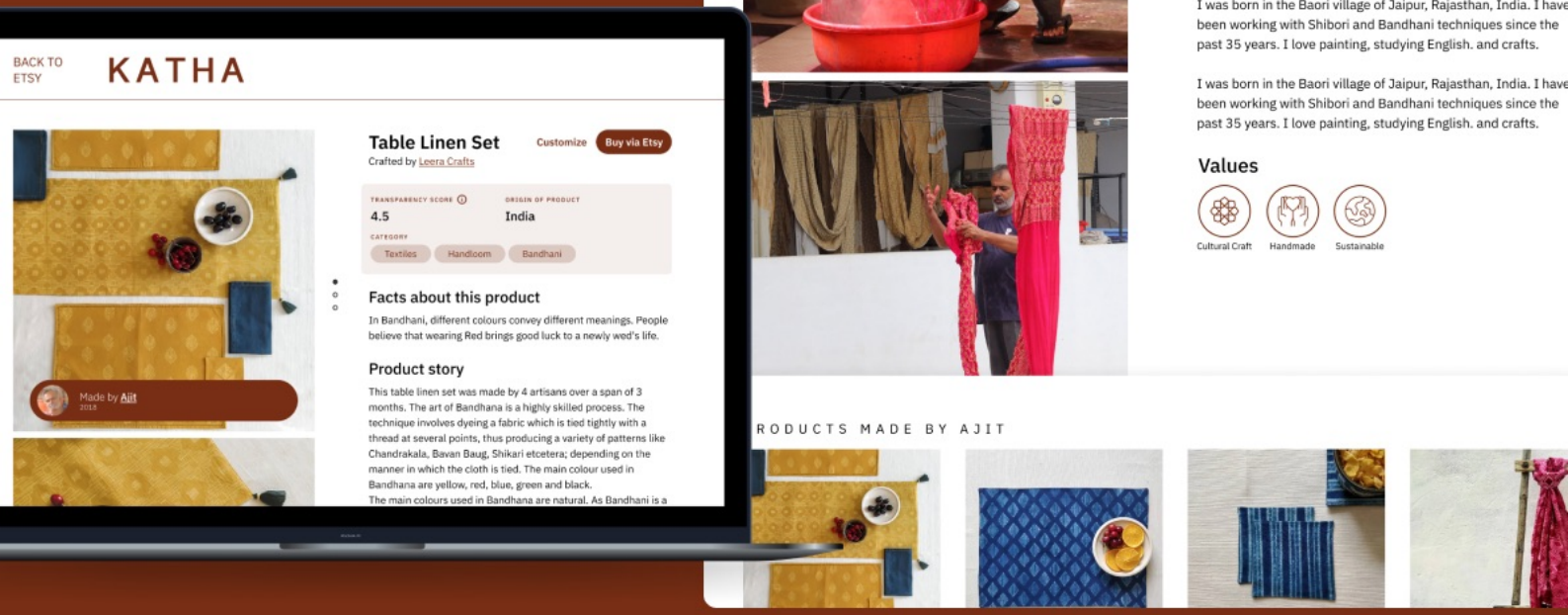
katha

A plugin API service for online handicraft marketplaces to verify the authenticty of makers through stories

Disruption in the Handicraft Industry



CRAFTED BY

Mudra Nagda
Naishi Shah

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INTRODUCTION

1 Problem Space

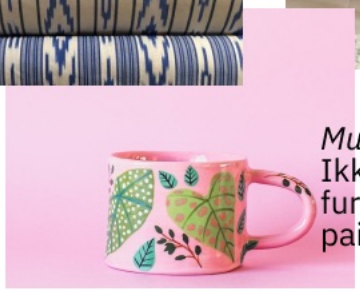
The handicraft industry has suffered a steady decline at the hands of the digitization of the mass manufacturing industry. In the midst of mass manufacturing and fast fashion, the value and uniqueness of handicrafts has been lost, partly because of the lack of ways to verify the authenticity and origin of the products.

Pertaining to this, people refrain from buying handicrafts online. This limits access to a variety of items to buyers and the reach for sellers.

Providing a medium to sellers to show the uniqueness of their raft and heritage and allowing users to take a look at the process would bring the two closer together in the handicraft trade ecosystem.

1 INTRODUCTION
About Us

Mudra Nagda
MS HCI '23



Mudra's favourite handicrafts
Ikkat print, handmade cane furniture, cute ceramics painted with love

Naishi Shah
MSCS-HCI '23

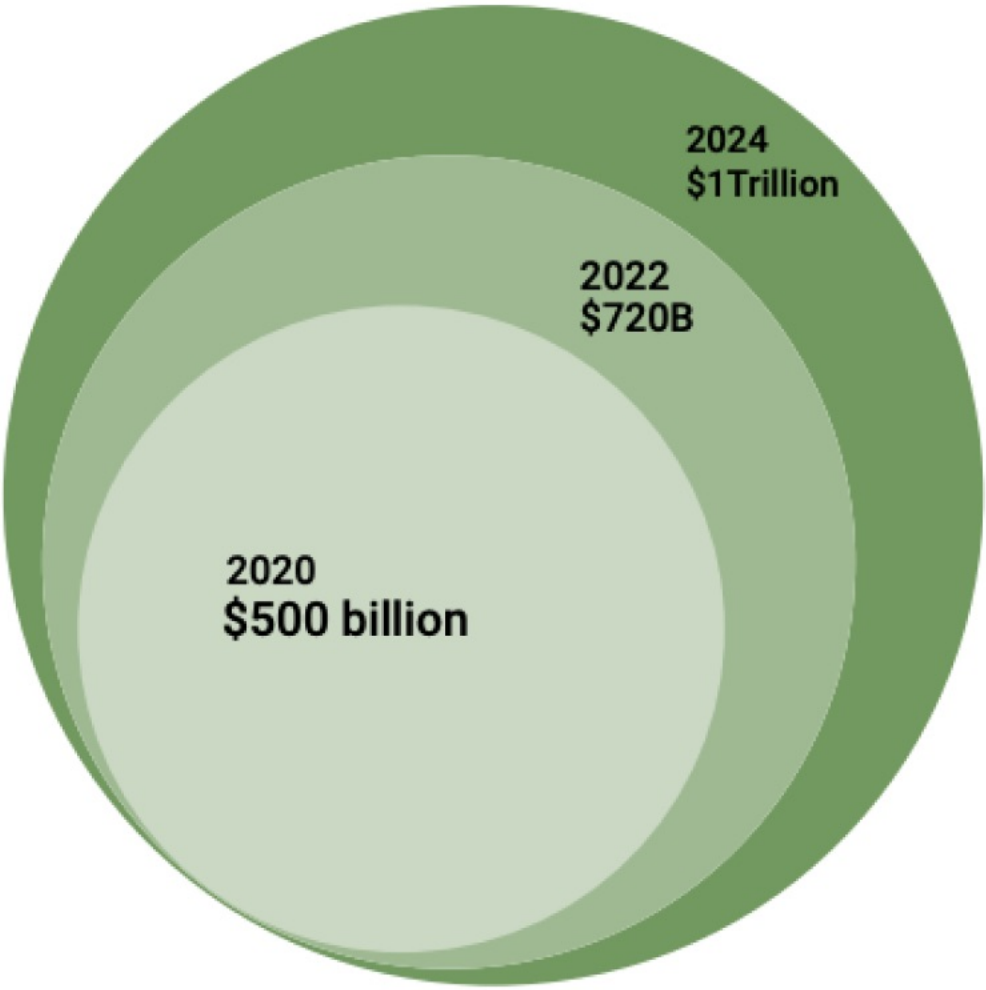
Naishi's favourite handicrafts
hand-woven rattan spice box, handmade statement furniture, artsy handmade jewelry

