

Design Rationale

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Minor User Experience Design 2020/2021

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Introduction

I have focused in these past 6 weeks to invent and redesign the information architecture of the Mohi application. This project is on behalf of the founder of the Mohi app Wibe van de Vijver. We live in a world with abundance of information and distractions. In today's world we see hundreds of self-centered social posts and we remember none. The Mohi community wants to introduce a slow-media platform where they advocate for alternative ways of making and using media that are more intentional, more enjoyable and of higher quality overall.

Problem statement

From the client

Our western culture has normalised being bombarded with new options and triggers to keep us hooked and addicted, controlling how we spend our time. We focus too much on self-centered social posts instead of sharing content which is meaningful and which we can use to bond with each other and inspire creativity.

The Mohi community wants to introduce 'Slow Media'. They encourage users to share meaningful media with each other that focusses on their full concentration. The Mohi community wants to introduce a platform that gathers limited highlights from friends, family and people we admire.

I have focused in these past weeks researching bottlenecks to improve the current Mohi design. The beta users of the current app didn't have enough motivation to regularly use the application. The current application is hard to navigate through, which leads them to get lost while using the app. In addition, they had not even discovered certain functionalities.

According to the test results of the new beta users of the current app, they had a lot of trouble navigating through the app because they found the content organization confusing. In this document I will explain my choices and insights that I have collected in recent periods.

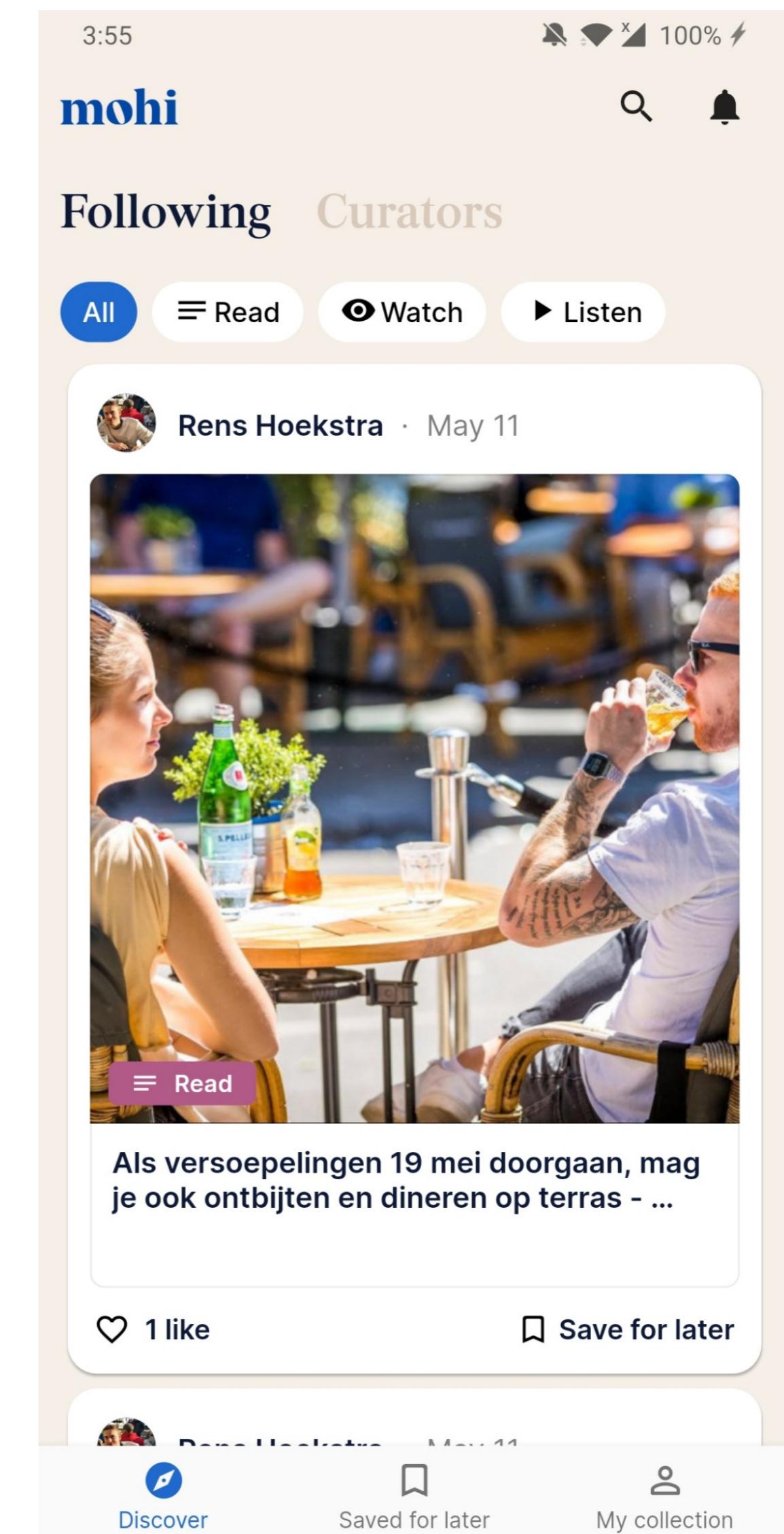


Fig. 1: The current interface that has to be redesigned

Design challenge

Design challenge

"How can we improve the information architecture of the app Mohi, so that users can find all functionalities without effort with regards to slow media?"

The process in short

I have conducted user tests ([Product biography p. 24](#)), deskresearch ([Product biography p. 6](#)) and a product requirement list ([Product biography p. 4](#)) the first 3 weeks to map out what the wants and needs of the target audience are. I did this to figure out how I can redesign the product in the best way possible.

After these results I individually used ideation to develop new design ideas to see which ones would work best for the target audience ([Product biography p. 8](#)). The design choices I made are based on IA lenses which I learned during the Big IA course ([Product biography p. 20](#)).

As a result of ideation, I started prototyping and testing with the same first time users I already had for the beta Mohi application.

Results and choices

Based on the results of the various user tests ([Product biography p. 24](#)), I made choices and iterations. This ultimately gave birth to the current concept.

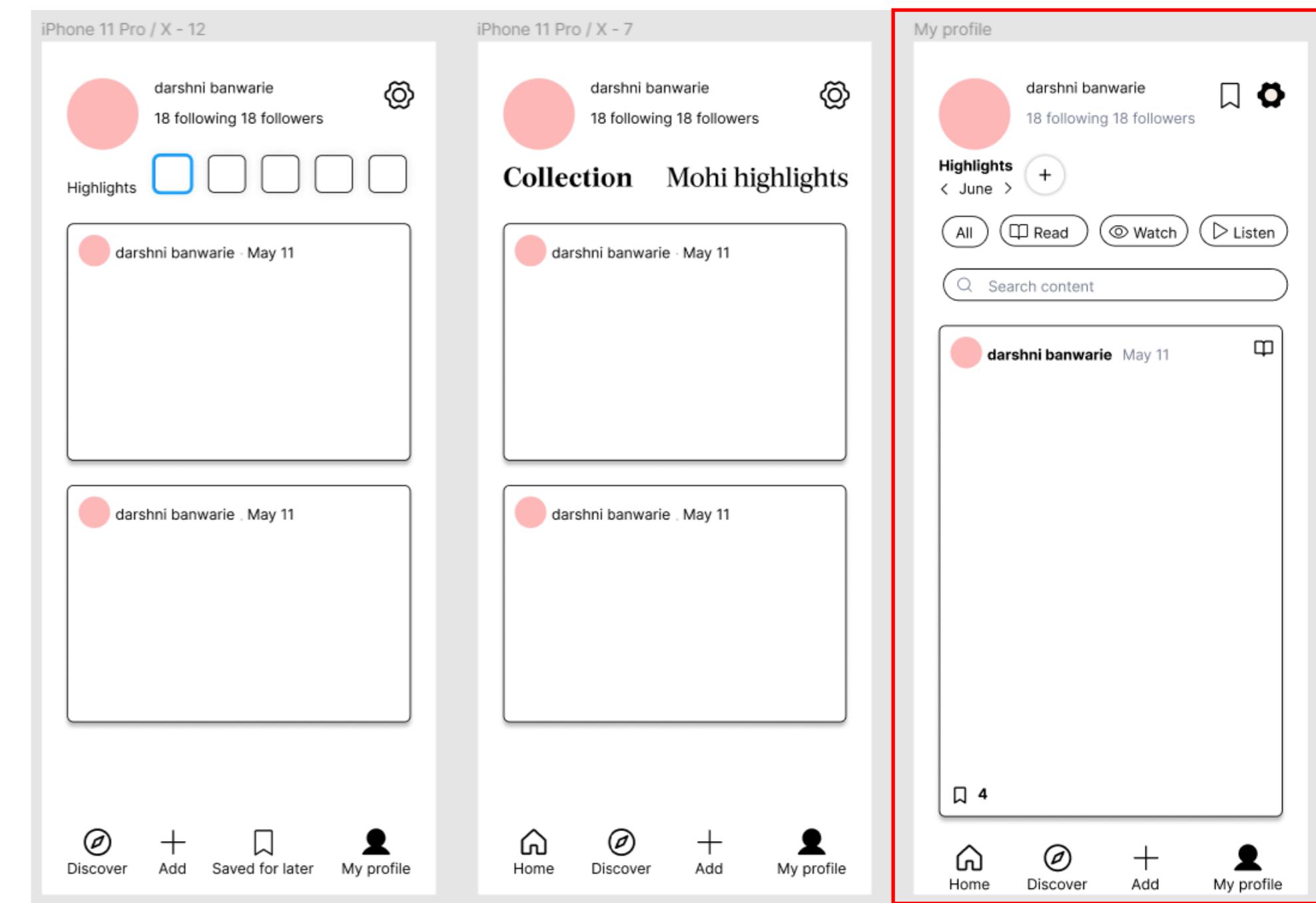


Fig. 2: Part of the individual ideation session for "My profile"

Design challenge

The product in short

The product navigation and placement of functionalities has changed completely. I unpacked all the functionalities according to the user tests where they decided which ones are the most important and hard to find.

