Deborah Afolabi

Dr. Heidi Mau

DIG 325: Visual Design for the Web
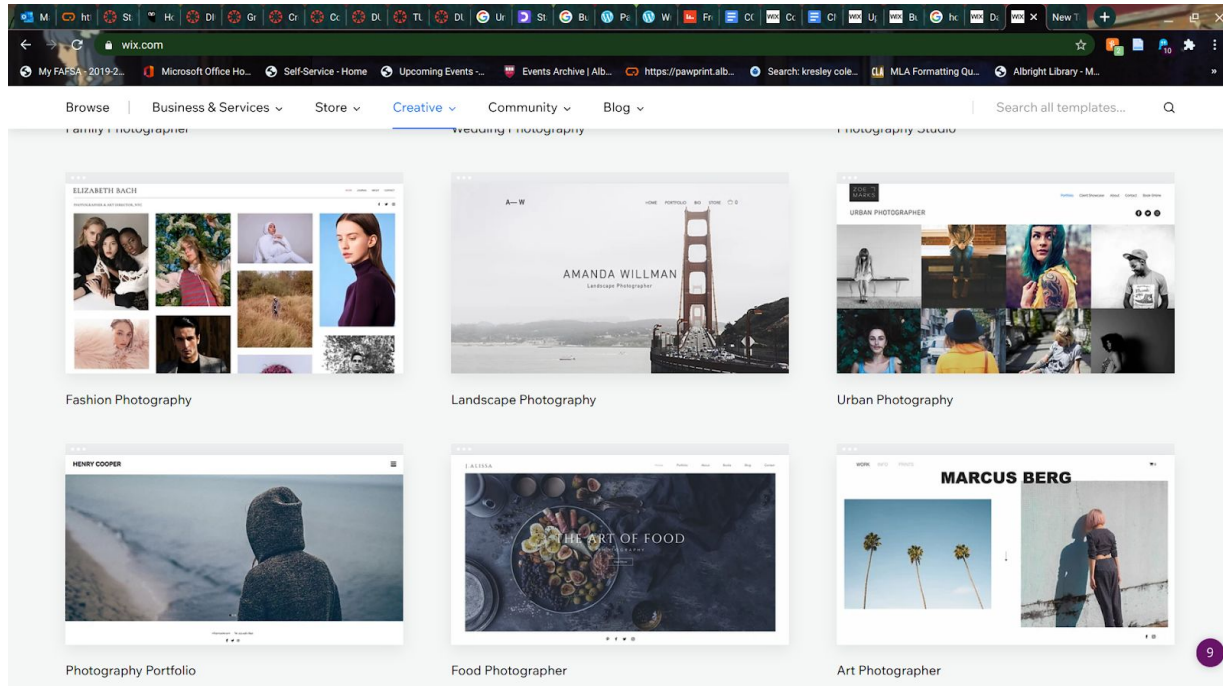
2 November 2020

CMS Exploration: WIX

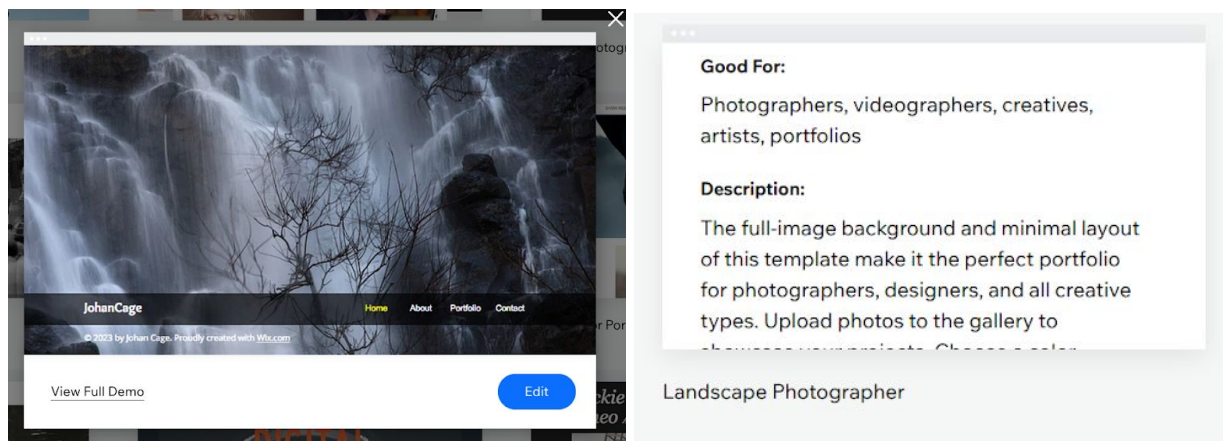https://debbieamori14.wixsite.com/photography

WIX's free website option allows users to have an assigned, customizable URL and up to 500MB of storage and bandwidth. The free version of the site offered a lot of tools that I was not expecting. You also get access to a library of templates and media elements such as icons and stock videos and images. I think the best part of the free version of WIX is the mobile editor, where you can customize your site for mobile devices. If I decide to keep this site, I would upgrade to either the Combo ($14/month) or Unlimited ($18/month) plans, simply because of certain tools I would need depending on where I want the site to go (i.e. if I wanted to become a freelancer photographer), and the storage space, as raw photographs take up a lot of space. Those plans offer more storage space and more tools necessary for starting a business.

I came into this exploration already knowing what I wanted to do: a site as my photography portfolio. Although this is my first time using WIX, it is not my first time creating a website, so I quickly went through the initial steps of signing up and selecting a photography template. The great thing about WIX (and most website building sites) is that you can be specific to help the process move along faster. I had my focus on a photography site, so that is what I looked at for templates. It was very difficult for me to select one; I wanted something complex, yet simple, something a graphic designer would use, yet for a beginner. Eventually, I selected the Landscape Photographer template, mainly because I had an idea for what photo I could use for that main photo on the home page (I didn't even use the photo I was thinking of).
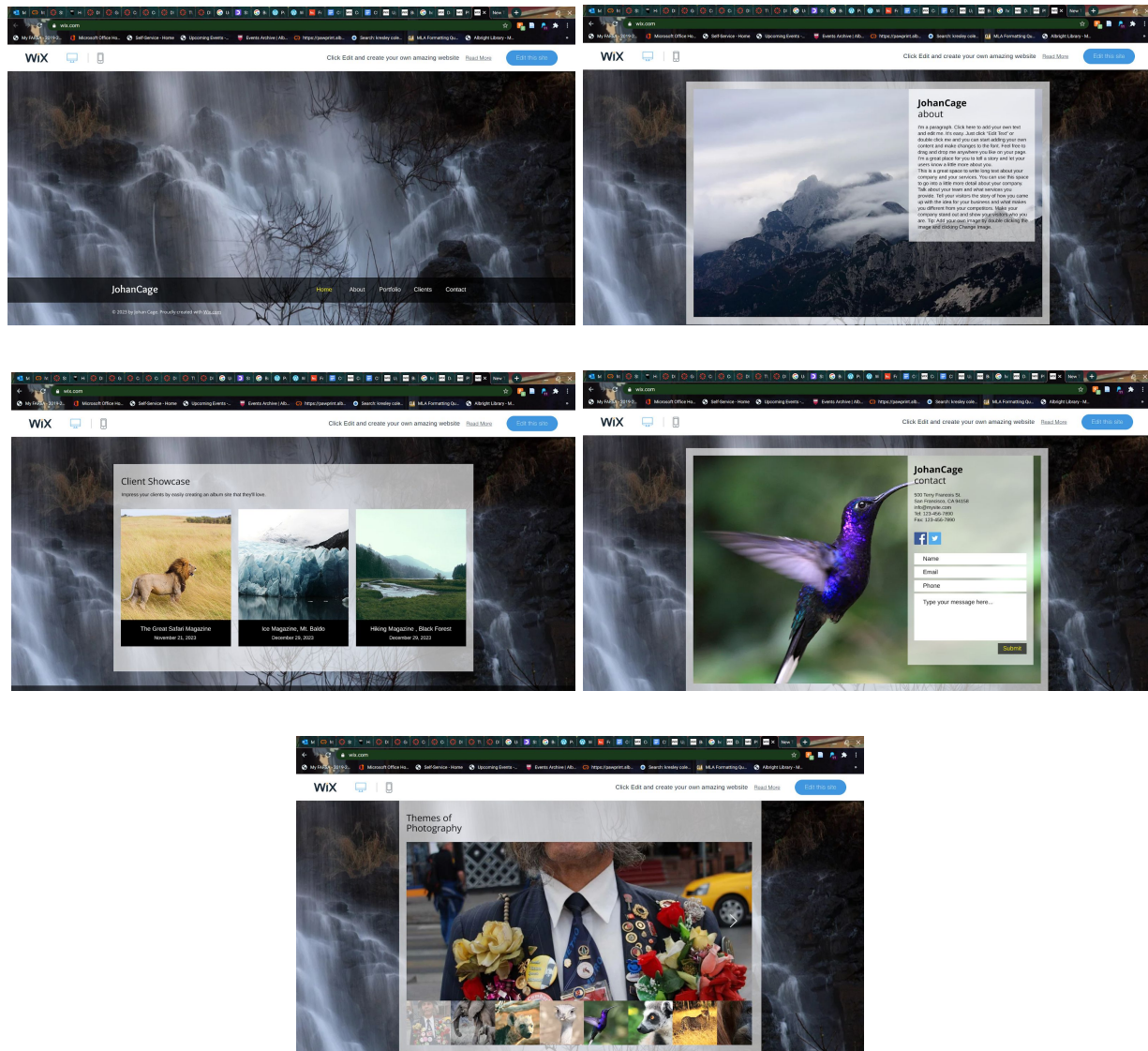
WIX photography site templates

