

design

portfolio guide



table of contents

03	<i>introduction</i>
04	<i>content</i>
05	<i>format & marketing your portfolio</i>
06	<i>general tips & reminders</i>
07	<i>a final check</i>
	<i>sample portfolios</i>
08	<i>design and health</i>
10	<i>design and hospitality</i>
12	<i>design and user experience</i>
14	<i>contribution</i>

introduction

What is a design portfolio?

A design portfolio is a collection of a designer's best creative work. It demonstrates their sense of individual style, thinking processes and method of work to show potential employers the kind of work they are capable of producing.

Who uses a design portfolio?

Portfolios are used by designers that range from graphic, to strategic, to interior, and they come in a variety of forms to reflect this. Anyone in any design field can have a portfolio, and many companies will require one to apply.

When should you start building a design portfolio?

Since the creative process is an ongoing journey, designers can add to and/or modify their design portfolio continuously throughout their careers. Coursework and internships often serve as convenient opportunities to develop portfolio pieces.

You should start (if you already haven't) collecting process pictures of your current design work (see more about process on pg. X). We recommend keeping an archive to help you curate your portfolio later.

It is recommended to start building a portfolio fall sophomore year.

introduction

content

What goes into a design portfolio?

A design portfolio typically consists of a select number of a design student's best work that represents his or her creative identity. It can include, but is not limited to: coursework, work completed in project teams, internships, freelance, and independent work

Remember to include an "About Me" section that conveys your passions, values, inspirations, and aspirations/goals.

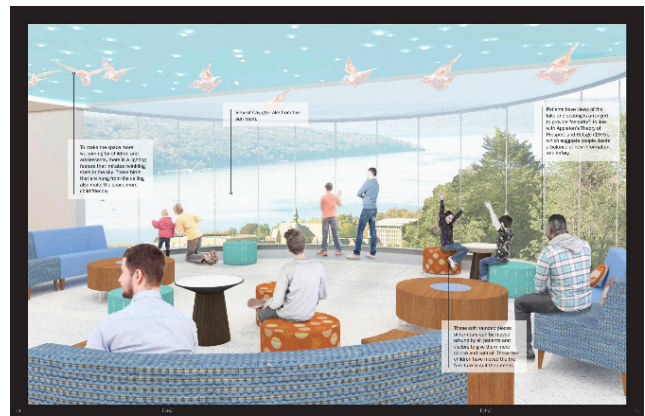
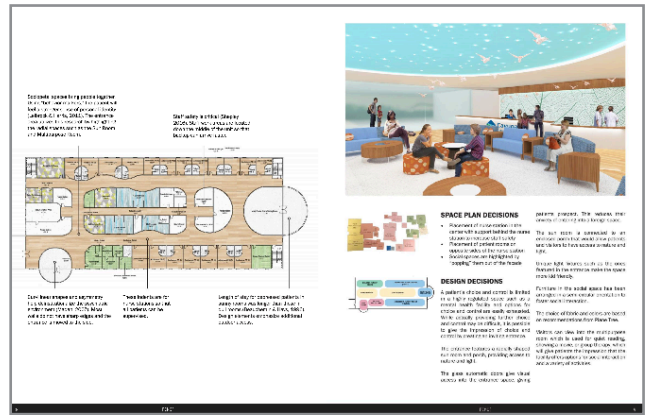
It can be useful to have a running portfolio or archive so you can tailor the pieces in your portfolio to the specific employer.

What are some common features of a design portfolio?

Portfolios often contain images of a design student's work followed by short descriptions of it. The descriptions must include the title, date, and time frame in which the project was completed. In addition, credit must be given to any team member who contributed to the particular project.

How do reviewers often evaluate portfolios?

