

ASSIGNMENT #3: PROJECT STATEMENT- ARTIST/DESIGNER/EDUCATOR/RESEARCHER STATEMENT

Goals:

- To reflect on what is the core meaning of your work.
- To investigate statements that resonate with you as a starting point to originating work.
- To explain and expound the essential qualities of your work.
- To affirm, document and forecast your art and design and research projects.

Learning Outcomes:

- 25% of total project evaluation for each outcome.
- Creation of a paragraph or a one-page summary of your work.
- A summative representation of the images or documents submitted for a position, grant, residency.
- A statement than can also be condensed or transported into part of a cover letter.
- Information that represents reflection about and plans for your discipline.

Methods:

- Refresh looking at past writings, past statements and consider updating these to make current.
- Look for different models from professional online sites and note what is successful about each.
- Read the attached articles that give tips and encouragement.
- Write a meaningful and perceptive one-paragraph to one-page statement.

Assessment:

Basic Competency

- The statement is a short description but one that does not place the work in associative categories or larger contexts.
- One that introduces goals and plans but without much detail or care.
- A statement that is not usefully paired to one's actual studio production or research or discipline or the images or documents in the application.
- One that is very familiar and not individualized in words and content.

Advanced Competency

- The statement is a succinct and perceptive analysis of work, working methods, and puts forth an envisioned platform or future.
- One that may take the opportunity to explain: concepts; inclusivity topics; socio-economic position; philosophical or historical ties and ideas; and or relevant movements or stances the work is aligned to.
- A statement that stands as a true placeholder of where your work is right now. All readers know work is a flow and will change and grow, but this statement clarifies and crystallizes what you are attaining right now.

Artist Statement

An artist statement is a brief (usually one page) text that describes and contextualizes the artist's work, ideas, and intentions. Ideally it is informative, engaging, and memorable to the reader. While it is a professional document—often included in grant applications, promotional materials, and the like—it is also an expressive form. Some of the artist statement guides you'll find in books and on the internet suggest a fill-in-the-blank model for scribing your statement. You'll also find many warnings about what not to include (philosophical

asides, art-world language, etc.). Take such checklist and minefield advice with a grain of salt. Structures and guidelines can be helpful but give yourself room to experiment. Some of the most effective artist statements are ambiguous rather than explicit, poetic rather than literal, playful or political rather than safe. In short, you want to honor your work and your voice, and there's no one-size-fits-all way to do that.

That said, here are a few questions you might consider when beginning to draft your statement. In the end, your statement might cover only one of these points, or some of them, or none of them.

- Who are you? (focus on telling autobiographical details that relate to your work)
- What do you make? (name your medium[s], give examples of specific works)
- What materials, techniques, and processes do you use?
- What subjects/ideas are you interested in? (cultural contexts, political issues, etc.)
- Who are some of your artistic influences? (address formal, conceptual, and intentional connections)
- What motivates or inspires you?

Here are a few unique strategies we've noted:

- Tell a story or narrate a memory that suggests an origin point or essence of your work.
- Quote from a favorite saying, poem, or song that embodies your work.
- Use active language that creates images in the reader's mind, as a verbal parallel to your work.
- Date your statements; there's something freeing about marking the statement as a snapshot at a moment in time rather than a mandate set in stone.

Here are a few generative writing practices you might experiment with:

- Try timed free-writing; set your clock for 10 minutes and just write, without self-censoring.
- Brainstorm before you write, using lists, mind maps, and outlines.
- Ask friends who know your work for feedback.
- Strive for a natural voice; you needn't sound like a professor or critic.
- Revise and rework.
- Look at models for inspiration. The Writing Center has a file of artist statements; the CUE Art Foundation's website has artist statements accompanying documentation of every exhibition; *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings* is one of many excellent anthologies of artist writings in general, including statements.

Center for Arts & Language / Mari Iwahara / Jennifer Liese, November 2011.

