

UX CASE STUDY

# Designing a better platform for freelancers

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# Stages Presented

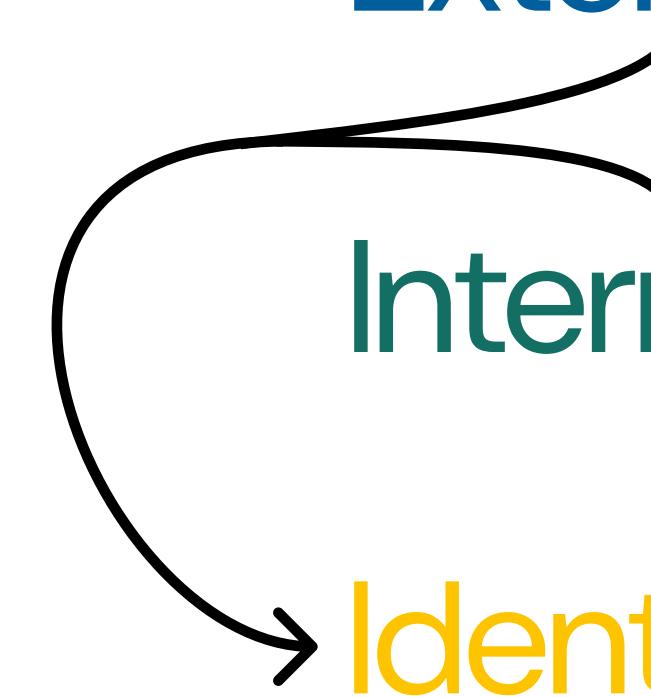
External Research

Internal Research

Identifying Problems

Creating Solutions

Analysis & Reflection



# Who is this for?

# Freelancers

Freelancers are self-employed professionals who offer services to clients on a project-by-project basis, often through digital platforms. They typically manage their own schedules, finances, and client relationships.

# What problem does this case study address?

## Looking for work

For this case study, i will be talking about my process of addressing just the single issue in order to highlight my process and not get caught up in the finished product.

# Where does this begin?

## Research

Starting from the beginning, I conduct multiple layers of research into freelancers to first identify what i do and don't know, then to learn as much as i can, through interviews

# How do freelancers look for work?

## Domain Analysis

## STEPS

**Social media profile / Portfolio**

Compiling work

Posting work constantly

Connecting and engaging with  
the audience

**Brand Identity**

Building Connections

Consistent online presence

Presenting commission details

## TOOLS &amp; CONNECTIONS

ASSORTED SOCIAL MEDIA

DESIGN TOOLS

CLIENTS

ENTHUSIASTS

PERSONAL WEBSITE

MARKETPLACES

GROUPS OF FREELANCERS

Based on my limited prior experience freelancing, I went into this with the understanding that looking for work was a complicated and inefficient process. Following my prior knowledge, the first step to conduct essential Secondary research, which helped identify real challenges among this community, and provided me with gaps to fill with Primary research.

# What are my research objectives?

EXTERNAL RESEARCH

## What do i need to discover?

- How do freelancers manage their businesses?
- How many tools do they really use to look for work?
- Is the job-searching process an apparent issue for freelancers?

INTERNAL RESEARCH

## What questions can i ask directly?

- How do you find work?
- How do you balance client work with promoting your own brand?
- Have you found a specific social media strategy that has brought in new clients?

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One of the most important parts of UX design is always asking questions, be that to myself about my methods & current direction, or asking questions from the people i am designing for.

# What did i learn?

## Interview responses

DO THEY HAVE A SPECIFIC SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY THAT HAS BROUGHT IN NEW CLIENTS?

Freelancers mention success in their portfolio and social media, but note that they often have to post on assorted social media platforms

HOW DO THEY FIND WORK?

Freelancers often find work through clients reaching out through social media after finding their portfolio posts.

HOW DO THEY BALANCE CLIENT WORK WITH PROMOTING YOUR OWN BRAND?

All freelancers interviewed agree that they will ask clients for permission to include interesting work in their portfolio

# So much reading, Why is this important?

Boring? Maybe.  
Useful? Absolutely.

Lots of words, I know. However, the more we can understand about the users and their current issues, the more detail and attention we can put into developing our solution.

# What happens with the data i've gathered?

## Generate and validate problems

Now that i have some data to work with, I begin the process of breaking it down into parts, starting with a persona.

# How can I show this data visually?



## Alexa

Persona · Freelance Designer

### Goals / Motivations

- Enjoys the flexibility offered by freelancing
- Motivated by financial rewards, and working with new people
- **Focuses on growing their portfolio**

### Challenges

- Uses a lot of tools for different purposes
- Communication issues with slow responding clients
- **Looking for work**

## Persona

When interviewing freelancers, they were assured that they would not be identified in the data gathered. Therefore, I have created a persona that embodies the goals and challenges found in the complete dataset.

