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[00:00:00] **Heidi:** This is the Successful Fashion Freelancer podcast. I am your host, Heidi, and we are here to talk about true remote freelancing in the fashion industry. Not temp job freelancing, but true remote freelancing where you work with a variety of brands doing the work that you love, when and where you want on your own terms.

This is how I built my successful career over a decade long earning over a hundred thousand dollars a year, working a very comfortable 25 to 35 hour schedule traveling when I wanted. And on this show, we take you behind the scenes and show you strategies of how you can do that as well. Today's conversation is, Portion of a strategy session with one of my Lance Accelerator students, Christina.

Um, Christina is a little bit stuck because she is trying to figure out what she wants to pursue as far as the aesthetic goes. Um, Christina has a gothic aesthetic, and [00:01:00] that is the industry and category and community, community that she love. But she's worried and, and she was told all throughout her schooling education that there's no work in that industry.

There's just, it's a very small world. So she's feeling really torn on what to pursue and, and how to put her portfolio together. Um, So we talk a little bit about what to pursue, but then we also really map out, step by step how she can put together her portfolio so that it's going to attract the right brands, um, and that she gets to do the work that she loves.

In that sort of like gothic category. So if you are feeling stuck on your tech pack portfolio, that's ultimately what Christina wants to do. Um, that's what she has industry experience in, um, since she graduated back in 2017. That's what she's been doing. And so that's what she's tried to put together is her tech pack portfolio.

And she was a little. Lost and unsure on [00:02:00] what it needed to include, what it didn't need to include, you know, sort of things she had learned from fashion school that like weren't really relevant. Um, because, let's be honest, sometimes, a lot of times fashion school doesn't teach us relevant stuff and they don't really show us how to put together great portfolio.

So we walk through all of that. Um, As a student inside my freelance accelerator program, Christina had the opportunity to jump on a one-on-one

strategy session with me where she and I sat down for close to an hour and talked through anything and everything she was stuck on. Um, this is an opportunity that you get when you are inside my freelance accelerator program and is the only way to get direct access to me.

Um, so if that is something that you would be interested, , uh, then that is all inside of Food Accelerator. You can check out the details, um, over at so heidi.com/fast, f a s t, and we can get you on the wait list and let you know the next time it opens. Um, inside of FAST is also where we. Put the full strategy session.

So I shared just a [00:03:00] portion of them here in the podcast. And then the full strategy session is shared with all the students inside of the program. Um, if you wanna check out some of my free resources to get started right away on your freelance career, you can head on over to soha.com/freelance. We will link all this up in the show notes.

So just scroll down wherever you're listening and you can check that out. Um, thank you so much for being here. I'm super excited to share my conversation with Christina today with you. And, uh, hopefully this can help you get a little bit unstuck on your portfolio or something that you're maybe stuck on in your freelance career.

Uh, so let's jump into it. Here we go. Um, okay, so let's talk. So you sent over. Some notes about where you're struggling with your aesthetic. Um mm-hmm. , do you want me to sort of look at what you've sent or do you wanna just maybe gimme a little brain dump about where you're feeling at right now?

[00:03:54] **Christina:** Um, I mean, I could, yeah, totally.

Um, I could tell you [00:04:00] where I'm at right now. I mean, nothing really has changed since I sent you that, but, um, basically, I really need to redo my portfolio because it's so college, um, to the point where I don't even send people my website anymore. . Um, I have like examples of freelance work that I did like in the past, but it's just stuff that I did for clients in the past.

Um, and that's kind of really old at this point too, because I can't, I don't have like, I don't wanna show everybody's, you know, tech per, like tech packs and stuff like that. Yeah. . So I really need something to present. But then the thing is, like, I, I, I like my personal aesthetic is, is I'm very, I'm goth like, I'm very like in that world.

Yeah. And I feel like, I don't know if I'm doing myself a disservice by sticking with my aesthetic, because it might turn other brands. [00:05:00] Seeing that, but maybe the design doesn't even really matter. Maybe the tech pack is the really only thing that matters as I've learned, um, since not being in college. Um, but yeah, I feel like f i t just didn't, they did not really prepare anybody for how it actually is.

Like nobody really cares about these big ass art projects. Like no one cares.