What is a Designer Statement? (Part 3): Ponik, Lupton, Eatock, Nelson, Yegir

Vadim Gershman

Design Dec 7, 2011

Ellen Lupton Some designers call them manifestos. For an artist today, writing a manifesto would seem ridiculously out-of-date, but many designers have embraced the retro-vanguard directness of posting your beliefs in some kind of list. It's an opportunity to say what you believe with humor and clarity, and it's a format

that people seem to understand. Bruce Mau, Bruce Sterlling, Emily Pilloton, and Ulla-Maaria Engeström have all written provocative and influential manifestos.

This is one of my personal favorites (concise, witty, and direct):

http://www.hobbyprincess.com/2005/03/draft_craft_man/comments/page/2/

It was published in MAKE magazine, also no stranger to manifestos.

Keetra Dean Dixon

hi hi,

Hope this response fits the bill. So excited to see the discourse!

Q: Is there such a thing as a “designer statement,” and if so, how would you go about creating one?

A: There are a lot of design manifestos, initiatives, philosophies, missions and methods. Regardless of the titling, a statement outlining ones approach to work is an invaluable guide. The work we produce carries the mark of our perspective (be it grand or subtle) whether we intend it to or not. It is vital that we understand our own voice in order to contribute responsibly and extract greater meaning from our endeavors. For me, stating my goals can help move my work from intuitive to intentional. “Designer” is such a nebulous title; further defining the role for myself is key to directing my own path and its resulting impact.

I developed a half-hearted traditional artist statement when I began showing work in galleries, but I developed the most useful writing during my graduate studies at Cranbrook in response to the completely open, almost unstructured program. I needed guidance. I developed a structure to self-apply. I extracted my own voice, creating a set of guiding statements to keep me on a broad, but directed path. I still look to, and continually evolve two of sets of those guides: “What the work wants to do” (my initiatives) and “Reminders when making” (my methods). They cover the grand concerns of what am I doing & how I am doing it.

Thanks again for the inquiry!

BEST LUCK

kdd

The Writing Center. University of Colorado

Writing an Artist Statement

Artist statements can take many forms depending on their intended use. Most commonly, statements introduce a specific collection of art; introduce or explain an artist's methods, inspirations, subject matter, and/or themes; or serve as an "About" or "Mission" page for an artist's website. Like resumes and CVs, an artist statement is a living document that should change and grow with new/evolving projects, web sites, gallery shows, etc.

General Considerations

Know your audience: An "About" page for a web site will sound different than the introductory information that precedes a gallery show. How you need to appeal to buyers, galleries, strangers, other artists, etc. will dictate what the statement sounds like.

Show instead of tell:

- Ineffective sample: I use paint to create
- Effective sample: The thick layers of oil paint create shadows on the canvas that

become part of the composition's meaning.

Be specific:

- Ineffective sample: I have always enjoyed creating art to express my ideas.
- Effective sample: Watercolors on newspaper is a new form for my art and is the

perfect medium for my upcoming collection about the end of the printing press in the digital age.

Compose both a long and short form statement: long form versions can be up to 500 words, while the shorter version will most likely be fewer than 200 words.

Format and Length

Generally, an artist statement will have two to three concise paragraphs. Depending on whether you are introducing a specific piece, show, collection, or your entire body of work, the paragraphs may differ.

Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself as an artist and some general ideas about your art and your process, materials, methods, tools, etc.

- What is the audience about to see? Photography, painting, knitting, sculpting, video, animation?
- Use a creative beginning that describes your art visually so your audience will be able to picture something specific as they read. For this type of introduction, consider giving a detailed description of one of your pieces.

Paragraph 2: In this paragraph, you might describe your artistic process, be it mixing materials and media or finding the perfect location to photograph. It might address the following information:

- How much time do you spend on your work?
- What is the inspiration for your work?

