

World Building

(ADAA5011)

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How to Create a successful Artist Website

Artist Identity

- A detailed 'About the Artist' section.
- Highlight techniques.

Community Impact and Partnerships

- Highlight local collaborations.
- Add a 'Get Involved' or 'Contact Me' section for volunteers and workshop hosts.
- Showcase community outcomes with a community gallery.

Domain

- Create a recognizable domain that coincides with other social media platforms.
- Aim for .com or co.uk as these are the most recognized.

Purpose and Goals

- Define the main objective (portfolio, shop if needed, informational and contact details).
- Identify target audience.

Social Media Platforms

- Link other relevant platforms.
- Consider other different types of platforms.

Community and Workshop Features

- Events/Workshop Calendar (easy to update with upcoming sessions, exhibitions, or community events).
- Online registration or booking system.
- Community gallery or submissions section.

Design and User Experience

- Create a clean, clear layout.
- Ensure consistent branding (colours, fonts, logos).
- Prioritise easy navigation.
- Consider how design works on all devices and screen sizes.
- Ensure accessibility (consider Alt text, colour contrast, resizable text.)
- Consider language options (Welsch)
- Provide clean contact info and directions.
- Research other artist websites.

Visual Presentation and Portfolio

- Use high quality images. Showcase work in visually appealing, fast loading formats
- Include categories or themes for easier browsing (portraits, landscapes).
- Add a behind-the-scenes or how-to-do section.

Creating a Domain

What to consider before committing to a domain name:

Branding and Identity

- Clarity. The name should reflect me (my name).
- Memorability. Ensure it is easy to remember, pronounce, and spell.
- Relevance. It should ideally hint at what you do.
- Consistency. Ensure that the chosen name coincides with other social media platforms.

Domain Extensions

- .com still the most trusted and memorable.
- .org, .net common alternatives depending on audience.
- Country-Code (.uk) good for local markets.
- Niche TLDs – (.art, .shop, .design) good for branding but not as widely recognised.

Availability and Variants

- Check availability. (Namecheap, Google Domains, GoDaddy).
- Consider buying other domains that are similar.

History

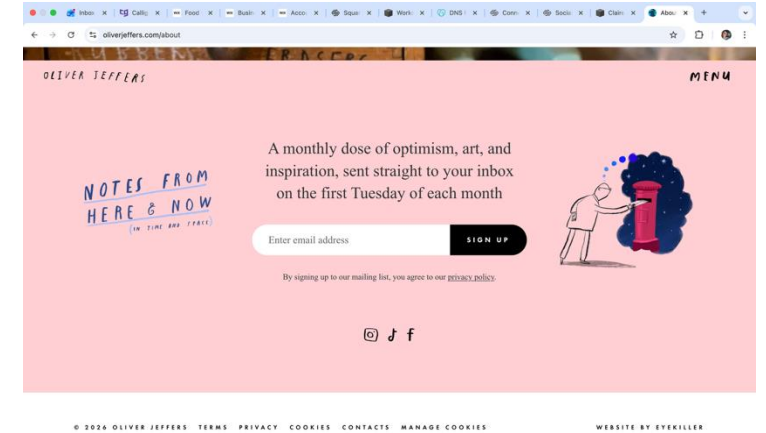
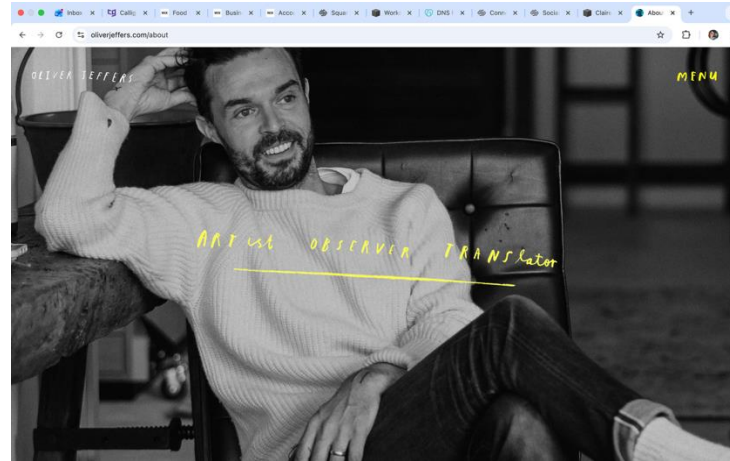
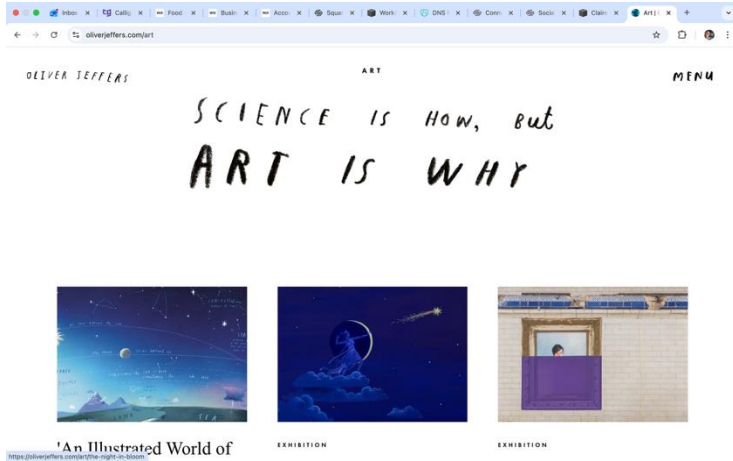
- Consider online history connected to a name.

