

How to Write an Artist's Statement

what your artist's statement is and what it does for you

Your artist's statement is your chance to communicate why you create the kind of art that you do. It should enrich the viewer's experience of your work and give them the tools to dig a little deeper into your process. Frequently gallery directors, reviewers, teachers, and curators will use your statement to understand and evaluate your body of work. **Your artist statement is your voice when you're not there.**

some basic nuts and bolts

- It's short. The ideal length is four to five sentences.
- It's simple and direct.
- It, unlike your bio, is written in the first person (i.e. "I," "me," "my").
- It does not contain information about things like exhibitions, education, collections, awards and so-on. Those belong in your resume or CV.
- It is current and up-to-date.

getting started

Just start writing. Ramble on without being self-critical. You'll go back and edit later.

Here are some questions to get you started:

- Why have you chosen to create your particular imagery?
- What medium do you use? Is there anything unusual about the way you apply it?
- What are the key themes and issues of your work?
- How would you like viewers to respond to your work?
- Is there something a viewer might not be able to tell about your work from looking at it?

tips

- Keep your language simple and direct. Non artists will be reading this so avoid jargon and clichés. Cut out the words "really," "very," "completely," etc.
- Try speaking out loud to a friend about your work and have them take notes about the main points. This may help focus you.
- Read other artists' statements. After reading their statements can you conjure a mental image of their work? Is your mental image accurate?

edit, edit, edit

- Have artists and non-artist friends read your statement.
- Cut out the "fat," that is the flowery bits. You just want to express, as simply as possible, the main idea or motivation behind your body of work.
- Typos and grammatical errors make terrible impressions on readers so make sure to proof read!

lather, rinse, repeat

Your artist's statement will be a perpetual work in progress. As you grow and change artistically your artist statement should reflect this. You should be reviewing and reworking your statement at least four times a year.

Resources:

The Practical Handbook for the Emerging Artist by Margaret R. Lazzari
Art Marketing 101 by Constance Smith