

# **Yale School of Art Website Design Critique**

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**Human Centered Computing**

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## **Introduction - Seif**

- **Overview of the Existing App:**
    - The Yale School of Art website is a digital platform that shows the institution's academic offerings, student work, events, and resources. It primarily targets current and prospective students, faculty, and alumni, providing critical information and a visual representation of the school's creative culture.
  - **Objective of the Critique:**
    - This critique aims to evaluate the website's user interface, user experience, accessibility, and functionality. This website was chosen because of its unconventional design approach, which shows the creative thoughts behind its community, while doing so presents a challenge for usability and accessibility.
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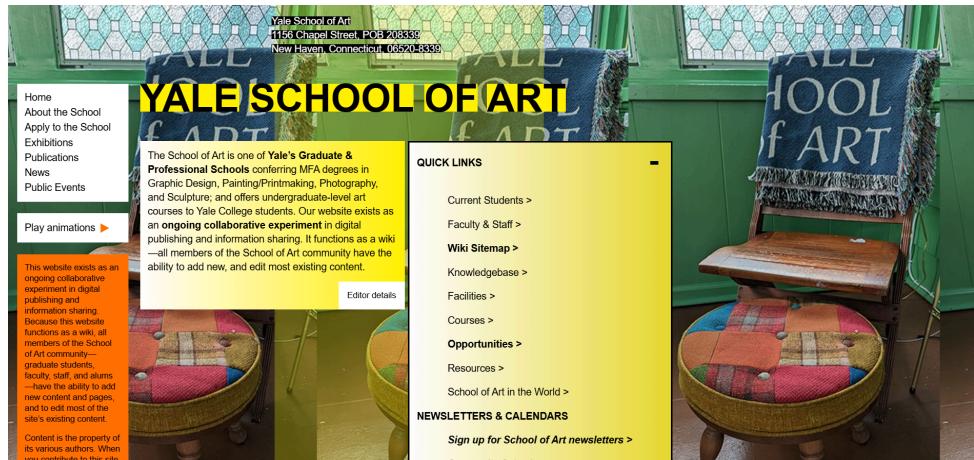
## **Current Design Analysis**

- **User Interface (UI) Analysis: - Seif**
  - **Layout and Navigation:**
    - The layout is visually engaging but unconventional, there are scattered elements all over the page that make it disorienting to navigate. For example the "Quick Links" in a bright yellow background, text heavy sections, and a visually overwhelming image in the background.
    - Navigation is inconsistent and unintuitive; instead of a structured navigation menu, users rely on isolated links like "Happening at SOA" and "Community Bulletin Board," which are not grouped logically or easily identifiable. Essential options like accessing "Calendars" or events require significant scrolling and exploration, adding unnecessary complexity.
    - The absence of a standard navigation menu or consistent layout hierarchy might confuse first time users. The quick links tab also pushes the page all the way down.



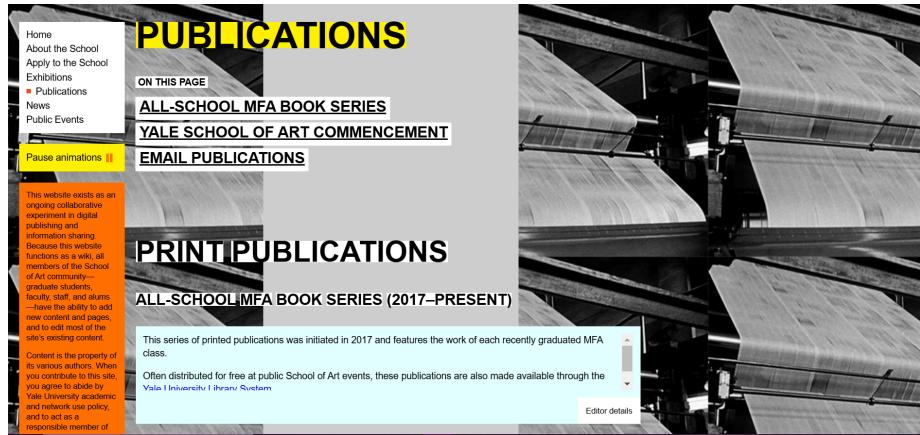
- **Visual Design: Tatiana**

- There is a common font for headings, subheadings, and blog-like posts such as bulletin board posts. Informational posts are also usually yellow or green gradients.
- Everything else on the website is purposefully disorganized and inconsistent to represent the variety and diversity of the art department, but it looks generally unpleasant to the eye and difficult to navigate.



