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Some notes on the relationship between your artwork and writing, especially at this time when you are beginning to think about the final show and beyond. I hope you will find them useful.

Artist statement

Generally, between 200-300 words and presented alongside your work either in a catalogue or exhibition panel.

The purpose

- to help the viewer position your work within a broader context or discourse. (Try to be specific and focused. Don't make large claims for your work, that's for others to do, and don't get too complicated or too specialist).

- to help the viewer remember your work.

- to point to some of your overriding concerns/themes

- to point to issues around process/technique that you might want to highlight

Remember that the purpose of writing is to communicate, not to try to impress. It often helps to have someone in mind who represents to you your intended audience.

Extended piece of writing 500-1000 words

Often in catalogues there is an opportunity to write about your work in more depth than the shorter artist statement.

This gives space

- to develop a wider argument (but again beware of being too broad. In the end, a couple of points that are made clearly and well supported will be better than trying to cover all your thoughts).

- to critically view your work against the claims you make for it. (We all have numerous thoughts on every issue under the sun, but you need to focus on those that are expressly evident in the work itself. There is no point in raising the readers expectations, only be let down when seeing the actual work).

- to cite influences, i.e. other artists, writers, thinkers etc. Be specific and narrow it down to one or two key works that you feel are particularly relevant. These should be specifically related to your work, not merely that you think they are great.

Think about the 'style' or form of writing that you might use. In the same way that artists work within styles, there are a multitude of styles in writing. Keep a look out for pieces of writing that you think might help.

We get used to showing our work to our colleagues but we are often less willing to share our writing. I have always found it very useful to have some 'critical friends' that I can run an idea past. It can also be helpful to read a piece aloud and record it so you have the opportunity of playing it back to yourself.

As with most things, the more you do the better it becomes. Try to write as part of your ongoing practice. Furthermore, you might find that by writing about another artist's work that you particularly admire, might bring your own practice into sharper focus.

If you discover that writing is something you enjoy or find stimulating then think about submitting to various publications. Within the field of printmaking there are a number of magazines and journals that you might consider. In all cases, you should start by becoming familiar with the articles they publish and the audiences they address.

Printmaking Today is a magazine aimed very much towards printmakers and the craft of printmaking. Predominantly UK based, articles tend to be relatively short 300-800 words and is presented in a lively visual format. I have a piece in the current issue under the title *My Printing Day*.

Sadly, Art in Print has stopped publishing but a new journal **Impact Printmaking Journal** published by UWE has been launched with its first issue due any moment. The journal is peer reviewed and has developed from the Impact Printmaking Conferences. I have an article in this first issue entitled *The making of Paula Rego's Nursery Rhymes* (5.500 words) and would be delighted to receive any feedback.

Print Quarterly is a very scholarly journal covering all aspects of printmaking from across the globe. Its peer reviewed and publishes substantial articles, smaller notes and a wide range of book and exhibition reviews.

Journal of Visual Art Practice Peer reviewed, This has a broad remit across visual arts. Its peer reviewed with an emphasis on the practitioner/academic.

Conferences;

Conferences are an ideal opportunity to expand your horizons. There are various levels of engagement, The Impact Printmaking Conference is probably the most accessible and offers opportunities for formal papers, panels, artists talks, demonstrations, exhibitions etc. I would always recommend that you find a way of being part of the conference rather than simply attend. The formats are very flexible so for example you might propose a conversation, performance or a panel.

Others conferences to consider are Southern Graphic Council and College Arts Association both in USA

Finally, some examples of writing. This is a very personal selection and represents very different approaches and styles. I have included a piece of my own writing.

I dislike jargon intensely and cannot stand people who think that complex ideas need to be expressed in a way that is obscure or rarefied. I believe the opposite is the case.....

For that reason, I have always believed it is important to talk about art in clear and straightforward terms. It is a subject that invites waffle and pretension. In many discussions about art- contemporary art especially- complexity often descends into obscurantism and mystery becomes muddled with mystification. I hate both. I am interested in speaking as clearly as possible about that which can be spoken about.

I think the things I am dealing with in my work are complex because they are so basic, yet more complex than I can really grasp. I try to find the simplest way to express things, both visually and verbally. There are some things that you can say, and these should be said, and then other things that you can show but cannot say.

Craig-Martin, Michael.2015, *On Being an Artist* London, Art books p.12

Can he do this through sculpture? By kneading plaster, he creates a vacuum from a plenum(space filled with matter). The figure when it leaves his fingers is 'ten steps away', and no matter what we do, it remains there. The statue itself determines the distance from which it must be viewed, just as courtly manners determine the distance from which the king must be addressed. The situation engenders the surrounding no man's land. Each of his figures is Giacometti himself producing his own little vacuum. Yet all these slight absences that are as much a part of us as our names, as our shadows, are not enough to make a world. There is also the void, the universal distance between all things. The street is empty, drinking in the sun; suddenly, in this empty space a human being appears.

