ONLINE PRESENCE

An Extension of your Practice

"A creative career can look different every year and it's hard to predict what opportunities might present themselves next!"

Laura Rojas - Alumni Story Participant

Your online presence is an extension of your professional creative practice. It is essential to have examples of your work easily accessible online. Curators and employers are increasingly using the internet to engage with and screen potential candidates before contacting them directly.

Whether it is a portfolio website or platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook or Instagram, ask yourself: How do you want someone (employer, client, recruiter) to perceive you when they view your online profile? Here are a few points to keep in mind:

- Maintain a consistent personal brand across all platforms that reflects who you are as an artist or designer.
- Ensure your content supports your personal brand through your use of text, images, and posts.
- Select an identifiable URL, username or handle. Use professional username like your first and last name, your company name, or and industry related nickname.
- Make your profiles searchable by including keywords, and regularly updating your information with new achievements, skills, projects and posts.

Tip: Artists with an exhibition history may include a CV on their "About" or "Bio" page. However, it is not advisable to include resumé – consider including a link to your LinkedIn profile instead.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a critical part of your online presence but different from a website. Your website is a professional tool, a curated look at your practice, whereas your social accounts are for outreach. Don't just establish a social media presence, use social media to build your network.

Reach out and interact with others in your professional community:

- Join the social media groups for your program of study at OCAD U to interact with current students and alumni. Employment opportunities, calls-for-submissions, and relevant events are often posted to such groups.
- Join social media groups within your field of interest or career to share and receive the latest information related to your industry.
- Follow the social media pages of organizations that interest you. Many organizations will post job descriptions, information about salaries, and more.
- Follow artists or designers you admire. They may post valuable insights into their practice or industry, and maybe even follow you back.

Ask questions. Ask for feedback on a work-in-progress to start a discussion about your work. Even something as broad as "Is anyone hiring in [industry]?" may bring responses.

PORTFOLIO WEBSITE

A portfolio website showcases both your work and your personality at the same time. It should reflect your voice, interests and skills. The projects prove your skills as an artist or designer through concrete examples of your work.

Within a few seconds of scanning your website, it should be easy to get a sense of who you are and what you're about. Create a user-friendly experience by using a simple interface for your website that is easy to navigate. The main components of your site could include:

About – The "About" page explains who you are and what you do. According to Format.com the "About" page is the #1 visited section on the online portfolios of their users. This is because people want context on the creator and the intent of their work.

Galleries – Showcase your best work, and only show the type of work that represents your current creative practice. Your website is not (necessarily) an extensive archive of your projects from many years ago. Remove work that you're no longer interested in making.

Contact – Your contact information should be easy to find. Have your personal email address listed and avoid contact forms.

Links to your social media – Include social media buttons on your website so visitors can see additional elements of your professional online presence. Likewise, provide a link to your portfolio on your social media sites.

Tip: Avoid landing pages unless they serve a purpose. For example, you may use a landing page to announce a current exhibition, or launch directly into a demo reel. Otherwise, landing pages are unnecessary clicks to the visitor experience.

FORMAT.COM

Format has dynamic, beautifully responsive themes, great for the code-fluent and code-averse alike, with the option to customize code or use its user-friendly built-in tools to change your portfolio to your taste and needs.

And as a OCAD U student, you have access to a **FREE premium online portfolio** subscription through Format: **www.format.com/ocadu**

FURTHER RESOURCES

- Adobe Portfolio - (Free with Creative Cloud) a simple layout based, drag and drop style portoflio site with access to Adobe Fonts.
- Behance - (Free) an active social network & portfolio site with communities, groups, & job postings. The 'LinkedIn' of portfolios.
- Coroflot - a combination portfolio and job board website, connecting Design-driven companies to recruit exceptional talent.
- Wix - (Free + Premium) Innovative and evolving, useful for all types of websites though cites designers as target audience.
- Fabrik - (Paid) choose from more than 9000 possible layout combinations across themes tailored to different professions.
- Weebly - (Free + Premium) SEO functionalities mean better rankings and visibility while the built-in marketing tools make it a popular solution for eCommerce, freelancers, and entrepreneurs.
- Squarespace - (Paid) Beautiful templates with wide array of fonts in combination with tools to track and grow your social media following.
- Portfoliobox - (Free + Premium) Focuses on visual, with galleries, blogs, e-commerce, and profiles with no coding required and a free domain.

