

PORTFOLIO ADVICE: TEXTILES

ARTS THREAD asks lecturers running the UK's top textiles courses for their top tips on the perfect interview portfolio

PORTFOLIO CONTENT

Drawing and painting skills from primary source material is important—both in large and small scale.

Demonstrate an ability and interest in colour, texture and pattern from a wide variety of work, looking at different scales, medium and subject.

Show how you develop ideas through sketchbooks—bring along a couple of your best to show how you record and develop ideas.

Diversity—show a range of different skills—from drawing with a range of different media, to photography, collage, mixed media and digital skills of all kinds.

Reflect your independent identity in the work you choose. It is important to show that you have an ability to develop your own individual ideas and concepts.

The interviewers don't expect you to already have technical skills in print, knit, weave or embroidery, as you will be learning these on the course.

PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION

Make sure your portfolio is presented clearly in a way that makes it easy to look through, with uniform paper as 'mounts' or as wrappers to contain groups of un-mounted work, such as drawings.

Present your work in easily identifiable sections, e.g. life-drawing or photographs.

Avoid plastic sleeves—textiles is a tactile subject and interviewers may want to handle your work.

Edit your portfolio and pick the strongest work, but don't be afraid to show ideas that are still developing.

Portfolio cases should be easy to undo and remember to add a name tag to your portfolio and label your work on the back.

PREPARATION PRIOR TO AN INTERVIEW

If possible attend one of the university's Open Day visits prior to the interview. The visit will enable you to tour the department and its facilities and find out more about the course and whether it feels right for you.

Research the course on the university website and/or prospectus and take note of how they describe the course—their strengths, facilities, what they look for in an applicant.

Compare it with similar courses so that you can answer knowledgeably the question, 'why have you chosen *this* course'.

Practice presenting your work and be prepared to be able to discuss it. Broaden your awareness of design issues by going to design exhibitions and reading textile-specific magazines such as *Selvedge* and *Crafts*, which are often available in colleges/libraries. Interviewers will ask for your opinions on design topics.

Have a few questions ready for the interviewers, more than *one* question—as they may answer your one question during the course of the interview!

This advice is general—you should always contact the university or look online to see if the course has its own special requirements for portfolios.

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