

Strategy Report for
MICHAELCICCONE.COM

Forming a relationship with the world-class artist next door

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Executive Summary

Michael Ciccone is a prolific artist, an abstract expressionist with a signature style and an inviting personality. As Michael's body of work continues to grow, so does his fan base, and so does the general demand for more information online. This project will engage Michael's audience by greatly improving access to information about his artwork, his process, and related events. We have developed recommendations for updating the current site at MichaelCiccone.com, based on our analysis of comparative sites, audience, and content.

Our comparative analysis has shown that the current site at MichaelCiccone.com matches expectations for an individual artist's website, with an attractive and unique appearance, highlights of artwork, events, and news, and information about the artist and his background. However, as Michael's body of work has continued to grow, the site has quickly become outdated and unwieldy to maintain. Strategies are necessary to ease both the user's ability to search and browse through the growing content on the site and the artist's addition of content to the site. In addition, new content should be added to provide context for the artwork and further share Michael's emphasis on process, giving users a behind-the-scenes look that will strengthen their relationship both with his art and with him.

As a result, our strategic recommendations are focused on:

- **providing more context for Michael's artwork**
 - adding new multimedia content that shows his work-in-process, engaging users in a **relationship** with his art and with him
 - relating content items to each other all across the site, to create a **unified** view of Michael's body of work and his role in it
- **adding search functionality and improving browse functionality** by using a database structure as the basis for most content, with structured metadata and controlled vocabularies for ease of searching and consistent use of terms across the site
- **making it easier for the artist to add and update content to the site**, so that it can remain up to date with his **prolific** work, while over time showing his **progression** and the **longevity** of his work

After following the recommendations in this strategy report, MichaelCiccone.com will exceed user's expectations for an artist's website, rather than just matching them. The site will provide an immersive user experience with Michael's entire body of work, and his artist's lifestyle, rather than just exposing users to a few brief highlights.

Mission, Audience, and Vision

Mission and Goals

Mission

MichaelCiccone.com will provide an immersive user experience for users to form (or continue) a relationship with the artist and his body of work. The structure of the site will follow Michael's own philosophy of "Form first, then details," so that viewers can start from the big picture and then work their way into specifics, from his entire body of work into particular series, or from the form of an entire artwork into close-up details. Users will be able to browse by choosing from a variety of criteria, or to easily search for a known artwork or event. By making it easier for the artist to add and update content, we will also make it easier for users to stay up to date with Michael's latest work and most recent events.

Primary goals

The main purpose of the site is for people who appreciate and collect art to learn more about Michael's work, including his style, process, and philosophy, and to keep updated with his recent work and events. It is important for the site to be kept up to date, so that the people who follow Michael's work can feel like they are getting a behind-the-scenes look at all aspects of his work as it unfolds.

Secondary goals






A secondary goal is to make it easier for Michael to upload content to the site himself, so that he can add new work and new events and keep the site current. When he is able to add content directly to the site himself, this will allow him to make the site more personal, including his commentary on creating new work, or video of his art-making in action.

Long term goals

The long-term goal for the site is to function as a digital archive of Michael's entire body of work. We envision future scholars researching Michael's work by way of this website and the included database.

Audience

The audience for MichaelCiccone.com could generally be described as people who appreciate art, at any level, and are interested in learning more about Michael Ciccone and his work. All groups need to be able to easily browse through artwork that is new to them, yet also quickly find a known artwork. They also all need to be able to quickly find information about events they might want to attend, or news items with updates on Michael's work and career. The following groups have specific connections to the site:

	<p>Collectors</p> <p>This user group is focused on following Michael's work, process, and his artist's lifestyle. Whether they have already purchased artwork by Michael or are considering a purchase, they need to understand the integrity of Michael's work and his creation and installation process, and the resulting longevity both of the work and of his relationship with his collectors.</p>
	<p>Fans</p> <p>This user group is focused on following Michael's creative process, with a simple curiosity about the work itself. They will be most interested in process photos and video, which should link to related artwork and events to further draw them in.</p>
	<p>Gallery Owners</p> <p>This user group is focused on following Michael's work, process, and self-promotion. They need to be impressed by the integrity of Michael's work and process, so that they feel confident adding his work to their gallery. By seeing how actively Michael promotes his own work, they will see that they will have an easier time promoting his work themselves.</p>
	<p>Art Historians</p> <p>This is an imagined user group in the future, focused on looking back at Michael's body of work. They will be particularly interested in relationships between artworks, events, and commentary, and will need robust search functions.</p>
	<p>The Artist</p> <p>The artist also must be considered as an important user of the site: if he can't comfortably interact with the site, he can't direct his audience around it. He must be able to easily update content for the site himself, and easily locate existing content on the site to share it with audience members and link other content to it.</p>

We developed more detailed personas to represent each of these groups, to more fully consider their needs. The details of this research are in **Appendix A**. This research helped us to identify that the site should have features that support the following:

User goals:

- become familiar with Michael's style, and his entire body of work
- get a better understanding of Michael's process and see him in action

User tasks:

- browse through all of the artwork
- narrow a selection of artwork by different criteria, like medium or scale
- find a specific work of art that they already know
- discover new art as it is added to the site
- get information about specific events where they can see Michael's work
- access video, audio, images and text that show Michael's work in process
- contact Michael personally for more information, or to visit

Artist goals:

- share the most up to date information about recently created artwork, work in process, and upcoming events

Artist tasks:

- add a new artwork, with photos and detailed information
- find a specific work of art to share with others, or to update information
- add new events, like upcoming gallery shows
- add news items, including both media coverage and his own information about works in process

Project Vision

Current Website

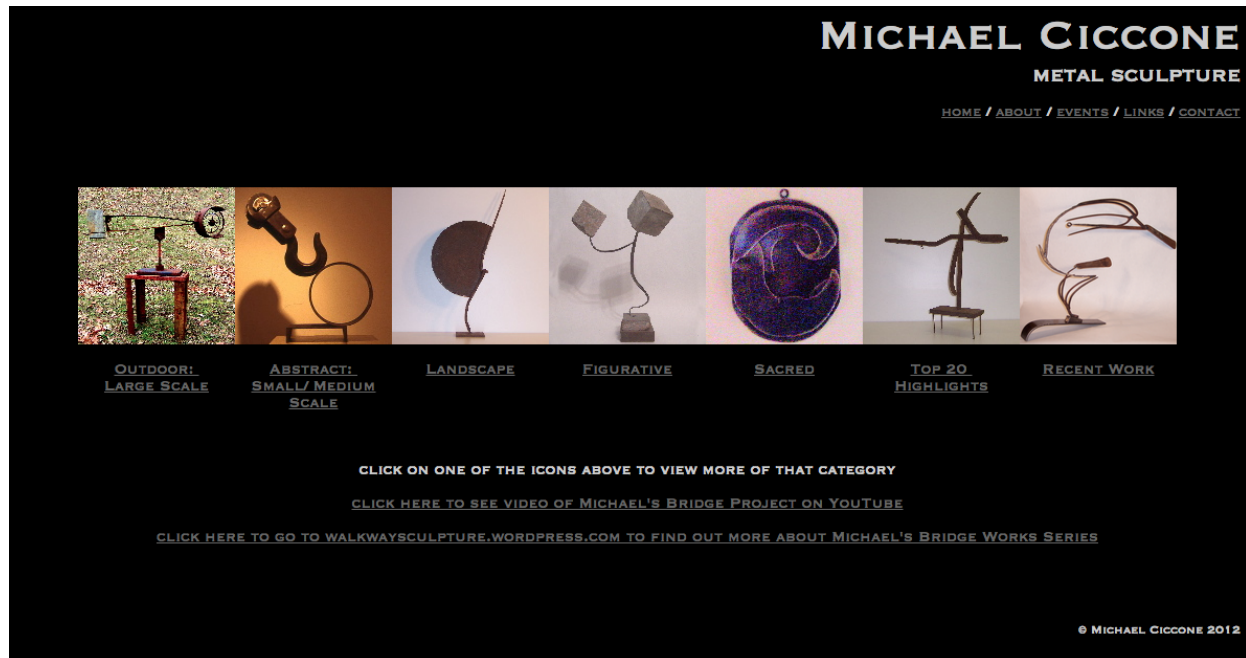


Figure 1. Home page for MichaelCiccone.com, before suggested improvements, as of August 2013.

While Michael Ciccone remains pleased with the overall visual design of the site, he has been continually frustrated by the difficulty of finding and sharing a particular work of art among the extensive body of work represented there. Also, the site is very out of date: content about events has not been updated in about a year, and no new artwork has been added to the site since 2009. Images of Michael and of his studio, on the About and Contact pages, are also very out of date and need new content. Furthermore, Michael actively creates photos, audio, and video to record his process of making many of his pieces, and he is aware that his audience would appreciate that behind-the-scenes look at how he creates his work. He also has a new series of drawings that need to be added.

Michael stands out from the art crowd as a working man's artist, working construction by day and making art whenever he can. This aspect holds a strong appeal for his target audience. It will be important to continue to include content that continues to tell this story of his entire lifestyle, his process, and his philosophy. He likes the idea that the site is more than just a showcase of highlights of his work, but rather can include his entire body of work, showing his progression, even sharing some of the pieces that he considers to be failures (especially since, against all odds, some such pieces have been purchased by collectors).

Proposed Improvements

The new and improved site will overcome all of these challenges. The overall look and feel of the site will not change, as Michael and his audience members both remain happy with the current layout and style, and it is important that the style of the site does not steal attention from any individual work of art. However, the back end processes of **adding and updating content** will be much easier, as will the public processes of **searching and browsing** through the extensive collection of artwork, and **navigating not only through the artwork, but also news, events, and commentary**. The new site will emphasize the ways in which Michael's work is **prolific** yet **unified**, that his work shows a **progression** over time and yet shares an impressive **longevity**, and that Michael values the **relationship** that his audience forms with his artwork and with him.

It's important to remember that the appeal of Michael's artwork to his audience is primarily in the aesthetic pleasure they derive from viewing his art, and the emotion that the work triggers in them. There is also an element of longevity in the permanence of the materials that Michael uses, so that a collector investing in his artwork will be able to enjoy it for a lifetime. Therefore it is important that the images of the artwork are not competing with other content for the viewer's emotional and intellectual attention, that they are easy to find and to browse, and that they express this sense of longevity.

Michael would like the site to project the fact that he employs an array of diverse approaches to his art, but that each piece fits into one unified body of work. His distinguished style is already recognized in the community of Hudson Valley artists, and he wants the website to help spread this recognition. He also wants to stress the fact that each of his pieces is one of a kind, as opposed to some artists who produce duplicate artworks. He needs to show his audience how process oriented he is, perhaps by showing multiple images of works as they are being made, or by sharing videos of his process in action.