- **Interaction Design: Tatiana**

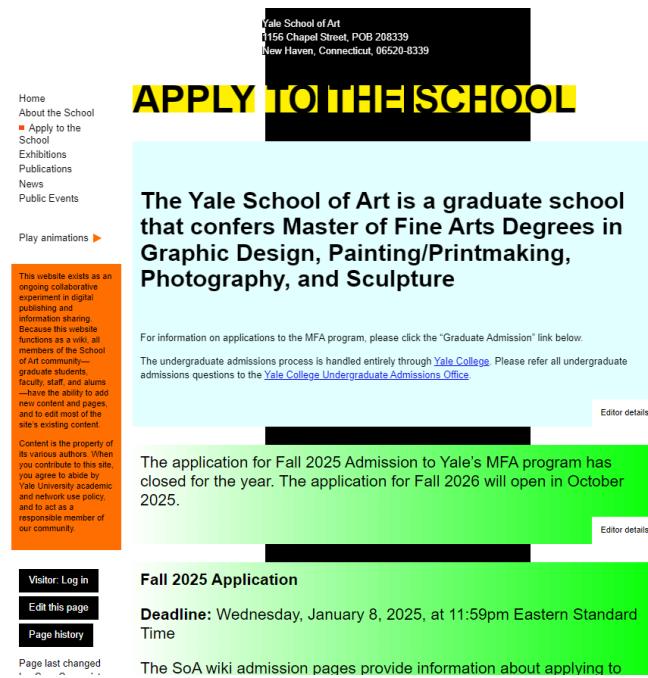
- There are several quick links to various pages that are easily accessible, usually at the top of each page, but the design of the website may make it difficult to find what you are looking for. The user interaction can be improved due to a pause animation button that doesn't seem to do anything, but it is on every page where there may be no animations present. Interactions are not intuitive either because each piece of information on the website is very cluttered.
- The pause animations button could only be on specific web pages that do have animations instead of every page, as that can come off as very confusing and make the button seem like it is not functioning properly all of the time. Overall user interaction could be simplified where the design of the website could have more uniform elements to make it easier to navigate.



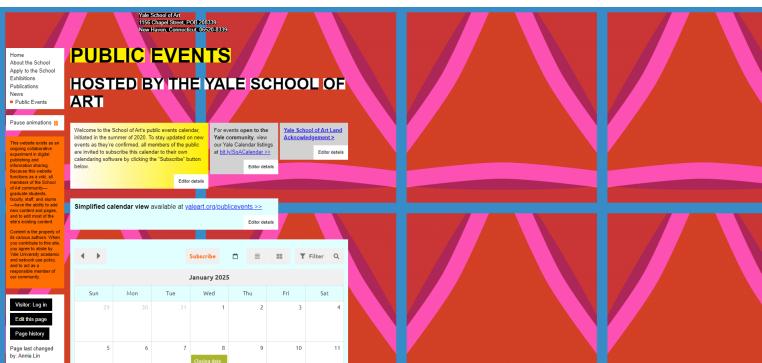
- **User Experience (UX) Analysis: Jonathan**

- **Usability:**

- The web page usability is average. The webpage focuses more on the visual appeal at the cost of usability. There is too much on the screen and the lack of an understandable layout, which makes the navigation difficult. Any user who comes across the website will be lost.
    - Although the website contains menus and something of a layout, it can be improved with a visual hierarchy by adding a consistent font across the webpage and a better layout to help the user access content easier. They can add better low-contrast elements to help user read and understand the information on the screen



- **Accessibility:**
  - The accessibility of this website is low, as there are no visible accessibility options or anything similar. This can limit the amount of users that can explore the website.
  - The website accessibility can be improved in multiple ways. For example, they can implement a simple background to help people that can be overstimulated to have access to the information. The animation button should be off by default to help reduce distractions.



