CRIT VIDEO LAUNCH FEEDBACK:

Participants at the launch day of *'Art Crits: 20 Questions – A Pocket Guide and Commissioned Artist's Video'* held at the V&A on Friday 18th October were asked how they would use the video:

- If a member of staff or a facilitator, who would you use it with?
- If a participant, at what stage of your development would this be or have been useful?
- What do you think are the key points?

Over one hundred staff, students, graduates and self-trained artists, attended the launch. This is what they told us:

Part I they would use with students before a crit, with BA, MA and international students, with new students at foundation level or earlier and on open days. It could be in the starter pack.
Although the tone of the video is aimed at younger audiences they would use it with staff to promote debate and discussion. They would use it at the beginning, middle and end of the course or year.
Coaches would use it with clients who are afraid or reluctant to have their work critiqued.
It could be used with any creative group, with evening classes and groups who don't normally have crits.
It could be used to promote discussion between departments, eg fine art and graphics, to inspire practising artists to continue in a peer group or to empower students to run their own crits.
It could be used for reassurance that it is not the person but their work that is being judged, and to highlight the value of other input, showing that you don't necessarily have to change your work as a result of feedback, but you do need to be aware of how it can be interpreted.
It would be useful for participants to know what to expect and how to use the crit to develop ideas and how to benefit from it.
There was a question about the appropriate space for a crit to be held – should it be in the studio or elsewhere?

The key points were:
Enabling the artist to think about the work on a less personal level – critical separation.
Crits are for gathering feedback from both peers and tutors and which the artist can use as s/he chooses.
Students can discover what they are doing.
Crits are not the same as tutorials.
Intention vs perception – artists should not try to persuade people of their intentions.
Gaining confidence as an artist.

Part II would be used with any group needing information, with first years, third years, the staff team, new tutors, overseas students and those who tend to avoid crits.
It is more educator-focused.
It could be used to highlight the importance of knowing how to ask questions of different departments or groups e.g. technicians, curators critics, the public.
It gives a cross-institution perspective.

Key points:
It is important to prepare a framework before a crit.
Participants won't always know how a crit works.
The crit is a learning process and an integral part of art-making.
There is a variety of models and the crit has various stages of development.
It is useful to practise different models.
Crits are too often staff-led which can inhibit contributions.
Crits can help develop confidence in hearing feedback and in learning the language to discuss collectively.

Part III would be used for all students, new students, international students, post-graduate certificate groups and anyone studying art.
It could be used with tutors in discussion about their role. It could even be used with creative writing groups.

Key points:
use of plain language;
finding a shared experience and a common language;
the need to explain any references made and to stop the 'pseudo-philosophical' debate;
acknowledging language and cultural differences;
importance of planning a crit and providing a framework;
importance of allowing silences and not vocalising for others.
Feedback can be contradictory.
There will always be an element of doubt.

Part IV would be useful for anyone asking advice, for introductory sessions prior to the crit, at the beginning of the course or as a reminder. It would be particularly useful for new or international students but also as reminder for all. It could be used by yourself and with A level groups.

Key points:
It is important to develop your own style – there shouldn't be a generic approach to public speaking.
Using a description to start can act as an 'ice-breaker'.
Relationship to professional field – presentation skills in real life
Preparation for crits/presentations is important.
Body language
Learning about confidence
Public speaking is a *learned* skill.
People liked the pace and the light-hearted tone.