



TITLE: CREATING AN ARTIST STATEMENT

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DATE:

Crafting an Artist Statement

What for?

Artist statements are written for use in grant proposals, exhibition applications, websites, blogs, exhibitions and catalogues.

An artist statement seeks to help viewers understand an artist's work, inviting them to engage with the work and the artist's ideas. It helps viewers access the work and introduces them to concepts, materials, influences and references in the work and to feel part of the work, to be touched on some level.

Your artist statement is designed to give the viewer enough information to pique their interest and encourage them to look and look again.

The process of writing an artist statement can also assist you in understanding your motivations and intentions as an artist, and the ways that your work engages the viewer.

How to?

It is important to remember that the following ideas are only indicative, there is not one way of approaching this and you may want to take YOUR artistic license in creating your artist statements.

Content:

- **Tell Why**
Explain motivation, subject matter and any artistic or personal influences. The concepts that influence Field Studies specific processes, perhaps some of the data informants have imparted that fuelled your imagination.
- **Tell How**
In a sentence or two describe the artistic process if applicable, what the work is or if there are any special techniques or unusual materials. Don't get too technical or provide a step-by-step guide.
- **Avoid overt statements**
Do not "tell" the reader what they "must" see in your work.
- **Don't get too abstract**
The statement should be about your work, your ideas, your emotions, and your influences rather than about abstract ideas or huge concepts. The best artist statements are personal and particular to the work.

Format:

- **Simple and short**
 - Try and write clearly and concisely for a wide range of viewers. Imagine you were speaking to someone in person. An artist statement is an introduction to an artist's work, without the artist being there.
 - If you have multiple bodies of work, have multiple artist statements for each.

- **Language**
 - Learn to Love Language! Short doesn't have to mean content-less: Consider unique or fascinating choices of words. You're an artist, after all! Use a thesaurus! But make sure the reader doesn't necessarily need to use a dictionary.
 - Whenever possible, use active rather than passive tense, and find verbs and adjectives that really strike to the heart of what it is you do.
 - Your prose should reflect the qualities of what it describes, by using verbs and adjectives that really match the qualities of your creative output you can create a statement that both excites and informs.
 - Make sure you have both long and short sentences, which create a syncopated rhythm that is enjoyable to read.
 - Be innovative and consider the importance of the beginning of your statement. (rather than: "My work is", "In my work" or "My painting/drawing/sculpture/video/performance is inspired by")
 - Avoid using 'I' and 'me' throughout the statement. "I want to..." or "I am trying to..."
 - Be sure that your language is succinct and to the point; edit out any rambling ideas or unclear concepts.

Other useful aspects:

- Ask a friend to record the main ideas and phrases as you talk, and then combine those phrases into clear and concise sentences using as few words as possible while still capturing the essence of your ideas. You may have trouble writing about your work but could talk about it more easily.
- Once you have a draft, put it away for a few days, look at it again, you may see how a phrase, sentence or a word can be changed in order to make the artist statement clearer and overall better.
- Have someone else read and comment on it.

Crafting an Artist Statement is a compilation of accumulated ideas, some from John R. Math, Hannah Piper Burns the San Francisco Art Institute and Heike Qualitz