# GUIDE TO DIGITIZING EXHIBITIONS

# FOREWORD

This guide was developed as a way to teach other small colleges and research cohorts how to digitally document exhibitions by creating interactive websites. We share the steps we took each week to accomplish our initial goal to produce two websites documenting the studio of artist Matthew Clay Baumgardner and the recent Cubes Exhibition at Furman University featuring his Cube sculptures. Throughout the process, we inevitably faced setbacks which shifted all our focus towards the exhibition website, producing this teaching guide, and proposing recommendations for a future studio website. In this guide, we balance advice with examples to give more comprehensive instruction, with which you can choose to follow the most relevant aspects for your project. If you wish to see how our examples translate to the final product, visit our documentation website at baumgardnerarchives.com.

The timeline shown below is what we would have followed given the hindsight we have now. There is room for error and overlap, with a focus on adaptability to your needs.

This guide and our research was made possible by the funding through the Furman University Office of Undergraduate Research. Under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Archino, Marissa Patel, Anne Heaton Sanders, and Caroline Bass are proud to share our guide with you.

| | | Punchlist | |
| | Evaluate Research | | Collect Content |
| Goals | Preliminary Research | | Host |
| Week 1 | 2 | 3 | |

# STEPS

1. SET GOALS & TIMELINE
2. PRELIMINARY RESEARCH
3. EVALUATE RESEARCH
4. PUNCHLIST
5. CHOOSING A HOST
6. COLLECT CONTENT
7. BUILD THE WEBSITE
8. REVIEW
9. PUBLICATION
10. FUTURE WORK

# SET GOALS & TIMELINE  2 - 3 DAYS

Starting an open-ended documentation project is daunting. That is why we first set goals before we worked on any research. Listed below are our own personal and project goals that we established before any other plans were made. The purpose of these examples is to get you to start thinking about the ultimate goal of your own project, and our goals are by no means the exact goals you should set.

## PERSONAL GOALS

1. Maintain a consistent work schedule
2. Improve graphic design skills and portfolio
3. Learn the possibilities and limitations of the platform we choose
4. Learn how to coordinate with a remote team
5. Develop collaborative leadership skills
6. Set and meet deadlines
7. Develop storytelling abilities

## PROJECT GOALS

1. Update "Cubes Catalogue" to fit our digital needs
2. Produce 3D model of cubes exhibition and studio space
3. Create two websites documenting the cubes exhibition and studio space
4. Create teaching guide so other groups can follow our process
5. Create recommendations for producing a website documenting the artist's studio space*

After setting the personal and overall project goals, make a project plan by creating smaller, weekly goals. As seen in the timeline under the "Table of Contents" page, we have reconstructed an ideal timeline from our own experience and pitfalls. It is adaptable to whatever direction your project takes you. From this, you should create your own timeline with deadlines for the goals specific to the project you are working on. If there are any foreseeable concerns about any aspect of your project (for example: website host capabilities, obtaining photos, working with the team, etc.), write them out and factor in the drawbacks to the timeline.

*This updated goal happened halfway through the project when it became apparent we would not be able to satisfactorily complete and publish both sites within our timeline.

Goals

Week 1    2    3

For reference, our ideal week by week schedule was initially planned to look like this:

- **Week 1**: Orientation, project management and workflow, goal setting, preliminary material collection.
- **Week 2**: What makes a good online exhibition? Reviewing other online exhibitions with a rubric, developing our wishlist, evaluating WordPress templates. Continue gathering & processing materials (documents, photos, essays, etc.).
- **Week 3**: Decide on a template and what features need to be added. Identify what additional content we want to add. Begin developing that content in draft form. Develop a punchlist for the website and delegate. Develop timeline for week 5 & 6.
- **Week 4**: Continue writing content, building site. Aspirational deadline to have a prototype of the website by week's end. Develop timeline for weeks 5 & 6.
- **Week 5**: Continue work on exhibition site, begin drafting plans for studio tour.
- **Week 6**: Develop timeline for weeks 7 & 8.

Everything was going according to plan until week 3, when we reached out to the Furman IT Department to set up our theme. It was at this time we learned we could not use the highly compatible Astra theme or any plugins because of security reasons. This set us back several days, as we scrambled to propose short term and long term solutions. We ultimately decided to make a short term subdomain off of one of the team member's personal WordPress site so that we could start inputting content and troubleshooting any errors. We never published this site, as it would be a risk to rely on the maintainance of a personal server over time. For our long term solution, we were able to secure funding for a GoDaddy host, Wordpress website, and domain name.

This divergence from our original plan set us back about a week, greatly reducing the amount of time we would have to create the website. Although, we had orginally aspired to create two websites—one for the exhibition and one for the studio space—we had to reevaluate what was our priority. We ultimately focused all of our attention on completing a comprehensive exhibition website, creating this teaching guide, and proposing recommendations and creating a mockup for the future creation of the studio website.

This example of our adjusted timeline and goals due to setbacks demonstrates that there are going to be factors our of your control when creating your project. Although no one wants their plans to fall through, it can be to your advantage to learn how to adapt to situations out of your control.

# PRELIMINARY RESEARCH <span>2 WEEKS</span>

To ensure our exhibition documentation website was contextualized in academia, we gathered evidence from books, 3D modelling technology, and other exhibition sites. Additionally, we researched host and platform options after we discovered the school server would not work for our project. To avoid the same mistakes we made, we recommend you add technology budget research to this step of your timeline.

## BOOKS

We recommend starting research by finding books about documenting art spaces. For our project, we read:

1. *Hiding Making - Showing Creation* edited by Ann-Sophie Lehmann, Rachel Esner, Sandra Kisters
2. *Creating a Winning Online Exhibition* by Martin R. Kalfatovic
3. *Studio and Cube: On the Relationship Between Where Art Is Made and Where Art Is Displayed* by Brian O'Doherty

The main theme throughout these books was that we must determine what is special about the space and then convey that in a digital space. In the next section, "Evaluate Research", we will go more in depth about what we learned from the books and how we applied it to our exhibition documentation.

## 3D MODELLING TECHNOLOGY

When looking for what 3D modelling technology will work best for your uses, it is helpful to look for websites that use 3D models to show an exhibition space. The following links are the best options we found. We ultimately chose the fourth option listed below because we only had insta360X images of the Cubes Exhibition before it was taken down. To give yourself more options, we recommend you chose which 3D modelling technology to use well before the end of the exhibition that you are documenting.

- Matterport (https://matterport.com/industries/gallery/san-francisco-art-institute)
- Panomedia (https://www.benaki.org/virtual/kentriko/ground_floor/)
- Google Street View (https://www.kirklandmuseum.org/visit/)
- insta360X camera with Algori 360 Image plugin for Wordpress

# EXHIBITION & STUDIO WEBSITES

We found examples of websites that documented an exhibition or work space, some of which included a 3D model. The following are some of the sites we found the most helpful, with a full review in the 'Evaluate Research' section.

- https://bitforms.art/
- http://artistarchives.hosting.nyu.edu/Initiative/
- https://www.frick.org/exhibitions/virtual_exhibitions
- https://www.benaki.org/virtual/kentriko/ground_floor/
- https://www.kirklandmuseum.org/visit/how-we-display/
- https://www.harokostudio.com/project/kwong-woh-hing-sauce-factory/
- https://artsandculture.google.com/story/monet-the-water-lily-pond/WgIS-72lKcegxJQ
- https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/ecologyofanexhibition/



Benaki Museum immersive exhibit tour.

# BUDGET FOR TECHNOLOGY

If you are not receiving any funding, this section is not applicable. However, if you are fortunate to have access to funding, the budget must be considered at the beginning of this process. We recommend incorporating this into the research phase of the project, where you begin to explore possibilities and features for your site. It is a good idea to over budget added costs may arise after you submit your budget proposal to the research department. Make sure that you specify every detail of your expenditures in your proposals, including tax. Some of these expenditures are tools that will actually help you begin the project, so comprehensive research of technology costs is necessary at this point. A flow chart with a more in-depth evaluation for choosing a hosting site will be shown under "Choosing a Host".

# BUDGET EXAMPLE

The following budget example is based on our own budget created for our eight week long research project. In addition to the following technological budget, keep in mind any travel or shipping expenses you may foresee. For example, it cost $15 to ship journal copies to all group members to evaluate and use in the website.

## GoDaddy Host Subscription

Furman's servers were unable to host a site with plugins and only offered a limited number of WordPress themes. Our vision for the site extended beyond what Furman could provide, so we looked for an alternative host. We used GoDaddy and purchased a two year hosting plan with them.  We made our purchase during a sale, therefore our server costs may differ from other plans purchased after this summer.



https://www.godaddy.com/hosting/wordpress-hosting
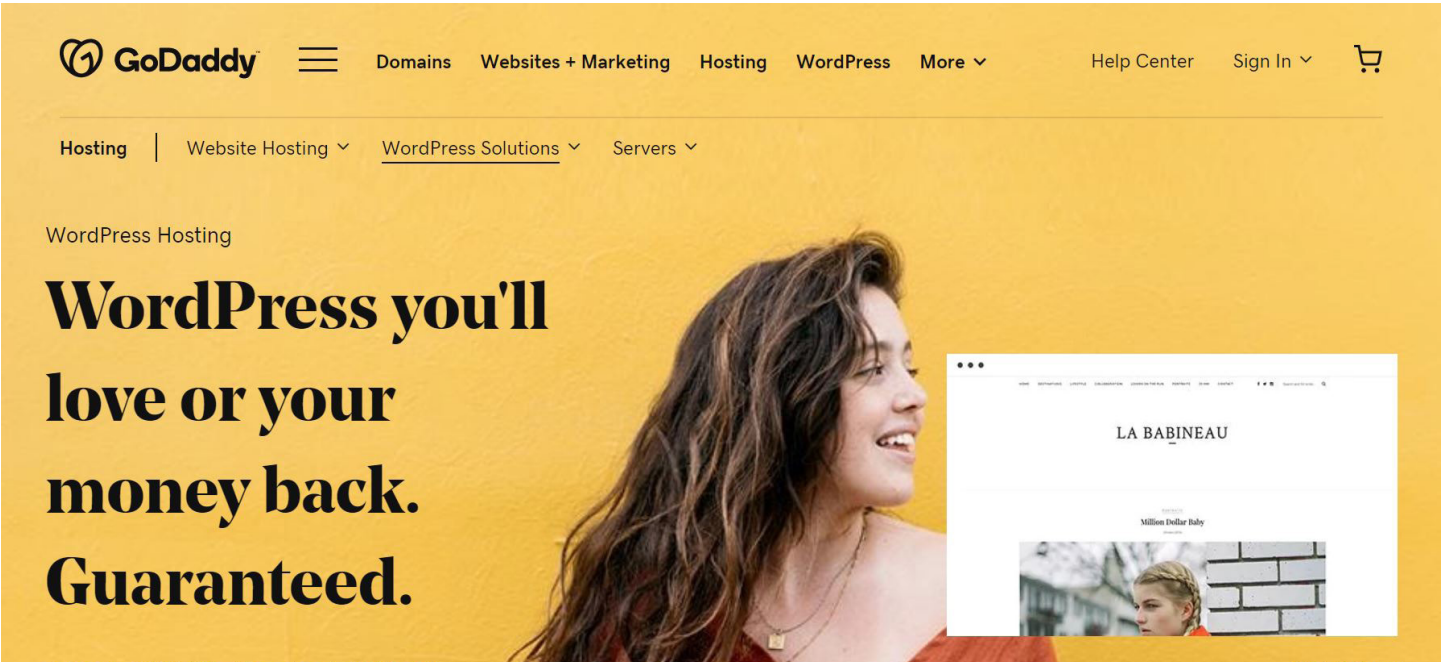
| Product | Quantity | Term | Price |
|---|---|---|---|
| Essential Website Backup 5GB | 1 Plan | 2 Years | $50.23 |
| .COM Domain Registration<br>matthewclayba...xhibition.com | 1 Domain | 1 Year | $12.17 |
| Essential Website Backup 5GB | 1 Plan | 2 Years | $50.23 |
| .COM Domain Registration<br>baumgardnerarchives.com | 1 Domain | 1 Year | $12.17 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Subtotal: | $124.80 |
| Tax: | $6.03 |
| Total: | $130.83 |

