



Visual identity and WordPress site for an artist

CASE: Art Studio Kirstu

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Bachelor's Thesis

May 2021

Information and Communication Technologies

Bachelor's Degree Programme in Information and Communication Technology

(Media Technology)

Harjula, Hanna

Visual identity and WordPress site for an artist. CASE: Art Studio Kirstu

Jyväskylä: JAMK University of Applied Sciences, May 2021, 65 pages.

Information and Communication Technologies. Bachelor's Degree Programme in Information and Communication Technology. Bachelor's thesis.

Permission for web publication: Yes

Language of publication: English

Abstract

The thesis was a development project assigned by an artist Krista Uusivirta, increasing visibility as the main goal. The first task was to create a visual identity for Uusivirta as an artist including a color palette, logo, and typography. The second task was to build her a responsive portfolio website with a webstore in WordPress. The third task was to launch an advertising campaign on her Instagram account.

The psychological aspects of colors and shapes were studied to achieve appropriate effects and consistency on all the elements in visual identity. The logo was designed utilizing golden ratio. WordPress site was built using a child theme and contents compiled together with the assignor. Three different eCommerce plugins were compared to find a suitable one for selling her art directly on the website. WooCommerce was proven significantly better than the other two, thus brought into use. A month after publishing the site and collecting feedback the Instagram campaign, an art giveaway promoting the website, was launched.

The results were a consistent visual identity, fitting the artist and her audience, as well as a coherent website with a functioning webstore. Number of followers on Instagram as well as web traffic increased in consequence of the campaign.

Keywords/tags (subjects)

Visibility, visual identity, branding, logo design, web design, WordPress, eCommerce, WooCommerce

Miscellaneous (Confidential information)

Harjula, Hanna

Visuaalinen identiteetti ja WordPress-sivusto artistille. Case: Art Studio Kirstu

Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän ammattikorkeakoulu. Toukokuu 2021, 65 sivua.

Tietojenkäsittely ja tietoliikenne. Insinööri (AMK), tieto- ja viestintätekniikka. Opinnäytetyö AMK.

Julkaisun kieli: englanti

Verkkojulkaisulupa myönnetty: kyllä

Tiivistelmä

Opinnäytetyö oli taiteilija Krista Uusivirralle toteutettu kehittämistyö, jonka tavoitteena oli kasvattaa näkyvyyttä. Ensimmäinen tehtävä oli luoda hänelle visuaalinen identiteetti sisältäen värimaailman, logon ja typografian. Toinen tehtävä oli rakentaa responsiivinen portfoliosivusto ja verkkokauppa WordPressiin. Kolmas tehtävä oli käynnistää Instagram-kampanja verkkosivujen ja Instagram-tilin näkyvyyden kasvattamiseksi.

Haluttuja tunnereaktioita herättävien ja yhtenäisten visuaalisen identiteetin elementtien luomiseksi opiskeltiin värien ja muotojen psykologiaa. Logon suunnittelussa hyödynnettiin kultaista leikkausta. WordPress-sivusto rakennettiin lapsiteemaa käyttäen ja sisältö luotiin yhdessä toimeksiantajan kanssa. Sopivan WordPressiin integroitavan verkkokauppa-alustan löytämiseksi vertailtiin kolmea eri verkkokauppalisäosaa. WooCommerce todettiin kahta muuta vaihtoehtoa huomattavasti paremmaksi ja otettiin käyttöön Uusivirran taiteen myymiseksi suoraan verkkosivuilla. Julkaistuista verkkosivuista kerättiin palautetta kuukauden ajan, minkä jälkeen käynnistettiin Instagram-kampanja. Kampanja oli verkkosivuja mainostava arvonta, josta palkintona oli tilaustyö Uusivirran taidetta.

Opinnäytetyön tuloksena saatiin aikaan yhtenäinen, Uusivirralle ja hänen kohderyhmälleen sopiva visuaalinen identiteetti, sen raameja noudattava verkkosivusto ja toimiva verkkokauppa. Instagram-seuraajien määrä ja liikenne verkkosivuilla lähtivät kasvuun kampanjan myötä.

Avainsanat (asiasanat)

Näkyvyys, visuaalinen identiteetti, brändäys, logot, verkkosivut, WordPress, verkkokauppa, WooCommerce

Muut tiedot (salassa pidettävät liitteet)

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Abbreviations and terminology

AJAX	Asynchronous JavaScript and XML. Technique for creating fast and dynamic web pages, with no need to reload the page to change the content.
API	Application Programming Interface. A computing interface defining software application's interaction with external software components, operating systems or microservices.
CDN	Content Delivery Network. A network of servers dispersed around the world caching static content from websites. The cached data is delivered to user from the server located closest to them.
CMS	Content Management System. A computer software used to create and modify digital content, typically used for managing enterprise and web content.
CMYK	Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Key. A color profile which uses cyan, magenta and yellow as primary colors. The fourth plate 'key' aligns the primary colors and holds the most detail in the image. This color profile is used for printing.
(Web) Crawler	A computer program (bot) that automatically searches documents on the Web, typically operated by search engines for the purpose of Web indexing.
CRM	Customer Relationship Management. A process of managing organization's relationships and interactions with existing and potential customers.
CSS	Cascading Style Sheets. A style sheet language which describes how elements in web documents written in a markup language such as HTML should be displayed.
CSV	Comma-separated Values. A simple file format used to store tabular data.
CTA	Call to Action. A marketing term for a design element that invites the user to take some desired action.
DOM	Document Object Model. Interface that represents an XML or HTML document with a logical tree structure.
EMEA	Europe, the Middle East and Africa. A designation given to a set of countries in these regions, most commonly used for marketing purposes.
FTP	File Transfer Protocol. A standard communication protocol used to transfer files between the server and the client.

GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation. European privacy law setting guidelines for user content and giving people rights over their personal data. Effective since May 25, 2018.
GLS	General Logistics Systems B.V. A British-owned logistics company operating also in Finland.
(GNU) GPL	(GNU) General Public License. Free software license that allows software to be freely used, modified, and redistributed by anyone. Written by Richard Stallman of Free Software Foundation for GNU Project.
HTML	Hyper Text Markup Language. Standard markup language for web pages.
HTTP	Hypertext Transfer Protocol. Application layer protocol for transmitting hypermedia documents such as HTML. Originally designed for communication between web browsers and web servers but can also be used for other purposes.
HTTPS	Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure. Extension of HTTP using TLS/SSL to encrypt the data transfer for more secure connection. Website needs a TLS/SSL certificate for authentication to use HTTPS.
IG	Instagram. Social media platform owned by Facebook.
IP address	Internet Protocol Address. Identifier attached to a device, contains location information, and makes the device accessible for communication on the computer network.
JS	JavaScript. A lightweight programming language used to make web pages interactive. Used both on the client-side and server-side.
MySQL	An open-source relational database management system based on SQL aka Structured Query Language.
PCI DSS	The Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard. A set of security standards formed in 2004 by Visa, MasterCard, Discover Financial Services, JCB International and American Express, aiming to secure credit and debit card transactions against data theft and fraud.
PHP	Hypertext Preprocessor. A server scripting language embedded in HTML used to make dynamic and interactive web pages.
QUIC	Quick UDP Internet Connections. A transport layer network protocol which improves performance of connection-oriented web applications by using UDP (User Datagram Protocol) instead of TCP (Transmission Control Protocol).
RGB	Red, Green, Blue. Color profile which uses red, green and blue as primary colors. This color profile is used for screen display.

SEO	Search Engine Optimization. A strategy used on websites to get more site traffic by ranking higher in search engines.
TLS	Transport Layer Security. A protocol used for encrypting the data sent from the browser to the server and vice versa as well as authenticating the website. Evolved from previous encryption protocol called Secure Sockets Layer (SSL).
UI	User Interface. The means in which user interacts with a software application or a hardware device.
URL	Uniform Resource Locator. Colloquially termed a web address; a reference to a web resource, most commonly to a web page, that specifies its location on a computer network and a mechanism for retrieving it.
VDP	Vulnerability Disclosure Policy. Guidelines for ethical hackers and security researchers for reporting security vulnerabilities to organizations.
Viewport	The visible area of a web page to user.
W3C	World Wide Web Consortium. The main international standards organization for the World Wide Web.
WP	WordPress. An open-source content management system (CMS).
XML	Extensible Markup Language. Defines rules for encoding documents in a format which is readable for both humans and machines; designed for storing and transporting data.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the project

The internet is overflowing with talented artists. According to Statista Research Department (2020), online sales in the global art market are increasing. The question is, how to be one of the artists that can get their art sold? By getting exposure and recognition, which can be achieved with an effective branding strategy, says Campbell (2020). Branding is about creating a strong, positive image of the entrepreneur and their products or services, a “brand”. It helps art entrepreneurs differentiate themselves from their competitors and build a loyal customer base. (Branding, n.d.).

According to Demand Metric Research Corporation (2016), consistently presented brands are three to four times more likely to possess excellent brand visibility, while inconsistency might create confusion and damage credibility. Visual identity is the cornerstone in making the brand consistent and recognizable. It defines use of brand’s visual elements including logo, colors, typography, and photography (Anderson, 2020). All online platforms and real-life implementations of the brand should follow these guidelines the visual identity provides.

Then, where to gain visibility as an art entrepreneur on the internet? Social media channels might be the most important ways to gain visibility in the modern world, for artists like any entrepreneurs. An NY Collector stated in Artsy.net survey (Soboleva, 2015), “if your artwork isn’t represented on Instagram these days, do you exist?”

In addition to social media presence, a website is always a good idea. Entrepreneur’s own website is all about them, without unwanted third-party ads or any other distractions. On the contrary, a post in social media feed is easily lost in the crowd and at the mercy of constantly changing algorithms. A website, however, can be optimized for search engines so it’s easier to find. A website can be the place for all important information of one as an art entrepreneur, a portfolio for artwork, and a way to sell art directly – everything under one web address. What’s more, it has no limits for customization and is therefore the best way to bring out the brand and its visual identity. A good website creates a sense of professionalism. (Gale, 2021; Rogers, 2018).

1.2 Assignor

The assignor for the thesis is Krista Uusivirta, a self-taught Finnish artist. Currently she's mainly working with model horses – in addition to unique repaints, she's experimenting on sculpting and creating accessories from old jewelry. She also paints with acrylics on canvas and creates home decor. Inspired by nature, her main theme in art has always been equine, especially Turkmen Akhal-Teke horses. During past years she's been doing commissions for international customers via social media channels such as Instagram and DeviantArt, going by name Kirstu.

1.3 Objectives and methods

Thesis was a development project in which the goal was to answer following questions:

1. On which platforms would one increase art entrepreneur's visibility on the internet?
2. What are the aspects of visual identity and how to make them consistent and appropriate?
3. Why and how would one make a WordPress site with a webstore for an art entrepreneur?

Source materials for the theoretical foundation were research reports, articles, and videos by the professionals of these fields as well as the official websites, wikis and forums of WordPress and other services used in the practical implementation. Prior experience and skills on visual design and web development were also utilized.

In the practical implementation, the first task was to build a visual identity for Uusivirta as an artist including a logo, color palette and typography. The second task was to build her a responsive portfolio website in WordPress; consistent with the visual identity and easy for her to maintain with no coding knowledge. Three different webstore plugins for WordPress were compared to find the suitable one for selling her art directly on the website. After publishing the site, the third task was to launch an Instagram campaign to increase visibility and analyze the subsequent web traffic statistics.

2 Visual identity

2.1 Artist identity

The art itself is obviously on the limelight here, but potential customers are also interested in who is behind it, their personality. In the start of the branding process, it's important to get to know the artist themselves. Who are they? What is their passion, what inspires them? What are their values? What is their vision, what do they want to say with their art?

Answering these questions and more, there are two useful text types to write and include on the website: an artist biography and an artist statement. While the artist biography is about the artist as a person, the artist statement is focused on the art itself. The artist statement is a short text, ideally between 150-200 words, answering these three simple questions: what, how and why. (How To Write An Artist Statement: Tips From The Art Experts, 2016). Hotchkiss (2018) says that the statement can help someone gain a deeper understanding of the art, feel more connected to that art and, ultimately, value it. For visual identity, these texts give a good base to build on. After all, visual identity is a part of the artist identity – the part that's shown to the world.

2.2 Color theory

2.2.1 Basics of color theory

Knowing the basics of color theory is important to be able to use colors efficiently in branding (Hauff & Neidlinger, 2018). Red, blue, and yellow are often referred as primary colors which make all the other colors. By mixing two primary colors you get secondary colors which are purple, green, and orange. Tertiary colors are made by mixing secondary colors. These are called pure or saturated colors. By adding white to a pure color, you get tints, by adding black you get shades and by adding gray you get tones. (Hauff & Neidlinger, 2018).

The easiest way to make a color stand out is pairing it with a complementary aka opposite color in the color wheel. For example, orange is the opposite of blue since it's made of yellow and red. Split complementary colors mean the colors beside the complementary color, e.g., yellow-orange and red-orange are split complementary colors for blue. Another way to make a good color palette

is using a triangle or square: three or four colors evenly spaced around the color wheel. Tetradic (rectangle) is a color combination using two complementary pairs. (Hauff & Neidlinger, 2018).

2.2.2 RGB and CMYK

This theory about primary colors explained before is correct when talking about material things e.g., traditional painting. When talking about light, it's not. According to Konstantinovsky (2019) Professor Westland explains it this way: "*Light enters our eyes in two ways: (1) directly from a light source; and (2) reflected from an object. This leads to two types of colour mixing, additive and subtractive.*". In additive color mixing the primary colors are red, green and blue. Simply put, color profile on screen is RGB.

In subtractive color mixing the primary colors are cyan, magenta, and yellow, which leads us to color profile CMYK. This color profile is used on prints. The letter 'K' stands for key plate which is usually black ink. Key plate holds the most detail in the image and other plates (C, M, Y) are aligned with it. (Coale, 2014). Both color profiles are obviously needed in art industry – for printed and digital media – which is why the color codes for a brand are usually declared in both RGB and CMYK.

2.2.3 Psychology of colors

When choosing brand colors, it's good to know about their psychological effects on people in different cultures. Like Hauff and Neidlinger state in their article (2018), "in content marketing, color is an emotional cue." While people often respond to certain colors in similar ways, it is important to remember that the psychology behind any color can depend upon many different factors, e.g., past experiences, cultural influences, and personal taste, says Cherry (2020).

Red is usually seen as the most powerful color there is. Red is associated with excitement and passion but also danger and aggression. Red tends to encourage appetite hence why a lot of fast-food chains and e.g. Coca Cola use red in their branding. In YouTube's logo there is a red play button – a call to action. (Martins Ferreira, 2019). At its best, red is a very energizing color (Hauff & Neidlinger, 2018).

Yellow is a happy color. It's often associated with sunshine and positivity. (Martins Ferreira 2019). In great quantities, however, yellow can be frustrating. Yellow is the most visible color and therefore attention-grabbing but also most fatiguing to the eye. (Cherry, 2020). It's important to know that colors can have totally different associations in different cultures. For example, in Egypt and much of Latin America yellow is linked to death. In many countries yellow is a mark of success and money. (How Translating Colors Across Cultures Can Help You Make a Positive Impact, 2020). Some of the most known brands using yellow in their logos are McDonalds' and Ferrari.

Orange is a strong and energetic color that encourages appetite like red, and friendly and fun like yellow. Fanta logo reminds us of the fruit carrying the same name as the color. Orange portrays physical comfort, warmth, and enthusiasm. (Hauff & Neidlinger, 2018; Cherry, 2020). Orange is often associated with Halloween and prison uniforms in the U.S. (Cherry, 2020) but considered sacred in India – think about Buddhist monks (How Translating Colors Across Cultures Can Help You Make a Positive Impact, 2020).

Green reminds us of the nature and thus usually described as a refreshing, healthy and tranquil color (Cherry, 2020). Therefore, green is often used by organizations that want to portray themselves close to nature and environmentally friendly, e.g., Vegan Society. On the contrary, in China green is associated with infidelity (How Translating Colors Across Cultures Can Help You Make a Positive Impact, 2020).

