

**EMILY  
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UNIVERSITY  
OF ART + DESIGN

undergraduate  
portfolio  
workbook





## What is a portfolio?

Your portfolio is a showcase of your best and most current work. It is an important part of your application to all of our undergraduate programs, and should shine a spotlight on your skill and creativity.

Not everything is about skill: your voice and the point of view from which you create is just as important as raw talent.

There is no magic formula to the “perfect” portfolio. However, there are proven strategies you can use to ensure your intent is clear when submitting your portfolio as part of your application to university.

We offer portfolio workshops designed for teens thinking of pursuing an education in art, design or media at the post-secondary level. Find all programs at [teens.ecuad.ca](https://teens.ecuad.ca).

# How to use this workbook

In this workbook, you will find direction in the form of tips and prompts on how to develop your portfolio.

**Prompts** are your call-to-action, as they ask you to do something. Try tackling the same prompt multiple times over time.

**Tips** are things to keep in mind while you create.

Collect your work all in one place. You probably already have a sketchbook or notebook that you use to jot down ideas, sketch, and ideate. Keep this workbook and your other materials in an easy to reach place so they are close by when you are stuck with a new idea.

**READY? LET'S BEGIN.**



*We want to see **you** in your portfolio!  
Show us your creative passion and individual  
artistic voice.*

– DIRECTOR OF RECRUITMENT, ECU

## How to build a strong portfolio

### STEP 1 –VISUALIZE

Think carefully about the world around you. What are the things that are at the top of your mind? Try to interpret those thoughts into your artwork.

We are looking to see how you engage critically with the world around you, and how well you translate that into your work.

### Prompt

Create three works that connect to how you begin your day. Record a short description of why you selected the three topics or items that you chose.

Jot down why you chose your selected medium and how that connects to your practice.

Each time you revisit this prompt, change one thing and do it with intention. Record why you changed it. Take the time to think about why you have made the change, and how it affected your work.

Tip! Take photos and videos of your work while it is in progress. Don't forget about detail-shots! If a piece has depth, ensure that we can see its texture by taking a photo up-close, or at an angle.

You can upload multiple photos or short videos of each piece of work you submit. Showing the process that brought you to the final product helps us to see your thinking. Find details at [ecuad.ca/portfolio](http://ecuad.ca/portfolio).

*My new understanding and appreciation of art feels fresh, and liberating.*

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Sebastien Kaschel,  
Foundation



## STEP 2 – THINK

Recreate an old piece in a new way. In 1-3 short sentences, write down what the new piece means to you.

The main thing we are trying to see through your portfolio is who you are as a person on our shared planet at this time. Experiment with new materials, be playful during the process. Allow yourself to create work that you might not like – you may find this opens you up to new ways of seeing.

### Prompt

Try word association to loosen up. Ask a friend or family member to give you a couple of random words. Toothbrush, roses, windy. Play with the words—what do they make you think about? Are they connected? Record the experience, and see if this inspires you to create.

**TIP! Take your time.** Rushing your creative process won't give you a chance to showcase your best work. Consider your best work from the previous two years when compiling your portfolio.

## STEP 3 – CREATE

We are looking for portfolios with a diverse range of materials and media.

Ideally, you should incorporate at least three different mediums in your portfolio. Painting, drawing, photography, film, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, and even a couple of pages from your sketchbook are ideal mediums for submission.

Try to be diverse. This will help us to determine the level of exploration you are doing as an artist.

### Prompt

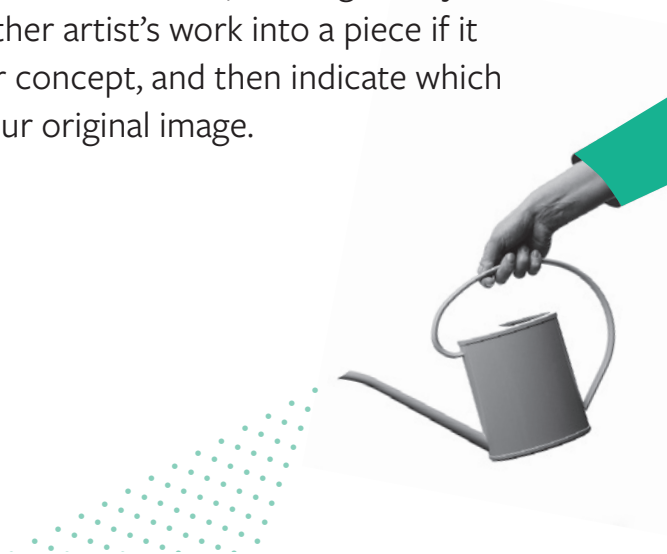
Take your favourite current piece—the single piece you would submit if you could only submit one—and rework it in a different medium. If the original was 2D, try to render it in a 3D format. If it was digital, try to make it analogue.



**TIP!** You don't have to use expensive materials to create exceptional work. As always, be careful to ensure that any found materials are safe for use, and don't pose a threat to your health.

## What not to include

Do not use images appropriated from the internet or another artist's work. Ensure each piece is your original idea, character and/or design. Only appropriate another artist's work into a piece if it strengthens your concept, and then indicate which portion is not your original image.



*I am encouraged to think deeply about my art and work towards creating a voice for myself.*

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Brie Wong, Foundation



The logo features a stylized building with vertical lines on the right side, and several overlapping, rounded shapes in various shades of green and teal on the left side, resembling leaves or abstract architectural forms.

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We acknowledge that Emily Carr University is situated on traditional, ancestral and unceded Coast Salish territory.