‘A woman from Manchester has become the first person to change her name by Deed Poll to a web domain, according to the Legal Deed Service.

Twenty-four-year-old Claire Forshaw changed her name to Princess-Rainbow.com earlier this week. She had previously been put off changing her name by her boyfriend, 23-year-old Robert Morris, who had tried to dissuade her by claiming it would cost hundreds of pounds.

The Legal Deed Service says it “firmly believes” the former Ms Forshaw is the first person to change her name to a web domain. Princess-Rainbow.com, who currently works as a care assistant, plans to use her namesake web domain (which her boyfriend bought for her this week) to set up an online business selling artwork.’ (Battersby, 2009)

Artist Research

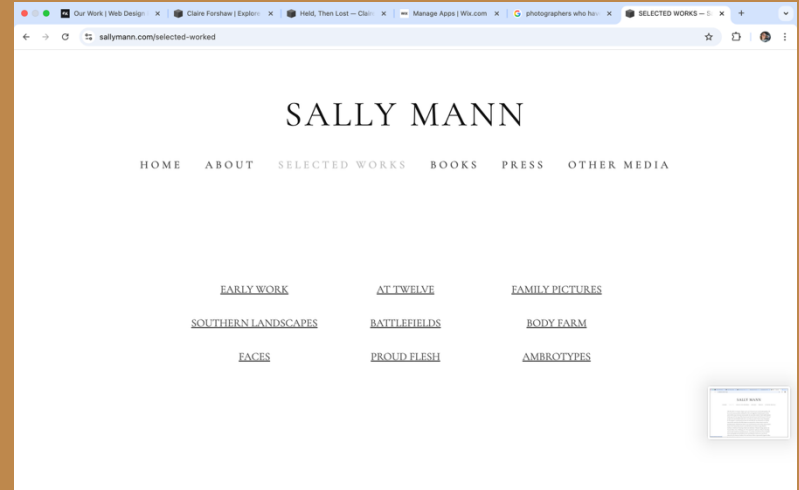
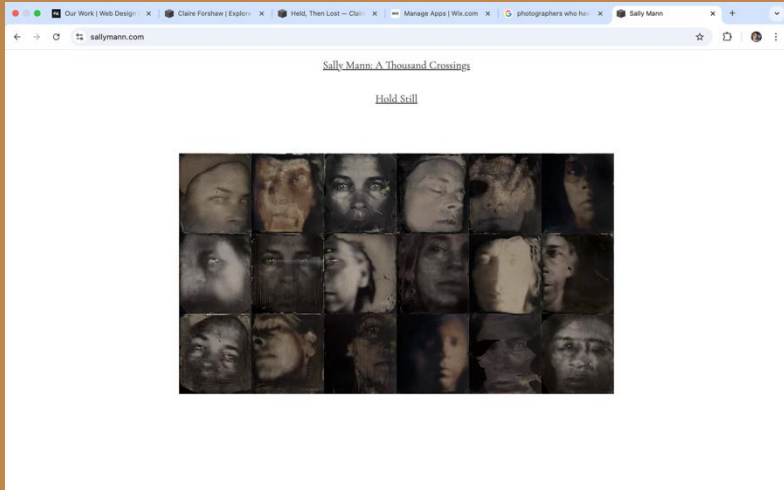