Blue is one of the most liked colors. Compared to red, its effect tends to be more mental than physical. Blue is usually seen as a calming and trustworthy color. That's why a lot of companies that want to project an image of security use blue in their branding. This can be seen in social media giants Twitter, Facebook and Skype. On the other hand, blue can also be seen as a sad, distant and cold color, and it's one of the least appetizing. (Cherry, 2020; Hauff & Neidlinger, 2018; Martins Ferreira, 2019).

In comparison to other colors, purple occurs rarely in nature, thus it's often seen as a mysterious and intriguing color. For the same reason it's a symbol of royalty and wealth (Cherry, 2020), but also creativity (Hauff & Neidlinger, 2018). Consisting of red and blue, purple is also described as a

sensual and soothing color (Cherry, 2020). Some popular brands with purple as their main color are Yahoo! and Twitch.

Pink is usually seen as a feminine color and associated with qualities such as softness, kindness, nurturance, and compassion (Cherry, 2020). Because of that, pink is a popular color for brands targeting female audience e.g. Victoria's Secret and Barbie (Martins Ferreira, 2019). Pink is a symbol of romance. On the other hand, pink can also be seen as a childish and immature color since it's so overused in all things for little girls. (Cherry, 2020).

2.3 Basics of typography

2.3.1 Terminology of typography

Typography is often overlooked but an essential part of the brand's visual identity. Like color choices, typography choices influence decision making. "Typography is the art of arranging letters and text in a way that makes the copy legible, clear, and visually appealing to the reader", sums Hannah in her article (2020). Good typography encourages the reader to continue reading.

Typeface means the design of letters. "The word 'typeface' historically refers specifically to the shape and style of the letters, organized into a set based on the alphabet, numbers, and punctuation needed to completely express language", says Crider (2017). For example, Arial is a typeface. A font is a particular set of glyphs within a typeface (Keung, 2020b), in modern world a computer file. In the original publishing sense, a font meant a collection of metal casts that contained glyphs in specific sizes and weights. There would be two different fonts for 'Arial, size 12, regular' and 'Arial, size 16, bold'. A font family is a collection that includes more than one specific style of font, e.g., Arial Regular, Arial Bold and Arial Italic. However, the words 'font' and 'typeface' are commonly used interchangeably. (Crider, 2017).

Web safe fonts are the default fonts, pre-installed by many operating systems and devices. Web fonts are downloaded by the user's web browser while rendering the webpage, and then applied to the text. This slows the site's load time. Web fonts require CSS3 to work, and in older browsers there is limited support for it. That's why you should always use web safe fallback fonts as well

when using web fonts. (CSS Font Stack, n.d.; Mistry, 2019). There are a lot of services offering web fonts for free, e.g. Google Fonts, and for subscription, e.g. Adobe Fonts.

2.3.2 Font types

When it comes to design, font types are divided into two main categories: serif and sans serif. The names are self-explanatory: a serif is a decorative stroke that finishes off the end of a letters stem. *Sans* is French for ‘without’, so a sans serif font doesn’t have serifs. The serif fonts often use strokes that vary in weight meaning some areas of a letter may be thick while others are thin. Sans serif fonts on the other hand tend to use simple, clean lines and be the same width throughout. (Rinaldi, 2019). The difference between these two main font types can be seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Serif and sans serif

Serif fonts’ history dates all the way back to 18th century thus they are seen as traditional, trustworthy and elegant. Businesses that want to appear reputable and serious often use serif fonts. Some well-known brands using serif fonts are Burberry, Vogue and The New York Times. Sans serif fonts on the other hand are simple and modern. They give more casual feeling, so they are often used by brands aiming to be easily approached, relatable and youthful (Rinaldi, 2019). Facebook and Adidas are some good examples of this.

Another way to divide font types is by their character width compared to each other. Monospaced letters and characters are all the same width or have the same amount of horizontal space; proportionally set vary in width and only take the space needed. Numerals work well in monospace – they are also known as Tabular Figures. What comes to body text, it’s easier for our brain to recognize different characters when they are proportional, in their natural width. (Keung, 2020a).

Some other common categories for fonts are script, calligraphic and handwritten. They are more decorative and harder to read than basic serif and sans serif fonts, and thus not the best choice for longer texts. Instead, as headlines etc. they are vibrant and eye-catching. Script fonts are based on the flow of cursive handwriting. Script fonts can be divided into two subcategories: formal and casual. Formal script fonts are elegant, inspired by handwriting from the 17th 18th century, while casual ones are more relaxed, inspired by wet brush strokes. Calligraphic fonts also mimic brush and nib strokes but tend to be more contemporary. Handwritten fonts are a newer category, imitating modern-day handwriting. (Keung, 2020c). See examples of each in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Examples of font categories

2.4 Logo design

2.4.1 Principles of logo design

Logo is an essential part of any brand. It’s the main graphic symbol of business and its visual identity (Anderson, 2020). According to Airey and Carson (2020), the logo is the business’ first point of contact with the outside world. “It’s important to remember that when we look at something, we don’t read first. Before anything else we see shape, we see color, and if that’s enough to hold our

attention, then we'll read", says Airey (2020). According to him, the logo should aim for easy recall. Too much detail is not a good idea. When we think about popular brands such as Nike, Adidas, or Apple, they all have this in common. Like Airey and Carson (2020, 4) sum it up, "the simpler a logo design, the more memorable it will be." Pentagram's high-profile rebrands for e.g., Windows, MasterCard and Warner Bros have all done the same thing: simplified the design. (Pentagram, 2021).

In addition to simplicity, another golden rule in logo design is versatility of scale. The logo should work in the tiniest sizes as well as scaled huge, e.g., as a favicon of the website and printed on the office wall. (Airey & Carson, 2020). For this reason, the final logo should always be vectorized. A vector graphic is made of points, lines and curves based upon mathematical equations, not colored square pixels like normal images. Therefore, it never gets pixelated when scaled. (Shayla, n.d.)

2.4.2 Psychology of shapes

Colors have their own psychology, like described in chapter 2.2, but so do shapes. "Just like fonts and colors, shapes are an important aspect of design, capable of symbolizing ideas, expressing moods, and leading the eye", says Peate (n.d.). Round shapes such as circles, ovals and ellipses are soft shapes without harsh angles, thus seen as positive, welcoming, and comforting. Circle is associated with unity, commitment, and love since it reminds us of rings, a symbol of marriage. Circle is also seen as stable and reliable for its consistent shape. Some well-known brands embracing circles are NASA and the Olympic rings. (Christie, 2017; Peate, n.d.). Curves are often seen as feminine and describe motion, happiness, rhythm, or pleasure (Shapes in logo design, 2016). One good example is the Coca Cola logo.

Squares and other rectangles are symbols of trust, order, and balance. This might be because things we regard secure in our lives are often rectangular in shape, such as a safe or a house. (Peate, n.d.; Shapes in logo design, 2016). According to Christie (2017), "straight lines and precise logo shapes also impart strength, professionalism and efficiency." Some simple logo designs based on squares are BBC's and Microsoft's.

Triangles are not as popular shapes in logo design as circles and rectangles, which is understandable as triangle does not give the same safe and comforting feeling. Triangles can, however, suggest dynamic power and continuous motion or improvement. Masculine with strong edges, the triangle shape is commonly used in the motor, construction, scientific and legal industries, e.g., Mitsubishi Motors and CAT construction. (Peate, n.d.) What comes to the direction, the triangle might be safest to point upwards or to the right, since in our Western culture a triangle pointing left or downwards indicates negative associations. (Peate, n.d.). Our reading direction is from left to right, which gives the impression of movement forward being indeed to the right, and the past being in the left. This is opposite in cultures where the reading direction is from right to left, e.g., Arabic speaking countries. (Reading direction, n.d.; Vincent, 2013). However, facing left is not necessarily always bad: it attracts customers whose temporal focus is on the past, tell Jeong, Kwak, Puzakova and Zhang in their research on advertising (2018).

Like triangles, vertical lines are seen as masculine and powerful, even aggressive. Like Peate (n.d.) says, “they draw the eye of the viewer downwards, often directing the eye towards the brand name.” SoundCloud logo is a good example of this as well as combining strong vertical lines with soft curves. On the contrary, horizontal lines appear calm and tranquil, making you feel settled and protected. A famous example of this is IBM. (Christie, 2017; Peate, n.d.).

2.4.3 Negative space

One way to make logo design intriguing is to utilize negative space. Creative Bloq Staff (2019) explains negative space as the space between, within and surrounding an object. In graphic design, negative space is often used to form another shape or object. Award-winning FedEx logo is a classic example of this: negative space between the letters ‘E’ and ‘X’ creates an arrow. It’s important to evaluate every detail in logo design – unintentional hidden shapes might endanger the intended brand message (Peate n.d.).

Closure is a technique in which an object is incomplete, but there is enough detail for the human eye to make the whole picture. (Christie, 2017). A good example of this technique used in logo design is World Wildlife Fund’s panda. Closure is one of the Gestalt Principles, a series of theories of

visual perception by German psychologists in the 1920s. Gestalt means ‘unified whole’ which describes well the essence of the Gestalt Theory: when looking at a group of objects, we will see the whole before individual parts. (Hampton-Smith, 2018).

2.4.4 Golden ratio

It’s commonly believed the Golden Ratio makes the most visually pleasing shape. It’s seen everywhere in the nature from seashells to human body. Many artists and architects throughout ages, e.g., Leonardo da Vinci have used it in their compositions. The Golden Ratio describes a perfectly symmetrical relationship between two proportions. (Creative Bloq Staff, 2019). The Golden Ratio is derived from the Fibonacci sequence, in which the next number in the sequence is a total of itself and the previous number, starting from zero: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3 and so on. The actual ratio in Fibonacci sequence is an irrational number that never resolves, but it can be reduced to 1:1.618. The ratio is mathematically also known as Φ (Phi). The Golden Ratio is usually illustrated with a rectangle which edges are in that ratio. Practically, when you draw a square inside that rectangle, the remaining space is in the same ratio as the original rectangle. Likewise, the Golden Spiral’s growth factor is Φ . (TipTut, 2017). See the Golden Spiral inside the rectangle in Figure 3.

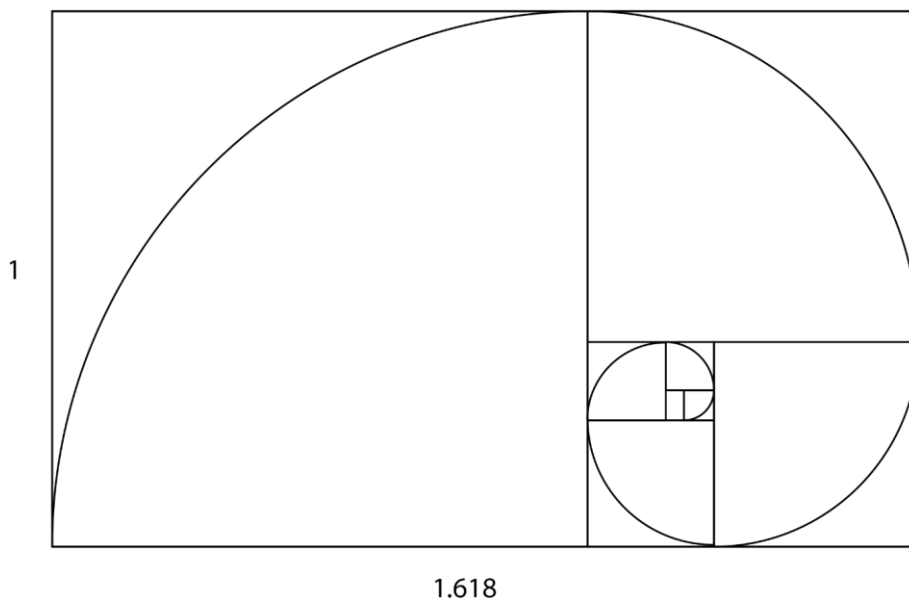


Figure 3. Golden Ratio

Golden Circles are following the same ratio, like seen in the Figure 4.

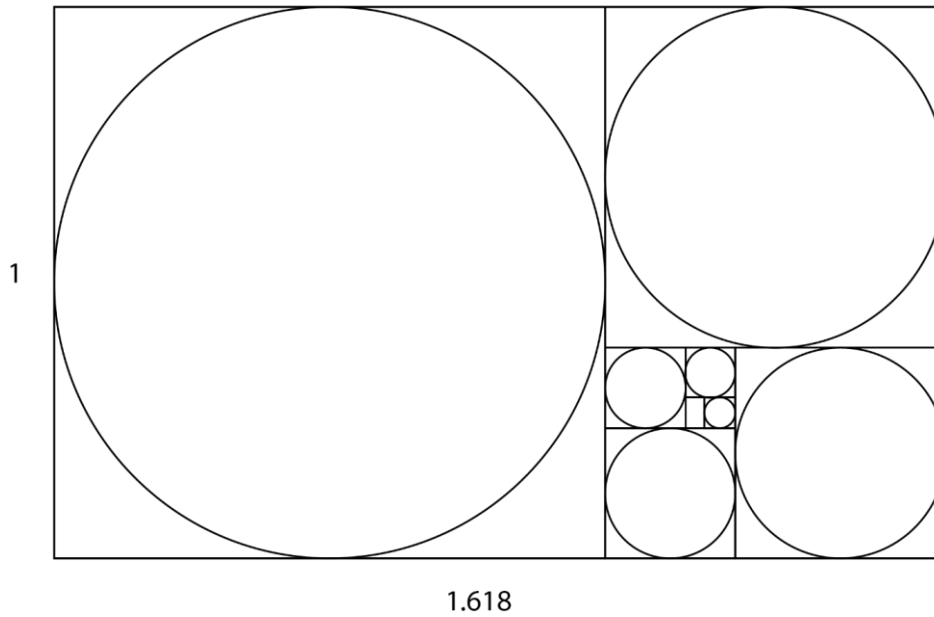


Figure 4. Golden Circles

In logo design, Golden Circles are often used by multiplying and overlapping them to create the logo's lineart. This way the logo has mathematically perfect shapes and consistent lines. Twitter is a good example of this: they renewed their logo in 2012, and it's heavily based in three Golden Circles, like seen in the Figure 5. Twitter even demonstrates this in their brand guidelines. Only the bird's head is not exactly following the Golden Circles, but that doesn't really matter. Like Johnson (2012) says, "This strategy is meant to be a tool to help refine your work, not inhibit your creativity."

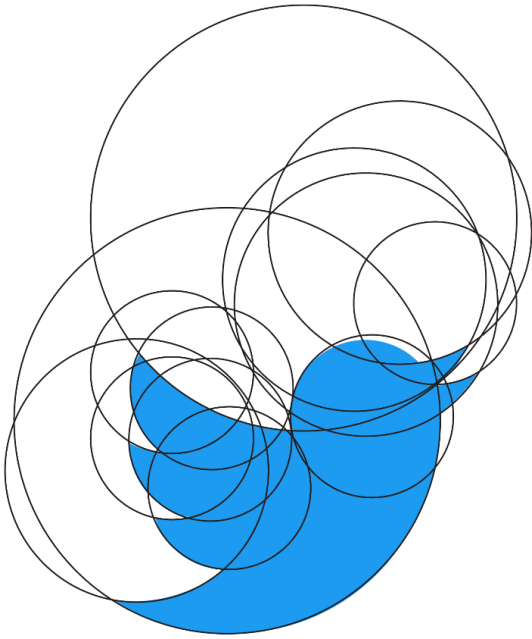


Figure 5. Twitter logo and Golden Circles

2.4.5 Colors and typography in logo design

For consistency, the logo should match the brand's color palette – or the other way around. Black and white might not be a bad idea either: once again, think about Apple or Adidas. Even if the primary logo design isn't monochrome, it should work effectively in black and white for different applications (Airey & Carson, 2020). It's not a bad idea to have two or three variations of the logo: one for black background, another for white background and optionally third in color.

