

Hi, I'm

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Product Designer & Technologist



shutterstock®

Artist Portfolio Page Case Study

Role: Lead designer and researcher

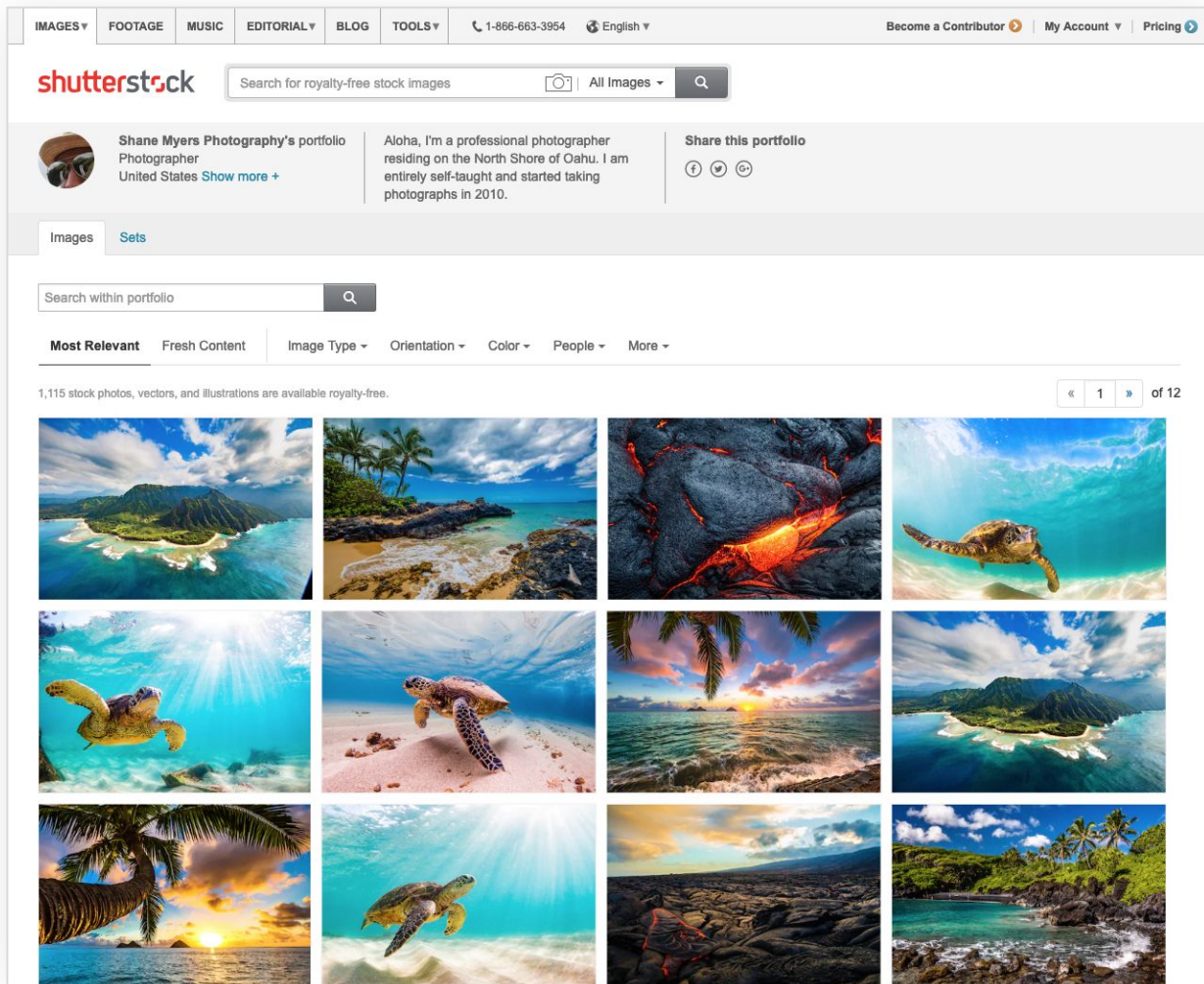
Outline

- 1 Objective
- 2 Research
- 3 Design sprint
- 4 Design output
- 5 Rollout strategy
- 6 Success metrics

Part 1

Objective





Objective

Here you can see the old artist portfolio page. The goal of this project was to rebuild it using Shutterstock's new design language.

Other than simply migrating the page however, we didn't have a clear concept of what success looked like or even what existing problems users were facing. So I set out to learn more through research.

Part 2

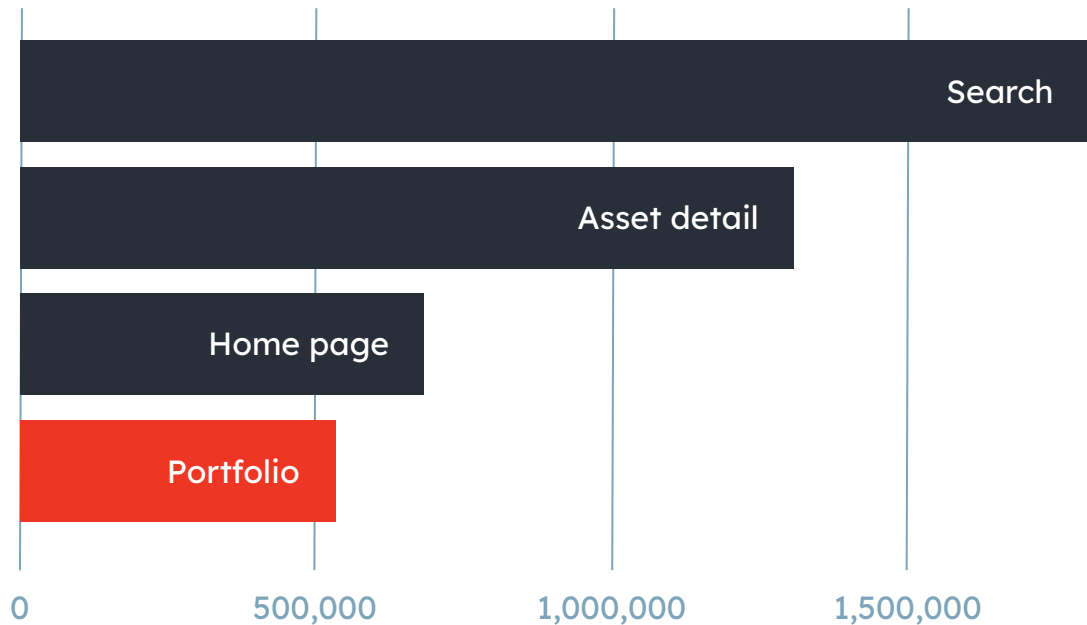
Research



Quantitative Analysis

Google Analytics

4th most viewed page on Shutterstock



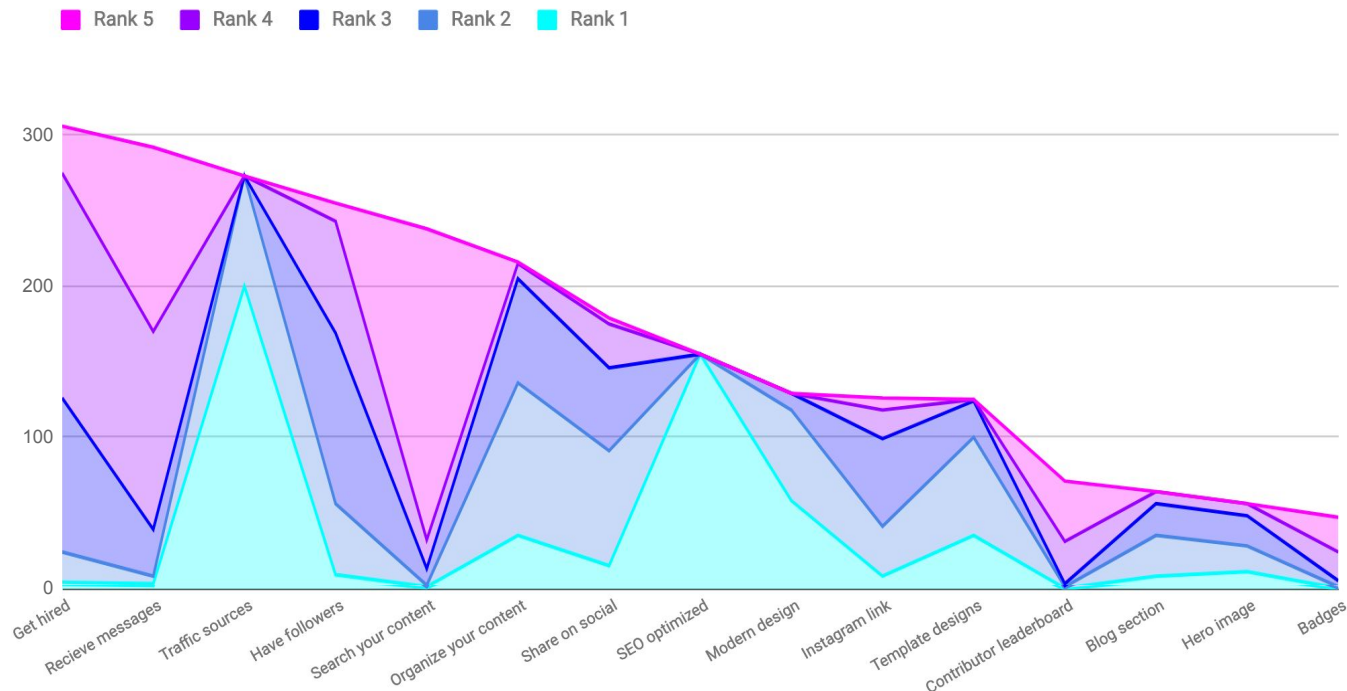
Quantitative analysis

The first component of research was quantitative analysis.

