

## Introduction

An interaction design project for VSCIA (Vancouver Society for the Creation of Independent Art). Every year VSCIA focus on organizing **MiniComi** - an all-age, free-to-attend, single-day market.

## Problem

The first problem identified is that **MiniComi organizers** do not allocate time to communicating with artists and understanding their needs and the second problem being, **Artists** lack mentorship support and guidance during planning and find it difficult to connect with other artists before conventions. This led to our **design space** of How might we create a more genuine connection between organizers to better prepare for a more enjoyable MiniComi experience? The constraints we encountered due to the pandemic were remote interviews, remote workshops and not being able to conduct ethnographic research at MiniComi.

## Process

The problem space was determined through a series of user research. The initial phase of the research involved **exploratory research** on articles along with interviews and **surveys** of artists based in Vancouver, to understand their values, challenges, and goals. In the second phase, we created an **affinity map** on Miro where we wrote out all our research findings, grouped them into similar categories and identified reoccurring patterns. Afterwards, we created **user journey maps** to better understand the process of art conventions/markets that led to identifying the greatest pain points of each map in the planning and preparation phase. Lastly, we conducted two **remote participatory workshops** to learn how artists and organizers see the research context and ensuring that our scope was relevant to their problems.

## Contribution

With a background in Business, the role I play throughout the project was consistently **realigning our actions with our goals** such as reminding the team who our focus group is, who are our end users, what approach is most feasible, and ensuring our decisions are research-based. The areas where I contributed the most were **conducting interviews** with artists, creating **surveys**, leading the Organizer **workshop**, as well as designing **low and high-fidelity mockups**. Throughout the project, we continuously redefined our problem statement after each research phase. Due to the cancellation of in-person MiniComi, we were unable to test out the product, however, we did present our final solution to VSCIA for feedback.

## Solution

Our solution MiniAgenda is a **web-focused** application to help guide artists through the **planning and preparation process** leading up to MiniComi, by providing recommended tasks, resources, and direct communication. The key features in the application are: **recommended tasks and milestones** provided upon sign-up to ease new artists into preparing for the event, **internal and external resources** are released throughout the year by organizers through the Resources page and **messaging platform** where artists and organizers can communicate directly and casually. Once the solution was complete, we validated our solution by discussing the **value proposition** for both the artists and the organizers realigning back to our design focus and goals to ensure that the ultimate problem had been solved.

## Reflection

The problem we encountered was determining whether to focus on the artist, organizers or both. Through this challenge, I learned how easy it was to fall into a biased view or opinion. Since this application can only be utilized once MiniComi can be held in person again, I would like to receive user feedback on the application to build a viable product built for the event. If I could do this project a second time, I would plan out clear research process points to collect user data, be aware of intentions and goals of each interview conducted, and re-consider accessibility when designing the solution.