Preparing and Submitting a Portfolio for the FotoClave Portfolio Workshop

Definition of a Portfolio

A portfolio is a collection of images arranged in a sequence that represents a coherent body of work that reflects your personal style and photographic interest. A Portfolio has a theme or concept.

The theme can be anything. The images in your portfolio should explore that theme. The theme should be expressed in the title of your portfolio. One challenge is to have a theme that is broad enough to be interesting but narrow enough that you can give the viewer a better understanding of the subject in just a few images. "Flowers" is probably too broad a theme and a poor title. "Flowers of California Vernal Ponds" is better. Is "Views of a Fountain Pen" too narrow? Perhaps. Unless you are clever enough to show the viewer something about a fountain pen they had not considered before. Then it might be great!

For ease of discussion, for this workshop we look only at projected images. We ask all workshop participants to submit one portfolio. The workshop leaders will select portfolios to discuss, based on the time available. We may not discuss all submissions; whether or not a submission is discussed does not imply anything about the quality of the portfolio, rather that its discussion will provide a positive learning experience for anyone attending the workshop.

Portfolios for the entry-level PSA Portfolio Distinction consist of 10 images. The N4C competition will allow between 7 and 10 images. Both competitions also require an Overview Image, and a Statement of Intent. To keep things simple, for this workshop only the images and a title will be required. If you wish to create a Statement of Intent and/or an Overview Image, go for it!

At first reading, this document may seem overwhelming. But we urge you not to spend too much time trying to make your first portfolio "assessment ready". It is much more important just to get *something* submitted. Imperfection may even be a virtue, as this is intended to be a learning experience for all participants.

Creating a Portfolio

Usually when creating a portfolio, you will have a theme or concept in mind and go out and make images to tell the story of your theme. This process could take several days – or several years!

The other approach (and the one you will probably use for this workshop!) is to look through your archive of pictures and select those which fit a theme that interests you. On your first pass, turn off your "internal critic" and select as many images as possible that *might* fit your theme. Then start whittling the images down, looking for ones that best explicate the theme, complement each other, and are technically the best – in that

order of priority. Keep repeating this process until you have selected between 7 and 10 images that work best together to share your concept with the viewer. Don't be afraid to set your work aside and work on it again another day.

Once you have selected your images, decide in what order they should be viewed. Think of each image as a scene in a movie. A photograph of a knife followed by a photograph of one hand grasping another may make you think of someone being stabbed. The reverse order may imply the start of a meal.

Technical Requirements

If you are familiar with N4C competition requirements, portfolio requirements are no different.

- Images must be exactly 1920 pixels wide and no more than 1200 pixels high OR exactly 1200 pixels high and no more that 1920 pixels wide. (Note: for the PSA Portfolio Program the vertical dimension is 1080 pixels.)
- The resolution should be ignored.
- The image must be in JPEG format
- Specifying the Maximum JPEG quality is recommended.
- The images should be in the sRGB color space.
- Please, no copyrights on the image. No need to worry about security — we are using a secure photo hosting site, so your images will be safe.

Submitting your Portfolio to the Workshop

Our image submission service is being provided by the photo-sharing site SlickPic.com. To upload your portfolio, go to http://slickpic.us/2147993jQxM. In order for us to keep track of which portfolios belong to who, you will need to create a free "Guest Upload Account", or you can use your existing account, if you have one.

Title each image in your portfolio in the following manner:

<S5 or S6>_<Portfolio Title>[x of y]<optional image title>.jpg

Where y is the number of images in your portfolio and x is the sequence number in your portfolio. S5 or S6 designates which of the two sessions of the Portfolio Workshop you signed up for. For example:

S5_Bridge for a Working City[4 of 10]Delany Street Park.jpg

Cutoff date for submissions is 5:00 PM October 3, 2019.

OPTION 1: The Statement of Intent

If you wish to go beyond the basic core of seven to ten images, the Statement of Intent should be the next thing you attempt. Developing a concise, yet complete, Statement of Intent will often help you in selecting and sequencing the images in your portfolio.