Using Google Analytics data, I began by looking for clear behavioral patterns. It turned out that the portfolio page was the fourth most viewed page on Shutterstock getting around five hundred thousand views per day.

Clearly the artist portfolio page had a meaningful impact on the user journey, yet we hadn't been giving it the attention it deserved.

Survey responses



Quantitative analysis

I also reviewed related surveys ran prior to the project. This is a visualization I created from a data set ranking features artists wanted from a new portfolio page.

Depending on the way you represent the data, you can uncover hidden patterns. In this case, even though some features weren't ranked first, they were selected with the highest overall frequency.

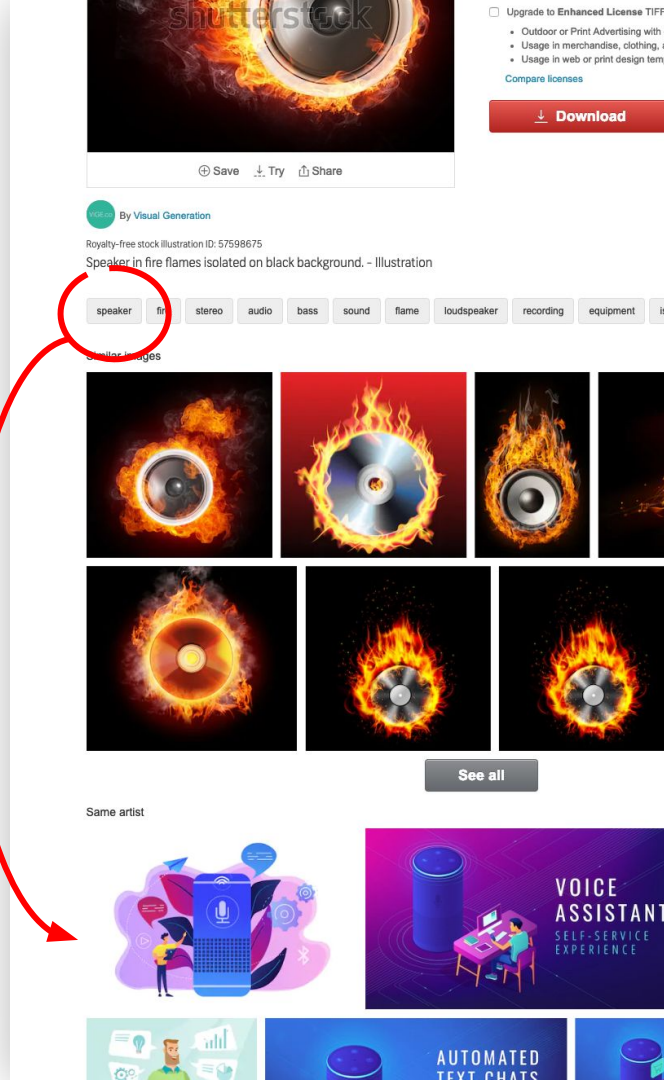
Coming from a background in mechanical engineering, I always try to find meaningful data that can be translated into something everyone can understand and learn from.

Qualitative Analysis

Take-away:

Surface the right content

"I want to see the flaming speakers by this artist, and I'm wondering why it comes up with all these purple things... Nice work, but not related..."



Qualitative analysis

Through user testing, it became immediately clear that we needed to do a better job surfacing the most relevant content for customers.

Here the user was looking at a “flaming speaker” image. They liked the realistic style, but the related content from the same artist was based solely on the first keyword, “speaker.” The results showed smart speakers and people speaking in front of podiums — not what the user was looking for.

The user’s negative emotional response was palpable as they bounced from the page without attempting a second search. I saw this as a major opportunity as the artist did have more related content; we just failed to reveal it.

Take-away:

Both customers and artists want to give and receive feedback



"Hey, can we do this with a coffee mug?"

"It's valuable to me to know what's in demand."

Qualitative analysis

One unintuitive take-away was that while both customers and artists wanted to communicate with each other directly, they appreciated doing business through Shutterstock.

Customers wished there was a way to request something they were looking for, and artists wanted to know what kind of content was in demand.

There were concerns from the CEO that if we encouraged communication, artists and customers would do business outside Shutterstock, but my research showed the opposite...

Take-away:

...But they don't want to work directly with each other

*"It's a lot more **time consuming** and a lot more **expensive**."*

*"Most of the time **I'm underpaid**, and they want it yesterday"*

"I can experiment as opposed to having a client."

Qualitative analysis

It turned out, customers believed working directly with artists was time consuming and expensive, and artists felt they were usually rushed and underpaid. Many artists don't like being told what to do, and would rather focus on their own inspiration. At the same time, both valued Shutterstock's legal protection.

For these reasons, I was able to push for including an artist's social media and website links on their portfolio, encouraging both communication and personalization.

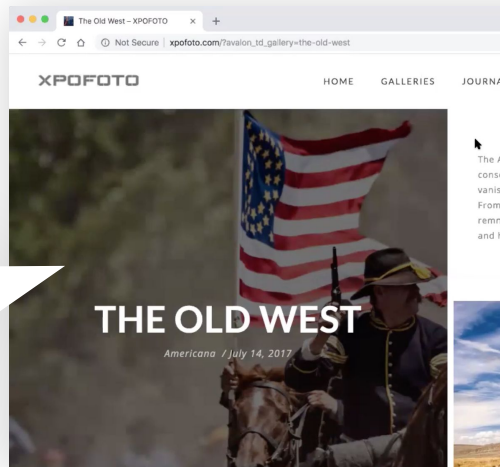
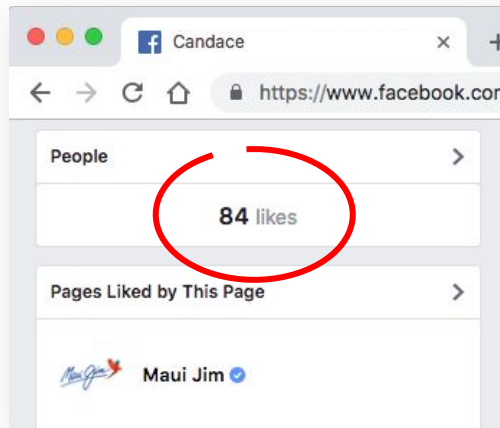
While there could be many more potential opportunities from connecting artists with customers, this was the most agile way to deliver value to users quickly.

Take-away:

Artists struggle with promoting themselves and want Shutterstock to do it for them

"Letting the agencies do the marketing, I can concentrate on the content."

"It got to be too much to do and to sustain. You have to pay for the hosting and the URLs. I'm not pouring my heart and soul into this."



Qualitative analysis

I also learned that artists had trouble promoting themselves, or simply weren't interested.

