Portfolio FAQ:
Studio Art, Design, Visual Arts Studies

What makes a portfolio outstanding?
An excellent portfolio is a balance of three important things: your technique/technical ability, your creativity, and what makes you unique. Include whatever you believe to be your strongest work in any or many media. This could include, but not limited to such as works in 2D, 3D, digital, time-based, performance art, etc. But if you have only been able to study a limited number of media, put together a range of works from those for submission. We just want to see what you think is your strongest artwork. Strong portfolios also include your best works first. When documenting your work, make sure you are taking photos or scans that have good resolution/clarity to show detail, are well lit, and are cropped exactly at the end of the canvas/paper.

What’s an observational drawing?
An observational drawing is not made from a grid or photograph. It’s a drawing done from life. Some examples include still-life drawings, gesture studies, and architectural or perspective drawings.

I’ve done a lot of creative things outside of my studio art classes. Can I include those works in my portfolio?
Yes! We are interested in getting to know you and see a wide variety of hands-on projects. Have you worked in a woodshop or welded? Are you interested in building virtual worlds? Have you designed a set or costume for a performance? We’re interested in all varieties of work, from clay modeling and crafts, to landscaping and jewelry design.

What if I have great ideas, but I don’t have the money or resources to bring them to life?
That’s ok! Past applicants have shared their ideas as sketches or plans for future projects. We are excited about these ideas, too!

Are there any things I should consider leaving out of my portfolio?
Avoid a portfolio full of celebrity portraits or copies of popular anime/cartoon characters. A few of these are all right, but we want to see your original works of art and experience your ideas. School projects are fine as well.
If I’m applying to Design, how should I tailor my portfolio?
Consider including graphic design projects such as logo design or yearbook layouts. Include examples of application development, website design, robotics, coding or other digital concepts you’ve explored. Review our design program description and remember that we’re interested in a wide range of ideas and skills. We want to see how you think! Give your works descriptive titles (“poster design”, “prototype for chair”, “wireframe for a productivity app”, etc.) and tell us what materials, techniques, and/or software you used to create it. Feel free to include sketches and process documents as well.

Can I see an example portfolio?
No, because this process should be unique to your background and ideas. There’s no right or wrong way to create a portfolio. If you’d like to see examples of work from some of our current students, visit our Flikr.

How much can I say about my work?
For our portfolio submission we utilize an online platform called SlideRoom. When you begin uploading your work, you will see that there are text boxes available to provide a description for each piece. This is an opportunity to provide context for your work! Please take advantage of this space and in your words tell us about each piece that you are submitting. Think of it as a chance to tell us something that might not be evidently clear about the piece from just looking at it (what are the dimensions? What materials did you use? Was this the first time you used this medium? Is this part of a series?) If the content is not clear, tell us what this piece is about. You also want to be economical about your words – tell us the most important details in as few words as you can.

**PRO TIPS:**

1. Place your strongest works first.
2. Submit works that closely relate to your major of choice.
3. Crop out the negative space around the work, or photograph works against a neutral background.
4. Photograph your work in natural light.