Paragraph 3: Depending on the purpose for the statement, you might focus this paragraph on one of the following:

- A specific project that you are in the midst of creating and a description of your most recent work, process, or use of materials.
- A specific description of the gallery show that the statement is introducing. **Additional Considerations**

Write in the present tense: Use “I do” or “I am” instead of “I did” or “I was.”

Avoid analyzing your own work: instead, describe your inspirations, medium, and subject matter. The critics can challenge you on your interpretation, but they cannot challenge you on the reasons and methods behind your work.

- Ineffective sample, inviting argument: The materials in my work, taken from abandoned instruments, offer a critique of modern music’s obsession with new technology.
- Effective example, describing inspiration and materials: Having seen so many old instruments abandoned in alleyways, I was inspired to bring them back in front of audiences in my sculptures.

Don’t write a biography: there should be no stories without lessons and no lessons (or abstract virtues) without a concrete application. Only include a story about the first time you painted when you were a child if somehow that story directly relates to your current work (perhaps you are using those old paintings and repurposing them into a new medium).

Research Statement Template

https://www.mcw.edu//media/MCW/Education/GraduateSchool/Documents/ucla_researchstatementtemplate_46-47.pdf

What is it?

A research statement is usually a single-spaced 1-2 page document that describes your research trajectory as a scholar, highlighting growth: from where you began to where you envision going in the next few years. Ultimately, research productivity, focus and future are the most highly scrutinized in

academic faculty appointments, particularly at research-intensive universities. Tailor your research statement to the institution to which you are applying – if a university has a strong research focus, emphasize publications; if a university values teaching and research equally, consider ending with a paragraph about how your research complements your teaching and vice versa.

When is it Used?

A research statement is used when applying for academic faculty positions, and sometimes for research-intensive positions in think tanks or government. Because the academic job market is increasingly competitive, a common trend for hiring committees is to ask only for a cover letter and CV. If this is the case, you will need to condense your research statement to 1-2 paragraphs to include in the cover letter.

Helpful Tip

For Humanities and humanistic Social Sciences, only describe one future project. Pacing is different for Sciences, so those in STEM fields may be able to include more than one project.

Introduction The first paragraph should introduce your research topic and interests in the context of your eld. A version of the introduction to your dissertation/thesis abstract could be adapted, but here it should set up a framework for future research.

Summary Of Dissertation/Thesis This paragraph should give more detailed information about your doctoral research project. Condensing your abstract could be one strategy for developing this paragraph. Expanding the dissertation paragraph of the cover letter to address methods and more specific endings/arguments could be another. Try not to have too much language repetition across documents.

Contribution To Field And Publications Describe the significance of your projects for your eld. Detail any publications initiated from your independent doctoral or postdoctoral research. Additionally, you can include plans for future publications based on your thesis. Be specific about journals to which you would submit or university presses that might be interested in the book you would develop from your dissertation (if your eld expects that). If you are writing a two-page research statement, this section would likely be more than one paragraph and cover your future publication plans in greater detail.

Second Project If you are submitting a cover letter along with your research statement, then the committee may already have a paragraph describing your second project. In that case, use this space to discuss your second project in greater depth and the publication plans you envision for this project. Make sure you transition from your dissertation to your second project smoothly – you want to give a sense of your cohesion as a scholar, but also to demonstrate your capacity to conceptualize innovative research that goes well beyond your dissertation project.

Wider Impact Of Research Agenda Describe the broader significance of your work. What ties your research projects together? What impact do you want to make on your eld? If you're writing a research statement for a teaching-oriented institution, you still can address some of the above questions, but make sure to connect them with your teaching.

Keep in mind that future projects have to be feasible for the institution to which you are applying. Does it have the resources, funding, and equipment you will need? If not, you aren't a good fit for the position (and it isn't for you).

25 % Previous Research Experience Describe your early work and how it solidified your interest in your field. How did these formative experiences influence your approach to research? Explain how this earlier work led to your interest in your current project.

