

*Calvin & Hobbes on artist statements. Cartoon
by Bill Watterson, July 15, 1995*

Artist Statements & Writing About Your Work

It is important that you can write a statement about your work. Explanations like “the work can speak for itself,” or “others can interpret it however they want” are TRUE, but here are some important reasons to provide your audience with an artist statement:

- To validate your work and your professionalism to galleries
- To apply for grants
- Sales: to connect to your customers, and create longer relationships
- To provide the viewer, both artists and non-artists, a framework with which to view and interpret the work
- To prevent interpretations that weren't your intention
- By spending time writing about your work, you can often learn more about your studio practice, about your intentions and decisions. It's a way to explore the work more yourself, and to generate ideas for new work.

There are different kinds of artist statements:

- Specific statement about a body of work, exhibit, or a single piece
- A more general, over-arching statement about all of your work, your studio practice, and the concerns you have as a maker and artist
- A statement about proposed work (work that isn't yet made or still in-progress), to accompany an exhibition or craft fair proposal
- Statements for a grant or other funding
- Brief statements to display at a sales table, or on a card to be included with a purchase



Things to consider including in your artist statement, questions to think about and address:

- What motivates you to make your work?
- What materials and techniques do you use? Do they help inform the meaning of the work or relate to the subject matter?
- Is there something about your process you want the viewer to know?
- Address content and formal decisions: what prominent forms, figures, shapes, colors, marks, does the viewer see and why?
- What are some of your art historical, non-art, pop-culture, musical, or literary influences?
- Is there something autobiographical you'd like the viewer to know? A life experience that influences the work? If so, keep it brief and very much related to the work.
- Think about tone. Humorous, expressive, direct, friendly, or reserved/minimal?
- Who is your audience?
- Always write in the first person
- Be as objective as possible
- Use a direct voice. Never use passive sentence-starters such as, "My hope is that the viewer...." "I think that the work makes people feel..."
- Meaning and concept: What do you want the work to say to the viewer, what is it's meaning?

Process

I always find it helpful to start out with a stream-of-consciousness writing exercise, responding to each of these questions, writing out anything that comes to your mind.

Then, going through many, many drafts and revisions you can slowly try to distill the information into a concise few paragraphs.

You want to convey the information as clearly, and concisely as possible. My rule of thumb is no longer that 1-4 concise paragraphs, but everyone has their own idea about how long an artist statement should be. Length may be dictated by the statement's purpose: web, exhibit, sales, application, etc.

A General Statement

Through photo-editing and surface manipulations, my work traces threads within an existing domestic visual narrative, as well as creating new ones. The carefully applied surface embellishments suggest human care, and by altering these found images and presenting them in a gallery setting, they are given new life and purpose. Photoshop tools are used to highlight both the presence and absence of subject, and an exposed vulnerability to the passage of time. The surface glitter embellishments are both seductive and unsettling. I use a variety of vernacular photographic source material – Kodachrome slides from the 1950s, antique black and white photos from the 1930s, and family snapshots from the 1980s. Existing first as an object, then scanned and digitized, and enlarged and printed, from these images many stories emerge: some personal, some universal, others surreal and fictitious.

Kelly Hider



The work in *re: tracing* is based on a set of images carefully selected from my grandparent's collection of Kodachrome slides taken in the 1950's and 60's. Through photo-editing and surface manipulations, I trace threads within an existing domestic visual narrative, as well as create new ones. The sparkling embellishments suggest human care, and by altering these found images and presenting them in a gallery setting, they are given new life and purpose.

Before my grandmother became a wife in 1950, and shortly thereafter a stay-at-home mother of four children, she studied art for a brief time at the Rochester Institute of Technology. She has shared with me her art school experiences of taking figure-drawing classes ("very risqué" she said), and of meeting her class at the Genesee River Trail for hours of en plein air painting. In the subsequent decades she rarely found time to paint, stealing moments with her watercolor set on family vacations or in her backyard, and more often finding outlets for creativity and connection with the landscape as a gardener and as an avid hiker.

In looking through this photographic archive, these images demanded my attention: hiking in a field, posing in the garden, holding a newborn baby, noticing the sunlight's glinting reflection on the water. I use Photoshop tools to highlight both the presence and absence of subject, and an exposed vulnerability to the passage of time. The glitter is both seductive and unsettling. Existing first as an object, then scanned and digitized, and enlarged and printed, from these slides many stories emerge: some personal, some universal, others surreal and fictitious – about a woman, a mother, an artist. The works in *re: tracing* highlight moments where two artist's lives overlap. The similar place my grandmother and I began turn into diverging paths, traversed during different eras of American history.