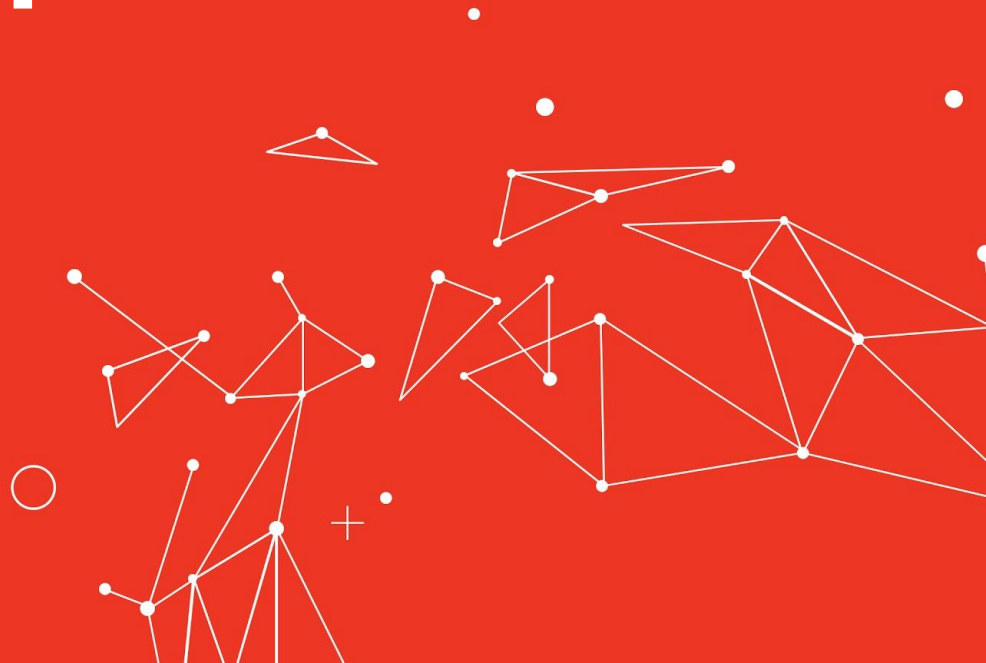
Social media pages had poor engagement, and personal websites were time consuming and expensive and still didn't generate much traffic. In the end, many artists just wanted something easy and free.

Meanwhile, more experienced artists said there was no point in marketing themselves. They wanted our algorithms to put the right content in front of the right customers, freeing them to focus on their craft.

These findings supported the idea that the portfolio page could be both an algorithmic storefront and a replacement for a personal website.

Part 3

Design Sprint





Take-away: What was our goal?

1. **Build a page that artists would be proud to show off**
2. **Help customers find what they're looking for faster**



Design sprint

Next, I used my research findings to kick off a three day design sprint. By its conclusion, we arrived at two main goals:

1. We wanted to build a page that artists would be proud of. We wanted to help increase a sense of community and connectedness to the brand as well as incentivise artists to serve as lead-generation for more artists and customers to join Shutterstock through promoting their own pages.
2. We wanted to do a better job helping customers find what they were looking for faster. At the end of the day, helping customers download sooner and more frequently was the main way we could impact the bottom line.

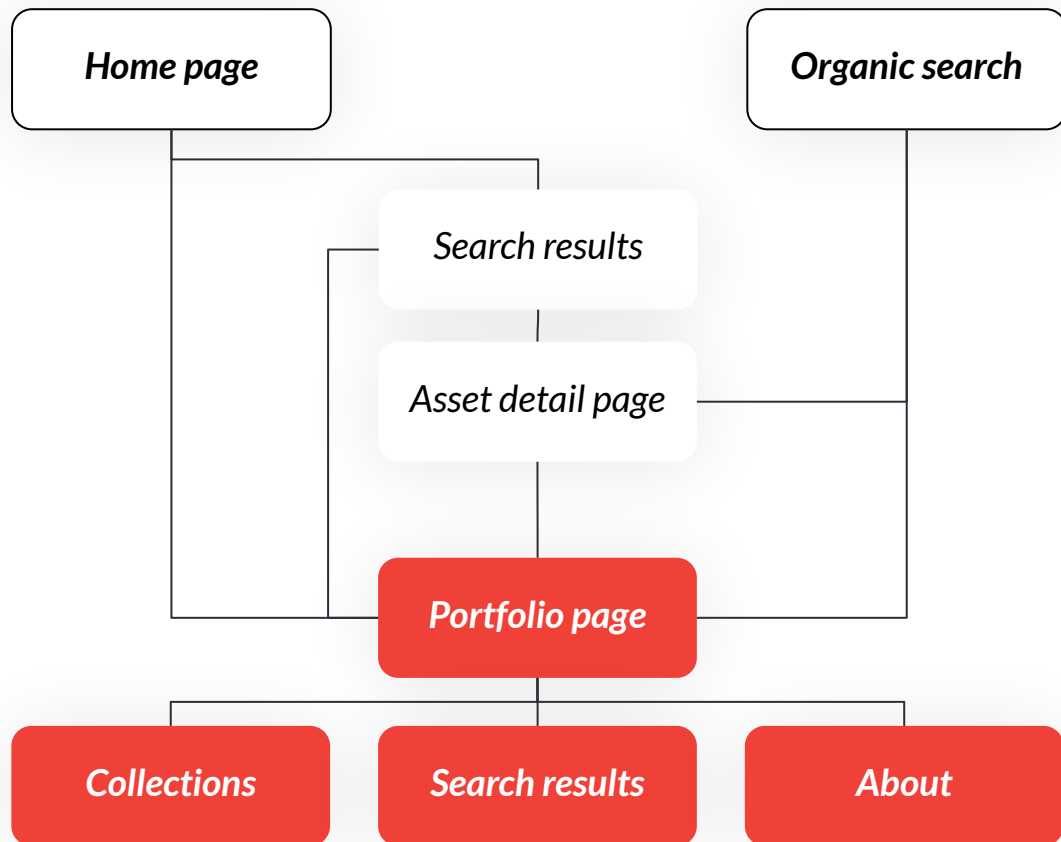
Part 4

Design Output



Design Thinking

Basic customer user flow



Design thinking

A customer can reach the artist portfolio page in many ways, and they can be at various stages in their journey when they arrive. All of these cases needed to be accounted for in order to create the best user experience.

Users who came from search should be able to continue their search flow, and users who came from a search engine while looking for a particular artist should be presented with an immersive storefront experience. In the end, I had to create a page that served both these needs and many others.



View filters



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Search for images



Categories ▾



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Images



Videos



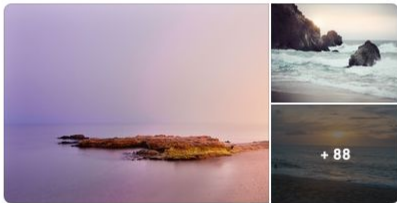
Collections



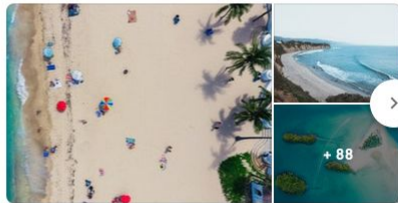
About



Great cities



Stunning sunsets



Beach paradise



1



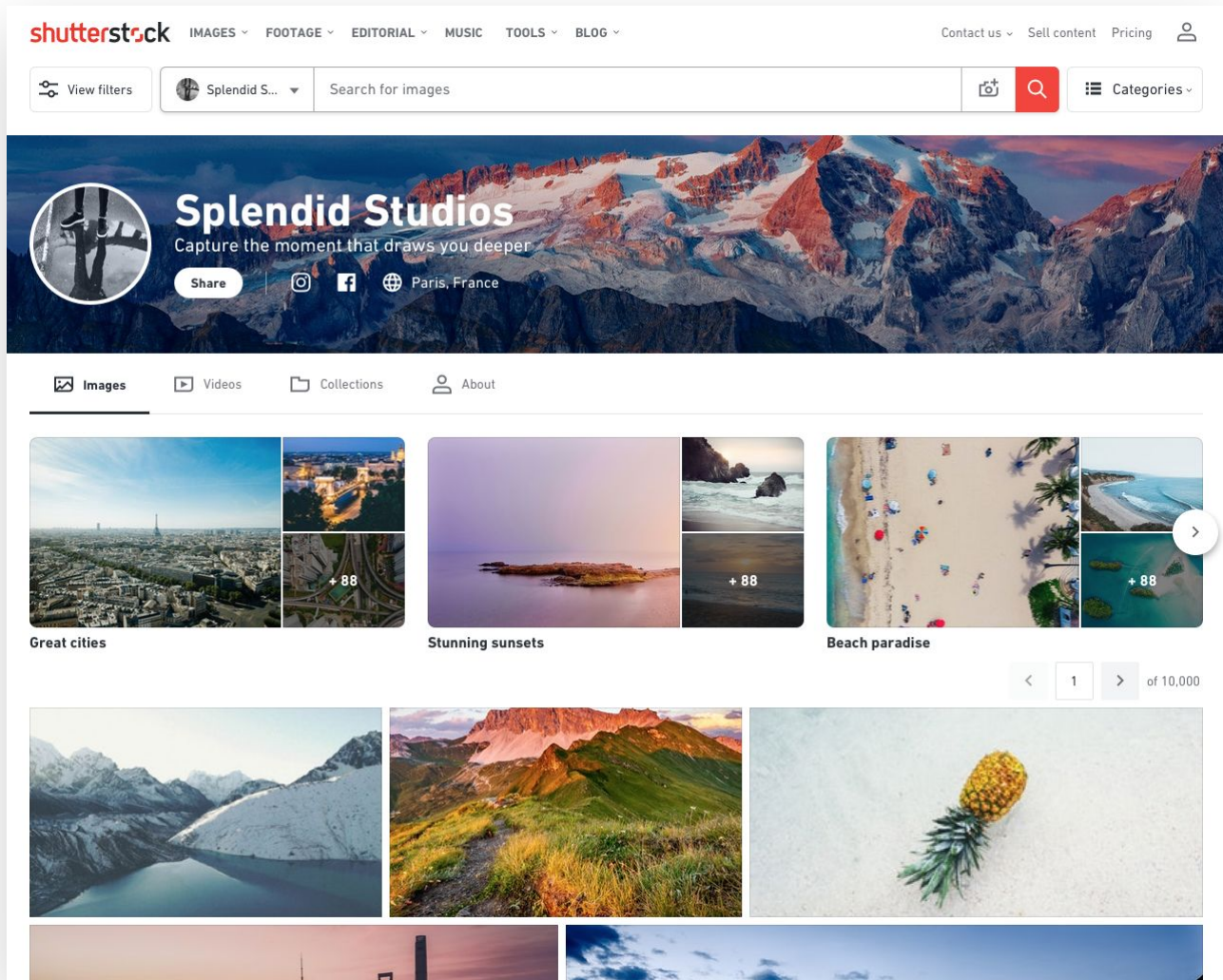
of 10,000

Design thinking

And here is the final result. The main emphasis for the design was placed on personalization for the artist and the overall discoverability of their work.