- **Functionality Analysis: - Roger**
  - The core functionality of the site is for users to be able to navigate through and be able to view information regarding Yale and upcoming events and exhibits hosted by the Yale School of Art. All the links are functional and up to date, but it may be hard for a user to navigate, hindering the usability of the site.

- Some features include logging in into the site and being able to edit the page. Although there are no issues with the functions themselves, accessing these features may be difficult since they are obfuscated by the site's brutalist web design. An example is the login button under all the navigation instead of near the top right of the page.



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- **Performance: - Roger**

- The app's performance is fast and clicking any links yields near instant response times due to the lack of animations.
- However, visiting the news section of the site can take a few seconds to fully render as the more recent news seems to be simply added on top of old ones. There seems to be more than a hundred entries and photos dating all the way back to July 31, 2017.



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## Identified Areas for Improvement - Sogol

- **Area 1: Navigation and Menu Structure**

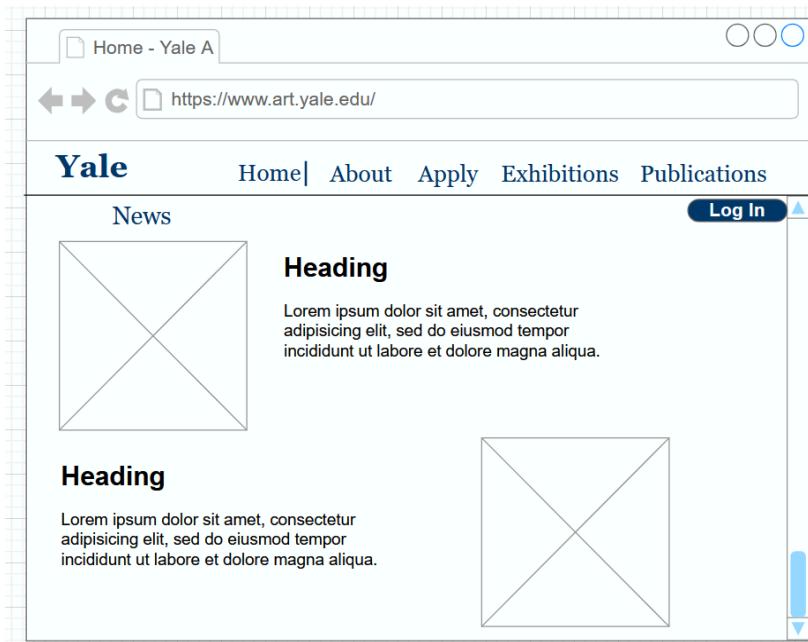
- **Current State:**

- The current navigation menu is messy with too many links pinned right in the top bar that could confuse the users. The firm has no established structure, so information can be hard to find and its location is unstandardized.



- **Suggested Improvement:**

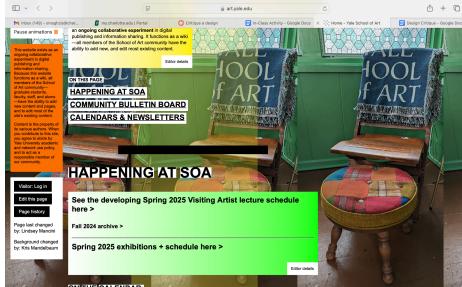
- Streamline the navigation menu by condensing the navigation links into dropdowns (e.g., "Academics", "Events", and "About Us"). Provide a search box strategically to allow users to easily locate any desired content.
    - Makes it easier for users to understand and navigate and highlights important information clearly and accessible



- **Area 2: Visual Design Consistency**

- **Current State:**

- The website lacks consistent typography and spacing. Font sizes and styles are highly inconsistent between pages.



- **Suggested Improvement:**

- Maintain a consistent design language, which is achieved by applying a common typography system, standard colors, and regular spacing.
    - Creates a polished, professional appearance and improves readability