

## Guide to Writing an Artist's Statement

Visual artists are not always writers, so the requirement for an artist's statement may be a daunting one. But galleries generally want one, and a statement is a part of many artists' websites and resumes.

A couple of reasons artist's statements are valuable: Sometimes our audience has little or no training in visual arts or in calligraphy specifically, so a little explanation helps them enter a difficult piece. Even when the piece is not hard to read (literally or figuratively), statements often help create a personal connection between the artist and audience.

### Guidelines

An artist's statement is short. Use your software's "word count" function to keep the statement under 250 words.

Two types of statements (you can do either type or combine them):

1. General statement
  - a. The statement does not apply to any particular piece, but to your work in general.
  - b. You can talk about why you love calligraphy, why you chose your media (paper or canvas or gold, etc.), what inspires you to make art, your work process, and so on.
  - c. You can talk about a design principle or element you used, to help the viewer understand your process or the piece better. These include line, shape, size, space, texture, color, value; center of interest (emphasis), balance, repetition, direction, contrast, harmony, unity.
2. Specific statement
  - a. The statement applies to a particular piece or group of pieces.
  - b. Ask yourself what motivated you to choose this way of communicating the exhibit theme or the text. How did doing this piece help you wrestle with the theme or the text or the materials or the lettering style?

Try to imagine what questions a viewer might have about you or your piece. Use the statement to draw them into your world and to reach out to theirs.

***Example of a General Artist's Statement (91 words)***

My work is abstract, yet nonobjective. I work abstractly because the spiritual issues that I wrestle with are not visually tangible; they are abstract: expressing a quality apart from an object, having only intrinsic form with little or no pictorial representation. Although my work is abstract, it contains definite symbolism. Symbol is the language of the soul. Color, line, shape, and texture are my parts of speech....

An idea gives life to shapes, color, and arrangement. Then the intuitive process and result reciprocate to show something previously unknown, new, and life-giving.

*Laura Jennings, painter*

***Example of a Specific Artist's Statement (139 words)***

The two etchings included in this show are from a series called "Maladies of a Fallen World." They were both intended to use a "place setting"-like format...a round plate-like shape inside of a rectangle to serve as a foil to ordinary objects and plates that are transformed into objects that bear new significance. The photopolymer etching process used to create the final image allows for additional manipulation of the photo image.

I am exploring with these objects the idea of our world after the fall, the advent of sin. We understand that sin brought death, strife, pain, and all the maladies that might be associated with these things. It seems ironic to me that many maladies are not always recognized as the fruit of the fall. Sometimes we find beauty, delight and feelings of pride in these maladies.

*Katherine Brimberry, printmaker*