

Tips for Visual and Fine Arts Resumes

Inventory

Keep an inventory of your experience and training. Include exhibitions, community outreach, group projects, workshops, volunteer activities, etc. Also, keep a running list of workshops, seminars, and master classes.

(Do not include high school unless you are a freshman or attended a well-known, highly-respected program.) Update your inventory regularly.

When it is time to create a resume, refer to your ongoing inventory, and select the specific information that best relates to the position.

Resume Formatting

Opinions abound on what an artist's resume should "look like". One school of thought suggests that a resume should include pictures, logos, and other graphic elements. This approach can be effective but may not be the best choice in all circumstances. For example, when applying for grants, residencies, commissions, exhibitions, galleries, museums and arts centers, the College of Art Association suggests submitting a simple and straightforward resume. In its "Artist Resume Recommended Conventions," it says:

Easy to read fonts and type sizes (never below 10 point) help facilitate reading. Use white space well and do not submit your resume on colored paper. Do not use headshots, images or colored fonts. A beautifully prepared resume will not get you an exhibition opportunity if your art or its documentation is weak, but a poorly designed resume could cost you such an opportunity.

[An in-depth description of CAA Standards and Guidelines for artist resumes is found at: <https://www.collegeart.org/standards-and-guidelines/guidelines/resume>]

Bullet Points versus Text Blocks

Bullet points are recommended for resumes because they arrange information so that the eye can scan and read quickly and they help the reader keep track of her location on the page. This is especially important because employers typically scan a

resume for only 8-10 seconds to determine if the applicant is of interest.

Some people prefer to place their information in blocks of text rather than bullet points. While blocks of text may be visually appealing, the blocks of text disrupt eye flow, and make it difficult to keep track of progress on the page. Hurried readers may skip important information or miss the details you want them to know.

ATS-Friendly Resumes

Most online resumes are prescreened by Applicant Tracking Systems, computer software that seeks key words and experiences that are indicated in the posting. Although the software is evolving, many systems reject resumes with graphics or graphic embellishments. (If the system does not reject a resume with graphics, it will ignore the graphics, so do not embed critical information in the graphics.) Until all systems have been updated, keep these details in mind:

- Do not use templates. Many are incompatible with ATS software.
- Tables will be converted into one line of text.
- Do not use headers or footers.
- Do not use live hyperlinks.
- Do not use columns.
- Tables will be converted into one column of text.
- Use traditional section headings.
- Use key words and phrases.
- Sans serif fonts are best (Arial, Verdana, Calibri, Tahoma).
- Use consistent formatting.
- Save as a .doc or .docx document; some systems are not able to read a PDF saved as an image.

There are many thoughts, theories, and research on what makes a "good resume. Ultimately you are the designer, editor, and critic and you choose how you want to write and style your document. **Regardless of the format, what makes a resume "good" is that the content clearly demonstrates that you have the skills, background and experience that relate to a specific position.**