

Art and Design Studio

Year 1

SECTION

8

PORTFOLIO AND EXHIBITION



Creative Project

Portfolio Building

INTRODUCTION

Dear learner, you are welcome to section 8. In this section, you will be introduced to how to write an artist's statement. Also, you will be guided in producing different types of art/design portfolios. As part of this section, you will discuss the various ways of showing your artwork to the public through art exhibitions.

By the end of this section, you should be able to

- Develop an artist's statement to reflect a portfolio and exhibition.
- Generate a manual and digital portfolio as evidence of art and design practice.
- Use appropriate strategies to mount an art and design exhibition.

Key Ideas

- Artist statement helps to explain the concepts and ideas of an artwork.
- Every artist needs to keep a portfolio, which could either be physical or digital.
- Art and design works can be exhibited in a physical space or on digital platforms.

UNDERSTANDING AN ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Meaning of Artist's Statement

You may have come across some artworks that are not easy to understand. Sometimes, you try to understand them, but their meanings are not clear. Therefore, artists describe the ideas that inform their artworks. The description of the concepts and ideas by artists to help the understanding of their artworks is what is termed as an artist statement. Usually, it is a brief text that artists write to explain their artworks for easy understanding. Generally, an artist's statement is a communication link between the artist and the public, explaining the artist's intentions or why the work was produced.

The artist's statements may be brief, or possibly a page. It could be made public through exhibition catalogues, and flyers. It could also be displayed in digital or printed format for the viewers to read. Artist's statement could be done to reflect the theme of a particular exhibition, and where necessary, it could be varied to suit a different exhibition. It is a key feature of an exhibition proposal. The exhibition proposal is discussed in the subsequent lessons.

Guidelines for Developing an Artist's Statement

When writing the artist's statement, some guidelines need to be followed. The following are some of them.

- **Provide a brief introduction:** Give a brief statement about yourself as an artist indicating your full name, your artistic discipline (textiles artist, painter, ceramist, sculptor), and state briefly the types of artworks you create. Include a bold and engaging statement that attracts the reader's attention to your artwork.
- **State your artistic concepts and themes:** Describe the techniques (e.g. carving, impasto) and mediums (oil paint, digital media, and installations) you use to create your artworks. Explain why you use these techniques and mediums, and how they contribute to your works. In addition, state the key themes or concepts in your work, explain their importance, and indicate how they are represented in your works. For example, you may be exploring identity, social problems, memory, and emotions as your themes and concepts. Also, indicate the message and philosophy communicated through your artworks.
- **Explain the contexts and influences of your artworks:** State the contexts based on which the works were created. It could be social, political, economic, educational, environmental, cultural, and religious. Also, state if contemporary artistic styles influence your works.
- **Define your approach to art making:** Indicate your creative process including how you develop your artistic ideas and produce your artworks.
- **Engage the Audience through your artworks:** Consider how you want viewers to interact with your work. Indicate what you want the audience (viewers) to see, feel, or experience when they engage with your art.
- **Write the statement of conclusion:** Summarise your key points by highlighting the importance of your artistic journey. You can also include upcoming artistic projects.

Importance of Artist Statement

- It serves as a good way to clarify one's ideas about his/her work(s).
- It gives art dealers, curators, or the public access to the description of your work, in your own words.
- This can be good for a reviewer as well.
- It is useful in writing a proposal for an exhibition or project.

- It is often required when applying for funding.
- It is often required when applying for further studies.
- It serves as a reference for people who will want to write about your work.
- It is a good way to introduce your work to patrons and the public.

"With my recent works I try to breathe life into a long forgotten culture so that its designs, ideas, innovations, and lifestyle are displayed on my canvas."