ANALYZING THE ECOSYSTEM

2 CMH Sector

To understand the handicraft industry, we first researched about the market sector it typically belongs to. This market sector is called the Creative Manufacturing and Handmade sector. Interestingly, it is the second largest employer (after agriculture) in developing countries, but it is the least funded.

The sector has seen rapid growth in the past and is projected to grow so in the future. It is predicted to grow by 20% in the next 2 years.



20% growth in the handmade sector

ANALYZING THE ECOSYSTEM

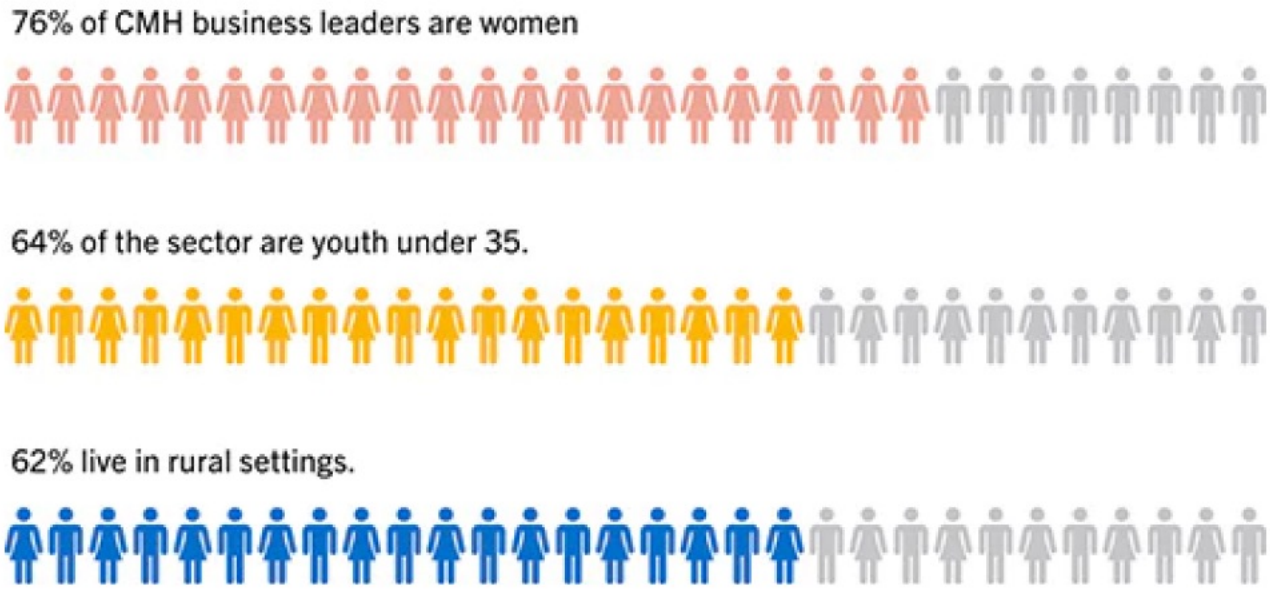
2 Target Audience

Seller side

The seller side consists of the makers, artisans, creators & artists. We call them ‘makers’. The demographics of these makers indicate that they are mostly women, youth under 35 & belong to rural areas. This explains the threat of technology driven disruption that looms over the industry.

Buyer side

The buyers can be located in anywhere in the world. The buyers may be wholesalers, or individual customers.



ANALYZING THE ECOSYSTEM

2 Market Analysis & Trends

Analyzing Etsy

what we love about etsy

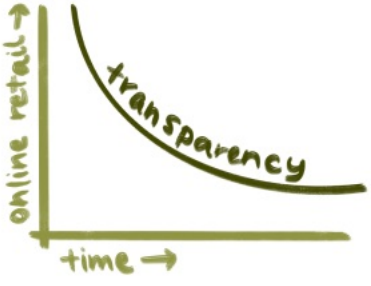
- visibility for small business owners
- Customers trust 'Etsy' brand
- Single marketplace

what we found etsy lacks

- Uniqueness of the craft
- product story
- cultural relevance if any
- Maker story

