

An Easy Start to an Artist Statement

The objective of this template is to provide prompts to think about what you would like to include in your artist statement. Write in response to the prompts that you find most engaging.

An artist statement is usually **300-500 words**, and is written in the first person. It should be a quick read, giving an overview of your practice and interests, with one or two artworks given importance, if needed.

Words that describe you: What titles do you give yourself in relation to your work? *Do you talk about yourself in terms of your material? (painter, sculptor, performance artist, etc.) Do you have academic branches to your practice? (teacher, researcher, workshop facilitator, etc.) Do you have other peripheral labels that help define what you do in the arts? (curator, translator, cultural leader, etc.)*

Words that describe your work: How do you physically describe your artwork? *Describe the scale, format, colour, and texture of your work. What material is used to create your work? Are there reasons for the choices you have made, either practical or conceptual? What themes/ideas do you explore in your work? Are there any social, political, historical references in your work? Are you using metaphors or symbols/motifs in your work that the viewer should know about?*

Possible Futures: Describe where your work is going from here. *What are some of the ideas you are continuing with? What are some ideas you are clarifying further?*

Influences: Influence of place - *Does a sense of place figure prominently in your work? Consider the ways in which you have established a relationship to this place. As you build a narrative of place, engage all 5 senses (what do you hear, smell, taste, touch and see?).* **Influence of others** - *If applicable, include other artists, writers, historians, poets, teachers who may have had an influence on your practice.*

Brag Like No One is Watching: List your Achievements. *Include one or two highlights of your career. These can include: exhibitions you've shown in, organisations you've worked or volunteered for, awards/grants/fellowships you have received, graduations, workshops you've taken/given, etc.*

Artist statements are usually no more than **one page**. They are written in the **first person** (use “I am”, “my work”, etc. instead of referring to yourself by name and using pronouns (she/he/they)).

Titles of artworks are **italicized**, and all significant words are **capitalized**.

First Draft Create a first draft for your artist statement by organizing your responses to the prompts on the previous page. You can think about dividing your artist statement into three paragraphs. The first paragraph can serve as an introduction to you and your work. The second can describe your conceptual or material concerns, and perhaps provide details about one or two artworks, and the third can include your achievements and future plans.

A large grid of dots for writing the first draft of the artist statement.

Editing and Formatting

Review your statement for grammar and spelling. Always use spell-check. In particular, double check spellings for names of people and institutions.

Try to avoid repetition, consolidate sentences that are similar and use a thesaurus for words you find yourself using too often.

Have someone else read your statement to help spot typos. Choose a legible font and use a size between 10-14 points.

Resources

For delving deeper into writing about artwork, some invaluable resources for artists and educators:

1. West, Anne. *Mapping the Intelligence of Artistic Work*. Portland, Moth Press, 2011.
2. Hasting, Julia, *Akademie X: Lessons in Art + Life*, New York, Phaidon Press - 2015
3. The Writing Centre, Emily Carr University of Art and Design, 2022 <https://writingcentre.ecuad.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/a1ddb-writing-an-artists-statement.pdf>