

CRITIQUE

Proper technique

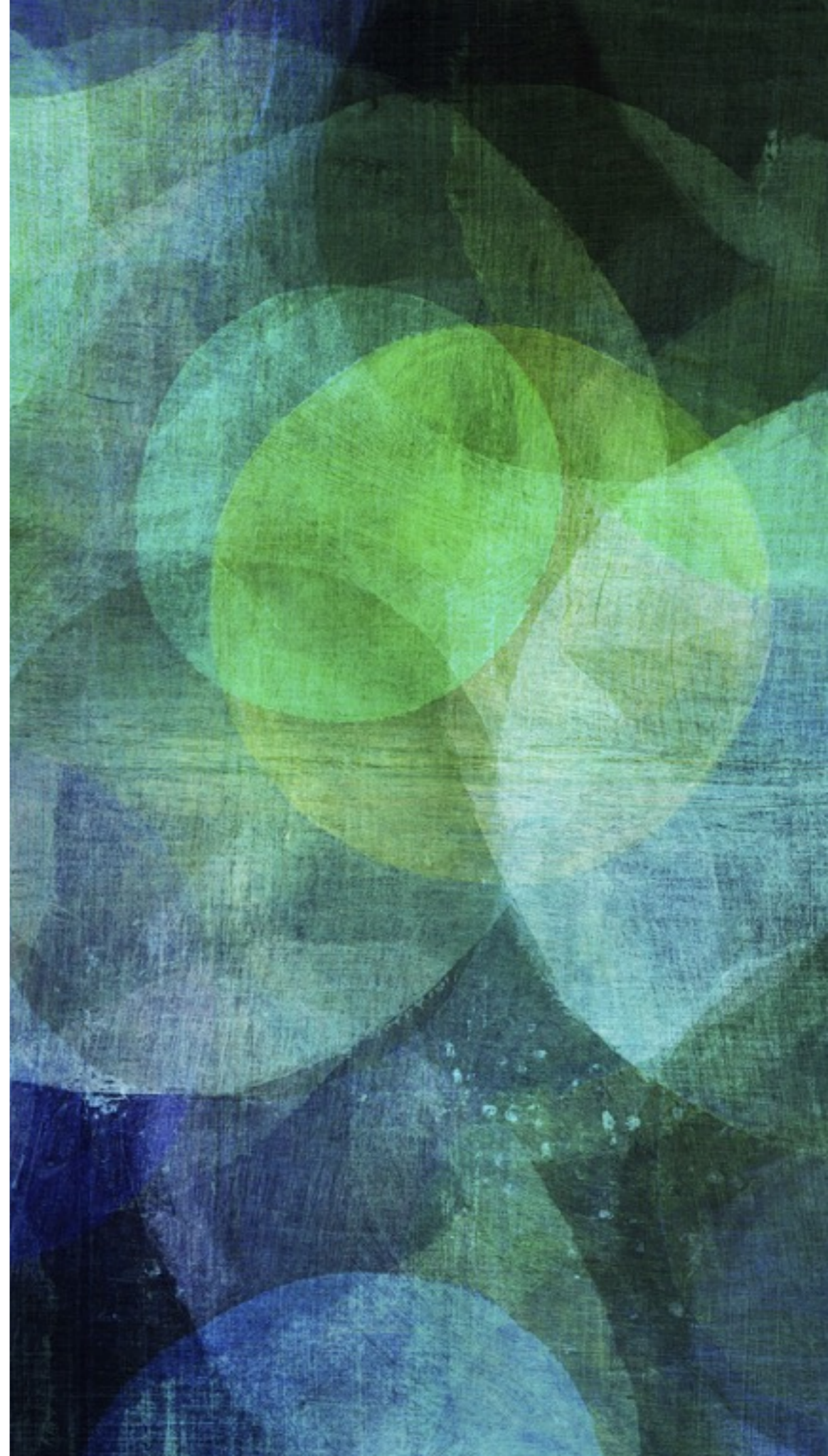


CRITIQUE

- Why do we do it?
- Why is it important?
- Who learns whiles other are being critiqued.

Critique is an art form

- It can be handled skillfully, or very badly
- Critical thought requires some personal initiative, the willingness to take time, investigate, research
- It can have a fruitful, enriching and constructive effect
- It improves as it is practiced



Critique is a life-skill

- One must work at being a good critic.
- Its practice makes us better communicators and collaborators
- The lazy critic is soon forgotten, but a good critic is valued and sought out.

