

Artist Statements.....from ArtBusiness.com

On this planet, people communicate with words, and your artist statement introduces and communicates the language component of your art.

Your artist statement is about facts, a basic introduction to your art; it's not instructions on what to experience, what to think, how to feel, how to act, or where to stand, and if it is, you'd better do a rewrite.

Just about all artists want as many people as possible to appreciate their art. A good artist statement works towards this end, and the most important ingredient of a good statement is its language. **WRITE YOUR STATEMENT IN LANGUAGE THAT ANYONE CAN UNDERSTAND**, not language that you understand, not language that you and your friends understand, not language that you learn in art school, but everyday language that you use with everyday people to accomplish everyday things.

Like an introduction to a book, your statement presents the fundamental underpinnings of your art; write it for people who like what they see and want to know more, not those who already know you and everything your art is about.

People have short attention spans. Don't overload readers with details.

In three to five paragraphs of three to five sentences each, provide basic information like **WHY YOU MAKE YOUR ART, WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO MAKE IT, WHAT IT SIGNIFIES OR REPRESENTS, WHAT'S UNIQUE OR SPECIAL ABOUT HOW YOU MAKE IT**, and briefly, **WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU**. Don't bog readers down, but rather entice them to want to know more. As with any good first impression, your statement should hook and invite further inquiry, like a really good story is about to unfold. Give too little, not too much.

Your statement is about you, so personalize it. Write it in the first person, not like you're talking about yourself in the abstract. Infuse it with your unique perspective. Whenever possible, make it conversational, like you're speaking directly to readers (note: a good editor can work wonders here). The more complicated, theoretical, arcane, inscrutable, bloated, pompous, elitist, egotistical, bombastic, arrogant or impersonal your statement, the more trouble people will have trying to hack through it and connecting with you and your art on meaningful levels.

Additional considerations:

- * 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.

- * 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.

- * 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.

- * Tell the story about what led up to your art **ONLY** if it's short, compelling, and really really relevant.

* 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."

* Don't instruct people on how to see, feel, behave, respond, or otherwise relate to your art. Nobody likes being told what to do. Instead of saying "You will experience angst when you see my art," say "This art expresses my angst" or "I express my angst through my art." Or go see a therapist and work it all out.

Before you go public with your statement, get feedback. Show your art and statement to friends, friends' friends, and maybe even a stranger or two. Make sure they get it, that they understand what you want them to understand.