# [SYMPOSIUM] BOOK CLUB Infosheet

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Thanks for volunteering to chair the [[SYMPOSIUM] BOOK CLUB](https://artandcritique.uk/book-club/)! Please fill in the details and email this to [info@artandcritique.uk](mailto:info@artandcritique.uk) at least six weeks before the proposed date (and ideally sooner), so that we can publish and promote the event. Please read the form carefully and complete all the fields (unless they are marked as optional). If you have trouble filling in a field, please describe the problem that you are encountering instead.

## OVERVIEW

[SYMPOSIUM] is a monthly free and open-access reading group for artists, researchers and anyone interested in the intersections between art practice and critical theory. More specifically, we are interested in texts that reflect on or provide some insight on the relationship between theory and practice. Everyone can propose a text and chair the reading group. Participants are requested to book a place and download the shared document.

## SELECTING A TEXT

Please don’t worry about how relevant or entertaining the discussion will be for the participants. As long as the text helps you think about your own practice and research, it will certainly be relevant to others. This includes a broad variety of texts, from philosophy to politics and aesthetics to science fiction – there is no limitation on genre. Typically, each book club focuses on one text of up to 20 pages. Please pace the reading; can we discuss the text in two hours? If the text is long you may need to select an excerpt or divide it between two sessions.

## PERSONAL INFO

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| NAME as you would like it to appear |  |
| WEBSITE or instagram etc. |  |
| E-MAIL |  |
| PHONE |  |
| BIO if you would like to be added to the list of contributors please add a bio no longer than 365 characters and attach a profile picture |  |

## EVENT INFO

The [BOOKCLUB] takes place on every second Friday of the month, from 6:30pm to 9pm. Please arrive at 6pm to help set up. Everyone arrives from 6:30pm for tea and to catch up. The reading group starts at 7pm. We have a tea break in the middle and we usually have a drink in a nearby pub afterwards.

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|  | [SYMPOSIUM] # |
| EVENT DATE every second Friday of the month |  |
| EVENT TIMES | 6:30-9pm |
| SETUP TIME usually 30min |  |
| CLEAR UP TIME usually 10min |  |
| AUTHOR |  |
| TITLE |  |
| YEAR |  |
| PUBLISHER |  |
| LINK TO PDF ONLINE optional |  |

## VENUE INFO

The [BOOKCLUB]takes place at a different venue every time and we all contribute to finding and booking venues. If you have suggestions for a venue please add these below, otherwise leave the section blank and we will discuss this. The space needs to have public access, a table/s and seating capacity for at least 15 people. Other facilities such as a kettle, tea pots and mugs are very useful. A screen and/or video projector with speakers is a bonus.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| VENUE NAME if you don’t have a venue please leave this blank |  |
| ADDRESS |  |
| POSTCODE | London |
| ACCESS/TRAVEL INFO if necessary |  |
| SHORT LINK TO GOOGLE MAPS if you don’t know how to do this please leave it blank |  |
| LINK TO VENUE PAGE |  |
| FACEBOOK URL |  |
| TWITTER HANDLE |  |

## INTRODUCTION FOR THE WEBSITE

Write a short introduction to provide some context on the text from your own perspective. When was it written? Why was it written? Who wrote it? Was it a response to something else? Why are you interested in the text? How does it relate to, or inform, your practice or your research? How does it reflect on the relationship between theory and practice? Write down some questions that you would like to bring to the discussion as suggest some further reading.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| INTRIODUCTION maximum 500 words |  |
| QUESTIONS what questions are you bringing to the discussion of the text? |  |
| SUGGESTED FUTHER READING optional but useful for participants |  |

## STRUCTURING THE DISCUSSION

Think about how you will structure the discussion. Will you start with an introduction and your own questions or will you ask the participants to share their questions first? You might want to show images, play sound or screen a video during the discussion. Or you might have another activity in mind. We usually print a few copies of the introduction and questions from the website to have handy in the discussion. If you need something else printed please add a note below. Please consider printing the text yourself if you have access to free printing. It’s also good to bring along a couple of additional hardcopies of the text in case someone forgets their copy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| FACILITIES optional, please specify whether you need additional facilities (projector, amplifier & speakers etc.) and whether you can provide these |  |
| HANDOUTS please specify if you can print the intro & questions and 2 additional copies of the text, or if you need help with printing |  |

## PROPAGANDA

The event will be published on the [[ART&CRITIQUE]](https://artandcritique.uk/art-crawl/) website with your name and link to your website. You can also choose to have your bio and profile image with a link to your website published in the [MEMBERS AND CONTRIBUTORS](http://artandcritique.uk/about) section (optional). The event will be promoted on social media ([Twitter](https://twitter.com/artxcritique), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Curating)) and public listings ([Art Licks](http://www.artlicks.com/), [Art Rabbit](https://www.artrabbit.com/), [Arts News](http://www.artsjobs.org.uk/arts-news-listings/)). In the form below you can indicate whether you have any preferences (for example whether you would like to remain anonymous) and whether you would like to be added as a co-host to the Facebook event. Otherwise please follow, invite your friends and share!

