

# UNFOLDING THE MYSTERIOUS ARTIST'S STATEMENT



And other related “stuff”

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# What is an Artist's Statement?

- Brief text (statement)
- About 1 paragraph
- Explains body of work
- General/overarching or specific to a show or individual piece of work



# Why do I Need an Artist's Statement?

- Usually a gallery or “call to artists” requirement
- Key that defines YOU and what your work is all about
- Helps potential buyers, students, employers understand important aspects of your art and techniques you use



# Artist's Statement Ingredients

- Why you like to make art
- What subjects you prefer
- Process and techniques
- What differentiates your work from others'
- Aspirations/goals as artist
- Who/what inspires you



# Artist's Statement Example

“ The changing light of day and the moods it creates are the foundations of my watercolors. My paintings usually start with a color idea, then evolve into compositions in which color is the primary subject. To me, art is a synthesis of my personal feelings, the subject or colors that inspire me and my materials and techniques. Serenity and simplicity are my primary goals. “

Nita Leland, [www.nitaleland.com](http://www.nitaleland.com)

# Writing Artist Statement Tips

- KISS principle
- Write in first-person
- Use language that anyone can understand
- Everyday language
- Reflect YOU
- Take your time



# Artist's Biography—What it is

- Your life before and including being an artist
- Several paragraphs
- Usually written in third person
  - “Pierre Bonnard was a French painter, book illustrator, and etcher...”
  - “Known for her perceptive depictions of women and children, Mary Cassatt was one of the few American artists active in the nineteenth-century French avant-garde.”
  - “Kadir Nelson began drawing at the age of three...‘I have always been an artist,’ Nelson explains. ‘It’s in my DNA.’ At age ten, his uncle Michael Morris, an art instructor, apprenticed Nelson.”

# Artist's Biography – Why You Need it

- Helpful tool in promoting an artist and his/her work
- Provides background to the audience
- Opportunity to write professionally
- Opportunity to display your expertise as an artist



# Artist's Biography Ingredients

BRIEFLY – 1-2 pages

- Where you're from
- Where you went to school
- How did you become an artist
- What drives you as an artist
- Where you have shown your work
- What you are doing/working on currently



# Artist's Biography Examples

- “Kadir Nelson began drawing at the age of three.....he was granted an art scholarship at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn....Upon graduating with honors, Nelson began his profession as an artist, publishing his work and receiving commissions...”
- “In 1999, Nelson began to collaborate.....”
- “Most recently, Nelson released his authorial debut,.....”
- “Nelson also exhibits his work in galleries and museums.....”

# Artist's Biography Examples – cont.

- Michael Janis was born in Chicago, IL. He lives and works in Washington, DC.
- He first began working with glass as an architect in Australia, where his projects received international awards.
- His architectural discipline is evident in his precise and detailed “sgraffito” technique.
- Janis currently works as Co-Director and instructor at Washington Glass School.

# Artist's Biography Tips

- Gauge the appropriate length
- Refer to other examples if you get stuck
- Visit other artists' websites
- Write professionally – third person
- Proofread you work
- Have it read by a “cold reader”



# The Resume/CV – What is it?

- Tool to help promote you, the artist
- Chronological history of the artist



# Artist's Resume – The Ingredients

- List everything you've ever done including
  - Education
  - Awards & honors
  - Solo shows
  - Community work
  - Residencies
  - Teaching

# Artist's Resume – The Ingredients

- Professional development
- Media coverage
- Collections – public
- Collections – private



# Artist's Resume - Example

- **Name/e-mail/website/phone number (centered)**
- **Education**
  - 1972-1974 U. of South Carolina. High School Art Education; MED Remedial Reading
  - 1968-1972 Columbia College, Columbia, SC  
Focus: Painting, Drawing, Sculpture
- **Supplementary Education**
  - 2008-10  
**Weisser Glass Studio, Kensington, MD.** Classes in stained glass; glass fusing, cutting, working with hot glass, and other related techniques; image transfer with Susan Taylor Glasgow.



# Artist's Resume - Example

- **Supplementary Education**

- 2007-08

- Washington Glass School, Mt. Rainier, MD.** Classes using float, 90 COE and other glass; welding.

- 1967-2006

- Corcoran School of Art, Washington, DC.** Summer high school program;

- Torpedo Factory, Alexandria, VA.** Graphic Design.

# Artist's Resume - Example

- **Exhibitions**

- 2010

- Strathmore Mansion, Bethesda MD.** August (Juried).

- Glenview Mansion, Rockville, MD.** *Generations in Glass*, 3/28-4/27. (Juried).

- Weisser Art Gallery, Kensington, MD.** *Evolve*, 1/23-2/14.

- 2009

- Artcrafts Gallery, Annapolis, MD.** *Reflections II*. (Juried).

- Artomatic 2009.** Washington, DC. Over 1000 participating artists and 75,000 visitors.

- Anne Marie Garden Gallery, Solomon's Island, MD.** *Celebrations*. (Juried).

# Artist's Resume - Example

– 2009, cont.

**Del Ray Artisans Gallery, Alexandria, VA.**

*Objet D'Art, 02/27-03/22*

*Celebrate the Art of Making, 3/27 – 04/26*

*Spring Outside Market*

*Holiday Market*

.....

– 1968-1976

*Woodrow Wilson High School, Washington, DC; South Carolina State Fair, Columbia, SC; Columbia College Library, Columbia, SC; U.S. General Accounting Office, office-wide art show.*

# Artist's Resume - Example

- **Awards**

- 2009

- People's Choice Award, *Celebrate the Art of Making***

- Curator's Pick,.....

- 2007

- Brash poem for Liberace's Folly, Artomatic.

- .....

- 1976

- First Place for sculpture, Little Man,.....

- Honorable Mention, South Carolina State Fair.

# Artist's Resume - Example

- **Donations**

- 2009

- Del Ray Artisans, Upbeat Offbeat Auction.....

- Alexandria Community rowing, silent auction.....

- 2008

- Institute of Musical Traditions, Fairfax Station, VA.

- 2007

- Food and Friends, silent auction, Washington, DC.

# Artist's Resume - Example

- **Additional Experience, Reviews, Publications**
  - Illustrations in magazines, curating, postcard designs
  - Newspaper features, e.g., in Washington Post, etc
- **Related Professional Organizations**
  - Del Ray Artisans, etc. guilds, art societies, alliances

# The End

- Last tips:
  - Use the internet
  - Google “How to write an artist’s statement”
  - Google “What is an artist’s biography?”
  - Google “Artist’s cv or artist’s resume”
  - Update, update, update

