

Tips & Tricks

Setting up your Design & Production college
application portfolio



❖ Big Picture Considerations

- ❖ Keep it clear & simple
- ❖ Show Process!
- ❖ Showcase your work in your “voice”
- ❖ A portfolio is not a scrapbook
- ❖ Reviewers should know who you are in your absence
- ❖ Be clear about what you actually did / worked on
- ❖ Show Process!
- ❖ Lead & finish with your strongest work
- ❖ Avoid redundancies
- ❖ Show Process!
- ❖ Test your file on different devices

❖ Keep it clear & simple

Quick graphic design tips

- ❖ Be consistent- train the viewer's eye to know where to look
- ❖ Pick ONE font and use it throughout
- ❖ Be consistent with how you use *italics*, larger fonts, bold, CAPS, etc...
- ❖ Use a tight color scheme
- ❖ Pay attention to alignment, justification & centers

Excellent overview of practical
[graphic design tips from Canva](#)

With drop shadow

Good overview of [color theory](#)

Without drop shadow

Sometimes a drop shadow can help by providing dimension to the page and guide the viewer's eye

❖ Keep it clear & simple

Quick graphic design tips (con't)

- ❖ Avoid “one-sided” pages at the expense of images that are too small
- ❖ Avoid clutter- let images breathe on the page
- ❖ Use the same design elements throughout whole portfolio
- ❖ Contrast = Interest & legibility

Label, label, label!

- ❖ Credit collaborators, indicate what you worked on
- ❖ State show titles, project or assignment title
- ❖ Include a date
- ❖ For production photos include Act & Scene #, scene name, or song title

❖ Let your “voice” shine

*Tell a visual story of how you've improved:
what you've learned, what you would do differently next time.
What surprised you about your process?*

- ❖ Lead with your strongest work & finish with a bang
- ❖ A few bullet points can go far to add context to your experiences along with well placed labels
- ❖ Theater is a team sport- give credit where credit is due to others, but feature your contribution
- ❖ The focus is on your WORK, not fancy formatting.
- ❖ That said, it's ok to have some style!



...And show your growth!

❖ Introduce Yourself!

Create a homepage, title slide or page

- ❖ Include your name prominently
- ❖ Give yourself a “job title”
 - Theatre Artist
 - Stage Manager
 - Theatre Technician
 - Lighting Designer, etc...
- ❖ Depending on format, include a one sentence bio, or state goals
- ❖ Consider one image that shows you or your experience or talents





Edith Head

Costume Designer

Edith Head is an LA based award winning Hollywood costume designer. (who died in 1981)

Contact: EdithHead@xxx.com
(000) 123-4567



❖ Show Your Process!

Stage Managers:

- ❖ Show samples of calling scripts, blocking notes & paperwork
 - Demonstrate your organization and communication style & skills
 - Remove any person contact information about other individuals
 - Double check scan quality of paperwork
- ❖ Make a video calling a complex cuing sequence
 - Keep it under 2 mins and manage your file formats or make sure permissions on YouTube or Vimeo are open

Good web-based example of paperwork:

<https://www.patrickleejohnson.com/paperwork>

Helpful video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HYWV3KfkJPo>

Esp timestamp 1:30 & 3:00

In person college
interview?

Bring 1-2 full prompt books

❖ Show Your Process!

Magic Sheet for Chicago: Teen Edition

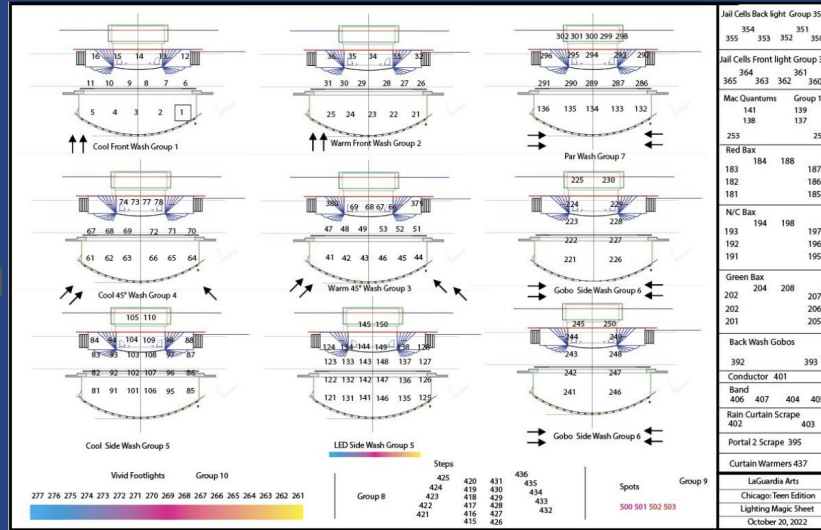
High School

Scenic Design by

Costume Design by

Lighting design by

Assistant Lighting Design by



This is a magic sheet I made as Asst. LD on Chicago: Teen Edition. After I channeled the plot, I used the positioning & purpose to create a magic sheet so both the designer & I knew what lights to focus where, when we were focusing on stage. As someone who learns visually, I created individual groupings to allow me to accurately name & focus each fixture.

