

Notes for portfolio project

1. Portfolio contextualising information

The interview moment involves presentation in a verbal capacity, and presentation in a visual-narrative capacity. In many ways, because of your architectural presentations to lecturers in the design subjects, you already have much experience in these forms. The difference between the visual-narrative portfolio for the interview, and the presentations you have made for individual projects, is that the portfolio needs to create a coherent position that spans across projects, thereby showcasing your strengths. In this term you will make a portfolio which could be useful to you soon.

A portfolio is a living and ever-changing document. For instance, most of the projects in your portfolio at this point of your career will be of university work, but as you gain more professional experience, you will add these realised projects to your portfolio. Your portfolio should also change depending on the specific audience: it is important to consider what aspects of your work you present to specific potential employers or clients. You can use the portfolio to highlight various aspects of your skills depending on the position you are applying for. This means that you need to know the intention of your portfolio: what should the viewer learn when he/she/they browses through portfolio, and what is the portfolio saying about your work as a thinker and a designer? The primary purpose of the portfolio is to showcase your thinking style, and your capability as designer.

In the archinect.com article James Long and Ellicott Long (2011) describe a range of properties which they find important for architectural presentations:

“Your university portfolio is in essence what shows a potential employer how you approach a design problem and the design solution you come up with. Therefore it should be fairly detailed including work from earliest design briefs and sketches through to more detailed drawings and any models constructed. It should tell the story of a project and be easy to follow and most importantly show the employer your strengths and what you could bring to their company. A lot of design portfolios simply include pretty 3D renderings of the final design. These are important but only show a small part of the process you have completed. If you have spent a year working on a design project, show a year’s worth of work. Compile the portfolio in reverse chronological order starting with your most recent work first and working backwards. Include some written descriptions if necessary but remember this is a visual tool. Also make sure you include any drawings you have done with specialist software to reaffirm the information on your CV (e.g. Rhino, Maya, 3D Max, Environmental Modelling Software)”

Long and Long present an approach to what a portfolio could look like. A portfolio should tell a type of story. During the year you approached presentation as a narrative form, and you looked at various story structures which can influence the underlying flow of content in a presentation. A portfolio should give access to important aspects of a process, rather than only final renderings. While there is much to learn from Long and Long, however, you do not have to structure your presentation like they suggest. For instance, you may not agree with the need to do things to the chronological order they suggest, but rather, wish to explore some other type of ordering mechanism. If you feel strongly about another ordering mechanism, therefore, you should explore it. Follow your individualised research expression.

References

Long, J. and Long, E. (2011). Architecture and Design Graduates – How to Secure Your First Position – Part 2: Assembling a Portfolio, Applying for Positions. [online] Archinect. Available at: <https://archinect.com/features/article/13018102/architecture-and-design-graduates-how-to-secure-your-first-position-part-2> [Accessed 19 Sep. 2017].

2. Notes on the class interaction

During the quarter we will discuss your ideas for the portfolios, and I will help you think through their visual-narrative and conceptual positioning.

While starting to plan this presentation, you may want to revisit some ideas from past projects. The ideas worked with in past projects should put you in a good position to create a visual-narrative story in your portfolio.

It is important for you, however, to read a range of articles about portfolios, and you should look at other people's portfolios. It may also be useful for you to read through or listen to interviews with practicing architects to gain a sense of how people speak about their work to a public audience.

The primary goal of any presentation is to connect to an audience/reader/viewer, and through the experience of the presentation, teach them something. A presentation needs to be focussed and edited in a way that creates a coherent learning experience. The portfolio should consider the visual-narrative journey undertaken by the audience/reader/viewer.

Design presentations should have a well thought out and consistent materiality. The scheme you use should include carefully considered styles, fonts, colours, textures etc.

3. Technical Resources

When designing presentations, there are a few things you can do to make your work impact-full.

Below are resources you can go through to improve your designs: Consider typography, layout, principles and elements of design, images, and colour. Also, just because we are thinking in graphic design terms does not mean everything you make should be on computer... you can make hand drawings and sketches and notes... they could be important for the portfolio.

