

# WHAT WE LOOK FOR IN A PORTFOLIO

CAMBRIDGE  
SCHOOL OF  
VISUAL &  
PERFORMING  
ARTS



# AN OVERVIEW

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When students apply to any of our courses, we are often asked “what should I include in my portfolio?” and “how many pieces do you want to see?” For us it is less about the number of pieces and more about what you put in there. Quality is more important than quantity; show us your best work.

At CSVPA, we are looking for students to demonstrate originality and motivation. You need to show us that you are interested in the subject area you are applying for. If you are passionate about something, show it! It is less about the final piece and more about the thought process you have gone through. Show us your research and ideas in sketchbooks or notebooks and show us a variety of work which demonstrates the skills and experience you have.

# FOUNDATION DIPLOMA IN ART & DESIGN

awarded by **ual:** awarding  
body

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Your portfolio is your chance to show us your skills and passion. Use the following points as a guide for preparing your portfolio:

- show us 10-15 pieces of your very best work: quality is more important than quantity
- include both taught and personal work
- demonstrate drawing skills (from live observation, as well as from photos or reference materials)
- show us your personal ideas and areas of interest (if you're passionate about a certain subject, show it!)
- experiment with a wide range of media and materials
- show your research and ideas in sketchbooks or notebooks
- only use work you have made in the last 18 months: nothing older
- submit it electronically as a PPT or PDF, or arrange an interview to show your work in person.

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# UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES, GRADUATE DIPLOMA & MA

ACCREDITED BY **FALMOUTH**  
UNIVERSITY

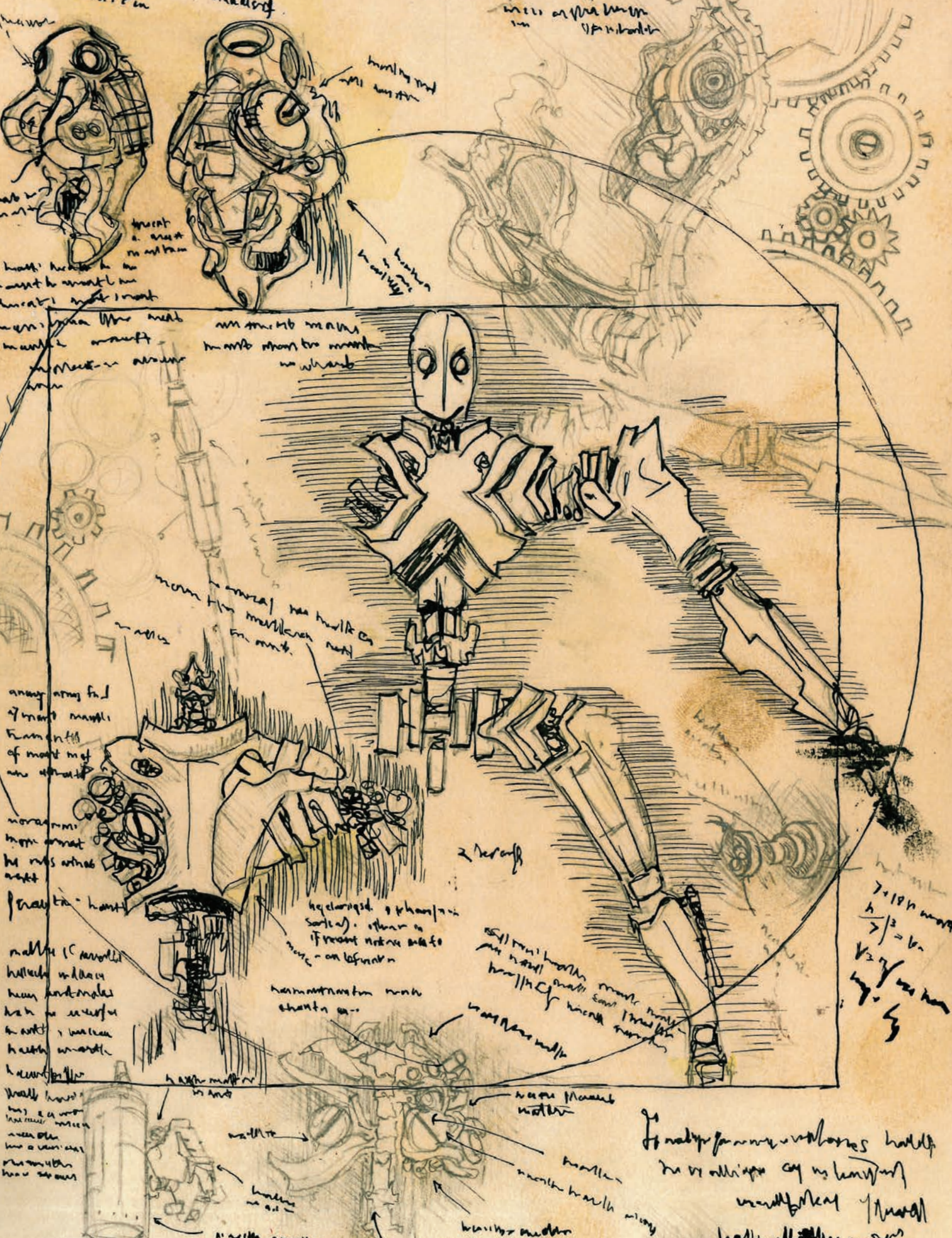
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Your portfolio is the chance to show us your skills and your passion. It should comprise of 10 to 15 images in total showcasing a range of work and must include sketchbook work. We would like to see some, but not necessarily all of the following:

