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Blowfish

What to Do When a Design Jury Attacks

by **Ray Chung, Josh Comaroff, and the GSD Classes of 1999 and 2000**

Note: *Blowfish* were first developed at the GSD by the classes of 1999 and 2000, especially Ray Chung and Josh Comaroff, as a way of making fun of the pretensions and relieving the stresses students face when they present their architecture, landscape architecture, or urban design final work to a “jury” of five to ten prestigious professionals.

Here is a selection:

1. Blowfish

Puff out your cheeks and point your fingers out around your face, like dangerous spikes.

2. Pre-emptive abuse

Slap your head violently and mutter “Stupid, stupid, stupid, I should have thought of that.”

3. Misunderstand the criticism

Reply, “Yo mamma.”

4. Defense in numbers

Consult with your invisible friend, and then tell him to be quiet and speak later.

5. Alienation

Suddenly lose all English communication skills. Continue presenting seriously, in complete gibberish.

6. Throw down the gauntlet

Gesture aggressively toward the jury and yell, “Ya wanna go? Ya wanna step outside?” For a hockey motif, bear-hug a critic and try to pull his or her shirt up over the head.

This renders your opponent both blind and open to your punches.

7. Bunker

Hide behind the nearest chair or pinup board.

8. Narcolepsy

Fall to the ground fast asleep, or if this is inconvenient, gently lean back against the pin-up board and doze off.

9. Camouflage

Prepare in advance and dress in a color similar to the site model or surrounding furniture. Then, in your moment of crisis, stay very still and make no sound.

10. Postmodern simulation

Leaf through your sketchbook and then look up and say, “I’m sorry, that’s not in the script. What page are you on?”

11. Distraction

Motion to a location behind the jury and point out the submarine that’s lurking in the distance. Timed correctly, this defense will earn you sufficient time to disappear mysteriously.

12. Good humor

Laugh boisterously and acknowledge the critic’s witty joke. Then, smiling, proceed to ask for more serious remarks. Continue to giggle at random intervals.

13. Tight scheduling

Immediately look at your watch, gather up your things, and leave the room, apologizing for a previously scheduled appointment.

14. Witty rejoinder

Reword the criticism to incorporate the words “my ass,” and then moon the jury,

On Education

demonstrating where the criticism lies.

15. Sexual tension

Drop into a sultry tone and ask, “What are you doing after this is over?”

16. Lower the standards

Avoid standard terms like “plan,” “section,” or “elevation.” For section, say, “This is what it would look like if you sliced the wall off and looked at it from really, really far away with a zoom lens. In black and white.” Instead of “plan” use “strategy” until they correct you.

17. Regression

Cover your ears and start yelling, “La la la la la la. . .”

18. Determination

Point at any part of your drawing over and over again, insisting, “But that’s right here. Right here. It’s right here. You’re just not getting it. It’s right here.”

19. Quiet

Make the “shhhh” sound and look up into the distance. After a pause, ask, “Do you hear that?” Keep this up until everyone has forgotten the criticism.

20. Power of suggestion

Wink at the critic and repeat over and over: “You love it. Come on. You loooove it. . . .”

21. Bribery

Say nothing. Hand the critic a cookie.

22. Condescension

Look the critic dead in the eye and say, “Well, well, look at Mr. Fancy-Pants.”

23. Scatological

Grab your stomach and run. “Gotta go potty.”

24. Euro-advertising

Say nothing. Whip out a roll of Mentos, smile at the critic, and freeze.

25. The Jim Henson

Wear a hand puppet. Have puppet answer all questions. If a particularly negative criticism comes up, sag the puppet’s head and say, “Critic make Doinkie feel BAD.”

26. The Scarface

Dump a mound of cocaine on the site model. Kneel and bury your face in it.

27. Infantile

Bring stuffed animal. Gently cradle it and weep. Sing a lullaby. Say, “Fluffy is the only one who really understands me.”

28. Sociopath

Cover your eyes and scream, “Why don’t they leave me alone with my dreams???”

29. The John Wayne

Insist on speaking in a Texas accent. Swagger. Refer to the critic as “Pardner.” If the critic asks you a question you can’t answer, make your hand look like a pistol and yell “POW.”

30. Emergency landing

Calmly sit down, put your head between your knees, and fold your hands over the back of your head. Remain in this position until the captain tells you it’s okay to get up.

