

BUILDING YOUR STRATEGIC PORTFOLIO

Interior Design

Today, we will cover...

- 1** What is a Professional Portfolio?
- 2** Who is your audience?
- 3** Which type of professional are you?
- 4** Which format suits you better?
- 5** Which type of structure suits you better?
- 6** What should you include?
- 7** Next Steps

What is a professional portfolio?

A portfolio is...

...one of the most important **marketing tools** a designer should possess.

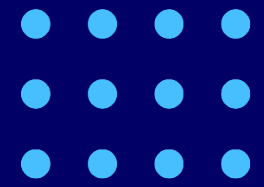
a **timeline and record** of experience that demonstrates your skills, methods and capabilities.



Source: [Syahda Aurellia, 2025](#)

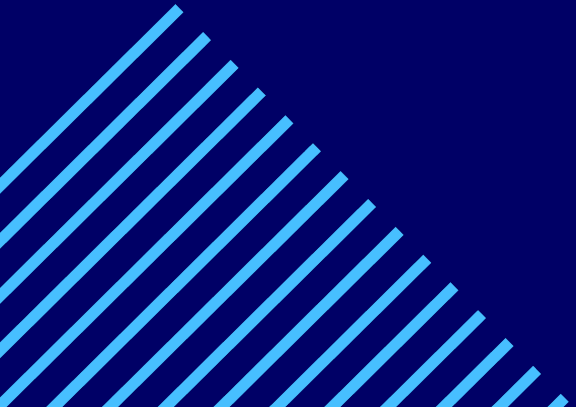
[illegible]

Source: Mai Amin and Salma Ayman, 2026



2

Who is the
audience?

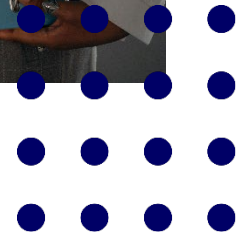
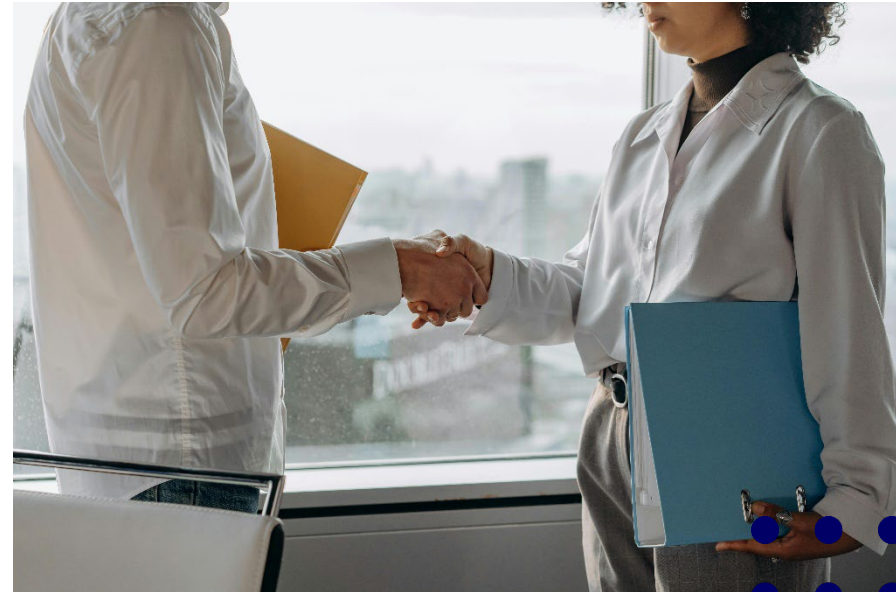


Target audience

Recruitment approach



Client approach





Recruitment approach

Do some research online...

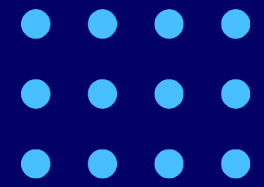
- Try to find out how the recruitment process will be and who will be reviewing your material (HR, Manager, Director, etc...)
- Show in your portfolio that you fully understand the role you are expected to perform, but also offer a fresh and innovative point of view.
- Consider the company's needs and wants

Client approach

Do some research online...

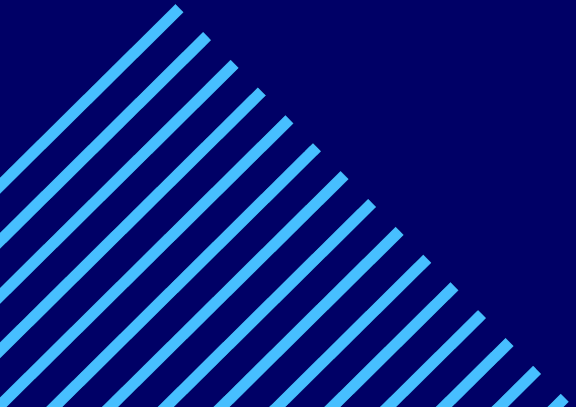
- Try to find out information about the company/client and their objectives.
- Highlight the projects that are most relevant to them and focus on those that you think can bring a new perspective to the firm.

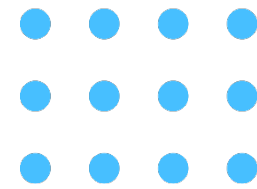




3

Which type of
professional are you?





Spatial Design

Experiential design + workplace environments

These firms assist clients on designing, planning, and delivering interior spaces such as residential homes, retail environments, hotels, restaurants, and office spaces with focus on the user experience.

Gensler

YODEZEEN

HKS



Skills

- Creativity & Vision
- Communication & Client Service
- Design Software Proficiency
- Space Planning & Spatial Ability
- Knowledge of Materials & Finishes
- Drafting & Sketching

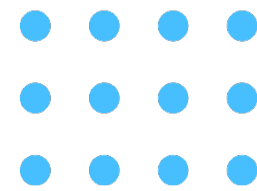
Role Types

Experiential Spatial Design:

- Residential Interior Designer
- Commercial / Retail Designer
- Hospitality Designer (hotels & restaurants)

Workplace Environments:

- Workplace Designer
- Office Designer



Corporate

Brand experience + retail design

In-house departments that assist their own Corporations on the design and construction of functional spaces aligned with their standards and needs such as flagship stores, showrooms and retail areas.

Key Skills

- Space Planning & Spatial Ability
- Technical and problem-solving skills
- Innovation and adaptability
- Detail and Results-oriented
- Marketing & Branding
- Accounting & Estimating

Role Types

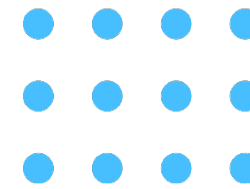
- Space planner
- Interior Designer
- Strategic designer
- Technical Advisor
- Franchise Design Specialist



LOEWE

BBVA





Consulting

Strategic design + service design

These companies assist their clients through strategic design including key topics such as UX experience, Digital transformation, circular economy or ESG strategies. This is a fast-growing field driven by the connection between space and people/brand needs.

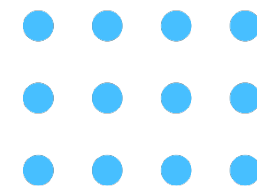
Skills

- Excellent academic records
- Communication & Client Service
- Problem-Solving & Adaptability
- Organization & Time Management
- Space Planning & Spatial Ability
- Market knowledge

Role Types

- Interior Design Consultant
- Brand Experience Designer
- Strategic Spatial Designer
- Visual Merchandising
- Retail Strategy Specialist





Project Management

Coordination + construction

Project Management and Construction roles require coordinating design, budgets, suppliers and execution on site. These hybrid profiles are highly demanded because projects require integrated management, not just creativity.

HITT



Key Skills

- Problem-Solving & Adaptability
- Attention to Detail
- Budgeting & Project Management
- Knowledge of Materials & Finishes
- Communication & Client Service

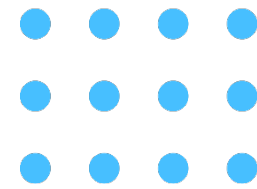
Role Types

- Interior Design Project Manager
- Project Coordinator
- Interior Site Manager
- Technical Manager
- Cost Manager

BAUMEISTERWERK

CLUNE
Construction Company





Public Sector

Social + cultural companies

Public Sector and Social /Cultural companies look for in-house professionals that advice them on their specific needs. These type of positions are frequently for limited periods of time to cover that need, especially in the Public Sector.



