

Creative Portfolio workshop

As a graduating senior in the art and design fields, your online portfolio is one of your most powerful tools for launching your career. Whether you're a fine artist, game designer, or graphic designer, your portfolio serves as a digital résumé, a creative showcase, and a gateway to new opportunities.

Purpose of an Online Portfolio

- **Showcase Your Work:** Highlight your best and most relevant pieces to potential employers, clients, galleries, or collaborators.
 - **Demonstrate Your Process:** Employers and collaborators want to understand how you think and solve problems, so include sketches, wireframes, and explanations when appropriate.
 - **Build Your Personal Brand:** Your portfolio reflects your style, professionalism, and personality. Keep it authentic yet polished.
 - **Facilitate Networking and Opportunities:** Include clear links to social media, email, and other professional platforms so people can quickly contact and share your work.
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Tips for Everyone

- **Personalize it:** Blend elements from the categories below to make your portfolio feel authentically *you* while still achieving your overall goal(s). Ask yourself, “What do I want this portfolio to say about me?” and ensure that the design, content, and tone reflect your perspectives.
- **Keep it Updated:** Refresh your portfolio regularly with new projects or experiences. Nothing looks worse than a portfolio that hasn't been touched in years.
- **Mobile-Optimized:** Ensure your site is responsive and looks great on mobile devices, as many people will view it on phones or tablets.
- **Make Navigation Simple:** Make it easy to navigate and find relevant projects. Include a straightforward menu and intuitive labels.
- **Provide Context:** Whether through project descriptions, case studies, or process images, give viewers enough information to understand what you did and why it matters.
- **Link to Social Media/LinkedIn:** Incorporate your social profiles to help viewers connect with you, but ensure they are platforms you want potential employers to see.

Why You Should Get Good Documentation of Your Work

Documenting your projects is vital for sharing, promoting, and preserving your work. High-quality documentation accurately conveys your efforts, especially when showcased or submitted to galleries, grants, exhibitions, play sessions, and online platforms. It's important to document projects while they are in progress as well; this will assist you in creating detailed case studies for each project. Good documentation can also enhance your portfolio, social media presence, and applications, ensuring your work is represented effectively and reaches the right audience.

How to Get Good Documentation of Your Work

- **Photography:** Use high-resolution images of the work in good lighting to capture details, textures, and colors accurately. Use a camera to ensure crisp, clear photos. For 3D works, show multiple angles.
 - **Video and Audio:** For time-based, interactive, or sound-based work, record video or audio to demonstrate the project's functions in real time.
 - **Context Shots:** Include images or footage of your work in its intended environment—whether in a gallery, public space, or interactive setting. This shows how the audience engages with it.
 - **Supplementary Media:** For digital or new media projects, use screen recordings, animated GIFs, or website snapshots to represent the work's interactive or evolving nature.
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Fine Artists

Your portfolio should highlight your use of technology, digital or analog mediums, and interactive elements as an artist. Potential collaborators, curators, and galleries are looking for cutting-edge creativity and the integration of digital processes into your work.

Dos

- **Curate Thoughtfully:** Show only your strongest pieces that reflect your current style and vision. Quality over quantity!
- **Show Series or Collections:** If you work in a series, show the pieces in context. This helps showcase thematic or conceptual depth.
- **Document Work Professionally:** Use high-quality images or videos of your artwork. Make sure colors are accurate, and images are clear and well-lit.
- **Include Artist Statements:** Add short, compelling artist statements to give insight into your concepts, materials, and influences.
- **Show Interactive and Time-Based Work:** Include videos, interactive pieces, and animations. Provide clear documentation through videos or simulations if your work is experiential (e.g., VR/AR installations).

- **Provide Context for Digital Art:** Explain the technology or software behind your work (e.g., generative art with p5.js, interactive installations with Arduino, 3D art with Blender). This helps non-tech-savvy audiences understand your process.
- **Use High-Quality Documentation:** Since new media works often rely on physical installations, screens, or digital interactions, make sure your photos, videos, or screen recordings are professional and clear.
- **Embed Interactive Elements:** Include interactive versions of your work directly on your portfolio site. For example, include playable games, clickable web-based art, or interactive animations.
- **Highlight Cross-Disciplinary Work:** If your new media practice involves collaborations with technologists, programmers, or other disciplines, explain your role and how the partnership influenced the work.

Don't

- **Overlook Technical Details:** New media works often rely on specific technologies. Provide enough technical details (software, programming languages, devices used) without overwhelming the viewer.
- **Avoid Only Showing Still Images:** Images alone cannot capture most new media works' time-based, interactive qualities. For better representation, include video or animated GIFs that showcase the work's engagement and process in action.
- **Don't Neglect User Interaction:** If your work involves user interaction (e.g., responsive installations, web art), show how people interact with the work and document that engagement.
- **Avoid Clutter:** Don't overwhelm viewers with too many pieces. Stick to roughly 10–20 works.
- **Don't Neglect Contact Info:** Ensure you have an easy-to-find contact form or email and links to your social media profiles (Instagram, Behance, etc.).

