

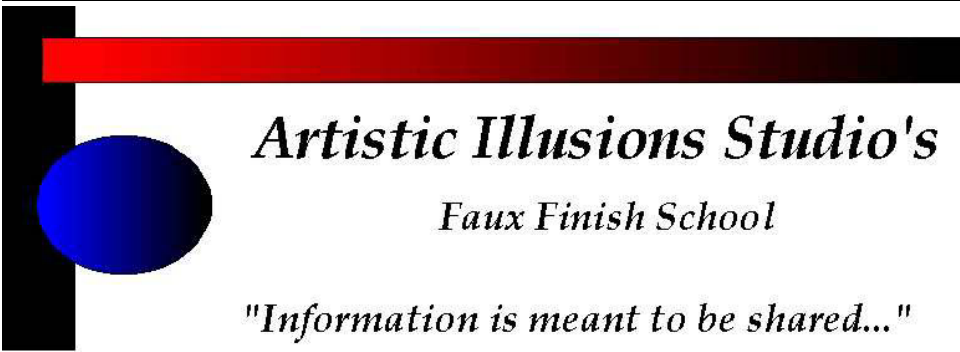


---

# Faux Finish Portfolio Development And Presentation

---

**By Dan and Amanda Folster**



# *Artistic Illusions Studio's*

## *Faux Finish School*

*"Information is meant to be shared..."*

### **FREE INDUSTRY NEWS FOR FAUX FINISHERS OF ALL LEVELS!**

Join FAUXSTERS FORUM, a free quarterly newsletter that includes information on faux finish techniques, industry news and events, money making ideas and more!

To join us visit:

<http://www.ArtisticIllusions.com>

.....

**"This is just a *sample* of wealth of information available in the ebooks found in [Artistic Illusions Studio's faux finish school](#) online e-library."**

**"These ebooks on faux finishing and running a successful faux finishing business have turned my business around! We haven't had a slow week in months!"**

**"Who knew there were so many different ways to advertise for free?! These ebooks are just what I needed. Thanks for sharing what you know with the rest of us!"**

.....

***"A MUST-HAVE for anyone even thinking of starting or expanding their business!"***

.....

For a full listing of all ebooks and instructional faux finish video DVD's offered by Artistic Illusions Studio's faux finish school please visit our website:

[www.ARTISTICILLUSIONS.com](http://www.ARTISTICILLUSIONS.com)

---

Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2004 Artistic Illusions Studio's Faux Finish School

All Rights Reserved

Reproduction or transmission of any part of this work by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, beyond that permitted by Copyright Law, without the express permission of the publisher, is prohibited.

---

---

# ***FAUX FINISH PORTFOLIO DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENTATION***

**By Dan and Amanda Folster**

---

## **TYPES OF PORTFOLIOS**

- **Sample Portfolio**
- **Photo Album**
- **Picture Portfolio**
- **Online Portfolio**



Each of these types of portfolios has good and bad points. Listed below you will find our opinion of each type (and why).

Keep in mind you need to use whatever works for your particular situation. Try each of them for yourself and see which one (or ones) you prefer!

### **What do I use for sample boards?**

We use poster board from Wal-Mart.

Paint on the shiny side because it is the stronger side.

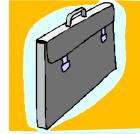
Poster boards are lightweight, large enough to allow your client to get a good idea of the true feel of the faux finish you are trying to show them and light enough for your client to tape to a wall for a couple of days if they need to!

---

---

## **SAMPLE PORTFOLIO**

This type of portfolio can be found in art stores usually, but sometimes the office supply stores carry them. There are two types we have used in the past:



---

## **PAPER PORTFOLIO**

These 26”x30”heavyweight paper portfolios are what we always give to our students to take their classroom samples home in, (especially handy if they have traveled by air to get to our school).

Although they are light and easy to carry, paper portfolios are not very durable over time. They are, however, great if you need an inexpensive, temporary “quick fix”.

