

Online Presence: Website & Social Media

Online publishing gives you a multitude of ways to share your practice. Once you have strong digital documentation of your work, you're ready to create a portfolio website and post work to social media.

Posting your work online can extend its life and grow your audience. You can choose to share work at all stages from ideas to process, production, end use, or exhibition. Find ways to link your work online and offline:

- Reveal a larger story behind your work through text, imagery, and photos.
- Post older work on your website that might otherwise get lost.
- Reshare work through social media that may have had a short lifespan, such as a limited edition print or publication, or one-time collaboration or workshop.
- Show work that might have a limited audience, such as a performance or exhibition.

WEBSITE

Your website is a critical tool to showcase your work. It's often the first introduction that an audience will have to your work as an artist. Your website should contain the highest quality documentation, be easy to navigate, and reflect your current practice.

How much work to show?

You don't need to include every piece you've made: be strategic and selective. Portfolio guidelines vary from major to major, but in general, a student will emerge with 8+ strong portfolio pieces or 3+ bodies of work. It's okay to hold back one or two projects that you can bring to interviews or present during a studio visit so that you're showing fresh work.

Content Management Systems

Content management systems (CMS) are user-friendly online platforms that allow people with little to no coding experience to build websites from existing templates. These systems make it possible to create, edit, and update a website using a visual interface rather than programming languages like html.

CMS features:

- Range of design templates
- Automatically update to the latest web browser technology
- Incorporate responsive design, meaning they adapt to a viewer's screen size
- Allow multiple authors
- Compatibility with search engines

- Blogging options
- Social media add-ons

Research content management systems carefully. Find a system that you feel comfortable working with and fits your price range. Take advantage of student discounts as well as free-trial periods to test out the interface. Some systems offer free versions for a limited set of options. Avoid free versions that incorporate ads.

Most content management systems provide online tutorials and free support. Make sure you follow tips for how to upload your content and ensure your website is efficient to load and search-engine friendly.

Popular CMS options:

- Cargo Collective
- Squarespace
- Wordpress
- Adobe Portfolio
- Virb

Registering a Domain

A domain name is the address of your website. Some content management systems provide a free generic URL. You can instead register a custom domain name that incorporates your name, a moniker, or the name of your company. You can use a service like Register.com to search available names. A custom domain costs roughly \$10–\$15 to register and requires an annual renewal fee to retain the rights to the domain. The standard generic top-level domain ending is .com, however there are many alternative domain endings such as .net or .me. Choose a name wisely and avoid long domain names.

Web Hosting

Web hosting services allow you to store and access your website files. Some also offer custom email and domain registration. Web hosting is a monthly or yearly rate that runs between \$5–\$20 per month. It's a necessary cost if you plan to code and design your own website or if you hire someone else to create a website for you. Most content management systems include web hosting as part of their monthly fee.

PROMOTING YOUR WEBSITE

- Add links to any account you have online including social media, blogs, websites, and directories.
- Create an email signature with a link your website.
- Add your website to professional materials.
- Ask someone for feedback on your website.

Online Presence: Website & Social Media

- Announce your new website or major updates on social media or via email.
- Promote a single work on social media or via email.
- Promote people you collaborate with or work for by congratulating them on any recognition or awards.
- Announce career events such as a new job, exhibition, or an award.

Updates

Update your website as needed, like when you're ready to share new work or when you change your bio or edit your resume if they are part of your website. Examine your website closely every few months, or at least twice a year.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Artists use social media to post media and news, network, and build relationships and followings.

Understand the key differences between social media platforms. Most social media and blogging platforms require upkeep. Test out different platforms and before committing, research how other artists and creative agencies use these accounts including how often people post, how content appears in the feed, and how users interact with each other. Note that some platforms are more geared towards text than media, and many have strict requirements for types of posts. Some platforms also offer "pay to play" options that favor users who spend money to get their content seen.