Kelly Hider

Artist Statement for a Body of Work or Exhibit



Heinrich Toh



ARTIST STATEMENT

My work explores the evolution of identity by synthesizing memories of past with the present. Inspired by layers of memory, ancestry, and pattern, my work investigates the sense of longing and cultural assimilation that comes from travel and relocation.

Memories are fleeting with the ongoing assimilation to my immediate environment - they inspire me to seek what was once familiar while blurring the boundaries between Western or Eastern culture. The contrast between the modern and traditional imagery in my work reflects layered and overlapping cultural elements.

The process of my work combines several printmaking techniques, including collagraphs, monotypes, paper-lithography and image transfers. My work is hand printed, with multiple runs through an etching press, resulting in rich layers of color, pattern and imagery. Each print is a unique one of a kind work on paper, as I do NOT make editions, reproductions or gicleés.

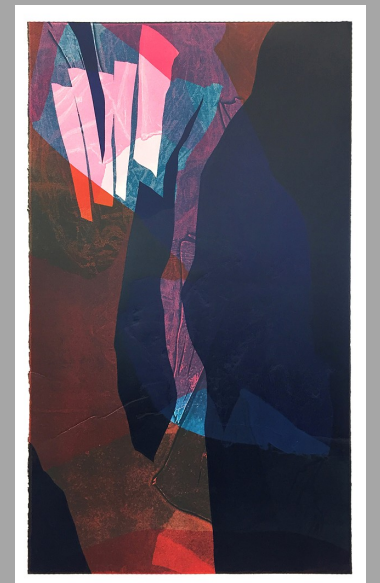
ARTIST BIO

I am mixed media artist focusing on works on paper. Originally from Singapore, I am a graduate from the Cleveland Institute of Art, and the La Salle College of the Arts. I have exhibited at the Wing Luke Asian Museum in Seattle and several galleries throughout the US. My work is in private and public collections, which include the University Hospital of Cleveland and the Dell Children's Hospital in Texas. When I am not making art, I love spending time in the kitchen creating culinary bedlam and I do cook a mean dish of noodles.



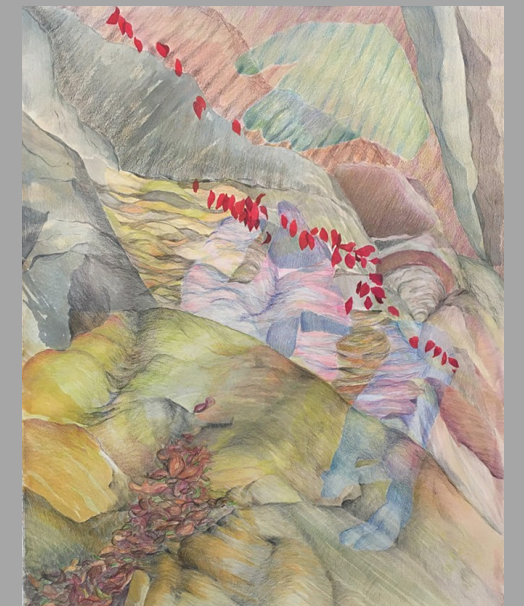
Jessie Van der Laan – General Statement

In my work I consider the layers that make a whole – the contradictions that meet in the same space. I work interchangeably between drawing, printmaking, fiber sculpture, and installation, using repetition to build form and a sense of time. The work is an accumulation of dreams, worries, hopes, fears translated through shelters, caverns, bodies, hollows and perforations. I instinctively refer to natural colors and forms, such as linear striations of rock, muted tundra ochres, vibrant summer flowers, and blooming greys of an approaching storm. This imagery alludes to the world we inhabit, are desperate to protect, and which holds the history of generations. Figurative elements either become windows to what is exuberant and joyful or serve as shadows or veils, dulling and obscuring the elements below. I create depth and density through overlays of information, and light is found within the dark. Within the subtle, liminal, and bittersweet, I contemplate the sentiment of the past, and the potency of a hopeful future.



