Institute of Contemporary Arts

Style Guide

1. Graphic identity

Rather than a fixed set of rules, the ICA's graphic identity is conceived as a toolbox of elements that will be added to or discarded as necessary. The key components at the time of writing are:

1 The full name Institute of Contemporary Arts (to emphasize the plural 'arts') used interchangeably with the acronym:

ICA

The logo is derived from an ICA poster-catalogue designed in 1950 by the artist Richard Hamilton. The letters were originally printed from wood type, which explains the slightly clunky spacing.

2 Two main typefaces, CMU serif (aka Computer Modern) and Grotesque MT Standard, are used for most general 'institutional' matter:

CMU Serif
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890
!@#$%^&*()_+=~`{}[]\|;:'",.<>/?

Grotesque MT Std
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz1234567890
!@#$%^&*()_+=~`{}[]\|;:'",.<>/?

Additional fonts are also used for the ICA's five programme categories, *Exhibitions (CMU Typewriter Text BI)*, **Films (Dom Casual Medium)**, Talks & Learning (mtdbt2f-z), L i v e (O C R B) and Digital (LoRes 12 Narrow), plus others specific to certain events where appropriate.

3 Frequent use of 'digital primary colours' red, green and blue, often on a light grey background.
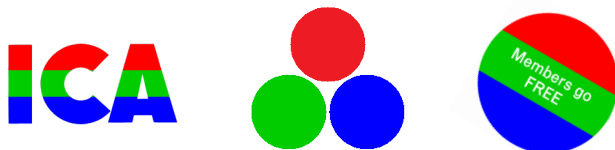
The main standard red, green and blue values are:

Digital:
Red R255 G0 B0 (Hex #FF0000)
Green R0 G204 B0 (Hex #Green #00CC00)*
Blue R0 G0 B255 (Hex #0000FF)

Print:
Red C0% M100% Y100% K0% (or Pantone 032)
Green C100% M0% Y100% K0% (or Green 354)
Blue C100% M100% Y0% K0% (or Blue 072)

The standard light grey background of the website, marketing emails etc. is:

Digital: R204 G204 B204 (Hex #CCCCCC)
Print: C0% M0% Y0% K7.5% (or Pantone Cool Grey 3)

* n.b. RGB green is not 'pure' G255 as it is illegible on the grey background.

Two further colours are also used in certain digital contexts, such as for Cinema 3 and buttons:

Pink R255 G0 B255 (Hex # #FF00FF)
Yellow R255 G2255 B0 (Hex #FFFF00)

Gold, Silver and Bronze are also used occasionally for more prestigious purposes, such as communication with donors.

4 An open-ended set of classic optical illusions variously used to group generic aspects of the ICA (Membership, Support etc.):
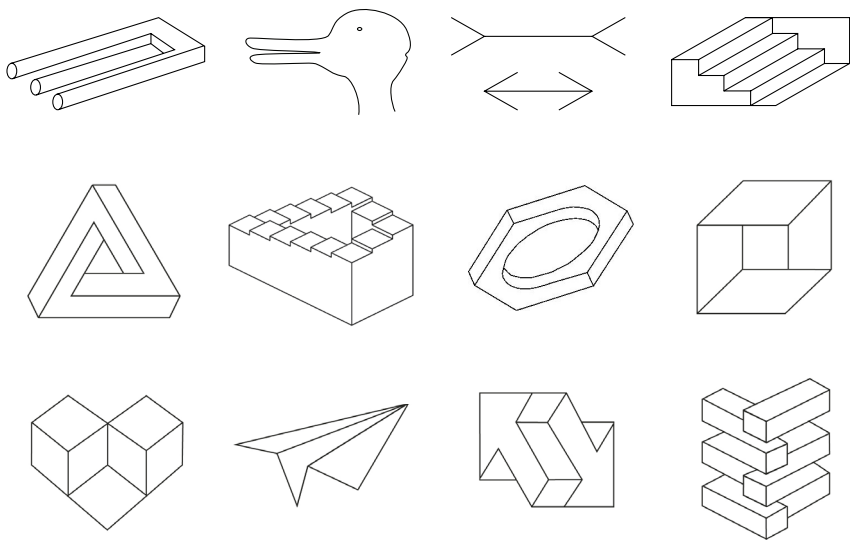
2. Referring to the ICA

General use

In text that requires a degree of formality (such as exhibition guides and wall texts) spell out Institute of Contemporary Arts on first mention (never capitalise a preceding 'the'); thereafter use the acronym ICA. In most other contexts (including the website, emails and social media) the acronym can be used from the outset.

