

4. Your Artist Statement

What is it? An artist statement (artist bio or personal statement) is typically a half or three quarter page document that describes an artist's:

- Art or related life background
- Inspiration and influences
- Techniques and materials

What is it for? Its purpose is to clarify the artist's intention and describe their process. This is important to:

- The public, to understand the work to find a reason to purchase
- Juries or selection panels, to justify selecting the work above other entries
- Gallery staff, to sell the work
- The artist, to become comfortable and project confidence discussing their work

What's the difference between a good statement and an awful one? Good statements are direct, down to earth and make a connection with the viewer. They may be written in either first or third person. Awful statements are wordy, vague, pretentious or all of the above. What sets an engaging, readable artist statement apart from those long winded pompous art-speak statements we read everywhere?

1. It is positive. Rather than: "Alex Browne, although not formally educated in art, has pursued ambitious projects in sculpture from an early age." Instead say: "Alex Browne, who is completely self-taught, pursued ambitious projects in sculpture from an early age."
2. It is made up of simple declarative sentences. Rather than: "The hats made by Colleen Graham, are both whimsical and sophisticated, and are all one of a kind pieces." Instead: "Colleen Graham creates whimsical sophisticated one of a kind hats."
3. It creates a mood, and a sense of who the artist is.
4. It is not too wordy. If you need help editing (most of us do!) pick up a copy of Strunk and White's "The Elements of Style".
5. Examples of influences and inspirations are included.
6. It is often effective to use a quote by the artist.