Jessie Van der Laan – Absorption

This series of drawings reflects my experience of motherhood. Rather than the physical record of daily chores or activities, these are the manifestations of my hopes and anxieties. These dreams are filled with real and constructed landscapes, seen, or obscured, through the lens of figures, arms, and grasping hands. I am habitually drawn to rock formations and fields of flowers. Viewing rock formations I notice the layers of sediment, the ebbing of color that denotes the passage of time. These elements of the landscape elude to a permanent, continuous presence, but recognize the smallness of our individual time on earth, and how short a time I have to mother these children. Flowers and gardens mark the season, and are manifestations of cultivation, of tending, and contrast the centuries old geology with their impermanence. Overlaid on this imagery are silhouettes of hands, arms, or figures. I often feel that my arms are my most precious resource. They allow me to hold hands across parking lots, to carry bags, to wash dishes, gesture when I am intensely speaking, to draw, to write, and they are often full. In some cases, these arms and figures become windows to what is exuberant and joyful in life. They clarify and prioritize beauty, hope, and rejuvenation. In other cases, they are obstacles, dulling the outside world through a sense of obligation, or fear. Both experiences are true, useful, and not mutually exclusive. I look to my children and myself, holding anxiety and hope in the same space, as I wonder who we will each become, and what small moments may shape our progress. Through slowly layering watercolor, colored pencil and graphite, I grapple with these contradictions, and the thin membrane through which we absorb the world and one another.

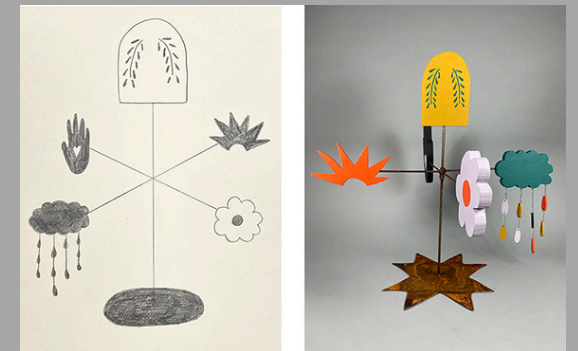
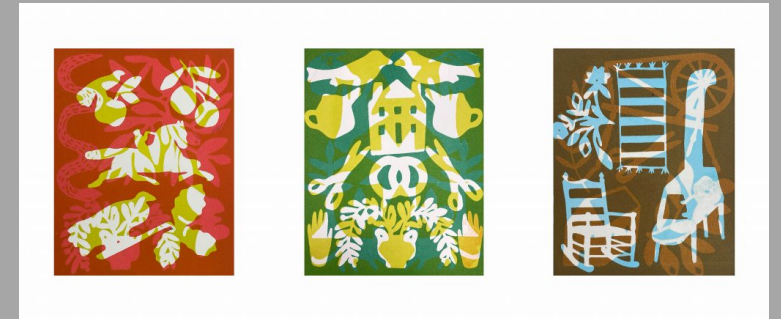


PREVAILING WINDS

Whether gentle or destructive, wind has the power to create change.

Windsocks, whirlygigs, and weathervanes were once vital sources of information, measuring wind direction and speed. Now these formerly functional objects accumulate in antique malls and roadside souvenir shops, their utility relinquished for kitsch and nostalgic value. While these adornments are steeped in history and collective meaning, they are also outward expressions of an individual's relationship to our past. Domestic scenes, normally relegated to interior spaces, are translated through weatherproof materials like steel and wood and projected outwards into public viewing spaces. The front yard becomes a gallery where the nuances of regional and personal identity are expressed through layers of symbols.

In *Prevailing Winds*, Kaleena Stasiak continues her exploration into the performative reproduction of formerly functional objects as a method for interpreting history and re-envisioning the future. In a moment of disillusionment with institutional knowledge, by hearkening back to human rituals of survival, these weather predictors point to the cyclical nature of time, and offer hope for the future. For Stasiak, making becomes an act of

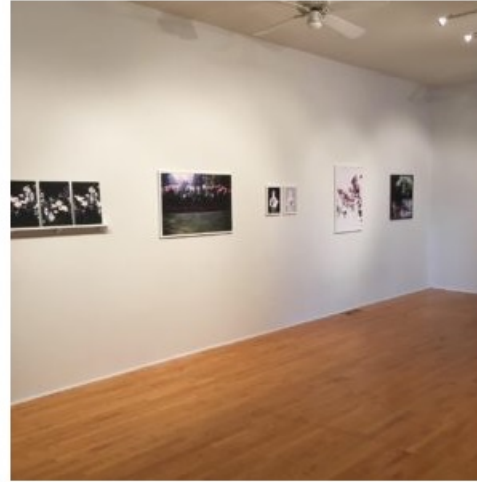


Writing Exercise

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Biography: A concise summary of an artist's accomplishments.



Kelly Hider is a regionally and nationally exhibiting studio artist living in Knoxville, Tennessee. She received her BFA from SUNY Brockport in 2007, and an MFA from the University of Tennessee in 2011. Recent solo shows include exhibits at Unrequited Leisure in Nashville, the Central Collective in Knoxville, the Clayton Arts Center in Maryville, TN, and Lincoln Memorial University. Hider's work was featured on the cover of the independent art journal, *Number: Inc.* in 2016, and she has been twice awarded Ann & Steve Bailey Opportunity Grants through the Arts & Culture Alliance's Heritage Fund in Knoxville. A proud Hambidge Fellow, Hider completed an artist residency at the Hambidge Center in Rabun Gap, Georgia in 2019. Kelly Hider works at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts as their Youth Education Programs Manager, facilitating Arrowmont's local programming and outreach for area kids and young adults, as well as the new youth outreach program *ArtReach on the Road*, which brings craft education to K-12 students throughout central Appalachia. Hider has served on the board for Tennessee Craft since 2021.

