

Resources

Artist Advocacy – Sculpting Words to Tell Our Story

List of Resources

If you are looking for...	Start Here
Houston Funding	Houston Arts Alliance
State Funding	Texas Commission on the Arts
Advocate for the Arts in Texas	Texans for the Arts
Texas Arts Data	Texas Cultural Trust
Regional Arts Funding and Opportunities	Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA)
Professional development, touring & other arts resources	Mid-America Arts Alliance (M-AAA)
Federal Arts Information	National Endowment for the Arts
Elected Officials	Americans for the Arts Advocacy Hub
Arts Economic Impact Data	Americans for the Arts AEP6
Build relationships with community partners	Americans for the Arts Community Engagement Resources
Artist Resilience and Emergency resources	Houston Arts Alliance
Practical tools and information to drive transformative change	Art of Transformational Consulting

Artist Story Workbook

A hands-on workbook for finding, shaping, and sharing the stories behind your creative work.

This workbook is not about finding the “perfect” artist statement. It is about uncovering the moments, people, places, values, and experiences that make your work yours—and finding language that helps other people understand why it matters.

How to use it

Be specific. Use real moments instead of general statements. Don’t worry about polish. The strongest stories often begin with something small: a person, a place, a memory, a question, a challenge, or a moment when something changed.

1. FIND THE BEGINNING

Start with the experiences that brought you to your creative practice. Look for the details that feel true and specific to you.

What brought me to my art?

Think about your earliest memory, an influence, a discovery, a person who encouraged you, or a moment when you realized you wanted to create.

The story behind my work

What is happening beneath the surface of the work? What question, experience, idea, tradition, or tension keeps showing up?

A person, place, or community that shaped me

Who or what helped shape the way you see, make, perform, build, write, teach, or connect? Think about: a specific memory, turning points, relationships, where you're from, family traditions, life's challenges and celebrations.

2. FIND THE WHY

Your story becomes meaningful when you can connect your creative practice to what you care about. Move from what you do to why you do it.

A moment when my work made a difference

Think beyond scale. It could be one audience member, one student, one neighbor, one collaboration, one conversation, or one unexpected response.

Why I continue to make this work

What keeps you returning to this practice? What would be missing for you or others if you stopped?

Who experiences my work?

Who sees, hears, encounters, participates in, learns from, commissions, collects, or carries your work? Who do you hope to reach?

3. MAKE THE CONNECTION

A powerful artist story helps another person understand not only what you make, but why it matters. Use the prompts below to make that connection visible.

What I want people to understand

What do you wish someone knew after experiencing your work that they might not have understood before?

The connection to community

How does your work connect to a community, place, audience, cultural tradition, issue, or shared experience?

The story I want to remember

If you could tell someone one true story that captures why you make this work, what would you tell them?

4. BUILD YOUR 2-MINUTE STORY

Use the framework below to turn your notes into a story you can share with a patron, collaborator, community member, funder, elected official, or new audience member.

WHO	Who are you? What should someone know about you?
WHAT	What do you create or do?
WHY	Why did you begin? Why does the work matter to you?
IMPACT	Who experiences the work, and what does it make possible?
INVITATION	What do you want someone to understand, experience, support, or do next?

My 2-minute story

Write it as you would say it. Aim for a story that sounds like the authentic you.

MY STORY IN ONE SENTENCE:

_____

_____

***Practice**: Read it out loud. Circle the sentence that feels most like you. Underline the moment that gives the listener a reason to care. Then try telling it without reading.*

THE ARTIST ADVOCACY STORY TEMPLATE

Your story is more than an explanation of your art. It is an invitation for someone else to understand why your work matters. Use these prompts to create a short, authentic message you can adapt for different audiences.

I am...

Who are you? Include the part of your identity, practice, experience, or perspective that is relevant to this story.

I create...

What do you make, perform, teach, build, preserve, or facilitate?

I started because...

What first drew you to this work?

My work matters to me because...

What keeps you committed to it?

My work matters to my community because...

Who does it reach? What does it contribute, create, preserve, challenge, or make possible?

One thing I have learned through my work is...

What has your practice taught you about people, place, community, or yourself?

What I want people to understand is...

What do you wish decision-makers, audiences, funders, neighbors, or collaborators knew?

I am asking you to...

What is your invitation or call to action? Attend? Share? Purchase? Fund? Partner? Listen? Make space? Advocate?