

Illustration and Concept Art Admissions Portfolio Requirements

Applicants must submit a portfolio of exactly 15 pages in PDF format. The first three pages are mandatory drawing tests, while the remaining twelve pages must come from the specified portfolio categories. In addition, applicants are required to include a link within the PDF showing the process for one of the drawing test pieces (such as a time-lapse video or progress photos).

Format and Labeling:

Make sure that all pages of your portfolio are submitted in the same orientation and dimensions. Here are some possible formatting examples.

- Portfolio submission example #1: 8.5 x 11 inches Portrait (every page in the portfolio)
- Portfolio submission example #2: 11 x 8.5 inches Landscape (every page in the portfolio)

Add your full name typed at the bottom right of every page.

You will submit a PDF format of your portfolio to design@algonquincollege.com

You will name your file in the following manner:

YourLastName_YourFirstName_ICA_Portfolio Fall or Winter Year.PDF

Incorrect file naming or formatting may result in your portfolio not being reviewed.

Portfolio Recording Requirement:

In addition to the submitted portfolio pages, you must provide a short recording of your drawing process for **one art sample** (any piece of your choice). The recording should clearly show your workflow from start to finish to verify that the work is your own.

You may use any method to create your recording, including the following:

- **iPhone or smartphone timelapse** (Please click [HERE](#) for instructions for this method)
- **Procreate timelapse feature** (Please click [HERE](#) for instructions for this method)
- **Webcam recording** (position your webcam to show your drawing or painting; no need to share your screen if recording traditionally)

The recording should be short and simple. Editing or narration is not required.

Important: Please include a link to your recording **within your portfolio PDF**. The link can be added as text (e.g., “View Recording Here”) on the relevant page, or on a separate page at the end of your portfolio.

Click on this link to see what to avoid adding in your portfolio submission

[Dos and Don'ts for ICA Portfolio Submission](#)

Portfolio Section 1: Three Drawing Tests

Portfolio Page 1: Self-Portrait

Draw or paint a self-portrait in your own artistic “voice” or style. The goal of this test is to evaluate your ability to combine a likeness of yourself with your drawing/painting style, using light, shadow, and colour to create mood. This piece must be completed in colour.

Submit the following on one page:

1. A clear photo of yourself (reference).
2. A reference or sample that represents your drawing style.
3. Any thumbnails, concept sketches, or colour tests.
4. The final stylized self-portrait (should occupy at least 50% of the page layout).

Portfolio Page 2: Bedroom Interior Design

Create a bedroom interior based on the following description:

A 10-year-old child who loves adventure, values imagination, and is a bit messy. The bedroom should describe the child’s personality and story without the child present, using perspective, composition, and mood created through light, shadow, colour, and line.

On this page you must include the finished composition drawing in colour, which should occupy at least 50% of the layout. Supporting thumbnails, concept sketches, and/or colour tests should also be included to demonstrate your process and research.

Portfolio Page 3: Mini Comic (Three Panels Minimum)

Create a short, sequential comic that demonstrates your original storytelling skills using your own characters and artwork. The comic should clearly communicate a narrative while also showing effective use of composition, line, and visual flow. Applicants are expected to use mood, colour, light and shadow, line, or shading to enhance the storytelling.

On this page you must include the finished mini comic (at least three panels, presented in line art, inked, or in colour). Supporting thumbnails, concept sketches, and/or colour tests should also be included to demonstrate your process and development.

*****Please click [HERE](#) for more details and examples for the Three Drawing Tests*****

Portfolio Section 2:

Portfolio Pages 4–7: Life Drawing

Life drawing samples should demonstrate strong anatomy and proportion, dynamic posing with clear silhouettes, and confident use of line, volume, and weight. Heads, hands, and feet are important to include as part of this section.

Some applicants label their drawings with the time spent (e.g., 5 minutes, 20 minutes). Not all drawings need to be highly refined — quicker sketches are acceptable — but each piece should show strong foundational skills.

Examples of suitable studies may include:

- Hand, head, and foot studies (maximum of five per page).
- Gesture drawings showing weight, balance, and movement.
- Long pose studies demonstrating anatomy, proportion, and foreshortening.
- Anatomy studies demonstrating understanding of structure and form.

Avoid copying or tracing directly from a book or another artist's drawing.

Please click [HERE](#) for more detailed information and Life Drawing examples.

Portfolio Pages 8–11: Character / Creature Design

This section must demonstrate your ability to design original characters and creatures with distinctive silhouettes, expressive poses, solid anatomy, and strong use of line and colour.

Silhouette studies are required. This section must include one page displaying a set of 10 silhouettes, along with a fully rendered, full-colour version of your chosen silhouette presented on the same page.

In addition to the silhouettes, the other pages in this section should show:

- **Strong poses with personality** — characters or creatures that tell a story through dynamic posing, gesture, and acting.
- **Anatomy and proportion** — designs that demonstrate accurate structure while still showing creativity in shape and form.
- **Line and colour** — finished designs that use confident linework and effective colour choices to communicate personality.

Examples of ways to present this work may include:

- Create an expression sheet (three poses, three facial expressions, three hand gestures).
- Develop a character/creature exploration sheet (5–10 variations leading to a final colour render).
- Design a character lineup (multiple characters from the same world, showing contrast in shape and personality).
- Produce a character rotation (front, $\frac{3}{4}$ front, side, $\frac{3}{4}$ back, and back views).

Each of the four pages in this section should highlight a different aspect of your design ability and showcase variety.

Important: All characters and creatures must be original. Do not submit fan art. Avoid multiple headshots without context; aim for full-body poses and place your designs in situations or environments where possible.

Please click [HERE](#) for more detailed information and Character and Creature Design Samples.

Portfolio Pages 12–15: Environment and Prop Design

This section must demonstrate strong perspective, composition, and technical drawing skills. Your goal is to show that you can design environments and props with accuracy and clarity while still communicating mood and design intent.

Examples of suitable work may include:

- An environment drawing (interior or exterior) that demonstrates perspective and composition, supported by thumbnail or process sketches.
- A prop or object design sheet showing studies of the same object from multiple angles.
- Perspective-based drawings of buildings, staircases, furniture or objects to demonstrate technical control.

Choose the options that best represent your abilities. Work may be presented in line art, shaded, or in colour.

Important: Do not copy or trace from books or other artists' work. All designs must be your own.

Please click [HERE](#) for more detailed information and examples for this section.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Dainty at daintyc@algonquincollege.com