Figure 8.1: Example of An Artist Statement

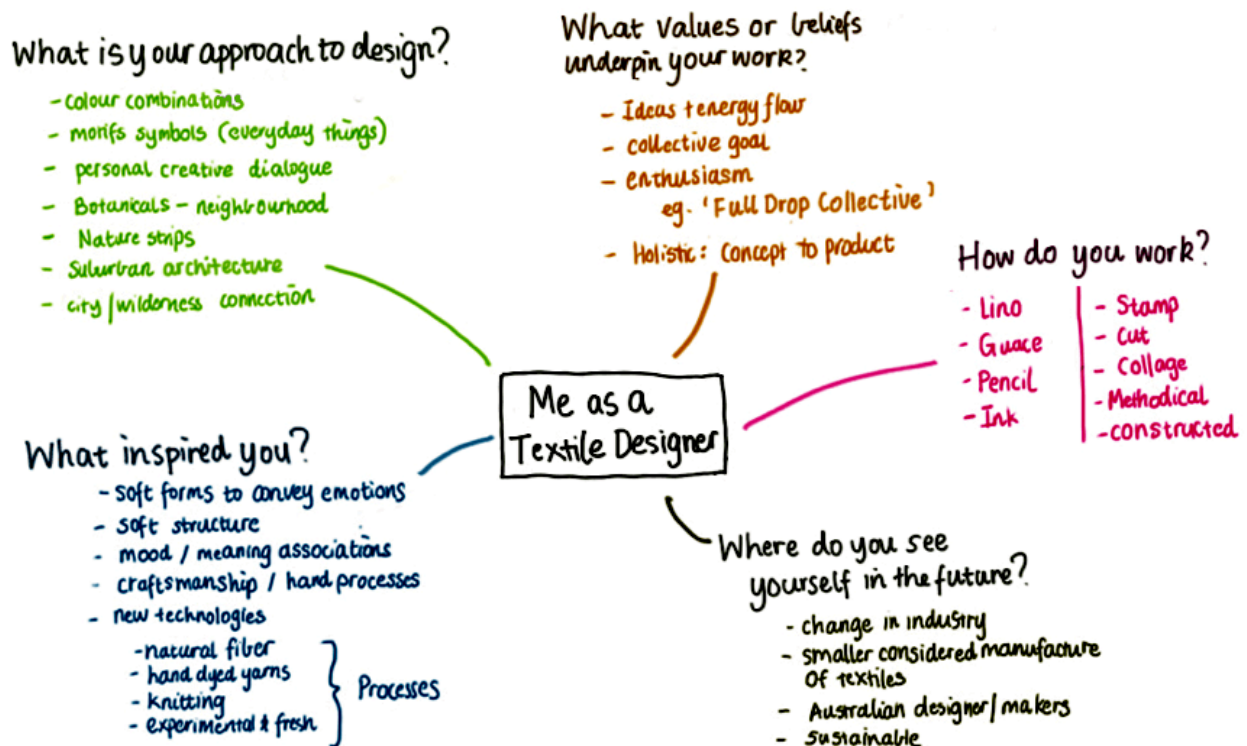


Figure 8.2: Drafting the artist statement

Activity 8.1

Search for 2-D and 3-D art and design works of local and international artists and read about the artists' statements.

Activity 8.2

Carefully look at the guidelines of local and international artists' statements and write down the various steps involved.

Activity 8.3

Write an artist's statement about your own 2-D or 3-D artwork.

ARTIST PORTFOLIO

In Section 4 we learned that Art and Design Studio works need to be stored. You also learned about the meaning, characteristics, and importance of an art portfolio. Remember, an art or design portfolio is a collection of artworks created by the artist or designer. It serves as a protective storage where the artist/designer keeps their works. You also learned that a portfolio makes it easy and convenient for artists to handle and transport their artworks.

Additionally, you learned that art portfolios can be physical things such as large cardboard folders, containers, or electronic files with digital images and notes saved on a computer or an external hard drive. The following examples of art portfolios add to those you have already seen in Section 4.



