

## The Artist's Statement

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After the resume, this is the next most frequently requested document for artists. Think of the artist's statement as something to represent you when you are not there. What do you want your audience to know? What do they need to know about the visual materials they are looking at? How can the statement add to the viewer's experience of the work? Often, the statement will accompany your work in an exhibition situation.

Basically, it should include:

- **a short description of your work:** (what are we looking at)
- the **conceptual basis** of your work, what you are interested in, influences;
- the way in which you employ **techniques** and **materials** as relevant to concepts;
- the way you place yourself in the **context of contemporary and/or historical art** (as your work matures this is key). If you were influenced by specific artists for this project feel free to mention them, but it's not a requirement of this particular statement.
- For our purposes the statement should not exceed one page in length.

## Evaluation

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**Your artist's statement** will be evaluated on its ability to articulate and reflect your conceptual motivations and the technical decisions (in camera shots, the selection of appropriated imagery and video editing choices).

## Artist's Statement Examples

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### Example #1: [the common S E N S E, Ann Hamilton](#)

*The Museum is an institution of sight, a house of looking and seeing, a place where we behold with our eyes. We may be stirred, moved or touched by what we see but we rarely touch the thing seen.*

*I lament this distance.*

*We stroke a pet, reach to draw a curtain and feel the fineness of the cotton, touch the hand of another person. We sleep between sheets, stay warm inside silk underwear and wool coats; cloth is the constant tactile companion to our body, is the hand that is always touching.*

*Cloth covers nakedness—makes us social. Its surround is an early architecture and its origins are animal: the fleece of sheep, the skin of bear, the spun thread of a silkworm.*

*Each extension of a hand or paw is toward contact. Contact with the ground, the air, to someone or something outside the self and from this extension one is always touched in return—that is touch's reciprocal condition and exchange. When we touch we go from being observers to being included; things seen become things felt.*

*In silence or in speech, reading and being read to are other forms of touch. The words of poets and writers stir us. When this happens we may be compelled to note, copy, or underline and often to share that touch—by passing the book from hand to hand, by reading out loud, or by sharing the page. The distance between author and reader, and reader and reader diminishes as the capacity of words to compel recognition travels from contact to contact, screen to screen, and perhaps from hand to hand.*

*This project is a series of invitations. It begins—or ends—with the image of a camera draped in cloth; with it, an invitation to be photographed. Your images will become material in the project. This is the project's first exchange.*

*Then, there is an invitation to take fragments of readings, poems, texts, and to submit your own.*

*In the South Gallery, there is an invitation to listen and feel the air generated by a field of twenty mechanized bullroarers inspired by ancient instruments used from Greece to Australia to call or signal over great distance.*

*In the North galleries, there is an invitation to pull down from the walls segments of birds, mammals, and amphibians.*

*An exhibition is a form of exchange; like a conversation, it is organic, changed by each person who enters and whose acts of giving and taking will become the public life of the project.*

-Ann Hamilton

## **Example #2 | [Night Watch, Shimon Attie](#)**

*Night Watch* featured a 20ft-wide hi-resolution LED-screen which travelled the city's waterways aboard a large, slow-moving barge and tug boat. Displayed on the screen were silent close-up video portraits of 12 new New Yorkers whose lives have been saved by recently being granted political asylum in the US.

The Installation combined contemporary LED-technology with dated, anachronistic modes of transport to create a complex and layered artistic and sculptural tableau. *Night Watch* activated and animated NYC's waterways as both literal and metaphoric sites and landscapes for escape, rescue, safe-passage and the offering of safe-harbor for those most vulnerable. The artwork thus engaged one of the most urgent issues of our time – that of welcoming or closing our doors to asylum seekers and refugees.

*Night Watch* thus also reflected New York's long history as America's first port-of-call for those most in need. This included engaging and being in visual dialogue with some of New York's most resonant and relevant landmarks, such as the Statue of Liberty, the Freedom Tower, the Empire State Building, and the Brooklyn and Williamsburg bridges, among others.

During *Night Watch*'s run, the Installation travelled very slowly and closely hugged the city's shorelines, allowing for intimate and sustained "I-thou" encounters with New Yorkers on shore. The piece also sometimes docked at pre-publicized locations and times. This allowed for longer viewings to take place, and was also timed and coordinated with related pre-planned events and symposiums on shore dealing with refugees and asylee issues. Needless to say, *Night Watch* represented a distinct counter-narrative to our current zeitgeist.

The individuals displayed on the screen are from 5 continents, and are largely members of the international LGBTQI communities, as well as unaccompanied minors, who fled tremendous violence and discrimination in their homelands. The individuals displayed in the work arrived from Nigeria, Honduras, Columbia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Jamaica and Peru.

The video documentation and still art photographs show how *Night Watch* functioned visually and aesthetically under a wide variety of environmental conditions. They also capture how the piece interacted with the natural landscapes of the Hudson and East Rivers, as well as with different elements of the near and far cityscape.

Finally, *Night Watch* was timed to overlap with the UN General Assembly Week, bringing the piece face-to-face with world and American leaders.

*Night Watch* was produced, commissioned and created in close collaboration with More Art, a New York City arts organization and non-profit. More Art focuses on creating socially engaged artworks in close collaboration with local New York City communities.

For Night Watch, More Art and I partnered with asylee and refugee legal aid organizations such as Immigration Equality and Safe Passage Project, as well as community empowerment groups including Queer Detainee Empowerment Project and RIF Asylum Support.

### **Example #3 | [Battlefield Project, Jeff Beekman](#)**

The enduring legacy of the U.S. Civil War is difficult to overestimate. Over 150 years in the past, it remains our nation's deadliest conflict. Though no one alive can claim to have witnessed its events first hand, the war's place in our collective memory is evidenced in the films we watch, the political and economic landscape we have inherited, and the countless historic markers, statues and memorials scattered across the southern and eastern portions of the United States.

Civil War battlefields are strange, often highly negotiated spaces. There is general agreement that the history these sites preserve is important, yet there are complexities as to how this history is presented and how the land has been changed to accommodate current stakeholders' interests. War colleges make frequent use of these locations to teach our aspiring young officers military history and tactics. Historians, archaeologists - scholars of every variety come in support of their research. And then, there are the literally millions of tourists who make treks annually - whose importance cannot be underestimated because it is their support that keep these parks open.

Still many other locations remain unmemorialized - sites today deemed too valuable to waste on preservation, locations of sporadic violence whose outcome is not considered important, or most uncomfortably those spaces whose histories confuse or dispute the narratives we long to hear - the plowed and planted over remains of mass graves, sites of black heroism and massacre, locations where ignoble and best forgotten acts occurred (at least in the minds of those who have occupied these places in the years since). The Battlefield Project started as a way I could begin to explore of all this, a way I could question how particular sites have evolved.

In form, the Battlefield series is comprised of photographs taken in Civil War memorial and battlefield sites across the United States. Many are simply documentation of sites and phenomena directly observed. Others record digital projections of archival photographs of soldiers or heroic paintings of battle. These projections are cast upon the sites where those depicted fought and fell. Rather than post-production collage via Photoshop layering or the like, I am interested in the physical integration, image wrapping over structure, and how projected fragments from the past are supported by and illuminating of the landscapes and structures they are cast upon.

Whether observed or constructed, the goal of these photographs is the same - to create a compression between a traumatic past and the present day, a space where the relationship between site and memory, the now and that fleeting moment where the nation almost succeeded in tearing itself apart, can be investigated.