If the logo contains letters, the next question is whether to use an existing typeface or illustrate it yourself. Coca Cola is a great example of timeless illustration – the logo has stayed the same since late 1800s (Airey & Carson, 2020). If the brand name has multiple words on it, one option is to create a monogram of its initials: two or more letters combined or interlaced. Some popular brands using monogram logos are Yves Saint Laurent and Louis Vuitton.

What comes to font types (described in chapter 2.3.2), sans serif fonts – like minimalism altogether – have been dominating logo design in recent years. Like mentioned in chapter 2.4.1, a lot of companies have gone through simplifying rebranding, which can be seen in typography, too.

One of the most famous cases is Google exchanging its longstanding serif logotype for sans serif in 2015. (Airey & Carson, 2020).

3 WordPress for business

3.1 Why should a business choose WordPress

WordPress is an open-source platform powering 40% of all sites across the web thus being the most popular CMS in the world, according to Gelbmann (2021). Safe to say it's a reasonable option for any kind of business, and here's why. WordPress is simple to set up – many web hosts offer a one-click WP installer. It's also possible to import your existing website from different publishing system, e.g. Drupal or Blogger, to WordPress (Importing Content, n.d.). Updating is just as simple. It's not even needed to be fluent in English, since WordPress is available in more than 70 languages, including Finnish (Translation Teams – Translate WordPress, n.d.). WordPress' graphic UI makes it easy to use with zero coding knowledge. See Figure 6 for WordPress dashboard.

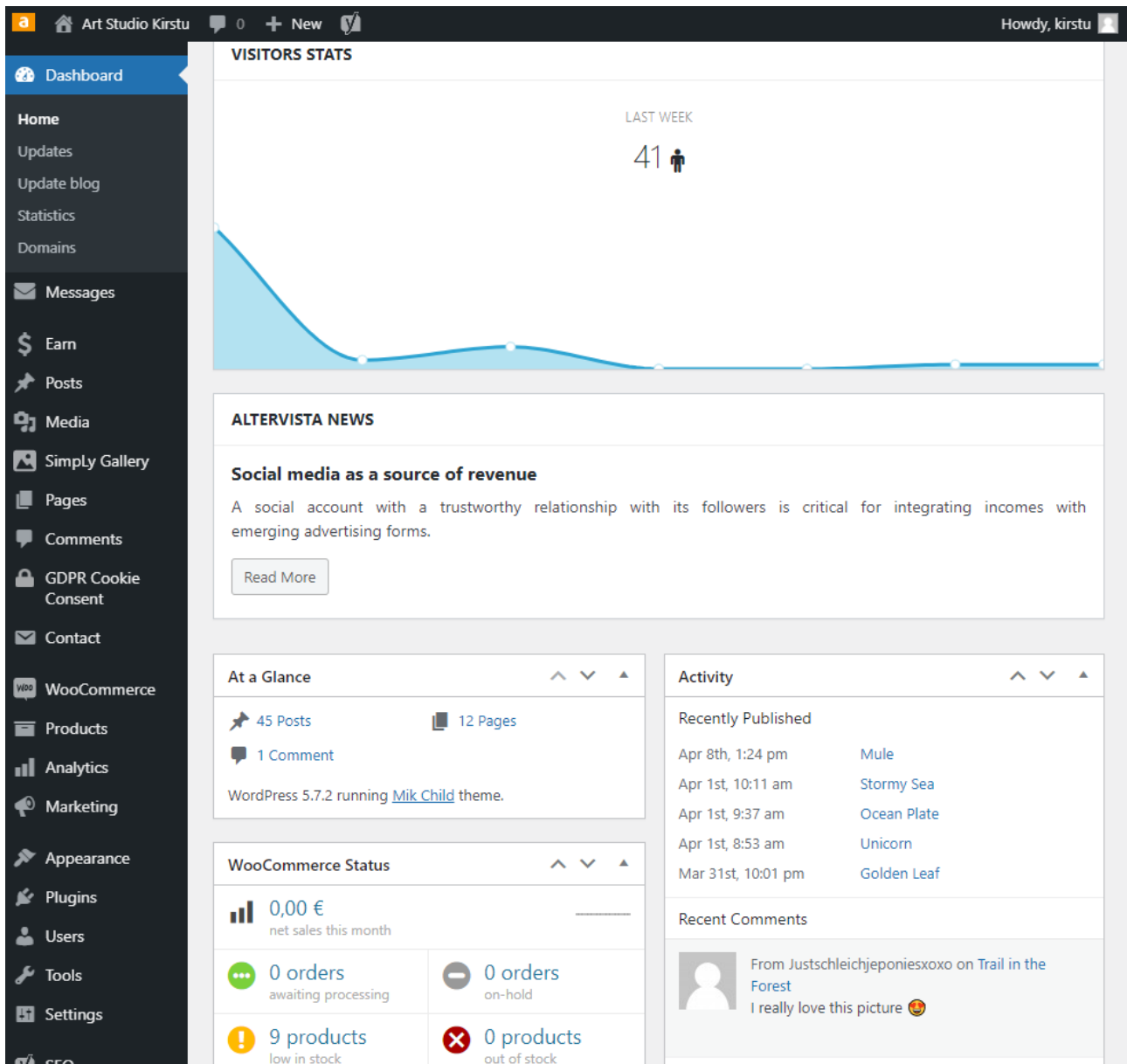


Figure 6. WordPress dashboard

On the other hand, WordPress is flexible to modify however you like. WordPress is licensed under General Public License (GPLv2), which means you are free to run the program for any purpose, change it as well as redistribute it and its modified versions (About Us: Our Mission, n.d.). In consequence, there are tons of themes and plugins for different functions available to choose from and ready to use, as well as support for making your own. See chapter 3.4 for details. What's more, WordPress is optimized for search engines and in full compliance with the standards set by the W3C (Features, n.d.).

3.2 Security in WordPress

WordPress is a secure option since high security is one of the program's top priorities. The WordPress project is a meritocracy run by a core leadership team consisting of core developers and led by its co-creator and lead-developer Matt Mullenweg. In addition, WordPress has a security team of approximately fifty experts, of which about a half are employees of Automattic, people behind WordPress.com (the earliest and largest WP hosting platform). These teams work together to identify and resolve security issues in the core software as well as document recommended practices for third-party theme and plugin authors. The global WP community plays a great role in security, too. The Security Team can be alerted of potential security vulnerabilities via HackerOne, a platform with pioneering VDP structure according to their website (Response, n.d.). All reports are acknowledged, and after verifying and determining its severity the patch is planned.

WordPress is constantly developing and frequently updated, however strongly committing to backwards compatibility. Major releases possibly containing new user features and developer APIs are aimed to launch every 4-5 months. Minor releases are launched when needed. They are reserved for fixing security vulnerabilities and critical bugs only. Beginning with version 3.7, all minor releases are updated automatically. This means security fixes can be done immediately without needing any action from the site's administrator.

What comes to plugins and themes contributed by third parties, they are manually reviewed by volunteers before they are available on the WP repository. The security team contacts the author if they discover a vulnerability to work together to fix it. The plugin or theme can be pulled from the public directory if the author is not responding, or the vulnerability is severe. Available updates to plugins and themes appear on the WP control panel. They can also be set to update automatically. (Rosso, 2015).

3.3 Hosting a WordPress site

WordPress-powered website requires a host that supports at least PHP version 7.4, MySQL version 5.6 or MariaDB version 10.1 and HTTPS. WordPress recommends Apache or Nginx as the HTTP server software. What comes to legacy environments, WordPress also works with PHP 5.6.2 and MySQL 5.0, but these outdated versions are exposed to security vulnerabilities. (Requirements,

n.d.). Since WordPress is the most common CMS, a lot of host providers today offer hosting services pre-configured specifically for hosting WordPress, called “WordPress Hosting” (Shivar, 2021b). It’s usually used to simplify, secure, and speed up a WP site compared to WP site on a typical web server (Shivar, 2021a). Some companies do exclusively WP installs, e.g., WP Engine (Shivar, 2021b).

Another important thing to consider when choosing the host is the locations of its data centers. The data center’s location affects the website’s performance in specific geographic location. The website’s data center should be where its major audience is. (Editorial Staff, 2021a). Because of this, international businesses should use CDN to improve their website’s performance. CDN does not only speed up the website’s loading time, but also improves crash resistance since the load is distributed to multiple servers around the world. (Editorial Staff, 2019).

3.4 WordPress site’s structure and themes

WordPress is originally a blogging platform; hence its basic functionality consists of publishing tools for blog posts and pages as well as comments. Posts of similar subjects can be grouped into hierarchal categories. Tags can be used to sort the posts even more specifically, into micro-categories. Variety of contributors with different levels of access to the site can be added and edited in the built-in user management system. Core functionality of WordPress can be extended with tons of plugins: add-ons that offer specific features like contact forms, spam protection and SEO. See post management view in Figure 7. The four symbols on the right have been added with Yoast SEO plugin and describe SEO score, readability score and internal links. See chapter 6.3.2.

The screenshot displays the WordPress 'Posts' management screen. At the top, there are navigation elements including 'Screen Options' and 'Help'. Below this, a status bar shows 'All (47) | Mine (7) | Published (45) | Draft (1) | Private (1) | Cornerstone content (0)'. A search bar and 'Search Posts' button are also present. The main interface includes a 'Bulk actions' dropdown, an 'Apply' button, and several filter dropdowns: 'All dates', 'All Categories', 'All SEO Scores', and 'All Readability Scores'. A 'Filter' button and a pagination indicator '45 items' are also visible. The central part of the screen is a table listing posts with the following columns: Title, Author, Categories, Tags, a comment icon, Date, and a set of four status icons (grey, orange, red, green). The table contains seven rows of post data.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Title	Author	Categories	Tags		Date				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mule	kirstu	Commission, Medallions, Model Horses	acrylics, blue, chestnut, equine, medallionopoly, mini, mule, pouring, studio thornrose	—	Published 2021/04/08 at 1:24 pm	●	●	3	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stormy Sea	kirstu	Traditional Art	abstract, acrylics, blue	—	Published 2021/04/01 at 10:11 am	●	●	2	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ocean Plate	kirstu	Decor	abstract, blue, epoxy, plate	—	Published 2021/04/01 at 9:37 am	●	●	2	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Unicorn	kirstu	Traditional Art	equine, unicorn, watercolors, white	—	Published 2021/04/01 at 8:53 am	●	●	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Golden Leaf	kirstu	Decor	acrylics, epoxy, gold, gold leaf, green, pouring	—	Published 2021/03/31 at 10:01 pm	●	●	1	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Space Photo Album	Hanna	Decor	blue, photo album, purple, purple and blue, space	—	Published 2021/03/15 at 1:58 pm	●	●	2	0

Figure 7. Post management in WordPress

A WordPress Theme controls the appearance of content stored by WordPress (Theme Handbook, n.d.). Users can change some aspects of the theme, like site icon and text colors in *Customizer*, a part of WP's graphic UI. The customization options are defined by the theme. WordPress publishes one default theme every year, but there are thousands of free, user-made custom themes available for use. WordPress encourages the users to create their own custom themes: there is an extensive *Developer Resources* library within WordPress' official website, including a *Theme Handbook*.

Themes are built of *Template files* which are used to display a certain part of the website, such as `header.php` and `index.php`. Different *Post Types* are displayed by different Template files. The default Post Types in WordPress are *post*, *page*, *attachment*, *revision* and *menu*. It's also possible to make your own *Custom Post Types*. *Template tags* are WP functions used in Template files to retrieve content from the database, e.g. `the_title()` retrieves the title of the page. The main mechanism in WordPress is the Loop, which loops through the posts retrieved for the current page and displays them according to theme settings. For additional features and functionality in theme there is a file called *functions.php* which can be edited to call WP functions and define your own. (Theme Handbook, n.d.).

Because the themes distributed in WordPress' free theme repository are licensed under GPL, they are free to modify and redistribute. This allows creating child themes – themes that are based on a complete theme but partly modified. Customizations are done in child theme files, separated from the parent theme files. This way, updating the parent theme doesn't affect the customizations done in the child theme. Using a child theme instead of building a whole new custom theme can save a lot of time. (Theme Handbook, n.d.).

4 Artist visibility on the internet

4.1 Social media visibility

4.1.1 From DeviantArt to Instagram

Social media presence is essential for any modern entrepreneur, like mentioned in chapter 1.1. Artists have been on the internet since it's been possible to upload images to websites from the 1990s (Ables, 2019). Naturally, the platforms have changed in over twenty years.

DeviantArt is said to be the first large-scale online art community, launched in 2000. It was developed by three people – Stephens, Scott Jarkoff and Angelo Sotira – who met in a chat room online and shared interest in digital art. DeviantArt used to be the most popular platform for artists to share their work and get genuine engagement, amassing one million artworks in the first three years. (Ables, 2019; Christopher, 2021). DeviantArt was bought by Wix for 36 million dollars in 2017 (Ables, 2019). Googling 'DeviantArt' today, the first asks displayed in the search results are 'is DeviantArt a bad website', 'is DeviantArt dead' and 'is DeviantArt still popular 2020'. According to

Christopher (2021), one of the biggest reasons for people leaving the site was vastly increasing amount of explicit content and lack of properly working mature content filters.

On the other hand, with mass adoption of smartphones new social media platforms took the spotlight in 2010s. The culture changed. No more in-depth feedback in admiration of detailed artworks but endless scrolling and clicking 'like' on image after image. Instagram reached one hundred thousand users in one week and one million in less than three months after launching in 2010. Two years in, Facebook bought Instagram for one billion dollars. (Ables, 2019). In 2021, over one billion people use IG every month. What comes to mobile apps, IG has 4th-most users, outranked only by Facebook, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger. (Newberry, 2021). According to Facebook IQ (2019), "simply by being on Instagram, brands can make a positive impression". Surveyed people around the globe described brands on IG as popular, creative, entertaining, and relevant in 2018. Of course, IG is not a platform exclusively for artists, but for the same reason it's a place to reach even more people – both potential customers and other artists.

Like briefly mentioned in chapter 1.1, visibility of posts in social media platforms like Instagram is dependent on algorithms that are constantly changing. The bottom line is simply the more frequently you post, the more visibility you get.

4.1.2 Features of Professional Instagram Profile

Instagram offers three profile options for free: personal, creator and business. For an artist, Instagram suggests a creator account. On the other hand, business account is suggested for local businesses and brands. Professional profiles, meaning creator and business, can have more information in the profile as well as more tools in use. In personal profile there are slots for a website address and a short bio text, meanwhile in professional profile there are also categories, contact information and cta buttons. Business profiles can also set location with map and directions. *Insights* offers detailed analytics. With *Promote*, posts can be turned into paid ads. (Read, 2016; Vamp, 2021).

Professional profiles have more ways to create content. All profiles can create regular posts, Stories that are visible for 24 hours and Reels for short videos of max 30 seconds length as well as host live videos of max 60 minutes length. There is low threshold to post more casual content in

Stories, like works in progress for artists. There are also a lot of built-in tools to easily create interactive Stories like polls and quizzes. Selected Stories can be kept visible in the profile highlights after the first 24 hours. Professional profiles can also use IGTV for longer videos and create IG Guides. IGTV videos can be between 15 seconds and 10 minutes long. (Dadhich, 2020; Warren, 2020). Guides are threads curated of either places, posts, or products in IG Shop, with custom headlines and commentary. Curated items can be originally posted by someone else. (Warren, 2020).

Instagram Shop is a free tool to showcase business' product catalog and reach more customers (Instagram Business Team, 2020). Connecting the IG business profile to a Facebook Page is required, and the business needs to be located in a supported market: NA, LATAM, EMEA or APAC. Finland is a part of EMEA. (Instagram Shopping Availability, n.d.; Warren, 2021). Accounts are reviewed before Shop is published. Products can be tagged in any type of the content in IG. Businesses with an IG Shop can also add a "swipe up" link that directs viewers to their shop – otherwise this feature requires ten thousand followers. (Warren, 2021). Businesses in US with access to Instagram Checkout can sell products directly on Instagram, in which case IG takes a 5% fee per shipment or a flat fee of 0,40 dollars for shipments of eight dollars or less. Businesses not using IG Checkout link their own webstore to the products in IG Shop. (Warren, 2020 & 2021).

In a survey done in 2018 by Ipsos, 87% of respondents said they took action after seeing product information on Instagram, such as following a brand, visiting their website or making a purchase online (Facebook IQ, 2019). In Artsy.net survey, 52% of art collectors told they had bought works from artists they had discovered on Instagram, and 31% had bought specific works they had originally found on Instagram (Soboleva, 2015).

4.2 SEO in WordPress

While social media presence is essential for artists today, so is search engine optimization aka SEO. According to Heltzman (2021), 53% of website traffic comes from search engines aka *organic search*. It drives over ten times more website traffic than organic social media. SEO is helping the algorithms of the search engines to understand and rank websites appropriately in search results.

WordPress as a platform is already optimized for search engines, like mentioned in chapter 3.1. This means the code WP generates follows the SEO best practices. Proper use of categories and tags (see chapter 3.4) makes the site easier for users and crawlers to browse the site. Internal links in general not only increase the time users spend browsing on the site, but also seem to improve *page authority* – score the search engines assign for each page. There are also some settings which affect search ranking. For example, SEO friendly permalinks are readable text, not numeric. Same goes for images: descriptive title and alt tags are good for SEO. (Editorial Staff, 2021b).

There are also multiple SEO plugins for even more improvement. They help optimizing the content by e.g., offering audit checklists, content insights and previews of how the site looks in search engines (Patel, 2021). With these plugins it's easy to add a title, meta description, and a focus keyword/keyphrase etc. to WordPress posts. The idea of focus keywords is to match the words people use in search engines. There are a lot of free and paid tools for finding the right keywords online. (Editorial Staff, 2021b). SEO plugins also usually offer automatic generation of an XML sitemap, a file that lists all pages on the site. An XML sitemap helps search engines to find content and adjust the crawl rate. (Editorial Staff, 2021c).

In May 2020, Google announced a new set of metrics affecting search ranking: Core Web Vitals. These metrics are related to site's loading speed, responsiveness, and visual stability. (Subramanian, 2020). To improve loading speed there are services like CDN and file compression. See chapter 3.3. In a portfolio site lazy loading of images is a must-have. When using lazy loading, the site loads lightweight placeholders at first and replaces them with final images as the user has scrolled into the viewport (Andrew & Wagner, 2020). Safe to say, SEO-friendly design is also user-friendly design.

5 Visual identity for Art Studio Kirstu

5.1 Art Studio Kirstu

In this case, already knowing the assignor since childhood and sharing mutual interests made the branding process simple and natural. Artist statement and biography were written as the basis for visual identity. See chapter 2.1. Before creating the graphic elements, the very first task was to recreate the name: make it sound more like a business and describe all her art but remain familiar.

Like Anderson states in his article (2020), “customers do not react positively to radical changes”. Uusivirta has been sharing her art on the internet under the same nickname, Kirstu, at least for seven years. ‘Kirstu’ is a Finnish word for a chest. On Instagram, she’s been sharing model horse customizations by @kirstusmodelhorses since 2019. Therefore, the name transformed into Art Studio Kirstu.

5.2 Color palette

The color palette with five colors, seen in Figure 8, was given by Uusivirta, containing purple as well as light and strong shades of pink and blue.



Figure 8. Original color palette by Uusivirta

These represent her favorite colors. Light pink can be seen in her hair, blue and purple in a lot of her art, like seen in Figure 9.



Figure 9. Krista Uusivirta & her painting 'Silver Wolf'

According to color psychology described in chapter 2.2.3, this color palette is seen as feminine, soothing, and intriguing. Purple itself as a creative color suits art field. Besides Uusivirta herself, feminine colors fit her audience well. Not all but most of her customers and fellow model horse artists she has been in contact with have been female.

The color palette was run through Adobe Color's Accessibility Tool for color blind safe check. The original shades of light pink #F2D0DD and blue #B2D3E2 were in conflict for protanopia aka green-red color blindness. The conflict was due to their blue values on RGB profile being too close to each other: 87 and 89. (Adobe Color, 2021). The results from Color Blind Simulator can be seen in Figure 10. The problem was solved by preserving the red value and adjusting the green and blue values of the light pink color's RGB profile.

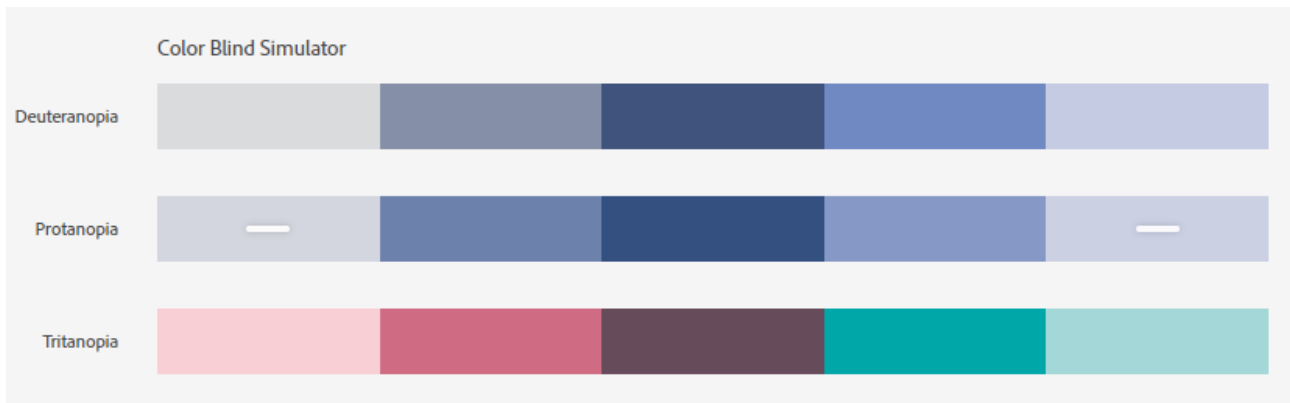


Figure 10. Color Blind Simulator by Adobe Color

The strong pink was picked to be the primary color. To find the right additional color to make the pink stand out, the color code of it was put into ColorHexa tool. Among a lot of useful information, the tool gives complementary, split complementary, analogous, and triadic color schemes matching the given color code, like seen in Figure 11.

Color Schemes with #bf69a8

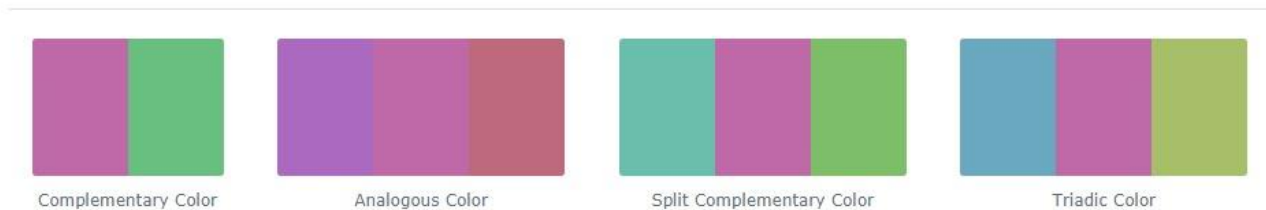


Figure 11. Color schemes with #BF69A8 by ColorHexa

The complementary color for this certain pink would have been lime green. Since Uusivirta wanted to use blue instead, it was made to match the blue shade on triadic color wheel. See theory of complementary and triadic colors in chapter 2.2.1. Same adjustments were made to light pink and blue colors. See the final color palette in Figure 12.

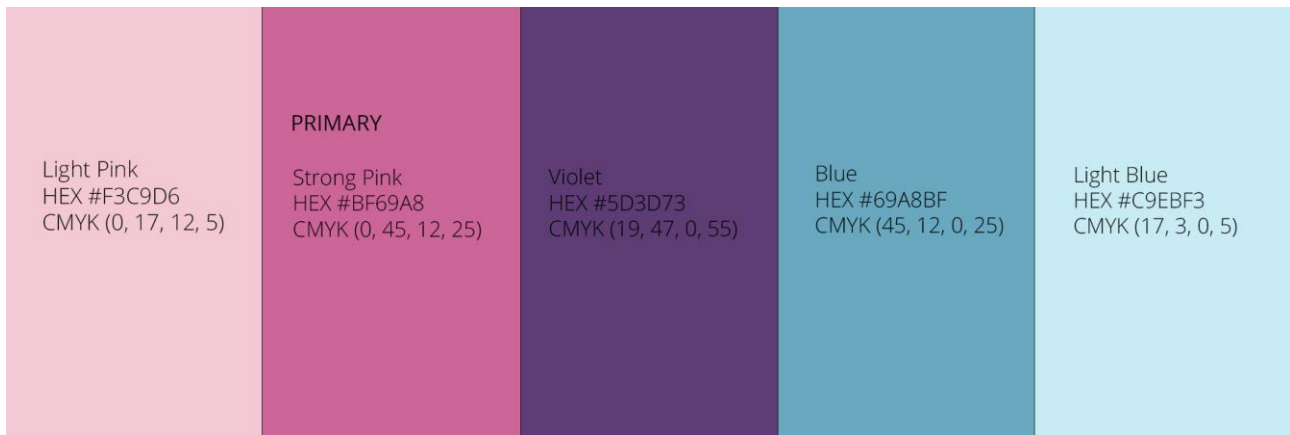


Figure 12. Final color palette

5.3 Logo

Since most of Uusivirta's art is equine-themed, it was obvious the logo would implicate that in some way. Her favorite horse breed is an ancient Turkmen horse called Akhal-Teke. They are often referred to as 'golden horses' due to their coat's metallic sheen (Westfall, 1999). Uusivirta tells that the Akhal-Teke's extraordinary metallic sheen is one of the reasons why she loves to paint them more than anything else. According to her, she often gets asked about her own Akhal-Teke horses – even though she doesn't have any in real life.

There are a lot of different kinds of traditional tack that horses wear in Turkmenistan, some of them seen in the Figure 13. According to Akhal-Tekes Association of America (n.d.), in Turkmenistan every horse wears an *alaja* around their neck. Alaja is a braided wool cord made of camel and sheep hair. It's believed to protect the horse from evil spirits.



Figure 13. An Akhal-Teke horse wearing a bridle, neck collar and an alaja. Photo by Eetu Autere / haukkaleva.net

In the earliest logo sketches seen on the left in Figure 14 there were horseshoes and chests ('kirstu' in Finnish) in addition to horses, but they were quickly ditched. From the very beginning the focus was on elaborating the idea of placing letter 'K' inside a horse head, standing for Kirstu. Hereby, the final logo represents an Akhal-Teke horse wearing an alaja which is shaped like the letter 'K'.

Detailed sketch seen on the right in Figure 14 was scanned and imported to Adobe Illustrator, where it was vectorized (see chapter 2.4.1). To accomplish golden ratio, golden circles were placed on top of all the round shapes on the sketch. See chapter 2.4.4.

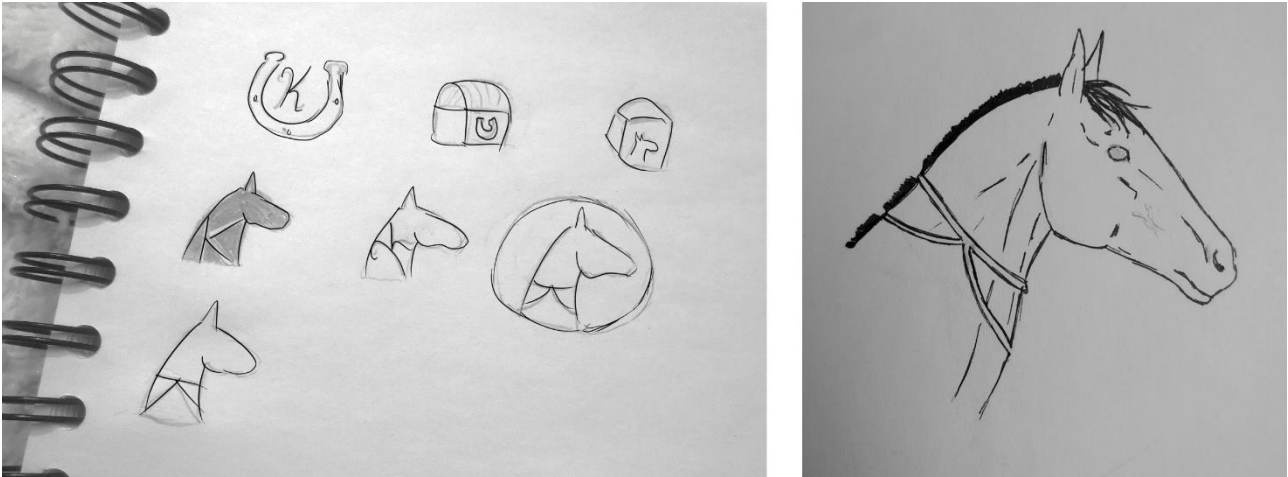


Figure 14. First logo sketches by Hanna Harjula (on the left) & the detailed sketch by Krista Uusivirta (on the right)

As illustrated in Figure 15, the final lineart of the logo is based on five golden circles, which are described in chapter 2.4.4. Only the horse's ears and bridge of nose were drawn with a free hand. The alaja is negative space, meaning it changes color with the background (see chapter 2.4.3).

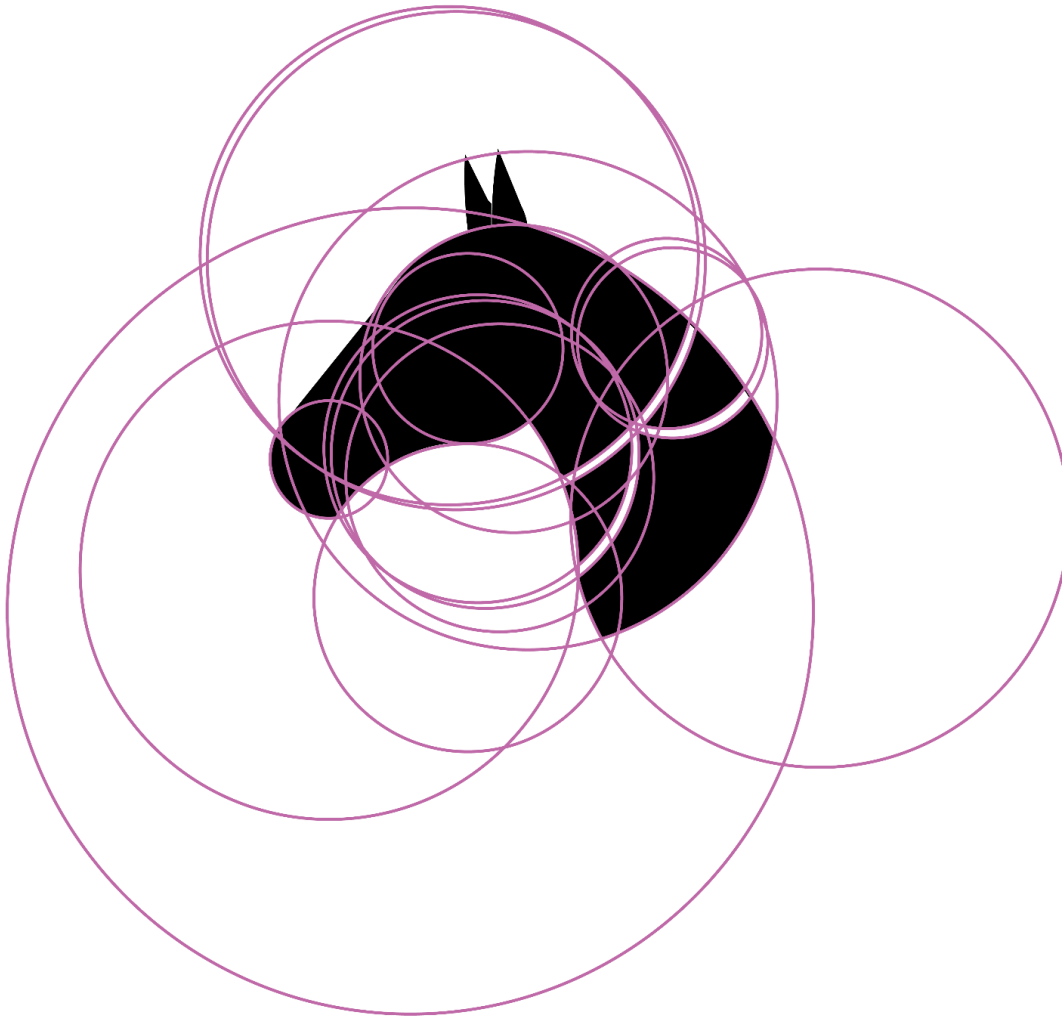


Figure 15. Logo made with golden circles

Unlike the sketches, in the final logo the horse is facing left, which is unordinary for western characters, like described in chapter 2.4.2. However, in Turkmenistan, where the Akhal-Teke horse comes from, the reading direction is from right to left. In our western culture facing left indicates looking at the past, which fits the ancient Akhal-Teke horse wearing a traditional alaja. Other than respecting the cultural heritage, the logo is simply deviant, and the letter 'K' is easy to read.

Shapes of the logo go hand in hand with the color palette of Art Studio Kirstu in terms of psychological effects (see chapter 2.4.2). Round shapes, like light pink and blue colors, are soft. They are also seen as positive and welcoming. Curvy lines are giving a feminine feeling, like pink, and describe happiness which Uusivirta would like to evoke through her art.

After finishing the logo in monochrome, it was tested in all the colors in color palette introduced in chapter 5.2 and a few gradient combinations. As seen in Figure 16, the final logo has three color variations, so it fits all possible applications (see chapter 2.4.5). Third one is colored gradient with light pink and blue, picked by Uusivirta. Other two are black and white: one for light backgrounds and another for dark backgrounds.

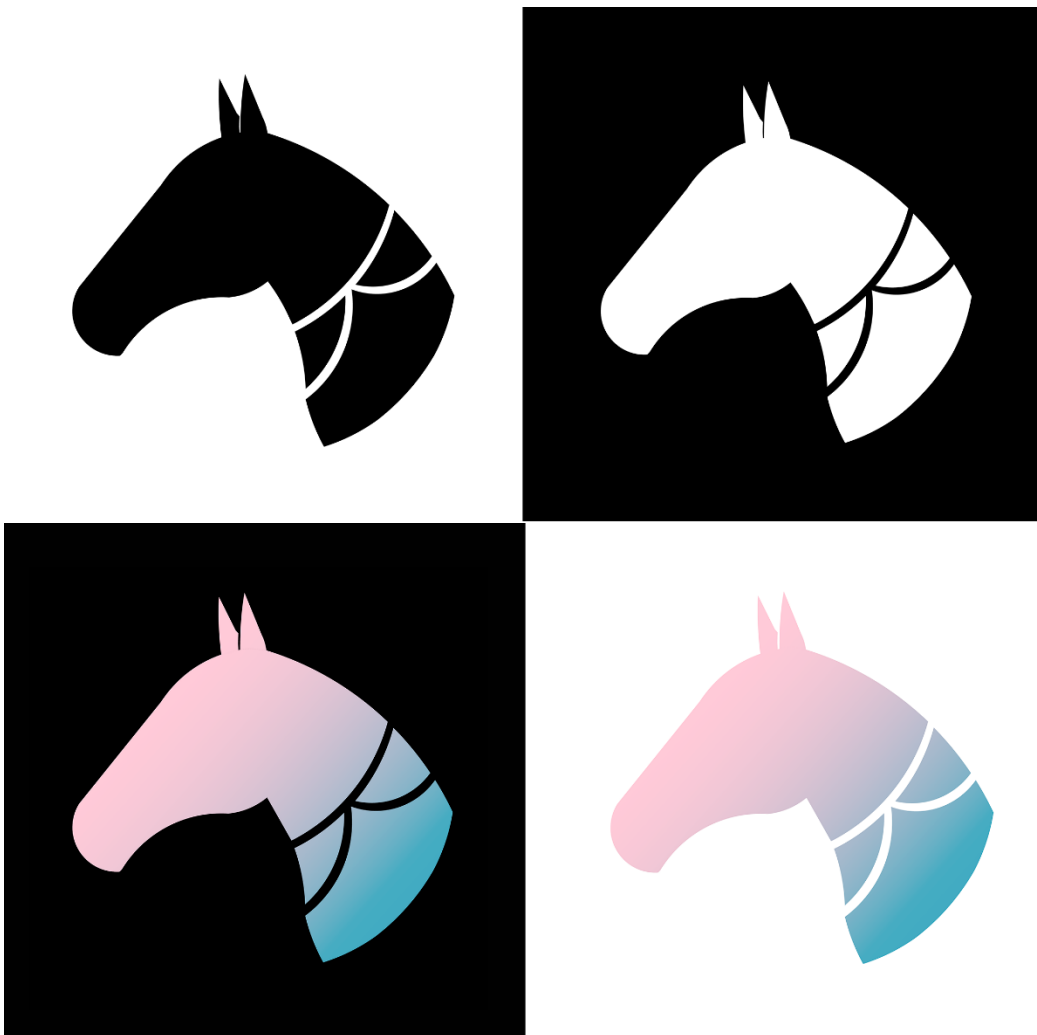


Figure 16. Color variations of the logo

The logo is used in the digital form in the website header and favicon as well as Instagram profile picture. What comes to printed materials, the logo can be seen for example in stickers sent with the order to customers.

5.4 Typography

Typefaces of Art Studio Kirstu are thorough sans serif (see chapter 2.3.2), like seen in the Figure 17. Clean and smooth like the logo design, with slightly curvy lines, adding some modern touch to its traditional theme. In the headline typeface ‘Yanone Kaffeesatz Light’ the letter ‘K’ matches one in the logo. The font is light and elegant – just like the Akhal-Teke horses. For the body text the font is ‘Open Sans Regular’. Both typefaces are found in Google Fonts with open font license. Web safe fallback font (see chapter 2.3.1) for both is Tahoma Regular.

Art Studio Kirstu

This font is Yanone Kaffeesatz Light
for headline text

This font is Open Sans Regular for body text

This font is Tahoma Regular, web safe fallback
font for both

Figure 17. Fonts for Art Studio Kirstu

6 WordPress site for Art Studio Kirstu

6.1 Webstore plugins in comparison

6.1.1 Required features

What was looked for in a webstore plugin for Art Studio Kirstu was easy management with a graphic UI. The products are constantly changing and most of them are unique, so adding, delet-

ing, and editing them needed to be simple to do. When a unique product is sold, it should automatically become unavailable for purchase. Every product has a product page which has a text area for description and a photo gallery. The customers should be able to purchase items without registering. In addition to these mandatory features, categories for different types of products, a search function, PayPal integration and account creation were desired.

When choosing any plugin, some things should always be considered. Most importantly, the plugin should be updated regularly for security and compatibility with current version of WordPress. It might not be a bad idea to also consider how many active installations it has and who made it, and additionally, does it have some certificates? Three free-to-use eCommerce plugins were compared with these requirements in mind to find a suitable one for Art Studio Kirstu.

6.1.2 WP Simple PayPal Shopping Cart

WP Simple PayPal Shopping Cart is a lightweight solution for eCommerce by a few individual contributors. The plugin has over 30 000 active installations in WordPress. Its few components can be placed anywhere in the website with a simple shortcode: "Add to cart" button, product display box, shopping cart, PayPal smart button with a few payment options and the pages shown after a purchase or cancellation. A post with following shortcodes is seen in Figure 18:

```
[wp_cart_button name="Custom Halter EYES for Classics" price="3.00"]  
[show_wp_shopping_cart]
```

ACCESSORIES, MODEL HORSES

Custom halter EYES for Classics



Custom halter & necklace

Add to Cart



Your Shopping Cart

Item Name	Quantity	Price
Custom Halter EYES for Classics	<input type="text" value="1"/>	€3.00 
Total:		€3.00

Checkout with 

Figure 18. WP Simple PayPal Shopping Cart

Plugin setup is easy and settings on PayPal, currency, component texts and URLs etc. are easy to understand. Ordered products can be seen in the orders menu and it's possible to configure sale notification emails to be sent automatically to the site admin. What comes to product management, it's not what was looked for. The product's name, price and optionally shipping cost and possible variations, e.g., size or color, are declared in the button's shortcode parameters. Editing a product means editing its shortcode – every single one individually. There is no listing of available products anywhere. The plugin also requires manual updating whenever the product is no longer available, which was not desired.

6.1.3 Ecwid Ecommerce Shopping Cart

Ecwid is a PCI DSS Level 1 certified eCommerce solution. According to their official website (2021), the company was founded in 2009 to enable small businesses to easily add online stores to their existing sites. Ecwid offers multiple ways to sell, e.g., Instagram Store and Google Shopping, in addition to the WP plugin called Ecwid Ecommerce Shopping Cart which currently has over 30 000

active installations. Ecwid is also the most popular eCommerce app on Facebook. These different platforms can be synchronized automatically, but only the online store is free to use. In addition to WordPress, it can be installed in other CMS like Weebly and Joomla. Other sales platforms – Facebook, Instagram, and Amazon – are only available for subscription, as well as the app for managing the sales on mobile.

Setting up an Ecwid store requires making an Ecwid account with an e-mail address. The store can be managed in Ecwid's own control panel or it can be integrated to WordPress' control panel. There is a built-in CRM as well as automatic email notifications and invoice generation. While there is no built-in analytics, orders can be tracked. Attention is paid on GDPR – there is a legal section with guidance in the store settings. Shipping methods are suggested by your location: Posti and GLS in Finland. Shipping rates and regions can be set for each carrier. For payment methods, Ecwid can be connected to Stripe or PayPal account. The customers can create an account but also purchase items without registering.

The appearance of the store is highly customizable, including the labels. There is also a built-in search function as a block that can be added to any page. The store language can be chosen in the free version, but localization requires subscription. Finnish is included in 50 professionally translated languages. The products can be categorized and grouped by type. The maximum number of different products is ten in the free version, which is not enough for Art Studio Kirstu. Inventory tracking is not included, which means no stock control. Like seen in Figure 19, the products in the free version are either on stock infinitely or not at all. That's not suitable for a webstore selling unique products.

The screenshot displays the Ecwid product editor for a product named "Custom Halter EYES for Classics". The interface is divided into several sections:

- Header:** Includes the Ecwid logo, a "BACK" button, the product name, and navigation options like "Add New Product", "Duplicate Product", and "Get Help".
- Left Sidebar:** A navigation menu with categories such as "Store management", "Marketing", "Reports", "Sales channels", "Overview", "Website", "Facebook", "Mobile", "Other Channels", "Configuration", "Design", "Payment", "Shipping & Pickup", "Settings", "Apps", and "My Profile".
- Main Content Area:**
 - Image Upload:** A section with a horse image and a dashed box labeled "Upload Images".
 - Product Details:** Fields for "Name" (Custom Halter EYES for Classics), "SKU" (00000), and "Weight, kg" (0). A checkbox "Requires shipping or pickup" is checked.
 - Description:** A rich text editor containing the text: "Custom made unique halter with blue eye pearls, fits Classics. Breastplate in picture not included."
 - Ribbon:** A section titled "Add or edit ribbon" with a sub-heading "Place customizable text labels like 'New' or 'Free shipping' over the main product image to attract customers and bring in more sales."
- Right Sidebar:**
 - Pricing:** Shows a price of € 3.00. It includes options to "Set 'Compare to' price", "Bulk discount pricing", and "Enable 'Pay what you want' pricing".
 - Product availability:** A toggle switch is set to "Enabled".
 - Stock Control:** Shows "In Stock (∞)" and a "Stock Control" toggle.

Figure 19. Product editor in Ecwid control panel

6.1.4 WooCommerce

WooCommerce is the most popular eCommerce solution according to Built With (2021) with over five million active installations in WordPress. WooCommerce is the first plugin by WooThemes, a company which used to make WP themes at first. The WooCommerce plugin was released in 2011 and became the fastest-growing eCommerce platform on the internet. WooThemes was acquired by Automattic in 2015. (WooCommerce, 2021).

WooCommerce's core platform is free and open source. There is neither a fee on transactions beyond that of the payment service provider. There are a lot of other plugins in WP plugin repository made to add features to WooCommerce. In WooCommerce's website there are total of 558 exten-

sions listed, both free and paid, developed by Woo and other WP developers. For example, for automatic tax calculations by city, country, or state there is a free official extension called WooCommerce Tax, which is available in Finland besides over 30 other countries.

Setting up WooCommerce is easy with its apprehensible setup wizard. All requirements for the webstore of Art Studio Kirstu were fulfilled in the core platform. Product management in WooCommerce is comprehensive and well organized. The products are listed in the control panel just like posts or pages. There is also a Stock area where all the products and their variations are listed with information on how many pieces there are in stock. The product page has categories, tags, a product image, gallery with zoom function, a description text area, price, and item count in stock. A product can be added to cart by clicking a button. Reviews and star ratings can be enabled or disabled for the product pages. Automatically chosen related products are shown after product details. It's also possible to link certain products as upsells or cross-sells. A screenshot of Edit Product view displayed in Figure 20.

Figure 20. Edit Product in WooCommerce

WooCommerce also has built-in CRM, analytics, and automatic e-mail notifications. It's possible to allow customers to make an account but also purchase products without registering. Default payment methods in WooCommerce are direct bank transfer, check payments, cash on delivery and PayPal Standard, which redirects customers to PayPal to enter their payment information. Activating PayPal Standard installs a plugin called WooCommerce PayPal Payments. There are three Shipping Methods in WooCommerce's core platform – flat rate, free shipping, and local pickup – that can be chosen for different shipping zones, which are automatically selected for the customers by their shipping addresses. Shipping Classes can be used to group similar products and to provide different rates for them.

6.2 Hosting in Altervista with CloudFlare

Altervista is one of the biggest free of charge hosting services in the world and the leading one in Italy, hosting three million websites. It's founded in 2000 and owned by Mondadori, the leading publishing company in Italy. (Altervista n.d.; Tanoto, 2021.). According to Tanoto, Altervista's data-centers are in the USA, Germany, and Great Britain (2021). Altervista offers two hosting plans for free: a traditional hosting service called AlterSite with support for PHP, MySQL and FTP connection, and an unlimited WordPress hosting service called AlterBlog (see chapter 3.3). Switching an existing account between these two can be done at any time with a single click.

Altervista has a partnership with CloudFlare, an American company offering security and performance optimization (CloudFlare, 2015). Their global CDN service was named "Customer's Choice" by Gartner's Peer Insights survey in 2020 (CDN Reviews, 2020). In addition to CDN, CloudFlare offers a spam filter by pre-blocking suspicious traffic. Altervista activates CloudFlare automatically in case the system detects abnormal traffic on the site. (CloudFlare, 2015). Alternatively, these services as well as an SSL certificate can be activated with one click in Altervista's control panel. CloudFlare's own dashboard seen in Figure 21 has more settings on these as well as additional tools.

