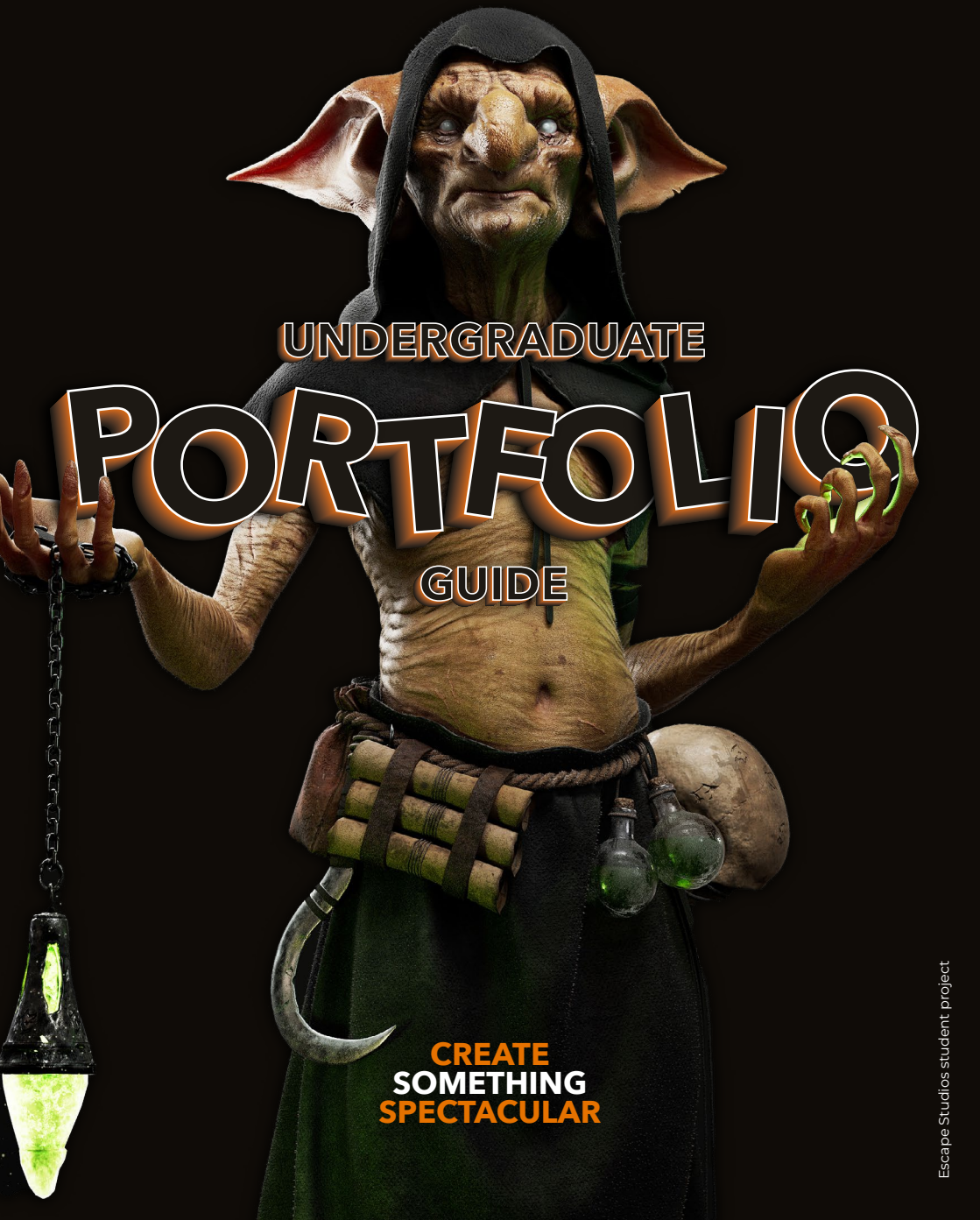
ESCAPE
STUDIOS



UNDERGRADUATE PORTFOLIO GUIDE

CREATE
SOMETHING
SPECTACULAR

Escape Studios student project

Escape Studios student projects

A NOTE FROM DR IAN PALMER

PRINCIPAL OF ESCAPE STUDIOS

The most common question that I get asked by prospective students is **"what do you want to see in my portfolio?"**. The short answer is **"we don't mind, whatever you want to put in it"**!

I know that's not very helpful (although it's true), so we have put together this guide to help you build up your portfolio of work.

We know you may have work that is incomplete, or maybe you haven't studied arty subjects before, but don't worry. We're much more interested in seeing your creative/ imaginative side and your ability to develop your ideas than a perfect polished piece of art.
So send us what you have!