Depending on your level of enthusiasm, you may want to focus on one platform or repeat information across multiple platforms. Don't engage in a platform just because you think you have to. We are all guilty of starting blogs and accounts and letting them go. Accounts are usually most effective if you maintain a steady level of activity and develop a schedule for posting content, such as once a week or once per day.

The major platforms include:

- Instagram
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Snapchat
- Behance

Keep in mind that platforms will come and go, and you will have to continue to adapt your work to new screens, new devices, and new formats. Above all concentrate on the quality of work and the quality of documentation.

Website Checklist

WEBSITE CHECKLIST

Use this website checklist to help you determine if your website is easy to navigate, strongly showcases your work, and allows a viewer to easily get in touch.

You may want to print this checklist and share it with a friend to get feedback. It's also helpful to share your website with people who are unfamiliar with your work for a more objective read.

Keep in mind that someone visiting your website — whether they are a fan, a potential client, or a curator who wants to exhibit your work — should be able to answer the questions:

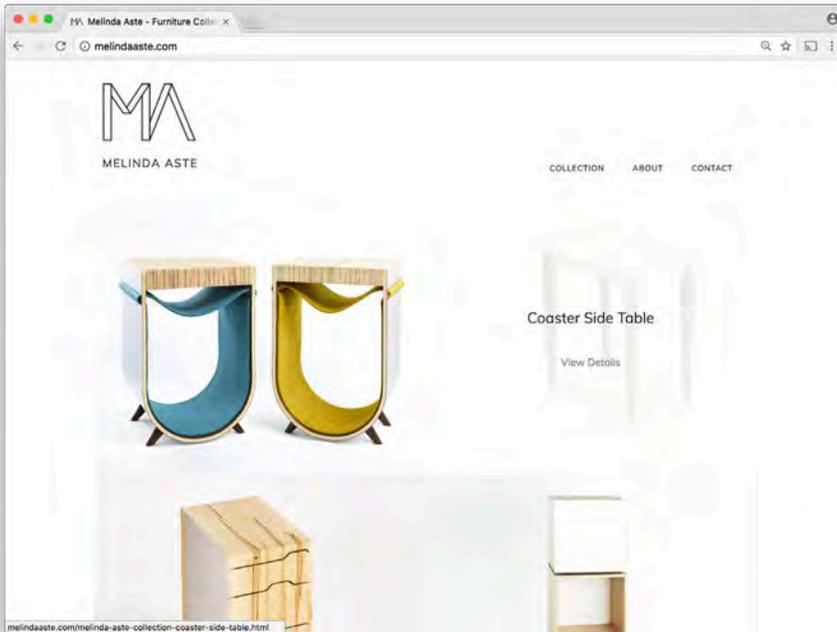
- What is the current focus of this artist's creative practice?
- What processes, tools, and materials does this artist explore within their work?

Website Checklist:

Artist is easily identified.	Yes	No	n/a
Contact information is accessible.	Yes	No	n/a
Bio is clearly written and free of spelling/grammar issues.	Yes	No	n/a
Profile image or image(s) of workspace is appropriate.	Yes	No	n/a
Portfolio showcases work effectively.	Yes	No	n/a
Work is easily identified by title or series.	Yes	No	n/a
Number of images feels appropriate for each project.	Yes	No	n/a
Work loads quickly – images and media are properly formatted for web.	Yes	No	n/a
Media and image file names include name of artist and title of work.	Yes	No	n/a
Descriptions are free of spelling/grammar issues.	Yes	No	n/a
Descriptions are clearly written and offer context for work.	Yes	No	n/a
Project collaborations are mentioned and identified.	Yes	No	n/a
Process is differentiated from finished works.	Yes	No	n/a
Categories, if present, help organize and differentiate bodies of work.	Yes	No	n/a
Website is easy to navigate.	Yes	No	n/a
All links are working and point to the correct content.	Yes	No	n/a
Website links to artist's social media accounts.	Yes	No	n/a