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Personas are a great way to show conforming data from interviews. You might note that it is significantly easier to digest compared to plain data, and it's always nice to work with names rather than numbers.

# How can i refine my data?

## Generating a problem statement

### User

ALEXA, THE  
FREELANCE  
DESIGNER

### Need

A PLACE TO BUILD  
THEIR ONLINE  
PORTFOLIO

### Insight

ALEXA FINDS THAT CREATING  
AND MANAGING AN ONLINE  
PORTFOLIO IS TOO  
EXPENSIVE, AND UPDATING  
MULTIPLE CHANNELS EVERY  
TIME SHE ADDS NEW WORK  
IS INNEFICIENT

### Statement

ALEXA MANUALLY UPDATES THEIR  
PORTFOLIO ACROSS EVERY CHANNEL  
THEY USE TO PROMOTE THEMSELVES  
(THEIR WEBSITE, INSTAGRAM, ETC),  
WHICH IS TIME CONSUMING AND  
REPETITIVE. THEY ESPECIALLY  
STRUGGLE WITH THE EFFORT AND  
INCONSISTENCY REQUIRED TO KEEP  
UP-TO-DATE CONTENT ON EVERY  
PLATFORM.

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A problem statement an incredibly significant step for developing a solution: By better understanding a problem, i can develop bespoke solutions using techniques that follow

# What if I need to refine my problem statement?

## Statement

ALEXA MANUALLY UPDATES THEIR PORTFOLIO ACROSS EVERY CHANNEL THEY USE TO PROMOTE THEMSELVES (THEIR WEBSITE, INSTAGRAM, ETC), WHICH IS TIME CONSUMING AND REPETITIVE. THEY ESPECIALLY STRUGGLE WITH THE EFFORT AND INCONSISTENCY REQUIRED TO KEEP UP-TO-DATE CONTENT ON EVERY PLATFORM.

## Validating Problem Statement

WHY?	WHY?	WHEN?	HOW OFTEN?	HOW SEVERE
Freelancers have to post their content to multiple platforms	They need to look for potential clients and build professional connections	After completing a project or when they have time to post personal projects	After completing a project or when they have time to post personal projects	Medium severity: Alexa promotes herself so clients can see and hire them.
<b>OPPOSITE / WORST CASE</b> Alexa has to constantly update their portfolio every time they make something new	<b>MAKE IT WORSE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alexa has to upload each project manually</li><li>• Many different channels to advertise</li></ul>		<b>OPPOSITE TO PREVIOUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Automatically prompt Alexa to upload their work once it's complete</li><li>• Offer one main channel for all freelancers to post in and clients to easily find posts.</li></ul>	
<b>PAINS</b> Managing online presence and portfolio is frustrating and takes a lot of time		<b>GAINS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Alexa doesn't have to make per-platform posts</li><li>• Alexa can more efficiently spend their time</li><li>• Clients have a better place to look for freelancers</li></ul>		

Applying these strategies to each problem statement is a great way to not only immediately validate them, but also to begin generating ideas for solutions, and to rank these problems based on potential improvements.