25% Current Projects Describe your dissertation/thesis project – consider using the first paragraph from your dissertation or thesis abstract since it covers all your bases: context, methodology, findings, significance. You could also mention grants/fellowships that funded the project, publications derived from this research, and publications that are currently being developed.

50% Future Work Transition to how your current work informs your future research. Describe your next major project as you did in structure one and a realistic plan for accomplishing it. What publications do you imagine stemming from it? The last part of the research statement should be customized to demonstrate the fit of your research agenda with the institution.

Tips for Combining your Research and Teaching Statements

- i Research the department and university priorities
- i Based on their priorities, determine how best to combine the two statements
- i For a teaching-focused position, emphasize your teaching and end by relating your teaching to your research
- i For a research-focused position, emphasize your research and end by describing how your teaching complements your research
- i For a position that values both equally, create a statement that weaves the two together. For instance, your introduction can describe how your teaching and research inform each other. The following paragraphs depend on what you want to emphasize first, but one or two paragraphs on teaching and one or two on research can work, depending on length requirements. Conclude by reiterating the centrality of teaching to research and vice versa, based on your teaching and research philosophies.
- i Ultimately, you want to create a narrative through-line that can 1) demonstrate how teaching makes your research relevant (and vice versa) and/or 2) why your work is a relevant teaching topic

When Applying

Read the instructions for materials required carefully – postdoc positions often will ask for a “personal statement” that’s actually a research statement. They’ll want to know about completed work, work in progress, future work, professional goals, publication plans, etc.

The research statement is NOT the same as the research proposal required by many postdoc applications.

Research proposals vary widely in length and have their own specific requirements¹.

For more on the research proposal, see Karen Kelsky, “Dr. Karen’s Foolproof Grant Template.” The Professor Is In.

<https://careerservices.upenn.edu/application-materials-for-the-faculty-job-search/research-statements-for-faculty-job-applications/>

The Purpose of a Research Statement

The main goal of a research statement is to walk the search committee through the evolution of your research, to highlight your research accomplishments, and to show where your research will be taking you next. To a certain extent, the next steps that you identify within your statement will also need to touch on how your research could benefit the institution to which you are applying. This might be in terms of grant money, faculty collaborations, involving students in your research, or developing new courses. Your CV will usually show a search committee where you have done your research, who your mentors have been, the titles of your various research projects, a list of your papers, and it may provide a very brief summary of what some of this research involves. However, there can be certain points of interest that a CV may not always address in enough detail.

- What got you interested in this research?
- What was the burning question that you set out to answer?
- What challenges did you encounter along the way, and how did you overcome these challenges?
- How can your research be applied?
- Why is your research important within your field?
- What direction will your research take you in next, and what new questions do you have?

While you may not have a good sense of where your research will ultimately lead you, you should have a sense of some of the possible destinations along the way. You want to be able to show a search committee that your research is moving forward and that you are moving forward along with it in terms of developing new skills and knowledge. Ultimately, your research statement should complement your cover letter, CV, and teaching philosophy to illustrate what makes you an ideal candidate for the job. The more clearly you can articulate the path your research has taken, and where it will take you in the future, the more convincing and interesting it will be to read.

Separate research statements are usually requested from researchers in engineering, social, physical, and life sciences, but can also be requested for researchers in the humanities. In many cases, however, the same information that is covered in the research statement is often integrated into the cover letter for many disciplines within the humanities and no separate research statement is requested within the job advertisement. Seek advice from current faculty and new hires about the conventions of your discipline if you are in doubt.

Timeline: Getting Started with your Research Statement

You can think of a research statement as having three distinct parts. The first part will focus on your past research, and can include the reasons you started your research, an explanation as to why the questions you originally asked are important in your field, and a summary some of the work you did to answer some of these early questions.

The middle part of the research statement focuses on your current research. How is this research different from previous work you have done, and what brought you to where you are today? You should still explain the questions you are trying to ask, and it is very important that you focus on some of the findings that you

have (and cite some of the publications associated with these findings). In other words, do not talk about your research in abstract terms, make sure that you explain your actual results and findings (even if these may not be entirely complete when you are applying for faculty positions), and mention why these results are significant.

