Basics of Freelancing

As with any endeavor, it all comes down to your work. It's about initiative and getting work done. Students should be aware that freelance work is harder, not because of the art skills, but because you must be a savvy entrepreneur. Here are some helpful tips:

- Freelance portfolios demonstrate your art style and skill level.
- Your portfolio/reel will showcase your best work and is easy to access. Recruiters will move on to the next person if they can't access your work and see it from different angles.
- Consistency is key! You need to consistently be working on projects and improving your skill set and portfolio.
- Regarding competition, it's not about who's the best, but who's **reliable**.
- Clients are looking for artists who can deliver, can complete a project under a negotiated rate and time.
- As a freelancer you must be "Hungry for work." You are the business, you must always be looking for projects and networking within the various communities, either in person or online.
- Don't expect people to come to you, you are the one who will have to make connections.
- Keep your portfolio ready to show to anyone, at any time. Make business cards, and be prepared to hear the ideas of others. These situations can be opportunities to work on new projects.
- It is essential that you hone your craft. It's a competitive world out there. If you want to get noticed, you need to stand out.
- Quantity of work builds the portfolio. When there are enough pieces to demonstrate your skills, improve the quality of that work.

This is **your** business! - if you don't promote it - and believe in it, it won't work. This takes commitment and focus. The first few years will be hard. Establishing yourself as a brand that is trusted and competent - **must be** your purpose in life. If you are going to do something, do it all the way or don't do it at all. "Do or do not, there is no try." Yoda hit the nail right on the head.

Getting Started

A quiet workstation is essential. This is a job; it should have the space for one. This is about your abilities to create artwork for someone who is willing to pay you. Invest in a good computer and research the hardware, so that you know what you're getting and why. Developing for 3D relies on two areas in the computer: RAM and CPU. Don't skimp on the motherboard - make sure it has the specifications to get the job done. If your PC

fails, you fail, be smart and learn how to fix simple technical problems. The links below will give you a good idea of the costs involved for various computers and software.

Computer Set Up
https://www.cgdirector.com/best-computer-for-animation/
https://www.titancomputers.com/

Software you will Need
https://all3dp.com/1/best-free-3d-modeling-software-3d-cad-3d-design-software/
https://www.creativebloq.com/features/best-3d-modelling-software

How to be successful

Not everyone can freelance successfully. It is similar to owning your own business, just with less overhead.

- To be successful you need to be both **confident** in your ability and **motivated** – there is no giving up, lest you risk ruining your reputation.
- You need to know what your skill set is worth, both not to overcharge or be undercharged.
- You need to always be searching for new work opportunities, even when you already have a job going, so you can line up the next one.
- Freelancing will not produce a lot of income right away. Have a part time or full time job to ensure you can pay the bills.
- Work on a passion or personal project for fun to help hone your skills and have work to add to your portfolio.
- Maintain realistic goals for yourself. Know that neither Rome nor your career, was built in a day. Realistic goals mean having short term goals that will progressively add to your long term ones.
- Be ready, willing and able to take criticism from professionals and fans. Distinguish the difference between complaints, opinion, and genuine critiques.
- Remove any ego from the equation. There will always be someone better than you, and there are plenty that are worse. Know your skill level and don't oversell yourself, the industry is savvy.
- Be prepared for failure. Failure is inevitable in life so don't view it as defeat but rather a way to get better, learning from the moment and moving on.

Using Social Media to Promote yourself

For students not near a studio, it's all about your internet presence. More of your time will be spent in promoting the work, than the work itself. Being a freelance artist means you are responsible for marketing yourself, constantly! If no one knows who you are, they won't seek you out. So being active on social media like **Instagram**, **Twitter**, **Facebook**, and **ArtStation** is essential to your success. All of these sites offer you the ability to showcase your work, and show people your skill level and commitment. Sharing your latest creation is a great way for people to see that you are active and approachable. The most successful artists make connections with studios and people with whom they keep a professional relationship.

https://www.instagram.com/?hl=en
https://twitter.com/?lang=en
https://www.artstation.com/

Understanding the Costs Involved and Creating a Workable Budget

This tool will help you to understand the budgeting process better and help you create a workable budget for your business.
https://polycount.com/discussion/188013/freelance-rates-and-budgeting-tool

How to Bid on Projects

There is no "one size fits all" method of billing for work, it will be different for everyone. To better estimate what you should be charging you'll want to ask yourself the following questions:

1.) How long will it take to complete the project?
2.) Is there a deadline to adhere to and will that date work?
3.) How much should be charged to cover expenses and effort?
4.) Find a base value you are willing to go down to while bidding until the job becomes unprofitable, then work up from that number.
5.) An interview is a negotiation, are you willing to go lower on a price, even if it means you won't make much from it?
6.) Does the quality of work provided, match the cost requested?

