

Guide to
Selective Admissions - Part A
The Foundations Portfolio

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Introduction

The LSU School of Art has seven distinct artistic disciplines that can lead to a BFA degree. When students are accepted to LSU and indicate a preference for Art as a major they enter a Foundations Year of study in the School of Art comprised of preliminary courses in art and design. At the conclusion of the Foundation Year of study students apply to their chosen discipline through the process known as Selective Admissions.

Beginning in the 2012-13 school year two separate parts will comprise the Selective Admissions process. Part A will be a Foundations Portfolio comprised of work from the Foundation classes of Art 1011(or 1008), Art 1012(or 1009), and Art 1847(or 1010). Part B will be a Discipline Specific Portfolio whose requirements are determined by the faculty of each individual discipline within the School of Art. The aim is to provide a broader context of student work to the faculty members in charge of each discipline's admissions. The Part A - Foundations Portfolio is the responsibility of each student to complete for Selective Admissions. Don't be daunted, the following will serve as a step-by-step guide to help you with the process.

The Basics of a Foundations Portfolio

The Foundations Portfolio will be comprised of work completed during your Foundation Year in the three classes that make up the basis of the Foundations Curriculum: Art 1011 (or 1008) – Two Dimensional Design; Art 1012 (or 1009) – Three Dimensional Design; and Art 1847(or 1010) – Drawing. From each class you will select three works that represent your best practices while also showing the breadth of your skills. These can be homework assignments, major projects, in-class exercises, or even pages from your sketchbook. The format is open ended so you can choose those items that put you in the best possible light. Once you have selected your work, you will photograph them digitally, edit and format them in Photoshop, compile the info for each work (Class, Year, Size, Medium, etc.), and upload them for review by the faculty.

There are multiple steps to this process. This guide will answer many of your questions and, along with in-class demonstrations and supplemental information, assist you with every step of the process. Before we begin, it is important you understand how the Foundations Portfolio will be reviewed by the faculty during Selective Admissions.

How the Foundations Portfolio Will Be Used

The impetus behind the Part A - Foundations Portfolio is to teach you valuable professional development skills early on. Digital documentation of work is a fundamental tool and having a working knowledge of these steps will allow you to present yourself in the best possible way in your professional life. The Foundations Portfolio will also allow faculty access to a number of your Foundations assignments during Selective Admissions process giving them a better understanding of who you are as a student and as an artist. They will use this Part A - Foundations Portfolio to support the Part B - Discipline Specific Portfolio you create for Selective Admissions.

Beyond the Selective Admissions faculty, your Foundations Portfolio will also be reviewed by the faculty members from the Foundations Committee. The Foundations Committee is comprised of professors across all disciplines of the School of Art. They will review the work; pass their findings onto different departments, while also looking for ways to improve the Foundations curriculum. But let's first look at the steps that will compromise the Foundations Portfolio process.

Overview of the Process

Today the digital documentation of work is a ubiquitous part of the art and design worlds. Whether it is for a grant proposal, personal website, gallery records or residency submission, artists must document their work to the highest standards. Because this may be your first time digitally documenting your own work, let's run through the steps involved in the Foundations Portfolio.

First and foremost, you will have to ask yourself what work best represents you? As mentioned you will be choosing only three artworks from each of the Foundations classes. Make sure to choose work that shows your strengths while also representing your range of skills.

Once you have selected your works you will need to photograph or scan them. You must consider where you will shoot, how you will light and set-up the work, and what equipment you will use. Luckily there are a vast number of resources at LSU and in the School of Art to help with cameras, equipment, and studios. We will discuss each of those options in the 'Resources Available' section.

Once you have your digital images, you will need to format them in Photoshop. Again, there will be in-class demonstration and assistance along the way. Then you should gather the information needed for each slide and upload everything to SlideRoom. SlideRoom is the program that the School of Art uses for all Foundations Portfolios. It is an easy-to-use, intuitive program that will help you organize your work for Selective Admissions. This may feel like a lot if you have never attempted many of these steps before, but it is very manageable. Before we go step-by-step through this process let's introduce our partner on this project.