Reviewers often evaluate portfolios in terms of format and content to understand the designer's style and technical capabilities. They also use portfolios to assess the designer's creative process. Remember that every detail in a portfolio should be presented in a way that shows an individual's creative work from start to finish in its best light.



format

Medium

Traditionally, design portfolios are printed and published to be physically submitted to design firms and recruiters. However, as the design community is increasingly shifting toward online platforms, more students are beginning to market themselves digitally. Consider the medium in which you use: Print or digital? If you are printing on paper, then ensure the dimensions you print in match the requirements set by the company to which you are applying. If your chosen format is digital, then ensure you use a professionally recognized online platform.

Color

Color consistency is key to a strong portfolio. Some designers use a unified color scheme, while others opt for a monochrome palette. Whether you choose more vibrant or subtle tones, remember that your choice of color conveys your style and can be used to assess your understanding of color theory.

Consistency

Like telling a story, your portfolio has the power to communicate your personal brand image and a coherent glimpse into who you are. As such, when choosing pieces to include in your portfolio, try to include projects that highlight your focal interests and areas of expertise, like in health, UX or ergonomics, in a coherent way by establishing visual consistency.

Typography

Typography can be used as a mode of visual expression to convey your personal style. Similar to the format of a resume, clear hierarchy must be established between titles and descriptions throughout your portfolio. Standard font is 12 pt., but may differ as long as it is legible. Feel free to explore different fonts that express your style, but also keep in mind that Serif fonts are easier to read.

marketing your portfolio

Mail

Some employers require prospective designers to submit their portfolios directly to them by email. In order to avoid delays, ensure that your portfolio is saved in the correct dimension and format before sending it to a potential employer. If your file is over 20 MB, there may be issues on the receiving end. Remember to never go over 100 MB. In addition, remember to write a formal email to introduce yourself and to clarify your intentions with your portfolio attachment. Ensure that if your portfolio is printed, it is legible on letter paper (8.5x11).

Online Platforms

Several platforms for creating digital portfolios include: AdobePortfolios, Coroflot, and Behance. It is encouraged to experiment with a few platforms first before deciding which of them suits your personal style and audience the most. After selecting one and uploading your work, you can market your portfolio link on all platforms. There have been recent trends in curating an instagram feed for yourself as a designer.

general tips & reminders

Process

Remember to save assets throughout projects! Document your process work so you can display your design thinking in your portfolio. (Don't worry if it looks messy, just take a picture with your phone!) While taking photos, make sure the background is not distracting. Think about what's around the project and how you want to present it in your portfolio. Keep in mind that you may have to spend extra time photoshopping your background.

The quality and readability of your process drawings help people understand the project. Photos of the site before your redesign highlights the changes you made. It can be helpful to have a post evaluation/reflection to show employers what you learned and where you recognize areas of improvement. Client testimonials can be helpful for receiving feedback and a positive review boosts the reception of your project.

Group Projects

For group projects remember to not only give credit, but to emphasize how you specifically contributed to the project and what you learned from it.

Organization

A portfolio should not be an archive of all your work but rather a select few that best showcase your skills. **Density of information is key.** Around 4-7 well developed projects ranging from 15-60 pages is average for a designer's portfolio.

Information hierarchy should be a main consideration when formatting your portfolio. Ask yourself "What am I highlighting?" Projects are often arranged by category, chronology, or type of focus.

Balance between text and image

Be wary of too much text. Try to find a balance between image and text and display it in an intriguing layout. For example, offset the coldness of 3D models with process drawings and sketches or use stronger graphics to compensate for a more research based project. Designers tend to prefer eye-catching visuals over blocks of text.

- Give credit to team members!
- Include an "About Me" section
- Be consistent and purposeful with design style

a final check!

What should you have in your portfolio?

- The parameters of each project:
 - When and where was the project made?
 - What was the budget?
 - For who or what client?
 - Did you work in a team? How many/who (if it's relevant)
 - Were you in a leadership position?

- Your design process:
 - Do you include photos of your design process/ideation?
 - Is it clear how you reached the conclusion of your project from your process?
 - Do you include both your progress and milestones?
 - Are your photos readable, or in good, well-lit, high quality settings?

