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BEFORE GETTING IN: BUILDING YOUR PORTFOLIO

Choose Variety

Show a range of drawings and other media that display the depth and scope of your talents. Highlight texture and contrast through mixed media. Sure, pencil drawings are great, but show us what else you can do.

Observation is Key

Demonstrate your ability to draw from real life. Drawings of a person, a still life or a landscape - rather than drawings from a photo or someone else's artwork - will always get higher marks.

Mind Your Composition

Highlight your composition skills. Composition is all about selecting the right elements and arranging them in a unique way within the picture space to communicate an idea or feeling. Try asymmetrical arrangements or use different angles of composition.

Experiment

Dive into different materials. Combine them and see what happens. If your style is tight and detailed, try working loose and with gesture. Push yourself in a different direction and out of your comfort zone.

Deliver the Unexpected

Demonstrate not only your ability to draw objects accurately, but also conceptually. Think about a message, story or emotion you're trying to convey.

Seek Feedback

Feedback helps you grow. Get it from your teachers, counselors and peers. Post your artwork on Facebook, Flickr and Youtube. There are resources at your disposal throughout this website. Take advantage!

New Media

Digital art and animation are big and only getting bigger. If you have any animated pieces you feel are worth a look, include them in a DVD or post them online and send us the link.

Look Beyond the Obvious

Look beyond the obvious to communicate an idea or theme. For example, use everyday objects as letters to deliver impact and drive home a memorable message.

What's the Concept?

Don't just take a picture. Make a picture. Organize and execute a scene to communicate a powerful idea. It's an effective way to add emotion and meaning to your work.

Crafts and 3-Dimensional

If your forte is crafts, like pottery or jewelry making, drawings of your designs are perfectly acceptable. If you've created an actual piece, take photos of it. Experiment with your own "photo studio" at home using butcher paper as a backdrop. Find the best angle to photograph your work and use lamps as lighting. An overcast day gives good lighting as well.

Quality Over Quantity

Don't worry about not having tons of work in your portfolio. It's better to show nine or 10 strong pieces than 20 weak ones.

A Strong Background

It's a mistake to ignore the background. It can be as important as the main subject. A well-executed background gives balance, depth and interest.

Let's Chat

Feel free to contact us at any time when you are developing your portfolio. Our admissions counselors are available to give you feedback and advice before you submit your final portfolio. If you have questions about anything, call and ask - we're here to help.

BEFORE GETTING IN: DO'S AND DONT'S

DO

Show drawings from observation of real life; people, places, objects and environments.

Put your subject in a specific time or place.

Portray objects accurately - but creatively and with originality.

Experiment with mixed media, oil paints, watercolor and pastels.

Take a ceramics or metal and jewelry class. Create something three-dimensional.

Show art that combines technical ability with interesting ideas.

Talk about your ideas with instructors or admissions counselors and learn how to present your work.

Keep a sketchbook and include it with your portfolio.

Ask for feedback. Put constructive criticism to work for you.

DON'T

Show drawings primarily from photographs.

Show copies of other's work, for example existing characters, CD covers, styles or genres.

Isolate objects in the middle of the page.

Forget to include figure drawing.

Draw on notebook paper.

Limit yourself to pencil.

Show only classroom assignments.

Ignore the background.