YOUNG ARTIST AUCTION 2025
ARTIST IDENTITY GUIDE

Welcome — this is your space to begin shaping your artistic identity.

Before you begin, remember this:

Your goal as an artist isn't to make something that pleases everyone — it's to create work that feels true to you. The more personal, specific, and intentional your art is, the more likely it is to connect deeply with the right audience.

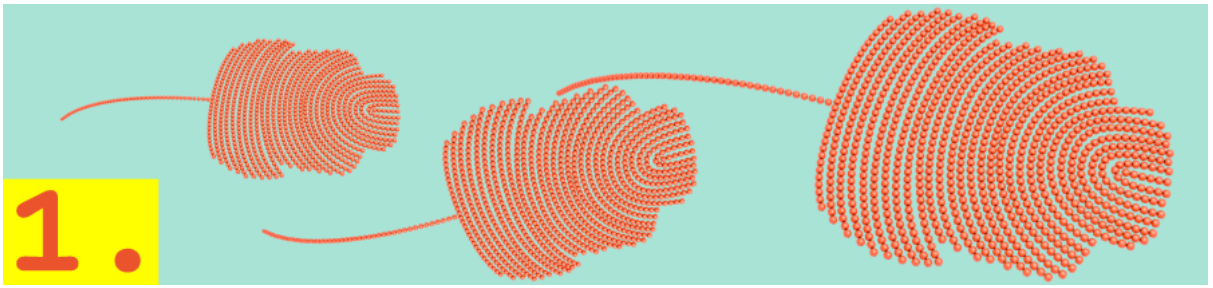
This exercise is designed to help you define your artistic identity and uncover the *red thread* — the recurring theme, energy, or feeling that ties your work together. That thread might show up in the subjects you explore, the materials you use, or even in the emotions your work evokes.

Finding your voice doesn't mean limiting yourself. It means understanding what truly drives you — the ideas, stories, techniques, or questions you return to again and again. When your work has clarity and cohesion, it becomes easier to communicate what you do and why it matters — to curators, collectors, collaborators, or simply your community.

This is also a chance to reflect more deeply on your creative process. To explore not just *what* you make, but *why*, *how*, and *for whom*. Your answers will help you write stronger artist statements, talk about your work with confidence, and shape the way your art lives in the world.

Take your time. Be honest. Be specific. The more clearly you can see yourself, the more clearly others will see you too.

Tip: Be as descriptive as possible – material, medium etc.



Reflect

(5 min)

Step back from your work and observe it with fresh eyes. Don't overthink—simply write about what you feel rather than what you think about your creation.

- "The last piece I made felt like....."

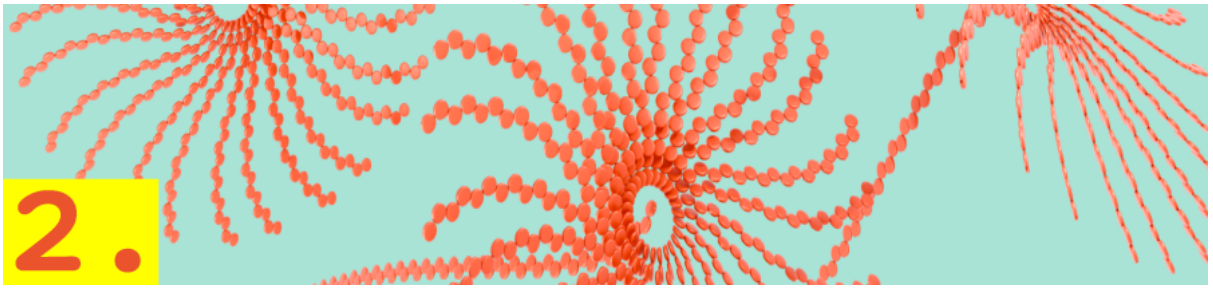
  Reflect on the emotional experience of creating your most recent artwork. Describe how it felt to work with specific materials, mediums, and techniques.

Your answer:

- "The piece I'm most proud of felt like....."

  Describe the emotional and artistic significance of the piece you're most proud of. Detail the materials used, the creative process, and what it represents in your artistic journey.

Your answer:



Understanding Yourself

(10-15 min)

It's normal to explore different themes and mediums in your work—this is part of the creative process. However, you may notice that you often return to the same subjects or materials because that's where your genuine interest lies. Take time to observe both the alignments and disconnections in your work.