He is not interested in creating any ecommerce functionality on the site. The nature of the fine art industry is that prices are very negotiable, and sometimes placing a hard price on the site feels gauche. Rather, the site should be an aspect that leads the user to contact Michael more directly for more information, coming to his studio / sculpture garden for a personal visit or contacting him by way of phone or email to get more information. It is in that more personal communication that people are often drawn in to take a greater interest in Michael's work.

Some key adjectives to keep in mind are:

- unified
- prolific
- progression
- longevity

Targeted Message

We have identified two different target messages for this project.

The **public message** sums up the story that the site will actively tell to our public audience:

Form drives the work; stand back and take in the unity of the overall composition before focusing on the smaller details

This statement summarizes Michael's approach to his artwork, and will guide our approach to the website as well. This idea guides the audience's experience of interacting with the work, but encourages them to take ownership of the interaction and form their own interpretation of the work. We will be guided by the idea of "Form first, then details" in terms of the structure of the site, so that viewers can start from the big picture of Michael's entire body of work, and then work their way into specific series, media, subjects, or time periods, and then into specific works of art, and then specific details about each work. Pages for each artwork should introduce viewers to the piece as a whole, and only then add additional close-up detail views.

The **private message** is an internal "Way We Serve Statement" meant to remind us, in our work on the site, to create a very specific experience for our audience:

Form a relationship with the world-class artist next door

Communication Strategy

This website will need to convey the target messages above not only with regards to Michael's finished artwork, but also about his process, and about him. All parts of the site will need to work together holistically to present a unified vision of Michael's style and process, including ideas of strength, balance, and longevity.

People currently find out about Michael's site because they have met him or seen his work at a gallery, and they have taken one of his business cards or brochures. Some other websites also point to his site, including the site for the Saugerties Artists Studio Tour, which he is very involved in helping to organize. When he shows at other galleries they sometimes provide links to his site. From time to time he also has the opportunity to speak about his work on the local radio or TV, and is able to point people to his site to find out more. Currently it is unlikely that he gets much new traffic via search engines, so we could explore some simple search engine optimization, especially for our local art market.

Lessons Learned from Analysis of Comparative Sites, Audience, and Content

Comparative Analysis

In this case we needed to do comparative analysis rather than competitive analysis. Michael's competition is made up of other artists in the Hudson Valley (and beyond), but in fact they often support each other's work rather than competing with each other, and form a tight knit community. Each artist's work is so different stylistically that the competitive aspect is much more indirect. Michael's work is very much his own - no one is making art like his, especially from the kinds of materials he uses.

Examining other websites of artists in the Hudson Valley, we see that even when the work on display, and the design style of the site, is very different, most sites have a similar simple gallery structure, highlighting a select few images but not providing a very wide or deep view of the artist's work. Our desired features for more granular browsing and searching are not supported in any artist's sites we can find in the Hudson Valley arts community. Also, none of the sites we have examined so far share the breadth of an artist's entire prolific body of work as we intend to do. Our current goals for the project definitely would make Michael's site stand out with much greater functionality than any current artist sites in his regional area.

To get an even clearer sense of our audience's expectations related to other artist's websites, we consulted the sites for four different local artists who have participated, with Michael, in the Saugerties Artists' Studio Tour. We rated each site, following a rubric (shown in **Appendix B**) that outlined several criteria based on the features we identified were needed for our main user tasks. Then we evaluated Michael's current website using the same criteria.

Richard Edelman

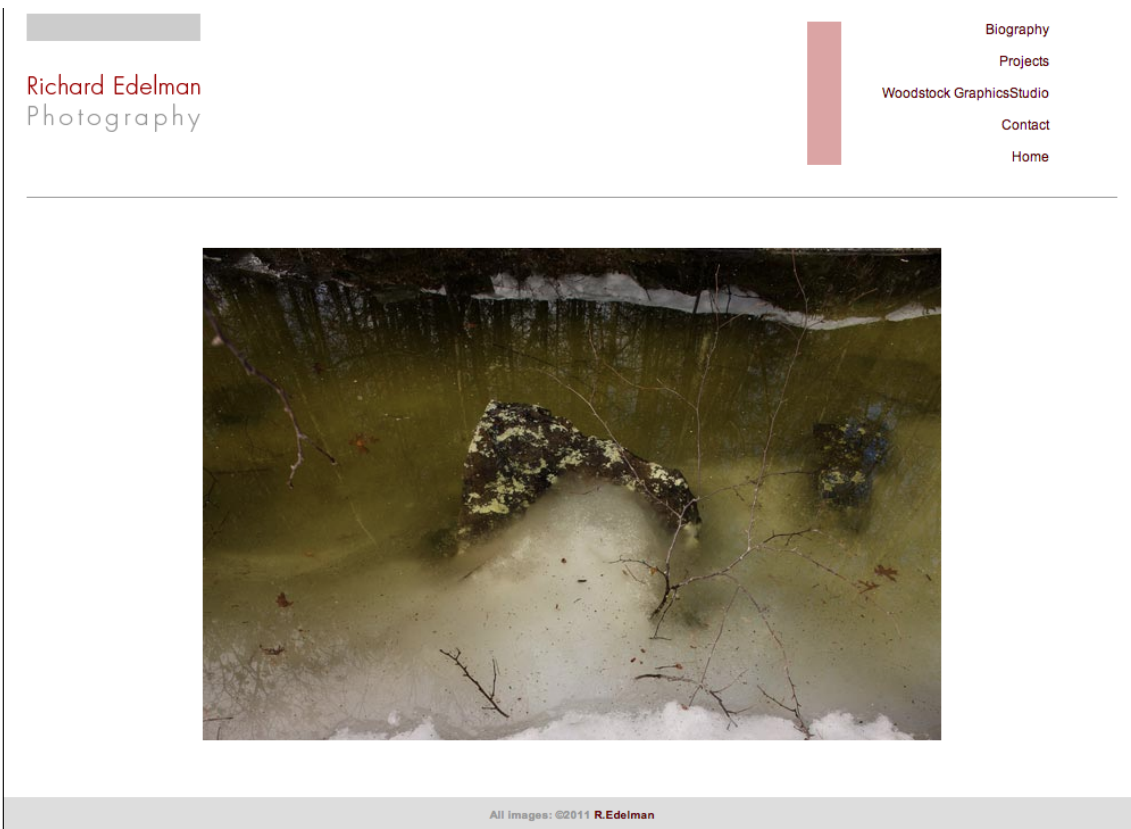


Figure 2. Home page for the website for artist Richard Edelman, August 2013.

Artist	Richard Edelman	Rating
URL	http://www.woodstockgraphicsstudio.com/pictures.html	-
Design		4
Navigation	global navigation not always consistent, no bread crumb trails or tabs, so navigation can be jumpy	3
Site Organization	no filters / facets, sort by project but not by date	2
Links and Labels	no connections across site	4
Search	none	0
Readability	caption font too small	4
Performance	can't tell how up to date the site is, no help system	4
Content	no event or process/lifestyle info, little detail	2
	Total	23
	Average	2.875

Lorrie Fredette

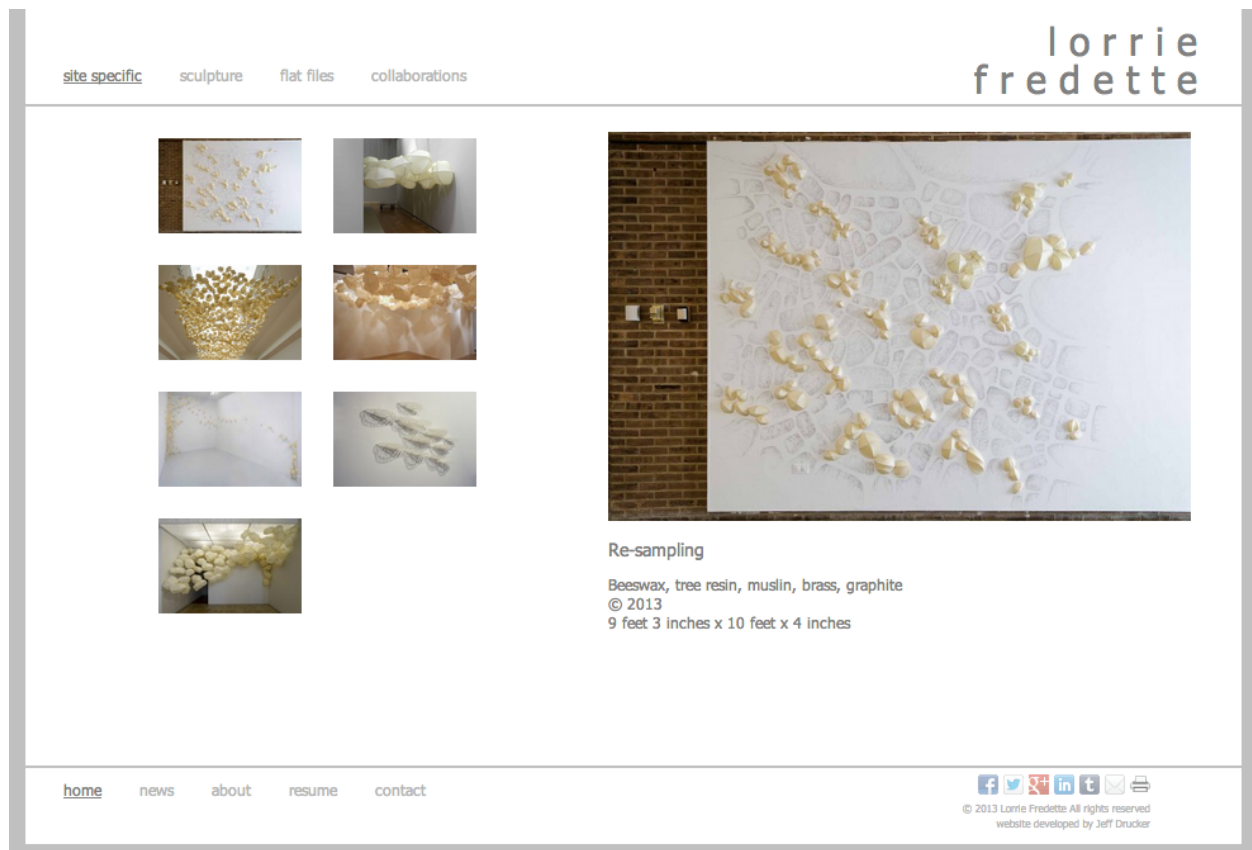


Figure 3. Home page for the website for artist Lorrie Fredette, August 2013.

