



BUILDING A PORTFOLIO

Building a portfolio requires careful planning. You will want to show work which not only reflects your current abilities, but also your potential to handle the challenges of a professional art college. Students applying to Pennsylvania College of Art & Design should present 10 to 15 pieces of finished work with a minimum of three (3) of those pieces being drawings from direct observation. It is useful to show work in a variety of media (see below). All work in your portfolio should effectively illustrate how you think, see and make decisions as an artist. In addition to your finished pieces, you should consider including your sketchbook. Students committed to photography as a major can show these abilities as well as present seeing, thinking, and decision-making skills in contact sheets, prints and digital output.

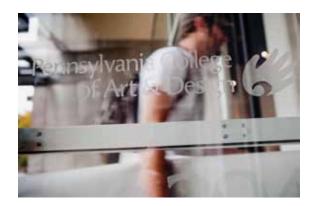
- **DRAWING.** Finished drawings show your understanding of line, value and composition. Studies may be of interiors, still life, or the human figure. Drawings made from secondary source material (like photographs) should be avoided. You must have at least three (3) drawings from direct observation in your portfolio.
- TWO-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN. Show your skills
 with color, shape and composition, and your ability to
 think analytically in combining these abstract design
 elements effectively. Show your ability to handle color
 and how it affects the viewer's understanding of, and
 reaction to, form.
- THREE-DIMENSIONAL DESIGN.

 Demonstrate your ability in manipulating three-dimensional elements and principles of design.
- PERSONAL CHOICES. Highlight your special abilities in areas like, photography, printmaking, graphic design, etc.
- **SKETCHBOOK.** Sketchbooks are very important. As a part of your portfolio, they directly demonstrate your thought process in the development of a visual idea.

EDITING

Building a portfolio is much like writing a book – editing is everything. Use your most critical eye when selecting work for your portfolio and, above all, avoid work that is:

- **COPIED.** Do not present copies of work done by other professional artists like paintings, cartoons or photographs. Your work should show your own thinking and decision making.
- **DATED.** Choose work created within the last year that shows your ongoing interest in studying art.
- DAMAGED. Select pieces that are clean and demonstrate good craft in their execution and presentation.



VISUAL PRESENTATION

As an artist, you will constantly be asked to present your portfolio. How you do this tells others what your current strengths are in the arts. A well thought out, well-designed portfolio presentation exemplifies organizational skills as well as pride in your work.

- PORTFOLIO CASE. A high school student does not need an expensive portfolio case. A clean, sturdy vinyl case or even a well-made case created by binding large, strong pieces of cardboard together will work for most students.
- MATTING OR MOUNTING ARTWORK.

Work in a portfolio should always be well presented but, for a student, it is not necessary to have artwork matted or mounted. However, matting or mounting work does add to the overall presentation of a portfolio and is positively noticed by any reviewer. If you choose to mat your pieces, be sure that the mat is properly cut and enhances the work rather than detracts from it.

- Choose mat board colors in neutral tones and use good craftsmanship when cutting your mats.
- CD PORTFOLIOS. Students living more than three hours away or students with large pieces of work may submit a CD portfolio. You must include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want to have your CD returned. Please refer below for specific instructions.
- CD PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION. Portfolios presented on a CD should include individual digital image files in .jpg format, and should not be combined to create a slideshow or prepared presentation. The images should be in focus, well-lit and photographed against an all-white or all-black background. In addition to the CD, students should include a typed corresponding list with the title of work, date, medium, and size of the artwork presented.



THE INTERVIEW

All visual artists must be able to communicate their ideas verbally as well as visually. In an interview, try to be natural and discuss your work openly and without hesitation. It is understood that every piece does not need a full explanation, but the interview will go more smoothly if you discuss your art with intelligence and enthusiasm. If you can't think of what to say, here are some topics that you should be prepared to address in a college admissions interview:

- CONCEPT. Where did the idea originate and what research was involved in developing the concept?
- **TECHNIQUES.** How was the piece executed and why did you choose that technique?
- **MEDIUM.** What materials did you use to create the piece and why did you feel they were good choices?
- STYLE. Why did you use a particular style?
- PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS. What was the assignment and what restrictions did you have to work with?