# What was all that for anyway?

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

## “How might we \_?”

### Statement

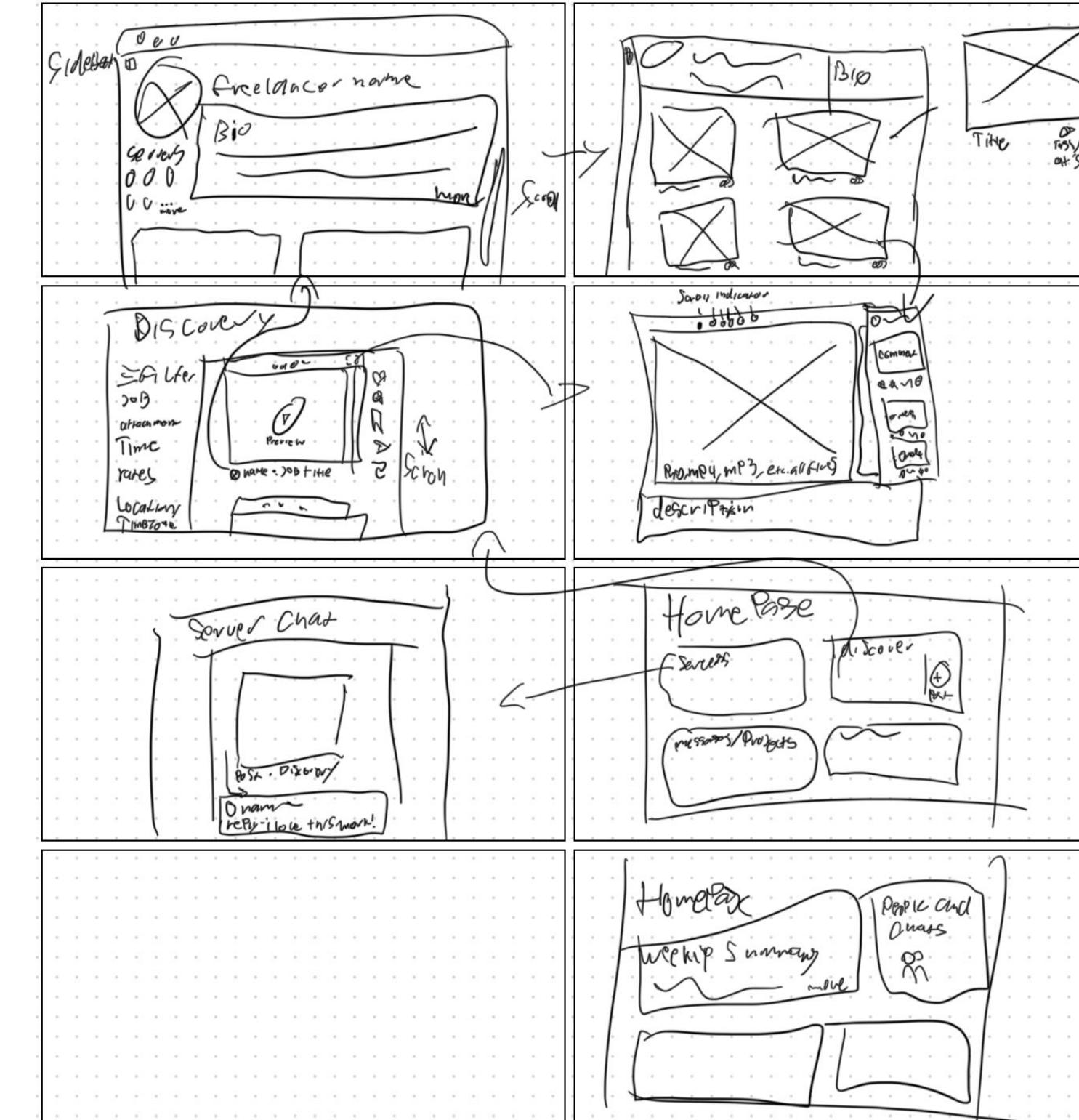
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HOW MIGHT WE:

- make it more efficient for clients to search through and find freelancers via advertising and portfolio?
- constitute portfolio growth and advertisement in the platform?
- make it easier for the freelancer to update their portfolio?
- make it easier for the freelancer to advertise themselves?

CREATING SOLUTIONS

## Crazy 8's

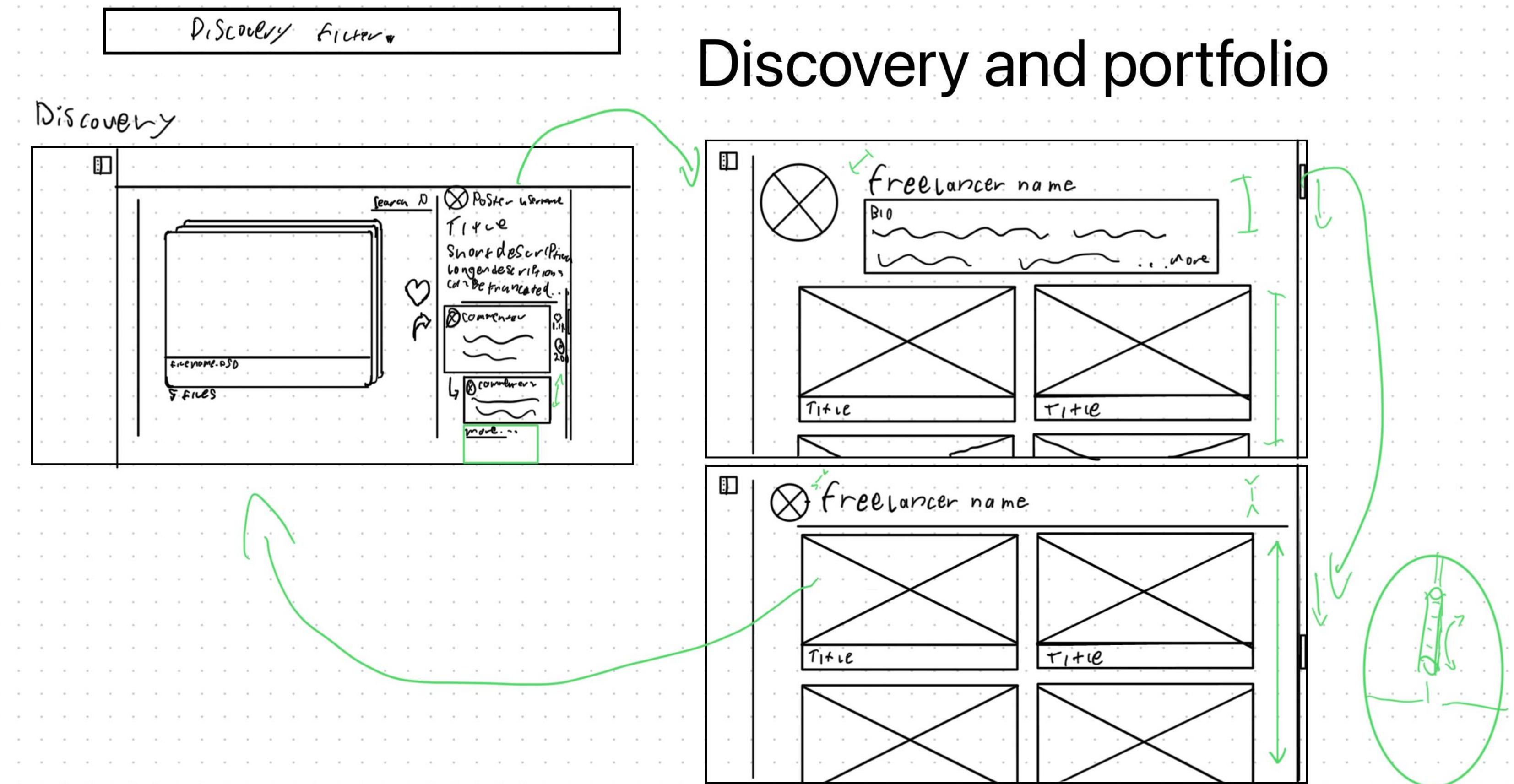


Creating How Might we's is an important step in refining the problem statements into workable chunks to resolve in Crazy 8's.

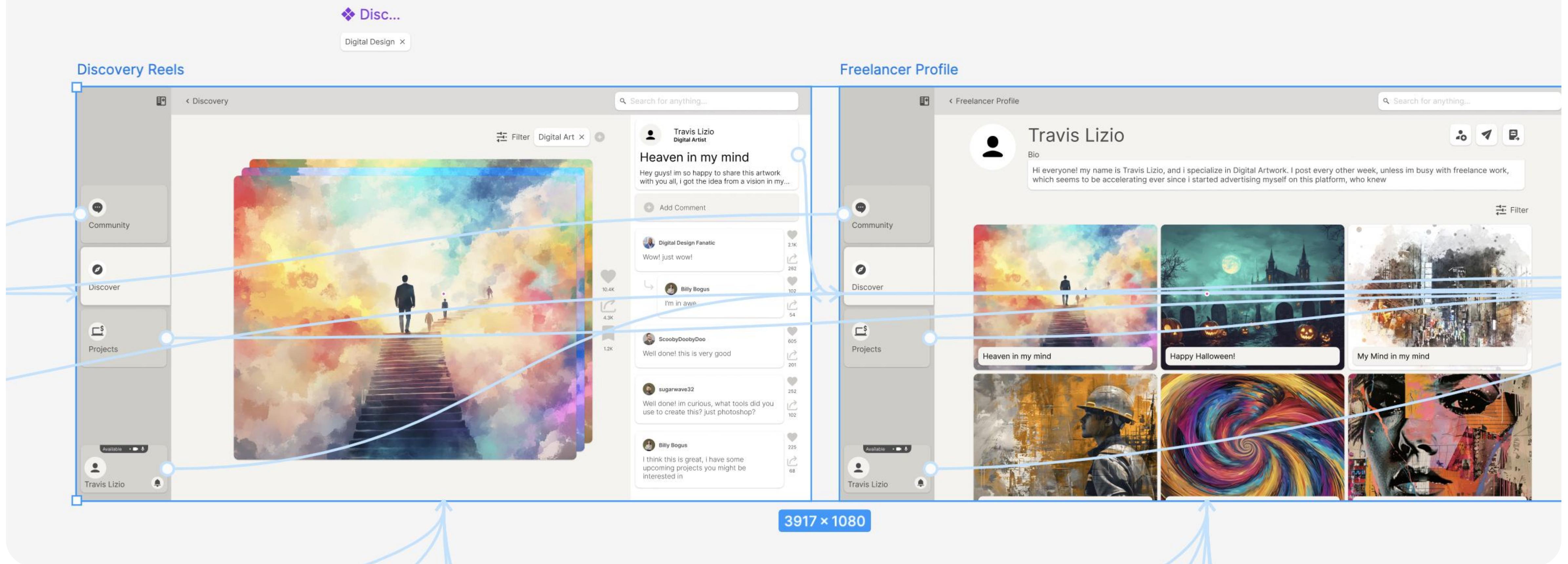
Crazy 8's are a fantastic way to take these How Might We's and our initial ideas for solving them, and diverge to create different ideas.