Critique is a form of analysis

- **it observes...** what do you see?
what is there, and what is not?
- **it evaluates...** why did you notice?
how did it do that?
- **it uncovers...** what might not have been
revealed previously?

Critique is a form of analysis

- **it reflects...** why does it have that effect?
- **it interprets...** how could it be improved?
- **it “reports”...** persuasively deliver the analysis and interpretation

Qualities of good critique

Balance It is important to keep things in proportion, neither **overdoing it** nor being too **timid**.

This requires an ability to keep things relative, with a **level-headed approach**.

When criticism is balanced, it is more likely to be successful.

Balance

Those who are **too negative**, focus only on the downside or limitation of things -- unremitting negativity gets in the way of getting anything done

Those who are **uncritical**, are often regarded as being superficial and ineffective -- lacking in effort, and in discernment

Qualities of good critique

- **succinct** with a start and a finish; purposeful, not endless
- **relevant** on-topic and pertinent to the work
- **clear** not vague or wandering
- **well-researched** backed up with helpful information; validated

Qualities of good critique

- **sincere** genuine and trustworthy
- **positively intended** accurate; without either malice or puffery
- **articulate and persuasive** uses industry terminology; identifies causes when pointing out issues; uses neutral tone

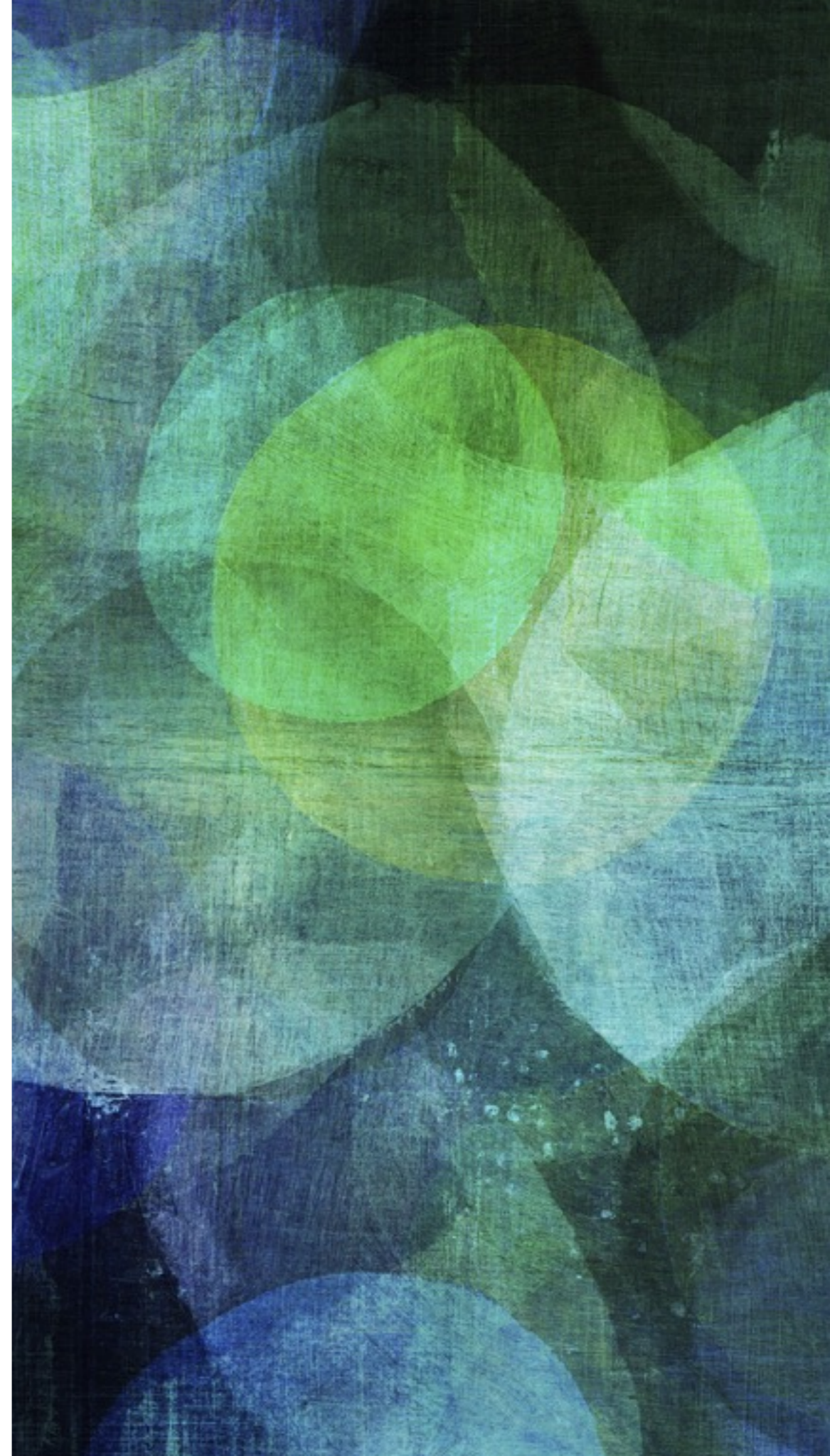


Critique's Challenges

- Knowing the criteria to use
- Managing ego
- Using effective language

Knowing the criteria to use:

- are there specific questions, categories or goals that should be covered?
- if unknown, cover communication and design basics



Communication questions to consider

- What does it communicate to you?
- Is there a clear message(s)?
- What factors make you feel this way? What stands out (positively)?
- What stands out (negatively)?
- How effective is it?

Design questions to consider

- Is it visually organized? Structured for comprehension?
- Typography - Can you read it? Does it enhance the theme?
- Composition - Is there hierarchy and good information flow?
- Imagery - what does it communicate? Is it good quality?
- Color - What does it express? Is it used effectively?
- Is the work attractive and/or engaging?

Challenges

Managing Ego:

Critique is about the effectiveness of the work and exposing flaws -- for improvement. **It is not about what you like**, but about how well the work meets the objectives or communicates the messages.

**From here on out, the words “I like”
are banned from critiques.**

Challenges

Managing Ego: giving critique

- **Be honest**, not opinionated.
- **Be observant**, not picky.
- **Be persuasive**, not argumentative.
- Do not flatter or fawn.

Challenges

Managing Ego: giving critique

Good critique is a skill that must be exercised, and perfected.

Develop a skilled eye to evaluate design/media principles well, focusing on professional criteria.

