

Minimalist Websites

How to do it

The easy way

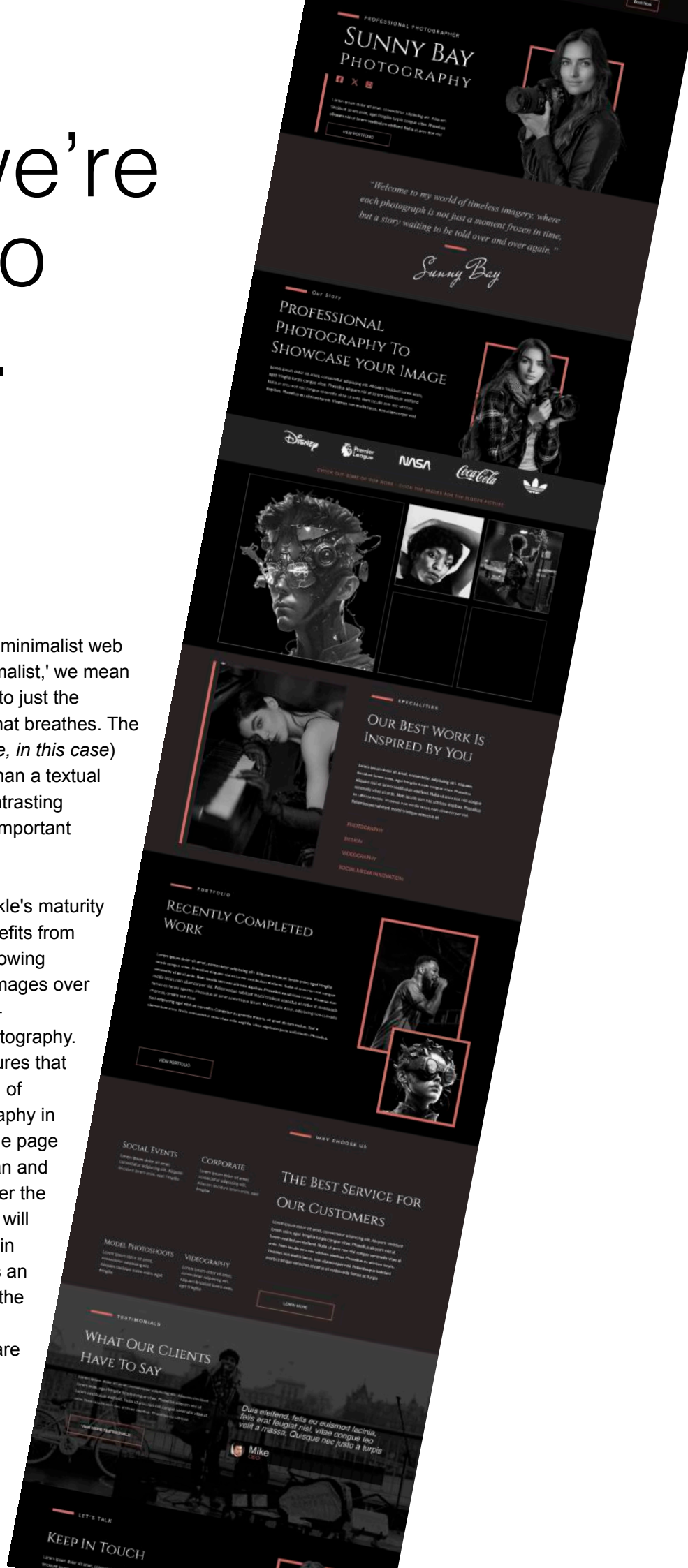


A Creative Guide For SparkleApp

What we're going to Create.

What you see illustrated here is a minimalist web page created in Sparkle. By 'minimalist,' we mean the textual content is pared down to just the essentials, arranged in a design that breathes. The ample white space (*or black space, in this case*) creates a visual message rather than a textual one. The design uses a single contrasting highlight color to draw the eye to important content.

