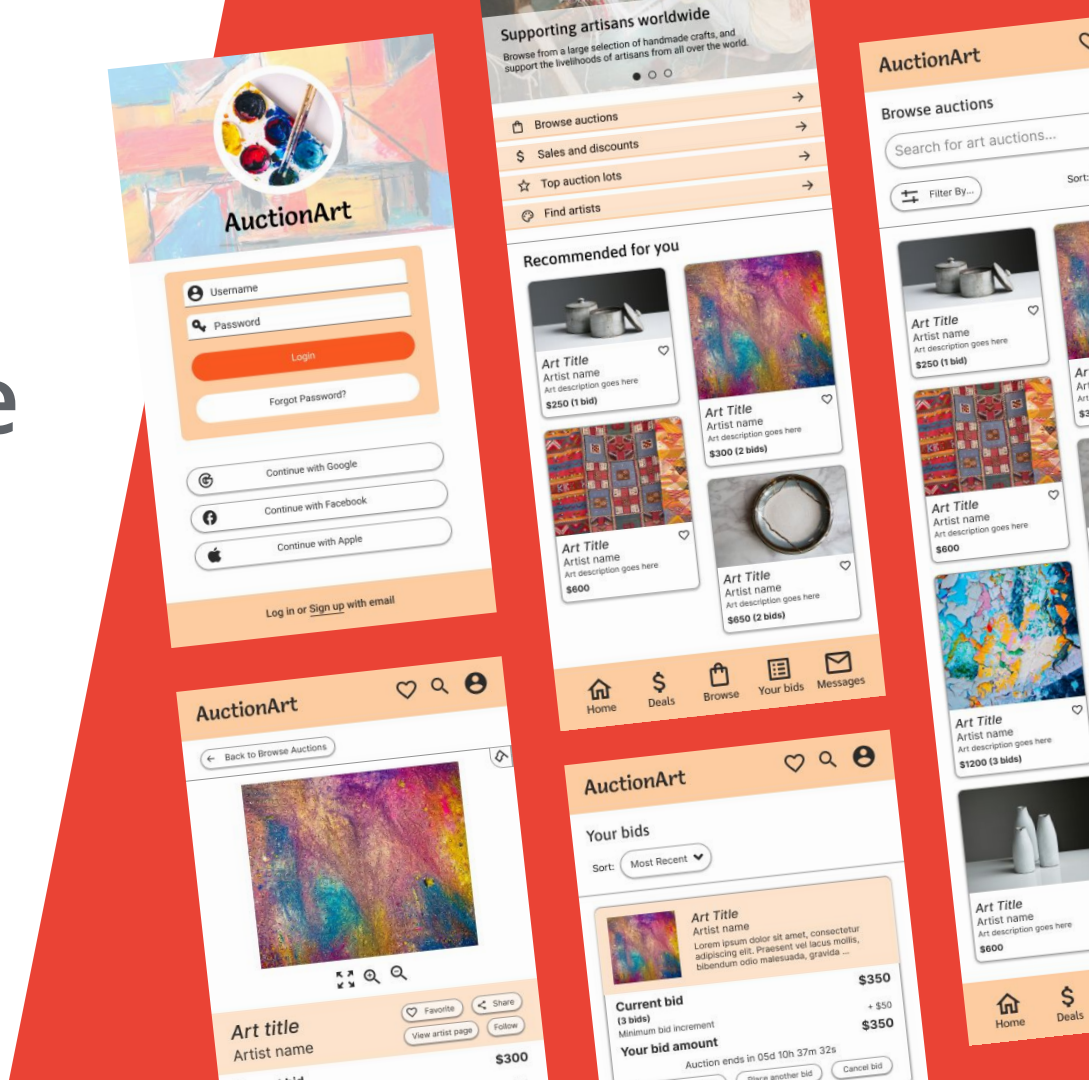
AuctionArt Case study

Thorya Aadland



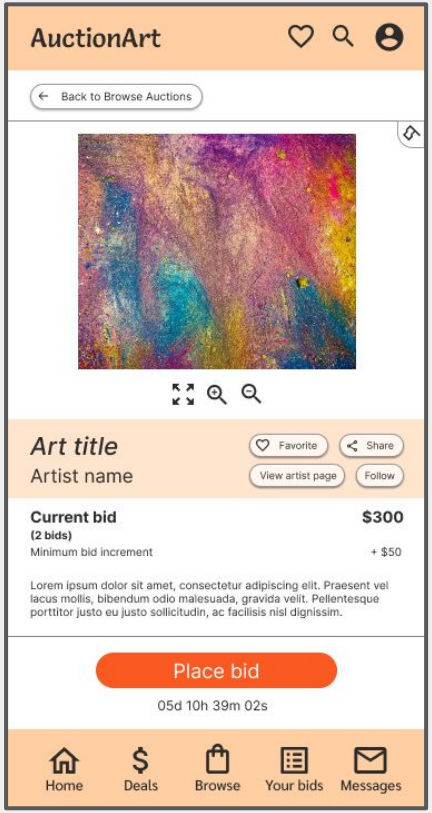
Project overview

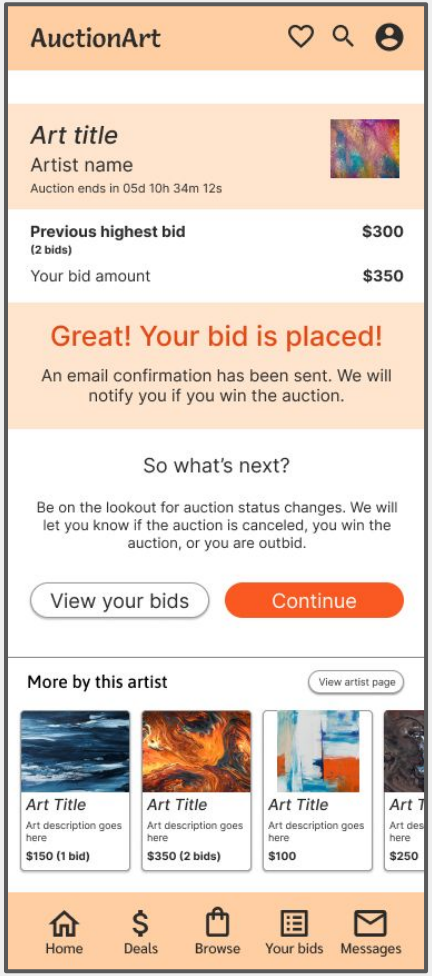
The product:

AuctionArt is a mobile app which allows users to place bids on art auctions online.

Project duration:

October 2022 - January 2023





Project overview

The problem:

Many online art auctions are exclusive to wealthy patrons and collectors. Auction websites often lack diversity in their mediums and featured artists, restricting their content to 2D art and failing to feature traditionally underrepresented groups.

The goal:

Our AuctionArt mobile app will let users browse discounted online art auctions, which will affect users with limited funds who can't afford to spend thousands on artwork, by advertising auction sales and promotions from small-scale artists and businesses from around the world.

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Project overview

My role:

Thorya Aadland: Lead UX Designer and Researcher

Responsibilities:

- Conducting competitive audits
- Designing low fidelity and high fidelity mockups
- Planning and conducting usability studies
- Creating prototypes

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Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

User research: summary

User research included a competitive audit and a usability studies of the low-fidelity and high-fidelity prototypes.

Our competitive audit assessed several websites currently featuring online art auctions and sales of artisan goods. Criteria included the desktop experience, mobile experience, features, accessibility, user flow, navigation, brand identity, and descriptiveness. The study revealed very large restrictions for potential user types in the competitors included in the study. In addition, there were issues with accessibility in navigation, including a failure to support keyboard-only navigation.

In the usability study, we assume users have limited experience participating in online art auctions. This study found that seamless navigation and the use of simplistic art terms to be large priorities when browsing.

User research: pain points

1

Pricing

Most online art auctions exceed thousands of US Dollars, making them vastly out of budget range for casual hobbyists and art enthusiasts.

2

Lack of diversity

Most featured auction mediums are limited to 2D artwork, such as photography, prints, and paintings. This leaves massive gaps in diversity for art mediums and artisans.

3

Ease of accessibility

People with disabilities, such as visual impairment, can still take a keen interest in art and should be considered when designing art auction sites.

