

WORKSHOP #8 FEEDING BACK

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2021, 17:00-19:00

W/ MANOLIS TSIPOS

How do we rethink the ways in which feedback is given? How can we break down the hierarchies between student and teacher? How can the student take charge? How can we diminish the 'ego' in these moments and create an environment in which everyone is committed to offering critical feedback generously? During this session, Manolis Tsipos joined us to introduce the DAS Theatre (previously DasArts) feedback method.

Developed in partnership with the philosopher Karim Benammar, the method offers strategies for creating a more generous and speculative environment for group feedback sessions. It employs a diverse set of techniques and formats that are designed to tackle a number of harmful tendencies within common practices of critique. It allows the maker/presenter to fully contend with both the successes and potential failures of the work, without falling into reductive binaries or positions of defensiveness.

During the workshop Manolis drew on Socratic dialogue to provide a basis for the method that is committed to question-posing. This helps to produce an atmosphere in which the presenting student does not see the feedback given as infallible or inevitable, but instead allows them to approach both negative and positive feedback as a potentially productive interaction.

Before the session Manolis directed us to the DAS Theatre film *A Film About Feedback* and the Irit Rogoff text 'From Criticism to Critique to Criticality' (2003) to help ground the discussion: how can we move towards embodied, agentic criticality, rather than criticism or critique that is about fault-finding?



> IN THE APPENDIX YOU WILL FIND THE DIFFERENT STEPS OF THE 'DAS ARTS FEEDBACK METHOD'

Manolis Tsipos was born in 1979 in Athens, Greece. He is a cross-disciplinary performance artist interested in hybrid narratives and broadened concepts of choreography; a few-times published writer of prose and poetry in Greece, France, and the USA; a mentor within multiple performing arts contexts in Europe; and a coach specialised in the DAS Theatre Feedback method. Currently, his theoretical enquiries are focused on how friendship could be conceived as a crucial factor in the understanding of our modes of artistic collaboration and cohabitation inside our field.

FEEDING
BACK

online
WORKSHOP #8

w/ MANOLIS
TSIPOS

TUE MAY 11,
5-7PM

How to offer critical feedback generously? How to break the hierarchies between student and teacher? How to make sure the student is in charge?

Hear! Here! is a platform and research project for Rietveld & Sandberg staff. In 2020/2021 the platform is dedicated to dialogue and critical pedagogy.

Be Wary of the 'But' Effect

During feedback sessions, when positive feedback is offered there is a tendency to follow it with a negative statement. This second statement can often overshadow or obscure the first, even when it is less substantial in scope, leading the maker to fixate on the negative and overlook the positive. This fixation can, in turn, produce a number of harmful practices; from an understanding of critique as a process of simply routing out problems to be fixed to an anxiety about receiving feedback at all.

Within the method there are moments where only the successful portions of the work are discussed. This provides a clear demarcation between the positive and the negative, allowing the maker to process them both whilst also avoiding a simplistic binary between the two.

A Breadth of Formal Techniques

The method deploys an extensive set of different formats all designed to avoid specific pitfalls or to create particular possibilities. This includes listening exercises, one-on-one conversations between participants, discussions held through dissociative prompts or language, and letters written for the maker to take away with them. For the majority of the session the maker has to remain silent, yet at pivotal moments they are fully empowered. All of this is carried out by a moderator who writes

everything out on large sheets of paper, which are then given to the maker to return to at a later date.

Rules Aren't Always Bad

While much of critical pedagogy can be seen as a process of breaking down reactionary or oppressive ideological formations within teaching, in favour of freer or more inclusive forms of learning, the DAS Theatre method shows how rules and regulation can also be deployed to produce an environment that fosters a greater level of trust between those involved.