This design also showcases Sparkle's maturity as a web development tool. It benefits from Sparkle's freeform capabilities, allowing elements to be layered, such as images over boxes, to emphasize key content - particularly the site's focus on photography. Additionally, the site includes features that enhance user interactivity. Instead of animations, it showcases photography in a unique way. All the images on the page are monochrome, providing a clean and simple feel. However, hovering over the images reveals their full color. We will explore how to achieve this effect in this tutorial. For now, consider this an example of why Sparkle is one of the best tools for creating modern, minimalist website layouts which are increasingly becoming the norm.



Why this trend Is happening.

Not so long ago, SEO experts emphasized that "content is king" for websites. They advised creating large quantities of relevant textual content to be noticed by search engines and achieve high SEO rankings. While this remains true to some extent (*about 53% to 60% of website visits come from organic searches*), there is a growing trend where 40% to 47% of traffic originates from social media and paid searches (AdWords).

This shift has significantly influenced website design. Web pages are now evolving to mirror the platforms from which the traffic comes. For example, visitors scanning a Facebook or Instagram feed and clicking on a link expect a seamless transition when they reach the website. They want to continue scanning content without disruption.

As a result, web pages are becoming more "scannable," featuring longer formats with quickly assimilable information as users scroll down. Imagery often prompts pauses for further reading. This trend is likely to persist, so web designers must adapt to these changes to effectively meet user expectations.

Furthermore, multi-page websites are increasingly being designed as a series of individual landing pages, each serving as a self-contained sales pitch for a specific product or service. This approach allows social media and paid listings to promote specific aspects of a website, directing visitors to the relevant page that can stand alone.

Meanwhile, the traditional home page is evolving into a summary page that highlights key aspects of the website's overall theme or purpose, rather than just serving as a simple entry point with links to other sections. Although such links can, and often do, feature in a home page, they have become less important in the world of social media marketing.

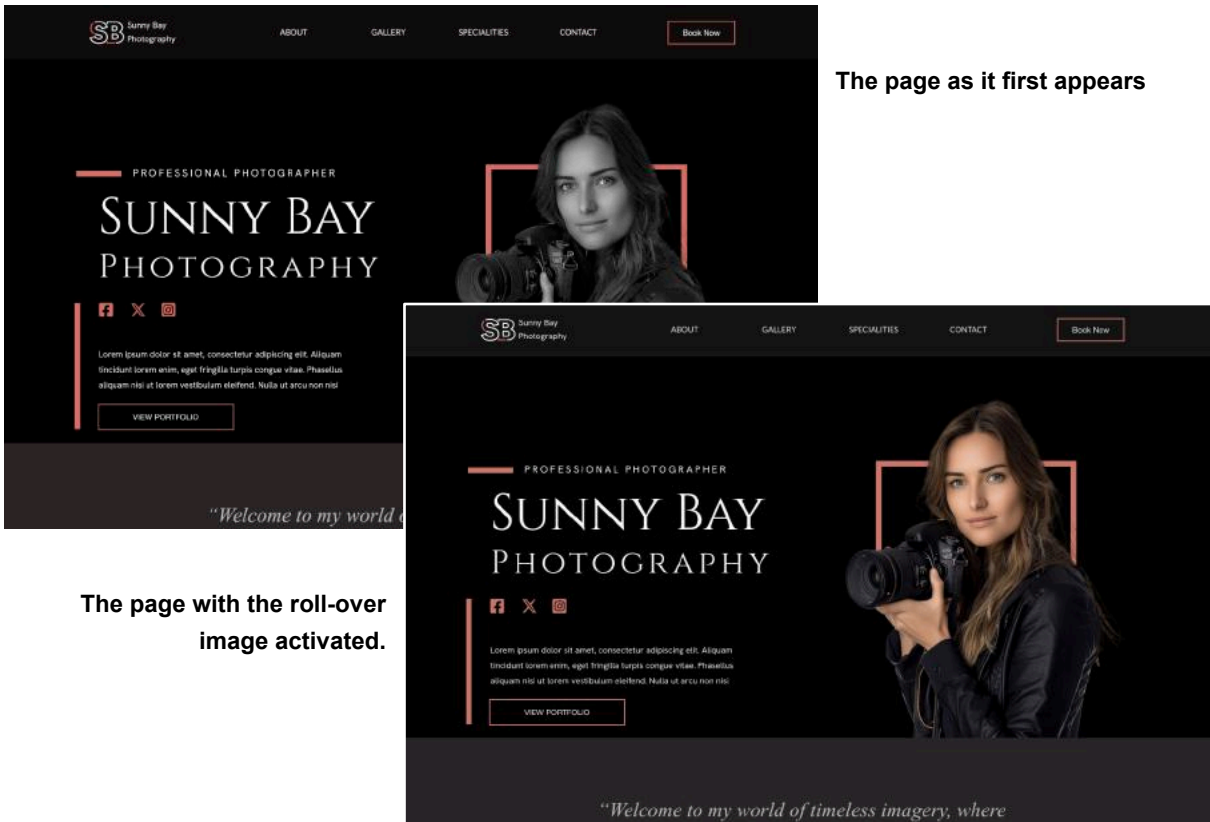
Our example minimalist website embraces this growing trend by offering concise information in small, easily digestible chunks for impatient visitors who are in "scan mode." Images break up the content into blocks of individual ideas or concepts, rather than presenting a continuous story from top to bottom. Along the way, additional links (*calls-to-action*) encourage visitors to explore further and engage with the site's primary purpose.

