

PROFESSIONAL PACKET ASSIGNMENT

Digital II
Matt Siber
Revised, Spring 2010

ASSIGNMENT

Create a packet of professional materials to be used for self-promotion. You will send this packet, or elements of it, to galleries, photo editors, modeling agencies, museums, juried exhibitions, grants, etc. The idea behind making a cohesive packet is to create a visual professional identity for yourself. Design should be consistent between your letterhead, business card, CD cover and digital portfolio so that people will immediately recognize your 'brand' when they see it in a pile on their desk. Having a cohesive design also makes you look like you have your act together. It shows that you are organized, disciplined and professional enough to care how you present yourself to potential employers and clients.

CONTENTS

The list of contents for your packet is as follows. It is unlikely that you will need all of these elements for any single submission or presentation. Preparing everything in this packet should prepare you for just about any situation or request.

Here are the required contents for your packet:

- CD w/ digital portfolio, artist's statement and resume
- CD Cover
- Business Card (printed)
- Letterhead (will appear on your statement and resume)
- Artist's Statement (printed and on CD)
- Resume (printed and on CD)

COMPACT DISC

Although CDs are starting to fall out of use, a compact disc can be a very handy way to give examples of your work to interested parties. Keep a couple in your bag in case you run into someone you think could help you. They are small and easy to look at on any computer if you set it up correctly.

The CD should have pdf files of your portfolio, resume and artist's statement. You should put your artist's statement in your portfolio pdf but also supply people with a separate file in case they want to print out a copy. You want to make it as easy as possible for people to access what they need.

CONTENTS OF COMPACT DISC:

1. PDF portfolio with images and statement (CV optional).
2. PDF of artist's statement on letterhead.
3. PDF of CV/Resume on letterhead.

WARNING 1: When someone puts your CD into their computer, the first thing they should see is your name. This means you have to title your CD! *My Disc* or *Untitled* is unacceptable.

WARNING 2: Upon opening your CD I should find three pdf files. One for your portfolio, one for your statement and one for your resume. Everything needs to be in pdf form. Jpegs, Word documents, Power Point files, etc. are not acceptable.

PDF PORTFOLIO

This is not a class on portfolio development so I will not be grading you on the content of your portfolio. In general, it is a good idea to show one or two cohesive projects rather than a smattering of random images. In most cases, people want to see that you are serious and mature enough to stick with a project and see it through. Because 20 slides fit in a slide sheet, your pdf portfolio should consist of 20 images. Fewer will make it look like you don't have enough work while more may overwhelm the viewer.

PDFs can be made through Adobe Bridge, Indesign, Acrobat or a number of other programs. The first page should have your name and contact information (a logo if you have one). There should be a statement about the work you are presenting (possibly two if there are two bodies of work).

EACH IMAGE MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- TITLE – if there is no title, make up a naming system so people can identify the image.
- DATE – dates are particularly important for curators and gallerists.
- MEDIUM – archival inkjet print, c-print, silver gelatin print, etc..
- SIZE – there is no sense of scale on a computer screen. You must tell people the approximate size of your work so they know what the work will look like in person and how much space it will take up on a gallery wall.

This data can be typed in with the text tool in Photoshop. Do not type on your photo directly. You can add a space of solid color in which to type your identification information below the image using Canvas Size under the Image menu in Photoshop.

You can also add the info in the Output window in Bridge. Under the Overlays header, you can choose to include the file names in the PDF. This means that you will have to type all the necessary information as the title names of your files. Make sure not to include the file tags at the end of the file name by checking the appropriate box. Lightroom has a better pdf generator than Bridge and makes it easier to add image information below each image.

REQUIRE CONTENTS OF PDF PORTFOLIO:

1. Twenty images presented as a portfolio.
2. Title, date, medium and size for each image.
3. A title page with your name and contact information (should be the first page).
4. An artist's statement about the work in your portfolio.
5. (Optional) Your CV or resume. This still must appear on your CD as a separate file but could be included within your portfolio pdf as well.

WARNING: Please make sure that all the images appear in one pdf file that can be opened and viewed all at once. DO NOT make individual pdf files of each image and put them in a folder! This is no better than a folder full of jpegs and makes it harder for people to view your images.

CD COVER, BUSINESS CARD AND LETTERHEAD

Create a design that you can use or adapt for all three of these items. You may want to design a logo for yourself or it could just be a choice of fonts that ties everything together. Choices made regarding color, design, logos, fonts and composition are all extremely important in creating a unified set of promotional tools that also communicate the appropriate message you'd like to project about yourself and your business.

- CD COVERS are 4.75 x 4.75 inches. If you would like to fold your cover so that you can create material for the inside jacket you should double the width to 9.5 inches. The CD cover MUST include a minimum of your name, phone number and email address.

- Your **BUSINESS CARD** should reflect your CD cover in some way. When paired together, they should look like they belong to the same person. Business cards measure 2 x 3.5 inches. There are pros and cons of creating a business card that varies from this standard size. The bare minimum of information on your business card is name, phone, email. If you have a website, it should also be included. It is up to you whether or not you include your mailing address.
- **LETTERHEAD** can be created in Word using the Header and Footer features. You can also use Photoshop or Indesign. Letterhead **MUST** include your name, phone, email, url, **AND** mailing address. Since letterhead is usually sent via snail mail, it is required that you give the recipient the necessary information to respond to you via the same system.

A word about photos: Using photographs on business cards and letterhead is often problematic. They are usually too small to be readable. Sometimes a very simple, formal image will work but it usually looks better if you rely on text and graphics for these items. The CD cover is usually large enough to handle an image.

WARNING 1: Pay very close attention to your use of fonts. Make sure the information is readable and that the relative size of the fonts makes sense with the hierarchy of the information. Your name is the most important piece of information so it should be the first thing people notice on your card.