- General:
 - Is it your best work?
 - Do you have too much or too little?
 - Is the portfolio clearly organized?
 - Are you portraying who you are and what kind of designer you are?

- Technical:
 - Is your file under 20 MB?
 - Is your portfolio grammatically correct with continuity and clarity?

General Interview Tips:

- Have a hard copy(ies) prepared.
- Send a thank you note after the interview.
- Be mindful about your presence as a designer and personal brand.
- Be mindful about your presence on social media. Would the company be proud to represent you publicly?

design & health

This individual's focus on wellness through design is effectively emphasized both by his visual and textual description of projects. The portfolio illustrates architectural and interior projects that communicate the values of the designer through his content and his skills through visual design.

WATAUGA MEDICAL CENTER HOSPITAL MASTERPLAN
BRIDGING TO WELLNESS
 Boone, NC

ARCHITECTURE + HEALTH STUDIO 8950
 GRADUATE COURSEWORK | CLEMSON UNIVERSITY
 FALL 2017 | GROUP PROJECT - WENZ TUTTLE & MARIAH GRESKIO

Watauga Medical Center is a regional hospital located in Boone, North Carolina, with a close proximity to Appalachian State University. It was originally a Hill-Burton facility that has been expanded upon throughout the years, creating a maze of pathways and spaces.

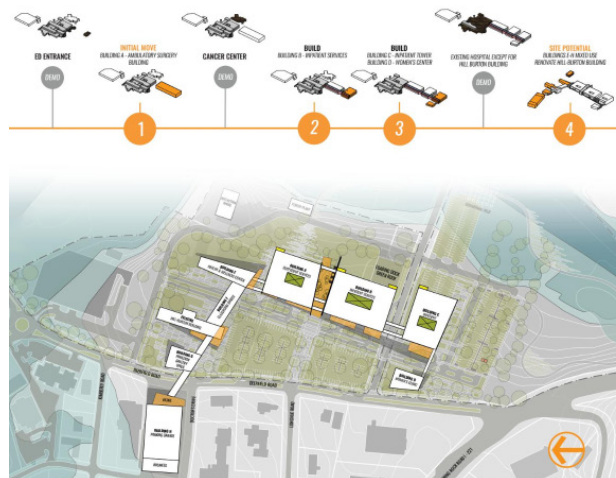
Seeking a solution to their need for growth and desire to build a state-of-the-art facility in Boone while maintaining functionality, the Watauga Medical Center board of directors turned to the students at Clemson University in the Architecture + Health program for master-planning insights. The Watauga Medical Center Campus Masterplan is designed to accommodate for the immediate need of an Ambulatory care center and future clinical needs. The system will serve as a model for promoting a healthy community and activating a medical campus to accommodate growth.

CONNECTING STREET AXES CROSSROAD OF HEALTH FACILITY AND THE COMMUNITY ESTABLISHING BUILDING CIRCULATION

Name: Tuttle W.
 Program: Master of Architecture and Health Candidate 2018, Clemson University
 Bachelor of Fine arts in Interior Design 2011, Miami University
 Source: https://issuu.com/wenzuttlet/docs/w.tuttle_a_h_portfolio_2018_pages

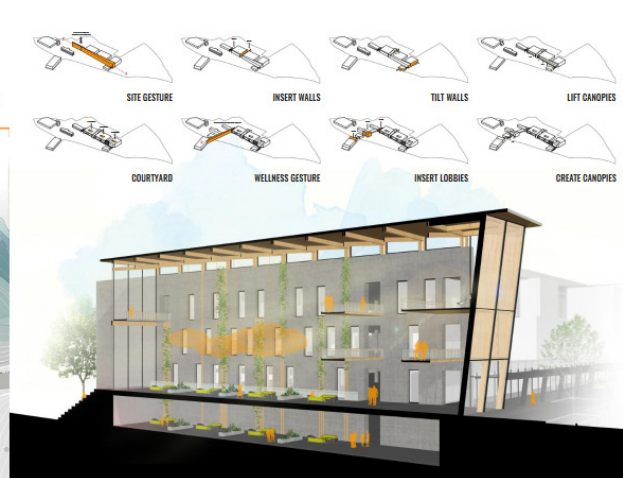
color

This portfolio uses strong complementary colors of orange and blue to create a striking impact on the viewer and demonstrates effective application of the color theory



annotations

The portfolio uses numbered annotations to describe the different functions of the physical building, which clarifies the project's intention.



