

# Upcycle Project Specifications

## Aesthetics of Design

### Spring 2021

#### Due dates:

- **Upcycle Artifact must be completed by 11 am Feb 22.**
- You are encouraged to revise and improve it later, but this is the version you must document for critique. If you revise it, submit an additional post about it later too.
- **Complete Upcycle report due midnight Feb 24**
- **Video of your Upcycle Presentation due in the same report post midnight of your presentation date.**
- **2 Critiques of Upcycle reports due Midnight Sunday Feb 28**

#### Details

##### Upcycle Artifact

From the Initial Assignments document.

This will be your individual warm-up project. Create an artifact that **conforms to an aesthetic**, either the aesthetic you researched, or one that someone else in class posted about. Upcycle means that your artifact should be constructed of inexpensive or recycled material, something easy to manipulate using additive or subtractive techniques: cardboard (can be laser cut), foam core, drywall, sticks, plastic forks or plates, soda cans/bottles, Legos, bubble wrap or packing peanuts, stir sticks, straw, hay, cloth, papier Mache, tires, DVDs, PVC, food, plastic bags etc. Try to avoid buying new materials. (A hint: repetition is a common component of many artworks, so for example, if you use rubber bands, use a *lot* of rubber bands). You'll be asked to document your design and construction process, so keep track of where you find inspiration. In particular, if you use an existing design you **must** document the source, but hopefully you will use this opportunity to create something new. Your artifact should be of moderate size, something between 0.5 and 8 cubic feet; can be small but must be viewable without a microscope, or up to as large as a chair. Plan to video the finished artifact for a short in-class presentations during the week of Feb 22, and a formal report will be due as a blog post Weds Feb 24. You might want to make one of those time-lapse assembly videos for extra awesomeness.

##### Upcycle Report/Blog post

Length: As long as it needs to be to include the following. This documents your efforts for one third of the semester. Don't scrimp.

- Your title should be the name of your artifact, **not** 'Upcycle Project'.
- Complete report due in as blog post, midnight Weds Feb 22.
- Set a Featured Image.
- OK to cut and paste from Inspiration, and Progress posts.
- Describe and **cite** your inspirations and any existing designs that you adapted. *You must cite ALL content on your blogs for this course! Any photo that you did not take, any text that you*

*did not write from scratch MUST have a citation, a source link. If you can't remember where you got something DON'T USE IT. Go back and search for something similar that you can cite.*

- Describe your vision for your project, the specifications that you developed for its function and its form, your artistic vision and aesthetic. What were you trying for?
- Add a detailed description of your fabrication process. Document with lots of sketches, photos or video. Minimum 5 photos, or 1 minute video.
- An illustrated description of the final artifact. Again, photos, videos, cad drawings as appropriate. Full description of the actual artifact.
- Compare what you achieved to your FUNCTIONAL goals.
- Compare what you achieved to your ARTISTIC goals. This your aesthetic, your metric.
- What is next? Will you refine this artifact? Keep it, recycle it, try again someday?
- Include a link to the video you made of your live presentation, or another video that provides and equivalent full description and demo. If you want this to appear with a play button instead of a Featured Image, insert the link to your video (upload to YouTube or Vimeo) as the first text in your post, and set your post type to Video. You won't get credit in the end for this major post without a video.

## Two In-Depth Written Critiques

Choose two Upcycle Final Report posts to read carefully. See the Blog and Critique Policy for more guidelines.

## Upcycle Presentations

In class starting Monday Feb 22 (see Schedule), we will have presentations in pods, the same pods you've been having discussions in. Everybody is expected to serve as a Critique Facilitator at some point this semester for one of the Upcycle, Design Preview or Final Project critique days. Your pod has a grad student (Pod Facilitator) who will coordinate to make sure there is a Critique Facilitator for each session to keep things moving along. The Critique Facilitator will host the zoom room for the critique, and post the link in the pod slack channel. The Critique Facilitator will also remind presenters to record their presentations (you need it for your post). The Pod Facilitator will take roll, note who facilitated and who presented in the pod google sheet. **Even on the days you are not presenting, you must attend with camera on and comment.** This is another opportunity to hone your critique skills.

Each student will give a presentation on their Upcycle project, with the content of the presentation to mirror the written report, detailed above. Plan to talk for 7 minutes, then take 8 minutes for critique, then one minute for the next speaker to get set up while others are typing comments. This way 3 students can speak each period, but it's OK for the critique to go long; there is room in the schedule. Presentations and critiques that are too short *are not good*. The Critique Facilitator is expected to encourage discussion by contributing their views and soliciting input from everybody. The order of speakers will be set by who volunteers to go next, but if desired your pod can decide to set an order.