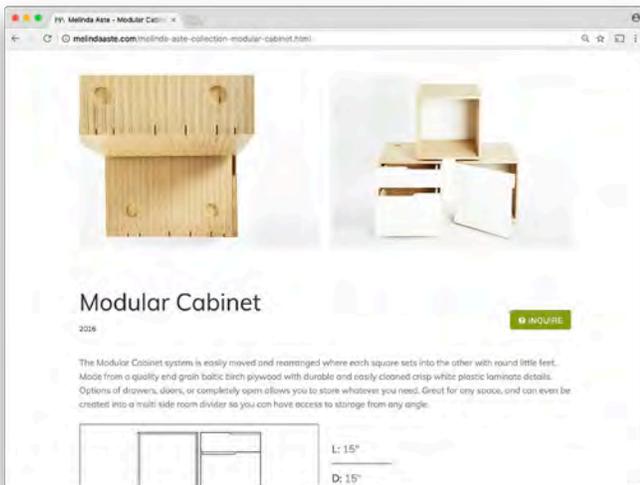
Website Examples

WEBSITE EXAMPLE
Senior Year Student
BFA, Woodworking & Furniture Design

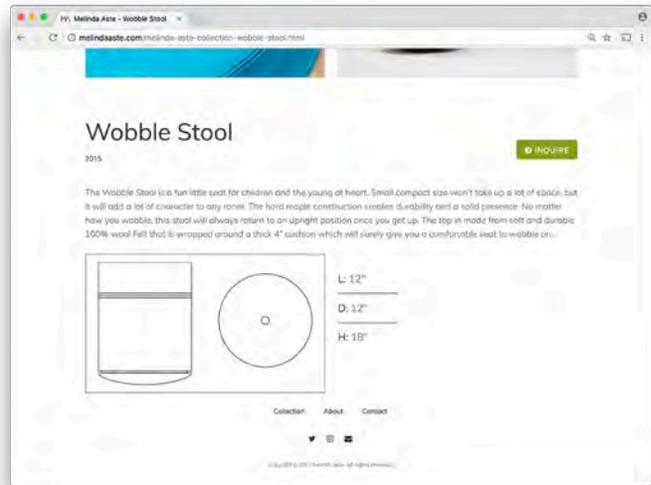


Header & Navigation
A personal mark anchors the top-left corner. At top-right, the navigation menu is easy to locate and read.

Overall Approach
Ample white space. Dynamite product shots act as a main menu on home page, and quickly communicate the nature of the artist's practice.



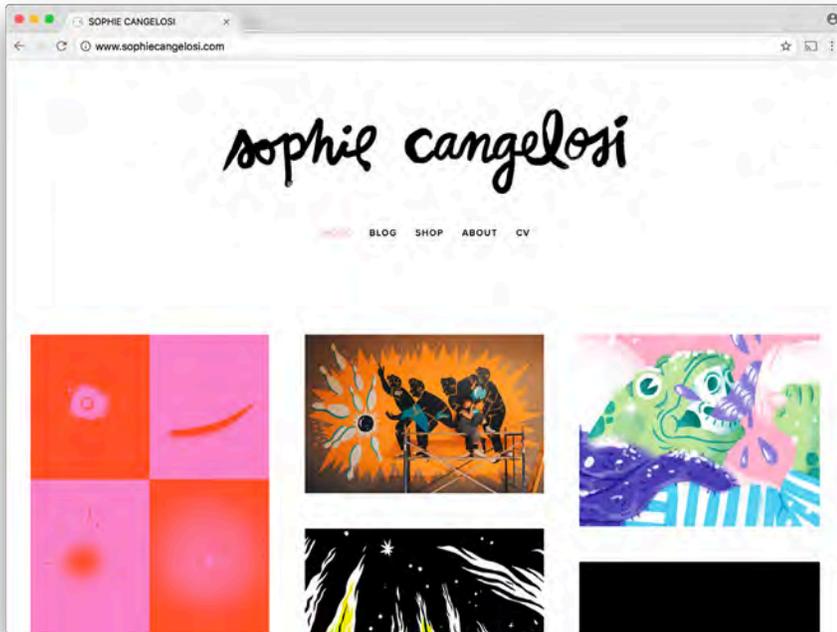
Work Page
Images show multiple views with details of each piece. Title of each work is clear. Tone of written description coupled with green inquiry button indicates work is for sale.