My selected template

Once I had my template, I immediately got to work. I was a little confused by the interface at first, specifically the lines and how things moved on the screen. However, once I realized that I was not in fact moving objects on the screen but just scrolling, I was able to design without preamble. WIX was pretty easy to learn, so I had no trouble in that regard. WIX reminds me a lot of Canva, which I use a lot and is probably why it was easy for me to grow accustomed to. I pretty much stayed true to the original design of the template, changing colors, backgrounds, and minor elements along the way. I completely deleted the clients page, as this was only meant

to be a portfolio site, and I ended up putting all my images on one page anyways. Then I changed
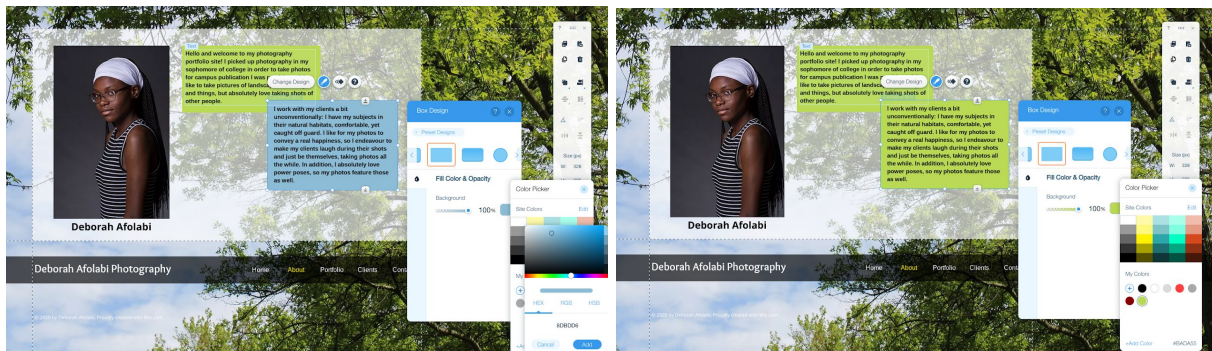
the name of the site.

The original design's menu had five pages: Home, About, Portfolio, Clients, and Contact.

The first thing I did was change the background of all the pages. At first I was going to

use a photo I'd taken of a sunset, but when I was going through my photos, I came across the

treetops one first, and decided at that moment that it would be perfect. The cool thing about this

template and WIX's tools is that I could change the background of all the pages at once to the

same image, which became the theme of my site. Unfortunately, I do not have screenshots of the
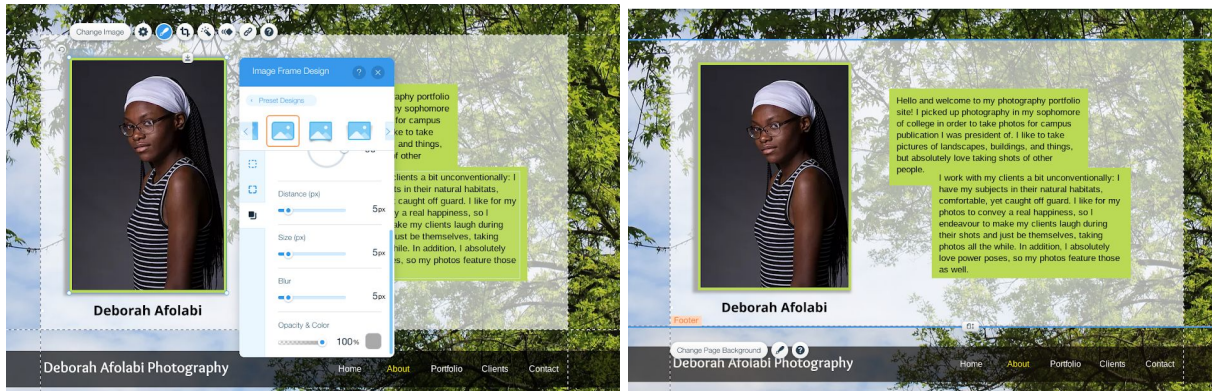
process of adding the background, as I had technical difficulties that resulted in the deletion of all the screenshots I took before working on my About page.

The next page I edited was my About page. I did not really like the layout of the page; an image atop an image. I took out the second image, kept the opaque box, added a photo of me, then began to play with type, design and formatting after writing a brief bio. I wanted the page to really tie together, which is why I started with trying to recreate the background image colors and incorporating them in the text boxes. I wanted a tiered design with my text to make it a little easier to read, which is where the stair-design came from. The blue did not look cohesive with the rest of the design to me, so I just made all the boxes green, even after trying different opacities. I actually came back to the About page in order to add extra links that I felt should not be in my Contact page, which led to me rearranging elements and playing with the type. Once I decided that the text would be on green backgrounds, I also started playing with the design tools for my photo, adding a green drop shadow and border to it.
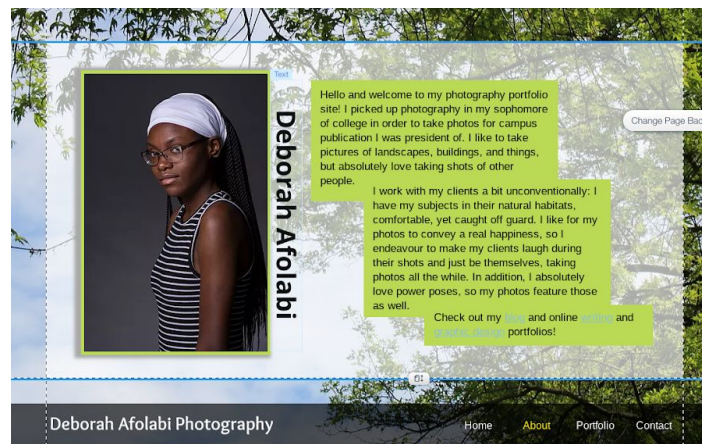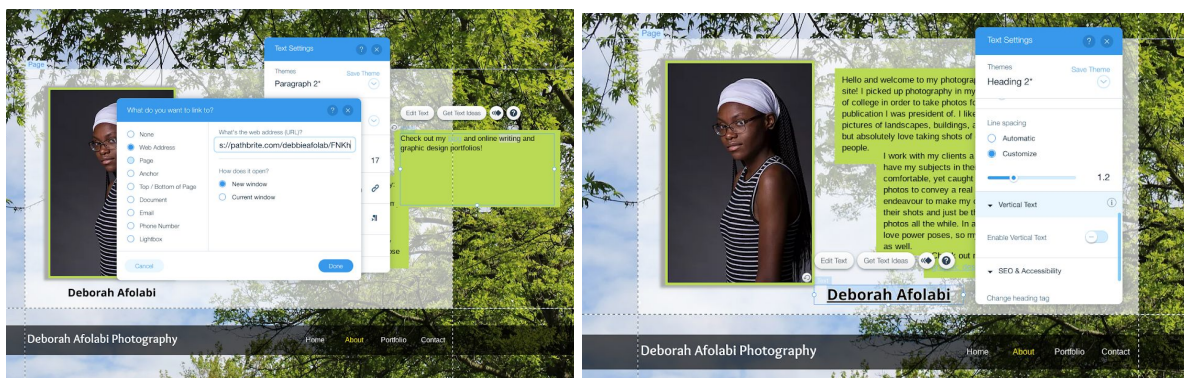

