

## **Review Guidelines for *Metalsmith* magazine**

These are general guidelines for writing exhibition reviews for *Metalsmith* magazine. The Publications Advisory Committee has prepared these guidelines.

Each review need not address all of the points listed below, nor will all points be applicable. However, it is important that the review go beyond description and provide analysis. Reviews should look at the work, overall exhibition, or curatorial approach critically and express both positive and negative responses.

Reviews should be proposed in advance, or submitted in a timely manner. For exhibitions this means as soon after the exhibition dates as possible. Unsolicited submission of a review does not guarantee publication. It will be subject to a review process by the Editor.

### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

- A. Length: approximately 300 – 700 words. Make every word count.
1. Accompanying materials: professional quality images (rgb, tiff, or jpg format, minimum of 300dpi resolution, reproducible at 8 x 10 inches minimum) and full captions (artist, title, date, media, dimensions, collection or gallery, photographer), copyright information if applicable, and correct orientation. Please indicate any cropping or overprinting restrictions.
- B. Images of work in the exhibition, particularly works being discussed in the review, should be requested from the gallery, museum, curator, or artist.
- C. Title, dates and location of the exhibition and a listing, if possible, at the beginning of the review of all participants. Include venue(s) and dates, if it is traveling, and state if a catalogue is available.
- D. Conflicts of interest: whereas we are a relatively small community and it is virtually impossible to review a group exhibition where all of the participants are unknown to us, there are still some conflicts of interest that can be identified.
  1. Do not review your professor's work
  2. Do not review your student's work, particularly recent graduates.
  3. Do not review colleagues at work with whom you are close.
  4. Do not review artists with whom you have a vested interest, i.e. a collector reviewing an artist whose work they collect or a gallery employer or owner reviewing work of an artist they represent.
  5. Do not review anyone with whom you are too close to be objective about their work
- E. Be prepared to have your work edited.

### **II. REVIEWING GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- A. How the exhibition is organized?
  1. Is it juried or invitational? Were awards given?
  2. Theme-oriented (i.e. "Playful Intent" or "Commemorative Cup")
  3. By location, or focusing on a particular population?
  4. By category (hollowware, jewelry, ironwork, etc.)
- B. What is the curatorial viewpoint? This is most often found in the curator's statement in the catalogue or by talking to the curator directly.
- C. Provide a historical or cultural context for the work, if possible.
- D. Brief description of the work being analyzed. This should introduce each work to be analyzed and should create a mental picture; it is not a description of techniques.

- E. Group the work into categories (categories relating to concept, not physical characteristics) and analyze them in comparison to one another. What dialogue takes place between objects?
- F. Interpret the work. You are the viewer, what does the work mean to you?
  - 1. Use artist's statements about the work to help you understand the artist's intent but do not simply quote the statement in the review unless you are taking exception with what the artist says about his or her own work.
  - 2. Do the materials and processes support the content of the work? How?
  - 3. What meaning can be found in the form?
  - 4. What does the work express about the culture, the individual, contemporary life?
  - 5. Consider function. Is the work meant to function or does it challenge functionality?
  - 6. Consider the ultimate site of the work, i.e. jewelry on the body.
  - 7. You might mention the installation if it enhances or detracts from the impact of the work.
- G. What does this work contribute to the ongoing dialogue?

### **III. SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- A. To review a solo exhibition is important that the review have some familiarity with the artist's work. If you are unfamiliar with the artist's work do some research or contact the artist or curator directly. Save biographical information for a feature article unless it is germane to the work.
- B. An introduction to the past themes of the artist's work
  - 1. What has concerned this artist in the past? Formally? Conceptually?
  - 2. How are past themes or concerns expressed in this work?
- C. Is this new work breaking ground or a new investigation for the artist? Is it a new slant on old subject matter? Is it technically innovative?
- D. How does the work fit into the contemporary dialogue or what is its historical place, if any?
- E. How does the work express the artist's interests, i.e. material culture, science, craft, history, etc.?
- F. If it is a retrospective, are there new conclusions to be drawn by viewing this large body of work? How can the work be analyzed in relationship to other works from other periods? What are the threads running through the work? Does the current work have the exuberance of the artist's youth? What does maturity bring to the work?
- G. How well was the show curated?
  - 1. Does the installation seem logical? Is it chronological? Thematic?
  - 2. How might the installation signal the curator's point of view?