

INTRODUCTION

Design is about progress. It is the conceptualization and creation of new things. Design is a process, a service, a way of thinking, and an activity that results in objects, systems, artifacts, and outcomes. It involves conducting research to collect information, having an understanding of the subject and studying it, analyzing insights from the data gathered, and applying the findings to the design of things.

What is Artistic Representations Otherwise?

An inter-cultural collaboration with Uganda and international artistic/scholars focused on developing and sharing under-represented artistic research based in Uganda. The project is housed in the Department of Art and Industrial Design, Kyambogo University Kampala and involves faculty and graduate students (artist/scholars) from both within and beyond the Department based on their interests in artistic research.

At this time of renewed activism in Africa concerning the politics of knowing, many Uganda-based contemporary artists are producing works that assert the need for systemic change in society, both locally and globally, and in the art world. This collaboration is responding to the disjuncture between the relatively high global visibility of Ugandan artists and the relatively low international visibility of scholarly writers.

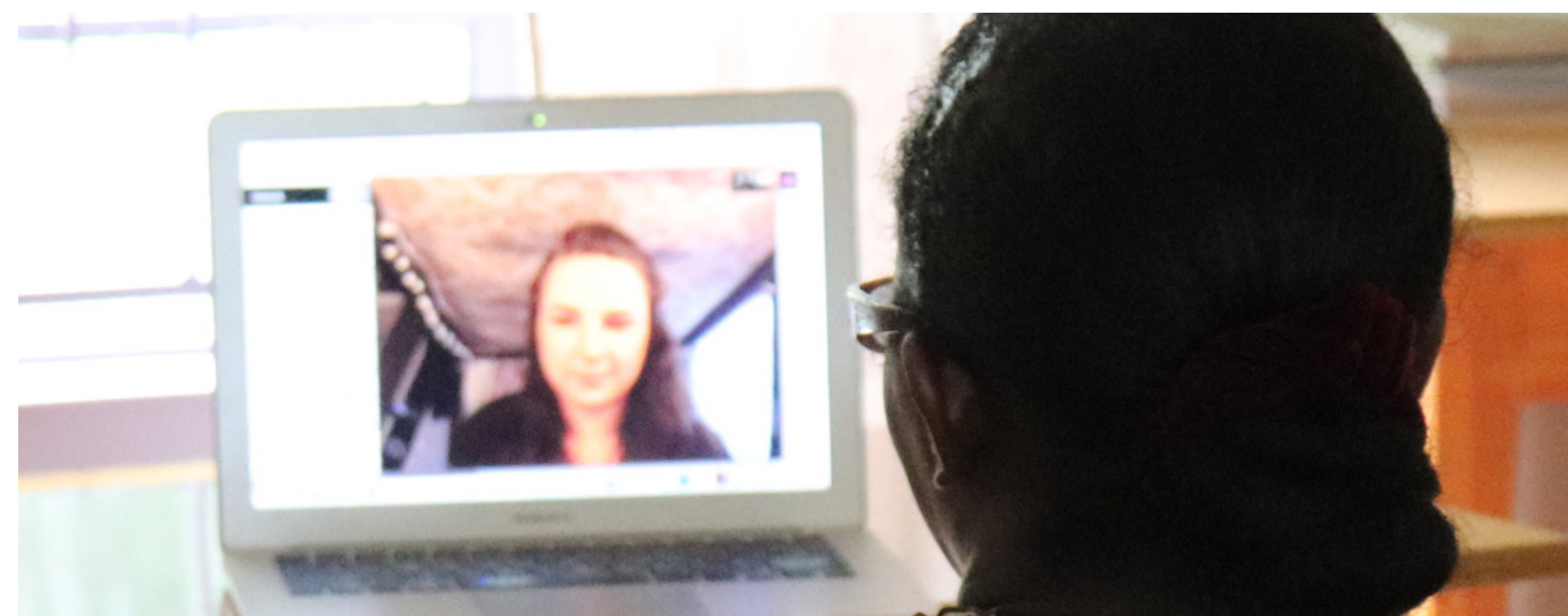
"How do we register artistic research in Uganda in a global academy that still privileges Western epistemological traditions?"

