

An excerpt from “The Graphic Designer’s Guide to Portfolio Design”

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Most employers agree that the design portfolio should be made of about 10 to 20 pieces of recent, original work. These pieces should demonstrate your strength and experience in design, as well as highlight skill areas of particular interest to you. In sum, you must use your portfolio to create a coherent, comprehensive message about yourself as a designer.

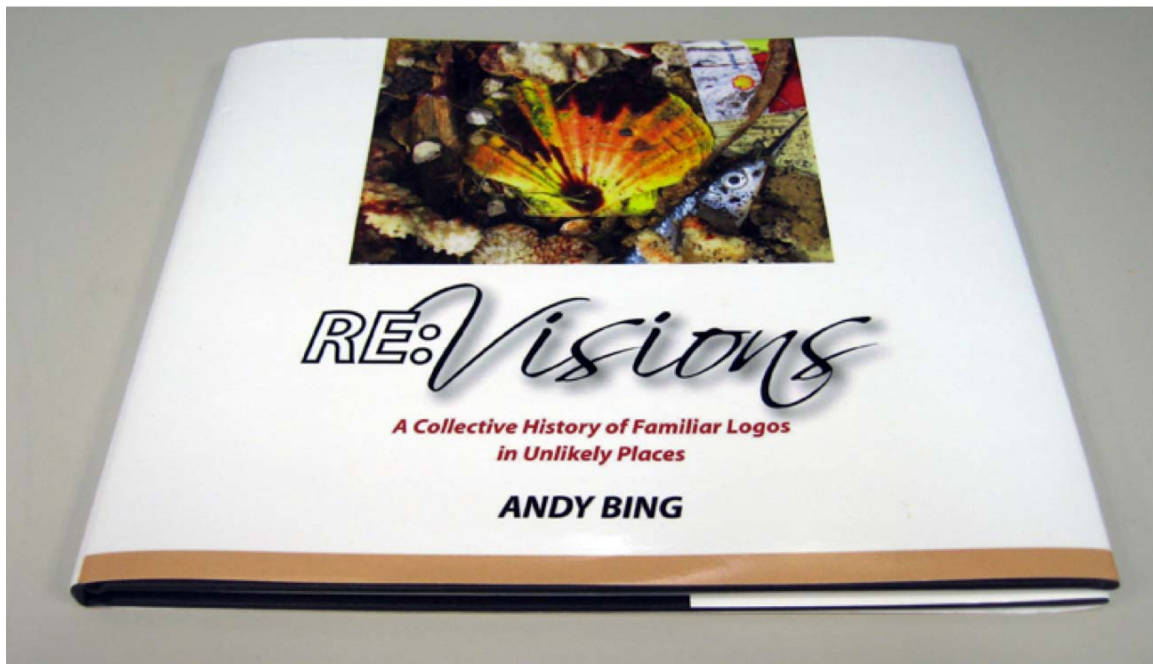
Before we go much further here, though, I want to stress that there really are no right or wrong pieces to include in your port. That said, you should also be aware that the first piece viewed by the employer is the most critical; it sets the tone for what is to come. So a good rule of thumb is to select your finest piece of art as the first. It should be visually provoking and conceptually clear. And it must be perfect: no mistakes of any kind. Remember, you are setting the stage for what is to come. Even a typo in some copy will give a negative impression.

One option is to consider a custom created book of your art. Low cost technologies allow you to develop and print a soft cover or hardcover book. The quality is so high that they are virtually indistinguishable from commercially printed books. You just can't tell the difference! How do the companies accomplish this? With extremely high-resolution printers from Hewlett-Packard or Xerox. These printers can faithfully reproduce the colors of your photos and because they can print across several pages, they are quite cost effective.



There are a number of different companies for you to investigate. They all have the ability to create your photography book directly from their web site. You create the design of your book from provided templates, upload the file and a bound book complete with a rich colorful printed cover sleeve arrives in about two weeks. One of the best is Blurb (www.blurb.com). The results are beyond belief! Blurb creates books directly from your PDF files.

Apple Computer Company also has a terrific site – iPhoto books. iPhoto uses preset templates. You drag your photos or art onto template pages, add text and captions, hit a button, and *voilà*... your newly created book arrived in a few weeks. The software also lets you create calendars and greeting cards of your photography or and of your art for that matter – great for give-a-ways! iPhoto works for both Macs and PCs.



Caption: Andy Bing has created a beautiful book of his design's using the services provided by Picaboo. Not only is the color reproduction work excellent, the book can be made with a wrap a round cover to create a most professional presentation.

The process of getting a book printed at Picaboo (www.picaboo.com) is easy as well. Not only can you work with templates, but Picaboo allows you to completely customize your book by creating your own page layouts. Picaboo is designed to work with PCs.

There are other ways to create photo books as well. Snapfish and MyPublisher © both offer some great features. MyPublisher offers a you the ability to create an over sized coffee-table size photo book that is quite remarkable. MyPublisher also offers 8 unique book styles and over 200 page layouts to choose from. These are choices of color for your book's pages and even leather covers. Plus, My Publisher has a plug-in for iPhoto. Snapfish (a division of Hewlett-Packard,) creates photo books, as well as mugs, mousepads, notebooks, keepsake photo plates, BBQ aprons, and calendars. Any of these items might make terrific self promotional items to help people remember you and your designs.



Caption: MyPublisher © offers a variety of options for your book designs and is available for both the Macintosh and PC computers.

Lulu is yet another publishing option. (www.lulu.com) Their website has a very thorough step-by-step process which will enable you to create a professional book design featuring your photography. You pick a design, and add caption to explain your ideas. They offer templates you can follow or you can send a PDF file of your designed book, and simply have them print it, at the same prices.

One thing is for sure. Your newly created book will really catch the attention of the

people who view it. A book comes with an implied level of importance. A book looks significant. Your work will not only look its best but it will get more attention as well!