It's up to you to make sure you can present via Zoom. Practice sharing your screen and using the computer audio and optimization when sharing a video. If you want, you can pre-record your whole presentation, but this is not expected. Extemporaneous presentation experience is valuable.

Say Thank You at the end of your talk. Do NOT say 'Any questions' right away; instead, wait until after the applause. Then ask for questions. It's magic. It completes the rhythm of the talk. Allowing applause sets the audience free to respond.

Plan to record your presentation and critique to add to your posted report. Yes, **this is required**. (If your video turns out awful for some reason, you may re-record your talk afterwards and post that.) Title your video (with a video title card at the start), then upload to YouTube or Vimeo. **DO NOT** upload the video directly to AesDes.org; it doesn't have the bandwidth or optimization of a dedicated streaming site.

## Presentation Critiques

Our critique method is adapted from

Lerman, Liz. *Critical Response Process: A Method for Getting Useful Feedback on Anything You Make, from Dance to Dessert*. EBook., 2002. [https://www.amazon.com/Liz-Lermans-Critical-Response-Process-ebook/dp/B00CF8MYD6/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?crid=33FL1ANVGPYPF&keywords=liz+lerman%27s+critical+response+process&qid=1565033305&s=gateway&sprefix=liz+lerman%2Caps%2C576&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Liz-Lermans-Critical-Response-Process-ebook/dp/B00CF8MYD6/ref=sr_1_1?crid=33FL1ANVGPYPF&keywords=liz+lerman%27s+critical+response+process&qid=1565033305&s=gateway&sprefix=liz+lerman%2Caps%2C576&sr=8-1).

Step 1: Statements of Meaning

These are often, but not always positive statements, calling out a strength of the work.

What does this work say about design? About the intended aesthetic?

If making a positive comment, BE HONEST and SPECIFIC. What did you like and why? DO NOT JUST SAY 'good job'

Step 2: Artist as Questioner

The student presenting can ask for specific feedback to guide further development of the work: "What do you think of the way top is supposed to open? What about the saturation of the color, is it too hot? Did you notice how the fasteners are hidden?" etc. Don't ask just 'what do you think', that's too vague. You'll get more useful answers if your question is focused.

Responders should answer with honesty even if your opinion is negative. However, offer suggestions only in response to the artist's question.

Step 3: Neutral questions from Responders (audience).

This is tough, to ask a question without embedding an opinion. It will take practice. For example, instead of "It's kind of rough" or "why does it look unfinished" ask "How does the finish interact with your aesthetic" Be sure to ask about the aesthetics. DO NOT OFFER SUGGESTIONS HERE. Instead, ask about why certain choices were made.

Step 4: Permissioned Opinions

Responders name the topic of their opinion, then ask the artist for permission to state it. For example, "I have an opinion about the overall size of your artifact. Do you want to hear it?" The artist can answer yes or no. If you already know that the artifact is too small and what to do about it, you can say "No thanks." If you are open to suggestions, then say "yes". If you have a suggestion about how to make the artifact differently that hasn't been discussed yet, here you can say "I have an opinion about how to fabricate your device. Do you want to hear it?"

Students in the 5228 section are expected to volunteer as Pod Coordinators for one of the three major critiques: Upcycle, Design Review, and Final Presentations

## In-Class Critiques:

- Log in toAesDes.org
- Find the post with the presenter's Upcycle Report
- **For each work, try to type or verbalize at least one substantive comment:**
  - a. **A statement of meaning** or
  - b. **A response to a question from the artist** or
  - c. **A neutral question** or
  - d. **Ask to offer an opinion.** If you only type the offer, be sure to follow up later when artist will respond; if yes, then add your opinion.
- If you verbalize a comment, type it too.

## Suggestions on what to do at each stage if you are the ARTIST

### Preparing for the Process

... invested in continuing to work on the piece you are showing and open to the possibility that you might change it.

... thinking about what you want to learn related to where you are in the process of developing the work you are showing.

... in an open frame of mind about what you will hear.

... learning as much as you can about the physics before you present

### Step One: Statements of Meaning

... suspending the need to hear “this is the greatest thing I’ve ever seen.”

... suspending the need to question the sincerity of positive comments.

... attending to your own internal reactions to the comments in terms of how they inform the steps to come:

Are they answering the questions I have about the work?

- Are they suggesting that I need to probe deeper on any subject?
- Are they raising my sense of curiosity about something new?
- Are they reflecting a consensus reaction or a diverse response?

### Step Two: Artist Asks Questions

... building on the information you have heard in step one.

... refraining from long explanatory preambles.