THE PRACTICAL STUFF

WHERE TO PUT YOUR PORTFOLIO

After you apply and are invited to submit an online portfolio, you will need to provide a URL to your portfolio of work that's hosted on an external platform.

This could be for example:

- Google Drive/OneDrive
- ArtStation
- Dropbox
- Your own website
- Vimeo/YouTube for a video reel

HELPFUL TIP!

To avoid delays in your application, make sure your link is not password protected or due to expire, so our tutors can access your work!

TYPES OF WORK YOU COULD INCLUDE

Some types of work are more relevant to certain courses.
See course guidance later in this guide for specific examples.

3D WORK	ANIMATIONS	BLOGS	STORYBOARDS
PAINTINGS	DIGITAL ART	MODELS	SHOWREELS
SCULPTURES	SKETCHES/ DRAWINGS	VIDEOS	PHOTOGRAPHY
CODING TOOLS	PROGRAMMING	STOP MOTION	LIFE DRAWING

GENERAL TOP TIPS

PUT YOUR BEST WORK FIRST

Let your best work make the first impression! Then you know our tutors have seen what you're capable of.

SHOW DEVELOPMENT

Not everything needs to be 'finished'. We want to see how you develop your ideas (including any notes or scribbles).

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE A SPECIFIC SOFTWARE EXPERT

That's what we're here to teach you! We're looking for evidence of your talent and creativity.

THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH YOU INCLUDE

Quality is more important than quantity. Think about "why am I proud of this piece?" or "what techniques are being showcased?".

MAKE SURE YOUR WORK IS ORIGINAL

We are assessing your suitability for studying with us. If there's work you collaborated with someone on, be clear about your contributions.

TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR WORK

Arrange your work in a way that's easy for us to access, and provide a variety of work if you can. Show us you care!

YOUR SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Alongside your portfolio, you can also submit an optional supporting statement. If you do, this will be reviewed by our tutors with your portfolio of work.

Your supporting statement can be:

WRITTEN
(NO MORE THAN 500 WORDS)

A VIDEO
(NO LONGER THAN 2 MINUTES)

AN AUDIO RECORDING
(NO LONGER THAN 2 MINUTES)

WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

If you decide to include a supporting statement, this can be a good place to include the following information for our tutors to consider.

CONTEXT
Was the piece for school coursework? A passion project? Did it turn out the way you imagined?

HOW YOU MADE DECISIONS
What was the inspiration for your initial idea and how did it develop? What would you do differently next time?

INDIVIDUAL VS GROUP WORK
It's important for us to know if any of the work you submit is not completely your own.

YOUR BACKGROUND
Have you studied creative subjects before? Are you more creative or technically minded?

OUR UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

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2D OR 3D

THE ART OF COMPUTER ANIMATION

TUTOR BLOG

Check out Alex, our Dean of Animation and VFX's blog at escapestudios animation.blogspot.com

2D ANIMATION

This course follows 2D specialist modules using traditional drawing skills and leveraging them through digital tools, sketch-visualisation, backgrounds, lighting and shading.

3D ANIMATION

A range of industry-standard 3D animation techniques are covered on this course alongside animation mechanics like locomotion, flexibility and weight.

DRAWINGS

We'd love to see final pieces along with any sketches that led to the creation or design of the work. Life drawing examples are also great to see.

ANIMATION

It's great if you've had a go at some kind of animation, whether it's hand-drawn, digital or some stop motion on your phone.

DIGITAL WORK

Try your hand at free software like Blender, or any 2D drawing tool. We're happy to see any kind of animation experimentation in any medium. While you don't have to have digital work, it may be beneficial to have a go at using it.

STORYBOARDING

This is the initial conceptual process that's needed before any feature can be made and gives animators a chance to create frame by frame ideas. This will allow us to see your creative thought process.

"The perfect portfolio shows a blend of creativity and technical skill. It's nice to see a mixture of traditional media, such as drawing and 3D artwork.

ALEX WILLIAMS
Dean of Animation and Visual Effects

BA (HONS)/MArt

CHARACTER CREATION FOR ANIMATION, GAMES & VFX

The role of Character Creator is to bring characters to life. This course approaches character creation for different outputs such as VFX, games or virtual reality, covering theory alongside technical and artistic approaches.

DRAWINGS

If you've done life drawing, or perhaps your own character drawings then we would like to see them from all angles, and variations on a theme.

ANIMATIONS

You could include some simple animation in your portfolio to showcase a knowledge of locomotion.

SCULPTING

Either in traditional clay, or digitally with free software, to demonstrate.

HELPFUL TIP!

