

Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process

This widely-recognized method nurtures the development of artistic works-in-progress through a four-step, facilitated dialogue between artists, peers, and audiences.

The Process engages participants in three roles:

1. **The artist** offers a work-in-progress for review and feels prepared to question that work in a dialogue with other people;
2. **Responders**, committed to the artist's intent to make excellent work, offer reactions to the work in a dialogue with the artist; and
3. **The facilitator** initiates each step, keeps the process on track, and works to help the artist and responders use the Process to frame useful questions and responses.

The Critical Response Process takes place after a presentation of artistic work in any discipline. Work can be short or long, large or small, and at any stage in its development.

The facilitator then leads the artist and responders through four steps:

1. Statements of Meaning: **Responders** state what was meaningful, evocative, interesting, exciting, striking in the work they have just witnessed.
2. Artist as Questioner: The **artist** asks questions about the work. After each question, the **responders** answer. **Responders** may express opinions if they are in direct response to the question asked and do not contain suggestions for changes.
3. Neutral Questions: **Responders** ask neutral questions about the work. The **artist** responds. Questions are neutral when they do not have an opinion couched in them. For example, if you are discussing the lighting of a scene, "Why was it so dark?" is not a neutral question. "What ideas guided your choices about lighting?" is.
4. Opinion Time: **Responders** state opinions, subject to permission from the **artist**. The usual form is "I have an opinion about _____, would you like to hear it?" The **artist** has the option to decline opinions for any reason.