[00:05:25] **Heidi:** They don't, they really don't. Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Okay. So what services do you wanna offer? It sounds like you wanna offer tech packs exclusively, or like, do you wanna do design? Like, what are you thinking?

[00:05:42] **Christina:** Um, I, I've never had the opportunity to professionally do design.

Okay. I've only since, um, graduating, I've just been doing tech packs. Actually, while I was in college, I started freelancing tech packs. Okay. Because one of my professors hired me. Um, [00:06:00] so, and then I was working for her and then through Covid she retired. Okay. Um, and then I left the industry door in Covid and they kept me on for freelance, and then they didn't need freelance anymore, so now I actually have to go out and get that myself.

Yeah. Um, and, and, um, I, I'm sorry, did I feel like I went on a tangent? No, no,

[00:06:19] **Heidi:** no. You didn't at all. All this information is really helpful. Yeah. Keep going. Um,

[00:06:24] **Christina:** I. I feel like I haven't even considered trying to do design, cause I guess I'm so comfortable in tech pack land. Okay. Um, and I'm like, oh, should I just make a bunch of tech packs as a collection?

but then like, if I do that, should it just be like some generic active wear collection? Cause I've done a lot of active wear, you know, like I, I haven't really been the director of what I've done. I've just kind of been given things that I just kept going, going, going. Yeah. I don't know if that makes any sense.

[00:06:56] **Heidi:** Yeah. No, no, no. Makes total sense. Yeah. I mean, [00:07:00] here's what I'll say.

at the end of the day, a tech pack is a tech pack is a tech pack. Whether it's for goth or whether it's for active wear or whether it's for, I mean, you know, there's

some nuances obviously in construction and fabrications and trims and that sort of thing. Um, but like the bones of it are the same and you know how to do that, right?

So, you know, you say like, should I just go after active? . I mean, I feel that so many people go after active wear because it's just kind of like for a lot of people, you know? I think that's what a lot of the world wear. I mean, I'm in leggings right now, right? Like that fits a lot of people. Therefore there's a lot of brands.

Therefore there's a lot of freelancers going after that. I actually think that you [00:08:00] have an interesting. Like niche opportunity here to take advantage of the fact that you are interested in this like smaller market. Cuz you had said, um, I mean you literally said, I'm just gonna read this here. I have a very gothic and dark design aesthetic.

I am torn between being who I actually am in my portfolio or dumbing it down, so to say, in order to be more mainstream and appealing to a wider. Mm-hmm. , you know, appealing to a wider audience can actually be a disadvantage. Um, it's like you're, you become a smaller fish and a bigger sea. Right? Yeah.

Versus you could be like the gothic tech pat girl or something. I don't know. Right. Yeah. I mean, I think there, I think there's actually a really interesting opportunity here. Obvious. . [00:09:00] There's a lot of fashion in the goth world. I mean, a lot of fashion. I know I, I've known people over the years, like I feel like that community is very, fashion is like their biggest statement, right.

And the hair and stuff too. But like it's such a big part of that community that, um, I think there's something interesting and I think that people that probably work for gothic brands are into that look. And I think they'd be excited to have someone who's like into that, involved as a freelancer versus like, you're like, I'm not really into active, well, maybe you're in active wear too.

I don't know. I don't, it doesn't really totally sound like it. Um, maybe goth active wear, I suppose. Right. There's probably that aesthetic too. Yeah.

[00:09:48] **Christina:** Um, I mean, I find it interesting. I've, I've, I did work on Champion and I, I thought that was fun. Okay. Um, I mean, I'm not, I'm not like picky, cuz most of the [00:10:00] time it's just people giving me things to make into a tech pack.

So it's not like I have any personal attachment to it. You know what I mean?

[00:10:06] **Heidi:** Um Right. But here's the thing to think about When it comes to freelancing, there is value in having some personal attachment to the brand or to the aesthetic. Because here's the thing, you're gonna be looking for these. Which means it's gonna be a lot more fun and enjoyable for you to find them.