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Persona: **Amrita Chandarana**

Problem statement:

Amrita is a manager at a public art gallery who needs to browse collections of art with lots of diversity in origin, artist, and genre, because she needs to teach her guests about world history.

Amrita Chandarana

Age:	47
Education:	Masters in Art History, Courtauld Institute of Art
Hometown:	London, UK
Family:	Husband, 1 son, 1 dog
Occupation:	Gallery manager, collector

"Artistic knowledge is cultural knowledge."

Goals

- Seeks to add artwork to her gallery.
- Wants to teach people world history through art.

Frustrations

- Wishes to know if the art was verified for authenticity.
- Wants more diversity, likes to support traditionally underrepresented artisans.
- Nearsighted, wants zoom-in features to see details.

Born and raised in the UK, Amrita first found interest in art history when she would make yearly visits to her extended family in India. Her travels introduced her to many different cultures and their unique art forms. She spent much of her youth curating in museums and art galleries before becoming a gallery manager, who uses her knowledge and appreciation of historic art to teach people about world history.

As a person, Amrita is very conscientious and seeks to create a gallery that represents many different cultures and art forms.

Persona: **Heather Smith**

Problem statement:

Heather is a prospective homemaker and new homeowner who needs to browse collections of art by material, medium, and color, because she wants to decorate her house with decor that suits her style and won't break easily.

Heather Smith

Age:	25
Education:	BBA in Business Administration, Augusta state university
Hometown:	Duluth, GA, USA
Family:	Husband, 2 cats
Occupation:	Secretary

"A house can always use a personal touch."

Goals

- Wants to decorate her newly purchased house
- Wants to save money
- Hopes to raise a family soon

Frustrations

- Limited funds, wants art in her price range.
- Only wants art from reputable sellers.
- Wants search features for genre and material to suit her safety requirements.

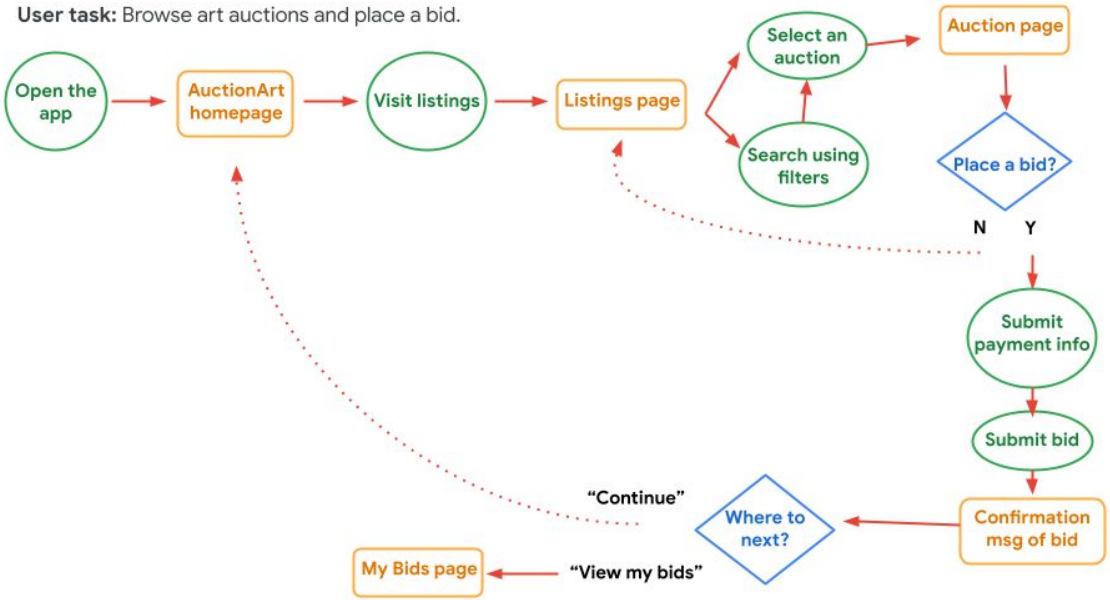
Heather recently graduated from university, has been married for two years and just purchased her first house with her husband. It's a relatively small, suburban home where they hope to raise a family. They have limited funds but would like to decorate their new house with some unique home decor.