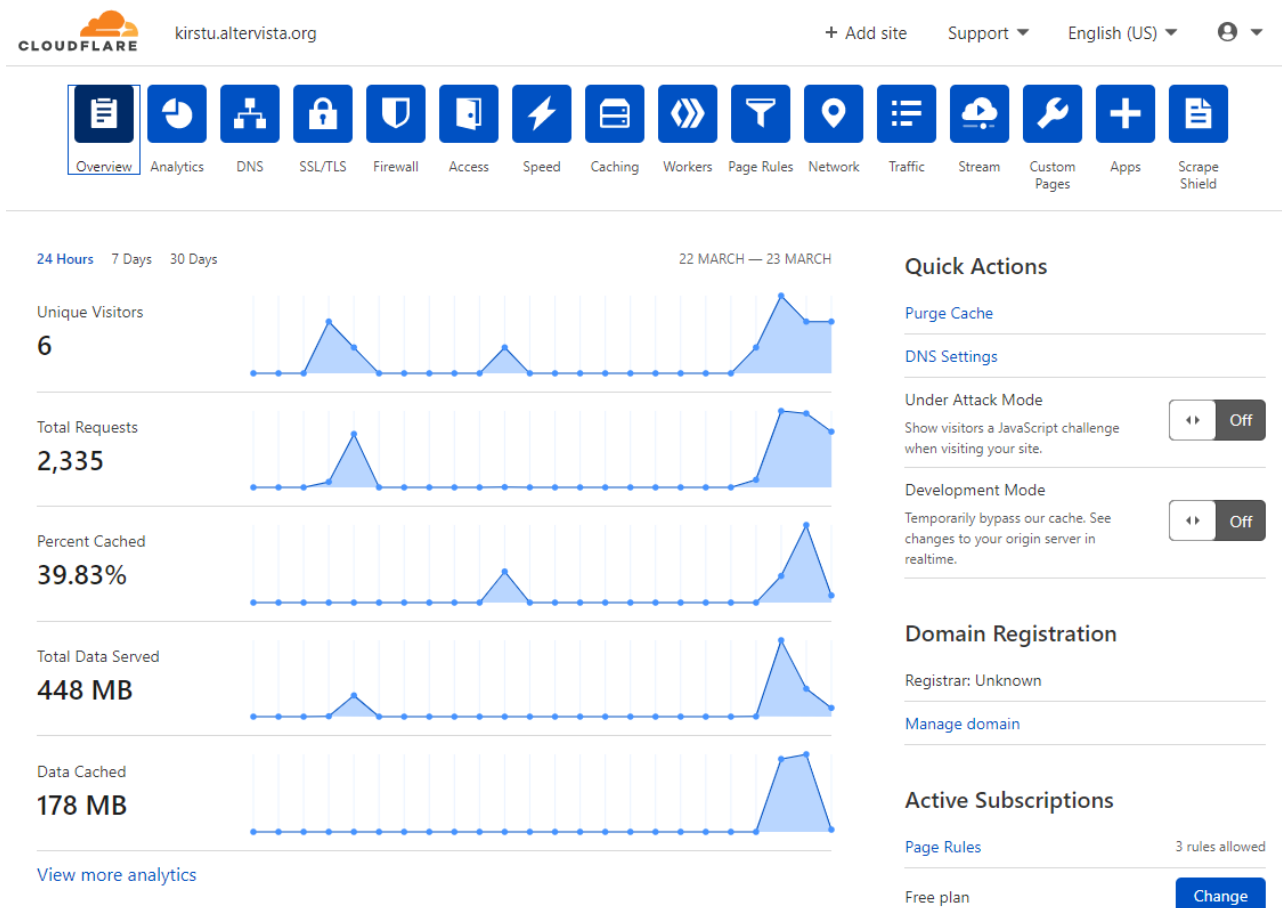


Figure 21. CloudFlare Dashboard

CloudFlare displays analytics on site traffic, threats, and performance. It also gives information about site loading speed. In the free plan there are following tools available for optimizing it:

- Brotli compression
- Auto Minify reduces the file size of source code by removing all unnecessary characters from JS, CSS and HTML
- Rocket Loader improves paint times by asynchronously loading JavaScript

There are also settings on SSL/TLS and firewall. What comes to network, there are protocols like QUIC and WebSockets available for encryption and performance improvements. All of these tools and protocols were taken into use for optimization of Art Studio Kirstu site.

HTTPS connection is a mandatory for a webstore and CDN preferable for international audience, like described in chapter 3.3. Other performance-optimizing tools were also welcomed as the site is heavy on content, especially photos – loading speed is crucial for user experience but also SEO,

like mentioned in chapter 4.2. Altvista was picked for Art Studio Kirstu since it offers these services built-in for free, in addition to unlimited bandwidth and storage. Besides, Altvista offers WordPress hosting with a one-click installation in addition to regular hosting. There are Altvista's own additions in WordPress' control panel, e.g., Earn and Promote. Since the beginning, Altvista has been offering bloggers tools to earn with their site, including ads and social media sharing. These are not in use in Art Studio Kirstu.

6.3 Content, site structure and theme

6.3.1 Responsive design

The site for Art Studio Kirstu was designed desktop-first for dynamic and engaging visual appearance – which might be the most important aspect for a portfolio site. Desktop view is full-width, maximum width of content being 1920px. Most of the users are expected to find the website through the Instagram community, at least in the beginning, which underlines the importance of a responsive and mobile-friendly theme. Therefore, it was made sure the website worked properly on mobile and tablet devices as well. Meanwhile the desktop site displays portfolio posts in archive and photos in galleries in three columns, in mobile there is only one column. Some mobile views can be seen in Figure 22 and a tablet view of a post in Figure 23.

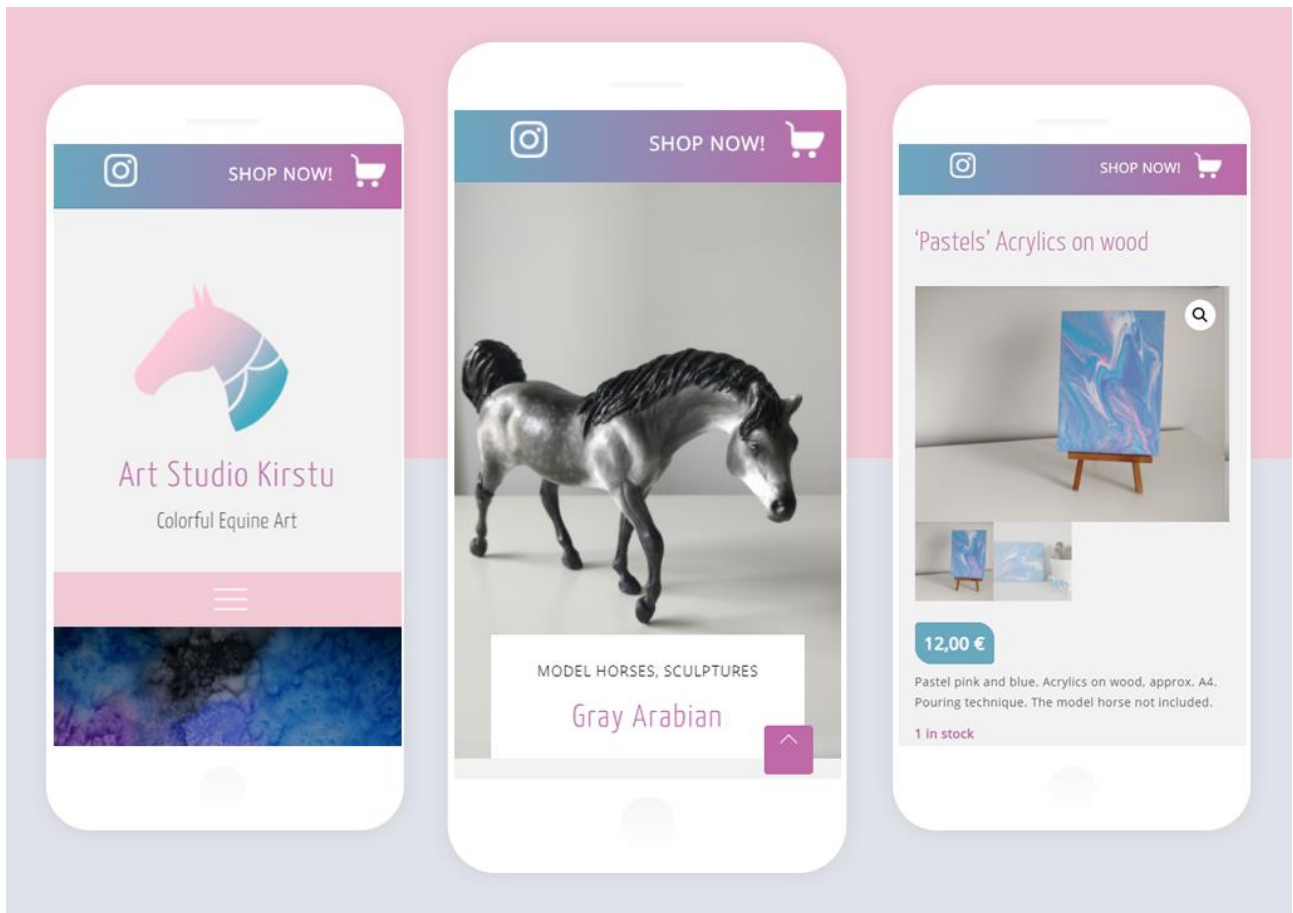


Figure 22. Mobile views of Art Studio Kirstu website

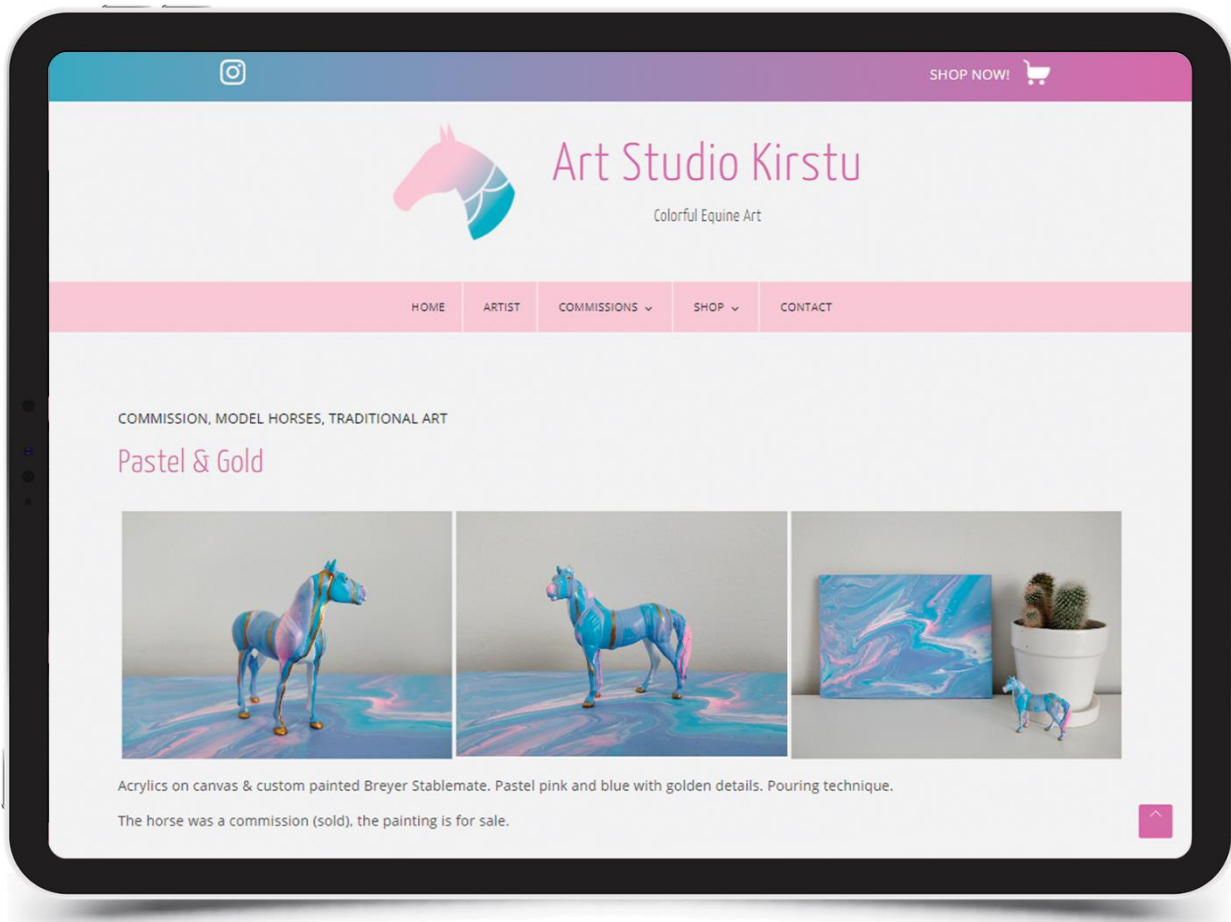


Figure 23. Tablet view of a post on Art Studio Kirstu website

6.3.2 Structure and navigation

All pages include a header containing two navigation bars and the logo and site title in the middle. The upper navigation bar contains location information and shopping cart on the right and social media icons with links to Instagram and DeviantArt profiles on the left. The primary navigation has links to all main pages on the site: portfolio, artist, commissions, shop, and contact. In mobile the primary navigation bar is collapsed into a dropdown. At the end of each page there is a footer containing copyright information and links to legal pages. Website structure is displayed in Figure 24.

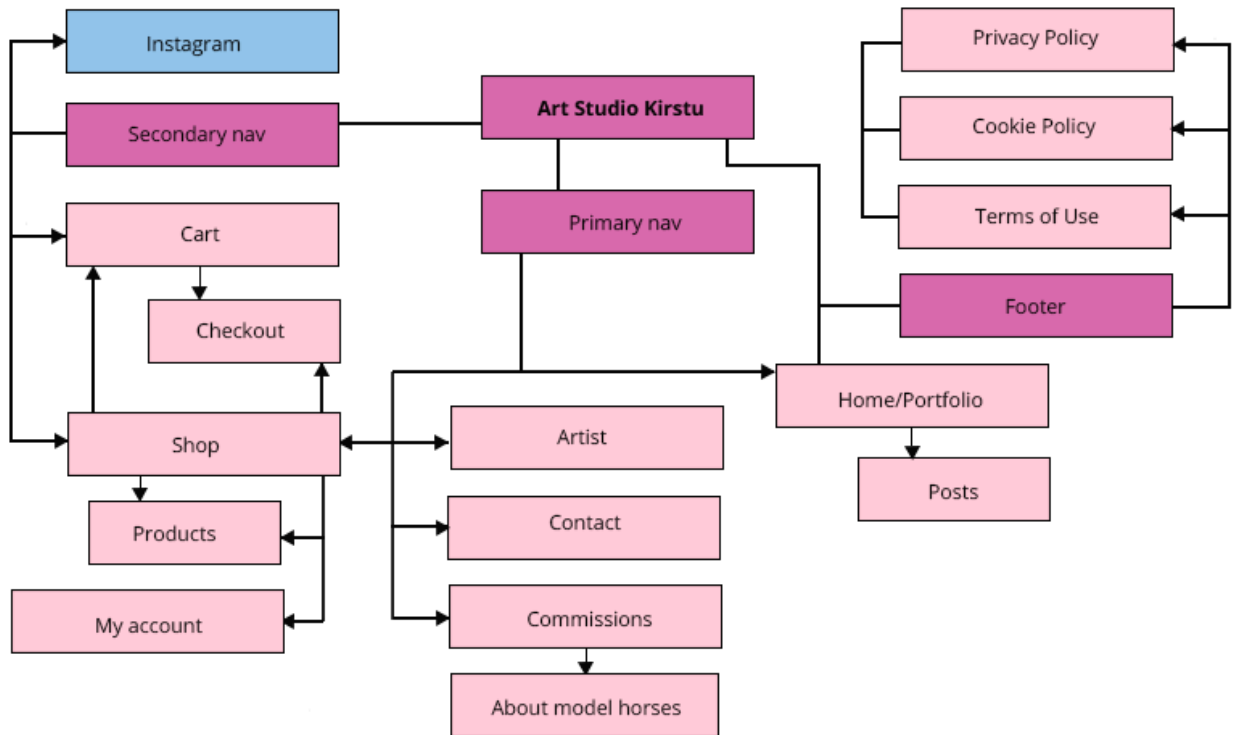


Figure 24. Website structure

6.3.3 Content

The main function of the site is displaying Uusivirta's art, which is why the portfolio is placed as the landing page. Artworks are added to the site as posts. The featured image in the post is the one shown in the portfolio. Posts are divided into hierarchal categories, like advised in chapter 4.2:

- Commission
- Decor
- Digital art
- Model horses
 - Accessories
 - Medallions
 - Sculptures
- Traditional art

Tags are used to represent more specific details, like different color schemes, painting techniques, model horse producers, and types of horses what comes to color, gender, and breed etc.

