**Hello MFA students,**

As you prepare to speak about your work and create a visual presentation, please use this checklist. I am writing this because I think most of my career success has been possible due to my ability to give clear, 5-7 minute presentations. It took me five years of regular public presentations to feel comfortable speaking in public. I would stay up all night, feel inadequate, tremble and sweat as I practiced with friends, and have out of body experiences while speaking in groups. It took years of dedication to this form of communication, and support from friends to get to a place where I enjoy public speaking. I know you can do this too.

**Remember: most people will not see your work in person; they will see it in your public slideshow.** If they do see your work in person, they won't look at it for as long as you will ask them to in your slideshow. This is an incredible opportunity to tell people what your work is about. I have given presentations to get residencies and grants, to convince a national committee of museum directors to pay artists, and at many institutions including MoMA, Google, and the Met. I have seen a lot of presentations over the past eight years; I offer this checklist to help ensure that your work is presented in a way that reflects the care that you put into it.

If you choose to ignore this checklist, drawn from the norms of slide presentations in the field of contemporary art, please convince me that the alterations you've decided to make are integral to your concept for the presentation itself. **Remember: the artwork is experimental; the lecture doesn't have to be.** If you have time this year, I would recommend that you take a basic graphic design and a performance, theater, public speaking, or storytelling class at SVA or anywhere in NYC. We all use typography and text in our lives (for post cards, posters, etc.) so it cannot hurt to have basic visually literacy in graphic design. We are all asked to speak in public at some point; why not practice with peers? Feel free to ask me any questions about this list, and to share draft presentations with me.

**Good luck!**

Caroline Woolard

PS: Note that you will see two checklists: one for <u>visual slides</u> and the other for the <u>spoken aspect</u> of your presentation. Please go through the checklist as you are working on your presentation, and check it off!

**Make sure your <u>visual slide</u> presentation:**

**___ has your First Name and Last Name on the first slide.** We need to remember you!

**__ has a white background.** This is personal preference, but I choose a white background because black text (for captions) on a white background is easier to read; if you use a black background, you will have to use white type and make your type even bigger for legibility. I also think of the white background as an additional light in the presentation hall; it allows me to see the audience and makes for a less-sleepy environment. Those dark presentation spaces can feel completely dead. Add light!

**__ has more imagery than text.** Your slides serve as a backdrop to your story; they *add* to what you are saying (they do not repeat it). Your presentation should have as little text as possible; the slides exist to emphasize the important parts of your story, and the things that are difficult to remember. Slides are *not* for you to read off. You can hold note cards in your hand to remind yourself what to say. If you do use text, use one color: black.

**___ uses the same font for the entire presentation, and only at two or three type sizes.** For example, you might use 24 pt. size for captions, a 48 pt. size for quotations, and a 96 pt. size for your name and other simple headers. If you want to use more than one font, please learn what a style guide is, and use it. Note that people read text best if there are 7-9 words per line. See the NYTimes website to check out this 7-9 word per line practice of legibility.

**___ has high resolution documentation**. Make sure your image is at least the aspect ratio of the projection (often 1920 pixels in width by 1080 pixels in height for widescreen or 1280 horizontal pixels results in 960 pixels on a for standard right now). Photographs that are placed in google slides are compressed and displayed at a low resolution, so if you have to use google slides, practice projecting the slideshow to see if you can alter the quality of your image.

**___ has high quality documentation.** Your work is as good as the photograph that documents it (and as good as the space it is photographed in). Hire a photographer if you aren't good at taking pictures, and consider staging an installation in order to document your work in a beautiful space (or PhotoShop it in a nice space). If you make 2D work, do not crop it! If it works, include the shadow, the edges, and the wall.. If you make 3D work, show me it installed in a space, perhaps with a person or other demarcation of scale (outlet, light, etc.)

**__ has captions for all images, in the correct format.** You cannot show reference images that inspire or influence your work without captions. Your work needs captions. For an idea about how to do this, see: http://bombmagazine.org/article/748097/audra-wolowiec

**__ does not have full bleed images, or text over images.** As artists, we care about how we frame our work, so every corner of our documentary imagery and our 2D work matters. This means that you cannot create full bleed images of your work (allowing the image to go off the edges of the slide). Even a detail shot should not be full bleed. Our work is not a backdrop for additional messaging, unless it is an ad. Do not crop your image or place text over it unless you are consciously making a statement about your work in relationship to advertising.

**__ ends with your contact information.** People will sit with this slide; it should thank them and give them a way to contact you.

**You will give a great <u>spoken presentation</u> if you:**

**__ attend many presentations.** The more you listen and watch for the style of 5-7 minute presentations in the arts, the better you will be at making a great presentation yourself. Jennifer Edwards says, "Don't just watch others present - take notes. What works, what doesn't, how do you feel before, during, after someone's presentation -- what can you use? What will you work hard to avoid?"

**__ make it shorter!** Do not rush, or cram information in. Show fewer slides, and let the audience look at them for 3 seconds. Try not speaking so they can take the image in. Remind yourself that you already know your content better than anyone.

**__ read quotations / text if you have them in your slides.** You certainly do not need to use text or a quotation in your slides, but if you do, please read it out loud. When you show text on the slide and say something else, you have lost your audience because they are trying to read the text *and* listen to you at the same time.

**__ you have practiced multiple times.** I recommend practicing your presentation to a friend, in real time, without stopping, to get a sense of your pacing. Do this a few times. I like to record myself while clicking through my slides, so that I can keep track of time and then play it back. Jennifer Edwards says, "Rehearse in the shoes you will wear, choose your clothing for appearance, comfort and color scheme. You have chosen how to represent yourself visually in the slides -- you and your attire should compliment those choices. Record yourself multiple times (audio and / or AV) - and listen / watch - smooth out ums, likes, 'ok - sos' etc., become aware of and minimize shifting weight, fidgeting, or having a flat affect."

**__ you follow one of the following approaches:**

> **__ Why me? Why us? Why now?**
> I care about ____ (topic)___ because ___(personal story from your life)____. This matters to all of us because _____(rationale)_____. This topic is important right now because _____(reason)_____.

> **__ WHO / WHAT / WHO / HOW / WHEN**
> **WHY**: your rationale / question that drives the project (30 seconds) *Ex: "While the US has enough guns to arm every resident, 0 are collected in design museums. Why aren't guns collected by contemporary design museums, and what does this reveal about design criticism today?"*
> **WHAT**: a clear 1-3 sentence project summary / statement (30 seconds) E*x: "An exhibition on design and violence."* Show imagery.
> **WHO**: a description of your role and who else is involved (30 seconds. *Ex: "I am the design researcher and curator, and I worked with artists and exhibition designers to create the exhibition."*
> **HOW**: slides of your working process / method for research / attempts and failures all documented very well. (2 minutes)
> **WHEN**: a description of your next steps for distributing the work next (1 minute)
> **????:** a question to direct feedback from the group (30 seconds)

> **__ A THIRD APPROACH**
>> I'm sure there are many other approaches, especially involving storytelling. Please share these with each other and with me. Personally, I do not think showing images of your family, cats, or hometown is appropriate unless it is relevant to your work / topic.