

Exercise 1.4 Portfolio development / Research online portfolios

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1. PORTFOLIO WEBSITE PREFERENCES AND CRITERIA

When looking for a portfolio site, every artists should have a list of preferences and criteria in mind when looking for this type of a service. Keep in mind the following:

1. Your portfolio site should be easy to navigate.
2. Make sure it's easy for potential clients to contact you.
3. Your portfolio site should offer some information about you and express some of your personality.
4. Your portfolio site should be easy to update and should also be updated often so that only your best content is featured.
5. Include testimonials or references from happy clients.
6. Include your social networking profiles, but only if they are professional.
7. Provide a downloadable resume.
8. Categorize and tag your work, especially if there's a lot of it. Consider including a search field so that visitors can search within your site.
9. Include relevant and interesting information on your site, so that visitors will want to return.

2. FEE-BASED PORTFOLIO SITES

There are too many to list them all, but the sites that I visited and which I thought were user friendly and easy to navigate are as follows:

www.creativesource.ca

Artists Agents & Reps. Pay a fee for portfolio page with up to 50 images, direct mailing offer.

www.threeinabox.com

Artists Representatives

www.botanicalartists.com

Artists need to submit sample work for consideration.

3. FREE PORTFOLIO WEBSITES (some with optional fee for upgrades):

www.behance.com

wordpress.com – They have portfolio themes to choose from.

www.facebook.com – Create your own facebook page, which includes an 'about' page, photo albums of your work and send status updates to site visitors following your page. Create facebook ads to market your facebook page and art. Link to your portfolio or website.

4. CREATE A NEW WEBSITE USING HTML (or update an existing one)

For the short term, I will mostly likely update my existing website content (www.inkberrystudio.ca) so that it reflects the new art created as a result of the Botanical Illustration course. In the long term, however, I can see myself recreating the website, with perhaps some subtle flash content in the gallery pages. The current website was created with Adobe Dreamweaver, Photoshop and Illustrator. It has a clean layout and an easy navigation. Last Fall, I completed an 'Introduction to html' online course, which will be helpful when it's time to update my gallery pages.

In Canada, website hosting fees are reasonable at approximately \$5 Cdn/month, which can be paid monthly or annually. Domain name registration fee is approximately \$100 Cdn/5 years and business name registration is approximately \$60 Cdn/5 years. Check applicable fees in your local area/country.

5. SAMPLE BOTANICAL ILLUSTRATOR WEBSITES

www.catherinewatters.com - Catherine Watters

www.botanical-paintings.com - Karen Kluglein

www.studio16online.com - Mindy Lighthipe

www.annswan.co.uk - Ann Swan

Consider joining a local society of botanical artists. One such site here in Canada is the Botanical Artists of Canada, www.botanicalartistsofcanada.org or American Society of botanical Artists www.asba-art.org located in the United States. Societies such as these usually offer membership, member gallery, lectures, exhibitions, newsletters and links to resources.