Step 1: Reflection

Which existing websites out there most inspired your web site design thus far?
The sites that most inspired my design were
http://www.windowsofnewyork.com/ and http://www.juliankrispel.com/eljulio/

Which parts of the design are you most proud of?
I'm proud of the simplicity of the site and how well the typographical elements work with one another. I think it makes the site really approachable and breathable. The spirit of the site also comes across as playful, which was my intention.

What struggles did you encounter in your design process?
I didn't start by creating a Photoshop comp, but rather just launched directly into development. As a result, I wonder if the site I created was limited by my technical knowledge. If I had created a comp first, I might have thought more out of the box or potentially pushed myself to create something more stylistically interesting. At least the wireframes helped me to visualize what the site would look like at a high level, minus styling. Moving forward, however, I'd like to mock up comps beforehand, for my own, and the client's, benefit.

Which struggles did you encounter during page development?
I had some issues with floats at first, but this was easily resolved once we learned the unit material on clearing floats. I also originally had the intro down arrow set as an absolute element, which meant that it kept overlaying on top of other content whenever the browser was resized. My second mentor, Dara, suggested that instead we make the arrow a block element, which resolved the issue. I learned an important lesson–that there are multiple methods of displaying elements, but upon further testing, one of the approaches may prove to be a superior solution.

What did you learn from making your project responsive?
It was challenging to constantly change the units the site was built in as we learned more advanced coding. I had to convert pixels to ems to percentages, making sure that everything still appeared the same. I also started out thinking that a dozen media queries would be appropriate for my site, but after speaking with my mentor, I had to re-write my code so that the user would have a smooth experience of a changing layout as they resized their browser–which meant using just three media queries.

Step 2: Reviews

Review a website from group 1 and a website from group 2 of the following list, commenting on each website's layout, typography, navigation, and overall flow.

Group 1
http://www.sagmeisterwalsh.com/

The layout is very refreshing and the focal point is completely clear, which is the main navigation in the center of the screen. There is just the right number of menu items so as to not be overwhelming. That said, I initially overlooked the social media and search functionality in the top right of the page, since there is so much clutter in the video feed of the physical office. My initial thought is that this content could have been better placed or at least called out more prominently, perhaps with a semi-transparent box behind it. When exploring the rest of the site however, I better understood why it is located where it is, since it makes sense on the remainder of the pages. This functionality is also more likely to be used outside of the homepage anyway. The navigation bar at the top seems redundant on the homepage, but appropriately done on the rest of the site. The typography throughout the site is simple and legible, which allows the work itself to be the center of attention, as it should be. As a smaller detail, I like that the size of the logo diminishes as you scroll down the page since the later page content is more important for screen real estate. The overall flow of the site makes sense to me.

When viewing the site on a mobile device, however, the homepage live feed is cut off, so you cannot read some of the words in the menu. While this isn't ideal, there is still full navigation at the top right of the homepage that can be used instead. I would advise them to omit the live video feed on mobile devices and create a more custom mobile layout instead.

Group 2
http://www2.warnerbros.com/spacejam/movie/jam.htm
This is a fixed-width site, so it doesn't make for a good user experience on tablet or mobile devices. When viewing the site on those devices, the content is extremely small, so you have to pinch to zoom in around different areas of the site. The flow of the site is somewhat confusing, since it's not a linear experience. Within each main section, the subnavigation options are displayed as text overlaid on a single image. Many different colors and typefaces are used. The typeface choice is quite jarring and inelegant, but understandably this was due to limited font options being available in the 1990s. The layout of the site defies many accepted online conventions since the homepage navigation is circular, and then navigation is completely missing from most of the other pages. The background color randomly changes on certain pages, but not consistently.