# How can i show interaction?

# Visualising interaction with Wire-Flows



You might notice a similarity between the Crazy 8's and wireflows, my wireflows are essentially a step-up in detail from the crazy 8's that take the best parts out of each sketch. Wireflows are a great way to solidify ideas created in Crazy 8's, and act as the middle point between Prototyping and pen/paper, by visualising different ways the user can interact with each screen.



# Figma Prototype

The next developmental step in designing a prototype is, finally, the prototype. While figma mockups aren't the be-all and end-all of UX design, this step is definitely something to look forward to, as it represents a significant milestone in creating a solution, and allows prototype testing to commence.

After all that, all i got was this lousy prototype?

We aren't finished  
yet.

Not something to easily forget, Validation & reflection is one of the key processes in UX Design. It's all well and good to jet off and create something, but is it any good for the users?

So it's not over?

## Validation & Reflection

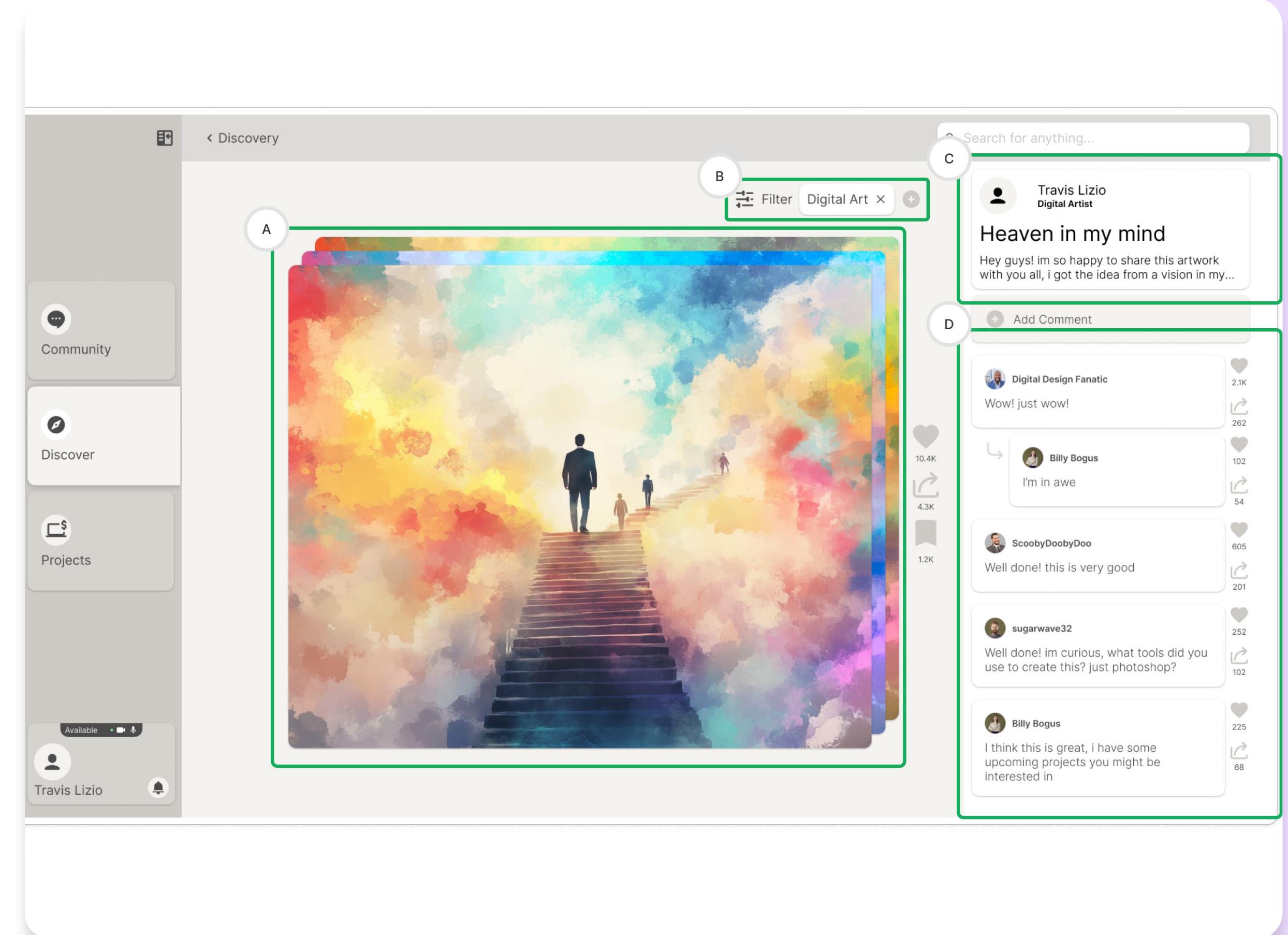
Now that I have a digital mock-up of my solution, i am able to test it. Similarly to the [Internal Research](#), I recruit freelancers for an interview. This time I ask them to perform tasks on my mockup, and from the results i can identify what works, and what doesn't

