

## General guidelines for writing a Statement for Creative Works

The process of writing a Statement for Creative Works should always be a work in progress, as work changes and matures with time. In your Statement for Creative Works try to give the reader a sense of the concept, decision for use of formal elements, technology, and inspiration for the work.

1. "I" statements are the best way to express your intentions and inspirations. This does not mean you need to start sentences with "I", or ever use that term, but keep it about your concept and working process. Don't try to instruct your viewer, let them experience the work for themselves. For example, don't say something like "You will feel angst while looking at my video".
2. Avoid easy comparisons to common words or other creatives. "My work is like Gary Hill's" or "it looks like a river" constitute a laziness with vocabulary and gives the reader very little to work with. If indeed rivers are the inspiration, get specific about its qualities rather than the amorphous general idea of "river."
3. Don't state the obvious/what the viewer already gets about the work. If your work is a video, we can already see that and it doesn't need to be in the statement. This being said, it may be good to describe the process if it is technically unique.
4. Get feedback and edit. You don't have to stress over what you say about your work, but sometimes other points of view can be helpful when you are trying to place things into context. Also, take a break from the initial statement and come back later to re-read what you have written. Having time to reflect is very helpful.
5. Keep it simple! You can pack a lot into a few sentences while still being articulate and informative. Talk about the concept, media, inspiration and creative process to start.

### In addition:

A statement should:

- State your ideas clearly and simply
- This is an introduction of your own perspective and reasoning behind the work
- Help clarify your own ideas about your work

Avoid:

- Arrogance and pomposity (how great or relevant you are)
- Grandiose expressions and clichés about your work and views
- Overuse of technical terms and jargon
- Long explanations or discourses on techniques and materials you use
- Poems or prosy writing
- Childhood or family stories, unless they are very relevant to your work

## **EXAMPLES OF PROFESSIONAL STATEMENTS FROM CREATIVES**

### **LYNN HERSHMAN**

Over the last three decades, artist and filmmaker Lynn Hershman Leeson has been internationally acclaimed for her pioneering use of new technologies and her investigations of issues that are now recognized as key to the working of our society: identity in a time of consumerism, privacy in a era of surveillance, interfacing of humans and machines, and the relationship between real and virtual worlds. In 2004, she was named “the most influential woman working in New Media. A major survey of her work was presented in 2012 at Kunsthalle Bremen. Her work is featured in “A Bigger Splash: Painting After Performance” at the Tate Modern London in 2012 and a retrospective and catalogue are being planned for 2015 at the Zentrum fur Kunst Und Medientechnologie, Germany.

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### **Casey Reas**

Casey Reas' ongoing Process series explores the relationship between naturally evolved systems and those that are synthetic. The imagery evokes transformation, and visualizes systems in motion and at rest. Equally embracing the qualitative human perception and the quantitative rules that define digital culture, organic form emerges from precise mechanical structures. Reas' software, prints, and installations have been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions at museums and galleries in the United States, Europe, and Asia.

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### **Golan Levin**

Golan Levin develops artifacts and experiences which explore the expressive use of computation. His work focuses on the design of systems for the creation, manipulation and performance of simultaneous image and sound, as part of a more general inquiry into the formal language of interactivity, and of nonverbal communications protocols in cybernetic systems. Through performances, digital artifacts, and virtual environments, often created with a variety of collaborators, Levin applies creative twists to digital technologies that highlight our

relationship with machines, make visible our ways of interacting with each other, and explore the intersection of abstract communication and interactivity. Levin has exhibited widely in Europe, America and Asia.

Levin's work combines equal measures of the whimsical, the provocative, and the sublime in a wide variety of online, installation and performance media. He is known for the conception and creation of Dialtones: A Telesymphony [2001], a concert whose sounds are wholly performed through the carefully choreographed dialing and ringing of the audience's own mobile phones, and for interactive information visualizations like The Secret Lives of Numbers [2002] and The Dumpster [2006], which offer novel perspectives onto millions of online communications. Previously, Levin was granted an

Award of Distinction in the Prix Ars Electronica for his Audiovisual Environment Suite [2000] interactive software and its accompanying audiovisual performance, Scribble [2000]. Other projects from recent years include Re:MARK [2002], Messa di Voce [2003], and The Manual Input Sessions [2004], developed in collaboration with Zachary Lieberman, and Scrapple [2005] and Ursonography [2005]; these performance and installation works use augmented-reality technologies to create multi-person, real-time visualizations of their participants' speech and gestures. Levin's current projects, such as Opto-Isolator [2007] and Double-Taker (Snout) [2008], employ interactive robotics and machine vision to explore the theme of gaze as a primary new mode for human-machine communication.

Levin's work has been presented in the Whitney Biennial, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, the Kitchen, and the Neuberger Museum, all in New York; the Ars Electronica Center in Linz, Austria; the NTT InterCommunication Center (ICC) in Tokyo, Japan; and the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie (ZKM) in Karlsruhe, Germany, among other venues. His funding credits include grants from Creative Capital, The New York State Council on the Arts, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Rockefeller MAP Fund, The Greenwall Foundation, the Langlois Foundation, and the Arts Council of England. Levin received undergraduate and graduate degrees from the MIT Media Laboratory, where he studied in the Aesthetics and Computation Group. Between degrees, he worked for four years as an interaction designer and research scientist at Interval Research Corporation, Palo Alto. Presently Levin is Director of the Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry and Associate Professor of Electronic Time-Based Art at Carnegie Mellon University, where he also holds Courtesy Appointments in the School of Computer Science and the School of Design.

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## **Jenny Holzer**

Jenny Holzer was born in Gallipolis, Ohio, in 1950. She received a BA from Ohio University in Athens (1972); an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence (1977); and honorary doctorates from the University of Ohio (1993), the Rhode Island School of Design (2003), and New School University, New York (2005). Whether questioning consumerist impulses, describing torture, or lamenting death and disease, Jenny Holzer's use of language provokes a response in the viewer. While her subversive work often blends in among advertisements in public space, its arresting content violates expectations. Holzer's texts—such as the aphorisms “Abuse of power comes as no surprise” and “Protect me from what I want”—have appeared on posters and condoms, and as electronic LED signs and projections of xenon light. Holzer's recent use of text ranges from silk-screened paintings of declassified government memoranda detailing prisoner abuse to poetry and prose in a sixty-five-foot-wide wall of light in the lobby of 7 World Trade Center, New York. She has received many awards, including the Golden Lion from the Venice Biennale (1990); the Skowhegan Medal (1994); and the Diploma of Chevalier (2000) from the French government. Major exhibitions include Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2001); Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (1997); Dia Art Foundation, New York (1989); and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (1989). Since 1996, Holzer has organized public light projections in cities worldwide. She was the first woman to represent the United States in the Venice Biennale (1990). Jenny Holzer lives and works in Hoosick Falls, New York.

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