

The Display Info Format for Artworks

In the Visual Arts, finished artworks and art objects are accompanied by information for viewers.

The **first four lines** are essential. They answer basic questions frequently asked by viewers:

- "WHO made this...?"
- "WHAT'S it called...?"
- "HOW did they make it...? With what **materials** and/or **techniques**...?"
- "WHEN did they complete it?"

Display information can include additional lines of information such as...

- the **DIMENSIONS**... (IMPORTANT *if* a photo is used in place of the actual work)
- the **OWNER**... (IMPORTANT *if* the work is on loan or from someone's collection)
- the **PRICE**... (IMPORTANT *if* the artist is willing to sell the work)

The **sentences** that follow are the "**STATEMENT**." It tells the story behind the artwork.

The diagram shows a sample display card for an artwork. Callouts point to various parts of the card:

- Artist's Name:** Points to "Arthur G. West".
- Titles are italicized or underlined, but rarely both. Here the title is also enlarged and bold-faced to help it stand out.** Points to "***Black Hills at Sunrise (after Georgia O'Keeffe)***".
- media (materials used) is usually all in lower case.** Points to "collage and acrylic on canvas".
- The month and the year the work was completed.** Points to "June 2023".
- A STATEMENT from the artist provides background, history, and context for viewers to understand and appreciate the work. It tells the artwork's backstory – where the idea came from, how the artist made it, what the artist learned or discovered, and what things might symbolize or mean in the work. Statements can be long or short, but are kept to just one page.** Points to the paragraph: "This painting was made to go in a very specific place. There is a big blank wall I see every morning at my school. One day I realized, 'If that wall had been given a large window, I would see the Black Hills each morning instead of just a wall.' Sunrises are all about intense displays of color, so I kept the drawing simple, but applied colors in the purest form I could. Where needed, I applied the technique of muting intense colors with their complementary color instead of using white or black."

MORE...

☐ Always TYPE your display information.

Use a **legible font** that's a comfortable size to read at arm's length, and leave a **comfortable margin space** around the text.

☐ When needed, print display information on stiffer, heavier **card stock** for free-standing table or shelf display.

☐ Give **each art object its own** complete display information, such as...

- a sketchbook cover
- individual artworks in a portfolio
- a finished canvas, sculpture, or framed artwork

This is a standard courtesy to viewers, much like a program or bulletin is to audience members at a concert or performance.

☐ **Never damage artworks by gluing, taping, or stapling display information directly onto the surface of the art.**

Correct, proofread, formatted, complete and typed

DISPLAY INFORMATION

is a common expectation of artworks that are displayed, exhibited, and submitted for assessment.

“Why?”

- 1) It's a **TRADITION** in the arts.
- 2) It's a **COURTESY** to viewers and to posterity.
- 3) It's worth **MORE CREDIT** for art assignments.

- **PROJECT** Display info is a graded criterion.
- **ART HISTORY** Display info is a graded criterion in several places:
 - 1) a page for each rendition
 - 2) the portfolio's cover page
- **SKETCHBOOK** Display info that is permanently mounted to the cover of a sketchbook is a way of earning stronger credit for the criterion of personalizing the cover.

TIPS:

- Keep this guide handy for future use.
- Follow the assigned format for display information.
- Have someone help you proofread and edit your writing.