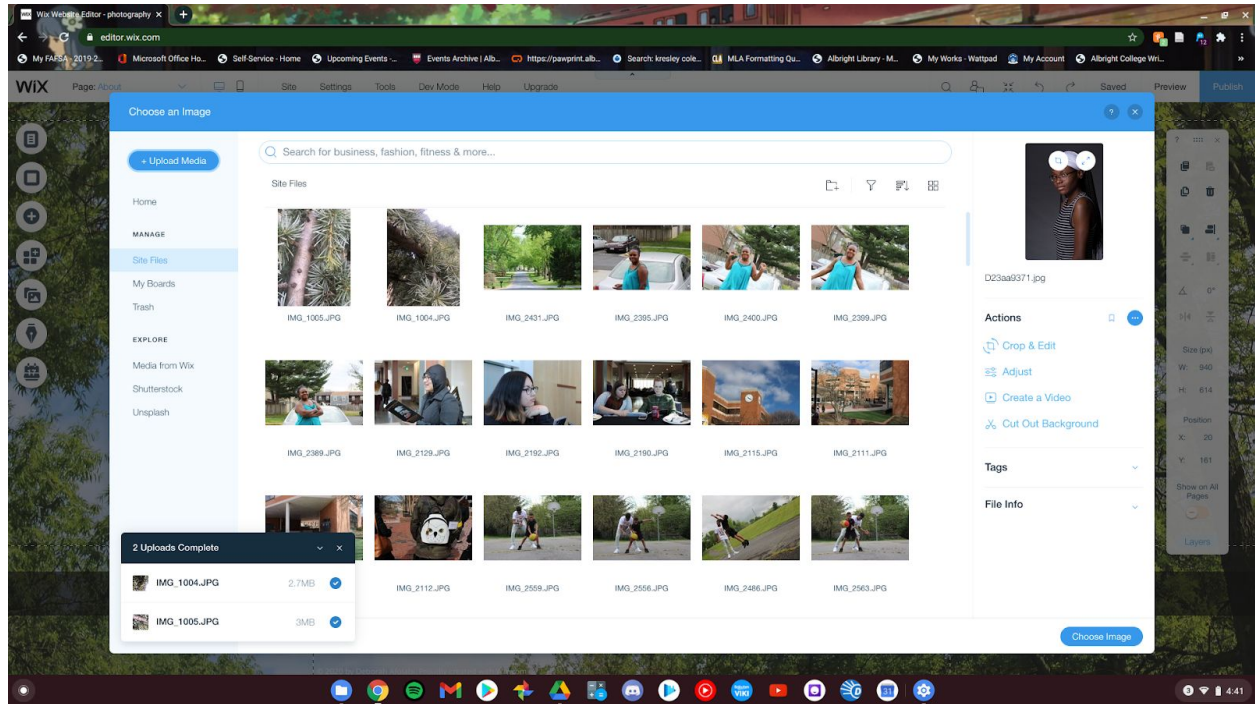*Playing with color and opacity to make the elements of the page tie together*

Using the image design features of WIX to also make the image flow with the theme of the site/page

Embedding the links of my blog and portfolio sites in my About page and changing layout to fill the spaces nicely
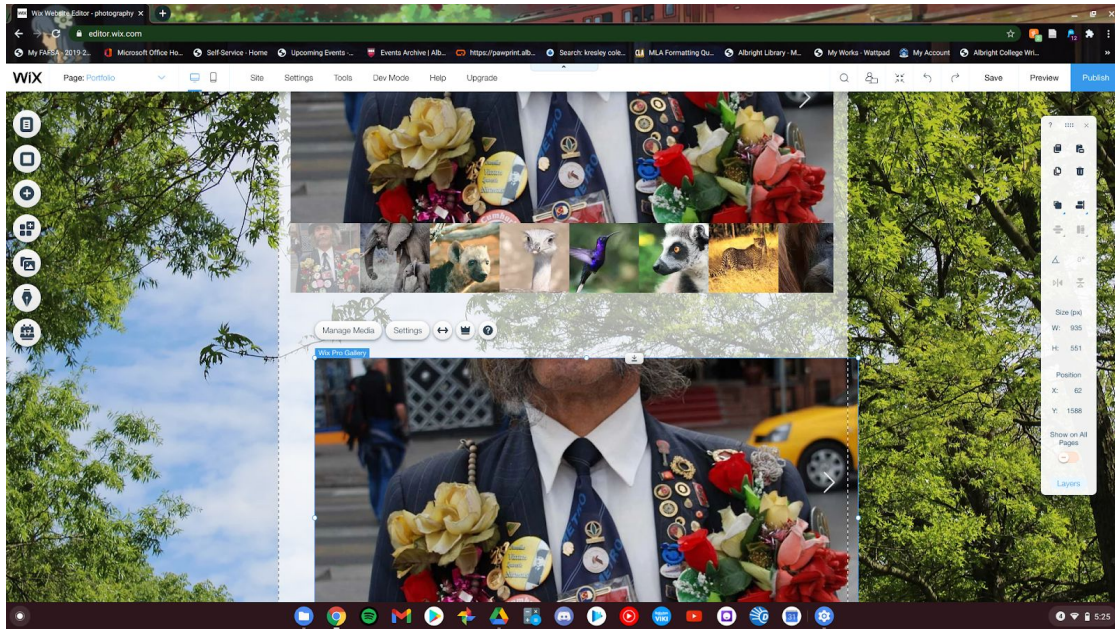
Editing the portfolio page was a tedious, but simple process. Selecting and uploading all the photos was what took the longest time. That was what I did first, before even editing the page itself. The way media libraries work on WIX is a lot like how Wordpress's own do: you upload the photos and you can access them at any time.
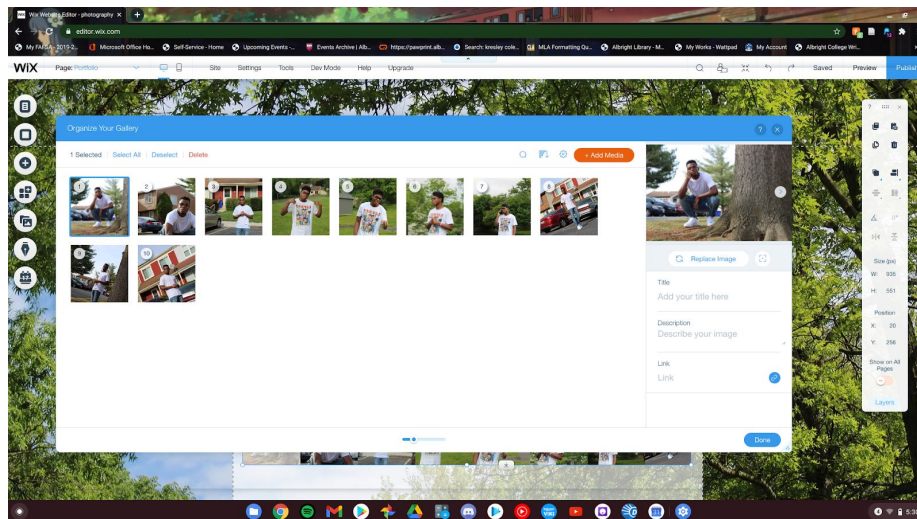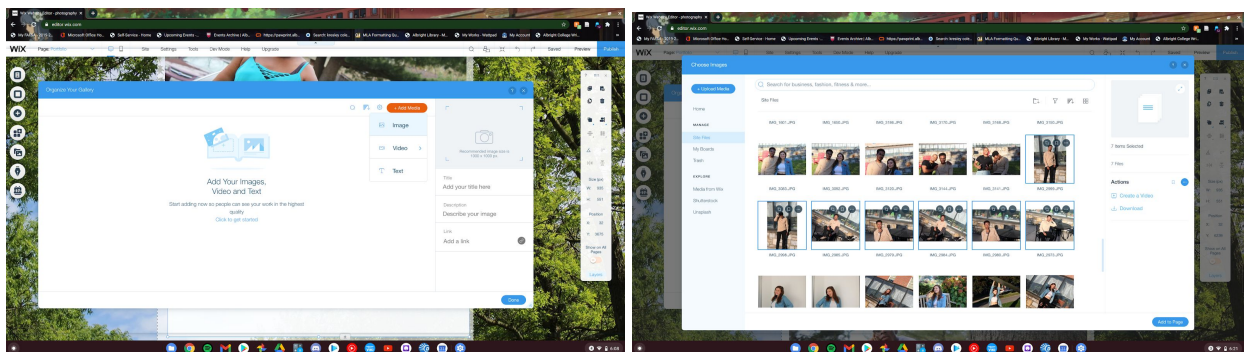
My WIX media library after uploading the photos for my portfolio