The artist's identity is cleanly displayed at the top, and beneath, you can see the collections and featured content the artist has chosen to display prominently.

This is a huge improvement from the previous experience where an artist had no control of the content on their page as it was solely determined by the search algorithm. Now they will be able to make the portfolio page their own.



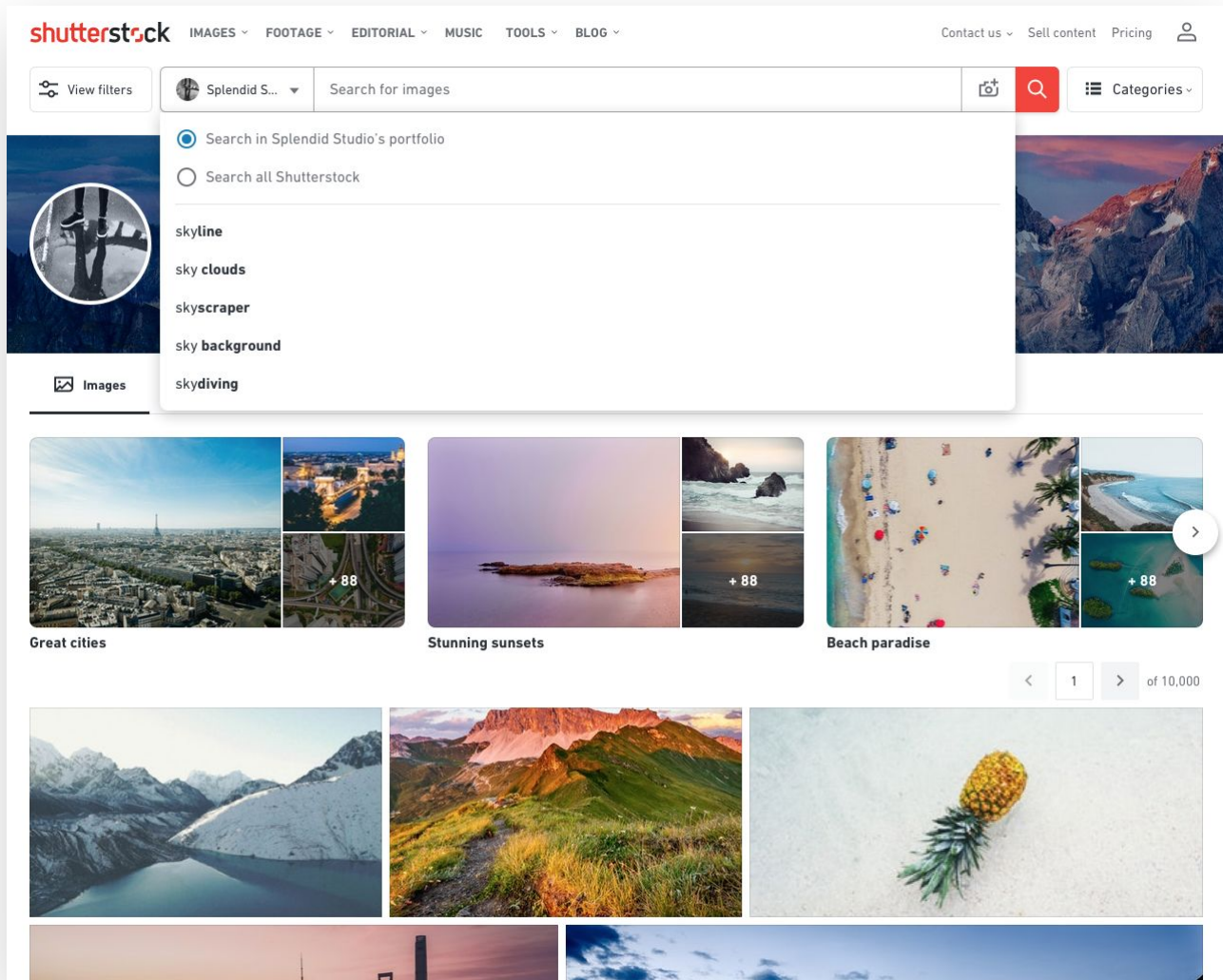
Design thinking

And it even looks great with a hero image. But one of the biggest challenges on this page was figuring out how search would work.

How would a user know if they were searching in the artist's portfolio or all of Shutterstock? How would we integrate all of the existing search and filter features?

The old page relied on two search bars, but user testing revealed that this pattern was confusing for some users, while others didn't even notice the second search option.

My solution was two-fold...





Design thinking


First, when you click into the main search area, you are presented with a radio option to let you know that you are searching within the artist's portfolio and to give you the option to search all of Shutterstock instead.



This interaction works well even on small devices where there usually isn't even enough room for filter pills or media type dropdowns.


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 Images  Videos  Collections  About




× **Urban landscape** > [Search all Shutterstock](#)


24 urban landscape stock photos, vectors, and illustrations from Streetsmart Photos available royalty-free.




Great cities





Night lights





Big Apple







 1  of 10,000

Design thinking

And second are the secondary functions that accompany the search results. So even if a user didn't realize they had performed a search within the artist's portfolio, or just didn't find what they were looking for, they can easily search all of Shutterstock with a single click.

This is in fact how most users will experience an artist's page. Typically, a user will perform a search, click on a result, then view the artist's other work. Previously, when a customer landed on an artist's page, their search context was dropped, which proved to be a terrible experience during testing. By persisting a user's search, we work towards the second design sprint goal of helping customers find what they are looking for faster.

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24 related stock photos, vectors, and illustrations from Streetsmart Photos available royalty-free.

Great cities Night lights Big Apple

of 10,000

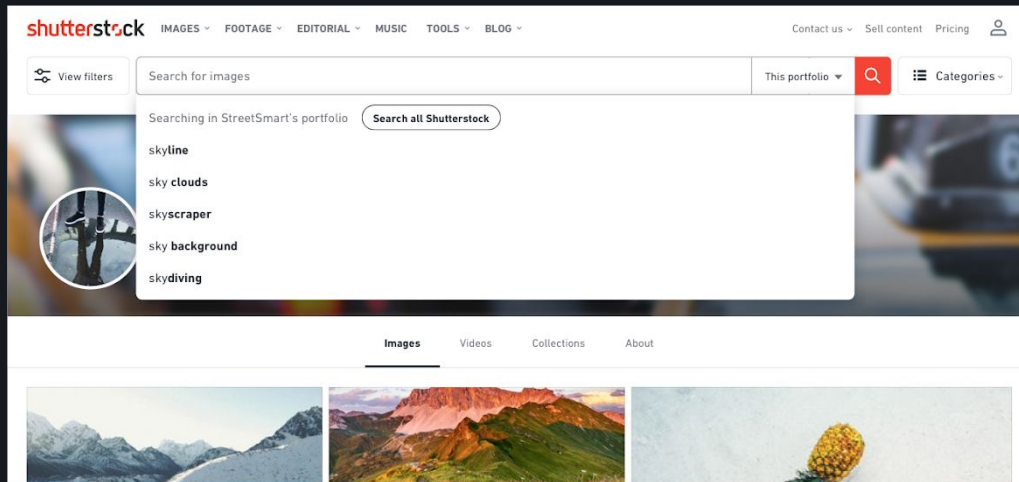
Design thinking

I extended this pattern further to when there might not be any search query at all.

Here you can see what it would look like if a user arrived at an artist's page from an image or video without any text-based search context.

That image or video would serve as the context, and reverse image search would be used to surface similar content from the artist.