The best professionals are sought out by their colleagues as trusted sources of skilled and honest evaluation.

Challenges

Managing Ego: receiving critique

We **solicit** feedback -- requesting that others give us some of their valuable time and attention -- an invitation, *for better or worse*, to hear how our work has affected others.

Challenges

Managing Ego: receiving critique

Don't be defensive -- don't invalidate someone else's view of how the work has affected them by questioning their reaction.

This tends to discourage or close-off honesty, particularly in reticent people.

Challenges

Managing Ego: receiving critique

The important skill for you as the recipient, is the weighing of the critique. Designers who are skilled in using critique, quietly take it ALL in, then sort it for the information's value to them.

Challenges

Managing Ego: receiving critique

Critique is **NOT** a mandate. The fact is, you are the master of the situation. **YOU** decide what to do about any feedback you receive. You do not have to follow the suggestions or change your thinking as a result of what you hear -- the choice, and consequences, are yours.

Challenges

Managing Ego: receiving critique

Critique is NOT debate.

It is not necessary to "rebut" your peers, or respond in any other way except to thank them for taking the time. If you want to let them know that a particular comment helped you make an important correction, great -- a validation without squelching future input.

Challenges

Critique is NOT debate.

Challenges

**Critique is about what
you like.**

Using effective language

“like” or “love” it’s not about YOU

Skip the lazy language!

Use professional wording like: effective, active, adequate, capable, cogent, compelling, competent, convincing, direct, effectual, efficient, energetic, forceful, valid, useful, accomplished, clever, functional, significant, powerful, relevant, sound, imposing, assertive, dynamic ...

Using effective language

“you need to...” don’t dictate

consider..., think about...,take note of..., you might...

Using effective language

“I think...” be neutral - no “I” or “me”

“I think these pages are crowded...” becomes:

The pages feel crowded...

There are issues with page density...

How to use Critique

- Critique is about giving and receiving, **for improvement of *your work*.**
- Give **valued** feedback
- Receive feedback **graciously**

Benefits of Critique

- Criticism gives you a vital outside perspective on your work, uncovering potential areas for improvement that you are unable to see by yourself.
- Feedback challenges you to be a better designer. Rather than settle for your own standards, you are pushed to take your work to the next level.

Benefits of Critique

- Handling critique can dramatically improve the way you communicate —an essential skill for any successful media or design career.
- Constructive criticism often gives you the kick in the butt you need to learn a new design skill or media technique.
- Never underestimate the importance of humility. Criticism keeps you grounded, making you easier to work with, and more open to learning from others.