FREE SOFTWARE YOU COULD TRY:
Blender or ZBrush Core Mini

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"In your portfolio, we like to see what problems you are solving and see how you have approached realistic anatomy or any other studies of a 'style'.

MICHAEL DAVIES
Head of Creative Technology

BA (HONS)/MArt

THE ART OF VIDEO GAMES

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This course teaches students to get to grips with developing assets and scenes for use in video games. Students learn through projects using the latest 3D software and techniques including modelling, texturing and lighting for a modern game engine.

DRAWING SKILLS

This can be life drawing, concept work or observational showing that demonstrates you have an eye for detail.

3D WORK

The Game Art course is 3D-based, so show us some examples of using some free software such as Unreal Engine or Blender.

SKETCHBOOKS

These will give us an insight into your idea creation process and how you follow that through to the final pieces.

SHOWREEL

This needn't be longer than a couple of minutes as long as you include your best work. If you've made a game make sure you send us something we can view easily, not just a project file.

"If I saw a portfolio with good observational drawing then that would be just as good as if it was something done in Photoshop.

SIMON FENTON
Dean of Interactive and Real Time

BSc (HONS)/MSci

VIDEO GAMES DESIGN

This is a highly focused digital games course that teaches design from concept to implementation, developing gameplay, environments and user experiences.

YOUR OWN GAME DESIGN

Maybe you have used Unreal Engine and Blueprints, Unity and C#, Python or even Scratch to make a game. If you have created your own game design and it is still in a word document, then this is great! We would like to see that!

DRAWINGS

Even better, if you have supporting drawings etc. to show us your vision of how your game design could come together in the end.

PROBLEM SOLVING

We would also like to see examples of your process and problem solving. Please show us the development of your projects; how you got from initial idea to final product.

HELPFUL TIP!

FREE SOFTWARE YOU COULD TRY:
Unreal Engine or other free engines like RPG Maker

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"We would like to see examples of work in 2D or 3D. It could be examples of games you have made, tools or projects that use some form of coding.

MICHAEL DAVIES
Head of Creative Technology

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BSc (HONS)/MSci

TECHNICAL ART FOR GAMES & VFX

This programme is for students who love problem solving and finding creative solutions. Technical Artists are the bridge between code and art. They write scripts and use code and maths that enable artists to make amazing but efficient visuals.

3D WORK

If you have created work in a 3D package, we would like to see that, but whether it is computer or paper based, we want to see work that demonstrates your passion and creativity.

SUPPORTING ARTWORK

This can be sketches, notes, fine art, photography... show how you developed your idea and overcame problems to realise your final product.

TECHNICAL EXAMPLES

Perhaps you've made some tools or projects that use some form of coding. We'd love to see you're comfortable with these types of systems. What was a problem you ran into? How did you solve it?

HELPFUL TIP!

FREE SOFTWARE YOU COULD TRY:
Unreal Engine or Houdini Apprentice

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PROGRAMMING FOR GAMES AND VFX

Programmers use coding for innovative solutions and can work across games, films and animation. Our tutors are looking for technical proficiency and creative thinking.

PROGRAMMING WORK

E.g. websites, apps, games, open-source projects, hackathons, code snippets. Work in one or more programming languages (e.g. Python or JavaScript) would be helpful.

NON-DIGITAL WORK

This could be flowcharts, plans/development of digital projects, or tangible items like circuit boards, robotics, or interactive installations.

OTHER SKILLS

Work that demonstrates teamwork, project management, understanding of algorithms/data structures, or in creative fields like digital art/storytelling, doesn't need to be in coding.

FREE SOFTWARE YOU COULD USE

You could try game engines like **Unreal Engine/Unity**, 3D creation in **Blender**, version control like **GitHub**, or code editors like **Visual Studio Code**.

"A programming portfolio should showcase a blend of technical and creative problem solving."

MICHAEL DAVIES
Head of Creative Technology

BA (HONS)/MArt

THE ART OF VISUAL EFFECTS

There are two elements to our VFX course:

COMPOSITING
Compositors bring everyone's work together to make the final seamless VFX that amazes audiences in the cinema and on TV.

3D VFX
3D artists create models and environments building the worlds and objects in modern films and TV.

3D WORK

We recommend you're somewhat familiar with software, mainly Autodesk Maya. You can download a free trial of Maya on their website.