Our host purchases.

## Wordpress Site Subscription

While we did build the site off of a team member's personal account as a short-term solution to our hosting problem, we had to look for an alternative solution that could be sustained in the long-term. After we had purchased our two year hosting plan with GoDaddy, we had to purchase a WordPress site through GoDaddy as well. We picked the most basic plan that would cover a two year period. This expenditure came out to be $179.76. After purchasing the WordPress subscription, we migrated our existing site off of our team member's personal server and onto our new GoDaddy account.

## Plugins

While we only worked with free plugins, upgraded plugins can help increase the functionality of the site depending on your goals. This would be a cost to plan for on the off chance you need an upgrade for a plugin. We requested $60 for possible upgrades (which we did not end up using), because we found that the next level upgrades only cost about $30 on average. This cost will obviously vary depending on the plugins, so it is important that you research the functionality and pricing of each plugin thoroughly.

# EVALUATE RESEARCH

<div align="right">

**2 WEEKS**

</div>

Depending on your research style, you may prefer to execute these two steps sequentially or simultaneously. Regardless, there is certainly an overlap between the gathering research and evaluating research phase. Listed below are some excerpts from the books, as well as our evaluation and how we applied it to our project:

## BOOK EVALUATION

### *Hiding Making - Showing Creation*

We focused on chapters 1, 7, and 12, as well as the epilogue, because they were the most pertinent to translating the space into a digital documentation. As we read through the book, we annotated all information that was applicable to our project. Some of the most important information for our particular project from this book was:

- "With the transition from craft to industry, the production process disappeared from public view" (pg 32)
    - We want to bring his creation process to the forefront, accomplishing this through audio clips and images explaining it.
- Historically, exhibition spaces were the public space for art, whereas studios were more intimate and rarely shown
    - What we are doing is bringing the formerly private and exclusive resting place for art to the forefront. We believe this is still respectful of his space because Baumgardner loved visitors and enjoyed having collectors stop by.
- The goal of a particular artist-in-residency "was to open the doors to the artistic lab. In theory it should be possible for artists to do just that: leave everything as it is and keep working" (pg 230)
    - What is interesting about Baumgardner's studio space was it was immaculately clean. Even in his process photos, the materials within the space are organized and afterwards are cleaned up. This is one of the aspects which makes his space special.

## Creating a Winning Online Exhibition

Although this book is now outdated in terms of internet capability (published 2002), it still explains website design in a timeless way. Some of the most important information was:

- "The web experience is an interesting blend of the passive and the interactive" (pg 72)
  - As much as we want the site to be as interactive and attention grabbing as possible, we must remember that places of rest are necessary. For example, later in the website building process, we discovered we needed a landing page for the cubes, found cubes, and 2D work before we went into the individualized analysis.
- "In an exhibition, the design will manifest itself not only in the solution of problems, such as those related to display and visibility, but also in the communication of an idea" (pg 73)
  - Throughout the process, we must keep in mind *what* and *how* we are going to solve the issue of designing a digital space. Through this, our design style will begin to materialize.