3.1 A portfolio and process design

Understand the process contained in this online guide from d.school, an interdisciplinary school at Stanford University: [An Introduction to Design Thinking Process Guide](#). Think back to past projects... where have you seen blockages in the process? Think back to the design framework you made in your group work in term 2. Consider how a portfolio can give the reader an entry point into your design process.

3.2 Understanding User Jobs

I want you to rewatch the following video from Phoenix University: [Understanding Customer Jobs](#). Clayton Christensen is an educator at Harvard Business School and is a leader in the field of marketing. The key learning in this video was that you design for specific user needs. The user employs your design to solve a problem in their lives. Understanding the idea about customer jobs is very relevant to portfolio design.

3.3 The Cartographer, and the Rastaman

Read again [this extract](#) is from Kei Millers (2014) *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion*. The cartographer proposes that he can map all things and create simplicity out of complexity. The Rastaman counters: He suggests that places in the world are inexplicably bound in multiple stories and encounters that cannot truly be quantified. I want you to think about what you can learn from both the Cartographer AND the Rastaman. My question to you: How does this realisation influence a portfolio?

3.4 Look at a wide variety of architectural portfolios

You need to understand what is out there and incorporate good ideas, and avoid the bad ones.

<https://www.archdaily.com/872418/the-best-architecture-portfolio-designs>

3.5 Typography

For the portfolio pages you need to use text (references from theory, poems, your own observations, problem statement, contextualising writing etc). Sometimes this text will be found sources which you can use as is (newspaper articles, scans of books etc). At other times, however, you may want to consider how you use typography. I want you to think about how you can include typography in your portfolio pages, because it can help get the message across.

Watch this for an introduction on typography: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sByzHoiYFX0>

Watch this for an overview of typography: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mBoVoj5jLfc>

Watch this for a behind the scenes view of how designers think through the use of typography:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DLeSPCTA9Wg>

Also look at the multimodality extract regarding Typography from

<https://multimodalityglossary.wordpress.com/>:

Typography refers to the visual design of language through the selection of type font, size, line, and spacing. From a multimodal perspective Typography represents a mode/code in its own right, which interacts with other modes. Hartmut Stockl (2005) outlines a tentative typographic 'grammar' as a structured set of networked resources that accounts for typographic meaning making and its communicative effects. Just as there is no speech without voice qualities and intonation, Stockl argues that there is no written document without (typo)-graphic qualities. He leads a semiotic and multimodal trend to acknowledge the crucial function of typography and text design and how it contributes to textual meaning in numerous ways. A trend that has been taken up by Theo Van Leeuwen, Sue Walker among others.

Stockl models the 'grammar' of typography with a four-part division of typographic resources'. Within this grammar Stockl sees the highest level of the typographic sign system as consisting of four domains or dimensions of typographic work which represent typographic or textual units of varying size: (i) 'micro-typography' refers to fonts and individual letters features (e.g. size, face, font, colour); (ii) 'meso-typography' concerns the configuration of typographic signs in lines and text blocks (e.g. spacing, alignment, position, direction); (iii) 'macro-typography' deals with the graphic structure of the overall document (e.g. indentions, paragraphs, emphasis); and (iv) 'para-typography' which is concerned with typographic media, i.e. surface materials and instruments for producing typographic signs material (e.g. the quality of paper).

In *Typography and Language in Everyday Life* (2001) Walker provides a detailed look at graphic as well as linguistic aspects of language and suggests there is much to be gained from collaboration between typographers and applied linguists. In *Introducing Social Semiotics* (2005) and his article 'Towards a semiotics of typography' (2006), Van Leeuwen outlines a social semiotic approach to analyzing the ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning potentials of letterforms with a focus on features such as weight, expansion, slope, curvature, connectivity, orientation and regularity.