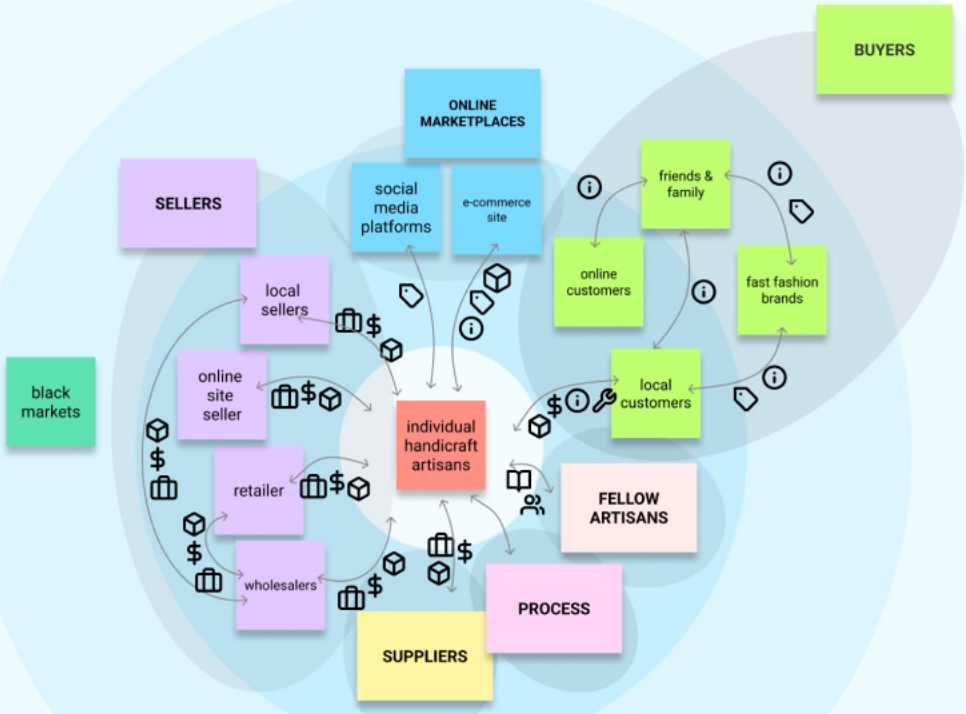
Trends & disruption

As accessibility to global markets increases with the rise of online retail, transparency of the product make & origin reduces.
This also increases malpractice, black markets and resellers - all of whom benefit from the craft of underpaid artisans.



2 ANALYZING THE ECOSYSTEM

Ecosystem Map



Information flow
Brand Identity
Knowledge flow
Business Partnerships
Goods flow
Networking
Service flow
Financial stream

Technology
instant messaging
video calling
photos
online shopping(e-commerce)

Buyers and Sellers

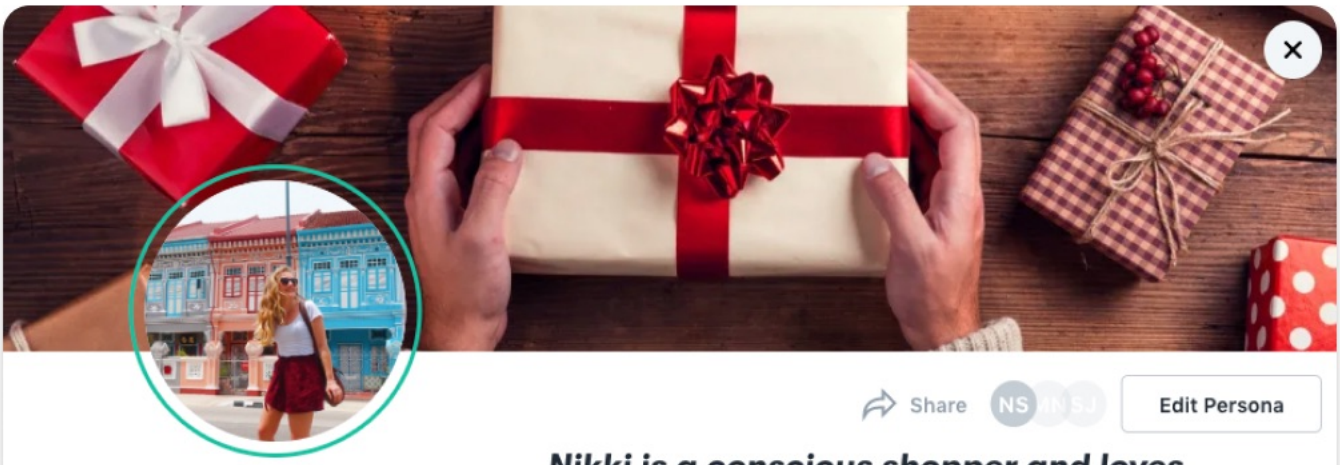
Storyboards

Buyers struggle with the high cost of handicrafts, the origin and authenticity of the product and unfamiliarity with the craft.

Sellers or artisans struggles with being underpaid and under appreciated for their work, being exploited by middlemen and business owners and global reach.

Online Marketplaces
There currently existing online marketplaces for these products. However, the products are typically expensive and may involve black and grey markets.

Personas and Journeys



Share NS MN SJ Edit Persona

Nikki

Created by
Mudra Nagda

Last edited on May 3, 2022,
11:22:04 PM
by Naishi Shah.

Nikki is a conscious shopper and loves buying gifts for her friends and family. As a voracious traveller, she is inspired by the origins of art from different places in the world.

Nikki has had a bad experience with trying to buy authentic pieces of handicrafts online. She has encountered counterfeit products, but she is determined to find authentic products. She also watches shipping fees as most of her products come from across the world.

0

Personality traits

Openness	●●●●○
Conscientiousness	●●●●○
Extraversion	●●●●○
Agreeableness	●●●○○
Stability	●●●○○
Intelligence	●●●●○