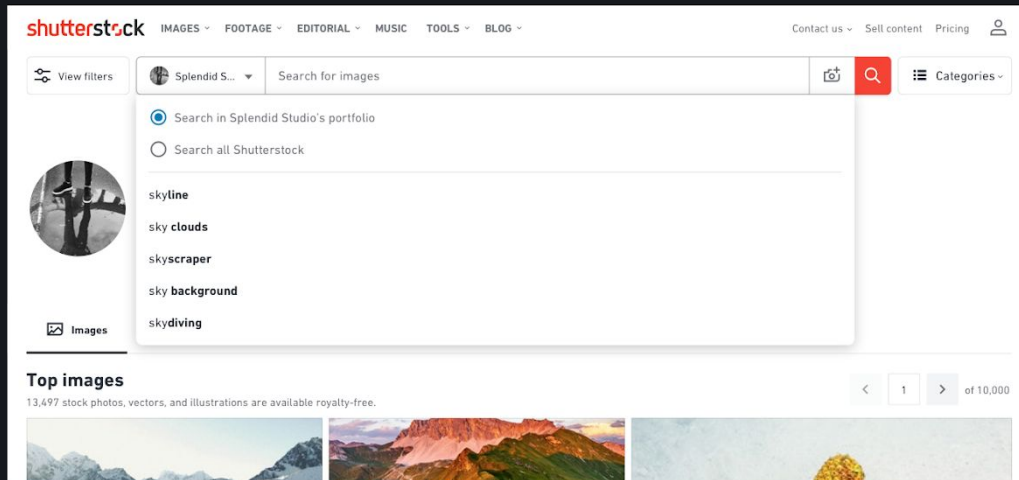
Design Iterations

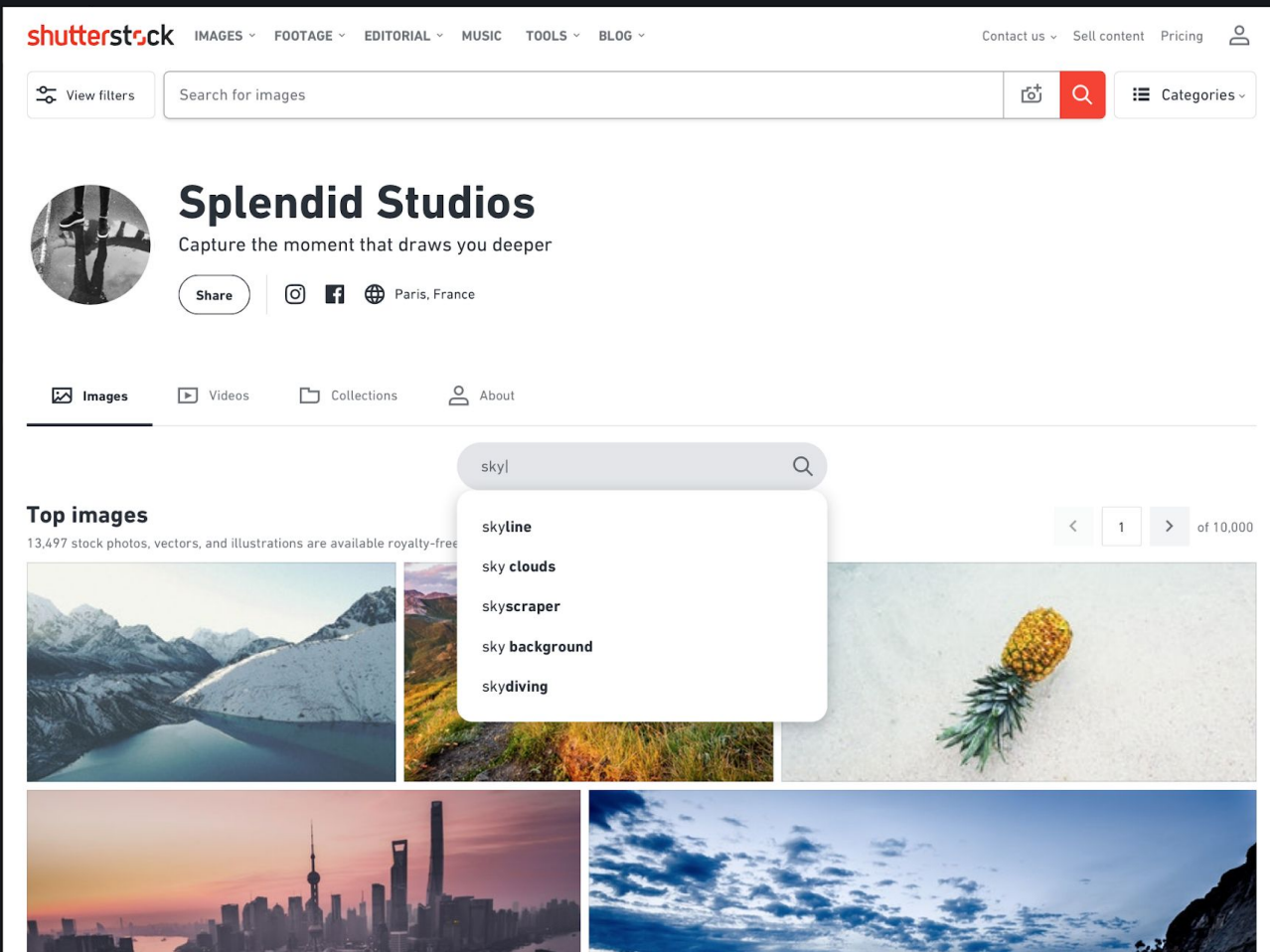


Design iterations

Here is a previous iteration and the final design for the inline search options feature.

User testing showed that the second design communicated its purpose more clearly and was noticed more quickly through use of radio buttons and color.





Design iterations

This is a design option for maintaining two search bars that still performed better than the current page in the case that a unified search bar would be too technically difficult to implement or have poor user testing results.

It was concluded that while a unified search experience had many advantages over a secondary search, the MVP would launch with two search bars, as it would be faster to build that way, and unified search would be slated for a later phase.

Although designers seek the ideal, true agile methodology teaches us to build things fast and continuously iterate towards better solutions.

Design iterations

Because the artist portfolio page is customizable, there are many states it can appear in. Here you can see a matrix of some of the different design options across different states and customization options.

Although some designs looked good under specific conditions, I made sure to evaluate the efficacy of each design across all likely situations in order to select the best one.

No hero

Hero

With search

Minimal

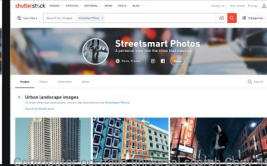
Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 64



Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 66



Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 56



Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 65



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Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 65



Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 64



Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 66



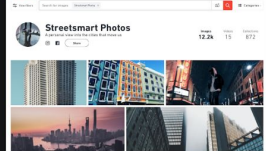
Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 56



Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 65



Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 64



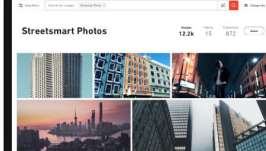
Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 66



Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 56



Contributor portfolio universal search Copy 65



Left tabs (no pagination)

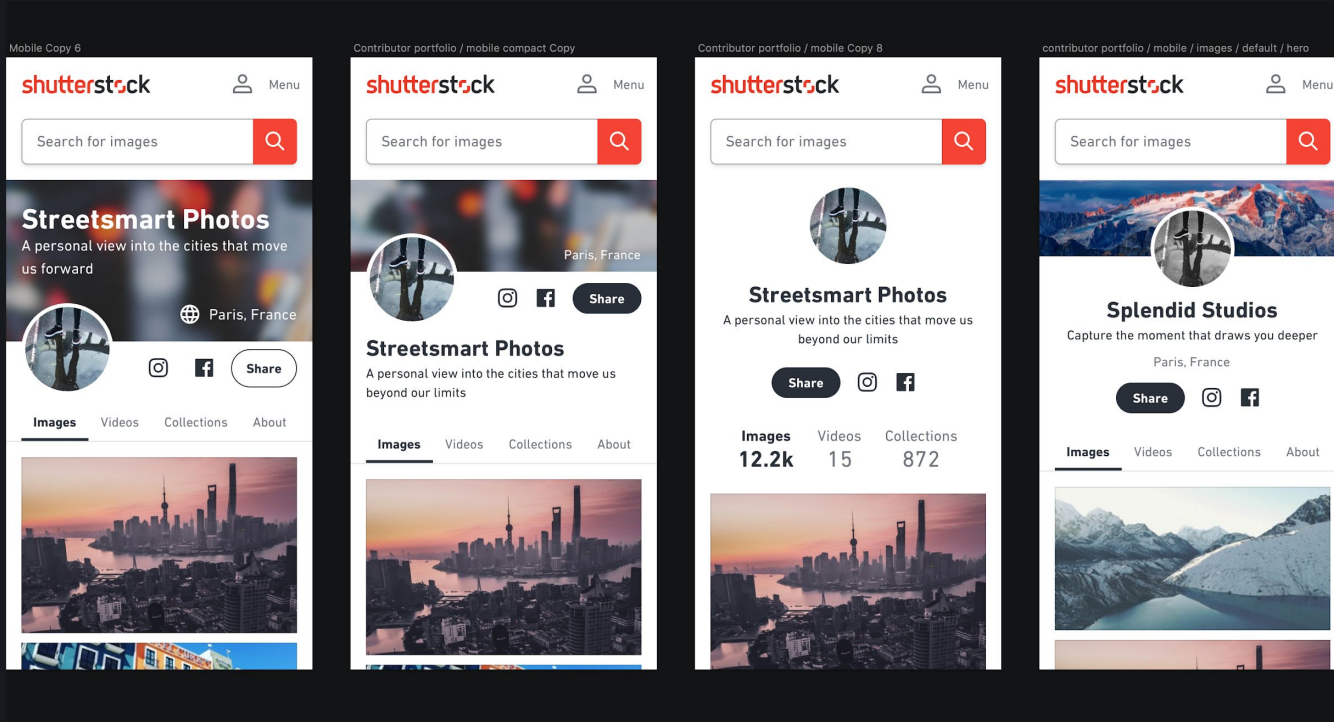
Center tabs (no pagination)

