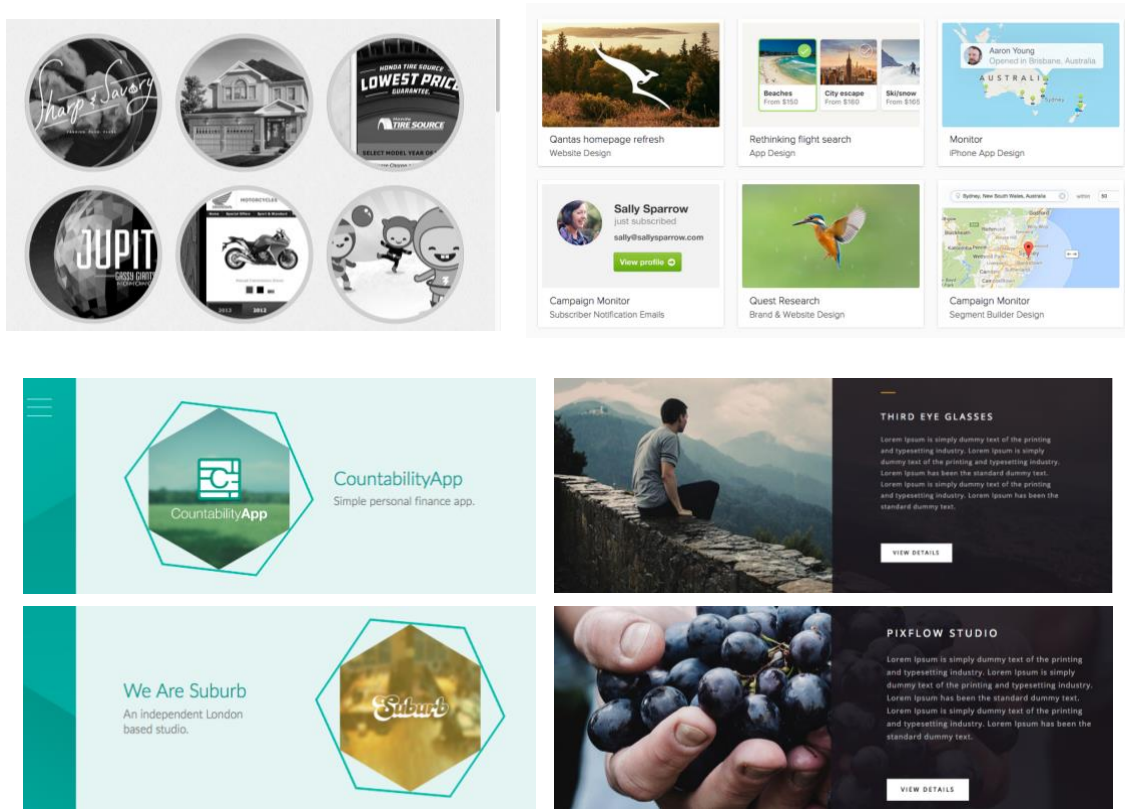# Project Gallery Layout and Thumbnail Designs

You need to present your portfolio pieces in an attractive, professional way. The first impression a potential employer or client will get of your work is through the portfolio gallery that contain the project thumbnails. Recruiters spend only a couple minutes looking through your work, so the first impression counts.

Gallery Page Layout

For the portfolio gallery page, make design decisions concerning the layout you prefer. The three most common layouts for the portfolio page are
- rows/columns of thumbnails
- larger thumbnail with title and very brief description
- two-box layout with image in one box and project title, paragraph, & action button in the other

Examples of these layouts are shown in the following illustrations.

Project Thumbnail Design

After deciding on the gallery layout, you are ready to prepare the thumbnails. You will need to take proper steps to crop the thumbnail images. Also you will need to decide on the shape and border type for the project thumbnails, the caption content and formatting, and the hover state. Take the following steps to prepare your project thumbnails:

1) Even if you have a diverse portfolio with an eclectic array of projects, you'll want to create project thumbnails that have some consistency. They could all have the same background color, border, shape, or content focus for example.