## Studio and Cube: On the Relationship Between Where Art Is Made and Where Art Is Displayed

This book is crucial to understanding the function of a studio space and the relationship to the exhibition "white cube". We found pages 4 - 40 the most helpful, although it is a shorter book and can easily be read in its entirety. Some of the most important information was:

- If a studio is both a live and work space, we must see through the process for creating and living and how they're intertwined
  - This is a critical aspect about why his space is so special. We talk about this more in our future recommendations for the studio website.*
- All works are potentially unfinished if within the artist's vicinity
  - This is very true of Baumgardner living situation. He is literally feet from all the unfinished work he has ever done, which is made evident that they're unfinished because he routinely reworking old pieces ("Memory's Floor" 90s/10s).

*To obtain a copy of the Baumgardner studio website recommendations, email Dr. Sarah Archino at sarah.archino@furman.edu.

# WEBSITE EVALUATION

When looking at the website examples, be thinking about how they function, what you like aesthetically, and how it was built. We created a rubric and a set of questions to determine what aspects of each site we would like to include in our own documentation website. After evaluating each source based on the standard rubric, we determined which site was the winner for each category and why. From this research, we started thinking about *how* to include those things in our own website. Shown below is a short excerpt from the rubric that we created to compare all the websites.*

| Websites | Is it easy to navigate? | Does it have other information about the space, artist, etc.? What other tabs are included? | What host and platform are used? | If there's a 360 view, how was it produced? Does it have embedded links? | Overall, is it aesthetically pleasing? What aspects do you like/not like? | What aspects of the website are engaging to the viewer? | What would you add to make it better serve you/the viewer? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| https://www.frick.org/exhibitions/virtual_exhibitions | Yes | Yes, past exhibitions have links to installations, about the artist, map with audio stops, music that inspired artists, introductory video, virtual tour, lecture videos, related programs, and publications | Originally launched using Drupal. It also uses eMuseum for the collections management | Produced with Matterport; some of the virtual tours have embedded information, some of them don't | Yes. It's clean, consistent, and uses images of the space/works well. I think it does look a little corporate and we can use a little more color/personality for our site | The 3D exhibitions are engaging because, in addition to going through the space virtually, there's plenty of additional information to learn more about the pieces in each room | This is a meticulously produced website, but some of the formatting on the 3D model additional information section isn't as user friendly as it could be |
| https://www.haroko-studio.com/project/kwong-woh-hing-sauce-factory/ | Yes | This is a 360 virtual production company, but it has info on the history of its clients, explains the interactive factor, and highlights important aspects of the tour | Wordpress | Haroko Studio makes the 3D models. Yes, there's embedded information | I like that the website is -clean and only includes what is necessary. Personally, I prefer a lighter background on websites because it's visually less heavy | The 3D tour is incredibly engaging, especially because it's interactive. The rest of the website doesn't need to be as engaging because they're trying to sell their 3D tour services, with is the engaging content they direct the viewers to | Perhaps they could highlight their services by adding a compilation of the best 3D tours to their home page |
| https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/ecology-ofanexhibition/ | More difficult to navigate—the menu goes away | Yes, gathering the objects, designing the exhibition, creating the catalogue, the life of an object, finding the balance | Netlify | N/A | It has a clear hierarchy and color scheme. I don't like the dark background color because it's visually heavier. However, I love the use of images to illustrate the steps | It's engaging because it's sort of like a choose your own adventure through all the steps of exhibition design. The viewer can see the process from start to finish in a step by step way | I would prefer an easy access menu bar that's available on every page for ease of use |

*To obtain a copy of the full website rubric evaluation, email Dr. Sarah Archino at sarah.archino@furman.edu.

| | | Punchlist | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Evaluate Research | | |
| Goals | Preliminary Research | | |
| Week 1 | 2 | 3 | |

# PUNCHLIST

After considering the recommendations from your research, it is time to start a punchlist of what information you want, what you do not have, what you already have, and what you can get. Keep a separate list of things you do not foresee being able to achieve within your project timeline—this will be extremely useful in formulating a plan for suggesting what future work can be carried on. The following list is an example of our own punchlist, which is tailored to our own project.