design & health

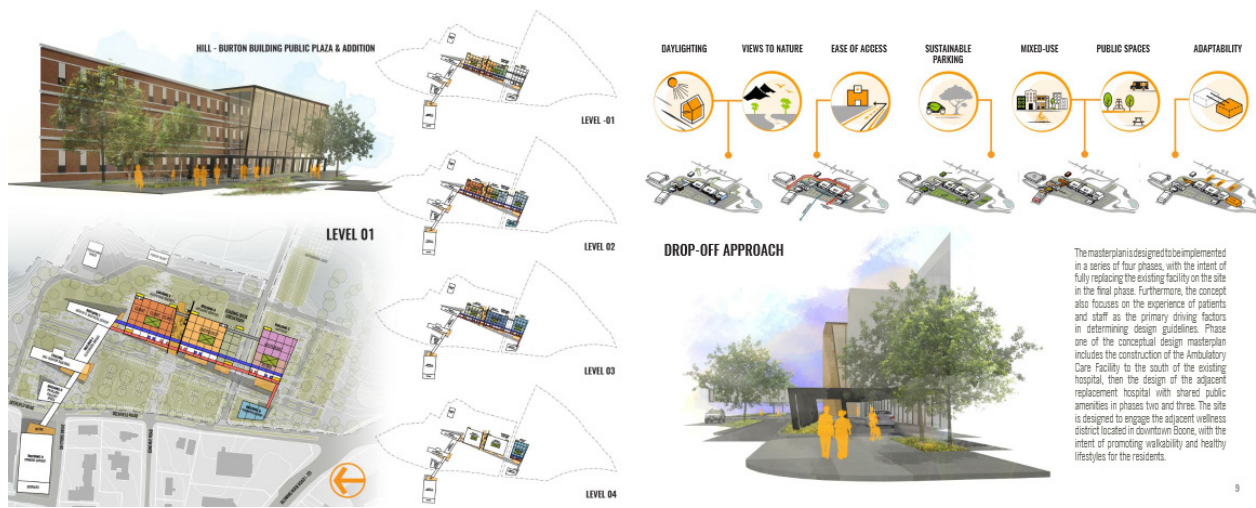
graphical representations

This page effectively communicates this architect's thorough user research. He includes statistics about his target group, the homeless population, as well as user personas. Be sure to maintain an engaging balance of pictures and text to keep your reader interested. In a portfolio, intriguing graphical representations of research reflects personal style and makes it easier for readers to understand your work.



site plan

Under his user research, this architect also includes four site plans. Each site plan shows the factors he has considered for the environmental design. By splitting the site plan into four site plans, it is easier to represent each factor in intriguing and detailed imagery.



typography

In this example, the designer chooses a relatively angular and narrow font. While the angularity does well to distinguish his style, the narrowness can pose a challenge in terms of readability for reviewers.

renderings

This page includes many colorful renderings, which contribute to its overall eye-catching aesthetic. However, in terms of layout, images could be resized a little larger to guarantee that the reader can view them.


description

The content of the description focuses on the experience of patients as staff as the primary participants in the design guidelines, indicating that the designer has strongly considered the users in his design process.

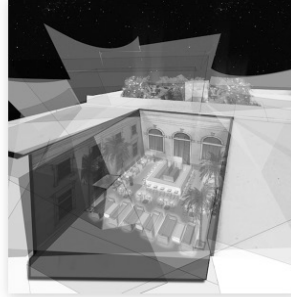
design & hospitality

This DEA alumni showcases her projects online and continues her personal brand by developing a logo. She adopts a monochromatic color scheme and suggests an interest in the hospitality industry by selecting a spa, restaurant, and hotel as her main portfolio pieces to showcase.