The layout of the interface remains consistent, causing the elements to stay in the same place. This provides landmarks for the target audience.

The problem was that some subpages were hidden in a main page e.g. if the user wanted to change their settings, they had to go through My collection -> click username -> settings. So I redesigned "My collection" into "My profile" where they can find functionalities they associated in their mental model as personal functionalities. The rest of the screenshots of the current app apps are in the product biography ([Product biography p. 16](#)).

I mainly redesigned the information architecture so that the user wouldn't waste too much time finding anything.

Link prototype:

<https://www.figma.com/proto/zln4osTRO2IWRGf3Hzd8il/Mohi-App-redesign-darshni?page-id=0%3A1&node-id=39%3A385&viewport=-1616%2C411%2C0.18707747757434845&scaling=scale-down>

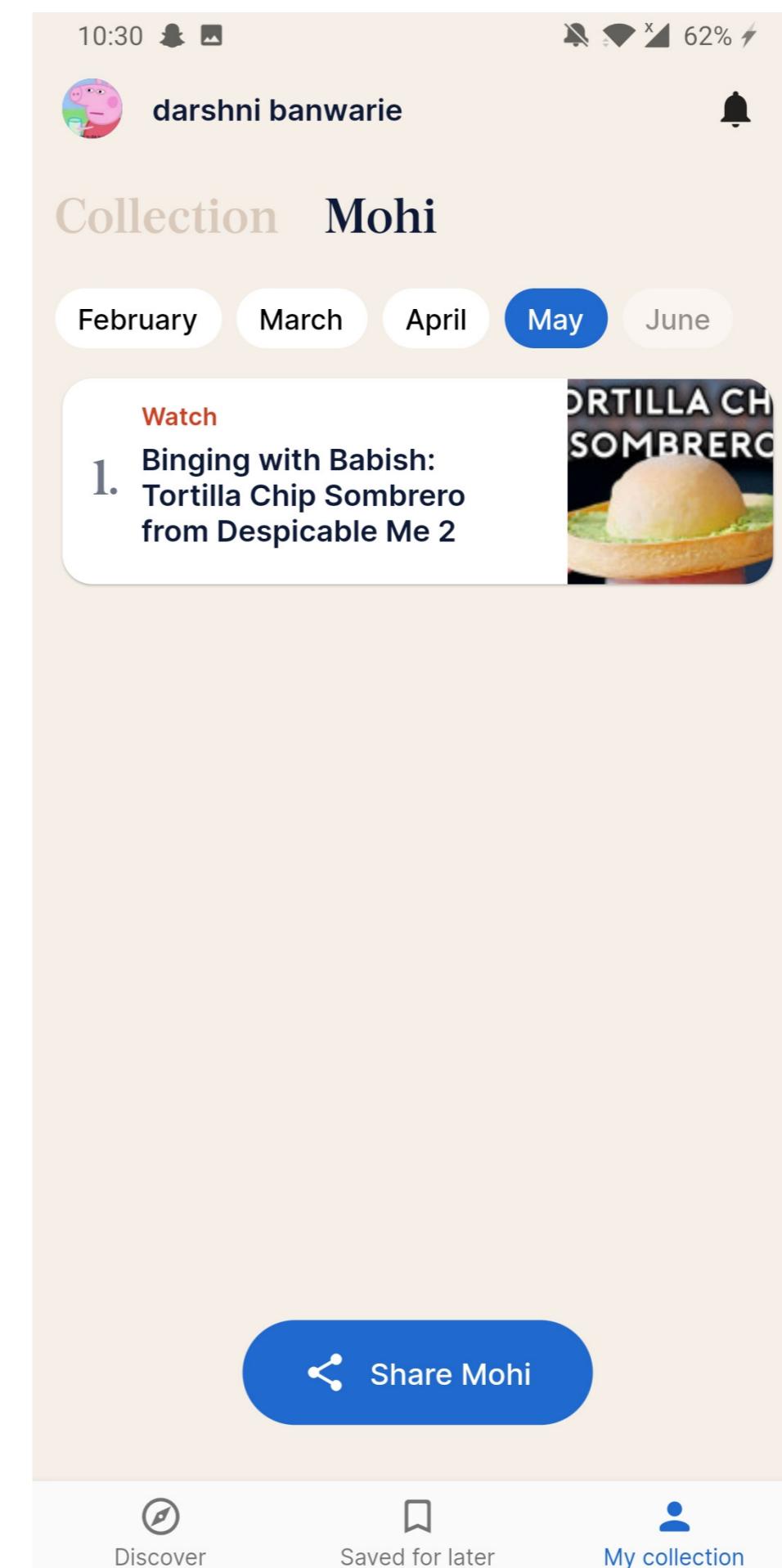


Fig. 3: Current interface of "My collection"

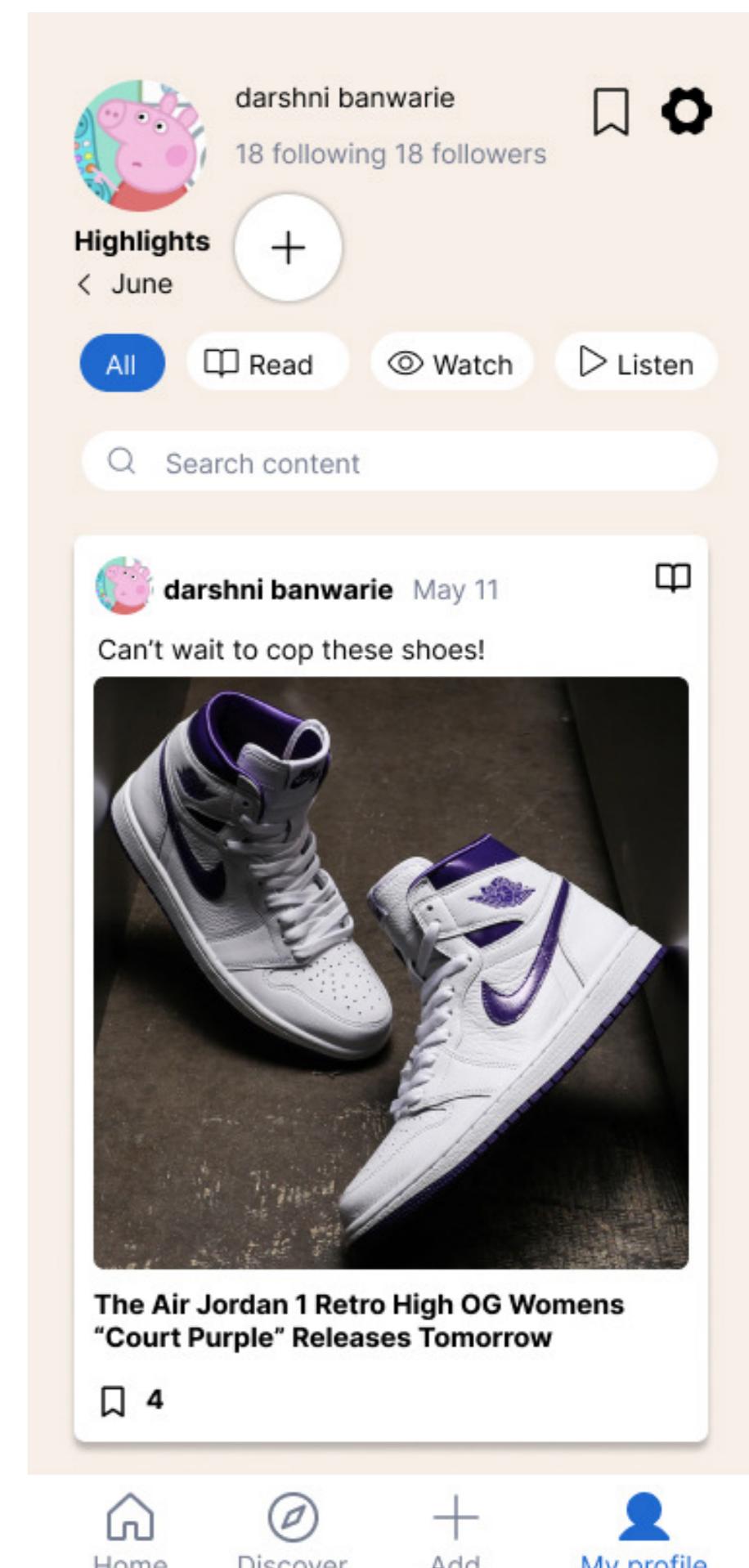


Fig. 4: Redesigned interface of "My collection" which is called "My profile" now.

Research

Insights

Functionalities

Slow Media provoke the full concentration of their users. And their concentration was being interrupted because the important functionalities were hidden in the application. According to the results of user tests, some functionalitites were almost impossible to find (My profile, settings, monthly highlights). And they wouldn't use some features in the main pages every day (monthly highlights, saved for later).

