

## 5 Ideas that Help You Get Pictures

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Taking pictures is extremely important to the portfolio process, and yet it's such a hard thing to remember to do. So often I finish a project only to think at the end, "Wow pictures of that process would have made a great portfolio addition." The biggest problem is that, in school I was provided with a photo call to get portfolio pictures. In the real world you must fend for yourself.

It is a problem I still struggle with, and sometimes I want to shoot myself when I think of the beautiful scenery I don't have represented in my portfolio. I know many people who have the same problem. I'm always looking for new ways to tackle this problem, and have yet to find the perfect solution. In my search to overcome this, I have found some things that help, so here's what I've discovered so far. Get a cell phone with a digital camera. I have a lot of really low quality digital pictures of work I've done. I took all of these pictures with my cell phone camera. The quality may be low, but I wouldn't have them at all if I didn't have the cell phone camera. This is the best solution for someone who just can't remember to bring a camera with them. When I upgraded my cell phone, my choice was based on which one had the largest available resolution. Keep a throw away camera on hand. Whether it's a disposable, or just a really cheap one, if you don't have to worry about it being lost or stolen, you're more likely to have it with you and use it. Then you just need to remember to develop the film. I used this method for some time, and it worked better than other methods for a while. I still have a pile of undeveloped film and undeveloped disposable cameras, so I moved on to digital. Be friendly. When you have forgotten to take pictures, having friends who managed to remember is your only hope. If everyone hates you, they won't want to do you any personal favors. Sending you copies of their pictures is a personal favor. If you know ahead of time you don't have the ability to get the pictures you want, bribery can also be helpful. (Ok, so not really bribery... but some form of thank you gift. Let the person know you recognize and appreciate the favor.) Make special time to take pictures with a good camera. This is hard, because it's not time you get paid for. However, if I want pictures with my good camera, I know I need to take a special trip because I'm not going to leave my very expensive, beautiful camera hanging around the paint area while I work. If you schedule a time to go take pictures and stick to it, you'll get good pictures. For finished set pieces, I suggest scheduling a time to take pictures when the lighting designer will be toward the end of writing cues (as long as you know the lighting designer to be friendly). Ask if they'd mind bringing up a cue or two briefly that makes the set piece you are focusing on look good. If you bring them coffee or something tasty, you will get better pictures. Asking the lighting designer ahead of time if they'd mind you dropping by briefly is polite, and make sure you keep it brief. Identify your personal weakness and take steps to overcome it. When working at home on models and such, often the biggest reason I don't take pictures is I don't feel like I should take the picture until it is perfect. It will never actually be perfect, so I never take the picture. This is silly of me, I know, so I've learned that when I make myself take lots of pictures all the way through the process, I actually have pictures on file. I force myself to do this by promising pictures of my progress to people, like the director. "I'll e-mail you a picture of what I have so far no later than Wednesday night." When I say that, a few good things actually happen. I force myself not to procrastinate the entire process for the last minute. Communication during the design process increases. I actually take pictures.