Oliver Jeffers is not only one of my favourite artists, but his website is one that I frequently visit. His site is colourful and fun, which is a reflection of his work, with bright colourful images, and videos of him working on projects. It is full of personality and artist identity, from personalised fonts created from his own handwriting, which he uses within all of his work, like his children's books and his canvas paintings, to drawings he has created, in his artistic style, specifically for the website. He has even hand drawn the social media link logos, keeping everything consistent and on brand.

Being a photographer, I don't have the same level of artist identity, but I plan to achieve some level of consistency within my website by using a colour palette based around the colours that naturally feature within my work, as well as using the same font theme (until I'm famous enough to use my own handwriting and be recognised by it). I do believe that the works I plan to exhibit, on my site, sit on a fine line between looking similar and being closely related, due to the methods of image making, therefore maintaining a clear sense of being made by the same person.

Jeffers' website was created by Eyekiller, a 'high-calibre' website designing company that has produced websites for other renowned clients such as Van Morrison, Game of Thrones Studio Tours, and The Arts Council of Northern Ireland. It is not the type of company that offer templates or student discounts, so I didn't linger for long.

Artist Research



Researching, I analysed the website of **Sally Mann** and found her site to be more informative than visually pleasing. Her home page features her name, and a set of images that give the impression one has stumbled upon something dark and nightmarish. Although this does portray a range of work from Sally Mann, it could be seen as uninviting to viewers. This makes me contemplate the image or images I will be presenting on my home page, as I want to invite curiosity as well as showcasing the type of work that I create.

The listing or category pages throughout her website are very basic. They are white and feature her name, the navigation bar and then lists of either selected works, books or other media. Though this makes the website easy to navigate, it lacks visual interest. You would think, for a photographer, that there would be images on every page. Unlike **Oliver Jeffers**, Mann's site lacks personality. There isn't even a self portrait on her About page, only text. One reason for the lack of personality within a website belonging to someone who is renowned, is simply because they don't need it. They are already recognised and notable, so they feel they don't need all the extra fuss. The website is used simply for sharing information and work. Once in the gallery pages, the clean, basic design becomes effective. Mann's images don't need dressing up, they are already beautiful. Any background noise would only create visual chaos and would take one's eyes away from the images themselves. This is something I will also consider when designing my gallery pages. Overall, I find Sally Mann's website disappointing, but it doesn't stop me returning for more.

Artist Statement



As a student photographer, and artist, I'm drawn to the physical and experimental nature of alternative photographic processes. My practice often explores these exploratory processes, like cyanotype and lumen printing and liquid emulsion. I'm fascinated by how light, chemistry, and time can transform simple materials into something expressive and deeply personal.

Within my work, I like to “cleverly” combine photographs with everyday objects to create narratives between image and item. For me, photography isn't just about capturing a moment and putting it on paper, it's about creating an experience that not invites curiosity, emotion and reflection, but offers the chance to feed our human drive to touch, hold, and keep.

Beyond my own creative practice, I have a strong passion for sharing these processes with others. I run local cyanotype workshops, along with my partner Esme, where we introduce people to the joy of hands-on image making. These sessions are an opportunity to connect with my community, making photography more accessible and collaborative. Teaching has become an important part of my artistic journey, it is a way to inspire others to experiment, learn, create and express themselves., as well as an opportunity for me to learn in return.

Website Plan



OVERALL STYLE & AESTHETIC

Colour Palette: Deep cyan blue, white Black

Accent/Neutrals: Warm beige/linen Light grey

Purpose: Reflects cyanotype tones and lumen print warmth while maintaining a minimal, sophisticated aesthetic.

Typography: (unsure)

Headings: Elegant (thin, clean, possibly white)

Layout Style: Spacious white space for a gallery feel. Simple grid or masonry layouts for artworks.

Logo/Branding: A simple typographic logo in black or cyan blue (if needed)

Website Plan

SITE STRUCTURE & PAGE PLAN

1. Home / Landing Page

Purpose: First impression, introduce my artistic identity and aesthetic with image of me on a Lunaria Seed (image above), this not only shows me as the artist but shows a type of alternative processing.

