

Writing Artist Statements

Artist Statements Should:

- Excite the reader/viewer to look at your work longer or know more about your work
- Divulge your passion for your art
- Reveal your ability to think critically about your practice
- Make a direct relation to your art
- Be clear, concise and understandable
- Be specific to your own practice
- Be, at all costs, grammatically correct
- Use descriptive, effective, and confident

Artist Statements Can:

- Reference your background, motivational factors, major influences, turning points, etc.
- Express the keys themes or issues of your work
- Explain the role of formal or medium and how they are important
- Talk about your process or medium and how they important
- Reveal your uniqueness
- Include future goals

Artist Statements Should NOT:

- Make overblown, lofty or grandiose statements
- Be too poetic. The reader must be able to relate to your writing
- Be too platonic (too theoretical and not practical)
- Seems disconnected to your art
- Use jargon or clichéd writing
- Reveal too much about your ideas, process or influences
- Make over generalization about how other people think, feel, act, etc

Ideas for Getting Started:

- Write in your sketchbook/journal – write down words or phrases for future reference in your sketchbook
- Free write – write a letter or just write as if you are talking to someone specific about your work. Keep writing without going back to edit or reread and do not worry about anything you have already written. When you are finished, go back and pick out key points.
- Brainstorm/make a list – devise a list of keywords or phrases that relate to your work. These could be themes, mediums, process, influences, etc. edit this list to two - five items use this list as key points in your statement.
- Cluster list/drawing – use a diagram of arrows to join ideas that relate giving you a non-linear and visual understanding of your work.

READ – read fiction, non-fiction, art writing, other artist statements, art magazines and any other material that you admire. Use this as inspiration for your own statement.

COLLECT – keep a collection of material for reference and inspiration. This can be a famous quote, hallmark cards, statements from galleries, etc.

Question to Ask:

- Why do I make art?
- Why do I paint, sculpt, weave, draw, etc?
- What are the key issues or themes that run through my art?
- What do I most hope to achieve through my art? For myself? For the viewer?
- What is specific about my art/process/approach?
- What are some consistent factors through out several pieces/bodies of work?

Lastly:

- Use a dictionary and a thesaurus and get a good writing guide
- Get a proofreader you trust and is willing to be brutally honest with you
- REVISE – this cannot be overemphasized! Expect to rewrite your statement as many as 10 times before you achieve a sound final copy. Then, rewrite it again. You will have many artist statements on hand. (Though, having a good general one read for when anyone asks is a good idea.)
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