

Symbolic Self

Write a brief description (artist statement) of the object you chose and how each place (4-6) tells a story about you and how you used leading lines to emphasize your object.

Helpful Hints:

It's human nature to try to make sense of what we see. Writing an artist's statement is a great way to help your viewers understand what they're seeing.

Keep it (fairly) short

Write enough so that you can get your ideas across, but keep it to one page or less.

Keep it simple

Avoid academic or flowery language. Even if you're in grad school, your viewers will most likely include some non-artists and non-academics.

Start with the "Why?"

Why did you choose your particular subject matter or imagery? You can mention influences (artistic or otherwise), inspirations, and past experiences that led you to your subject. Some artists often refer to the work of other artists that inspired them. Others might be influenced by media or popular culture. Still others might have been traumatized by clowns... It doesn't really matter how you came to your subject matter, but the viewer will be interested in knowing why you chose it.

Then talk about the "How?"

Most viewers will want to know something about your materials or your process, especially if the materials or processes are unusual. It's not necessary to write a step-by-step guide to the watercolor process, or list every chemical that you used to process your photographs. You might just mention that you use watercolors and that you were drawn to them for their unpredictable nature and their transparency. Or you could briefly describe the process used to create cyanotypes and what made you love it. And if there's an unusual technique or material, mention that. And seriously, what is that brown thing?

Act like you know what you're doing

Avoid phrases like, "I want to..." or, "I'm trying to..." or, "My intention is..." Just say what you're doing: "I expose the gritty underbelly of urban life..." or, "These paintings explore the wonders of nature and the beauty of our world..." Don't be wishy-washy about it.

Not so much "me," "my," and "I"

It's hard to do, but try to avoid using the words "me, my, and I," repeatedly. It's annoying to read a whole page of sentences that start with "I."