Key Skills

- Commitment to excellence
- International Experience
- Innovation and adaptability
- Great communicators
- Languages

Role Types

- Cultural or Institutional Designer
- Interior Designer
- Technical Advisor
- Strategic Designer
- Graphic Designer

ADDITIONAL CAREER PATHS

Furniture Design



Source: [Andreas Janson](#)

Product Design



Source: [Arvind Krishna Sushil](#)

Fashion Design



Source: [IE Fashion Runway Show](#)

Lighting Design



Source: [Carmenza Henao](#)

Stand Design



Source: [Sak Design](#)

Graphic Design



Source: [Liz Nikol](#)

ADDITIONAL CAREER PATHS

Virtual Reality Designer



Source: [Paper Birds](#)

Creative Direction



Source: [Lambs and Lions Berlin](#)

3D Artist



Source: [Gensler](#)

ADDITIONAL CAREER PATHS

Photographer



Source: [Luzestudio](#)

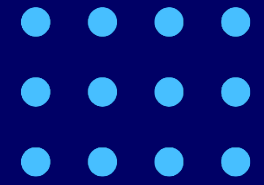
Editor & Writer



Source: Architect Magazine Middle East

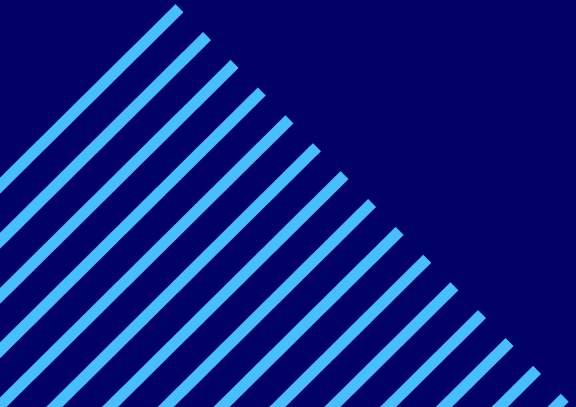
Entrepreneur

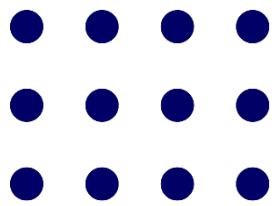




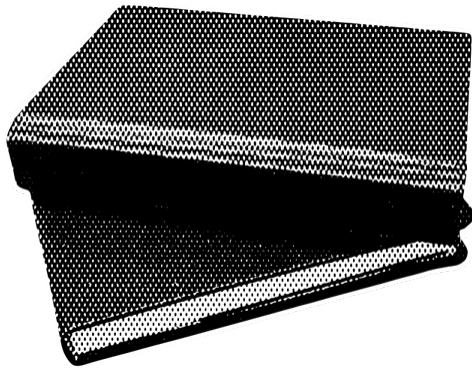
4

Which format suits
you better?





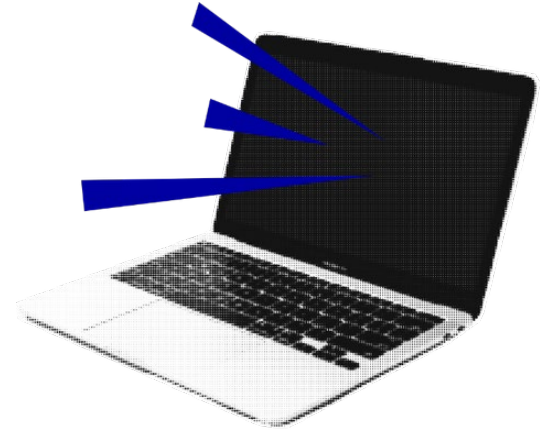
TYPES OF FORMATS



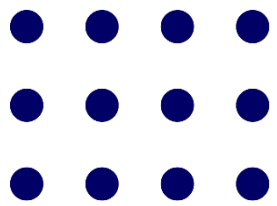
Classic



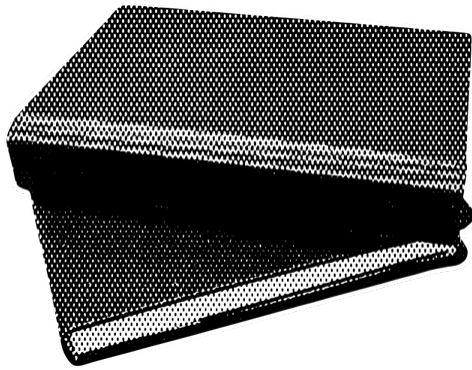
Digital



Web Based



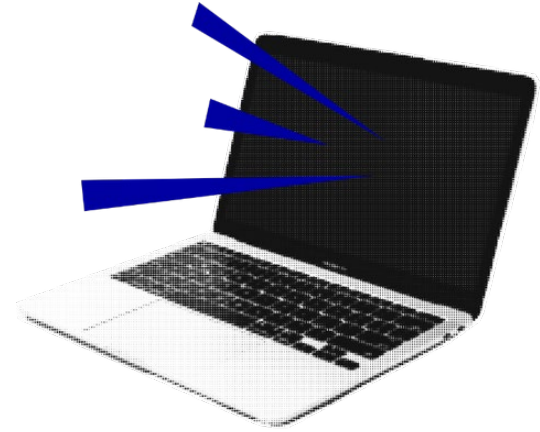
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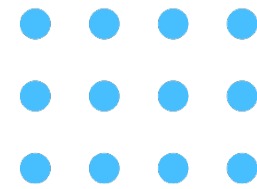
Digital



Web Based

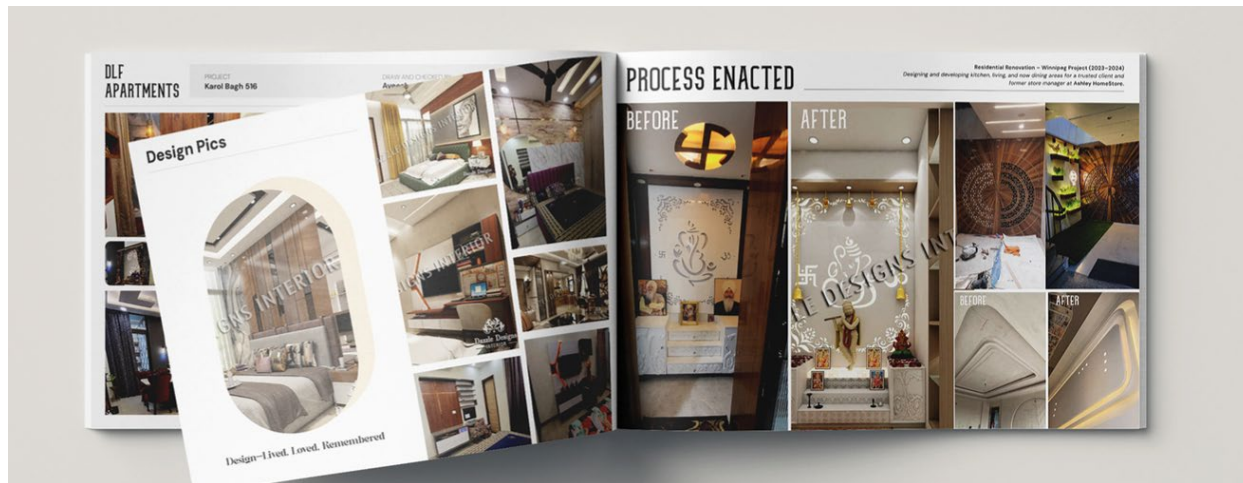
static

dynamic



Classic version

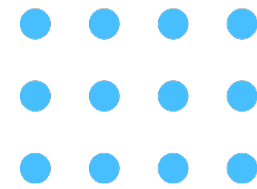
- An actual **book of various sizes** with printed examples of your work still serves a purpose in today's "digital world."
- There are several ways to present such a portfolio, from placing prints in a pre-made book with sleeves, to creating your own custom bound book.



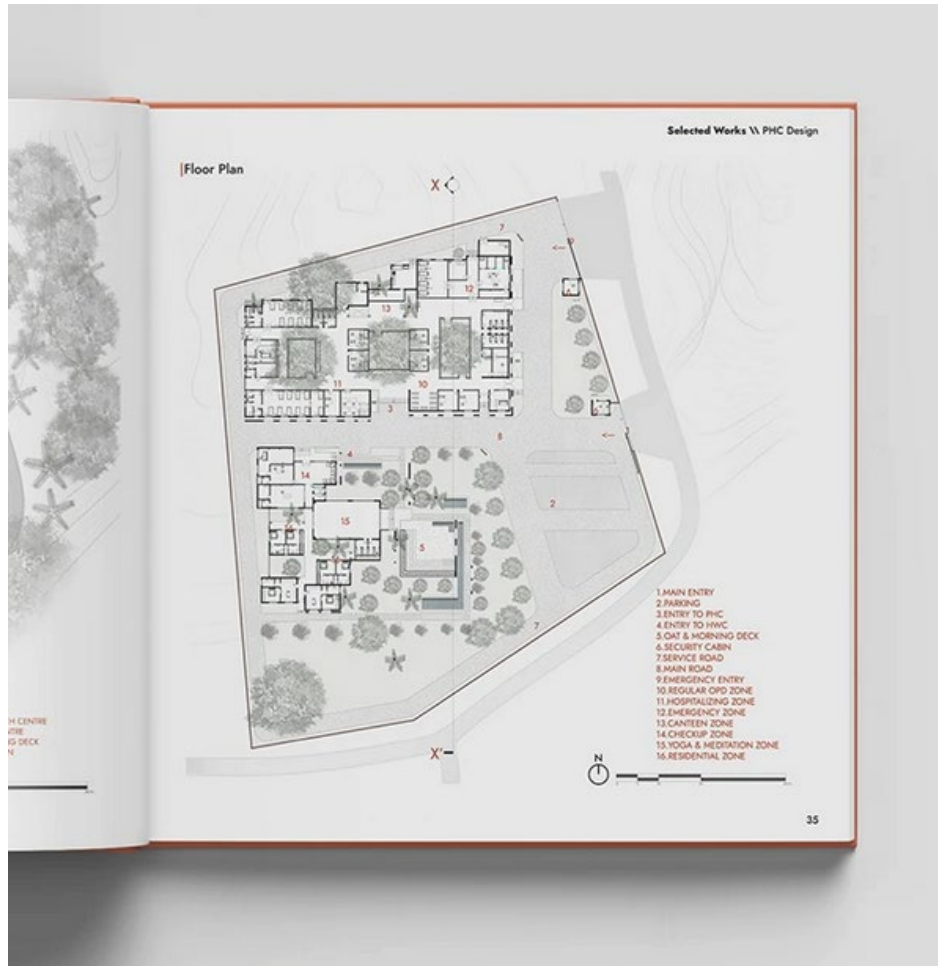
Source: [Rishabh Sharma, 2026](#)



Source: [Archontia Manolakelli, 2022](#)



Classic version



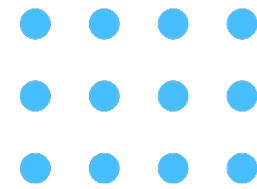
Advantages

- Shows your work in its actual, final format
- Great for showing off print design
- Can be brought to a meeting and shown without a computer

Drawbacks

- Must be delivered by mail or in-person
- If you happen to meet a potential client or employer, you are left without a portfolio

Source: [Alok Bansode, 2025](#)

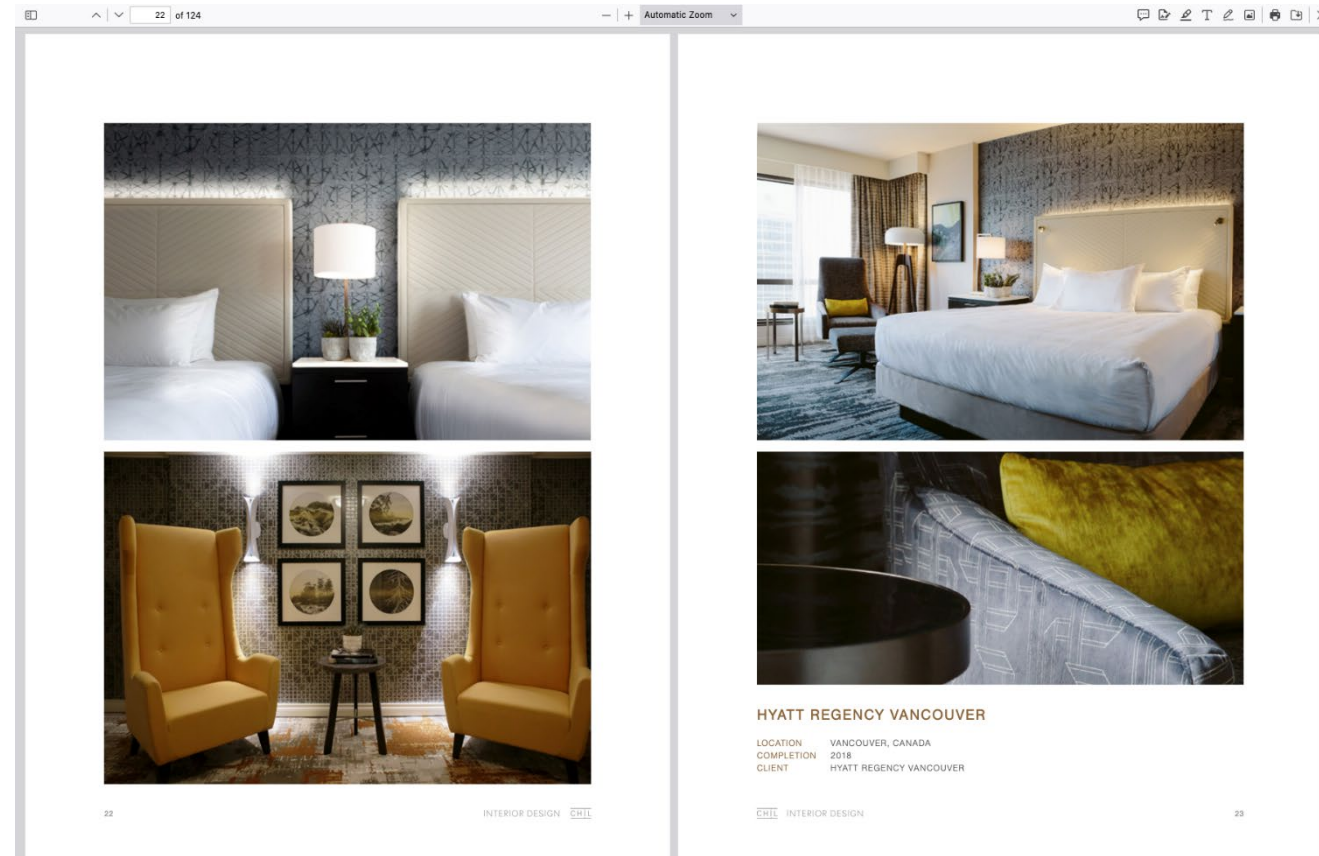


Digital version

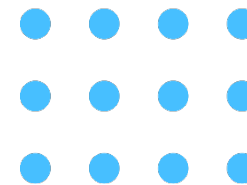
Creating a portfolio as a PDF is becoming more and more popular.

Using Acrobat, multi-page PDFs can be created from layouts created in a graphics software program (such as InDesign or Photoshop).

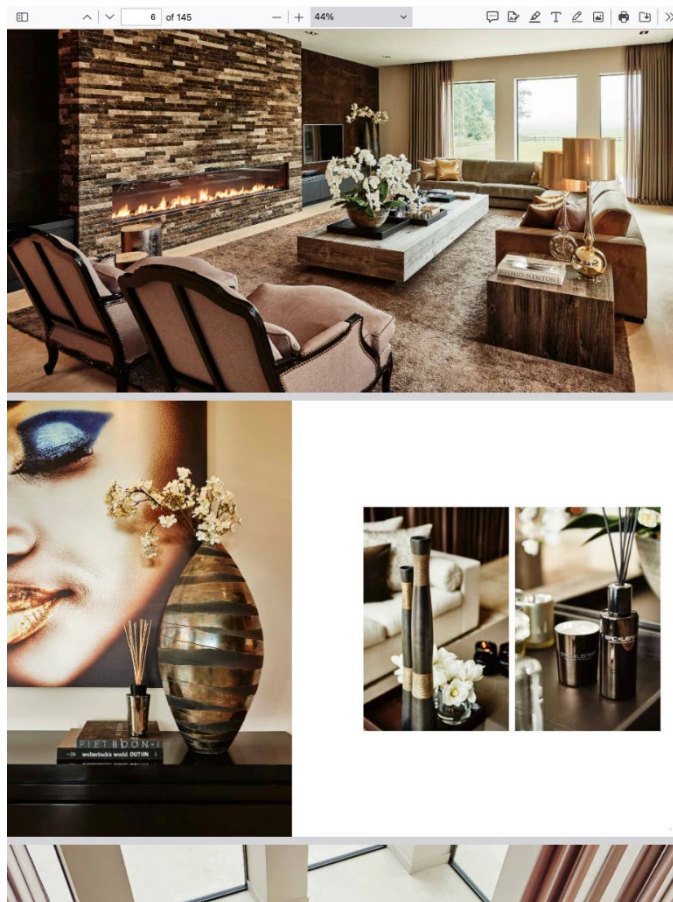
The result is a brochure-style piece that shows examples of your work along with descriptions of projects and related information.