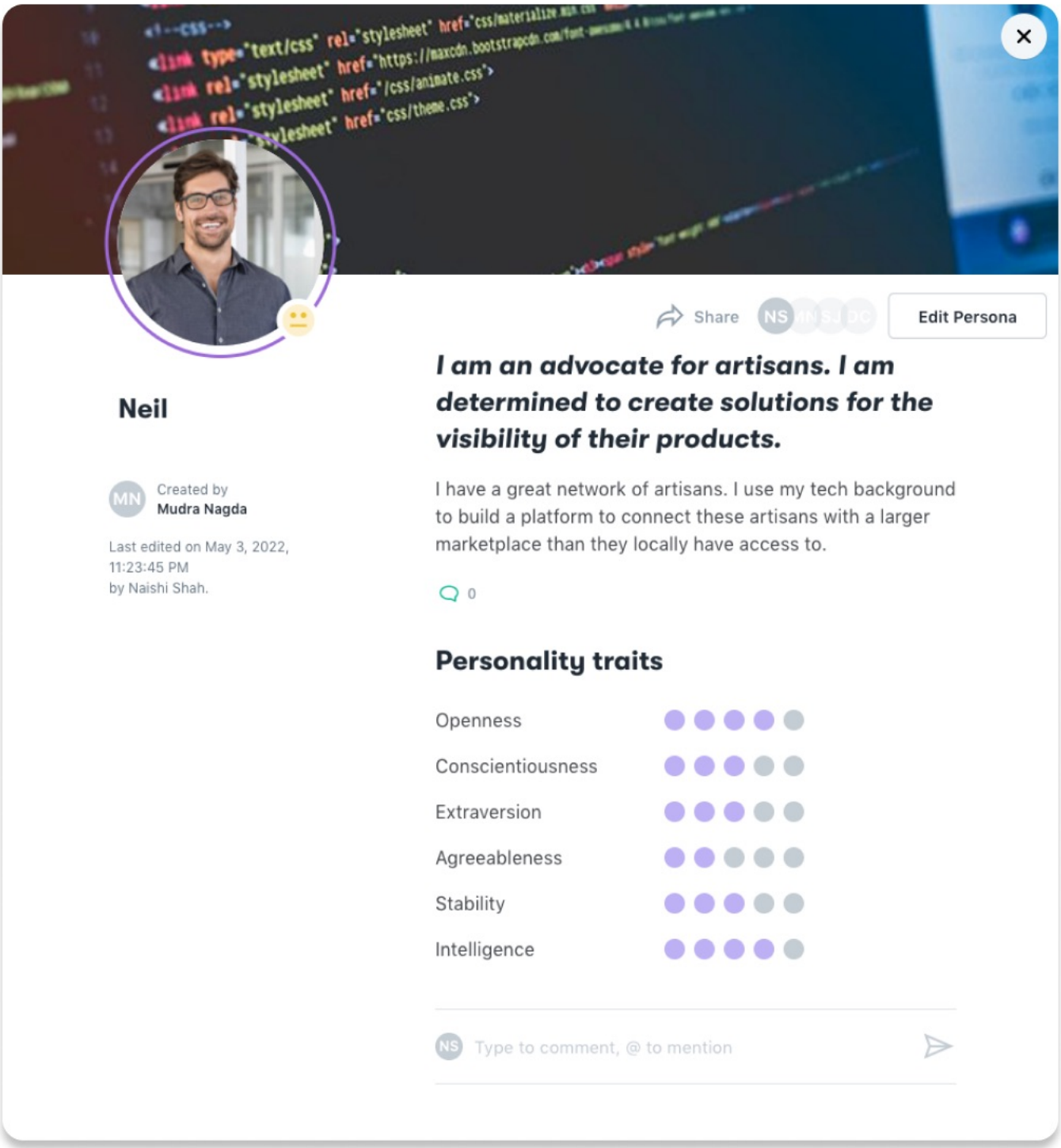
Needs

Being able to verify the source of a handicraft product

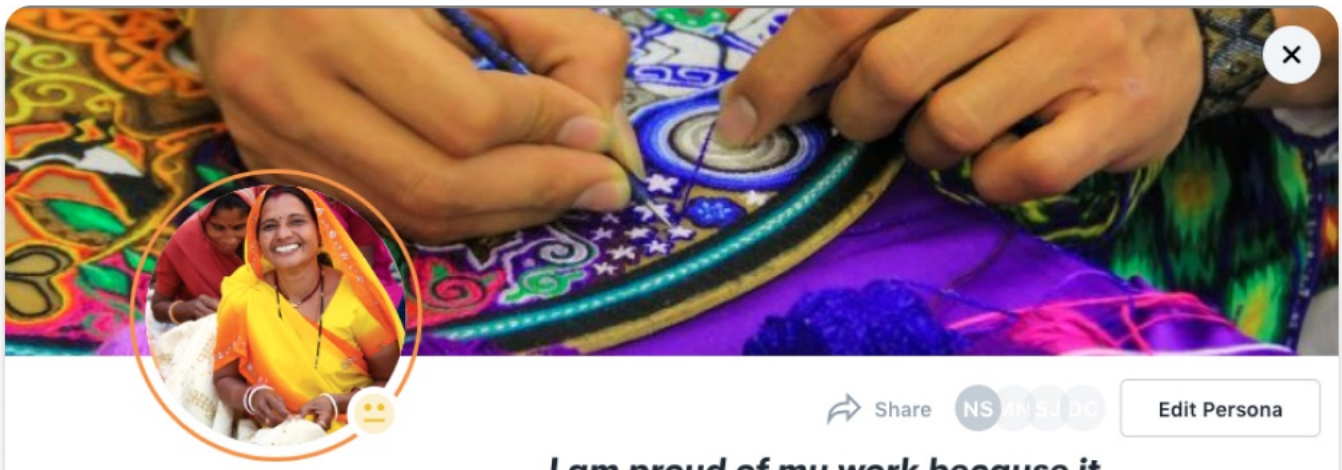
Knowing the story behind the handicraft product

Buying authentic handicraft products

Personas and Journeys



Personas and Journeys



Share NS JN SJ DC Edit Persona

Reema

MN Created by **Mudra Nagda**

Last edited on May 3, 2022, 11:26:48 PM by Naishi Shah.

I am proud of my work because it represents the heritage of my ancestors. However, I wish I received more recognition for the number of hours I spend creating products.

Reema invests a lot of time and love into making each product. Every piece is unique and has a story that she often shares with people while selling in stores. It would be nice if she could share these stories with a larger audience as well.

