



unique web site design
& development

How to Plan your Website: for Artists

This is the basic process, which you can complete on your own or in collaboration with us.

1) Determine what is the purpose of the site—to provide an easily accessible on-line portfolio, or to sell art from your site?

Generally potential clients or galleries seeking more information will be referred to your portfolio website as a result of some contact with you or your art. This possibility alone is worth your investment, because it makes your work easily available to anyone in the world and gives them a way to contact you.

But, if you have prints or copies of artworks that can be sold for a couple hundred dollars or less, you can consider selling directly from your site.

- a) You can indicate that things are for sale and give prices, and ask people to contact you by email.
- b) We can set up a “shopping cart” which will allow people to pay by credit card.

You of course will still be responsible for receiving the orders and arranging shipping unless you contract with a fulfillment house to do that. Selling prints or copies via shopping cart may increase your income, but it also involves considerable additional time and/or the expense of

- setting up the credit card account
- monitoring your email closely
- arranging shipping
- dealing with returns or damaged goods
- investing in active print and web strategies to drive traffic to your site for the purpose of making sales.

For most artists, the ability for anyone to access your work is the necessary reason to have a website. For craftspeople who are already taking orders on a regular basis and shipping work to customers, or want to expand in that direction, a shopping cart makes sense.

2) Decide what you like

Go to www.google.com and search under your field. Look at sites and see what appeals to you and what doesn't. Bookmark or keep a list of the sites you like and don't like, and what about the site you like or don't like. This will help us when we start designing the site to know what direction to go in.

3) Decide what to present and how to organize it

Go through your slides or artworks. If you work in different media, decide how many media you want to present on your site, and how many examples of each. Or you might want to present your work by theme—it's your creation! We can give you our opinion of what is most effective for your work

Example of organization by medium: www.tonyryder.com
www.lisawagnerartist.com

Example of organization by theme: www.elbertweinberg.com
www.helendallas.com

Example of organization by location: www.johnrosenthal.com

Ways to present art portfolios

a) A thumbnail page where clicking on each small image shows an enlargement of the work.

Example of thumbnail presentation: www.johnrosenthal.com
(Note how larger “thumbnails” are also used in the menus rather than just using labels.)

b) A “slide show,” where forward and back arrows lead from one picture to the next. The picture can still be enlarged by clicking.

Example of slideshow presentation: www.johnrosenthal.com

c) You can also have images cycle for a set amount of time, or move from one place to another when the page opens. As long as it *serves a purpose*, anything goes! You need to think how it plays the second or third time someone sees it. Visitors now often skip an animation that is there just because it can be done.

4) Decide on image size

You can have a thumbnail of any size, leading to an enlargement or detail of any size. Keep in mind that visitors are looking at the site on a wide range of screens, and a tiny thumbnail will be invisible on a laptop screen at very high resolution, while a very large enlargement may run off the screen for a medium-sized monitor at medium resolution.

Examples:

Small/medium thumbnails click to largest possible enlargements:

http://www.johnrosenthal.com/tn_park.htm

Larger thumbnails click to med size enlargements:

<http://www.tonyryder.com/a-drawings.htm>

Medium size pictures click to enlargement of detail(s)

http://www.elbertweinberg.com/cat_1.html

5) Gather up whatever is applicable:

- your resume
- past and/or future exhibit listings
- artist statement
- publications you have written or appeared in
- reviews of your work
- biographical material
- teaching schedules

and decide what you want to present on your site. It's up to you—you can give as little or as much information as you choose.

These categories, plus whatever categories we select for your artworks, will usually comprise your “menu” of choices. Usually each menu category has a link to its own “page,” which can be of any length, though a longer page takes longer to load. Any page can link to a new page or back to another page in the site.

6) Think about what will make your site different from other sites, what makes your art different from that of other artists. What will make your site “sticky?” What do you want to emphasize? Do you have an interesting and unusual technique that you can talk about? We can give you our impressions about this after we see your work.

7) Check the pricing. If you have a budget, be realistic and set priorities. You can have your site built in sections, adding sections, pages or new works at a later point. This is more cost-efficient if you have laid out your basic structure in advance, but the wonderful thing about the web as a medium is that it's completely fluid—you can always change your mind!

8) Choose a domain name. You can check what's available at: www.register.com or www.simpleurl.com (less expensive.).

9) Create digital files:

We have developed a list of instructions for creating and submitting digital files available on the website at www.arttechweb.com/download.htm