**Writing an Artist's Statement**

**Submitted by Amanda Linn**

1. To Get your Brain Going…

List individual words or short phrases that come to mind when asked these questions:

* What is your favorite art material? Why?
* How would you describe your artwork in an e-mail?
* Besides the work of other artists, what influences your artwork?
* What do you like best about being an artist?
* Why do you make art?
* What is most challenging about being an artist?
* How do you begin a piece of artwork?
* What does it mean when you say a piece of artwork "turned out really well"?
* What do you want others to feel or think when they see your artwork?

2. Artist’s Statement Frameworks:

These frameworks will help you mold the words and thoughts from above into document form. Each paragraph should have 3 to 5 sentences. Most artists’ statements are one page. Write in first person present tense- "I am" NOT "I was", "I do" NOT "I did".

Paragraph 1- Why do you do the work you do? Support your statement telling the reader more about your goals and aspirations.

Paragraph 2- Tell the reader how you make decisions before, during, and after the artwork is created. How and why do you select materials, techniques and themes? Keep it simple and BE SPECIFIC.

Paragraph 3- Tell the reader a little more about your current work. How did this work grow out of prior artwork or life experiences? What are you exploring, attempting or challenging by doing this work?

3. Helpful Hints:

* If you have trouble writing about yourself, write about an artist you admire. Then write about yourself from that point of view.
* Begin writing as if you were talking to someone about your art
* Have a friend ask you questions about your artwork. Take notes as you answer the questions
* Have someone who is not familiar with your artwork read your statement and ask you questions
* Create a statement that makes the reader want to look at and know more about your artwork
* Your statement should be more than just a description of your art and/or art process
* Read your statement aloud as you edit
* Have a classmate, the art teacher, another teacher, the janitor, etc. read your artist’s statement while looking at your artwork

**Note:** This framework was inspired by several models of writing an artist’s statement with additional input from university and high school art teachers.

Amanda Linn, Harmony Grove High School

Toasterart@Yahoo.com

**Some helpful links:**

Here are some tips from Ceramics' Monthly: (Archive)
[http://www.ceramicsmonthly.org/mustreads/artist.asp](http://web.archive.org/web/20080117060623/http%3A/www.ceramicsmonthly.org/mustreads/artist.asp)

Some tips by Molly Gordon:
<http://www.mollygordon.com/resources/marketingresources/artstatemt/>

Tips from About.com:
<http://painting.about.com/cs/careerdevelopment/a/statementartist.htm>
 (has links to sample artists' statements)

Tips from Patricia Bouk:
<http://www.artincanada.com/arttalk/artistresourceartistsstatement.html>

**Tips from Sid Miller:**

Purpose: to give viewer/potential buyer information about the artist or artwork (as much as 30% of consumer's decision making about purchasing art is affected by this statement)
Be creative and inventive
Write in the first person
Talk about the who, what, when, where and how
    give your background
    where you studied
    why you chose this particular medium
    why you love making art
    what is the piece about--deeper meanings that might not be obvious
Be honest and passionate about yourself and what you say with your art
Use historic quotes that you relate to or validate your work
Mention well-known artists who have influenced you
List collectors who have purchased your work
Include shows and awards you have been involved with
Use press quotes

**From Judi Jacobs:**

ARTIST'S STATEMENT #1

The Artist's Statement is a marketing tool used by professional artists and craftspeople that is very helpful in giving the viewer/potential buyer important information about the artist and the artwork they produce.  "As any craftsperson or avid collector will attest, there is something truly special about buying a piece of art that was carefully crafted by human hands. But being invited into the artist's psyche, learning more about the work and its creator can make the experience even more remarkable."

The Crafts Report November, 1997.

Artists' statements are relatively new to contemporary craft and art. In the past the artist's work tended to speak for itself.  However, since the 1980's, when the crafts field started to become driven the the "business end" of things, artists' statements began to surface more and more.  As the retailer or gallery owner became more sophisticated and aware of the value of the added information and how it affected the public's purchasing choices, the statement began to have a direct link to the selling process. It is thought that as much as 30 percent of the consumer's decision-making process when contemplating a purchase can be affected by information contained in this "marketing tool".

ASSUME YOU ARE A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST AND A GALLERY THAT REPRESENTS YOUR WORK HAS ASKED FOR A PERSONAL ARTIST'S STATEMENT ABOUT YOUR WORK. REMEMBER THIS AN IMPORTANT MARKETING TOOL, ONE THAT WILL BE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN SELLING YOUR WORK. BE CREATIVE AND INVENTIVE--TRY TO INCORPORATE INFORMATION THAT YOU THINK WOULD INFLUENCE AN ART PATRON YOU TO ADD THIS WORK TO THEIR COLLECTION.