Website Footer
The navigation menu is repeated at the bottom of each page. Social media icons link to active accounts. Includes up-to-date copyright information in plain view.

WEBSITE EXAMPLE

**Alum, 1 year after
Graduation**
BFA, Illustration

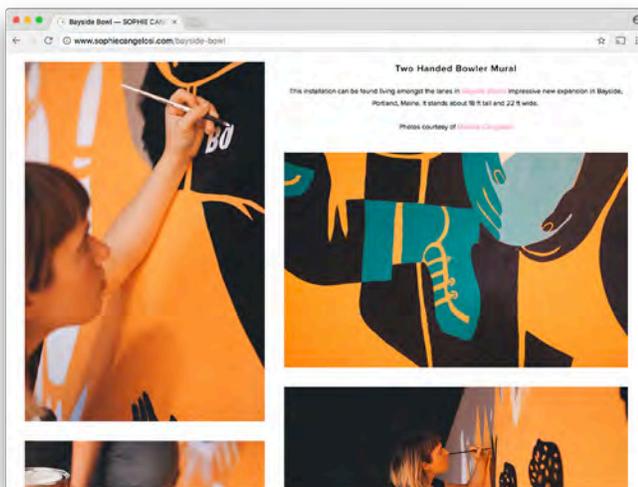


Personal Brand

Friendly unique lettering conveys the artist's hand and links to practice. Good contrast to the otherwise standard type.

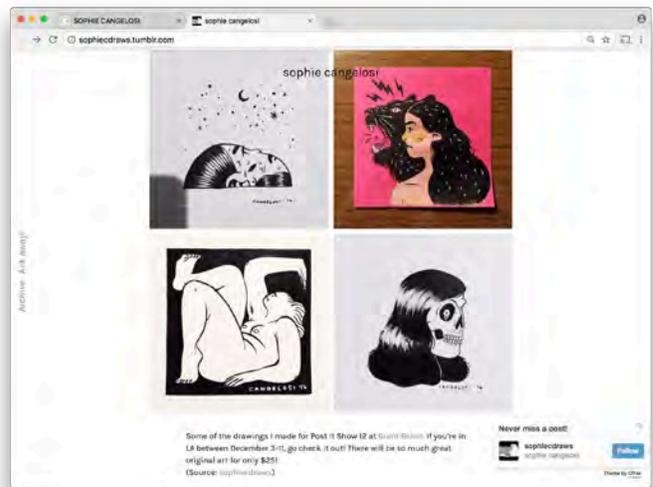
Overall Approach

Tiled imagery showcases a range of work and variety of approaches to documentation in a playful manner.



Process

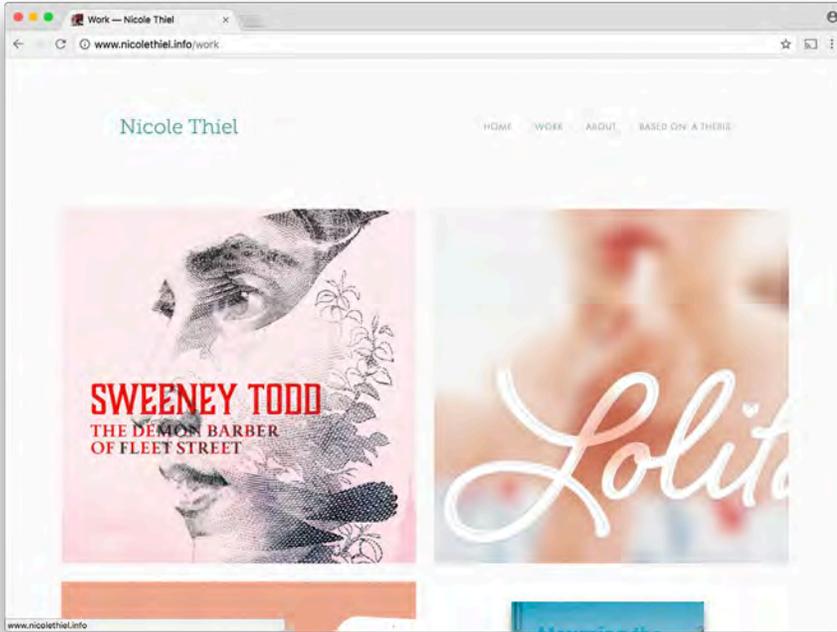
For each project, the artist includes a mix of finished product along with details. Photographs convey process, scale, and also communicate personality.



