Individual Artist Awards
RASMUSON FOUNDATION

Artist Statement

An artist statement is a brief written description of an artist's work, practice, and philosophy. It provides insight into what motivates and inspires the artist, what themes or concepts they explore, and the techniques and mediums they use. The purpose of an artist statement is to give an audience (viewers, galleries, readers, listeners, producers, publishers, reviewers, curators, or collectors) a deeper understanding of the artist's creative process and the meaning behind their work. An artist statement is the What, Why, Who, and How of an arts practice and can be an overarching statement that reflects on the body or portfolio of an artist's work as a whole – such as with Rasmuson Foundation's Individual Artist Awards – or it can be a specific statement about one work, a series of work, an album, collection, publication, or an exhibition.

What to include

1. **Introduction to the Artist's Work:**
    - A clear and concise introduction to what the artist creates (e.g., paintings, poetry, jazz music, Hip Hop dance, sculptures, short films, installations, etc.).
    - Describes the subject matter or themes explored in the artist's work (e.g., identity, nature, technology, social issues, etc.).
2. **Artistic Process:**
    - Insight into the methods, materials, and techniques the artist uses in their work.
    - Explanation of the creative process (e.g., do they work intuitively, experiment with new media, or engage in a specific set of steps).
3. **Concept and Themes:**
    - What the artist is trying to convey or express through their work.
    - Discusses the underlying themes, concepts, or ideas explored in the work (e.g., exploring emotions, cultural commentary, political themes, abstraction, etc.).
4. **Inspiration:**
    - What inspires the artist—this could be personal experiences, cultural influences, art history, nature, or other artists.
    - Reference to the intellectual, emotional, or visual sources that shape the work.
5. **Purpose or Intent:**
    - Why the artist makes the work—what do they hope to achieve or communicate through their creations?
    - What does the artist want the viewer to take away from the work (e.g., reflection, emotion, new perspective, etc.)?

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What to consider

Keep It Concise: Typically, an artist statement is between 150-300 words. It should be long enough to convey important ideas but concise enough to hold the reader's attention. For the Individual Artist Awards, the artist statement should be no more than one page. A half page is standard.

Avoid Jargon: Use clear, accessible language. Avoid overly technical terms unless they are specific to your medium and necessary for understanding.

Personal & Sincere: The statement should reflect your unique perspective and voice as an artist. It's an opportunity to share your vision and personal connection to your work.

Be Direct: Don't over-explain your work. Keep the statement focused on the key ideas and intentions behind your practice.

Write for Your Audience: Consider who will be reading the statement. While it should be personal and true to your experience, keep in mind that it may be read by someone unfamiliar with your work.

Example

"My work centers on the exploration of liminal spaces held within memory and its fleeting nature. I create large-scale mixed media pieces that combine photography, fabric, and paint to evoke a sense of nostalgia and loss. By layering images of familiar places and objects, I create a dialogue between past and present, highlighting the way memories fade and distort over time. The textures and materials I use are chosen for their tactile qualities – I believe that physical engagement with the artwork can mirror the emotional weight of memory and the ephemeral quality of material mirrors memory's fleeting nature. Through this process, I aim to capture moments that feel both familiar and distant, allowing the viewer to connect with their own experiences of time and memory. Ultimately, I hope to encourage viewers to think about and engage with their own memories and to better understand what we can learn from the things we hold on to."