

# CRITIQUE GROUP GUIDELINES

A Critique Group can offer friendly feedback and helpful perspective to artists and makers on a regular basis. Scheduled meetings also help you stay motivated with external deadlines (for each Critique Group meeting) and a break from the isolation of the studio.

The book titled, *Talent is Overrated*, by Geoff Colvin, analyzes how people become successful. (Recommended reading!) The most important concept of the book is that success comes from frequent "deliberate practice." This is not just repeating the same thing over and over but developing skills with a focus on constant improvement. A Critique Group can help to focus your professional improvement by providing constructive criticism from your peers. The goal is to inspire greater creativity and deliberate progress in each new artwork. Ultimately, this may lead to exhibition opportunities and superior professional visibility for you and your work.

Below are suggestions for a Critique Group Format, Host Responsibilities, Artists Responsibilities, and a Guest Policy tested by over twenty years of experience.

## CRITIQUE GROUP FORMAT

- **Suggested length of time for a Critique Group meeting is three hours.**
- **Meeting locations rotate** with each Critique Group member.  
**The host gets the first hour** for an *in-depth, insightful, discussion* preferably in their studio space where participants get a more intuitive understanding for the foundation of the creative process and final work.
- **Critique Group members will show work** in the order that they arrived to the meeting. Participants arrive early if they anticipate sharing their work early in the meeting.
- **The Critique Group format is most valuable when discussing work in progress.** If people only bring work that is completed, the opportunity for mid-course corrections or improvement is lost.
- Participants can avoid "show and tell" by preparing a question relevant to the work in progress.
- **Schedule future meetings** as far as three meetings ahead to avoid last minute scheduling issues.

## HOST RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ideally, Invitations **should be sent out two weeks** prior to the meeting.
- *For best attendance*, a follow up email, postcard and/or phone call are the most effective reminders.
- The host may **not** cancel a Critique Group meeting for LOW ATTENDANCE.
- Simple refreshments are recommended.
- **As artists arrive, the host should ask if they brought work**, and then make a mental note of how many people have work to share.
- **The host should make sure each artist who brings work gets equal time** (in the remaining two hours.) **Use a timer** to facilitate an equal time limit or the host may delegate this responsibility.

## ARTISTS RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Please RSVP** promptly to the host regarding invitations so the host can plan accordingly.
- **Arrive ON TIME.** When people arrive late, the Critique Group meeting runs late. If everyone arrives early or close to the starting time, everyone will have time to share before it gets too late.
- **Everyone has something to contribute to the Critique Group.** Participate actively.
- **Bringing work is only one aspect of sharing in each meeting.** Your opinion, observation, or thoughts at every meeting give substance and purpose to make the Critique Group meetings worth attending
- **Critique Group members should make a personal commitment** to attend meetings regularly to sustain the long term viability of the Critique Group.

## GUEST POLICY

1. Guests are welcome to come to any meetings.
2. Each guest may attend two sessions per calendar year.
3. Guests need not be artists, but it is appropriate to expect that they should at least have some exposure to or involvement in the arts.
4. Guests may not invite other people.
5. Guests should be formally introduced **as a guest** at every Critique Group they attend by the member who invited them.
6. Guests are encouraged to bring digital images, prints, or examples of their work.
7. Guests always show their work last.
8. Guests are always welcome for consideration to become members.
9. When a member of the Critique Group wants to invite someone to join the critique group, the inviting member suggests the guest's name for consideration. There should be a formal discussion by email or at the next meeting and a consensus of agreement from the other members.
10. Limit of two guests per meeting. Please inform the host that you would like to bring a guest.

**Members who miss six consecutive meetings** will be removed from the mailing list. If you are no longer on the mailing list and wish to attend, call on the active members to get the next location.

# Critique Group Invitation Guide

- **DATE** should be prominent.
- **TIME**
- **EMAIL ADDRESS and PHONE numbers** for host.
- **ADDRESS** of the meeting location (your studio or house is recommended)
- **MAP, written instructions, or link to online transportation/driving instructions**
- **Reminder PHONE CALLS** or emails to the Critique Group Members before the meeting *are recommended.*

© 2002, 2011 Harriete Estel Berman

Thanks to the Metal Arts Critique Collective [<http://www.critiquecollective.rewarestyle.com>] for their review of this document and their endorsement of the Critique Group Guidelines. If you have comments or information about these guidelines, contact: Harriete Estel Berman at: [bermaid@harriete-estel-berman.info](mailto:bermaid@harriete-estel-berman.info)

© 2002, 2011 Harriete Estel Berman [www.harriete-estel-berman.info](http://www.harriete-estel-berman.info) [www.askharriete.typepad.com](http://www.askharriete.typepad.com)