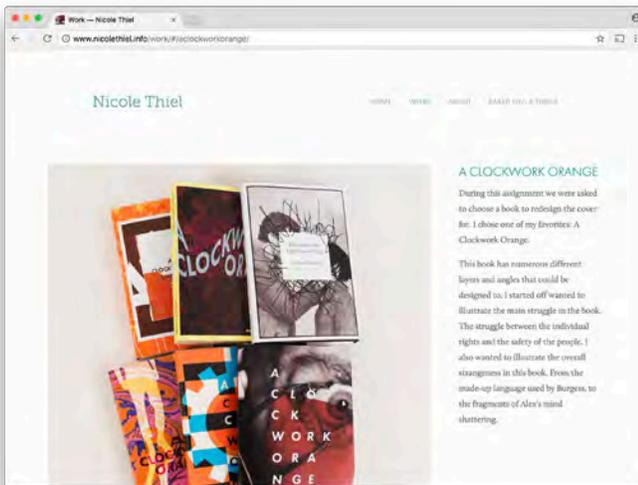
Blog

Blog opens in new window, keeping main site in view, and features current news and events. Only start a blog if you are committed to making frequent updates.

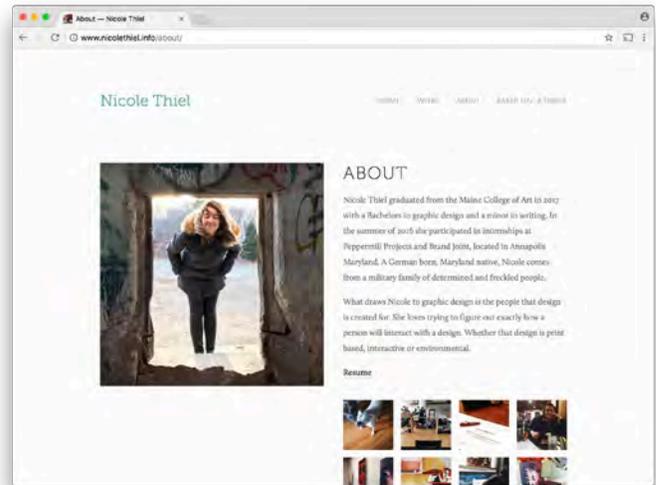
WEBSITE EXAMPLE
Senior Year Student
 BFA, Graphic Design



Overall Approach
 Cropped details of work create a dynamic main menu. Clear navigation top-right. Large name with a pop of colors anchors top-right corner.