Source: [Chil Design](#)



Digital version



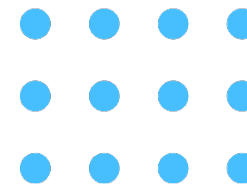
Source: [Eric Kuster](#)

Advantages

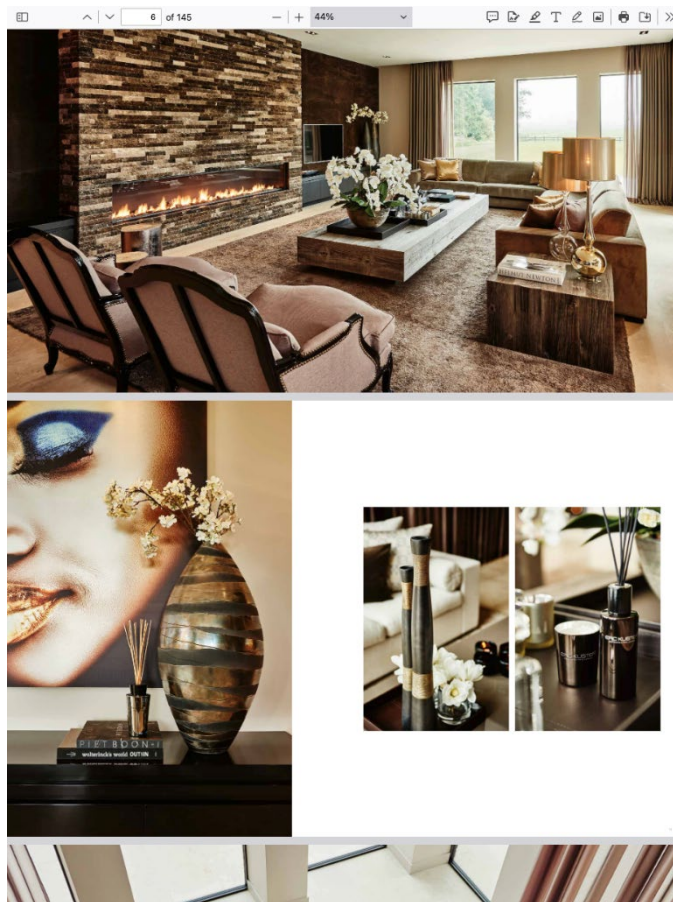
- Easy to email
- Control over layout without having to worry about browser and web issues
- The PDF itself serves as an example of your layout and typography skills
- Can be printed with consistent results
- Relatively quick and free to create

Drawbacks

- Relies on the user to save and open the file
- Less effective for showing web design projects



Digital version



Source: [Eric Kuster](#)

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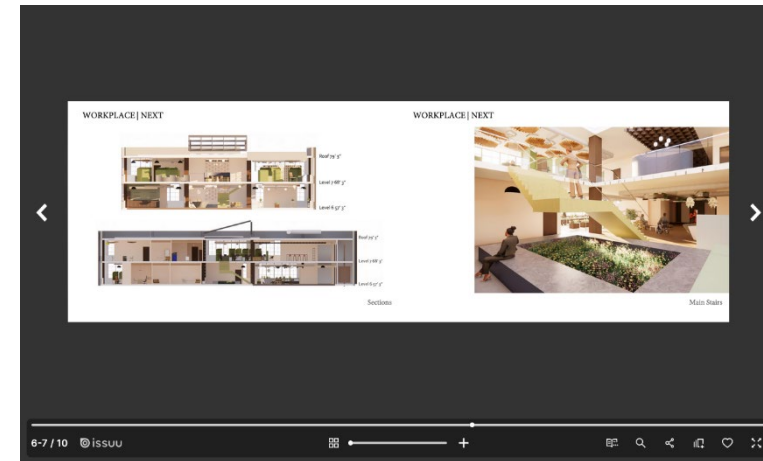
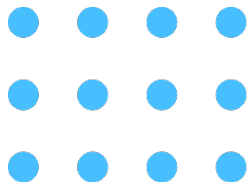
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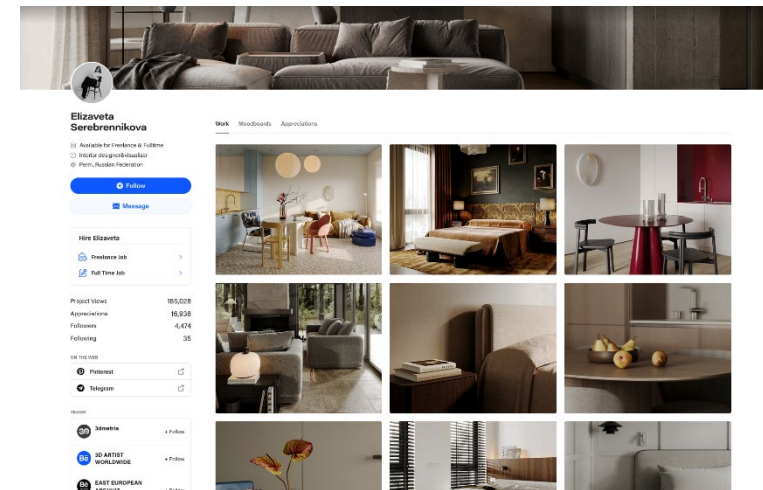
Do not under any circumstances send JPEGs or PNGs, this will look extremely unprofessional!!

Web-based version

- A web hosted portfolio, is a digital portfolio that has been uploaded and stored onto a specific website.
- This could be a section on your own personal website or more commonly a dedicated hosting site such as [Behance](#) or [issuu](#).

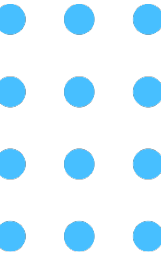


Source: [Sydney Smith's portfolio](#), hosted on [issuu](#)



Source: [Elizaveta Serebrennikova's portfolio](#), hosted on [Behance](#)

Web-based version

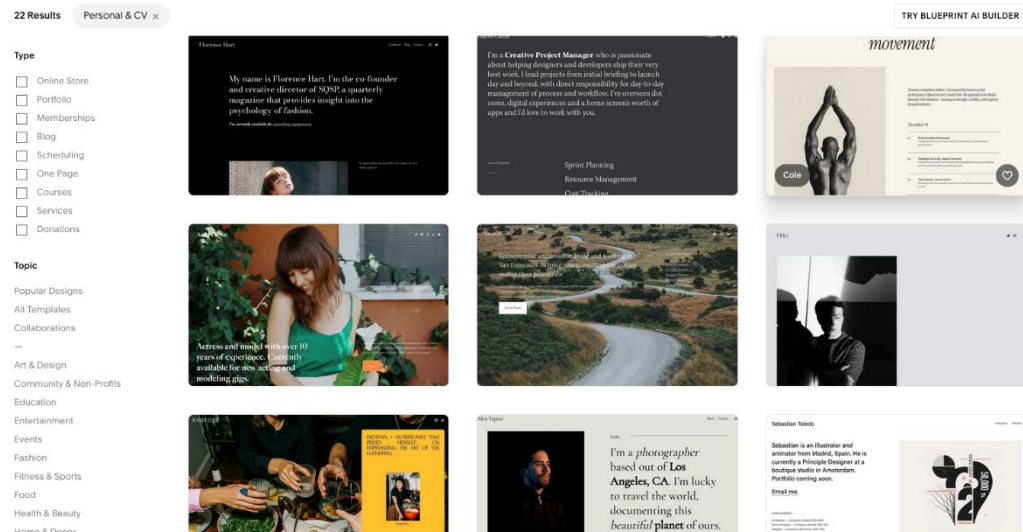


Advantages

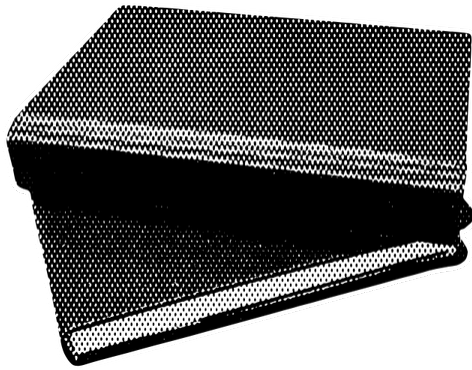
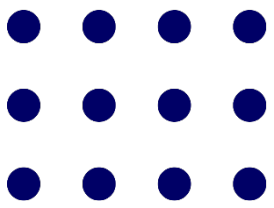
- Easy to share
- Can be updated at any time without having to send out a new document or print out a new book
- Can provide a look into your personality
- Allows for an interactive presentation of your work