3.6 Layout

The layout of your pages is important because it helps the reader move through the different story that you are telling. Try to experiment with a layout that adds to the message you are trying to communicate in the pages.

Watch this for an introduction on layout: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a5KYIHNKQB8>

Watch this video for three tips when designing (having a concept, using open space, use consistent typeface): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9OTcdc2mwc>

3.7 Principles and Elements of Design

Think about your visual literacy flip book... and how different elements and principles of design can influence meaning in a layout. It is important to consider how people read the visual structure of the page when you are presenting information in a visual way. Use the elements and principles of design while making your pages.

This article gives an overview of the elements of design: <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-Elements-of-graphic-design-1697502>

This article gives an overview of the principles of design: <https://www.thoughtco.com/principles-of-graphic-design-1077541>

This article gives an overview of both the principles and elements of design: <https://www.johnlovet.com/design-overview>

3.8 Colour

Colours are pervasive of everything we visually encounter in the world. Colours can affect the way we feel. When you consider your colours, do so in terms of the associations or moods they may carry with them, and choose colours that work well with each other.

Watch this video for an introduction on working with colour: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 2LLXnUdUlc>

Read this article for a brief overview on research on the psychological effects of colour: <https://www.verywell.com/color-psychology-2795824>

Use this resource to help you choose colour schemes when you need to: <https://color.adobe.com/>

3.9 Images

Images can help you tell your story, share ideas, give people access to your point of view, and sell your proposal. Well chosen images can make a presentation great... and images do this by being able to convey what words cannot quite say. Be very clear in your selection of photographs, sketches, precedents, plans, and elevations. All the images you use work to tell a particular visual-narrative.

Watch this video for an introduction on working with images: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MELKuexR3sQ>

Consider how image and text works together

Getting the graphic relationship between image and text is right is critical. Spend time considering this.

<https://www.canva.com/learn/how-to-marry-text-and-images/>

<http://graphicdesignjunction.com/2016/07/text-over-images-in-web-design/>

<https://designshack.net/articles/layouts/how-to-balance-text-and-visual-content-in-design/>

<https://about.easil.com/image-in-text-poster-designs/>

3.10 Your portfolio can be mixed media, and hand made, low fi, or self bound

This portfolio does not have to be printed out, and bound using Perfect (Glue) binding or by using standard portfolio sleeves. You can use a DIY binding system, or you can create an artist book as a portfolio. Just as long as it carries over the idea of what you want people to read, and understand about your practice.

<https://www.artistsnetwork.com/art-mediums/technique-tuesdays-special-touches-for-handmade-books/>

<https://www.behance.net/gallery/7920947/Handmade-Portfolio-Design->

<https://www.creativebloq.com/portfolios/paper-portfolios-5132559>

<https://za.pinterest.com/pin/45528646203135514/>

<https://blog.library.si.edu/blog/2012/06/01/what-is-an-artists-book/#.W7Hdc2gzaUk>

<http://www.philobiblon.com/tutorials.shtml>

http://www.hewit.com/skin_deep/

<https://boundunbound.org/>

3.11 Storytelling

If you want a presentation to stick in people's minds, then use storytelling techniques. A story can help make your presentation engaging. But remember, the story in your portfolio does not have to follow a beginning, middle and end structure. Your story can be glances into your research subject. Your story could also be a range of anecdotes or seemingly unrelated visual entry points into your elective. Consider how a story can be visual.

Here are some example story structures people sometimes use in presentations:

<http://www.sparkol.com/engage/8-classic-storytelling-techniques-for-engaging-presentations/>

Here are Pixars rules for telling a Pixar-Story: <http://io9.gizmodo.com/5916970/the-22-rules-of-storytelling-according-to-pixar>

N.B. This is a very important article for visual storytelling:

<https://medium.com/visual-stories/10-simple-rules-of-visual-storytelling-4ee868498447>

3.12 Writing Styles

While you write your site observations, you can experiment with writing genres. It is up to you how you incorporate writing genres into your portfolio. See how using different styles of writing can help you make a strong presentation... you can make a powerful movement (and here I use the word movement to mean a visual-narrative form, in other words, a story) in presentations by using contextually relevant writing in a nuanced way.

