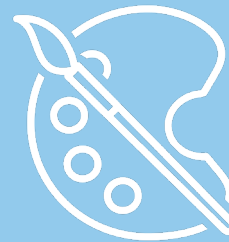


EA College Counseling: PREPARING A POWERFUL VISUAL ARTS PORTFOLIO



WHAT STORY WILL YOUR PORTFOLIO TELL?

As a dedicated art student, your thoughtfully-prepared portfolio can serve as a compelling way to introduce yourself to colleges and universities, going beyond standard application materials to showcase your passion, skill, unique voice, and artistic growth. Your portfolio should reveal your evolution as an artist, showing how you approach challenges and bring your ideas to life.

DO I NEED AN ARTS PORTFOLIO?

If pursuing a fine arts program (BFA) or similar arts-focused program, a portfolio will likely be required for, and could be pivotal to, your admission.

Colleges and universities practicing holistic application review may encourage artistic students to submit portfolios as an optional component, even if they aren't pursuing a major in art.

Consider submitting a portfolio if:

- You intend to major or minor in art, and the school offers a supplemental portfolio.
- You have dedicated significant time to art, taking lessons or working independently.
- You've received recognition, been published, or exhibited your work.
- Feedback from a National Portfolio Day or a similar event encourages you to submit.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ART STUDENTS

For prospective art students, requirements may be specific and vary by school. Understand the submission guidelines for each school:

- What particular **type of work** is expected?
- How many **pieces** are required?
- Are there unique **supplemental arts questions**?
- How do I **share** a portfolio with schools?
- What are portfolio, application, and interview **deadlines**?
- Is an **additional recommendation** needed?



Be confident AND humble. Even the best-qualified and most talented applicant has learning to do. If you have a sense of direction (animation, illustration, graphic design), share it!

TIMELINE *Allow ample time to prepare your portfolio!*

Spring of Junior Year

Work on your art, and begin organizing and identifying pieces that best represent your abilities. Explore summer programs.

Connect with EA art instructors to strengthen your portfolio. They will help you plan and organize your work for individual programs and schools.

Make an appointment with the EA photography teacher to digitally capture all artworks created in class, summer programs, and sketchbooks.

Summer before Senior Year

After consulting with the Art Department, consider which pieces you might include in your portfolio.

Become familiar with various application components.

Rework or complete unfinished pieces.

Draft an artist's statement.

Fall of Senior Year

Share your artist's statement with your art teacher or college counselor.

Share your portfolio with your art teacher - continue to be open to feedback.

Finalize your presentation.

Create a shared Google Drive or webpage to display your art and digital portfolio.

STEPS TO PREP:

1. **Examine successful art portfolios** submitted to institutions to which you are applying. Seek insight into the level of skill and creativity expected. The EA Art Department is a great resource to start this exploration.
2. **Research portfolio requirements at your schools of interest**, as they differ across schools. Organize these details in a spreadsheet, checklist, notebook, or somewhere easily accessible.
3. **Review completed work with EA faculty.** Decide what pieces best represent you and your talents. Be prepared to share all pieces with EA faculty.
Note: Each school may have different portfolio criteria. You will likely submit unique portfolios to each school.
4. **Contact the Art Department** for assistance in photographing your art.
5. **Edit the digital images** of your work.
6. **Decide which pieces need clear, concise labels.**
7. **Work on assembling your pieces** into a thoughtfully prepared portfolio using Google Drive or another online storage tool.
8. **Write an artist's statement.** Share it with your art teacher and college counselor.
9. **Review your final work** with your visual arts teacher before uploading.

PORTFOLIO LOGISTICS:

- Select **12-20 pieces**. Most schools have a minimum of eight pieces.
- Focus on **quality, cohesion, and impact**—not quantity!
- Consider **order**: organize effectively!
- Showcase your **imagination, style, process, willingness to experiment, and mastery of various mediums**.
- Choose **recent works**, preferably within the last two years.
- Some schools may require work based on a **specific theme**. Read directions!
- Include **two to three sketches**.
- Show **works in progress** if pieces are part of a series or panel.
- Provide **documentation** and context.
- Craft concise and clear **labels/descriptions**.
- Photographs should be **clear, clean, high-resolution, and well-lit**.
- Many schools use **SlideRoom**, an online application system to receive and evaluate applicants' art portfolios.
Note: there is a fee associated with each submission.
- Impact portfolios showcase **technical skills, creativity, and personal artistic voice**.
- Request **honest feedback** from a trusted art teacher.

COLLEGE COUNSELING TIPS FOR STUDENTS PURSUING VISUAL ARTS:

A **balanced mix of colleges** on your list is important. Include programs that do not require a portfolio, and be open to going to a part of the country (or outside the US) that you might not have considered. Your flexibility indicates how dedicated you are to pursuing the arts.

Not all schools **weigh an arts portfolio** equally. Learn how the schools on your list consider a portfolio.

Attend **open houses**. At these events, you may view current students' work; attend classes; and meet current students, faculty, and admission counselors. Since many schools have distinctive programs, these conversations are helpful.

Consider attending **portfolio programs and reviews** offered at universities. While these programs are neither an expectation nor essential to preparing a powerful portfolio, you will gather helpful insights and learn more about the college hosting you. For example:

- Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts will provide feedback on your work.
- Summer portfolio workshops are offered at Drexel University, Tyler School of Art, Rochester Institute of Technology, and the University of Michigan.

Your **application timeline** may be different because you need to prepare a portfolio. Start early—summer at the latest so there is enough time to complete all requirements. Map out application deadlines and portfolio review dates and deadlines so that you do not miss anything.

Attend **National Portfolio Day**. Get expert tips and portfolio reviews. Speak with representatives from art and design schools.

REACH OUT.

The EA College Counseling team is always here to help. If you have any questions along the way, please do not hesitate to reach out to your EA college counselor!