Try to avoid using sentences that refer to ourselves as 'the ICA'. There's no need to say something is taking place 'at the ICA' in copy that obviously refers to our programme. Similarly, try to avoid habitually introducing the programme with some variant of 'the ICA presents…', although this is fine is you are aiming to convey an air of gravitas.

The ICA's building, commercial entities, job titles and departments

The public areas of the ICA's building are comprised of gallery spaces (the Lower Gallery/Podium and Upper Gallery), a two-screen cinema, a theatre, a studio, a box office, a bookshop and a café. In most cases, the 'ICA' prefix (such as 'the ICA Theatre') can be avoided if the space you're describing is obviously within the ICA, but proper names should be capitalised. Therefore:

Capitalise Upper Gallery and Lower Gallery when referring to the singular and discrete spaces, but no need to capitalise galleries when referring to the exhibition spaces as a whole.

Similarly, capitalise Cinema 1 and Cinema 2 when referring to the specific spaces, but use the lowercase cinemas when referring to both. Use ICA Cinema when referring to the curatorial entity, and use the all caps ICA CINEMA when referring to its distribution arm.

ICA Bookstore refers to the commercial entity; lowercase bookstore refers to the space.

Generally, use Rochelle Canteen on first mention and thereafter the Canteen. Both ICA Rochelle Canteen and Rochelle ICA are acceptable when distinguishing from the 'other' Rochelle Canteen at Arnold Circus.

Continuing this distinction between proper and common nouns:

Capitalise Member/ship when referring to ICA Red Members, Green Membership, etc., but not when referring to members or membership in a general sense within a sentence. However, Friends (of the ICA) is always capitalized, as it is always used as a proper noun.

Capitalise ICA Artists' Editions when using formally, lowercase artists' editions or just editions when not.

Capitalise proper nouns such as Executive Director of the ICA, Chief Curator or Head of Development, but lowercase titles when using generally, including chair and board.

In general, avoid over-capitalising nouns for No Good Reason (such as exhibition ticket, programme etc.).

3. Titles, captions, credits

Titles

The following formats are in capitalised italics: *Exhibitions*, *Artworks*, *Films & Videos*, *Albums*, *Books*, *Newspapers*, *Journals*, *TV series*.

These ones are capitalised roman with single quotes: 'Essays', 'Articles', 'Papers', 'Poems', 'Chapters', 'Events', 'Individual Episodes of a TV Show'.

And these ones are only capitalised: Series of Works, Biennials, Awards, etc.

n.b. These are overarching, predominantly print-based rules that may warrant alternative treatment in digital formats due to various technical limitations or contextual priorities. See the relevant sections on Website, Emails and Social media below.

On the ICA website, we've adopted standard ways of pre- and suffixing event titles in order to avoid multiple colons:

Film Title
Film Title + Q&A
Film Title + intro
Film Title + panel discussion
PREVIEW Film Title
UK PREMIERE Film Title

Members' Screening: Film Title
Symposium: Event Title

Artists' Film club [on its own line, no colon]
Film Title

Season Title
Event Title (+ Q&A / + intro etc.)

Captions

Full artwork captions should be laid out in the following order, divided by lines or commas:

Artist, *Title of Work*, date, materials/technical specifications, duration if appropriate (with colon divider 0:00 and 'min.' abbreviation). © if appropriate. Courtesy, if appropriate, followed by a full stop at the end (contrary to the general rule about full stops after Fragments). So:

Seth Price, *Industrial Synth*, 2000, single-channel video, 16:37 min. © Seth Price. Courtesy Gisela Capitain.