Have a look at this article to understand the four types of writing that you could interweave into

your portfolio: <https://letterpile.com/writing/Four-Types-of-Writing>

This article will give you a broad explanation of creative nonfiction, a genre of writing that uses literary styles and techniques to create factually accurate narratives: <http://www.creativenonfiction.org/online-reading/what-creative-nonfiction>

There are two main genres in writing (non-fiction and fiction), but there are many common genres (subsets of genres)... have a look at this list to see what you may want to include in your portfolio: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_writing_genres

3.13 PowerPoint Design and the Elements and Principles of Design

This document gives an overview of all the elements you should consider while developing a presentation using PowerPoint etc. <https://tutsplus.com/presentations-ebook>

The second is a listicle which gives does and don't when working with PowerPoint.

<https://business.tutsplus.com/articles/37-effective-powerpoint-presentation-tips--cms-25421>

The third is an overview of the principles of design, relevant to any type of design work.

<https://www.johnlovet.com/design-overview>

While going through the principles and elements of design as you design the 2-d presentation, I want you to think back to *Architecture: Form, Space, Order*, by Francis D.K. Ching. (2007)

<https://archive.org/stream/FrancisD.K.ChingArchitectureFormSpaceAndOrder3rdEdition/Francis%20D.K.%20Ching.%20Architecture%20-%20Form,%20Space%20and%20Order%203rd%20Edition#page/n3>

How do these elements and principles of design apply to a portfolio, and your message?

Infographics (You don't need them, but could be interesting to look at)

Designers create infographics to education people using text and image. The way they order information may be useful for when thinking about your architectural boards. These articles give notes on designing infographics. Infographic designers process their data, check all their sources, and create a wireframe in a format that works for the presentation. Infographics have stories, set a tone, and have concise and clear information. The colours, blank spaces, and typography are well considered. Infographics are well edited, and proofread. Go through these articles when you have a moment:

Some steps to planning the design of an infographic... <https://www.fastcodesign.com/1670019/10-steps-to-designing-an-amazing-infographic>

Learn about tools and strategies for creating infographics, and look at some examples of great infographics... <https://www.creativebloq.com/graphic-design-tips/information-graphics-1232836>

Learn how designers relay mass amounts of information in an effective, and beautiful way... <https://designschool.canva.com/blog/create-infographics/>

3.14 Finding a Purpose in a Presentation

When designing your presentation to your audience, however, there is another important presentation principle to keep in mind: When you know the purpose of your presentation, you know what to include in the presentation. Every PRESENTATION must have a GENERAL PURPOSE and a SPECIFIC PURPOSE... If a presentation doesn't have a general purpose and a specific purpose, the people you are presenting to are all the more likely to be confused at the end of your presentation, be left wanting to know what you meant to relay, or be uninterested to know more. The needs of your audience is best catered for when you work with a clear general purpose and a clear specific purpose.

A GENERAL PURPOSE is to INFORM, to PERSUADE, to ENTERTAIN, or to INSPIRE. Sometimes a presentation could have a mixture of elements, but still have a primary purpose. i.e. it is possible have a presentation that is informative, but is still geared to INSPIRE people. The GENERAL PURPOSE will guide you in the presentation content choices you make. A SPECIFIC PURPOSE is what you want the audience to do, or know after having seen or read through your presentation. You are the expert in the the SPECIFIC PURPOSE... it is the information you have that you want others to receive and be influenced by. The SPECIFIC PURPOSE is what makes the presentation yours... it is your content, your knowledge, narrowed and edited, so as to be applicable to your AUDIENCE.