**FLYER** We print and distribute flyers to promote the event. If you make a flyer, please attach a high resolution image (at least 1240 x 1754 pixels). The flyer will be printed in black & white in A6 size (10.5 x 14.8cm) with a white border. Light colours and small typeface will not be visible. You can make a test print and/or desaturate the image in your image-making software to see how it looks. Please don’t forget to add the date, time, meeting place and hyperlink ([http://tiny.cc/book-club](http://tiny.cc/artcrawl) or <http://jm.p/sym-bc>).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| EVENT PROMOTION PREFERENCES optional, see above |  |
| WOULD YOU LIKE TO CO-HOST THE FACEBOOK EVENT? you need to click “going” on the event page first |  |
| HAVE YOU MADE A FLYER? optional |  |

## IMAGES

Please select 2-6 images that best represent the aspects of the text that you would like to emphasise. One of these will be used to make the flyer if you don’t provide one. Please upload the images to [Dropbox](https://www.dropbox.com/home) or other file-sharing website and add the link and password below. The maximum resolution for images on our website is 923 pixels on the longest side. If in doubt, please send higher resolution images (no larger than 1240 x 1754 pixels). Please add the filename and caption for each image to the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| LINK TO IMAGE FILES |  |
| PASSWORD |  |

## IMAGE CAPTIONS

Please add as much information as possible in the image captions, including artist’s name, year, title, materials, dimensions/duration, venue and photo credit.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| FILENAME | CAPTION |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |
| 4. |  |
| 5. |  |
| 6. |  |

## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THE BOOK CLUB

The book club is meant to support you in your own research. Don't worry about entertaining us or about being authoritative. Our pedagogical model prioritises equality and inclusivity, it is peer-led, supportive and co-operative.

The book club is designed to give you the opportunity to practise a number of different skills embedded within its structure. You don’t need to follow all of the guidelines faithfully but you should adapt this sequence to your own practices and methods. It's very important to maintain and develop your own methods and exchange/learn from others and the diversity of research/writing methods and styles that everyone brings to the group.

Begin with the selection of a text that you've probably already read a couple of times, to practise decision-making and focus. Read the text a couple of times and make notes, followed with some background reading on the author and the relationship of this text to their work and the work of others (to practise your reading, note-taking and research skills). Read the text again and make notes of questions that you have, or of the philosophical questions that occur to you as you make connections between the text and your previous knowledge and experience (to connect this new knowledge with previous knowledge and build your own understanding of the material). When you’re ready to do some writing, get your notes out and you practice writing a summary of the ideas in the text. You're writing this from your own perspective, so you're also practising your interpretation skills and honing your theoretical skills, articulating the connections between the text and your prior knowledge. Next, practice your critical skills by questioning the assertions or foundations of the text against your own experience, what is missing, are there inconsistencies? You're also honing your research skills by articulating your own questions. How does the text relate to your research? How does it help you make sense of problems or questions that you’re encountering in your practice? Once you've done a bit of writing you can start practising your editing skills to distil your writing, rearrange and structure it. Develop your questions to make them more precise by considering how someone else might understand them (now you're practising reflexivity and self-critique). At this point you might want to send your writing to someone else in the collective for some feedback and a chat, to practise your communication and collaboration skills. Select an image and/or make a flyer to practise your picture editing and graphics skills, making connections between ideas across media.

At the book club you have an opportunity to practice your presentation skills. How do you talk to a room full of people about the ideas that you've been reading, researching and writing about? How do you put them in the picture with a short introduction? How do you get across your understanding of the text and invite everyone to collaborate with you to answer your questions? Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak while you practise your listening, communication and co-operative skills. How do you accommodate their questions, while taking notes to record the discussion and the important points for your own research? At the same time, you will be keeping an eye on your questions and engaging with the discussion open-mindedly, practising critical thinking on your feet. For example, you could potentially change your mind about something or you might articulate an argument to defend an idea or opinion. Finally, wrap up and summarise the discussion, putting all these skills together.

After the book club, write down any ideas that have occurred to you since the discussion. This is a very important time and you need to make notes because you will forget all the valuable insights that the discussion has given you. This gives you an opportunity to practise your theoretical, reflective and critical skills again, and exercise your memory. Take these notes and the notes you made at the book club and you use them to write the ideas out (to practise your critical, theoretical and writing skills again). This whole process now applies the benefits of discussing the text with others onto your previous solitary work. Did the book club help you to understand something in a different light? Have you changed your mind about something? Have you noticed something that you missed before? Have you answered your initial questions? Have you come up with new questions?

Once you've written a summary you can choose whether to keep it for your own use or share it with the group for feedback. Then once you've tweaked it you can post it on the website (in the "news" section) under your own username (I will sign you up when we get to that stage). You can look up the summaries that have been shared with the group in the symposium list archive (using your password).

If you go through most of these stages you will get the most out of chairing the book club. If you don't go through these stages then you're probably going to get very little out of it (even though the discussion itself might be interesting and fun) because you might not be prepared to recognise or make sense of the benefits, which fade if they’re not caught when they're fresh.