Examples [Fine Arts]

- ★ <https://noaranjo.cyou/> *alumni
- ★ <https://kylamullaney.com/> *alumni
- ★ <https://www.nebulooous.com/> *alumni
- ★ <https://www.ryanbaumgart.com/> *alumni
- ★ <https://www.bh1ma.com/home> *alumni
- ★ <https://www.annaokatz.com/> *alumni
- ★ <https://cal-ledoux.github.io/> *almni
- ★ <https://ojack.xyz/>
- ★ <https://skygoodman.net/>
- ★ <https://charliegerard.dev/>
- ★ <https://patriciogonzalezvivo.com/>
- ★ <https://mollysoda.exposed/>
- ★ <http://www.cassiencquater.com/>
- ★ <https://jonsatrom.com/>

- ★ <https://www.cameronmankin.com/>
- ★ <https://crystalb.xyz>
- ★ <https://nickbriz.com/>
- ★ <https://wttdotm.com/>
- ★ <https://www.paolo.molleindustria.org/>
- ★ <http://www.marisaolson.com/>
- ★ <https://placesiveneverbeen.com/>
- ★ <https://beyondresolution.info/>
- ★ <https://teddavis.org/>
- ★ <https://ksawerykomputery.com/>
- ★ <https://glander.co/>
- ★ <https://bomani.rip/>
- ★ <http://matthew-lyons.com/>
- ★ <https://beccaricks.space/>
- ★ <https://www.katehollenbach.com/>
- ★ <https://www.outofambit.com/>
- ★ <https://mimionuoha.com/about>
- ★ <https://angelawashko.com/home.html>
- ★ <https://v21.io/>
- ★ <https://joyfennell.com/>

Game Designers

For game designers, your portfolio should focus on artistic and technical skills, appealing to studios, developers, or freelance clients.

Dos

- **Show Playable Demos:** Include playable demos or videos of your games. Provide links to downloadable versions or playable browser versions.
- **Highlight Team Projects:** Make it clear what your role was in each project—whether you worked on level design, characters, mechanics, or environments.
- **Showcase Problem-Solving:** Include brief explanations of technical or design challenges you faced and how you solved them.
- **Include UI/UX Elements:** If applicable, showcase your user interface and experience design skills by including wireframes and prototypes.
- **Document Work Professionally:** Use high-quality images or videos of your work. Make sure colors are accurate, and images are clear.

Don't

- **Don't Rely Only on Screenshots:** Video and interactive elements are key. Static images can't fully convey a game's experience.

- **Avoid Being Vague About Your Role:** Always clearly define your contributions, especially on collaborative projects.
- **Don't Forget to Include Tools and Software:** List the game engines, design tools, and programming languages you are proficient in (e.g., Unity, Unreal, Blender, Photoshop).

Examples [Game Designer]

- ★ <https://alex-sheen.github.io/> *alumni
- ★ <https://portfolio.isaac-berman.com/> *alumni
- ★ <https://rahmanmustapha.netlify.app/> *alumni
- ★ <https://www.noor-j-amin.com/> *alumni
- ★ <https://www.jjabuhalimahcreative.net/> *alumni
- ★ <https://ashlynsparrow.com/>
- ★ <https://jannouna.itch.io/>
- ★ <https://w.itch.io/>
- ★ <https://clarafv.com/my-games/>
- ★ <https://kpoppp.io/>
- ★ <http://www.patrickjagoda.com/>
- ★ <https://lauraehall.com/my-projects/>
- ★ <https://ko-opmode.com/>
- ★ <https://everest-pipkin.com/>
- ★ <https://www.jwaaaap.com/>
- ★ <https://karastonesite.com/>
- ★ <https://cattsmall.com/>
- ★ <https://kzoradm.itch.io/>
- ★ <https://terrifyingjellyfish.com/>
- ★ <https://www.shed-works.co.uk/>
- ★ <https://strangescaffold.itch.io/> *
- ★ <https://njunius.github.io/>

Graphic // UX/UI Designers

Designers need to focus on the process behind the visuals. Employers seek a deep understanding of user needs, interaction design, and interface aesthetics.

Dos

- **Showcase Case Studies:** Include in-depth case studies that explain your process, from research to final design. Focus on problem identification, user testing, and iterations.
- **Demonstrate Responsive Design:** Show how your designs work across different devices—desktop, tablet, and mobile.
- **Emphasize Usability:** Highlight user-centered design decisions, and if possible, include feedback from usability testing.
- **Organize with a Clean, Simple Layout:** Your portfolio tests your design skills—make sure it's clean, easy to navigate, and reflects good UX practices.

