

ILLUSTRATION PRE-BFA

APPLICATION PROCESS + REQUIREMENTS 2021

Students are granted Illustration Pre-BFA status in the Department of Design through a portfolio review or as a recipient of a Talent Award. Obtaining Pre-BFA status is a prerequisite to apply for the Illustration BFA program, and is intended to be temporary, allowing students the opportunity to take additional courses in preparation for the BFA entrance review. Pre-BFA status does not guarantee or imply future acceptance to the BFA program. Application deadlines are in December, April, and June of each academic year. The application portal opens at designdept.slideroom.com thirty (30) days prior, and closes at 11:59 pm on the day of the deadline. See designdept.byu.edu or contact the Department of Design for more information at designdepartment@byu.edu

Application Procedures

1. **ARTWORK:** Prepare a selection of 8 to 12 examples of your best recent work. This should include pieces from the prerequisite DESIL 101 Drawing & Composition course. You may also include a few of your best pieces created in other classes, a few personal drawings, paintings, illustrations or digital artworks. Consider the Portfolio Guidelines for suggestions about how to select, photograph, organize, and present your work.
2. **FILE PREP:** Scan or photograph your drawings, paintings, and illustrations to create digital image files and edit them to represent your original artwork as faithfully as possible. Save these images, plus any digital artwork you want to include, as JPEG files up to 1800 pixels high, with file sizes of approximately 2MB or less.
3. **APPLICATION PORTAL:** Create an account at designdept.slideroom.com if you do not already have one, and upload your images to your online portfolio by following the instructions on SlideRoom. Complete the form electronically and submit it by the deadline.
4. **SKETCHBOOK:** Scan or photograph a selection of 10-20 pages of drawings and/or studies from your recent sketchbook(s), compile them into a single PDF file, and submit this file electronically in the appropriate section of your portfolio on SlideRoom.com. Include samples from the sketchbook you developed in DESIL 101 Drawing and Composition or equivalent courses. Individual pages/images should be saved as JPEG files no larger than 2MB and combined into a PDF file approximately 20MB or smaller. This digital sketchbook should not include your name if it is submitted online with your SlideRoom portfolio (for anonymity in the review).

Portfolio Guidelines: Illustration

Students often ask what the Illustration area faculty look for in a portfolio. We do not specify the particular contents of student portfolios—we believe students should make independent artistic decisions. However, the following principles and questions may help as you select examples of your work and prepare your portfolio.

Ideas: What themes, concepts, or narratives do you seek to express in your work? Do you have original stories to tell? Interesting perspectives to share? How do you communicate your thoughts and beliefs in pictures? What does your work say about you, your experiences, or the way you think? Understanding and solving real-world visual problems are important aspects of illustration practice. The best ideas often start out as rough sketches, creative experiments, or simple doodles. You may use photographs for reference, or other artists' work for inspiration when you create, but your portfolio should give precedence to *your own original work*, instead of master copies, fan art, or copies of photographs. Derivative works can be useful exercises for learning, but they have limited capacity to reveal your original thoughts. Include creative examples that showcase your interesting ideas.

Skills: What are your strongest abilities? How does your portfolio showcase the very best of what you can do? Successful illustrators are recognized for the distinctive, individual qualities of their work. One of the primary assets of an illustrator is the ability to draw well. Good drawing is clear, perceptive, sensitive, and aesthetically appealing. Draw both by observation from life and by imagination. Class assignments can help you develop and refine your skills. Students are not expected to be masters of every artistic medium, but it is valuable to show work that manifests good craftsmanship and emerging skill in one or more mediums—watercolor, gouache, acrylic, oil, digital, etc. Include examples of your work that prominently feature your best artistic skills.

Aesthetics: What are your visual tastes and preferences? Do you have a penchant for appealing shapes, compelling compositions, or pleasing color palettes? Does your work have a distinctive look, feel, or aesthetic voice? Successful illustrators understand and apply principles of design to attract, interest, inform and inspire viewers. Through research and practice, they create images that appeal to the visual senses. An important skill to develop is the ability to discern which of your pieces are more successful than others. As such, students are encouraged to make your own portfolio selections in consultation with trusted peers, with limited direction from faculty. Remember to include examples of your work that reveal your sense of aesthetic design.

Presentation: Another key to success as an illustrator is professional presentation. How do you photograph your artwork and edit the images to make them attractive, clear, and true to the original? Some free resources online can help. Capture images with a good quality imaging device. Large format scanners and cameras are available for student use at the Media Center in the Harold B. Lee Library (HBLL). Try to light your work brightly and evenly with your camera lens in focus. Consider shooting artwork outside on a cloudy day, or indoors near a large window. Watch out for shadows, glare, and hotspots in the lighting. Use a tripod and center the camera perpendicular to the artwork to avoid distortion. If you must use a mobile phone, take care not to cast shadows on the artwork with your body. Digitally adjust your images with appropriate levels of brightness, contrast, and clarity. Crop the artwork just slightly inside the border edge. Show that you care about your work and respect yourself as an artist by preparing your portfolio with thoughtful consideration for presentation.

Sketchbook: An illustrator's sketchbook is a document of the creative process. It may include preliminary or rough sketches, thumbnails, observational studies from life, visual experiments, notes, scraps and doodles. Sketchbooks are not meant to be carefully-curated works of art in and of themselves. Rather, they function as artistic laboratories where it is safe, expected, and even necessary to make mistakes and messes as part of the creative process. Interesting ideas and beautiful drawings may be captured in the sketchbook, but it should mainly function as an incubator and proving ground for creative ideas. At least one of your sketchbooks should feature assignments and preliminary work from DESIL 101 Drawing & Composition. To give the faculty a sense of your creative exploration, experiments, and concepts in development, include a sketchbook.