

BACKWATER ARTISTS

3<sup>RD</sup> AUGUST 2023

# WRITING YOUR ARTIST STATEMENT

# INTRODUCTION

Eamonn Maxwell was, previously, Director of Lismore Castle Arts and is now an independent Curator and Collection Adviser. Since graduating from Camberwell College of Arts, he has been involved in many exhibitions in Ireland and internationally, including curating the Irish Pavilion at Venice Biennale. Whilst Curator at University of the Arts, London he founded the Emerging Artists Programme which helped to give many artists important exposure to their practice. Aside from working with international artists, he has also advised some of the leading contemporary art collectors and has expertise as a board member for not-for-profit organisations.

# DISCLAIMER

I currently advise the Arts Council on their art collection but today I am here in my capacity as an independent curator and adviser.

Any advice I will give on the Arts Council is widely available in the public arena and should not be misconstrued as providing any particular insights on funding or its Collection.

# WHAT WE WILL COVER

- Introductions from each of you
- Difference between statement, CV, bio and length of each
- Examples of artists statements
- What to include and what to avoid



WHO ARE YOU?

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# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

- Artist Statement – how you describe what you do
- CV – your exhibition/award/education history
- Bio – combination of CV & Artists Statement

# HOW LONG SHOULD THEY BE?

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- Artist statement: 150 words
- CV: 2 pages
- Bio: 200 words/2 paragraphs





SOME  
EXAMPLES OF  
ARTISTS  
STATEMENTS

# SERENA CAULFIELD

I am an artist of a time with no time.

My sources range from classical artworks to children's drawing books, aural histories to local myths. Disobeying a linear art history while reclaiming it somehow in the present, I repurpose art history to play with its power, both visually and conceptually, imbuing the anachronisms of the past with the attitudes of the present. My paintings are mashup-allegories, engendered with the frivolities and traumas of our time. But I am also in there, somewhere in the paint, an individual attitude trying to resolve itself amidst all these references, feelings and politics swirling on the canvas.

I am an artist of a time with no time.

# ANNE HARKIN- PETERSEN

My work is informed by a curiosity and fascination surrounding the origins of the universe, the relational aspect of everything and our contemporary attitude to knowledge.

Through my paintings I explore a contemplative abstract style to best express my concerns, sense of adventure and possibility, using tone, depth, layers, and mark-making, to invoke a visceral, human response beyond representation. I embrace ambiguity in my work and want to draw attention to the need to ask questions.

It is important that my work celebrates elements of surprise and mystery, thereby, creating a catalyst for the expansion of ideas beyond the obvious.

# CATRIONA LEAHY

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Catriona Leahy's work engages in sites wherein a particular dissonance manifests itself temporally, spatially or aesthetically, where anachronistic objects, architecture or particular landscape tropes usher the past into focus with the present. To that end, her interest lies in the remains of cultural phenomena that have been displaced, or have lost their significance in our "progress-driven", globalised society. Residues on the landscape of our industrial past and by extension, the impact this intervention has had on our environment also provide material for investigating the repercussions of a society driven by progress. Through a process of intervention in the image using print, photography, moving image, installation and sculpture, attention is drawn to transformations, latent aspects and layered histories. More recent work has been preoccupied with the question of how to reimagine the landscape in a time of ecological crisis. To that end, the work often focuses on anthropogenic landscapes – landscapes made or transformed by man's intervention. In an ever-evolving landscape, it is only much later that the repercussions of human intervention can be truly determined. The latency of a visual manifestation of such activities, teaches us that the consequences of our actions in one moment can have any number of outcomes – undetermined and unpredictable. It is this temporal latency that is of concern for Catriona – the ripples or tremors that are felt, experienced or perceived, only much later after the event, as traces that meld into the fabric of our present.

# MIRIAM O'CONNOR

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Miriam O'Connor is from Cork and was educated at Technological University, Dublin and later completed a Research Masters at Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art Design & Technology, Dublin (2011). In her practice she draws inspiration from the sights, sounds and language of everyday life. She is curious about the multifaceted roles photography occupies in culture and the manner in which this persuasive medium permeates the way we engage with the world around us. Rather than providing answers, O'Connor positions photography as a tool for posing questions, a playful medium that commands its own attention and analysis. Using photographs, text and printed matter, her projects have explored themes around looking and seeing; the relationship between camera and subject and the complex nature of photographic representation. Following her relocation to the family farm in recent years, O'Connor now occupies a dual role of farmer and photographer, where she is interested in engaging with the elasticity of the medium throughout everyday agricultural life.

# SVEN ANDERSEN

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Sven Anderson (b. 1977) is an artist working between Ireland and the US since 2001. Anderson's practice operates through artistic intervention, participatory actions, collaborative research and interactive design. His installations and performances respond to details of the built environment, the bodies of the audience and fragments of local history and ecology to suggest emergent, site-specific forms. Anderson develops projects in which different voices and perspectives surface together, prioritising shared authorship and collaborations that converge on systems articulated in public space.



