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COURSE: Grafisk Design och Medier-VT24
ASSIGNMENT: Practical Exercise 4B

PROJECT: WEBSITE MARIAUHLIN.SE (COMPUTER VERSION)

PROJECT INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH AND PROCESS

I am building a website for my practice. My research included moodboards, desktop reviews of portfolio sites, YouTube tutorials, a SWOT analysis, and a short- and long-term vision exercise. The design process has followed the stages of design thinking — Empathize, Define, Ideate, Prototype, Test — in a non-linear, iterative workflow.

The primary challenge is to present a multidisciplinary practice — photography, fine art and project management — in one coherent platform. Because my background is diverse, I need the site to demonstrate both professional depth and creative range. Several sections currently lack sufficient, up-to-date content to stand alone; my short-term response has been to consolidate material under a clear About text and a condensed homepage summary. I position myself as a distinctive professional resource through my broad capabilities, so it is essential that the website substantiates these claims visually and editorially.

An additional challenge has been the site's unfinished state and inconsistent visual system. Eager to publish, and with limited prior web-build experience, the initial launch involved a steep learning curve. The site's early design showed inconsistent typography, color, and layout. This practical exercise addresses those issues through a focused redesign and consolidation of visual rules.

USER IMPRESSION GOALS: When visiting the site, I aim for an impression that is creative, visual, high-quality, smart, professional, playful and memorable. The intended immediate emotional response on the homepage is warm, vibrant and competent. To achieve this, the homepage uses a saturated cloud image as a unifying visual motif — a symbolic, "cloud-based" representation of a digital self.

COLOR & VISUAL SYSTEM

HOME PAGE: a high-saturation cloud hero defines the palette. — analogous hues (yellow, orange, pink) with purple/blue accents for contrast. Colors close in value with high resolution give at soft yet vibrant effect. White type is used on the landing page to ensure strong contrast and legibility against the vivid background.

SITE BODY: palette elements from the homepage create visual continuity, while warmer, earthy tones moderate contrast across content areas to reduce eye strain and keep focus on imagery. Body text on interior pages is near-black (coal) for optimal readability; accent colors are drawn from the cloud image to tie the site together.

METHODS & LAYOUT PRINCIPLES

HOME PAGE: text placement follows principles of similarity, proximity and symmetry. Headline and navigation elements are arranged to form a compact, visually centered composition. Text hierarchy is structured into four levels — name, titles, information, menu — to direct attention and create balance.

SITE PAGES: recurring color accents, consistent typographic choices, and a fixed content width (1140 px) support recognition. Each section has a subtle aesthetic variation so users experience a sense of difference while maintaining an overall system. Visual interest is created with diverse image formats and selective use of GSAP animation.

TYPOGRAPHY

GENERAL GUIDELINE: Futura is the primary identity typeface. Helvetica and Archivo Black serve as reliable web fallbacks and display alternatives.

WEBSITE USE: Because Futura is not available as a web font, site text uses Helvetica and Archivo Black. Futura is reserved for rasterized applications (images, PDFs and other uploaded assets) where the original type can be embedded visually.

TOOLS & PRODUCTION

KEY PRODUCTION TOOLS: InDesign, Photoshop, Lightroom, Bridge, Midjourney, WordPress, Elementor, Astra, GSAP (animation), Topaz Photo AI, and Adobe Fonts. These tools supported mockups, image production, and site implementation.

REFLECTIONS

GENERAL REFLECTION: Overall, I'm pleased with the progress: I was able to synthesize a multidisciplinary past into a cohesive online presence. Learning how to build and design a website has been challenging but valuable. There is still substantial work remaining — continued content population, responsive refinements, and SEO improvements.

ON TOOLS & WORKFLOW: Because a strict grid system is not native to WordPress + Elementor, I used proportional mockups in Photoshop and InDesign to position menus, headlines and content blocks. For future redesigns I will consider Figma for a more flexible, design-system approach.

ON HOMEPAGE DECISIONS: I appreciate the off-center cloud composition — it avoids static symmetry and adds visual energy. The bold name treatment on the homepage balances personal visibility with content-first intentions; I expect to revisit this decision as the site matures.

ON COLOR CHOICES: The homepage image uses unusually high saturation compared with my usual palette, which created a challenge in connecting the landing visual to the site's other pages. Using the image's colors as menu hovers and accents helps unify the experience and creates a more holistic visual identity.

ON USER EXPERIENCE & STORYTELLING: On the COMMISSIONS, FINE ART and ART-IN-PROGRESS sections, I worked intentionally with design as storytelling and with emotional sequencing. That approach has improved the user journey by highlighting process, context and creative intent.

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