The Statement of Intent is what you intend to portray with your images; the message or feeling you want the viewer to take away. The Statement of Intent is not about technical matters (equipment, f/stop and the like) and is not a description of the individual images.
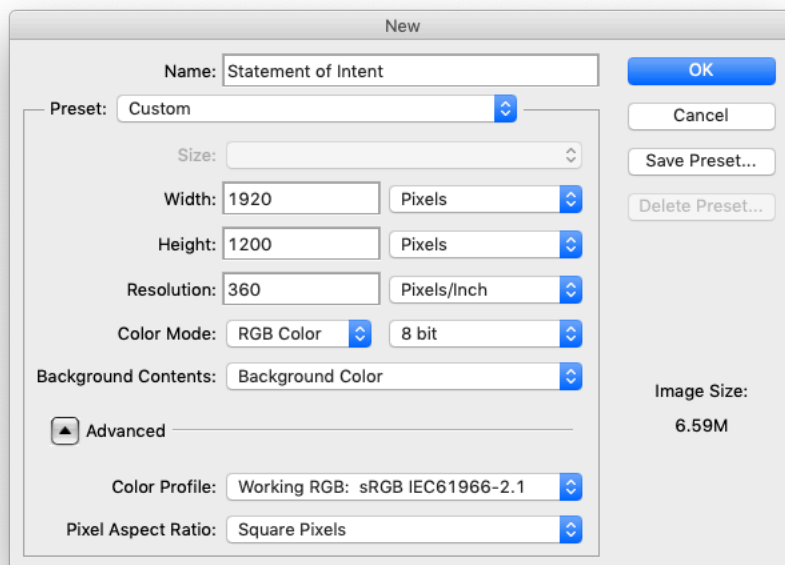
The Statement of Intent will be the first image of your portfolio. The first line should be the title of the work. PSA requires the title to be 5 words or fewer, N4C will allow up to 10. Subsequent lines should describe your intent in making this work: what message or feeling do you want the viewer to take away? This statement must be no longer than 75 words (fewer words is often better). Writing a good Statement of Intent can be the most challenging aspect of creating a portfolio, but it is one of the things that distinguishes a portfolio from other forms of photography.

Theme, Title and Statement of Intent all must work together.

For this workshop, you can print out your Statement of Intent and bring it with you. If your portfolio is selected for discussion, you can read your statement, or ask one of the workshop leaders to read it.

If you want to include your Statement of Intent in the presentation, there are several ways to create an image with a title and Statement of Intent. One recommendation is to prepare the text in your favorite word processor, e.g. Microsoft Word or Apple Pages. These programs can display the word count, which will help you stay within the 75-word limit. Select the text and copy it to the clipboard.

Next, open up your image editing program (e.g. Photoshop). Set the background color to black. Create a new document (in Photoshop this would be *File>New…*) with the following parameters:
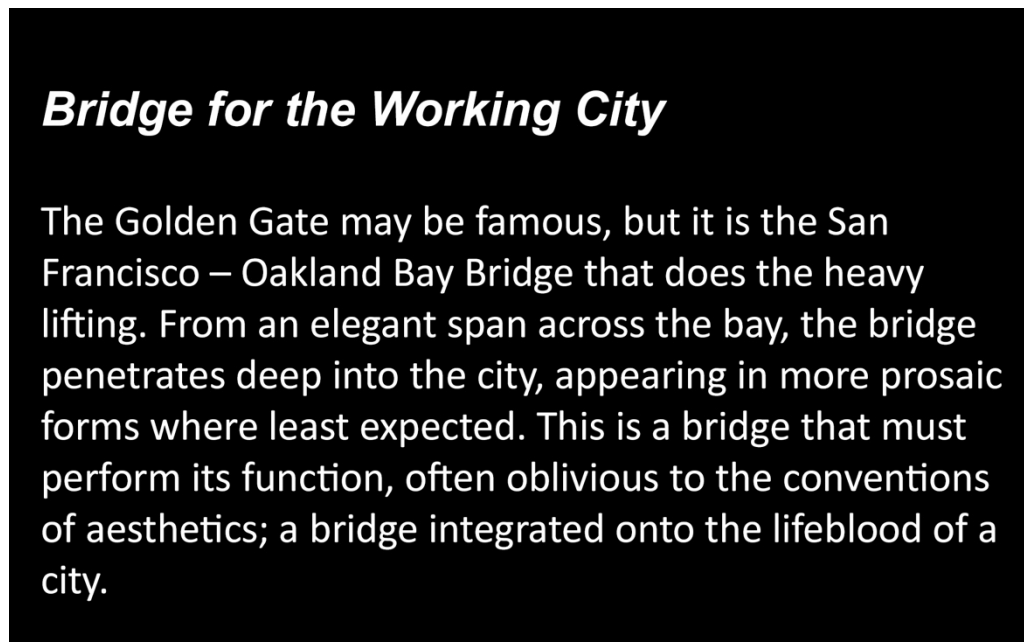
Select the Text Tool ⊤. Make sure the foreground color is white and drag the tool from just inside the top left-corner to just inside the bottom-right corner.

