

Art Show Redesign

A virtual solution for a pandemic-stricken school year

UX Research & Design
Instructional Design
Product Design

February - April 2021



Project Overview

Objectives:

- Design a virtual art show as a covid-safe solution to the traditional in-person HCPS Arts Festival.
- Design an assembly system that meets the needs of the school district's art teachers.

Role: End-to-end research, Front and back-end design design, organize and launch the HCPS Virtual Art Show

Team: As a solo designer I was responsible for the entire process.



The Backstory

Due to covid restrictions during the 2020-2021 school year, the Henrico County Public School District (HCPS) was unable to host its annual student art festival.

The traditionally in-person event, is an opportunity for each of the 105 art teachers in the district to showcase their curriculum and student artwork and for those students and their families to celebrate their recognition and artistic achievements.

The Client

Henrico County Public Schools



- 6th Largest school district in Virginia
- Total schools 72; Total students – 48,702
 - 46 Elementary Schools; 21,219 Elementary students
 - 12 Middle Schools; 11,336 MS Students
 - 9 High Schools; 15,645 HS Students
 - 2 Advanced Career Education Centers
- 105 Art Teachers
- Person of Communication: District Art Specialist



Interviews

I began with user interviews to uncover any pain points, get a better understanding of the problem and overall thoughts about a virtual art show.

Art Specialist

The Art Specialist is responsible for overseeing all HCPS art teachers, district related art needs and events. I asked about goals for the show and concerns.

Insights

- Elementary **teachers struggled to communicate with their students** as a result of the virtual learning environment.
- The district leaders **want to promote enriching learning experiences** during virtual learning.
- The district **can promote the show on HCPS social media but is concerned about student safety and privacy** on the internet.
- Concerned that **not all teachers have the same technology abilities**

Art Teachers

After hearing the Art Specialist's concerns, I arranged separate meetings for elementary and secondary art teachers. Four representatives, recommended by the specialist, attended each meeting.

Insights

- Elementary teachers had **seen little to none of their students' artwork** all year.
- Student class participation and attendance varied greatly across secondary schools. Some teachers were **concerned their school would be at a disadvantage** or presented in a negative light.
- All teachers were concerned about the virtual art show being an additional burden on what they described as a **stressful school year**.

Parents and Students

Accessing parents and students for interviews was not an option due to the pandemic and remote school year. I created a set of inferences based upon my observations as a teacher in Henrico school district.

- Many parents do not have computers/ are phone dependent for internet
- Many students and families do not speak English
- Students who do not take art are unlikely to know about the art show unless prompted by a peer



Personas

I next organized my insights into personas and categorized them based upon their involvement with the show.

- **Front End user:** Someone who would view and interact with the final published website.
- **Back End User:** Someone who contributed to behind-the-scenes development (such as design, content, logistics, social media, etc.).



The Administrator- *Back-End User*

- Superintendent, Principal, Art Specialist & similar
- Looking to promote HCPS success in tough times
- Concerns about student safety/ privacy on internet



The Art Teacher- *Back-End User*

- Overwhelmed from virtual teaching workload
- Concerned about quantity of student art available
- Wide understanding of basic technology skills



The Loved One- *Front-End User*

- Parents, Extended family & Family Friends
- Most likely looking for a specific person's artwork
- May have limited tech knowledge
- May only have a smartphone



The Student- *Front-End User*

- Secondary students likely to be tech savvy
- More likely to visit show if artwork is featured
- More likely to visit show if prompted in class

After completing the research I developed a set of key facts to keep in mind:

- Constructing the show was a collaborative effort involving over 100 art teachers with varying technology comfort levels.
- A new and unfamiliar process for teachers needed to be as stress-free as possible.
 - The assembly system needed to be clear and simple.
- The virtual art show needed to be easily accessible and engaging for viewers.
 - A clear phone interface for families without computers or accessing via social media
 - Minimalist design for non-English speakers and less tech savvy users

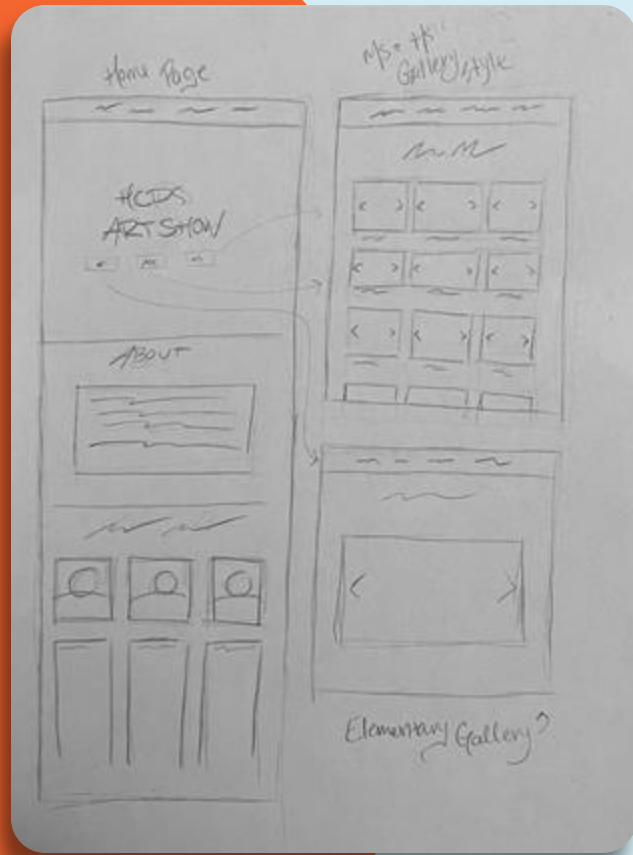
Competitor Analysis

I conducted a competitor analysis to see what formats worked well or not so well.

I found that:

- Few other school districts had created virtual art shows yet.
- Long video slideshows on YouTube were the most common format
 - This made locating art from specific students, schools and teachers difficult for the user.
- Single website page with a gallery layout
 - Easier to navigate
 - Difficult for a large scale presentation with 100+ teachers and art pieces





I decided that a website was the best choice because it could easily be shared among users and offered design flexibility.

Based upon a follow-up discussion with the Art Specialist, I made a list of the 6 key components for the site:

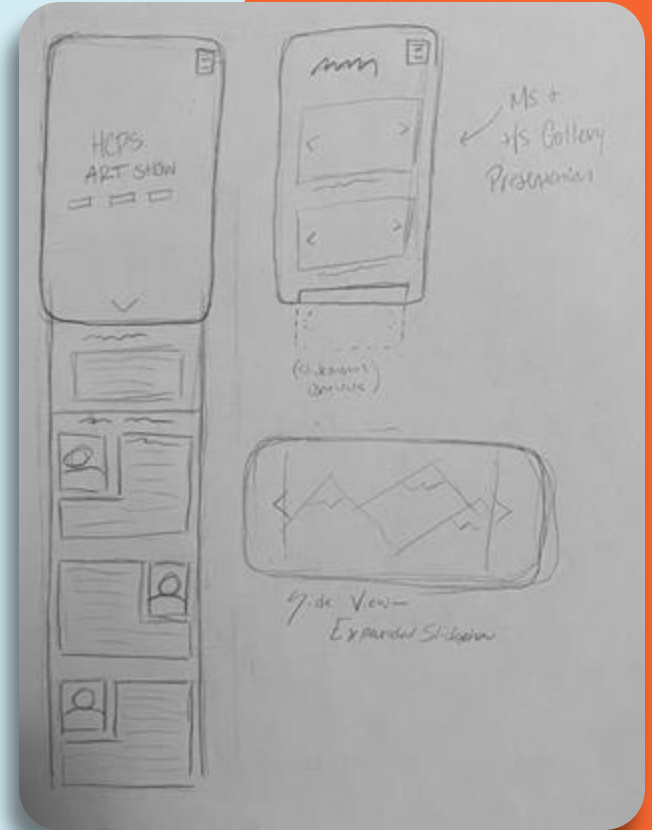
1. Home page
2. About Paragraph
3. Art Teacher of the Year Recognition
4. Elementary Gallery
5. Middle School Gallery
6. High School Gallery

I then developed low-fidelity wireframes to determine how to present it in a means that was clear and accessible.

Part of the design process was determining how to gather the artwork from teachers.

I determined the best option was for teacher to submit slideshows.

- Teachers are comfortable making slideshows
- Google Slides easily integrates with Google Sites
- Helps organize artwork by school
- Allow users to locate specific artwork more easily



The next step was to design a low-stress assembly system for teachers. My goal was for the instructions to be clear and concise with the least amount of steps possible.

Secondary

- A limit of 40 art pieces per school to help ease teachers' concerns about inequity.
- An optional template slideshow for teachers feeling crunched for time

Elementary

- One shared slideshow for all the elementary schools to reduce the concerns of having enough artwork (expectations were 3-5 pieces per school).

Everyone

- Instructions for embedding video art into a slideshow, a skill some teachers may not be familiar with
- Instructions for sharing the slideshow with me

Example Version: Some links have been disabled

KEPS VIRTUAL ART SHOW 2021

MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL (DUE MONDAY, MARCH 22)

Each secondary school will submit one google slideshow featuring student artwork from this year. These will be embedded on the Virtual Art Show site in a gallery-like format. Please limit yourself to 40 slides **per school**.

Part I: Make your Slideshow

1. Share a slideshow with other art teachers at your school and add 30 to 40 images of student artwork.
 - a. Here is an [instructional slideshow with template slides](#) which you are welcome to use.
 - b. This slideshow was designed with visual art curriculum in mind. It can be presented to students to help them photograph their artwork and incorporate them in the process of creating the virtual art show.
 - c. Want to add video art? Watch [how to add a video to the slideshow](#).

