**BAM/PFA**

**Editorial Style Guide** v2

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**OVERVIEW**

**1. OVERALL VOICE OF SITE**

The voice of the new BAM/PFA website aims toward these characteristics, the “4 A’s”:

* Additive – not replacing but adding to the current curatorial voice\*
* Attitude – bringing a sense of “revelation,” “provocation,” “inquiry”
* Audience – allowing information to rise to the audience(s)
* Artists – looking for opportunities for the artist’s voice on the site

This voice will primarily show up in the headlines and subheads on top-level pages, such as: home, exhibition, individual film screening, individual event, etc.

Headlines and subheads are the “marketing layer” of the site: promotional tools to get visitors to click and delve deeper into content. They are not primarily informational or educational or historical; that is the function of the curatorial voice, which will remain in the body copy on internal pages.

**2. LIMITATIONS OF THE PAST VOICE**

A. In the past, the site has been dominated by a curatorial voice:

* Headlines have been made up of exhibition or series titles, which assumes an audience already interested in or knowledgeable of the artist or film.
* The “hook” of an exhibition or film series—i.e. what might interest a site visitor who does not already know the artist or work—is often buried deep in the body copy.
* Body copy often leads with academic or curatorial language and tone:
  + Claim to greatness: “One of the most gifted filmmakers to emerge during the period…”
  + Scholarship: “The first midcareer survey of the work of …”
  + Institutional: “We are delighted to present for the first time in ten years, a selection of…”
* This leads to a preponderance of the curator’s voice, and too little of the artist’s or the audience’s, across the site.

B**.** To date, in print, online and in email blasts, a marketing voice has also been used at BAM/PFA that has relied primarily on calls to action or engagement using imperative sentences: “Bring the Kids”, “Meet the Artist”, “Get the Straight Dope”

* Calls to action are effective in small doses but flatten out with overuse
* There are opportunities to be more provocative / quirkier / attention-getting
* There’s still a need to include the artist’s or audience’s voice on the site.

**3. A COMBINATION OF THREE VOICES FOR DYNAMIC CONTENT**

The new BAM/PFA site will make use of three voice treatments for top-level content, listed below.

On the home page, at on other top-level pages, certain content buckets will be assigned a particular voice treatment. Other buckets will be flexible and can be written in any of these voices. These voice treatments will bring together the 4 A’s—additive, attitude, audience, artists—across the site.

See next item (4) for tables indicating where each voice should be used on top-level pages.

A. **Narrative Hook**

This is the primary voice of the site. This voice finds a narrative or thematic “hook” in the curatorial copy and then uses that hook in headlines and subhead to suggest a story or issue about the artist or exhibit that will grab a visitor’s interest.

* HEADLINE
  + Should be a lively statement with a concrete subject and active verb.
  + The subject of headline may be the artist if the artist is well-known enough to create the hook. The subject may also be the content of the work, its nation or community of origin, or some other concrete noun.
  + Alternately, headline may be a strong quotation from the artist that works as a hook.
  + Up to 8 words (or \_\_ characters)
* SUBHEAD
  + Builds off headline to further the story or idea being told.
  + May include name of the artist / medium / nation / era or other concrete information but only if it’s part of the hook (not purely as visitor information).
  + Up to 15 words (or \_\_ characters)
* ROLLOVER TEXT
  + Program Information Only
  + Number of lines to be determined
* BODY COPY (internal pages)
  + Always begins with a strong lead sentence meant to hook the reader: concrete subject, active verb.
  + From there, moves into curatorial voice.
  + Keep paragraphs short and break up longer paragraphs

B. **Irreverent Pop**

This voice uses a casual, humorous and even irreverent tone to provoke the click first and explain later.

* HEADLINE
  + Should speak to or comment on the picture or image
  + Uses conversational / colloquial speech, including slang and cliché
  + May include punctuation, especially ! or ?
  + May use direct address (speaking to “you”)
  + May pose a question meant to arouse
  + May use superlatives
  + Does not use artist’s name or title of work
  + Up to 8 words
* SUBHEAD
  + Builds off the headline in the same tone.
  + Includes artist’s name or title of work, to give a little more weight and clarity to the irreverent headline.
* BODY COPY
  + May require a new lead sentence or brief paragraph to transition from “pop” voice into curatorial voice.
  + From there, moves into curatorial voice.
  + Keep paragraphs short and break up longer paragraphs

C. **Minimalism**

With a minimum of words, this voice authoritatively declares an essential quality of the artist or work. More evocative than provocative.

* HEADLINE
  + May be grand, lofty, iconic.
  + Will often be an abstract noun or adjective.
  + Maybe also be a concrete or proper noun if pointing toward content.
  + No punctuation.
  + One word (two or three at most).
* SUBHEAD
  + Optional; not necessary.
  + Should be kept brief (5–8 words).
  + Can be the exhibition / series title.
* BODY COPY
  + Always begins with a strong lead sentence meant to hook the reader: concrete subject, active verb.
  + From there, moves into curatorial voice.
  + Keep paragraphs short and break up longer paragraphs.

