

# HOW TO WRITE AN ARTIST STATEMENT

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Every artist should know how to write an artist statement. You may think that your art will speak for itself, but many times it just cannot. If you are applying for a GRANT, you MUST have an artist statement. Work on this, and you will have one that you can update regularly for future opportunities. Always remember: An **Artist Statement** is NOT an **Artist Bio**. **Your artist statement is about your ART, not about you**. Also remember that your artist statement should be written in the 1<sup>st</sup> person. While working on your statement, try to address these points: WHY YOU MAKE YOUR ART, WHAT IT SIGNIFIES, HOW YOU MAKE IT, WHAT IT'S MADE OUT OF, and perhaps briefly, WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU.

## Here are additional tips that will help you write your artist statement:

- \* Make "I" statements rather than "you" statements. Talk about what your art does for you, not what it's supposed to do for the viewers. This doesn't mean you start every sentence with "I," but rather that you respect people's autonomy and allow them to respond to your art however they wish.
- \* At all times, give readers the option to agree or disagree with you. Never pressure them or dictate outcomes.
- \* Avoid comparative or evaluative comments that have been made about your art by third parties such as gallery owners, critics, collectors, or curators. These belong in your curriculum vitae. In your statement, they're name-dropping; in your curriculum vitae, they're testimonials.
- \* Connect what your art expresses with the medium that you're expressing it in. For example, if your art is about world peace, and it consists of twigs protruding from pieces of clay, explain the connection. Arbitrarily stating that twig/clay protrusions represent world peace leaves people wondering. If of course, the object of your art or your statement is to leave people wondering, then that's OK. In art everything is OK, but in order to succeed as an artist, someone beside yourself generally has to get the point of what you're doing.
- \* Be specific, not vague. For example, if your art is "inspired by assessments of the fundamentals of the natural world," tell which fundamentals you're assessing and how they inspire you.
- \* Avoid obscure references to music, art, literature, history, or anything else that requires detailed explanation or gobs of previous knowledge. If you have to make such a reference, explain it fast so that people know what you're talking about. If you can't do it fast, do it later.
- \* Avoid comparing yourself to other artists. If other artists influence you, fine, but don't say, "Like Picasso, I do this" or "Like Judd, I do that." Instead, say something like "Picasso's Blue and Rose paintings influence how I use yellow." Better yet, leave other artists out of your statement altogether. Let the critics decide who you're like. Plus you don't want to invite comparisons between yourself and the greatest artists who've ever lived. We all know who the victor's gonna be there.

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