



THE WRITTEN WORD

WRITING YOUR ARTIST STATEMENT

2

Here are five ways to make your artist statement shine:

1

STICK TO THE BASICS

You might be thinking, "I'm an artist. I communicate visually, not verbally." But writing is a skill that'll undoubtedly benefit your artistic practice and career. No matter how whimsical or contrarian you want your statement to be, you should stick to the basic rules of writing:

- Keep it between three and five paragraphs, each with three to five sentences (this is not a hard-and-fast rule, just a guide).
- Make logical transitions between sentences and paragraphs.
- Avoid using technical jargon or needlessly complex language.
- Leave out the fluff.
- Clarity is key. Don't sacrifice it for artistry.
- Get feedback. Ask a friend or family member to proofread it.
- Take a break. Leave it alone for a few days and come back to it with a fresh set of eyes.

2

KNOW YOUR DESTINATION BEFORE YOU EMBARK

Before you can write your statement, you gotta know its purpose. It should be a concise introduction to your art that sparks people's interest. Spend some time thinking about what you want the reader to know. Here are three things that your artist statement shouldn't be:

- 🚫 It's *not* supposed to tell people how to feel or what to think
- 🚫 It's *not* your chance to name-drop and talk about obscure knowledge
- 🚫 It's *not* an opportunity to review your entire life history

3

ANSWER THESE THREE QUESTIONS AND YOU'RE GOLDEN

What am I doing? How am I doing it? Why am I doing it? Anyone who reads your statement should walk away knowing what you create, the gist of how you create it and what your artwork signifies or represents to you.

4

CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY

It's all about language. *Write your statement in first person* – i.e., don't write it in the abstract. *Make it conversational*. If you don't write your statement in everyday English, you'll lose people. *Keep it short and simple*. This might feel limiting, but don't panic – if people want to know more about your work, they'll give you the opportunity to get deep, emotional, political, etc.

5

LET YOUR FREAK FLAG FLY

Short and simple does not mean boring! The most fundamental rule to writing your artist statement is: *Be yourself*. Many artists start with the prescriptive "My work is..." or "My work is inspired by..." This approach can feel tiresome to the reader. Your statement's voice should match the voice of your work. Is your work violent? Is it somber?