# DEIRDRE O'MAHONY

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For over two decades, my practice has focused on the role artists can play in providing cultural space to examine the complicated relationship between land, landscape and ecological sustainability in rural places. My ideas developed in the west of Ireland as conflicts about farming and land use played out in response to conservation regulation and rural policy development. My previous projects have used public engagement, archival and moving image installation and critical writing to communicate historical narratives' affective power on unconscious, subjective relationships and understandings of land, landscape and productivity. Cultural production: heritage, tourism, artisanal foods and festivals, has overtaken agriculture in economically unproductive but diversity rich, high nature value landscapes. Large scale, industrial farming for the global food markets currently dominates State agricultural policy, with traditional, small scale farming considered economically unsustainable. However, the future of rural places - including human and non-human inhabitants - requires that we think beyond purely economic or habitat-based, value systems. My aim is to create cultural space to harness the collective agency of artists, farmers, food producers, scientists, and policymakers to imagine new approaches to climate change and food security. Given increasingly precarious food security, linking culture and agriculture, rural and post-urban, artist and Agri/culturist is vital; a collective form of social, aesthetic and dialogical production necessitated by the gravest challenge to all lifeforms on earth, climate change and the collapse of ecological biodiversity.





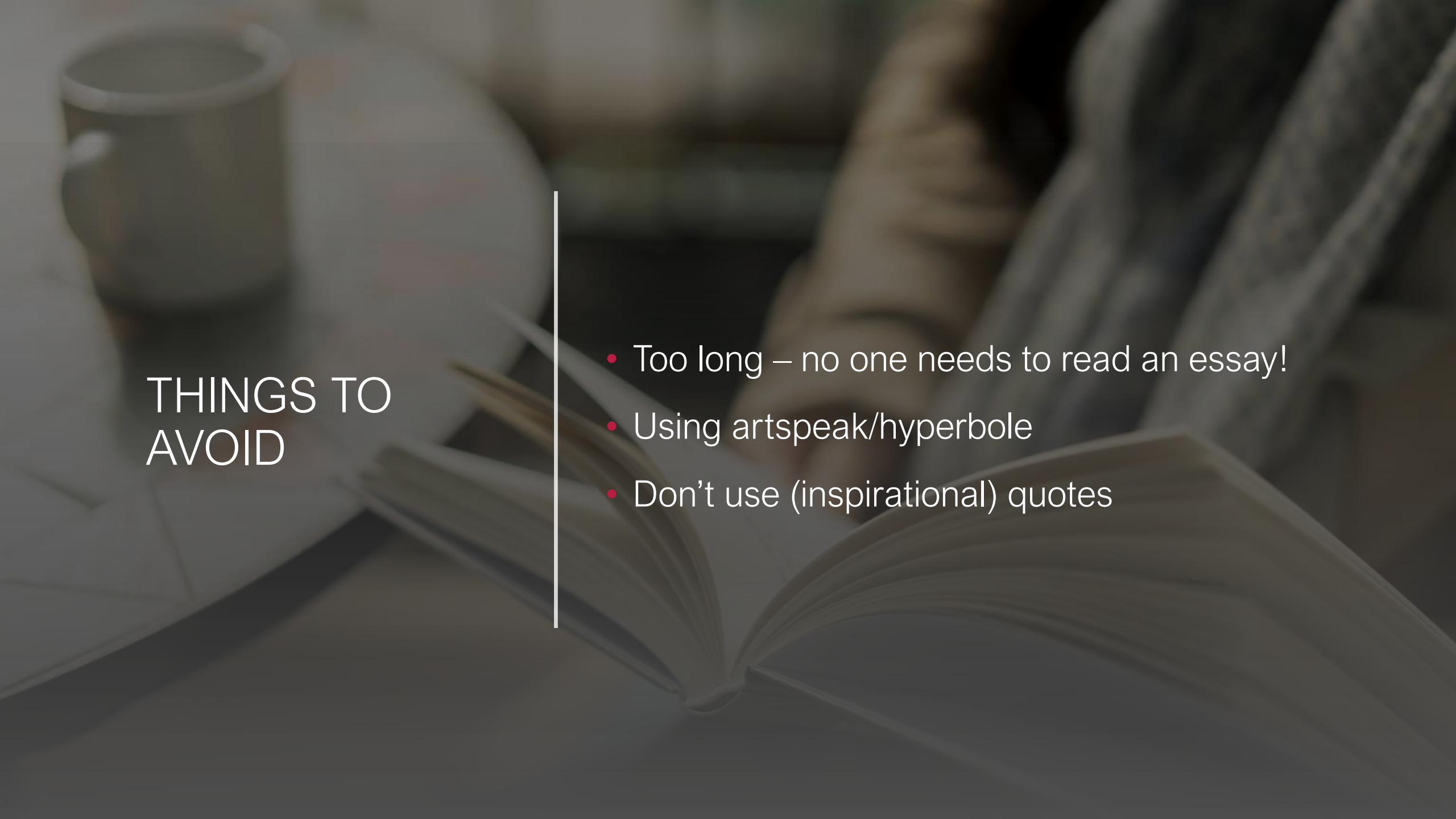
WHAT DO YOU  
THINK OF THOSE?



## WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTALS?

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- Who? - brief overview of your practice & tell the reader what you do especially medium
- What? - drives your practice – inspiration, concepts, themes
- Why? what do you want to achieve with your work?



## THINGS TO AVOID

- Too long – no one needs to read an essay!
- Using artspeak/hyperbole
- Don't use (inspirational) quotes

# QUESTIONS OR OBSERVATIONS?

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STAY IN TOUCH

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[INSTAGRAM.COM/EAMONMAXWELL](https://www.instagram.com/eamonmaxwell)