Artist	Lorrie Fredette	Rating
URL	http://www.lorriefredette.com/	-
Design	attractive, unique, consistent, proportionate, not distracting	5
Navigation	consistent, clear, with helpful clues on deep pages	5
Site Organization	no filters / facets, no sorting by date	3
Links and Labels	no contextual link connections between art / events, etc.	4
Search	none	0
Readability	fonts / spacing easy to read, easy to understand	5
Performance	quick loading, up to date	5
Content	no process / lifestyle info, but good use of pop-up detail views	4
	Total	31
	Average	3.875

Alex Kveton

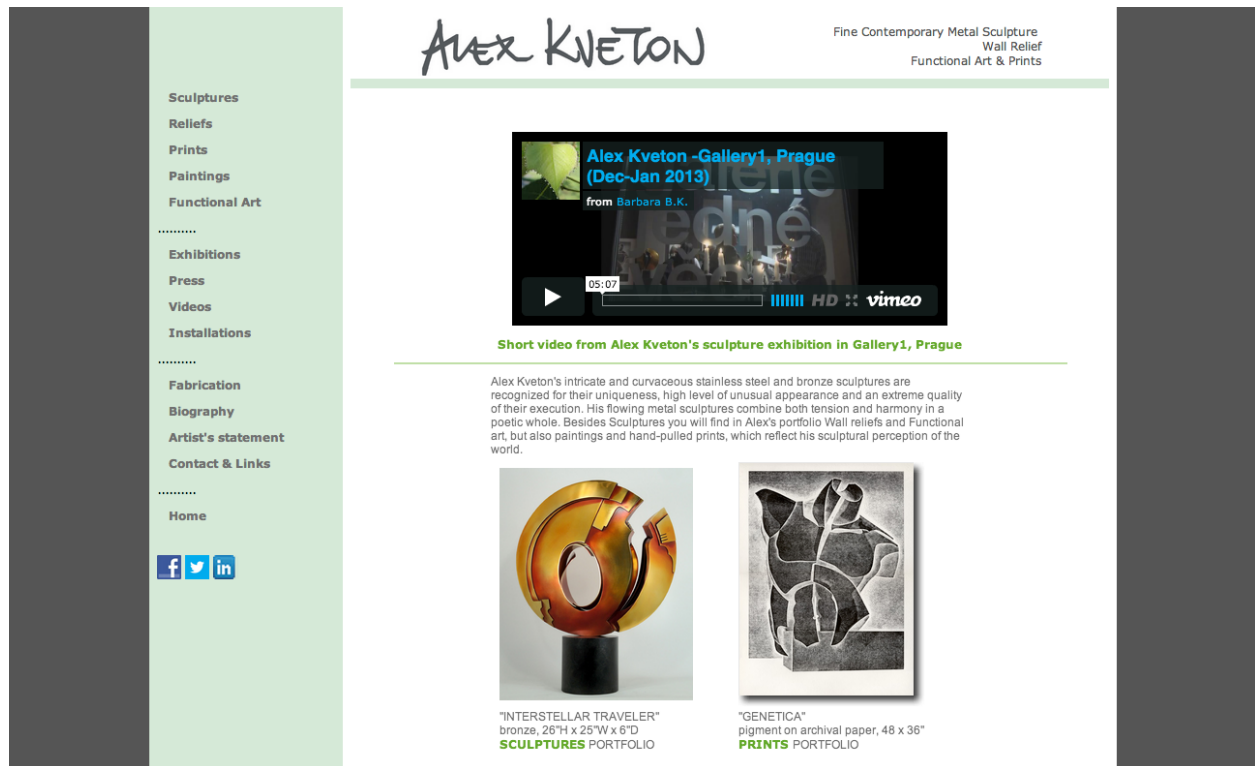


Figure 4. Home page for the website for artist Alex Kveton, August 2013.

Artist	Alex Kveton	Rating
URL	http://www.alexkveton.com/	-
Design	inconsistent clashing greens on some pages (detracts from art)	2
Navigation	inconsistent local navigation, uses frames, so URL stays the same?	2
Site Organization	no site map or index, no filters/facets	4
Links and Labels	no connections across site, few headers	3
Search	none	0
Readability	could use more spacing, some larger fonts	4
Performance	some thumbnails load slowly, not updated in a few months, no help/guides	4
Content	in depth content, views of art	5
	Total	24
	Average	3

Brian Lynch



site design by herstand

Figure 5. Home page for the website for artist Brian Lynch, August 2013.

Artist	Brian Lynch	Rating
URL	http://www.lynchstudio.com/	-
Design	lack of design feels too minimal, out of proportion	2
Navigation	navigation practically non-existent, easy to get lost deep in pages of galleries	1
Site Organization	no sorting, filtering/facets	2
Links and Labels	too minimal, no connections across content	2
Search	none	0
Readability	good readability, but barely anything to read	4
Performance	no indication of how up to date it is	4
Content	small images, no events / process / lifestyle	2
	Total	17
	Average	2.125

Michael Ciccone's Current Site, before suggested improvements

(see screen shot in **Figure 1**)

Artist	Michael Ciccone	Rating
URL	http://MichaelCiccone.com	-
Design		4
Navigation	not clear that the Home page is also the way in to the various sections of artwork, difficult to navigate back from a page deep in the site, no clues to location once deep in the site	2
Site Organization	breakdown by category only, difficult to allow for work that is in more than one category, browsing is limited, no searching, no sorting	1
Links and Labels	no connections across site, headers could be more clear as labels	3
Search	none	0
Readability	some text is too small and dark, including navigation	3
Performance	not up to date	4
Content	not enough process/lifestyle info, not enough detail	3
	Total	20
	Average	2.5

Analysis of Accessibility

To evaluate the level of accessibility for Michael's current site, we entered several of the current URLs into the Cynthia Says™ tool from HiSoftware® at <http://www.cynthiasays.com/>.

The site's performance with a view to accessibility was better than expected, but on closer inspection that was because the site is currently very simple, and will become more complicated with the added content and functionality that is planned. The extensive images on the site do not consistently take advantage of ALT text, a feature which provides alternate text for users who are blind or have low vision and use screen readers. General accessibility guidelines discourage use of extensive graphics because of the issues for such users, but as this is a site for a visual artist, showcasing images of his work, this is fairly unavoidable.

The design choice on the current site, for a black background with light text, appears to be a preferred color combination for some people with low vision, according to the CynthiaSays guidelines. However, there are arguments both for and against this both for low vision users and others, so it will likely be best to make sure a user's personal style choices in their browser can override the site's style sheet when necessary.

Card-sorting

To get a better sense of user needs with regard to our organization structure, we conducted a card-sorting exercise with a few representative users. We gave users a selection of cards, each with an indication of granular content for the site, including text and thumbnail images for artwork. Cards indicated content for all of our main expected types, including artwork, events, and news items. Contact information and information about the artist's background were also included. Users were asked to sort the cards into groups that felt logical to them, and to label the groups.

Even with such a small testing group, this exercise was very helpful to point out the fact that there are many different ways to sort Michael's artwork, and the site should be open to as many of them as possible. Some users sorted the artwork by medium, others by series, and some began to sort them by year before changing their mind and using another system.

As a result, these exercises support our preliminary idea that a database model, with a bottom-up approach, will allow for users to search and sort through all of Michael's artwork in many different ways, including by medium, category, scale, and year.

Content Audit

A detailed analysis of the existing content at MichaelCiccone.com was needed to consider what content needs to be updated, deleted, or added. To bring the site up to date, images and information for many new artworks must be added to the site. Also, in many cases there are better, more recent images of artwork that is already on the site, so the images can be replaced. Upcoming events, and those over the last year, need to be added. Past events will not be deleted, but kept as a part of the archive of Michael's experience.

This analysis was helpful to see just how quickly the site can become out of date. Moving forward, the artist will need to keep to a defined schedule of updates, either adding new content as soon as it becomes available, or at the very least updating events monthly, and other content every six months.

Architectural Strategies and Approaches

Functionality

Based on our analysis of comparative sites, user expectations, and content, combined with the mission and goals for the site, we have outlined the functionality needed for the desired improvements to the site. This functional specification outlines the required, preferred, and bonus features desired for the site. We also created a semi-functional prototype to provide a model for how these features would work together for users. The prototype is a Powerpoint presentation that allows users to click through navigation items to move between the slides, demonstrating all required functionality, and some preferred and bonus functionality. In our next phase we will be able to test this prototype with users, to make sure the functionality is working as intended before we proceed.

Figures 6-11 and 13-16 are screenshots from the prototype, shown here with a brief description of the functionality they model. In general, orange text is used within global or local navigation to indicate the current location or choice. Brown text is used to indicate contextual links when they are mixed in to a body of text that does not link anywhere. Please note that the content (text and images) and design elements (layout, colors, and fonts) shown in this prototype present one possible set of choices, but do not necessarily represent the final choices for the site.

Required Functionality

- most content will be stored in a database as one of three different item types (with metadata specific to each):
 - artwork
 - event
 - news item (including both media coverage and personal coverage of works in process)
- the header (including Michael's name and tagline) will always link back to the home page (see **Figure 6**)
- contextual links in individual artwork, event, or news pages will link to other related pages or external sites (see **Figure 6**)
- the Art, Events, and News pages will allow browsing through all such content, with a thumbnail image and basic metadata for each (see **Figures 7, 11, and 13**)
 - thumbnail image will be optional for events and news
- each artwork, event, or news item will also have its own individual page, with at least one image per artwork and detailed information for all (see **Figures 8 and 14**)

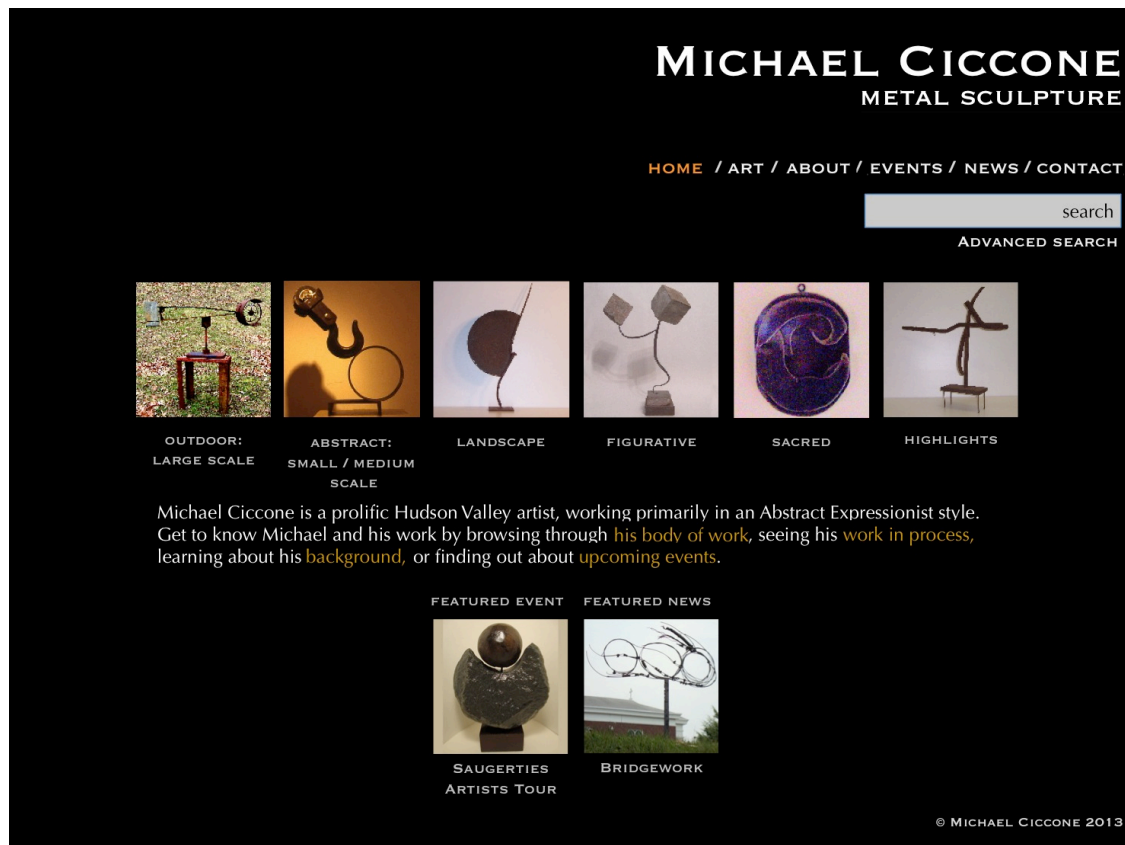


Figure 6. Proposed new Home page for MichaelCiccone.com, showing the global navigation, search box, thumbnails to indicate artwork categories, welcome blurb, and featured event and news.