- Clear branding of the estate (colors, fonts, logo, graphics)*
- High quality image of the exhibition for the home page
- Text explaining the 'about' page
- Plugins that allow us to embed our 3D tour of the space
- Text accompanying the 3D tour
- Updated cubes catalogue
- Plugin to read the cubes catalogue like a book
- Images of all Cubes, Found Cubes, and 2D works**
- Individual art analysis of each Cube and Found Cube
- Contents of the 5 display cases
  - Text
  - Photos
  - Journals
  - Cubes
  - Art materials
- Wordpress plugins
  - Modula (image gallery)
  - Algori (360 image embed)
  - To Top (back to top button)
  - WP Forms (contact form)
  - Typekit, googlefonts (site fonts)
  - 3D Flipbook (pdf viewer as a book)
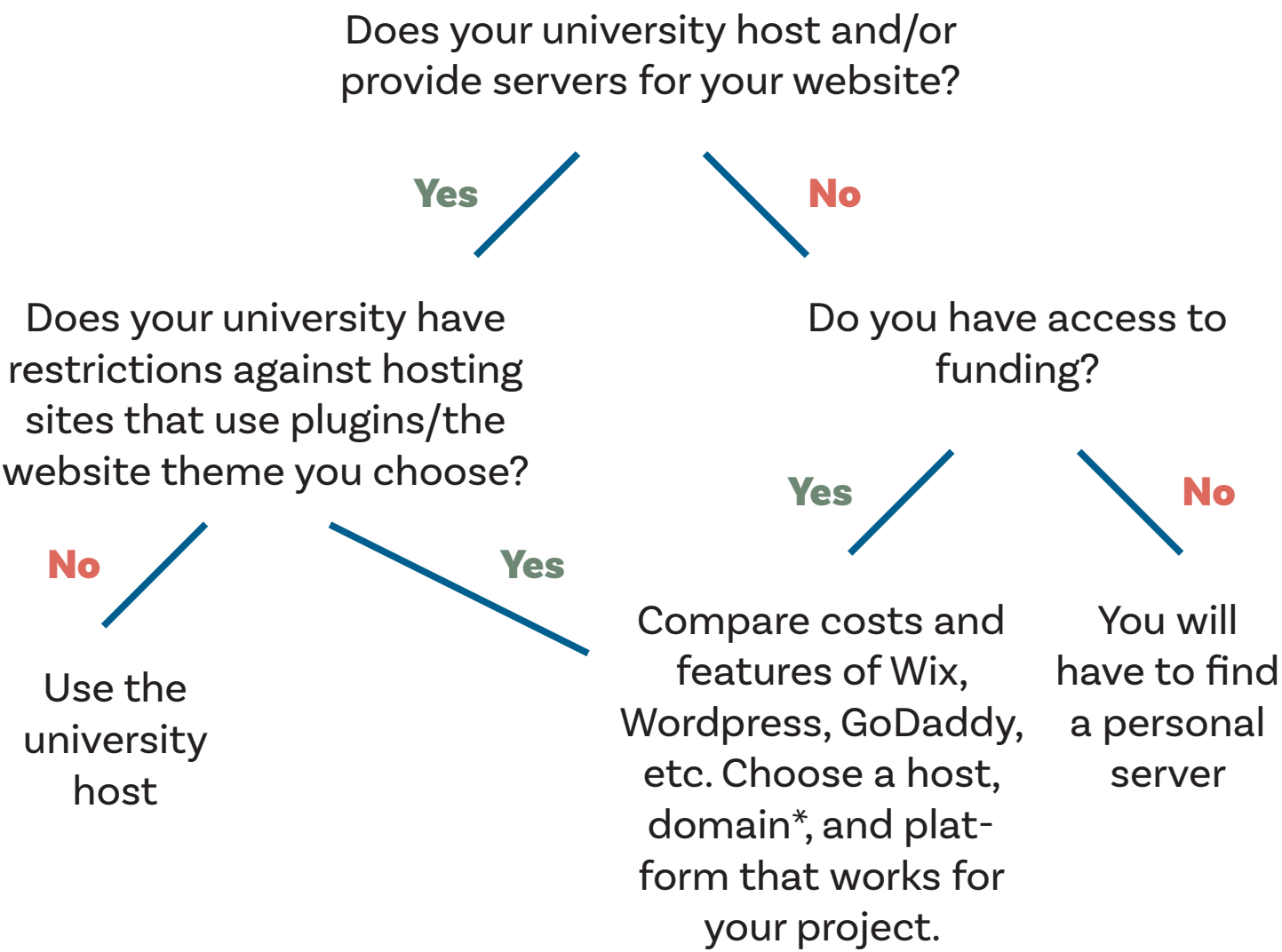- Pay for a GoDaddy server and Wordpress site

