
Flaunt

SAMPLE

This PDF is a limited preview of *Flaunt: Designing effective, compelling and memorable portfolios of creative work* displaying only 18 pages from a total of 176. It is intended to provide a preview of both the content and the way *Flaunt* works as a PDF.

In case you have come across this PDF through a search engine or can't remember why you are looking at this, you can read all about *Flaunt* at UNDERCONSIDERATION.COM/FLAUNT.

As a PDF, *Flaunt* is available for \$20.00 and as a printed book for \$30.00.

Peter Synak

THIS PORTFOLIO WAS CREATED DURING A UNIVERSITY PORTFOLIO CLASS IN 2008. IT CONTAINS A SELECTION OF MY BEST SCHOOL PROJECTS, AIDING ME IN MY JOB SEARCH AFTER MY UPCOMING GRADUATION. IT WAS MEANT TO REMAIN AS A PERSONAL BOOK COMMEMORATING MY TIME AT SCHOOL, AS WELL AS CATALOGING MY FAVORITE PROJECTS.

STATUS

I used this portfolio for several months after my graduation in 2008—it helped me launch my career during a challenging time with an economical decline as I was able to find a position as a junior designer that I was very excited about. It is now archived.

APPROACH

The book format in itself was part of a graduation class assignment. My particular theme came about as a means for cohesiveness and out of a personal interest in a simple approach to design. Thematically it supported my personal point-of-view for designers to convey information with the most clarity of intent. I've supported this thought with introductory pages printed on see-through vellum combining written words to the visible photographed project underneath.

Selecting all the materials was an exercise executing on the established theme. The vellum sheets layer information offering enough space for large photographs that are meant to speak for themselves. The paper I choose was a white and textured paper of a collection inspired by Charles and Ray Eames to add an interesting texture that I personally enjoy when flipping through books.

FLEXIBILITY

It wasn't intended to be updated at that time or in the upcoming years, as it was a stepping stone to launch my career in design, and partially to commemorate a particular time in my career leaving school, and transitioning into a new stage for myself. I intended to add future accumulated projects in a new portfolio, at a different stage of thought and philosophy towards what design means to me.

DISPLAY

First I sent postcard teasers showcasing different project to spark interest and gain invitations to present myself and the rest of my work. During interviews, I passed out two copies of the book while voicing over all projects either as a presentation or based on questions if I had sent it out pre-interview.

ONLINE

I did not add an online version at that time. Today I don't think this would be possible, as online portfolios are a standard and make it much easier for an employer or possible client to discover a designer.

OTHERS

Over the years I have collected and presented more recent projects when I had interest in new ventures. Most of my current body of work is a collection of digital projects which required a digital representation.

ABOUT

Currently Peter Synak is a Senior Designer at a San Francisco, CA-based startup working on new technology-related ventures focusing on bringing technology closer to people in developing countries. In the past, Synak worked as a freelance designer with various startups and as a staff designer at Ammunition and Method in San Francisco. In past years Synak has mostly worked with technology-related brands such as Adobe, Google, Microsoft, Samsung, Sonos, Autodesk, Barnes & Noble, Beats by Dre, and a few other interesting folks helping them to engage with their audiences.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

STRUCTURE	DIMENSIONS (IN.)	PRINTER	PRODUCTION TIME	PRODUCTION COST
Perfect-bound book	9.5 × 12.5	Epson Stylus Photo R1800	2 Weeks	\$500 Multiple copies
MATERIALS	PAPER	VENDORS	SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	TYPEFACES
Cardboard Book cloth	Neenah Eames Solar White, 24lb text Canson Vidalon Vellum, 55lb text	The Key Printing & Binding	French fold	Helvetica Neue 45 Light, 55 Roman, and 75 Bold



TIP Vellum paper serves as a great way to layer project information and add tactility.

I CREATED THIS PORTFOLIO IN THE SPRING OF 2008, WHILE WORKING AT CBX IN NEW YORK, NY. IT WAS THE FIRST VERSION TO REPLACE MY GRADUATING PORTFOLIO FROM SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY. I CREATED THIS BOOK IN ORDER TO FIND MY NEXT JOB, AND TO CREATE A PERMANENT SNAPSHOT OF MY WORK UP UNTIL THEN.

STATUS

I used it for four months before landing a job at Brand Union.

APPROACH

Since I can remember, I have used this system of logos: the “A” in my name is a different design tool for each touchpoint. My favorite one has always been the X-Acto knife, which was my inspiration for the metal book covers that are composed of laser-cut, bead-blasted, anodized aluminum. The previous portfolio covers were brushed stainless steel, which turned out to be very heavy and picked up too many fingerprints.

Because of the rather unconventional dimensions (9.5 × 13-inches), a completely arbitrary size seeking uniqueness, I could not find any stock binding solution. I found an oversize artist’s paper book, from which I stripped the coil off every time I modified the portfolio—a \$19.99 binding fee, plus the burden of using one hundred loose sheets of bright white drawing paper.

FLEXIBILITY

In theory it is updateable. The covers are permanent, and the pages can be punched at very specific office stores and copy centers. Unfortunately, I use page numbers in my design, so any new work requires complete repagination. It is impractical, but I love it. I won’t have it any other way.

DISPLAY

Mostly in person. My website should suffice when a personal interview is not possible.