PIKANTO
about



eleanor-spa
interior, branding

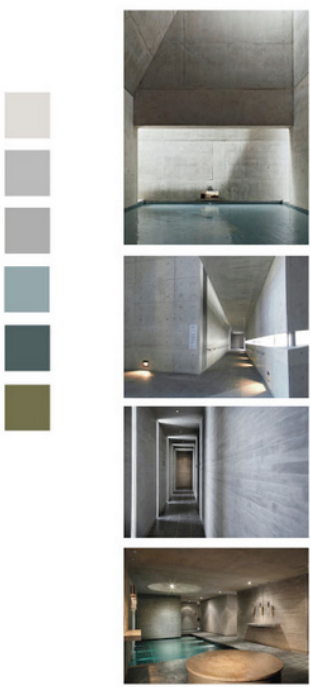


elliott-restaurant&bar
architecture, interior, branding

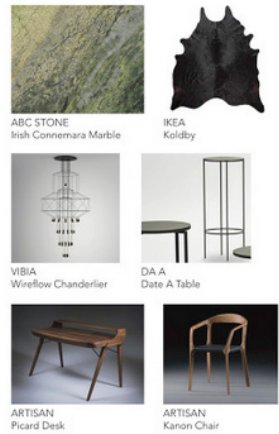


e-hotel&gallery
architecture, interior, branding

Name: Karina Pikanto
 Program: Bachelor of Science in Design and Environmental Analysis, 2017
 Source: <https://cargocollective.com/karinapikanto>



MATERIALS & FINISHES



color

This digital portfolio uses a monochromatic color scheme on her home page to create a unifying effect that weaves together the different styles of the designer's hospitality related projects.

word choice

How you describe your project is very important. This student brought her interior space to life and demonstrated an understanding of materials and finishes in an articulate manner. She combines subjective descriptions with notes on style and color to clarify her thought process in making her design decisions.

- "the hotel space will have a **classic, darker, wooden interior**, whereas the spa would be **minimalistic, cool, and contemporary**."



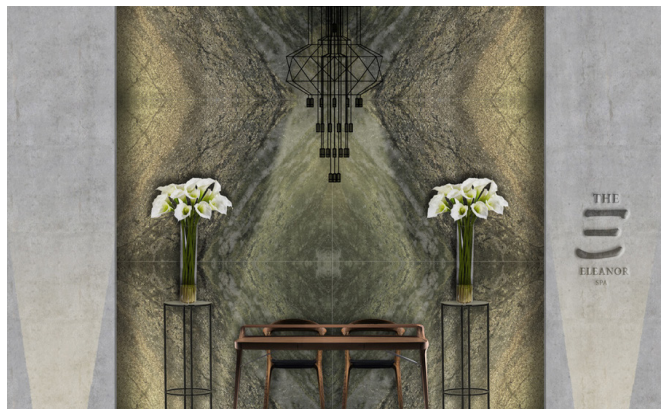
design & hospitality

renderings

The graphic content in this portfolio is very detailed, featuring renderings of interior spaces and furniture such as tables, flowers, and even towels. The level of detail suggests that the student has thoughtfully considered her design concept as a whole, including implications on the interior space as well as the products inside it.


consistency

Consistency in this portfolio is established through a recurrent logo and unified color scheme. While each of the photos reveal different perspectives of the interior space, they all speak the same visual language in terms of communicating a soothing, calm, and sophisticated tone.



design & user experience

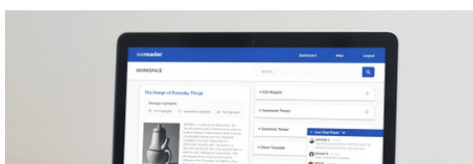
This is another example of a digital portfolio by a DEA alumni. Her website's welcome page is personalized with doodles that give the viewer a hint of her personality. The incorporation of doodles serves as branding for her personal design style and identity as a designer.



