

Arts Affirmation Session: Bio-Writing Workshop

Facilitator: Jennifer Broydell

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Presentation
 - a. What is an Artist Bio?
 - b. Content: Personal & Practical
 - c. Things to Avoid
 - d. Best Practice
 - e. ELAN's Member Directory
3. Self-Reflective Activity



About Me

- Senior MA student in Art History at Concordia
- Special Projects Assistant for ELAN since June 2018
- Professional experience in teaching, training, tutoring, technical writing, research



What Is An Artist's Bio?

- A text that introduces the person behind the artwork
- Often accompanies your CV and artist statement
 - DIFFERS from a CV - written in prose, gives more context
 - DIFFERS from an artist statement - includes details of your life, doesn't go into much depth about artwork

Content: Personal

- Convey who you are and what you've done
- Only include events relevant to your development as an artist
- Don't just copy your CV
- Mention your ideas and inspirations
- Be honest, authentic and unpretentious

Content: Practical

- Narrative-style (usually from past-present)
- Third-person prose
- Keep sentences short and simple
- Length varies - adhere to specific requirements
- Tone:
 - Clear and professional
 - Reflect the tone of the artwork

AVOID

- ~~Passive voice~~

- 🏆 The 2018 Sobey Art Award was won by Kapwani Kiwanga.
- 🙋 Kapwani Kiwanga won the 2018 Sobey Art Award.

- ~~Exaggerations~~

- “the best”
- “amazing”

- ~~Artspeak or complicated language~~

- “IAE rebukes English for its lack of nouns: *Visual* becomes *visuality*, *global* becomes *globality*, *potential* becomes *potentiality*, *experience* becomes ... *experientcability*” (Rule and Levine, 2012)

Best Practice

- Proofread and peer edit before you submit
- Keep a digital file of your art writing
- Research specific requirements and adapt your bio accordingly
 - Work from a COPY (don't overwrite or delete)
 - Save different versions of your bio for future use



ELAN's Member Directory

- **Directory Filters**

- by discipline
- by region

- **Search Engine**

- keywords

<https://members.quebec-elan.org/>

Self-Reflective Activity

1. **Discussion:** what kind of questions do you think an artist bio should answer?
2. **Activity:** take a moment to reflect on your practice by answering the questions provided (5-10 mins)

THANK YOU