

# Analysis, Molli McGrath Web Site

**Client: Molli McGrath** (*not actual person*)

**Site: mollimcgrath.com** (*not actual site*)

## Overall Look & Design

This is what I would call a typical-looking artist's site from yesteryear. It is basic, functional, displays the artist's work – but it does not SELL the artist or her work. That is because **it does not fulfill the Three I's** – it is not *interesting*, not *interactive* and not *informative* – thus the viewer is going to interpret the artist and her work as being “not interesting” – which is not true. It really does not communicate who the artist is because the site itself does not reflect the artist's personality, nor does its content tell us very much about her. In addition, it does not present an easy way for me to purchase her work.

When I checked the **links on the site** – which are all good, by the way – I was surprised by how many there were – **456**. Just perusing the site, I would never have guessed there were so many. The site just doesn't seem to have that much content. So it fools you. That, I think, is part of the reason it is boring: after a while, you feel like you're looking at the same thing over and over. Every page looks the same, so the work starts looking the same. But once we're finished, what have we really learned about Molli McGrath – the person, the artist or her work.

So the first thing I would do, as far as the web site is concerned, is to get a new one. **I would suggest a WordPress site**. They are easy to maintain, and they offer a lot of different options, as far as portfolio templates. Below is the address of a page that contains **over 90 different portfolio templates** – many of them excellent. Peruse them

and tell me which you like the best. Then we can talk about whether any or all of the ones you picked would work for you.

<http://www.tripwiremagazine.com/2012/09/wordpress-portfolio-themes.html>

**My fee for setting up a WordPress web site** for the amount of content you have would be around \$1150. (With discounts – your \$150 deposit plus the \$250 gift certificate you hold – it would be around **\$750**.) That would include, not only setting up the photos and copy, but the categories, pages, links, search engine optimization (SEO), plug-ins, tools, etc., as well as tutoring you on how to do your own posts and uploads of photographs, as well as getting you started with your first several blog posts. Custom designed theme templates, such as those on the page above, usually require an additional fee – usually a modest one – unless you decide to go with one of WordPress' free themes, which I can also show you. They're somewhat basic, but they can be customized to a certain extent. I would look at the ones above first.

WordPress web sites are blogs by nature, which, in my opinion, make them perfect for the artist. They work like a journal. You are building a following by sharing your thoughts and experiences with them, which is exactly what the artist needs to do. So it fulfills all aspects of social media, but it also has the permanence of a traditional web site. And, with the proper plug-ins and SEO in place, everything is being indexed with the search engines, so that it becomes very easy for people to find you by using the right key words in their search – key words that we will have built into your site.

## **Overall Navigation**

There are basically only six buttons on your site: home, about, contact, works, galleries and links. There isn't even a search function; so if I want to search for a particular type of art, I'm sunk. My only option is to spend a lot of time perusing the site. Very few people will do that. They want to find what they're looking for and then leave. So what

will happen is, they will look at your home page, get through the first couple of clicks on your “Works” page, possibly look at your “About” page for a few minutes, and then leave. Once we get you set up on a WordPress site, we’ll add Google Analytics to it so we can see exactly what people are doing. But, for now, that is a typical scenario.

**Ideally, what we want to do is to have a plan in place** – a strategy, of what we want people to do when they come to your site – and a goal of where we want them to end up and what we want them to do. **That final step is called *conversion***. It is one thing to increase your traffic so that a lot of people are looking at your work. It is quite another to have them leaving comments, making purchases, etc. Everything should be designed to point the visitor to the final step of conversion – whatever we decide that is going to be. That takes intentionality and a lot of effort – but it is no different than the gallery owner who decides to place your work in the window of their gallery with a photograph of you and a sign that reads, “Molli McGrath Oils – the Perfect Gift This Holiday Season. Come Meet the Artist This Saturday Morning from 10 Until 2 – Refreshments Provided by New Fusion Café.”

**It’s all about marketing.** So the goal here is to turn your static web site, which merely shows your work, into a dynamic site that actually *markets* your work. It will be an online gallery, if you will, but it will be more than a gallery – it will be a place where people can come and get to know, not just Molli McGrath’s work, but Molli McGrath herself - because that is what collectors want. They are not just collecting your work because they like *it*; they are collecting your work because they like *you*. So we are not just selling Molli McGrath pastels; we’re selling Molli McGrath.

## **Branding**

Which brings us to branding. **Molli McGrath isn’t just an artist – she’s a brand.** She represents something that the collector wants: her viewpoint, her experiences, her style. So what we need to do is to package all of this into a brand. We need to figure

out what should be included and what shouldn't. How diverse should we make the Molli McGrath brand, or how narrow should it be? I think we both know that your brand should include pastels; but should it include anything else? I think we know that it should include your landscapes; but should it also include your nudes? That's what we need to decide.

## Logo

Which brings us to the question of a logo. **Do you need one?** For most artists, their logo is their signature. That is certainly true of Picasso, Rembrandt, Degas and others who had distinctive signatures. To be honest, I cannot see your signature well enough to decide if it would make a good logo or not; so if you can send me a blown up copy of it, that would be great. But let's say your signature isn't distinctive enough to use as a logo. Another option would be to come up with a mark – i.e., a little graphic that you can place next to your name and on your marketing materials that will identify you and your brand. You probably remember that Albrecht Durer, the printmaker and painter, had a mark that was a large “A” straddling a small “D.” That's a pretty famous one. So we would just come up with something like that for you. You mentioned a “Y” with a dot. I would go a bit further than that (unless you want to make it look like a martini glass with an olive in it, which might work 😊). **To come up with a distinctive and memorable logo, I would charge around \$450**, which would include applying it to your business cards, letterhead, etc., and, if you like, working with a printer to produce those for you. Or, you may feel more comfortable working with your own printer where you are. It's up to you.