They come in a variety of sizes and colors, some have plastic handles, and some have cloth handles. We ***do not*** recommend these paper portfolios if you are continually transporting heavy textured sample boards.



---

## **PROFESSIONAL GRADE**

These 26x30 black portfolios are *much* sturdier than paper, and are what we use when taking samples to a client’s home or business.

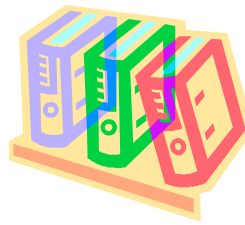
They close with a heavy weight zipper; the rounded handles are made of thick plastic, and are riveted onto the body of the case.

---

## PORTFOLIOS continued...

This type of portfolio will last for a long time if cared for just a bit, and are strong enough to carry several textured samples done on 1/8" Masonite or 1/8" Luan.

The main drawback to carrying a portfolio case full of samples is the weight involved, as well as the amount of time and effort it takes to pull every one of those boards out and show them to a prospective client that may be short on time.



## PHOTO ALBUM

These are great to carry around with you for those “spur of the moment” showings that you WILL run into!

***“OH! You do faux painting?! Do you have any pictures with you?”***

If you get a little album that can hold 3x5 or 4x6 prints of your work, you can keep in your purse, your backpack, or the glove box of your vehicle when you aren't in a jobsite situation.

The main drawback to this type of portfolio is the size...you can't see much detail.

---

## **PICTURE PORTFOLIOS**

Binders that hold 8x10 photos are a very useful tool for showcasing your work. We have used binders of many varieties for many different situations:



In the beginning we used 3 ring binders with the removable top-loading protective plastic document sleeves.

Eventually these proved to be not quite as durable as we needed for our particular situation, but we know several faux finishers that use this method quite successfully.



Another type of binder we have found in the big office supply stores closes with a Velcro strip and has 10 or 20 permanently attached 8x10 top-loading clear sleeves.

These binders are great for carrying 8x10 photos of rooms you have completed, letters of recommendation (with highlighted points) from satisfied clients, newspaper clippings; all the things you would want to show a person about yourself if you only have a minute or so.

These binders are fairly sturdy, and hold up well when tossed into the truck repeatedly!!

This particular type of binder has also proven to be very handy in situations when ease of handling and condensed presentation time is crucial, for instance on a jobsite when speaking with a builder.

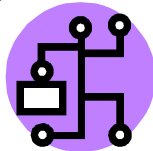


## ONLINE PORTFOLIO

Don't underestimate this amazing resource!!

If you have a web site with large, clear pictures of your work you can use this tool to allow prospective clients to research you at their leisure!

In today's busy world it's a much appreciated perk for prospective clients to have this option to view your work before calling you to set an appointment to meet with you in person.



Another advantage to having a web presence is the ability to send a website link to a prospective client.

If you have the e-mail address of your prospective client, you can provide them with a link directly to your online portfolio and save yourself and others precious time/effort in the long run!



About getting your pictures on the web- if you aren't a technology buff, there is the option of having your photos developed and placed directly on a disk by the photo lab.

You can then just send them from the disk to the website! (I can't stress the importance of having a *digital camera* for your business as soon as you can afford one though!)



Isn't technology wonderful?



## ***PRESENTATION***

---

***Presentation is very important.*** You must gage your intended audience accurately and use the appropriate tools at your disposal!

Each group of potential clients is going to have a different mindset, and a different list of needs to be met.

For example:



**BUILDERS**-we use binders when approaching a builder we would like to work for.

Think about it-In most construction situations there is nowhere to lay out an entire selection of samples, but more importantly-contractors are *very busy people*, and make their decisions quickly; they like subs who respect their time.

You must capture their attention immediately and impress them with your work in about the first 30 seconds of your meeting, or they will end your meeting right there on the spot and turn their efforts to the next sub demanding their time.

---

**Remember -"*time is money*" for everyone, not just you.**

---

---

**“and then I said...”**

So how do you approach a builder and catch his attention? I always just walk up on a jobsite and ask to see the builder.