In conclusion, adapting to the evolving web design landscape is important. By creating scannable, user-friendly pages and strategically using landing pages, websites can effectively cater to modern visitors' expectations and behaviors, enhancing user experience and engagement.

Start at the Top.

In our example site, it was important to convey the site's purpose within a few seconds. Visitors want to know who you are, what you do, and why they should care. Simplicity was key: a clear message stating who the website owner is, what they do, and a brief value proposition. Highlight colors draw attention to these essential details.

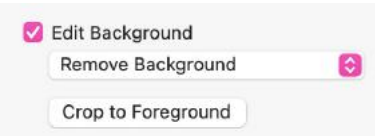
The choice of imagery also played a vital role, adding a human element to the page. A face looking directly at the visitor creates a personal connection, essentially saying, *"Hey, I'm talking to YOU."*



The page as it first appears

The page with the roll-over image activated.

The elements of this section are very simple to create in Sparkle. The orange highlight elements are standard boxes filled with the highlight color. The image is a PNG with transparent background. You could use Sparkle's Edit Background feature to convert a JPEG image into a PNG. With the image selected on the canvas, you will see the option in the style inspector. It looks like this.

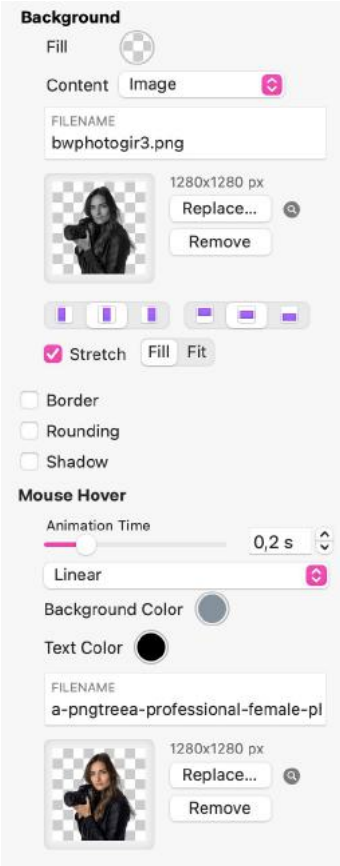


A standard box with no fill and an orange outline was then placed behind the image to provide a focal point for the eye to follow. The button is a standard button, filled with black and outlined in orange and provides a convenient link to the portfolio section of the page using the scroll to location option in Sparkle.

Creating the Interactive Images.

We used two distinct approaches to implement the color change, tailored to the device being used. For the desktop version of the site, we created a large button with a monochrome image as its background in the normal state. When a visitor hovers the mouse over the button, it changes to a full-color image. The on-click action was set to "Do Nothing." This hover effect makes the image burst into full color, adding a dynamic element to the user experience. The settings in the style inspector are shown on the right.

For the mobile version of the page, we used an animation effect to change from monochrome to color as the page is scrolled. Essentially, we placed the two images one on top of the other. The monochrome image was placed first, with the full color version on top. With the color version of the image selected on the canvas, we set up the animation effect as shown below.