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atdcoursereview-speechcomm-1/chapter/specific-purposes/>

3.15 Create a convincing call to action (get buy in for your ideas)

Translating your BIG IDEAS into ACTION by the AUDIENCE MEMBERS is the basis and goal of presentations... even in a educational presentation where you are transferring information you need some call to action that is based in the audience member's interest. When you are trying to persuade an AUDIENCE, you need to present them with a call to action that is clear on how an INDIVIDUAL can take ACTION. A call to action should never be vague... it should be vivid. Speak to people's imagination and inspire them with the potential reward they will get for taking action.

3.16 Focus your content (don't ramble)

The key to making the nuances that create a convincing presentation is to focus the content of your presentation. Be clear in what your presentation is about (and present that in a way that inspires someone to take action). The presentation needs to be focused on communicating a BIG IDEA... This requires choices, and execution. What do you need to include in the presentation to sell it to me? What should you exclude? Remember, when you focus your content, a reader / listener is more likely to know what you are presenting, and are more likely to be convinced by what you are presenting. You may wonder, however, how to focus your content: when focusing your content, you should be thinking about who your AUDIENCE is, and how to convince them of your BIG IDEA. This message can take various story structures, but there should always be a message you are communicating.

<https://hbr.org/2012/10/create-presentations-an-audien>

<http://www.allthingspresentations.com/articles/focus-content/>

3.17 Content is King: Design Content First

While a great design is important, the actual content in the portfolio is critical. Making sure the message of your portfolio is well considered, well written, and is complements the images and graphic design choices made for your portfolio.

<https://harnessmedia.net/content-focused-design/>

<https://medium.com/@8obbyanderson/change-your-focus-and-design-content-first-a124e12f3bb2>

<https://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2015/11/creating-good-user-experiences-by-focusing-on-content.php>

<https://contently.com/2014/11/12/5-brands-that-boosted-their-traffic-with-content-focused-redesigns/>

<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/center-stage-help-the-user-focus-on-what-s-important>

<https://www.relevance.com/the-importance-of-detail-oriented-content/>

3.18 Cater for your audience (make it appropriate)

There is nothing worse than listening to, or reading + working through a irrelevant and direction-less presentation. It is your task to think about your target audience, and design your presentation so as to appeal to their interests. Because, really... what's in it for me? Your audience right now is the following: You are in an architectural school, so your audience is academics with an architectural and usually a social and conceptual interest. GREAT PRESENTATIONS are about speaking to the AUDIENCE you are presenting to. In one of the articles I include below I read the following: "When you make the audience the star of your presentation, your reach rises, your impact increases, and your bottom-line blossoms." I couldn't agree more... because when I'm listening to a presentation, I want to know should I be listening... I want to know if this person know what they are talking about... and I want to know what's in it for me...

<https://www.lifewire.com/audience-analysis-important-tool-for-presentations-2767434>

<http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/audience-analysis/>

<https://www.fastcompany.com/3041558/5-ways-to-make-the-audience-the-star-of-your-presentation>

<https://www.creativelive.com/blog/customer-centric-design/>

3.19 Consider your context

Revisit the extract on context from Multimodality:

Context is a term often used in methodological accounts to refer to what falls outside the empirical focus of a study yet is, at the same time, seen as relevant to the interpretation of that empirical focus. Thus when data are collected and analyzed a distinction is made between 'text' and 'context', and often different empirical status is accorded to them, text being 'primary', context being 'secondary'. One extreme position in this debate is taken by, for instance, some conversation analysts who argue that anything outside the (multimodal) text selected for analysis is irrelevant for its analysis, unless participants themselves orient to it. At the other end of the spectrum we find the position taken by some ethnographers that as much of the context (of a case) as possible must be taken into account. Somewhere in the middle lies the position taken by, for instance, (interactional) sociolinguists and systemic functional linguistics. They argue that we must investigate how language ('text') 'fits into' context and how people construct and recognize these contexts. Frequently in research the empirical boundaries between text and context coincide with modal boundaries: a linguist treating image as context, for instance. Multimodality aims to avoid pre-defining such boundaries along modal lines, opting instead to investigate the functions of various modes in ensembles. For discussions about the methodological implications of notions of context see Blommaert (2005), Hak (1999), and Duranti & Goodwin (1982).

