

# THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' GALLERY

## The Photographers' Gallery Young Writers' Tips and Guide

The best thing about writing about art is that it can be as subjective or objective as you like. With both *A Young Person Recommends...* and *The Story Behind a Photograph*, we want to hear your voice come through, so don't worry about too much sounding like anyone else!

A great place to get writing inspiration is to read other writers. Explore what approaches to writing you like and those you don't appreciate. Past examples of *A Young Person Recommends...* can be found [here](#), with *A Story Behind a Photograph* articles [here](#). As well as this, arts magazine websites such as [Another Elephant](#), the [British Journal of Photography](#), and [Frieze](#) have thousands of articles to learn from.

### ***A Young Person Recommends...***

When writing a review, here are some things to think about. Don't worry if you don't include every point, but here are two templates to work off.

For Exhibitions:

1. Start with an overall impression of the exhibition that will intrigue the reader enough that they will want to read more.
2. Background info or context: What is your journey to the exhibition? What do you already know about the artist(s)? What other work have they made? What more do you know about them?
3. What is your first impression when you enter the exhibition?
4. What is the layout/presentation of the exhibition? How does this change how you view the work?
5. How does the exhibition progress? Is there more than one room? If so, how does it flow from one room to the other? If there is more than one artist, do their works complement one another? How so?
6. Is there a particular work that you like/dislike? Explain the work and your impression of it. Repeat if there are 2 or more significant works.
7. What's your overall impression of the work and the exhibition? Would you recommend this exhibition or, if it's in the past, do you feel it was significant? Why? Why not?
8. Basic info on the exhibition: title; photographer/artist(s); dates; location.

For Books:

1. Start with an overall impression of the book that will intrigue the reader enough that they will want to read more.
2. Background info or context: How did you hear about this book, or come across it? Has the writer/artist/etc produced other books? What were these like?
3. Does the book have an overarching subject? If so, what is it?

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4. If the book is by/about an artist is there a particular project or theme included or is it an overview of their work?
5. Do you like this book? If so, what is your favourite thing about it?
6. If there is writing included is it well written? What is the style of writing –personal, informative or something else?
7. Did you learn anything new or think about things in a new way when/after spending time with this book?
8. Does this book inspire you in any way?
9. Would you recommend this book to other people – why/ why not and if yes, who? Who do you think would most appreciate it?

## ***A Story Behind a Photograph***

Writing this piece will work differently to the reviews, as you'll be looking at your own work. This poses its own issues, but don't worry; when it comes to writing about your work, nobody is more knowledgeable than you. Simply put, you're the expert.

This being said, with so much information at your disposal and a 500-word count, it's important to focus on exactly what you want the reader to know. Remember, you're telling a story. While you write the article, these questions might be helpful:

- Open with a line that might intrigue the reader and inspire them to read more.
- Where was the photo taken?
- What can you write about the photo (that people might not be able to see) that reveals something more about it?
- When was the photo taken? If others are in it or helped you make it, who does the photo involve?
- Why is the photo important or interesting to you? Keep looking at the photo. Are there any new things in it that you've never noticed before?
- Why was this photo/series made? Is it part of a larger series or project or a 'singular' image?
- Has this photograph been shown before in an exhibition or book? What are your hopes for it in the future?

You don't have to include each point, or include them in this order. It might be useful to tick off the why's as you write, as this helps signpost information to the reader.

## **Final advice:**

It might sound cheesy, but the best writing comes from a place of enjoyment – so have fun! This is a chance to write however *you* want to write. Include opinions, enjoy yourself and make it your own. The best writing can come from honesty.

When your writing is ready for submission, send it to us. We'll work with you to edit it before its uploaded, and aim to give you supportive, editorial feedback.