Not all of these questions have easy answers but think about this hypothetical:
"I work part-time for $12 an hour working on a sales floor. With my free-time I freelance. Although I am new to freelancing, I feel my skills and time are worth at least that which I make normally ($12 per hour)."

From there, I bid on a project based on how long it will take me to complete or more than likely how much time the client gives me. **Deadlines** dictate the overall cost so if you have a general idea of how much time you'll spend working on the project you can better estimate what an appropriate bid is.

The 9 Virtues of a Freelancer
1. Most of the time, you will find a project that might last for a week.
2. Impressed clients will remember you for the next time.
3. When commissioned for work, understand the client's idea as early as possible.
4. Clients who can't explain their idea and care little for your art style probably won't pay either.
5. If you are not happy with the work, but the client is, you will get paid but won't have a stronger portfolio.
6. Your time is just as valuable as your clients, do not waste either.
7. Most of the work is adjusting to feedback, get it made quick but make sure it has the ideas the client wants.
8. Deliver the completed project in your style, but only once you are paid.
9. If your idea is better than the clients, make both and show them both, do not just show them yours.

Helpful Links to help you understand Freelancing:

https://www.katsbits.com/articles/how-much-should-i-charge-for-freelance-3d-modeling-work.php
http://wiki.polycount.com/wiki/Freelance
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itqWo34pzCQ

Some Ways You Can Get Warmed Up for Freelancing Are

- Offering your services locally, within your social circle to people who may be interested in inexpensive or free work.
- Selling your work at the local Farmer's Market or Flea Market.

- Consider trying Fiverr or UpWork before applying to a more professional freelance gig to see if freelancing is something you are capable of doing.

Creating Passive Income from your Work

There are many ways to generate passive income from 2D & 3D art-work if it is good. None of the following will make you rich, but they can generate some income on the side.

Freelancing Sites
https://www.upwork.com/
https://www.fiverr.com/
https://www.freelancer.com/

3D printing Sites
There are many 3D printing sights that have market places, **Shapeways** is probably the most popular.
https://www.shapeways.com/

3D Asset marketplaces
There are many 3D asset stores where people can sell 3D models, rigs, and more. The oldest and most widely known is **Turbosquid**, **Artstation** can be used as well. Here are links to the top websites for selling you pieces:.

https://www.turbosquid.com/
https://www.artstation.com/
https://gumroad.com/
https://assetstore.unity.com/
https://www.cgtrader.com/
https://www.unrealengine.com/marketplace/en-US/store

Patreon
A lot of artists have a Patreon. It can be a place to find supporters who will 'contribute' to your cause. Offer some things for free, but reserve the best work for paying supporters. Keep the interest of your audience - weekly, bi-weekly or monthly. Establish a regular basis when posting new work, so that supporters can check out what they paid for without being overwhelmed or losing interest.
https://www.patreon.com/

Helpful Links and Animation Communities

Basic Questions of Freelancing Answered
If you have questions about Freelancing and want answers, this is one of the best sites.
Join Polycount, read the **New Members** guide and learn from some of the best artists
out there.

http://wiki.polycount.com/wiki/Freelance

Books to Read
There is a book series called **Vertex** which has a lot of successful artists in the industry
talk about how they "made it" in the biz. There are 3 VERTEX books, they are completely
free. Each of them also discusses freelancing.
https://www.reddit.com/domain/artbypapercut.com/

Online Discussion On What It Takes To Be A Freelance Artist
https://polycount.com/discussion/190435/freelance-character-artist-how-do-i-become-
one

Polycount: http://www.polycount.com/forum/
- Work Critiques
- Contests
- Industry news
- Work opportunities

CGSociety: http://www.cgsociety.org/
- Work Critiques
- Contests
- Industry news
- Work opportunities

3DTotal: http://www.3dtotal.com/
- Work Critiques
- Contests
- Industry news
- Tutorials

ArtStation: https://www.artstation.com/
- Work Critiques
- Contests
- Industry news
- Work opportunities

11SecondCLub: http://www.11secondclub.com/
- Animator resource
- Work Critiques
- Contests

Gamasutra: http://www.gamasutra.com/
- Industry news
- Work opportunities

AnimationWorldNetwork: http://www.awn.com/
- Events
- Work Critiques
- Contests
- Industry news
- Work opportunities

DeviantArt: http://www.deviantart.com/
- Work Critiques
- Contests
- Networking Opportunities through communities

Creative Crash: http://www.creativecrash.com/
- Tutorials
- Industry News

Eat3D: http://eat3d.com/
- Free videos
- DVDs
- Streaming Videos

Ultimate Job Board: https://www.creativeheads.net/

Freelancing is not for everyone, but if this is the road you wish to take, this guide will help you. This is your business, you need to put in the effort to sustain it. Look for new

projects, network, and update your portfolio on a constant basis. It's about commitment. If you follow the necessary steps, you can be a successful freelance animator.