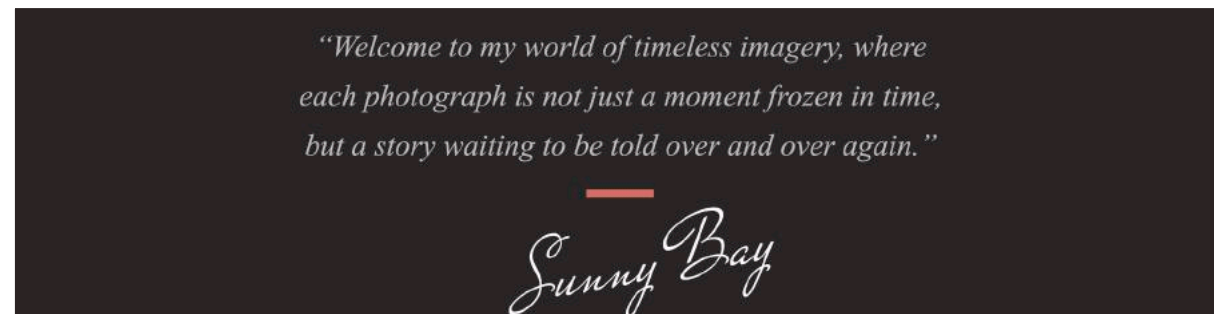


Note: If, when previewing in a browser, the image starts in color and transforms to monochrome, just click on the Swap button to reverse the effect.

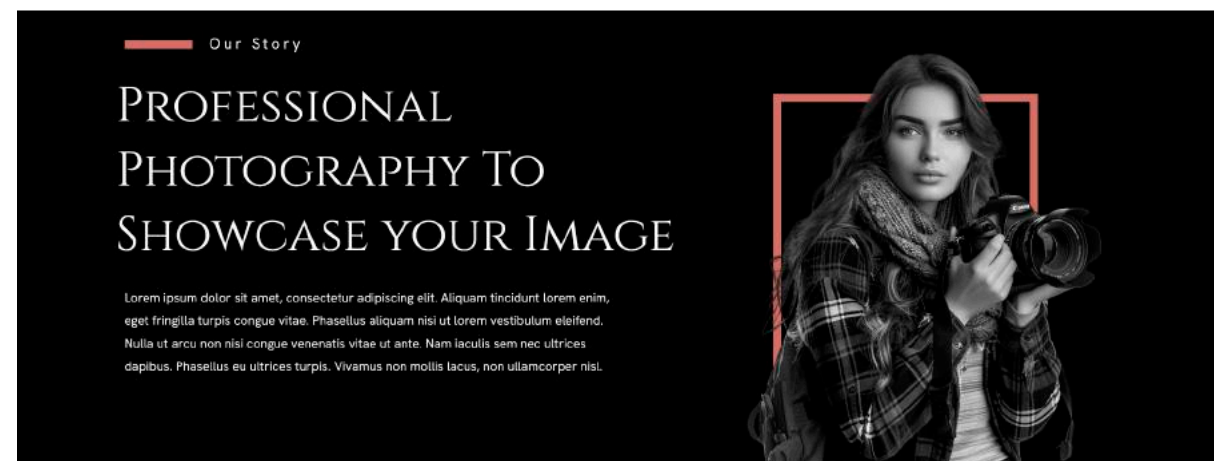
We used two approaches to achieve this effect because touch screen devices do not support hover functions. Alternatively, you could use the "animate while scrolling" technique for all versions of the site if preferred.

The Page Structure

Beyond the hero section, the page has been structured to provide all the necessary elements of a good landing page. The first section below the hero is a personal message from the site owner. It's been formatted as a quote in large type and signed with a signature typeface. Again, the small highlight is just a standard box. The background color of this block has been changed to a dark grey to make it visually distinguishable from the previous and next sections of the page.



Next up comes the 'About Us' section, only in this example we've called it 'Our Story' - it adds to the personal messaging of the page. This section was constructed in the same way as the hero section, with color changing image.