Paste the text from the clipboard with *Edit>Paste* or *cmd V* on the Mac, *ctrl V* on Windows.

Make whatever adjustments to the text you desire using the tools in the image editing program. For example, set the title to **bold,** and adjust the font size so that the text just fits inside the frame. This example produces white text on a black background, but you can choose whatever colors you like, just make sure it is readable!

Save the file in JPEG format.

Here is an example of a Statement of Intent. The title is 18-point Arial and the body is 16-point Calibri.

> ## *Bridge for the Working City*
>
> The Golden Gate may be famous, but it is the San Francisco – Oakland Bay Bridge that does the heavy lifting. From an elegant span across the bay, the bridge penetrates deep into the city, appearing in more prosaic forms where least expected. This is a bridge that must perform its function, often oblivious to the conventions of aesthetics; a bridge integrated onto the lifeblood of a city.

OPTION 2: The Overview Image

If you have successfully created a Statement of Intent Image, you may want to tackle creating an Overview Image.

The second image in your submission will be the Overview Image. The Overview image will contain smaller versions of the other images in your portfolio in the order you want your images viewed. More than just an index, the overview image will be used by the assessors as a tool to help them assess how the images work together. As just one example, if two adjacent images have skies with unintentionally different shades of blue, this will typically distract the viewer and lower the effectiveness of your portfolio. Consequently, the images on the Overview Image must accurately reflect the corresponding individual images in all respects except for size. For example, they must have the same aspect ratio, color balance, tonal quality and cropping as the

corresponding full-sized image. Therefore, you must complete all editing and have saved your images as JPEG before creating the Overview Image.

Note that in PSA Portfolio Assessments, the assessors pay a great deal of attention to the arrangement of the images on the Overview Image, borders, margins, etc.; they treat the Overview image as a piece of artwork in and of itself. N4C assessors are not supposed to put so much weight on the Overview Image. However, we can't say that an exceptional Overview Image won't bias an assessor in your favor.

The following instructions assume you are creating your Overview Image in Photoshop. However, they should be readily adapted to other image editing programs.

1. Start by opening your image editing program and setting the background color. Generally, a neutral gray background will work best, although any color that doesn't clash with your images can work.
2. Now create a new document using the same procedure described for the Statement of Intent, except the Name should now be "Overview Image".
3. Keeping the Overview image open, open one of your portfolio images.
4. *Select all* (*cmd A* on the Mac, *ctrl A* on Windows)
5. *Edit>Copy* (*cmd/ctrl C*)
6. Navigate back to the Overview Image.
7. Paste the image into the document (*cmd/ctrl V*)

8. The image will likely be much too large. Resize it by selecting the tool. Hold down the shift key and drag one of the corner boxes toward the center of the image until the image is the appropriate size.
9. Move the cursor to the center of the image and drag it to the desired location.
10. Click on any other tool and the "Apply Transformation" dialog box appears. Click *Apply*.
11. The image will be placed on its own layer. You can move or resize an image at any time by selecting its layer and clicking *Edit>Transform>Scale*.
12. Repeat steps 3 through 10 for each of the ten images in your portfolio.
13. When all ten images are arranged as you desire, save the file in JPEG format.

Here is an example of an Overview Image: