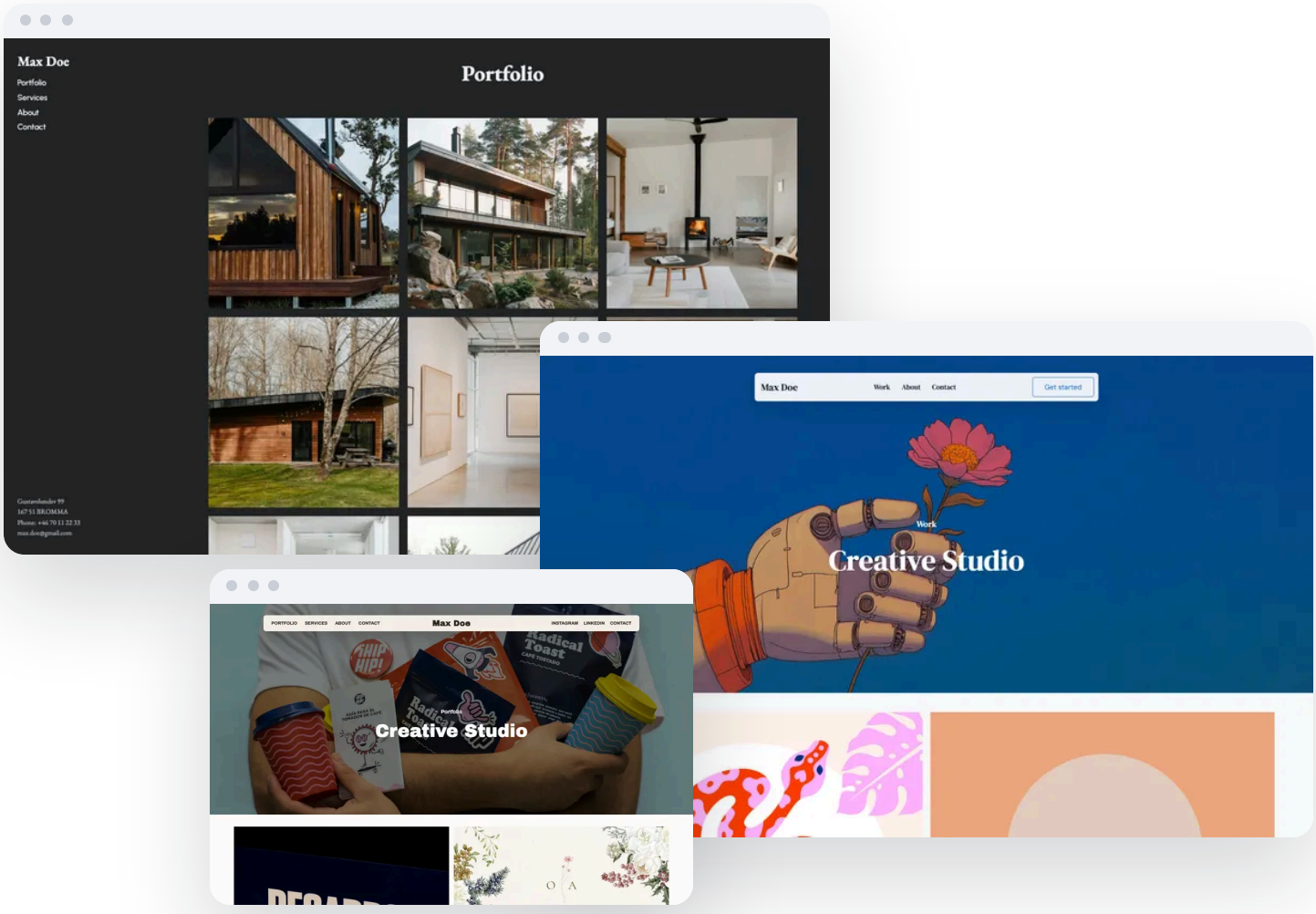
PORTFOLIOBOX

Get seen and get clients

The marketing guide for creatives



INSIDE

Your portfolio is live. Now people need to see it.

✓	10 things to do this week	start here
1	Make it ready to hire from	
2	Get it seen this week	
3	Turn attention into clients	
4	The longer game: pick two	
5	Other ways to earn	
6	Your first month, week by week	

A lot of good work goes unseen simply because nobody was told about it. That's fixable, and it doesn't take a marketing budget or a talent for selling yourself. It takes a few small things this week, and a habit after that. Start with the ten below.

YOUR FIRST WEEK LIVE

10 things to do this week

Each takes less than an hour. Tick them off as you go.

MAKE IT READY

- [ ] **1 Keep only your best work.** Ten to twenty pieces you'd be happy to be hired for. People judge you by the weakest piece they see.
- [ ] **2 Add one line to every project.** What it was, who it was for, what you did.
- [ ] **3 Write your About in three sentences.** Who you are, who you work for, how to reach you. Add a photo of your face.
- [ ] **4 Make it easy to hire you.** A contact page with a form and your email address, and a line that says what you take on.

