

## The *Fillip* Editorial Guide

### 1. *Fillip* takes only low doses of description

Often review writers will overuse description and comparison in their writing to the point where they become abusers and pushers of the stuff—favouring poetic vocabulary and/or cultural connoisseurship over any criticality and creativity. Of course, we're not against the use of poetic language and comparisons, since both can be useful if not also lovely, evocative, and entertaining. All that we ask for is a level of analysis and substance to freight the writing overall.

Purely descriptive reviews are exercises in egocentrism. As far as we're concerned, writing that exclusively features the observations and feelings of an author regarding art works better in blogs, diaries, weeklies, and Poetry 101 courses. Moreover, this kind of writing acts as a vehicle for gallery advertising because it never actually takes a critical position about the work and exhibition under consideration. It merely acknowledges that the art, exhibition, and venue exist, tragically sounding like a "hooray!" and "who cares" all at once.

### 2. *On the shame of too many comparisons*

When comparisons dominate a review, we begin to wonder why the writer and artist(s) are needed at all. This approach, when overdone, comes off as cartoon-like and glib.

For example:

"... Matisse meets Polke meets punk..."

"... five Warhol-cum-Sturtevant-cum-Koons..."

"... a mix of Picasso and clown make-up..."

### 3. *Fillip* encourages you to resist neutrality

These days, reviews tend to be written with an annoying politesse. We encourage you to be honest and hard when necessary. As long as you can argue the point with solid examples and clear thinking, then we support your freedom of expression.

### 4. *Fillip* discourages battery and worship

While we don't want reviews to come off as tepid or trivial, we also don't want writers to unfairly denounce an artist, exhibition, or work without reason. At the same time, we are opposed to writers who use the space of a review to formally exalt an artist, exhibition, or work.

### 5. *Prove it*

More often than not, we find that writers like to state opinions as facts. Be aware of your position early on and be sure to back up every statement that you make with some sort of argument. Explaining why you think what you do goes a long way in persuading a reader to your point of view.

### 6. *Endnotes are evil*

Because we are not an academic journal and do not have the space for explanatory endnotes, please refrain from using them except when absolutely necessary. Incorporating endnotes into the body of the text is preferable and not as difficult as it may seem. When endnotes appear in *Fillip*, they are too small for easy reading, which means that anyone who tries to understand what you're saying will be agitated by the fact that you've made them work extra hard to do so. In general, endnotes should be used solely for bibliographic notation.