If it's like stuff that you're aesthetically attracted to, you're gonna be pitching and talking to them, and your excitement about that type of clothing is going to like bleed into everything you do. I mean, I sent an email the other week talking about how like having self doubt or having confidence is like literally.

one drop of red food coloring and a cup of water. It's this tiny little drop, and as soon as you put it in, the whole [00:11:00] thing turns red. Right? So your excitement about like the goth look, I feel like could be that really in a, in a positive way, that really strong, you know, drop of color food coloring in that glass of water that brands are going to feel.

like, it's really hard to define and to like pick out in and on paper, like literally on paper, like in the stuff that you write or maybe the stuff that you say, but like people can just feel it. Um, I mean, I liken it to like last year we, we pivoted the business to focus on freelancing only because that's where I was the most excited.

That's where I was the most passionate and. . Yeah, I could talk about Illustrator, but I don't wanna talk about Illustrator. I wanna fucking talk about freelancing because this is where like I get really pumped up. I get really passionate and like people feel that, right? So you're probably like, yeah, I could do active or tech packs, but I'm really into this other type of clothing.[00:12:00]

And that excitement, that passion, like people are just gonna sense it. And that can be, you know, a big part of like making that connection with that brand to where they're like, We really wanna talk to Christina because she just sounds awesome. She's really into the, the clothes. Um, I mean, listen, at the end of the day, I'm not here to tell you what to do.

You have to decide that, but I'm here to sort of give you some ideas and some inspiration based on what I've seen in my own personal career, my own life, as well as all the other students inside of Freelance Accelerator, et cetera. And as soon as I like read, Your question here, and I looked at your website and I was like, go after the stuff that you're into.

[00:12:47] **Christina:** Okay. All right. Good. I'm I, I was so, I was so worried to send you my website cuz it's, it's so hot. It's just like, just. Whatever I did in

[00:12:54] **Heidi:** college. I agree. It's very college. I don't think your website is super representative. Like I, [00:13:00] I wouldn't want you to really send that out, . I don't,

[00:13:02] **Christina:** I don't send it.

[00:13:03] **Heidi:** I didn't even wanna send it to you.

I was like, that's all right. That's right. I'm not here to judge. I've seen, let me tell you, your, there's so many people's website looks just like yours. Don't feel bad. Everybody does this. So, so what do you think about that? And then, and then, hold on. Let me just say one more thing too. Before, before you answer.

You know, you said I didn't even think about or consider the opportunity for design. I mean, I looked at your website and it took me a minute to kind of dig through. There's a lot of projects and a lot of stuff, but yeah, you've got some really cool like flat sketches of some really fun designs and you have a good eye and so I don't know if you wanna do design or not.

It kind of sounded maybe earlier like you, like I could, but I just never thought about it. Cause I haven't had any professional experience. I think. You know, going into brands that you're aesthetically attracted to, to do tech packs, that could be like your foot in the door, right? And then [00:14:00] that's gonna open up so much more opportunity for you to potentially do design for them, right?

You could just maybe like toss out some stuff and be like, you know what? I know I'm doing text packs, but I've been following this person, blah, blah, blah. They're doing this cool. Or I don't know what, you know, I've been seeing this cool stuff and trying to report whatever it is. Um, and to open up that opportunity and for them to be, you know, like no offense, I'm talking to you right now.

People who are listening aren't gonna see this. You've got like platinum and purple and black hair and you know, you have a certain aesthetic and you know, an active wear brand that's maybe a little bit more mainstream might not be so excited about you designing. Right. We're, we work in fashion, people are very judgmental on how people.

Yeah, right. Versus a brand that's more gole that like fits your aesthetic. They're gonna be super excited to hear what your thoughts are on the design side because you are that person. You know what I'm [00:15:00] saying? Yeah.

[00:15:02] **Christina:** I, I guess I was just also worried cuz when I was in college, like I was told so many times, well your world is gonna be really small and you might not be able to get any work in that world.

So you're, you know, you better start thinking about, you know, doing something. So that's, I guess I, I guess I let that get way too much to my head. And, but I did also try, um, reaching out to those brands, like when I had first graduated and none of them were interested. Um, and not even in an internship Okay.

Through my school. Okay. So that was like, although Patricia Field did accept me,

[00:15:37] **Heidi:** um, for, I'm not sure who that is, but Okay. A big, oh, is it Patricia Field? Yeah. Why do I, should I know.

