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How to Write an Artist's Statement to Accompany Your Paintings

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An artist's statement is a short piece written by you, the [creative mind](#) behind it all, to accompany a particular painting or group of paintings. An artist's statement shouldn't be dismissed as insignificant or dashed out in a hurry as it's a vital selling tool, promoting and explaining your work to people looking at your paintings, whether they're potential buyers, exhibition curators, critics, fellow artists, or casual browsers.

At its best, an artist's statement reads easily, is informative, and adds to your understanding of the artist and the painting. At its worse, an artist's statement is difficult to understand or rambles on is pretentious and irritates rather than informs (or, even, provokes laughter).

How Long Should an Artist's Statement Be?

Rather make an artist's statement too short than too long – most people simply won't have the patience to read a lengthy treatise and many will be put off before they've even started. Aim at around 100 words or three short paragraphs.

What Should an Artist's Statement Say?

An artist's statement should be an explanation of your [painting style](#) and subjects or themes. Add a bit about your approach or philosophy if you wish. Mention your education, specifically if you've studied art (the closer you are to the date you left art college, the more relevant this is). Consider mentioning which artists (living and dead) have influenced or inspired you. Mention any significant awards you have won, exhibitions you have participated in, collections your paintings appear in or significant sales you may have made, and painting organizations or societies you belong to. Remember, though, you're aiming to create professional credibility by highlighting your

achievements, not providing a full resume. If you don't have a formal art qualification, don't worry, it's your paintings that make you an artist, not your qualifications.

Help! I Find It Impossible to Describe My Work in Words!

It can often be difficult to explain something visual in words – and after all, [you're an artist](#), not a writer! But, as with painting, practice makes it easier and perseverance is essential. You're unlikely to produce a polished artist's statement the first time you try, so be prepared to rework it several times.

Think about how you would describe your work to someone who didn't know you, what other people have said about your work, what you are aiming to achieve in your paintings, your outlook on life. Ask a friend for comments on what you've written (but pick someone you know will give you an honest answer, this is no time for "that's lovely" comments). Write your artist's statement in first person ("I work ..."), not third person ("Mary works ...").

Can an Artist's Statement Change?

Certainly, because you and your work will change. In fact, you should review your artist's statement whenever you need to use it to make sure it's suitable for a particular exhibition, event, or market, not simply print it out again time and again.

Where Can I Find Examples of Artists' Statement?

Many of the paintings submitted to the monthly [painting_projects](#) and the [First Painting Sold Gallery](#) have artist's statements, most very specific to a particular painting. Browse through these galleries, or the examples listed below, see what you think works and what not, think about why this is, then apply it to your own artist's statement. Also always look at the artist's statement when you're browsing an artist's personal website.