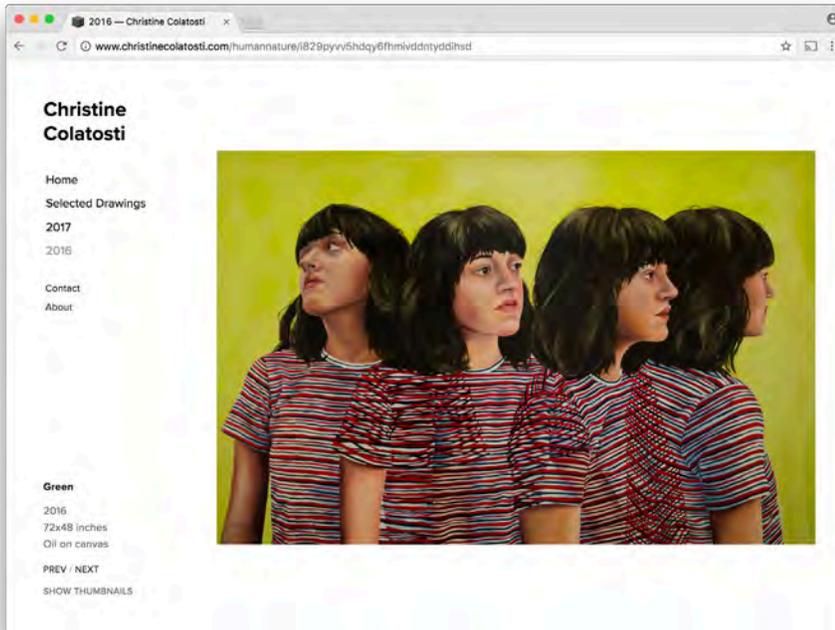


Documenting 2D in 3D
 It's almost always stronger to photograph realized mockups of work like book cover designs, packaging, and branded objects rather than using sleek online templates.

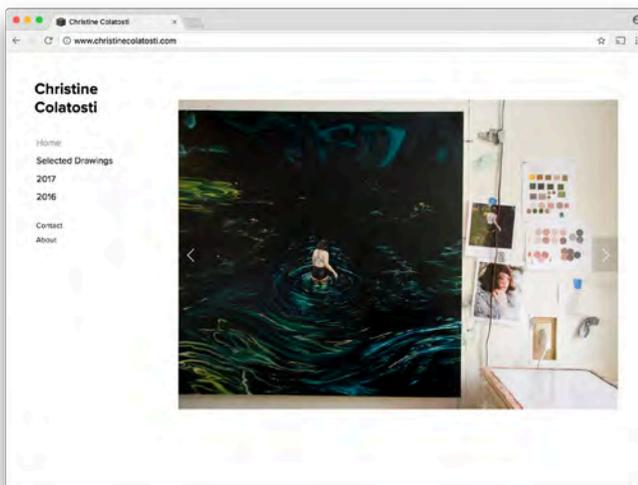


About Page
 About page features a well-written bio, friendly photo, and link to full resume. The page also incorporates an Instagram feed and links to active social media profiles.

WEBSITE EXAMPLE
Senior Year Student
BFA, Painting

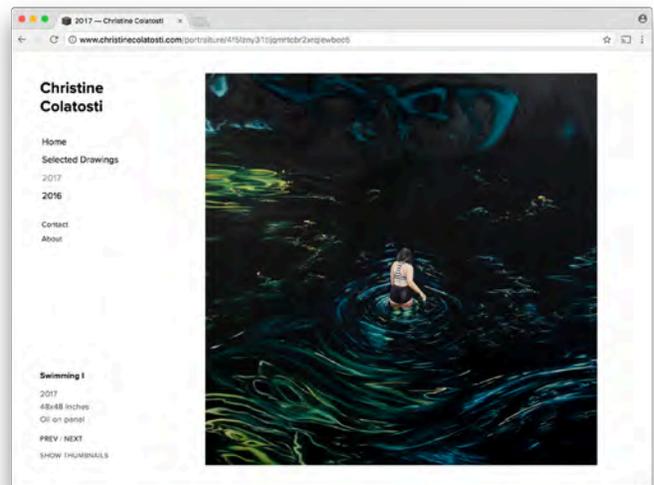


Overall Approach
Website features one large image at right. Left part of page includes name in large bold font, navigation menu, and information at bottom.



Studio Shot

On the home page, the artist includes a slideshow of studio shots that give a sense of process, inspiration, and the artist's personality.



Artwork

Work is grouped by year. Each grouping can be seen as thumbnails or individual works. Each work includes a title, dimensions, year of creation, and materials.