

Arty

Welcome To Arty!

Arty is a web application developed for the art community and aims to bring more awareness and attention to artists, their art, and their creative process. Currently, there are many social media platforms used by artists to share their work, however, none of them solely focus on artists. Arty's goal is to bring artist communities together and create a platform for them to delve into their creative processes together.

Our application also aims to solve the lack of minority representation in mainstream art. Diversity in art is not a very mainstream concept, despite art itself being mainstream. Art also allows minorities to express themselves and tell their cultural stories in an artistic way that only they could do. By creating dedicated spaces for minority artists to show off their work and get in touch with other minority artists, or people who are just interested in their work, we hope to bring more awareness to artists from underrepresented communities and the issues they wish to highlight.

To test our idea and get a better understanding of what potential users would want, we reached out to artists as well as people who were just interested in art to get their feedback and requests for our web application. Semi-structured interviews with free-response questions and 10-point scaled questions were handed out to 10 individuals.

We also researched external, public sources of information to get a better idea of the severity of underrepresentation in art.

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Who we Interviewed

As shown in the chart below, we were able to interview 10 individuals ranging from ages 18 to 27. Eight of these individuals are still undergraduate college students and only two are currently full-time employees. Six of the ten participants consider themselves artists, while four did not. Due to time constraints, we only managed to interview ten people and failed to interview any graduate students. Further interviews will be conducted to gather more information.

As stated previously, interviews were semi-structured and sent to participants electronically and via text message. While some questions were straightforward and required only numerical answers, other questions were more free-response and led to further discussion.

Demographics		Artists	
Number of Participants	10	Yes	6
Age Range	18-27 years	No	4
Average Age	20.6 years		
Occupation			
Undergraduate	8		
Graduate	0		
Employees	2		

User Study - What We Learned

Of the people we interviewed, those who were artists rated, on average, their interest in the arts as a 9.31. Non-artists said their interest in the arts is best rated at, on average, 7.75. Artists and people who said they were more interested in the arts spent several hours a day studying or observing different types of artforms. Artists were more likely to say they spent the majority of their day engaging with the arts. One detail that several individuals shared, which we imagined was the truth before conducting our interviews, was that they often have

Average Interest in the Arts	
Artists	9.31
Non-artists	7.75
Scale:	
1 = Not Interested	
10 = Very Interested	

different types of art present at all times. Between music, movies, and television shows, our participants said they have different art forms around them at all times of the day.

Several questions were asked that required numerical responses from 1-10, where 10 meant the user strongly agreed with the statement, and 1 meant the user strongly disagreed with the statement.

Artists were more likely to produce higher responses to the statement "Art represents aspects of our individual cultures." However, one individual's answer skewed the results to the values displayed in the table to the right. Artists were more likely to agree with the statement "Being connected to artists is important to me." Artists also produced higher-rated responses to the question "Minority artists are underrepresented on mainstream social media platforms."

Average Response to:

"Art represents aspects of our individual culture"

Artists	7.33
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Non-artists	8.25
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"Being connected to artists is important to me"

Artists	7.66
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Non-Artists	4.75
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"Minority artists are underrepresented"

Artists	7.83
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Non-artists	6.5
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As evidenced by the table above, non-artists were less likely to agree that being connected to artists is important to them and were more likely to disagree with the idea that minority artists are underrepresented. These revelations informed us Arty is not necessarily for everyone and will likely be used mostly by people who create art or are involved in some kind of artform.

The six artists in our study admitted, outside of live performances, the main way they shared their art was via Instagram, Etsy, and other social media platforms. All reported their experience of sharing art on these platforms as above average, but they also all detailed the feedback they receive as all positive. Very little constructive criticism was provided on these platforms and the only way these artists could receive helpful feedback was through opinionated friends or art-related classes. Constructive criticism is something Arty aims to provide artists.