Don'ts

- **Don't Just Show Final Screens:** Potential employers want to see your design thinking, not just the result. Include wireframes, prototypes, and testing results.
- **Avoid Overloading on Visuals:** Make sure your portfolio tells the story of how you made your design decisions—not just a gallery of pretty screens.
- **Don't Ignore Accessibility:** Demonstrate your knowledge of accessibility principles (contrast, readability, etc.), and ensure your portfolio is also accessible.

Examples [Designers]

- ★ <https://youli.design/> *alumni
- ★ <https://samsy.ninja/>
- ★ <https://rickcourtney.com/>
- ★ <https://unseen.co/>
- ★ <https://prand.tv/>
- ★ <https://igdesignspace.com/index.html>
- ★ <https://abnerbenjamin.com/>
- ★ <https://mayabergdesign.com/>
- ★ <https://margotharrington.com/>
- ★ <https://www.hello.tinytank.net/>
- ★ <https://fieldofpractice.com/>
- ★ <https://www.leilannitodd.com/>

Core Components

Home

The home page is your portfolio's introduction and first impression. It should be visually engaging and give visitors an immediate sense of your style and the kind of work you create.

- **What to Include:** A striking image or video of your best work, a short tagline or introduction about you and your artistic practice, and intuitive navigation links to other site sections.
 - **Purpose:** To captivate visitors and entice them to explore further. It sets the tone for your portfolio and reflects your brand.
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About Me

The "About Me" section offers visitors insight into who you are as an artist. It's your opportunity to share your journey, creative process, and artistic philosophy.

- **What to Include:** A brief artist bio, your background, education, artistic influences, and any relevant experience (e.g., residencies, collaborations). You can also include a photo of yourself in the studio or at work.
 - **Purpose:** To humanize your portfolio and provide context for your work. It helps potential clients, collaborators, or curators connect with you on a personal level.
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Contact

The "Contact" section ensures people can easily reach you for inquiries, collaborations, or commissions. Share *anything* you're comfortable with a stranger knowing, but don't include your home address or personal phone number. *It's important to keep this advice in mind when sharing your resume or CV as well*

- **What to Include:** Your email address, links to your social media (Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.), and a contact form. If applicable, you can also include details for gallery representation.
- **Purpose:** To provide a direct, simple way for interested parties to get in touch, whether for professional opportunities or feedback.

Work

This is the heart of your portfolio, where you showcase your artistic output. It should highlight your most important and best works.

- **What to Include:** Organized galleries of your work, divided by project, series, or medium. Each piece or series includes high-quality images or videos, titles, descriptions, and relevant details about the process or concept.
 - **Purpose:** Present your work in the most compelling way, offering a curated selection that reflects your artistic strengths and diversity.
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Writing

If writing is an important part of your practice, you can share your thoughts in more depth in this section.

- **What to Include:** Links to published articles, personal reflections, essays, or blog posts about your artistic process, themes, or reactions to art movements.
 - **Purpose:** To demonstrate your intellectual engagement with your work and the broader art world. It can offer deeper insight into your practice and show your versatility as an artist-thinker.
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Exhibition History

This section lists the galleries, museums, or other venues where you've shown your work and any relevant details about the shows.

- **What to Include:** A list of solo and group exhibitions with dates, locations, and links to exhibition websites or press coverage, if available.
 - **Purpose:** To showcase your professional experience and activity in art, emphasize that your work has been exhibited in recognized venues.
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Clients

This section provides a summary of your professional partnerships for artists who work on commissions or collaborate with brands, companies, or other artists.

- **What to Include:** A list of past clients or collaborators, possibly with testimonials, project descriptions, or images of commissioned work. *This should include any current or completed internships related to your desired profession.*
 - **Purpose:** To establish trust with potential clients and show that you're capable of working professionally and meeting the needs of diverse collaborators.
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Recognitions (Awards/Grants)

This section highlights any honors, awards, or grants you've received that recognize your artistic achievements.

- **What to Include:** A list of awards, fellowships, or grants, including the year and the organization that awarded them.
- **Purpose:** To demonstrate the recognition you've earned from peers, institutions, or funding bodies, adding credibility to your practice and standing out to potential galleries, buyers, or collaborators.

Organizing Your Art Portfolio Website

Grouping Your Work: Sub-Categories vs. Single Grid

It's common to display your work in a single list or grid, but organizing your portfolio into sub-categories can provide a more precise structure, making it easier for visitors to navigate. There are several ways you could categorize your projects:

- **By Medium:** If your work spans multiple mediums, create sections for each, such as “GIFs,” “Games,” “Web,” and “Writing.” This organization helps viewers find specific types of work they’re interested in.
 - **By Project Type:** You can also group work by how you engage with it, for example, by dividing your projects into “Talks,” “Workshops,” or “Installations.”
 - **Personal vs. Commercial:** Separate your personal creative work from commercial or commissioned projects to give a clear picture of your range as an artist. Categories like “Personal Projects” and “Client Work” can provide helpful context for different types of viewers (e.g., curators vs. potential clients).
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Case Studies

This resource is mainly geared toward designers but can also benefit artists. Each project in your portfolio should have its dedicated page or section, commonly called a “**Case Study.**” This format lets you present each piece in detail, giving visitors insights into your creative process and the story behind your work.