Because they have two cats and want kids, Heather is mindful about the art material for safety and making her purchases last. She is very choosy about which types of art she buys and wants to avoid art that might shatter or otherwise break easily.

User journey map

The aim was to make the bidding process as simplistic as possible, while also accommodating for the pathways a user can take to get there.

The path is designed to be cyclic, meaning the user can enter/exit from any point and navigate back to bidding, if they so choose.



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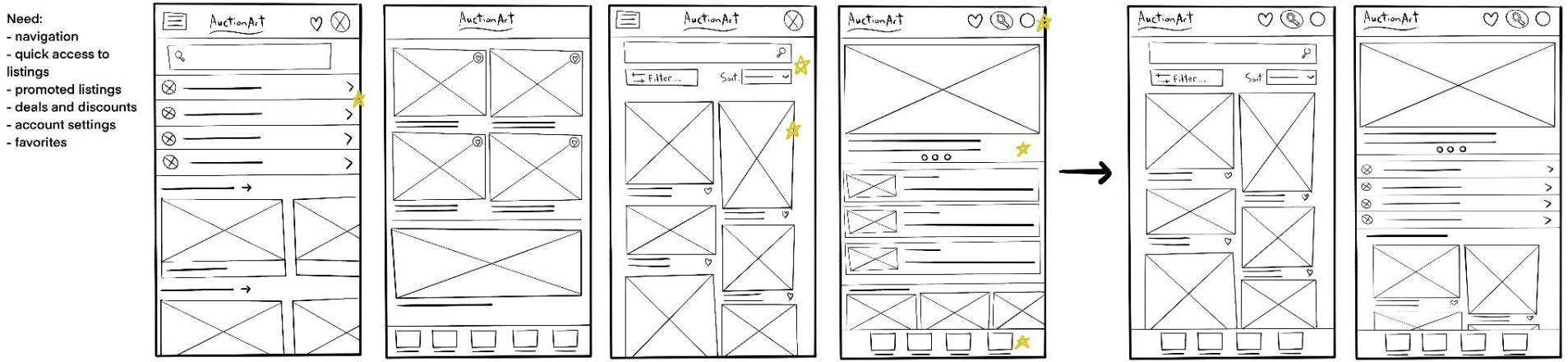
Starting the design

- Paper wireframes
- Digital wireframes
- Low-fidelity prototype
- Usability studies