31. Doppelganger

Quickly repeat verbatim what was just said. Attempt to repeat each word said as soon as it leaves the critic’s mouth.

32. Socialism

Whine plaintively, “How come I have to do all the work?” Alternatively, “I don’t see you doing anything about it.”

33. Ninety-degree rotation

Confidently re-present your plans as your sections and your sections as your plans. See if this helps.

34. Remove the evidence

Ignite your drawings and models, laughing maniacally, “Now you can’t hold me for anything!” The local fire department’s subsequent actions will naturally assist this defense.

35. Anticipatory emission

Act like you’re going to sneeze and remain in that state for some time.

36. Miracle

Look at your hands in amazement, exclaiming, “I can see again!”

37. Rabies

Drop as you respond, twitching occasionally.

38. Pesci

Begin to respond to the criticism but then turn progressively violent, beating the living crap out of the critic, all the while repeating the criticism in a mocking voice. Continue doing this until the critic “cries like a little girl.”

39. Taxi Driver

Snear “You talkin’ to me?” in your best DeNiro style.

40. Gangsta

If you’re wearing a jacket or vest, put your hand under your armpit and ask suspiciously, “You got prob wid dat?”

41. Tag

Run to the nearest unsuspecting

person and tag him or her, saying “You’re it.” Then clear out, or you’ll be tagged back.

42. Tickle

Abruptly tickle the critic. Vulnerable areas are the armpit, the belly, and the sides. The word “goochie-goo” may or may not cause more sensitivity in the critic.

43. Focus power (chi)

With a serious manner, straighten your body, look at the critic severely, then explain, “Architecture here!” (tapping on your chest), “No here!” (tapping on the critic’s head).

44. Impending doom

Hesitantly respond to the criticism, concentrating on the area of ceiling directly above the critic’s head. After a little while, start backing away from the critic slowly.

45. Special interests

Make your rebuttal based on the endangered mystical animals that inhabit the area of the critic’s concern. For example, “But unicorns are fatally allergic to exhaust fumes, so there can’t be parking anywhere near there.”

46. Charades

Entertain the jury by responding in charades. It doesn’t matter what you’re trying to say. As long as you keep pointing to your nose enthusiastically and nodding your head whenever a critic makes a guess, they’ll be happy.

47. Unknown trouble

Search through your pockets with concern, check your watch, then mutter, “Damn. Well, I guess it’s going to be too late for that.” Appear troubled, and answer all questions with resignation. While answering, keep watching the door as if someone is going to arrive. When a critic asks if you have something you need to do, hastily reply, “Forget it. Just keep talking.”

48. Fade away

Begin your response in earnest, and point out something on the drawing or model for the critic to focus on. While the critic is turned away, slowly start walking toward the door without interrupting your sentence. As soon as you reach the door, bolt down the hall and hide in a stairwell.

49. Fashion statement

Treat the area in front of the jury as a fashion show runway. Strut back and forth with flair. Not only will you look glamorous, you’ll feel glamorous.

50. Cat

Try to make yourself as tall as possible, raising your arms high above your head, making an offensive noise. The hungry critic will back down and search for less intimidating prey.

51. Bill and Ted

Make the devil sign with your hand, raise it above your head and shout, "San Dimas High School Football Rules!" The audience should cheer loud enough for you to make an exit.

52. Clouds

Play the cloud game. Turn to your drawing in fascination and point out how certain drawings look like faces or dragons.

53. Martyrdom

Drive a pushpin through your hand into the pin-up board, then ask the critic to do your other hand.

54. Yakuza

Take your X-acto and cut your right pinkie finger off. Wrap it in a white cloth and hand it to the critic to prove your commitment and utter shame.

55. Pout

Take a deep breath and hold it until your body twitches in dramatic paroxysms.

56. Junior high

Yell, "I hate you and your stupid rules!" Then stomp to a corner of the room, face the wall and turn up the music really loud. Ignore all calls to come to dinner.

57. Doobage

Spark up a joint and offer it to the critic. Begin philosophizing about life.

58. Cater

Arrange it so that at the moment of your review, a catering crew comes in and sets up a full spread, just for you and the jury. Food warms the soul.

59. Lost childhood

Look sad and mutter, "This is the worst school for show-and-tell I've ever been to."