Preferred Functionality

- search box on all pages (see **Figure 6**)
 - advanced search, for searching on any metadata field, tags, etc.
- browse by tag options to make it easy for users to filter items by different characteristics shown in a tag cloud
- sort options on the Art, Events, News, and search results pages (see **Figure 7**)
- individual pages for artworks, events, or news items all can include multiple images, for different perspectives / aspects (see **Figure 8**)
- icons/labels on the home page represent the main categories of Michael's work, and link to versions of the Art page with dynamic searches based on those categories (see **Figure 6**)
- icons/labels on the home page represent one featured event and one featured news item, linking to the full page for the individual event or news item (see **Figure 6**)
 - these are generated dynamically from the most recent event or news item that the artist has tagged as featured

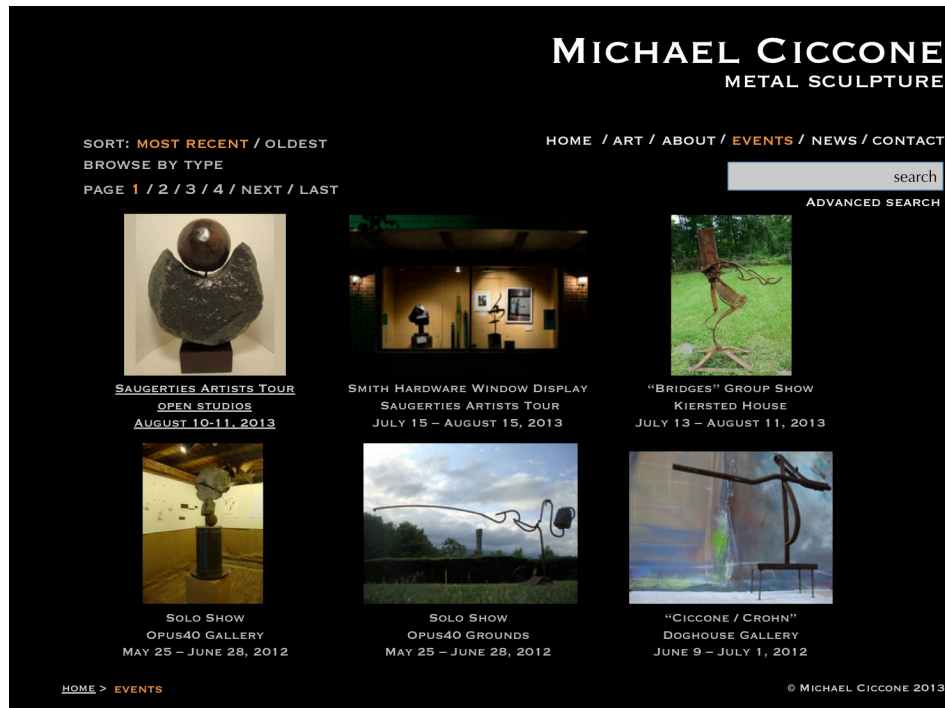


Figure 7. Proposed new Events page for MichaelCiccone.com, showing a list of events in a grid, with thumbnail images and a brief caption for each. At the top left there are options to sort by date and browse by type (a drop-down list with all types), and local navigation to move between event list pages.



Figure 8. Proposed new sample Event page for MichaelCiccone.com, showing a single event, with multiple (optional) images and detailed information.

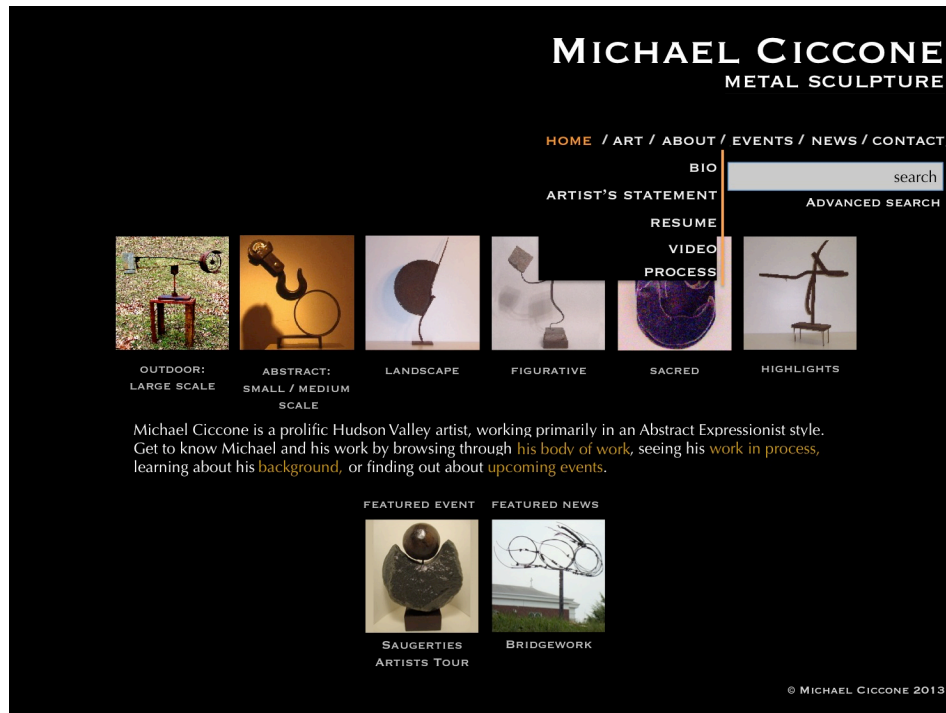


Figure 9. Proposed new Home page for MichaelCiccone.com, showing a drop down menu from the global navigation, for efficient access to any subpage from any other page.

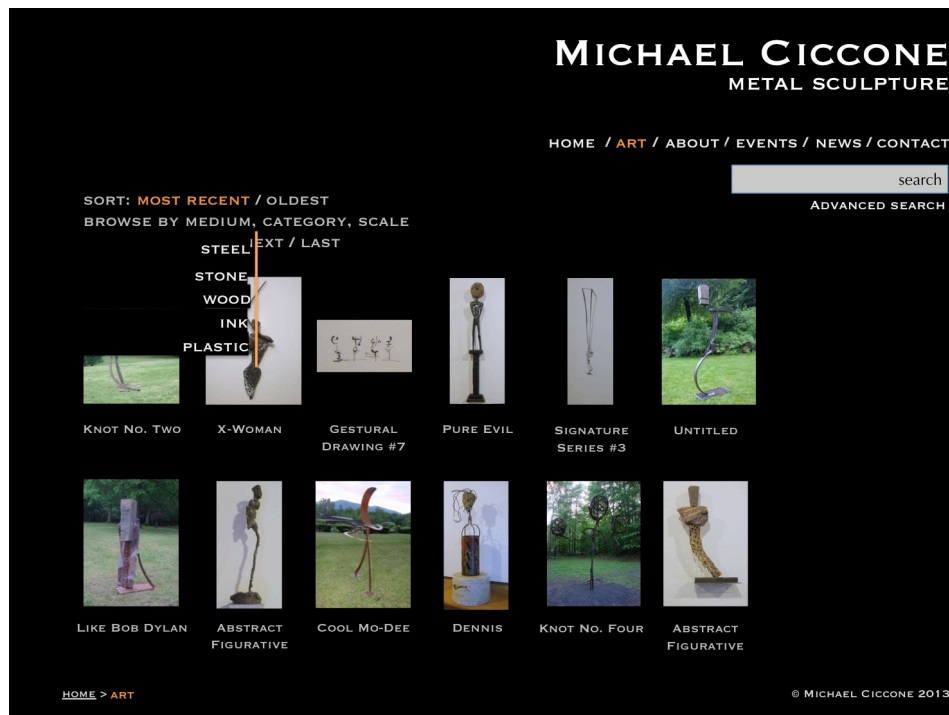


Figure 10. Proposed new Art page for MichaelCiccone.com, showing a drop down menu from the local navigation, for filtering the displayed artwork by specific criteria, such as medium (shown here), category, or scale.

