

WRITING AN ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

An artist biography is essentially a very brief summary of how you got to where you are in life. It generally consists of one to two paragraphs and is usually around one half of a page. A biography consists of information such as where you went to school, what degrees you have, when you earned them, if you've led any workshops or participated in any workshops, major exhibitions where your artwork has been exhibited and any major collections that your work is a part of. A biography is a quick summary of your resume.

Step 1

Go through your resume and highlight your most important accomplishments such as getting your art degree, where you got it from and when. Highlight any major awards and any major collections your work is a part of. Highlight significant workshops you have participated in and any major shows, especially recent solo exhibitions.

Step 2

List the information that you want to include in your biography. Then start writing out sentences briefly describing each point. Usually you start with where you went to school and when and what type of degree you earned. Then you write about the exhibitions, workshops and collections. Finally you end with where you currently are....are you taking additional art classes? Are you working on a grant? Are you working on a major commission?

Step 3

Have a colleague, friend, advisor, parent, or the Office of Career Services to read your artist biography. Often when writing your biography, you think a sentence makes sense when in reality it is confusing. Listen to opinions from others and try the suggestions offered by the person who is proofing your biography. If you don't like the suggestions offered, that's ok, you do not have to follow them. Make sure that you do not have any misspelled words and that your verb tense is consistent throughout the document.

Step 4

Make sure that you save your biography on the computer and also on a CD or flash drive so you have it for future biographies. Oftentimes you can reuse certain parts of a previous biography and cater it to the purpose at hand. When you save your biography, don't just save it under the heading "Artist Biography" but save it also by date and by purpose. Look at it occasionally and update as needed.

For example:

"Artist Biography ICC Solo Show 2007" or "Artist Biography BFA Application"

Step 5

Print out your artist biography! Print your biography on the same paper as your artist statement, resume and cover letter. Avoid cute generic paper. Stick with standard white, ivory, or any neutral solid color paper.

Examples of Artists Biography

Sample 1

Jennifer Costa is an Assistant Professor of Art and Gallery Curator at Illinois Central College in East Peoria, IL. She received her Master of Fine Arts Degree in Sculpture from East Carolina University and her Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the University of North Carolina, Asheville. She lived in North Carolina for 16 years before moving to Illinois in 2000. Her sculptural work consists mostly of studio furniture created from metal and wood.

Sample 2

Annie Lee was born in Gadsen, Alabama and lived for a number of years in Chicago. She has recently resettled in Las Vegas.

Lee began painting at the age of ten, winning her first competition shortly after. In high school she won a four-year scholarship to Northwestern University which she declined. She returned to school at the age of forty after two marriages and two children. She did undergraduate work at Mundelein College, Chicago and the American Academy of Art, and she earned her master's degree in Education from Loyola University. As the demand for her work grew, she left her then current job as a railroad clerk to paint full-time.

Annie Lee's art reflects her remarkable ability to observe life as she sees it, combining the elements of humor, satire and realism to share those observations with her audience. Her paintings are popular throughout the U.S. and well beyond. She enjoys considerable recognition in the Caribbean, Europe and Japan. Her work has been featured in film such as Eddie Murphy's "Coming to America" and "Boomerang"; and on television shows including "ER", "Hanging with Mr. Cooper", "A Different World", "227" and "Amen".

Today her work can be found in a variety of media and on a number of merchandise such as collectibles, figurines and kitchenware.