WARNING 2: When adapting a design between the CD cover and the business card or letterhead, **DO NOT STRETCH THE DESIGN**. Make sure fonts and graphics don't look warped, flat or skinny. This is a cardinal rule of graphic design.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Your artist's statement should appear in print on your letterhead, in your portfolio pdf, and as its own separate pdf file on your CD. The separate file allows people to easily print a copy of your statement. Do not include Word or other word processing files because you don't know what kind of programs people have on their computers. If they don't have the necessary program, they won't be able to open your file.

Make sure you title these files with your name as well as "statement" or "portfolio." If you just use the word "statement," that file becomes hard to identify if someone drags it to their desktop. For example: siber_statement.pdf.

WARNING: Snide, defensive statements claiming that your work has no meaning will receive a failing grade. I require you to think and write about your work. Claiming no intended meaning is not a valid option.

RESUME

This isn't a class on resume writing so I won't be grading you on resume techniques and formats. A resume should begin with your education. Don't bother including your high school as you must pass high school to get into college. If your degree is in progress then list the school, location, degree sought and dates as (Sept. 2006 – present).

Next, list your employment. You may want to include jobs that are not photographic. If you were a manager somewhere or held a job for several years it shows people that you are responsible and reliable. It is a good idea to include bullet pointed details about your specific jobs. List the responsibilities you were entrusted with or the skills you acquired. Were you promoted at any point? Were you entrusted with cashing out at the end of the day or closing the store? If you

were a photo assistant, what were your specific required tasks? People want to know these things.

After employment you can list any awards, exhibitions, grants, scholarships, etc..

Finally, don't forget to list any special skills you might have. You may want to say that you are familiar with using a view camera or Speedotron strobes. Being bilingual is always an impressive skill for potential employers. Anything you think might impress people or set you apart from the crowd. Of course, all of you are experts at Adobe Photoshop!

Try to keep your resume to one page and never go over two.

There are millions of resumes posted online. Take a look around to get ideas for what to include at how to format your resume keeping in mind that many of the resumes posted online are not well done.

SLIDES (not required)

We are no longer able to make slides from digital files in our digital lab. Digital film recorders are old technology with very little technical support. When Columbia's machine finally conked out, there were no parts and no service to repair it. You are not required to produce slides for this project.

If you find slides are required for a submission in the future (some people still ask for slides), there are two ways you can make them. One is the old fashioned way of loading slide film into your camera (yes, a film camera) and photographing your prints. This usually works best on a copy stand, which we have here at school. Your second option is to find a lab that will make slides from digital files. This will cost you more money but will require less time on your part.

One last tip: If you need to send slides out, you can easily make professional looking slide labels using the return address labels from Avery. They can be found at any office supply store and are template #8167 in Microsoft Word. This is far better than trying to hand-write the information on the slide. Plus, it looks really cool.

PACKAGING

You will almost always be mailing these materials. Please hand in your project in a 9x12 or similar envelope addressed TO ME with your return address in the upper left corner. Address the project to me at the following:

Matt Siber
Professional Packet Assignment
Photography Department
Columbia College Chicago
600 S. Michigan Ave., 12th Floor
Chicago, IL
60605

Obviously, you do not have to include postage. This part of the assignment may seem silly but I want to make sure you are able to follow directions explicitly. The address on your envelope should appear exactly as it appears above. Seems simple but you'd be surprised how many people have trouble with this.

I WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST PACKET ITEMS IF THEY ARE NOT HANDED IN TO ME ALL AT ONCE IN THIS FORMAT.

GRADING

Most of this project is about paying attention and following directions. If you are unable to follow directions to a tee, you may eliminate yourself from consideration for grants, exhibits, jobs, etc., before anyone even looks at your work.

Everything is clearly laid out for you in this handout. If you follow all the instructions carefully, you will do fine. I deduct a lot off your grade if you are missing elements or clearly did not follow instructions properly. There is a lot to do here but it should be easy to get a good grade if you are paying attention.

The other part of your grade is the creative aspect of the assignment. How much time did you spend working on your design? Does it look good? You may not be graphic designers, but you are visual artists so color, composition and readability are important. How consistent is your design? Does everything look like it came from the same person? Are there arbitrary changes in fonts, colors, etc.? Does your design aesthetic communicate an appropriate "image" about your business?

When I hand the packets back to you, you will receive with them a small sheet with your grades for each section of the assignment, a final grade, and my comments on improving the packet.

TIPS FOR SUBMITTING YOUR WORK

If you have a body of work you feel is strong, you should start submitting your work to juried exhibitions and/or contests right away. Doing this as a student will give you momentum and experience as you finish your degree.

There are a number of online resources for artists to find calls for work, exhibitions, grants, jobs, assistantships, internships, etc.. The two websites I have found useful are www.artdeadline.com and www.artcalendar.com. Both have extensive listings with detailed information.

When looking through these listings, read the details carefully. Are students allowed to apply? Does it cost money? Is there a cash award? Who are the jurors? If the jurors are important curators, it may be beneficial for you to expose your work and your name to these people. Does the theme of the exhibit fit with your work? Is the exhibit specific to women, minorities, Midwesterners, etc.? Do you need to be from a certain state or region? Make sure you are eligible so you don't waste your time and resources.

Lastly, as you are putting the submission together, make sure you follow the directions as explicitly as possible. Don't send them any more or any less than they are asking for. Make sure you give them the formats they require and the number of copies they request. Most of these organizations receive so many submissions that they weed through the first round by tossing out any submissions that are incorrectly compiled or formatted. Don't eliminate yourself from the running before anyone looks at your work.

Good luck!