GET IT SEEN

- [ ] **5 Send your link to ten people.** Friends, old colleagues, teachers, past clients. A short personal message, not a post. Ask what they think.
- [ ] **6 Share it properly.** One post or story with your best piece and the link.
- [ ] **7 Put the link everywhere you already are.** Instagram bio, LinkedIn, your email signature, Behance or Dribbble.
- [ ] **8 Tell Google you exist.** Give your site a title like "Anna Berg, illustrator in Manchester", then add it to Google Search Console (free).

TURN IT INTO WORK

- [ ] **9 Ask one person for a job.** Someone who has hired someone like you before. There's a message you can copy in section 3.
- [ ] **10 Answer every enquiry within a day.** Fast answers win work. Slow ones lose it to someone else.

Done all ten? That's more than most people do. The sections below go deeper, in the same order.

1 Make it ready to hire from

Someone who might hire you looks quickly, often for less than a minute. In that time they want to answer one question: can this person do the job I have in mind? The short version:

- **Your best ten to twenty pieces**, grouped by the work you want more of. One line of context on each.
- **An About page with a face:** who you are, who you work for, how to reach you.
- **A contact page with a form and your email address.** Some clients won't use a form.
- **A line on what you take on**, and prices if you can. Even a "from" price helps: it filters out the wrong enquiries and reassures the right ones.
- **A share image.** Set your best piece as the picture people see when your link is shared in WhatsApp, LinkedIn or Messages: Settings → Website → SEO → Share image.

Our getting-started guide shows what to put where, with examples: **How to make a portfolio that gets you work** at portfoliobox.com/getting-started.

Short on time? The AI assistant in the editor can draft your project lines and your About from a few words. Then make them sound like you.

Your own domain

A site at yourname.com is easier to say out loud, easier to remember and looks like a business. Clients notice it on a business card and in an email signature. Your own domain comes with Personal and Professional, and it's included the first year on yearly billing. You can connect a name you already own or find a new one.

2 Get it seen this week

Start with people who already know you

Your first visitors won't come from Google. They'll come from people who know you, and they're the ones most likely to hire you, recommend you or share it.

Write to ten of them, one at a time. Friends who work in your field, former colleagues, teachers, people you've worked for. Keep it short:

A MESSAGE YOU CAN COPY

Hi Jo, I've just put my portfolio online: annaberg.portfoliobox.net
I'd love to know what you think, and which piece you'd pick as the strongest.

Asking for an opinion is easier than asking for work, and people like being asked. Some of them will pass it on.

Share it properly

One post, one story. Lead with your single best piece, not a screenshot of the whole site. Say in one sentence what kind of work you're open to. Put the link where people can tap it: in your bio, or in the story's link sticker.

Then keep going. Every new project is a new reason to post, and every post can point back to your site.

Put the link everywhere you already are

- Instagram bio
- LinkedIn: the Featured section and your contact info
- TikTok bio, once your account can show a link
- Your email signature, so every email you send carries it
- Behance, Dribbble, ArtStation or whatever your field uses
- Your CV, your business card, your invoices

Each one is a door that stays open while you work.

Get found on Google

People search for what they need: "wedding photographer Leeds", "children's book illustrator", "architect portfolio Toronto". You want your site to answer some of those searches.

- **Give your site a clear title and description.** What you do and where: "Anna Berg, illustrator in Manchester". You set both in Settings → Website → SEO.
- **One page per kind of work.** A page called *Wedding photography* has a better chance with "wedding photographer" than a page called *Work*.
- **Write a few real sentences on each page.** Search engines read words, not pictures.
- **Tell Google the site exists.** In Google Search Console, add your site and choose the HTML tag method. In Portfoliobox, go to Settings → Website → Integrations → Verification meta tag and paste the name and the content into the two fields.
- **Get linked.** Every profile, directory, school page or client site that links to you helps people and search engines find you.

Google takes days or weeks to show a new site. Do it now and let it run in the background.

3 Turn attention into clients

Visitors are nice. Clients pay the rent. Between the two, someone has to ask, and usually it's you.

Start with people who know your work

Make a list of ten people who could hire you or know someone who could. Start with the ones who have paid for work like yours before: a café that commissions illustrations, a studio you interned at, a friend who runs a small business. Write to them one at a time:

A MESSAGE YOU CAN COPY

Hi Sam,

I've just put my portfolio online: annaberg.portfoliobox.net

I'm taking on illustration work for menus, packaging and posters from January. If anything like that comes up at the café, or you know someone who needs it, I'd love to hear about it.

Thanks, and say hi to the team.
Anna

Change the details, keep the shape: your link, what you do, when you're free, one easy thing they can do.

Writing to someone you don't know

Most new work comes from people who don't know you yet. Find the person who commissions the work: the art director, the photo editor, the studio owner, the marketing lead. Their name is usually on the company site, on LinkedIn or in a magazine's masthead. Write to one person, about their work:

A MESSAGE YOU CAN COPY

Hi Maya,

I'm an illustrator in Manchester. I loved the packaging you did for the Harbour Tea range.

