College of Engineering | Computer Science

MADE WITH LOVE IN BEND

Connecting and Supporting Artists in Central Oregon

Kimberly Markley

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The **goal** of the *Made With Love in Bend* project is to address the challenges faced by local artists and makers living in Central Oregon. As the regional population grows and the housing market becomes more competitive, artists struggle to find both suitable studio space for their work and affordable housing.

Our **vision** for the project is to create an online "art walk" and artist directory that showcases the diverse talents and abundant skills within our community. The project's mission is to support and connect artists by providing them with a platform to share their biographies, creative processes, current work, and a directory of their skills and services.

To ensure the platform effectively serves its intended audience, we have conducted a **research** study to identify the missing elements that can complement artists' existing individual efforts. By leveraging insights gained through this research, we can design technological solutions to support the individual needs of artists.

By intertwining sound research methods, holistic community engagement, and innovative software engineering, *Made With Love in Bend* aims to **empower** local artists, foster community connections, and provide valuable resources for artists and patrons residing in or visiting Bend.

We will realize this unifying vision as a senior **capstone project** by students in the Computer Science program this fall.

STATE OF THE ARTS:
SURVEY RESULTS OF 50 CENTRAL OREGON ARTISTS, MAKERS & CREATORS

IN THEIR OWN WORDS...

"The Bend area lacks affordable, collective studio space to enable artists to have a place to work with other artists - to collaborate, share and inspire each other."

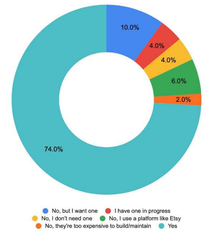
— Julie: Oil Painter

"I think one of the biggest obstacles to art community in Bend is the cost of real estate/lease space. We have created artist spaces in the past, but have been forced out of town by the rental market."

— Stuart: Painter, Jeweler, Sewer

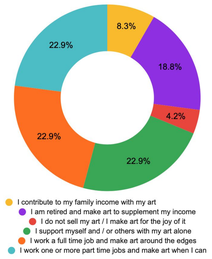
ONLINE PRESENCE

Over 80% of those surveyed have established an online presence, and of those, 76% had built their own website. Most had photos of their work, and 87% of them had taken the photos themselves.

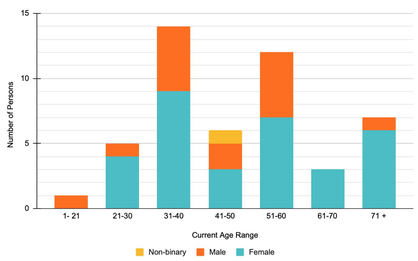


INCOME & STUDIOS

Less than 25% of local artists and makers support themselves solely on the sales of their work alone. Over 75% of them ideally need a studio to do their work, and 58% said studio needs complicated their living situation. Further, 56% said a lack of access to suitable studios affected their creative endeavors and restricted the growth of their businesses. Over 62% have considered sharing studio space with other artists.

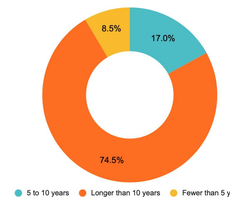


DEMOGRAPHICS: AGE & GENDER



SKILLS & MEDIUMS

Almost 75% of respondents have dedicated over 10 years of their lives to learning and refining their skills. Many are multi-disciplined artists.





RESEARCH PROBLEM

Our research focused on empowering artists to thrive and succeed in a broader marketplace. Their work and creative energy not only contribute to a region that attracts individuals aspiring to work, live, and engage in a vibrant community— but also play a significant role in actively envisioning an inclusive and prosperous future for small cities[1]. In turn, this fosters an environment that can attract additional regional technology and industry investment in the years ahead.

METHODS

We developed and deployed an online Typeform survey, in both English and Spanish. To identify the real needs of potential stakeholders, artists, and community partners, we took care to include as many women, minorities, and queer artists and makers as possible. The survey focused on their comfort levels with online sales, how their living and studio needs affect their creative work, and how they prefer to connect with other artists in the region.

CONCLUSION

Our research analysis indicates that artists and makers are already resourceful in using existing tools to offer their work for sale online. Rather than creating yet another marketplace solution, *Made With Love in Bend* will be a web platform specifically built to support useful artist connections within our local community, such as:

- directory with artist biographies and tagged, searchable skills to promote their abilities and craft,
- a private message board for artists to connect with each other, and
- public events calendar to help connect artists who are new to the area with other artists in their chosen art or area of expertise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our research was made possible through the generous support of the Layman Fellowship at OSU-Cascades.





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REFERENCES

[1] Selada, C., Cunha, I. V. D., & Tomaz, E. (2011). *Creative-based strategies in small cities: A case-study approach.* Redige, (2), 79-111.

Oregon State University Cascades