

UX Design 1: Case Study 1

Saatchi Art Evaluation

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Overview

Saatchi Art is an nontypical e-commerce website in that it is really an online art gallery. Saatchi represents artists in over 100 countries, and the artwork is sold to collectors all over the world. While Saatchi Art portrays itself as a gallery, not a store, the company takes a 35% commission on all artwork sold through their website. This commission is less than a typical gallery, but the goal remains the same: to get the artwork of the artists represented into the hands of collectors through sales. Therefore, it is important for Saatchi Art that their website make it as easy as possible for new and returning collectors to purchase artwork.

Purpose

To improve the process for users to find artwork and form the emotional connection to it that leads to sales.

Problem 1: Clicking promotional banner on home screen leads to e-commerce gallery, not to the artwork used as the background for the banner.

Justification: At the bottom of the banner there is a line of text giving the description, title, and artist of the piece used as the background image for the banner (Image 1). A user who is interested in purchasing that specific painting would want to be able to click on that text and have it link them to the purchase page for the painting. Instead, clicking anywhere in the banner takes the user to a gallery page (Image 2). In the gallery page they would either need to go through several pages until they found the painting again, or remember enough of the description to search for it. This adds several extra steps to the process and could frustrate users.

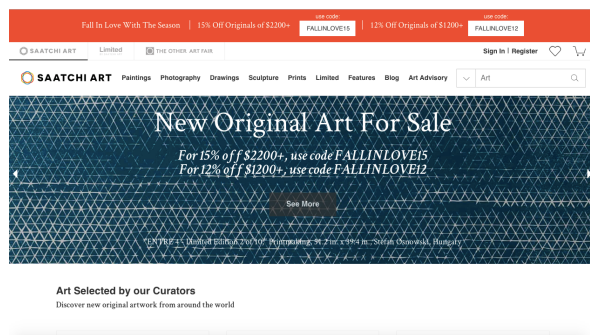


Image 1: Screen shot from landing page displaying banner that leads to the weekly gallery.

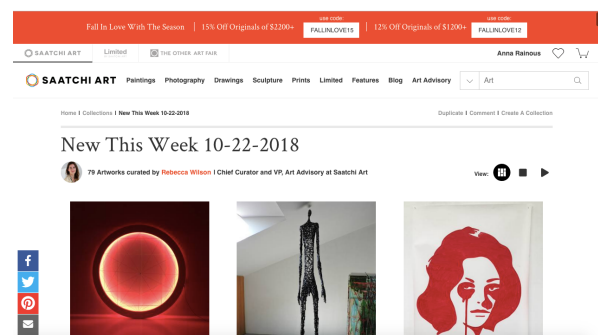


Image 2: Screen shot of the gallery upon clicking the banner on the landing page. The artwork used for the banner is nowhere to be found in the first page of the gallery.

Solution: Feature the piece used as the banner photo as the first piece in the gallery.

Justification of Solution: Featuring the banner artwork in the gallery satisfies the needs of the two main types of users who will be following that link - those who are interested in the gallery, and those who are interested in that particular piece of art. It can also help lead users who may have originally been interested in the artwork used in the banner to check out more artwork available on the website, which could potentially increase sales. Labeling it as the featured artwork makes it clear to users that it is the same piece as was displayed on the landing page (Image 3)

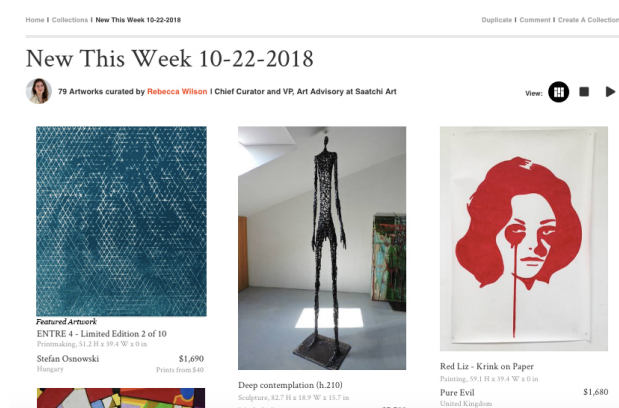


Image 3: Visual Simulation of solution showing featured art from landing page as first image in the gallery.

Problem 2: Visual search feature resets search parameters with each selected image.

Justification: While the visual search is a very thoughtful feature for this type of e-commerce, it leads the user down a visual rabbit hole. Instead of combining visual elements from the first selection and the second to show new results, it wipes out the parameters from the first selection and replaces them with new visual parameters best on the new selection (Images 4-7). This leads the user down a path of selecting image after image without ever narrowing the search to more specific parameters to find the perfect piece of art.

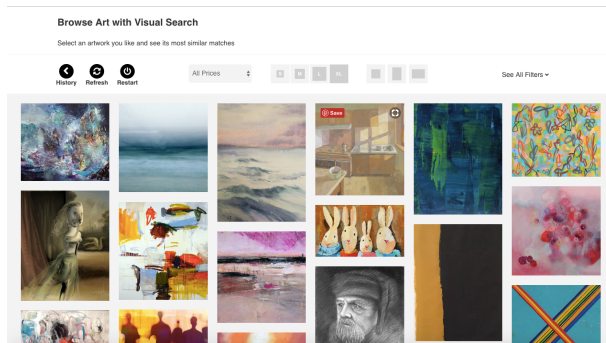


Image 4: The first page when a user selects the visual search feature displays images of a variety of different types and genres of artwork.

