

Changemakers: Building your Personal
Brand for Sustainable Employment
ADAA5001

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Website Research and Evaluation

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Link to my Website: <https://19026585.wixsite.com/dominicbrewsterdocum>

The goal with curating and updating a website was to showcase my work as a professional brand. Curating a website as an online portfolio for a personal brand is important especially for a photographer trying to produce an income from their creative practice. A website can be more specific and personal to your own style and aesthetic preferences, it becomes a platform to showcase your work with more intention, that reflects who you are more accurately. This is something popular social media platforms often lack, as there are limitations in presenting your creativity and practice. For example, most image sharing platforms have a grid system layout and a border, that often crops pictures, meaning all profiles look similar following the same template.

Previously I have created a free domain website, in order to showcase my work. However, this was used on an academic basis, for sharing to universities during application. It has not been considered much since then, nor updated much during my time in university; during which time my practice and personal development as a documentary photographer have changed considerably. This old domain is no longer an accurate representation of myself or my work as a photographer.

Making the decision of how I was going to create this new webpage, I had to consider layout and design, and importantly, how much influence I could have on altering the website. Did I want ultimate freedom? I reviewed my options.

The webpage could be built from scratch using a programme like Adobe Dreamweaver, where you can code the overall appearance, tools and functions of the site. This option allows for complete control and creates a unique platform, catered to your own ideas and designs. However, this process requires a lot of time and cost, especially considering my skills do not lie in coding. It is a very complex process. Alternately, and the decision I opted for was to create a website profile, through an already existing platform. In essence, a website that offers options for website building and hosting. Examples of these include, square space and wix, which provide a service for creating a website using a pre-built templates, which are easy to modify (Website, 2013). Although, these have pre-built templates, it was important that I chose the correct style and layout in which my photography was to be illustrated through.

Taking into consideration my influences as a photographer, as well as, the online presence of publishing companies I admire, I took inspiration and notes on what I felt have been successful attributions to their webpages.

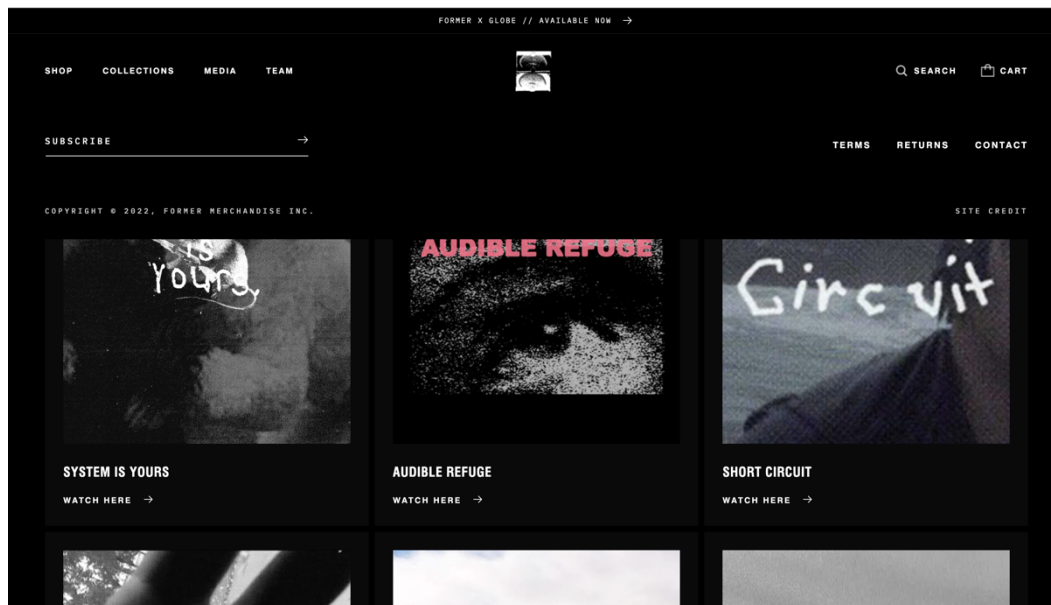


Figure 1 Former Merchandise, 2023, Screenshot of webpage, Media Page.