Background: white, clean.

Text overlay: "Exploring narrative, material, and process through alternative photography."

Links: Links to social media (Instagram)

Links to pages: Gallery, About Me, Out of the Blue (page dedicated to workshops), Community Gallery (a gallery of work produced by the community within workshops), Contact (email, booking workshops)

2. About Me / Artist Statement

Purpose: Talk about my creative philosophy and process. Portrait image of me working or teaching (I want this to really show my personality, I feel this is important when working within the community)

Optional quote:

"I explore how images and objects hold memory, emotion, and connection."

Design:

White background with thin blue lines or cyanotype borders.

3. Gallery

Purpose: Main area to showcase all my bodies of work.

Structure: Simple grid or masonry grid.

Projects Listed:

Hi Grandma, it's me

Conversations

Lumen Seeds

Anthotypes (Beetroot Series)? Or Lumin Prints?

Design Note:

Hover effects (slight cyan tint or caption overlay).



4. Individual Project Pages (From Gallery)

a. Hi Grandma, it's me

Theme: Memory, identity, and Dementia.

Content:

Introduction text (short narrative about grandma and the concept).

Installation photos: hanging optical glasses with embedded portraits.

Detail shots: close-ups of the glass and imagery.

Reflective text about what this work means to me personally.



Website Plan

b. Conversations

Theme: Connection, ritual, unsaid conversations.

Content: Images of the teabag portraits.

Text about process, printing on used teabags, symbolism of sharing tea.
Possibly a quote about conversation or domestic ritual.



c. Lumen Seeds

Theme: Fragility of life, loss of identity, memory.

Content: High quality images of the lumen prints on seeds.

Description of experimental process

Short note about fragility and natural cycles.

Design Element: White background, blue accents, clean grid.



d. Anthotypes

Theme: Organic process, impermanence, and the beauty of decay.

Content: Image of anthotypes, rich pinks and reds.

Text on the natural materials used, and why I chose beetroot.

Design Element: White background to keep with other pages.



5. Out of The Blue Workshops

Purpose: Highlight my teaching and community involvement.

Content: Introduction to the cyanotype workshops, write up about my passion for sharing process-based art.

Photo gallery: people creating cyanotypes.

Workshop calendar or “Join/Host a Workshop” inquiry form.

Testimonials or community feedback.

Design: Minimal, light-blue accents, white background.



Website Plan

6. Contact / Connect

Purpose: Encourage engagement and opportunities.

Content: Simple contact form (Name, Email, Message).
Email link and optional social icons (Instagram, etc.).

Optional line: “I’m open to collaborations, exhibitions, and workshop opportunities.”

Design: Black text on white; subtle cyan underline hover effects.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES TO CONSIDER