simple tabs

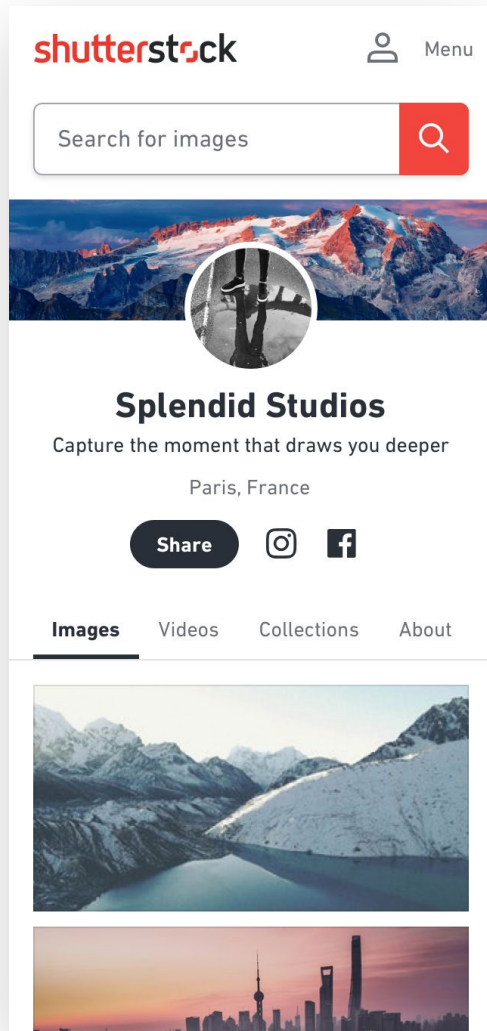
Compact

Design iterations

Here are a few design options for the portfolio page on small devices. In these designs, I had to take into consideration how the artist's information would be rearranged as the viewport size decreased.