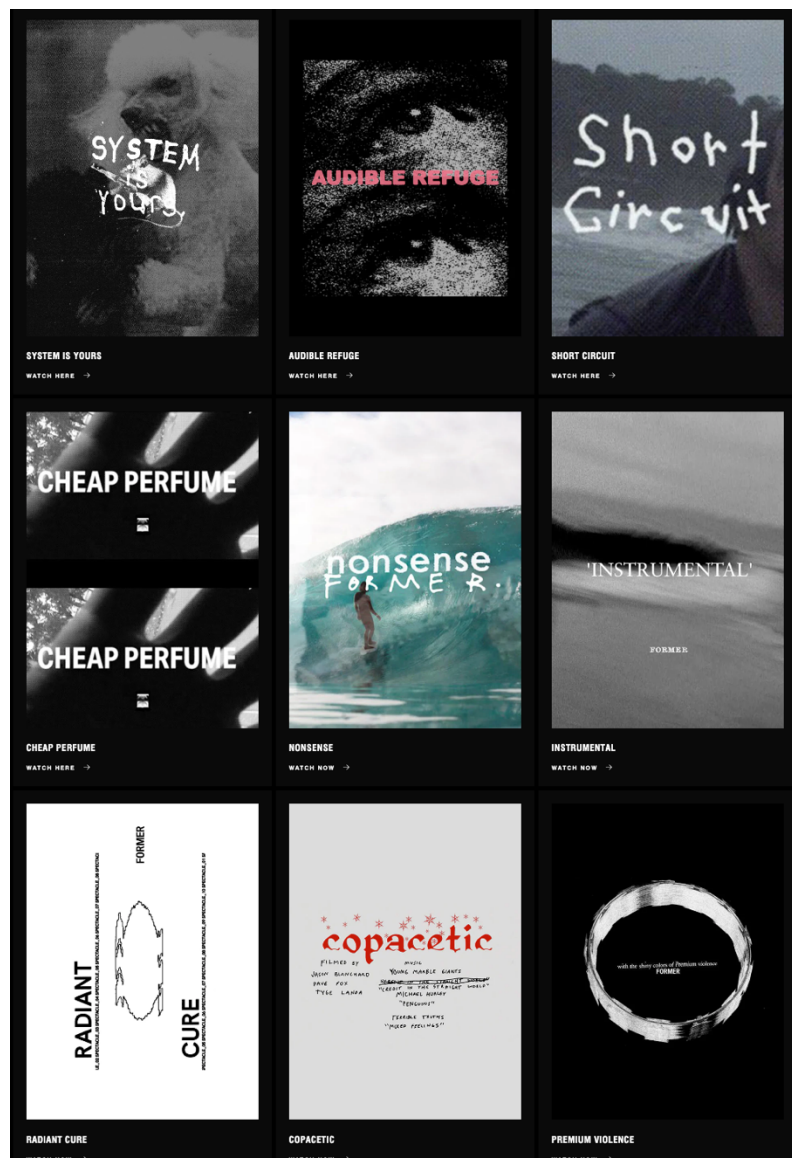


Figure 2 Former Merchandise, 2023, Screenshot of webpage, Media Page.

Figure 1 and 2, refer to *Former*, a media, apparel company and publication house founded by Craig Anderson, an surfer based in Australia (FORMER MERCHANDISE, 2022). This website provides a clear layout that works perfectly to compliment the aesthetics of the brand. The menus provide dropdown bars to subpages and each media page is simple to use.