Objective

To develop a platform for sharing under-represented artistic research based in Uganda under the name Artistic Representations Otherwise.

METHODS

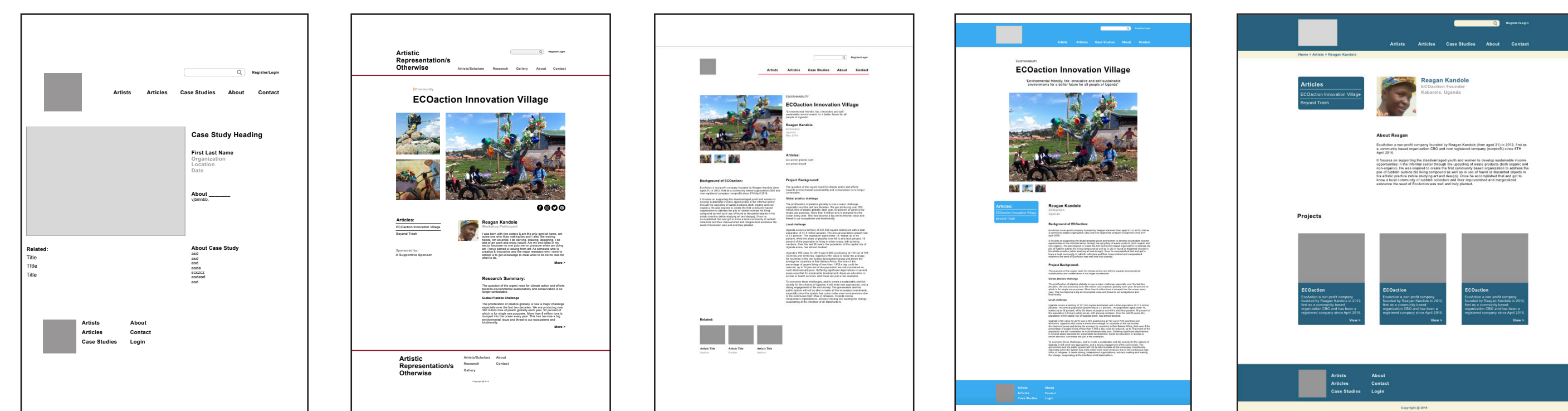
Initial research into website conventions for similar projects was analyzed to establish features and functions, navigation systems, layouts, and common colour palettes. Then research was conducted into the client and client/user needs through asking questions and exchanging information via skype conferencing, abstracting themes from the workshop, and reading articles and abstracts from participants in order to establish what features and functions were needed.