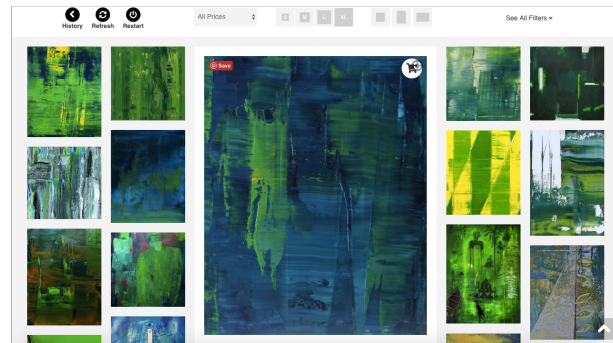


Image 5: When a user selects an image, that image is shown prominently in the center of the screen, surrounded by smaller images of visually similar artwork.

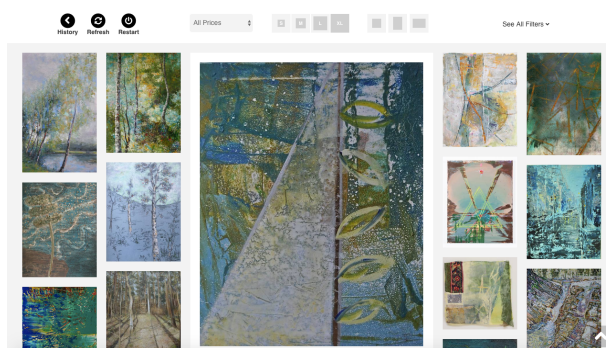


Image 6: A user can then select a second image, which is then replaces the first image, and is surrounded by smaller images of visually similar artwork to the new selection.

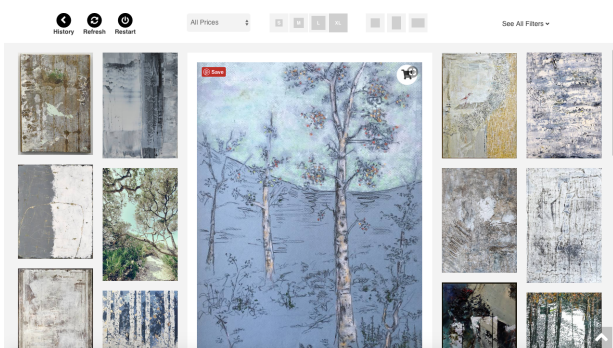


Image 7: When the process is followed again, the results displayed have very little in common with the first selection.

Solution: As a user selects additional images, the visual search takes into account the qualities of all the selected images and produces search results that have elements in common with two or more. Depending on the resource limitations, there could be a cap on the number of selected images (up to three, for example). The user can swap any on the selected images with a new one as they find art they like better (Images 8 and 9).

Justification of Solution: With this solution the integrity of the visual search feature is maintained, but it offers the user the opportunity for further customization. It is the visual equivalent of doing a Google search for two words that are not necessarily related, and seeing if what you are looking for already exists. While this option does require a lot of heavy lifting on the

part of the developers, limiting the number of selections a user can make helps to keep the necessary coding from getting too overwhelming.

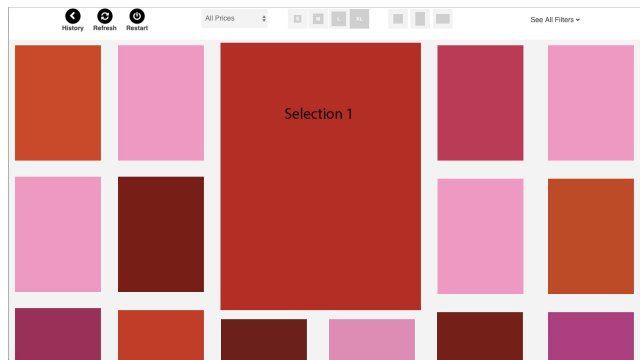


Image 8: Visual simulation of the solution to the visual search feature issue that. By using colors to represent similarities to artwork, one can see that the search results are all similar to Selection 1.