Short artwork captions can be used within texts, with just the title followed by the date in parentheses:

... in his work *Industrial Synth* (2000), the artist tried ...

Foreign film titles are generally in English with the original title in parentheses and italics, unless there's a specific reason to keep the original:

The Third Mother (La Terza Madre), Dir. Dario Argento, Italy, 2007, 102 min. Italian with English subtitles.

Film formats (e.g. 35mm, 16mm) should be in the copy only if a special selling point.

For commissioned or commercial images which don't require a credit, there is no need to state the obvious with captions such as 'Installation view'.

Credits

Sponsor and other support credits should be in a new paragraph at the end of body text, with a full stop:

Supported by Bloomberg.

Use common sense when deciding whether or how to include the definite article. No need to capitalize 'The' if it's not officially a part of the name:

Thank you to Forensic Architecture Exhibition Supporters Circle, the ICA Directors Circle, the Friends of the ICA, and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts for their generous support.

A text credit is always preferable to a logo if OK with the sponsor or partner.

If not, b/w logos are always preferable to colour. They should ideally be supplied as PNG files with a transparent background; if not, then .AI or EPS files. Where necessary, a strapline can be included above partner logos to specify their relationship with the ICA (Supported by ..., Made in collaboration with ... etc.).

Exhibition credits should be written in list format and, unless otherwise specified, alphabetical order. For individuals, place the name in alphabetical order of the last name, and for organisations, in alphabetical order of the company name:

> Supported by the Betty Woodman Exhibition Supporters Circle including Shane Akeroyd, David Kordansky Gallery and Salon 94.

4. Images

Images should be chosen for their graphic impact across multiple platforms and devices, including various softwares on desktop computers, tablets and smartphones – particularly bearing in mind the increasingly small scales.

They should be supplied at minimum 1000 pixels along the longest edge @72dpi (or 2000 pixels for installation shots).

To avoid visible pixelation, guard against images that have been previously compressed then upscaled.

Landscape format images are strongly preferable to portrait ones, and try to avoid square formats. Note that we typically crop images to 4:3 ratio to avoid a jumble of formats on the website and in email announcements.

Images should *never* include overlaid text as they will always be presented alongside contextualising information.

Ideally, no headshots or pictures of people talking at an event, and no book covers or equivalent shots of media objects.

5. Bios

Ideally, a bio should invite an interested reader to make further discoveries about an individual through subsequent enquiries; a bio does not need to provide a comprehensive overview of a working life. Aim for no more than 50 words, e.g.:

Paul B. Preciado is a writer, philosopher, curator, and one of the leading thinkers in the study of gender and sexual politics. His first book, *Counter-Sexual Manifesto* (Columbia University Press) was acclaimed by critics as 'the red book of queer theory' and became a key reference for European queer and trans activism.

In most cases, bios follow a fairly rudimentary form, but there are no specific rules around this, only conventions. Occasionally, a bio may be submitted which follows none of these conventions and provides very little practical information about an individual's (or group's/band's/collective's) body of work. If this text is written with formal integrity (or humour) and provides insight into the individual's voice or approach through its unconventionality, it should remain as is.

Be careful with laudatory language ('award-winning', 'critically praised', 'well respected'), which can lend a bio an inflated, ostentatious tone. Generally, remove if present in the original bio.

Hyperlinks can be inserted into bios on the website, but should be used sparingly (i.e. one hyperlink per bio).

In the case of all bios – especially longer ones – edit the list of previous and upcoming exhibitions/publications to include only the most recent and/or relevant. Previous exhibitions should be formatted as follows:

Gallery/institution/museum, City; with multiple entries separated by semi-colons.

No need to include state or country. No need to mention city if it is contained in the name of the gallery/institution, e.g. Philadelphia Art Museum or Kunsthalle Wien. For example:

Black Quantum Futurism has presented, exhibited and performed at Red Bull Arts, New York; Serpentine Galleries, London; Philadelphia Art

Museum; MOMA PS1, New York; Bergen Kunsthall; Le Gaite Lyrique, Paris; and Squeaky Wheel, Buffalo, among others.