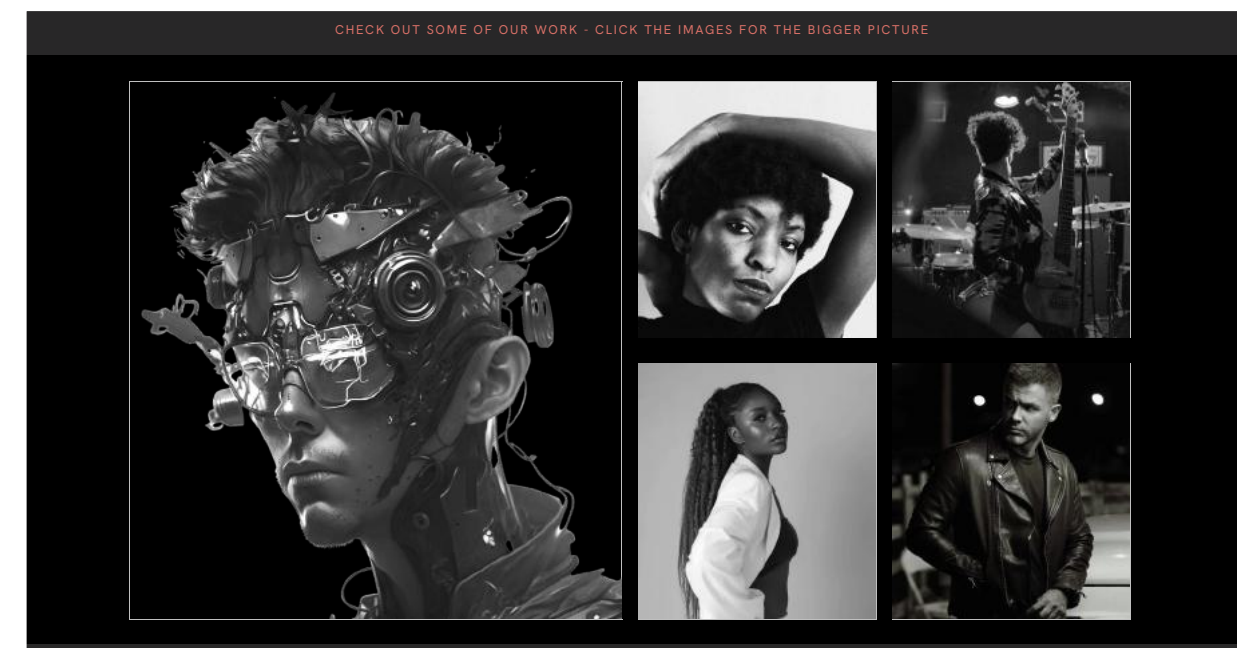


Next we add some credibility by showcasing logos of well-known clients.



The Journey Continues


The next section of the page uses Sparkle's Image/Video Grid, which is an excellent way to showcase a small portfolio. The key is to limit the number of images. While an artist may love all their work, visitors who scan the page will only engage with a limited amount of content. Therefore, use this feature to highlight the very best pieces of the portfolio and save the rest for a dedicated page showcasing a wider variety of works. You will add portfolio info and links to other info in the portfolio section further down the page. Naturally, this doesn't apply to all websites, but whether it's products or services, keep image blocks like this to a small number of images, If it's necessary to show more, create relevant links to other pages.



The nice thing about the image/video grid is that the images will open in a lightbox when clicked, allowing for a user to scroll back and forth to view all the enlarged images without having to continually close the lightbox. This is a nice feature for people viewing on mobile devices as the lightbox utilizes the familiar 'swipe' left or right gesture they are so used to when viewing the images.

Highlight What You’re Good At.

In this section of the page, clearly summarize your specialties. Focus on what you excel at rather than trying to present yourself as a "jack of all trades, master of none." Be direct and confident: "This is what I do best." Highlighting your core strengths and expertise will help visitors quickly understand your unique value and build trust in your abilities. Providing links to concrete examples or brief case studies can further reinforce your message and demonstrate your proficiency in these areas. Follow on with a section that explains more about your portfolio, including a link to the relevant page.



