



Talking About Your Artwork

Tips in preparation for an exhibition opening, giving an artist talk, or an interview.

Talking about one's own art:

- a) Describe “why you do what you do” - your artistic intent, or your philosophy in general. This would be followed up by any one or several of the following talking points (which hopefully illustrate or give evidence to back up your stated philosophy)
 - a. Describe **subject matter**: What you as the artist 'see' in the piece - why you did it.
 - b. Describe **form**: How the subject matter is presented, the technique chosen, and why it helps the subject; discuss formal elements - i.e. line, shape, design, color etc. and how they help present the subject; and the quality of the presentation of the slide, the actual work etc.
 - c. Describe **medium**: How the artist -you- work with the tools, not too much technical detail, but more about how and why you use a particular technique. Depending on the audience you may need to define what a certain technique is - especially if it is a somewhat unusual or un-known technique.
 - d. Describe **style**: How you see the similarities between your diverse subjects/techniques etc. You might put the work in context -if needed- geographical location, movement, time period, etc., basically what makes YOU unique?

 - b) Summary of artists intent (if needed) - any new directions etc.
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Possible audience questions - or questions to ask yourself

- What is my first response to the work? What does it make me think of? Why do I have that response?
- After hearing the artist speak (or after thinking a while) how has the response changed - or does it?
- When and where was the art made?
- What purpose does the work serve?
- When does the artist intend the art to be seen?
- What is the title and does it help in understanding the work?
- What is the medium used? Does it help in understanding the artists intent?
- What is the subject? Does it lead to insight about the artist (or ourselves)?
- How is the subject presented? Does the technique the artist used help the viewers grasp of the subject?
- How are the formal elements (line, light source, color, design, texture etc.) used to further the artists intent? How do they make me feel?
- Are the artworks presented recognizable as a 'body' of work by a particular artist? Why or why not?

- How does the technique/medium used affect my response to the work?
- In regards to the subject, why is the figure placed where it is? Why that color? etc.?
- How does the artists description of the art affect my comprehension of the piece? or How does my description of my own artwork affect my understanding of my own work?