MEMORIES

After I graduated from college, I flooded New York City with little employee care packages. I spent over an hour on each, and most firms

received several. I went to an interview at Interbrand and they asked me to wait in their cafeteria. While I was sitting there, I overheard two people talking about this cool mailer that someone received with a “Sam” logo. One said to the other, “Oh, neat. We should really bring this person in for an interview one day.”

ONLINE

The physical portfolio is a labor of love. The website, on the other hand, is a functional necessity. Most places I applied to required a website in order to be considered for an interview. My portfolio and website share the SAM brand look and feel. The similarities, however, end there. I approached each medium differently, but with a similar goal: to provide an effortless way for someone to see the breadth of my work and the seriousness of my application.

LOOKING BACK (5 YEARS LATER)

My next portfolio was an iPad app. It used more of a traditional slide format embedded in an application I developed. While it was more conventional than my previous portfolio in its design, it still served as a custom expression of my design experience and embodied my general way of thinking.

ABOUT

Sam Becker is a Creative Director at Brand Union in New York, NY. Becker studied communications design at Syracuse University. After school Becker got his start in Crate & Barrel’s graphics department, and later worked for design agencies CBX and Interbrand. Becker Tweets at @sambecker, and Instagrams at @smam.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

STRUCTURE	DIMENSIONS (IN.)	PRINTER	PRODUCTION TIME	PRODUCTION COST
Wire-O-bound book	9.5 × 13	Epson Stylus Photo 1400	—	\$750
MATERIALS	PAPER	VENDOR	RETAIL STORES	TYPEFACES
Aluminum covers	Moab Entrada, double-sided matte inkjet, 300g/m2	Unique Copy Center Advanced Laser and Waterjet Cutting	—	Apex Sans Dolly

Ariel Rudolph Harwick

I MADE THE PORTFOLIO AT THE END OF 2013, AND I COMPLETED THE CASE LATER IN 2014. I’D RECENTLY MOVED TO WASHINGTON DC FROM NORTH CAROLINA, AND THOUGH I HAD A RESPECTABLE NUMBER OF FREELANCE CLIENTS, I WAS LOOKING FOR MY SECOND FULL-TIME JOB. I DESIGNED IT FOR INTERVIEWS AT DESIGN STUDIOS AND FOR MEETINGS WITH POTENTIAL FREELANCE CLIENTS. WITH ALL THE BLOOD, SWEAT, TEARS, AND DOLLARS THAT WENT INTO IT, I DIDN’T WANT IT TO BE USELESS AFTER GETTING A JOB!

STATUS

I’m happy to report that the portfolio fulfilled its first purpose—it got me a permanent position. As for the second—thanks to the internet—most of my freelance clients are too far away for in-person meetings, so I frequently use the website to gauge clients’ interests and needs.

APPROACH

I gravitated toward a generously-sized book format; it seemed like the best way to cohesively present such a wide array of projects. I considered screw-posts for their flexibility but eschewed plastic slipcovers—I wanted the portfolio to feel as polished, unique, and substantial as any piece I would create for a client. As a graphic designer, artist, and writer, I take as much pride in my craft as my content, and I want the viewer to tangibly feel that pride as they interact with the book.

From a practical standpoint, the gray divider pages make each project totally discrete. No project is on the back of any other, so I can easily swap them around without reprinting pages. The dividers also improve pacing by creating rhythm and hierarchy, and they give the eye a rest between photo-heavy spreads.

The interior pages alternate uncoated paper for the divider pages with coated paper for the rest to create textural contrast. The pages are scored multiple times for flexibility, since the book block is pretty thick. Having the printer drill and score the pages would’ve doubled production costs, so I did both myself. I used a scoring board (it has lots of little parallel grooves) and a bonefolder to score. I actually drilled it with a power drill, which created a burr that I had to beat down with a hammer. It wasn’t ideal, but it was cheap. Next time, I’ll invest in a fancy Japanese screw punch.

Where the book was a labor of love, the case was a labor of hate. As a print designer, I needed to be able to carry samples along with my book. I decided to modify an existing laptop bag pattern, a questionable idea considering that this was only my fourth sewing project ever and that the pattern was listed as “advanced.” Ignoring these portents, I changed the size, increased the padding, added interior pockets for

my samples, and gave it a flap to make it even more waterproof (the exterior is made of sport jacket fabric extracted from the chaotic Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores clearance pile). The result is reasonable as long as you’re not a seamstress, but my sewing machine and I are no longer on good terms.

FLEXIBILITY

Yes, though at a cost. The loose covers and screw-posts make it possible to rearrange and add pages at will. However, the size I’ve chosen requires me to get my pages printed at a shop—which costs decent money—rather than doing it myself, so I’ll only update when I have a substantial chunk of projects to switch out all at once.

DISPLAY

Always in person, though the project descriptions make it so that someone could just as easily enjoy the book on their own.

ONLINE

My physical portfolio and my website share the same visual cues from my personal identity—logo, color, pattern—and the same spare elegance. But because the physical portfolio allows for more typographic and compositional variety, it better showcases my expertise as a print designer.

