



## Office of Partnerships

Career Development Services  
partnerships@collegeforcreativestudies.edu

# ART PRACTICE PROFESSIONAL READINESS

## Artist Statement

### Definition:

- Provides access to your background, your process, and your professional history
- Contextualizes your work for the viewer/reader to understand it better

### Length:

- Generally no more than 1 page.
- An introduction/supplement to the work. It can also address a large body of work or work in different media that shares a theme.

### The Purpose:

- Used to supplement your work samples.
- To accompany an exhibition or performance of your work, or included in a portfolio or grant application.
- Can be used as a reference for galleries, curators, publicists, critics, journalists etc. to promote, describe, sell, or write about your work.

## Artist Biography

### Definition:

- Summarizes your resume in a narrative form.
- Should be written in third-person format.
- Choose your most significant accomplishments along with some personal information that may not be included on your resume.
- Include information such as: where you were born, raised, have lived or traveled, especially if it influences your art.
- May include some sentences from your artist statement.

### The Purpose:

- Use for publicity, press releases included in grant & residency proposals, and should appear on your website.

## Exhibitions

- Make work! When you're ready to "go public," show your work as often as possible in almost any and every available space!!! Can't find a space? Create one or think beyond the traditional gallery space.
- Choose a venue to exhibit your work. Be sure to do your research and become familiar with the owner/director of the gallery or alternative space.
- If you are specifically approaching a gallery, check out their website and be sure you are a good fit for the gallery. Talk to the owner/director to have an understanding of the physical space, an awareness of the types of people who go there, and of any other relevant cultural, political or social predispositions.
- Do not just refer the gallery owner/director to your website or drop off a packet of materials without any idea where you are, why you're there, or what you want other than for them to show your art. It's tacky and unprofessional!
- When approaching galleries, demonstrate a sense of engagement, sincerity, authenticity and genuineness-- these qualities are always good.
- Describe your art in your own words rather than in art-speak. Galleries really appreciate that.
- First and foremost, they want to get a sense of who you are as a person. Saving the complicated explanations for later is always recommended.
- Apply for juried exhibitions, solo exhibitions, two-person exhibitions across the country and beyond, as much as you can afford. Try to find the free submissions. Some submissions will cost. If selected, you may need to pay shipping.
- -Decide if it is worth if for you or not. Remember that you are investing in you. If you get a rejection letter/email, this is normal! Do not be discouraged, the juror/panelist became familiar with your work and good things can come from that exposure.



# Office of Partnerships

Career Development Services  
partnerships@collegeforcreativestudies.edu

## Work Sample (Portfolio)

### Definition:

- A work sample is a representation or document of your work, such as jpegs, postcards, or pdfs. Your images are the first thing looked at in a portfolio or submission package.

### Length:

- The length or size of your work sample will depend on where you're sending it. Most applications will specify the format in which they would like to receive your samples. You may be asked to submit 72 dpi for screen display, 300dpi for printed images, be sure to have both in your archive.

### Use:

- Work samples are one of the most important components of an artist's portfolio or submission.
- They will appear in your promotional materials, including: website, grant & residency applications, publications, exhibition catalogs, newspaper and magazine articles, newsletters, brochures.
- When using still images, you have only a few seconds to impress the panel, juror, agent, producer, dealer, art related jobs or other professionals with your work. Make it count!!

## Online Presence

### Use:

- Your online presence is an easy way to share information about you and your work. Because it is easily accessed from around the world, it allows people the opportunity to find and connect with you.
- Be careful what you post online. Remember that you are using the social network to advance your artistic career - Be careful about how you represent yourself within these networks as your activities are visible to all.

