GYATA TABIRI

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Give a creative review a clear job

By Gyata Tabiri · Revised November 2, 2026

A review can contain plenty of feedback and produce no decision. That often happens when people are answering different questions: one is choosing a direction, another is checking details, and a third thinks the work is already final.

Say what this review is for

Explain the audience, constraints, and decision needed. Identify which parts are ready to judge and which are still being explored. A rough direction needs a different conversation from a build awaiting approval. Mixing them can send a person back to polish something nobody has actually chosen.

Let the reasoning enter the room

Give the person presenting a chance to explain the approach. Then test that reasoning against the purpose of the piece. A concern about legibility deserves a different discussion from a preference for another style. Both can be heard without pretending they have the same consequence.

Resolve contradictions before handing them back

If one reviewer asks for less copy and another asks for more detail, the designer should not be left to negotiate the conflict alone. Name the trade-off and identify who can settle it. Owning that decision is part of running the review.

Leave a record someone can use

The recap should distinguish approved decisions, requested changes, and open questions, with an owner for each next step. If a new concern reopens an earlier agreement, say why. That gives the next revision a stable starting point instead of a collection of competing impressions.

I would judge a review by the clarity it leaves behind. The person returning to the work should know what to act on and what they still have room to decide.

Read alongside: Turning an observation into useful feedback · Making responsibility visible.