

Artist Statement Overview

What is an Artist Statement?

An artist statement is a description of an artist's work in their own words. It is an expression of the “**how, what and why**” of an individual's artistry. An artist statement explains the creative process, including the artist's motivations, inspirations, and methods of approach. An artist statement should be viewed as an alternative to the actual physical presence of the artist for someone viewing the work created.

The Components of an Artist Statement

Artist statements vary in length, tone, and purpose. However, all effective artist statements have some qualities in common. They answer the “**how,**” the “**what,**” and the “**why**” of an art piece. Below, is a list of components that should be included in an effective artist statement:

- **Medium, materials, and methods** – It is essential for an artist to describe the medium and the materials that are used in creation of an art piece. This explanation conveys to the audience, “**how**” the artwork was created and what mediums were used in the process.
- **Subject matter** – For artists, it is sometimes challenging to speak on the subject matter of an art piece. Artists, at times, prefer not to put labels on their work in order to let the audience interpret the work for themselves. However, an artist can describe their subject matter without directly going into full detail. Instead, an alternative approach can be utilized to convey the “**what**” by stating that the art piece, in general, is an abstract painting, a landscape, or an interpretation of an everyday object or scene.
- **Relationship between an artist's concept and materials** – A good artist statement speaks about the artist's influences and how the art piece expresses that work. This is the artist's opportunity to differentiate their work and answer the “**why.**” In an artist statement, there should be an explanation to why the artist chose a certain concept and what they were hoping to achieve in the process. Key questions to answer are: “What are the intentions of the art piece and what messages should it convey?”

Tips for Writing an Artist Statement

Here are a few tips on how an artist's can assist their audience in understanding their art and gain insight into their process:

- **Write in the first person** – The goal of an artist statement is to communicate the artist's work effectively. The best way to do that is by using the artist's own words in first-person language to

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connect with their audience. When crafting an artist statement, the artist should imagine they are having a conversation with the reader. The use of the terms, “I” and “me” are preferred to make the content more personable. This method should allow the reader to see the art piece through the lens of the artist.

- **Answer the right questions** – An effective artist statement answers the “**how**,” the “**what**,” and the “**why**” as it pertains to the created art piece. When writing an artist statement, an artist should think about all the questions they would typically have to answer if they were physically in front of their created art piece with an audience.
- **Read the statement aloud to see if it sounds genuine** – When an artist reads their artist statement out loud, it should sound like it's their own words and not have extra technical language or jargon. An artist's statement should sound natural while being delivered from the voice of the artist as if in a conversation with the audience .
- **Share the artist statement to gain feedback** – An artist should share their artist statement with a fellow artist, a teacher, a mentor, or even a family member. The artist should ask the individual to point out any inconsistencies, grammar errors, misunderstood dialogue or confusing concepts.

Steps to writing an Artist Statement

Step #1: When writing an artist statement, an artist should always take a few minutes and think about why they created the art piece and what is the significance of the work. In those few minutes, the artist should think about:

- How they felt while creating the art piece.
- What subjects/themes they want to present through the art piece and why?
- What processes and techniques were utilized in the creation and why?
- While creating the art piece, what were their goals and aspirations for the outcome?
- Who or what inspired the artist to create the art piece?

Step #2: A general artist statement should be approximately no more than three (3) paragraphs in length. The artist should take their time and thoroughly write out the artist statement. The artist may need to write several drafts before the final version is completed. Below is a list of what could potentially be included in a draft.

First paragraph:

- Background information on the artist
- Description on the art work to be showcased

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- Summary of what inspired the artist

Second paragraph:

- Medium(s) used on the creation of the art piece
- Techniques and artistic methods that were chosen in the process
- Description of the themes and subject matter that emerge from the art piece for the audience

Third paragraph:

- Explanation of what the artist is attempting to explore and challenge the audience through their work
- Explanation of the artist's main idea and approach to their work. The artist statement should demonstrate a personal style description and what the work means to the artist and their personal understanding of the art piece