Some of our individuals said a useful feature of social media was the ability to follow artists that they enjoy. They also said the process of posting their work was easy because of their constant working with technology and their existing knowledge of platforms like Instagram.

One user said that the For You page of Tik Tok was useful because it exposes them to content they normally wouldn't see. This feature is similar to a feature on the DeviantArt website (discussed in the Existing Solutions section).

Artists averaged a 9.66 response to the statement "I would be interested in a dedicated platform that focuses on allowing artists to share their art, creative process, and the cultural background or beliefs that led to their creations." Non-artists responded with an average rating of 6.

"Art is not always about pretty things. It's about who we are, what happened to us, and how our lives are affected" - Elizabeth Broun

Artists responded to this quote by Elizabeth Broun with an average rating of 7.66. Non-artists responded with an average rating of 7.25. The last two responses reveal artists agree a platform like Arty is interesting and potentially useful to artists. Non-artists would generally agree with the artists; however, they agree to a lesser extent. According to our interview participants, there is a market and need for a platform like Arty.

What Our Users Want

From the information collected above, it is clear artists want an application like Arty to post their work on. Although they received feedback on social media, artists said this feedback was mainly positive and supportive. Our interviews of artists revealed creators want more constructive feedback, feedback they are likely only to get in a classroom setting.

Our users also want some features integral to social media. The ability to follow other artists and categories of art was brought up by one individual. A feature where content, created by people you don't follow, is displayed, similar to Tik Tok's For You page, was another idea provided by one of our user study participants.

Further research and interviews of potential users can be used to understand what type of expectations artists have when sharing their work. Expectations regarding file formats and profile pages, which we hope to make increasingly customizable so creators can represent themselves to their fullest capabilities, can be gathered in future surveys.

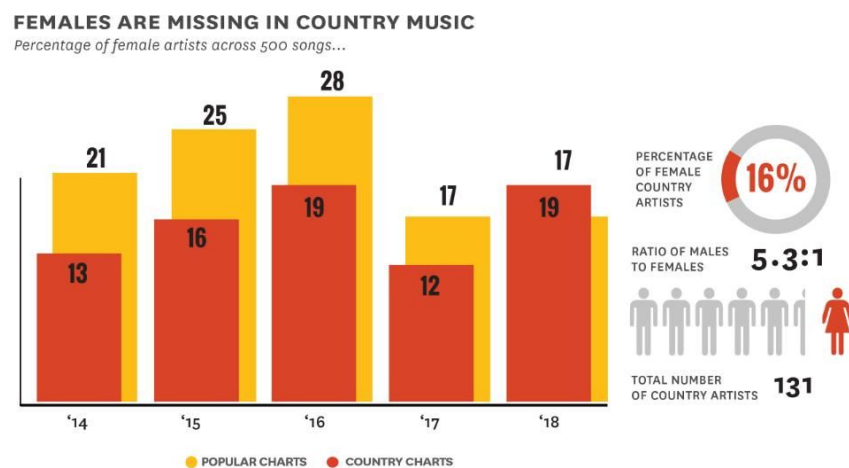
Early development of the product will certainly reveal further constraints we must consider. Therefore, Arty must maintain a flexible design aimed to allow artists their full range of creativity and expression.

Public Research

Additional research was gathered from external academic resources. According to Heather Stivison and her article “Minority Representation in Mainstream Art Museums,” minority art, until recently, was labeled as “primitive” and unworthy of being taught in art history classes (Stivison). This lack of appreciation for minority art has led to little or no minority art representation in art museums. According to an NCBI study of artist diversity in 18 major US museums, 85% of artists are white and 87% of artists are male (Topaz). The lack of diversity in major museums and the art community has prevented many minority artists from receiving the recognition, or the chance of achieving recognition, they deserve.

The music industry also has similar aspects of underrepresentation. According to Kasey Brennan in her article “Underrepresentation of Women in the Music Industry,” as of 2018, 97.7% of music producers were male while only 2.3% were female (Brennan). Tess Rico, hoping to enter the music producing industry, recognizes this reality, and expresses concern.