0

Personality traits

Openness	●●●○○
Conscientiousness	●●●●○
Extraversion	●●○○○
Agreeableness	●●●●○
Stability	●●●○○
Intelligence	●●●●○

Needs

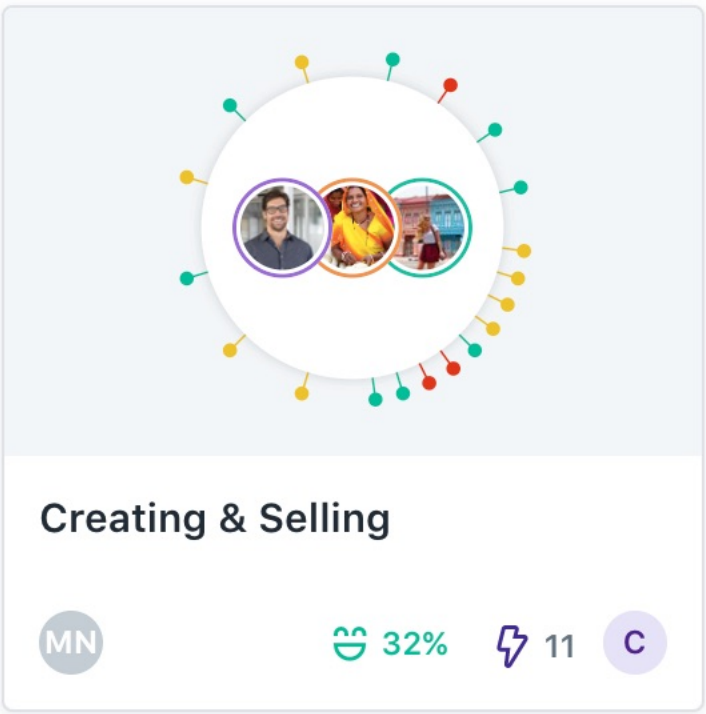
Getting paid more

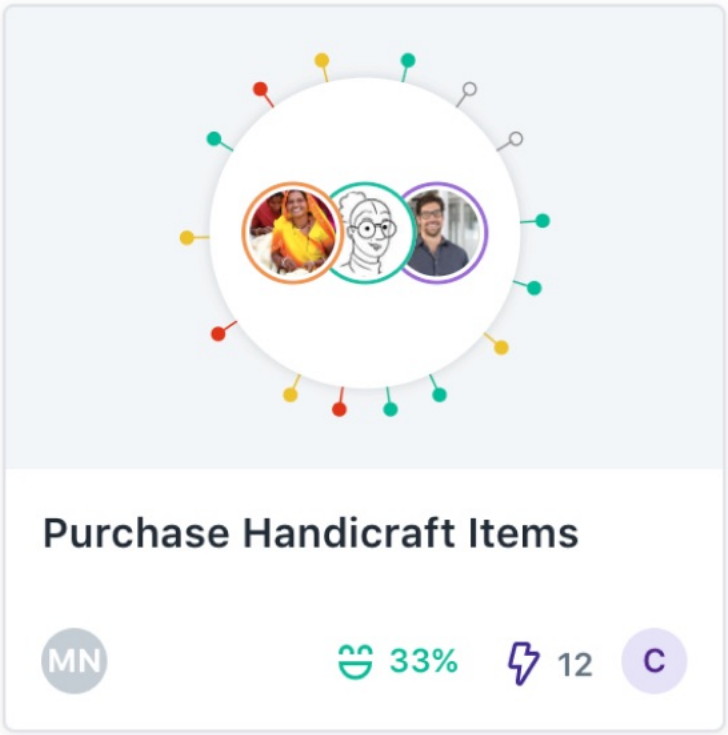
Lesser involvement of middlemen

More recognition

UNDERSTANDING THE USERS

3 Personas and Journeys





User Journeys

We mapped out 2 user journeys - one for our makers and one for potential buyers. These journeys were created based on the research insights found from secondary research and online resources on trends in the industry. We found 10+ design opportunity areas in each journey, from the pain and gain points of our personas. We believe this helped us view each user's experience from an end to end point of view.

The research findings can be found on the next page.

3 UNDERSTANDING THE USERS

Research findings

Verifiability is difficult on online platforms

"I would prefer that Etsy stop with all the fees and just charge a flat rate commission, like eBay does."

Changes in the platform's algorithm affect sales and visibility

Limited or no access to non-local resources

Artisans are underpaid because people lack knowledge of the effort that goes into making the artifact

Some artisans lack the technical skills to operate online businesses/social media

Artisans working under a business owner are exploited and deprived of their full pay

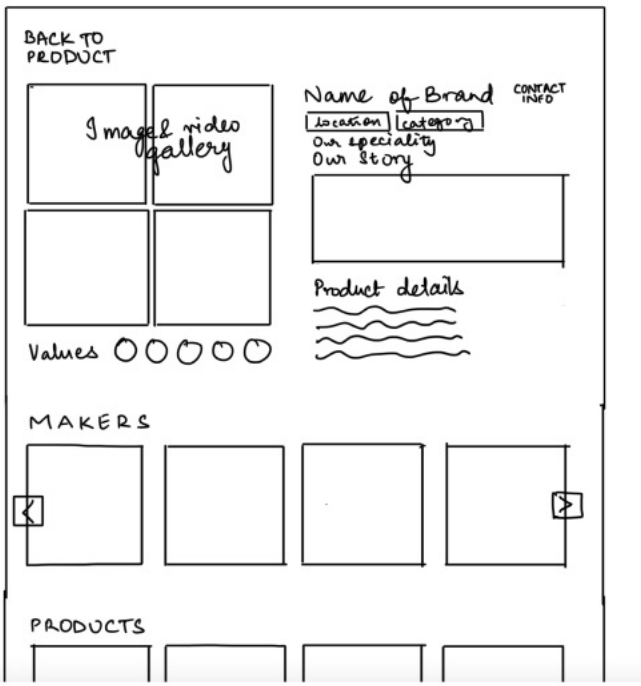
Threat from fast fashion products

Unauthentic sellers steal photos of real artifacts and pass them as their own and machine manufacture similar products