Bonus Functionality

- drop down menus from global navigation for quick access to subpages from any page (see **Figure 9**)
- drop down menus from the Art page to filter the entire body of work by Medium, Scale, or Category, or a sidebar on the left showing faceted browsing, to show possibilities for further filtering based dynamically on the current set (see **Figure 10**)
- interactive Google map showing Michael's studio and sculpture garden
 - also can included other venues where Michael's work is displayed
- a set of streamlined forms for the artist to easily add more content to the site
 - different forms for artwork, events, and news, with the appropriate metadata
- icons on the home page can be animated to change between several featured images every few seconds, rather than just being one static image, to further show the breadth of Michael's work and feature more recent work
 - this would mean that more than one event and news item can be featured
- provide filters / facets on the search results page to quickly narrow by content type
- bread crumb trail, to further indicate the current location within the site, relative to other locations (see **Figure 8**)

Design Rationales

The prototype models design choices that are based on the following rationales:

- Maintain the basic look and feel from the original website
- "Form first, then details": following Michael's philosophy for creation of his own artwork, the site leads visitors from a big picture view of Michael's entire body of work, to specific categories of work, to full images of each individual work, to close-up shots of details of the work and textual information about the work.
- Make sure that the home page is clear in providing a quick introduction and overview of Michael's work, with clear guidance of where to go next on the site and what is included within the site
- Include both images and text wherever possible, to maintain a visual focus
- Make sure that the design of the site does not in any way detract from the images of the artwork
- Relate the works of art to text, video, and audio about their creation, and to events or news items in which they are showcased, to show how each artwork fits into Michael's overall career and process
- Serve the needs of the main user groups we have identified: Collectors, Fans, Gallery Owners, Art Historians, and the Artist himself.
- Convey that the site is up-to-date, with new content added regularly
- Make sure there is no "navigation stress" for the user, and that it is always clear where in the site the user is currently located, and how to get quickly to other important locations

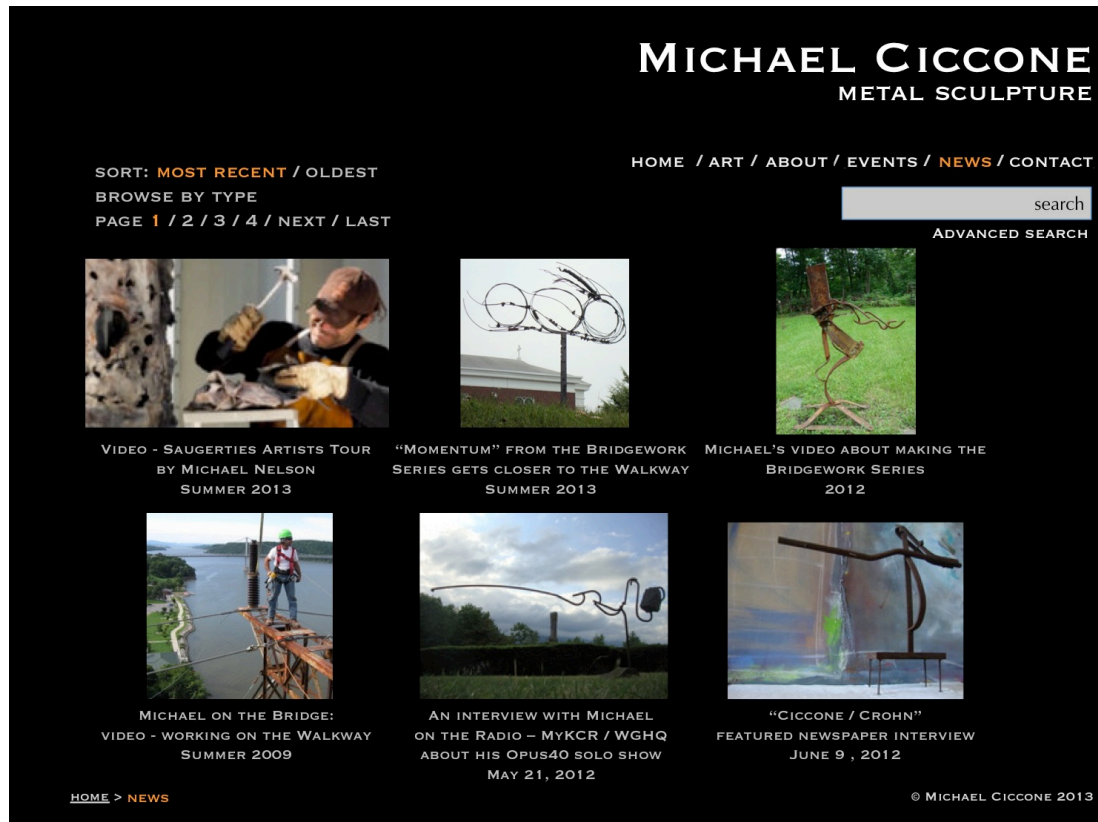


Figure 11. Proposed News page for MichaelCiccone.com, showing thumbnails and a brief description of each news item, which link to a full page with more detail about each news item; this page can be sorted by date or filtered by the type of news item (for example, video interview, news article, process images, etc.).

Organization

Based on our research, the best approach to the organization structure for this site is a bottom up approach, with a database model. A strictly hierarchical model is not appropriate for Michael's artwork, as each artwork can easily fall into several different groupings at one time. Our preliminary user analysis showed that different users approach Michael's work in different ways, and would appreciate being able to sort the artworks in different ways (see the section above on our Card-sorting experiment).

With a database oriented organization structure, we can easily use an ambiguous topic-oriented organization scheme, which will allow users to view content according to different topics that fit their interests. For example, from the artwork page they can filter the list of all artworks by medium, category, scale, or year. The layout of the home page will introduce users to Michael's artwork following a category scheme, so that will be the dominant approach, but once users begin to explore, they will be able to use the filters or tags to organize the work in different ways as desired.

Blueprint

This diagram demonstrates our basic understanding of the organization of all content within the site. While the Art, Event, and News pages will be built dynamically from these content types within the database, this blueprint shows how sub-pages will be generated from the filter choices to browse by different criteria such as medium, category, scale, year, or type.

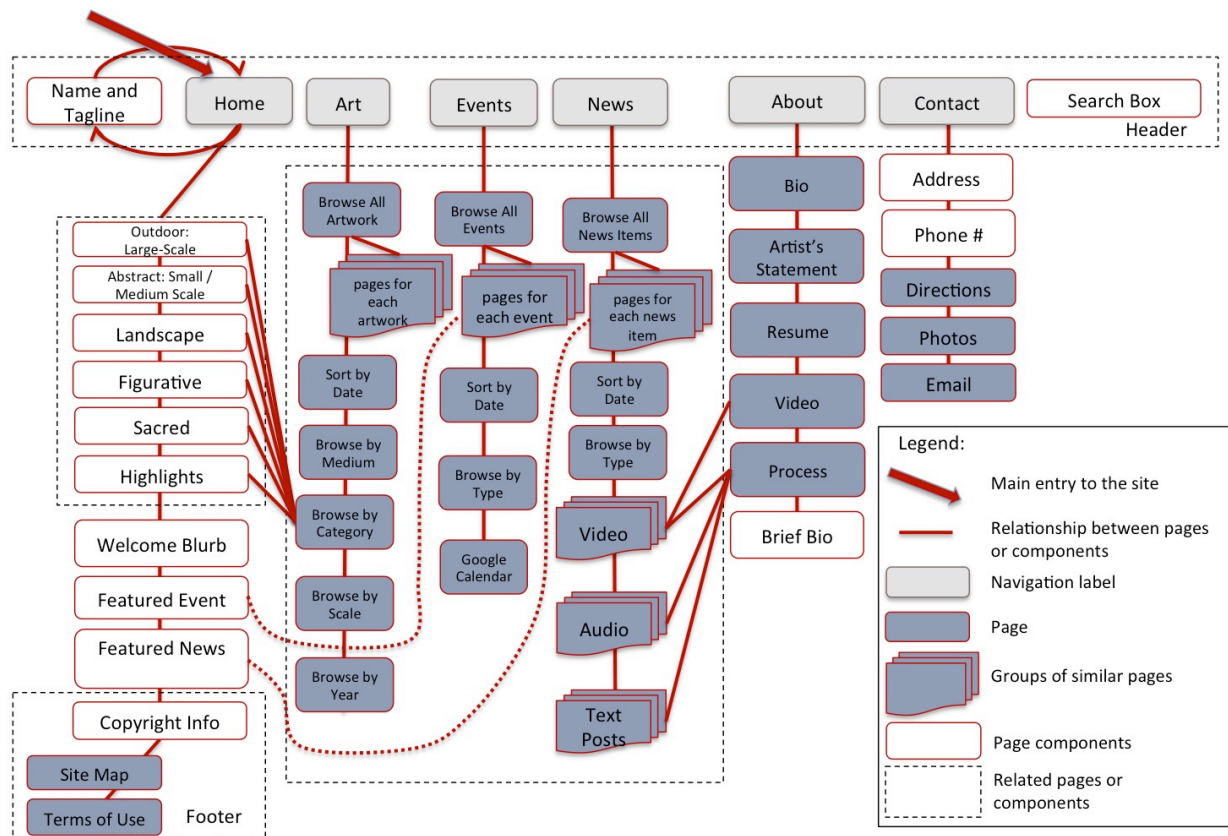


Figure 12. Blueprint showing proposed organization for MichaelCiccone.com

Navigation

We explored three alternative sets of labels for the main sections of the site at MichaelCiccone.com, including existing labels and adding two more. We considered options more oriented either to art buyers or gallery owners, using metaphors related to the experience of viewing Michael's work in a gallery or in his studio. However, our analysis of our audience showed that they have different perspectives on the content, and limited experience with online materials, so it made sense to choose navigation labels that match conventions for all types of website, art-oriented or not. Our resulting labeling scheme is a hybrid approach, with mostly topical labels: Art, About, Events, and News. These are also supplemented with the customary metaphor-based Home, and the customary task-oriented Contact. These are all simple, clear, don't take up much space, and don't require much thought to interpret.

Global navigation will be included as a part of the header that is a part of every page of the site. The site ID (the artist's name) and tagline will always link back to the Home page of the site. The other global navigation labels will fall in a line below that. A search box and link to advanced search will also be included as a part of the header. **Appendix C** shows a preliminary, low-fidelity wireframe as a mockup of the home page, with navigation.

Local navigation for browsing pages (of Art, Events, or News) or search results will include links to the First, Next, Previous, and Last pages of that browsing section, along with links to numbered pages of the browsing section or search results. Options in the local navigation for those sections will also allow sorting by date, and filtering by criteria such as medium, scale, or type.

Contextual navigation will be an important addition to the improved site, as it is not used to full advantage in the current site. Contextual links internal to the site will allow an artwork to be related to the event where it is being displayed, the news article in which it is discussed, or the video in which users can see it as a work in process, for example. Contextual links can also relate content to external websites, for example to the site for a gallery where an event is taking place, or to an online newspaper with an article about the artist.

The current site has navigational issues when a user is at a deep level within the structure of the site. There is little indication of how to move up a single level or navigate to another section. It will be necessary to add visual guidance to help users know where they are in the site and how to move around. The addition of a bread-crum trail will help significantly with this. Also, the design of the global navigation will indicate to users what section of the site they are currently in, using a change in color or another visual cue.