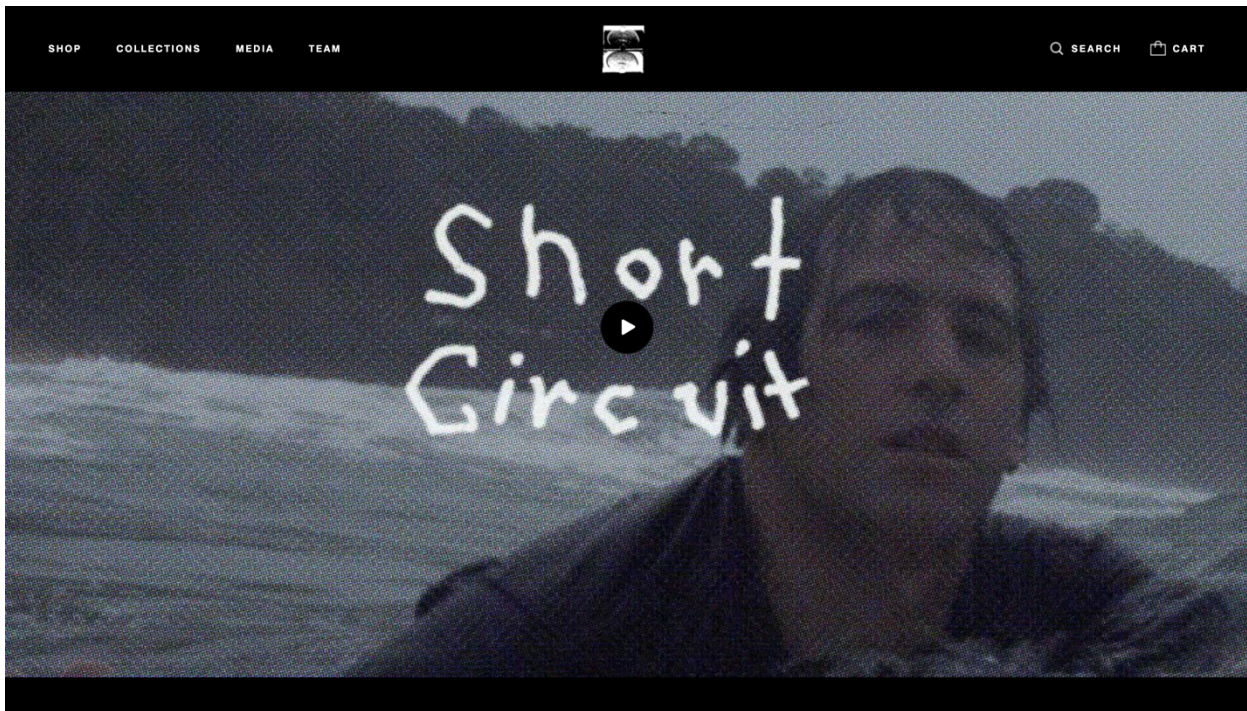


Figure 3 Former Merchandise, *Short Circuit (Film)*, 2023, Screenshot of webpage.

Each media page, allows the video or selected media to flood the whole page, which is great for honing in on the subject. Often websites can be filled with too much information or imagery, that clutters the feed and distracts from the objective of the webpage. This is something seen a lot with use of advertisement (Brookins, 2019), and therefore is something I want to avoid. Furthermore, the choice to keep to a colour scheme that is basic and allowing the substance of the website to speak for itself is underrated. Going for a monochrome palette is often complimentary to any subject matter but also, again, has the ability to enhance the images or media displayed. Too much pattern of colour could draw attention away, creating a cluttered and unappealing layout.