Unorganized content makes navigation difficult and inexplicit, so the users can easily get lost and feel annoyed. If the users face first bad interaction, they may not give the second chance to your product. (Tubik, 2017).

The users were spending more time than they should have on their phone/in the app and the navigation didn't give them a sense of control and confidence.

Familiar site maps

Before designing, I researched popular platforms like Instagram, Facebook and YouTube to gain insight in the mental models of users. And I realised that they had similarities; they had separate pages for "my account" in which the users could find settings. And they also had a separate page where the users can discover new content. So I concluded that their mental model of a social platform looks like that ([Product biography p. 17-19](#)).

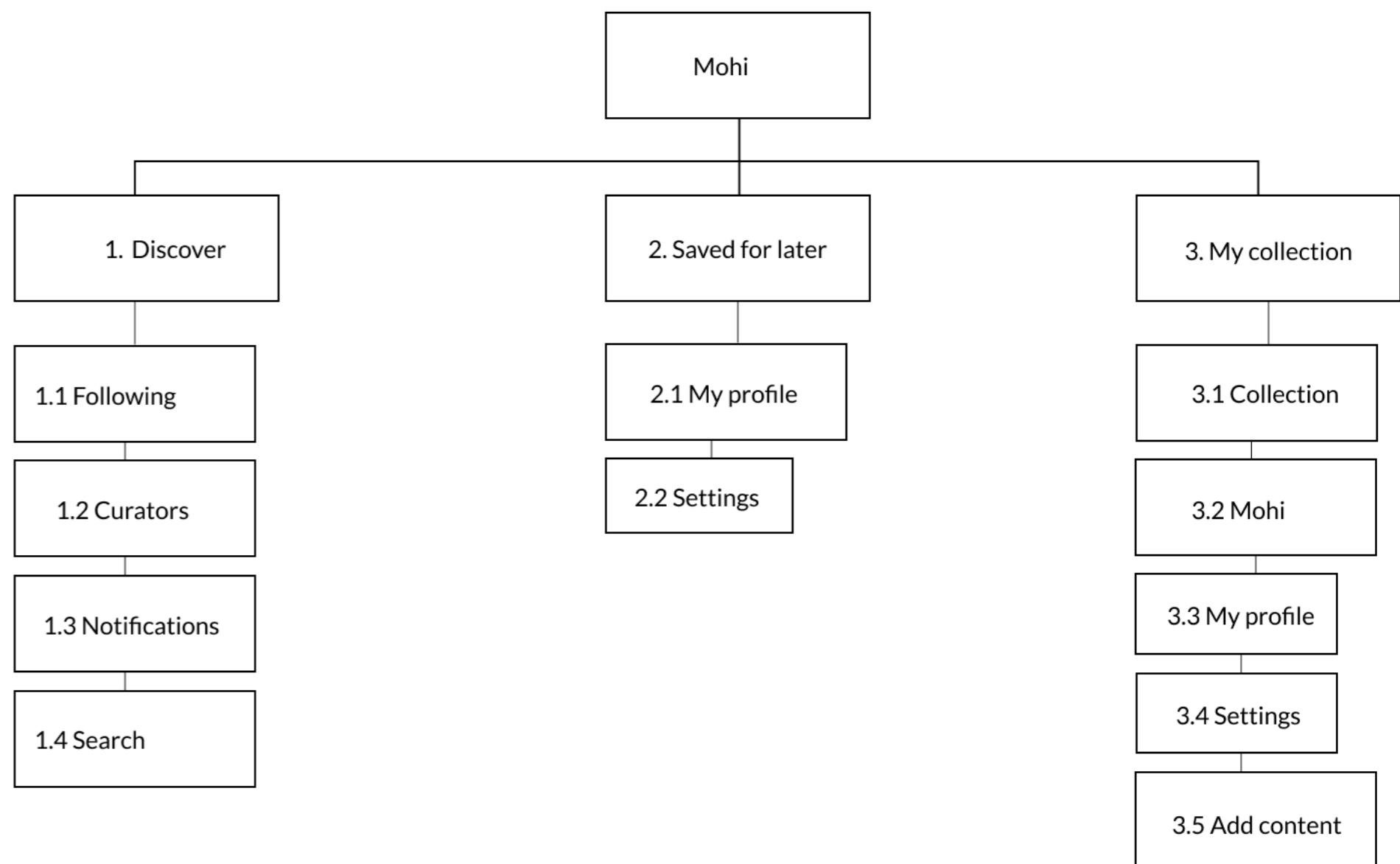


Fig. 5: Sitemap of the current Mohi design.

Design choices and iterations

Test results and iterations

According to the test results of my design:

- **Discover:** put people there who have woke news, media that the government doesn't control: like bloggers, TED talks, podcasts, games
- **My profile:** add a search bar and sort options so users can find content. (fig. 7).
- **Highlights:** plus icon to add a highlight is too big. Indicate more clearly which highlights of the month they are seeing right now (fig. 7).
- **Home:** "saved later" belongs in a personal page, like my profile (fig. 6).

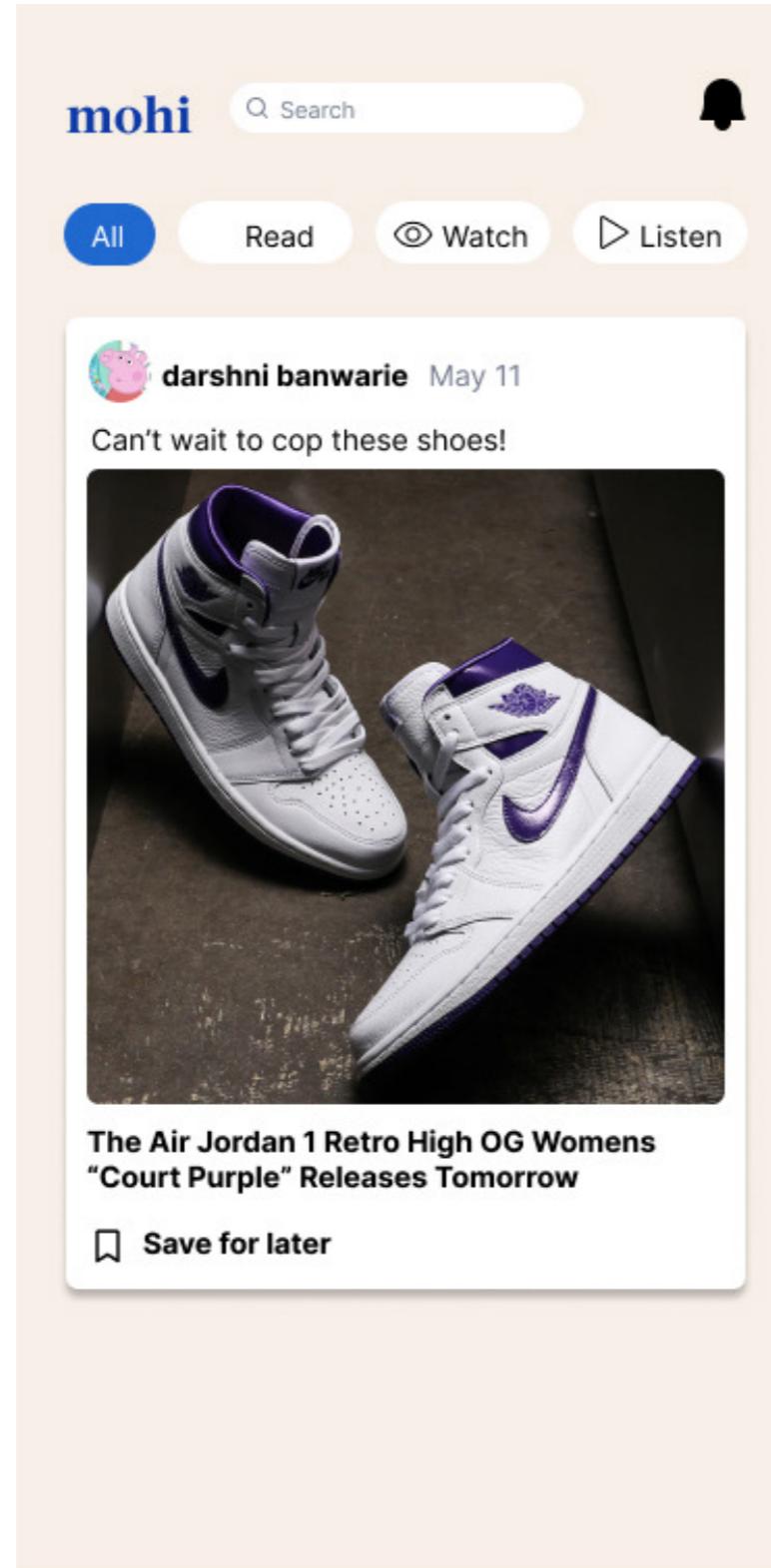
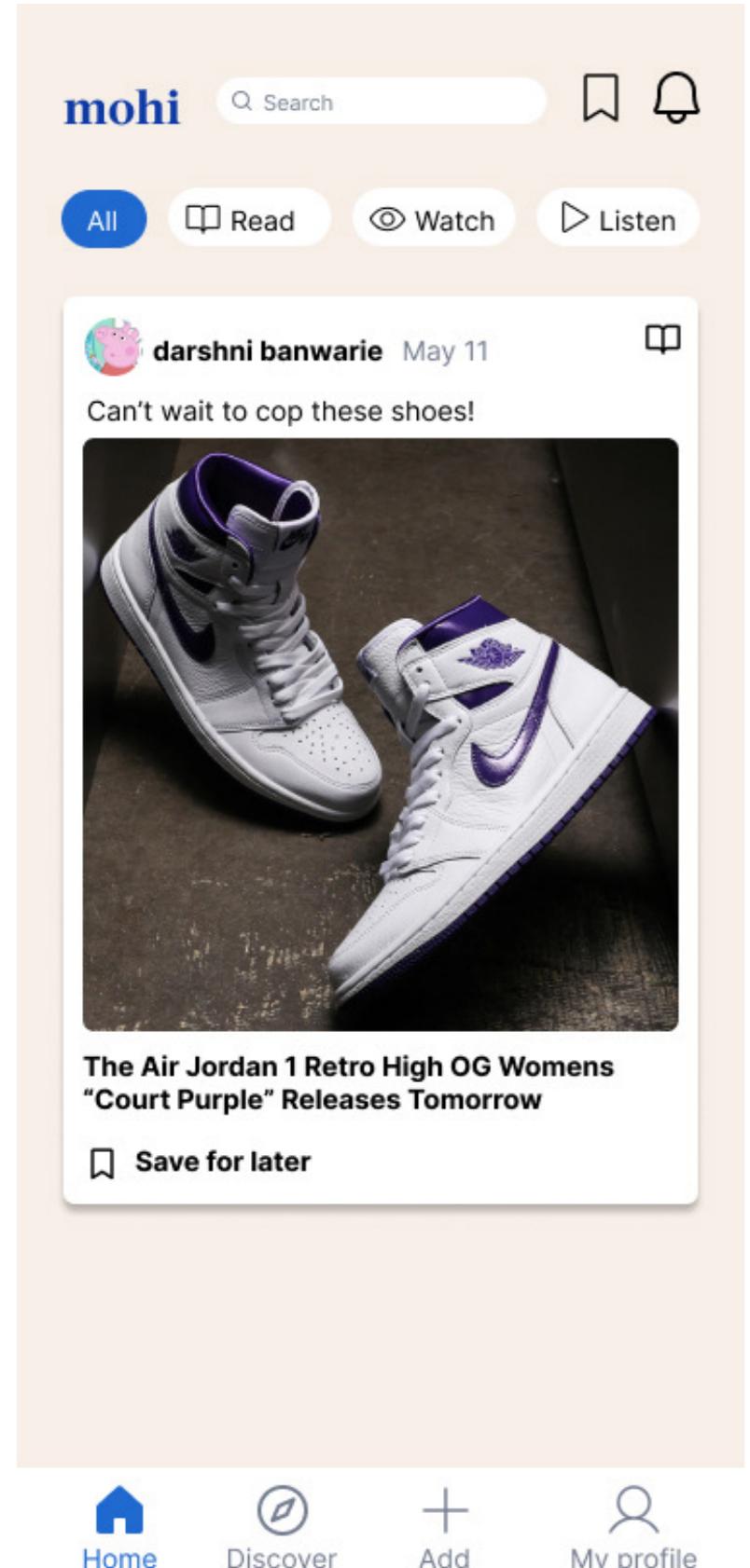


Fig. 6: Before and after iterating the homepage. I added "Saved later in my profile."

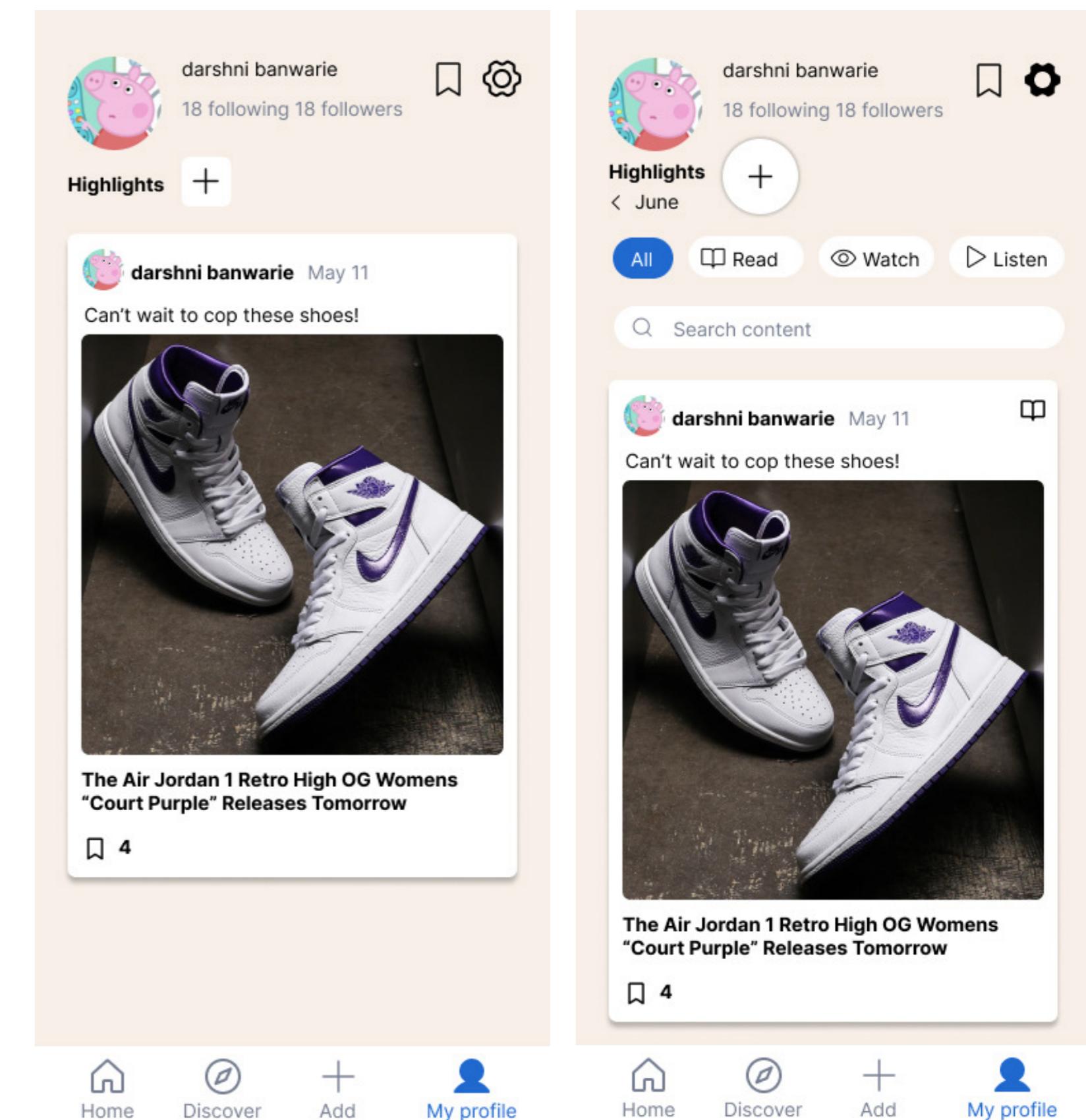


Fig. 7: Before and after iterating the "My profile". I made "My highlights" more prominent, and to avoid confusion, added the option to see which months' highlights the user is currently seeing.

Design critique

I planned two design critique sessions with my peers in the last week of the project ([Product biography p. 32](#)). Where I received feedback and based on that I improved the search bar, I initially didn't specify what the user could find there. I assumed that they knew that they could find users there (fig. 8).