After uploading all the photos, I took a close look at the page's original template, which I

actually liked. The template utilized a slideshow interface, and I could copy and paste the

element as a whole in order to have a slideshow for each of my photography projects I was

featuring (12 slideshows). I had to edit the slideshow media to add the photos, picking up a

smooth process: delete the copied media, add the images specific to the project, rearrange in the

order I wanted, then submit to the interface. After I had added all the photos, I discovered the

zoom out and rearrange function, which allowed me to only rearrange elements on a page. It

made it really easy to place each project in the order I wanted them to appear.
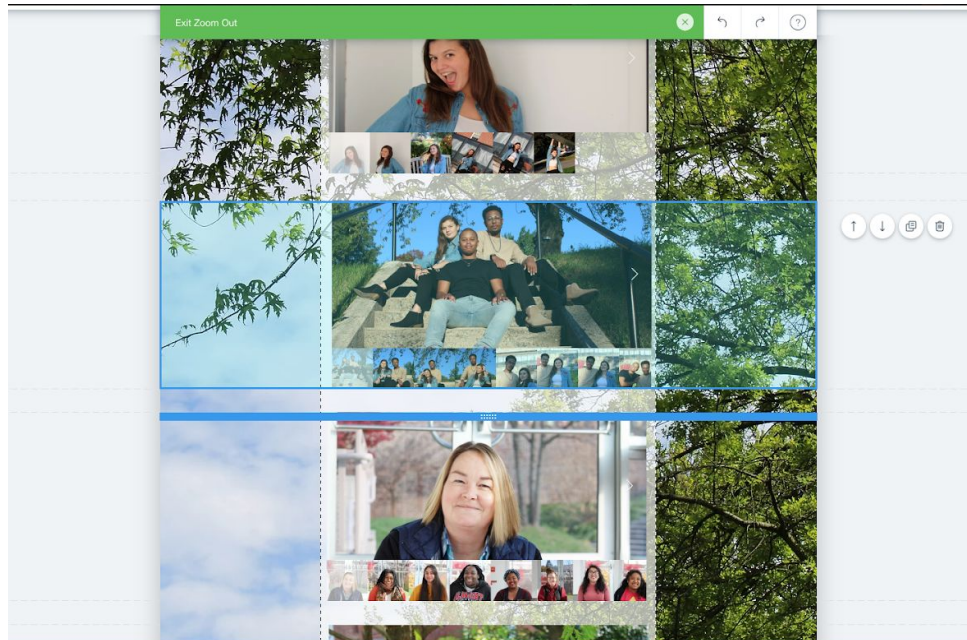
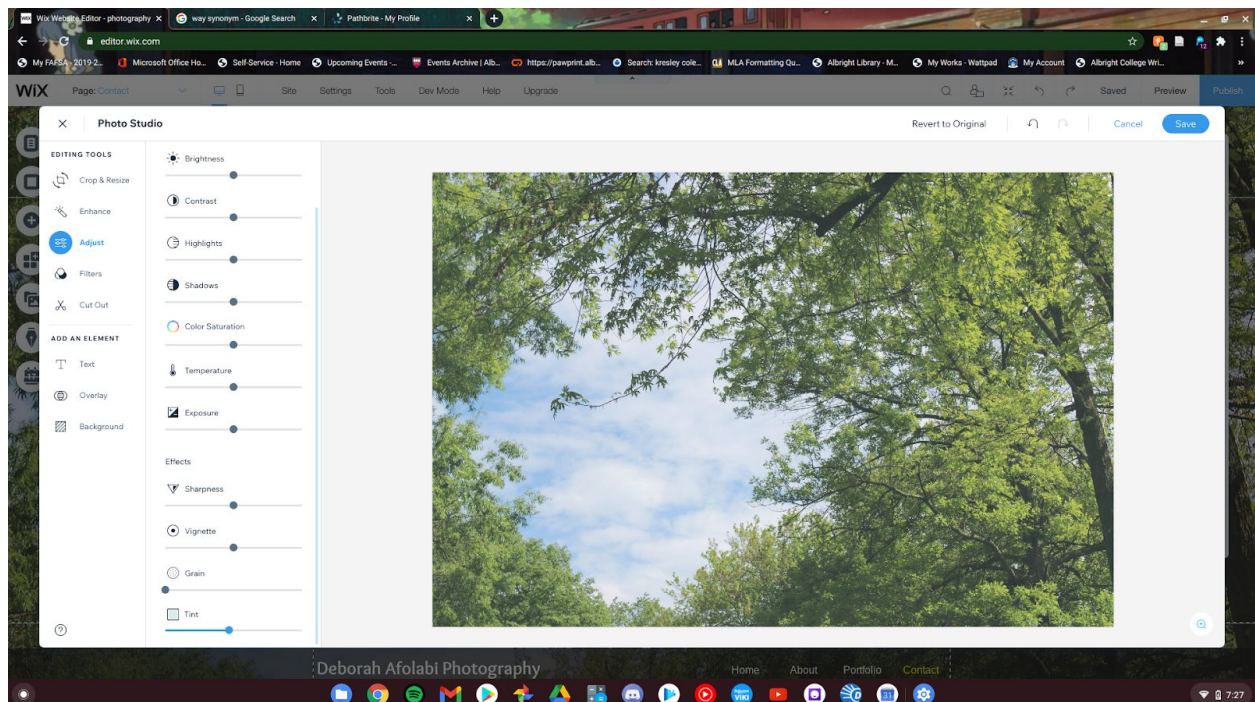*Copying and pasting the original slideshow interface multiple times*

Process of deleting and adding images and then rearranging them. The first image should be the best as it appears

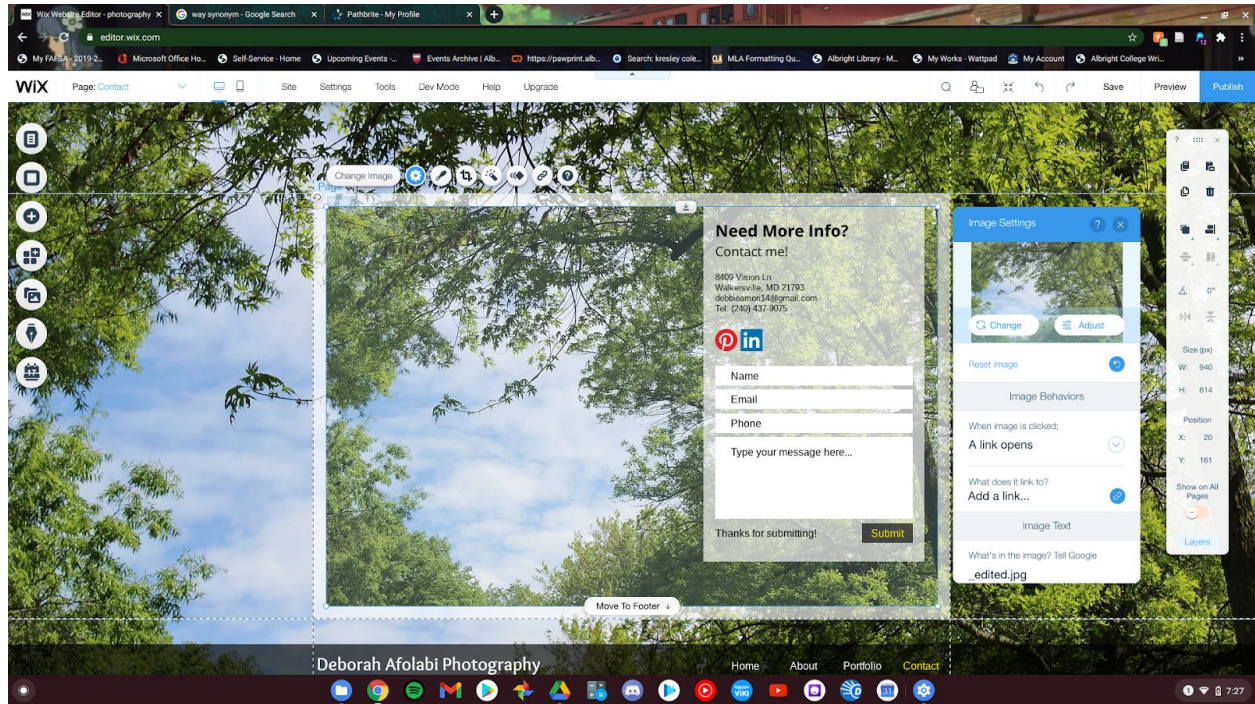*first as the main media of the interface.*