As you are putting together the ever-evolving punchlist, start drawing out a mockup of what you want your website to look like. We recommend sketching it out by hand first. Then, if you have access to the technology, you can make a mockup in Adobe Illustrator or a similar program. Visualizing your website before building it is crucial because it enables you to start creating content before the host and platform is set up.

*Need to start reaching out to any partners at this stage if they have a say in the branding.
**This was a point where some could not be found within our timeline, so we added it to future work.

# CHOOSING A HOST

Does your university host and/or provide servers for your website?

Yes / No

Does your university have restrictions against hosting sites that use plugins/the website theme you choose?

Do you have access to funding?

No / Yes

Yes / No

Use the university host

Compare costs and features of Wix, Wordpress, GoDaddy, etc. Choose a host, domain*, and plat-form that works for your project.

You will have to find a personal server

*If you have agency, try to make a general, short domain name so that you can expand the use of the site in the future.

| | | Punchlist | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Evaluate Research | | Collect Content |
| Goals | Preliminary Research | | |
| Week 1 | 2 | | 3 |

# COLLECT CONTENT

Although it might seem like the next step would be building the website, we decided to gather any content we might need beforehand. This should occur simultaneously while deciding what host and platform to use. The previously made mockup of our website helped us organize our thoughts and identify what media was needed, down to the page. We went as far as to mark which page would be under what menu tabs. After this, we knew exactly what we wanted and where.

Images and text will look different for each website, exhibit, and studio. This may take some time if you are relying on others to send over images, which is why we recommended you start contacting the image owners at the beginning. In our case, we located previous professional images of each cube (a photo of every angle) and 2D pieces. In your case, you might have to take these photos yourself.

For our main page we created our own image using previously taken professional photos. In most cases, we would expect a professional looking wide shot image of the exhibit. However, because we only had access to a 3D image of the exhibit and wide shots of the exhibit were not high quality, we decided to take a different route using the artwork instead. Below is the image compilation we Photoshopped together for our home page.

Cubes Exhibition compilation image.

With each cube, we wrote our own formal statements and for a few of them we used excerpts from the catalogue essays that mentioned the piece. We wrote a statement about the exhibit and the artist for the main page and included a credit for everyone that was involved on the contact page.

Another important aspect of the website is branding. If you already have established branding from a sponsoring organization, it is still important to know the brand standards that you will be using. We identified our needs: a logo, colors, and typeface. While looking at Matthew Baumgardner's artwork and studio we emphasized colors we thought to be important, although we based the color palate mostly around the marigold. It is important to mention that CMYK colors needed to be translated to hexadecimal color codes for a WordPress site. Then, we were able to extract a signature from his artwork and transform it into a logo. Typeface was the simplest part. One for headers and one for basic text. We had two in total, but you might want more variations.