6. Punctuation, grammar, spelling, etc.

Punctuation

And, &, and + The word 'and' is preferable on most occasions (including Nash and Brandon Rooms); '&' is used between words with a distinct connection (fish & chips and salt & pepper); '+' is sometimes used where a more graphic distinction is required (e.g. the allcaps building signs for UPPER + LOWER GALLERIES). See below under 'Titles' for other generic programme usage (+ Q&A, + introduction etc.).

Apostrophes Although this position is contentious, we omit the possessive 's' on all words ending in 's' (princess' dresses not princess's dresses).

Brackets Square brackets can be used for editorial clarification [clarification by editors], including translations.

Commas Unless it resolves an ambiguity, avoid an Oxford/serial comma after the penultimate word in a list (so red, green and blue not red, green, and blue).

In measurements make sure to use the proper multiplication symbol × with a space either side (24 × 34 cm) *not* the letter 'x'. If the typeface family doesn't seem to have one, borrow from the standard Symbol font.

Dashes and hyphens

En dashes (–, Mac option-dash) are used to add parenthetical clauses – like this – within a sentence. Avoid longer em dashes (—, Mac option-shift-dash) which are the American equivalent.

En dashes are also used to denote time spans, like 2019–2020, June–July, Monday–Saturday, 12–1pm. For graphic reasons (especially digital formats, where lower resolution often forces characters to crash into each other and appear tighter than in print) we often include a single space on either side (which deviates from standard English usage):

9

No space:	Space:
8–9pm	17 October – 23 December
25–26 February	Friday 19 – Saturday 20 March
Friday–Saturday	

(As a rule of thumb, if there are already spaces used in the information being connected, use spaces around the dash.)

Hyphens (-) should only ever to be used for join-ing compound words (middle-aged, crazy-assed) and compound modifiers (19th-century novel) and, in layout, for break-ing words (i.e. when using hyphen-ation at the ends of lines).

Use one word instead of a hyphen where possible (artwork, artform, filmmaker)

Avoid hyphens for compound adjectives (the civil rights movement not the civil-rights movement)

Ellipses When representing pauses should be used with a space either side like ... this, or, if at the end of a sentence, followed immediately by a full stop like this .... When used to substitute text 'in a quote put them between parentheses like (...) this'.

Exclamation marks Use *extremely* sparingly! If you are aiming to motivate or excite the reader, try approaching it from another angle before resorting to an exclamation mark.

Full stops Use single spaces after full stops.

Quotation marks Use curly quote marks (' ' " ") rather than straight feet & inch signs (' '') which are commonly used these days but incorrect. Note that this is not easy to maintain as software tends to strip out the proper ones, meaning we have to replace them manually:

' Option-]	" Option-[	
' Option-shift-]	" Option-shift-[	

Follow British, not American usage, so 'single inverted commas for quotations, with commas, full stops and other such punctuation usually outside the end quote', like that. 'However, the full stop should remain

inside the quote if it is clearly the end of the original sentence, like this.' Use double inverted commas 'only when 'there is a "quote" within a quote', like that.

If a stand-alone quote from a review or similar:

> 'Yoon Jung-Hee is exquisite in Lee Chang-Dong's cinematic masterpiece.'
> – David Major, *Telegraph*

Abbreviations

Avoid over-using abbreviations unless space is tight, e.g. use concessions rather than concs if there is adequate space.

Avoid unnecessary full points in acronyms and common abbreviations (BBC, NYC, Edward G Robinson, Mrs Thatcher, 9pm, 30mph etc.).

Only use all capitals for acronyms when the letters are pronounced individually (FBI, CIA, ICA, LOL, QED) otherwise just capitalise the first letter (Nasa, Aids, Snafu).

Common literary abbreviations (p.s., i.e., n.b., viz., etc.) with full stops, but RSVP, ETA, DIY and so on without.

Capitalisation

Titles of books, films, music, works of art, etc. usually in italics with *Initial Caps*. No need to capitalise a, an, and, at, for, from, in, of, on, the, to – unless after a colon or specified in original title.

