

ARTIST STATEMENT

It is always good to show the viewer something that they cannot automatically see...something that makes them revisit the work.

Your work wants you to understand it; spend time with it and it will speak to you. Clarifying your ideas about your work will accelerate your growth as an artist.

Taking the Leap: Building a Career as a Visual Artist by Cay Lang. (SF: Chronicle Book, 1998)

Purpose of an Artist's Statement

- To help understand your own work
- To set the tone for viewing your work
- To point the viewer to the concerns your work addresses
- To help the viewer understand and care about your work
- To help critics and curators write about your work

Answer the question "Why?"

- Talk about what you do, how you do it, and especially why you do it.
- Discuss and defend the choices you've made.
- Cite influences and sources.

Get your thoughts down

- Begin by flow writing. Write more than you intend to keep.
- Don't worry about your writing style at first. Craft and edit later.

Make it simple

- Communicate the thoughts and concerns underlying your work that interest you the most. Give your reader insight into your work.

Be honest and straightforward

- Avoid hyperbole, pomposity, overblown statements, and words you rarely use or don't understand.

Make it personal and specific

- It should be a reflection of you, not written to a formula.
- Your mission: to convey that you are the only person in the world who could have made this work and written this statement. Remember this profoundly true paradox: the more personal –the more universal.

Make it short

- 1-2 pages maximum

Questions to get you started

Process

- Do you have a particular process of working?
- Does that process contribute to the work's content?
- What medium are you utilizing?
- How and why did you choose a specific way of working?

Concept

- What issues are you exploring and why?
- What concepts, themes, or convictions underpin your work?
- What are your implicit, explicit, or obscured meanings?
- How do your life experiences influence the work?
- What is your artistic attitude?
- How have your ideas developed?
- What influences you the most?
- What do you want others to understand about your art?

Context

- What do you feel you fit into the contemporary art world?
- Name specific artists you are looking at.
- What are the similarities and differences between their work and yours?
- Have you appropriated or referred to the work of others?
- Who is your audience?

Evaluation

- Are you avoiding discussion of any aspects of your work? If so, why?
- Are there any related key words or ideas you talked about in all three of the above sections?
- Highlight any answers to the questions above that stand out as being important to share with your audience.
- Now you have all the information you need to put your ideas, motivations, concepts, and practice into a concise statement.
- Edit your statement draft. Cut out anything extra. Ask someone who hasn't seen your work to read your statement. Ask someone who has seen your work to read your statement.