On the landing page, after the header there is a slider with five photos, each representing different category. Three photos are shown at once. The posts in the slider are easy to change in the customizer (introduced in chapter 3.4). Following the slider there is an excerpt of the artist page, and after that a call to action for commissions. The last element on the landing page is the beginning of the post archive containing all the art uploaded to the site. The post archive is divided into pages, one page displaying maximum of 9 posts. See the landing page on desktop in Figure 25.

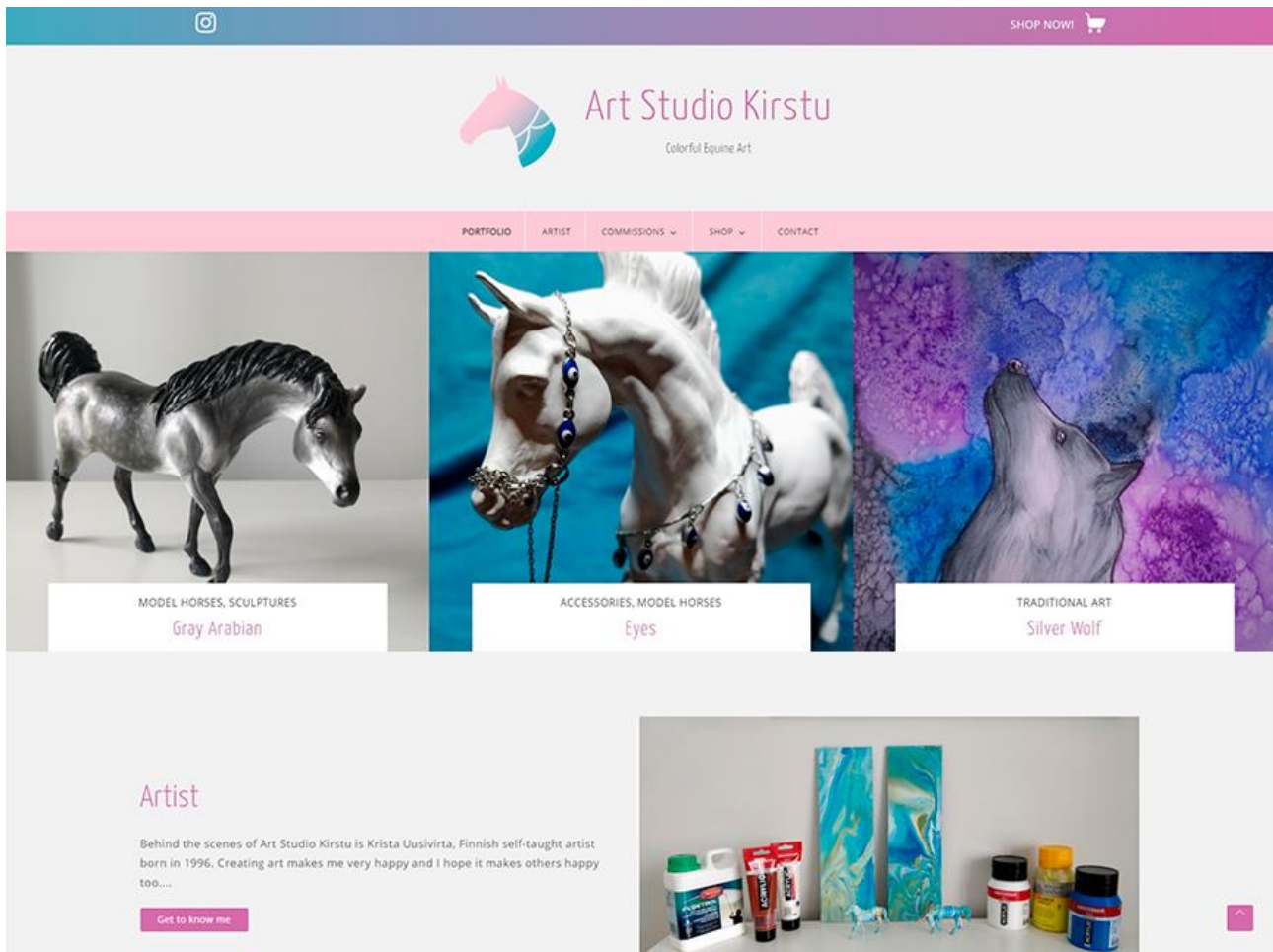
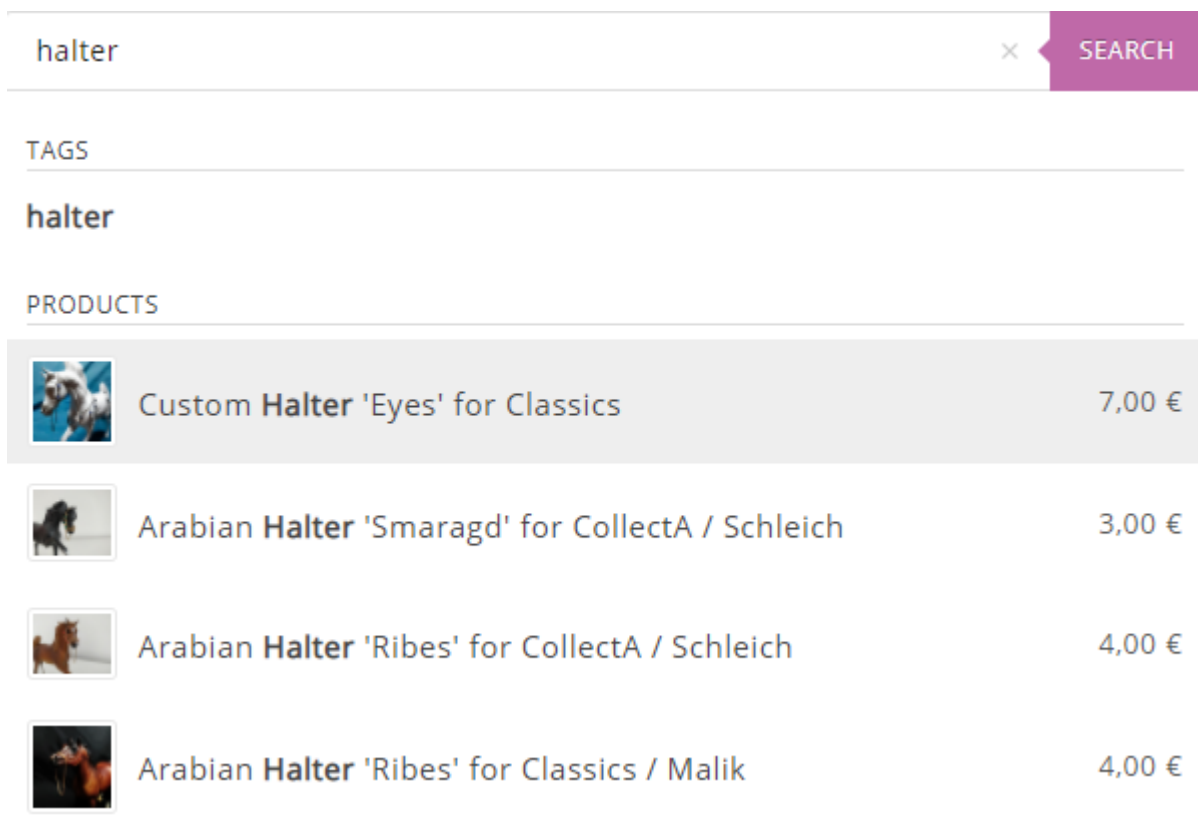


Figure 25. Landing page of Art Studio Kirstu

The artist page has biography of Uusivirta and a photo of her. According to Anderson (2020), visual representation of the entrepreneur makes customers more likely to engage with them and relate to their business. In the end of the artist page there is also an Instagram feed made with Smash Balloon Instagram Feed plugin which currently has over one million active installations.

Commissions are sold outside the webstore since their prices vary individually based on the difficulty, materials, and size of the artwork. Therefore, there is page containing information about the available commissions and pricing guidelines. In the end of the page there are three most recent posts in the Commission-category displayed. Additionally, there is a sub-page 'About model horses' that has some dictionary on model horses for customers new to scene. For ordering commissions etc., the website has a contact page with a simple contact form made with plugin Contact Form 7 by Takayuki Miyoshi.

WooCommerce generates a few of its own pages: shop, individual product pages, customer account page, cart, and checkout. WooCommerce also offers its own 19 blocks that can be used in any page. The Search Product block does not show the results until user clicks the button which redirects to another page. One free, easy option for an asynchronous search function is a plugin called FiboSearch - AJAX Search for WooCommerce by Damian Góra. Search button is placed anywhere on the website with a shortcode, and its appearance can be customized in the settings. See Figure 26.







TAGS		
halter		
PRODUCTS		
	Custom Halter 'Eyes' for Classics	7,00 €
	Arabian Halter 'Smaragd' for CollectA / Schleich	3,00 €
	Arabian Halter 'Ribes' for CollectA / Schleich	4,00 €
	Arabian Halter 'Ribes' for Classics / Malik	4,00 €

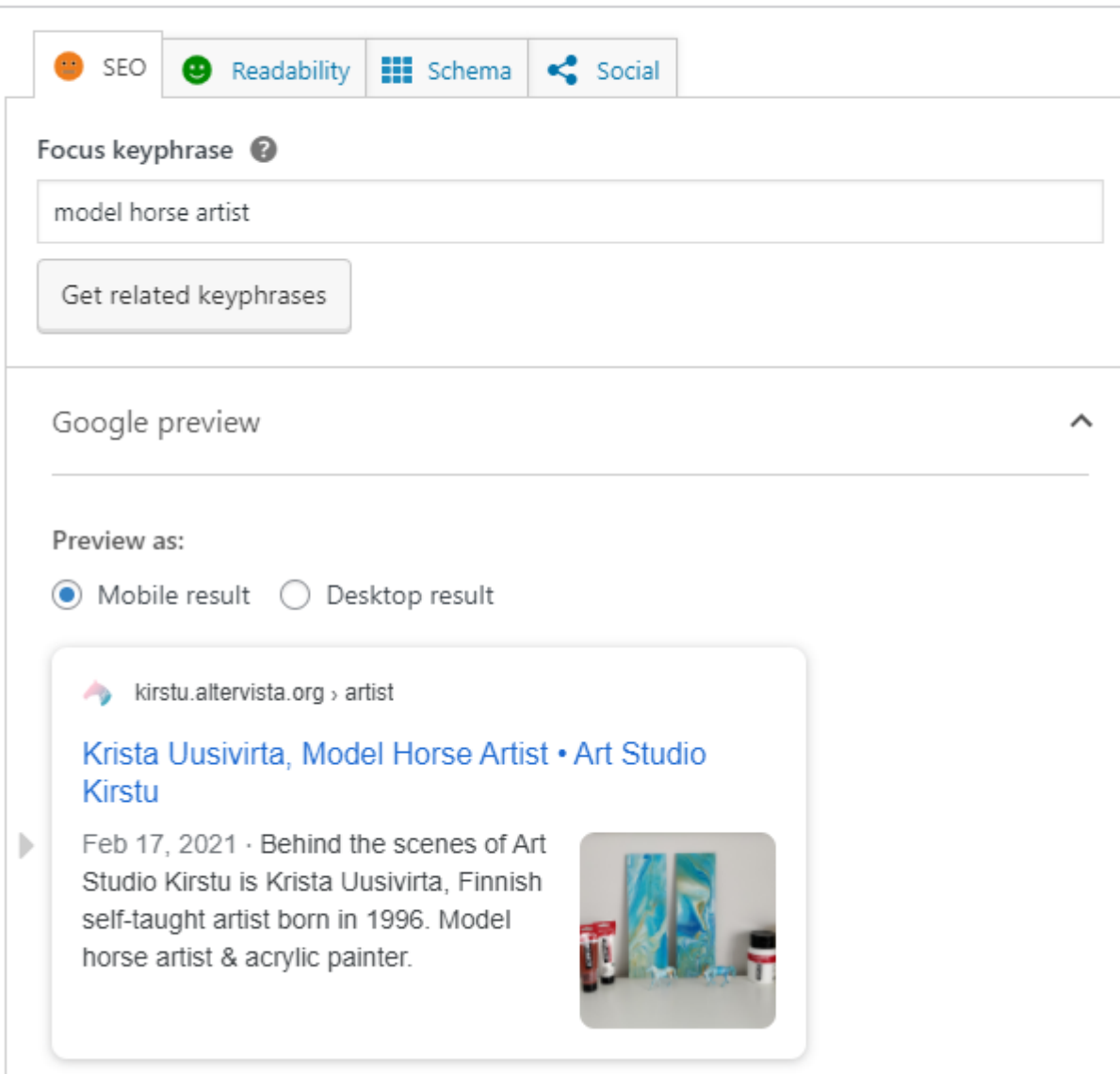
Figure 26. FiboSearch - AJAX Search for WooCommerce

Legal pages are pages that are required by GDPR as well as crucial to a webstore: Privacy Policy, Cookie Policy and Terms and Conditions. GDPR Cookie Consent by WebToffee, a plugin with over one million active installations, was used for creating a cookie policy and a pop-up cookie notice banner in footer. The plugin scanned the site and found cookies with their usage explained were added to a table in the cookie policy.

Contents of the website – photos and text – were created together with the assignor. As a portfolio site there are a lot of photos: all art pieces are photographed, usually from multiple points of view. Thesis process included a few photo shoots and editing of all photos, including a bunch of older ones Uusivirta had taken herself. A plugin called SimpLy Gallery Block & Lightbox was used for more visually pleasing layouts as well as lightbox and lazy loading functionalities for the galleries in the portfolio posts.

Yoast SEO was picked to improve site's search engine ranking. See chapter 4.2. Yoast SEO is a plugin published in 2010, owned by the company Yoast (The history of Yoast, 2021). It's probably the most popular SEO plugin with currently over five million active installations on WordPress. The free version offers technical WP configuration, an automatically generated XML sitemap, page analysis, Google preview etc. The page analysis is divided into two categories: readability and SEO, which includes usage of the focus keyphrase and links as well as length of text. SEO title and meta description are easily edited and analyzed in the go. Yoast SEO uses colored smileys to visualize the analysis: green for good results, orange for improvements and red for problems. See Figure 27. There is also a premium version with more features available for subscription.

Yoast SEO



The screenshot displays the Yoast SEO interface. At the top, there are four tabs: 'SEO' (selected), 'Readability', 'Schema', and 'Social'. Below the tabs, the 'Focus keyphrase' field contains the text 'model horse artist'. A button labeled 'Get related keyphrases' is positioned below the input field. The 'Google preview' section is expanded, showing a preview of the artist page. The preview includes the URL 'kirstu.altervista.org › artist', the title 'Krista Uusivirta, Model Horse Artist • Art Studio Kirstu', and a snippet of text: 'Feb 17, 2021 · Behind the scenes of Art Studio Kirstu is Krista Uusivirta, Finnish self-taught artist born in 1996. Model horse artist & acrylic painter.' An image of two abstract paintings is also visible in the preview.

Figure 27. Yoast SEO: Google Preview of the artist page

To find proper keyphrases for Art Studio Kirstu, a website called AnswerThePublic was used. It offers comprehensive data of the keyword for chosen country and language, visualized, and categorized to questions, prepositions, comparisons, alphabetical and related. Two queries per day are free.

6.3.4 Child theme customizations

The WP theme for Art Studio Kirstu was done by creating a child theme like introduced in chapter 3.4. Mik by Shark Themes was picked as the parent theme as it was clean and dynamic. Most importantly, the front page had some desired elements ready: a photo slider, a call to action with full-width background, and posts archive with multiple columns. See Figure 28 for the official theme screenshot.