Drawbacks

- The most time consuming to create
- You have to worry about it looking or behaving differently from computer to computer
- You need the technical knowledge to set it up
- Expensive to hire someone to develop it for you
- In most cases you will have to pay for a domain name and monthly web hosting



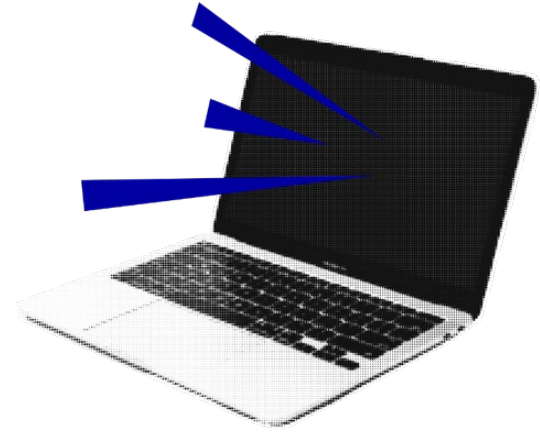
Squarespace templates for portfolio websites



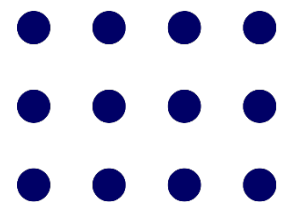
Classic



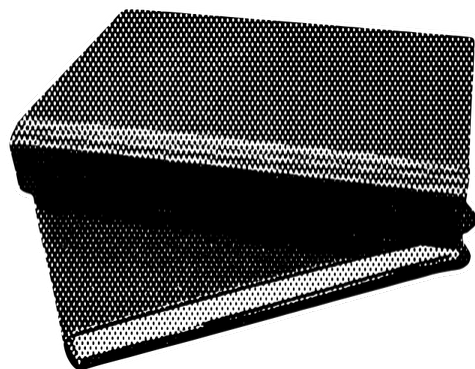
Digital



Web Based



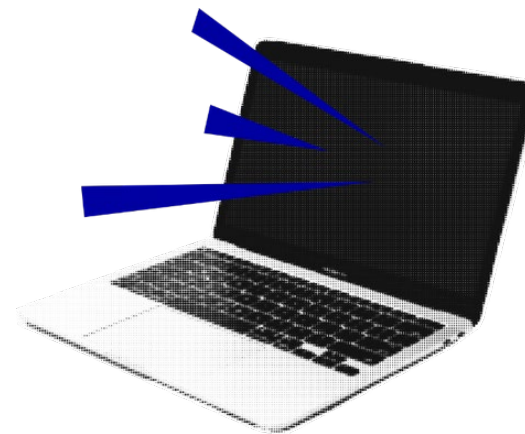
interviews



Classic



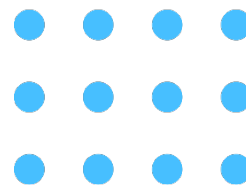
Digital



Web Based

applications

Key drivers



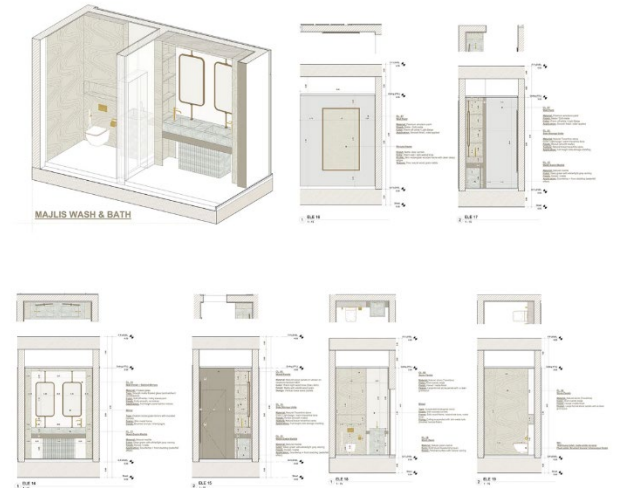
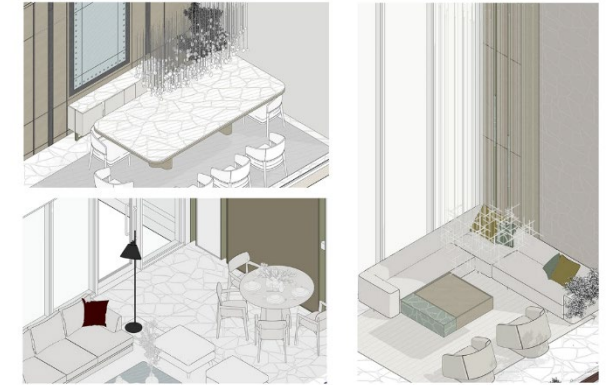
Size

If sending your portfolio in a PDF format, make sure that the file size is no larger than 5MB (15MB max) to enable it to be easily sent via email.

If using [WeTransfer](#) or [Dropbox](#) keep in mind that this adds an additional layer of inconvenience for the interviewer and the link to it is temporary.

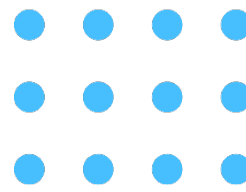
Scale

Ensure that your portfolio can be read at smaller scales, larger scales are generally fine and rarely required, but an **A3 portfolio** is very likely to be printed at A4 by the interviewer (saving paper and ink), and so must be legible for it to be successful.



Source: [Mai Amin and Salma Ayman, 2026](#)

Key drivers



Size

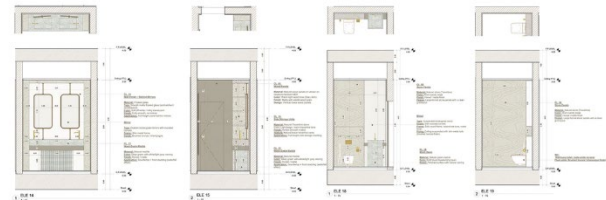
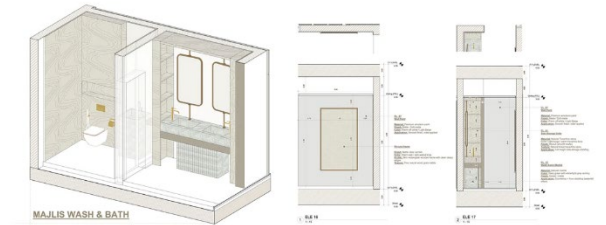
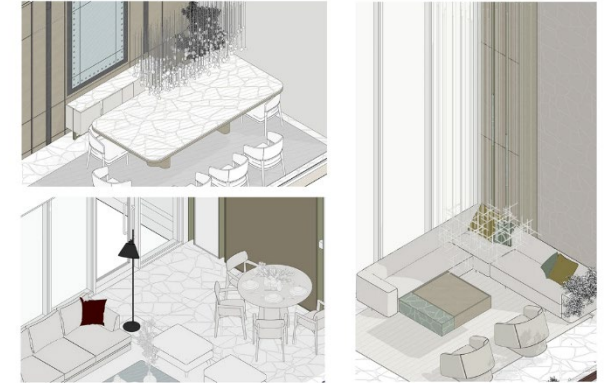
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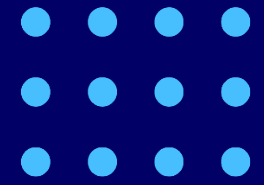
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The easier you make it for the recipient to view your work the more likely they are to engage with it ...it's not always initially based on the quality of work!!!

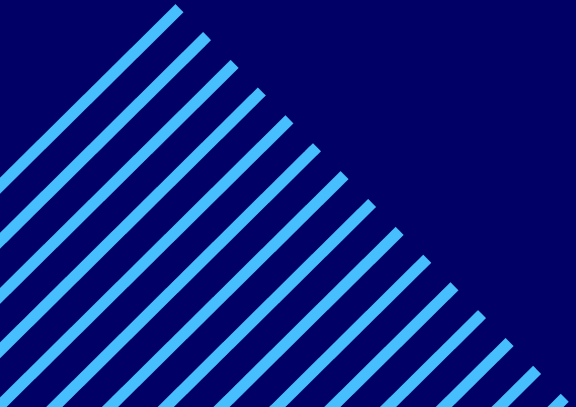


Source: [Mai Amin and Salma Ayman, 2026](#)



5

Which type of
structure?