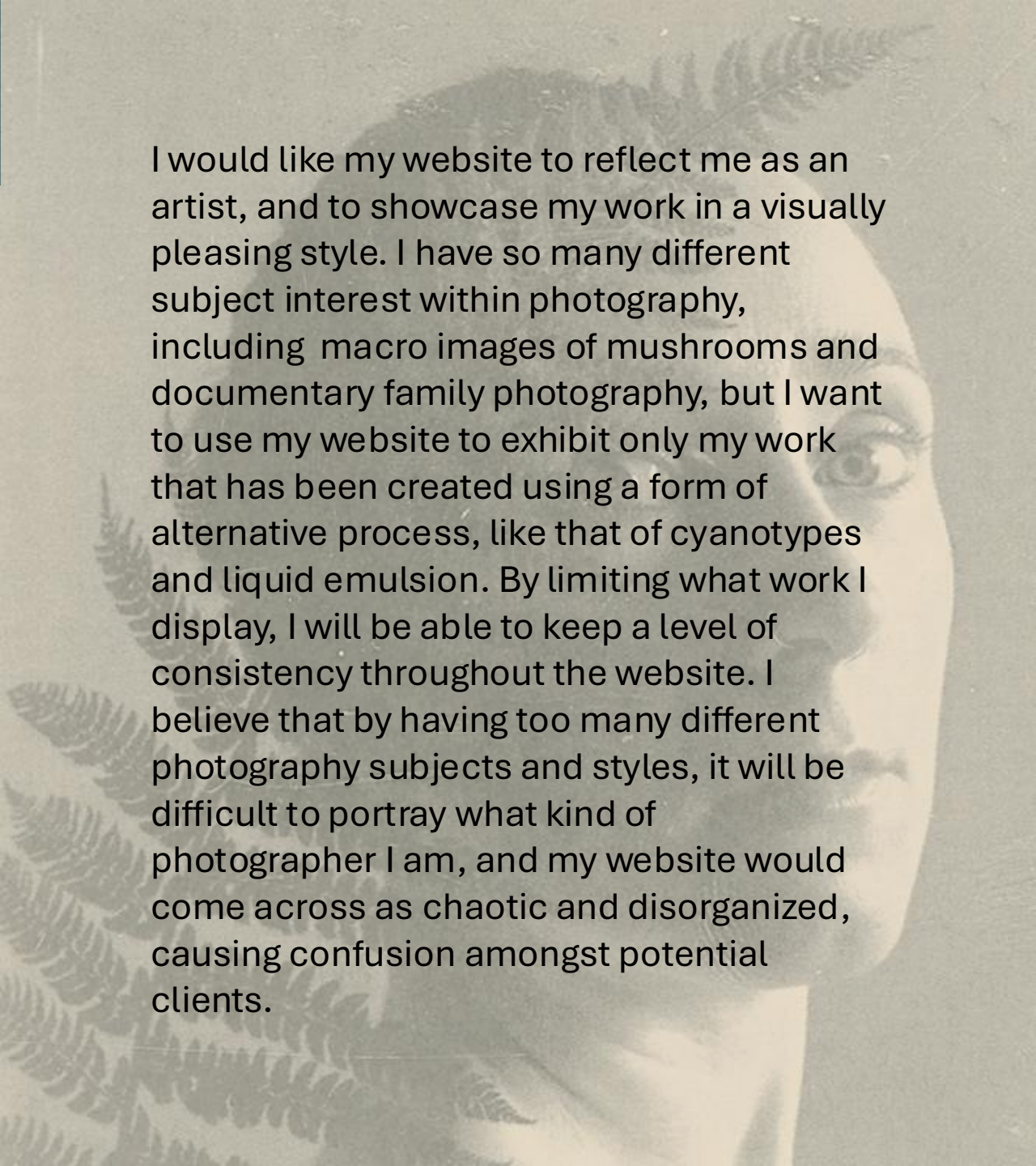
Navigation: Top menu with smooth scrolling.

Usability: Alt-text for all artworks.

Descriptive project titles.

Welsh language.

Mobile-friendly design.



I would like my website to reflect me as an artist, and to showcase my work in a visually pleasing style. I have so many different subject interest within photography, including macro images of mushrooms and documentary family photography, but I want to use my website to exhibit only my work that has been created using a form of alternative process, like that of cyanotypes and liquid emulsion. By limiting what work I display, I will be able to keep a level of consistency throughout the website. I believe that by having too many different photography subjects and styles, it will be difficult to portray what kind of photographer I am, and my website would come across as chaotic and disorganized, causing confusion amongst potential clients.

Building a Website

Squarespace

Why it's good for artists: It's often highlighted as the website builder for creatives because of its clean, stylish templates and visual focus.

Own domain support: Yes

Price: From around 12 pounds/month

Pros: Great design

Cons: More expensive than other budget builders. Less control if you want very custom layouts

Tilda

Why it's good for artists: Very focused on visual layout, design driven

Own domain support: Yes

Price:

Pros: Strong visual control, clean minimalistic feel.

Cons: Fewer templates compared to others, not as easy

Wix

Why it's good for artists: Very flexible drag and drop, lots of templates, good for artists who want more creative freedom

Own domain support: Yes

Price: From around 7-15 pounds/month

Pros: Lots of templates and flexibility, good value

Cons: Time consuming (because of flexibility)

