

## Words of Wisdom from Wesley Mancini on Portfolios...

-In general there was a lack of focus in many portfolios. Students not knowing who they are or what they wanted to be were evident. For instance, if a student wants to be a woven designer there is no need to see an example of their sculpture represented in their portfolio.

-Edit work out. There was a lot of redundancy across the board, even in the graduate students work. Exploration of a certain weave structure or warp can be said with one or two samples instead of fifteen. Select the best of each example in each category showing an array of varied looks. Edit the best and remove the rest. A portfolio with examples of A, B and C quality work averages out to be a "B" quality portfolio while a condensed portfolio of "A" quality works leaves an impression of WOW.

-Eliminate the verbiage. Work should speak for itself. No one is going to take time and read during an interview.

-Have work that is functional. Many portfolio samples had no end use in mind they were purely experimental. In a Masters program work especially should be beyond exploratory and actually be functional.

-Don't justify work with excuses. If it is not good enough to be in the portfolio don't have the piece in it. No rationalization of blurry images or non-repeats, etc.

-If a student is a painter then it is vital that they can paint, especially a realistic flower. As an assignment some students had to duplicate an actual printed fabric. The "knock off" was right on. However, in their own work they could not paint or draw in an acceptable manner suitable for hire.

-When showing a collection be sure there is an assortment of scale and density in the designs. Just because everything is similar doesn't make it a good collection.

-Color is a major issue. Colors should be salable not oppressive and depressing nor should they be highly individual. There was a general lack of understanding of color in many ways, for example when painting assorted color ways, values need to be in the same position in all color ways. Therefore the darkest color should be where the darkest color is in all palettes.

-Portfolios of a specific technique do not show range. For example a portfolio of Shibori techniques may be pretty but it has no translation into the real world. It only illustrates knowledge of a technique that is not used except in a very specific artisan.

Portfolios should be concise examples of top-notch focused examples that have an end use in mind and not artistic explorations. You are creating designers not artists. They have to learn to design for a specific market and learn that aesthetic and have a body of work that represents that understanding in order to land that first job.

I loved the work. It made me remember being young again. There was talent in everyone who showed us his or her portfolios. Now it's time to harness and direct their talents. Good Luck.

My best, Wesley Mancini