ARTIST STATEMENTS

What we write about when we write about ourselves

McKnight Artist Fellowships for Musicians 2021
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SPRINGBOARD for the arts
www.springboardforthearts.org
What is your story and how can you best communicate that story to an audience?
GOALS

Creating a framework for understanding

- Context
- Guide
- Deepen
A succinct story that encapsulates your passion, vision, and what is most significant about you and your work.
STORY ELEMENTS

■ Context – Political, technology, economic, philosophical
■ Historical – Where do you fit into the timeline? Where did you come from?
■ Physical – Medium, Style, Scale
■ Subject Matter – Themes, Patterns, Topics
■ Culture – How does your work connect to “now”
■ Vision, Interests, Background, and Goals
**EXPERIENCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></th>
<th><strong>CHALLENGES</strong></th>
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</thead>
</table>
| - Flexible, non-traditional format  
- Offers variety  
- Anecdotal/Story-driven  
- Highlighting meaningful events  
- Holds experiences that may not fit well in other formats                                                                                                                                          | - Requires careful crafting  
- Curatorial choices  
- Capturing the scope of your work                                                                                                                           |
# RESUME

## STRENGTHS
- Holds lots of information that doesn’t read well in narrative form
  - *E.g. Awards, premiers, commissions*
- Formatted, easily read
- More neutral, traditional

## CHALLENGES
- Less room for “voice”
- Formatting constraints
- More neutral, traditional
- Catagorizing, i.e. tidy little boxes
- Boring
ARTIST STATEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>■ Open format, flexible</td>
<td>■ Long lists don’t work well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Allows for a formalized voice/style</td>
<td>– <em>E.g.</em> Awards, premiers, commissions</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ Structured to carry a story/narrative</td>
<td>■ Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>■ Highlighting notable accomplishments and providing deeper context</td>
<td>■ Requires careful crafting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARTIST STATEMENT
BASICS

• WHO you are...
• WHAT you do...
• WHY you do it...
  • OR ... flip it and reverse it..
• WHY, WHAT, WHO
ARTIST STATEMENT

EXERCISES

• **The Facts About Your Work:** (the basics, i.e. materials and process; use objective, not subjective language)

• **Influences/Inspirations** (where do you get your ideas?)

• **Using All Five Senses** (sight, hearing, touch, taste, smell)

• **Place/Space** (i.e. urban vs. rural; where can people find your work?)

• **Your Beliefs** (what are the driving forces behind what you believe?)
Where to say What

Find the best vehicle for your message.

Take any piece of information and ask yourself,

“Will this be best communicated in Audio, in Resume, or in a narrative artist statement?”
THE MIX

RESUME → PAST
ARTIST STATEMENT → PRESENT/PASSION
WORK SAMPLE → PROOF
JUNK DRAWER

- Watch out for the Long Windup
- Language: clear, concrete, concise, active language.
- Look for patterns across your materials, themes and through lines.
- Identify “sticky” stuff; anecdotes, phrases, ideas, analogies, etc.
- More eyes and ears! Get feedback from people inside and outside your bubble. Look and listen*.
- The classic Inverted Pyramid of Journalism
Three Illustrations

Old Oxford
Inverted Pyramids
Work Samples
GOALS

Creating a framework for understanding

- Have you provided **Context**?
- Have you helped **Guide** your audience?
- Do your materials **Deepen** their understanding of you and your work?
How do *you* tell *your* best story?
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