

ARTIST STATEMENT ESSENTIALS

Created by Professor Emeritus Mary Stewart —Inspired by *Getting Your Sh*t Together*:
<http://www.gyst-ink.com/>

What is it? An Artist Statement is a 150-500 word (limited to 300 words for award applications) text that is designed to provide viewers with a brief introduction to your work. Typically, it describes what you are doing, how you are doing it, and possibly why it is important.

Who is the target audience? A basic statement must be modified to fit various needs.

- The statement that accompanies your thesis exhibition typically describes a specific body of work.
- The statement you will include in your Awards application will describe to the Department of Art jurors the body of work you are submitting. If it is highly cohesive, your statement may be very brief. If you include works of various types and mediums, it will probably be longer.
- The statement you might include in an exhibition at a community art center must be accessible to a broader audience, possibly with little background in art.

What is the best way to write your statement? In your first draft, loosely answer the following questions. Don't worry about word count at this point--just pour out ideas.

- Your overall vision
- When and why you have created the works under discussion
- Techniques used in creating the work, especially if they are distinctive or non-traditional
- Where your current work fits in contemporary or historical art practices
- Artists or writers who have inspired you
- Why this work is important to you
- What you hope to communicate to an audience.

Take a break, and then review what you have written. What have you left out--or said twice? What is the best order for your paragraphs? Do some paragraphs need to be deleted entirely? Revise, and re-write.

Then, show your statement to others to check their response. Faculty members and friends in Art History or English may be especially helpful. You need substantial criticism, not just a pat on the back! Rewrite it again, double-checking your grammar.

Do's and Don'ts: (See examples at the end of this document)

- A weak statement often reads like a brag fest or a press release and may be pompous, beset by empty expressions and clichés, generic, or excessively personal. This is not a resume nor is it simply a biography. Only discuss your family history if that plays a significant role in your work--as in the story of an immigrant or an adopted child.
- A strong statement will be clear, concise, specific to the works shown and personal--without becoming narcissistic. It will be a pleasure to read as well as informative.

View your statement as an opportunity to tell some of the "story behind the artwork"--and a chance to understand your own motivations and passions as an artist/designer.

SPECIAL NOTE: All undergraduate applicants will be considered for the \$1000 Ann Kirn Awards. These awards are targeted at students with an interest in design. Be sure to include at least a short statement describing your approach to design and the role it plays in your practice.

EXAMPLES (selected from faculty websites)

I create art installations, objects and artist's books, using craft based materials that explore the seemingly chance events that occur in our lives. My artwork responds to cultural shifts examining genetic markers and traits, the daily consumption of pharmaceuticals and adaptive behaviors on our DNA. These ideas are expressed using text as a narrative vehicle that uses white porcelain signifying a sanitary/hygienic material.

The element of chance conception has dominated my art practice for over a decade. Initially the focus was a personal narrative exploring the differences of when gender is formed in conception. My recent artwork explores recognizable biological symbols at the moment of inception, specifically, our genetic DNA and all of the information encoded within it.

My current art responds to these expanding realms of science, ethics and social behavior as the roll of the dice in life plays out. I will watch, create and observe both the predictable and accidental, which yield indescribable patterns of beauty and chaos.

FSU Professor of Art (Ceramics), Holly Hanessian (go to <http://www.hollyhanessian.com/>)

My work is the result of my perpetual pursuit of knowledge and understanding. As a child I realized quickly that the accumulation of information far exceeded the quantity that a dedicated classroom teacher had patience or time enough to teach me. I approach my work initially as a scientist approaches their research. I first gather information from primary sources. As the search images develop I follow a considerably less linear path and am attracted by the unexpected and overlooked. The disregarded records, figures or facts merge and become the atypical moments that facilitate my knowledge of materials, technology and objects. These moments nourish intuition and lead to invention. The combination of research, information and play is the subject of my work.

My recent research threads included vintage knitting patterns, origami and experimental machines and vehicles of unheralded aviation pioneers like Australia's Lawrence Hargrave and Brazil's Alberto Santos-Dumont.

FSU Professor of Art (Printmaking/ Bookarts), Denise Bookwalter (www.denisebookwalter.com)

My work involves a mapping of sorts; an exploration centered on the mobility and authorship of memories, language and objects - a dialogue reflective of the intersection and location of *place* in our lives. I employ sculpture, photography, traditional media and digital fabrication technologies in investigating how we navigate through and within the geography of experiences.

FSU Professor of Art (Public Art, Digital Media), Kevin Curry (see <http://kcurry.com/home.html>)

From electromechanical sculptures that respond to the dark history of convict leasing in the turpentine industry; to a modified payphone that serves as the vehicle for (and mediator of) impromptu storytelling; to the sensory experience of watching and listening to an autonomous, buzzing landscape of electronic detritus; the overriding goal of my work is to reveal the politics embedded in all technology.

FSU Professor of Art (Digital Media), Rob Duarte (see <http://robduarte.com/>)

FYI, SOME OF MY OWN STATEMENTS

CONCISE STATEMENT for gallery website. (Written in third person at gallery's request)
Building on her background in printmaking and drawing, Mary Stewart now combines digital photography with drawing and painting to create invented landscapes ranging in size from 20x20" to 44x160." Derived from photographs taken in Costa Rican rainforests, *Continuum* connects the macroscopic with the microscopic. *Entanglements* was inspired by the visual density and complexity of the local vegetation and the primordial world it evokes. Part of a new series, *Surface Tension* reveals the complexity of nature through multiple layers of information.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT FOR VENVI SHOW IN FEBRUARY 2017. (*This show included prints from several different bodies of work, and thus needed to be fairly broad.*)

I am most interested in how we construct and express knowledge, both of ourselves and of the world around us. By digitally reconstructing photographic imagery to create new visual structures, I invite viewers to reflect on their existing knowledge and also to see the world anew.

After moving to Tallahassee in 2006, the north Florida landscape became my primary source and inspiration. *Entanglements* was inspired by the visual density and complexity of the local vegetation and the primordial world it evokes. *The Same Stream Twice* continually re-combines the same ten digital photographs. As noted by the philosopher Heraclites, experience is ever changing: even when visiting the same location, we cannot step into the same stream twice.

My current artwork expands on the environmental imagery I began in 2006. The *Cloudtower Series* is based on photographs I took in a cloud forest in Costa Rica. Enveloped in mist, the tropical foliage becomes mysterious and almost monochromatic. Zipline platforms enhance the mysterious vision. Derived from photographs taken in Costa Rican rainforests, *Continuum* connects the macroscopic with the microscopic. Health in an ecosystem extends from the largest to the smallest structures. *LeafStorm* is more visceral. Measuring up to twelve feet in length, these images distort the photographic source material more ferociously and the surface painting is much looser. As environmental destruction continues unabated, I see storm clouds gathering.

FSU Professor Emeritus, Mary Stewart (see www.marystewart.info)