



Artist Website Checklist

The site you have is better than the site that never gets launched because it isn't perfect. Use this checklist as a guide to make sure you're hitting all of the important points, and build from there.

Prepare

Before you build:

- [How to research your online competitors](#)
- Find at least 20 – 30 artists whose work is similar to yours – what works on their sites? What's terrible?
- How can you stand out from other artists? [What is your brand?](#) What is your [Uniquity?](#)
- Use tools like Google Analytics to understand how people interact with your website.

Self Hosting vs. Artist Website services

- Self hosted sites are sites where you pay for your own hosting and build your site to your own specs. Many art schools teach artists the basics of html to enable them to do this. Free software like [Wordpress](#) will make this process easier.
- Artist website services. There are dozens of companies that offer artist websites. Understand that these companies are a stop-gap for helping you get a site up if you can't build one yourself or can't afford to pay someone. There will be limitations on these sites in respect to what you can customize.

Hosting – the best hosting you can afford. We recommend [Bluehost](#) (for cheap, shared) or [WebSynthesis](#) (for rock solid hosting).

Have your own domain name. JaneDoe.com or JaneDoeArtist.com. Subdomains like yourname.blogspot.com look unprofessional.

If you're building the site yourself, there are some great resources for design inspiration.

- Pre-made themes: there are literally thousands of great themes out there. Here's [a list of some of the ones that I've used](#) and are proven stable, and you can also look [here](#) and [here](#) for thousands more.
- Want to find some great icons, buttons and other design elements to incorporate into your designs.

Design

After researching, sketch out what you'd like your website to look like. Literally. Bust out the sketchbook and draw it out.

Keep it simple - design & navigation should be focused on your art. Be sure your information is organized logically.

Take that design to your web designer, or look for a theme that closely resembles your ideal design.

Include the following pages:

- Home page** – feature your very best work in large format, include a newsletter opt-in, and a call to action (tell the site visitor which art is for sale, or point them to your gallery representation)
- About** - Your About page should first be about your audience, not you. Welcome them and give them an

idea of what to expect from you and your art. Include your artist statement & resume, but put it below the main About section, or in a separate drop-down page.

- Image galleries** – Here's our [video guide](#) for making your images found online.
 - Large, [sharable images](#) – shoot for 500+ pixels wide
 - File resolution set to 72 dpi or ppi
 - Each image has its own url on your site? Lightboxes are nice, but the individual images in a slideshow aren't sharable
 - Label all of your work with a title, description, and a 1 - 2 paragraph history or story on the page
- Blog** – use your blog to tell the [Epic Story of Your Art](#), [make collectors swoon](#), and [encourage sharing](#). Be fierce, engaging, and fun. Whatever fits your personal brand.

Very Important: Break up your text with formatting. Use size 12 - 14 font. People rarely read on the Internet, and when they do they pay a lot more attention when you use **bold text** or *italics* to highlight the most important words. Try not to have more than 4 lines in a paragraph and use sub-title callouts like <h2> in your html. Use web-standard fonts.

- Avoid the following:
 - no auto-playing music when your site loads – this is just annoying. There are few things that will make someone click away faster
 - mouse effects – don't use scripts that turn the user's mouse into a tiger or a paintbrush
 - flash – loading pages went away in the early 2000's, and Apple devices like iPhones don't support Flash
 - iframes – a lot of artists use iframes to make their blog or other page appear on their website. Iframes break the page, cause problems with search engines, and usually don't look good
 - disabling back buttons – you should allow basic browser functionality unless you know exactly what you're doing
 - 3rd party advertising – your artist website is about you and your art. Third-party ads distract from your art, and they won't bring you much revenue unless you have ton of traffic
 - showing every piece of work you ever created
 - No background images unless its your art
- Offer ecommerce unless you have a gallery that sells a lot of your work, be sure to include terms & refund policies. [Explanation of options below](#).
 - Paypal Buy Now buttons
 - Self-hosted site like Woocommerce or OpenCart
 - Ecommerce service like BigCartel or Shopify
- Make sure your contact info is prominent and easy to find.
- Your site should be mobile responsive
- Converting site visitors to sales
 - Ensure that all blog posts and other content point to your art sales page with as few clicks as possible
 - Newsletter opt-in displayed prominently on home page and sidebar
 - Testimonials from collectors, with pictures of your art on their walls
 - Search functionality for your art & blog
 - Social sharing buttons on all of your pages, especially your art

Want even more help with your artist website? Check out the [Artist Website Checklist webinar!](#)