What to Include in a Case Study:

- **Overview:** Provide a concise summary of the project. Describe its themes, mediums, goals, and audience.
 - **Concept and Inspiration:** Explain the concept behind the piece. What inspired the work? What messages or emotions are you exploring? Are there any unique features or mechanics?
 - **Process:** Detail your creative process, from concept to execution. Discuss your approach to digital tools and any technical challenges you faced.
 - **Role and Collaboration:** If the piece involves collaboration, describe your role and the contributions of others. List any necessary attributions.
 - **Reception:** Provide details on where the project has been exhibited or published, including any press coverage, awards, or public reception.
 - **Media:** Add high-quality images or videos of the project, ideally showing it in its best context, such as in a gallery or on a digital platform, if applicable.
 - **Audience Interaction:** For installations or interactive pieces, highlight how audiences engage with the work, whether through physical space, screens, or devices.
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What is is Website [(technically)]

Domain Registration

- **Make a Strong First Impression:** Your domain name is your website's first impression. It should reflect your brand, artistic vision, or creative identity. A common approach is using a format like `FirstLast.com`, but you can also get creative to make your domain memorable.
 - **Conveys Professionalism:** A well-chosen domain conveys professionalism and sets the tone for the visitor. Consider what your domain says about you and how it aligns with your mission as an artist.
 - **Consistency Matters:** To build a cohesive online presence, try aligning your domain name with your social media handles, email, and other professional platforms.
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Hosting

- **What is Hosting?:** Hosting refers to where your website files are stored. The hosting server allows others to access your website when they enter your domain name.
 - **Types of Hosting:**
 1. **Shared Hosting:** This is ideal for simple portfolio sites. Many website builders (like [Wix](#), [Adobe Portfolio](#), or [Squarespace](#)) include hosting in their service. Free options like [GitHub Pages](#) and [Neocities](#) and paid options like [Namecheap](#) and [DreamHost](#) also offer shared hosting.
 2. **Virtual Machine Hosting:** For custom sites that require backend programming, using services like [Digital Ocean](#), [Linode](#), or AWS (Amazon Web Services) is recommended. These allow more control but require technical knowledge.
 3. **Self-Hosting:** While not recommended due to complexity, you can [host your website](#) on a personal computer that is always connected to the internet.
 - **Domain and Hosting Connection:** After registering a domain, you must point it to your hosting provider through nameservers. This allows your domain to direct visitors to your website.
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DNS (Domain Name System)

- **What It Does:** DNS is the system that connects your domain name to the specific server where your website is hosted. When you purchase a domain, you'll need to update it with your host's nameservers, allowing visitors to access your site.
 - **Setting It Up:** Once you buy a domain, configure the DNS settings to point it to your hosting provider. This involves entering the nameservers provided by your host into your domain registrar's system.
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Email

- **Custom Email Address:** You can create a professional email address using your domain (e.g., `yourname@yourdomain.com`). This is often more professional than

using a generic service like Gmail. *Your UChicago email will be transitioned into a FWD-only email within two quarters of graduating.*

- **Hosting Email:** Many hosting providers offer email services, so you can access your email through webmail or sync it with email clients like Outlook or Apple Mail.

Private Registration

- **Why It Matters:** Domain registrars are required to collect personal information when you register a domain (e.g., your name, address, and email). Many registrars offer privacy protection services to hide this data from public WHOIS databases.
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HTTPS (SSL Encryption)

- **What Is HTTPS?:** HTTPS is a secure version of HTTP, ensuring that data between your website and its visitors is encrypted. This helps protect privacy and increases trust in your site.
 - **Why It's Important:** Web browsers may flag sites without HTTPS as “not secure,” which could discourage visitors. Most hosting services provide free SSL certificates to enable HTTPS, making the process simple for users. See <https://certbot.eff.org/> for more information on how to set that up.
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Website Creation

- **Do-It-Yourself (DIY) vs. Website Builders:**
 - If you're comfortable coding and want full creative control, you can build your site from scratch using platforms like [NetNet Studio](#).
 - If you prefer a streamlined process, consider website builders like [MMM.page](#), [Carrd](#), [Cargo](#), [Wix](#), [Spacespace](#), [Adobe Portfolio](#), or [Webflow](#). These services offer pre-built templates and drag-and-drop functionality.