Capitalise recognised geographical and political divisions (e.g. the Eastern Bloc, Northern Ireland, the West Coast), but do not capitalise north, south, east or west when they merely indicate direction or general location, such as central London, east London etc.

Capitalise job titles, but not job descriptions, so Chair of the ICA Board but then the chair, or Pope Francis but then the pope.

Music genres are in lowercase (grime, hip-hop, techno), with the exceptions of R&B, K-pop, J-pop.

Newspaper titles are printed as follows: the *Guardian*, the *Observer*, the *New York Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Financial Times*, the *Spectator* – although *Le Monde*, *Die Welt* and *Die Zeit* are capitalised and italicised in full.

All caps only ever to be used as a LAST RESORT.

Fragments No full stop for sentence fragments (i.e. those lines that are not grammatically resolved: Free for Red Members, Image © Mark Blower etc.)

Singular vs plural Unless otherwise advised, artists, art collectives and bands are plural (Honey-Suckle Company identify themselves ..., HSC derive their name and ethos ... etc., not HSC identities itself ...). Corporate entities are singular (the BBC has decided ...).

Spelling

British not American English rules, e.g.

British ✔	American ✗
colour	color
glamour	glamor
behaviour	behavior
organisation	organization
analyse	analyze
centre	center
theatre	theater
metre	meter
traveller	traveler
fuelled	fueled
modelled	modeled
skilfull	skillful
manoeuvre	maneuver
likeable	likable
unshakeable	unshakable
defence	defense
licence	license
pretence	pretense
dialogue	dialog
analogue	analog
catalogue	catalog

aluminium	aluminum
grey	gray
programme	program
towards	toward
speciality	specialty
mould	mold

Avoid '-st' endings: among not amongst, while not whilst etc.

When in doubt about whether a trade name has become a common noun use lowercase (hoover, champagne, dayglo), with uppercase used for clarity – to distinguish between the brand Martini (Rosso, Bianco etc.) and a generic martini (shaken not stirred), for instance.

Spelling of some common digital words (generally stick to trade name usage unless at the beginning of a sentence):

eBay, Myspace, YouTube, Windows, Wi-Fi
email, internet, online, podcast, webpage, website
PDF, JPEG, MPEG, MOV., MP3, RSS feeds, RTF
K for kilobyte, MB for megabyte, Mb for megabit

Tonal preferences

Sentence structure Ensure sentences are complete (they must have a subject and a verb) and concise – a reader should be able to grasp the meaning of your sentence without needing to reread.

Descriptive text Try to avoid endless strings of adjectives (a common pitfall in art writing), which dilutes meaning and detracts from the impact of a text.

Active vs passive voice Where possible, use an active, rather than a passive voice, as the latter can have a distancing effect.

Hyperbole Try to keep away from overstatement or what might be perceived as exaggerated praise ('enthralling', 'incredible') unless it is undeniably accurate, e.g. Wang Bing's monumental 18-hour long … . Similarly, 'epic', or 'sprawling', when used factually are fine. The use of 'masterpiece' is acceptable only on very rare occasions; 'genius', never.
Profanities Retain when necessary to the understanding of a piece of

writing or warranted by tone/subject matter/context. Artwork titles or original artists' texts should not be censored; however, if these texts include a term which could be interpreted as a slur, a judicious decision about how to proceed should be reached between artist, curator and copy editor.

Salacious language Again, context dependent. Usually fine, as long as it's in keeping with the curatorially approved tone of the event.

Tense We typically use present tense to describe the programme:

Omnibus is the first survey of the work of Berlin collective Honey-Suckle Company, bringing together key moments of the group's 25-year history.

This screening is followed by a Q&A with Walter Murch.

Professor Homi K. Bhabha discusses his past and ongoing scholarly work with *New York Times* literary critic Parul Sehgal and Professor Richard Sennett.

The only occasion we deviate from this is when discussing the anticipated content of lectures and discussions, which tend to be in future continuous tense

Exploring Bhabha's diverse fields of enquiry, the conversation will reflect on key texts and lectures …

Avoid 'extra' formatting – meaning don't highlight names in body text, provide superfluous links etc.