Figure 8.3: Artist's/Designer's Portfolio



Figure 8.4: Example of pages in the portfolio



Figure 8.5: Example of a manual portfolio case



Figure 8.6: *The use of Virtual resources technology as a means to display an artist's digital portfolio*

How to Build an Art Portfolio

Having refreshed your understanding of an art portfolio, it is important to know how to build your art portfolio. This lesson guides you on what artwork is appropriate to be kept in your portfolio. It is important to note that in building your portfolio (whether physical or digital), things such as drawings and sketches, observations, verbal responses, written records, and actual products are considered.

In building your art portfolio, here are some guidelines to follow:

- State the purpose of the portfolio.
- Select your best works based on quality and relevance.
- Organize your works in chronological order (e.g. according to dates, themes, concepts, philosophy, narrative flow).
- Provide context for each work indicating the title and description, project background, creative process, and impact. Include your artist statement.
- For physical portfolios use quality printing and case.
- Include the artist's resume or curriculum vitae (CV).
- Update your portfolio regularly.
- Peer reviews and written self-reflections can be placed in the portfolio.

Building Electronic or Digital portfolios

Electronic or digital portfolio was discussed in Section 4. You saw examples of electronic or digital portfolio interfaces. As part of this lesson, you will learn how to create and save a digital portfolio in a drive or a folder in a computer, mobile phone, or tablet which will make it easy and convenient to transport and view artworks. You will develop

your own simple way of presenting the artworks in your digital portfolio. By building your electronic portfolios, you are also learning and applying the technological skills commonly used by artists or designers.

In building a digital portfolio, you can use a scanner to copy or take a photograph with a camera or smartphone. The images are then transferred onto a computer using a USB cable or other means. When developing a digital portfolio, you may make use of design software such as CorelDraw, Adobe Photoshop, or Adobe Illustrator. After successfully creating a digital portfolio, the next step is to save it on an external hard drive, Google Drive, or personal website for easy transportation and accessibility. The following are common tools for creating an electronic or digital portfolio.



Figure 8.7: *Scanner*



Figure 8.8: *DSLR Camera*



Figure 8.9: *Smartphone*



Figure 8.10: *Laptop*

Importance of Art Portfolio

Art portfolio comes with benefits for artists, designers, and creative professionals. It is an essential and dynamic tool for displaying and building a professional presence. Some of the important of an art portfolio are:

- **An art portfolio showcases one's artistic skills:** It provides a comprehensive overview of an artist's technical skills, creativity, and proficiency in various mediums. It also projects the artistic strengths and levels of an artist.
- **A properly organised portfolio serves as an artistic identity for branding an artist:** It conveys one's artistic style and approach to the public. Also, an art portfolio reflects the seriousness of an artist in his/her creative endeavours and offers more artistic opportunities when shared with galleries, clients, or established art institutions.
- **It is essential for academic and career opportunities:** For students applying for admission to schools or universities, a good portfolio increases their chances of gaining admission. Besides, when applying for jobs, internships, and artist-in-residence projects, an art portfolio provides proof of your artistic capabilities.
- **It documents and communicates one's artistic growth:** An art portfolio shows your artistic development over time and offers an opportunity to reflect on how one's artistic techniques, concepts, and styles have evolved.
- **An art portfolio serves as a tool for curators to use in selecting artists for art exhibitions:** When submitting portfolios for exhibition, it gives curators insights into the body of works of artists and helps them to decide who to select.

- **It increases networking and collaboration opportunities:** It serves as a powerful marketing tool that allows you to promote your works to potential collaborators, clients, or art collectors. In the case of a digital portfolio, it enhances the visibility of the artist through social media and online platforms.

Activity 8.4

Search for either manual or digital art portfolios of local and international artists and write down their similarities and differences.

Activity 8.5

Build both manual and digital portfolios of your own 2-D and 3-D art and design works.

ART AND DESIGN EXHIBITIONS

An art and design exhibition is a special event where artists show their art and design works to the public. Exhibitions in Art and Design are done in different forms. It could be done in a physical space or online. Exhibitions done in the physical space could be described as indoor or outdoor. The indoor exhibition involves displaying artworks in an enclosed space, structure, or building. An exhibition done in an open space is known as an outdoor exhibition. Digital or virtual exhibitions are online art shows that offer artists the opportunity to display their artworks on the Internet. Another form of digital art exhibition is through the display of soft copies of artworks on screens using computers. Examples of artworks displayed during exhibitions include sculpture, modelling, leatherwork, graphic art, textiles, painting, assemblage, ceramic/pottery wares, jewellery, basketry articles, still pictures, and many others.

