

Building your Portfolio for the BFA...*AND BEYOND*

We are excited to review your application for the School of Art Scholarship program! As you consider your images for the application, it can also help to talk with teachers, family members, and to take the time to consider which images you'd like to include. Remember, this is just the first step! Your portfolio will continue to grow throughout the years to come, and this information is one resource for you.

This document includes the following information:

[1_ The Documentation Process](#)

[2_ Curating Your Portfolio](#)

[3_ Dos and Don'ts](#)

[4_ How Portfolios are Reviewed](#)

[5_ Frequently Asked Questions](#)

THE DOCUMENTATION PROCESS

Basic documentation guidelines for wall-based or object-based artwork

- Use the best high quality camera you can find, ideally with a minimum of 7-8 megapixels. While a phone can work in a pinch, it will not give you the best quality documentation of your work.
 - If you don't have your own camera, Digital SLR cameras may be available. Ask your teachers and school, or even a family member that may have a digital camera you could check out or borrow.
- Always use a tripod or something to stabilize your camera if you can!
- Lighting must be sufficiently bright, even and neutral-white. Which means, try to avoid sunbeams onto your piece, if you're shooting near a window. If you're in a room that has fluorescent lights, you may want to try to get some spotlights to help put light onto your piece where you can control it more.
- Your image must be in clear sharp focus.
- Document in a neutral, clean space with neutral walls.
- Nothing should distract from the work. Make sure the only thing in your image is the piece itself, without any extra distractions around.
- Images of rectangular work should be cropped to fill the picture plane. Meaning, don't crop off an image, make sure it fits into your camera image.

Documentation timeline

- Document physical artwork soon after completion. If not, you might forget to do it!
- Durational, performative, and social practice artwork can be documented live with video or photography.

Documentation storage

- Personal online drive or cloud storage is recommended. Stick with one place to keep your digital images, even in google, dropbox, or another place. A thumb drive for storage would even work!
- Be sure to save your images with the title and give yourself a reminder of which image is which.
- Personal archive folders should contain high resolution documentation files. Large format image files with a resolution of 200dpi-300dpi are necessary for long term archiving and printing purposes. But, you may have to change the size of images to work with online applications or uploading parameters.
- Information such as artwork title, date, medium, and other items should be saved for each documented artwork.

CURATING YOUR PORTFOLIO (THIS IS THE TOUGHEST PART SOMETIMES!)

Curating a portfolio towards a specific media area (Ceramics, Drawing, Painting, Photo, Printmaking, Graphic Design, Video, Sound, Sculpture, Fiber, Jewelry, Performance, etc.)

- The portfolio should include a selection of works from a variety of art courses, with emphasis on work you feel best shows your best skillsets.
- A total of 15-20 images or media documentation files will give you a range to pick from for program applications, whether for admission or scholarships.

- 3-5 documentation examples should reflect competency in chosen media area emphasis. If you plan to pursue Painting, you may want to have more images of completed or in-progress Paintings. If you do not plan to say, go into Design, then you're not usually required to show something from a Graphic Design project. This is YOUR portfolio, so make sure it's representative of you!

DOs and DON'Ts

- DO include short thoughtful descriptions accompanying each image.
- DO put your three strongest works first.
- ONLY include detail images when shifts in scale drastically change the meaning of the artwork. This is most usually done for work in Ceramics, Sculpture, or Installation.
- ONLY include multiple views for three-dimensional artwork containing complex spatial relations.

HOW PORTFOLIOS ARE REVIEWED

- Technical competency-did the applicant try different processes and can growth and development be seen?
- Effort and ambition-did the applicant push themselves for the different projects?
- Scale and scope-was the work done inside a class or outside a class, and what is their range of skill and idea behind their works?
- Conceptual competency-what is the idea behind each work and is it more than just a reproduction?
- Professional documentation-can the works be seen clearly and fully?

FAQS

Q: Why is the portfolio important?

A: *The portfolio is important as a student and a professional. A portfolio is often required for scholarships, grants, exhibition opportunities, internships, future employment, and application to master degree programs.*

Q: Can I submit sketchbook images or work in-progress for the School of Art's Scholarship application?

A: *Yes, in this instance, we realize that given the time, students may not have everything they need to fully finish certain pieces, or may have great works in progress for various spring events, AP portfolios, or competitions. 1-2 sketchbook images are appropriate, with the majority of images being completed works.*

Q: I'm interested in the BFA but unsure what emphasis area to choose.

A: *Students who are uncertain about what emphasis area to choose are encouraged to "test the waters" by enrolling in intro-level studio courses in the semester after finishing the Foundation Program. Each school and program are different, but at the School of Art, whether students are interested in Graphic Design, Art Education, Art History, or Studio Art, you are able to learn more about each area through Foundations and the Art History surveys.*