Foreign words

Foreign words are usually in italics, then capitalised and with accents where appropriate (*Sturm und Drang*, *Mise en Scéne*). Make sure there isn't an equivalent English term, as many foreign terms phrases are widely misused.

Lowercase 'van' if full name is used (Vincent van Gogh) but uppercase if not (Van Gogh).

Accents always used on foreign names where necessary (Slavoj Žižek, Hüsker Dü) but not on words used widely in English (cafe, cliche, fiance, hacienda, deja vu).

One exception to avoid ambiguity: exposé.

Korean first names should use lowercase for the second syllable (eg. Bong Joon-ho, not Bong Joon-Ho).

Where writing in Chinese (Mandarin), the correct pinyin markings should be used. Pinyin affects the meaning of each word, e.g. Balloon (Qìqiú) (without the pinyin, it could also translate as 'To beg').

Some foreign film titles are deliberately kept in their original language, where some delberately have the translation as part of the title (or a different title in the original language). If so, set the whole thing in italics and keep the original language's standard sentence case:

A Cop Movie (Una película de policías)
I Want to See (Je veux voir)
The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão (A Vida Invisível)

7. Numbers

Numerals One to nine spelt out, then 10, 11, 12 etc. But never start a sentence with a figure, write the number in words instead. Always use numbers in units of measurement.

Dates No hard rule regarding full names or abbreviations for days and months but the order always remains the same:

Friday 12 March 2018, 9pm
Fri 12 Mar 2018, 9pm
Monday 14 – Friday 18 April 2018, 9pm
Mon 14 – Fri 15 April 2018, 9pm

As a general guideline, for listings and other types of text where space is at a premium (e.g. newsletters, calendars)
Use 3-character abbreviations (Mon – Sun, Jan – Dec) but within sentences or where space allows (e.g. press releases, invites, wall captions) use the long versions – at your discretion. Also, avoid 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc., prefer the numeral alone, e.g. 1 October 2019.

Decades 1960s (no apostrophe) for first mention and thereafter just 60s.

Centuries Numerals not words, no superscript, always lower case (20th century). Hyphenate for compound phrases like 19th-century novel.

Time min. not mins. 12-hour clock format with colon if necessary but shorten to single numeral when on the hour (8:30pm, 8pm, 12pm, 12am). Don't repeat information unnecessarily (5–6pm not 5pm–6pm, 12–17 July not 12 July – 17 July).

Ticket pricing Format this way:

Full price: £13
Concessions: £11

Red Members: Free
Green Members: £11
Blue Members: £7

Prices for artworks/editions of four or more digits are written with a comma: £4,500.

Shorten spans of numbers and years where it is not ambiguous to do so and use the shortest text possible. However, do not elide numbers between 11 and 19, which must always be written in full. The First World War (1914–18) was shorter than the Second World War (1939–45). The First World war lasted from 1914–8. The professorship was held 1993–5.

8. Website

Follow the same basic principles for images outlined in Section 7 above.

As a general rule, the text on any given page should be able to stand alone without assuming prior knowledge of website navigation or route to that page.

In digital media, provide links to websites from words or phrases rather than writing out URLs, but in print use the format www.ica.art/etc. (no http://).

Avoid repeating information where a link will suffice.

Page headings should patently describe page content and ideally contain content keywords for search engines.

Always check links once a new page is live.

External links should open in the same browser window for accessibility reasons.

Avoid excessive use of colons to separate e.g. seasons or series from titles, as they can quickly mount up.

With few exceptions, images should be landscape, cropped to 4:3 ratio, and 1000 pixels wide (or 2000 pixels for exhibitions install shots). Avoid images that contain text and headshots. (More on images above and in the separate Image Guide.)

Deviations from above Style Guide rules:

No specific formatting *within* the titles used for page headings, e.g. Honey-Suckle Company: Omnibus, Metahaven: VERSION HISTORY (i.e. without distinguishing roman/ bold/italics etc.)