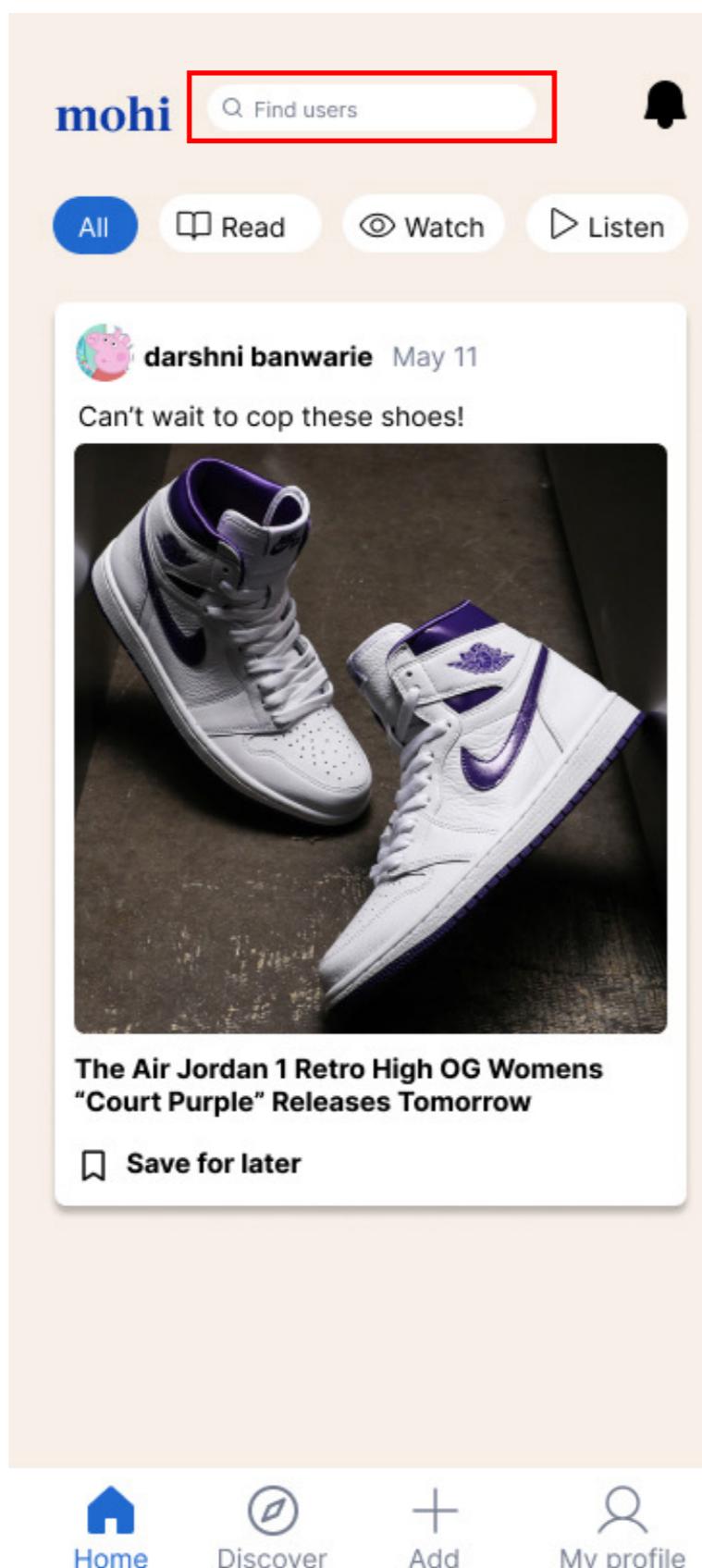
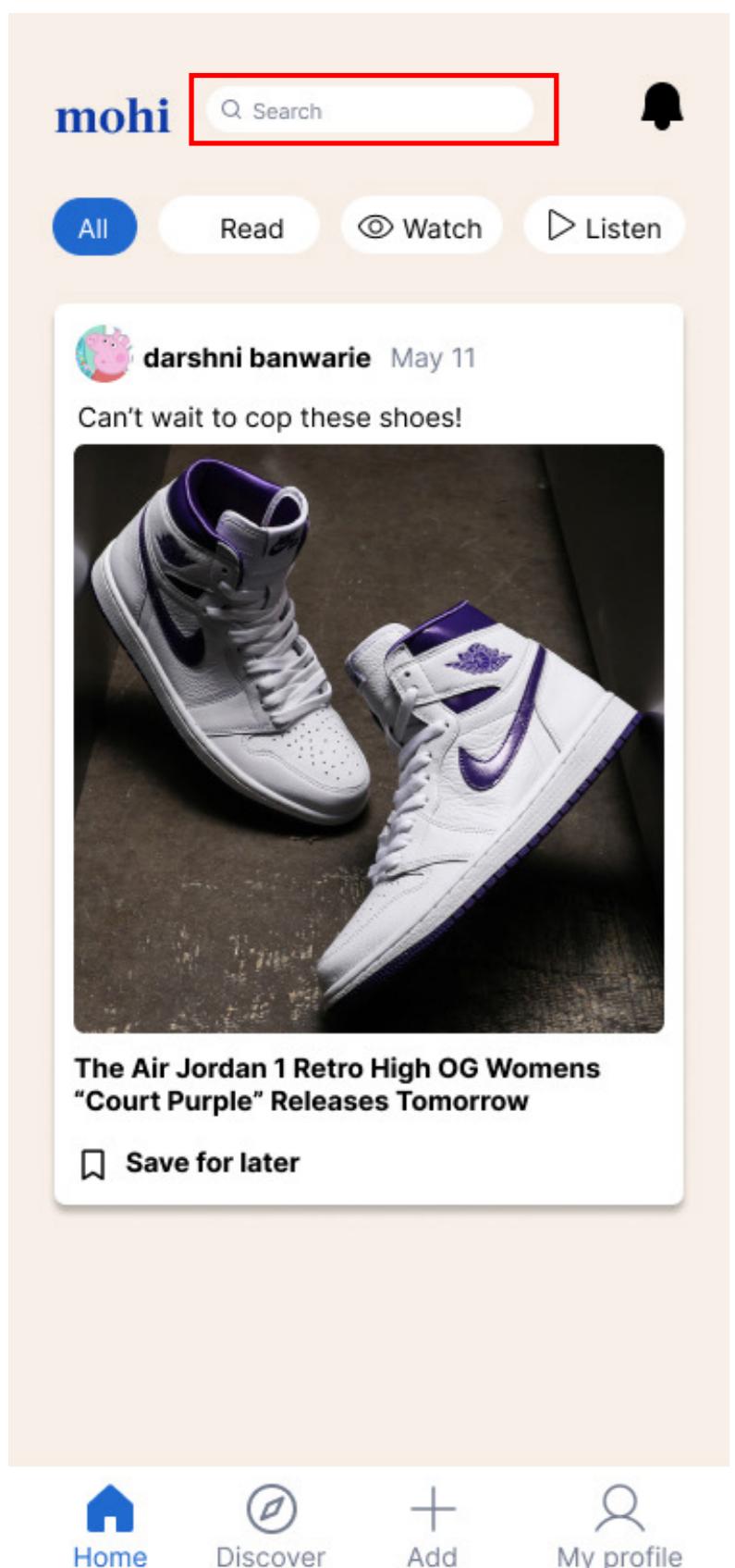


Fig. 8: Before and after iterating the search bar. The search bar only indicated that they could search for something, but that something wasn't specified.

Another bottleneck was that my peer didn't quite understand highlights, which I think can be solved by explaining it well ([Product biography p. 33](#)). The user can add a top 5 of their favorite content as a highlight every month. So figure 9.1 is before the user added a highlight for this month, where figure 9.2 is when they added a highlight. The intention is that they can add a maximum of 5 highlights, and the order which it will be sorted is per top 5 (e.g. first highlight is number 1). They can arrange and change the order in figure 9.3. And the user can post this as a list when they have a total of 5 highlights for the month.

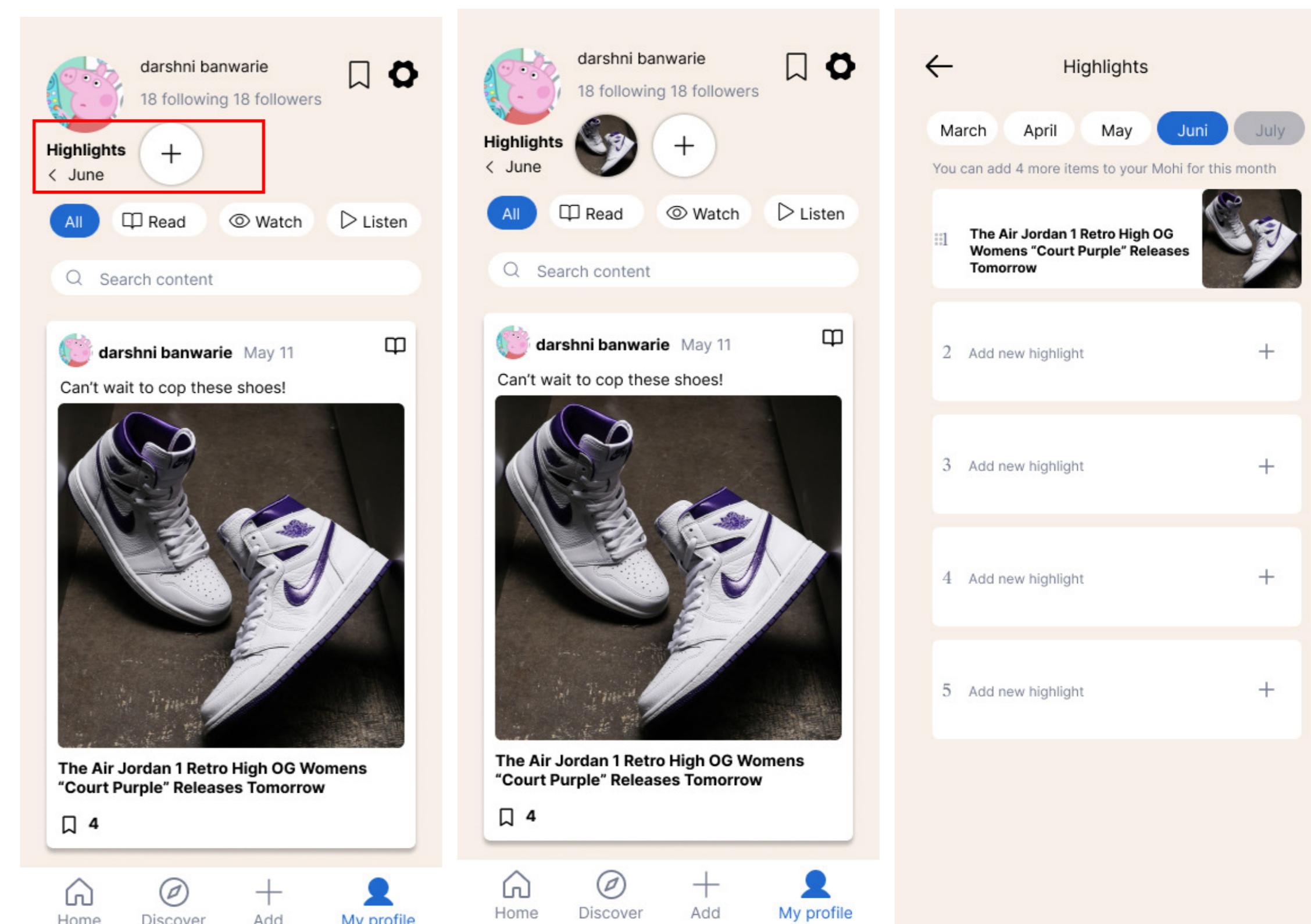


Fig. 9: My profile -> highlights.

IA lenses

I used IA lenses from Big IA to avoid blind spots and support user goals with the structure. I also used them to support the choices I made in my redesign.

I. Context: Give the user an indication on which page they are and what they can do on that specific page. Give the user context relatable to the navigation item on that page to avoid confusion.

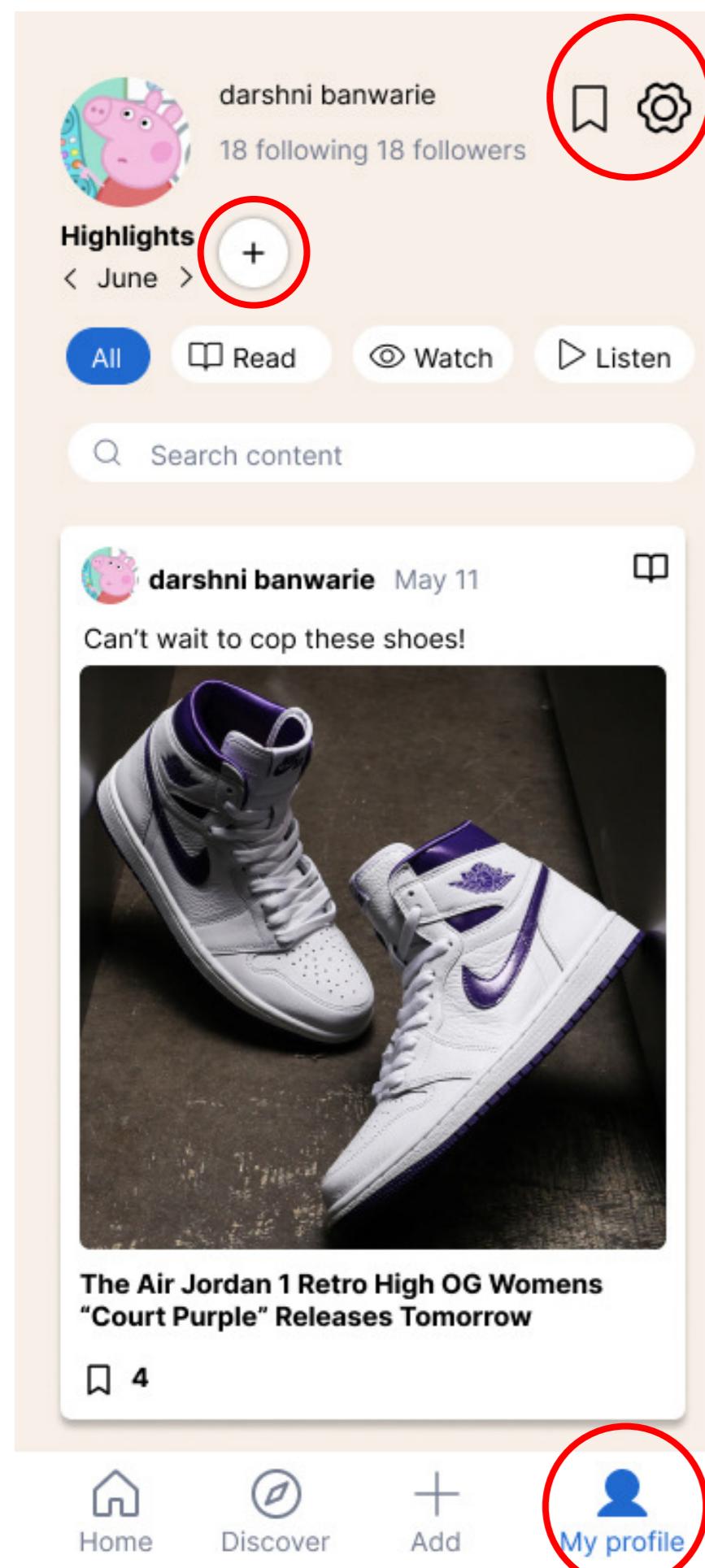


Fig. 10: My profile page.

II. Escape hatch: Provide the user an escape when a primary action fails them. Put a link/button to get the user out of that page and back to a known place.

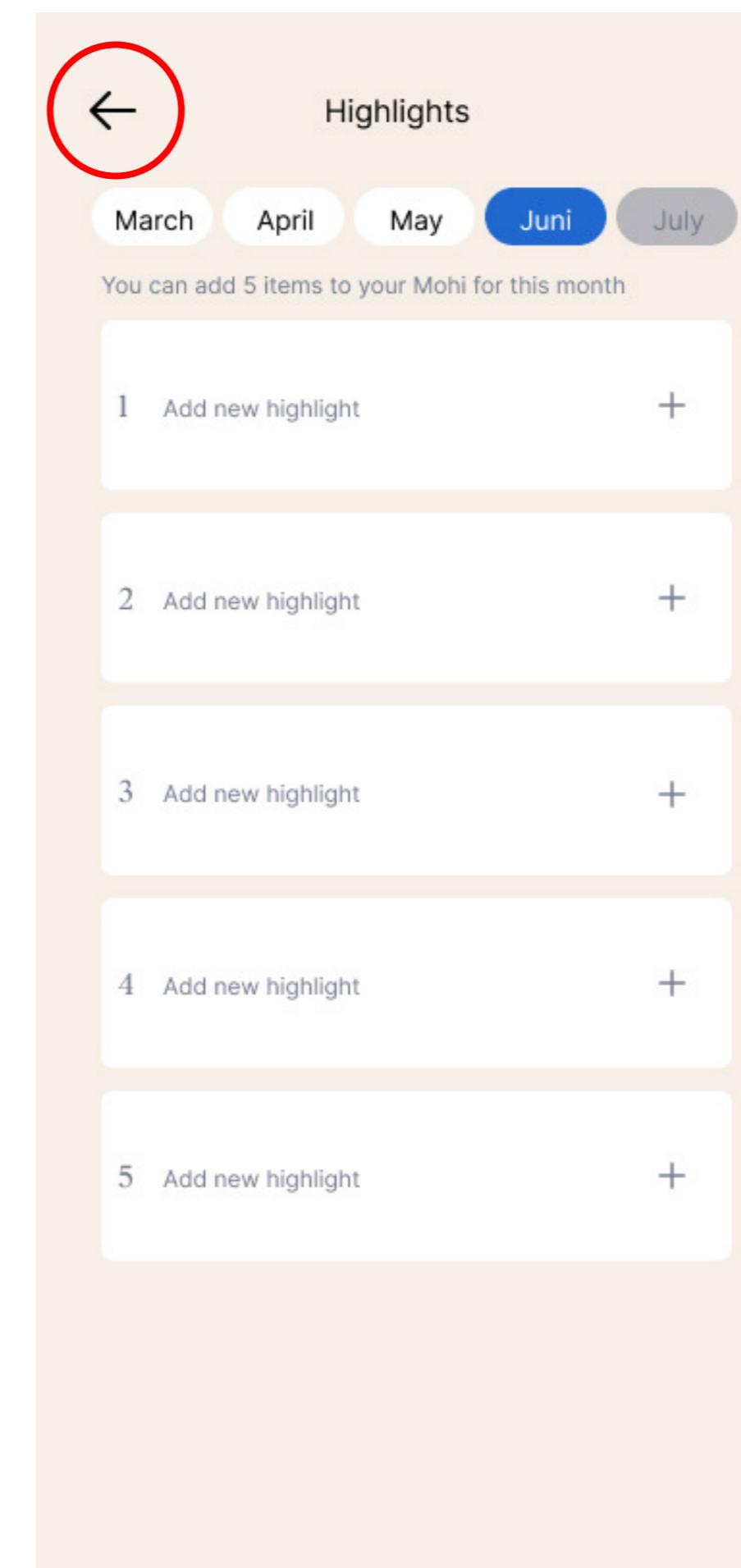


Fig. 11: Add to highlights page.

Adding to highlights is a primary action in "My profile", if the user wants to back out adding a highlight, they can easily go back to their profile with the left arrow.