- drawing of any kind
- project and self-initiated work, to include work in progress or finished pieces, showcasing a level of visual skill and creativity
- evidence of primary and secondary research, which might include information from reference books, magazines, exhibition or museum visits
- your thinking and development process in sketchbooks or notebooks, including reflective thinking
- personal ideas and areas of interest (if fashion is your passion, show us)
- experimentation with a range of different media and materials, showing evidence of innovative thinking where possible
- a breadth of interest in and exploration of a range of art and design disciplines
- evidence of cultural awareness, identifying social and cultural influences on your work.

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# THE SKETCHBOOK RULES

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Your sketchbook is your best friend, it gives you a space to grow and learn. You can try new things, experiment, make mistakes and allows you to be an individual. It is important to tell the story, show us your ideas, where the ideas came from, the development of your ideas and the conclusion. The first idea is never the best one, but it can take you to the right one. Look after your sketchbook because it can help you to get into a top university.

No empty pages, draw on both sides

No crossing out, learn from mistakes, add notes

Organised, clear, easy to read, separate books

Varied approach

Show direction

Include project titles, briefs, time given

Feel the quality

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# STRUCTURING A **PORTFOLIO**

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Your portfolio should demonstrate the focus and the direction you want to take. It should show us your personality. If you like to be big and bold, then your portfolio should be big and bold, if you are accurate and neat your portfolio should be accurate and neat.

A portfolio should be made up of finished work.

The first pieces are the most important, so put your best work first.

Place your drawing at the back.

Any large pieces of work, photograph them, but take a good photo. A bad photo of a good piece of work can make a good piece of work look bad!

Only include work you like and that you have picked – not something your parent, teacher or friend has chosen.

Include work from the last 18 months only.

It should be easy to read.



# HOW TO SHOW YOUR WORK

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Simple mounts white or black – no colour, glitter or pictures of fairies around the edge!

Window mount prints only.

Photos, large, clear and well lit.

Match direction portrait or landscape.

Keep it simple.

## WHAT NOT TO DO

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Never:

- Use borrowed work
- Use weak work to bulk
- Trace or copy a drawing
- Use bad photos of your work
- Over mount
- Mix directions
- Mix areas
- Use special effects

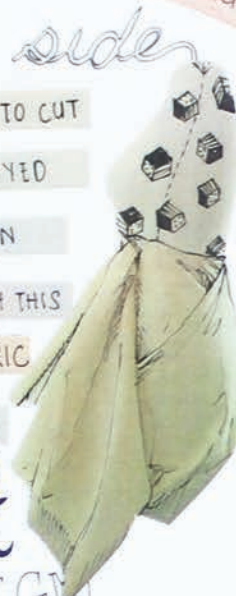
# one day PROJECT

GIVEN A METRE OF CALICO

I WAS REQUIRED TO MANIPULATE THE FABRIC AND CREATE FOUR DIFFERENT SKIRT DESIGNS



FOR THE FIRST DESIGN, I WAS HESITANT TO CUT THE FABRIC INITIALLY SO I JUST PLAYED AROUND WITH IT AND PINNED IT ON THE MANNEQUIN. I CAME UP WITH THIS DESIGN THAT FEATURES GEOMETRIC FOLDS AND DRAPES IN THE FRONT.



First DESIGN

FOR THE SECOND DESIGN, I SWITCHED THE FRONT DESIGN OF THE FIRST SKIRT DESIGN TO THE BACK BECAUSE I THINK IT IS MORE FLATTERING TO HAVE THE VOLUME ON THE BACK SO I DEVELOPED THIS DESIGN.

I THEN TIED A KNOT TO CREATE A SORT OF COCOON SILHOUETTE.



Second DESIGN



ONE DAY

DRAPING PROJECT





I STARTED THE THIRD DESIGN BY PLEATING THE FABRIC INTO A BASIC PLEATED SKIRT. I THEN FOLDED THE FABRIC UP AND PINNED IT TO CREATE THIS INTERESTING SHAPE THAT I FIND TO BE QUITE FLATTERING. I THINK THAT IT WOULD DRAPE BEAUTIFULLY ON THE MODEL.

Third  
DESIGN



Fourth  
DESIGN



FOR THE FOURTH DESIGN, I FINALLY GAINED THE CONFIDENCE TO CUT THE FABRIC AND I SNIPPED THE BOTTOM HALF OFF TO CREATE A MINI SKATER SKIRT. I THEN PLEATED EACH SECTION OF THE SKIRT UPWARDS TO PRODUCE AN INTERESTING SHAPE. I THOUGHT THE DESIGN WAS TOO PLAIN SO I



WEAVED STRIPS OF FABRIC AND PINNED IT TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SKIRT TO CREATE A SORT OF GEOMETRICAL TRIM.



