

SELECTION OF WORK SAMPLES

Work samples are an essential part of any application for arts project funding, artist fellowships, residencies and related professional opportunities. Given the volume of applications many funding entities receive, your work samples are likely to be reviewed within a set, relatively short timeframe. The following tips are designed to help you make decisions regarding which samples will support your proposal and best represent your work under these conditions.

Remember each panel is comprised of a different set of individuals who all may respond differently to your samples. **Preparing your work samples is not a perfect science.** The most important thing is to tailor the submission to the opportunity. You are rarely, if ever, asked for a representation of your entire career & practice. Rather, provide samples to support a given project or to represent your current artistic practice.

Questions to consider

Remember that your work samples should correspond with and be relevant to your written proposal. If you are applying for a specific project, think about how your work samples relate to the project you are proposing and make choices accordingly. Questions to consider:

1. Do my work sample selection demonstrate a coherent & current artistic vision, as articulated in the written proposal?
2. Is there a specific or unique element in your proposal that needs to be illustrated or contextualized by the work sample (i.e. participatory element, educational component, public art component, improvisation)?
3. Is this the first time you are doing something (i.e. incorporating text into performance; working site specifically; designing a set) and is there a rendering that would represent the project well? *
4. Do the samples of your past work support the feasibility of what you are currently proposing in terms of discipline, scope, scale, subject, approach, etc.?

Tips for selection

- Avoid showing work that is more than 5 years old. Remember that people are most interested in the artist you are today.
- In cases when older works need to be selected (e.g. when the work has a direct relationship with the proposed project or if there has been a recent break from artistic creation), raise the situation with the program staff and provide a clear & succinct reason for choosing the older sample in the written sample description, if possible.

Tips for selection (cont'd)

- Share your work samples with someone who will give you an honest opinion about your selection before you submit the application.
- In cases when you cannot submit work sample in the required format (e.g. past videos unavailable or recording not permitted by Actor's Equity Association[†]), consult program staff to discuss alternatives.
- Do not submit TV spots or interviews as work samples as sometimes they will not be reviewed.

Remember, our tips and suggestions **cannot take the place of the actual work sample requirements of a specific funder.**

Ultimately, you know your own work best. Use your best judgment to determine what constitutes the most effective representation of your work.

[†] *Actor's Equity Association has amended its rules to allow for certain kinds of video documentation.(archival, promotional). Be sure to consult the AEA website or your AEA contract for complete information*