Satre, Jean- Paul. 1995 *Essays in Existentialism* New York, Citadel Press Book p406

The authority of [Diane] Arbus's photographs derives from the contrast between their lacerating subject matter and their calm, matter of fact attentiveness. This quality of attention- the attention paid by the photographer, the attention paid by the subject to the act of being photographed- creates the moral theatre of Arbus's straight-on, contemplative portraits. Far from spying on freaks and pariahs, catching them unawares, the photographer has gotten to know them, reassured them- so that they posed for her as calmly and stiffly as any Victorian notable sat in a studio portrait by Julia Margaret Cameron. A large part of the mystery of Arbus's photographs lies in what they suggest about how her subjects felt after consenting to be photographed. Do they see themselves, the viewer wonders, like that?

Sontag, Susan.1979 *On photography* London, Penquin books P.36

I am for an art that is political-eretical-mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum.

I am for an art that grows up not knowing it is art at all, an art given the chance of having a starting point of zero.

I am for an art that embroils itself with the everyday crap & still comes out on top.

I am for an art that imitates the human, that is comic, if necessary, or violent, or whatever is necessary.

I am for an art that takes its form from the lines of life itself, that twists and extends and accumulates and spits and drips, and is heavy and coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself.

I am for an artist who vanishes, turning up in a white cap painting signs or hallways.

I am for art that comes out of a chimney like black hair and scatters in the sky.

I am for art that spills out of an old man's purse when he is bounced off a passing fender. I am for the art out of a doggy's mouth, falling five stories from the roof.

Claes Oldenburg extract from "I Am For an Art..." in Environments, Situations, Spaces (New York: Martha Jackson Gallery 1961); reprinted in an expanded version in Oldenburg and Emmett Williams, eds., Store Days: Documents from The Store (1961) and Ray Gun Theatre (1 962) (New York: Something Else Press. 1967), 39-42.

"And she never done nothing to William Zanzinger": it takes you right back to a time when you believed, or hoped against hope, that there surely must be somebody who would see to it that such things didn't happen. The sadness and pathos are on her behalf, but they touch us all.

All this, though, without that human illusion of feeling that is sentimentality. The song opens with a line that takes a risk: 'William Zanzinger killed poor Hattie Carroll'. But poor is saved from any soft pity because it is hard fact. The word is compassionate but it is dispassionate, too, for it does not lose sight of the plain reality that she is poor. Zanzinger, on the other diamond-ring finger, is not poor. He has 'rich wealthy parents'. They're not just rich, and they're not just wealthy; they're rich wealthy. Superfluous? You bet. Wasteful? But not a word is wasted.

Ricks, Christopher. 2003 *Dylan's visions of sin* London, Viking p229-230

To hear the song:<https://uk.video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr=yhs-Lkry-SF01&hsimp=yhsSF01&hspart=Lkry&p=lonesome+death+of+hattie+carroll#id=16&vid=c5a2e84e6a20e12ad703c9a748e47104&action=click>

*Images of familiar things in recognisable places attract inevitable associations, provoke reflection on the emotions they arouse, the values they represent. Those in *Some poems by Jules Laforgue with images by Patrick Caulfield*, the limited edition book, with accompanying portfolio of prints, published in 1973 by Petersburg Press, were prepared by the artist over a period of three years from 1969. Taken together, they comprise Caulfield's most sustained meditation on the inconsequentiality of the everyday, the ineluctable modality of the visible, the inescapable turning of time. They add up to an inventory of absences.*

Gooding, Mel. 1999 *Patrick Caulfield: The complete prints 1964-1999* London, Alan Cristea Gallery. P.11

*There is a reductive austerity in Morandi's compositions: shape, interval and tonal modulation distil an image to its essence. Morandi was both a painter and printmaker, and is widely regarded as one of the finest etchers since Rembrandt, an artist Morandi held in great regard. And it is in his etchings that one can see most clearly Morandi's desire to capture the invisible and give it pictorial form. While Cezanne's still lives question the edges of perception through shifting marks and quivering edges, Morandi's question the very materiality of their objects. In the exquisite *Various Objects on a Table*, which measures just 175 by 194 mm, Morandi works to conjure the scene before him, while simultaneously doubting its existence. The image hovers between material reality and dissolution. Morandi simulates tone through freely drawn, crosshatched lines. These lines produce the delicate web through which we discern the image, while offering a continuous reminder that*

this is a flat image, a construct. Teasingly, he invites us to draw back, as if on a promise that the picture will come into focus, and also to lean in close, with the expectation of a secret that will be revealed. Neither position results in a fixed resolution. The image remains in a state of flux, alternating between absence and presence; each patch of tone tempts us to configure it into a pot or a bottle, while nonetheless refusing to be pinned down. Even the distinction between objects and the space around them is questioned, the intervals rendered as palpably as the objects themselves.

Coldwell, Paul. *Giorgio Morandi: Various objects on a table (1931)*

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