Rearranging my projects in the zoom out editor

The last page I edited was my Contact page. The first thing I did was add the background

photo as an element, editing it to make it alittle lighter. However, I realized that once you adjust

a photo you can't revert it back to its original unless you replace the image. I didn't mind how it
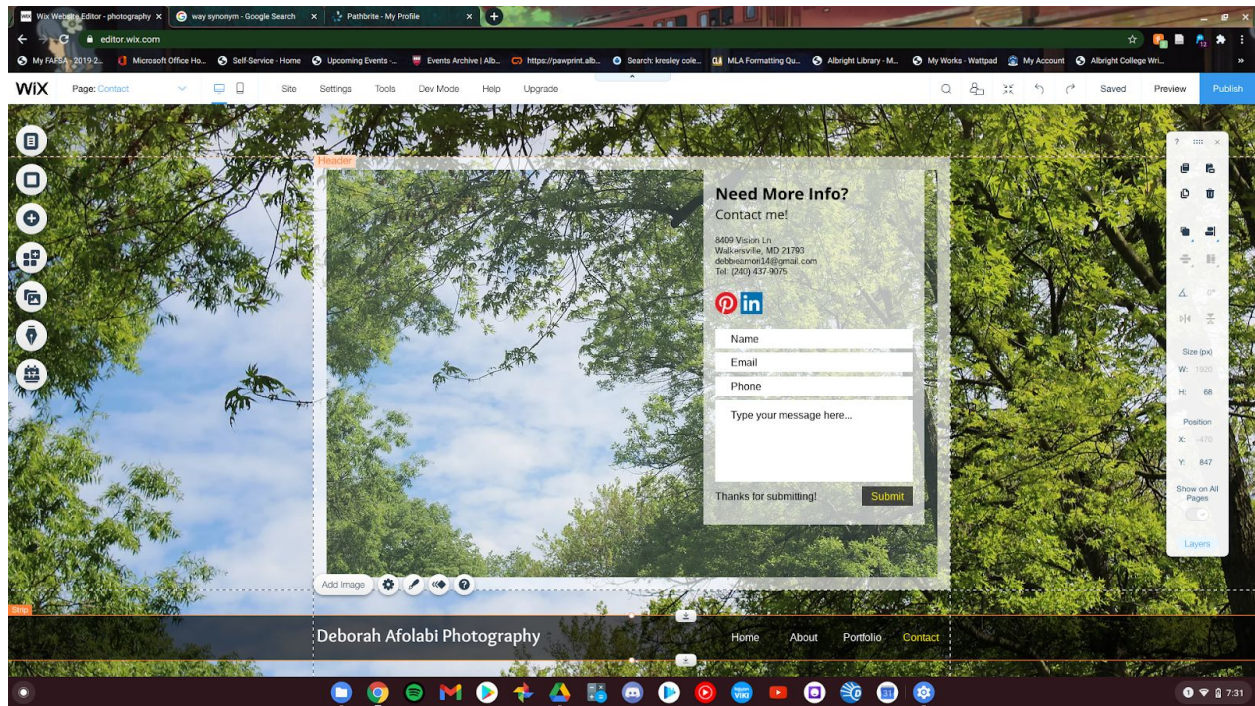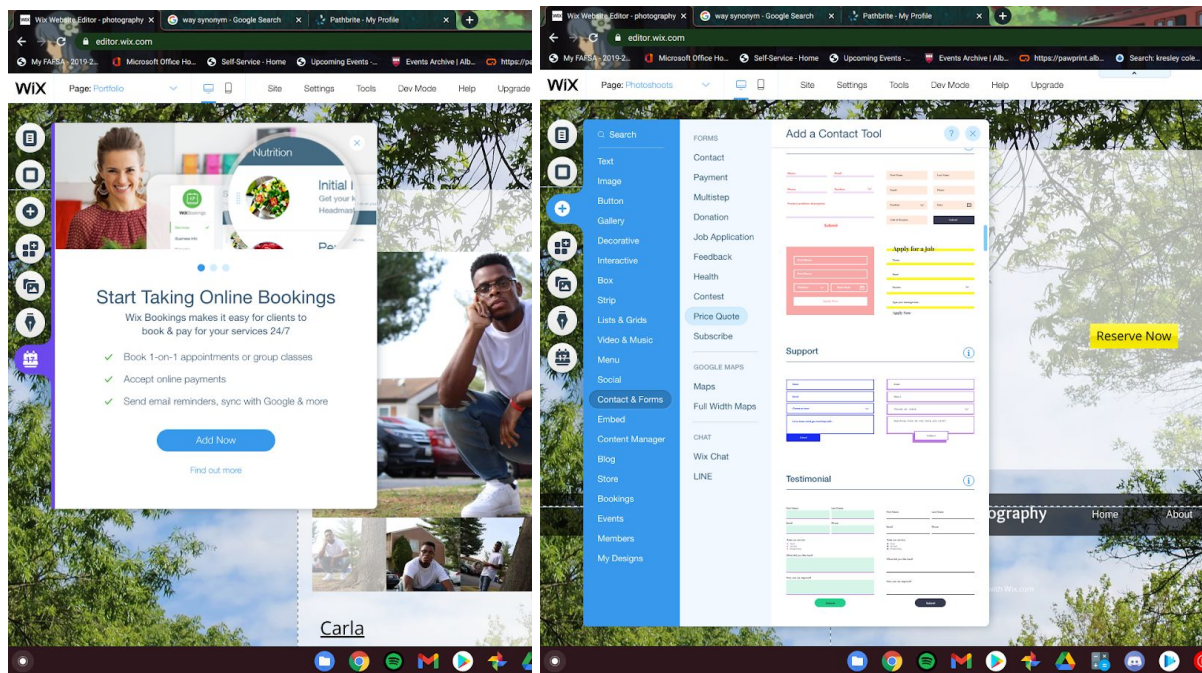
looked, so I just left it.