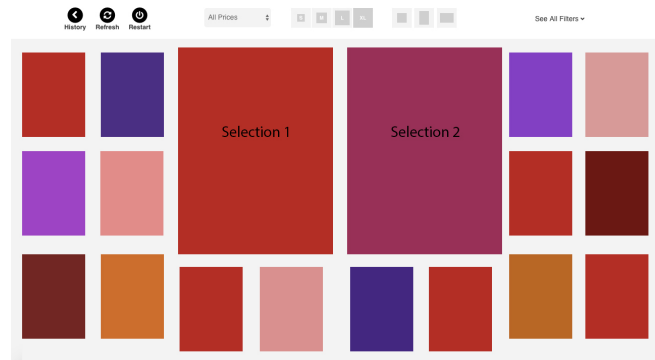
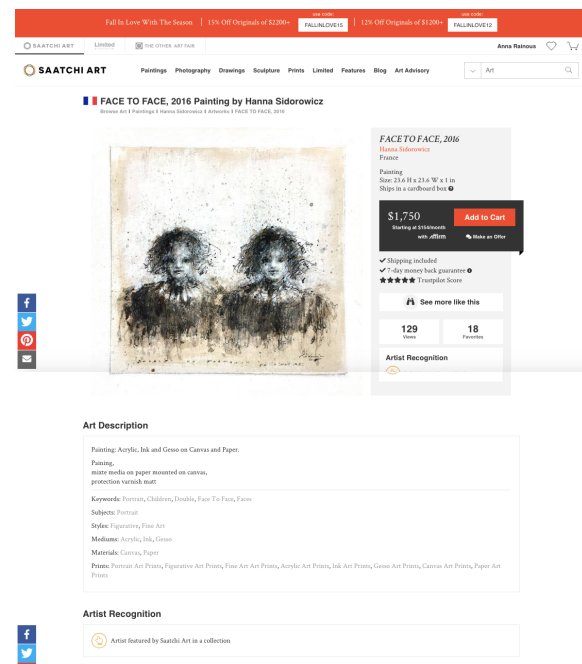
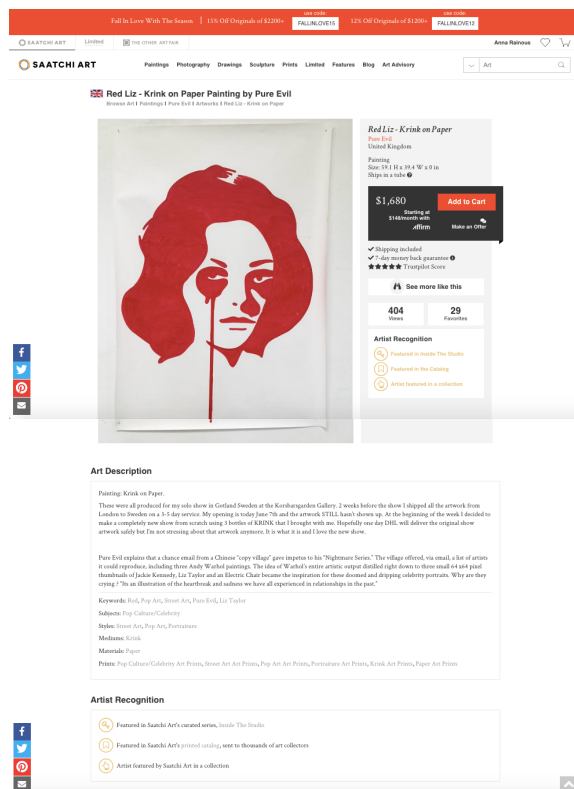


Image 9: Here you can see that the user has selected the image from the bottom left corner or the previous screen (Image 8). This new selection, Selection 2, has been combined with Selection 1 to produce new search results that have similarities to one or both selections.

Problem 3: Inconsistency in artwork descriptions.

Justification: Forming an emotional connection to a piece of art is vital to a user wanting to purchase the piece. On the home page, there is a featured promotion - get a discount on your purchase with the FALLINLOVE15. This implies that Saatchi Art wants the users to fall in love with the pieces they purchase. However, many of the featured pieces do not contain any artist or curatorial statement (Images 10 and 11). This can make the art feel inaccessible to the user; if a person does not understand what the piece is about it can cause feelings of inferiority rather than emotional connection. This may prevent them from making a purchase.



In **Image 10** (left) you can see that there are artist notes included with the artwork description. In **Image 11** (above), there are no artist or curator notes, making it unclear what the art is about. This makes it more challenging for the user to form an emotional connection with the artwork.

Solution: Include artist or curator's notes with each piece of artwork.

Justification of Solution: This solution is relatively simple, but that does not mean it would be easy. Some artist do not like to write artist notes, preferring art to speak for itself or the viewer to draw their own conclusions. It would be a big undertaking for the curators to provide notes for all of those pieces. However, I believe it is vital for the user to form the necessary emotional connection. Indeed, the curator's notes could even say something along the lines of "This artist does not speak much about the meaning of his work, preferring the art to speak for itself." This would still allow the viewer to get a feel for the artist and their work without overcomplicating the lives of the curators.

Conclusion

While Saatchi Art does offer an unparalleled selection of artwork available for purchase online, the website does not necessarily make it easy for the user to find a piece they want to purchase. By giving the user more direct access to featured works of art, Saatchi Art would greatly reduce frustration that could lead a user to leave the site. By offering the user more opportunity to customize their visual search, Saatchi Art could more easily help art collectors find exactly what they are looking for. And by providing artist or curator notes on each piece of artwork Saatchi Art would help the user form an emotional connection to the artwork more easily. These things combined would help Saatchi Art make more sales, which in turn helps the artists who sell their work through Saatchi Art as well.