What should an Artist's Statement include? The "who, what, when, why and how" concept is a good place to start. Give some information about your background, where you studied (you may have to assume you have had more advanced training that you actually have had at this point), and why you choose this medium to express yourself artistically. Sit in a quiet place and write or record the essence of why you love making art.

* Write in the first person (I).
* Remember you are giving away a piece of your life when you sell your art.  People want some intimate details about that life. Passionately conveyed information brings the buyer closer to you and your work.  Very often, the creative process (what was the thought process behind producing this work/) itself is of great interest to the consumer.
* Your goal is to spotlight yourself in a way that sets you apart from other artists.  State what makes your work more special than other art that is on the market. What are you trying to convey through your art to the audience who is viewing your work?
* Be honest and passionate about yourself what you have to say through your art.
* Use historic quotes that you relate to as an artist to validate you or your work.
* Mention well known artists who have influenced you and your work.
* List important collections (corporations, museums, well known people, etc.) who have purchased your work. Also, can include prestigious shows or competitions you have participated in (you might have to use your imagination here).
* Use press quotes

BE CREATIVE WITH THIS STATEMENT!  REMEMBER YOU ARE USING THIS AS AN IMPORTANT TOOL TO MARKET YOURSELF AND YOUR WORK.  TRY AND BE AWARE OF WHAT KINDS OF INFORMATION YOU USE WHEN INVESTING (PURCHASING) ART OR OTHER ITEMS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO YOU.

**From a TeacherArtExchange Member:**

My Art II students write a short paragraph and my Art III students have to type a page about their artist statement. I encourage students to look at several other artists’ statements on the Internet give them 2 examples from professional artists. I use the following questions as a starting point:

· What is YOUR definition of art?
· Why do you create art?
· Why do you work in the subject matter you work most in?
· How did you first become interested in this subject matter?
· What does subject matter personally mean to you?
· What medium do you enjoy working in the most and why?
· What do you want the viewer to "get" out of your artwork?
· What other artists and cultures inspire you?

**More on Portfolios**

[Creating and Maintaining an Electronic Portfolio](http://www.incredibleart.org/files/portfolio3.htm)  |  [Planning page](http://www.incredibleart.org/files/portfolio.doc) 

[Presentation Style](http://www.incredibleart.org/files/portfolio1.htm)

[Assessment of Portfolio](http://www.incredibleart.org/files/portfolio4.htm)

**More Writing an Artist's Statement**

**Submitted by:** Pam Stephens

**Artist’s Statement**

**What is an artist’s statement?**

The artist's statement describes who you are as an artist and what your art is about. Artist’s statements are used as marketing tools to sell you and your work; to inform viewers. Brag about yourself and your work.

**Some General Guidelines**

* Use an economy of words; one page or about three paragraphs is usually plenty.
* Use active words and present tense; avoid "to be" verbs and past tense.
* Keep it professional: use good paper, clean layout, and simple fonts.
* Discuss your personal art values or aesthetic (the philosophy behind your work; the reasons you create)
* Describe your style and medium (this is a good place to point out your unique creative processes)
* Include events or experiences that have contributed to your development as an artist.
* Give a concise and authoritative close.
* Avoid pretentiousness; make it easy and interesting to read and understand

**Planning**

Begin by brainstorming words and phrases. Do not be concerned about writing complete sentences. The following questions are meant as prompts to help you begin. You may choose to develop other questions.

* What are your personal art values or aesthetic?
* How are your personal art values or aesthetic seen in your artwork?
* What do you like best about the finished product?
* Describe the medium you use.
* Describe your style.
* Describe a theme that runs through your work.
* Why did you decide to become an artist?
* What do you like best about making art?
* What has influenced your work (Travel? Other artists? Family? Culture?) How does your work reflect this influence?

**Putting the Artist’s Statement Together: A Sample**

Paragraph I: Make a clear and concise statement about your artistic values or aesthetic or why you create. Support that statement with at least two reasons.

Paragraph II: Describe one of your works or a body of your work in such a way as to guide a viewer to understanding. This could include your use of the elements of art and principles of design, your unique use of tools and materials, or your style.

Paragraph III. Give the reader/viewer closure. Give a few more hints about your work. This is where you can point out a theme or discuss those experiences that influence your work.

**Review and Revise**

Edit for grammar, content, understanding, and effective layout.

**Remember**

You grow and change as an artist. Your artist’s statement should also grow and change.

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- See more at: http://www.incredibleart.org/files/portfolio2.htm#sthash.BkUZNxKL.dpuf