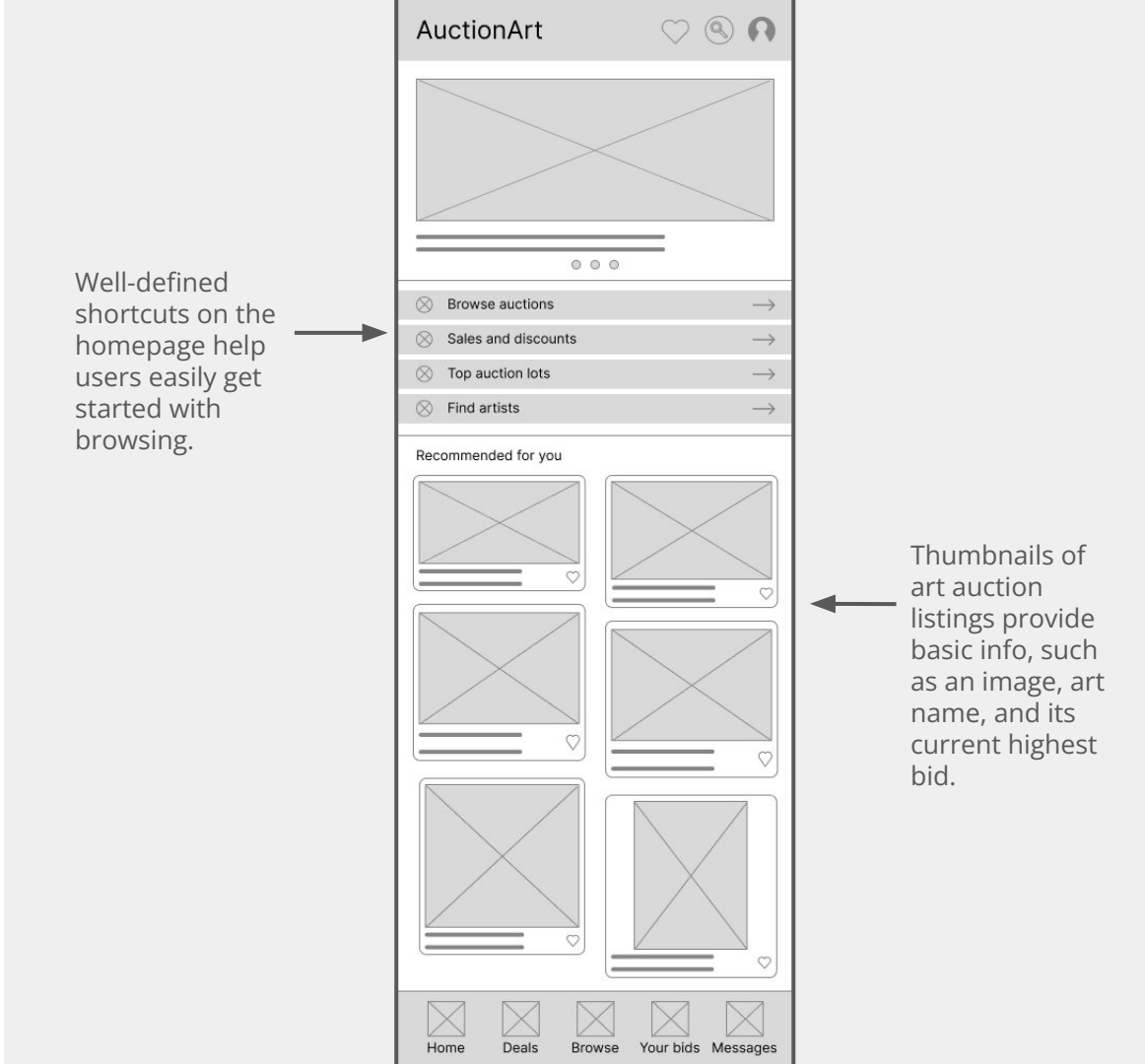
Paper wireframes

Several different designs were drafted, and the most desirable traits of each were starred for use in the revised versions.



Digital wireframes

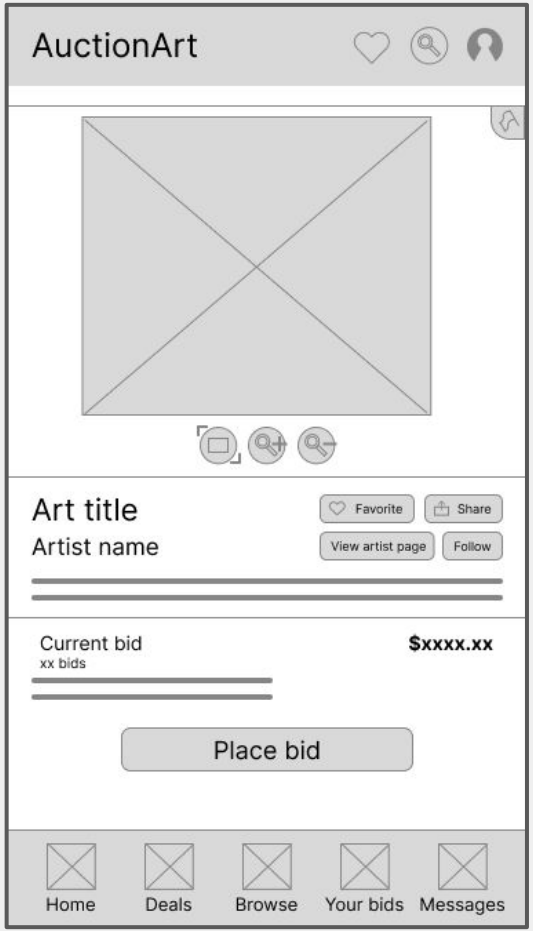
The goal was to make browsing as cyclic and easy to navigate as possible. The browsing pages can be very lengthy and full of information, so it was crucial to apply Gestalt principles and divide the content well.