The structure

1
Cover

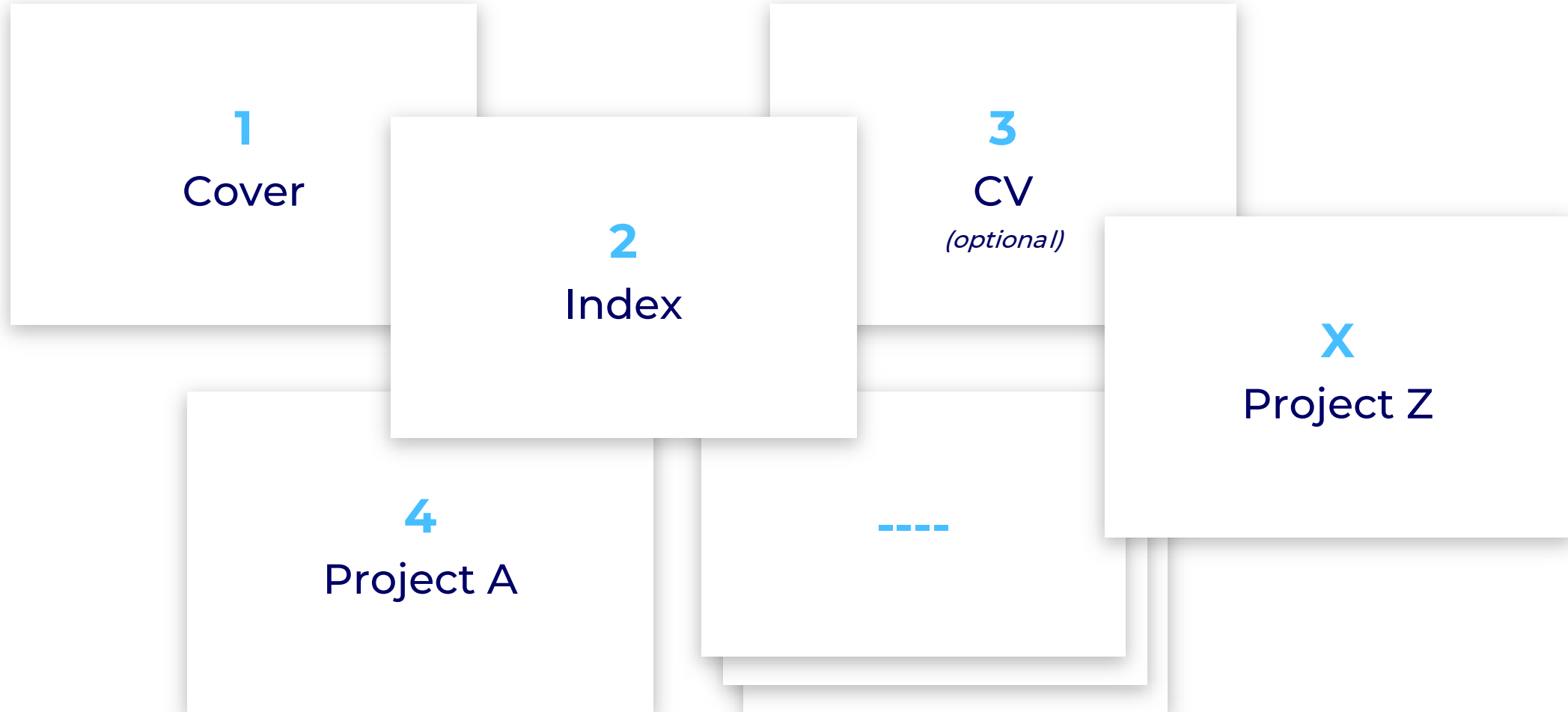
2
Index

3
CV
(optional)

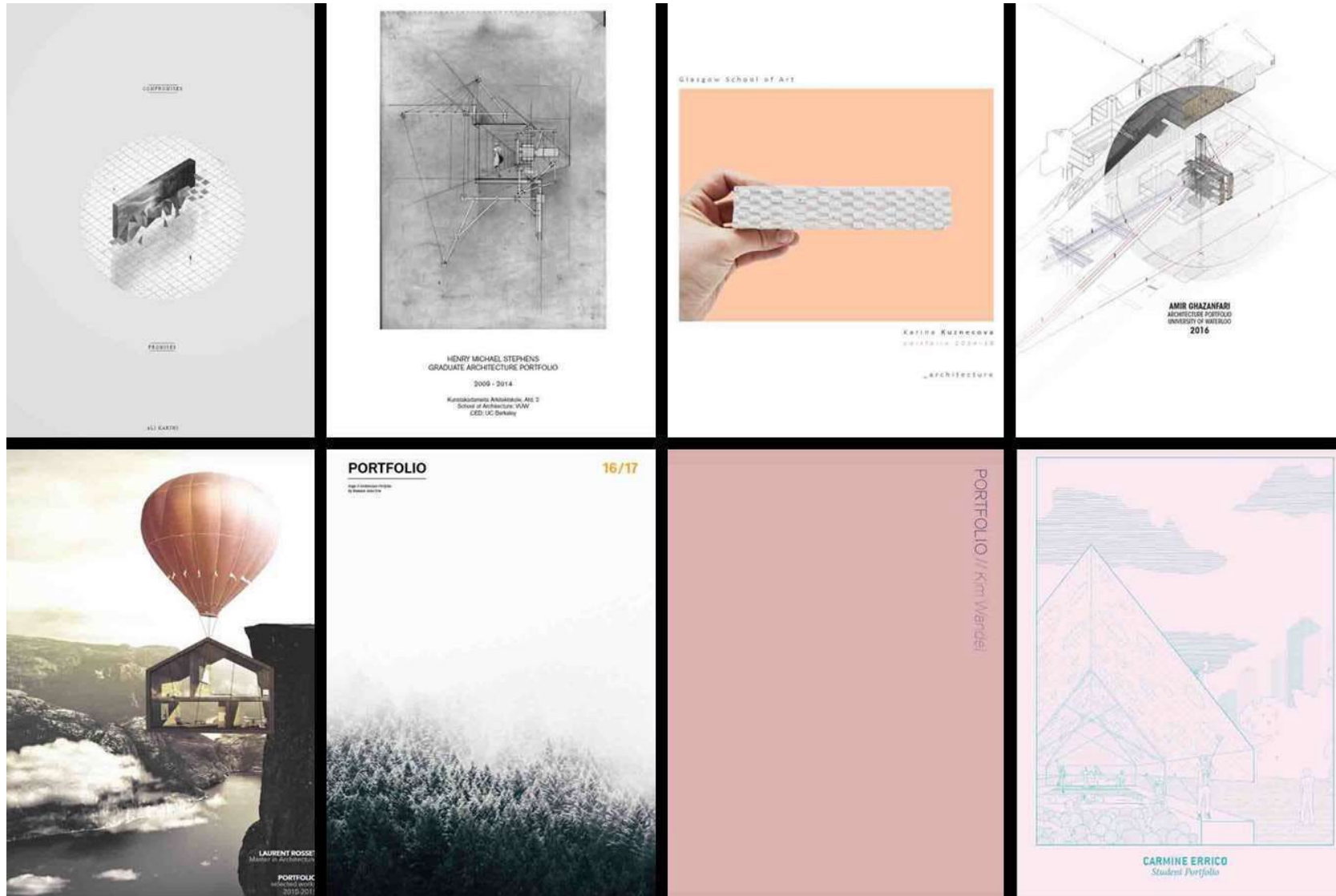
4
Project A

X
Project Z

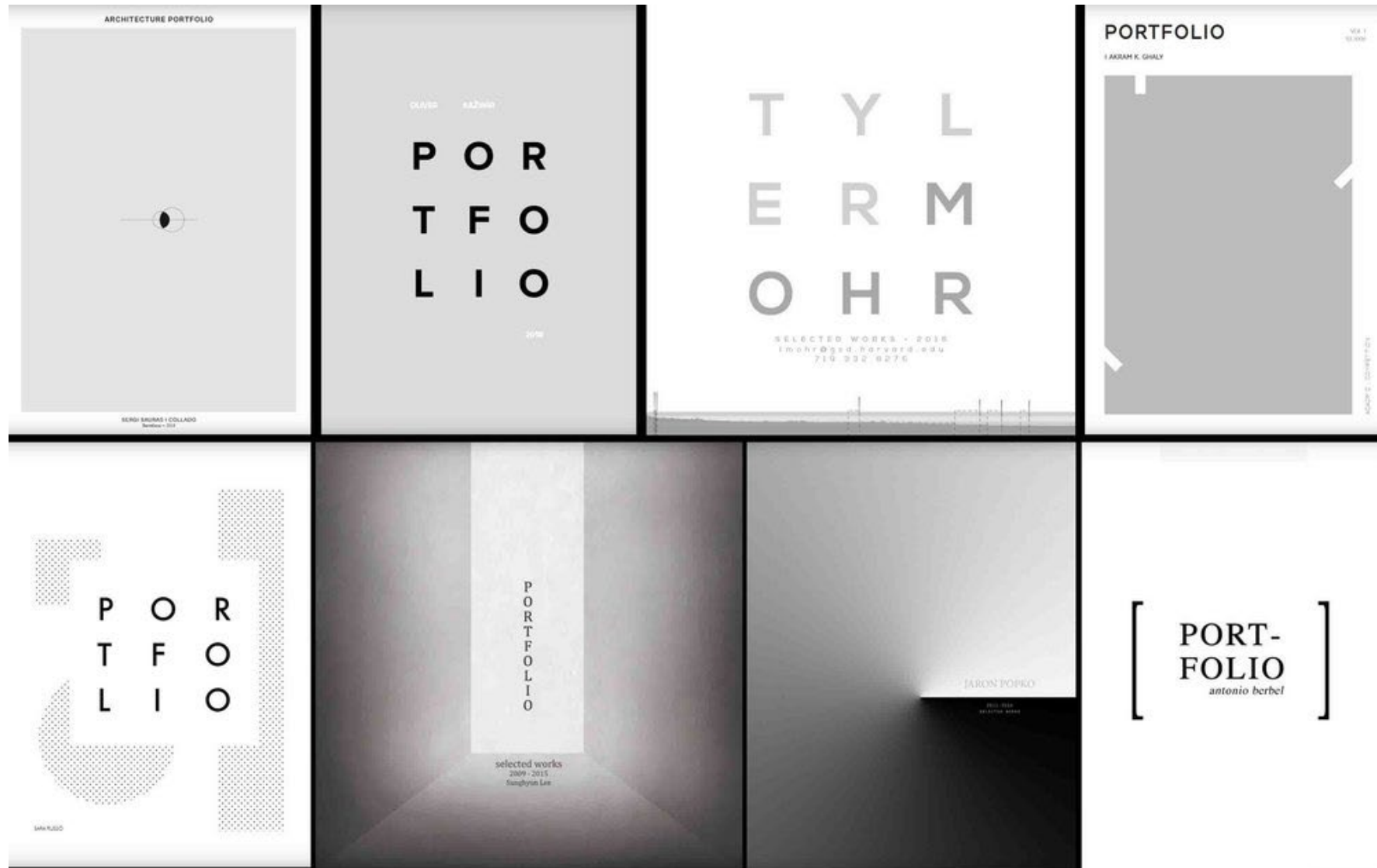
The structure



Front cover



Front cover



Static or dynamic structure?



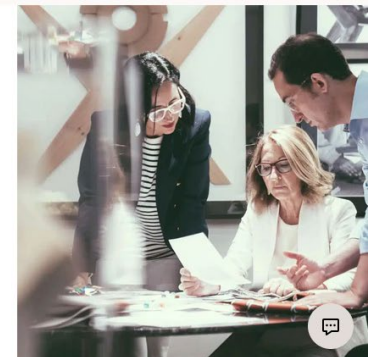
Source: www.bookmobile.com

Projects with personality
and own style



Our story of
passion and
dedication

We turn spaces
into illusions since
1979



Source: www.molinsdesign.com

Key concepts

Layout

Avoid clutter and don't be afraid of white space. If you use little white space, ensure your layout is clearly structured so that the portfolio's contents are easy to absorb.

Details

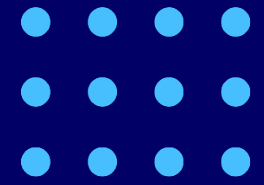
Often, the strength of a graphic design lies in small details. Use certain layout rules consistently and it will give your portfolio a sense of cohesion.

Order

Reverse chronological order; It helps to tell the story of your professional development and your career.

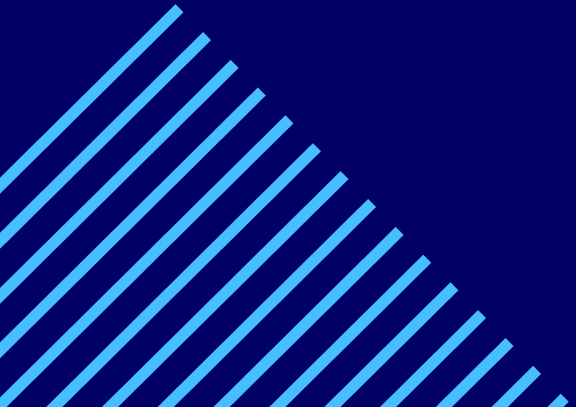


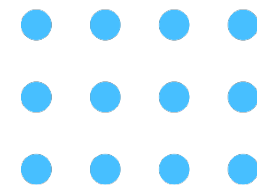
Source: [GUR Studio](#)



6

What should
you include?





Content

As you progress through your studies, internships and the profession, so too must the content of your portfolio:

Student

Your portfolio will most commonly consist of academic and theoretical work from your undergraduate studies.

Designer

Greater and more diverse mix of academic, design and built work experience with more content of the last two.

Design Assistant

Diverse mix of academic and design experience.



Set of skills to display

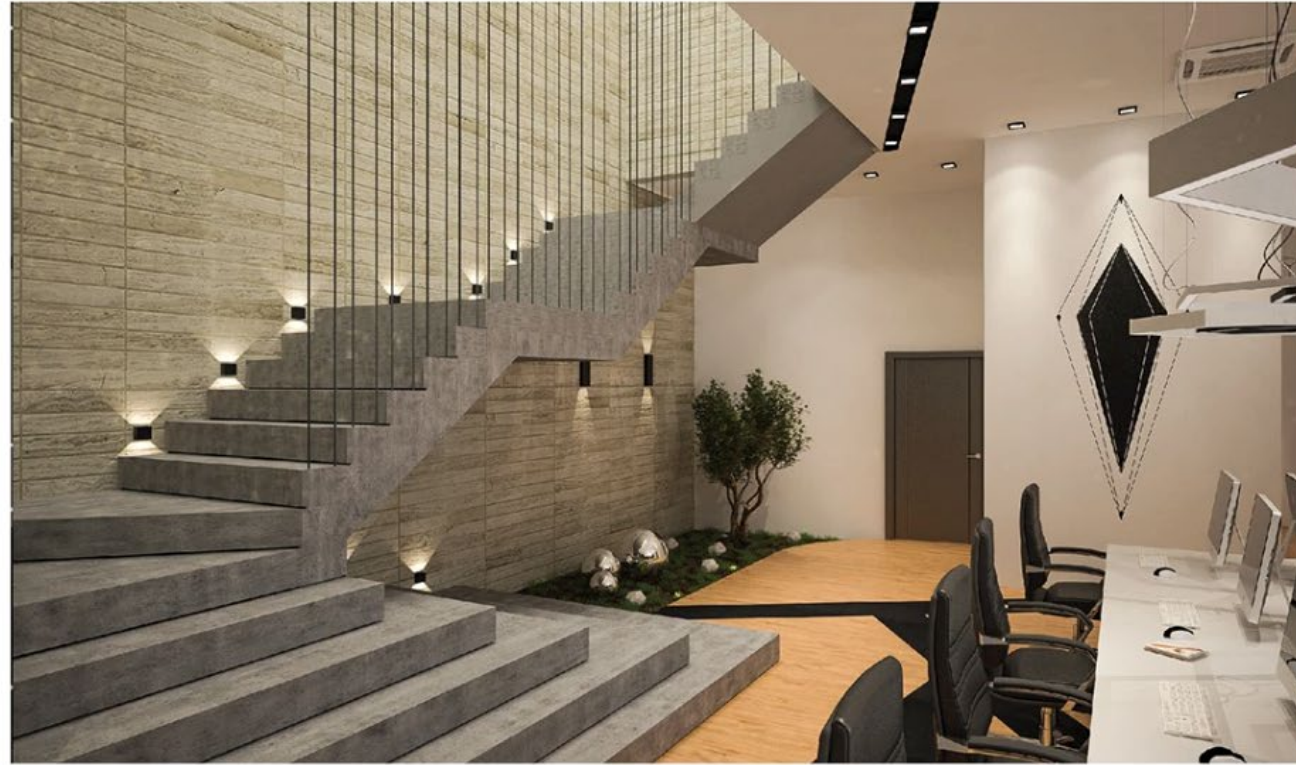
- ✓ Hand sketching and drawing (freehand / digital)
- ✓ Construction detailing (and knowledge)
- ✓ Architectural visualization (showcasing atmosphere, story, narrative)
- ✓ Creative problem solving
- ✓ Model making
- ✓ Versatility (showing other interests such as photography, sculpture, furniture design, film making)
- ✓ Visual / graphical communication (software and digital skills)
- ✓ Industry involvement (blog, published work, lectured)
- ✓ CAD skills (general software skills)
- ✓ 3D modelling (general software skills)



Sources (top to bottom): [Edmundo Bernardes Archviz](#), [YOD Group](#)

modern office

The small garden, combined with the usage of natural materials like stone and wood, would help to increase the productivity of staff. Raw materials add texture to space and matt finished materials decrease the disturbance of glare that is produced by direct sunlight.