**4. WHERE TO USE EACH VOICE ON TOP-LEVEL PAGES**

* The following tables are designed to approximates page layouts.
* Numbers and Headers correspond to wireframes.
* Continued on next page…

**HOME PAGE**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| [7. CALENDAR]  Film Title  Film Series Info  Tonight, Time | [6. FEATURED CONTENT CAROUSEL]  **Narrative Hook is default / Look for opportunities to use Irreverent Pop or Minimalism where appropriate**  Headline (5–8 words)  Subhead (optional; 7–12 words)  Rollover Text (for program information) | | [8. INSTITUTIONAL NEWS]  **Irreverent Pop** |
| [12. EXHIBITIONS ON VIEW]  Series Artist  Series Title  Through Date  [REPEATS] | [11. NEWS / HOT CLICKS ]  **Irreverent Pop**  3–7 words |
|  | [9. IN PERSON]  **Narrative Hook Headline (for individual presenter)** 3–6 words  Subhead: **Narrative Hook** (individual) or **Curatorial** Subhead (symposium/panel)  7–12 words | [10. ON VIEW EXHIBITION]  **Irreverent Pop**  3–7 words  - or -  **Minimalism** 1–3 words | [13. STUDENTS]  **Irreverent Pop**  tone appropriate for audience  3–7 words |
|  | [9. IN PERSON]  **Irreverent Pop Headline (for participatory event)** 3–6 words  **Irreverent Pop or Curatorial Subhead**  7–12 words | [10. ON VIEW FILM SERIES]  **Irreverent Pop**  3–7 words  - or -  **Minimalism** 1–3 words | [13. MEMBERS]  **Irreverent Pop**  tone appropriate for audience  3–7 words |
|  |  | [10. ON VIEW IN PERSON]  **Irreverent Pop**  3–7 words  - or -  **Minimalism** 1–3 words | [13. EDUCATORS & RESEARCHERS]  **Irreverent Pop**  tone appropriate for audience  3–7 words |
|  |  |  | [13. FAMILIES]  **Irreverent / Pop**  tone appropriate for audience  3–7 words |

**FILM SERIES / ART EXHIBITION PAGE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [IMAGE—film still]  [Caption Identifying Film Still] | [5.]  Series Title  Series Dates  **Narrative Hook Subhead:**  Short (5–15 words), or Long (up to 30 words) Or Quotation (up to 30 words)  Curatorial Copy  (includes Read More tab for varying length) |
| [6.]  Films in the Series  Title  Date / Time  Director, Country, Year  Description: **Marketing Short Film Blurb** | [9. RELATED EXHBITIONS AND SERIES] |
| [6. NEXT FILM IN THE SERIES] | [11. RELATED EXHBITIONS AND SERIES] |
| [11. EXHIBITION OBJECTS / ARTIFACTS]  DISCOVER  Artist / Name | [12. PLAN YOUR VISIT] |
| [14. PEOPLE ]  PEOPLE  Name  Title / Role | [13. SHOP]  SHOP |
|  | [14. LINKS]  LINKS  **Irreverent Pop** |

**5. CONTENT FOR STATIC PAGES**

For static pages, where content won’t change often, BAM/PFA should look for opportunities to adapt the voice treatments of the dynamic pages, above, as appropriate for content.

These pages fall broadly into two categories:

A. **Visitor Experience Pages**

These pages provide necessary information, such as hours and admission, parking, accessibility, FAQs, etc. Information should be organized as simply and clearly as possible. Visitors do not need to stay long on these pages.

* HEADLINE
  + Use Irreverent Pop voice treatment here: conversational tone, questions, direct address, etc.
* SUBHEAD
  + If necessary expand upon headline.
* BODY COPY
  + Use bullet points for informational lists.
  + Use numbers for step-by-step instructions.
  + Break-up large blocks of text with shorter paragraphs.

B. **Institutional Pages**

These pages present the larger story of BAM/PFA, whether the past (history, mission) or the future (membership, news about the new building project). These pages should be enticing and readable, since the goal is for visitors to stay, read and take action.

* HEADLINE & SUBHEAD
  + Use Narrative Hook voice treatment.
  + If appropriate, use quotation from artist or museum personnel to further the narrative hook.
* BODY COPY
  + Break-up large blocks of text with shorter paragraphs.
  + Write in concise sentences that push the story forward.
  + Use bullet points for informational lists.
  + Use numbers for step-by-step instructions.

For marketing layer:

Use digits instead of spelling out numbers

Use ampersands

Use abbreviations