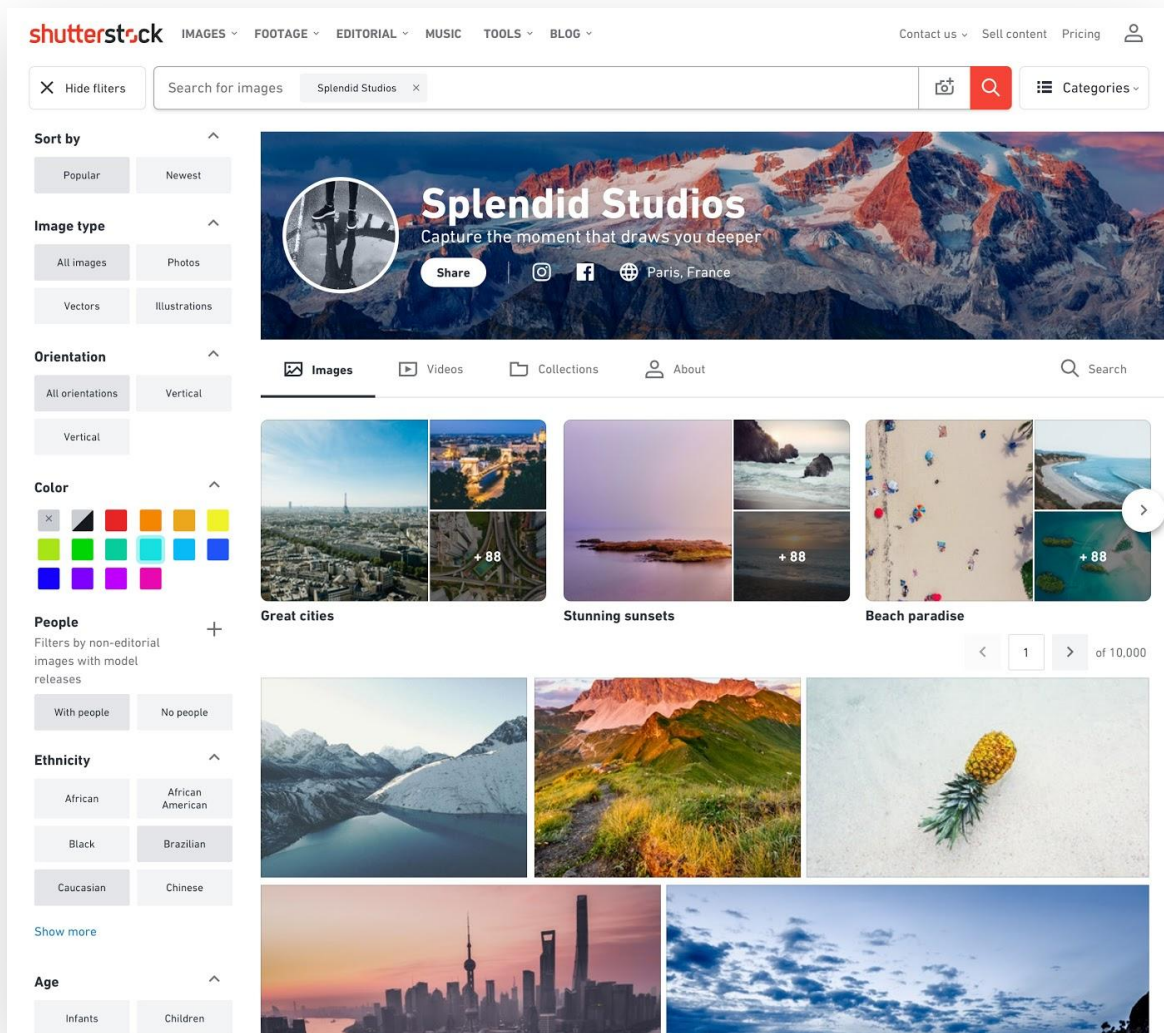


Additional Final Designs



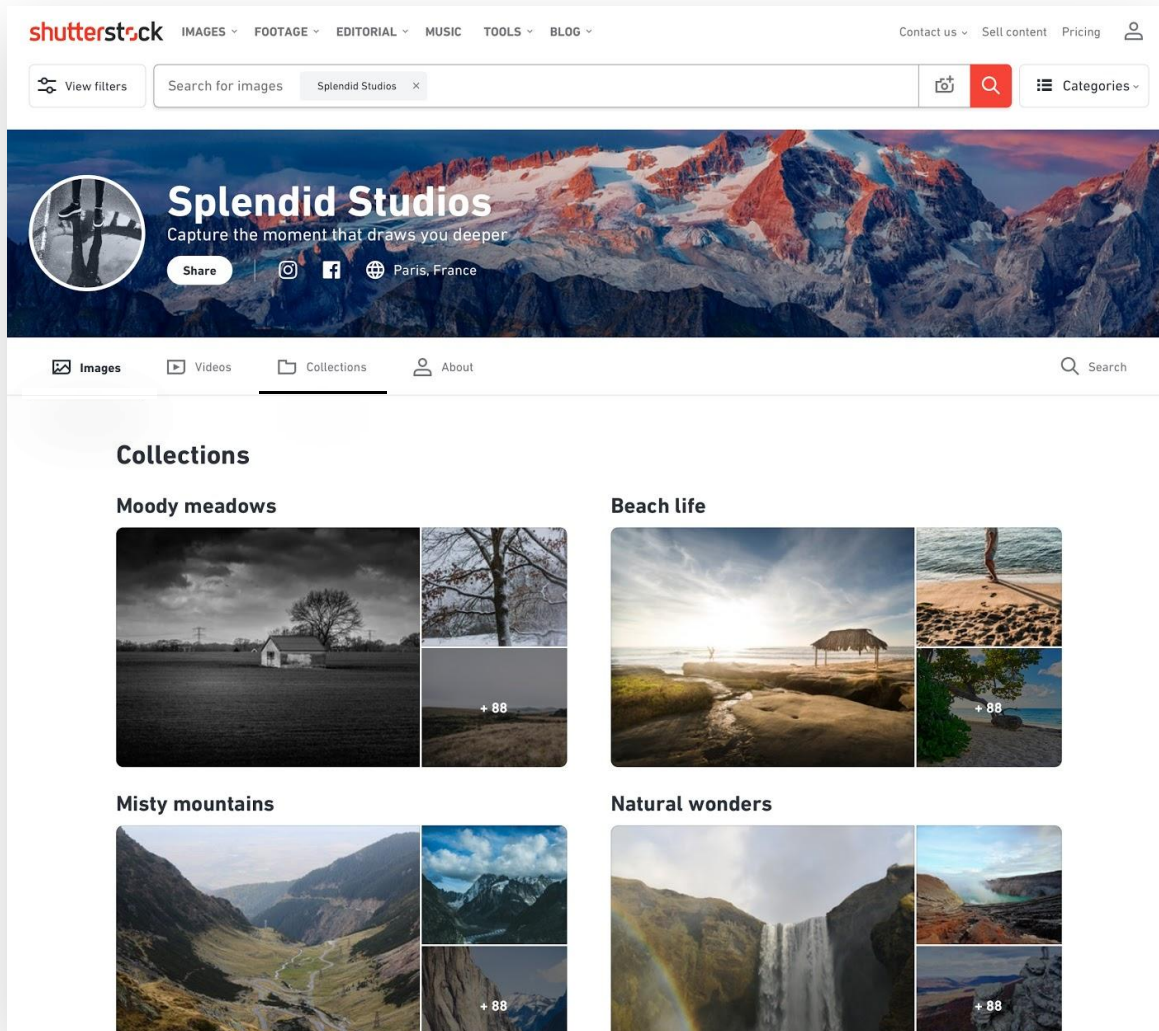
Additional final designs

And here is the final design for the portfolio page on a small device.



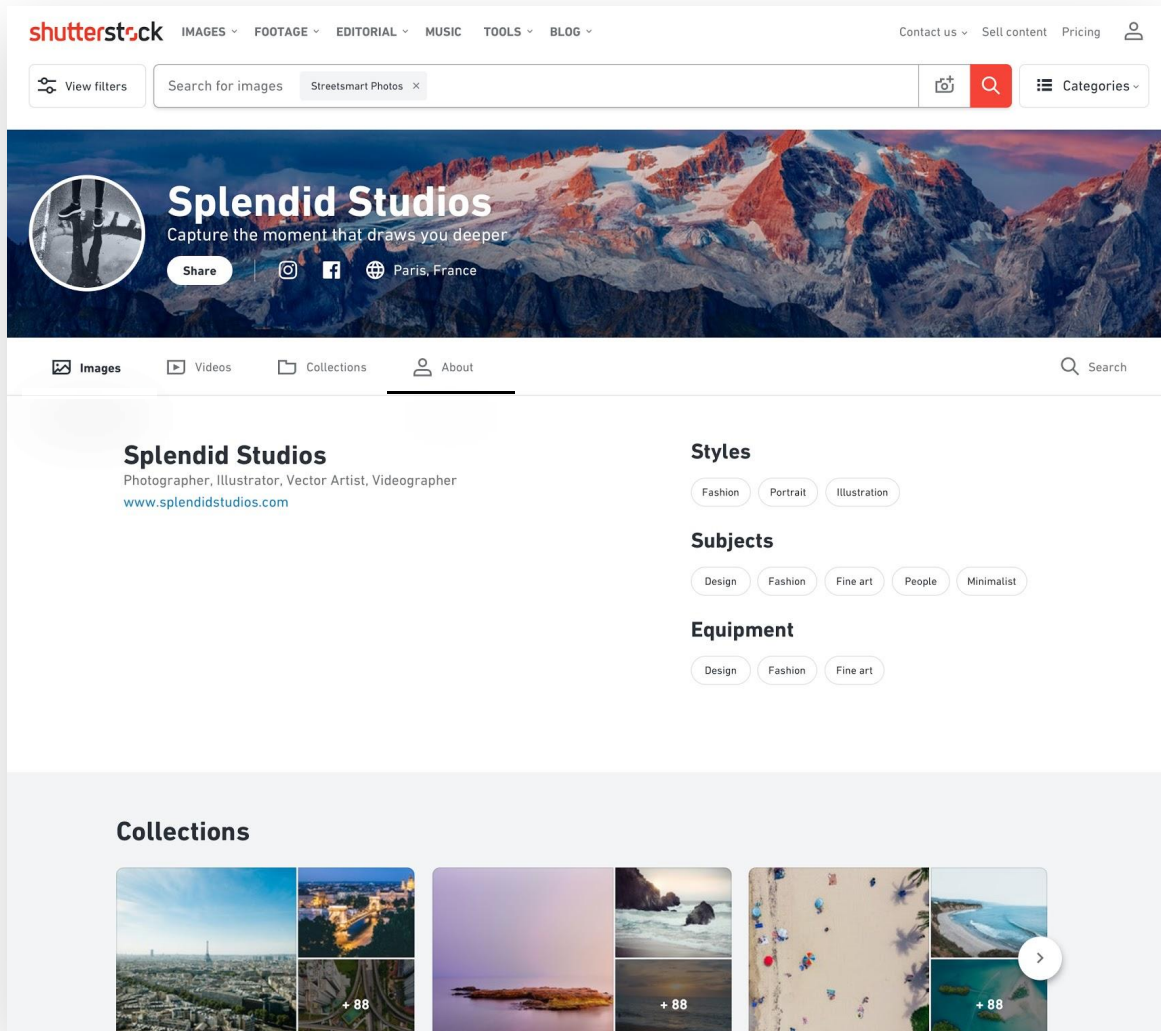
Additional final designs

This is the page with the filter
side panel open.



Additional final designs

This is the artist's collections page showing their content organized into themes.



Additional final designs

And this is artist about page. Unfortunately this is where I had to cut a few corners.

One of the biggest challenges with this project was that everything had to be built on top of existing data structures with new features gradually added in.

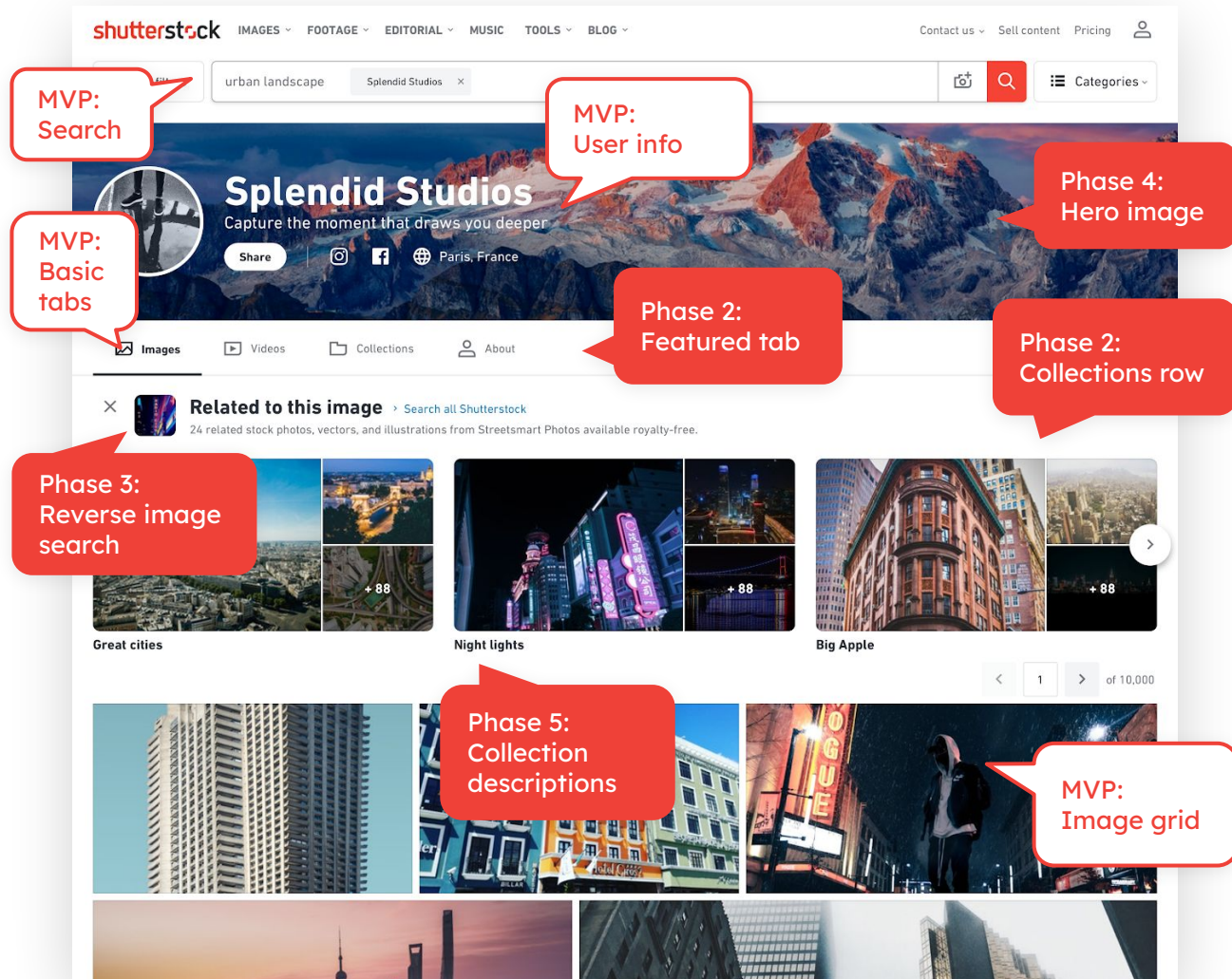
This is all of the additional information we collect from an artist. Here I had to find a visually compelling way to present everything while still preparing for future features, such as a long biography.

