Unit 9 | Design Critique

Reflection:

- **Which existing websites out there most inspired your web site design thus far?**
    - I primarily used Design Meltdown for inspiration and searched for "non-designer portfolio sites". A couple that inspired me were:
        - http://rachelgertz.com/
        - http://thibaultjorge.com/
        - Both are very minimalist and present work in a way that encourages discovery. Other elements on the page are clean and deliver a clear message, but do not take away from the featured work.
- **Which parts of the design are you most proud of?**
    - I'm most proud of creating the responsive iterations of the site (so far, just on the homepage) – specifically how the Work (grid) images fluidly stack 1x1 when the browser window gets smaller.
- **What struggles did you encounter in your design process?**
    - Balance -- the grid of Work icons on the homepage and continually having it align appropriately with other site elements as it shifted into smallest browser windows was the biggest challenge.
- **Which struggles did you encounter during page development?**
    - Especially getting into responsive, keeping all elements on every page in proportion using em's is a constant challenge. While certain navigation elements and buttons are changing in size and significance depending on the device they're being viewed on, my goal is to have a shift that feels logical and recognizable to a user.
- **What did you learn from making your project responsive?**
    - I learned about some practical tools available to help you while build responsive like Chrome's inspect element tool that reveals the browser pixel width as you're changing the window size and about ipadpeek.com which really helped put my designs in perspective.
    - Mobile browsing has become so second nature, sometimes you take for granted the customized iconography and mobile-friendly nav bars that were intended to enhance a mobile experience. In building a responsive site, I learned to be more aware of the design cues on a site as they shift to smaller and smaller devices and to be more conscious of that kind of design decision-making.

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<u>Website Critique:</u>

Group 1: <u>https://medium.com/</u>

Layout:
- Feels like a loose application of the Rule of Thirds with very obvious vertical columns
- Ample breathing room between columns to break up text-heavy content
- Eye is drawn to the center column (focal point) where the main stories are featured

Typography:
- Simple, clean and readable
- Size of the story headlines is almost competing with the name of the site, however, in this case I think that is acceptable because the goal of the site is obviously to discover new stories and information – which it is accomplishing by drawing attention to promote the stories
- Call-to-action buttons ("Write a story", "Sign in/Sign up") are a little light and feel like they could be easily missed

Navigation:
- Similar to the call-to-action buttons, the nav elements feel a little light and it is easy to overlook that function
- Underline/bold & hover actions do help to differentiate what stories are being shown

Overall Flow:
- The continuous scroll of stories makes it very functional and your eye continues down the page to continue to discover more
- All stories given an equal amount of space and priority makes scanning for an interesting headline easy
- No distracting elements; eye doesn't have to jump around to find one article to settle on

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<u>Website Critique:</u>

Group 2: <u>http://www.warnerbros.com/archive/spacejam/movie/jam.htm</u>

Layout:
- In an effort to continue on the "space" theme, there is nothing user-friendly about the cues on this site.
- Galaxy background makes readability/visibility difficult

Typography:
- Very unlikely that the body copy on this site is web-accessible because of the colored type on top of a busy background
- Times New Roman font in color makes it feel very basic

Navigation:
- As mentioned, the navigation cues are not recognizable or user-friendly; the names of pages do not easily tell the user what will be found on that portion of the site
- The logo anchored in the top left corner does help in terms of always navigating users back to the home page
- Some of the links leading deeper into the site content are not so obvious since they are not displayed in a recognizable navigation cue; in some cases the navigation links are buried within an image (again, something that probably causes issues for screen readers) or a very small, moving icon
- A nav bar running down the left-hand side of the screen appears inconsistently across internal pages

Overall Flow:
- Overall the site feels very disjointed; with small bits of content spread among a large number of pages
- The lack of recognizable user cues makes it challenging to navigate and find necessary information quickly
- As a positive, there is usually just one focal point per page, however, the purpose or goal of that focal point is usually unclear