ABOUT

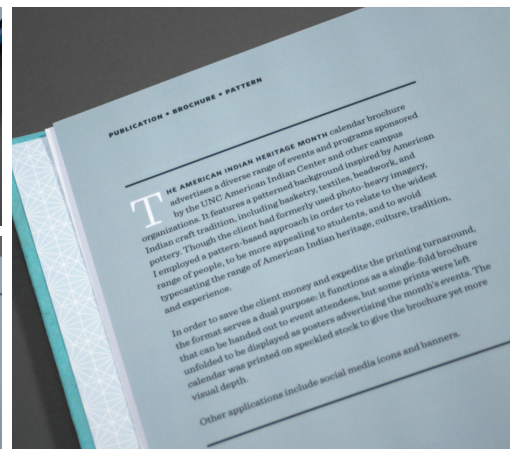
Rudolph Harwick studied studio art and creative writing at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Based near Washington, DC, Rudolph Harwick is a graphic designer who freelances and works at a design studio while enjoying book arts, printmaking, and writing short fiction. When she’s not creating identities, campaigns, and publications, Rudolph Harwick can probably be found in the woods, the art studio, or huddled with a good book.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

STRUCTURE	DIMENSIONS (IN.)	PRINTER	PRODUCTION TIME	PRODUCTION COST
Custom srew-post book in a custom bag	Book: 12.37 × 14.37 × .62 Case: 16 × 14 × 3.5	HP Indigo	Several weeks	\$265
MATERIALS				
Lokta paper	Cialux book cloth	PVA	Davey binders board	Starched mesh
Aluminum screw-posts	Water-resistant nylon	Blue linen	Interfacing	Craft foam
Webbing	Zipper	Velcro	Hardware	
PAPER	VENDORS	RETAIL STORES	SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	TYPEFACES
Chorus Art, gloss 80lb cover Finch Fine ID, uncoated, 80lb cover	Petree Press Swoon Patterns	Bookmakers Inc Mulberry Paper And More Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores Goodwill Fairfax Sewing Center	Hand-scoring Drilling	Whitney Sentinel



TIP Bold and brief lead-in text clearly establishes the purpose of each project and focuses attention on key accomplishments.



I CREATED THIS PORTFOLIO IN THE FINAL DAYS OF MY TIME WORKING AT FACEBOOK (DECEMBER 2013) WHILE I STILL HAD ACCESS TO THE RESOURCES AT THE ANALOG RESEARCH LABORATORY—I NEEDED IT TO LET PEOPLE KNOW THAT I HAD LEFT FACEBOOK AND WAS AVAILABLE FOR FREELANCE WORK.

STATUS

Still in active duty.

APPROACH

I was driven by budget, time, and the resources I had access to: silkscreening, color laser printer, and saddle-stitch stapler. I also wanted it to be simple, lightweight, and easily mailable while still being nicely designed and produced, so I used simple uncoated paper stock cover with a digitally printed interior. I folded and stapled it with a standard saddle-stitch.

FLEXIBILITY

None. This is true because of the form, but mostly due to the content. It is meant to show work done during a specific period of time for a specific client.

DELIVERY

I don't really "show it". I mail copies to people, and give them to people in person as a takeaway. If I'm meeting with someone in person they're already familiar with my work from my website.

MEMORIES

Several recipients posted photos excitedly on Facebook and/or Instagram. Feedback has been positive, and it's helped get me several projects by reminding people I already knew that I was available.

ONLINE

While not specifically designed to work together, most of the work is also on my personal portfolio website. My website is the primary way that people are exposed to my work.

OTHERS

I have had many online portfolios, but as for physical portfolios just my portfolio upon graduating college.

ABOUT

Ben Barry is a designer in Brooklyn, NY. Previously, Barry worked at Facebook, where he focused on developing internal culture, voice, and brand. Barry also co-founded the Facebook Analog Research Laboratory, a print studio and art program. Before Facebook, Barry, a graduate of the University of North Texas, worked for The Decoder Ring in Austin, TX. Barry is also an alumnus and advisor of Project M.

I think in general the internet is the best way to get your work out there, but using print in limited applications can feel very special and unique for the recipient.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

STRUCTURE	DIMENSIONS (IN.)	PRINTER	PRODUCTION TIME	PRODUCTION COST
Saddle-stitched book	8.5 × 11	Canon imageRUNNER	3 Days	\$2.40 Each x 220 \$528 Total
MATERIALS	PAPER	RETAIL STORES	SPECIAL TECHNIQUES	TYPEFACES
Staples	Cover: French Paper Construction, Nightshift Blue or Steel Blue Interior: Hammermill Color Copy Paper	Amazon.com French Paper	Silkscreen Hand-stapling	Alright Sans

I FELT IT WAS TIME FOR AN UPDATED AND EXPANDED PORTFOLIO, SINCE I WAS APPLYING FOR POSITIONS WITH SEVERAL POTENTIAL STUDIOS. ALSO, I WAS GEARING TOWARD A MASTER'S DEGREE, SO IT WOULD COME IN HANDY.

STATUS

This portfolio is still active, primarily because the format is flexible and not dependent on context.

APPROACH

Since I was applying to more than one studio, I chose to develop separate booklets. This made it easier to adjust the content according to the interview. Moreover, I wanted an economical solution that could be laser-printed and readily accessible. With these parameters in mind, I chose to create small individual booklets that allowed for wider flexibility. The booklets were mailed in small, cheap, and sturdy cardboard boxes that retained enough space for samples of my work. This simple production method is analogous to my work in general: economical, reserved, and strengthened by a no-nonsense attitude.

FLEXIBILITY

The booklet template design is so simple that I can add or subtract projects with absolute ease.