Planning an Art and Design Exhibition

In planning an art and design exhibition, the key things to consider include what to exhibit; where to exhibit; when to exhibit, how to exhibit, and the budget involved.

- **What to exhibit:** The type of artwork to exhibit, whether digital or tangible is a very important factor to consider when planning art and design exhibitions. This is because knowing the type of artwork to exhibit helps in planning the format for the display. For example, textile artists may exhibit print fabrics, embroidery designs, and soft copies of fabric designs, while a sculptor may display small and big statues, relief sculptures, terracotta works, and portraits among others.

Also, having the idea of what to exhibit informs the selection of the basic tools, materials, and equipment to be used in organising the exhibition space.

Art and Design exhibitions can be solo (one artist), or group exhibitions (two or more artists). Be it solo or group exhibitions, it is important to collaborate with others in the organization of the exhibition. This is because art and design exhibitions involve teamwork and planning.

- **Where to exhibit:** In deciding where to exhibit, there is a need to consider whether the exhibition will be done in a physical or online space. If it is done in a physical space, consider the availability of the space, easy access to the place, free movement of air (ventilation) in the space, free movement of people, lighting, the safety of the place (security), and the number of artworks to be exhibited. In addition, the intended impact of the entire exhibition on the audience should also be considered when deciding where to exhibit.
- **When to exhibit:** It involves the date, time, and duration of the exhibition. Also, the intended audience is a key factor to consider when deciding when to exhibit. Consider the period within the year, day(s) for the exhibition, and place. The date refers to the day the exhibition will take place. For example, if the exhibition date is set for September 15th, it means that it will take place on that specific day. Also, the time tells which part of the day the exhibition will start and end. For instance, if the exhibition starts at 9:00 am (which is in the morning) and ends at 5:00 pm (which is in the evening), that is the time one can visit the exhibition space to view the artworks. Duration refers to the total amount of time the exhibition will last from start to end. If the exhibition starts at 9:00 am and ends at 5 pm, its duration is 8 hours. That is how long one can spend viewing the works.

In the case of digital exhibition, consider online platform selection, which should be easy to use (user-friendly interface), and offer 3-D features and zooming (technical capabilities) such as social media platforms, virtual galleries, and websites among others. You should also ensure that the online exhibition platform is easy to find using various devices such as smartphones, tablets, and desktops.

- **How to exhibit:** How an art and design exhibition is organised is informed by the type of exhibition, be it physical or digital. The space and layout, lighting, display and mounting, context and interpretation of artworks, audience engagement, marketing, and promotion are key factors to be considered when planning how to exhibit. A good space and layout of the exhibition ensure that there is enough space for viewers to move around freely and comfortably. To achieve this, artworks should be carefully arranged to guide visitors through the exhibition. This involves grouping artworks by themes, context, and styles to create a logical flow. Also, the lighting system (whether natural or artificial) at the exhibition space should enhance the visibility of the works without creating any shadows on them. When displaying or mounting the artwork, choose appropriate techniques such as hanging, fastening, and framing to ensure easy viewing of the works.
- **Budget:** Generating a budget for an exhibition of art and design works, involves careful planning that caters to all expenses. Generally, the budget includes the costs of exhibition space, transportation, insurance, marketing and promotion, curating,

and staffing. Others include the costs of display and mounting, Information Technology, legal and administrative, contingency (unforeseen expenses), documentation and archiving (photos, videos brochures, and catalogues), visitor engagement (refreshment), feedback, and evaluation. Add all the costs together to know the total budget for the exhibition.