Artisans & Technicians:

- ❖ Include research & sketches
- ❖ Include images of works in progress
- ❖ What did you paint or build?
- ❖ How did it look onstage under lights?
- ❖ Run crew position? Document your responsibilities.
- ❖ Show paperwork

❖ Show Your Process!

Faux Brick

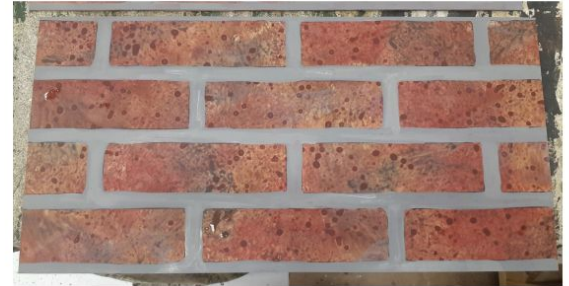
2022

Made at the MPulse Theater Camp Scenic Painting Class

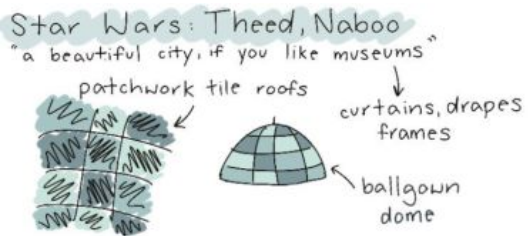
Paint on a Eucaboard

12" x 24"

What's missing?
RESEARCH! Include any
reference images that
you used.



❖ Show Your Process!



silk organza



Designers:

- ❖ Research images
 - why this image?
 - where was it sourced?
- ❖ Rough sketches
- ❖ Finished drawings, model work
- ❖ Final looks on stage

Digital Portfolio

Most colleges now require some kind of digital portfolio as part of the application process
(even if the interview is in person)



What should I use to organize all my stuff?

❖ Canva

- <https://www.canva.com/>
- Good template options in free version
- Download presentation as pdf or as individual jpgs

❖ Google Slides

- <https://docs.google.com/presentation>
- Use Themes and Layout to help with graphic design
- Download presentation as pdf or as individual jpgs

❖ Adobe Portfolio

- <https://portfolio.adobe.com/start>
- Website portfolio, free w/ Adobe subscription
- Ability to create pages or photo galleries

❖ Individual Files

- Follow the application instructions-what's allowed?
- Allows for different media
- Use available text boxes to add context

❖ What other platforms or ideas?

(Also there's too much text on this page,
but this doc is *not* a portfolio...)

❖ Digital Portfolio

- ❖ Don't settle for a template out of the box! Change *something* as a nod to your personal style.
 - (really...we've seen all the google slide templates)
- ❖ Test different file formats on different devices
- ❖ Pick a file size that allows for clarity and a good resolution, but doesn't look crazy big on screens that requires scrolling to see the whole image

Remember: Students enter our program with *many* different experience levels. So, submit what *you* have!

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EDITH HEAD

COSTUME DESIGNER

EDITH IS AN LA BASED AWARD WINNING
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Physical Portfolio & the in person interview

❖ What to Bring

Remember, YOU are being interviewed, not your work

- ❖ Be prepared to answer the question, “What would you do next time?”
- ❖ Bring items that do not translate well to a 2D digital portfolio or short video
 - Prompt scripts with your annotations, blocking notes, etc...
 - Sketchbook full of doodles and observational drawings
 - Jewelry you’ve made or clothes you’ve constructed
 - Small hand props you’ve made
- ❖ Bring any new work since you completed your application that shows additional skills
- ❖ Depending on the program, you may need to bring a device to show your digital portfolio
- ❖ Double check the expectations for each specific application / interview
 - For Michigan, you do not need to bring a bound “traditional” portfolio

PS: Document & Show Your Process!

Good luck!