DISPLAY

I am mostly hands-on, but on a few occasions I have mailed the portfolio for review. This is convenient, because the client is not under any obligation to send it back to me, as it is easily replaceable. When I am showing a portfolio in person, separate booklets come in handy when there are multiple people conducting an interview. It is then that I can show a broader range of my work, which can be pored over with greater attention, as opposed to many sets of eyes jostling in order to peer upon a single book.

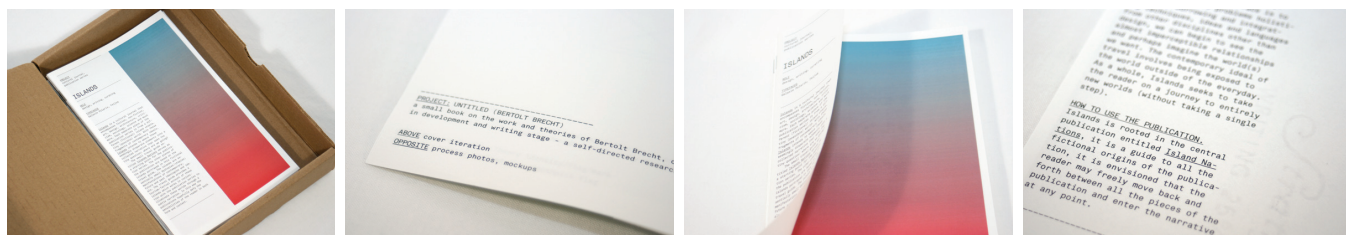
BIO

Abi Huynh is a graphic designer in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Huynh pursued his undergraduate studies in the Communication Design program at Emily Carr University in Vancouver. Huynh graduated from the Type and Media MA program at the Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten in The Hague, Netherlands.

**When I am showing a portfolio in person,
separate booklets come in handy when there are
multiple people conducting an interview.**

PRODUCTION DETAILS

STRUCTURE	DIMENSIONS (IN.)	PRINTER	PRODUCTION TIME	PRODUCTION COST
Box with booklets	5.5 × 8.5	Xerox Phaser 6120	6 Days	\$115
MATERIALS	PAPER	VENDORS	RETAIL STORES	TYPEFACES
Cardboard box	Mohawk, Strathmore, 25% Cotton	—	—	Akkurat Mono



AS A YOUNG DESIGNER FRESH OUT OF SCHOOL, AT THE END OF 2010, I HAD A VERY SMALL BUDGET TO CREATE MY SELF-PROMO—IT HAD TO BE RESOURCEFUL, UNIQUE, AND CHEAP.

APPROACH

I aimed for quality not quantity. Instead of sending out a big stack of postcards, I decided to send something practical that might stick around on someone's desk. I narrowed my wishlist to ten top contacts; a mix of advertising agencies, design studios, and solo designers whom I admired.

The whole package centers around up-cycling. I painted empty Altoid tins a flat white color, then I poured peppermint-scented soy wax in each. I was interning at Stitch Design Co. at the time, so I'd make a point to rescue any nice letterpressed scrap paper that was in the recycle bin. I cut down the scraps and stamped each to make my business cards. The sticker on the inside of the lid and the custom rubber stamps were sourced from vendors, but other than that, it was pretty fast, resourceful, and cheap.

RESPONSE

60% of the recipients responded to the promo; a few just said thanks for the gift, while others led to a conversation about work. I got a call from HOOK to freelance, which ultimately turned into a full time gig. How's that for ROI?

PRODUCTION TIME

1 Week

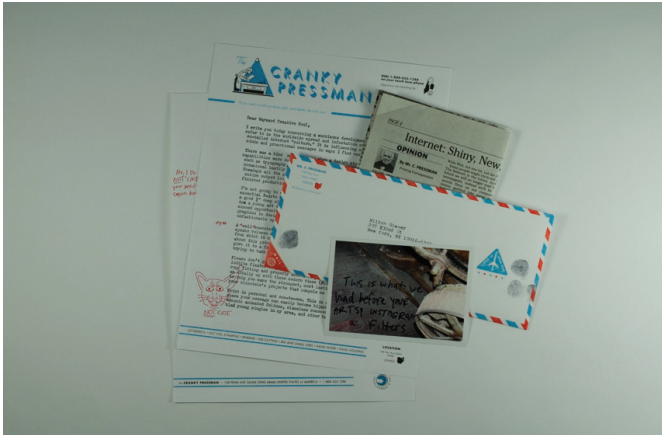
PRODUCTION COST

\$7 Each × 10
\$70 Total



Guts & Glory

DESIGN AND BRANDING STUDIO FOUNDED BY MEG PARADISE AND FAUN CHAPIN IN OAKLAND, CA, GUTS & GLORY REVEALS HOW TO “FAKE IT ’TIL YOU MAKE IT”, OR “PHOTOGRAPHY FOR DESIGNERS” IN THIS DETAILED TELL-ALL.



OUR PHILOSOPHY

PHOTOGRAPHY IS AN ILLUSION We tend to see photography as a record of reality, but photography has a long history of manipulating an image both in the lens and afterwards to construct an image that suits the photographer's vision. The beauty of a well executed magic trick is that you don't see how it's performed. A good photo is a very well executed magic trick.

KNOW THE BASICS There are tons of basic photography tutorials online that will give you a good foundation to creating a decent image. Better yet, find a local photo studio or store that offers classes.

