MERRITT / CAREER COLLECTION 001

The Design Career Story Workbook

Turn your projects into a clearer portfolio, professional profile, and interview story.

ARCHITECTURE / INTERIOR DESIGN / CREATIVE CAREERS



Good work.
Clear story.
Next chapter.

24 pages / Fillable worksheets / Edition 01

START HERE

Make your experience easier to understand.

A working document for people preparing a first application, a next move, or a leadership transition.

The aim is practical: explain what you contributed, show evidence of how you think, and connect that evidence to the work you want next. A finished building is useful evidence. So are a thoughtful studio project, a resolved detail, a coordination decision, or a team you helped develop.

WHAT YOU WILL LEAVE WITH

One career brief. Three project stories. A portfolio sequence. A professional introduction. A focused 30-day action plan.

The 90-minute first pass

Spend 15 minutes on direction (page 4), 20 on evidence and selection (5-6), 25 on one project story (7, 12), 15 on your introduction (16-17), and 15 on the career brief and next actions (20-21). Return for the deeper exercises later.

Use it digitally or on paper

Save a local copy before you begin. The worksheet boxes are fillable. If your PDF viewer does not retain entries, use a PDF editor or print the pages. Keep longer notes in your own document; the boxes are for a concise first draft.

Bring the work into a conversation

Each section stands on its own. If you choose personal advisory, your completed brief and selected stories give you a useful starting point. A consultation is optional; the workbook is designed to be useful on its own.

CHOOSE YOUR ROUTE

One method.
Different starting points.

Your stage changes the evidence you emphasize, not your obligation to be specific.

Late-stage student / New graduate

Use studio, thesis, competition, or relevant work experience. Label academic work clearly. Emphasize decisions, iteration, collaboration, and learning.
Start: 4-8, 12, 14-18. Finish: 20-21.

Emerging professional

Show what you personally delivered, the phases you supported, how you used feedback, and the next responsibilities you are ready to develop.
Start: 4-7, 9, 12-18. Finish: 20-21.

Mid-level practitioner

Make ownership, coordination, design judgment, and delivery visible. Separate your work from the overall team achievement.
Start: 4-7, 10, 12-21.

Senior professional / Creative leader

Explain the scale of your responsibility, the decisions you shaped, and how you enabled others. Keep individual and collective results distinct.
Start: 4-7, 11-13, 16-23.

USE THE TITLE YOU CAN SUPPORT

Describe your discipline, role, and credentials accurately. Titles and professional registration vary by location; check the rules that apply to you.

03 / PROJECT STORIES

From project description to contribution story.

Merritt working method: Context / Contribution / Decision / Evidence / Reflection.

1. Context

What was the brief, stage, and relevant constraint? State whether the work was academic, professional, built, or unbuilt.

2. Contribution

What was your role? What did you personally produce, coordinate, recommend, or lead? Credit collaborators.

3. Decision

Which choice or problem reveals your judgment? Explain the alternatives and the reason for your approach.

4. Evidence

What can someone inspect? Name the drawing, model, study, feedback, or documented result. Describe the limits of what it proves.

5. Reflection

What changed, what did you learn, and how does the experience connect to the work you want next?

WRITE A SHORT VERSION FIRST

Aim for a concise paragraph you can say aloud. Then attach two or three artifacts that support the story. Expand only where the reader or conversation needs more detail.

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE / ACADEMIC WORK

Show how you think before you have a built project.

Fictional example. Adapt the structure; do not reuse these claims as your own.

THE STARTING DESCRIPTION

"A community library project from my final year."

A CLEARER CONTRIBUTION STORY

In a final-year library studio, I explored how a public reading room could feel open while quieter study areas remained protected. I developed two plan options and tested the entry sequence in section and a physical model. The first layout sent visitors through the quiet zone; I moved circulation to the edge and compared the routes. I would show the option diagrams, a section, and the model to explain the change. It was an unbuilt academic proposal, and I have not measured its performance in use.

WHAT THE READER CAN UNDERSTAND

The brief and academic context are clear. The designer identifies a decision, the work they produced, and evidence of iteration without claiming a built result.

A CAPTION THAT CARRIES THE STORY

Final-year academic studio / Individual project. My work: plan alternatives, circulation diagrams, section, and physical model. Focus: testing the relationship between public circulation and quiet study.

USE AN ACADEMIC OUTCOME HONESTLY

A resolved design argument, a tested option, or a lesson from critique is an outcome. You do not need to invent a client, construction experience, or performance data.