ONLINE PRESENCE

The Visual and Written Narrative

KEY COMPONENTS TO A COMPELLING CREATIVE PORTFOLIO

Strong portfolios include text to support final project photos. This may take the form of image captions, statements that describe a series of artworks, or a written narrative outlining the design process. The written narrative supports your visual narrative by telling viewer what they are looking at, and guiding them through your intention, process and outcomes.

RAJNI PERERA

HOME   ABOUT   SERIES / EXHIBITION   CONTACT

BELIEVE, MOCA TORONTO

For the inaugural show *BELIEVE* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Toronto, Canada, the work underwent several iterations as it was my first museum show. The final pieces were a diptych of paintings called *BANNERS FOR NEW EMPIRES* as well as a large wood sculpture *TALISMAN*, made collaboratively with woodworker Yorgo Liapis.

BANNER1 - Canvas, wood, steel, acrylic and acryl-gouache paint | approx dimensions 10' X 10'

DOCUMENTING ARTWORK

Visual Narrative

- Strong photo documentation is an important investment - realistic colour balance, even lighting and high resolution are a must
- Ensure your images are free of distractions
- Document everything, including process work, installations, editorials, publications, reviews and the final results––you'll never know when you will need it
- Detail and installation views: A balance of wide shots and detail shots convey scale and intention
- Selecting images: Work displayed in your portfolio should effectively represent relate back to your practice. Consider organizing different mediums and bodies of work in different galleries and site pages.
- Consider the platform: process work may be more suited to a blog or Instagram, while finished pieces more suited to a professional online portfolio.