III. Importance: categories should be relevant to the people using them. Why is this category/relationship important?

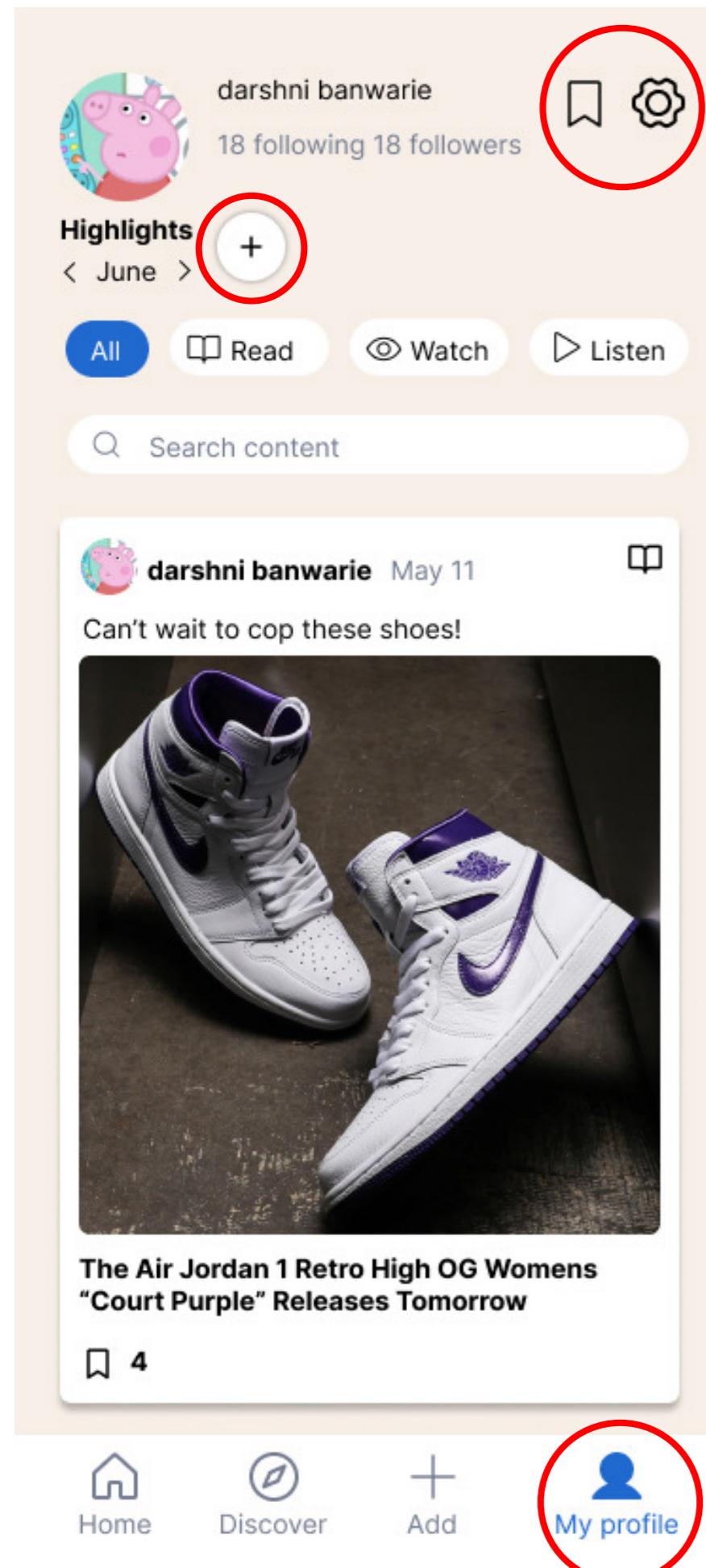


Fig. 12: My profile page.

IV. One menu, one purpose: provide the user with a menu that aligns with their needs.

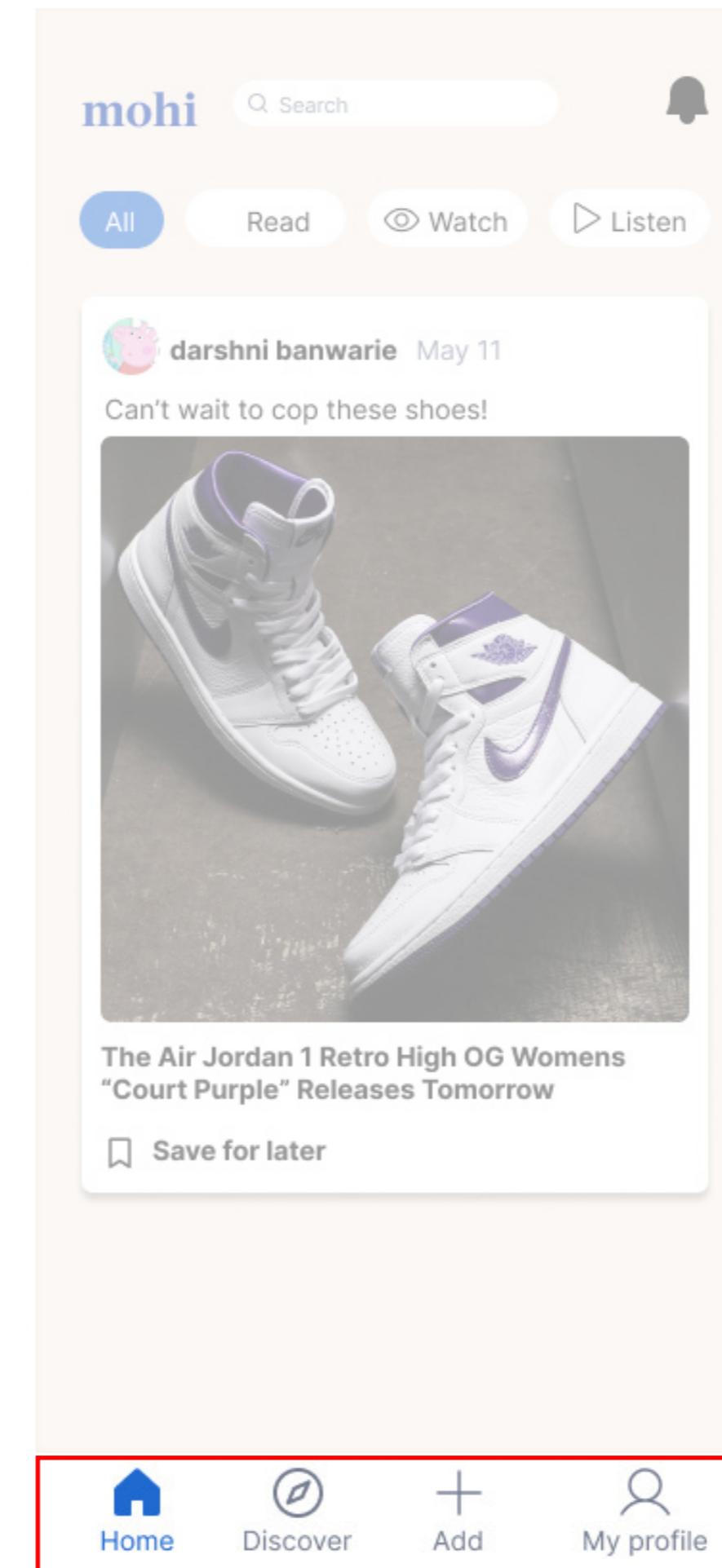


Fig. 13: My profile page.

The items in this menu serve their purpose by being the main tasks that the users would perform in the app. The user wants to see what their friends are watching/listening/reading, discover new content by verified content creators, add content themselves and view their own profile.

IA lenses

V. Confidence: help the user gain confidence while navigating through the app. Provide signals that they're heading in the right direction.

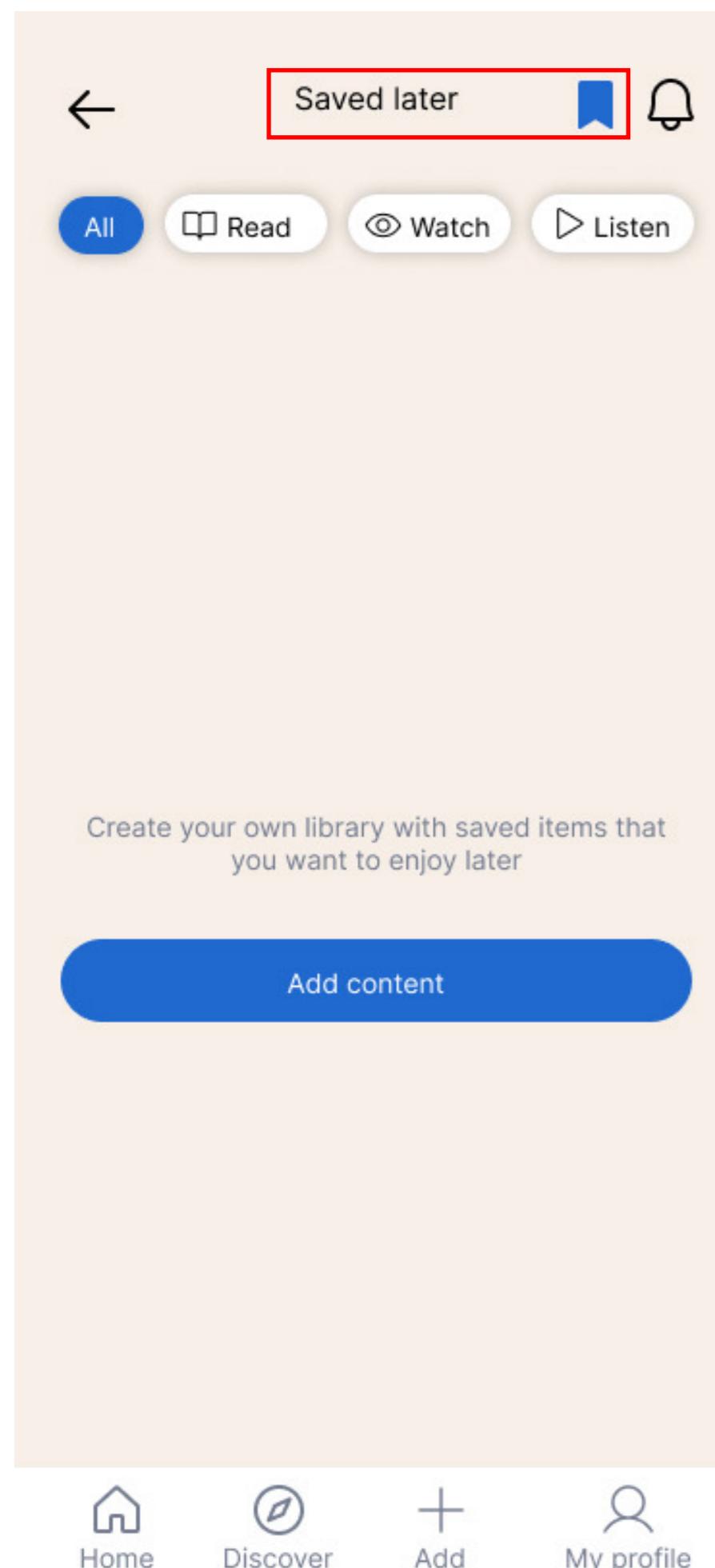


Fig. 14: Add/find saved later page.