Jimdo

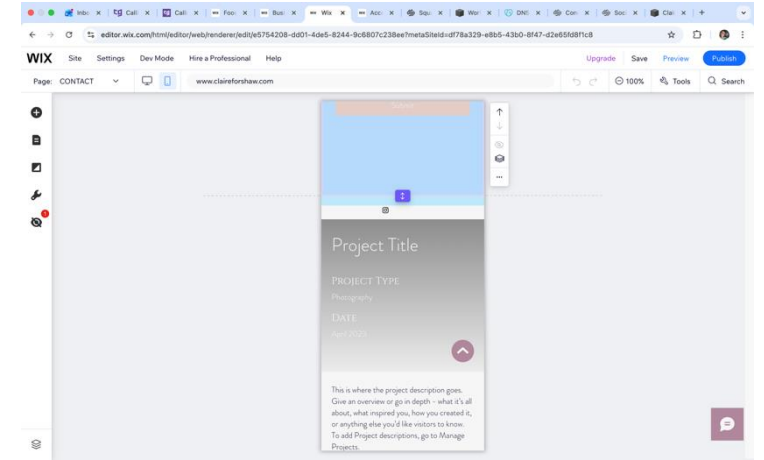
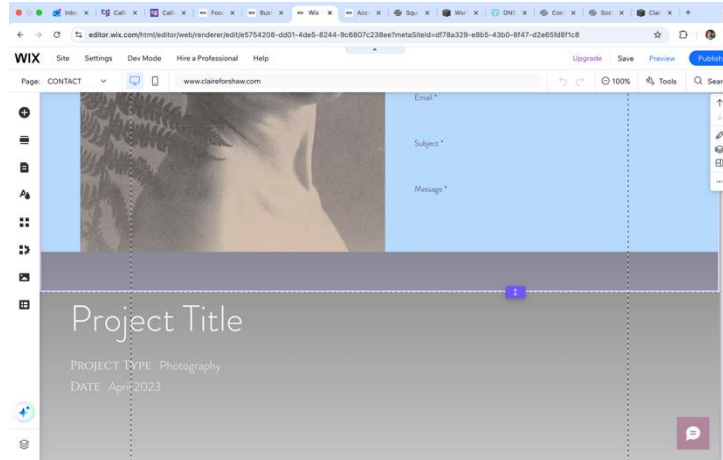
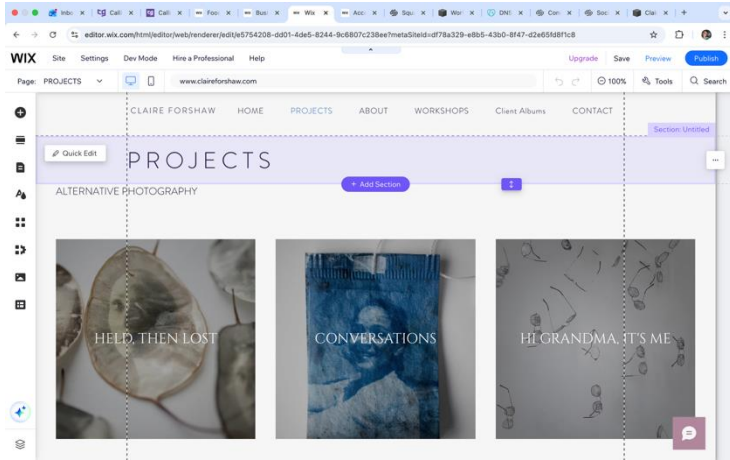
Why it's good for Artists: Simple, oriented to small business/creatives

Own domain Support: Yes

Price:

