

The **first paragraph** may begin with a broad statement that gives either your *perspective on art* or your *personal philosophy behind creating art*. This should encompass most or all of the work you've made, not just the art you're currently exhibiting. You might also mention what first inspired you to be an artist, what your grandest goals are as an artist, or even some themes that continually run through your art.

The **second paragraph** may have a few sentences about how you make your art. Focus on the process you used for the pieces you're displaying, while pointing out what makes your methods different and how your creative process is evolving. Use this opportunity to show how unique your art is, but make sure to keep it understandable for people who aren't artists, too.

The **last paragraph** may include some specific comments on the current works you're displaying. Give more details into the meaning behind your art, even pointing out one or two pieces in particular. This is your chance to explain any metaphors or hidden meanings in your work so viewers can go back to your art with a better understanding of your intent. If you haven't already, let the reader know what inspired you to create this specific collection and then finish up by mentioning what you see – or feel – when *you* look through it.

The essentials of the artist statement are as following:

1. An explanation of the materials and media – What tools do you use? Be as specific as you can.
2. An explanation of the subject matter and concepts explored – What are you communicating? Again, be specific – What sets your work apart from other work?
3. How these two aspects reinforce or contradict one another – What does your work DO?

Additional, optional aspects:

4. A short and specific personal narrative – no longer than 2 sentences
5. Historical context – explaining one or two influences on the work and placing it into an art historical continuum

Writing an Artist's Statement

Writing an artist's statement is a great way to help your viewers understand what they're seeing. Even if you never share your written statement with anyone, taking the time to sit down and write it out will help you talk about your work more easily.

Keep it short Write enough so that you can get your ideas across, but keep it to one page or less.

Keep it simple Avoid academic or flowery language. Even if you're in grad school, your viewers will most likely include some non-artists and non-academics, so you don't want to alienate them.

Where to start Think about an artwork or exhibit that you've seen that you loved, hated, or didn't understand. What did you want to know about it? Did you wonder what materials the artist used? What is the process? Then think about a time when someone was viewing your work and asking you questions. What did they want to know? What were they most curious about? It's also really helpful to collect artist's statements when you go to shows. Or surf the internet and read the statements on artists' websites. You'll see examples of both good and bad statements. Be inspired by the good ones and know that you can do much better than the bad ones.

Start with the "Why?" Why did you choose your particular subject matter or imagery? You can mention influences (artistic or otherwise), inspirations, and past experiences that led you to your subject. Some artists often refer to the work of other artists that inspired them. Media or popular culture might influence others. It doesn't really matter how you came to your subject matter, but the viewer will be interested in knowing why you chose it.

Then talk about the "How?" Most viewers will want to know something about your materials or your process, especially if the materials or processes are unusual. It's not necessary to write a step-by-step guide. You might just mention that you use watercolors and that you were drawn to them for their unpredictable nature and their transparency. Or you could briefly describe the process used to create the piece and what made you love it. And if there's an unusual technique or material, mention that.

Act like you know what you're doing Avoid phrases like, "I want to..." or, "I'm trying to..." or, "My intention is..." Just say what you're doing: "I expose the gritty underbelly of urban life..." or, "These paintings explore the wonders of nature and the beauty of our world..."

Not so much "me," "my," and "I" It's hard to do, but try to avoid using the words "me, my, and I," repeatedly.

Update it If you're a working artist (creating new work often) then you'll need to look at your statement every now and then to make sure that it still reflects your current work.

Multiple statements Most artists only have one statement that they update every few months or as their work changes. You might have multiple bodies of work that require different statements, especially if you work in different mediums.