

How to Write an Artist Statement

Your artist statement should give a general introduction to your work, or it can sometimes relate more specifically to a body of work or project. It should refer to your current work, but will undoubtedly evolve with your practice. An artist statement is different to an artist biography; the latter refers to your previous artistic experience and reads more like a CV. Ensure you write your artist statement in the first person.

Writing an artist statement allows you to clarify ideas behind your work. The focus should be on *why* you create and what motivates you, as well as *how* you create, including your artistic process and any important techniques. Ensure you keep your statement short in order to keep the reader's attention. Stay relevant and try not to overcomplicate it; ensure you write clearly and concisely. The aim of your artist statement is to communicate the ideas behind your art to your viewer, without you physically being there.

It's important to write your statement in a language that anyone can understand, to allow people from all backgrounds to access your work regardless of their level of knowledge in the arts. Be careful not to overload the viewer with too much information; explain why you create your work, who or what inspires you and how you create. An ideal artist statement should be half a side of A4 paper, or a couple of paragraphs - maximum 500 words.

When writing an artist statement you might include:

- An overview of the basic ideas behind your work
- Details of how these ideas are presented within the work
- Why you have created the work
- Why you made certain artistic choices
- The overall vision of the work
- Information on any techniques used that are important to the work
- Any inspiration behind the work, including from other artists

Do not:

- Instruct people on how to view your work
- Tell viewers how to relate to your work
- Compare yourself to other artists - being inspired by them is very different
- Be vague; it's better to be as specific as possible to make sure you're ideas are clear
- Include previous comments about your work - a statement is not the right place for these
- Try and guess how your viewer will respond

When you've drafted your artist statement, ask for feedback; it's a good idea to get feedback from a number of people with varying degrees of knowledge in the arts. Do they fully understand what it is you're trying to get across? If not, this is a good indicator that you need to make some edits or redraft to ensure it's clear.

Most importantly, invest time into getting your statement right. As with a book, your statement is your *introduction* or first impression on your viewer. You can't always be there to explain or justify your work; your statement speaks for you as an artist and needs to do your art justice.