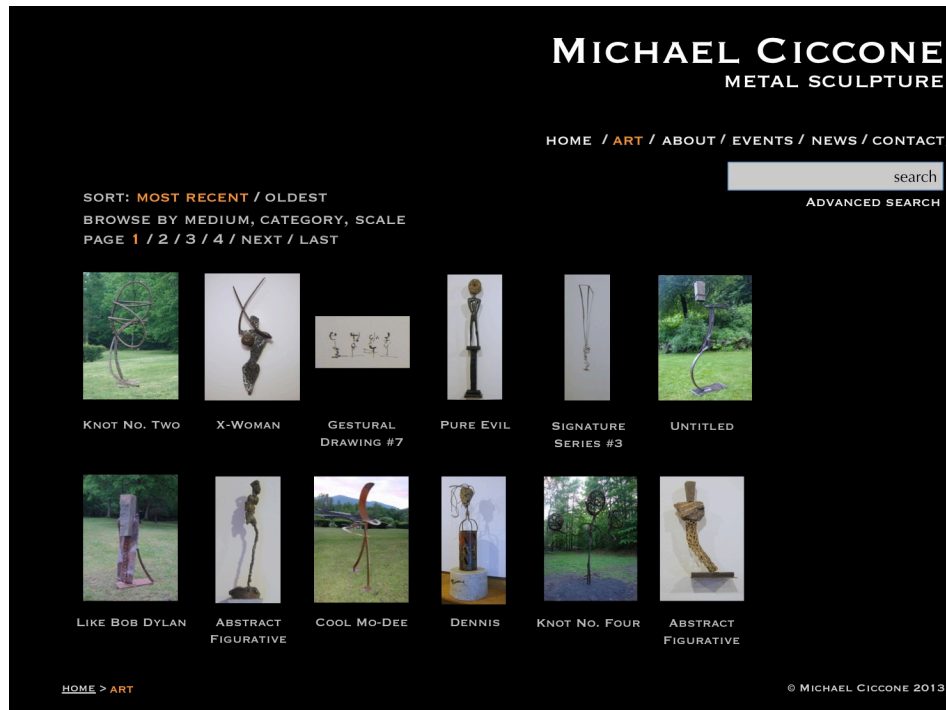


Figure 13. Proposed Art page for MichaelCiccone.com, showing a grid of thumbnails for browsing or search results.

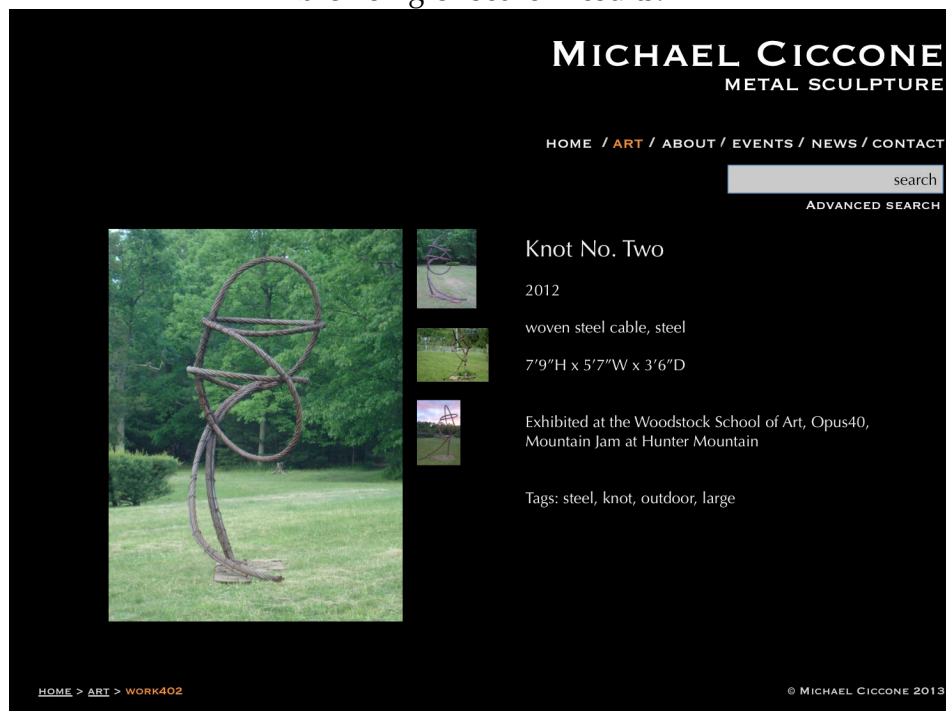


Figure 14. Proposed sample Artwork page for MichaelCiccone.com, showing multiple detailed images and information for a single artwork.

Use of Graphics

Visual images will be very important for this site, as its purpose is to represent the work of a visual artist.

- thumbnails will be automatically generated for all images, for search results and browsing pages, and for featured items on the home page (see **Figure 13**)
- large images will be shown on the individual artwork, event, or news item pages
 - multiple images can be included for each item, to show multiple perspectives (see **Figure 14**)
 - one image will be shown in a large size, with the others as thumbnails
 - when a thumbnail is clicked upon, it will be shown in the large size section of the page
 - when clicking on a large size image, it will open in a larger (almost full screen) zoom-able view, up to its original size
- large images will also appear in the About subpages and the Contact and Directions pages
- all images will serve a representative function
- no other visual imagery (decorative, organizational, interpretive, or transformational) will be used on any of the browse, search, or individual item pages, as this would detract from the images of the artwork when they appear.

Accessibility

As noted in the analytical section above, websites with extensive use of images have accessibility issues for blind or low vision users. Accepting that the visual arts focus of this site mean we can't cut back on our use of graphics, here's what we can do:

- make sure that all images have ALT and/or LONGDESC attributes
- use CSS to separate content from design, making sure that content is still readable without the associated style sheet (and with a user's preferred styles instead)
- include links to larger versions of the images, to zoom in and see details clearly.
- avoid tables, or mark them up to indicate their function if they really are necessary
- provide a link to skip repetitive navigation
- since we plan to use a CMS that includes scripting, we need to make sure the script can be identified with functional text
- make sure that we include alternative content for multimedia items (captions / descriptions / transcripts of audio/video)
- make sure that the search box (and any other inputs) have an ALT attribute, TITLE attribute, or linked LABEL
- make sure the URLs are clear in representing the location in the hierarchy of the site, to help with navigation

Content Management

Content

There is already a large amount of useful content in the current site that will need to be migrated and re-formatted for the new improved site. However, there is additional data about the existing artwork in a Filemaker database, which can be added for more detail. There is also a good deal of new content in the database that needs to be added, and even additional artwork that has not yet been added to the database. Furthermore, as shown in the Content Audit discussed above, much of the existing content needs to be updated.

As previously mentioned, Michael has also created and collected photographs, video, audio, and text to record his work in process, his installations, and some gallery shows. By adding the News content type, all of this new content can be easily integrated into the site. These items will help greatly to further the site's mission of providing an immersive user experience with exposure not only to Michael's artwork, but also to many aspects of his process and lifestyle.

Previously, any artworks or events had only one image associated with each, but in the new structure additional image files can be associated with Art, Events, or News, further increasing the amount of detail available. As discussed above, contextual links will help to relate internal pieces of content to each other, for a unified sense of Michael's experience. **Appendix D** provides a page description diagram showing priorities for content for the Home page.

Content with information about Michael's background will continue to be an important part of the site (see **Figures 15 and 16**). A bio, artist's statement, and resume are standard expectations within the art industry, and are already included in the current site. The improved site will also include Video and Process links on the About page to connect to other content in the database of the site.

Content Management System

To implement the proposed structure, we will use Omeka as a content management system. Omeka is open source server-based software that combines some features of a web content management system with some features of a museum collection management system and a library digital repository. With this combination, it is well suited as a publishing platform for an art collection. Omeka provides an administrative back-end and a public facing front-end. In addition, the Contribution plugin provides simple forms on the public end that make it even easier to add content. This plugin will streamline the workflow for the artist to add his own new content, and could even potentially allow users to add content. For example, a collector could add a photo of a sculpture in their home.

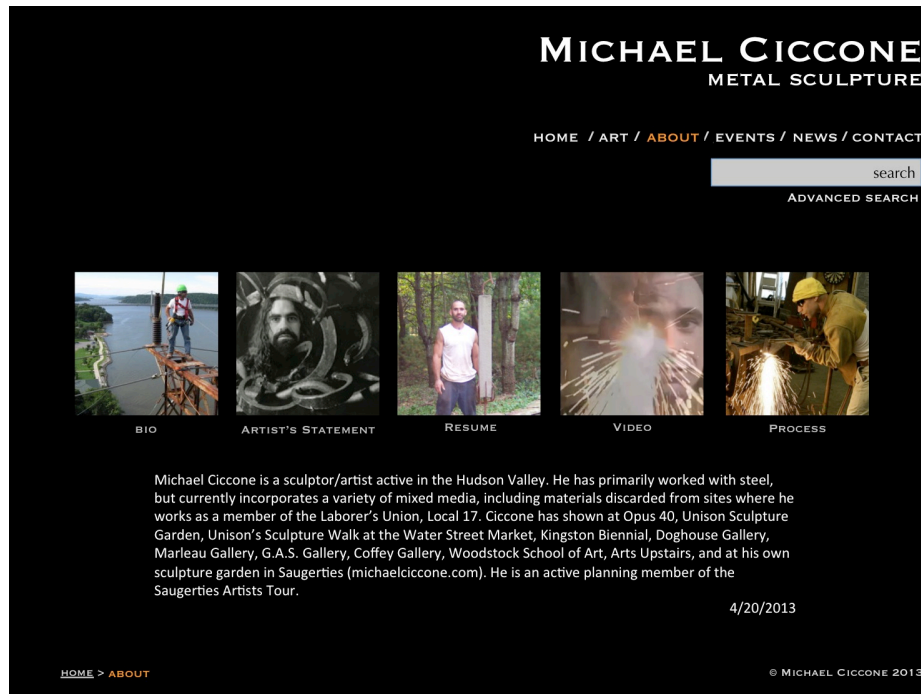


Figure 15. Proposed new About page for MichaelCiccone.com, showing thumbnail links to sub-pages that showcase in-depth information about Michael's background, along with a brief version of his Bio.

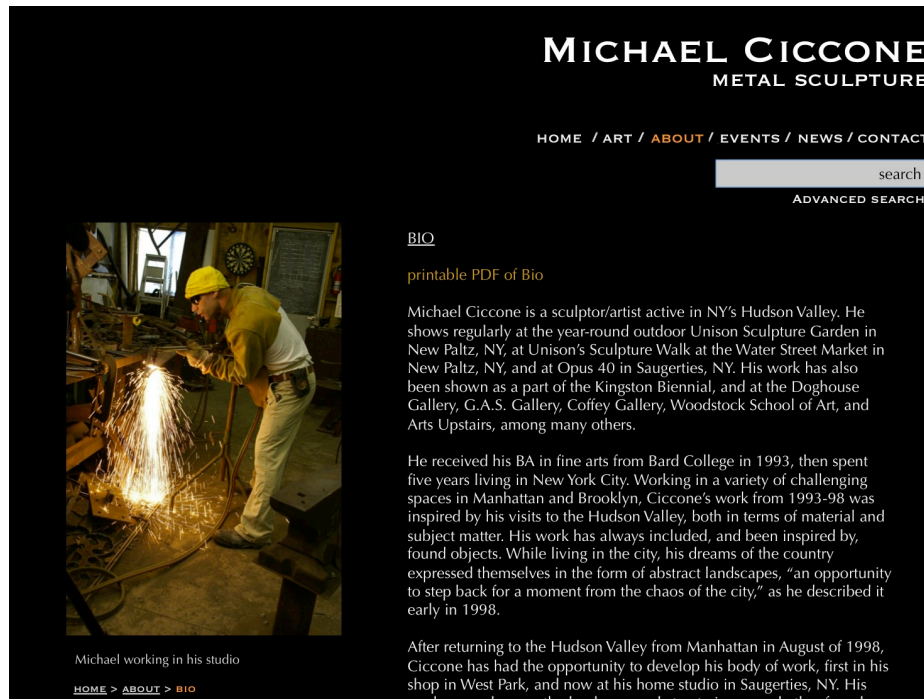


Figure 16. Proposed new Bio page for MichaelCiccone.com, showing an image of the artist in action, a link to a printable PDF version of his Bio, and the full text of his Bio shown on screen.