[00:15:44] **Christina:** She's a stylist. She did, um, sex in the City. She styled just Sarah

[00:15:48] **Heidi:** Jessica Parker. I should know that she also, cause I was a big Sex in the City fan

Yeah. She, well,

[00:15:53] **Christina:** she styled her. That's what she's known for. But she, she, she does a lot of other stuff like Okay. It's not just that. Yeah. Okay. Okay. [00:16:00] Um, but, um, Yeah, I, I, uh, didn't, I, I wasn't really getting anywhere when I first initially tried, but I wasn't trying in the way that you try.

[00:16:10] **Heidi:** I was just gonna say that was five years ago.

You were using different strategies. Um, listen, I'm not gonna say it's gonna be a magic shoe in like, at the end of the day, you know, so, so fashion school told you there might not be a lot of opportunity. Yeah, there's gonna be less opportunity in the goth world than there is in like the active wear world.

But there's also fewer of you. There's not as many people who are going after that work. So in a way, and versus like how many people I in freelance accelerator I talk to are doing active wear? It's a lot. Or just people in general that are doing active work. It's a lot. Yeah. So in a way it's, they kind of run parallels, like there's less opportunities, but there.

Candidates, less freelancers, less, [00:17:00] whatever you wanna call it. Right? And then in active wear there's more, but more so, um, and I'm a really firm believer that, like I said earlier, that your excitement for the category is going to bleed into everything that you do. Yes. I. At the end of the day, you're, you know, I always tell people, you're the CEO of your business.

You're the CEO of your freelance business. So like, you have to, you have to make the decision. What I don't wanna see is you said, this has really kept me stuck. Yeah. That's what I do not wanna see. So I want you to make a decision tomorrow, or by the time we get off the call, I'm gonna put you in a decision by the time we get off the call.

Okay? And you can change it in the next, I'm gonna give you like 24 hours to change it, but. make a decision and get started because the only way that you're going to actually start making progress to learn to maybe [00:18:00] adjust some nuances of the types of brands you're pitching to or, or whatever the thing is, is by actually getting started, like actually taking that first step.

Like what does your gut say right now? Yes. What do you wanna. I mean,

[00:18:16] **Christina:** for redoing my portfolio, I'd rather do it and enjoy it than like be forcing myself to do something that doesn't really jive with me. Um, I think it definitely, I definitely need to do tech packs because that's really what everybody wants, right?

Um, so maybe if I like did a mini tech pack, it's hard to pick a category, right? Um, it's hard to pick a category. Done so many different things. I tend to feel like I'm a jack of all trades and how do I not, how do I pick, like how do I choose and I have to choose, right? So, um, the one thing that I want to, like, do I, I mean I could make it be [00:19:00] active wear, but do I really wanna do that?

Could just do street wear, I guess. I don't know if that is a thing. Yeah, I mean, street

[00:19:06] **Heidi:** wear is totally a thing for sure. . You know, I, I think too, you might be putting a little bit too much pressure on the fact that like your tech pack portfolio, whatever type of garment you choose to do, like you're then locked into that kind of brand.

I think you're putting a little bit too much pressure on that. Okay. So yes, it's going to be better and more ideal if you're going after active. You have active

tech packs. If you're going. Street wear or goth, you have that. Um, but I, I don't think that that's gonna like, completely lock you out of those other categories.

Like maybe you could do like, three sample tech packs. Right. Since we don't wanna use other brands, tech packs in our portfolio. Cause that's kind of unethical, right? Yeah. You do, right? You do your three self-directed [00:20:00] tech packs and you do something that's like active but leans a little bit more like has some goth influence to it, right?

Uhhuh, . Um, so it could be like leggings, but that have got some flare. Right. Yeah. Um, or like, you've got some, I mean, this is, that's old from your portfolio what I saw, but like you had some really cool like strappy, bralet type of things. There's a lot. That's a lot. There's a lot of crossover in that, right?

At the end of the day, it sometimes is a matter of like maybe some slight adjustment in the styling, but also then like the fabric, the colors and the trims can kind of make it lean one direction versus the other. . Um, so you could do something that maybe blends those worlds. And then I think that, you know, there's ways too that like, [00:21:00] so now we're kind of blending, like active with goth, and then I think, you know, streetwear kind of could land in with that too.

