



161 Sixth Avenue  
New York, NY 10013  
P 212 691 6969  
F 212 255 2053  
[www.thefield.org](http://www.thefield.org)

## **FIELDWORK BASICS**

Fieldwork is a place for artists to learn about their work, develop their ability to give feedback, and build a community of artistic peers. The primary goal of Fieldwork is to provide structure and support for an artist's process. Fieldwork is one of the few places where an artist can develop his/her own craft at his/her own pace. Because Fieldwork is open to artists of all levels and disciplines, the groups are aesthetically diverse. The Fieldwork model of feedback has been honed over many years by the artists, and continues to be a powerful tool in the process of making art and learning how to give feedback. Artists tell The Field that the reasons they do Fieldwork are: to show work and get feedback consistently, to perform, to develop their abilities to see work deeply and comment via feedback, to combat isolation, to have a weekly deadline structure, to meet other artists, to find artistic collaborators, and to participate in discussions with other artists.

## **STRUCTURE OF WORKSHOP**

- SHOW WORK
- GATHER IN A CIRCLE
- GIVE FEEDBACK ABOUT EACH PIECE IN THE ORDER IT WAS SHOWN
- IF TIME ALLOWS, OPEN DISCUSSIONS

## **TIPS FOR GIVING FEEDBACK**

The goal is to give honest, immediate, specific feedback about your experience of each piece. Part of the rigor required here is in the ability to enter into a variety of different work with equal generosity. The core of this is to reflect back to the artist what you saw. This can include:

- What struck you, surprised you, distanced you, and/or confused you
- The structure and its relationship to the work as a whole
- The social, political, and/or the historical context of the piece
- Your emotional responses and gut reactions
- Comments related to your understanding of the work's intent.
- Specific examples that support your comments
- Stating the obvious; which is sometimes very helpful to artists.

## **TIPS FOR SHOWING WORK AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK**

The goal is to receive specific information about how your work is coming across to different viewers. To facilitate this:

- Show your work without any preambles or explanations
- If you like, provide any information that would be in the program (e.g., the work's title)
- Remember your role is to receive the feedback and retain your autonomy over the work. To do this, absorb the feedback by refraining from responding to comments or defending your work
- Be sure to get clarification on a specific comment if you didn't understand what was said
- Consider after all the feedback is given whether you want to ask about a neglected aspect of the work, such as the music or the costume
- Revel in the amount of information you've received and use it to help your work to further your vision

## **ABOUT CLAPPING, SUGGESTIONS AND THE FACILITATOR**

- Clapping can dissipate the immediate response to the piece and make it hard to stay objective. We try to provide recognition for the work people are doing via attention and feedback, rather than clapping.
- The use of suggestions is something that each group (and artist) handles differently. Most groups avoid suggestions because they can short-circuit the artist's role as creator and problem solver. Remember that it's possible to connect with the artist after the workshop to offer other types of feedback/suggestions.
- Finally, the facilitator is not a teacher, but a peer artist who acts as a guide to the Fieldwork process, making sure the environment remains supportive and challenging, and also keeping track of time.