Written Narrative

- Concise captions should be provided for **every** image displayed, and should include:
  ◦ Title
  ◦ Year
  ◦ Medium
  ◦ Dimensions
  ◦ Image Credit: Photographer
  ◦ Other identifying characteristics such as: Installation view or detail
- Include statements or context. This will help viewers understand your intention and gain some insight on what a piece or series of works is about. Was it shown at a gallery? Did it receive any awards, or press? If so, include links to the gallery's exhibition page and any reviews.
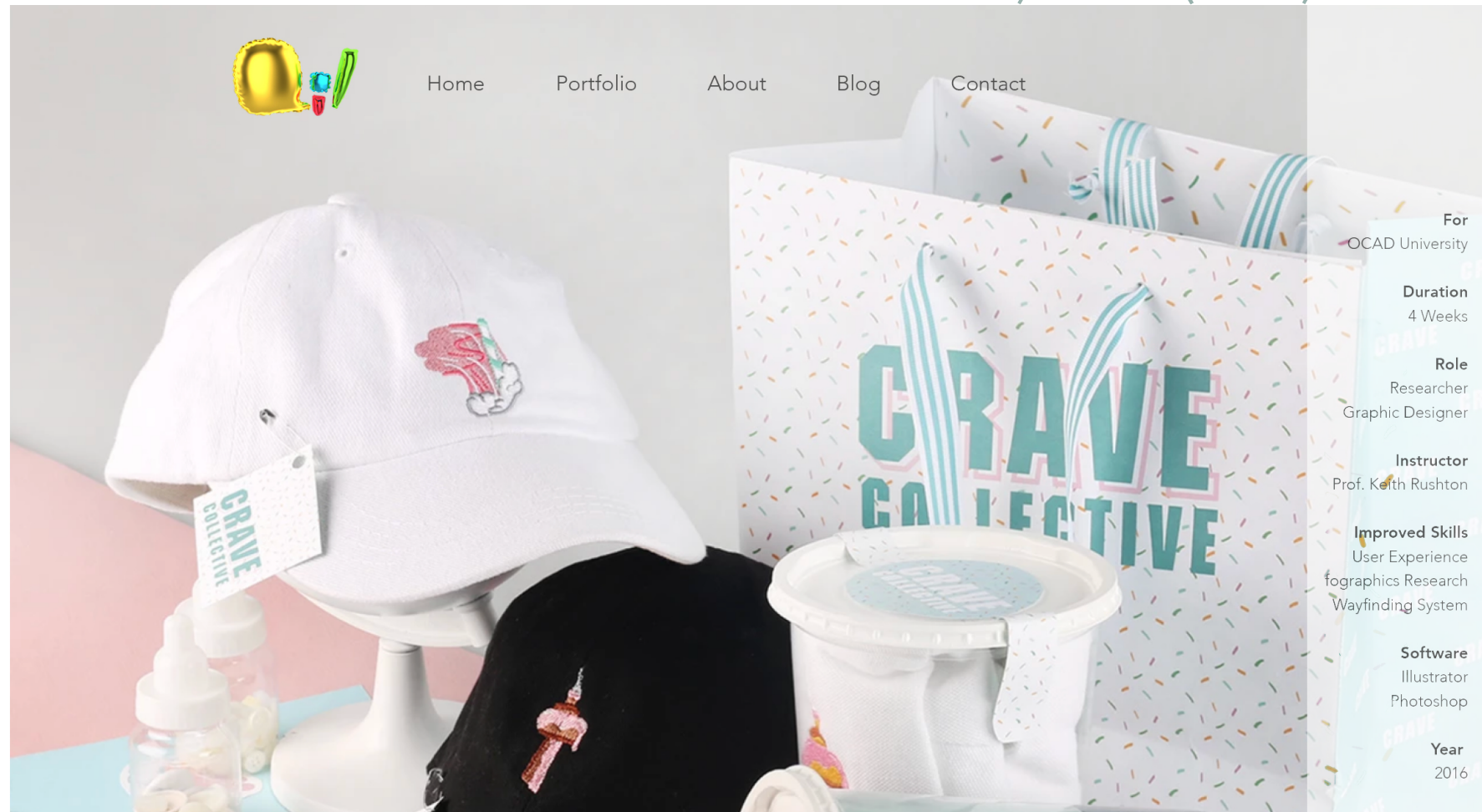
Tip: **"Above the fold"** refers to the top half of the front page of a newspaper, where the most enticing headlines and images are placed to encourage the reader to learn more. Applied to an online portfolio, the visible frame before a viewer starts scrolling horizontally or vertically should contain the most compelling imagery, information and key takeaways.

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For
OCAD University

Duration
4 Weeks

Role
Researcher
Graphic Designer

Instructor
Prof. Keith Rushton

Improved Skills
User Experience
Iographics Research
Wayfinding System

Software
Illustrator
Photoshop

Year
2016

Challenge

How can design illustrate people's love of food and pride in their cities?

Design Touch Points

Naming, Brand Strategy, Logo, Branding, Product Design, Illustration, Packaging Design, Graphic Design, Photo Editing

Solution

Crave Collective

Crave Collective aims to celebrate foodies and their love for their hometowns, represented through wearable apparel. This project was created to explore my ability to develop a design system. Visual direction, branding, product and packaging designs, advertisements, website design, studio props, product and fashion photography made by me.

DOCUMENTING THE DESIGN PROCESS

Executive Summary

A brief overview that summarizes a longer report or complete project that rapidly introduces readers to key information without having to read it all. Your summary should include:

- A **compelling image** that best represents your project
- **Title** of project
- A **brief overview** of the design problem, your design solution and the outcome
- **Credit** all contributors and clearly define your role
- **Design skills** and methodologies used (eg: rapid prototyping, typography, journey mapping, etc.)
- **Software** used

Project Template

Showing process work is a portfolio is very important for emerging designers. Hiring managers want to know how you approach a project as much as they want to see the finished work.

Apply proper UX/UI design philosophy by using a consistent project template which can include:

- An **index** or **navigation aid** to help readers jump to points of interest
- A **detailed** description of the design **problem, challenge or creative brief**
- A **detailed** description of the **solution**
- **Impact and results**
- Your **approach**
- **Each phase** of work & deliverables (ie: design research, story boards, design exploration, wireframes, etc.)
- **Insights** gained during each phase, which then informs the next
- **Key Learnings and outcomes**

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