We will also probably want to come up with **a font that fits your look** - one that you can use in all your printed pieces, including your business cards, as well as for any titles on your web site. That is all part of the branding process: coming up with a look that says, “Molli McGrath.” That would be included in both the logo development process, as well as the web site process.

## Navigation – Part 2

Back to the navigation of the site: right now, back buttons are the only means you have of getting back to a previous page, unless you choose to use one of the main buttons. This is not very intuitive and frustrates visitors. Every page should have a way to get back to the previous page, as well as the next level up or the next level down. The new site would have all this.

A WordPress site usually has at least two forms of navigation: the main navigation, which is usually located at the top of the page; and an index, or table of contents, which is usually located on the right or left, vertically. Some templates also have links or buttons at the bottom, which are less used, of course; and if it is a portfolio template, it usually also has arrow (forward-backward) buttons under individual images. That way, the visitor need never resort to the back button, unless they just want to, and need never feel lost or inconvenienced by not knowing how to get somewhere.

Some visitors prefer **a site map** to using either a search mechanism or a menu. Every web site should have a site map, if for no other reason than that the search engines consider it to be vital to having your site properly indexed by them. So I will produce a site map for you as part of the web site design process. In fact, I will produce two: one for the search engines, and a second one that is more user-friendly for visitors. It will be included in the menu bar.

I went ahead and created a sitemap for your present site, so that I could confirm how many pages you have and that there are no broken links. **You have 537 pages!** That's a big site; but, like I said, it doesn't look like it. It looks like a very small site. So, you have a lot of content that is buried beneath a very poor navigational system.

## Brochure

We talked about the possibility of your needing a brochure. I would like to explore that further. If you want me to design one for you, **my charge would be around \$150 per panel – or \$900 for a 6-panel brochure.** Then you would have printing costs on top of that. You might also consider doing a series of postcards, each one featuring a different work. You could probably do 6 of those for the cost of a brochure. Either the brochure or the postcards could be used as a means to announce your show, as well as a take-away for those who visit.

## Keywords

I tested about a dozen keyword combinations. As you might expect, those that contained “Molli McGrath” rank very high, as long as your name is combined with words like “artist,” “painter,” or “pastels.” In those cases – especially in the case of “pastels” or “pastel artist” - you dominate the page. But there are three other Molli McGraths – Molli MaGrath-Moore, Molly McGrath and Mollie McGrath – that are also artists, and they, too, have a presence.

I would like to see you in the top 100, and eventually the top ten, for words like “Wisconsin artist,” “Wisconsin landscape artist,” “Wisconsin oil painter,” “Wisconsin painter,” “Wisconsin oil paintings,” etc. We just need to expand your exposure and get some SEO working on your web site.

Though they may be prestigious, I don't see that your association with the Oil Painters Society of America is doing you much good. Their web site doesn't even have a search function, and their members' links are buried within their site so that they're difficult to find. I also did not see you listed in either their membership or their members' gallery. How come? I also don't see a much value in the Artists Society of the Midwest web site. Again, the members' list is buried within the site; but at least it is short enough

that you are easy to find on it. Have you ever gotten work through one of these organizations? Someone needs to tell these two organizations that they need to have a “Members” or “Artists” button in their main menus. Why else do these organizations exist?

## **Social Media**

**I think you need to build up your LinkedIn profile**, and I can help you with that if you need me to. That can be quite a valuable asset for you. It is the equivalent of an online resume, and those profile pages do get looked at quite a bit. **You can also link your WordPress blog to it**, so that the latest postings on your web site will show up in your profile. If I do your site for you, I will also put Twitter, Pinterest and possibly Facebook links on your web site so that people can “pin” or “tweet” your works. **Pinterest** is especially good for this, and allows you to “pin” a picture to one of your boards, while also “tweeting” it, which saves time. Pinterest is a heavily female, heavily visual, heavily upscale, heavily artsy site – and that, I would guess, is your demographic. How to make money off Pinterest is still being figured out; but one thing is certain – **it will give your work exposure**. These types of exposures will add up over time, as you gain followers and other people start “pinning” and “tweeting” your work. I can help you get set up with these for a small fee.

## **Copy**

Right now, the only copy on your site is your biography. We will retain that on the new site. However, **you need a lot more content if you want the search engines to find you**. And it doesn’t take that much effort. Just putting a detailed caption under each of your paintings, as well as some hidden descriptions with each work, will do wonders. Adding short accounts of what made you want to do certain paintings, ways you like to work, places you like to go to paint, favorite artists, things that inspire you – as well as

side interests, such as cooking, hiking, family and pets – will do a lot to fill out the site and gain the interest of collectors and followers. **Quotes from satisfied customers also make valuable content.**

**What we're doing is creating a world – the world of Molli McGrath** – and we want to invite others into that world. We want to share that world with them, and we want to give them a piece of it – in the form of one of your paintings – to take away with them to help them remember what they experienced there and, hopefully, to create a bit of that magic in their own world. That is branding, marketing, selling. We're selling an experience, a feeling, a vision. To do that, **we have to capture their imaginations and make them want to be a part of it.**

Thanks for this opportunity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Waitzel". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a prominent 'W' and 'S'.

**Waitzel Smith**

**Creative Sharks**

404-357-2163

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