Exhibition Proposal

An exhibition proposal is a plan that helps artists or designers to explain their ideas, the importance of the exhibition, and how much money they need to organise an art exhibition. It also shows sponsors and other artists the nature of the exhibition, so they can help make it happen. Sometimes art and design exhibition proposals are submitted to galleries, museums, and other institutions for consideration and approval. In your school, you may submit it to sponsors, art lovers, and connoisseurs for support.

Features of an Art and Design Exhibition Proposal

There are varied features of art and design exhibition proposals. The following are some of the key features include:

- **Title of the exhibition:** Provide an interesting, descriptive, and engaging title that captures the importance of the exhibition.
- **Overview of summary of the exhibition:** Provide a brief description of the main concept, the purpose of the exhibition, and its contributions to the field of art and design.
- **Themes:** Briefly explain the theme (main idea) of the exhibition indicating its artistic, cultural, historical, social, and aesthetic contexts. This entails connecting the educational relevance of the exhibition to the theme and its impact on the audience.
- **Aims and objectives:** This has to do with the purpose of the exhibition and its expected outcomes on the audience, institution, and community.
- **Artist(s) and artworks:** This captures the list of participating artists in the exhibitions including their bios, artist(s) statements, and brief descriptions of their artworks.
- **Target audience:** Provide the target audience and your intended engagement strategy with them. For example, the target audience may be students, art collectors, or the public.
- **Exhibition layout and display:** Determine the plan for how artworks will be displayed or mounted, the flow of the exhibition, spatial arrangement, and visitors' experience. You should also provide details about the physical setups such as lighting, signage, and multimedia elements where necessary. With online exhibitions, provide an explanation of the virtual platforms and any interactive features.

- **Logistics and timelines:** This requires providing information on the logistics, time and duration of the exhibition, and how the artworks will be transported, installed, and dismantled. Where there are educational programmes such as artists' talks, and workshops, that make them known.
- **Budget and funding:** This includes the estimated cost, the funding source, and revenue opportunities.
- **Marketing and promotion plan:** Provide publicity strategy and planned promotional materials on electronic and print media such as billboards, posters, flyers, brochures, exhibition catalogues, and radio and television adverts.
- **Partnership:** List all exhibition partners (institutions, galleries, organisations, other artists); and sponsors who will provide financial or in-kind support.
- **Evaluation and feedback:** State how you will evaluate the success of the exhibition in your exhibition review.
- **Documentation and archiving:** Make provision for high-quality images, and videos, for reviewers to understand the visual and aesthetic appeals. Where applicable, include the bio or resume of the curators highlighting their previous experience and exhibitions curated).

Activity 8.7

Look for exhibition catalogues of Ghanaian artists and take note of the types of works exhibited, and the artists' bios.

Activity 8.8

Produce a manual or digital portfolio of your own artwork and write the guidelines you followed in producing it.

Review Questions

1. In your own words, write down the meaning of the term *artist's statement*.
2. Write FOUR (4) importance of the *artist's statement*.
3. Create a diagram showing the various steps involved in writing an artist statement.
4. Briefly write your understanding of the meaning of an art portfolio.
5. State and explain the importance of an art portfolio.
6. Provide a written report that shows the guidelines you followed in building your own art portfolio
7. Explain the concept of an art exhibition.
8. Present a written report that shows the guidelines to follow when organising an art exhibition.
9. Use your artworks to mount an indoor exhibition that reflects topical issues in your society.

Extended Reading

1. Cleveland Institute of Art. (2024). ***Building an artist portfolio***. Cleveland Institute of Art. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.edu/files/resources/16-17ciaportfoliotips.pdf>
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3. Huge, A. D. S. (1999). ***The Manual of Museum Planning, (Professional Museum and Heritage Series)***. 2nd Edition. London Stationery Office. Retrieved from <http://ereserve.library.utah.edu/Annual/ARTH/6002/Muller/manual.pdf>
4. <https://explore-vc.org/en/galleries/subgalleries/2022-collective-memory-exhibition-ghana.html>
5. [Gallery — Dikan](#)

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