Editing the background image as an element of the Contact page

At first I was just going to simply leave it there as an info page, but since I do intend to do photography work on the side, I thought I'd add more to it. However, I didn't add the photoshoot text there until later. Originally, the form was there as another way of contacting me, but I added it after I failed to create a booking form due to the limited functionality of WIX's free option. I created a new page simply for scheduling a photoshoot, wanting to add a form and calendar for scheduling, as well as a fake pay now button. Although I found two forms that more or less worked, I grew extremely frustrated when I could not edit the content of the form itself, nor find a calendar button. In the end I just deleted the page, and added text regarding photoshoots on the Contact page.
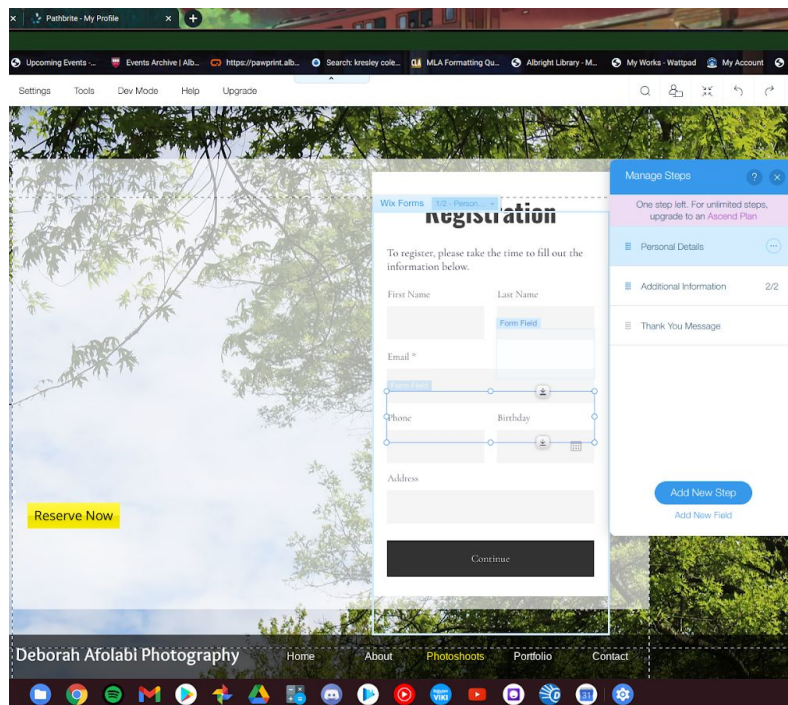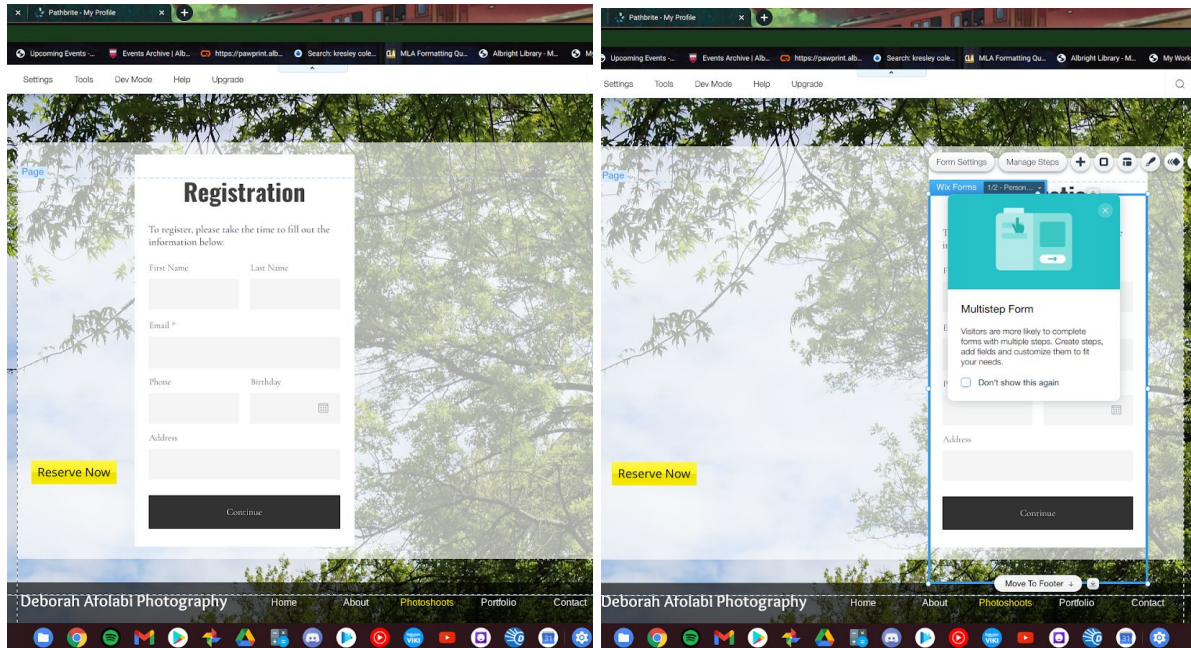
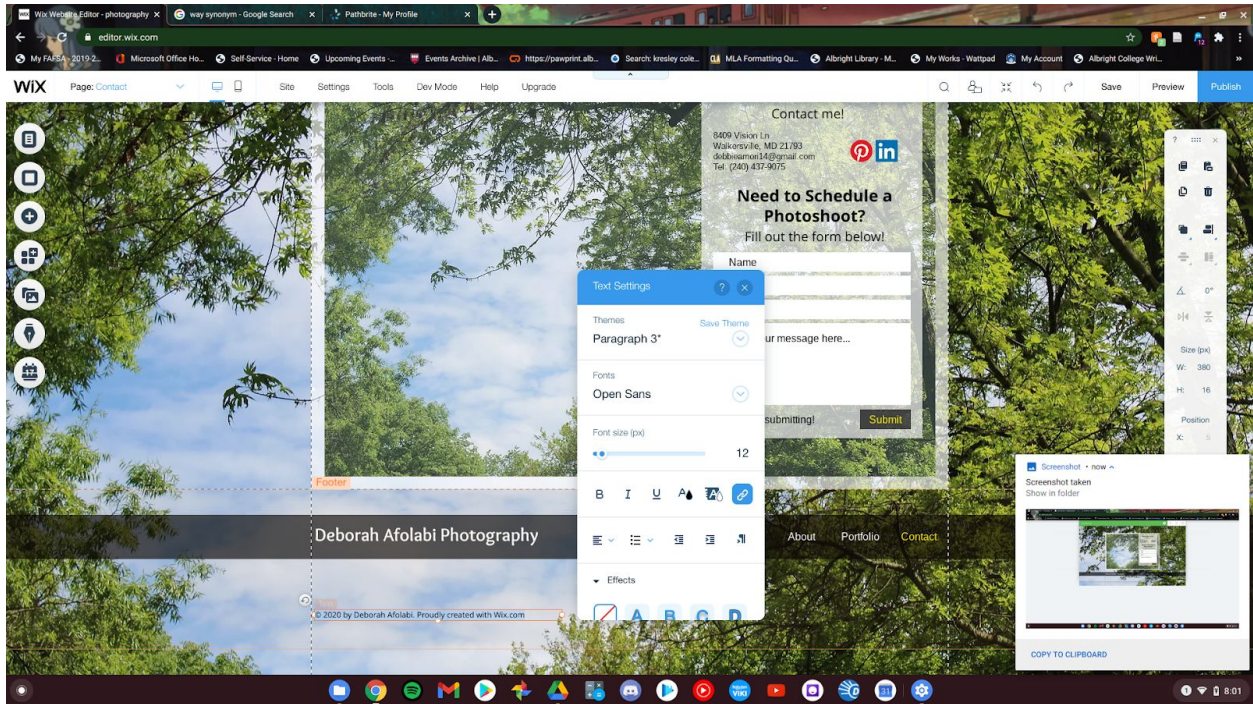*The original design of the Contact page*

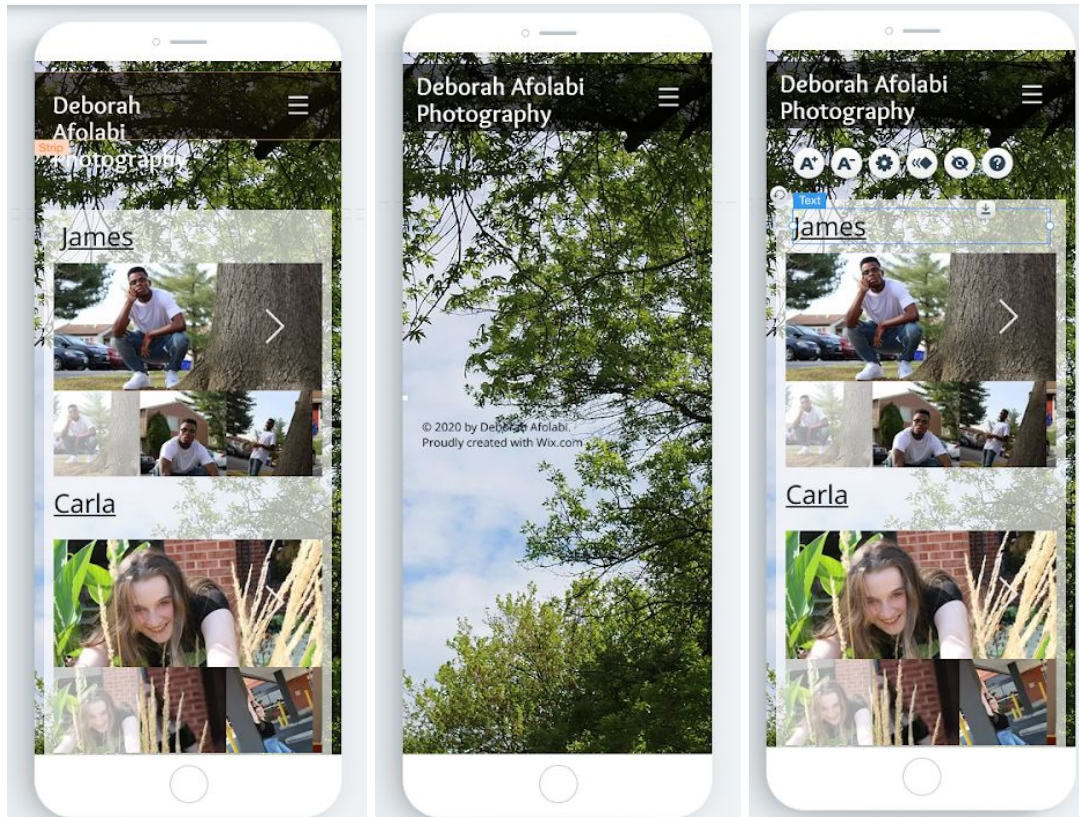*Looking for elements to create a booking form*

