Tips on putting together your portfolio for application to the Cleveland Institute of Art
you’ve spent a long time preparing for this...
Your portfolio is the cornerstone of your application, and a significant part of the admission decision.

We also consider your portfolio to be an important asset in the development of your career. It informs us of your artistic experience, education, and talent.

You’ve spent a long time preparing for this moment, and the following guidelines will help you create a portfolio that best reflects your work.
ask us, we’re here to help
Our Admissions Committee will evaluate your portfolio and will assess your technical abilities, conceptual problem-solving skills, and your use of your chosen mediums. Prior to that review we recommend that you schedule an appointment with one of our admissions counselors for a preliminary portfolio review. A campus visit and an appointment with one of our counselors can provide feedback on your current work and guide you as you work toward your best possible portfolio. **You can complete your application without an appointment or visit—just read on to learn how.**

Contact a CIA Admissions Counselor at 216.421.7418 or admissions@cia.edu
building your portfolio

The portfolio you submit to CIA should include no fewer than 12 and no more than 20 pieces of your original artwork.
12–20 portfolio pieces

This number will give us enough information to make an accurate assessment of your abilities. Please do not send any more than 20 pieces. At least four of those pieces must be drawings (observational drawings are highly recommended, sketchbook work is also encouraged). Observational drawings include still life, gesture, figure drawings, portraits, and landscapes.

We encourage you to feature your strongest pieces made in your junior or senior years. Portfolio pieces can take many forms including (but not limited to): drawings, paintings, prints, photographs, sculptures, animations, illustrations, computer-generated works, and clay, metal, or glass objects.
determining a sequence

The order in which you present your work can have a significant effect on your portfolio review, therefore we suggest you end your presentation with your strongest piece. Keep in mind that relationships in color, media, composition, and concept can link one piece to another and help your portfolio flow in a cohesive manner.

Make an effort not to include work copied from photographs or other published works. These generally do not make strong portfolio pieces. If you use source photos, try not to use them as the sole inspiration for your work.

Note: No application items will be returned, and it is recommended you keep an original copy of your submission for your records.

Go to cia.edu/portfolio for more information on photographing your work and preparing your portfolio. Or contact an admissions counselor at 216.421.7418.
end your presentation with your strongest piece
portfolio checklist for freshmen
Include at least 12 pieces of artwork (no more than 20)

Include 4 drawings (observational drawings are highly recommended, sketchbook work is encouraged)

Submit online (preferred) or in CD or DVD format

- If online, go to: cia.slideroom.com after submitting your application to us.

- If in CD or DVD format, please place your name and address on CD or DVD sleeve.
These preferred elements are only for transfer students wishing to be placed in the sophomore year or beyond, and seeking studio art credit to replace freshmen-level Foundation courses.
As a transfer applicant, please follow the submission format described in this book. Also provide these preferred elements to help us determine your placement. If you cannot supply all these elements, please submit what you have so that we can begin reviewing your entire application.

- **4–6 drawings from observation**
  (still life, portrait, or landscape)
- **2–3 examples of 3D work**
- **2–3 examples of 2D work**
- **3–4 examples of digital work**
  (using Freehand, Illustrator, InDesign, or Photoshop)
- **4–6 examples of work pertaining to the major you wish to enter**
Submit your application and portfolio online (preferred), or by mail to:

Cleveland Institute of Art
Office of Admissions
11141 East Boulevard
Cleveland OH 44106
Your portfolio is one of several pieces that make up a complete application to the Cleveland Institute of Art. In order to submit a complete application you must also include the following items:

- **Application** Download an application or apply online (preferred) at [cia.edu/apply](http://cia.edu/apply)
- A $40 application fee
- A personal statement outlining your reason for applying
- Official high school/college transcripts
- A letter of recommendation (preferably from an art teacher or counselor)
- Official SAT or ACT test scores
- **Portfolio of artwork** online (preferred) at [cia.slideroom.com](http://cia.slideroom.com)
When you’re ready to send us your portfolio, submit it online (preferred), or in a CD or DVD format. If online, go to: cia.slideroom.com after submitting your application to us.
CD or DVD Portfolio Procedure:

Should you choose to submit your portfolio on CD or DVD, please follow these instructions:

- Individual files should be in JPEG (.jpg) format with a file size not exceeding 1MB each.

- Animation or video work must be submitted in either QuickTime (.mov), Windows Media Video (.wmv), or Audio Video Interleave (.avi) formats.

- It is preferable that images be assembled and presented in a slide show format, using PowerPoint, Acrobat, Keynote, or another slide show application.

- Please submit a numbered list in Microsoft Word on the disc with the title, size, medium, and a brief description of each piece.

- Please do not stick any labels to the front of the disc.

- Place your name and address on CD or DVD sleeve.
For Early Action deadlines and decisions, you can submit your completed application according to the following deadlines. You will be considered automatically for merit scholarships if all of your application materials have been submitted by March 2. After March 2, CIA will continue to accept students based on rolling admission and will review completed applications throughout the academic year.
CIA Early Action Application Deadlines:

Dec 1 Early Action 1
Jan 15 Early Action 2
Mar 2 Regular decision deadline for first-time freshmen

Application Deadlines for Transfer Students:

Nov 15 Regular transfer student decision deadline for spring semester
Jun 1 Regular transfer student decision deadline for fall semester

Visit cia.edu/apply for more information on applying as a:

- First-time freshman
- Transfer student
- International student
- U.S. veteran
- Non-degree seeking student
Majors
Animation
Biomedical Art
Ceramics
Drawing
Game Design
Glass
Graphic Design
Illustration
Industrial Design
Interior Architecture
Jewelry+Metals
Painting
Photography+Video
Printmaking
Sculpture