VI. Titles vs. Labels: provide the user with clear titles and labels to help them understand the topic and format of content they're about to see.

The user is in the discover page where they expect to discover all this new content from other users.

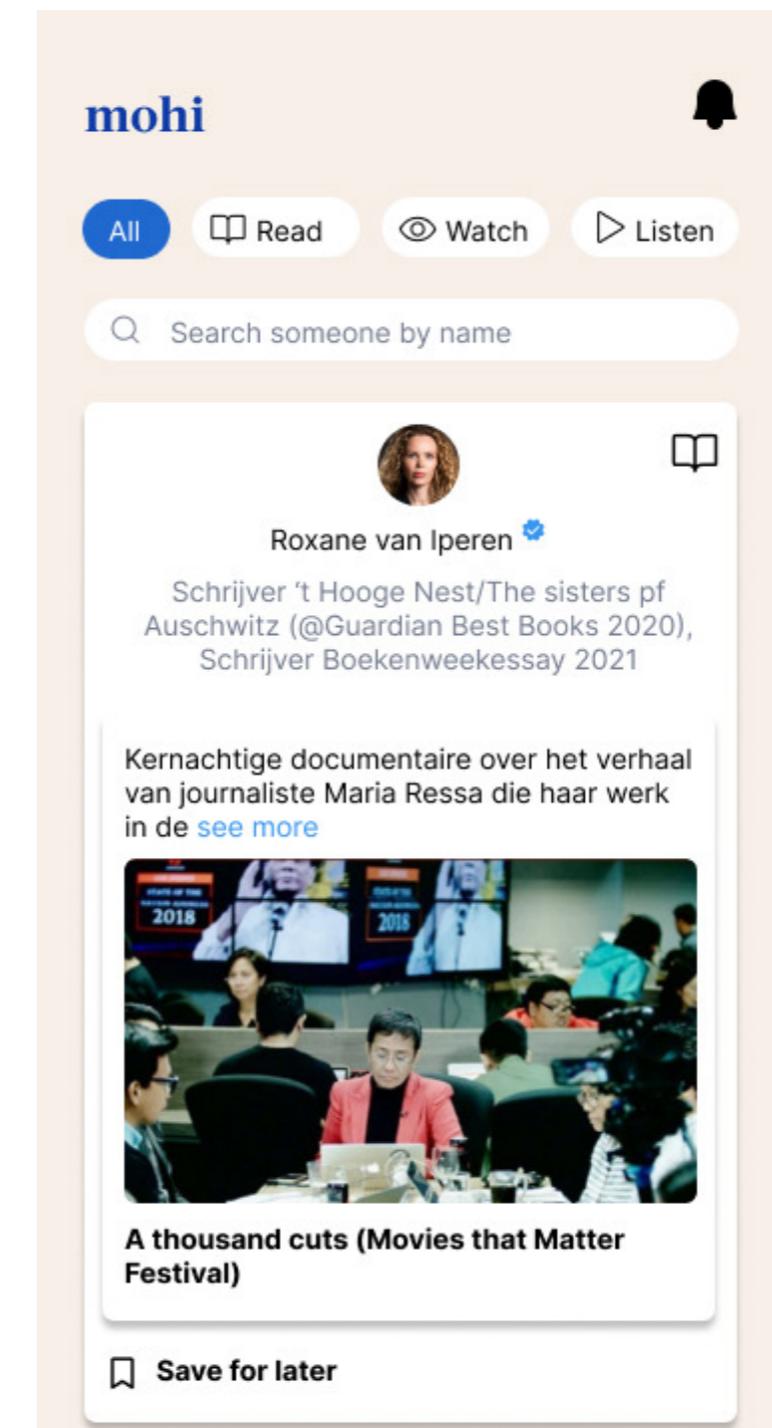
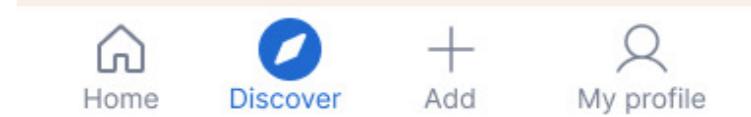
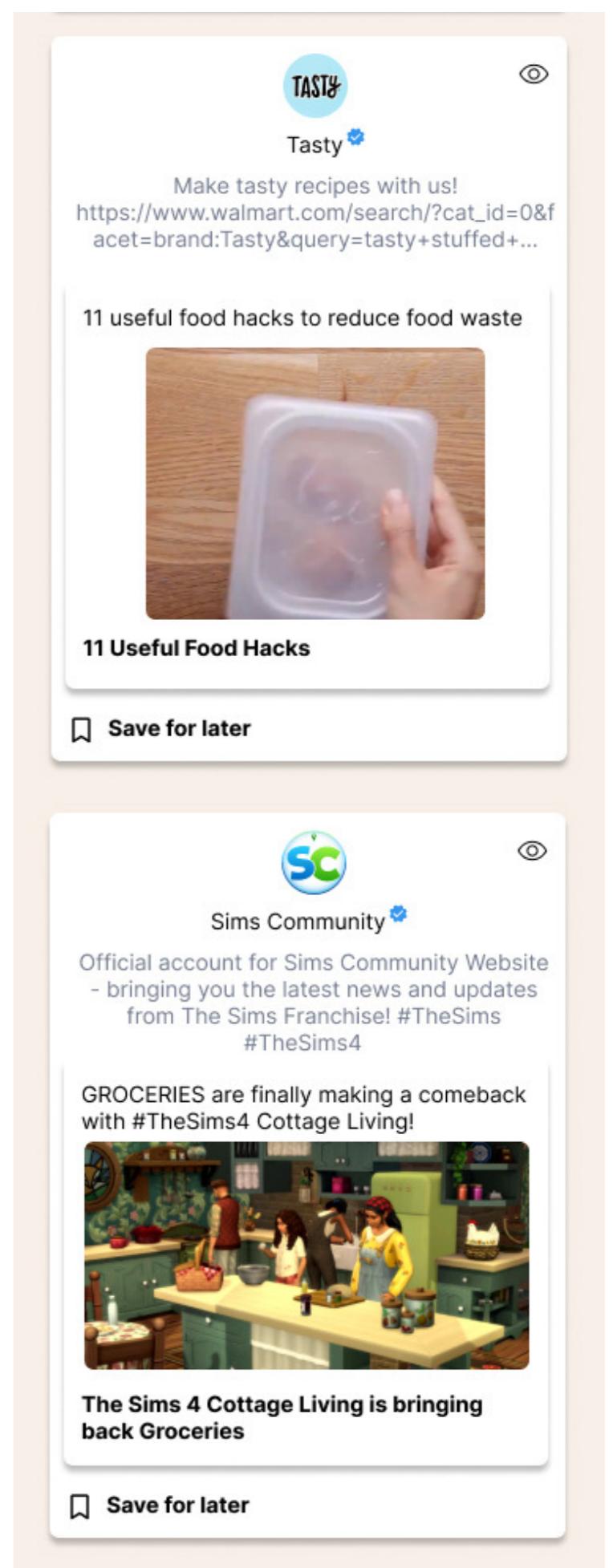


Fig. 15: Discover page.



Conclusion

Conclusion

Design Challenge

"How can we improve the information architecture of the app Mohi, so that users can find all functionalities without effort with regards to slow media?"

User tests

The Mohi community wants to introduce slow media, which actually needs the full concentration of users, because they'll be consuming better researched/written/designed content. And if the structure of the app isn't organized well enough, then the users their concentration will easily be broken and experience difficulties while using the app.

I focused in these past 6 weeks to improve the structure of the application so that users can easily find what they're looking for.

According to the user tests in week 5 ([Product biography p. 24](#)), the testers could find their way easier in the redesign than the current app. I also received as tip from the coaching sessions to time how long a user takes to find a functionality. I kept that in mind during all of the tests and realised that it took the testers in under a minute to find them. I think that the cause of this is because I organised the content according to their mental model. I researched popular platforms their sitemaps ([Product biography p. 17-19](#)) the first weeks to gain insight into people their mental models of social media. I also asked to validate my assumption on that, and it was indeed because the structure was familiar. Lastly, I used the product requirement list ([Product biography p. 3](#)) as a guide to keep the users their needs in mind.

Mohi recommendations

Most people are not familiar with slow media, so they're hesitant to try it out. Everyone is used to consuming fast media.

But what I've learned the past couple of weeks is that users their mental models are based on what they know from past interactions with other products, sites, and applications. And that's why they use a product ver often.

I think that it's best to design according to their mental model. Because UX designers are expected to predict how users will interact with or experience a product

Sources

Conclusion

Images

- Figure 1. High-fidelity prototype, Darshni Banwarie. 2021
- Figure 2. Low-fidelity prototype, Darshni Banwarie. 2021
- Figure 3. My collection, Mohi. 2021
- Figure 4. High-fidelity prototype, Darshni Banwarie. 2021
- Figure 5. Product Biography. 2021
- Figure 6-16. High-fidelity prototype, Darshni Banwarie. 2021