2) Make the colors pop in your thumbnails. Choose a main color for all of your thumbnails or for each of your thumbnails. The first set of thumbnails below have a tint added to the thumbnail image. The other set of thumbnails feature logos representing the projects with a colored solid background.
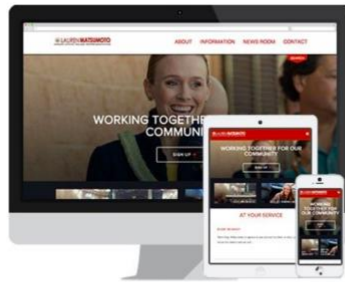

3) Decide what you want to feature in the thumbnail. Examples below feature the brand logo, the type of work, and a screenshot of the above-the-fold area of a website.

Little Big Plumbing

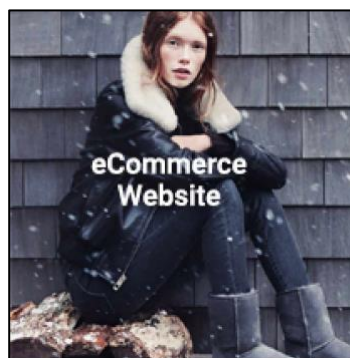*Responsive Web Design,Development*

Rep Matsumoto
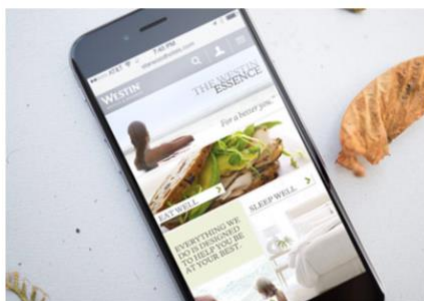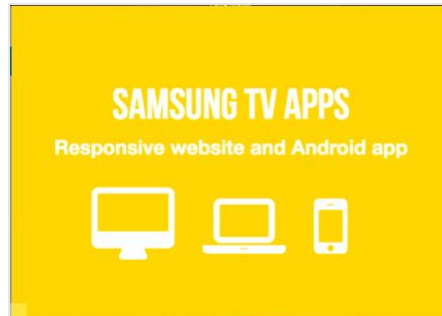
Development,Responsive Web Design,UX

Sasquatch Shades

Web Design,Development
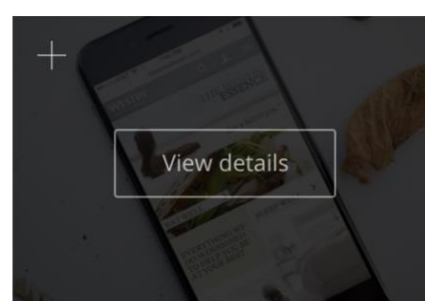
4) Choose a shape for your thumbnails. The most common shapes are square, rectangular, circle, or hexagon.
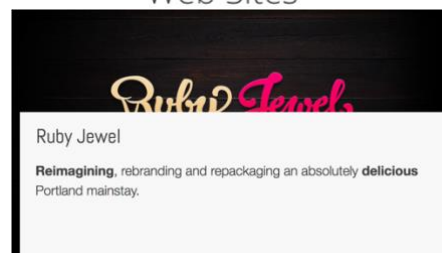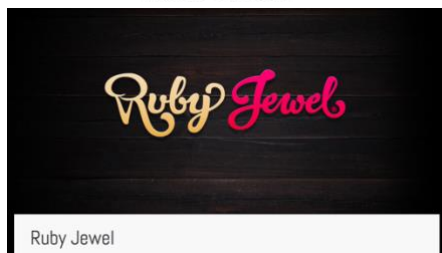

5) Determine what type of border you want on the thumbnails. Popular options include no border, a stroke, or a shadow. You might make the border a single offset stroke so that there is white between the image and the border. You can make the corners square, rounded, or beveled. You'll also need to decide how thick to make the border.

6) Determine the hover effect style that you want to include. The hover effect can change the color or just make the thumbnail darker or lighter.   You could also go with a box shadow. Another idea for the hover effect is to just change the size of the thumbnail. For portfolio galleries, the hover effect often provides an image caption.