Templates

Within Omeka, the browsing lists and item pages are built dynamically (using PHP and MySQL), with metadata based initially on Dublin Core, which is an international standard for metadata for diverse item types. With our long term archival goals for the content in this site, this metadata structure will help to insure the longevity and interoperability of the data with other systems.

Page templates in Omeka are all based on a common Theme, unifying the design of the site. Page elements, both visible and as machine-readable mark-up, are drawn dynamically from the MySQL database. In this way, different pages can easily pull from the same metadata in the database to reuse the same information in different ways in different contexts. For example, to increase accessibility, some sites have had success with automating the ALT text attribute based on the DC description field, to avoid having to create a specific ALT text field. Of course, many items in the current site and database don't have descriptions yet, but this is an issue both for find-ability and accessibility, so those descriptions will be an important part of our content strategy, and will have to be carefully crafted to serve both functions. The labor necessary to create those descriptions will be well worth it, both to improve our user experience and to help users find us in the first place, via search engines.

In the same manner that the "invisible" markup of the ALT text attribute can be automated, RDFa tags can also be automated into the markup of each page, helping each page to function as Linked Open Data, linking the information about Michael's work with other related artwork or events on the open web.

Metadata

As previously mentioned, Omeka is based upon the Dublin Core metadata schema, which provides a robust starting point for metadata for all three of our main content types: artwork, events, and news. Omeka allows for the creation of custom item types, so we will create our three custom content types, adding local metadata as needed for our desired customization for each of those types. The elements in the current database of artwork (in Filemaker) will be mapped to the Dublin Core elements, and any elements that don't map will be created as new custom elements. The current format from the Events page will be converted into fielded data rather than free text, and will be similarly mapped to Dublin Core elements. Elements for the News item type will be newly created, based on Dublin Core.

Initial recommendations for metadata elements for each custom content type are shown below. These elements will be further refined in early stages of migrating and adding content.

- Artwork
 - Title
 - Creator (will not be shown visibly on the page, as all items in this site are clearly by Michael Ciccone, but this DC field will be included in the machine-readable mark-up for this page, as a function of Linked Open Data)
 - Year (Date)
 - Medium
 - Dimensions
 - Description
 - Tags (Subject)
 - Scale
 - Category (Subject)
 - Location (Spatial Coverage)
 - Type
- Event
 - Title
 - Start Date
 - Start Time
 - End Date
 - End Time
 - Location (Spatial Coverage)
 - Type
 - Host/Sponsor (Creator)
 - Description
 - Tags (Subject)
- News
 - Title
 - Creator (may be Michael, may be a news interviewer, etc.)
 - Date
 - Location (Spatial Coverage)
 - Type
 - Description
 - Tags (Subject)
 - Format (text, audio, video, still image, etc.)

Controlled Vocabularies

Of the metadata elements described above, many will work better for the site if they use controlled vocabularies. Omeka has a plugin for controlled vocabularies, so it will make content uploads more efficient by having many elements chosen from drop-down lists rather than written as free text. Tags can also be based on the controlled vocabularies, for further consistency. Initial recommended controlled vocabularies are as follows:

- Year - create a menu of the years Michael has been working, to keep format consistent (this can also be done with other date elements)
- Medium - keep a list of all media used in Michael's work, such as steel, stone, ink, wood, plastic, paper, etc.
- Category - Michael does imagine his work as falling into some high level groups, such as Outdoor, Abstract, Figurative, Landscape, and Sacred
- Art type - sculpture, drawing, painting, etc.
- Event type - such as gallery opening, group show, solo show, outdoor installation, etc.
- News type - such as newspaper article, radio interview, video interview, work-in-process photo, work-in-process video, etc.
- Location - each location can be added to this vocabulary, to insure consistency for easy searching for all events at the same venue

Plan of Work

Following the three goals outlined early in this report, we will have three distinct stages of development:

- build structure to support our desire for access to a unified vision of Michael's body of work
 - migrate existing content from the current website
 - migrate existing content from the Filemaker database
 - add a variety of new content to flesh out the new structure, bringing the site up to date
- build functionality for Michael to upload content more easily himself
 - include dynamic page creation
 - use Contribution plugin in Omeka to create simple web forms for uploads
- evaluate how the functionality is working in terms of our long term goal as a digital archive of Michael's work
 - make sure that search and browse features still work well as the site grows, and that it doesn't grow unwieldy
 - may need refinement of taxonomies and tagging for a larger dataset
 - make a plan for digital preservation aspects

We will measure the success of the redefined site by evaluating our work with regards to those three goals, as well:

- with regard to the features we've identified for our target audience, what is the ease of use?
 - conduct user testing to evaluate how long it takes users to perform these pre-defined tasks, and how easy it is for them
 - make changes to improve their ease of use

- how easy is it for Michael to upload his own content?
 - once the contribution forms are in place for him, observe his usage
 - improve labels and workflows as necessary to improve his ease of use
- as the site grows, how does the functionality work with a larger data set?
 - over time, conduct more user testing to evaluate if search and browse features are still working with a larger data set
 - add more granular taxonomies, tagging, or other metadata as needed
 - evaluate the digital preservation needs, including backups, redundancy, and the ability to migrate to other systems or formats over time

We plan to complete the project by January 15, 2014. We will continue to work with Omeka as the CMS for this project. The hope is that it will be possible to use the Contribution plugin in Omeka to create simple forms for Michael to easily enter new content himself, and for it to be dynamically added to the appropriate event and gallery pages. By our target launch date, the 2.0 release of Omeka should be even more stable than it is currently, and everyone involved will have had time at the end of the summer and then again in early January to focus completely on this project. Time in August will be spent customizing an Omeka installation to work with the desired content types: artwork and related images, video, audio, and events. Once a small initial set of content has been migrated, a round of user testing will help us to make changes as needed before continuing forward. Then the time in January can be spent migrating and uploading the rest of the content and fine-tuning the results. Once all the initial content is in place, another round of user testing will make sure that our structure is working as intended, and help us to make changes as needed.

We have determined that it will be necessary to update major sections of content at least every six months (hopefully even more often, especially if we are able to reach our goal of making it easier for Michael to upload content himself). Events will need to be updated more often, ideally monthly, as new opportunities commonly pop up for Michael without that much advance warning.

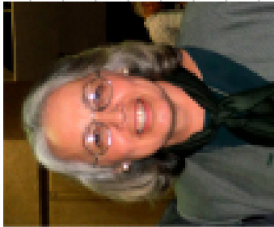




Summary

After our recommended structure has been put into action, the new and improved site for MichaelCiccone.com will exceed user expectations for an artist's website. The site will become a dynamic archive of Michael's work, with a detailed exploration of the events and news that provide the context for his work. Current users will find an immersive experience of Michael's work, Michael himself will find his process of adding new content and finding old content greatly improved, and future users will be able to look back on a rich archive of context for Michael's entire body of work.

Appendices

Appendix A - Personas

	Persona #1	Persona #2	Persona #3	Persona #4	Persona #5
	Colleen the Collector	Fred the Fan	Gail the Gallery Owner	Alice the Art Historian	Michael the Artist
Demographics:					
Photo:					
Quote	"I love to have art around me every day"	"I never knew an artist before"	"Connecting artists with collectors"	"Uncovering the historic relationships between artists and their art"	"I take what other people discard, and turn it into art."
Age	67	35	52	42	46
Gender	female	male	female	female	male
Education	Masters	high school and vocational training	Masters in Art History	PhD in Art History	BA in Fine Art
Occupation	insurance company administrator (retired)	union mason	fine art gallery owner	art history professor	artist, union construction worker
Family	owns a home with her partner	owns a home with his wife and 2 kids	divorced, 1 child in college, lives alone in an apartment over her gallery, owns the building	married with one young child, rents an apartment with her husband	married with one child, owns a home with his wife
Income	\$60,000 / year (retirement savings, etc.)	\$70,000 / year	\$60,000 / year	\$55,000 / year	\$35,000 / year
Interests/Hobbies	painting	kayaking	travel	travel	making art
Location	Kingston, NY	Newburgh, NY	Hudson, NY	Annandale, NY	Saugerties, NY

	Persona #1	Persona #2	Persona #3	Persona #4	Persona #5
	Colleen the Collector	Fred the Fan	Gail the Gallery Owner	Alice the Art Historian	Michael the Artist
Photo:					
Webographics: Internet Usage	check email, check Facebook but doesn't post much, look up historic info, browse for shopping	prefers phone or frequent texting to family, look up weather, directions, trivia, product info	much of her communication with work clients happens through email, she also is active in social media, promoting her gallery and her artists' work; she visits many art related sites (local to international) daily to stay on top of the latest news in her field	uses online resources whenever possible for her research, is available to colleagues and students via email, stays in touch with family and friends via Facebook, frequently shops online	check email, look up simple information online, look at other artists' work online
Level of experience	moderate	low	moderate	moderate	low
Equipment	home desktop computer with broadband internet	smartphone, home desktop computer with broadband internet	smartphone, laptop computer with broadband internet, used for work and home	smartphone, laptop computer with broadband internet, used for work and home	home desktop computer with broadband internet
Frequently visited websites	Facebook, news sites, historical reference sites, amazon	accuweather, google maps, wikipedia, amazon	local chamber of commerce, local arts council, Facebook	college website (especially library), HathiTrust, DPLA, museums	-

