Alas Artistry — Phase 2

Customer Journey Maps

Scope	Six personas mapped across the Phase 2 IA zones (A–F)
Owner	Ryan Schwegman, Founder & CEO
Status	Draft — input to Step 3 (timeline/roadmap + wireframes)
Version	0.1
Companions	Alas Stories PRD v0.5 · Sitemap & IA v0.1

0. How to read this

Each persona is mapped stage by stage with six lenses:

- **Doing** — the concrete action
- **Feeling** — emotional state (this is a grief product; emotion leads)
- **Touchpoint** — the IA zone · route involved
- **Friction / risk** — what could break trust or add burden
- **Care-first opportunity** — how the experience earns trust at that moment

Because the audience is often newly bereaved, the guiding principle throughout is **reduce burden, never rush, and let the product feel like comfort rather than a task.** No urgency mechanics, no countdowns, no pressure on grief.

The six personas: 1. **Direct Buyer** — bereaved, creating a memorial for their family 2. **Gift Purchaser** — giving comfort to a grieving loved one 3. **Gift Recipient / New Owner** — receives the gift while grieving, becomes steward 4. **Core-Group Member** — invited family/friend who contributes 5. **Non-Member Contributor** — distant friend sharing one memory, no account 6. **AR Viewer** — anyone who scans the physical tribute

1. Direct Buyer

Recently lost someone. Searching, often late at night, for a way to hold onto them. Wants it to be right.

Stage	Doing	Feeling	Touchpoint	Friction / risk	Care-first opportunity
Arrive	Finds the site via search/social	Raw, overwhelmed, seeking meaning	A · `/`, `/how-it-works`	A hard sell would repel	Lead with reverence and clarity, not conversion pressure
Understand	Learns what the AR experience is	Cautious hope — "could this hold them?"	A · `/experience` → preview	Abstract concept is hard to grasp	The pre-purchase preview turns the idea into a felt "yes"
Choose	Compares tiers	Wants the right choice; decision weight	A · `/tributes`, B · `/studios`	Tier/pricing confusion	Gentle guidance; plain-language tiers
Personalize	Uploads the honored photo, configures	Tender — the photo upload is the emotional core	B · `/studios`, `/studios/preview`	Upload anxiety; fear of "doing it wrong"	Reassurance, autosave, seeing them rise through the halo
Purchase	Checks out	Commitment, fragile hope	B · `/checkout`	Trust at payment; shipping/tax clarity	Calm confirmation; a clear "what happens next"
Build	Creates account, opens Builder	Purposeful, a little daunted	C · `/account`, D · `/stories/:id`	Empty Builder can overwhelm	Guided first steps; invite the circle early
Compose	Arranges memories into the experience	Absorbed, cathartic	D · `/compose`, `/library`	Too many options at once	Sensible defaults; the act itself is healing
Approve	Reviews the artist's finished-piece photo	Anticipation, scrutiny	C · `/account/orders` (§7.9)	A flat proof reveal undersells the craft	Make the proof reveal a beautiful, reverent moment
Receive	Tribute arrives; first scan	Emotional payoff — awe, comfort	E · `/t/:slug`	AR fails on their device	Capability detection guarantees a beautiful path either way
Live with it	Adds memories over time; renews	Ongoing comfort, stewardship	D · `/renewal`, E	Renewal that feels transactional	Grief-sensitive renewal; an open door to add more

2. Gift Purchaser

Wants to comfort a grieving friend or family member. Unsure what's appropriate; afraid of overstepping.

Stage	Doing	Feeling	Touchpoint	Friction / risk	Care-first opportunity
Arrive	Looks for a meaningful gift	Caring but uncertain	A · `/gifts`	"Is a product the right gesture?"	Framing: a gift of remembrance, not merchandise
Understand	Learns the gift + claim flow	"Will this be a burden to them while grieving?"	A · `/gifts`, B	Fear the recipient must "do work"	Explain the starter experience + effortless claim hand-off
Build starter	Assembles a limited starter experience	Care, wanting to honor someone they may not know deeply	B · `/studios/preview`	Limited media / knowledge of the deceased	Tasteful starter + a personal note; "they can shape it further"
Gift checkout	Enters recipient details, gift message	Generosity; hope it lands well	B · `/checkout` (gift path)	Recipient address/timing sensitivity	Thoughtful delivery options; a heartfelt gift message field
Await	Watches for claim + delivery	Anticipation — "did it arrive? did it help?"	Emails (§7.2) · `/account/orders`	Silence breeds worry	Claim email + delivery email close the loop
Hand-off	Recipient claims; purchaser steps back	Relief, warmth	(claim email)	Wanting to stay involved	Optionally invited by the recipient as a member

3. Gift Recipient / New Owner

Grieving. Receives an unexpected gift that someone made with care. Becomes the long-term steward.