Here is an example of a conversation I have had more than once...I thought it might help give you an idea of what to expect. Keep in mind this conversation could either way, so remember you have to think on feet...

---

**Me:** “Hi, (builder’s name) I’m Amanda Folster... do you have a second? I have something I think you need to see.”

**HIM:** “Sure.”

**Me:** (I hand him my picture portfolio.)  
“Who does your decorative painting?”

**HIM:** No one. (**He’s thinking “I’m busy-GO AWAY!”**)

**Me:** Why not? (**You don’t know what you’re missing!**)

**HIM:** Just not interested in it...too much trouble.  
(**Translates to: “Artists are moody and crazy and they don’t understand I can’t work every other sub around THEM”.**)

**Me:** “What, the faux paint or the flighty artists?”  
(**I’m REALLY telling him I understand artists can be hard to deal with sometimes...but I’m not.**)

**HIM:** “Ha-ha-ha... both.” (**Well, she has a sense of humor about it...!**)

**Me:** “Have you ever tried using faux painting instead of wallpaper?”

**HIM:** “No, didn’t want to fool with it. I’ve got a designer that handles all that stuff.” (**I don’t do decorating- I build houses.**)

---

---

**Me:** You should give it a shot- Wallpaper's a pain-our faux finishing gives a lot of "bang for the buck"; makes them (the houses) sell faster for a higher price. Well, of course, if you do it right that is!

Would you consider giving me a shot at proving it to you? **(I'm good-I can help you sell the house faster for more money.)**

**HIM:** Sure if you want, but I don't have any room in the budget.**(I'm not spending any more money than I already do, but I like what you're saying!)**

**Me:** That's OK, I can show you some finishes I picked up while I was in Texas that look great and they're quick to do. I'll bet I can stay within your wallpaper budget...I'd be in and out in a couple of days. What do you say? Can I show you some of my work? **(I travel, so I'm good at what I do, I'm fast at what I do, and I understand you have a budget.)**

**HIM:** Sure, why not-can you come back at 3:00?

**Me:** (Big grin) Here's my card. I'll see you at 3:00.

---

If the builder you are speaking with isn't receptive to you, or already has a finisher he's happy with, leave your card with him anyway. You never know when the opportunity will present itself to get your foot in the door with him.

You never know, if he fires his current finisher for some reason, or a buyer suddenly decides they would rather have decorative painting than wallpaper he will have *your* card. (It may be stuffed in the glove box of his truck, or down in the seat maybe, but he'll have it all the same!)

---



## **BEWARE....**

On occasion we have run across a builder who wants to us to cut him a “volume discount” on the first job he wants us to do for him (that’s because he’s going to “send a TON of business our way...”)

If this proposition gets thrown your way, we suggest you weigh the consequences carefully before you go there.

Establish right up front what constitutes “volume” and whether or not he is willing to guarantee that amount in writing.

Chances are he won’t.

What is more than likely to happen is this builder will get this job at a great price, then you will either never hear from him again, or he will always expect a huge discount even though you only do a room or two a year for him.

History tells us artists are not known for their great business skills, (hence the term “starving artist”) so just know that you are subject to this stereotype until you get an established reputation!

Builders are notorious for cutting overhead where they can, so just make sure you are working with a builder who understands the value of your services!

The builders we work with are wonderful-they appreciate our work (which raises the value of their spec homes by thousands of dollars) and they send us a lot of referrals.

It’s a good relationship to have, so be choosy when picking your regular customers!

---



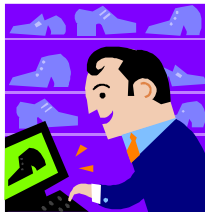
## **DESIGNERS**

Here's a crowd that's tough to nail down!

Getting an appointment with a busy designer or decorator can be a tricky thing in itself, and once you get the appointment you must use your time wisely.

**WARNING:** Keep in mind there is a HUGE difference between a “decorator” and a “designer.” And if you get them confused heaven help you!