# Let the tests begin!

## METHOD: INITIAL IMPRESSION

# Discovery page 1 Test Method

I ask the user to first identify what the screen is and what you can do with it, then what each labelled element on the screen represents.



Next page: Results

## VALIDATION & REFLECTION

### USER 1

Successfully identified this screen as the portfolio post, but didn't register that it was a part of a random feed.

A is the post with click through images

B is how you would search posts

C is the description

D is the discussion about the post.

### REFLECTION

It was interesting to note the ambiguity regarding where the users thought they were, and would be important to make it more obvious that they are searching through a discovery feed.

### USER 2

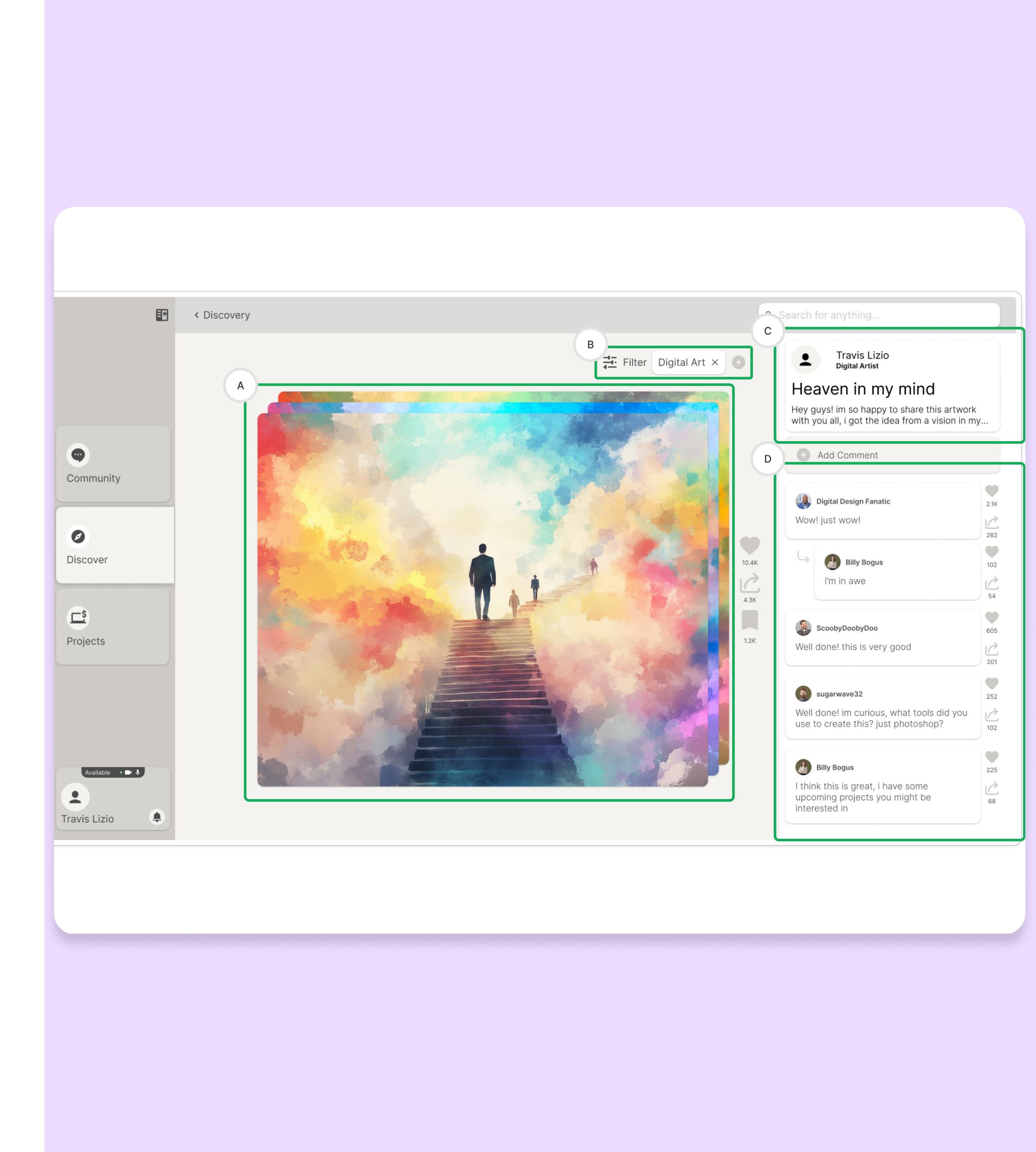
Understood that it was a folio post, but initially thought it was for their own profile, because of the name.

A The artwork

B Searching and identifying categories

C Link to the freelancer's account

D Comments and interactions



## VALIDATION & REFLECTION

# What about the other screen?

METHOD: TRUNK TEST

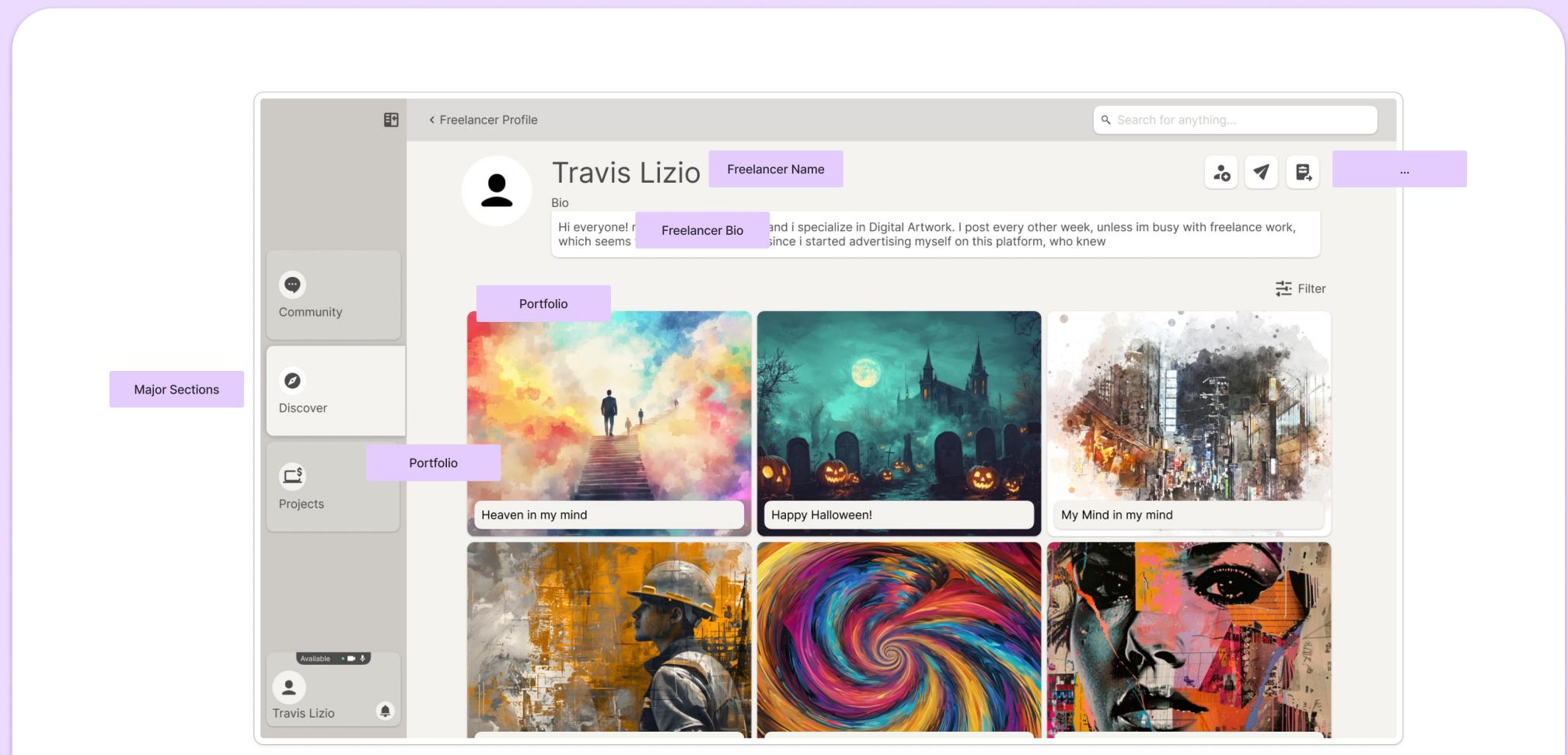
## Profile Page

It was interesting to see that users wouldn't immediately identify the profile options as i had hoped, However the rest of this screen was evidently self-evident.