Digital wireframes

There was a large focus on the immediate gratification of information, so the relative importance of info is reflected in the page layout, font size, and order.

The artwork can be enlarged to show detail, which is important for visually impaired users.

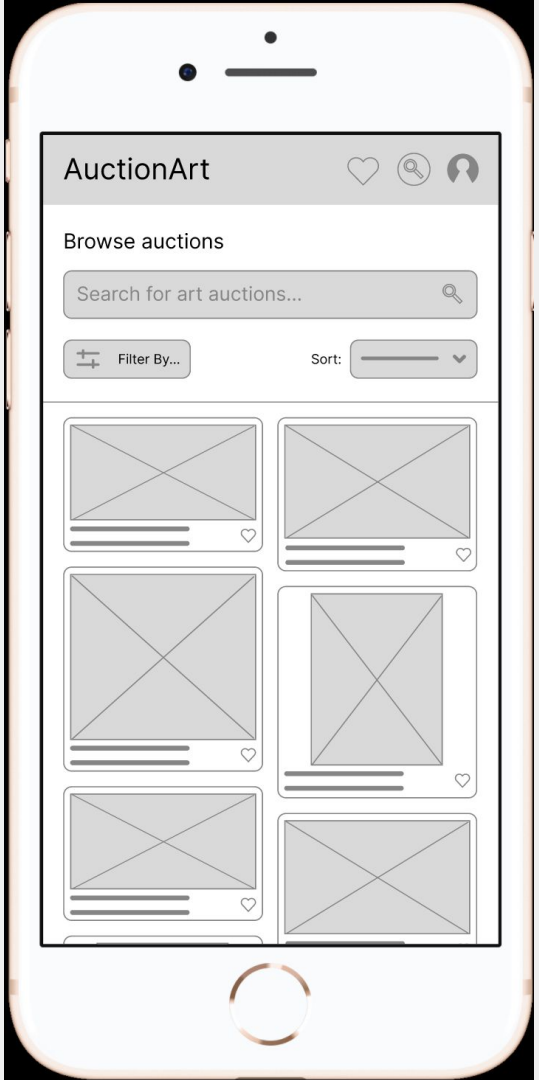


The fine details about the art can be found here, including user customizations such as favorites and following the artist.

Low-fidelity prototype

You can test this prototype at:

[AuctionArt Figma Low Fidelity Prototype]



Usability studies: findings

The usability studies revealed that users place a very high priority on the continuity of their navigation, as well as making the payment screens as painless as possible.

Round 1 findings

1. Users are not guaranteed to know what the term “listing” means.
2. Most participants anticipate a back button on the listing info pages.
3. Users may desire integrated payment options, such as PayPal.

Round 2 findings

1. Users desire a well-organized payment info page.
2. Users require a payment review page, detailing the taxes and shipping.
3. Users often like to view their list of bids, right after creating a new one.

Refining the design

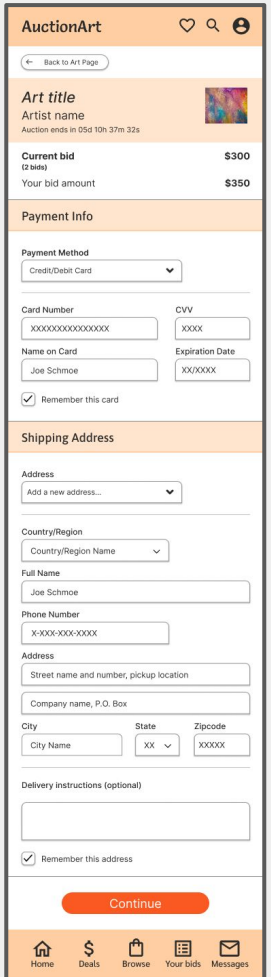
- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