	Persona #1	Persona #2	Persona #3	Persona #4	Persona #5
	Colleen the Collector	Fred the Fan	Gail the Gallery Owner	Alice the Art Historian	Michael the Artist
Psychographics: Expectations	standard web navigation, high quality images	standard web navigation, mobile compatibility	standard web navigation, high quality images	standard web navigation, advanced search, high quality images	standard web navigation, high quality images
Description	Colleen loves Michael's work and would buy more of it if her finances allowed. She also loves following his artist's lifestyle, appreciating his passion for his work. She is an artist herself, and takes life drawing and painting classes. For her, the website is another way of keeping in touch with Michael and seeing what he's up to, but does not replace her visits to his studio or gallery shows. She loves it when he shares video of his work in progress, and shares it with her friends. She also loves showing off the works from Michael that she has in her home.	Fred is new to art appreciation; he never really thought about it before he met Michael when they worked together on a construction job. He's really impressed by the way Michael takes everyday objects discarded from job sites and turns them into something more. Now when he sees materials being discarded, he wonders what Michael could do with them, and contacts him to see if he's interested in the materials. He had fun viewing some of the work in a gallery show of Michael's, even though he had never stepped foot in a gallery before.	Gail is considering adding Michael to the roster of artists who show their work at her gallery. She might offer to put one of his pieces in a group show, and depending on how that goes, she might show more of his work in the future. The ease of browsing and searching Michael's site can help her to make her decision, and to choose which of her works to put in this show, or future shows. She appreciates that Michael actively promotes his own work online, as that will add to the business he brings into her gallery.	Alice is an art historian in the future, looking back to study Michael's work. Her imagined interaction reminds us to keep some preservation goals in mind as we view this site as an archive of Michael's work. If we do our work properly, the digital record that remains will allow Alice to find a wide range of detailed information not only about Michael's works, but about his life, his process, and his philosophy. Ideally the records here will provide her with the information she needs even after Michael has passed on.	Michael will be a key user of his own site. He is a prolific artist, and has trouble keeping track of information about each specific artwork. The site will serve as an archive of his work, sharing information about each piece in the entire body of work, instead of just highlights. Much of this information will be available to the public, but some private notes will only be viewed from an administrative backend. As a result, our testing must make sure not only that all users interact well with the forward facing site, but also that Michael can work easily with the administrative back end.
Photo source:	http://weatherfordart.wordpress.com/2012/01/24/membe	http://www.rose-hulman.edu/~haan/	http://www.flickr.com/photos/pennstateiliv	http://www.flickr.com/photos/gothormr/30	http://michaelciccone.com/about.html

	Persona #1	Persona #2	Persona #3	Persona #4	Persona #5
	Colleen the Collector	Fred the Fan	Gail the Gallery Owner	Alice the Art Historian	Michael the Artist
Psychographics, cont.:					
Needs/Objectives	follow up on a visit to Michael's studio	find a work of art made from a job site where he worked with Michael	follow up on a visit to Michael's studio	follow up on research found in other sources regarding Michael's work	keep in touch with people after an initial contact, in any place or format
	follow up on a conversation with Michael at a gallery opening	find out about an upcoming gallery opening	follow up on a conversation with Michael at a gallery opening	follow up on a conversation with one of Michael's descendants	
	follow up on a feature article about Michael in the local paper	show Michael's artwork to a co-worker to suggest sharing discarded materials with him	follow up on a feature article about Michael in the local paper	follow up on a feature article about Michael in the local paper	share links to features about his work in local media
	find and compare different known artworks to choose one to buy		find and compare different known artworks to choose one to put in a group gallery show	find and compare different known artworks for research	find and compare different known artworks to choose one to submit to a juried gallery show
	view Michael's process for installing outdoor artwork		share Michael's process for installing outdoor artwork with a potential buyer	view Michael's process for installing outdoor artwork, in considering its longevity and conservation	share video / images of his process for installing outdoor artwork
	browse for work based on visual characteristics narrow down a group of selections	browse for work based on visual characteristics narrow down a group of selections	browse for work based on visual characteristics narrow down a group of selections	browse for work based on visual characteristics narrow down a group of selections	browse for work based on visual characteristics narrow down a group of selections
	get notices of Michael's events via email	get notices of Michael's events via email	get notices of Michael's events via email	get notices of Michael's events via email	send notices of events via email
			get notices of Michael's events via feed reader	get notices of Michael's events via feed reader	send notices of events via feed reader
	look up details about an upcoming opening or other event	look up details about an upcoming opening or other event	look up details about an upcoming opening or other event	look up details about an upcoming opening or other event	post details about an upcoming opening or other event
	view video of Michael making a piece	view video of Michael making a piece	view video of Michael making a piece	view video of Michael making a piece	post video of himself making a piece
	view Michael's resume or artist's statement		view Michael's resume or artist's statement	view Michael's resume or artist's statement	update his resume or artist's statement

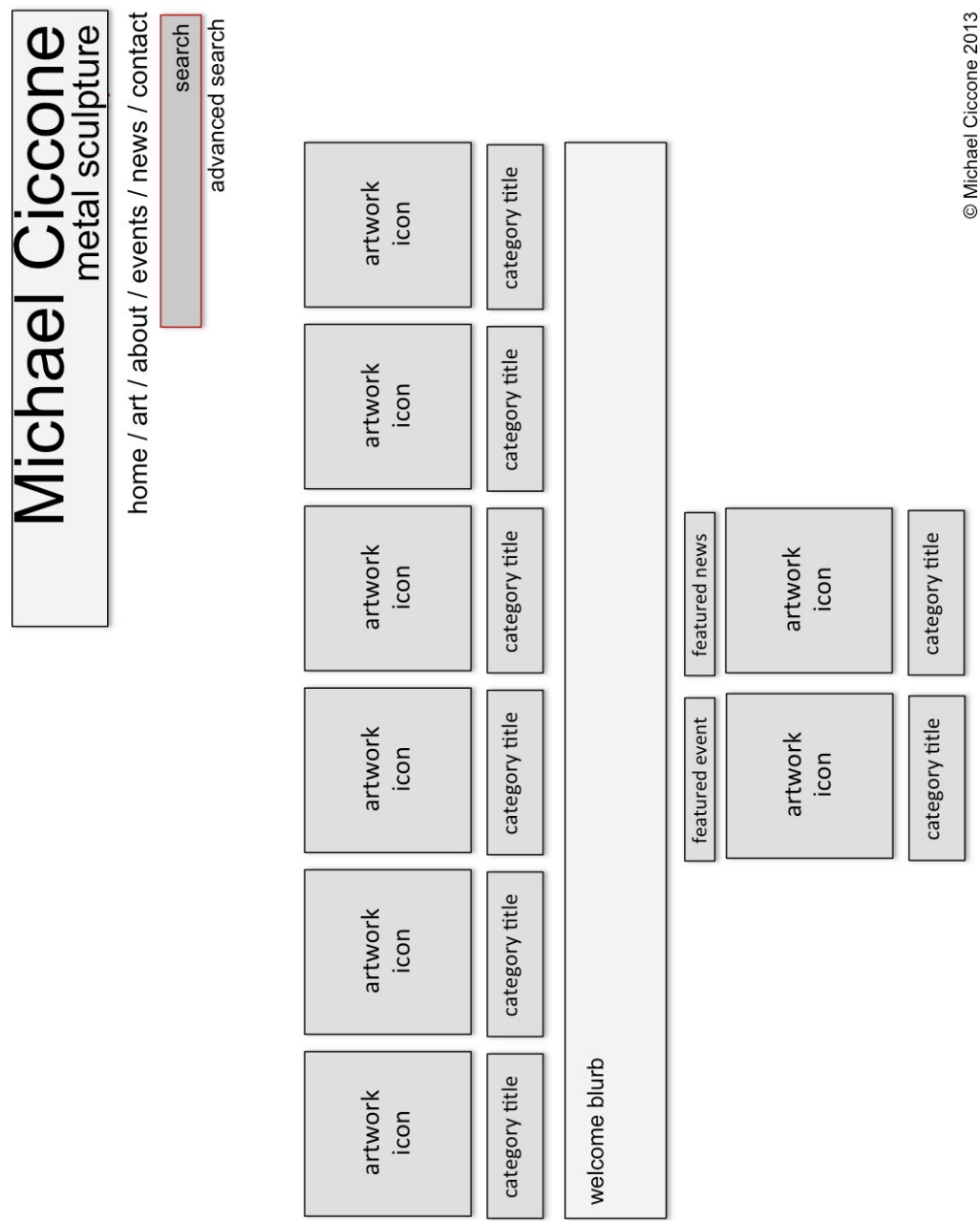
Appendix B - Comparative Analysis Rubric

To get a sense of our audience's expectations related to other artist's websites, we consulted the sites for four different local artists who participate, with Michael, in the Saugerties Artists' Studio Tour. We rated each site, along with Michael's site, giving one point for each of the following criteria:

- Design
 - attractive
 - unique
 - consistent throughout the site
 - style doesn't detract from the artwork
 - appropriate proportion / composition
- Navigation
 - clear from the home page
 - clear from any subpage in the site
 - bread crumb trails, tabs, or other clues to location
 - consistent global navigation
 - helpful local navigation
- Site Organization
 - logical breakdown of content
 - hierarchy is consistent
 - browsing/searching - any filters/facets?
 - sorting by date
 - sorting by subject / etc.?
- Links and Labels
 - navigation labels easy to understand
 - matches user expectations
 - contextual links reinforce connections across site
 - helpful headers, easy to understand
 - not too few, not too many
- Search
 - basic search functionality from home page
 - basic search functionality from every page
 - advanced search exists
 - link to advanced search is clear
 - search works logically
- Readability
 - headers / navigation are easy to read, concise and logical
 - body of text is easy to read
 - captions are easy to read
 - spacing for better understanding
 - text is easy to understand, not too much jargon
- Performance

- pages load quickly
 - images load quickly
 - links work as intended
 - no missing pages
 - freshness - recently updated
- Content
 - highlights of the artist's work
 - in depth details of the artist's work
 - details about events
 - bio / artist statement easy to find and read
 - a glimpse of the artist's process/lifestyle

Appendix C - Wireframe of the Home Page



Appendix D - Page Description Diagram of the Home Page

Final Project– IST553 - Arden Kirkland – 8/9/13

Page Description Diagram – MichaelCiccone.com

High Priority Items	Medium Priority Items	Low Priority Items
Art Information about individual artworks, with multiple images and detailed information	Featured Artwork Icons and labels for highlights of the main categories of artwork	Welcome Blurp brief text to introduce viewers to the site
About Bio, Artist's Statement, Resume, Video, Process	Featured Event and News Item Icons and labels for one event and one news item	Additional Featured Artwork Dynamic content, animated to change every few seconds
Events Information about individual artworks, with multiple images and detailed information	Contact Address, Phone, Directions, Photos, Email	Additional Featured Events Dynamic content, animated to change every few seconds
News Information about individual news items, including media coverage and commentary about work in process, with multiple images and detailed information	Search Box Keyword search of entire site content Link to advanced search	Additional Featured News Dynamic content, animated to change every few seconds
Home Reconnect from other pages	Artist Name and Tagline Links back to the home page from others	Copyright Info, Terms of Use, Site Map

These priorities are based on a mission to engage Michael Ciccone's audience by providing a behind-the-scenes look at how he creates his work. The main objective is for people who appreciate and collect art to learn more about Michael's work, including his style, process, and philosophy, and to keep updated with his recent work and events. A long-term objective is for the site to function as a digital archive of Michael's entire body of work, with efficient searching and browsing.

Where there are groups of similar pages for individual content, such as artworks, events, or news items, there will be an introductory page to each section to browse the content available. Those pages will have sorting options and filters to help users narrow down the list of desired content and link to the specific content page.