WORK WITH WHAT YOU'VE GOT You're not a photographer. You're a designer using the skills you've got to construct an image to suit your needs. And that's A-OK!

PHOTOSHOP IS YOUR BEST FRIEND This is the most powerful tool in your designer toolbox to get you a good image. Proper color balance, contrast, and saturation can get you very far.

FAKE IT TIL YOU MAKE IT As you grow in your career, your budgets should increase and include resources for working with professional photographers. Or if all else fails, make friends with a photographer and trade services.

THE SETUP AND THE GEAR

RECRUIT A BUDDY You can do it on your own, but if you recruit a buddy to help you, you'll have someone to help with the setup and

adjustment of your set while you're focusing on what you're seeing through the lens.

THE STUDIO We use our conference table to set up most of our shoots. But you can use pretty much any large, clean, flat surface.



INVEST IN A GOOD WHITE SEAMLESS BACKGROUND This will give you a much cleaner surface to work from in post-production. Use painters tape to tape it down so you can reuse your seamless since a roll of seamless paper isn't cheap.

USE WINDOW LIGHT WHEN POSSIBLE It's even, balanced, throws nice shadows and will give you the best overall lighting.

BUY A LIGHTING KIT Doesn't have to be fancy. B&H has a great selection of entry level kits that will get the job done for under \$200. We could probably use a strobe light but that becomes more complicated to use than a set of hot lights. The helpful people at our local photo store recommended we upgrade the lightbulbs from the standard kit to higher watt bulbs. You can't really have too much light. Pro tip: Hang out at a photography shop and ask questions. Most people are more than happy to help outfit you with gear that fits your needs and budget.

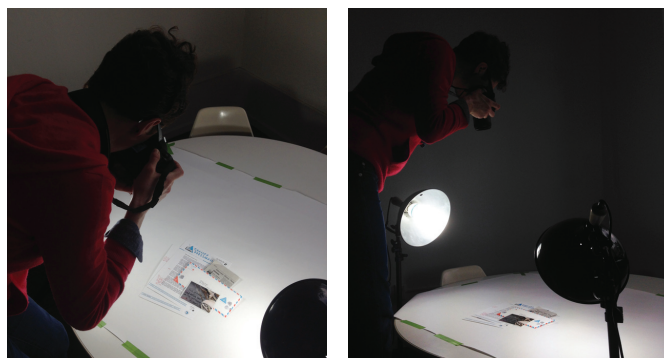


GOOD CAMERA, BETTER LENS Pretty much any camera will do. Mine is from college and is over 10 years old. My iPhone probably has more megapixels than this SLR. But a good lens will change everything.

Along the way we picked up a Nikon Nikkor 40mm Micro lens for around \$400 and it takes beautiful photos for super tight closeups and midrange product shots.

THE SHOOT

HANDHELD VS. TRIPOD Use a tripod if you need consistency between shots or don't have enough light to shoot handheld shots. The slowest shutter speed you can usually hold a camera at without getting a blurry image is about 30 if you have a super steady hand and hold your breath while depressing the shutter button.



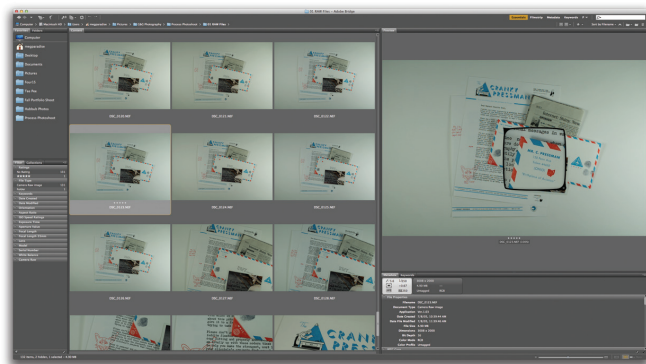
STAY ORGANIZED I watched a photographer friend on a professional shoot once and was amazed at how organized he was with all of his gear. It made the shoot run so much smoother than if everything was strewn about willy nilly, and things get messy fast when you're constantly losing things and tripping over stuff. It's dangerous and inefficient.

ARRANGE YOUR COMPOSITION For this shot, we wanted a nice grouping of all of the elements. We're going to replace the background and add a wood texture background (that I found on a design resource site, or you can shoot your own) so I want to make sure I'm squared off directly above my composition.

SHOOT IN RAW FORMAT This gives you the most flexibility once you start to pull everything into Photoshop.

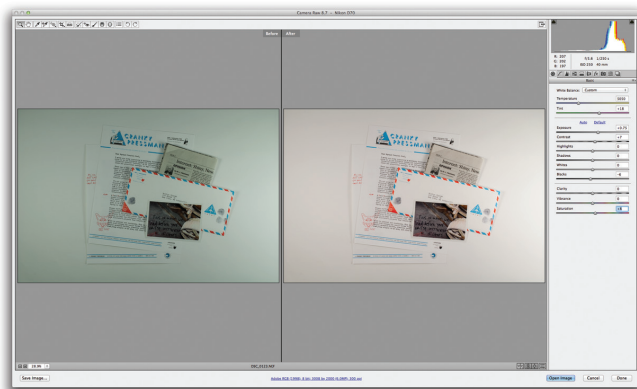
POST-PRODUCTION

CHECK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU WRECK YOURSELF Before you break down your set, dump your photos onto your hard drive and make sure you have a decent amount of images to work from. The biggest thing you're checking for is that they're in focus. You can do a lot of wizardry in post, but you can't bring a blurry photo into focus. If you want to get fancy, you can tether the camera directly to a laptop while you're shooting so you can view the images as you're shooting them.



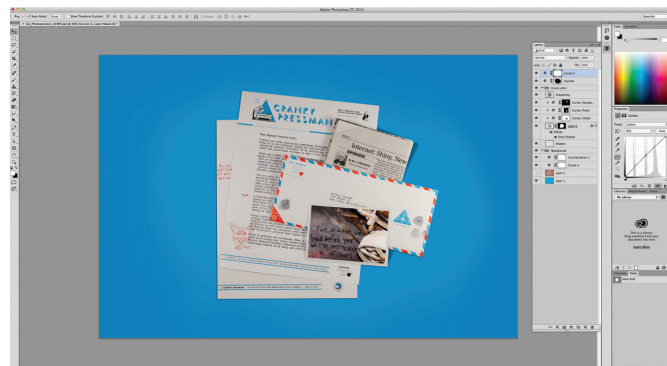
BREAK IT DOWN Once you check your photos for general OK-ness, break down your set. You'll be happy you did it now rather than at the end of your day.

PRE-PROCESS YOUR RAW FILES Use the RAW dialog box in Photoshop to adjust overall color balance, temperature, and contrast. Watch your histogram (the box that looks like a bunch of mountains and valleys) and try to keep most of the mountains in the middle of the graph without clipping the highlights or the shadows off. You will continue to refine the color balance and contrast using Levels, Hue/Saturation, and Curves once you pull the image into Photoshop but right now you're looking for a good, middle of the ground image. Not too contrasty, not overly saturated, not overly blown out. Now you're ready to bring your pre-processed image into Photoshop.