# HOW NOT TO SHOW YOUR WORK

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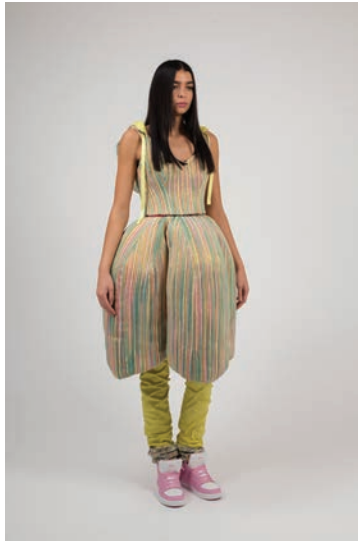


Too many photos  
No overlapping at an angle across the page

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# HOW TO SHOW YOUR WORK

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In a line  
Left to right, the way we read

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# HOW NOT TO SHOW YOUR WORK

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Don't mix portrait and landscape on the page

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# HOW TO SHOW YOUR WORK

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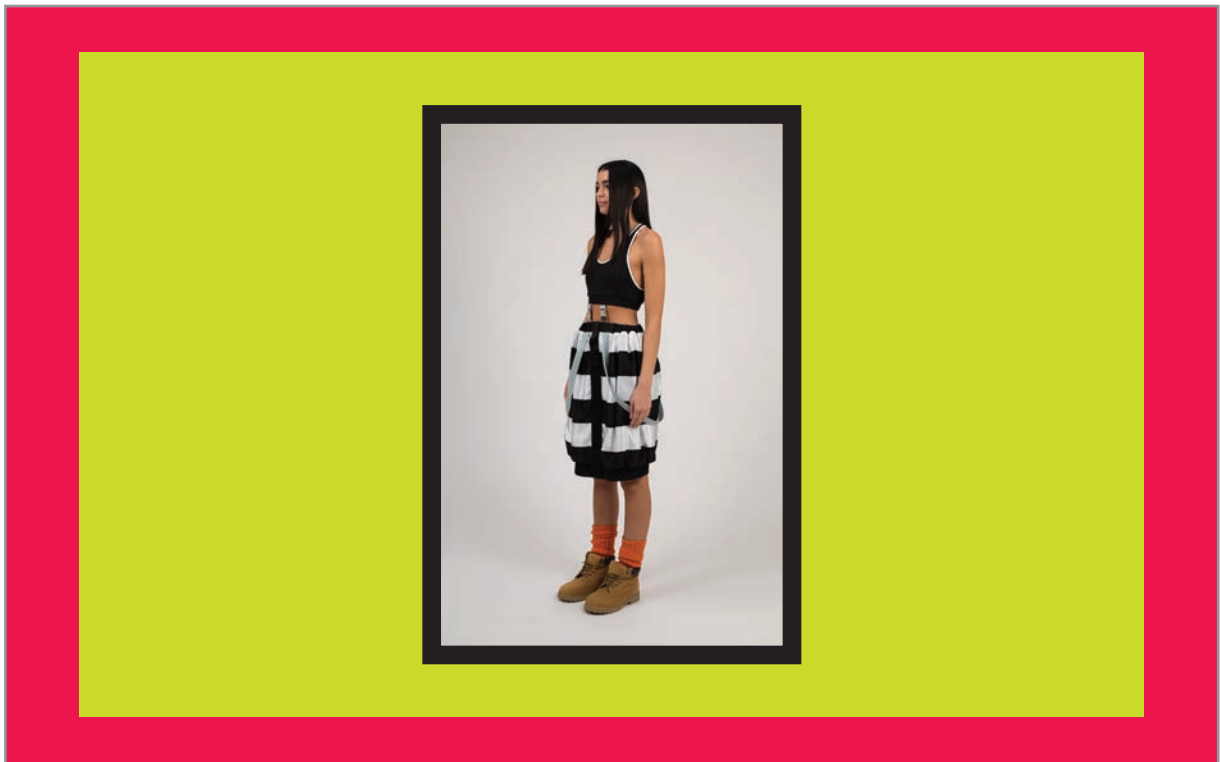


Keep images the same way up

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# HOW NOT TO SHOW YOUR WORK

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Do not over mount – here you see the background

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# HOW TO SHOW YOUR WORK

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Here you see the picture  
That is why we keep it black or white

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# CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

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Over the last 30 years, we have continued to develop the skills and confidence of many aspiring artists.

Our school provides a unique and highly personalised method of learning, creating an environment in which to nurture, educate and encourage these creative individuals.

As a student you are actively supported through a hands-on approach, extensive contact time with lecturers and all the equipment and materials you needed to ensure you meet your full potential.

By studying at CSVPA we will support you through individual portfolio workshops, providing interview practice, whilst helping you to identify the right university to apply to in order to be successful in the career pathway you wish to take.

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