I draw for food and drink brands: annaberg.portfoliobox.net

If you ever need an illustrator for a range like that, I'd love to be on your list.

Anna

No answer after a week? Send one short follow-up: "Just checking this reached you. Here's a piece I finished since: [link]." Many replies come from the second message. After that, let it rest for a few months.

> **Keep a list.** Who you wrote to, when, and what happened. A note on your phone is enough. It tells you when to follow up and which kind of message gets answers.

Looking for a job, not clients?

- Put your link at the top of your CV and in every application.
- Add it to LinkedIn's Featured section.
- For your three strongest projects, write a short case study: the brief, what you did, the result.
- Send it to the studios you'd most like to work for, even if they aren't hiring right now.

Answer fast, and make it easy to say yes

Answer every enquiry within a day. Ask what they need, by when, and what it's for. Then send a quote that leaves nothing to guess:

- what you'll deliver
- when
- how many rounds of changes are included
- where and for how long the client can use the work
- the price, and when it's paid
- a deposit before you start, often half

You can make quotes and invoices in Portfoliobox and send the client a link, so they can accept the quote online.

Price your work

A simple starting point for a day rate: what you need to earn in a year, plus your costs, divided by about 100 days you can actually bill. Then build two or three packages around it ("a logo", "a logo and a small brand kit", "a full identity"). Packages are easier to buy than hours.

Don't price against the cheapest person you can find. Price against what the work is worth to the client. If almost every quote gets a yes straight away, you're too cheap.

Collect proof

After every job that went well, ask for two sentences:

A MESSAGE YOU CAN COPY

Would you write two sentences about working with me? What you needed, and how it turned out. I'd like to put it on my site.

Most people say yes, because you asked when they were happy. Put the answers on your site next to the work, with their name and company. One real quote from a client does more than a page about how good you are.

THIS WEEK Write your list of ten, and send the first three messages.

4 The longer game: pick two

You can't do everything, and you don't need to. Pick the two that suit you and the people you want to work for. Do them every week for three months before you judge them.

Post where your clients look.

Choose the platform your clients use, not the one everyone talks about. Post finished work, the process, the story behind a piece. Answer comments and messages.

Suits you if you like making short things often.

A small newsletter.

Put a signup form on your site. Portfoliobox collects the addresses; copy them into a free email tool when you send. At events, a paper sheet works too: say on it what people are signing up for. Write when you have news, four times a year is enough to start.

Suits you if you have regular news: new work, shows, open slots.

Show your process.

A short text or video about how you made something shows your skill better than the result alone. Put it on your site and share it from there.

Suits you if you like explaining how things are made.

Communities and competitions.

Join the groups where your field talks: forums, Discord servers, local associations, alumni groups. Help first, promote second. Enter competitions that fit your work, and skip ones with high entry fees or terms that take rights to your work. Being shortlisted is worth sharing.

Suits you if you like being part of a scene.

Events, fairs and local press.

Go with a purpose, talk to people, follow up within a week with a short message and your link. Show your work where you can, even in a café or a shared studio. Local editors look for a local angle ("a Manchester illustrator draws the city's cafés"): a short, friendly pitch with two images and your link.

Suits you if you'd rather meet people than post.

Agencies.

Some agencies represent creatives in your field and find work for you. Read their submission guidelines first, then follow them exactly. Your portfolio is your application.

Suits you if you'd rather make the work than sell it.

> And the oldest one: do good work, be easy to work with, and tell people you're open for work. A happy client telling a friend still beats everything above.

5 Other ways to earn

- **A shop on your site.** Prints, originals, merchandise, digital files. You can sell from your Portfoliobox site and take payments there; a full store comes with Professional. Good photos and a short story behind each product sell better than a bare price.
- **Print-on-demand.** Services that print and ship your designs on posters, apparel and home goods when someone orders. No stock, no shipping.
- **Licensing and stock.** Photos, illustrations, music and design assets can be licensed on stock and asset marketplaces. For most people it's small and slow money, so treat it as a bonus.
- **Marketplaces and freelance platforms.** They bring buyers who are already looking. Put your portfolio address in your profile there, so the clients you win can find you directly next time.

6 Your first month, week by week

Week 1 The ten things above.

Week 2 Ask for work

- Write your list of ten people who could hire you, and send the message from section 3.
- Write to three people you don't know yet.
- Start your list of who you wrote to.

Week 3 Make it easy to say yes

- Write your prices or packages, even rough ones.
- Follow up on last week's messages that got no answer.
- Ask your last happy client for two sentences, and put them on your site.

Week 4 Start the long game

- Pick your two from section 4.
- Post one new project, and write one paragraph about how you made it.
- Look at your list: which messages got answers? Do more of what worked.

After a month: keep adding your newest work and taking out the weakest. A portfolio that changes gives people a reason to come back, and gives you a reason to share it again.

KEEP GOING

A portfolio that changes gives people a reason to come back.

Add your newest work, take out the weakest, and share it again. Every new project is a new reason to get in touch.

portfoliobox.com

Portfoliobox has made portfolio websites for creatives for 15 years.