All this leads to my next point: a multi-phased rollout plan...

Part 5

Rollout Strategy





Rollout strategy

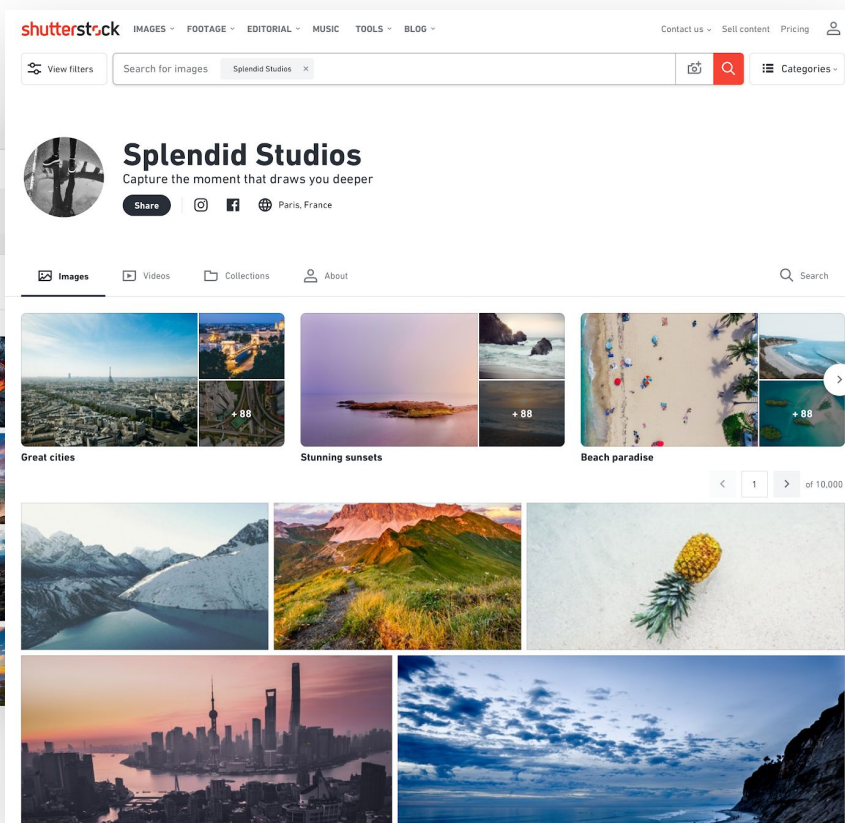
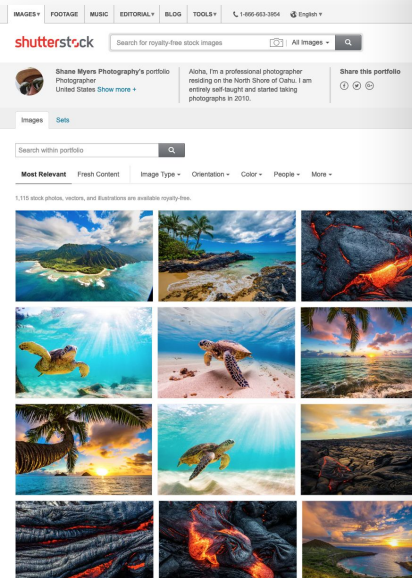
Having a solid understanding of software development, I recognize what is easier and what is harder. Using this knowledge, I created a rollout strategy to quickly deliver an MVP based on current features, while outlining phases to reach a more ideal state.

There were some ideas I knew stakeholders wouldn't go for due to the technical overhead, such as a follow feature that other designers had suggested. This meant I wasn't able to design the communication tools I really wanted to, but at the same time I was able to push for features I knew we were capable of delivering that otherwise might not have been approved, like contextualized search results and more customization options.

Part 6

Success Metrics & Next Steps





Success metrics & next steps

As of this writing, the MVP for the artist portfolio page has just been launched, and work on subsequent phases is underway.

Looking at success metrics, I'm hoping to find:

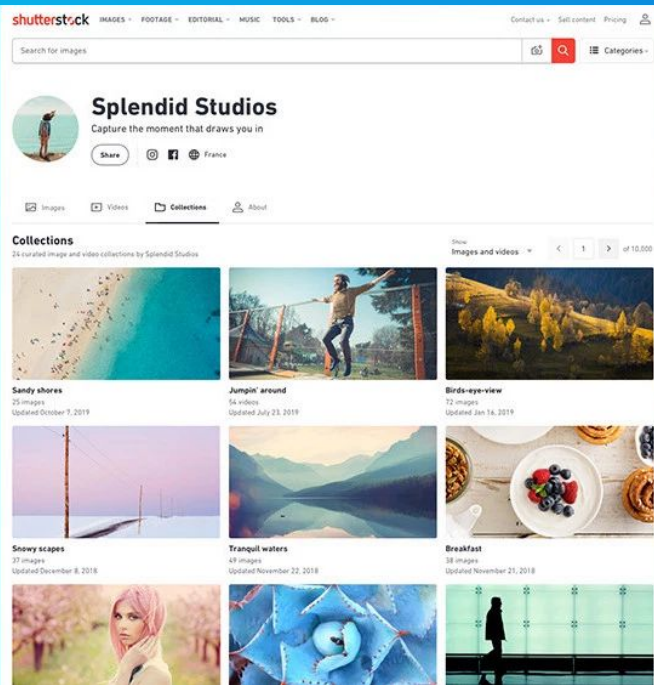
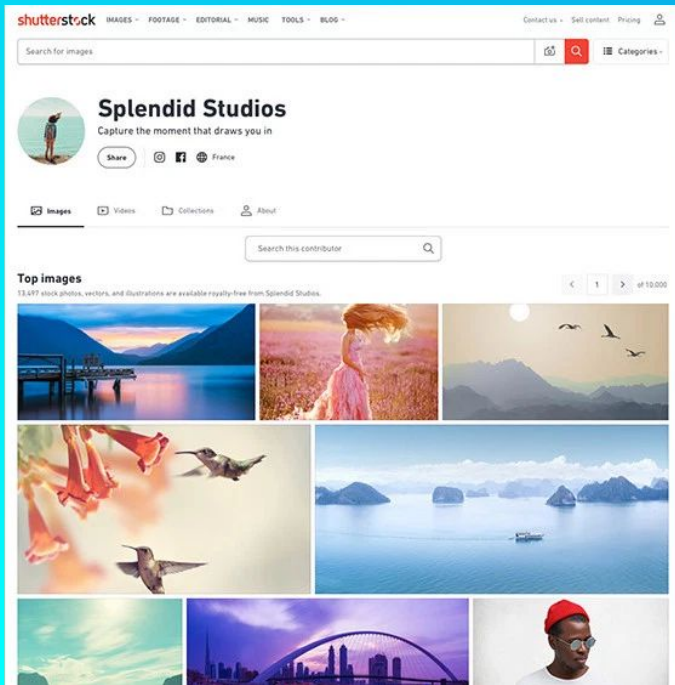
1. Increased downloads due to showing better related results.
2. More searches in an artist's portfolio since search has been made more prominent.
3. More collections created by artists to better merchandise their work since collections are now more discoverable.

Read more on the Shutterstock blog

READ NOW

Success metrics & next steps

So in the end, that's how I turned a page with poor discoverability into one that is highly customizable, serving customers as a place where they can find what they're looking for right away, and artists as a page they can promote and be proud of.



**THANKS FOR
TAKING A LOOK**



davidmack.design