HOPE HAHN
PRODUCT DESIGNER | CREATIVE DETECTIVE | PROUD WORM FARMER

Name: Hope Hahn
Program: Bachelor of Science in Design and Environmental Analysis, 20??
Source: <https://www.hopehahn.com>

Projects



WeReader | read collaboratively



Tilla | recapturing humidity



layout

The layout of this portfolio is simple and clear with relatively large margins so that the user can clearly distinguish one project from another. Each photo is consistent size and organized neatly on the page.

notations

To describe the essence of each of her portfolio piece, she uses phrases such as 'read collaboratively' and 'recapturing humidity' for subheadings.

consistency

Despite a degree of variety in terms of format for each of her portfolio pieces, ranging from product design to user interface design, she establishes consistency of style by using a predominantly blue and green color scheme.

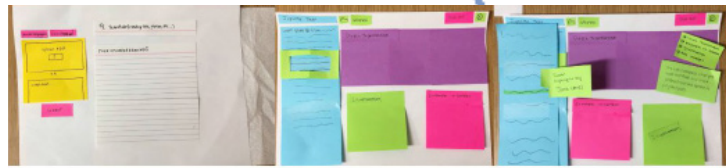
design & user experience

process documentation

Process documentation is a critical component of the portfolio to consider. In this example, she chooses to present the process under subheadings of 'user research' and 'prototyping'. She includes photographs of colorful post-it notes that demonstrate her brainstorming process. With this visual mindmap, she invites the portfolio reviewer to follow her thought process that achieves the end result.

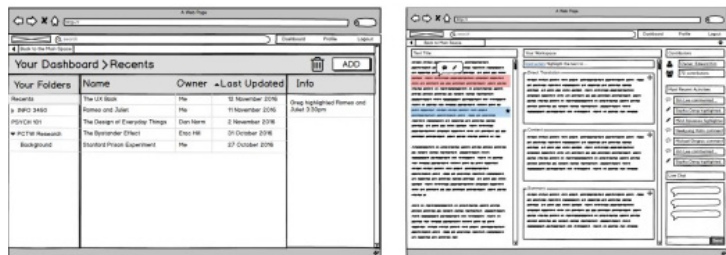


user research



Paper Prototype

user testing
 "The major UX problems we discovered with user evaluations were Clarity, Motivation, and Social Interactivity."



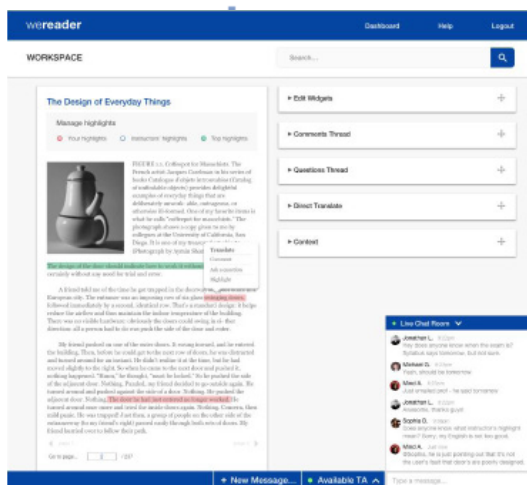
Low Fidelity Digital Prototype

prototyping (from sticky notes to wireframes)

balance

Another element to be aware of is how to demonstrate a balance of technical skills and creative thought processes in your work. Technical skills can be shown through measured drawings, especially on AutoCAD or other computer softwares.

Creative insights can also be implied through photographs of experimental processes. In this portfolio, the student created wireframes and a high fidelity mockup of her project.



final iteration

contributions

Produced by the Career Exploration Center with contributions from:

Camille Lee and Nooshin Ahmadi, the professors of DEA 4610: Professional Communications and Portfolio