Figure 4 Franziska Strauss Photography, Screenshot of webpage (2023), Home

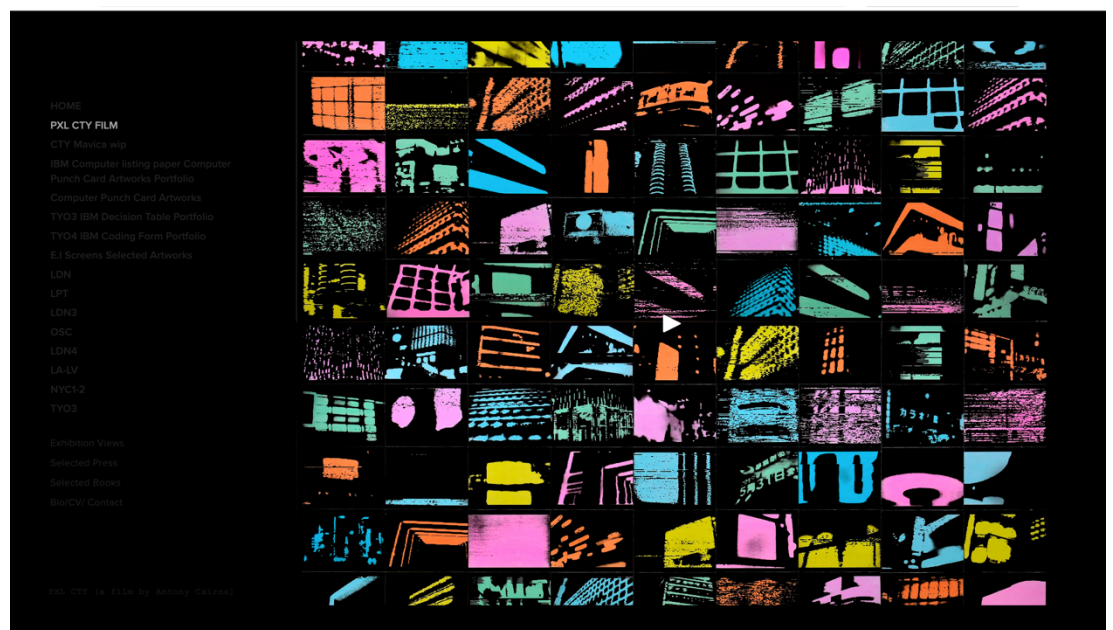


Figure 5 Anthony Cairns, PXL CTY FILM Screenshot of page, (2023).

The simple thematic choices is again displayed in figures 4 and 5. Figure 4 provides a straightforward and effective layout for a home page; providing an eye catching first sight and basic menu bar. Anthony Cairns (see fig 5) has been a main point of influence in terms of technique with film photography and inspiration for future projects involving film, so naturally I explored his website. I found that despite his large portfolio, the website was still clean and considered; each series of work listed in a menu, separate from the additional information pages (for which there is an obvious difference on the website). Moreover, Cairns has experimented with layout and there is a clear creative influence on the design and flow of the pages, with some changing background colour to enhance the work displayed. This was something to consider when choosing the sequence of images I was going to display, and whether the format I was using would allow for these kind of alterations to the webpages.



Figure 6, Anthony Cairns, Bio/CV Contact Page, (2023), Screenshot



Figure 7, Anthony Cairns, Bio/CV Contact Page, (2023), Screenshot

In addition, examining how other photographers had included their artists statements and cv was helpful in curating my own portfolio. Although, a listed CV is concise and can easily be placed in chronological order, I find this formality monotonous and lacks interest. This is especially when there’s no imagery linking to the dates and exhibits. However, it is understood that as a professional portfolio website, including a summary of relevant work is key when enabling you to successfully market your skill set to any potential employers or collaborators.

