

Artist Statement

Word count: “ghost map,” draft with tracked changes + 250-word final draft.

The assignment at a glance:

After being walked through the basics of an artist statement via an in-class workshop, you will complete a “ghost map” skeleton statement (no word count min/max), followed by a rough draft with tracked changes (no word count min/max), and finally, a clean final draft (250 words). All three components are to be handed in together in one document. Please submit in an editable file format for the highest quality feedback.

The assignment in more detail:

The artist statement is a short section of writing that provides insight into a single piece or body of work by describing the artist’s processes, techniques, philosophies, influences, and motivations. The goal of a statement is to engage the viewer with the work on a deeper level. The goal is not to close out the viewer (i.e. shut down their interpretive agency), nor is the goal to confound the viewer (i.e. make the work seem inaccessible). Therefore, an artist statement needs to be easy to read, open, informative, and interesting.

There are several reasons why an artist statement may be required. Depending on the circumstance, an artist statement may be as little as 50 words, or as many as 2000. Most artist statements you will encounter in your art career will require 100-500 words. What a statement includes and the depth to which it addresses contemporary issues will depend on how it will be used. Each statement you write in your career will have particular needs, and you may find that you will accumulate versions of statements for different occasions. Some of the most common content might include:

- What is it all about (conceptual concerns)?
 - What issues are you exploring and why?
 - What concepts, themes or convictions underpin your work?
 - How does your life experience influence your work?
 - How have your ideas developed?
 - Who else has written about these issues? How do you relate your work to their ideas?
- What are your formal concerns?
 - What techniques and materials do you use?
 - How and why did you choose them? How do they relate to your concepts?
 - Do you have a particular process of working? Does that process contribute or participate in the work’s content?
 - Do you intend to explore other techniques or materials?
- How you contextualize your work:

- Where do you feel you fit into the contemporary art world?
- What artists create works that share similar formal or conceptual concerns? How do you relate your work to theirs (what are you doing the same or different)?
- What are the goals of your work?

Organization:

The three key components of the assignment are:

1. A “ghost map” skeleton statement (no word count min/max)
2. A rough draft with tracked changes (no word count min/max)
3. A clean final draft (250 words)

All three components are to be handed in together in one document. Please submit in an editable file format for the highest quality feedback.

Note: Return to Module 7 to review “ghost maps” and artist statements
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- **How to use tracked changes in MS Word:** <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/track-changes-in-word-197ba630-0f5f-4a8e-9a77-3712475e806a>
- **How to use tracked changes in Pages:** <https://www.macworld.com/article/200849/pageschanges.html>
- **How to use tracked changes in Google Docs:** <https://www.pcmag.com/news/how-to-use-track-changes-in-google-docs>

Rationale: Including three steps of editing into this process sufficiently mimics the real-life process of formulating an artist statement. By beginning with a “ghost map,” students are asked to think deeply about the work of each sentence. Editing can be an extraordinary learning tool that allows for self-directed explorations of meaning and content in both the written word and in the work of art itself. By presenting two steps of process-oriented draft work, the student is able to show the movements they have made in their thinking. The final draft presents a best attempt at the skills we have been developing, which will then be held up to further feedback from the professor, adding another layer for growth and improvement.

Rubric:

	Beginning	Developing	Accomplished
Planning 20%	Little care has been devoted to planning. The ghost map needs more thoughtful attention.	Some care has been devoted to planning. The ghost map demonstrates some logical flow and it is clear that effort has been made. There is sufficient evidence that the student has crafted their plan with the course material in mind.	The student has devoted time and attention to planning the layout and flow of ideas. There is care taken in how each idea and sentence builds on or off its neighbour. It is clear that each paragraph serves a contained purpose. There is a beginning, middle and end.
Draft work 20%	The student struggles with the editing process. The student may have issues with clarity or concision that are not appropriately captured in the editing process. Errors may be overlooked. The student may have struggled to map the project over their ghost draft.	The student makes some attempt to curb issues with clarity and concision. Many errors are caught and corrected. There is some room for improvement, but a conscientious effort is evident.	The student judiciously edits for clarity, grammar and concision. The student may have moved sections to improve flow and overall has edited their way towards a much-improved document. The student edits out all errors.
Final Draft 60%	The student may need to work on the content or form to better create a functional statement that communicates with interest and makes space for the viewer. The student may need to better organize their ideas so that it becomes clear how their work integrates in the larger context of knowledge and contemporary practice. Some more effort to articulate the formal or conceptual concerns of the work may be needed. Ensure the statement has good flow and possesses a beginning, middle and end. Word count not met or exceeded.	The statement is developing in its ability to communicate with interest and makes space for the viewer. The student has made an effort to integrate their work in the larger context of knowledge and contemporary practice. Some more effort to articulate the formal or conceptual concerns of the work may be needed. The work may have some issues with organization, but an effort has been made to introduce the work, speak to it, and conclude the statement.	The statement communicates with interest and deeply considers the viewer. The student clearly and thoughtfully integrates their work in the larger context of knowledge and contemporary practice. One or more key ideas and thinkers are mentioned with appropriate context and citations. Formal and conceptual concerns are given space and make sense with the overall organization. The work flows well and has a beginning, middle and end.

Sample of the process of using tracked changes to edit:

Rough Draft

Artist Statement

~~This last fall, I signed up for an independent study on figure drawing rather than signing up for another regular art class. I knew that I had been interested in the figure, but I had not quite yet figured out what it was that intrigued me so much within this huge subject matter. Within a little over a month, I came to realize that~~ While most of my artwork is a form of self-portraiture, I am not interested in presenting a set view of myself as an artist, but instead I am deeply interested in the ways that the body conveys a sense of time and change, but also acts as a record of those changes, telling stories of our pasts. ~~and contains a record of the past. These ideas of time lead to issues of~~ We all have narratives within us, and these past memories are the things that we choose to hold onto and make into our “selves.” It is this holding on that is so interesting to me. In my work, I attempt to get at the constancy-impermanence as told by our bodies through time, and ~~I soon became interested in~~ subsequently, I tell the story of the ways that the “self” is broken down by time—~~t~~. By this, I mean simply that there cannot ever really be a “me” because the next ~~moment~~second, that “me” is different, even if it is in barely noticeable ways. We see changes through larger periods of time, but usually live with the mindset that we are stable, unchanging, grounded. In my recent work, I have used self-portraiture as a means of exploring issues of the body and the self existing through time, which has led me to ~~in order to come to~~ a better understanding of ~~our~~how we perceptions-of-ive change in everyday life. We tend to block out impermanence and change because they lead to death of the self, an idea to which we cling so strongly that we don’t know how to begin to let go. It is the ever-shifting nature of time that leave us ungrounded, in an in-between place, ~~which a place that~~ can be frightening, but it is this space that I am interested in exploring through my artwork.