- “I always come back to ……”

  Identify recurring themes or subjects in your artwork. Describe what aspects of your art continually attract your attention and why they resonate with you.

Your answer:

- “People describe my work as ….., but I want it to feel more like ……”

  It’s always interesting to hear how others interpret your work. Sometimes they’ll say, “This made me feel…” — and it aligns perfectly with your intention. Other times, their perspective is completely unexpected. Think back: when did someone last respond to your work? What did they say? If that hasn’t happened yet, imagine it — how do you think others will feel when they see your work? What might they take from it?

Your answer:

- “If I had to say one thing through my art, it would be ……”

  What is that one thing that captures your essence in your artwork? Identify the core message or emotion you aim to express through your art. Explain why this message matters to you personally and describe how you bring it to life in your work.

Your answer:



The Imaginary Timeline

(5-10 min)

Lets dive into an imaginary timeline and remember your path as an artist. Identify key phases in your artistic development, noting the distinctive themes, techniques, and influences of each period. Explain how these phases connect to tell the story of your growth as an artist.

- What I’m exploring now?

  What are you experimenting with right now? Is there a particular idea or obsession that’s catching your attention? Inspiration often comes from unexpected places — another artist’s work, something in your neighborhood, or a random fascination with birds, textures, or food. It might seem random, but it all connects back to your art in some way. Remember, art isn’t a

straight line - it's made up of many things: themes, ideas, and sources of inspiration. Even things that feel opposite to your current work — like a new hobby or hands-on class can open fresh doors and reveal new parts of your artistic voice.

Your answer:

- What I've explored before?

  What is the difference between now and then?

Your answer:

- What do I want to explore next?

  Is there something you've been dreaming of doing but haven't felt brave enough to try yet? Maybe there's an idea that's been on your mind for a while - something you saw in another artist's work that really inspired you. Is there a medium, style, or theme you've been curious about exploring? Sometimes the things we quietly want to try are the ones that can lead to the most exciting discoveries. What's something you're drawn to, even if it feels a little outside your comfort zone?

Your answer:

1 ↓ 2 ↑ 3 ↓ 4 ↑ 5 ↓

Describe each phase of your artistic journey, detailing themes, techniques, and influences. Explain how each phase connects to form a cohesive narrative of your artistic evolution.



The Red Thread Map

(5 min each)

Sometimes, as artists, we really want to create work that people will buy. And that's completely valid - making a living from your art is important. But it's also important to

remember: you're not creating for everyone. Not everyone will love your work - and that's okay. Art is deeply personal and subjective.

The key is finding the people your art truly speaks to - your audience. These are the people who will connect with your story and become your most loyal supporters. So when you're creating, stay true to yourself. Your art should reflect who you are, because **you** are part of the story.

When someone chooses to buy your work, they're also connecting with **you.** You're not just the artist- you're part of the brand, part of the storytelling that surrounds your art.

Reflection Questions:

- "If clients walked through a solo show of yours..... what would they feel by the end? What questions are left unanswered?"

  Envision how viewers would feel walking through your solo exhibition. As they move through the exhibition and take in the themes you've explored, try to imagine it from their point of view. What might they be wondering? What might still be unclear? Are there questions you meant to ask through your art but didn't quite express? Are there parts of your story or process that didn't come through? Thinking about this helps you step outside of yourself and see your work from someone else's perspective. It's a powerful way to reflect, refine, and deepen your artistic voice.

Your answer:

- List 3 themes you come back to again and again
  (ex: memory, identity, climate, migration, violence, tenderness, etc.)

  Look back—what are the themes you keep returning to, again and again? These patterns can tell you a lot about what matters to you, what you're drawn to, and where your artistic voice is naturally leading you.

Your answer:

- The red thread in my work is...

  Is there a recurring theme, feeling, or idea that keeps showing up - whether you plan it or not? Sometimes we don't notice it right away, but looking back at your body of work can reveal connections that run deeper than style or technique. What do all your pieces say when they're put side by side? What's the story they're telling together?

Your answer:

- Does my portfolio feel coherent?

