

## TECHNICAL TIPS FOR PREPARING WORK SAMPLES

The quality of a work sample is not synonymous with the quality of a piece of artwork. Besides selecting the most suitable piece to be reviewed by a selection reviewer, one of the important tasks for applicants is how to present their samples correctly and professionally. Below are a number of technical tips for applicants to use as a tool of reference when preparing their work samples.

### General guidance:

- **Always follow the funder's guidelines!** Pay close attention to file size requirements, cue point instructions, maximum number of samples accepted, and formatting instructions. *Consistency in format allows the reviewer to focus on content.*
- **If you're not sure, ask early!** If you have carefully studied the guidelines and still need clarification or guidance, contact the program staff as early as possible. Waiting until days before the deadline may result in unanswered questions from overwhelmed staff or not enough time to prepare for new instructions.

### Preparing CDs or DVDs

- Find out what kind of equipment your samples will be played on (Mac, PC, DVD player, etc.). Format and test your samples accordingly.
- Avoid placing stickers on your CDs or DVDs as this can jam equipment. Use a magic marker to write on the back of the disk when necessary.
- Label your samples appropriately and provide notes on navigating disks, menus, etc.
- Always test your work samples prior to submission. Many funders do not have the time or resources to prescreen samples.

### Preparing file uploads

- Make sure you upload the file in the format, resolution, length & size according to the requirement of the reviewer.
- Be mindful of image and sound quality after compression. Test the compressed sample before uploading to make sure the image & audio qualities are not lost in process (e.g. image doesn't become grainy when maximized to full screen projection). If possible, test the sample after uploading.
- Unless otherwise instructed, title each file as *ApplicantName#* (e.g. AndyWarhol1, AndyWarhol2, AndyWarhol3...) for order and clarity.

### Written sample description

- Use your written sample description to provide an inventory list of samples provided and a short description. This will provide context for the reviewer on various aspects of the samples as well as limitations, if any. Be prepared to provide the following for your samples:
  - Title of piece
  - Year of piece
  - Place/venue of documentation (if presented publicly)
  - Key artistic collaborators
  - Materials used for visual samples
  - Dimensions: height x width x depth for visual samples
  - Duration of video and audio samples
  - Total number of pages for manuscripts
  - Cue point for video and audio samples
- Include a succinct (20-40 words) description providing context for the sample, if guidelines allow. Long texts on the sample description may not be closely read.

## TIME-BASED SAMPLES (VIDEO & AUDIO)

### Video quality:

- Use separate microphones to record sound and protect audio quality.
- Consider more than one camera angle rather than just having one camera stationed at the back of the house.
- Use a tripod to stabilize the camera.
- Maintain a clear line of sight for the camera (i.e. make sure the camera's view isn't blocked by objects or audience).
- For dance recordings - Include the entire bodies of the dancers within the camera frame.
- If the recording conditions of your sample are not optimal, consider using your written sample description as a place to prepare the reviewer for suboptimal recording conditions. *For example: "single camera, back of house" or "amateur video recording" or "open rehearsal footage"*
- Sometimes grainy or otherwise low production quality video is still more desirable than still images. When making your selection, consider what video will allow the reviewer to see that images, music or text alone would not (e.g. quality of acting and directing).

### Length of sample:

- Include the sample in full (beginning to end), and cue to a point in the piece that you believe is compelling. Including the sample in full-length sometimes gives the reviewer the option to scroll forward in time to see how the piece progresses beyond the cue point. Check with the program guideline or staff to see if this is allowed.
- If you do choose to submit a brief clip of a piece (approx. 3 minutes), also provide the full-length piece on the same disk, if submitting on a DVD. Choose the most compelling section if you are required to show only a certain length of video/audio.

### Cueing:

- Cue your sample video to a segment approximately 3 minutes in length that you find most compelling. If you do not provide a cue, the reviewer will play from the beginning of the piece.
- Avoid cueing your sample video to moments when credits are rolling or other introductory information is being shown.

### Editing:

- Collaged video clips of different sections of a piece layered with non-project related music or text (format often used in promotional videos) are generally not appropriate for the review process as it may take away from understanding the piece in its original form.
- For durational performance art pieces (i.e. long hours of recording of a single piece), edited footage could be appropriate. Contact the program staff for guidance.
- For curators of group shows or festivals where numerous artists will be showcased, an edited reel may be most appropriate. Contact the program staff for guidance.

## VISUAL SAMPLES (STILL IMAGES)

### Image quality:

- Fill the frame without cropping the edges of the piece itself.
- Apply even and consistent lighting.
- Protect color subtleties of the piece by learning to use camera settings (e.g. white scale, color contrast, etc.).
- If background is shown, it should be neutral (white, black, grey).
- Remove all extraneous objects/people from frame, unless they are necessary to demonstrate scale, setting and other contextual detail.

### View & shot options:

- Consider whether more than one view would be beneficial to understanding a piece.
- Use a close-up view to show important details of the piece that can't be seen when viewed in full. Make sure to still provide a shot of the entire piece for the reviewer, nevertheless.
- Use three-dimensional view that covers the piece in its entirety and in the space that it's presented when the piece itself is three-dimensional, the piece combines separate pieces of components, or when demonstrating the piece's relationship with its site & surroundings. This is typically known as an installation shot.
- Only include a person in the camera shot when the piece contains an interactive or performance element. In that case include the person(s) necessary for the demonstration and couple it with another image showing the piece by itself. A video recording is another option for this situation.

## TEXT-BASED SAMPLES (MANUSCRIPTS)

### Paper:

- Use white, unlined and 8.5 x 11 inches paper.
- Use only one side of the paper; do not print double-sided.

### Fonts & formatting:

- Limit font choices to standard, readable font (e.g. Times Roman, Courier, Arial).
- Do NOT use a script style font (e.g. *Lucinda*), which makes the text less readable and feels unprofessional.
- Use minimum font size of 12 points unless otherwise instructed; don't sacrifice size to create more space.
- Use a running header that appears at the top of every page (except the first), and include the following information:
  - Author's name
  - Applicant name (if different from author)
  - Title of piece
  - Page number

### Margins & Spacing:

- Leave a 1-inch margin on all sides of your manuscript.
- Double-space the text lines.