

# THE PORTFOLIO

A portfolio of your work is essentially what sells you as a talented designer to the producer or director who is not familiar with your work and is hiring. This collection of your best work—a folder of designs and sketches—is usually taken around to be shown to the theatrical entrepreneur after an appointment has been arranged. The most important features in a portfolio are good organization and an arrangement that shows as much versatility as possible. If you are looking towards undergraduate or graduate school, display the greatest range of medium as possible.

- Begin with produced work, any ability to show a completed project from conception to fruition will be your strongest move. It is always interesting to see the contrast from concept sketch to production photograph. Show your professional work first.
  - Include production photographs. These should be few and large, your best photographs. Do not include blurry/poor photographs.
  - Include concept materials and all sketches. If these are impressive, display them as so.
    - Costume sketches, swatches, Sound Concept Boards and software screen shots. Lighting concept boards, sketches.
  - Include technical drawings (light plot/elevations/block diagrams, etc...)
  - Include process shots if you are a technician.
  - If you have the experience, you want to show a range of theatrical styles in the productions you choose to include (Realistic, Abstract, Interior, Exterior, Musical, Serious Drama, Opera, Ballet, Modern Dance)
  - \*\*\*\* Note to sound designers: You can include a CD of sound effects, that is referenced throughout your portfolio. You will need to include larger text sections that describe moments you are creating. While imagery is not the focus, it is important.
  
- Show other production experience.
  - If you have worked crew on a show it is customary (when first putting together a portfolio) to include 1 good photograph of the production. This gives the interviewer a good opportunity to get an idea of the scale of that production.
  - If you have worked on large concerts or with a production company, include a few photographs that show the type of work and scale of production it was.
  
- Include un-realized projects.
  - Classroom projects that display any applicable theatrical skill can be included. (Design projects, drawing and drafting projects, and construction projects, etc...)
  - It is a good idea when building a portfolio to complete non-realized projects, this shows passion for the work, self-motivation and in many cases displays skills otherwise not displayed in your realized work.

- Include related projects that display artistic and technical skills.
  - Include a SHORT sample of photography/artwork/photographs of sculpture.
  - Include a SHORT sample of graphic design/ modeling/film projects.
  - Include FEW images of any construction work, landscaping, etc...
- Include a copy of your current resume and consider a small headshot of yourself to put with it, anything to make you more memorable.
- LABEL,LABEL,LABEL!!!!!!!
  - Every page and even within that moment should be clearly labeled.
  - Largest should be the show title.
  - Next largest is what you did on that show.
  - Next is the other designers/technician/theatre. Dropping names is always good.
  - The labels should be artistic, clean. USE A PAPER CUTTER.
- Consider including a few images of you working and having fun in the theatre. This should in no-way dominate the portfolio but be a short extra.

FORMAT??? The truth is you will ultimately need many formats and what your genre is may dictate what format you use.

1. Large Format Conventional Portfolios (14x17 or even 18x24). These are great ways to display a lot of work, particularly hand drawn sketches. BE VERY CAREFUL NOT TO LOSE SPECTACULAR ORIGINALS BY GLUEING THEM INTO A PORTFOLIO, MAKE COPIES!!! Use removable double sided tape so they can be re-arranged. Take those steps to save you money on what is a fairly expensive portfolio!!!!
2. 11x17 or 13x19 portfolios can now be created in photoshop or a similar program and printed out and bound at any Staples or Kinkos. It is fairly cost effective. These have the advantage of being easily mailed, easily catered to a specific job interview and easily updated. Also if something is lost or damaged, it can be re-printed.
3. Digital Formats
  - a. Website- A good clean website is probably the most effective method. Clean navigation is a must. Do not include too many images. There are many spectacular portfolio websites out there so check them out. Facebook and Myspace pages are a possibility but are currently more effective as supplements.
  - b. Pdf- A great format, can be emailed and if planned correctly can be the same as the 11x17 or 13x19 printed portfolio. Can be hyperlinked like a website.
  - c. Powerpoint is an option. But you need to keep it as simple and clean as possible. NO cheesy transitions, sounds, etc...
  - d. Mailing DVD and CD's has proven very ineffective. People usually are not going to bother to even put it in the drive.

## Final Thoughts:

The portfolio is an artistic extension of your work. Not only should it display your art, but it should be crafted as if it is art. Consider themes and patterns. Put your title blocks in similar places from page to page. Include anything that showcases the work better.

Consider how it will be shown in an interview when you hold it to display it or if you need to leave it to be perused without your presence.

Presentation is everything, if you can't maintain a clean portfolio you probably can't be trusted in a serious technical or design position. It takes time to do this right!

Update your portfolio constantly as you grow in the business.