A Note about the CxC

Communication across the Curriculum (CxC) is an initiative created by LSU to promote better communication in the classroom. Its mission is 'focused on enhancing learning experiences for students and improving their written, spoken, visual presentation, and technological communication skills within the disciplines.' Why are they being mentioned you ask? The Foundations Committee has partnered with the CxC to provide support, instruction and guidance to Foundations students with their Foundations Portfolios.

We are fortunate to have a studio of the CxC in the College of Art and Design located in room 104-A of the Design Building, and it is, without a doubt, your best source of help through all stages of the Foundations Portfolio process. Our CxC studio is coordinated by Vincent Cellucci. He and his team of assistants will be coming to your classroom to give presentations on various steps of this process and are available during studio hours to answer questions. Remember to schedule time in their photography studio to ensure availability; you may also check out equipment, get assistance setting up lights, or help editing slides for SlideRoom. There is no step of this process that must be done with CxC but they make things easier. Quick note, CxC is not open on the weekends. Make sure you visit them during regular weekday hours.

Selecting Work

Selecting work is an important first step in any portfolio. You are choosing three works from each of Art 1011 (or 1008), Art 1012 (or 1009), and Art 1847 (or 1010). You will want to choose work that is your strongest, most complete work. Remember that those viewing these portfolios are looking at a lot of images, choose pieces that

make the reviewers take notice. Include a variety of work, a diverse range of media tells the reviewers that you have a breadth of skills and are adaptable to new concepts. Pages from sketchbooks can also be an important inclusion; they show how you develop ideas and a side of your personality that in-class assignments may not. If you are having trouble ask the advice of your professors, they have watched your work develop over the course of the semester and have a good understanding of your strengths. Lastly, feel free to shoot four or five works from each class. Not all work photographs well. This may allow you to choose not only the best work but the best images.

Photographing Work

Photographing is the single most important step in the digital documentation of work. Shooting a quality slide is essential for your own records and for use publicly. You can shoot slides outside outdoors, at home with loaned equipment; or in one of the studios at school; just be sure you take the time to set-up properly. The CxC has prepared a 'Digital Documentation Workshop' handout that will run through all of the steps for you from beginning to end. This handout goes into more depth and it should be your guidebook throughout the photography process. A few points in regards to photographing work:

1. Take the time to set-up your equipment properly
2. Use a tripod, and if possible a timer. It will help prevent blurriness
3. While set-up can take time, once you get the hang of shooting slides it will go quickly so shoot an extra piece or two from each class and choose the best ones
4. Always shoot multiple images of a single work by bracketing. You can choose the best one when you view them in Photoshop
5. Sometimes it is much easier to do things with help. Coordinate with friends in your Foundations classes and photograph together
6. Most importantly, don't wait until the last week of the semester to shoot your work

The 'Resources Available' section will list the places to borrow equipment, studios for shooting work, and computer labs for editing. As mentioned, the CxC has a quality studio with all the equipment on-site, it is the best to use but you must make an appointment.

Formatting Images

Formatting images takes time but it is essential for fine-tuning your images to get the best possible results. Review the images to see which have the best lighting and color; choose the best one to edit in Photoshop. Remember to always keep a version of the original safe and only edit copies. When you open a photo in Photoshop the original will be 300 or more dots per inch (dpi). For our purposes we want a slide that is 72dpi that is no longer than 1000 pixels in any direction. You can check the CxC Digital Documentation Workshop handout for more details on how this is accomplished but let's run through the basics steps here.

First, open your original file in Photoshop and using the Rectangular Marquee Tool crop your artwork to remove excess wall space. You can actually crop the image you want and start a new file that is automatically sized to the area you cropped. By pasting in the cut area you now have a properly cropped image. Next, on the menu bar, go to Image → Image Size and a window for editing the size of your image will appear. Make sure Constrain Proportions is on, next change the Resolution to 72 pixels/ inch, and lastly edit the Pixel Dimensions by changing the larger of

the width or height to 1000. You now have a clean, web sized image to upload to SlideRoom. Save your final slides in the following format: LastName_FirstName_Class_Slide#.jpg (Example: Smith_John_1847_03.jpg).