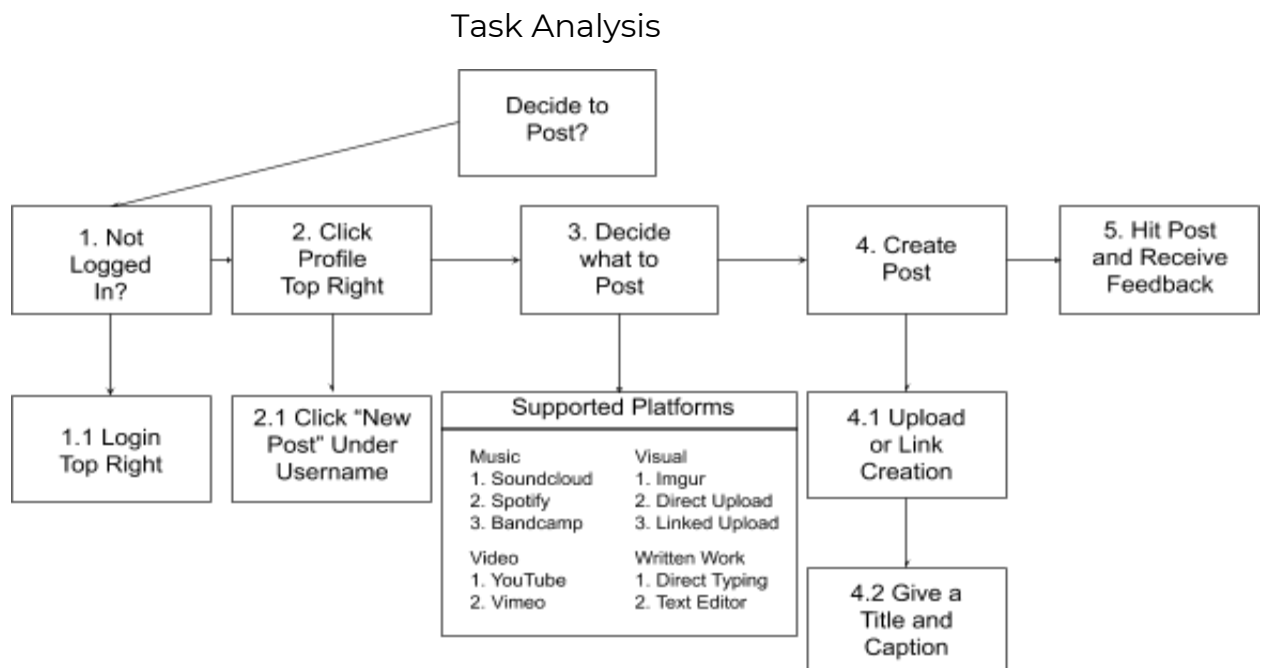
“I feel like women are less likely to get opportunities in this industry. Companies are more likely to give men more opportunities because that is what they recognize in the industry.” - Tess Rico



Genres of music, like country, also generate opportunities for one main group of artists. Across 500 country songs in 2018, only 19% of songs were performed by female artists. More alarmingly, only 17% of artists on 500 songs belonging to the popular charts were performed by female artists (Brennan).

All of this information informs us of two main things. These are: **(1)** There currently exists a vast amount of underrepresentation in several sections of the art industry. **(2)** This underrepresentation has caused minority groups to face additional challenges when attempting to gain recognition for their work.

Arty will provide a platform to combat underrepresentation and ensure every artist an equal opportunity to get recognized. According to Bentley University, to ensure diversity, you must acknowledge differences and value them equally ("7 Ways to"). Therefore, for Arty to ensure equal representation and opportunity, dedicated spaces for minority artists to display their work and connect with other artists will be central to the platform.