Referring to a designer as a decorator is like calling Bill Gates a computer guy. There's a little bit of a difference there!



A decorator is someone who has a “knack” or a gift for decorating, but no Design Degree.

As a general rule a decorator can help you choose curtains, paint colors and carpet; but cannot help with the architectural design aspects of designing a home, such as structural elements like the roofline, the floor plan design of your home, the wiring requirements for the lighting they've helped you choose, etc.

Designers have a degree, and are more knowledgeable-usually.

When a designer or a decorator sets an appointment with you, the large portfolio with the actual sample boards is the one to take.

Remember to take your business cards! Pull out all the stops!

---

---

***Make sure the colors of your sample boards are either neutral, or the most popular colors of the year for your area.***

Our students always seem to ask the same question when we discuss designers...

***”What do I do when they ask for a cut or a commission for work they have me do for them, or refer me to?”***

This can be a delicate subject for some, but not for us.

We tell our students to do what they think is fair, but eventually they will have to ask themselves, “Does the tile guy or the hardwood floor man pay the designer a commission when she hires them?” and a little voice will say, ***“No, they don’t.”***

Our designers don’t pay ***us*** a commission when we recommend them to ***our*** clients who need a designer!

Think about that for a minute.

They need us as much as we need them.

It has been our experience that the more successful designers do NOT ask us to pay a commission for any work we do for their clients.

We each help other look their best and that should be enough for a great working relationship!

If a designer or builder does suggest you should give them a referral fee, just smile and say “Sure...we’ll pay you the same percentage you would pay us for the referrals we send your way!”

If they balk at that, you don’t want to work with them anyway. Believe me!

---



## **HOME OWNERS**

Home owners are quiet often the most enjoyable crowd to work with.

When showing your portfolio to a homeowner, take your business card, picture portfolio, artist portfolio, and a fan deck to your initial appointment.

Focus on what they are saying *they* want the end result of the room to be, not what *you* want it to be.

Sometimes a client will know what they want the room to “feel” like, because they’ve seen it in a magazine, but they don’t know how to tell you *exactly* what they are after...what do you do then?

The best advise we have to offer is this:

When setting up your initial appointment ask them if they have any photos or pictures from magazines to help you pinpoint the finish they would like best.

Then, use your expertise to achieve the look they want.

---

A picture is worth  
a thousand words!!

---



## **WARDROBE or “Whatever shall I wear??”**

Here we go!

You have your portfolio, your website, your business cards, and your appointment book; now it’s time to go to work...and to your meeting with your first set of clients.

You want to make a good impression, but you don’t want to look as though you aren’t busy.

Ummmmm...do you dress in your paint clothes to work in and then change into clean clothes before your appointment?

- How much paint on your jeans is too much?
- Do you get all the paint from under your fingernails?
- Do you wash the paint off your face?
- Do you go home and take a shower?
- Should you carry an extra pair of shoes...?

## **Stop!**

The most important thing for you to wear is a professional attitude. Just wear what you are comfortable working in, and have confidence that they will know artists have a different sense of style than most folks.

Wear what you are confident wearing-there is no right or wrong if it’s the “real you” that you are presenting!

---



---

## **Repeat Business**

This is one of the more overlooked areas I see when evaluating other finishers, and it shouldn't be.

Repeat business and referrals are the main-stay of any service related industry!

I couldn't possibly stress enough the importance of taking care of your clients and their possessions.

I have included a few commonly known, but often disregarded courtesies that we teach to all our students.

The faux finishers who follow these simple steps have grown their businesses at an amazing rate when compared to those who did not!

### ***So, how do you get repeat business?***

- Show up on the day/time you say you will.
- Return phone calls.
- Call if you are going to be late.
- For heaven's sake, take your shoes off when you go into the house (or at least offer to)!
- Don't smoke in their home.
- Keep the area you are working in clean and organized.
- Pay attention to details.
- Send a "thank-you" card at the end of the job.
- Don't use profanity (duh).