Mockups

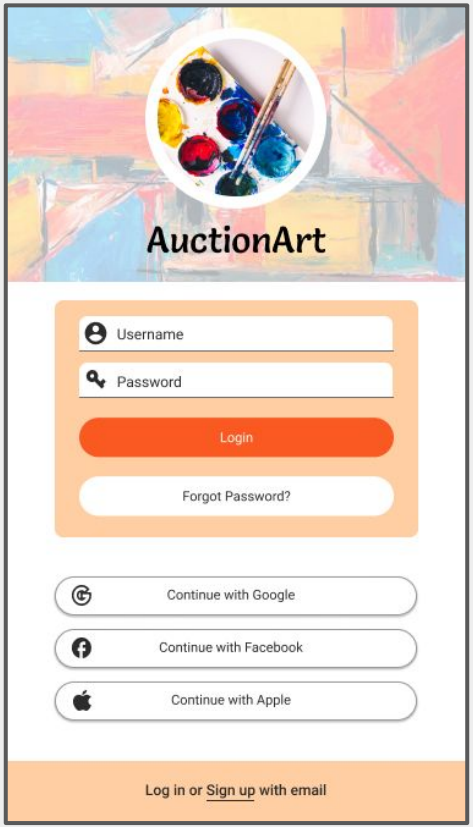
After the second usability study, it was clear that the payments page needed to be neatly sectioned. In addition, some fields and features were added to make recurring bid pipelines easier, such as saving payment methods and addresses for future use.

Before usability study

After usability study



Mockups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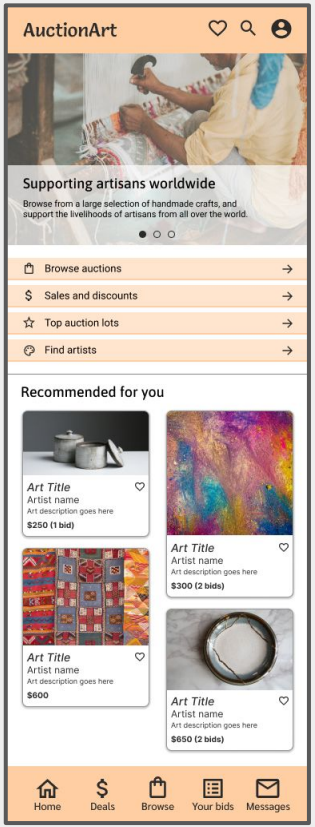
Username
Password
Login
Forgot Password?
Continue with Google
Continue with Facebook
Continue with Apple
Log in or Sign up with email


AuctionArt
Supporting artisans worldwide
Browse from a large selection of handmade crafts, and support the livelihoods of artisans from all over the world.
Browse auctions
Sales and discounts
Top auction lots
Find artisans
Recommended for you
Art Title
Artist name
Art description goes here
$250 (1 bid)
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Home
Deals
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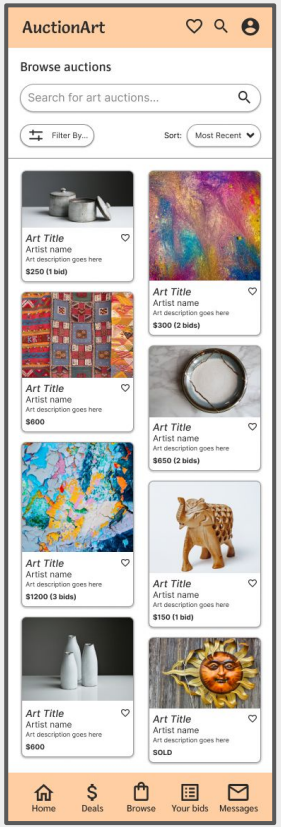
Your bids
Messages