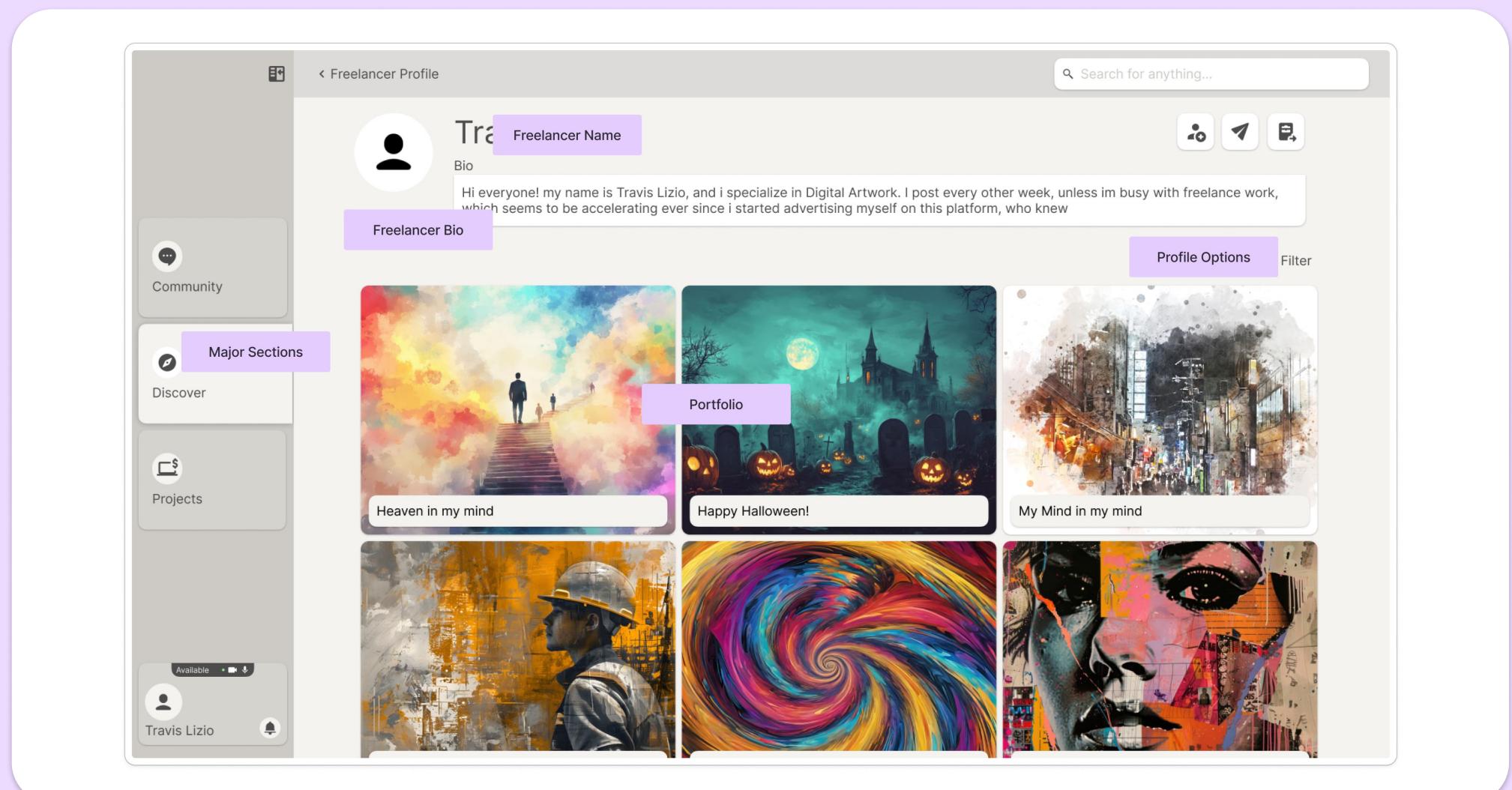
### REFLECTION

I would further test this screen quantitatively with different wording for the description of 'profile options', as well as another pool with those redesigned, and compare them to see where the issue lies.

## HIGHLIGHTED RESULTS



User 1



User 2

That was a lot of fun, but this is the end.

# What did i learn?

①

## Diverging is key

It is super, super important to be able to diverge from your initial idea. It could be the best idea you will have, but you never know until you generate *more* ideas, and analyse them

②

## Testing at every stage

If i could do it all again, i would have been testing at every stage of the project, not just the beginning and end. There were so many opportunities that i missed, and i believe that was one of the pitfalls of my project.

③

## Breaking down problems

Something that surprised me so much in this process was how important it is to break down and understand the problems you are trying to fix, and how much time you really should allocate to that

# Thanks!

Hope you enjoyed going through  
that as much as i enjoyed making it.