60. Hostage

Determine quickly which member of the jury means the most to the critic. Then grab that person, hold a knife to his or her throat, and demand that all negative criticisms must end. You might as well ask for a little spending money, too.

61. Pardon

Simply state, "I'm going to pretend you didn't say that."

62. The erotic challenge

Drop your pants and ask, "Don't you think it's time we put the Stud back in Studio?"

63. Little Dee

Put your hands on your hips and say with flare, "Shut yo bitch ass up."

If possible, slide your head side to side scoffingly.

64. Koala

Hug the critic fiercely, putting all your weight on his or her arm. Grunt and squawk a lot.

65. Grade

Post a list of the critics next to your drawings. Write a check minus next to the critic's name and say, "See that? That's for you."

66. Bad dog

Roll up a newspaper and whack the critic squarely on the nose. It causes a brief, sharp pain, but no permanent damage is done.

67. Heritage

Confidently answer, "Because that's how we people do it back in the old country."

68. Generality

Say, "Oh sure, I guess if you wanted to be technical about it. I guess I could 'design' it or 'draw' it, if you wanted to be anal." Keep making the quoting gesture with your fingers when you use key words.

69. Secret ink

Answer, "You can't see that because I drew it in lemon juice. You have to hold it above a lamp to read it, but don't tell the bad guys that's how you do it. Shh, it's a secret." Wink.

70. Gift horse

Indignantly say, "Ok, if you don't like it, fine." Then push the pin-up board with all your drawings out the door and charge down the hall, yelling, "I'm going to find someone who does!"

71. Hard worker

Immediately take down your drawings, roll them up, and head out the door. Tell them you'll be back with an answer.

72. Pez

Pull out a Pez dispenser and sheepishly offer the critic Pez, saying "Pez?" When you pull the head back to eject the Pez, giggle. Then become enraptured by the device and keep spitting Pez out until they're all gone.

Then cry.

73. Bladder dysfunction

Have a loaded watergun in your pants beforehand. Put your hands in your pockets as soon as the critic begins speaking. Gradually squirt water into your pants until the critic lets you go clean up.

74. Identification

Respond sarcastically, "What are you, some sort of critic?"

75. Ubiquity

Roll your eyes and sigh, "Everyone's a critic now."

76. Scale

Angrily shout, "There are people starving in the world, countries ravaged by war, and all you can talk about is how this imaginary design project is flawed?"

77. Popularity game

Turn your head and say with sarcasm, "OK, who invited the cool guy?"

78. Conspiracy

Drop your jaw and say with disbelief, "My God, you're one of them, aren't you?" Then look around and accuse the jury, "I bet you're all in on this together. They sent you, didn't they?"

79. Multiplicity

Run into another room, call home, then run back in with the answer. Tell them, "I'm just filling in. The real (your name here) is home sick in bed."

80. Apocalypse Now

Slowly run your hand down your face, mumbling, "The horror, the horror. . ."

81. Godzilla

Suddenly scream like a monster and lumber around the room with your arms straight out. Proceed to crush your models like a small Japanese village.

82. Darth Vader

Breathe heavily while extending your hand toward your critic's throat as if to choke him with the Force. Say, "I find your lack of faith disturbing."

83. Mr. Rogers

Change into a sweater and some sneakers, sit down, and lean toward the critic. "Would you like to be my neighbor?"

84. BA Baracus

In best possible Mr. T accent, respond with "Sucka, I pity the fool who asks me those questions." Gold chains a plus.

85. Reboot Windows

When a point is made, be in complete

agreement, explain how this sometimes happens, take down everything and put it back up again. If same point is made, seem puzzled and say, "This usually works on Windows . . . must be a corrupt file."

86. The put-off

When confronted with a question you can't answer, respond with "I can't get into that now, why don't you see me after class," OR "I'll get to that later" (but you never do), OR non-sarcastically, "That is a really good point, I am so glad someone brought that up. Would _____ [pick someone in the crowd] like to take a stab at it?"

87. Macarena

Wait for "el muchacho" to finish his statement and then yell "Hey Macarena" at the top of your lungs. Jump forty-five degrees to your left and proceed to do the Macarena. Macarena your butt out the door.