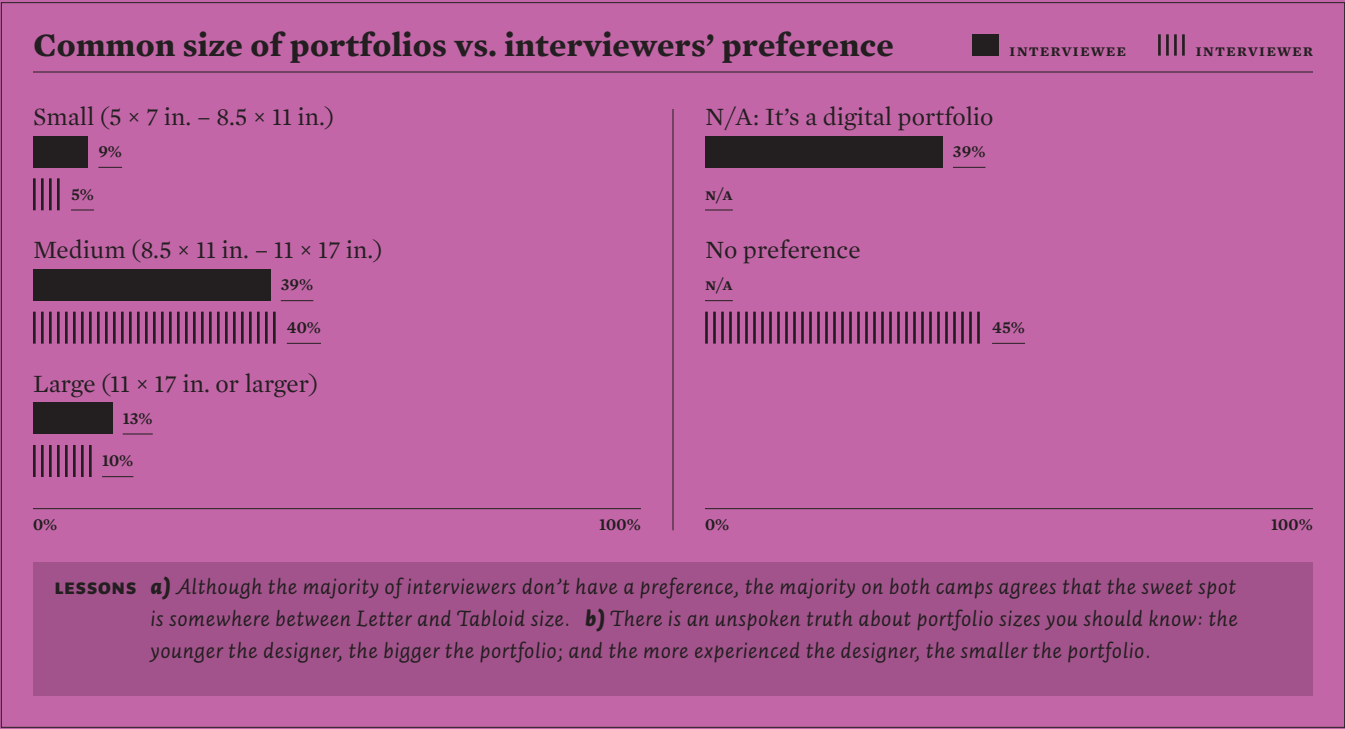
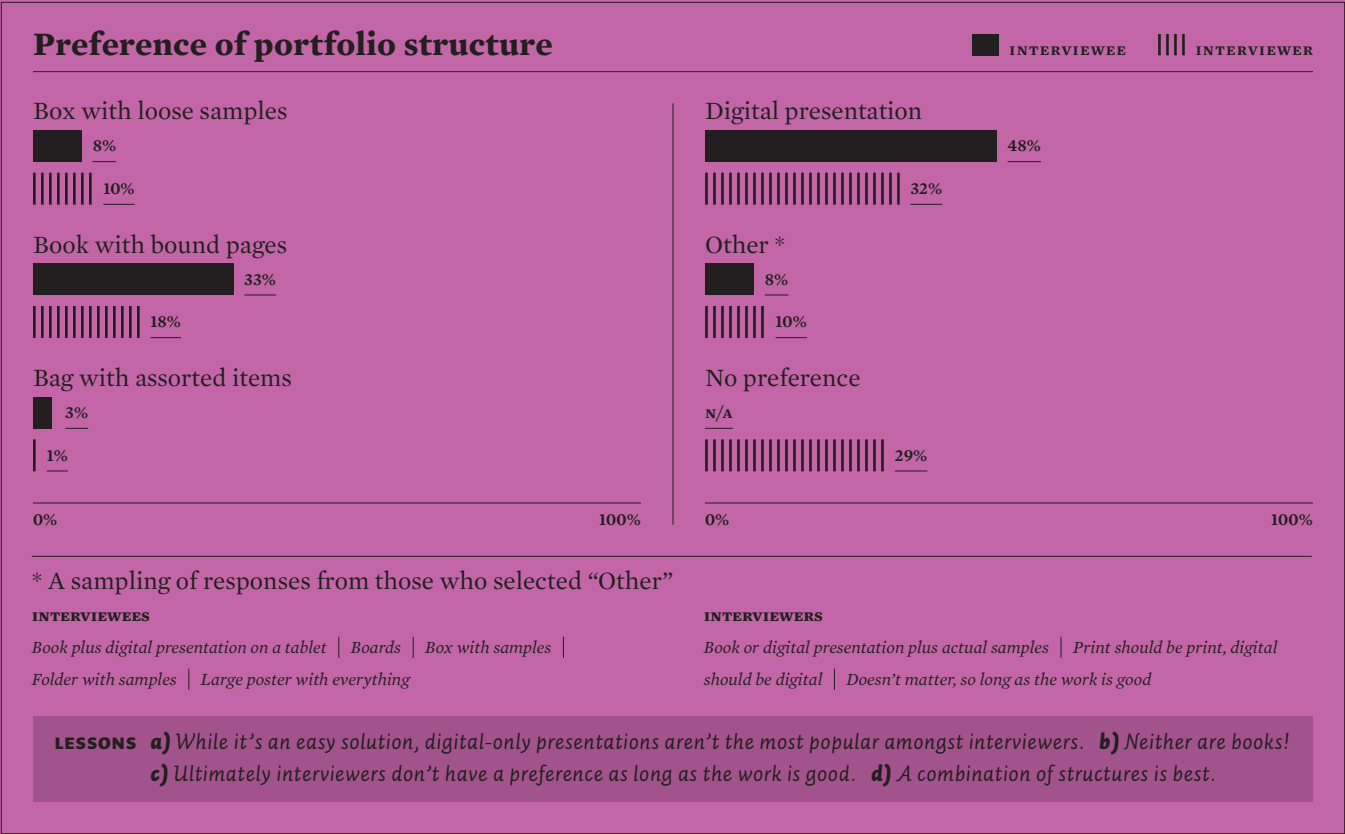
ALWAYS USE ADJUSTMENT LAYERS Using layers allows you to work in a non-destructive editing way that gives you the most flexibility and allows you to adjust the image back and forth until you arrive at something you're happy with.

LEVELS, CURVES, AND HUE/SATURATION These are the three main tools I was taught to process images. Use Levels to adjust the individual color channels to affect the overall color balance of your image. Use Curves to adjust contrast. Generally, a nice smooth S curve will give you a good amount of contrast without appearing overly contrasty. After you've adjusted the color balance and the contrast, add a Hue/Saturation layer. I usually increase the master contrast a bit, and then use the individual color dropdowns to affect any additional colors individually (eg. saturating red or blue while desaturating yellow).



PEN TOOL TRUMPS MAGIC WAND Use your Pen tool to create clean cutouts or selections, and zoom waaaaay in to make sure you're getting an accurate edge. It takes a bit more time up front than using the Magic Wand, but it will give you a much cleaner selection. I often find when I use the Magic Wand, I spend more time trying to clean up my selection than I would if I'd just spent the time to draw a clean cutout with the Pen tool to begin with. Once you have your selection, use a mask rather than delete your background. Apply a .5 or 1 pt Gaussian Blur to your mask to soften it slightly and help it blend more realistically into your background.

Portfolio basics



Project aids

Ideal amount of information accompanying each project

■ INTERVIEWEE |||| INTERVIEWER

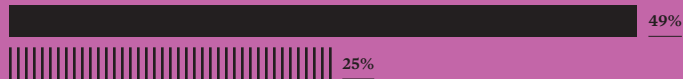
As much information as possible



As much information as possible and credits



Basic information



Basic information and credits



0%

100%

So what exactly is “basic information”? Most projects can be described with this formula:

Project type for X, who is X and whose target audience is X, or fills X function.

For example:

Logo for Nike, an athletics company specializing in footwear, apparel, equipment, and accessories for men and women.

Packaging for iPhone, an innovative device from Apple that brings a new level of interaction between people and their phone.

The description should help put your solution in context so that it can be assessed by the viewer.

LESSONS **a)** No one is going to read a paragraph—keep it short. **b)** Giving credit, especially if the work was done at a previous job, is extremely important. It’s rare that you work in a vacuum so don’t hesitate to credit your immediate team.

Are sketches and process images a welcome addition?

■ INTERVIEWEE |||| INTERVIEWER

Yes



No



No preference



0%

100%

LESSON Interviewers like to see how you arrive at finished solutions, so save those sketches.

What advice would you offer to a designer when creating their portfolio? Or when presenting it?

Show your best work. Have a story for each piece. SPELL CHECK. Whether you present your work in a book or on screen, bring a few actual pieces with you that I can experience first-hand. Know every typeface you used. Don't pretend that pretend things are real. Don't overdress. Don't underdress. Don't chew gum. Don't smoke until after your interview (preferably, don't smoke at all). Know who you're talking to. Have some of your own questions prepared. Listen. Praise others. Practice your manners. Have a favorite designer, book, and artist (and reasons why). Be early. Know what to do if you're offered a job. Relax. Don't get starstruck. Leave with a commitment (even if it's just that you'll follow up in x interval).

CHRISTOPHER SIMMONS

Make it well rounded and targeted towards the type of work you want to do. Example: If you want to design for the web, don't put all print-based projects in it.

JOSH HIGGINS

Do good ideas and execute them well. Do not spend an extraordinary amount of time mulling over the size and the form of the portfolio itself. Put your best piece first, your second best piece last, everything else in the middle. Think beforehand of how to explain the work in concise terms. Think of how the work can benefit the person you are showing it to.

STEFAN SAGMEISTER

Package your portfolio so the work is the one-and-only star attraction—no pink, fur-covered portfolios.

CARIN GOLDBERG

Show your work to the person you are presenting it to, and not to yourself. Sounds obvious, but I'm still surprised by the number of people who seem to think it is more important that they see their work than the person interviewing them. By this I mean, don't position your work in such a way that only you can see it clearly. Your work should be placed directly in front of the person viewing it, and not in front of you! It's glaringly obvious, but I'm staggered by the number of designers—young, and not so young—who make it difficult to view their work. This applies equally to print and digital portfolios.

ADRIAN SHAUGHNESSY

Tell us a story about you through your work. Are you mad about commissioning illustration or bats about typography? All about layout or obsessed with CGI? Please don't think sticking the same logo on a variety of objects counts as interesting. Equally, unless it is pretty unbelievable in its craft, I really don't want to see it in black and white on a blank page. Context is everything. And have a bloody opinion. A really good, smart, intriguing opinion. A conversation starter. An argument. Do not—whatever you do—be bland. There are thousands of designers out there. Why should you get the gig? This doesn't mean stroll in like you own the place. You don't. "Strong opinions, lightly held" is a good way to open a chat.

SIMON MANCHIPP

In web portfolios, I look for functionality, simplicity, beauty, and restraint. Make the site thoughtful.

HILLMAN CURTIS

Unless s/he's an interaction designer, I might advise against designing the actual portfolio site (when digital) as opposed to populating it with really great work. For graphic designers, I could go either way on this. For any other kind of designer (product, service, social, environmental, etc.), absolutely don't spend your time on the code. Spend your time presenting strong work strongly.

ALLAN CHOCHINOV

Don't include work just because it's real. The fact that something was actually printed and used doesn't make it more valuable.

PETTER RINGBOM

The work should be current—ideally from the past year. It should not be a retrospective of your time in school or proof of all of the classes in your program. It's good to think of the collection of work in the portfolio as “evidence” of your skills and conceptual abilities.

PETRULA VRONTIKIS

For a physical portfolio: don't worry about making a perfect object—à la something you would get after graduating from Academy of Art University. There is a pervasive method of portfolio creation at schools like that where you're advised to have one identity project, one liquor packaging project, a handful of sketch pages, etc. After a while, they all blend into each other.

For an online portfolio: Have your own URL. Make your own site. And write something more interesting than “brochure for hair dresser,” “logo for airline,” etc.

For both: Show your personality or point of view.

MARK KINGSLEY

Creating a portfolio is your opportunity to set yourself apart from other designers. It allows you to share your process as well as show the finished product. Employers want to know how you think, and when you are good at telling the story in a smart way, it gives the hiring person a sense as to your potential value.

I normally tell students to present their work and simply say, “I'll be happy to answer any questions you might have as you look at my work.” This way you don't end up jabbering when all the person wants to do is look at the work. Some reviewers like to ask a lot of questions, other do not.

MARY SCOTT

Think about where you are now, and where you want to go, and build your portfolio accordingly—even if it means doing personal projects to show your eagerness and hunger.

OCD

Show your best work in a sequence that makes sense. Make sure your résumé is flawless and has excellent typography. Keep it simple: no gimmicks whatsoever—unless the gimmicks are abso-fucking-lutely amazing. But keep in mind that they're probably not.

MARC ENGLISH

Less is more. Don't put anything in unless you believe in it. I hate unfinished work, or when people apologize for something incomplete or unresolved.

JESSICA HELFAND

Include only the work you're proud of. The work should speak for itself. Absolutely no spelling mistakes.

MICHAEL BIERUT