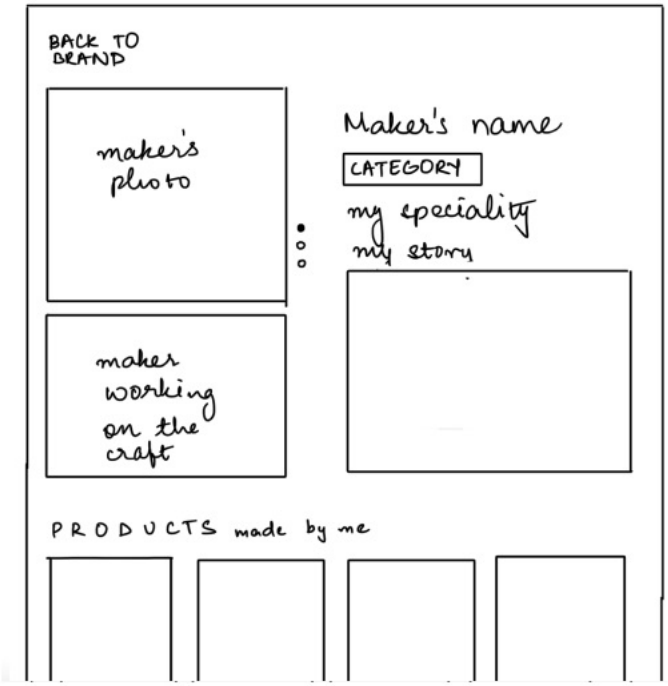
OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

“Katha delivers transparency to the buyer by bringing in craft stories of the makers”

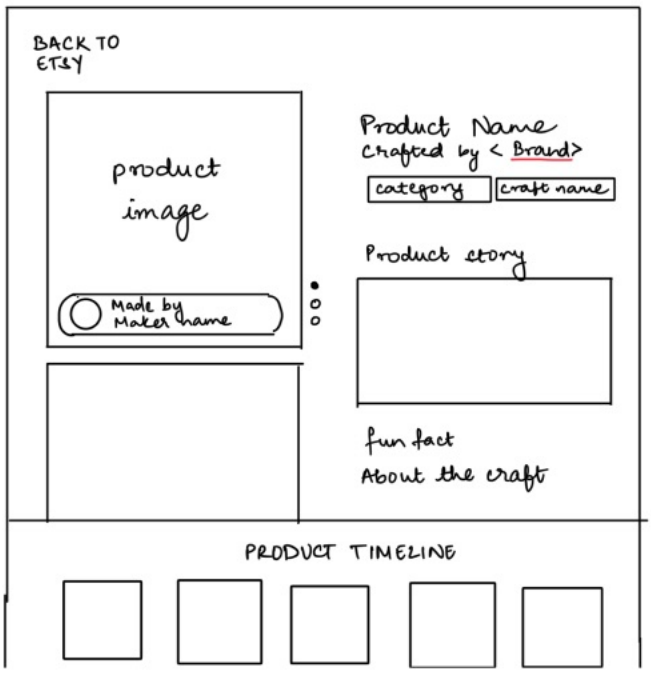
4 IDEATION AND DESIGN
Wireframes



Brand Information Page - This page provides a gallery of the brand's products, contact details and makers' list.



Maker Information Page - focused on the maker, their story, their craft and their speciality.



Product Information Page - origin details, the product's story and timeline and details about the craft.

Handicraft Museum - A glossary of craft terms to increase awareness about its cultural relevance

4 IDEATION AND DESIGN
Branding

LOGO

katha

Every authentic handicraft product has a story.

कथा /kathā/

English translation

A narrative or a story

COLOR SCHEME

Earthen tones embody a sense of naturalism and rawness. Black and white give simplicity and balance out the other 2 colors.

TYPOGRAPHY

Averia Libre Bold

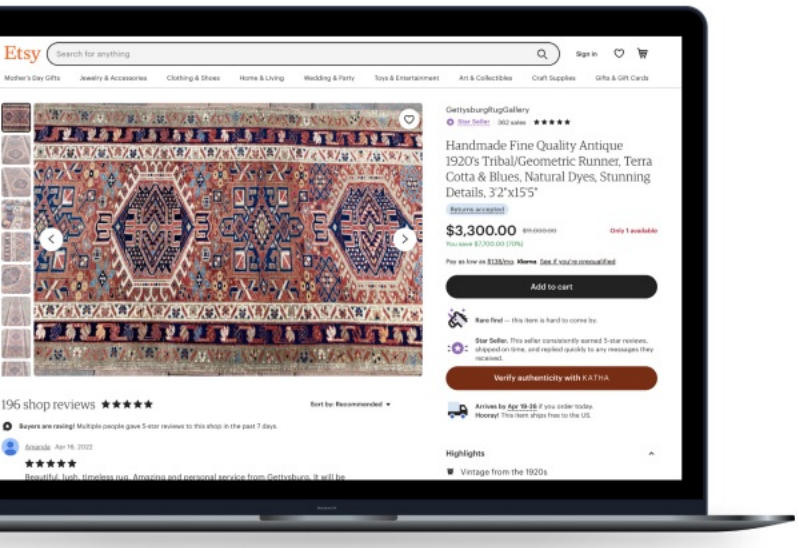
Averia Libre Regular

IBM Plex Sans SemiBold

IBM Plex Sans Regular

Averia Libre is used to embody the artistic nature of the platform with its artistic yet simple style.
IBM Plex Sans is an easily readable font and hence, it has been used for long parangraphs of text.

4 IDEATION AND DESIGN
Hi-fidelity prototype

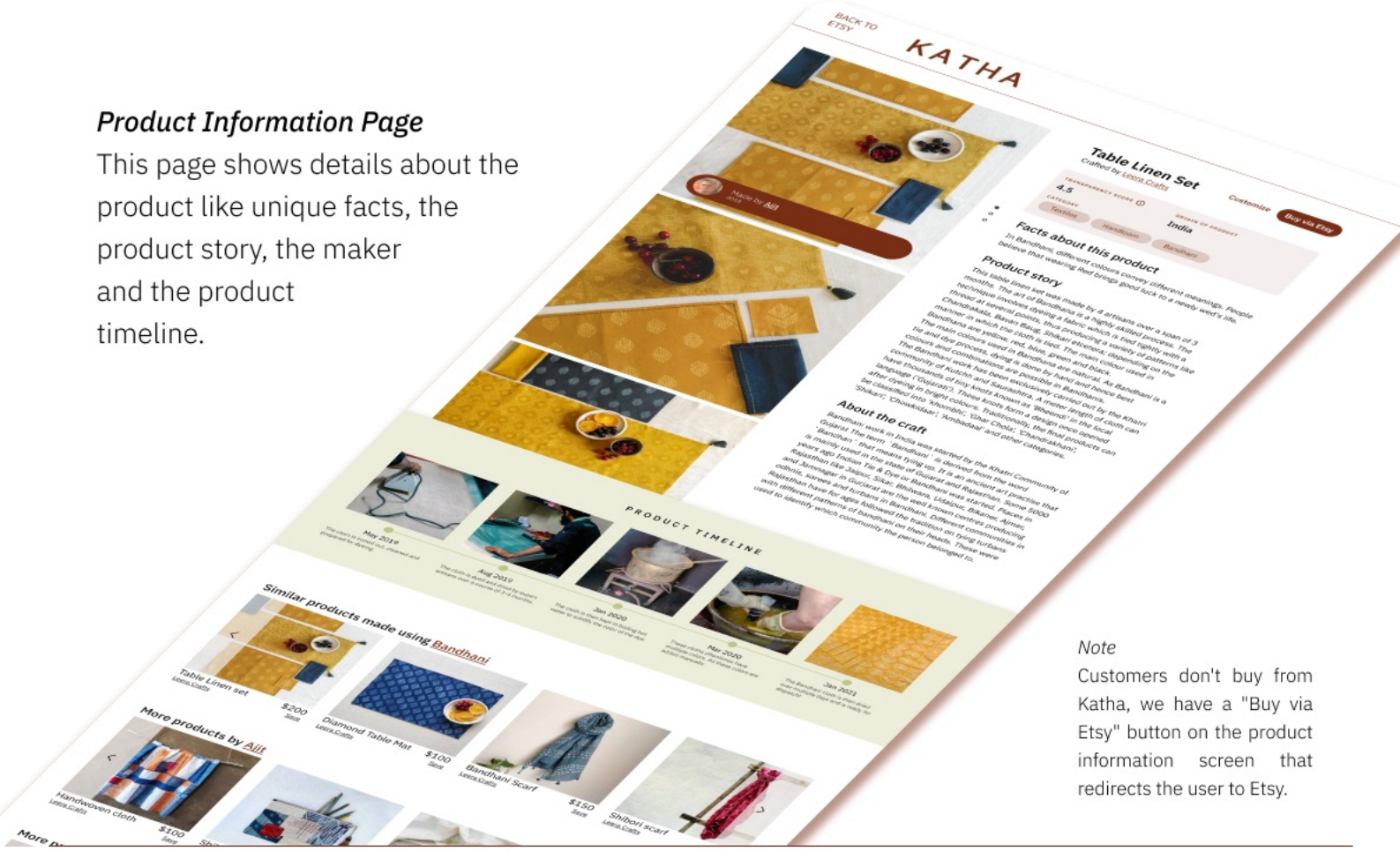


Plugin button for Etsy

The service can be accessed by clicking on the "Verify authenticity with KATHA" button on the product page on Etsy(or its likes). Clicking on this button redirects the user to the product information screen on Katha.

Product Information Page

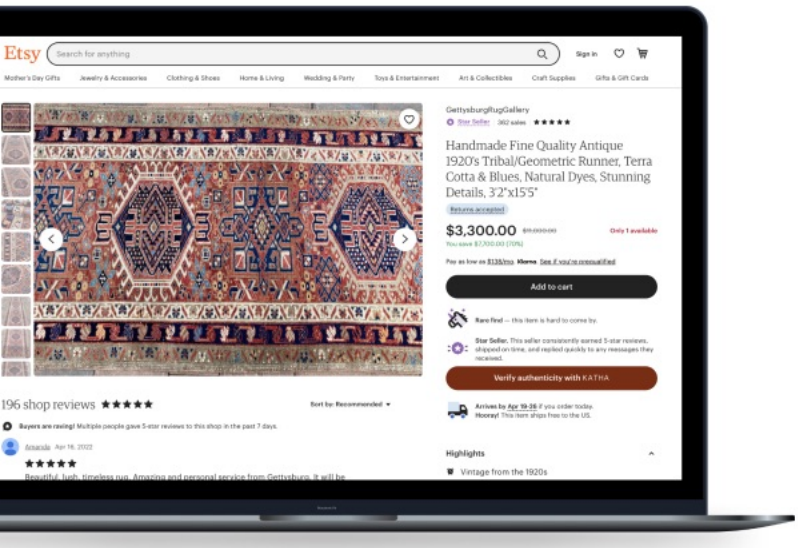
This page shows details about the product like unique facts, the product story, the maker and the product timeline.



