



Artist Bio

WHO ARE YOU? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

What is an artist's biography?

- ▶ An artist's biography is a one or two paragraph statement that provides useful background information to viewers, jurors, collectors, galleries, curators and grantors.
- ▶ All these people need to know about your career achievements and how you as a person connect to your work. While you will likely discuss your creative work briefly, this is NOT an artist statement.
- ▶ You need an artist biography to:
 - ▶ promote your art on your website and social media platforms
 - ▶ Provide for press releases
 - ▶ Add to grant, residency, workshop proposals
 - ▶ Form part of an exhibition catalog or brochure
 - ▶ Provide to any gallery or art center showing your work

What to include?

You don't need all of these – just the most relevant items.

- ▶ Where are you from? Where do you live currently?
- ▶ How did your interest in art develop?
- ▶ Where did you study art (or are you a self-taught artist)?
- ▶ What art media are you most connected to? What media do you typically work in?
- ▶ What major exhibits have you participated in?
- ▶ Is your art in any private or public collections?
- ▶ What awards and honors have you earned?
- ▶ Have you served in other art-related capacities (i.e., on a board, curating an exhibit, being a juror)?
- ▶ How did your interest in a particular theme/concept emerge?

Guidelines:

- ▶ Keep your biography to 250 words or less (approximately ½ page)
- ▶ Write in the 3rd person (“he”/”she”/”they” rather than “I”)
- ▶ Begin with your name, background information and possibly medium.
- ▶ Write only about personal experiences that are relevant to your career or artistic vision.
- ▶ Choose the best achievements – don’t create a laundry list.
- ▶ Avoid the use of jargon or difficult vocabulary.
- ▶ Keep paragraphs short for easy reading.
- ▶ Individualize your artist biography for different purposes.
- ▶ Understand the audience and adjust your biography accordingly.

Let's look at 3 examples of 3 very different artists.

- ▶ We can see that each emphasizes different aspects of their biography that best relate to their creative work and to what they want to say with their bio.
- ▶ There is no one way or one order in which to write your bio!
- ▶ Common information found in artist bios:
 - ▶ Medium
 - ▶ Geographic location
 - ▶ Art-related jobs or activities
 - ▶ Major art achievements (prizes, significant exhibits, collections)

Gregory Amenoff - Biography

- ▶ **Gregory Amenoff** is a painter who lives in New York City and Ulster County, New York. He is the recipient of numerous awards from organizations including the American Academy of Arts and Letters, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts and the Tiffany Foundation. He has had over fifty one-person exhibitions in museums and galleries throughout the United States and Europe. His work is in the permanent collections of more than thirty museums, including the Whitney Museum of America Art, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Amenoff served as President of the National Academy of Design from 2001-2005. He is a founding board member of the CUE Art Foundation in New York City and serves as the CUE Art Foundation's Curator Governor. Amenoff has taught at Columbia for the last eighteen years, where he holds the Eve and Herman Gelman Chair of Visual Arts and is currently the Chair of the Visual Arts Division in the School of the Arts. He is currently the Vice-President of the National Academy.

Gregory Amenoff

NOTE:

- ▶ Amenoff begins with his principal **medium**, painting, and **geographic location**.
- ▶ He then lists his major **achievements** (for example, “over 50 one-person exhibitions)
- ▶ He finishes with his current **art-related employment** and activity.
- ▶ He cherry picks his best accomplishments from his CV. We get the impression that Mr. Amenoff is a big deal!

Jeremy Randall

Jeremy Randall received his B.F.A. from Syracuse University and his M.F.A. in ceramics from the University of Florida, and has been making his hand built pottery professionally since 2005. He currently lives in Tully, New York, where he owns and operates his home studio. Jeremy is a visiting instructor of art at Cazenovia College in Cazenovia NY, and an adjunct professor of art at Syracuse University.

Jeremy has been involved in numerous national and international shows, is represented by Red Lodge Clay Center in Red Lodge, MT, The Clay Studio Philadelphia, and the Society of Arts And Crafts in Boston, among others.

Jeremy also has work included in the permanent collections of Robert and Jane Myerhoff in Baltimore, Bailey Pottery Equipment permanent Collection, and the Southern Illinois University Museum in Carbondale, Illinois.

Jeremy Randall

Note:

- ▶ Randall begins with his **education** and follows with his **medium**, hand-built ceramics.
- ▶ We learn that he operates a studio and is locally employed, so he has given us information about his **geographic location**.
- ▶ His main **achievements**, according to this statement, are having his work sold in **galleries** across the United States, and having his work become part of several significant **art collections**.

Peggy Diggs

Peggy Diggs is an artist who, for four decades, has made public work that addresses contemporary social issues such as domestic violence, contemporary life, and race. With a BA from George Washington University and an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, Diggs was trained as a printmaker but in order to reach a broader public, she has utilized forms such as junk mail, flags, milk cartons, and billboards. She often collaborates with specific communities to produce site-responsive, issue-specific projects that are relevant to a unique set of conditions. Through these public works, she has printed on money and then put it into circulation, given collapsible furniture to formerly homeless seniors, and distributed napkins in college eating facilities.

Diggs' work has been exhibited and collected throughout the United States, featured at institutions such as Mass MoCa, Project Row Houses, and the Museum of Modern Art, among others. She has received broad support for her work, most notably from Creative Capital, National Endowment for the Arts, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and Creative Time.

Diggs has taught at Brown University, Rhode Island School of Design, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Williams College and Berkshire County Community College. In 2013 she moved to Galisteo, NM, and plans to stay and work there forever

Peggy Diggs

- ▶ Note:
- ▶ Diggs starts with the meaning of her work: its underlying **concepts**
- ▶ She then discusses her **education** and initial medium
- ▶ She explains her **varied media** and strategies used
- ▶ Then she discusses her **major achievements** (for example, exhibits across the United States)
- ▶ More achievements: Major **awards and grants**
- ▶ She discusses her **art-related employment**
- ▶ And she finishes up with her **geographic location** (“she plans to stay and work there forever”!)

Another approach

- ▶ We can see glimmers of the different personalities of each of the 3 artists featured here – but maybe they could be even more personal or quirky?
- ▶ <https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2015/09/17/441166007/why-cant-artist-bios-be-better>
- ▶ The author of this op-ed suggests we use the artist bio not as a mini-resume, but rather as an insightful way to introduce yourself and BRAND YOURSELF.
- ▶ “Why should we listen to *you*, whether you're an international soloist or still in school? Think of this as a chance to craft a compelling narrative in a truncated form. Who was your inspiration? Who was your teacher? What other music do you listen to, aside from your own repertoire?”
(written with musician bios in mind but applicable to us all)