

Letter From the Editor

Doing something a second time is often revealing. In creating again, there is an implied proprietary knowledge of what was learned the first time around. Number two is a comma: it implies future movement. Once a series is instated, the comprehensive mood of the oeuvre seems more important than any one component. Each detail falls in service to a broader conceit, judged by an audience for its consistency and narrative flow.

Criticism is a prickly thing.

Negative opinions are often perceived as unruly, threatening to disturb the consistency of an editorial enterprise. But, they are also intellectually, creatively, and ethically essential. Criticism can't want to be easy; or it risks making even the best art so.

In her recent talk at The Walker Art Center's Superscript Conference, Orit Gat disparaged positive criticism as a tactic to generate readership, create consumer opinions, and in turn increase ad sales. People become consumers; consumers become numbers; the critic becomes a salesman. She argued that the positive review is implicit in enhancing the market surrounding the reviewed subject, while the negative review hardly ever "goes viral," failing to gain enough readership or circulation to have much effect. Though, serious criticism is a tool for promoting intellectual engagement and dialogue, not the bolstering of a specific artist or exhibition.

I hope to sidestep these musty qualifiers (positive/negative) ascribed to criticism, and the precarity of the critic's role, by simply being honest. Of course, the topic of honesty within critical writing is the subject of a whole other letter, so here I'd like to emphasize my commitment to transparency. Transparency between a critic and her community. Transparency in open dialogue between a community of critics and a community of artists and art enthusiasts.

I started this magazine with the earnest belief that there was a conversation that needed to be started. Where it would go, I had no idea. Now, having faced down all the usual sophomoric anxieties, I can say that a conversation has indeed begun—and it is one worth continuing. It has been an extremely encouraging three months since our initial launch of *Carla* Issue 1, and I treasure all the kind and appreciative feedback received, as well as the critical. Issue 2 includes not only a whole new round of essays, feature reviews, and reviews but also a selection of our weekly online *Snap Reviews* and our first *Letter to the Editor*, written in response to Travis Diehl's essay *MEAT-PHYSICS* which published in Issue 1. This is all to say that *Carla* is about you, and for you: the reader. I thank you all for being a part of that process and for engaging with us to push the conversation in new and unexpected directions.

Lindsay Preston Zappas
Founder and Editor-in-Chief