PHOTOGRAPHY

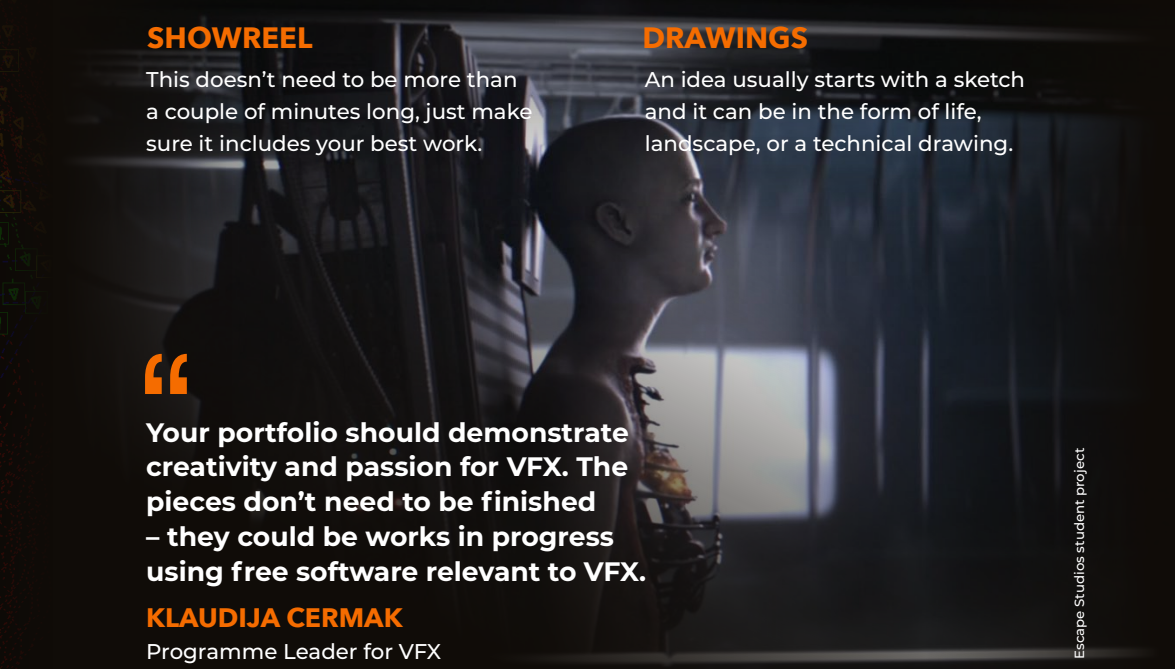
We want to hear why you took particular shots and how different lighting and effects were achieved. If you edited your photos, tell us how and why.

SHOWREEL

This doesn't need to be more than a couple of minutes long, just make sure it includes your best work.

DRAWINGS

An idea usually starts with a sketch and it can be in the form of life, landscape, or a technical drawing.



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"Your portfolio should demonstrate creativity and passion for VFX. The pieces don't need to be finished – they could be works in progress using free software relevant to VFX."

KLAUDIJA CERMAK
Programme Leader for VFX

BA (HONS)/MArt

CONCEPT ART AND EXPERIENCE DESIGN

This course focuses on design for games, animation, film and thematic environments in experiential design for branded events, theme parks, interiors and museums.

DRAWING SKILLS

This is important for a Concept Artist. Show understanding of gesture, form, shape design... this could be from life drawings or your own designs.

IDEA DEVELOPMENT

Show your ability to take an idea and turn it into a fleshed-out product. Show development of your concepts - we're interested in how you got there.

DESIGNS

Original character, vehicle, prop, architecture, environment or similar designs which demonstrate understanding of how they are typically used in the Concept Art field.

DIGITAL WORK

Such as 3D, digital painting, photo-bashing / matte painting, model making, photography, graphic design, industrial design or any other relevant work.

Image courtesy of Atomhawk

"We're looking for students who are passionate about visual storytelling, character development, or experiential design.

JIM RUSSELL
Concept Art tutor

"You don't need to have done motion design before, but we're looking for a good sense of design and visual composition.

ALEX WILLIAMS
Dean of Animation and Visual Effects

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THE ART OF MOTION GRAPHICS

Motion Graphics combines a variety of 2D and 3D elements, as well as live action to create dynamic, colourful visuals, infographics, special sequences for films, video game animations, film titles and promos.

COMPUTER SKILLS

Most work will be produced on a computer, so it's essential that you have a good familiarity with computer software.

ART SKILLS

The strongest Motion Designers have skills adjacent to design. These are disciplines which feed into motion graphics and will elevate your work. Even basic drawing skills are a plus.

MOTION GRAPHICS SOFTWARE

We mainly use **Adobe After Effects** and, for 3D work, **Cinema 4D**. Both programmes offer free trial periods - try some simple tutorials to see how you get on.

CREATIVE WORK

We'd love to see design work like drawings, painting, life drawing, sketches, scribbles, or 3D digital artwork.

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▸ **escapestudios.ac.uk**

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