... considering possibilities for two-part questions or general questions.

... ready to narrow questions down when they spill out in groups.

... ready to hear opinions, including negative ones, when they are in direct response to the question you have posed.

### Step Three: Responders Ask Neutral Questions

... attentive to possibilities and issues that may not be prominent in your current thinking.

... using the dialogue as an opportunity to advance your thinking about the work rather than to repeat what you already know.

... not working too hard to divine the opinion behind the question

### Step Four: Permissioned Opinions

... listening to the content of permission requests as well as opinions.

... exercising the options of saying “yes” or “no” to a proposed opinion.

... considering how content of this and previous steps is informing your thinking about how you want to continue with the piece you are working on

**Wrap-up**

... consolidating the most useful information you've heard.

**RESPONDER**

**Preparing for the Process**

... invested in the potential for the artist to do his/her best work.

... thinking ahead to how you will participate in the steps of the Process as you observe the presentation of the artist's work.

**Step One: Statements of Meaning**

... making comments that add new perspectives to what has already been stated.

... limiting your response to one or two points when many responders are participating.

... if you have a strong opinion that you would eventually like to make, addressing a related aspect of the work in your step one statement.

... noting the meanings that others have found in the artwork, observing how those comments are expanding your own perception of the work.

... observing your own preferences and points of reference.

**Step Two: Artist Asks Questions**

... keeping your answers honest and specific to the artist's question.

... expressing opinions, even negative ones, IF they are in response to the artist's question.

... listening carefully to the areas of interest and concern that are directed by the artist.

... staying interested in the conversation, even when it is about an aspect of the work about which you may not have a strong opinion.

**Step Three: Responders Ask Neutral Questions**

... framing a neutral question about the area of your opinion.

... considering options from general to specific and the possible merits of posing a more general question before a specific one.

... listening to the artist's response for indications that the opinion you have in mind may be either very valuable or irrelevant to the artist's concerns.

... curious about aspects of the work that aren't related to strong opinions (i.e., open to asking questions that are not opinion driven)

**Step Four: Permissioned Opinions**

... always prefacing opinions by saying "I have an opinion about \_\_\_ would you like to hear it?" and waiting until artist consents.

... indicating, in your request to the artist, if your opinion contains a suggestion or fixit.

... not loading the content of your opinion into the permission request.

... engaging the artist directly rather than dialoguing with other responders.

**Wrap-up**

...observing the quality of the contribution you and your fellow responders have made.

**FACILITATOR**

**Preparing for the Process**

... considering what kind of preparation will be appropriate for this artist, taking time, if needed, to meet with the artist in advance.

... assuring that all understand the sequence of the steps and the concepts of the neutral question and permissioned opinion.

... checking to see if the artist would like a note-taker.

**Step One: Statements of Meaning**

... encouraging a broad response with an opening that suggests many possible kinds of reactions (i.e. “What was stimulating, challenging, memorable, evocative, etc...”)

... intervening when responders jump to negative opinions or suggestions, reminding them of the opportunities they will have later in the Process.

... drawing the group’s attention to the variety of responses elicited.

**Step Two: Artist Asks Questions**

... encouraging artists to limit their preambles to questions.

... encouraging the artist to phrase in more general or specific terms if the question isn’t leading to a useful response.

... helping the artist refine very general questions, or sort through multiple questions that s/he may want to pose all at once.

... encouraging responders to respond to the question by being honest and specific, but staying on-topic with the question

... intervening when responses to questions contain fixits (suggestions for changes).

**Step Three: Responders Ask Neutral Questions**

... reminding responders about the discipline of framing questions neutrally

... discerning whether questions are neutral, and asking responders to rephrase neutrally when they are not.

... intervening to rephrase a question, or asking responder to refine question, when artist seems “stuck” in responding.

... intervening and refining the query if artist gives a long-winded “explanatory” response that sounds as though s/he is repeating information s/he has stated before.

**Step Four: Permissioned Opinions**

... reminding responders about the protocol of asking for the artist’s consent to state a particular opinion.

... checking to see if artist wants to hear suggestions as well as opinions.

... asking responders to restate when their permission statements have the content of an opinion loaded into them.

... directing opinions to be stated to the artist, not as seconds or rebuttals to other responders.

... intervening when responders engage in a dialogue that does not include the artist or when they become sidetracked discussing something other than the artwork under consideration.

**Wrap-up**

... asking the artist to say what his/her next steps are.

... checking to see if artist is open to hearing more from the responders outside the formal session.

... thanking all participants.

Lerman, Liz; Borstel, John. Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process: a method for getting useful feedback on anything you make, from dance to dessert . Dance Exchange, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

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