Pros: Less overwhelming, good value, simpler interface

Cons: Lacks some advanced design/exhibition features of the others

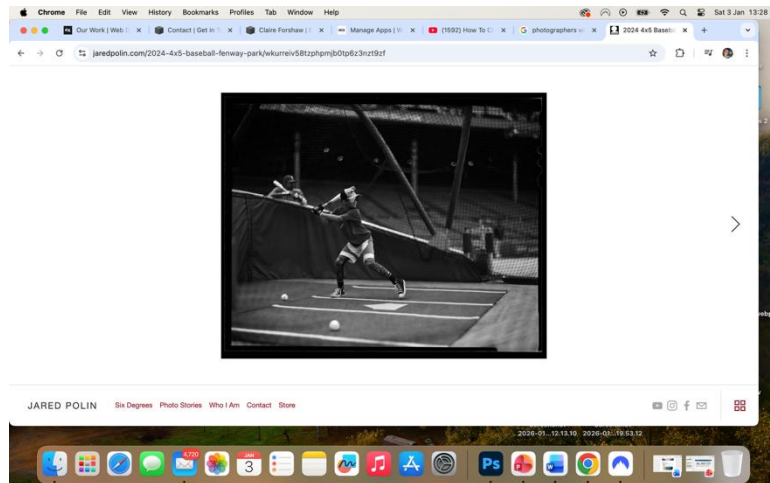
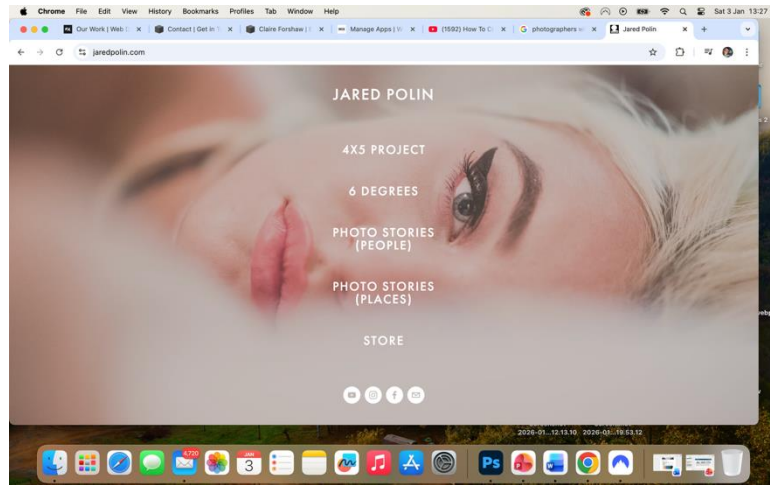


I began creating my website with Wix as it offered many templates that I felt offered the aesthetics I was hoping to achieve, it was also one of the cheapest and apparently one of the easiest.

It wasn't long before I realised that dreaming up ideas for a website was far easier than building a website. Within the template I chose, I was provided with an app called Wix Portfolio, which would 'easily' organise all my projects into the right places. After spending hours completing my other, simpler pages, like my contacts page and home page, I began working on my portfolio/project,s pages. This was when everything started to go downhill, fast. Once I thought I had completed these pages, I then went back to check on my other completed pages, and all was a mess. Wix had added a project section to every page which could not be changed or deleted, (as shown in images above). After additional hours trying to fix the problem, which created a lot of stress, crying and vowing to quit university for ever , (dramatic, I know. In my defence I was also on day three of quitting crisps and was in withdrawal, which is a thing, I googled it.) followed by many YouTube videos, more crying, asking my fellow students and facebook community for help, and not finding any answers, I gave up completely.

Then a few days later, I started again with Squarespace (and was still off the crisps).

Squarespace



Before I began to designing my site with Squarespace, I took the time to do a bit more online research to see if Squarespace was going to be any easier for me. I watched a few YouTube videos like <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GggMwqPSHFQ> which explained how Squarespace worked and even gave me an example of another photographers' website built using their templates.