Information to Prepare for Each Slide

The last step before you upload your work is to collect the data that will be included with each image. For our purposes you should have:

1. Name – The name of the work if there is one, otherwise a simple description like ‘Charcoal Study’ or ‘Pen and Ink Still Life’ is fine
2. Year – The year the piece was made
3. Medium – What medium or materials the piece was made with
4. Size – Basic dimensions in inches
5. Class – Choose one class from 1011, 1012, 1847, 1008, 1009 or 1010 (Only use the four numbers of the class, do not include ‘Art’ as-in Art 1847)
6. Assignment – Reviewers may not be familiar with all assignments so a single brief sentence to describe the assignment as clearly as possible is a major help

Uploading Work to SlideRoom at lsuart.slideroom.com

With your slides ready and organized, you are to the home stretch. The last step is to upload your images so they are available for review; this is where SlideRoom comes into play. SlideRoom is an online program that manages applications and Foundations Portfolios for numerous schools including LSU. Go to lsuart.slideroom.com, register with them, and begin the ‘2012 Foundations Portfolio’ application. You will enter some standard personal information on the first page along with the data about your major and your Foundations classes. If there is ever a question that does not pertain to you please answer N/A (Not Applicable). After this you will be ready to upload your images.

Begin to upload the images and order them by class so all the 2D images are uploaded together, same for 3D and Drawing. For each image you will be prompted to add the details of each slide as listed in the previous section. You must fill in each box. Once you are finished uploading one slide, move on to the next until all **nine** are complete. Lastly, you will be asked to pay a \$15 fee that is associated with each SlideRoom submission. Make sure all parts of your Digital Foundations Portfolio are complete before you pay and finish your submission. You will not be able to change any information after you pay.

Lastly, and very important, if you are planning to take Art 1011(or 1008), Art 1012(or 1009), or Art 1847(or 1010) in the Spring semester because these courses are required for Selective Admissions do not complete your submission in the Fall semester. You can leave the submission open until you have work from you missing class or classes and complete the Foundations Portfolio before Selective Admissions begins.

Resources Available

The following is a list of resources that are available to all Art students at LSU. They are broken into three categories: Equipment; Photography Studios; and Computer Labs. The complete hours and rules are not posted here, please check with each to verify exact information.

One quick note, all the equipment and the photography studios are available to you. It takes some time and effort to get everything checked out and set-up. Think about partnering with other students and working together when using these tools. An extra set of hands is very helpful. The work goes much faster and it is much more enjoyable.

Equipment:

1. **Gear to Geaux**

Circulation Desk at the Middleton Library

The LSU Student Technology Fee funds allow for the purchase of various computing, audio and video equipment including digital cameras and tripods. You must use a LSU Student ID to check out the equipment.

2. **CxC Art + Design Studio,**

Room 104-A, Design Building

Coordinator: Vincent Cellucci

Ph.: 225-578-1197

Hours: Mon - Thurs, 9am - 4:30pm, Fri, 9:00am - 4:00pm

The CxC is the best place to use cameras and scanners on-site but they have only one digital SLR to loan so plan or call ahead. They are also conveniently located on the 1st floor of the Design Building.

Photography Studios:

Each studio has a variety of available equipment in it. You should check the policies, availability and equipment of each before using. Proper backdrops, walls to hang work, pedestals and lights can be a major factor in the quality of your final images.

1. **CxC Art + Design Studio** (See Above)

The CxC has a nice photography studio with backdrops and lighting. You must schedule time to use the studio; luckily it is connected to the CxC office so there is help if you need it. This studio is easily the best of the available photography studios but **you must schedule ahead**.

2. **Art Building, Room 313**

On the 3rd floor of the Art Building this studio has just about everything you will need for getting quality images. You must bring a camera to shoot with, possibly a tripod too.

3. **Studio Arts Building, Room 162**

A photography studio located in the Studio Arts Building. The studio contains pedestals and backdrops that are great for 3d work. Light kits and tripods are usually on-site but you should check before using. May require access by your 3d-Design professor.

Computer Labs:

There are many great Computer Labs for you to format your slides in Photoshop in the Arts Complex. The following are the most often used.