Source: [Mojtaba Ashour](#)

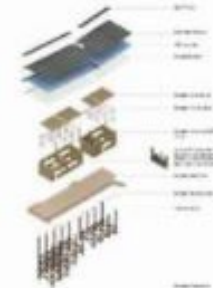
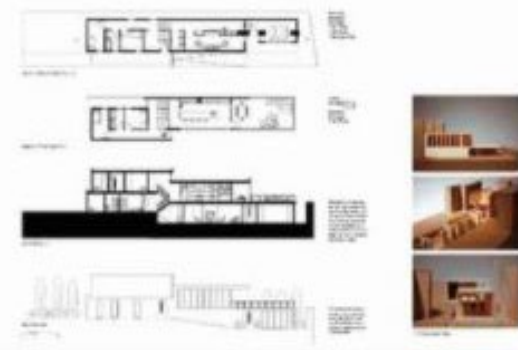
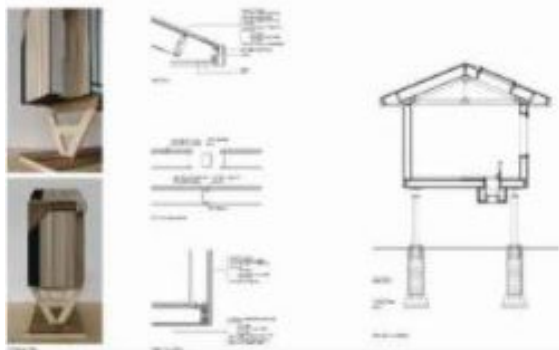


Self-evaluation process

- ✓ Selection of successful projects and experiences
- ✓ Avoid the trap of presenting every single project
- ✓ Aim to show only your best and most relevant work
- ✓ If you have doubts about a project, its results, or you think it doesn't suit the firm's profile, leave it out.
- ✓ Demonstrate your range of skills, diversity of experience and be available to present it in a variety of media.



Source: [Darya Zhukouskaya, 2024](#)





Source: www.nancysayed.com

Materials portfolio



Romeo & Giulietta 101, Dedar
Silk velvet, headboard

Materials portfolio

Furniture Concept Moodboard Cucina - Corridoio



Ikea - Bodarp grigio verde
L255XP60XH90



Mano a Mano
Isrolla-rubinetto cucina
oro rosa - Fred



Ikea - Hallviken
Lavello da incasso
56x50



Kave Home
Scaffale Shill Bianco
L80XP35XH154



Carta da parati
Inkiostro Bianco

Maisons Du Monde
Libreria Solstice
L100XP35XH185



Maisons Du Monde
Canopy - Mobile TV a 2 ante in legno massello di quercia
L160XP40XH50

Iperceramica - Gres Porcellanato
Effetto Legno - 20x120



Maisons Du Monde
Arielle - Divano 2 posti
in velluto verde eucalipto
L130.5XP74.5XH73.5



Skium
Clyde - Sedia scandinava
in velluto rosa antico



Skium
Tavolo Tuhi bianco
L90XP90XH74



LIVING ROOM

Materials portfolio



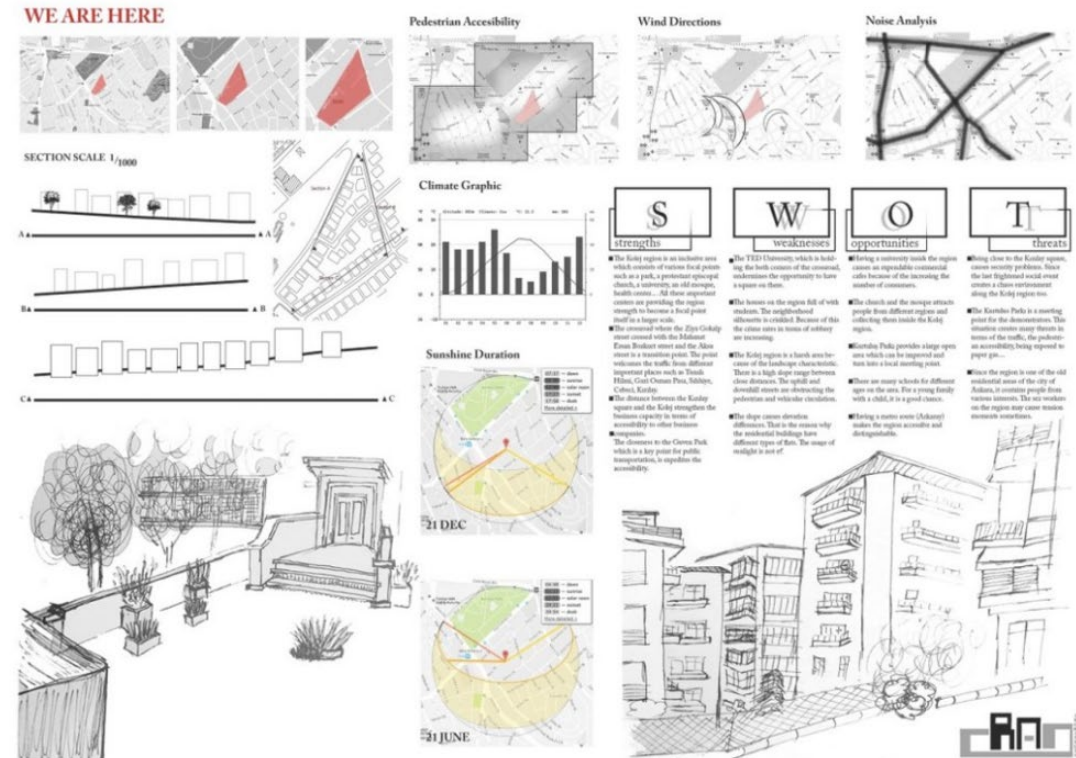
Source: [Soraya Eltayeb](#)

Materials portfolio



Common mistakes

- ✗ Too much information
- ✗ Lack of hierarchy
- ✗ Typos and mistakes
- ✗ Excess of creativity

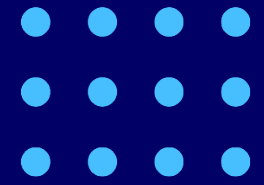


Final tips



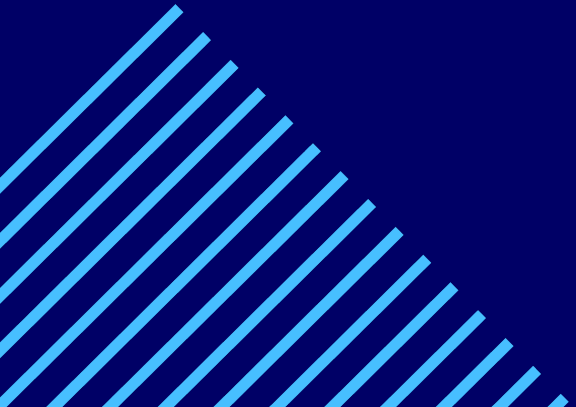
Source: [kidz studio](#)

- ✓ Portfolio should be aligned with your CV
- ✓ Less is more here, so quality over quantity
- ✓ Match your skills with the company needs
- ✓ Include team projects
- ✓ Don't be afraid of blank space
- ✓ Update frequently
- ✓ Pay attention to fonts and grammar



7

Next steps...



Next steps

- ❑ Design your Portfolio Strategy
- ❑ Follow the Index questions to make sure you cover all the relevant points
- ❑ Draft an initial version of it



THANK YOU!

Q&A