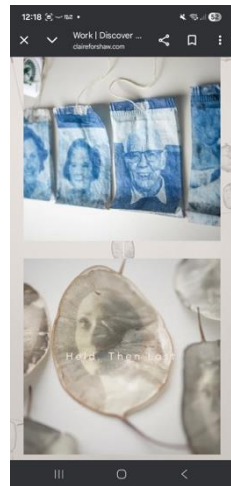
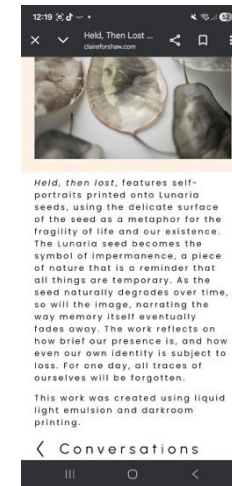
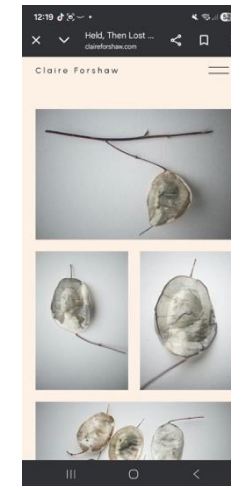
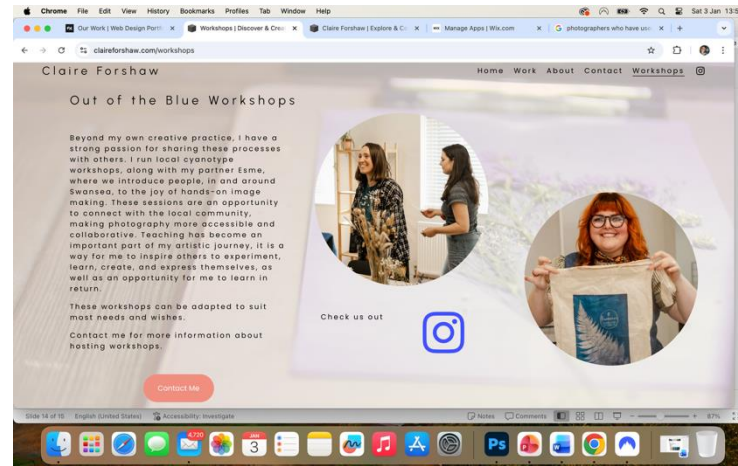
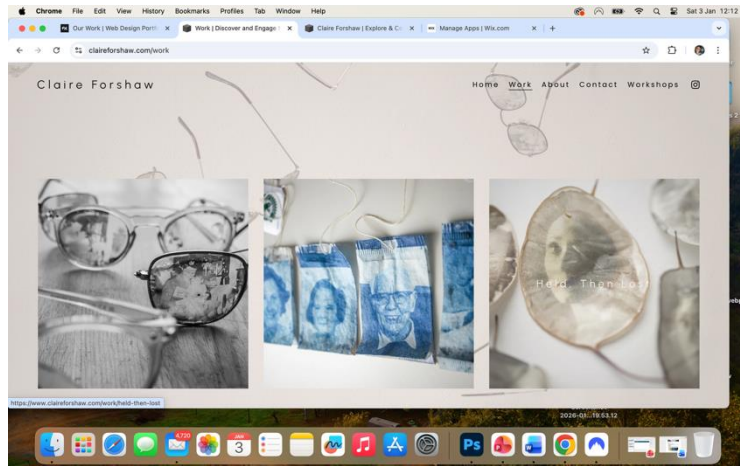
I took a look at some other photographers' websites, like that of **Jared Polin**, who had used Squarespace, to get some final ideas and inspiration. I found Polin's home page simple yet engaging with its slow playing slideshow of images that gives one a quick glance into what you can expect with his work. I plan to use my home page to show a snippet of what one can be expected to find further into the site.

One negative, I found, was that within his project pages, you don't get a grid style view of the images, you have to click through each image one at a time. Which I personally find time consuming and boring. I like to see all images at once and then investigate further into the images that catch my eye first. I will bare this in mind when it comes to my site.

Feeling a little more positive and fueled with the understand of how beneficial a website will be for my practice and community presence I decided to give Squarespace a try.

My Website

claireforshaw.com



Squarespace, I found, was far easier than Wix. I navigated the site well and was finally able to put my ideas into one of their templates. Unlike Wix, Squarespace was very supportive when it came to changing certain elements like fonts and colours, and with adding multiple Instagram links, which was important for my site for I wanted to include my continuing work with Out of the Blue, which has its own Instagram page and following.

I had originally planned to create my site with a simple and clean aesthetic, with fresh white backgrounds and grid or masonry layouts, but that changed during the process of building, for my work isn't so clean, neat and organized, and honestly, neither am I (well I'm clean). So, like the nature of my work, I experimented, texting out layering images and text, and different shapes and fonts. Unlike Sally Manns website, I wanted each page to feature at least one piece of work.

I feel I was still able to keep a somewhat level of consistency, (not by Oliver Jeffers' standards) by using full bleed, low transparency images of my work as backgrounds on all pages, except gallery/project pages, which I have kept somewhat clean and clear, allowing the work to stand alone and speak loudly. I was also consistent with fonts, colours and shapes used throughout, creating a sense of harmony within the chaos while still considering how each page would look on different devices.

Battersby, M. (2009) *Woman changes name to Princess-Rainbow.com, Independent*. Available at:
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/woman-changes-name-to-princessrainbow-com-1749329.html> (Accessed: 25 October 2025).