Existing Solutions

There are a few existing solutions to the problem of underrepresentation and opportunity in art, solutions which also act as platforms for sharing art. Social media is the largest existing solution. As evidenced by our user study, artists find sharing their music, graphics, and other forms of art on social media as the best way to receive recognition.

Examples of these platforms are Reddit and Instagram. These are sites to which users can post pictures and writing. These platforms, however, are not only for art. They are saturated with large amounts of personal pictures among other non-art related content. In contrast, Arty aims to directly support and encourage

the promotion of all art forms. Arty wants to amend the problem that these sites have: where art is lost amongst other forms of content. On the other hand, one area Arty looks to build on is how easily a person can post their work for others to see. Both Instagram and Reddit have an easy process of putting one's personal work out to the public. Arty aims to emulate this and help the creator focus on creating as opposed to trying to disseminate what they produce.

There exist other platforms solely dedicated to sharing art. One of these platforms is DeviantArt, a website that allows visual artists to share their artwork and receive feedback from art enthusiasts. DeviantArt's main page allows users to either view all types of visual art or to view visual art belonging to a certain topic or genre. This is a great way to ensure diversity and equal representation while also allowing users to view the art they love. Arty aims to implement a similar feature; however, it will include art belonging to several different art forms rather than just including visual art.

The website Genius, mentioned by one of the people we interviewed, is a website dedicated to sharing song lyrics, annotations and interpretations of lyrics, and general musical knowledge. The website's feature that allows artists to comment on their work is a feature that will be at the core of Arty. Arty will allow artists a chance to explain their creative experiences and the reasoning behind their art.

The Target Users

As previously mentioned, when conducting our user study, we found that artists responded that they would be very interested in an app such as Arty due to its focus on allowing artists to give and receive more constructive feedback, as well as providing more representation for artists from underrepresented backgrounds. Non-artists, on the other hand, only averaged a rating that correlated to being just above neutral to the idea. This lines up with the vision for the app to have its primary user-base be mainly composed of artists.

We envision that the secondary user-base would consist of those who are still interested in art, but who are not artists themselves. Arty would provide these users with a more streamlined way of coming into contact with art than most other current forms of social media. Another secondary group of users we see as a potential target audience are those who are looking to hire or commission artists for business projects or personal reasons, as the app could serve as a great place to scout for a diverse range of talent.

One potential group of tertiary users could be those who use other forms of social media but still end up seeing creative projects reposted from Arty on their respective apps, as there is a lot of overlap between social media. Another important group of tertiary users could be potential investors who may not have much involvement in the app itself, but would have a huge influence on its development and reach.

Summary

There is a drastic underrepresentation of many groups within the arts. Despite this, the platforms and avenues artists have access to either do not garner enough attention, do not make it user friendly for art lovers, or have an oversaturation of content (artistic and other). Arty aims to not pick some mix of these faults, but to remedy all three.

Looking towards the future, it is clear to keep in mind that Arty's user base is primarily artists themselves. From data gathered by the Arty team, the most important features seem to be 1) posting easily and 2) facilitating feedback. Going forward, the Arty team will need to delve into:

- Simple, easy to use GUIs in order to make the process of posting and viewing straightforward
- An "Explore" feature in order to broaden one's consumed content
- Other time-based programs to promote and highlight different individual cultures and forms of expression
- Personal profiles: for artists to compile their work easily and to be viewed by the average person

Arty is not looking to make a platform with a high-learning curve. We want to avoid a platform that looks daunting to users, whether they are artists or not. Our vision would resemble a space where individuals can express themselves through any means they choose. We want artists to grow both in numbers, but also in skill and experience. Any person will be able to go on Arty and find something they have never seen before, broadening their scope of culture and humanity.

To ensure this sort of devotion to the artist, Arty must be a simple, easy to use platform, with a diverse collection of art from many different art forms, and many different people.

Sources

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