88. Photo shoot

Bring with you a disposable camera. Make sure there is a flash. At the first sign of trouble begin snapping photos of the crowd. Use phrases like "Pout, baby" and "Yes, the camera loves you." If problems persist, ask the critics to take off their tops. When they refuse, call them amateurs and demand that they leave your studio at once.

89. Wizard of Oz

Pick up your model, cradle it in your arms and pet it, whispering, "Toto, I don't think we're in Kansas anymore."

90. Lick

Impulsively grab the critic's head with both hands and proceed to lick his or her face from chin to forehead in one stroke. Smack your lips, ponder the taste, then say, "I thought so."

91. Wet paint

If there is a portion of your model that is not resolved, cover it with a small placard reading "Wet Paint." If the critic motions toward that area, quickly chide him or her, "Don't touch that, it's wet." A clear varnish or shellac will make this more convincing.

92. Scarface

Ask if the critic would like to say hello to your "little friend."

93. One of them

Do not pin up anything. Dress in black (or in a saturated-blue button-down collared shirt with white buttons) and sit in the front

row with the jury. Confidently criticize everyone else's work to make the jury think you are one of them.

94. News anchor

Stick a finger in your ear, as if receiving a bulletin through an earpiece. Haltingly inform the critic: "Wait a minute . . . yes. . . I'm receiving word that. . . It is indeed as you say, not like it looks here. Again, the latest news is that you are correct, and this drawing is NOT accurate."

95. Hollywood audition

For females, wear a very tight white v-neck shirt. Slightly tilt your body forward with hands at your hips, making sure the cleavage is at eye level to the juror. After the critique, approach one of the jurors individually and ask him how you could improve the project. During the entire conversation stare at him with wide childlike eyes, responding to the critique with "Oooh's" and "Aaah's."

96. Interrupting cow

Start your presentation by saying "Knock, knock." They say "Who's there?" You say "The interrupting cow." They say "The interrupt- " You say "Moo." Then proceed to present your project. When they say "Ineffective!" or "Simplistic" or anything else not particularly nice, you say "Moo" intermittently while they are talking. And laugh each time because it's really, really funny.

97. World cup

At the very first positive comment, throw your hands in the air and run crazy around the room, cheering. Have your classmates lift you on their shoulders. Do a running slide on your knees if you can avoid rug-burn.

98. Farmer

Scratch your chin and answer humbly, "I'm just a farmer. I don't know about your fancy angles and smarty mumbo-jumbo." If they insist that you are an architecture student, reply, "Well, I don't know about that. I'm just a farmer."

99. Roberto Duran

Utter the words made famous by Roberto in the first round of his fight with Sugar Ray: "No mas." Then you have your trainer (studio mate or critic) throw the towel onto the model.

100. Sherlock

Reply, "No sh-t, Sherlock," to everything the critic says. See if you can convince the other jurors to join you.

101. Legal drama

Have a colleague stand up and yell, "Objection!" after which another colleague must say sternly, "Sustained." Feel free to look smug.

102. Caffeinated

Cut off every word with "uh-huh."

103. Karate Kid

Assume the crane position. There is no defense.

104. Floss

Begin to floss while audibly agreeing with your critics. Focus on the molars. If they aren't impressed by your project, they might be persuaded by your oral hygiene.

105. Martha Stewart Style

With an apron on, look the questioning juror in the eyes and say, "So, you ask me why I do it this way. Well, as a happy divorcée, I did it like this because I like it." End with a confident and condescending smile.

106. Odor

While listening to critic, begin to twitch nose and frown. Develop this into heavy sniffing and, with a quizzical expression, turn to jury and say, "What is that smell?" Slowly turn back to critic and ask if their tum-tum is hurting, while developing sniffs into a hacking fit.

107. Hollywood exec

As soon as the critics begin to talk, interrupt them rudely and let them know they have to make their pitch in fifteen words or less, otherwise you are "just not interested."

108. Ten-yard penalty

Bring a whistle and a yellow handkerchief to the review. Crouch down, stare at the critics, and be prepared to move quickly out of the way. When the critic uses design techno-jargon, blow the whistle and throw the flag, while yelling "Improper use of the English language. Ten yard penalty!"

109. Jedi mind trick

Raise your hand to the juror and say, "These drawings are the best you've ever seen." Done correctly to the proper authority all other jurors will follow and applaud your efforts. □