Part 2 - Competitive Audit Report

1. Competitive audit goal(s)

Compare the browsing experience of each competitor's auction listings.

2. Who are your key competitors? (Description)

The key competitors to AuctionArt include Artnet, Artsy, and Etsy.

Artnet is a direct competitor to AuctionArt and an online art auctions website for high profile artists and professional collectors, galleries, and museums. Unlike AuctionArt, it only deals with artwork appraised at very high values, with some artwork exceeding 50,000 USD.

Artsy is a direct competitor to both AuctionArt and Artnet. It is an online art auctions website catering more towards hobbyists, with some auctions below 1,000 USD.

Etsy is an online shopping platform and an indirect competitor to AuctionArt. While it doesn't partake in auctions, it sells a very impressive variety of arts and crafts worldwide.

3. What are the type and quality of competitors' products? (Description)

Artnet and Artsy have similar stock in their auction listings; they both specialize in 2d artwork such as paintings, photographs, prints, and lithographs.

Artnet is specialized purely for professional, high profile buying and selling of art. It puts a lot of emphasis on its price database, which has been used by many large companies such as Forbes and The New York Times. Its website is very simplistic and to the point.

Artsy has more social media aspects such as following artists, favoriting their work, and receiving notifications when their favorite artists post new work. Artsy has a larger collection of listings and thus has more customization/filter options.

Etsy functions like an online department store; its stock is not catered towards galleries or private collections. It has a rating system, shopping cart, favorites system, and notifications for new stock and promotions. Etsy's apps are very colorful and inviting, and detailed with tons of subgroups for browsing.

4. How do competitors position themselves in the market? (Description)

Artnet advertises itself as a premiere site for arranging the buying and selling of appraised work. Its target audience includes wealthy collectors and companies such as galleries and museums. It offers resources for price compare, arranging appraisals, and visiting large, in-person events such as art shows.

On the other hand, Artsy caters more towards hobbyists. Its curated content is also a little more humanistic; it features galleries and shows with social commentary and fundraising for non-profit organizations.

Etsy appeals to everyday shoppers who are interested in supporting small artists. They make holiday shopping easy and curate their users' feeds based on their purchases and favorite material.

5. How do competitors talk about themselves? (Description)

Artnet has a very formal tone and describes itself as a place to "connect with artists and galleries worldwide to find the next addition to your collection."

Artsy describes itself as a great starting point for prospective collectors. According to Artsy, "We've made it easy for new and experienced collectors to discover, buy, and sell art."

Etsy's tone is very friendly and encouraging, enticing users to peruse the wares of their hosted artists. Etsy's About Us page says that "Etsy is home to a universe of special, extraordinary items, from unique handcrafted pieces to vintage treasures."

6. Competitors' strengths (List)

Artnet's strengths include:
- Descriptiveness and ease of access for information
- Website is well organized; sections are distinct
- Very focused design; straightforward

Artsy's strengths include:
- Enticing features such as free price database and following artists
- Great accessibility: zoom, alt tags, keyboard-only navigation
- Lots of filters for types of art
- Great support for underrepresented groups of artists
- Descriptiveness and ease of access for information

Etsy's strengths include:
- Great brand identity: colorful, inviting, and friendly.
- Great user flow: Very detailed navigation bar, filters that cater toward the specific crafts in question.
- Convenient shopping features such as login with Gmail or Apple ID, promotions for holiday sales, and reviews system.
- Excellent accessibility: Many supported languages, locales, and currencies; alt tags; zoom and keyboard-only navigation.

7. Competitors' weaknesses (List)

Artnet's weaknesses include:
- Poor support for keyboard-only navigation
- Very limited search options
- Not a very diverse collection of art
- Little to no brand identity; site was very bland

Artsy's weaknesses include:
- Pagination didn't work well; it was very much out of the way of user flow. Couldn't control results per page.
- Little to no brand identity; site's color and decor was reliant on thumbnails of featured art
- Had some issues with scaling thumbnail displays for very tall images.

Etsy's weaknesses include:
- Extremely large, overwhelming customization options for the navigation bar.
- Bare bones thumbnails; they only display an image and a price. Viewing details involves visiting the product's page and searching in a sea of information for details such as artist, size, and location.

8. Gaps (List)

Some gaps include:
- Brand identity: For being art websites, our direct competitors really didn't have very impressively decorated websites. They were minimally adorned and not particularly exciting to visit.

- <u>Lack of diverse mediums:</u> Aside from Etsy, most listings were 2d art, such as paintings, photographs, prints, and lithographs. There were very few listings for anything other than 2d art being auctioned off.
- <u>Navigation and filter results:</u> We found that navigation is either bare bones or far too convoluted.

9. Opportunities (List)

- We should make sure that our app has a distinctive style that is memorable and inviting for our target audiences. An art auctions app should be pretty in its own right.
- We should ensure more diversity than our competitors, offering more mediums than just 2d art. Offering sculptures, sewed/knitted/crocheted goods, woodwork, and other mediums would give us an edge in our range of products.
- Our pagination should prioritize the clean organization of our search results.