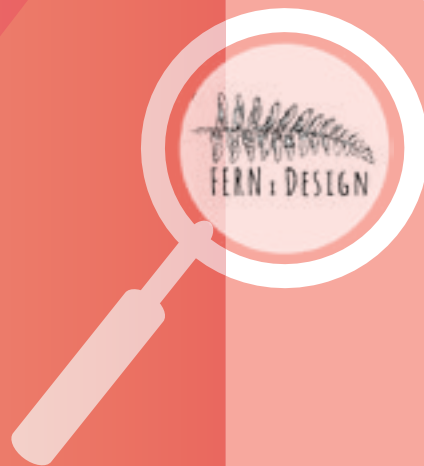


4

FATAL WEBSITE MISTAKES THAT KILL YOUR ART'S VISIBILITY

A Workbook to overcome the definitive top 4 roadblocks that get in the way of your art's visibility. Use this workbook to optimize your website and start creating new opportunities for your artistic career !





1. Keep it up-to-date...

... to make your work accessible

If your site doesn't have **your latest work** on it then it can't help you find new opportunities because people are just not getting access to your work and your development as an artist. And to make things worst, sites that are not updated regularly are badly ranked on search engines. Basically your website is slowly sinking into oblivion, and taking you with it. Don't let that happen, and add your work to your website as you create it.

... to protect your website

To make matters worst, a site that is not updated regularly is **subject to attacks**. The reason companies keep releasing new versions of their software, plugins and programming languages is because they find and fix existing bugs or loopholes that attackers can take advantage of. So don't risk it, just **update your site's software**.

What that means for you :

1. Don't use a hardcoded site. Use a CMS, like Wordpress, which powers 26% of the web in 2016 ! A CMS (Content Management System) will let you easily add remove and modify your site's content such as artwork, projects etc. on your own so that you're not relying on your developer to keep your site up-to-date.

2. Get your designer / developer to give you a short training on how and when to update your site's software. For further insurance, use the [VaultPress Plugin](#) (now a part of Jetpack), that will automatically backup your site on a daily basis, and restore the latest version in case of a system failure. This is particularly important if you're selling art online and keep customer information and other crucial data on your website. and do regular backups.

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2. Optimize your images...

...to have a fast loading website

You're going to have a lot of pictures and images on you website to showcase your art, and of course you don't want to compromise on their quality. But **heavy images can lead to a slow website**, and visitors will leave after 3 seconds if your site still hasn't loaded properly. And of course, a slow website means, bad ranking with search engines.

What that means for you :

1. Test your site's loading speed. Use a **free online tool like GTMetrix** to see which images are bringing down your site, and check your overall loading time. Anything over 3 seconds means you'll have bad visibility and bad ranking, so you need to be working on that.

2. You need to resize your images so that they're exactly the right width and height to fit snugly on your screen. There's no need for your browser to load an image that's 4000px large if your code limits its display width to 300px. You'll lose time charging and resizing the image.

Tip: to find the image width on your browser, right click on the image and click inspect. When you hover over the image, the dimensions will appear

3. Think about image resolution. You need to find the perfect compromise between image quality and resolution which can be very time consuming. Thankfully there are some ready made tools out there, such as Photoshop's "Save for the Web" function, which allow you to save time and play around with the most important parameters until you find the one that's perfect for the picture you're working on. It's a bit of a lengthy process but it's absolutely mandatory : you can make your website load 10 times faster with this simple trick.

Tip: play with the resolution by aligning the original and optimized images side by side and comparing for visual quality. Always keep in mind that your image should weigh between 0 and 200 ko maximum to load easily on your website.

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3. Setup your SEO...

.. to connect with the right people at the right time

Search engines aren't humans. They can't see your pictures and understand what your art is about. So your website needs to **provide props and tools** to help the little Google bots understand what they're seeing. Think of alt tags, meta descriptions, sitemaps, keywords, linking and copywriting. If you haven't set up your site to have good SEO, you'll always be ranked on page 85 of Google, no matter how good your art is. Stop thinking of search engines as mysterious robots, instead think of them as matchmakers. Tell them who you are and who you're looking to connect with, update them on your status and your projects **in a language they'll understand**, and they'll help create new opportunities for your career.

What that means for you :

1. Download and install the **Yoast SEO** Plugin (for free).

- Set it up so that your pages, posts and projects all have **automatic titles**

Tip : titles are not to be mistaken with headings. Headings are the main message your visitors see on your page e.g. "Contact", "About me", "Works" etc. Titles are the text that appears on your browser tab when you hover your mouse over it. They should include the main message of your page, which can be similar to your page heading, but should also include your artist name for good SEO.

- Go to your website's most important pages (Home, Contact, About me, Key Project etc.) and create **custom titles, meta descriptions and slugs** in the areas provided by the plugin.

- Check out your **word count** : a good target is 300 words per page, 150 if it's a category description. Include major keywords in the first paragraph of your copy and in the titles of your page.

- Enable useful tools such as **Breadcrumbs** (that line at the top of you artwork's page that shows you users where they are in your site, i.e. Home > Work > Paintings > Acrylics)

2. Images

- Be mindful of what you call your image files. Avoid names that make no sense (DC078925.jpg), instead **use the name of your work and you artist name**.

- Add **alt tags** to all your images, using the same information.

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4. Catch visitors' info...

.. to grow your audience and position yourself

Add a **signup field** to strategic areas of your website to catch your visitors' info. This can prove to be an amazing resource for your career, and provide you with incredible opportunities. The truth is that your site probably holds a lot of interesting content, and that people are interested in knowing more, being notified when you have a new show coming up, or hearing you present your artwork. After all that's why they're on your website ! Additionnally, some of your visitors may not want to collaborate with you right now, but chances are that they will in the future. **Ask for their information and send them notifications** so they'll remember you when the time is right. Don't let these opportunities pass you by! Politely ask if they would be interested in getting some news, and if so could they provide their email?

What that means for you :

- Design a signup form** that fits in with **the atmosphere of your site**. If your site is minimalist don't overdo it, if you're a painter maybe style the background of your popup with an original print.

- If you're using a popup**, activate its action only when your user wants it. How do you do that ? **Trigger the popup after certain actions only** : for example after a visitor has read an opinion piece, or after they've been to your "Upcoming Shows" page. They've shown interest in what you have to say, in your work and where they can see you next, so grab that opportunity !

- Link your popup to a (free) Mailchimp account**. This emailing service will enable you to send emails "en masse" to your mailing list. Newsletters, calendars, you name it. No need to manually add anyone to your list anymore, it's all done automatically. And an additional benefit : people who don't want to receive notifications from you anymore can simply unsubscribe. It's that simple, it's not intrusive, and it's free !

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So... how does your website rate?

Is your website missing out on one or all of these four key tools?



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