Preparing an application

Above all, an artist application should be clear, concise, and should exemplify that the applicant has read the guidelines of the call very closely. Make sure you have time to commit to both the exhibition opportunity *and* the application. Plan accordingly. Most calls will ask for an artist statement, a project description, a CV, and visual documentation.

Ask yourself whether the application serves your goals as an artist. Are you accommodated by the mandate of the organization? Remember that it takes about 5 years to move beyond the stage of an emerging artist, and gaining experience can be a better motivator than "success." Art Matters is an excellent opportunity to get legitimate off-campus experience while still studying. The anonymity policy is in place to ensure inclusive peer-reviewing, as well as to encourage newcomers to get their art out of the studio.

Writing an artist statement

An **artist statement** is a general statement about your practice that is not specific to projects. It reads easily, is informative, and provides the reader with access and insight into your artistic work. Normally, it is about 100-300 words, serving as a window into your world and creative process. It offers insight into the general issues and ideas expressed in your artwork and how you carry out these ideas in your art. It is not a bio. Rather, it is written in the first person. Though you can use the text over and over again, remember to update it and bend it just as often as your CV, which it works in conjunction with.

Writing an **artist statement** begins pretty easily: WHAT, HOW, and WHY. **What** are you doing? What medium, what context, and what ideas and themes are you looking at? Then, **how** are you doing it? This is where you explain your methodology and approach- your general strategy of execution from idea to output. Finally, you can share **why**. Why do you do what I do, and what is your goal?

This is a logical structure that can be toyed with, but it's an excellent place to start. There's also room for questions like: How does your art relate to others' art? What do you want people to understand through seeing your art? What/who influences you? Of course, when speaking about influences, there's no need to refer to your heroes. Rather, influences can be handy to explain the direction an unfinished work is headed in. Remember, an artist statement shouldn't get too theoretical. Jurors will read hundreds; clarity will stick out.

Writing a project description

A **project statement** or **project description** provides a description of a specific body of work and how you are able to present it. It is longer than an artist statement, usually about 300-500 words. It includes as much technical information as possible, giving a clear picture of how the project shall be mounted should the proposal be taken up. If the project is not yet completed, you can describe a logical strategy of execution. Explaining a transition from a current project can be very useful, in order to give the jurors something to start with.

Begin with writing exercises like free-writing or mind-mapping. Then, develop your outline: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHY, HOW. **Who** is involved? **What** are you trying to do and what will it look like upon exhibition? **When** did you do it, when will you do it, or when *can* you do it? **Why** are you proposing this? For example, this is a good place to refer to the mandate of the organization or thematic of the call. Finally, **how** do you plan to mount it? Always outline and review, just like an essay. Restructure the body of text so relevant bits are put together, and fluffy statements are narrowed down or kicked out. A juror should definitely be able to recount the project description in a single sentence.

No matter how many project descriptions you've written, have someone review each one. Is it clear? Is it relevant, innovative, and insightful? And- it may seem like a no-brainer- is the project feasible?

Adding supporting documents

Calls will generally ask for about 10-20 **supporting document**s that illustrate your work, especially the work you are proposing. Supporting documents generally come with very specific guidelines (i.e. typically .jpg files only, 1024x786 pixels, max 1mb) and are the most important part of the submission. Think about the sequence of the images; you want strong images to begin with and end with, and you want the first and last to work well together

should the jurors scroll through the images in a cycle. Each image should be captioned (i.e. title, series, year, size, medium), or the sequence should at least be accompanied by a list. You should mostly include just the work you intend to show, though maybe some images of your previous work that relate to your current proposal or structure what you are doing.

In the case of Art Matters, asking for extensive documentation isn't exactly accessible to undergraduate students. Many proposals are simply proposals, incomplete or even conceptual. Art Matters asks for up to 5 supporting documents, but encourages applicants to think outside the box if no documentation is in their possession. Consider clearly labelled drafts and sketches of unfinished visual works, or links to sample videos or audio clips for performances. Even your Soundcloud or Vimeo is helpful. As dancers, theatre artists, and musicians often apply at the beginning or in the middle of a project's process, Art Matters encourages supporting documents that are in-process as well. Consider filming yourself performing, just to ground the application in something visual and rhythmical. Anything that strengthens the application is invited. For example, documentation of previous artworks that you don't plan to exhibit can fit in, so long as this is clearly indicated. These images can support what you are doing, and exemplify that you have experience exhibiting your work.

Writing a CV

This isn't the type of CV you hand out at the mall. Artists have **artistic CVs** that include only entries related to art. There's no need to include descriptions, just relevant experience organized from most recent to least recent under headings. If call-outs don't ask for a CV, don't provide one. Art Matters asks for a CV not to privilege more experienced students, but to get undergrads started on outlining their artistic CV. Typical headings to consider including are*:

-*personal info*
-*education and training (only art related)*
-*solo exhibitions*
-*group exhibitions*
-*public art/special projects*
-*screenings*
-*curatorial projects*
-artist residencies
-*awards and grants (scholarships can be included, FASA grants too!)*
-*bibliography (wherever you art has been published- consider student publications like Interfold!)*
-collections (if your art has been purchased)
-community/affiliations
-talks/conferences
-*professional experience (only art related)*

*In italics are headings that may be easier to include within an Art Matters application.