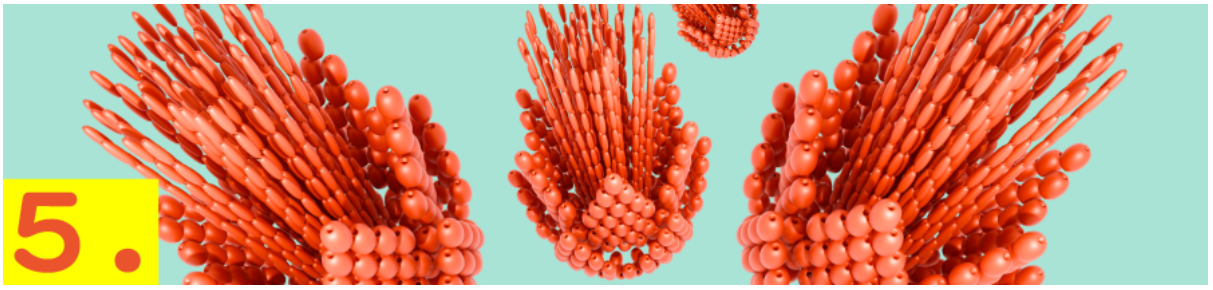
  Do your artworks feel like they're in conversation with one another? Does your body of work reflect you, your voice, your values, your vision? Does it express the themes you truly care about, or the message you want to share?

Your answer:

- What would make it feel more connected?

  If your portfolio doesn't feel fully cohesive yet, or if there's room for improvement - what could you add or change to bring it together more clearly? Imagine someone else viewing your work for the first time. Picture them walking through a gallery, flipping through your portfolio, or seeing your art in a museum. As they move from one piece to the next, what tells them, "This is your work"? What makes it feel like it belongs to you? It might be a certain style, a recurring feeling, a theme, or even the way you use color or materials. Whatever it is, that thread is what helps your audience recognise your artistic identity.

Your answer:



Artistic intent

(5 min each)

Let's shape your ideas into words — keep it short, but make it unmistakably yours. Craft a description that blends both your technique and your vision, something so specific it couldn't belong to anyone else.

Write a one or two sentences of your artistic intent as if it were:

- A solo show label

  In a few clear sentences, explain what your solo exhibition is about. What should people feel, notice, or think about when they experience your work?

  Tips:

  ** It should reflect content and tone*
  ** Use verbs and sensory words when possible*
  ** Don't over explain but evoke a feeling*
  Example: This series uses photos and textiles to explore the stories we inherit from our families and culture. It sits in the space between memory and what we imagine to be true.

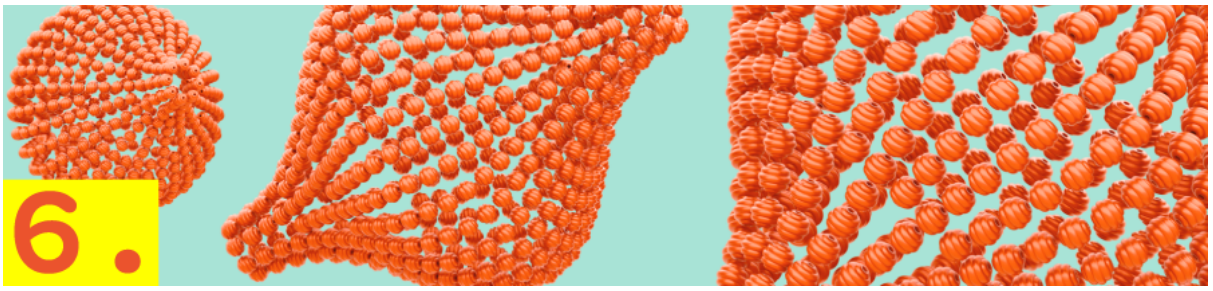
Your answer:

- An Instagram bio

Write a short and engaging statement that tells people who you are as an artist — what you create, why it matters to you, and what they can expect to see in your work.

Tips:
** Be bold, personal, and clear*
** Mention medium and/or themes*
** This is a first impression - be clear don't over explain*
Example: Tracing stories through multimedia threads between memory, myth, and the truths we inherit.

Your answer:



6. Mirroring Exercise

Try explaining your work to someone who doesn't know anything about it. Share what your art means to you and the ideas behind it. Afterwards, ask them to tell you what they understood. They can say something like, "This is what I'm hearing from you: Your work is about..."

This exercise helps you see how clearly you're communicating your ideas - and how others interpret your art. It's a great way to learn what's coming through and what might need more explanation.

Keep In Mind: When describing your work its best to articulate our artistic voice in clear, grounded language, so that your work connects and is easily interpreted across audiences, not just within the art world.

Your answer: