
PORTFOLIO REDEFINED

Portfolio Development Resource

JOAN MITCHELL
FOUNDATION



PARSONS THE NEW SCHOOL FOR DESIGN

PARSONS SCHOLARS
PRE-COLLEGE PROGRAM

ASHCAN
STUDIO
of
ART, Inc.

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About Portfolio Redefined

Portfolio Redefined is for all aspiring students who are preparing an art and design portfolio for college admission, as well as art teachers facilitating this process.

Parsons, Museum of Arts and Design, the Joan Mitchell Foundation and Ashcan Studio of Art host portfolio development and college access events throughout the year. We are devoted to workshopping ideas and practices to support students in building a competitive portfolio and application for art & design college programs. Throughout the year, separate workshops are hosted for students, parents, and educators.

PORTFOLIO REDEFINED 2014-2015 CALENDAR

October 11, 2014

Portfolio Redefined + Art Degree Demystified at Frank Sinatra High School

January 10, 2015

Senior Art School Application Check-in at Museum of Arts & Design

March 7, 2015

Careers in the Arts Fair at Parsons

June 18, 2015

Portfolio Redefined: Educators Edition/Scholastic/Admissions Summit at Parsons

July 27-31, 2015

Portfolio Bootcamp at Joan Mitchell Foundation Education & Research Center, Museum of Arts & Design, and Parson

Portfolio Development

CREATING A PORTFOLIO

All colleges have different admissions requirements and specific portfolio formats. Be sure to familiarize yourself with each school's requirements before applying.

Colleges require between 8-25 slides/images. They may ask for slides in a sheet, a carousel, or a CD-ROM of images (not usually original pieces).

For Fine Art portfolios (paintings, drawings, and sculptures), schools require a range of work that includes observational drawings and (depending on one's intended major) 3-dimensional objects. At least half of a traditional art portfolio must include art made from direct observation. An applicant's portfolio should be a range of personal work, not just work from classroom assignments.

Including older pieces can demonstrate growth in the student's work, however admissions officers normally want to see an applicant's most recent art. It is recommended for students to develop more pieces than the admissions portfolio requires. This way students can choose the best work that represents them.

Personal artwork should be based around a theme and is reflective of the student's interest and identity. If there is an art style that the artist is heavily influenced by such as anime, they should include drawings of their own original subject matter rather than drawing licensed characters. Students should also avoid drawing subject matter like skulls (unless it is part of a still life), hearts, eyes (by themselves), and copied images from pre-existing artwork. This kind of imagery should be avoided because these subject matter are often over

Using different mediums can evidence the artist's range and differentiate each of the pieces. Also finding ways to visually depict experiences relevant to the student's intended major can be an effective strategy for strengthening one's portfolio. A student should always use a sketchbook to plan their pieces as well as develop other ideas or practice their craft.

SOURCE: ArtSchools.com, *Financial Aid for Art Students*, 1997, www.artschools.com/financial-aid/

PORTFOLIO REVIEW DAY

Each year art schools send representatives to various locations to review students' portfolios and provide feedback. This is a great way for students to get an assessment of their work before applying. The representatives who come to these events are normally professors and people from admissions.

The days and locations that this event are being held in New York are the following:

Saturday, November 15, 2014

Purchase, New York

SUNY Purchase: School of Art and Design

12:00pm–4:00pm

Sunday, November 16, 2014

New York, New York

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center

12:00pm–4:00pm

PORTFOLIO TIP #1

BE OBSERVATIONAL

Draw, paint and sculpt what you see, with emotion and sensibility.

LIFE PORTRAIT EXAMPLES

- » a family member
- » a friend
- » yourself
- » someone sleeping
- » your hands or feet
- » a self-portrait
- » nude figure drawings

STILL LIFE DRAWING EXAMPLES

- » collect a group of random objects
- » a combination of some of your favorite objects
- » contents of your bag
- » objects within a certain color range or subject matter



JOEUN, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO NYU, FINE ART



KEREN, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO CORNELL, FINE ART



JINYOUNG, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED
TO CORNELL, FINE ART



JASON, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED
TO PARSONS, FASHION DESIGN



SIMOON, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED
TO SVA, ILLUSTRATION



ELANOR, ASHCAN STUDENT –
ACCEPTED TO SVA, ILLUSTRATION

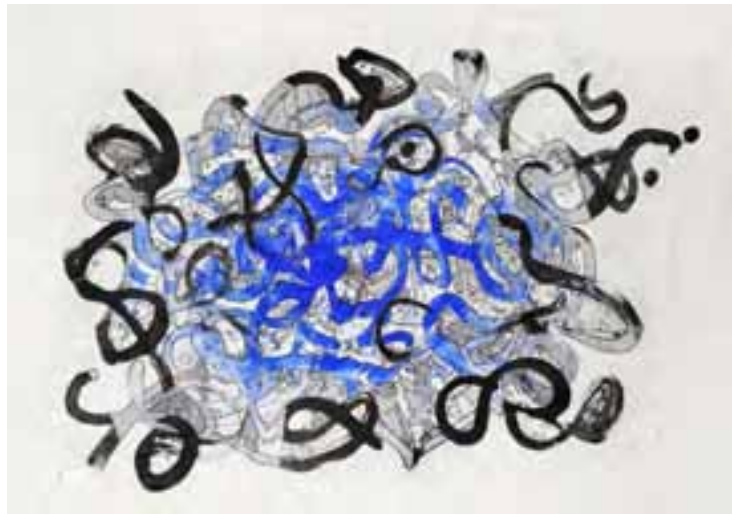
PORTFOLIO TIP #2

THEMATIC

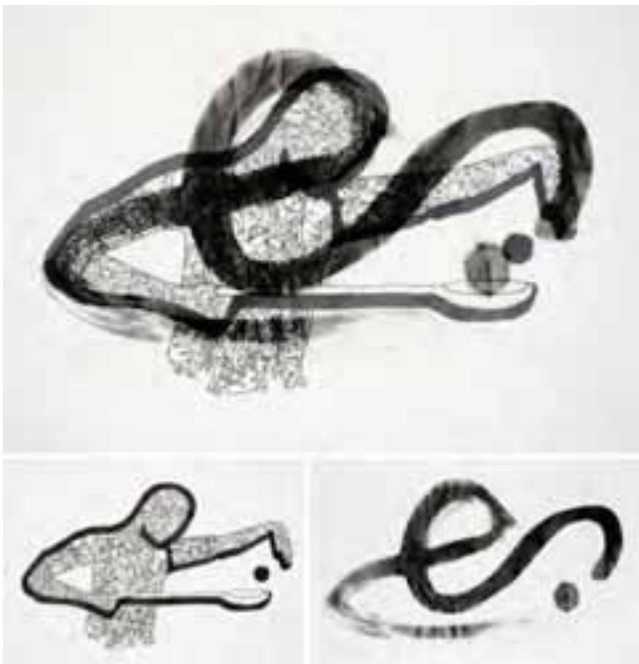
Chose an overall theme--something that interests you--and base your portfolio work on this theme. Some work can address the theme directly, some abstractly.

THEMATIC EXAMPLES

- » sleep
- » dreaming
- » ecology
- » urban life
- » compassion
- » family
- » hybrids
- » money
- » identity
- » nostalgia
- » opposites
- » mirrors
- » pattern
- » power



JOSEPH, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED
TO COOPER UNION, FINE ART



PORTFOLIO TIP #3

BE YOURSELF

Make work for your portfolio that reflects who you are. Be genuine and express your true identity. Work that is honest has the most impact.

YOU AS AN ARTIST/DESIGNER:

- » Where do you come from?
- » How did your upbringing shape you?
- » Whatever it was that first inspired you to draw, build on that inspiration, and keep building.
- » What do you remember most vividly?
- » What are your likes and dislikes?



SIMOON, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO SVA, ILLUSTRATION

PORTFOLIO TIP #4

USE DIFFERENT MEDIUMS

Medium refers to the art materials or artist supplies used to create a work of art. It is whatever you use to make a mark upon a surface. Tools for art making are all around you.

MEDIUMS TO TRY:

- » pen
- » water
- » plastic
- » food/candy
- » marker
- » charcoal
- » newspaper
- » a book
- » crayon
- » paper
- » receipts
- » metal
- » paint
- » wood
- » trash
- » clay



ELEANOR, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO SVA, ILLUSTRATION



YOORO, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO PARSONS, FASHION DESIGN



TING TING, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO RISD, FINE ART



KEREN, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO CORNELL, FINE ART



JIN SOO, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO PARSONS, FASHION DESIGN

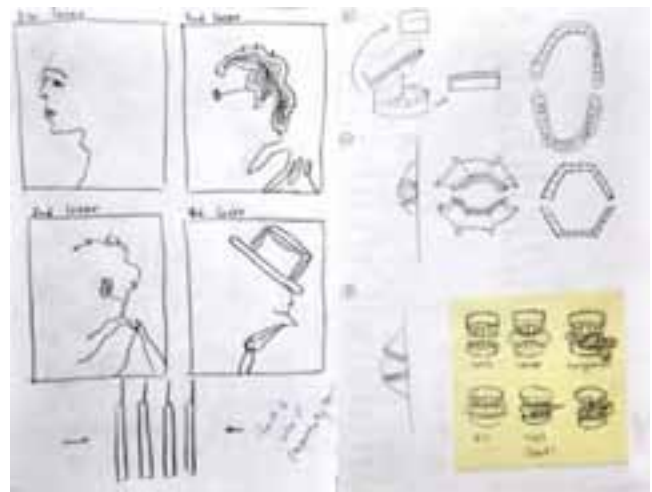
PORTFOLIO TIP #5

USE A SKETCHBOOK

Carry it around with you each day. The drawings you make here, and the notes that you take, are golden insights into what you are attracted to as an artist/ designer. Sketchbooks provide a place for you to identify and visually narrate what you see and imagine. Remember to take a look at what you've drawn and written about in the past; it will inspire you.

SKETCHBOOK IDEAS:

- » Record popular culture and your opinion of it.
- » Scrutinize and record the body language of the population around you: the shape of a crowd, the expression on someone's face, the way a hand holds a newspaper, an umbrella, or a coffee.
- » Draw automatically: let your pencil or pen wander across the paper and see where it takes you.
- » Cut out textures, images or poetry and add it to your sketchbook.
- » Leave them as they are or incorporate them into sketches.
- » Think about each entire page of your sketchbook as its own universe, narrative, or composition.



JIYEON, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO RISD, INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

PORTFOLIO TIP #6

SHOW YOUR DEDICATION TO ART MAKING

Challenge yourself and maintain a positive attitude. Schools receive thousands of portfolios; if your work looks like you cared about it and enjoyed making it, it will show dedication and commitment to learning.

WAYS TO SHOW YOUR DEDICATION:

- » Branch out: include music, film, clothing, etc. that you have made in your portfolio.
- » Know that art never stops being challenging.
- » Make every drawing/painting/sculpture/mixed media work you do better than the last.
- » If another artist's work inspires you, try to do what that artist did with whatever means you have.
- » If you strive for something big, you will surprise yourself.



JIHYE, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO PARSONS, GRAPHIC DESIGN



TING TING, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO RISD, FINE ART



JINYOUNG, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO SVA, ILLUSTRATION



JEE HEE, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO SVA, FINE ART

PORTFOLIO TIP #7

DOCUMENT RELEVANT EXPERIENCES

Explore ways to visualize related experiences. If you're interested in architecture and have experience helping your dad do construction work, how can you represent that work visually? If you're interested in art education and have taught arts & crafts at summer camp, how can you share that work? Consider photos, videos, digital media, a graphic novel, etc.

THIS ARTIST USED AUDIO TO DESCRIBE HER WORK:

"The footprint I created represents my mom and the journey she has taken in her life..."



Artist Statement

An artist statement is a personal essay that informs colleges who the student is, what they are interested in, their artistic process, and what type of work they make. Art schools usually include a specific question for students to answer that is related to the art they make and communicates what makes them an ideal candidate for admission.

PERSONAL TOPICS THAT STUDENTS OFTEN HAVE TO WRITE ABOUT ARE:

- » “Who am I?”
- » “Where am I coming from?”
- » “Where do I hope to go?”

The student’s answer should be a humble, honest response that is explained in-depth. Using common intros such as “I always knew I wanted to be an artist” can give weaken the impact of the student’s statement. The choice of words in a statement should be comfortable within the student’s vocabulary.

SOURCE: *The Museum of Arts and Design, Portfolio Redefined, 2013, www.portfolioredefined.wordpress.com/tag/portfolio-redefined*

EXAMPLES OF WHAT SOME ART SCHOOLS ASK STUDENTS TO RESPOND TO INCLUDE:

- » “What do you make, how do you make it, and why do you make? Ultimately, where do you visualize your creative abilities and academic study to take you after your education here at Parsons? (Maximum 500 words)” (Parsons)
- » “Describe when and how you became interested in art, design, writing, architecture, or the particular major to which you are applying. Describe how this interest has manifested itself in your daily life” (Pratt)
- » “What makes you a perfect candidate for FIT? Why are you interest in the major you are applying to? The essay is also a chance to tell us more about your experiences, activities and accomplishments.” (FIT)

Writing For Your Portfolio

ADVICE FROM CAROLINA WHEAT, DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS FOR PARSONS

In your statement or essay:

1. Represent yourself through text.
2. Use words you are comfortable using.
3. Discuss your process.
4. Please do not begin the essay “I always knew I wanted to be an artist.”

Digital Portfolio Strategies

Capturing the work you have done- static, time based, visual written.

“Quality of documentation affects perceived quality of work”

- CYNTHIA LAWSON

TIPS FROM CYNTHIA LAWSON ARTIST AND ACADEMIC THE NEW SCHOOL

Documentation is not just images:
it is Image + Video + Sound + Text

Documentation is not just final work:
it is Final Work + Process

SOURCE: [www.slideshare.net/cynthialawsonjaramillo/
portfolioreDEFINED-workshop-documentation-writing](http://www.slideshare.net/cynthialawsonjaramillo/portfolioDEFINED-workshop-documentation-writing)

DOCUMENTING A PORTFOLIO:

To be able to submit your portfolio you need to have your work documented, which means either photographed or scanned. In most cases photographing your artwork will be the ideal solution (large scanners aren't always available to students and they can't document 3d work), so here are some pointers for documenting your portfolio this way.

The camera used to photograph the artwork is less important than how it's used.

The images should be clear and straightforward and not shot at an angle. The piece should be oriented at the vertical and horizontal center of the picture plane.

Pieces should be shot on a neutral background (ex: clean white wall, paper backdrop) or on site if it's within context.

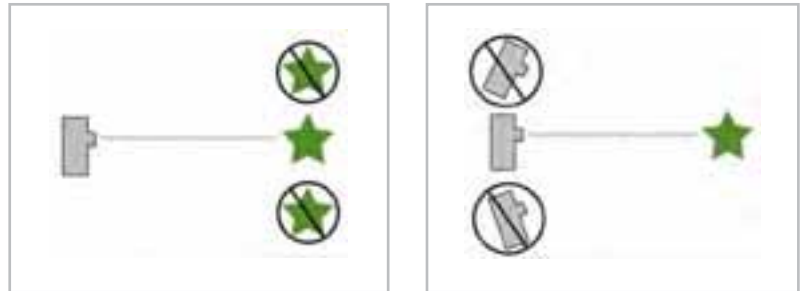
Never use flash when photographing artwork. Pieces should either be shot using two point studio lighting or natural daylight. The lighting should be even and not dominate parts of the artwork.

Files for online use should be saved at 72 dpi either as a .jpeg or .gif. Files for print should be saved at minimum of 150 dpi either as a .tiff, .png, or .PSD. File names should correspond with application requirements. Two folders should be made for storing the images, one for the student and one for submission.

DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES

CAMERA: It is not the camera you use, but how you use it.

ANGLE: Take photographs of your work straight on (centered both vertical and horizontal), be careful not to angle the camera above, below or from the side.



USING DIRECT CAMERA ANGLES



photographed from above



photographed from below



photographed from right



photographed from left



photographed from center

SASKIA, JOAN MITCHELL
FOUNDATION PARTICIPANT

CONTEXT

Take photographs of your work in front of a neutral background (backdrop paper), or in some cases, on site.

LIGHTING

- » Never use a flash, they can create “hot spots” in the image, and produce harsh and uneven lighting.
- » Use two point (evenly lit) studio lighting or natural light (sunlight)

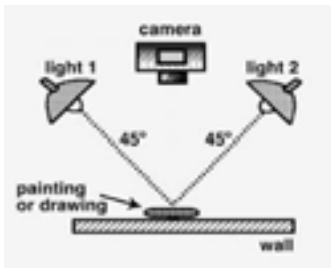


ILLUSTRATION OF TWO POINT LIGHTING SET UP



PHOTOGRAPHED ON SITE. JOEUN, ASHCAN STUDENT – ACCEPTED TO NYU, FINE ART



“HOT SPOT” FROM USING FLASH

FILE MANAGEMENT

- » Digital files for screen display use should be saved at 72 dpi as jpeg files.
- » Files for printing should be saved at a minimum 150 dpi, (preferably 300 dpi) .tiff, .png, or .psd at print size
- » Keep both versions in separate folders, and save the original files at full size as a back up.
- » Appropriately name files and folders: be sure to include your name in the file or folder name in the versions you submit to the school.
- » When saving your files don’t use spaces: use underscores _ (example: Figuredrawing_Lawson.jpeg)
- » 2-D work, list Dimensions x Height x Width – measurements in inches
- » 3-D work, list Dimensions x Height x Width – measurements in inches
- » Keep your statement and reflective text in folders with documentation



IMAGE SIZE SETTINGS IN PHOTOSHOP



NAMING FILES AND FOLDERS

High School Portfolio Examples

This section contains portfolios of students who have been accepted into art school. The purpose of showing these is to not only demonstrate what art schools are looking for but also to provide emphasis on the importance of having a diverse yet cohesive body of work. Each portfolio here integrates both traditional and conceptual subject matter and also presents the interests of the artists themselves. A high school portfolio should not only be a demonstration of a student's technical ability but their ability to come up with new interesting ideas and solutions to problems.

PORTFOLIO #1: Crystal

JOAN MITCHELL FOUNDATION
ART EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Attended: Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis High School
Joan Mitchell Foundation Saturday Studio Classes

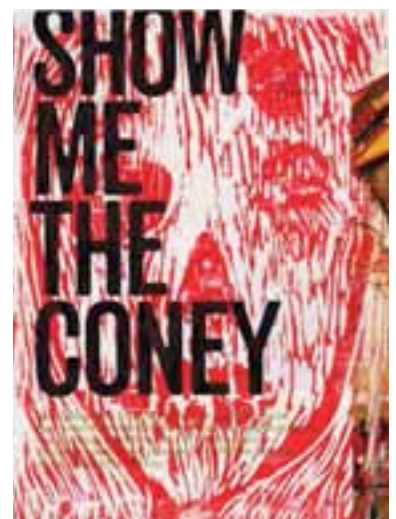
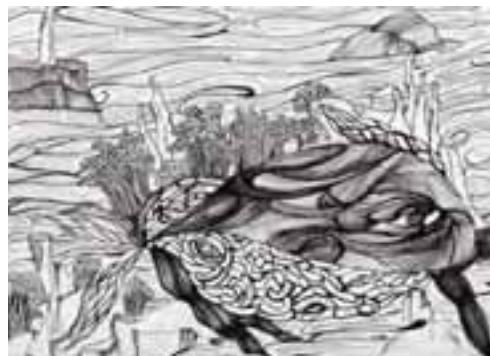
Applied to: Pratt Institute, Parsons The New School for Design

Attending: Parsons The New School for Design

PORTFOLIO TIPS FROM CRYSTAL

- » Manage time efficiently
- » Have your work reviewed but be confident in your decisions
- » Be cohesive about your ideas and how you execute them.
- » Put your strongest pieces in. Quality over quantity.





PORTFOLIO #2: Lobsang

JOAN MITCHELL FOUNDATION
ART EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Attended: Newtown High School

Applied To: Fashion Institute of Technology, LaGuardia Community College, Queensborough Community College.

Attending: Fashion Institute of Technology

PORTFOLIO TIPS FROM LOBSANG

Participating in art programs is helpful for strengthening your skills and expanding your portfolio.

Keep updating your portfolio and resume.

Work on your life drawings because most schools require at least 3 of them.

When documenting sculptures for submission, it is wise to touch-up the background in Photoshop.

If you're more comfortable speaking in person about your work schedule an appointment for a portfolio review with admissions.





PORTFOLIO #3: Vicky

JOAN MITCHELL FOUNDATION
ART EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Attended: Fontbonne Hall Academy

Applied To: Cooper Union, School of Visual Arts

Attending: School of Visual Arts (majoring in computer art)

PORTFOLIO TIPS FROM VICKY

- » Experiment and work out of your comfort zone.
- » Use feedback from critiques to improve your work.
- » Give yourself only a certain amount of time to work on one piece, and move on.
- » Always keep a camera or a sketchbook on you!
- » Set a goals for yourself that are related to finalizing your portfolio(ex: getting 5 life drawings done in a month).





PORTFOLIO #4: Matthew

JOAN MITCHELL FOUNDATION
ART EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Attended: Williamsburg Charter High School

Applied To: Pratt Institute, School of Visual Arts,
Fashion Institute of Technology, Cooper Union School
of Art, New York University Tisch School of the Arts

Attending: Pratt Institute



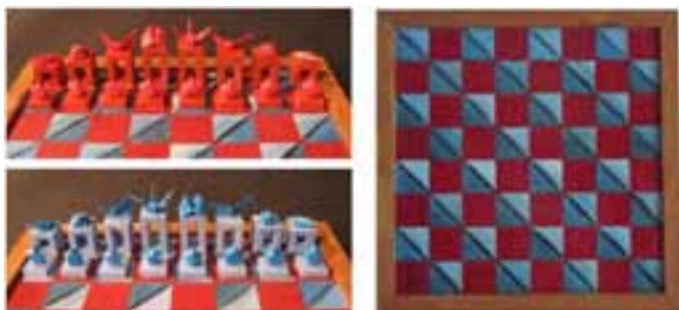
PORTFOLIO #5: Joseph

JOAN MITCHELL FOUNDATION
ART EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Attended: Renaissance Leadership Academy

Applied To: Pratt Institute, College of Staten Island, New York City College of Technology, Fashion Institute of Technology

Attending: Fashion Institute of Technology (majoring in toy design)



PORTFOLIO #6: Megan

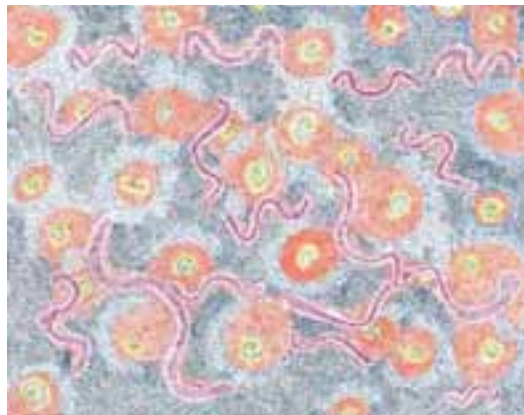
JOAN MITCHELL FOUNDATION
ART EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

Attended: Notre Dame High School

Applied To: Pratt Institute, Hunter College, St. Johns University, The College of New Rochelle

Attending: The College of New Rochelle





Student Spotlight

Akinyemi

JOAN MITCHELL FOUNDATION ART EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANT
AND ASHCAN STUDIO OF ART SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

STUDENT INTERVIEW:

Interviewer (I): How did you set aside time to work on your portfolio?

Akinyemi (A): While at the Ashcan Studio of Art, I devoted most of my time to building my portfolio. I would go to class from 11am to 8pm at night. and sometimes I even stayed till around 2 am.

I: Did you receive any outside help (extracurricular activities or portfolio intensives) while developing your portfolio?

A: I started off as a student in the Young Adult Program at the Joan Mitchell Foundation. After being in the program, I was advised by José Ortiz to apply for the scholarship at the Ashcan Studio of Art, where I developed my college portfolio.

I: What did you have in mind when making pieces for your portfolio?

A: Most of the time when making pieces for my portfolio my mindset was on creating a finished piece that could be presentable to the colleges I was applying to in person, and not just digital. I believe creating or recognizing a finished piece can be a tough task, considering that I have never really taken any art class that enforces that.

I: What was your planning phase like?

A: My planning phase involved a lot of research and looking into current affairs, because I like when my works speak on what is going on our society.

I: How did you go about documenting your work?

A: While I was at the Ashcan Studio my works were photographed and documented by professionals.

I: What were some of the challenges you've faced when working on your portfolio?

A: One of the most challenges I faced was doing 3-D works. It was challenging because it was out of my comfort zone.

I: What advice would you give to students who are going to or are currently working on their portfolios?

A: My advice to students who are working on their portfolio is to research the schools/major they are applying to, so that they can build works that best fit.

AKINYEMI'S PRE-COLLEGE PORTFOLIO



AKINYEMI'S PRE-COLLEGE PORTFOLIO



AKINYEMI'S PRE-COLLEGE PORTFOLIO



Content Contributors

ASHCAN STUDIO OF ART

www.ashcanstudio.com

Ashcan Studio of Art is an art school geared toward creative development and portfolio preparation. Our curriculum is an individualized program in which each student's personal interests and skills are the focus. With a lot of hard work, and with the resources of New York City's arts community, 100% of our students have excelled to their greatest potential and have earned admittance into many of the highest-ranked BFA and MFA programs, most having received scholarships.

At Ashcan, we believe that artistic growth and development should take place in a diverse and supportive environment. Our students come from around the region and from around the world to study at our studios in midtown Manhattan and Queens. Our instructors are professionals in the visual arts with a passion for teaching. They offer a breadth and depth of knowledge and experience in Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Illustration, Animation, Theater Design, Industrial Design, Computer & Graphic Design, Fashion Design, Interior Design and Architectural Design.

JOAN MITCHELL FOUNDATION

www.joanmitchellfoundation.org

A central principle of the Foundation's mission is to encourage the ambitions and education of developing visual artists. The Foundation's Art Education program strives to fulfill this mission by providing opportunities for both emerging youth artists and working adult artists through inclusive and diverse arts education programming, offered completely free to the public.

The program enhances the artistic education of young painters and sculptors through studio classes, in concert with other educational opportunities encouraging students to pursue and develop their voice in the arts. Simultaneously, the program supports the artistic development of working painters and sculptors through teaching opportunities, professional development training, and engagement with the artistic community.

The Art Education program began in 1997 with a single community partner, four Artist-Teachers and two classes that served approximately thirty students on Saturdays. Currently, the Art Education program partners with six organizations, offers Saturday, weekday, and summer programming, employs over forty Artist-Teachers, and serves 1,000 students each week.

MUSEUM OF ART AND DESIGN

www.madmuseum.org

The Museum of Arts and Design (MAD) champions contemporary makers across creative fields, presenting artists, designers, and artisans who apply the highest level of ingenuity and skill to their work. Since the Museum's founding in 1956 by philanthropist and visionary Aileen Osborn Webb, MAD has celebrated all facets

of making and the creative processes by which materials are transformed, from traditional techniques to cutting-edge technologies. Today, the Museum's curatorial program builds upon a rich history of exhibitions that emphasize a cross-disciplinary approach to art and design, and reveals the workmanship behind the objects and environments that shape our everyday lives. MAD provides an international platform for practitioners who are influencing the direction of cultural production and driving 21st-century innovation, fostering a participatory setting for visitors to have direct encounters with skilled making and compelling works of art and design.

PARSONS THE NEW SCHOOL FOR DESIGN

www.newschool.edu/parsons

There are many ways to pursue a Parsons education. We are committed to educating the next generation of design professionals, artists, critics and scholars. As a result, we are dedicated to the idea that the academic structure of our school should be flexible, and the academic instruction should be rigorous and offer both depth and breadth of disciplinary expertise. Balancing disciplinary expertise and cross-disciplinary capacity in a world that is increasing demanding both is our goal.

PARSONS PRE COLLEGE ACADEMY

www.newschool.edu/parsons/pre-college-academy

Parsons Pre-College Academy courses promote design thinking, creativity, and collaboration. Designed for students in grades 3 through 12, Pre-College Academy classes meet Saturday mornings during the school year and for two weeks during the summer. Classes are organized by grade level for elementary school, middle school, and high school groups. Academy courses include animation, fashion, graphic design, interior design, drawing, painting, cartooning, photography, and portfolio development

PARSONS SCHOLARS

www.scholars.parsons.edu

The Parsons Scholars Program is a three-year college access program in art and design for highly motivated NYC public high school students. Beginning in 10th grade, Parsons Scholars dedicate three years of Saturdays and summers to art and design studio classes while exploring careers and learning how to be successful in art & design college programs. Students build college and career readiness skills and to learn how to make well-informed decisions around college admissions, financial aid and areas of study. This need-based scholarship covers the cost of all pre-college classes, art supplies and travel for accepted 10th graders.