Like maybe it's like a hoodie or, I don't know. I mean, I don't think it's such a, , like cut and dry, black and white line between all of these. Yeah. Right. And so, so then you're like, okay, that could open up some more categories for you, some more types of brands. And then when you're looking for brands to reach out to, um, you're just looking for like, is it kind of feel in line with that?

It needs to be much less so in line than if you were doing. , right? Yeah. The, just in general it's like, oh, okay, a pair of leggings, they get it. Leggings is, leggings is leggings at the end of the day, right? Yeah. And same with like, maybe like all, all types of brands do like strappy. Not all types of brands, but like active as well as goths as well as [00:22:00] maybe, you know, depending on the street where bra probably not so much, but like strappy type of bra things.

Yeah. I mean, . I think at the end of the day, these all can kind of fall into one bigger bucket for you. What do you think about that? Yes.

[00:22:18] **Christina:** Yeah, you're right. They can, they can, yeah. Um, three, three self-directed tech packs. And then, um, some, would it be just like flats, like colored flats of the rest of it?

[00:22:37] **Heidi:** What do you mean? Of the rest of

it?

[00:22:38] **Christina:** Of, of like, of like a

[00:22:39] **Heidi:** collection? Well, why do you have to do a whole collection? I'm still thinking like, F

[00:22:46] **Christina:** I

[00:22:46] **Heidi:** T I'm sorry. . . So if you look inside a fast, there's uh, there's a bunch of portfolio critiques, right? Mm-hmm. , um, there's some tech pack portfolio critiques in there.

Mm-hmm. . [00:23:00] So I want you to, if you haven't yet, I want you to look at. You don't need a design board, you don't need mood boards, you don't need any of that stuff. You don't need a collection. You're really just gonna show the tech packs. Okay. Okay. And inside the tech pack, you're gonna have, right, the flat sketch, then you're gonna have all the technical call outs.

Um, I think it's good to have like a color call out page, right? So you, it shows you know how to do like a fabric map and all that stuff. Or if there's like any graphic prints, you know, know how to spec out the placement, that sort of thing. Um, but I, you don't need to like then turn that into a collection.

[00:23:38] **Christina:** Okay. So how many tech packs would it be total

[00:23:42] **Heidi:** then? I think you could just do like three. That's it? Yeah. Okay. That's really it. Really simple. It is. So, because here's the thing, with a new portfolio, whether it's tech packs or whether it's design, whatever, it. , [00:24:00] you wanna show the brand at a glance, quickly at a glance that like you know how to do what you're, what you're pitching, right?

Yeah. And you know as well as I do, you can like glance at a tech pack and be like, this person gets it. You could glance to the tech pack and be like, yeah, no. I mean, I don't know about you. I've seen some real horrendous tech packs in. . Oh yeah.

[00:24:27] **Christina:** Bad. Oh yes. Right. Bad.

[00:24:29] **Heidi:** Yes. You don't need to show a ton of stuff.

Mm-hmm. , um, like that's good. Yeah. They wanna see that, you know how to do. A technical sketch with call outs and you know how to do closeups and you know how to draw like the inside or any detailing that like might need more spec specking than on the flat itself, right? Anything that just needs a little bit further clarification.

Um, they're gonna wanna know that you can do like how to build out a bill [00:25:00] materials, right? Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah. They're gonna wanna see that, you know, how to put together like the fabric map and call it the colorways and that sort of thing. Um, any placement for, for graphics or that sort of thing. Like labels, hang tags, that stuff.

So embroidery. Embroidery,

[00:25:17] **Christina:** exactly. Yeah, I've done that before

[00:25:19] **Heidi:** too. So that's like, those are the, that's like your 80 20, that's like, that's all they're really gonna wanna see. And there, you know how to glance, okay, this girl knows how to do tech pack. Her, her tech pack example is like kind of in line. It like feels in line.

You're not showing them like denim or like handbags, right? It's in line enough with their brand that like that's all you need to make it click. Um, okay. Yeah. How does that feel?