- 1. CxC Art + Design Studio,**
Room 104-A, Design Building
Coordinator: Vincent Cellucci
Ph.: 225-578-1197
Hours: Mon - Thurs, 9am - 4:30pm, Fri, 9:00am - 4:00pm
CxC has only a few stations but there are assistants on-site that can help you if you have any questions.
- 2. CAD/GIS Lab**
Room 216, Design Building
Hours: Mon - Fri, 8:30am – 11:00pm, Sat-Sun, 12:00pm - 5:00pm
An extremely nice computer lab housed in the Design Building. There are over 20 computer stations loaded with Photoshop available for your use.
- 3. Digital Lab 1 and Digital Lab 2**
Room 108 and Room 111, Art Building
Two more great Computer Labs located on the 1st Floor of the Art Building. 20+ computers in each lab loaded with Photoshop for editing your digital images. Check open hours.
- 4. Middleton Library**
Some of the computers in Middleton Library are loaded with Photoshop. The extended library hours may help give you access at times other labs are closed.

Considerations

Miscellaneous:

- If you are having difficulty with any steps ask for help. Professors, Lab Techs, and Assistants at CxC are all available.
- Don't wait until the last week of the semester to begin. This takes time. The best policy is to shoot work you like right now then another group of work later in the semester. That way you can choose the best images.

Selecting Work:

- Shoot more works than you need and choose the best images.
- Bold work photographs well. Subtle work, like lightly drawn pencil drawings, can be difficult to photograph. You may have to spend some time getting a good image.
- If you are having difficulty deciding ask for help from your professors.
- Select a range of work, not just one thing. You want to show your range.

Photographing Work:

- You do not need professional equipment to get a good image, but it helps. Spend the time to borrow the best equipment.
- Check the CxC Handouts. They are full of useful information.
- Good lighting is important; spend the time setting up a light kit.
- Shoot multiple images for each work by using bracketing to get a range of light levels. Choose the best.
- Square your artwork. Nothing looks worse than a lopsided slide.
- Work with friends. It is much easier to set-up with an extra set of hands

Formatting Work:

- Keep a copy of all original files.
- Crop first, and then change to 72dpi and 1000 pixels at the same time.
- In Photoshop, using Image → Adjustments → Levels is a great way to adjust light / dark in an image.
- For more advanced Photoshop users you can adjust the colors, tones, and contrasts; just don't go overboard.
- Include the resolution in the file name or folder for your own records; it makes it much easier to find the correct file later.

Checklist

Selecting Work

Art 1011 or 1008

- Artwork 1
- Artwork 2
- Artwork 3

Art 1012 or 1009

- Artwork 1
- Artwork 2
- Artwork 3

Art 1847 or 1010

- Artwork 1
- Artwork 2
- Artwork 3

Photographing or Scanning Work (Setup)

- Camera and Tripod
- Scanner
- Lighting and Clean Backdrop
- Memory Card or Hard Drive
- Hardware and Tools for Hanging Work

Photographing or Scanning Work

Art 1011 or 1008

- Artwork 1 (Multiple Slides)
- Artwork 2 (Multiple Slides)
- Artwork 3 (Multiple Slides)

Art 1012 or 1009

- Artwork 1 (Multiple Slides)
- Artwork 2 (Multiple Slides)
- Artwork 3 (Multiple Slides)

Art 1847 or 1010

- Artwork 1 (Multiple Slides)
- Artwork 2 (Multiple Slides)
- Artwork 3 (Multiple Slides)

Formatting Work

All slides must be 72dpi, 1000 pixels in the longest direction, saved as Jpeg, named correctly

Art 1011 or 1008

- Slide 1 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 2 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 3 (Formatted Correctly)

Art 1012 or 1009

- Slide 1 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 2 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 3 (Formatted Correctly)

Art 1847 or 1010

- Slide 1 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 2 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 3 (Formatted Correctly)

Uploading Work to SlideRoom – Isuart.slideroom.com

Personal Info

Art 1011 or 1008

- Slide 1 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 2 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 3 (Formatted Correctly)

Art 1012 or 1009

- Slide 1 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 2 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 3 (Formatted Correctly)

Art 1847 or 1010

- Slide 1 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 2 (Formatted Correctly)
- Slide 3 (Formatted Correctly)

Submit and Pay \$15 (Only submit and pay when you are completely done and all slides are uploaded)