For non-linking synopses and other longer texts, generally revert to the usual styles for titles *with the exception of links*. Because links are white by default, they do not require further distinction beyond the usual capitalisation.

9. Marketing

Email

Follow the same basic principles for images outlined in Section 7 above.

Images (JPEG if photo, PNG if graphics, GIF if animation):
Landscape: 4:3 ratio, 640 pixels wide
Portrait: 3:4 ratio, 420 pixels wide
Square: 1:1 ratio, 560 pixels wide

Deviations from above Style Guide rules:

Links are always <u>underlined</u>; if they are also titles, they do not require further distinction beyond the usual capitalisation, e.g. Honey-Suckle Company: Omnibus, Metahaven: VERSION HISTORY (i.e. without distinguishing roman/ bold/italics etc.)

For non-linking synopses and other longer texts, generally revert to the usual styles for titles.

For stock phrases currently in use across e-shots, see separate document.

Calls to Action: 'Book now', 'Buy now' 'Read more here' etc.

Social Media

Follow the same basic principles for images outlined in Section 7 above.

Acceptable Twitter shorthand:

w/e	weekend
w/	with
w/o	without
tmrw	tomorrow
tix	tickets

Don't substitute 2 for 'to' or U for 'you'.

If reproducing review ratings, do not use asterisks **** but copy/paste proper black stars ★★★★.

Deviations from above Style Guide rules:

There is no need to stick to the regular RGB colour scheme, but try to add colours native to the event, e.g. related to a specific film festival or an ICA season with its own identity.

On platforms with limited formatting, use single quotes (Facebook, Twitter) or all caps (Instagram) instead of italics.

10. Etiquette

When copy-pasting text into the website's Content Management System (CMS) or into email templates, make sure to *strip out all previous formatting* by first converting to Plain Text or via some equivalent method, and that there are *single not double spaces after full stops*.

Don't supply text in all caps AS IT WILL HAVE TO BE RETYPED.

Please triple-check names (including diacritics), and test all weblinks.

George Orwell's Five Rules
for Effective Writing

Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.

This sounds easy, but in practice is incredibly difficult. Phrases such as toe the line, ride roughshod over, stand shoulder to shoulder with, play into the hands of, an axe to grind, Achilles' heel, swan song, and hotbed come to mind quickly and feel comforting and melodic.

For this exact reason they must be avoided. Common phrases have become so comfortable that they create no emotional response. Take the time to invent fresh, powerful images.

Never use a long word where a short one will do.

Long words don't make you sound intelligent unless used skillfully. In the wrong situation they'll have the opposite effect, making you sound pretentious and arrogant. They're also less likely to be understood and more awkward to read.

When Hemingway was criticized by Faulkner for his limited word choice he replied:

> 'Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words? He thinks I don't know the ten-dollar words. I know them all right. But there are older and simpler and better words, and those are the ones I use.

If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.

Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree (Ezra Pound). Accordingly, any words that don't contribute meaning to a passage dilute its power. Less is always better. Always.

Never use the passive where you can use the active.

This one is frequently broken, probably because many people don't know the difference between active and passive verbs.
I didn't myself until a few months ago. Here is an example that makes it easy to understand:

> The man was bitten by the dog. (passive)
> The dog bit the man. (active).

The active is better because it's shorter and more forceful.

Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

This is tricky because much of the writing published on the internet is highly technical. If possible, remain accessible to the average reader. If your audience is highly specialized this is a judgment call. You don't want to drag on with unnecessary explanation, but try to help people understand what you're writing about. You want your ideas to spread right?

Break any of these rules sooner than saying anything outright barbarous.

This bonus rule is a catch all. Above all, be sure to use common sense. These rules are easy to memorize but difficult to apply. Although I've edited this piece a dozen times I'm sure it contains imperfections. But trust me, it's much better now than it was initially. The key is effort. Good writing matters, probably more than you think.

(1946)

For all else refer to the Guardian and Observer style guide:
www.theguardian.com/guardian-observer-style-guide-a

This is an ever-evolving document so feel free to propose whatever amendments, arguments or additions.