I. Retooling Critique
Background

Retooling Critique is a group research lead by Judith Leemann and assisted and design by Alexander Sebastianus. Funded by a MassArt President’s Curriculum Development Grant with the intent of supporting the development of a new course, Critique Practices, offered in Spring 2018. It intends to bring the wider MassArt community some trailheads for further inquiry into studio critique in relation to the college’s mission as a public institution to provide an equitable and inclusive education in art and design.

The group research invites artist/activist/educators Kenneth Bailey, Billie Lee, Judith Leemann, Adelheid Mers, Anthony Romero and Caroline Woolard.

A 3 Day discussion/workshop/unraveling resources, issues and possibilities on Critique within art practice becomes the platform of the research.
Survey research, on student's experiences in their critiques at class.
the Issue on Crits:

Experiences of critiques in Art Institutes haven’t been racially inclusive and equitable, thus not serving its purpose in educating diverse artists, makers and thinkers of the current and the next.

Judith L. / Professor - “Collective networks of Art & Design Professors from all over the U.S shared the same experiences in critique that found to be inclusive”

Alexander Sebastianus / Student - As head of Multicultural Arts Association, “This has been discussed or problematize within the student body more than once, no action was made by faculty”

The Room of Silence | A documentation of shared interviews by RISD students regarding silent and non-inclusive spaces during critique.
Retooling Critique: Development

After the recollection of data, Judith Leemann proposed a class to the MassArt Curriculum that explores critique practices. With that much more research and development is much needed, thus the creation **Retooling Critique: A Study group of Activist, Artist and Educators on critique practices**.

Alexander Sebastianus, is invited to the project giving a student perspective with his background in ethnography and experiential design work.
retooling critique:
A working group for the study of studio critique, with
particular focus on its relation to racial equity & inclusion.

with artists/artivists/educators

- Kenneth Bailey
- Billie Lee
- Judith Leemann
- Adalheid Mers
- Anthony Romero,
- Caroline Woolard

A 3 day theater of study.

Interested members of the MassArt community are invited
to take the role of observers, by dropping in at any of the
following times:

- Thursday 11/16 10am - 1pm & 3 - 6pm
- Friday 11/17 10am - 1pm & 3 - 6pm
- Saturday 11/18 10am - 12pm & 2 - 4pm

This gathering is funded by a MassArt President’s
Curriculum Development Grant with the intent of
supporting the development of a new course, Critique
Practices, to be first offered in Spring 2018.

AT FENWAY STUDIO, MASSART
The Study/Workshop was platformed as 3 Day time and space period, with a malleable itinerary. First day is design to share and contextualize experiences, literacies and resources of critique. Second day involves development of curriculums, including the allowance of students exploring forms of critique that can enhances their art practices, accordance to need. Third day will be a testing period of the approaches, with students.

The workshop include tools, participants, documentation and breathing space in development of the project.
Participants

**Caroline Woolard**
Artist with interdisciplinary work facilitating social imagination at the intersection of art, urbanism, architecture, and political economy. Co-founder of OurGoods.org and TradeSchool.coop
Role: Research Participant

**Judith Leemann**
Educator at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Artist, Writer on *Beyond Critique* (Bloomsbury, 2017) - “Pragmatics of Studio Critique”
Translating operations through and across distinct arenas of practice, she looks for ways to move studio teaching methodologies into other contexts and to interrupt classroom habits by bringing in carefully curated noise.
Role: Hosting & Head Researcher

**Kenneth Bailey**
Sector Organizing and Strategy Lead of Design Studio for Social Intervention, ds4si.org, Practicing Artist and Activist in Boston
Role: Research Participant

**Billie Lee**
Educator and doctoral candidate in American Studies at University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, Artist, Writer on *Beyond Critique* (Bloomsbury, 2017) - “On Performing the Critical”.
Project extends her interest in community-centered pedagogy through an examination of interventions by women of color and Indigenous artists and educators in creating a politics of possibility.
Role: Research Participant

**Observers**
The study is open for the community of MassArt to observe. A box to be filled with cards of questions, opinions and etc. are open for observers to fill and submit.

**Adelheid Mers**
Visual artist, Associate Professor, and the Chair of the Department of Arts Administration and Policy at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.
Interests include: Art Based Research, New Media Policy, and (Visual) Discourse Analysis.
Role: Research Participant

**Alexander Sebastianus**
Student at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Artist, Born in Indonesia, worked with Community Arts programs in small scale societies and ethnographic researched on traditional textile practices the contemporary was also made.
Role: Research Participant

**Anthony Romero**
Professor of the Practice in Performance at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. Artist, writer, and organizer committed to documenting and supporting artists and communities of color.
Role: Research Participant
Tools and resources are available in forms of data, space and time, where participants can interact collectively or individually.

The Object Archive, is one in particular interesting. It archives objects brought by participant, share its significance in relation to critique, as method, metaphor or matter.
Breathing Space

Breathing spaces allow resting and thinking nourishment for participants during the heavy loaded discussions and study during the workshop.

Tall ceilings and glass windows

Resting space

Conversation table

Coffee and snacks for breaks
Documentation

Documentation includes form of visual, audio and matter. Collected, it will function to reference back what have been produced during this moment, and purposed for the lead researcher project, in creation of a course in workings. Documentation are available for participants to use, in their own works.
Critique Practices as Continuity

The 3 day workshop ends with a full archived resources, platforms and structures for the head researcher and educator, Judith Leemann to curate a syllabus that will accommodate to the intention to explore practices of critique in regards of inclusivity and equity.

**Course: Critique Practices SPRING 2018**

After the workshop, Professor Judith Leemann finished constructing the syllabus with flexibility of change. I was assign as a Teaching Assistant for the class, from a student perspective what are student curious about and can use in their studio or art practices. The class goals with an end project, where students are able to make their own form of critique and present how it can be shared among the larger community of MassArt.

**Ethnography of Critique Practices course** is also conducted and arrange with Billie Lee, one of the Retooling Critique participants and a PhD Candidate for American Studies in the University of Manoa in Hawaii. Within her research she requested a student lens of observation, which becomes me, to observe for her during the time of my teach assisting.

Archived resources and materials from Retooling Critique

Ethnographic notes by Alexander Sebastianus for Billie Lees research

Course Assignments by Judith Leeman

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Alexander Sebastianus Portfolio for Continuum