<https://multimodalityglossary.wordpress.com/>

3.20 Create a coherent ensemble

The elements of the presentation need to be Coherent. Revisit the extract on Coherence from the multimodality website. <https://multimodalityglossary.wordpress.com/>

Coherence is a term drawn from linguistics, notably social semiotics and the work of Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (1976). Coherence names the effect of arrangements such that everything in the arrangement gives the appearance of 'naturally' belonging together. It characterizes what appears as an unproblematic state of affairs whether in a social arrangement, or a multimodal sign, text or object. One aspect of coherence is the idea of textual completeness.

Cohesive ties refers to the entities through which coherence is explicitly produced – that is the ways in which texts are made to hang together. In absence of cohesive ties coherence needs to be established through inference

Theo van Leeuwen (2004) has developed notions of coherence to examine how multimodal cohesion is realized through composition, dialogue, information linking, and rhythm across a range of modes. He uses cohesion to describe how different kinds of semiotic resources are integrated into multimodal texts.

Van Leeuwen identifies four processes that he considers as pertinent for understanding cohesion across a range of modes. *Composition* he argues provides coherence and meaningful structure to a range of modes including spatial arrangements, images, and multimodal layout encompassing notions of foreground, background, the information value of elements in relation to each other and to audience. *Dialogue* explores how multimodal cohesion is realized through the structures of dialogic exchange in multimodal texts and communicative events – this can include dialogue/turn taking across modes. *Information linking* relates to how temporal or causal links are established between elements in multimodal texts. *Rhythm* he argues ‘provides coherence and meaningful structure to events unfolding over time and is crucial for everyday interaction and time-based media – with attention to measures and pulses, tempo’. Elisabetta Adami (2009) has developed these ideas of cohesion in relation to digital texts. She has shown, for example, how video threads on YouTube are created through cohesive ties of repetition and variation of elements of any kind, from objects, words, gestures and music, including the multimodal deployment of a video.

The Elements of the presentation need to form an ensemble. Revisit the extract on ensembles from the multimodality website. <https://multimodalityglossary.wordpress.com/>

This term refers to representations or communications that consist of more than one mode, brought together not randomly but with a view to collective and interrelated meaning. Within the framing of socially, culturally and historically regularized ways of making meaning, the communicator ‘orchestrates’ an ensemble (Kress, 2010) that bears traces of the maker’s ‘interest’ (Kress, 1997) and agency (Rowse, 2012), including aesthetic considerations (Hull and Nelson, 2009). As such, there is a meshing between cultural affordances, and the ideas and purposes of the individual, as meanings are ‘sedimented’ in particular ways (Rowse and Pahl, 2007). Medium also frames what is done; as well as combinations of modes made bodily and on the page, the resources available in online technologies shape the configuration of multimodal ensembles (Burnett, 2011). Deriving from music, the metaphor ‘ensemble’ is suggestive of discrete parts brought together as a synthesized whole, where modes, like melodies played on different instruments, are interrelated in complex ways. This raises a number of analytical questions, such as which modes have been included or excluded, the function of each mode, how meanings have been distributed, whether alternative modes could have been chosen and what the communicative effect of a different choice would be. The weighting of modes, in terms of which is predominant or backgrounded, can indicate relative ‘status’ and their very co-presence is suggestive of multimodal interrelationships (Martinec and Salway, 2005). For example, it is argued that, in children’s picturebooks, similar subject matter is represented in a ‘congruent’ (Schwarz, 1982) relationship between writing and image, whereas different aspects or disjunctive features of a phenomenon are communicated in a ‘complementary’ or ‘contradictory’ dynamic (Nickolajeva and Scott, 2000). As meaning makers decide on modal ‘best fit’ and how to combine modes for a particular purpose, analysis of the moment-by-moment processes of constructing multimodal ensembles can enable the analyst to unpack how meanings are brought together.