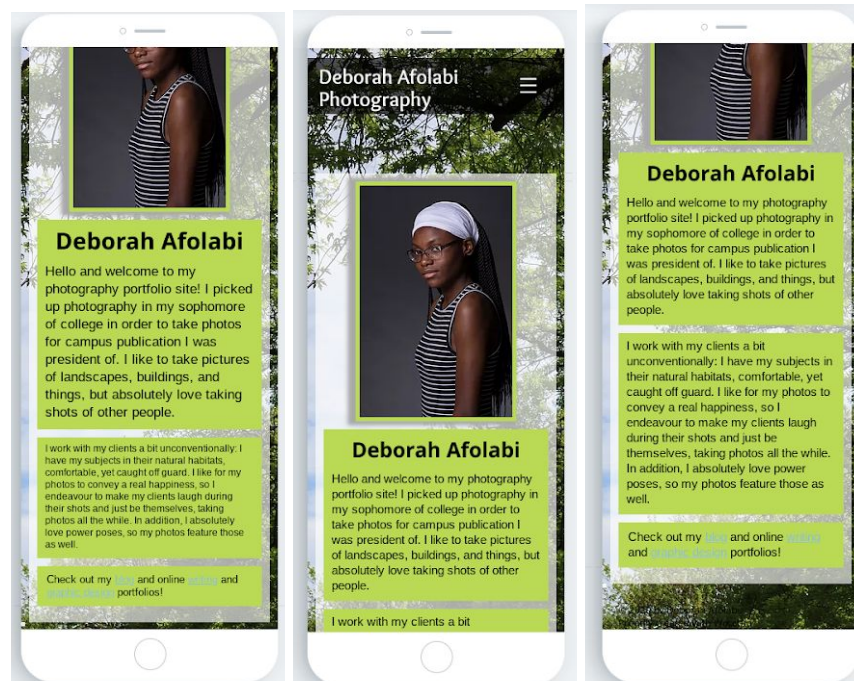*Trying to figure out if I can manipulate a form the way I want*

Adding an option to contact me for a photoshoot with the form

At this point I thought I was done, so I (almost) published my site. However, I saw the mobile icon in the top left corner so I thought I'd check it out. I thought it would just show me what my website looked like on mobile; I did not know it'd let me edit it based on it too! I found that a lot of things changed when I switched over to mobile. The best thing was that my navigation bar is at the top and is more simple, which is way better than the menu being at the bottom (and not being able to move it to the top due to WIX's free version). Type looked both smaller and bigger on different pages, and some things were better off being deleted from the mobile version (or "hidden") as well as rearranged.
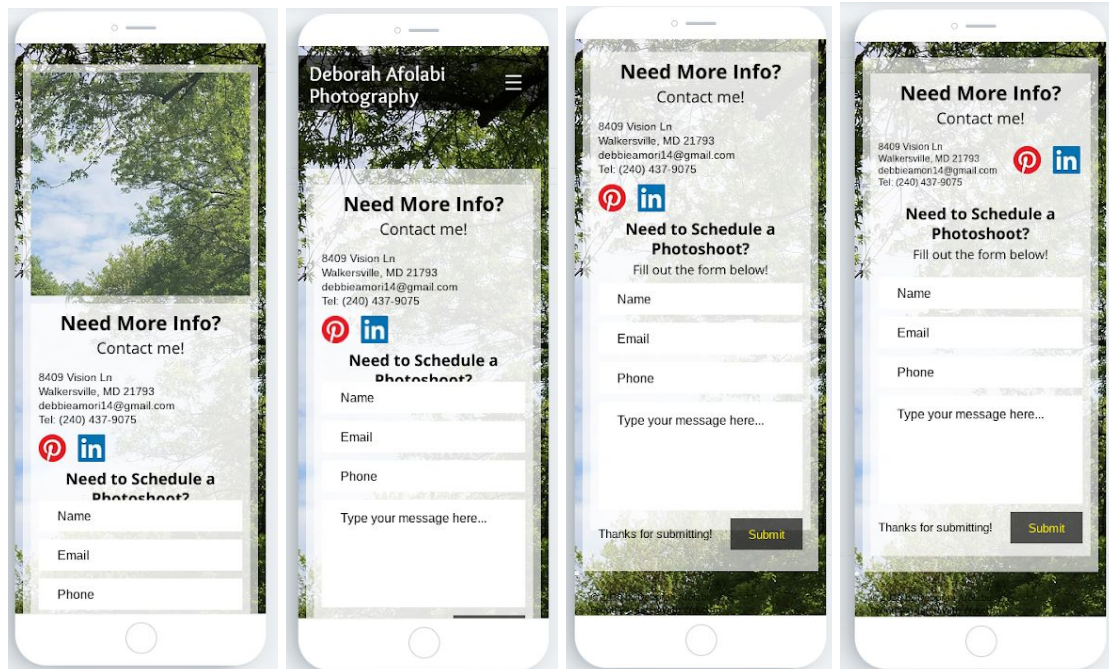
(From left to right) What my site name looked like on mobile before I edited it to fit the bar. What my home page looks like, and what my portfolio page looks like on mobile after editing the project names to be slightly smaller.