## Career Paths Of An Artist

- If you are invested in the act of creativity you are fortunate enough to be living in a moment in time not only inundated but virtually defined by media. Indeed, everything manufactured— from websites to lawn ornaments and everything in between— has at some time been touched by the hand, mind, or eye of a creative person. Consequently, job prospects in the fields of Art, Applied Art, Art History, Art Education, and Architecture are

better than they've ever been according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

- Every artist has to determine on their own how they want to participate in the for profit market, the non-profit world, the academic world, the curatorial world, the collector world, art fairs, you name it. There are a million worlds you can occupy.
  - Art Administrator
  - Curator, Writer, Critic
  - Exhibition Designer
  - Gallery Director
  - Exhibition Coordinator
  - Development/Grant Writer
  - Museum Educator/Researcher
  - Social, Cultural Agencies; Education
  - Arts Management
  - Conservator/Restorer
  - Director of Visual Arts Program
  - Gallery Owner/Administrator
  - Artist-in-Residence/Artist-in-Schools
  - Teacher/Administrator/Facilitator of workshops and demonstrations
  - College Professor (MFA)
  - Independent Visual Artist (freelance, commission)

## Artist Residencies

### Definition:

- Artist-in-residence programs and other residency opportunities exist to invite artists, academicians, curators, and all manner of creative people for a time and space away from their usual environment and obligations. They provide a time of reflection, research, presentation and/or production.

### Length:

- Each residency is unique and there is no single model. The expectations and requirements vary greatly. Therefore, the timeline varies greatly. Ranging from 1 week - 2 years.

### Funding:

- Operating an artist-in-residence program costs money.
- Some residency programs cover all costs for the artist, some offer stipends, others don't cover any costs at all.



# Office of Partnerships

Career Development Services  
partnerships@collegeforcreativestudies.edu

## Artist Residencies

### Funding Continued:

- It is not unusual that residential art centers cover the costs only partially, which may make it necessary for the artist to find additional funding. In some countries artists can apply for subsidy at state governed bodies.
- The total cost of a residency includes whether there are fees required or stipends provided, but also includes the direct costs to you (including meals, materials, and transportation), as well as the indirect costs (loss of income from jobs, or whether you're maintaining a home while you are away, among other factors). A residency that charges fees but provides other services may actually cost you less out-of-pocket than a residency with no fees but fewer amenities.

### Which Residencies Are Right For You?

- Social vs. Intensive
  - The relationship between the resident and the host is often an important aspect of a residency program. Sometimes residents become quite involved in a community: giving presentations, workshops, or collaborating with local artists or the general public.
  - At other times, they are quite secluded, with ample time to focus and investigate their own practice.

## Graduate School

Deciding to pursue a graduate degree is an important decision that should be carefully considered. It will affect your financial, artistic and personal life for at least two years and have a lasting effect on your career.

### How Do I Decide If I Should Go To Graduate School?

- Explore your career direction. Is graduate school necessary to attain your career goals?
- Think carefully about the utility of the degree. Will graduate school broaden your skills in ways that other certification, employment, residencies and workshops would not?
- Research and plan your financial support. Does the institution offer scholarships, grants, fellowships and/or graduate assistantships? Take your current financial standing into consideration before making a decision. Are the cost benefits worth the financial investment?

- Research the most appropriate schools and programs.
- Visit the institution and talk with faculty, staff and current graduate students.
- Location and timing are important factors to consider. Are you prepared to undertake two-three years of intensive work? Where do you want to live after graduate school? Consider the development of your work and think about your ability to establish yourself in a new community.

### Graduate School May Not Be A Good Idea If:

- You are trying to postpone a career decision or avoid employment.
- You are responding to outside pressures from peers, family or faculty.
- You are expecting to make more money or be assured job security from a graduate degree.