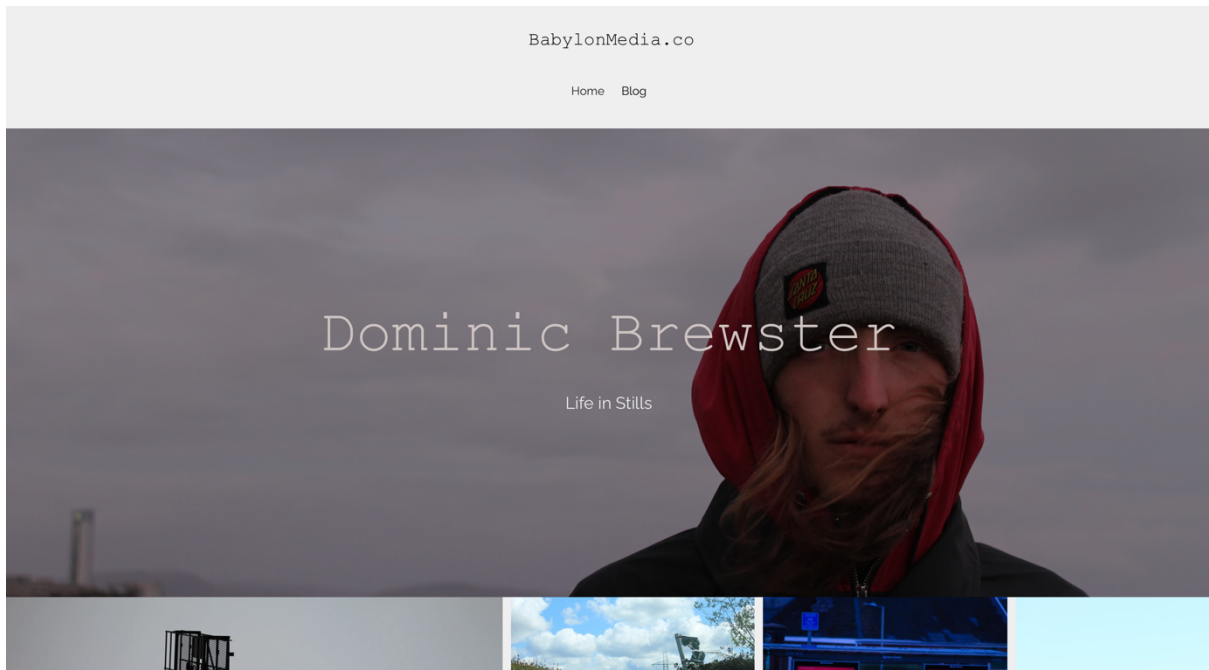


Figure 8 Dominic Brewster, *BabylonMedia.co*, (2023), Screenshot of webpage

My previous portfolio included a very basic visual display of my photography taken to outline my main areas of focus. This however, no longer resonates and has not been updated with any of my current or relevant pieces of work.

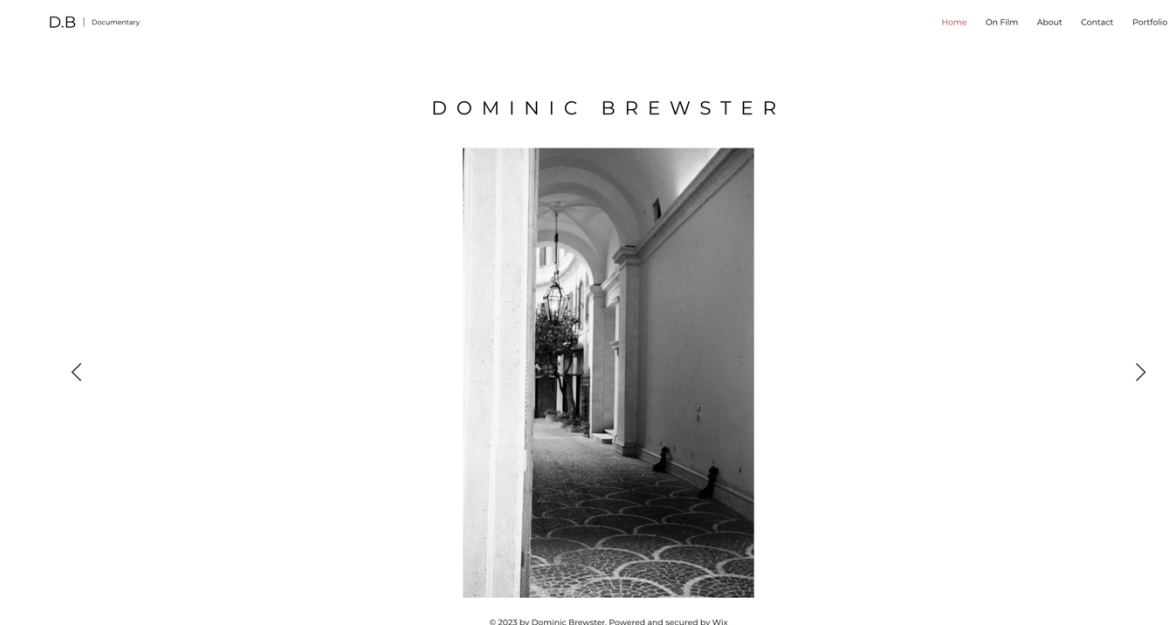


Figure 9 Dominic Brewster, *D.B. Documentary*, (2023), Screenshot of Homepage

Figure 9 displays the home page of my updated website. The website has been changed to maintain simple and clean cut. The use of bold and simple colour palette that allows for the

