

snappier, more unique site that truly reflects your style and can grow with you. The initial effort to build it is higher than picking a Cargo template, but once it's up, maintenance will be quite straightforward (especially with the tools and tips mentioned). On the other hand, if you were to prioritize zero-maintenance and don't need much beyond what Cargo offers, you could optimize your Cargo site by compressing media and using their developer tools for mobile styling. However, implementing features like a view toggle or matching Chloe's aesthetic *exactly* on Cargo could be difficult and frustrating due to the platform's constraints (and the mobile-optimized mode could interfere with custom layouts ²⁵).

Given your goals of **clarity, speed, maintainability, and a high-end feel**, moving to a lean static setup aligns perfectly. You'll achieve clarity by designing the site structure yourself, speed through performance optimizations, maintainability via simple content files (and optional CMS enhancements), and a high-end feel by mimicking the best minimalist portfolio designs out there.

6. Next Steps and Recommendations

To summarize actionable steps:

1. **Choose an SSG and set up the project** – For ease, Eleventy or Jekyll are great. Eleventy in particular hits a sweet spot for flexibility and performance (with no bloat) ⁴ ⁵ . Initialize a project and get it building on your machine. Structure your content (e.g., a collection for projects, each with a markdown file containing title, year, description, images, etc.).
2. **Design the layout and toggle** – Recreate a simple list layout for the index page (perhaps inspired by Chloe Scheffe's layout ¹¹). Then create a grid version. If using JS toggle, implement that (a few lines of JS and some CSS classes). If separate pages, set up two layouts in your SSG. Ensure the design is responsive and test on mobile early. Aim for that “text-first” vibe: maybe the homepage starts with a brief intro text about you (one or two lines) then a list of projects. Use good typography and spacing to make it feel sophisticated yet minimal.
3. **Optimize assets and performance** – Prepare your images (export to appropriate sizes, create thumbnails for grid view that are smaller than full project images). Integrate any build steps for optimization (for example, Eleventy can use plugins to generate multiple image sizes, or you can do a manual process). Add lazy-loading attributes, combine/minify CSS, etc., as detailed earlier. Essentially, bake in the performance from the start.
4. **Implement enhancements** – If you want the editing convenience, set up Netlify CMS (or plan to use GH web editor). Also, consider any other enhancements: for instance, you could add a service worker for offline caching (optional, only if you want to dabble in making the site a PWA). But only do this if time permits and it adds value. The site should already load near-instantly without complex caching due to its static nature.
5. **Compare with Cargo during build** – As you build out the custom site, keep an eye on how it compares with your existing Cargo site. You can use webPageTest or Lighthouse to measure your Cargo site's performance, then ensure your new site dramatically exceeds those metrics (likely in lower page weight and faster times). This will validate the effort.