SPECIALITIES

OUR BEST WORK IS INSPIRED BY YOU

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam tincidunt lorem enim, eget fringilla turpis congue vitae. Phasellus aliquam nisi ut lorem vestibulum eleifend. Nulla ut arcu non nisi congue venenatis vitae ut ante. Nam iaculis sem nec ultrices dapibus. Phasellus eu ultrices turpis. Vivamus non mollis lacus, non ullamcorper nisi. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et

PHOTOGRAPHY

DESIGN



VIDEOGRAPHY

PORTFOLIO

RECENTLY COMPLETED WORK

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam tincidunt lorem enim, eget fringilla turpis congue vitae. Phasellus aliquam nisi ut lorem vestibulum eleifend. Nulla ut arcu non nisi congue venenatis vitae ut ante. Nam iaculis sem nec ultrices dapibus. Phasellus eu ultrices turpis. Vivamus non mollis lacus, non ullamcorper nist. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Phasellus sit amet scelerisque ipsum. Morbi nulla dolor, adipiscing non convallis rhoncus, ornare sed risus.

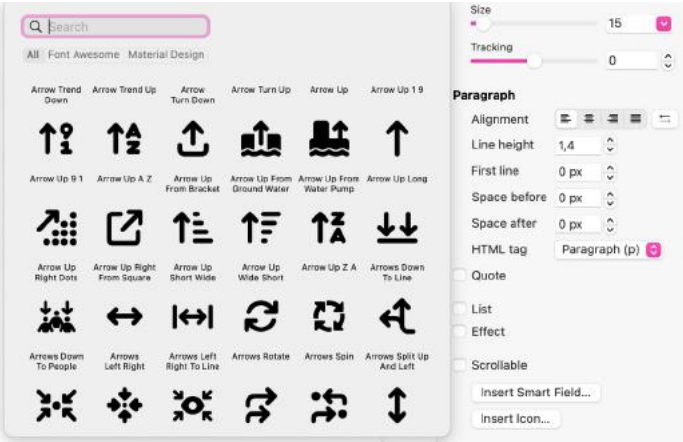
Sed adipiscing eget nibh at convallis. Curabitur eu gravida mauris, sit amet dictum metus. Sed a elementum arcu. Proin consectetur eros vitae odio sagittis, vitae dignissim justo sollicitudin. Phasellus




VIEW PORTFOLIO

Summarize Your Services.

In this section, enhance your presentation by introducing iconography to highlight up to four key services or features. Icons can effectively capture visitors' attention and encourage them to explore further. To optimize the scanning process, utilize a square block structure for your iconized features rather than placing them in a horizontal row. Unlike a straight row, this structure allows visitors to take in more information without excessive eye movement. Additionally, consider providing a brief description of why people should choose your services and include a link to a more comprehensive service/features page for further details.




You can use Sparkle’s built-in icons by inserting them into text boxes, or use subject-specific SVG icons.




SOCIAL EVENTS

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam tincidunt lorem enim, eget fringilla




CORPORATE

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam tincidunt lorem enim, eget fringilla



MODEL PHOTOSHOOTS

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam tincidunt lorem enim, eget fringilla



VIDEOGRAPHY

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam tincidunt lorem enim, eget fringilla

WHY CHOOSE US

THE BEST SERVICE FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aliquam tincidunt lorem enim, eget fringilla turpis congue vitae. Phasellus aliquam nisi ut lorem vestibulum eleifend. Nulla ut arcu non nisi congue venenatis vitae ut ante. Nam iaculis sem nec ultrices dapibus. Phasellus eu ultrices turpis. Vivamus non mollis lacus, non ullamcorper nisl. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis

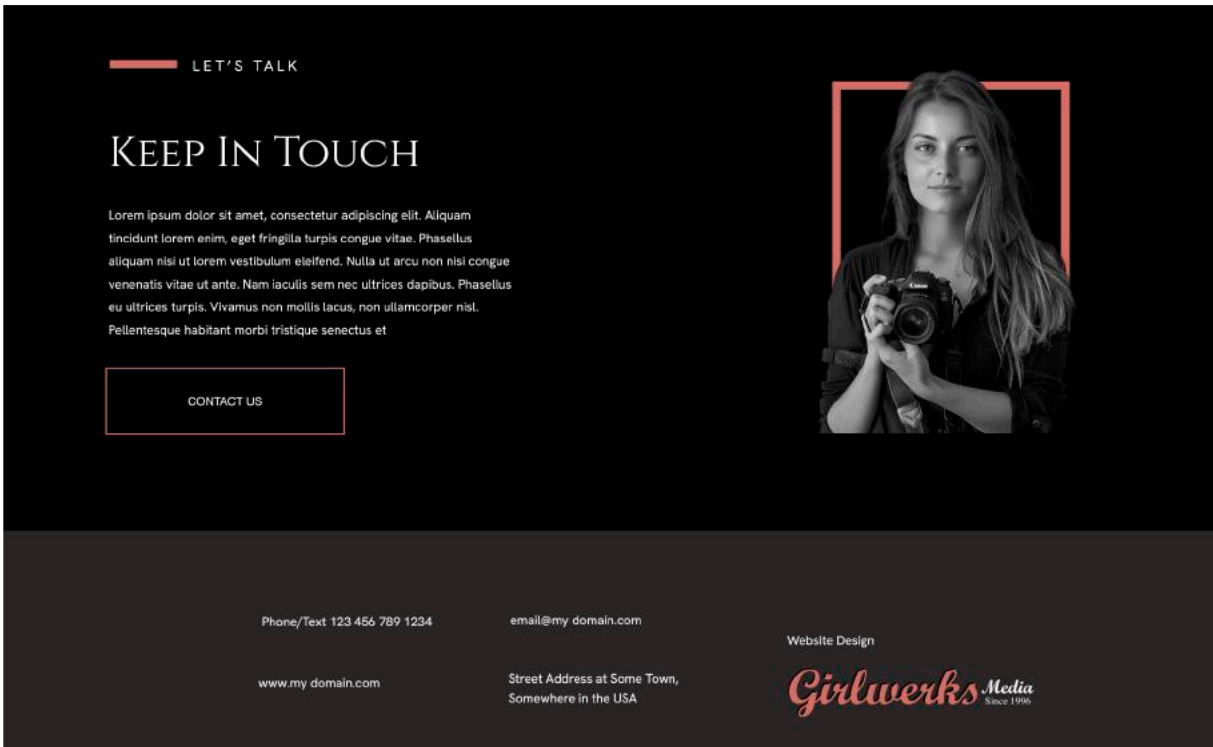
LEARN MORE

Social Proof.

Next, bolster your credibility by showcasing positive customer feedback, ratings, or testimonials. Utilize Sparkle's gallery object to display screenshots from your social media screens or customer testimonials. An autoplay feature can add dynamism to the page, engaging visitors with movement. Alternatively, consider incorporating a scrolling text box to feature a selection of commendations extracted from your social media feeds. This social proof not only enhances trust but also adds vibrancy to your website's presentation.



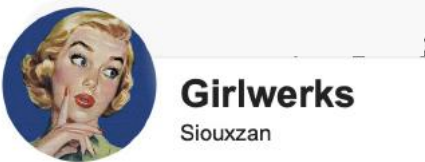
Finally, provide your contact info and a link to a contact form. This is best achieved using a modal popup form that gets triggered from the Contact Us button. Use sparkle's popup feature to achieve this. And, don't forget that all important footer.



Key Takeaways.

In conclusion, effective website design involves a combination of strategic elements to engage visitors and enhance user experience. From optimizing for various devices to utilizing visual elements like icons and galleries, each aspect plays a crucial role in capturing attention and conveying key messages. By focusing on a minimalist approach, simplicity, clarity, and user-centric design principles, websites can effectively communicate their purpose, showcase their strengths, and build credibility through social proof. Embracing these strategies ensures that websites not only attract but also retain visitors, ultimately leading to greater success in achieving their objectives.

A big thanks to fellow community member, Sooz, For allowing the use of one of her client's concept websites to illustrate this guide.



Want to learn more about the many 'freeform' design
Features in Sparkle? Check out the definitive guide
To using Sparkle

The Freedom to Design



<https://sparkleapp.com/sparkle/book.html>