audience to easily and smoothly navigate the website, with limited distraction. The home page includes a small selection of images, that slide through automatically (there is a feature to click on and enhance each image if the viewer wishes). This is a series of film images taken in Rome. It felt appropriate to be placed as an initial interaction people have with my practice as they are some of my most recent self-directed images, as well as, one of my most recent private bodies of work. I've largely worked in black and white film photography and these represent this format concisely and effectively. In future, I would like a video edit to feature on the home page.

The aim was to create a clear, simple and cohesive website; allowing each page to flow nicely into the next. This is where I found the ability to modify each page very useful, providing options for contents to opt for 'next page' buttons etc. The format of the website is straightforward, where I chose for there to not include all of my images, rather to sequence the best of the images I have produced over the past two years; opting for quality over quantity, featuring published works that have been exhibited and already featured in a professional setting. This selectivity, allows for potential clients or audiences to have room to discover more and help support that element of curiosity, as they have not witnessed everything at once. Another element that I incorporated, and resonated with other portfolios, was leaving out excessive information. Context next to imagery does not always feel necessary, particularly when my practice focuses so much on the admiration of the everyday – there is some value in observing an image as and for what it is. As it was put quite simply by Elliot Erwitt, 'the whole point of taking pictures is so that you don't have to explain things with words' (A. L., 2014 n.p.)

Nonetheless, I have included titles and dates, as well as, where a photograph was exhibited on the page displaying each curated sequence. A short edited biography has been included under the 'about' heading, discussing a brief synopsis of the subject of my work. The option to provide a short biography was made, in replacement of including my full artists statement as the statement felt too long and would draw away interest; leave space to allow the work to dominate the space and speak for themselves.

I have linked my website to my Instagram account, which in itself needs further updating. I would like my Instagram to follow a similar aesthetic to my website, allowing myself to play around creatively. This could be incorporating written word to my posts; things that indirectly relate to my practice. I have considered the use of Facebook and Twitter, also, in an attempt to reach a larger demographic. A Facebook page would be a great platform to link to my Instagram profile, where you can get more frequent and instant updates on my practice. Whereas, Twitter would be a beneficial media platform for sharing images that are considered off the cuff, relaxed and informal. The website contact page is included on the website and provides an email for potential clients. Nonetheless, this is my personal email and in future would like to set up a professional email purely for inquiries about my photography.

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List of Illustrations

Figure 1 – FORMER MERCHANDISE. (2022). *Movies*. [online] Available at: <https://www.formermerchandise.com/pages/movies>

Figure 2 – FORMER MERCHANDISE. (2022). *Movies*. [online] Available at: <https://www.formermerchandise.com/pages/movies>

Figure 3 – FORMER MERCHANDISE. (2022). *Short Circuit*. [online] Available at: <https://www.formermerchandise.com/pages/short-circuit>

Figure 4 – franziska strauss photography. (2019). *franziska strauss photography*. [online] Available at: <https://www.franziskastrauss.com/street/home>

Figure 5 – Cairns, A. (2014). *Antony Cairns*. [online] Antony Cairns. Available at: <http://www.antony-cairns.co.uk/new-edit-pxl-cty>

Figure 6 – Cairns, A. (2014). *Antony Cairns*. [online] Antony Cairns. Available at: <http://www.antony-cairns.co.uk/bio>

Figure 7 – Cairns, A. (2014). *Antony Cairns*. [online] Antony Cairns. Available at: <http://www.antony-cairns.co.uk/bio>

Figure 8 – Dominic Brewster. (2020). *Home | BabylonMedia.co*. [online] Available at: <https://babylonmedia-co.wixsite.com/dominicbrewster>

Figure 9 – Dominicbrewsterdocum. (2023). *Home | Dominicbrewsterdocum*. [online] Available at: <https://19026585.wixsite.com/dominicbrewsterdocum>