#bbe6ea  #a2d4d8  #00355f

#80ff00

#d9ba00  #5f9966
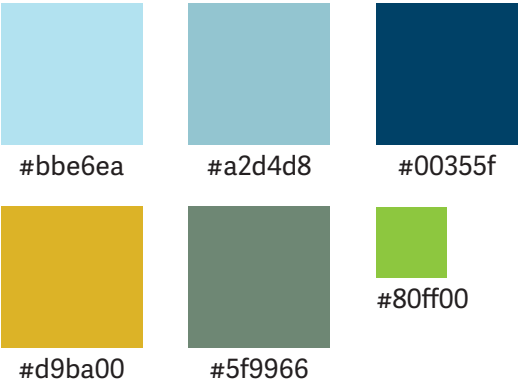
# Montserrat
## Adelle Sans

   There will inevitably be some aspects of the site you will not be able to do until you build the website. So, we made an ongoing list of these tasks, such as the decisions for how to digitize the the display cases, and worked through them as we built the site. Lastly, do not keep something if it no longer works as the website unfolds.

Punchlist

Evaluate Research

Collect Content

Goals  Preliminary Research  Host

Week 1  2  3

# BUILD THE WEBSITE

Once we had established our goals and created a mockup of the website, it was time to start building it. In our research phase we collected information about WordPress themes and plugins through blog reviews and many other sources. We chose Astra because it is the most flexible and versatile free WordPress theme. A user friendly theme such as Astra is important for many reasons. We did not have to sacrifice any of our goals or visions for the site because, despite minor complications, there was always a loophole or extra plugin that was compatible with Astra and helped us carry out our vision for the site.

We then installed plugins that were needed for components of the site, such as the VR experience or the PDF viewer for the exhibition catalogue. Once all of our tools were installed, we began building the site. We divided up the pages that we had planned in our mockup and began inserting images and texts based on our plan. These were our most useful plugins that we recommend for future projects:

- **Modula Gallery**: this plugin was used for image galleries throughout the site, primarily in the artwork pages.
- **Algori 360**: this plugin is necessary if you are going to embed 360 images or VR experiences into the site. Another plugin called the **Gutenburg** block editor must also be installed along with Algori 360.
- **To Top**: this plugin allows you to create a button that will take the user back to the top of the page. We recommend this one because of the high customization ability.
- **Typekit and/or Googlefonts**: if you have access to an Adobe account, we highly rec-ommend the Typekit plugin because it grants access to all of the fonts available for free on Adobe Creative Cloud. Googlefonts is another plugin that allows easy font customization throughout the website.
- **3D Flipbook**: if your website includes any PDFs that are better read with two pages side by side, this is an excellent, free plugin that accomplishes that.

# REVIEW

**2 - 3 DAYS**

This is possibly the most crucial step before publication. We recommend asking as many people as possible (your professors, advisors, parents, friends) to read over your work so that a fresh pair of eyes can catch mistakes your may not see. Once they have read through it and you have made edits, you need to read it once more. Additionally, you need to go back through all tabs, links, galleries, and pages to make sure they work. After you feel entirely confident in your website, then it is time to publish it.

# PUBLICATIONS

**2 - 3 DAYS**

If your research cohort is connected to a university, it is crucial that you contact their public relations department to ensure a wide audience will know about your publication. If this connection to the university is also funding your project, we recommend you credit them in your website, as well.

If your project is independently funded, reach out to people you know who would be interested in learning more about the artist, exhibition, and space. You could also reach out to your local news producer to see if they have any interest in doing a segment or article on your work.

| | Punchlist | |
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| Week 1 | 2 | 3 |

# FUTURE WORK

As mentioned previously, you should have kept an ongoing list of work you cannot complete within the timeline for your project. In addition, it could be beneficial to look for any conferences you could present at in order to spread information about the artist and your work documenting them.

For our cohort, we need to get in-person access to a few specific cubes for photographs. In the future, we would also like to start an oral history project documenting the stories of Baumgardner from the people who knew them best. We ultimately would like to expand our site beyond documenting the Cubes Exhibtion to include Baumgardner's studio space, his life, and his work.

With all these aspects in mind, you need to set up a plan for how you will address all the work that needs to be done. If your research cohort cannot continue the project in the long-term, find other interested professors and students who could carry out the future work. Regardless of who keeps working on the project, continued scholarship is crucial for the longevity of the preservation and amplification of an artist's legacy.

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