Safety Reminder

These images will be on the Internet, a much more public and accessible space than our usual art show.
Remember, only use students' first names!

Part II: Share your slideshow with me!

1. Invite me to be an editor. This is so I can embed the show on the site.
2. Go to the Share settings and allow **anyone with the link** to be a **viewer**.
3. [Add the link to your slideshow here](#) [Disabled]. Middle & HS have separate tabs please add your info to the correct one.

ELEMENTARY (DUE SUNDAY, MARCH 28)

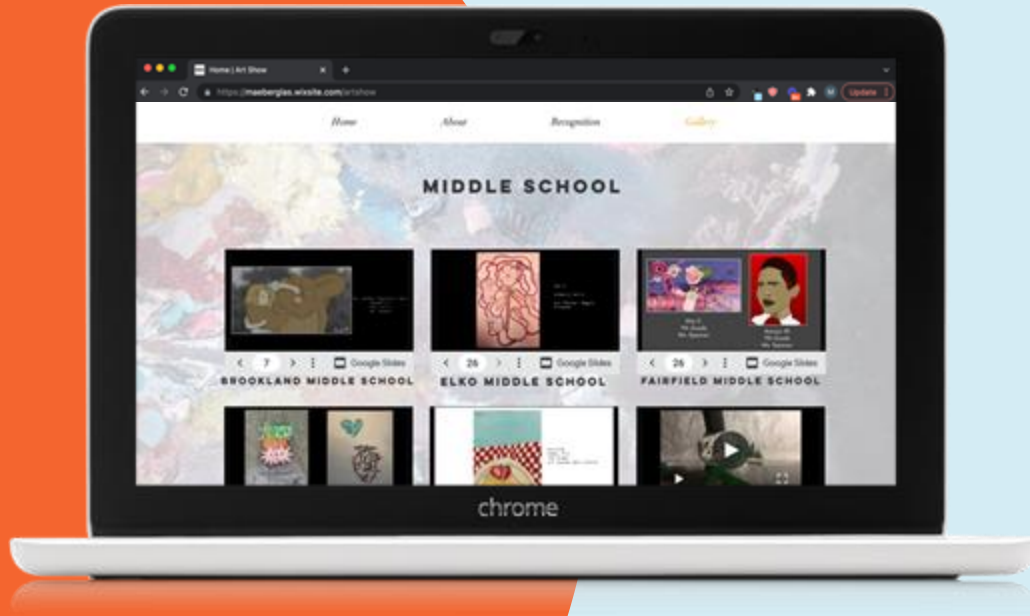
All elementary schools and teachers will share a single google slideshow presentation. This is to help ease any pressure you may be facing from not having images of student work.

- ★ Add onto [this editable slideshow](#) [Disabled]:
 - Aim to include 5 artworks
 - Use the template slide (slide #2) as a guide to help you format your own slides. Be sure to make a copy of the template slide and not accidentally edit slide #2.
 - Want to add video art? Watch [how to add a video to the slideshow](#).

Safety Reminder

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And, that's it! I am the owner of the slideshow so, on March 29th, I will delete the template slide and modify the share settings to make the presentation suitable for the virtual art show.



After receiving everyone's slideshows, I assembled the site.

I connected the site to **Google Analytics** to gain a better understanding of user patterns, specifically Students and Loved Ones, who I was unable to interview during generative research

Outcomes

Site Traffic and Engagement

- A total of 1,991 site users; 383 users returned
- Site viewed in 154 different cities/ locales and 12 different countries
- Individual slideshows had engagement ranging from 457 clicks to only 26.
 - The elementary school slideshow received the most views because it accounted for multiple schools.
- The HCPS social media post, which included the link to the art show, drove very little traffic to the site

In a follow-up survey

- 86.7% of the teachers felt the instructions were very clear and 13.4% of teachers felt they were mostly clear (able to quickly and independently work out any initial confusion).
- 46.7% of teachers would like to continue virtual shows alongside in-person shows when they return
- 33% would be willing to replace future in-person shows with virtual shows.

Reflection

- **Main challenge:** Lack of resources (people to interview, technology, developers, etc.)
 - With more advanced resources I could have addressed issues such as web page latency and more specific needs of Students and Loved Ones
- **Lessons Learned:** Someone playing an integral role behind the scenes can also be a user
- **Next Steps:** The Art Specialist wants a Co-virtual/ in-person art show for 2022. See the follow-up Performance Improvement Study in my portfolio where I analyze the outcomes of the Virtual art show and design a Hybrid Art Show

**"Mae did a fantastic job.
I was so impressed with her leadership
on this project. She really created
something special from the ground up.
Given the limitations the county and I
gave her, I couldn't be more thrilled with
the product and the process she went
through to share it."**

HCPS Visual Arts Specialist