[00:25:53] **Christina:** That feels a lot less pressure. a lot better

[00:25:57] **Heidi:** to do. What were you thinking you needed to. [00:26:00] Um,

[00:26:03] **Christina:** I thought that I would have to make like, you know, a whole, like a whole bunch of flats and show a whole collection as flats and then do tech packs.

Well, not for all of it, cuz you don't need tech packs for all of it, but No, you just have to like show one. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So that's what I was thinking I had to do. But

[00:26:20] **Heidi:** I mean, if you wanna pitch design then that you need to do some design, but if you wanna just start with tech packs. .

[00:26:28] **Christina:** Yeah. I mean, it feels, I, I've always felt frustrated just drawing a design.

I'd rather just make it so that part of it was always like, frustrating to me to just come up with a design and just draw it. Okay. And explain it and not actually do it. Okay. I always get frustrated with that. Yeah. Um, um, so I guess that's why with Tech Packs, I feel like I'm, I'm technically making it right cause I'm explaining it, but, um, Y Yes.

So that does sound a lot easier. And then I could just make that, [00:27:00] put that on a web, my, on a website. Um, and then, um, I think I would still keep some of the things like that I've had published on a separate area. Yeah.

[00:27:11] **Heidi:** Yeah. I mean,

[00:27:13] **Christina:** I mean, they could look there or not,

[00:27:14] **Heidi:** it doesn't matter. Totally, totally. Yeah.

Here's what I would say is like gonna be the best bang for your buck if you like, wanna get started like, , forget about the website. Just get your tech packs, your sample tech packs together. Put 'em into a pdf. Yeah. And call it a day. Okay. That's cool. Ultimately, right. I really, I highly, highly advocate for the PDF portfolio.

It's a lot easier to put together. It's a lot easier to edit and to modify. Um, . So often the user interface on websites that I have seen in fashion portfolios is [00:28:00] very clunky. Um, yours kind of fell into that category too, to be totally blunt. It was like, where am I clicking? And things were going sideways and vertical and then there was just felt like a lot of clicking and a lot of buttons.

You don't wanna make people have to work for the thing, you just wanna like give it to them really easily. , I think you can have a, you can update the website accordingly as you have time as you want to, but your biggest bang for the buck right now is just like, forget about that. Just give the PDF tech packs together.

If you start talking to brand, they wanna see more. You know, maybe something comes up about some of the stuff that you've done in the past, like you can then share that. But I wouldn't, I mean, I say this because this is the case for most people. getting sort of sucked into the website. Rabbit hole can just be a lot of time and energy.

Yeah. Um, some people are really savvy, so like, if that's you, then just get in there and do it and call it a [00:29:00] day. But for most people it's easiest to just get the pdf. Thank you so much for listening to this episode of the Successful Fashion Freelancer Podcast. As I mentioned at the beginning, this was a snippet of a strategy session that I had with one of our Freelance accelerator students, Christina, um, if you are interested in getting on a one-on-one call with me where you can get help and support and advice with anything and everything you need in your freelance career, personalized support to help you wherever you are stuck, that is an opportunity that is reserved exclusively for freelance accelerator students like c.

If you wanna learn more about that program, um, which also includes all the step by step videos, templates, tutorials, everything that you need to kickstart or grow your career as a successful fashion freelancer, you can head on over to soha.com/fast, f a s t. We'll link that up in the show notes and, uh, yeah, we can help you get started.

If you wanna check out some of my free resources, you can do that over at so heidi.com/freelance. Again, we will link that in the show. Um, yeah, and [00:30:00] thank you so much for listening. I really appreciate you being here. Also, thank you to my team behind the scenes. Who helps get this podcast up and out to you in your ears and coordinates all the guests.

That would be Tara, Daniel, Brittany, and my husband Mark, who does all the tech and editing. Thank you so much. Really appreciate you. Thanks for tuning in. Make sure you're subscribed on Apple Podcasts or Spotify or wherever you're listening, and if you're feeling so inclined and generous. Take 30 seconds and leave a rating and review if you feel like we deserve it.

All right, you guys, thank you so much. I really appreciate you being here, and I'll talk to you in the next episode of the Successful Fashion Fan Podcast. Bye.