AuctionArt
Browse auctions
Search for art auctions...
Filter By...
Sort:
Most Recent
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$250 (1 bid)
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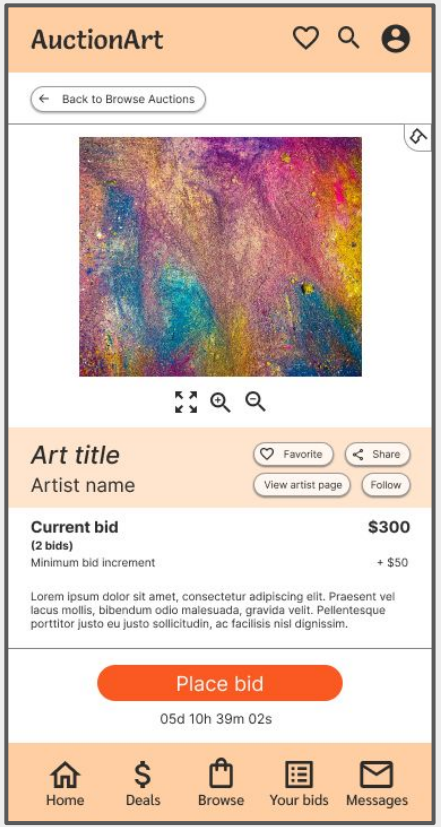
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Place bid
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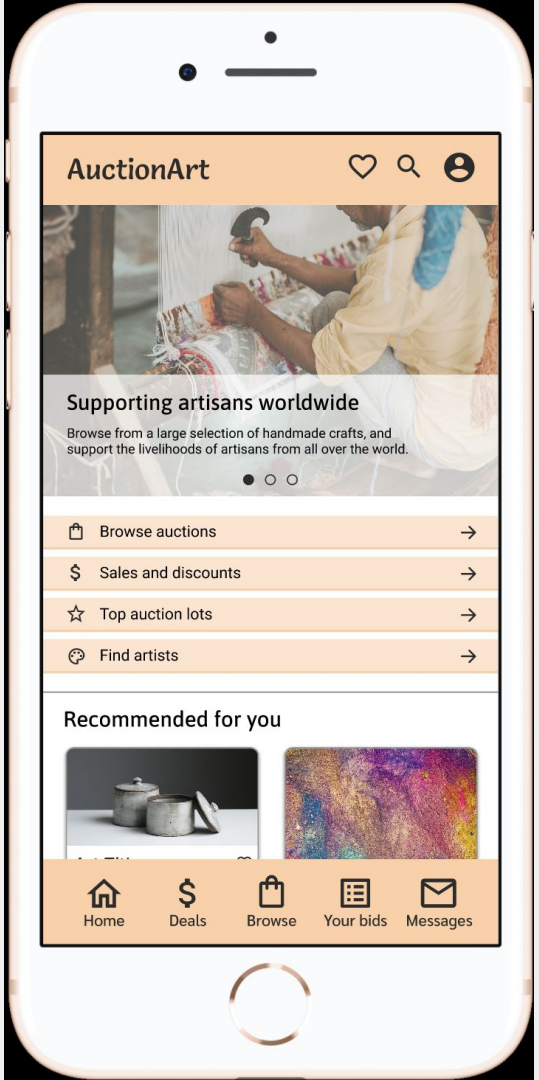
High-fidelity prototype

You can test this prototype at:

[AuctionArt Figma High Fidelity Prototype]



Accessibility considerations

1

Use of accompanying text with every image and thumbnail.

During the competitive audit, it was found that many existing websites provide thumbnails but don't have any accompanying captions or alt tags, making it hard on those who use screen readers.

2

High contrast ratio.

Color blindness is a prominent issue and requires its own specifications. Providing a high contrast ratio also benefits everyone, as it allows us to draw focus to specific sections and calls to action.

3

Adjusting to the user's selected region and language.

Not everyone is shipping to the same country. Accommodations for different currencies and formats of addresses are a must.

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways

Impact:

The AuctionArt app designs resulted in usability study participants feeling more confident in their ability to participate in art auctions. It's a great way for both professional and beginner hobbyists to enjoy and support artists.

What I learned:

I learned a great deal about user research and accessibility during this project. I also learned advanced prototyping skills in Figma. This experience has definitely improved the overall quality of my work, in both UX design and software development.

Google

Next steps

1

Additional research for users with disabilities.

The usability studies included visually impaired users, but it would be greatly beneficial to test with other accessibility features, such as those for users with limited mobility.

2

In-app carousels for multiple images of artwork.

Some artwork will require more than one photograph. Ceramics, sculptures, and other 3D works would benefit from this.

3

Charity auctions.

Many art auctions are for the sake of charity, like silent auctions. The proceeds go towards a humanitarian cause.

Let’s connect!

You can view more about AuctionArt by contacting me or accessing my website!

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