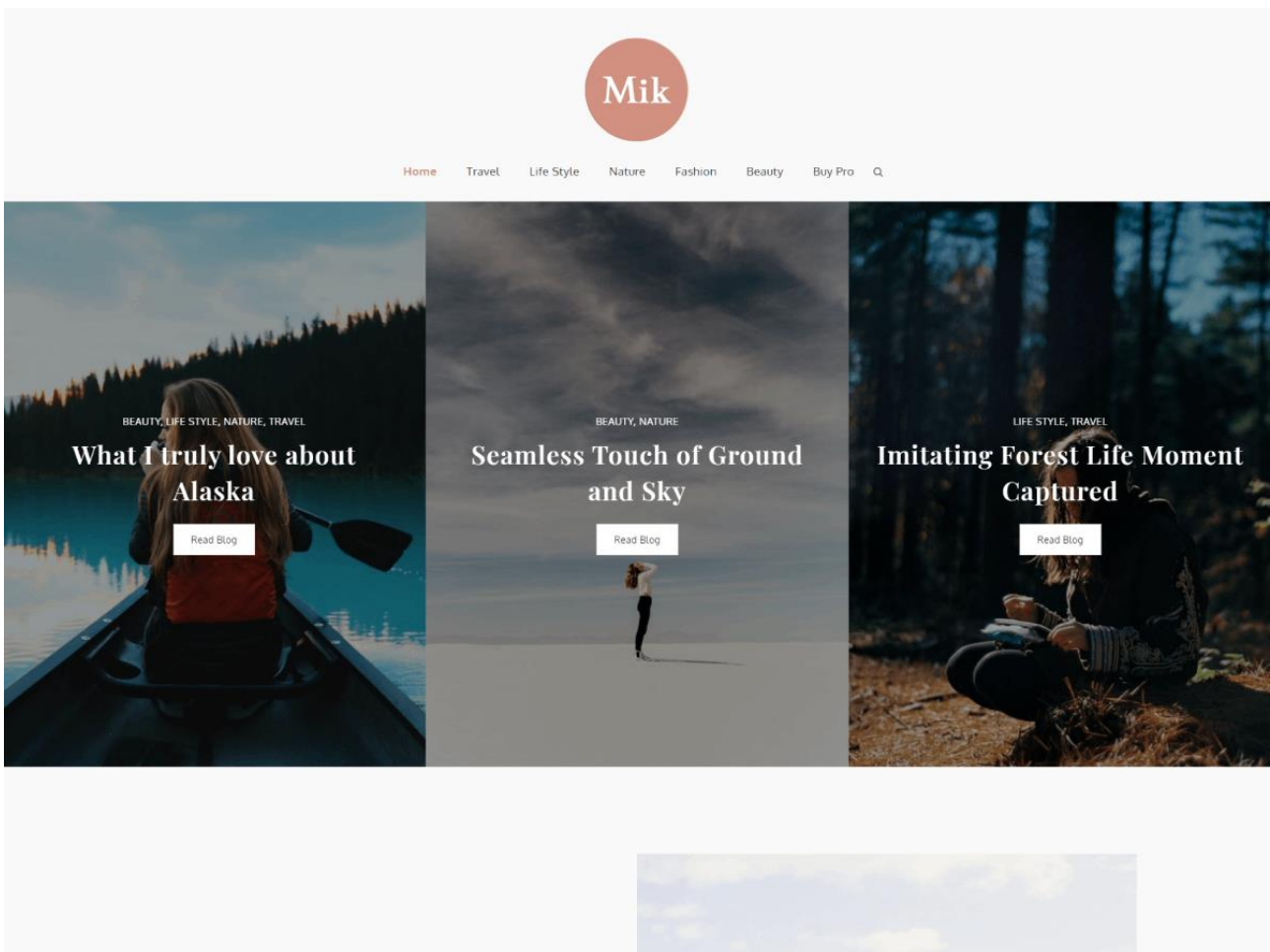


Figure 28. Mik by Shark Themes

Customizations were mostly visual, hence done to the CSS. Light grey for background and dark grey for typeface were picked to create a clean, easy-to-read look without extreme contrast. Typefaces and the color palette for highlighting were set in the branding phase introduced in chapters 5.2 and 5.4. Uusivirta picked the strong pink as the primary color for the website. It's used in headlines, table borders, buttons, and primary navigation's background. Purple is used in hovered links

since it's slightly different from the dark grey typeface color. Blue is used in elements needed to pop out from the rest of the site, like price tags in the product pages. On the other hand, light pink is used in the elements that needed some color but not that much attention, and as a hover color for buttons.

The parent theme had two menu locations: primary and footer. In child theme a third one was added: a fixed navigation bar with an Instagram link on the left and shop links on the right: a text-link "Shop now!" to the catalog and a self-drawn icon linking to the shopping cart, like briefly mentioned in chapter 6.3.2. Gradient of pink and blue is used as the background color for the fixed navigation bar, like in the colored version of the logo.

Commissions-page shows three most recent posts under commissions-category, like mentioned in chapter 6.3.3. They are displayed similarly to the front-page slider. See Figure 29 for the custom query.

```
// Page 'Commissions': Added to default page template in child theme
// Displaying latest posts in category 'commissions'
?>
<h2>Latest commissions</h2>
<?php
$args = array(
    'post_type'      => 'post',
    'post_status'    => 'publish',
    'category_name'  => 'commission',
    'posts_per_page' => 3,
    'orderby'        => 'post_date',
    'order'          => 'DESC',
);
$arr_posts = new WP_Query($args);

if ($arr_posts->have_posts() ) :
    while ($arr_posts->have_posts() ) :
        $arr_posts->the_post();
        ?>
        <div class="kirstu-post-block">
            <?php echo the_post_thumbnail(); ?>
            <?php echo the_category(); ?>
            <a class="kirstu-title" href="<?php the_permalink();?>">
                <?php echo the_title(); ?>
            </a>
        </div>
    <?php
    endwhile;
endif;
```

Figure 29. Query for showing the latest commissions

Some minor changes and additions were done to following pages as well:

- Error 404 has a photo
- Post archive has three columns instead of one or two
- Posts do not have a header image
- Pages do not have comments enabled

All modified child theme files are listed in Figure 30.

wp-content > themes > mik-child











Name	Size
 404	2 KB
 archive	2 KB
 footer	2 KB
 functions	2 KB
 header	3 KB
 page	2 KB
 page-commissions	3 KB
 screenshot	542 KB
 single	2 KB
 style	20 KB

Figure 30. Child theme files

7 Analytics

7.1 Analytics tools

Separate analytics tools were not needed to inspect web traffic of Art Studio Kirstu as they came with hosting choice: both Alservista and CloudFlare offer analytics. Alservista displays its own Statistics section in the WP dashboard, displaying total and average single visitors and pageviews

- on daily basis for the last 30 days,
- on weekly basis for current and last week and
- on monthly basis for current and previous months

Single visitors and pageviews of past month are displayed with line charts. Statistics also show percentage of visitors and pageviews increase compared to the previous week and month, with green color if it's positive and with red if negative. According to Altermista Staff (2015), the statistics include bots and crawlers. All time statistics of single visitors and page views can be downloaded in CSV format.

Cloudflare offers area charts on web traffic by requests and bandwidth (total, cached and uncached), and unique visitors (total, maximum and minimum per day). According to Cloudflare, the number of unique visitors is calculated based on the unique IP addresses requesting content from the site, which means crawlers are also included. In security section there are total threats with top threat type displayed similarly to web traffic. Top crawlers are also listed. Cloudflare displays web traffic and threats by country on a map, listing five top countries. GeoIP database is used to map IP addresses to countries. Performance section displays pie charts of client HTTP versions and saved bandwidth as well as a content type breakdown. Available time periods for all stats are last month, week and 24 hours.

7.2 Visibility of Art Studio Kirstu

Like many other artists over the past decade, also Uusivirta has switched from sharing her art on DeviantArt to Instagram in 2019. That has been a good call: her following is ten times bigger on IG. In defiance of the cultural change on interaction described in chapter 4.1.1, Uusivirta tells she gets more engagement on IG than she ever did in DeviantArt. Most of her posts receive comments, not just likes. Her followers are active, but so is she. In addition to finished artworks, she frequently shares work in progress and occasionally involves followers with polls etc. in Stories. See chapter 4.1.2.

The website of Art Studio Kirstu was published on March 15th, 2021 and Cloudflare activated in March 17. The live website was tested in many different mobile, tablet and desktop devices by multiple users including Uusivirta herself. Browsers in use were Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Microsoft Edge. Little fixes and fine adjustments were done based on the feedback collected. Content was added along the way. Active advertising started almost a month later, as the social media campaign in Instagram was launched on April 13th, 2021. The logo was set as the profile picture and website linked through Linktree, a simple service displaying all your links.

The campaign itself is a giveaway with a simple agenda: get the existing social media followers to check out the website and share it to their friends. To enter the giveaway, they must tell the name of their favorite piece of art in the portfolio in the giveaway post's comments. This requires them checking the website before entering the giveaway. For extra entry they can share the post in their own IG story. Following the account is also required to participate in the giveaway. This is a common way to organize giveaways on Instagram today. As a giveaway prize there is a free commission, a custom painted model horse. When launching the campaign, the IG account had total of 673 followers. During the first two weeks of the campaign the number of followers increased to 726. The giveaway increased the website's traffic as well, making the number of unique visitors per day biggest so far: 358 in April 13, like seen in Figure 31. The chart was created from the data in a CSV file offered by Altermista Statistics.

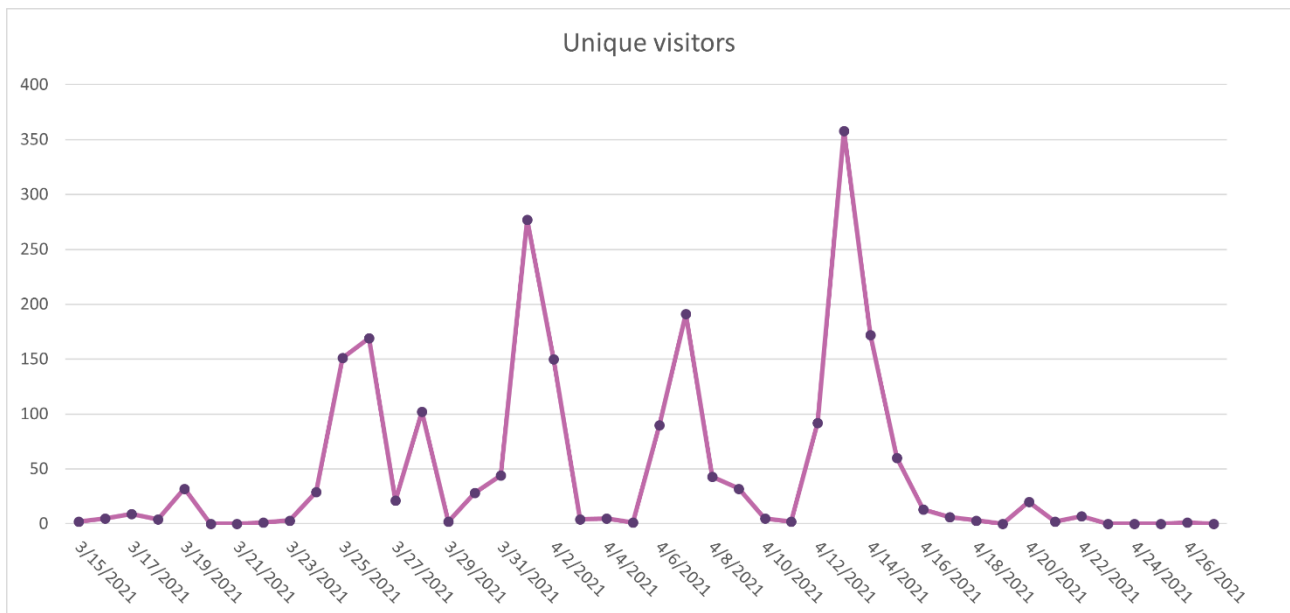


Figure 31. Unique visitors from 15th March to 26th April 2021

The audience of Art Studio Kirstu is international, like introduced in chapter 1.2. Uusivirta tells her customers and other artists she interacts with come from the US, UK, Netherlands, France, Sweden, and Russia in addition to Finland. It can be deduced from Web Traffic Requests by Country that her followers have visited the website after the IG campaign. A screenshot from Cloudflare Analytics is shown in Figure 32.

Web Traffic Requests by Country

Last month



Top Traffic Countries / Regions	
Last month	
Country / Region	Traffic
Finland	13,413
United States	2,900
United Kingdom	1,748
Netherlands	934
France	660

Figure 32. Cloudflare Analytics: Web Traffic Requests by Country

8 Conclusions

The objectives of the thesis were to build a visual identity and a WordPress site with a webstore for Krista Uusivirta as an artist, like stated in chapter 1.3. Art Studio Kirstu was born. The psychological aspects of colors and shapes were studied in chapter 2 to gain a good understanding of their effective and appropriate use before creating the elements of visual identity: color palette, logo, and typography. Learning how to utilize golden ratio in logo design was a fascinating experience for a math-loving graphic designer. Consistency between all the elements in visual identity was achieved: colors and shapes go hand in hand expressing femininity, softness, and elegance, like described in chapter 5.

Uusivirta's social media channels of choice, DeviantArt before and Instagram today, were studied in perspective of history of sharing art online in chapter 4.1.1. It was interesting to notice how people, like Uusivirta in this case, go after the trends as the world changes – and how it benefits them. Her IG profile was not switched from Personal into Professional neither IG Shop created during this thesis, but these could be useful options in the future. See chapter 4.1.2 for comparison.

The development project was executed according to the schedule set in the start: visual identity was ready in the beginning of February and the website was published in March, like disclosed in chapter 7.2. Reasons behind WordPress being the most popular CMS in the world were studied in chapter 3. WooCommerce was proven significantly better than the other two ecommerce plugins in comparison done in chapter 6.1 and thus brought into use for Art Studio Kirstu. All desired content and functionality, described in chapter 6.3, were implemented on the site. The site was tested to be responsive with multiple mobile, tablet and desktop devices with a few different browsers.

Statistics on web traffic were collected until the end of April, two weeks after launching the giveaway campaign on Instagram. Both web traffic on the site and number of followers on IG grew after the campaign as anticipated, like presented in chapter 7.2. What's most important, the assignor was pleased with the outcome. Feedback was collected from her and others along the way, hence improvements could be made on the go. Co-operation with the assignor worked well overall, like expected by multiple hobby projects done together along the years. See chapter 5.1.

The most challenging part in the development project was building the child theme in WordPress. See chapter 3.4. A lot of time was spent in finding certain elements and their CSS classes in browser's inspector tool as well as trying to understand how the site is constructed. Some compromises were made on site structure due the changes being too complicated to do within a child theme. Process led to a conclusion that it's a lot more straightforward to build the whole theme from the scratch yourself.

What's the number one priority in further development of the Art Studio Kirstu's site, however, is even more optimization. The site's loading speed is not as good as desired, and that's crucial for

both user experience and SEO, like stated in chapter 6.2. Google's free tool PageSpeed Insights offers critical data of site's performance but also advice on how to fix the problems, so it probably will be utilized soon. All the posts and pages are not yet honed for SEO either, but the tools are ready-to-use since Yoast SEO plugin is already activated, like introduced in chapter 6.3.3. The webstore could be developed further by adding more payment methods and creating comprehensive set of shipping zones and rates for international markets.

Nonetheless, the site is up and running, consistent with the visual identity and functioning properly – and giving new opportunities for the artist in question. Art Studio Kirstu was already accepted to Artisan Gallery of Breyer Fest 2021, an annual convention organized by the leading model horse producer in the world, Breyer. This year convention is held online for international audience due to Covid-19 pandemic, in July 16 to 18. A website and more importantly a webstore of her own are already making her hobby more like a business.

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