

How to Write Your Artist's Bio

in 5 Easy Steps

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GAC Volunteer

Photo by Aaron Burden
courtesy of Unsplash

As an artist, you may not be thrilled about writing about yourself, but you need an artist's bio for your website, your portfolio, applications, shows, etc. So let's make it simple, shall we?

An artist's bio is a short paragraph, written in prose, and in the third person. It tells more about the way your life has influenced your work than a CV, which is in point form. A bio is about you, the artist, as opposed to an "artist's statement" which is more about the work and the themes behind it, and is written in first person.

In an ideal world, you would hire a professional writer to craft the perfect bio, but not everyone is ready to do that. (A great resource is PWAC, the Professional Writers Association of Canada, which has a Guelph chapter.) Here's how to do it yourself, in five steps.

1) State the basics

The components of a bio are quite straight forward:

- Name and medium you work in; special techniques
- Key themes; what you hope to accomplish with your art
- Showing history; any collections your work is in
- Art-related education; any well-known teachers, influences
- Awards; other professional achievements
- Other art-related work, such as being a curator or art writer
- Media coverage
- Significant projects you are working on, upcoming exhibitions, collaborations
- Where you are from; where you live and work

Of course some of these may not apply to you, and you may want to change the order if, say, the fact that you are local is important.

2) Find your nugget

There is something about you that makes your art unique. Make sure it's in your bio. Do you use unusual tools, materials, techniques? Are you tapping into an extraordinary childhood or event from your past? Are you inspired by a place, person, or issue that might resonate with clients or jurors?

3) Emphasize relevant experience

Who are you writing for and what is important to them? You may need a different bio for different events. If, for example, you are applying for an outdoor exhibition where you will be your own salesperson, such as Guelph's Art on the Street, be sure to emphasize any similar events so the organizers know you can deal with crowds, weather, etc.

4) Use the delete button

Editing yourself can be painful, but it's necessary. You want to paint a clear picture of who you are now as an artist. Unless you're just out of high school, your secondary school experience is probably not relevant. If you're applying to show your acrylics, the sculptures you created in the '90s may not do much for you. A website bio should be 200 words or fewer. Some applications will limit you to

100. Trim your bio and see if it reads better. You might be surprised.

5) Grab a proof reader

Make sure to get another set of eyes on your bio before you post/submit it. Typos make you look careless and unprofessional.

That's it! Still not sure you hit the sweet spot? Check out samples of artist's bios on in our [Member Directory](#) or your favourite artist's web site.

***A note from GAC:** In almost all cases, we use the term "artist" broadly, to include creative professionals and amateurs working in many disciplines, including but not limited to: visual arts, performance, craft, music, literary, spoken word, creative designers, multimedia, film, etc. Not every tip will apply to every discipline, but if you're not a "traditional" or visual artist - chances are there's something here that could help you anyway.*