

Shopify Project Writeup

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 when in the research process to collect user data as well as being aware of the intentions and goals of each interview conducted.