

# How to Write Your Artist's Statement

## 28 Guidelines on How to Express Your Creative Vision

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*Your artist's statement is a verbal expression of how you paint, draw, or produce your art in your chosen medium.*

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A well-written artist's statement is essential for any serious professional artist. It is one of the most powerful art marketing tools you will have. The artist's statement offers you the opportunity to explain your creative process and inspiration.

### **There are many benefits to having a well-written artist's statement**

An artist's statement will serve as a useful tool on its own, and it will also enhance your verbal communication about your art. When you are crystal clear about your creative inspiration you will be more convincing when you explain your work to a dealer, grant giver, writer, or prospective buyer.

People who are attracted to your work will want to know more about the artist behind it. The artist's statement offers you the position to share your story, rather than leave it open to incorrect interpretation or confusion by others.

As your viewers learn more about you and your intention, they will become more engaged with your work and their desire to purchase it will grow. So, there is a very practical purpose for the artist's statement.

### **28 tips and guidelines to help you write your artist's statement**

1. It is important to find your own voice and not copy that of another artist.
2. Write the artist's statement in the first person (I, not she or he).
3. For general purposes strive to keep your length to 100–200 words.
4. Customize your artist's statement for the individual(s) and/or audience
5. Explain the motivation behind your process.
6. Explain how your work develops and evolves during the creative process.
7. Describe your medium and your style.
8. Relate your technique and style to your medium and your vision and philosophy.
9. Use "picture words" to express yourself in the most articulate manner. Select from a large variety of words by using a Thesaurus or search online for synonyms.
10. Avoid self-doubt statements such as "I try to..."
11. Avoid the use of jargon and cliché. Consider this: What may be understood to Americans may have a different connotation to a European or Asian audience.
12. Discuss the way(s) in which your work, medium, technique, or vision is unique.
13. If you work in series, explain how they are connected—if they are.
14. If you work in series but they are dissimilar, write a different artist's statement for each series of work.
15. Write honestly and avoid writing in a tone that speaks down to your reader.

who will be reading it. For example, an artist's statement that you write to a grant foundation will be more complex than the one you post on your website to a general audience. The one you write for an editor of an art magazine will be different than the one you send to a general readership newspaper.

16. Avoid grandiose, esoteric, and ego-centric expressions.
17. Avoid simplification.
18. Avoid being overly technical.
19. View this writing project as an opportunity to define the critical conversation you want to engage through your art.
20. Avoid repetition.
21. Vary sentence structure and length.
22. Adjust the length of your sentence to relate to the complexity of the idea.
23. After you write your artist's statement, try it out on someone who is not involved in the art world to make sure it is written clearly for different types of people, not just artists.
24. Use spell check. Have someone who is good with grammar proofread it for you to check for misspelled words and typographical errors.
25. If you find the task extremely difficult, don't hesitate to obtain some coaching or editing from a professional art writer.
26. To help you get started, keep a journal to record your ideas, before, during, and after a creative session in the studio.
27. Never copy another artist's statement. However, read them for style, insight, and inspiration.
28. Avoid the temptation to rely on using quotations of a famous (deceased) artist or philosopher as part of your artist's statement. Instead, find your own words to express the same or similar idea.

*Renée Phillips is an author, artists advocate, and director of Manhattan Arts International in New York City. She is known internationally as the "Artrepreneur Coach," helping artists achieve their highest potential through career guidance, promotion, and writing services.*

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