What my About page text looked like once you switched to mobile and how it looked once everything was cohesive.
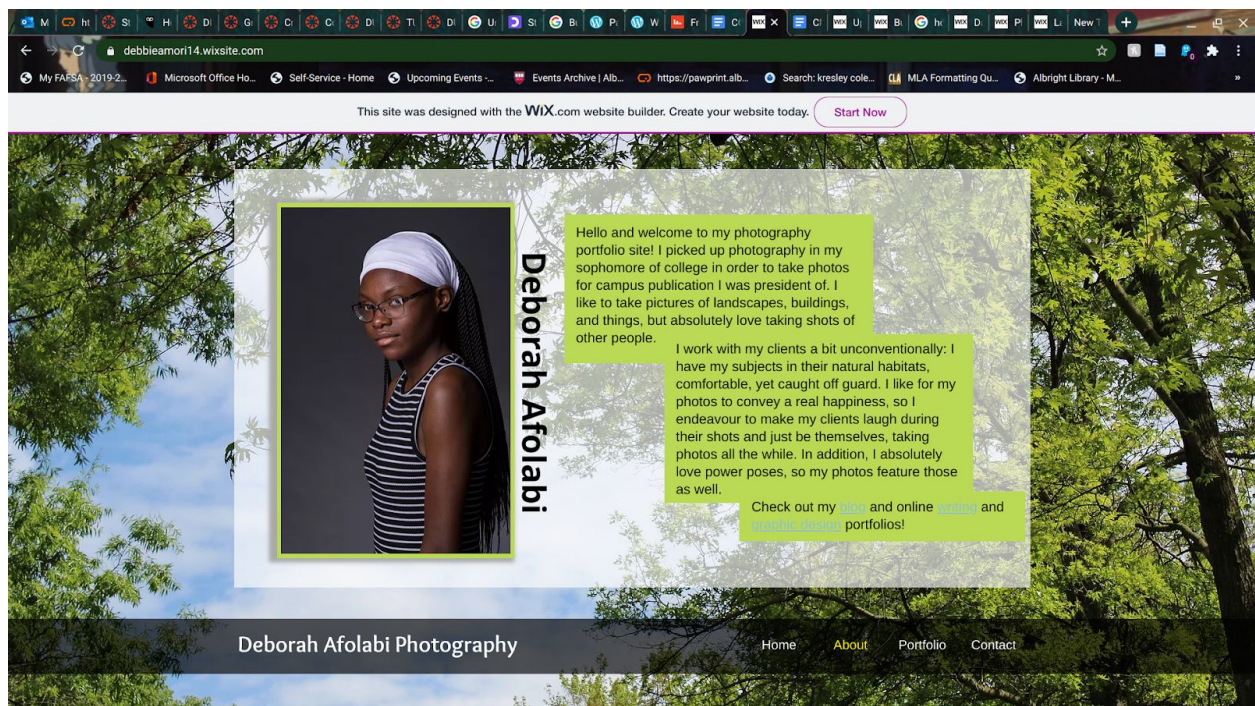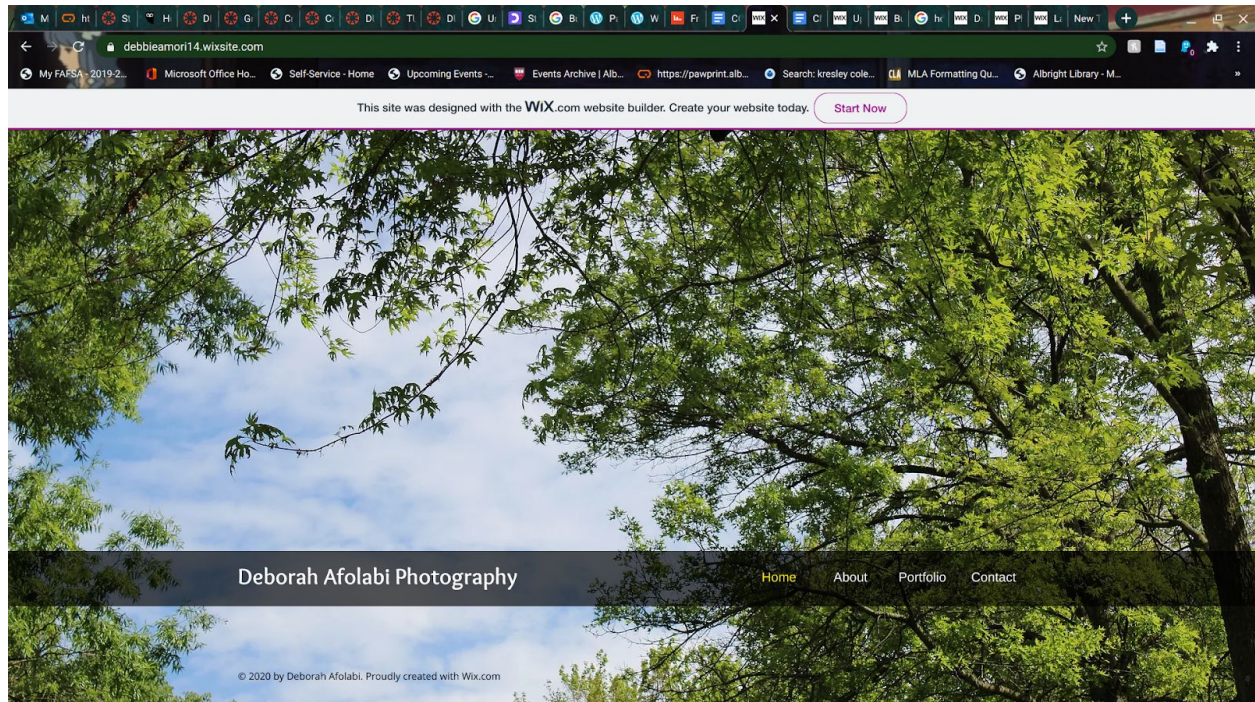
Hiding the image on mobile, then rearranging to make sure that everything appears correctly on the Contact page
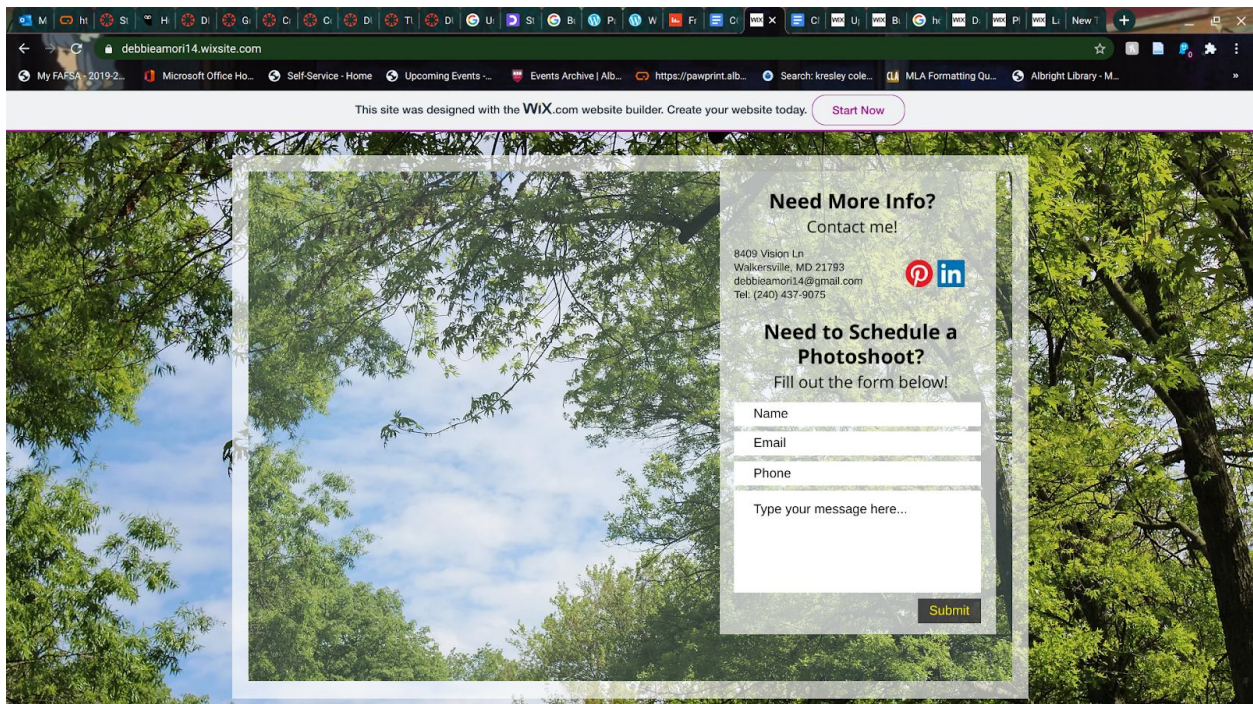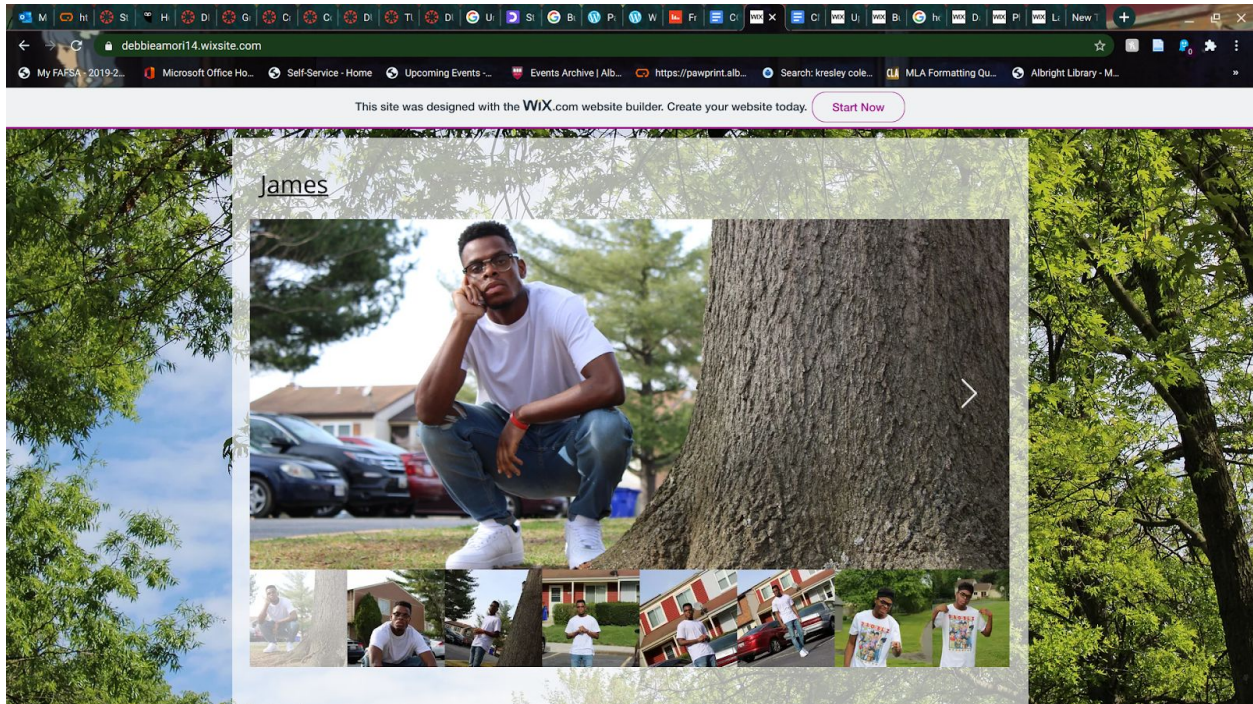
on mobile.

Overall I think WIX is a pretty user-friendly web-building site. It was not that difficult to learn, especially if you are familiar with the Adobe Creative Cloud or Canva, as its tools and features are similar, if not simpler. I liked that everything was easy to find with their use of colors and the main table of features on the side. There were some things I did not like, such as not being able to revert an image to its original form after adjusting it without replacing it, not being able to add features to the mobile site that are not on the website, and not being able to edit certain features such as the footer and forms. I also have to scroll all the way to the bottom to reach the menu on each page (although this is more of an issue because of the template I chose, but I wish I could have moved it to the top). However, I assume that if I was using a paid version, I wouldn't have these issues. I did like how my site ended up looking. It is very simple and easy to use on the user end. I like that I was able to stick to a theme on every page and tie everything together. I would use this site for myself, however I may get a premium version as I would need more features and storage space depending on if I want to start a business and add

more photos to the portfolio. WIX is similar to Wordpress, but is more complex and modern in

my opinion. Its free version offers far more features and customizability.

Final website pages.