Having strong documentation of your work is essential to your career. The images and video you present of your work and process can communicate a lot about your approach to your craft.

Your online portfolio is an ongoing project. Document your work as you make it. Build time into your schedule to take photographs, video, or screenshots of finished work and the process.

You should have images readily available that you can showcase on your website and share via email for job, grant, and residency applications, online shops, and attracting clients. Your portfolio should be updated as your work evolves. It doesn't need to include all of your work and should be edited over time to represent the kind of work you want to make in the future.

DOCUMENTATION
Make sure you take time to document your work properly. For a viewer, it's very difficult to separate quality of the artwork from quality of the documentation. Because we're so close to our work, it can be hard to see images of our work objectively. If you're not confident in photographing your work, enlist a friend or hire a professional.

Portfolio images can communicate:
• Medium and range
• Scale and dimensions
• Material and texture
• Scope of work
• Usage or display
• Process

Photography Tips
• Take straightforward images of your work.
• Avoid cropping, unless it's necessary to show details.
• Take multiple shots of each piece. Shoot more than you need and edit down.
• If the work is three-dimensional or site-specific, try shooting from different angles and distances.
• If shooting on a background, choose your surfaces wisely. If you don't have access to a professional setup find clean non-distracting surfaces. Floors or illustration board can work well.
• If you include your hands within the frame, make sure you take off rings and jewelry that are not part of the artwork. Fingernails should look clean and nail polish should not be chipped.

• Download your first set of images and make sure they look good before you keep going.
• Avoid doing major repairs in Photoshop.
• Remember that a scanner is also a useful tool to document work.

Process or Sketches
You can show work that was part of a short excercise or a longer process, but label it as such.

SAVING FOR WEB
Save multiple versions of your files for web and print purposes. Dimensions online change all the time. Keep original high-res images and media files for all of your work. Save corrected files separately. Your files should be optimized for the web and email. Most web and social media platforms provide guidelines for optimal resolution and dimensions.

Keep folders for:
• Original high-res images (300dpi or higher)
• High-resolution corrected images (images for print should be in CMYK)
• Screen-resolution corrected images (see below for details)

File Formats
• Images must be RGB, and at screen resolution (72–150dpi)
• Screen resolution will deter people from printing images found online or stealing for commercial purposes
• JPG is the best format for web
• PNG is an option for simple graphics / icons / logos and for images that need transparency
• GIF is used for animation
• Use the Adobe "Save for Web" tool
• Keep files size under 1MB

File Names
Include your first and last name in your file name. Proper names make files easier to organize and embed them with information that makes them more traceable online. People can change file names once they download your images, however most don't. If someone downloads your piece, then your name is right there in the file and it will be easier to locate.

Establish a system for yourself, and be consistent. Include:
• First and last name
• Series or image title
• Year of creation

Portfolio Basics: Digital Documentation

For example:
- Jane-Smith_Leaf_2016.jpg
- Jane-Smith_NextGen_Logo_01.jpg

LABELING YOUR WORK ONLINE
Adding text descriptions and choosing file names serve many purposes. The main benefit of descriptions are to:
- Properly label your work
- Support your images
- Demonstrate your ability to write and communicate
- Help search engines to find your work and increase your visibility in web and images searches

Text that Helps Support Your Images:
- Image artist / author
- Series title
- Image title
- Year of creation
- Dimensions
- Client work or self-initiated
- Project description

Adding Credits
- Get permission to use photos that you did not take of your work. For example, you can credit Photobooth if you use it.
- If you show student work for a fictional client, make sure it's labeled, for example, "student work".
- If you're using work that you complete for a firm or company (freelance or as an employee), you may not be able to show that work on your own site. Ask before posting.
- Properly credit collaborators. You can also choose to add a link to collaborators' websites.

COPYRIGHT & METADATA
Posting work online exposes you to both opportunities and risks. The material you share online is always public. Once you upload media online anyone can share it, link to it, download or take a screenshot, and redistribute the work. Strategies like naming files and adding context to your work online helps to protect it. You can take steps to add information that links the file back to you by using metadata and attributing licenses.

Metadata
Metadata is information that travels with an image behind the scenes. Some of this information is generated by the technology that captures it, such as image size, date of creation, and color profiles. Additional information can be created in programs like Adobe Photoshop and embedded into images and websites with code. Metadata can include image title, author, keywords, and descriptive captions.

Creative Commons
Creative Commons is a free way to protect your online content like images and video. Creative Commons partners with sites like Flickr and YouTube to create a standard across the internet to define and label how content can be shared and used for different applications.