Stage	Doing	Feeling	Touchpoint	Friction / risk	Care-first opportunity
Receive	Opens the physical tribute	Surprise, emotion, maybe overwhelm	(unboxing)	No context for what it is	A gentle printed insert: what it is, how to scan, no pressure
First scan	Scans the QR	Moved by a starter experience made *for* them	E · `/t/:slug`	—	The giver's care is felt immediately
Claim	Claims ownership	"This is mine to tend now"	C · `/claim/:token`	Account setup *while grieving* is a burden	Frictionless claim (consider magic-link); a warm welcome
Explore	Sees the Builder, the starter content	Agency, comfort	D · `/stories/:id`	Empty/sparse content feels daunting	Gentle onboarding; "add when you're ready"
Extend	Adds their own memories	Healing, connection	D · `/compose`, `/library`	—	Easy to add; nothing is lost from the starter
Gather	Invites family to the collaborators	Communal grief, togetherness	D · `/members`	—	One-tap invites; shared tending
Steward	Renews, maintains over time	Quiet responsibility	D · `/renewal`	Transactional renewal	Grief-sensitive cadence; never a countdown

4. Core-Group Member

Invited family or friend. Honored to be included; wants to contribute and, often, to have their own keepsake.

Stage	Doing	Feeling	Touchpoint	Friction / risk	Care-first opportunity
Invited	Receives an invite	Honored, included	(invite email) → C	"Another account to make"	Smooth accept; clear why they were invited
Contribute	Uploads photos/video/audio/text	Catharsis, sharing memories	D · `/library/upload`	Upload friction	Easy upload; see it appear in the library
Collaborate	Helps shape the experience	Shared tending	D · `/compose`	Unclear what they can/can't do	Role clarity (Member vs Owner actions visible)
Moderate	Reviews non-member submissions	A sense of responsibility	D · `/queue`	Ambiguous approve/decline	Simple, respectful review controls
Order their own	Buys same-as-this or creates their own	Wanting their own keepsake / starting fresh	D · `/tributes`	Re-entering all details	Same-as-this is one step; create-my-own seeds a new journey

This persona is the repeat-order / referral seam: "create my own" loops the member back to the start of Persona 1.

5. Non-Member Contributor

A more distant friend or relative invited to share a single memory. Low commitment; won't make an account.

Stage	Doing	Feeling	Touchpoint	Friction / risk	Care-first opportunity
Receive link	Opens a submission link	Willing, low-commitment	F · `/submit/:token`	A signup wall would lose them	No account required to contribute
Submit	Uploads a memory + their name	Sharing something meaningful	F · `/submit/:token`	Uncertainty about what's wanted	Warm, simple form; gentle guidance on what helps
Confirm	Sees confirmation	Closure — "I contributed"	F · `/submit/:token/done`	Over-promising inclusion	Gracious thanks; set expectation that the family will review
(Downstream)	Content enters the review queue	—	→ D · `/queue` (member)	—	Honors the family's control over their memorial

6. AR Viewer

A memorial guest, visitor, or family member encountering the physical tribute. May have no prior relationship to the brand.

Stage	Doing	Feeling	Touchpoint	Friction / risk	Care-first opportunity
Encounter	Sees the tribute and its QR	Curiosity, reverence	(physical piece)	Unclear how to engage	Dignified, legible QR presentation
Scan	Scans the code	Anticipation	E · `/t/:slug`	Device may not support AR	Capability detection routes them gracefully
Experience	Watches the AR or web-viewer	Moved — awe, comfort, connection	E · AR / fallback	A broken AR = a broken moment	Both paths are beautiful; the fallback never feels like a downgrade
Onward	May want to learn more or contribute	Inspired, quietly curious	E (gentle link)	A hard CTA on a grief moment is jarring	A *quiet* "learn more" / contribute path — never a sales push

7. Gaps & additions surfaced by these journeys

Mapping the journeys revealed touchpoints the IA should add or sharpen before wireframing:

1. **Printed unboxing insert** (Personas 3, 6) — a physical card explaining what the tribute is, how to scan, and (for gifts) how to claim. A fulfillment touchpoint, not a screen, but essential to the first-scan emotion.
2. **Gift message / personal note** (Persona 2) — a dedicated field in the gift checkout; not currently explicit in Zone B.
3. **New-owner welcome moment** (Persona 3) — a warm first-run state in the Builder Overview, distinct from a returning owner's view.
4. **Passwordless / magic-link auth** (Personas 3, 4) — strongly worth considering to reduce account friction for grieving users. A decision for the auth design.
5. **Gentle onward path on** `/t/:slug` (Persona 6) — a quiet, optional "learn more / contribute" element that respects the memorial moment and never sells. Needs careful copy and placement.
6. **Builder empty states** (Personas 1, 3) — empty library/compose screens are emotional; they must invite gently ("add when you're ready"), not nag.
7. **Role-visibility in the Builder** (Persona 4) — Members should clearly see which actions are theirs vs. Owner-only, to avoid confusion at the permission boundary.

8. Next step

With these approved, **Step 3** is the project timeline/roadmap plus the **UI/UX concept and wireframes** — starting with the highest-emotion, highest-traffic screens these journeys prioritize: the pre-purchase preview, the gift + claim hand-off, the `/t/:slug` AR delivery moment, and the Builder's first-run experience.