

Writing your artist statement

"Too much self-analysis lets the air out of your creative balloon." Edward Betts

What is an artist's statement? There are as many answers to this question and there are types of art. An artist statement is your chance to express yourself and your art in words. It can be a story, or poem and can be formatted in any way to support your expression.

Why do you need one? Just like your resume, your artist statement provides insight into you – the artist. It tells the story of your art. It is your chance to connect with your audience/viewer on another level (words & narrative). It gives potential buyers, employers, and gallery owners something special – an “inside scoop” on why your art is important to them.

What should be included in it? What motivates you? Try to describe in words where your inspiration comes from. You may not want to include details that are highly personal or ones that may make the audience uncomfortable. Your goal is to help the audience understand your work on a deeper level.

How long should it be? Although it is often harder – the simpler the better. Three or four sentences can do it.

What if I'm just starting out? Even if you are just starting your business, you still have much to bring to your artist's statement. Focus on your connection to your materials, why you're creating, and remember to be enthusiastic. Today, the "excitement" of something can be as effective as traditional matter-of-fact credentials.

Write and Rewrite Again, like your resume, your artist statement is seldom perfected in one sitting. It keeps getting better.

Some valuable secrets to enhance your artist statement

- _ Use historic quotes that you relate to as an artist and craftsperson to validate you or your work. Check art history books, etc.
- _ If you have a need to elevate your statement with superlatives, ask your best customers or a retailer if you can quote them.
- _ Solicit interviews from the press in order to obtain quotes or passages from another source.
- _ Mention well-known artists who have influenced you and your work. Be honest. Show influences that connect your work to that of the well-known artist or craftsperson.

Where and how can I utilize my artist statement?

- _ Post it at craft events for the public to read. (You might want to have copies to give away to interested buyers.)
- _ Press releases can be developed from parts of your artist's statement.
- _ It is a good resource for your galleries or retailers to post or display alongside your work. (A very short version can be made into a handout.)
- _ Always include it in your portfolio, especially the longer version, for acquiring new representation.
- _ Pull information from the statement when writing or designing flyers, Web pages, etc.
- _ A good statement is a wonderful tool to hand an employee who is preparing to help you make your products.