Starwood Hotels Mobile
Web Sites

Starwood Hotels Mobile
Web Sites

Ruby Jewel

Ruby Jewel

Reimagining, rebranding and repackaging an absolutely **delicious** Portland mainstay.
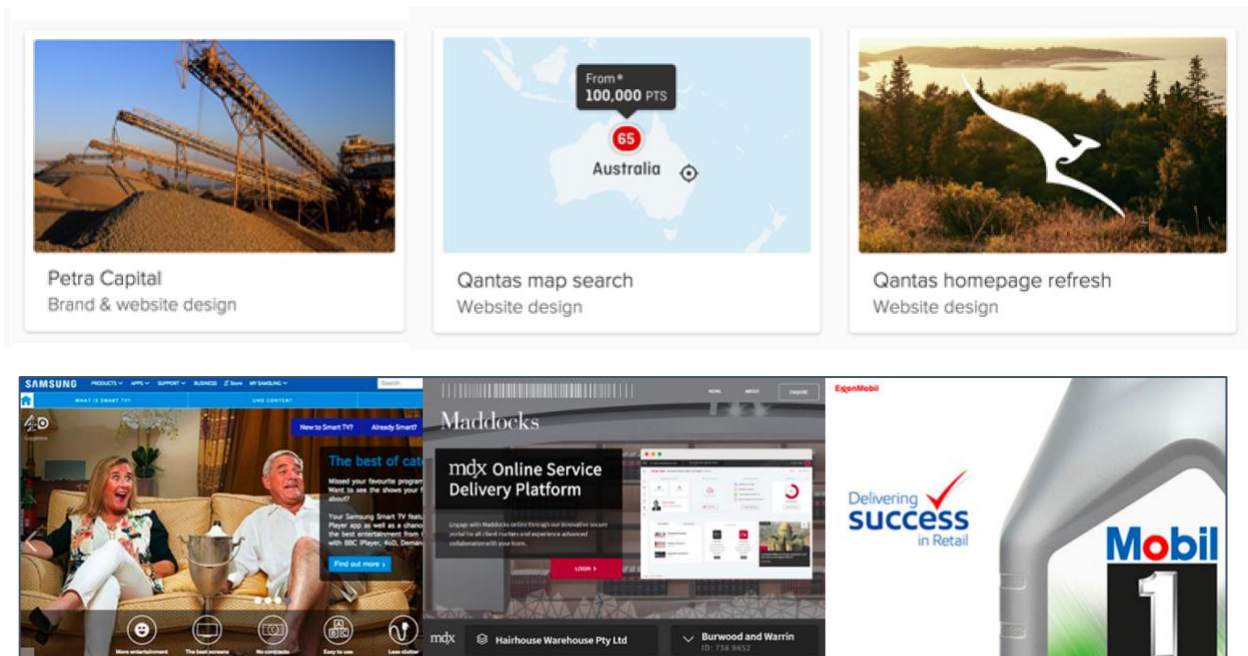
There are also lots of animated hover effects. Here are a few links to sample animation hover effects for thumbnails:

https://designshack.net/articles/css/joshuajohnson-2/
https://tympanus.net/Development/HoverEffectIdeas/
http://gudh.github.io/ihover/dist/index.html

7) Decide if you want the thumbnails to have space between them or to run together in a collage effect.   Be sure the thumbnails are precisely aligned with consistent spacing between them. Let your framework program do the alignment and spacing work.

8) Website project thumbnails can be set up so that the above-the-fold screenshot is displayed inside of a monitor mockup. Usually the mockup files are psd files with masks set up so that you can add your image inside of the monitor. You can download monitor mockups at freepik.com. One monitor mockup is provided in the Canvas Modules that you are free to use. Here are some examples of the mockups:

Tips for Creating Thumbnails:

It helps to know Photoshop if you want to do something extra with the thumbnails. A new Photoshop tool is the Frame tool which allows you to crop an image inside of a frame. This way you can experiment with zooming in on certain areas of an image to feature inside of the thumbnail. You can add a logo with a transparent background over a colored rectangle or image. You can also use layer styles for various types of borders on the thumbnails.

But basic styling of a thumbnail image can easily be done with CSS styles. For example, you can set the width, corner radius, and border style, color, and weight. Bootstrap, Foundation, and Bulma all have class attributes for thumbnails relating to shape, border, and caption alignment.

When cropping the thumbnail images, try to avoid cutting out words and showing partials buttons and other elements. With the Javascript games, you may want to feature something else if the user interface of the game is not that attractive. For example, instead of featuring the Rock, Paper, Scissors user interface, you could go with an image of the hand signals for the thumbnail.