Website Options

Websites

Why do you need a website?

What isn’t a website?

What are the options?

What qualities should your site have?

Why?

Your website should be the centre-piece of your web presence. Anyone trying to make a living from their creative practice can be discovered through their website (with the aid of good SEO – Search Engine Optimisation), and this is the place you direct clients to via email link, social media, verbally, on your business card, CV, letterhead etc.

It is not always easy to show your portfolio to clients and certainly not with every update, but you can keep them interested and informed with a link to new content via email or social media.

Websites have never been cheaper or easier to set-up and maintain.

What isn’t a website?

Social Media: Facebook, Twitter etc.

File sharing sites: Pinterest, Flickr, Instagram etc.

Blogs: Blogger, WordPress, Tumblr etc.

All those other web-based presences are useful for increasing your contact base, interlinking with your website, SEO (search engine optimisation) and keeping in touch with clients.

Mark Griffiths

Overview

Projects

Commissions

Contact
About

MARK POWER

Projects About Connect Blog Essays Bookshop

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PAULO NIMER PJOTA
SASKIA OLDE WOLBERS
PAUL P.
OLIVIA PLENDER
STEPHEN PRINA
JAMES PYMAN
MICHAEL QUEENLAND
TIM ROLLINS AND K.O.S.
EDUARDO SARABIA
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MAAIKE SCHOOREL

HANNAH STARKEY
DIRK STEWEN
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WOLFGANG TILLMANS
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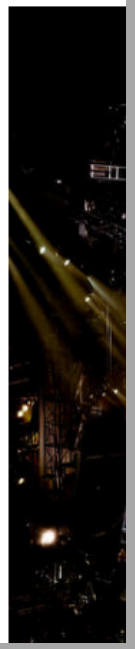
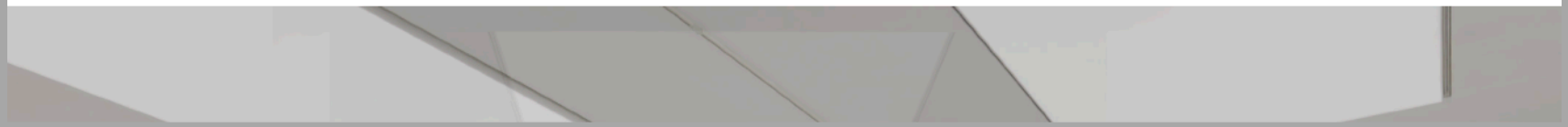


CRAIG-MARTIN

WORK EXHIBITIONS ABOUT CONTACT



What are the options?

Bespoke

You or a web designer build the site from scratch using software such as Adobe Dreamweaver. You or the designer codes the look and functionality of the site using HTML. (Hyper Text Mark-up Language) and CSS. (Cascading Style Sheets)

Advantages/Disadvantages?

Unique Look.

Complete Control.

Complexity (coding, updating).

Web Hosting/Domain name required.

Cost if you're getting someone to build it for you.

You need good design skills (or a good designer).

Arguably unnecessary with today's alternative options.

One-stop Shop

There are many sites that offer hosting, web-building options (either using some code or with templates requiring no coding).

Many of these offer free websites or a variety of price plans for greater flexibility.

You might also use web space provided by Google +, Mac etc. Some are general, some photo or art-specific.

Examples:

Wix, Weebly, one.com, Photoshelter, SmugMug, Zenfolio, Unusual Light, Carbonmade, Virb, LayerSpace, Squarespace, Amazing Internet, GoDaddy, Adobe (available with Creative Suite subscription)

Advantages/Disadvantages?

Simplicity.

No coding required.

Many will allow some customisation with code

Check statistics for up-time/server speed

Visit sites made on these platforms

Limitations for email.

Free sites: Domain name/adverts/limited image upload and bandwidth.

CMS

Content Management Systems

You can create a site using a CMS without coding. The best known options are Joomla, Drupal, Shopify and WordPress.org.

You will require hosting, but the CMS is usually free. You will need to do some work but can customise your site with themes (free or premium), plug-ins and widgets. 30% of all websites developed today are built on WordPress platforms.

Advantages/Disadvantages

Very flexible and straightforward to use.

Very easy to update as you do this on the server of your hosting company.

Web Host advantages such as bespoke email.

Once you have got to grips with it, easier to create other sites.

Premium themes can be expensive (though this is a one-off cost).

What your site should have?

Must Haves:

Simplicity - you do not need complex design, and navigation should be easy.

Select, edit and sequence your pictures with care, as you would a portfolio.

Your site should be fast to load and the transitions should be fast too.

Your site should be responsive and work on mobile devices.

What your site should have?

Desirable:

Your own domain or custom name: hettybarnacle.com or hettybarnaclephotography.com as opposed to hettybarnacle.wix.com*.

Your own professional email address e.g., hetty@hettybarnacle.com etc.

At the very least link to a more professional sounding Gmail or similar account; ditch licklepixiehettie@hotmail.com for any client contact.

*This may be unavoidable with free site.

What your site should have?

Landing Page/Homepage

Menu: Work/Gallery/Projects

Contact (include social media if links aren't on homepage)

About (Bio, Statement, Exhibitions/Publications etc. - a kind of online CV)

For now, or the future:

Shop

Client Area

(These latter options will normally only be available with site where you pay a monthly fee, often at, at least, a second tier rate.)

Your site is built for clients and potential clients

Your Audience

If you don’t have a website yet, and while you investigate the options, create a folder and start saving work that you want to place as content on your site.

When you find a host/provider that you like, check their specifications for content.

They will have an optimal file size/ pixel dimension specification.

Save your files to that size or you may have issues uploading work or with the navigation speed of your site.

The spec. may, for example, be for files no more than 2 megabytes. This accommodates a jpeg around 1600pixels on the long dimension at full quality; a larger file at very good quality. I usually save images now (on Photoshop) at 10 or even 8, rather than 12. On screen, this makes no visual difference but makes the images easier to handle.

Many viewers of your work will have high quality, wide-screen monitors, so uploaded images may be larger. However, it is unlikely that you will require anything larger than an image that matches an HD monitor, so an image height of 1080pixels would seem about right.

Some sites will compress your images to the correct (optimal) size when uploading.

If you work using a medium that may not seem conducive to the screen image, consider the optimum way of displaying your work: still installation images, performance stills etc.

If you work with paintings where the surface texture is important, or with collage, where again, the 3-dimensional quality of the work is an essential element, you need to photograph the work with lighting that reveals the texture, or with additional detail images that show the work from different angles.

If you work with moving image, website hosting accommodates this but it might not be as good with a free provider or even on a low monthly fee as such options usually limit file space. Research is important here.

Task for next week

Find an artist website you like and send me the URL.

This could be a site you already follow/know about, or something new - a discovery.

Consider how it works why you like it, what you don't like.

Consider aspects such as where it appears in a Google search for the name of the artist, the landing/home page, menu, navigation, speed of use, work - edit/sequence etc.