PROCESS

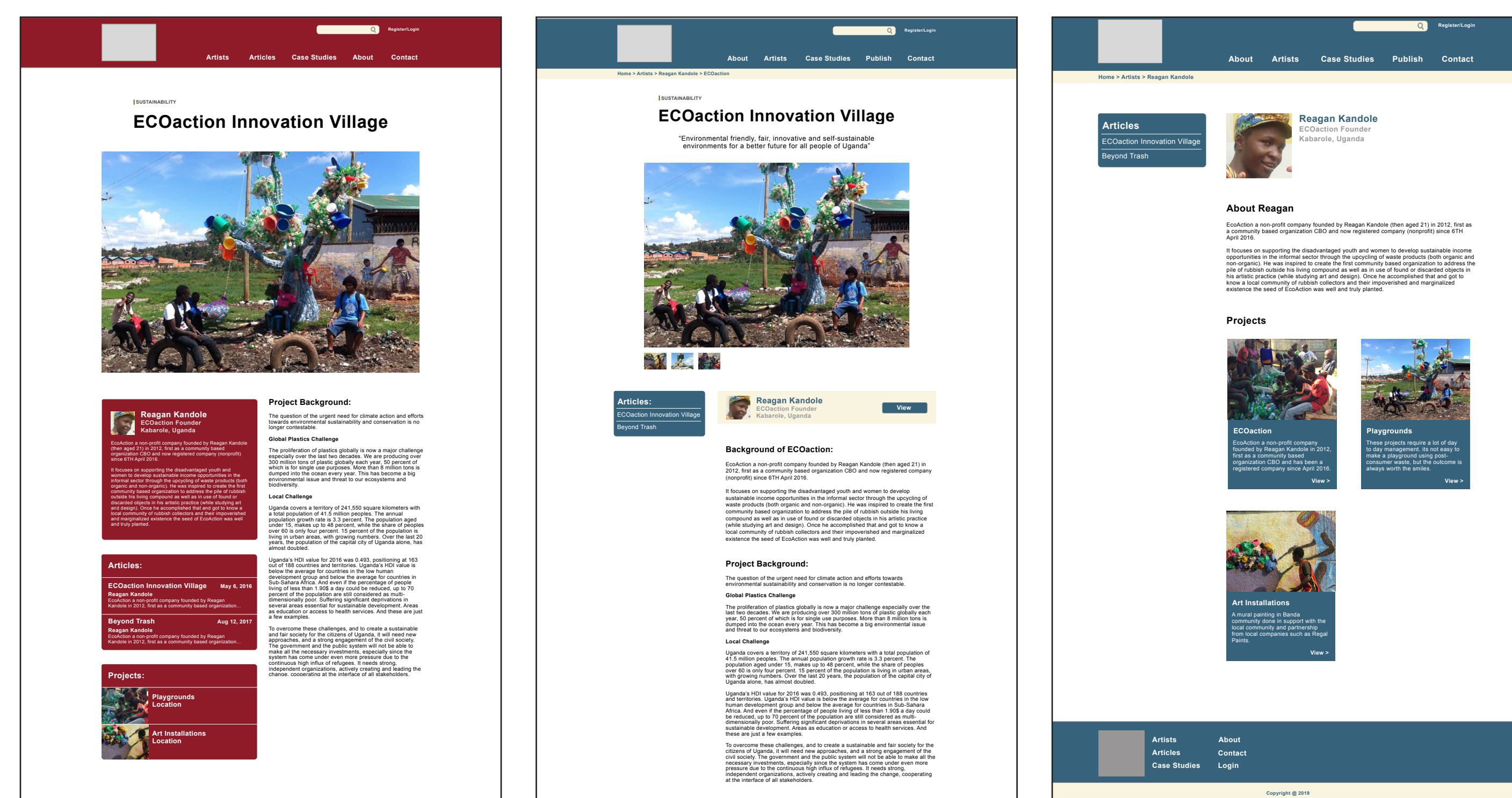
Initial Process

Sketches and wire-frames were first produced to establish hierarchy of information, layout, navigation, features, and functions of the website. Many variations and revisions were made to find an aesthetic that both related to the African culture while maintaining a professional, academic look.



Mock-ups

Several mock-ups were produced and presented to the group, and a template format selected. Further revisions to the layout, colour palette, featured information were made and several functions based on the group's feedback.

