

An artist/creative statement is a general introduction to your work, body of work, or specific project. It is not a biography and speaks to the viewer in your absence, so we recommend that you write this statement from a first person point of view and in concise conversational language.

This statement is a way to highlight the authentic relationship you have with your practice. Instead of writing how the viewer should interpret your work, share what you think of it. Being prepared with a statement will help you take advantage of opportunities whenever they arise.

Length(s) of Statement(s)

You may need multiple creative statements for different contexts. Here are a few example lengths:

1. Full-page statement that speaks generally about your work, the methods you may have used, and the history of your practice, with the possibility of details regarding your current projects
2. Short statement that includes the above in an abbreviated way
3. Short project statement about a specific project you wish to present

Pre-Writing Questions

- Why are you writing this statement?
- Who will read this statement?
- What assumptions are you making about the reader's existing knowledge?
- Where will this statement live?
- What do you want the statement to say about you and your work?
- What is the desired takeaway from this statement?

What to Include While Writing

Depending on the length of your statement, the number of sentences devoted to each part will vary, so it might be helpful to think of the statement in ratios:

- First 1/4 - Overview showcasing the basic ideas behind your work, body of work, or specific project. Do not include details just yet.
- Second 1/4 - Specific details that show how the broad ideas mentioned in the beginning of the statement are represented in your work. This can also include the “how” if you want to mention special processes and/or “unusual” materials utilized in your work.

- Third 1/4 - The “why” behind your work, which can include themes, influences, motivation, current/historical events, subject matter, and more
- Last 1/4 - Summarize the most important points in your statement and hone in on the takeaway

Post-Writing Questions

- Does your statement achieve the goals listed during your pre-writing phase?
- Is it free of grammatical errors and typos? Is it formatted to the specifications required?
- Does it meet the requirements of your audience?
- Does it read as professional and objective even with the first person narrative?

Words of Wisdom

“There is an unselfconscious language about your work which you use all the time. Every time you talk or think about your work, you experience a relationship between words and your art. The trick is to learn how to catch yourself doing this, and then faithfully write it down.”

-- Ariane Goodwin

Writing Exercises

The following exercises were created by the Joseph Meyerhoff Center for Career Development at the Maryland Institute College Of Art:

10-Minute Writing Exercise

The best way to get started with an artist statement is to begin writing about your work in a 10-minute brainstorming session. Do it quickly, and don't worry particularly about grammar or word-smithing. There is no structure or format to this. Just write or type everything that comes to mind about the piece.

Some questions to get you started:

- What does it look like? (Size, colors, shapes, textures, light, objects, relationships, etc.) Make your description visual.
- What inspired the piece and/or where does the impetus for the piece come from, personally speaking?
- Talk about the work from a conceptual, thematic, and/or emotional point of view

- Is there a central or guiding image or idea?
- What are its different elements and how do they affect each other or interact?
- What kind of materials did you use/are you using to create the work? Why?
- What was the process of development for the work?
- How does the work use space/relate to the surrounding space? What would be the ideal space in which to exhibit or present the work?
- How does this work fit into the overall flow of your development as an artist?
- Where does it fit into (or relate to) your awareness of other contemporary work?

Writer's Block Exercise

- Invite some friends over for a studio visit (in person or virtually), while having a conversation about your work record what you are saying. Listen to your conversation later and choose the best excerpts to put in writing.
- Listen carefully to questions and comments about your work during critiques. Are some questions asked more than others? This is what people want to know about, and where you should focus your effort in your statement.