

CRITgroup Collaborative Project

At the inaugural meeting in November 2011 the possibility of a collaborative project was raised. After our first year of **C**reating, **R**eflecting, **I**vestigating and **T**alking, we are now pleased to invite you to participate in our first collaboration.

We are interested in investigating the perceived differences between 'art' and 'craft', as this has been a feature of our conversations in several meetings. How does the apparent need to 'label' oneself as a particular kind of practitioner (a 'photographer', a 'craft worker', etc.) affect individual practices and how do those descriptions of discipline relate to differing methods of producing work?

To get started, we are running three 'mini projects', which we will use in order to pin down and agree a clear research question that will then inform the next working stages of the project. The idea of these is that by introducing particular boundaries or criteria we will flush out key aspects of our respective practices which will better equip us in our collaborative investigations.

Full details of the proposed projects are listed on the next page, however you are invited to become a part of these collaborations by simply getting involved with our first project; *Creative Whispers*.

Invitation to Collaborate

We would like to invite as many people as possible, at any stage in their creative careers to become involved in our collaborative project. To get started, please come along to our CRITmas party on December 19th and bring a physical object you have made or an idea recorded in a written/sketched fashion. To fit in with the CRITmas party theme, we ask you to wrap it like a present (or enclose it in a card). This will help us to select one each at random without knowing what the item is! It is important that you include a gift tag (or alternative) which clearly indicates who it is from but you should not specify who it is to. The only stipulation for the content of your contribution is that it should in some way reflect your practice; it could be a small item as a 'taster' of your current work or simply an idea for something you hope to make next but haven't quite got round to...

If you are unable to attend on the 19th of December but would like to become involved in the collaborative project, you can post your contribution to CRITgroup c/o MadLab, 36-40 Edge Street, Manchester, M4 1HN. Please include a return address so we can select a contribution to send back to you!

Full details of proposed collaborative starting points:

- **Creative Whispers** (begins December 2012)

Each collaborator produces 'a thing' (this maybe a physical object or just an idea recorded in a written/sketched fashion) which they feel somehow represents their practice. These are brought along to the next meeting (beginning December 19th), pooled and then picked out at random. The tasks is then to take that new outcome away, respond to it in some way (it may be to physically add to or develop an object, produce an outcome based on an idea, etc.) and bring it back the following month. These developed outcomes are then passed on to a new collaborator and the process will repeat until everyone has had some input on each starting point. We will then discuss and review the outcomes with a view to being in a better position to derive a clear 'question', though we will also undoubtedly have some interesting pieces in their own right.
- **Crafting by Committee** (Start date TBA)

Each collaborator will produce a brief project proposal, situated within their current practice. The rest of the group will then act as a panel who will, upon hearing the proposal, specify particular criteria for how the project must progress. The practitioner must then follow these instructions precisely and return to the panel in a future meeting with the outcome. We can then use these pieces to reflect upon how decision making within different practices can impact upon outcomes but also be an intrinsic part of the creative process. Again, these will be research pieces, starting points for potential development and pieces of work in their own right.
- **Artists Anonymous** (Date TBA)

Proposed as a potential performance/audience participation piece at an event or opening in which we display work, this would again be part artwork, part research. Individuals in the group would be required to wear name tags which identify a creative discipline to which they ascribe themselves. In a parody of a 'self-help' session, they would be asked to introduce themselves to the group by specifying the particular practice which they feel they operate within and will then be 'interrogated' to justify or substantiate this claim. Though this will be facilitated by CRITgroup attendees, it's hoped to involve a wider range of individuals who might be somewhat unsuspecting and bring a whole new perspective to the conversation. This would probably be filmed and transcribed for further analysis.

Upon completion of these projects (as well as throughout), it is planned that collaborators will meet for a review session in which we will reflect upon the outcomes of each and discuss ways to move the project forward. This will include the formulation of a 'research question' which defines our area of investigation with more clarity.