Note

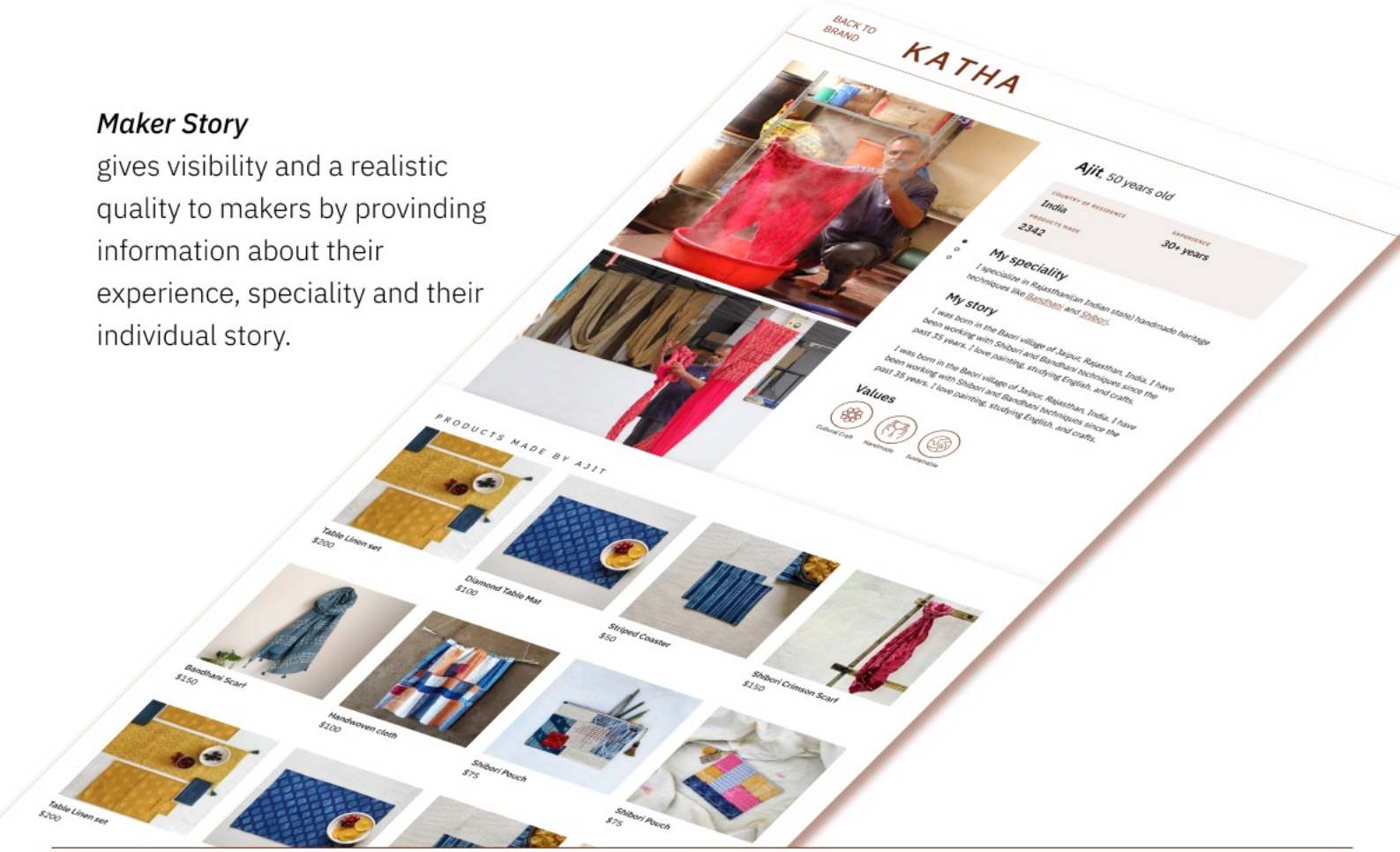
Customers don't buy from Katha, we have a "Buy via Etsy" button on the product information screen that redirects the user to Etsy.

4 IDEATION AND DESIGN
Hi-fidelity prototype



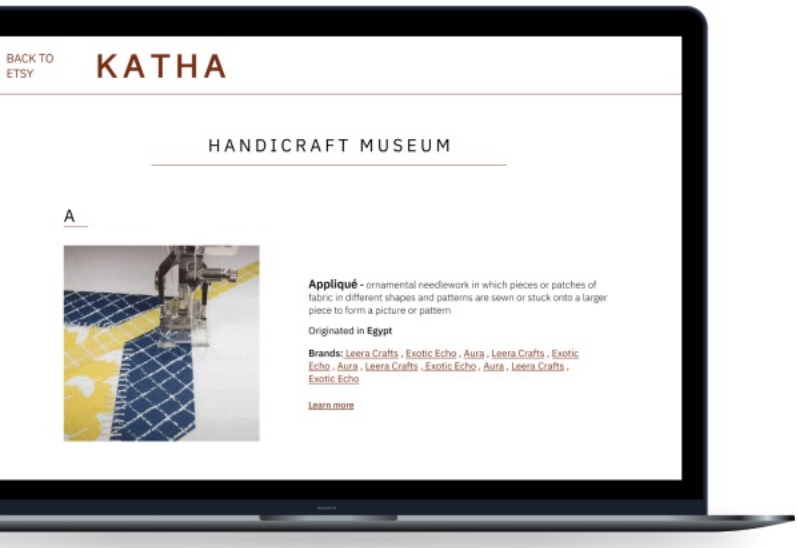
Information about the brand
provides informtaion like the origin, service category and speciality. It brings value to the users by showing the brand story, their values and their **transparency score**, which is a measure of how open the brand is with its users. It is determined by the amount of content shared in the form of media like images, videos and maker stories.

Maker Story
gives visibility and a realistic quality to makers by provinding information about their experience, speciality and their individual story.



IDEATION AND DESIGN

4 Hi-fidelity prototype



Handicraft Museum

is a glossary of the different types of crafts featured on Katha. Each entry shows a visual of the process of making the craft, its origin and the brands that practice the craft

Brand Tranparency Score

Brands that have shared information about their makers, origin, craft values have a higher transparency score.

MAKERS

Maker Stories

Bringing makers, their craft and their specialties into the spotlight.

Product Timeline

See the end to end view of the beautiful process that goes behind making a handicraft product.

REFLECTION AND FUTURE WORK

5 Validation Research

We conducted validation research to obtain feedback with 3 participants. We showed them our clickable prototype and obtained feedback using cognitive walkthrough and task analysis.

Here are some things our users said...

PARTICIPANTS

2 Georgia Tech students

1 Working Professional

METHODS

Cognitive Walkthrough

Task Analysis

"I would love it if the app had multilingual support. I know a lot of artisans and potential buyers who do not use English and would be way more comfortable using their native language."

"I was a little confused about the transparency score initially. I wish it was clearer."

"I wish Katha was in a more story-like format, rather than an e-commerce format."

"I have a lot of my own ideas and I love custom handicrafts. I would like to contact the maker directly and communicate what I want to them. "

REFLECTION AND FUTURE WORK

5 Future Work

Our future work entails streamlining communication between buyers and sellers for custom orders, multilingual support and the seller side of the service.

Streamline communication for custom orders

Multilingual support

Seller side of the service

As we conduct more user research - validation and otherwise, we realise the potential of growth in this sector. Our future work starts with the above mentioned points, but is not limited to these. Based on the cumulative responses we obtain, the future of the project shall be shaped by the buyers and sellers of the Handicraft Industry.

Resources

10 Types of Innovation

The Invincible Company

Designing Brand Identity

This is Service Design Doing

Etsy

Ten Thousand Villages

Digital disruption is impacting every industry, even the handicraft industry

How the creative manufacturing and handmade sector can craft a post-COVID-19 future

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