The final part of your research statement should build on the first two parts. Yes, you have asked good questions, and used good methods to find some answers, but how will you now use this foundation to take you into your future? Since you are hoping that your future will be at one of the institutions to which you are applying, you should provide some convincing reasons why your future research will be possible at each institution, and why it will be beneficial to that institution, or to the students at that institution.

While you are focusing on the past, present, and future of your research, and tailoring it to each institution, you should also think about the length of your statement and how detailed or specific you make the descriptions of your research. Think about who will be reading it. Will they all understand the jargon you are using? Are they experts in the subject, or experts in a range of related subjects? Can you go into very specific detail, or do you need to talk about your research in broader terms that make sense to people outside of your research field focusing on the common ground that might exist? Additionally, you should make sure that your future research plans differ from those of your PI or advisor, as you need to be seen as an independent researcher. Identify 4-5 specific aims that can be divided into short-term and long-term goals. You can give some idea of a 5-year research plan that includes the studies you want to perform, but also mention your long-term plans, so that the search committee knows that this is not a finite project.

Another important consideration when writing about your research is realizing that you do not perform research in a vacuum. When doing your research you may have worked within a team environment at some point, or sought out specific collaborations. You may have faced some serious challenges that required some creative problem-solving to overcome. While these aspects are not necessarily as important as your results and your papers or patents, they can help paint a picture of you as a well-rounded researcher who is likely to be successful in the future even if new problems arise, for example.

Follow these general steps to begin developing an effective research statement:

Step 1: Think about how and why you got started with your research. What motivated you to spend so much time on answering the questions you developed? If you can illustrate some of the enthusiasm you have for your subject, the search committee will likely assume that students and other faculty members will see this in you as well. People like to work with passionate and enthusiastic colleagues. Remember to focus on what you found, what questions you answered, and why your findings are significant. The research you completed in the past will have brought you to where you are today; also be sure to show how your research past and research present are connected. Explore some of the techniques and approaches you have successfully used in your research, and describe some of the challenges you overcame. What makes people interested in what you do, and how have you used your research as a tool for teaching or mentoring students? Integrating students into your research may be an important part of your future research at your target institutions. Conclude describing your current research by focusing on your findings, their importance, and what new questions they generate.

Step 2: Think about how you can tailor your research statement for each application. Familiarize yourself with the faculty at each institution, and explore the research that they have been performing. You should think about your future research in terms of the students at the institution. What opportunities can you imagine that would allow students to get involved in what you do to serve as a tool for teaching and training them, and to get them excited about your subject? Do not talk about your desire to work with graduate students if the institution only has undergraduates! You will also need to think about what equipment or resources that you might need to do your future research. Again, mention any resources that specific institutions have that you would be interested in utilizing (e.g., print materials, super electron microscopes,

archived artwork). You can also mention what you hope to do with your current and future research in terms of publication (whether in journals or as a book), try to be as specific and honest as possible. Finally, be prepared to talk about how your future research can help bring in grants and other sources of funding, especially if you have a good track record of receiving awards and fellowships. Mention some grants that you know have been awarded to similar research, and state your intention to seek this type of funding.

Step 3: Ask faculty in your department if they are willing to share their own research statements with you. To a certain extent, there will be some subject-specific differences in what is expected from a research statement, and so it is always a good idea to see how others in your field have done it. You should try to draft your own research statement first before you review any statements shared with you. Your goal is to create a unique research statement that clearly highlights your abilities as a researcher.

Step 4: The research statement is typically a few (2-3) pages in length, depending on the number of images, illustrations, or graphs included. Once you have completed the steps above, schedule an appointment with a career advisor to get feedback on your draft. You should also try to get faculty in your department to review your document if they are willing to do so.