

*Originally developed and presented by Cezanne Charles and Lauren Rossi as part of the professional practice programs of Creative Many (organization dissolved June 2019). The workshop was delivered fall 2018, in partnership with Kresge Arts in Detroit. These worksheets assist artists in creating essential written assets in support of their creative work and practice and are provided courtesy of rooftwo, LLC.*

## PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE SEMINAR WRITING ARTIST STATEMENTS AND RESUMES: ARTIST WRITTEN ASSETS

### THE STATEMENT

The statement is a powerful part of the materials you must create to support your creative practice. The statement sets out the “mission” for your work and articulates:

- What you produce - What are the interests and outputs of your creative practice?
- Why you produce it - Why is it meaningful, significant or important to you?
- How you produce it - Explains how you produce your work. What is your point of view or specific process?

Your statement should address both the conceptual (your ideas, concerns, and how they manifest themselves in your work) and technical or formal aspects of your creative work. Your statement may also include information about any influences that inform or directly relate to your work. This could be work by other creative practitioners but it could also be influences drawn from popular culture, current/world events, other disciplines, activities you participate in, and/or affiliations you have. The statement should provide an audience/client insight into your work and your practice. Statements vary in length but are usually no more than a full page. You should create

- 25 - 50 word “mission” statement
- Half Page Statement (2-3 paragraphs)
- Full Page Statement

### THE BIO

The bio is an important tool in a creative practitioners arsenal. It is used in a variety of contexts, including press releases; grant, fellowship, and residency applications; promotional and contextual materials (programs, flyers, catalogues); and as the basis for introductions and presentations about you and your work. The bio is a summary of your resume, which highlights recent achievements and details some personal information as it relates to your work or interests. It presents a clear picture of who you are, what your work is about, what you have accomplished, and the direction of your practice. It can vary in length. As a general rule you should create:

- Single Paragraph Bio
- Half Page Bio (2-3 paragraphs)
- Full Page Bio

### RESUME

The resume is an important outline of your creative practice detailing your achievements and qualifications to date. It can vary in length and it is useful for you to create:

- 1 Page Resume
- 2 - 3 Page Resume

### Resume Category Headings

#### **Contact info (required)**

List your name, address, email, phone, URL (websites/blogs), and social media connections (optional).

#### **Achievements/Outputs**

List chronologically (with most recent first) Exhibitions, Performances, Publications, Screenings, Client/Contract Works, etc. as appropriate to your creative practice and your current accomplishments.

**Achievements/Recognition**

List any Fellowships, Awards, Prizes, Residencies, Competitions, Grants, and Scholarships you have received to date. List in chronological order (with most recent first).

**Related Professional Work**

List any other significant achievements related to your creative practice. Include relevant employment (Teaching, Arts Management or other), lectures/presentations, professional associations, and service (board or other voluntary positions).

**Bibliography**

List all sources that have publicized, reviewed or otherwise mentioned/referenced your work. This can include books, journals and magazines, online sites, video, TV and other media. List in chronological order (most recent first) and create categories as necessary.

**Education**

List your educational qualifications. Include if appropriate a brief title and description of any thesis work. Dates attended and completed or expected completion (if currently a student) should be included. If you studied with someone significant to your creative practice or took on additional studies that relate to your work (languages, independent study, foreign travel etc.) you may also want to highlight it.

The most important thing to be aware of when putting together your resume is that it should play to your strengths. Highlight categories and areas that indicate your strengths. Leave off or put on page two areas where you are still developing a track record. Keep it concise and focused. Like the other written assets, it should support what you want people to know and understand about you, your work, and your achievements.

**SOME RESOURCES**

Battenfield, Jackie, *The Artist's Guide: How to Make a Living Doing What You Love*. Da Capo Press 2009. Essential reading for artists and independent designers.

<http://www.nyfa.org/level4.asp?id=266&fid=1&sid=51&tid=200> Accessed July 2010

<http://www.nyfa.org/level4.asp?id=256&fid=1&sid=51&tid=200> Accessed July 2010

<http://artistemerging.blogspot.com/2006/08/writing-artists-statement.html> Accessed July 2010

<http://10gallon.com/statement2000/> Accessed July 2010 (for some light relief)

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE SEMINAR  
WRITING ARTIST STATEMENTS AND RESUMES: COMMUNICATING YOUR VALUE

Creative practitioners need to be able to network and promote themselves in a variety of contexts. Communicating your Value is about distilling what is essential about you and your work in a way that resonates with people. Whether you are in actual conversations with someone, giving a presentation, or whether you are writing about your work in a statement, project description or bio it is essential that people are able to connect with and remember you. It is helpful to think about what an audience or client may be most interested in or may want to know about you rather than what you want or your agenda. Using language that directly addresses an audience or client is often the missing piece in elevator pitches, statements, bios, and presentations or in networking conversations. As a result, many fall flat or are not memorable.

Example 1

My name is Artist X. I am an artist, curator and arts executive that creates work that investigates our relationship to objects, spaces and each other. --26 words--

Or

My name is Artist X. As an artist, I create work that invites participation and play by audiences allowing them to experience and question their relationship with objects, spaces and each other. --32 words--

Example 2

My name is Artist X. I am an artist and my work is about the environmental challenges that face humanity today. --21 words--

Or

My name is Artist X. I travel and document through photography the people, places and waterways that make up the Great Lakes ecosystem. As an artist, I make the abstract science of climate change meaningful for audiences. --37 words--

Communicating your Value Exercise

Brainstorm some questions that you believe that an audience wants to know about you/your work. Write them in the space provided below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Now provide brief answers to those questions.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Now turn those answers into a few sentences.

Now refine your sentences. Is there anything that has been left out or that you feel is important. Try writing a paragraph now, including anything that has been left out.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE SEMINAR  
WRITING ARTIST STATEMENTS AND RESUMES: WRITING EXERCISE

Write 3 keywords about you

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Write 3 keywords about your work: What?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Write 5 keywords about your work: Why?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Write 5 keywords about your work: How?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Write a 25 - 50 word sentence using any of the keywords above.

List 3 significant achievements

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

List 2 personal identifiers

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

Write 1 paragraph using any of the keywords above.