### Graduate School Programs:

- **Ceramics:** Alfred University, New York State College of Ceramics
- **Fiber Arts:** Cranbrook Academy of Art
- **Glass:** Rhode Island School of Design
- **Graphic Design:** Rhode Island School of Design
- **Industrial Design:** Art Center College of Design
- **Interior Design:** Pratt Institute
- **Metals/Jewelry:** State University of New York, New Paltz
- **Multimedia/Visual Communications:** Carnegie Mellon University
- **Painting/Drawing:** Yale University
- **Photography:** Yale University
- **Printmaking:** University of Wisconsin, Madison
- **Sculpture:** Virginia Commonwealth University

## Obtaining Recommendation Letters (Letter of Reference)

### Definition:

- A document in which the writer assesses the qualities, characteristics, and capabilities of the person being recommended in terms of that individual's ability to perform a particular task or function.

### Uses:

- Letters of recommendation are typically related to employment, admission to institutions of higher education, or scholarship eligibility.

### Etiquette

- Choose a faculty member who knows you well. The more a professor/supervisor knows about you, the more specific the letter will be.



# Office of Partnerships

Career Development Services  
partnerships@collegeforcreativestudies.edu

## Obtaining Recommendation Letters (Letter of Reference)

### Etiquette Continued:

- Make a formal request of your professor (by email or appointment) Give the professor time to consider your request
- Ask early. Make an appointment to discuss the recommendation at least 1 month, preferably 2 months. They need ample time to write a thoughtful distinctive letter.
- Provide information about the position or program. The more the professor knows, the more easily they can tailor the letter toward a specific audience.

### Bring This Information With You When You Meet With The Professor After They've Accepted Your Request:

- A description of the job or graduate school(s) to which you are applying.
- The application forms and materials
- Information about where the letter should be sent, or a pre-addressed envelope with proper postage.
- Provide information about yourself: Resume, Artist statement, images of your strongest work. The more specific, the better the letter will be.
- Double check that the letter was sent, if not contact the professor to be sure it was sent.

### Common Mistakes To Avoid:

- Never assume that the professor will be willing to write a letter. Always ask first. Even if you would like to list a professor's name as a reference on an application.
- Don't just drop off forms and info with the Department Administrator's or send them as email attachments, (unless they say its ok).
- If a professor denies your request, don't assume you're a bad student or bad person. The professor may not have adequate experience with you to write an effective letter.
- Don't harass professor about whether they sent the letter yet, unless they ask for a reminder. You may request that the professor send you an email to confirm that the letter is sent.

## Networking

- Regularly swap studio visits with your peers, whether you have a studio or not, invite people to see what you're working on or go to the Fine Art Department Critique club for peer-to-peer dialogue
- Invite faculty and staff to check out what you're doing, especially faculty from other departments
- Sign up for exhibition announcement emails from surrounding art related institutions
- When you're ready to "go public" with your work, apply for exhibitions
- Collaborate with other colleagues to propose an exhibition for a group show
- Regularly attend exhibitions and introduce yourself to the community and director/owner of the space
- Take time to be socially engaged within your community
- Exchange information and follow-up with the people you meet as soon as possible
- Say Thank you when someone extends themselves to you. Faculty and Staff included.
- Something missing in your community? Take charge and make it happen!

### Network Local!

- **Art Detroit Now:** <https://www.artdetroitnow.com/galleries>
- <https://www.waynestategalleries.org/>
- <https://cranbrookartmuseum.org/>
- **Hyperallergic:** <https://hyperallergic.com/>
- **Brooklyn Rail:** <https://brooklynrail.org/>
- **Art in America:** <https://www.artnews.com/c/art-in-america/>

## Resources For Best Practices

- Creative Capital: Artist Tools Handbook
- Creative Capital: <https://creative-capital.org/>
- The Artist Guide: How to Make A Living Doing
- What You Love, Jackie Battenfield
- College Arts Association: <https://www.collegeart.org/>
- Michigan Council for the Arts: <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/industries/macc/macc-grants/>
- An Artist's Guide to the Profitable Self-Employment (Center for Cultural Innovation) 2018 Edition
- Joan Mitchell Foundation: <https://www.joanmitchellfoundation.org/estate-planning-for-visual-artists>