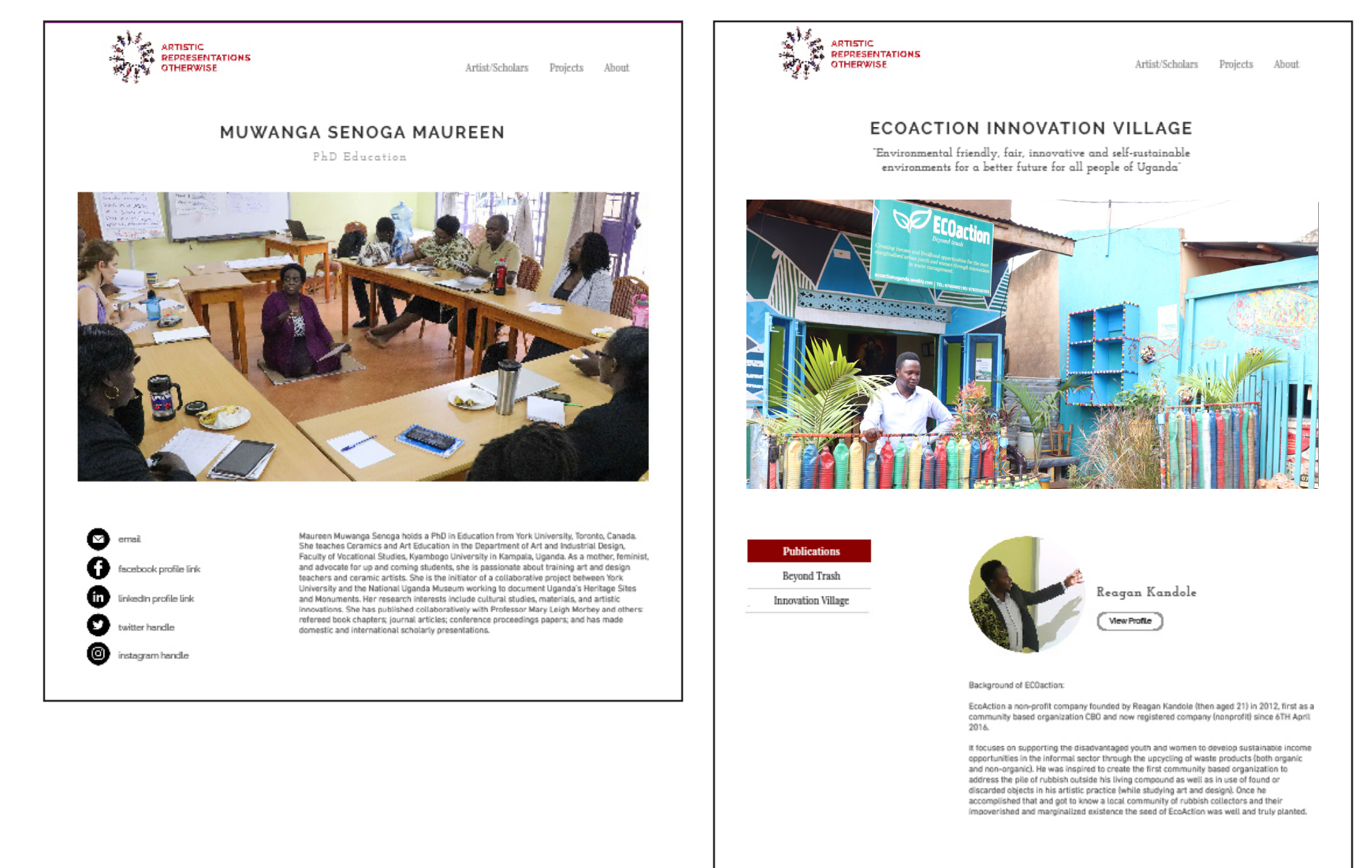
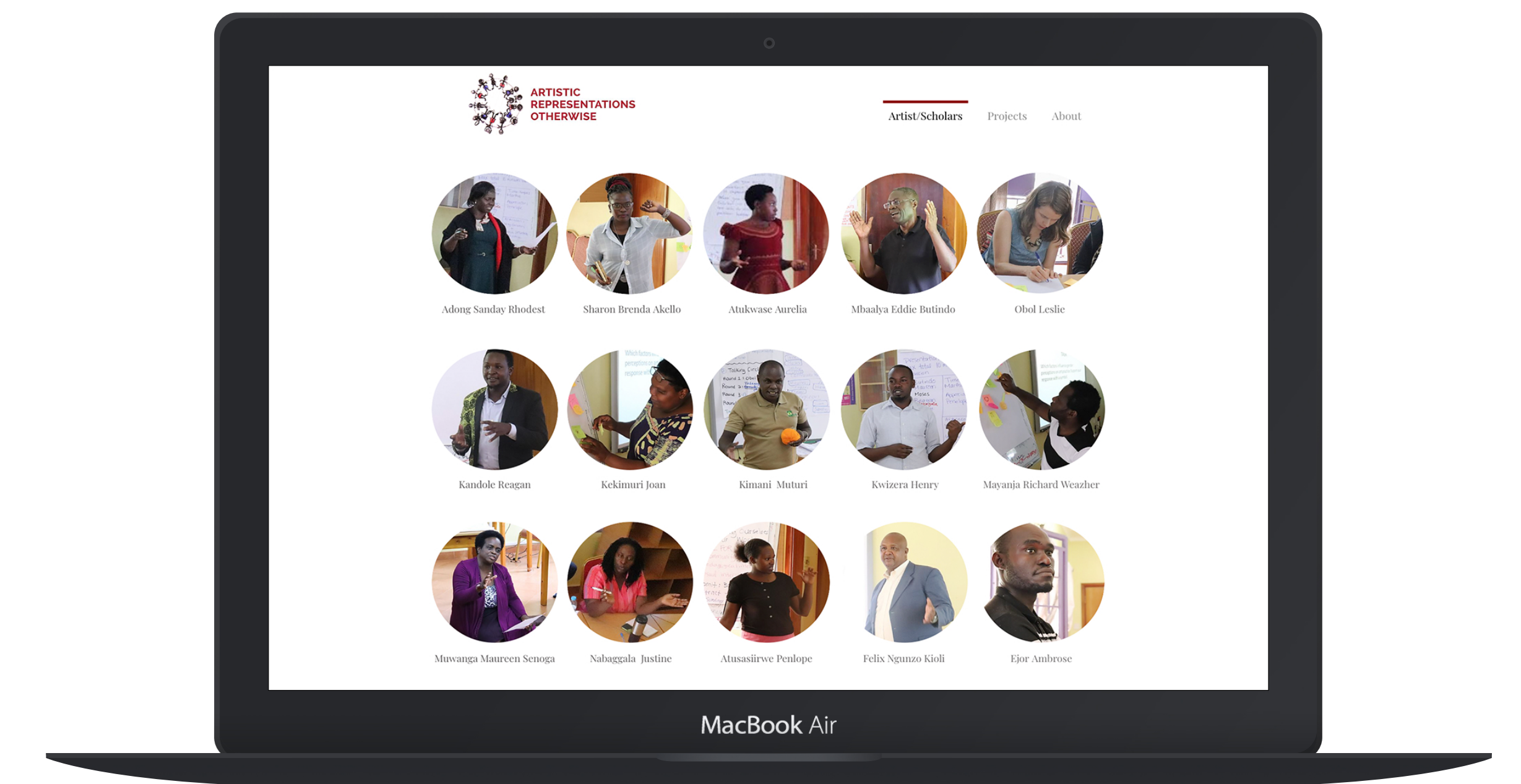


Evaluation

User tests conducted by ARO participants and feedback from the group, as well as input from other designers was essential to making improvements. Additionally, key themes from their workshops provided useful resources that could be incorporated into the site identity. One key theme was the power of symbols and circles. Because of this it was decided that one of the hand-drawn symbols should be the logo to symbolize unity and diversity. Additionally, circles were used for various elements throughout the website to refer back to these core ideas.



RESULTS



CONCLUSIONS

The Artistic Representations Otherwise website skeleton and templates are complete but personal information, links, documents, summaries and research images still need to be added by participants. Once this is completed, the site can be made live and further user feedback can be gained to make improvements for web functionality and usability. Such feedback could relate to visual aesthetic, amount of available information, user-flow and navigation, etc. This site references Ugandan culture through its colour and imagery, while maintaining a minimalist, professional aesthetic in order for information to be communicated clearly.

Next Steps

The next step once the website is completed would be to gain online recognition. Tools such as Google analytics, advertising, and personal networking can be employed to accomplish this. A transportable exhibit mock-up was additionally designed as a separate project with the potential to increase awareness about ARO participants' works.

References

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