Katie Sharpe received her BFA at Idaho State University in May 2018. While in school she also competed on the ISU rodeo team in the intercollegiate rodeo association. After college Sharpe lived in Oregon rodeoing and using grant funding to bring art to rural K-12 schools in the area. She now lives in Knoxville, Tennessee, working as a studio technician at Arrowmont School of Crafts. A sculpture artist mostly working in clay and paper, Sharpe's artwork incorporates themes found in rodeo and cowboy culture.

www.katieannesharpe.com

Instagram: @katieannesharpe

Sam Chumley received his BFA in ceramics from Indiana University Southeast in 2017 and his MFA in ceramics from Ball State University in 2020. Sam's work combines ceramic and printmaking processes to create functional pottery. Sam's work has been included in a variety of publications and exhibitions nationwide. His work is represented by Plough Gallery in Tifton, GA. Sam works as a studio technician for Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts

www.samchumley.com

Instagram: @xchumleyx

John Allen is an artist and educator from Greenville, South Carolina. Currently living in Knoxville, John is active in several community arts organizations in East Tennessee. A current board member of A1LabArts, John was also a founding member of The Big Camera. With an artistic practice encompassing drawing, painting, experimental photography and mixed media, John earned a BFA from Clemson University and an MFA from the University of South Florida. A former Arrowmont staff member, John currently teaches Photography at Maryville College and Drawing/Art History at Pellissippi State Community College. www.johnallenart.com

ROB MILLARD-MENDEZ – Bio

Rob was born in a New England textile town with an incredible industrial past. From an early age, he was enthralled with mechanics, motion, and the wonders created by practical, no-nonsense makers.

Rob is a Professor of Art in the Art and Design Department at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville, Indiana. He teaches 3-D Design, Woodworking, and Sculpture. He received an MFA in Sculpture from UMASS Dartmouth. Rob's work has been shown in over 500 exhibitions in all fifty states as well as internationally. He has had many solo exhibitions and he has received over 120 awards for his art and his teaching. Rob's sculptures are in over sixty private and public collections and images of his work have appeared in Sculpture Magazine, American Craft, two Lark Books, Art New England, and many other publications.



BIO

Kaleena Stasiak is an interdisciplinary artist who uses an assortment of haptic media to explore collective mythmaking, and its relevance to the present day. Digging through a lexicon of symbols and imagery evoking American colonial times, folk art, and quilts, she reframes the dominant ideologies surrounding early history and domestic labor. Her graphic cyphers denote the power and breadth of traditional women's work, functional handicraft, and the impulse to create. Decoration and ornamentation become expressions of desire, signifiers of identity, and autobiographical documentation of lives omitted from text-based historical narratives and artistic discourse.

Originally from Ontario, Canada, Stasiak holds a BFA in Printmaking from the Ontario College of Art and Design and an MFA in Printmaking & Book Arts from the University of Georgia. Recent shows include *Tournament of Lies* at Wassaic Project in Wassaic, NY, *Ancient Art Objects* at Whitespace in Atlanta, GA, and *Identity Measures* at the Contemporary Art Center in New Orleans, LA. In 2017 Stasiak founded the South East Women Wrestlers, a performance troupe based in Athens, GA, that uses the spectacle of wrestling to reframe stereotypes and representations of femininity. She currently teaches Printmaking & Foundations at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Georgia.



Brigid KO Designs

About Me

Usually, you can find me in my studio, in the garden, riding motorbikes, or working on the 1920's house that I live in with my partner and 2 kitties. But, I also love to travel and, I've been lucky enough to have been many places around the world. There is still SO much more to see and so many different cultures to explore. And, roaming around the mountains and rivers of the Southeast is also a favorite pastime.

I am a self taught jeweler living in the beautiful mountains of East Tennessee. Using a torch and hand tools, I create one of a kind pieces designed to be everyday adornments and, unique, custom talisman. I am inspired by the textures and colors of the natural stones I use like; Turquoise, Malachite, Carnelian and Opal. Everything I make I would wear myself.

On my days off, you can find me traveling, hiking in the Smokies, or swimming in the river in Big South Fork....and, of course, wearing a ring on every finger.

