

Alina Gold(wo)man

I am a mixed-methods UX researcher and designer specializing in immersive XR experiences for children and museum visitors. I have 10+ years of industry and academic experience, a PhD in human-computer interaction (HCI), and a background in consumer psychology. I use the iterative research and design process to help users cultivate a rich sense of shared meaning through deep connections and play.

Professional Experience

UX Research and Design Lead [2024-]

Netherlands Institute for Sound & Vision (NISV) / Beeld en Geluid, Hilversum, NL

- Led an **iterative UX research and design process** for cultural heritage use case (TRANSMIXR EU Horizon grant 2020) to build *The Space Archivists*, a **template-based Social VR game** for children to explore the NISV archive. Planned, organized and facilitated **co-design sessions** with children, '**design salons**' with heritage professionals, created the **concept design**, and conducted **low-fidelity testing**. The game was built with KHORA, CWI, and TUS, and I conducted **prototype testing and feedback sessions**, and led two formal **usability studies**. Showcased game at Cinekid '25 festival, United XR, and other museum events. Wrote related reports, and a *Heritage* journal publication.
- Supported **design process** of the **Curator Studio**, that allows museum professionals to create their own version of the Space Archivists game using their datasets. Created **low-fidelity mockups** of the tool, ran a **usability study**, and conducted **adoption evaluations** with museum professionals.
- Co-organized '**XR for Cultural Heritage**' **workshops** and **mentored XR design student projects** and an internship. Co-authored **XR for Cultural Heritage method booklet and workbook** based on this work.
- Conducted **usability study** of the **ai4culture.eu platform**, and wrote related usability report.
- Supported other EU projects, including Epic-We **culture heritage "game-jams"** that empower youth to imagine, create, and exchange cultural values and heritage through game-making. Also created **design scenarios** as part of the 3D4CH EU project, an **online 3D cultural competence center**.

Senior Mixed-Methods UX Researcher [2023-2024],

Cognizant Digital Studio, Amsterdam, NL

- Conducted **qualitative research** through **stakeholder interviews**, **user surveys**, **synthesis**, and **thematic analysis** for a pharmaceutical company, a bank, and the UK government. Supported **design briefs**, and wrote **case studies**.
- Conducted **mixed-methods research** through "jobs to be done" **personas** and related **scenarios** for a pharmaceutical company and analysis of **Google analytics**. Created **user flows and needs documents** for the pharmaceutical company and UK government. Also, designed, launched, and created **analysis plan** for an external survey for the UK project.
- Developed **trend reports** on B2B E-commerce for a manufacturing company, and for the banking and financial sectors.
- Launched **research democratization initiatives** by creating and facilitating **workshops on contextual trends research**.
- **Mentored intern** and supported survey development to improve the hybrid office experience. Supported bags-of-stuff prototyping research, and the development of an interactive technology prototype.

Postdoctoral Researcher/Designer and ERCIM Fellow [2019-2022], Distributed & Interactive Systems Group,

Centrum Wiskunde & Informatica (CWI), Amsterdam, NL

- **Conceptualized and designed *The Co-creation Space*** tool for artistic co-creation as part of the TRACTION project (EU Horizon Grant 2020) through a multi-step user-centered design process, including **focus groups**, **co-design sessions**, **personas**, **storyboards**, and **wireframes**. Tested tool through **usability studies** and **open pilots**, and authored related papers at CSCW and IMX, and created related promo videos and blog posts. **Managed technology evaluation** for the TRACTION project, and authored several technical reports.
- Helped conceptualize and design **Social VR lobby** and **Co-creation Stage** tools. Co-authored related research.
- **Developed design method** "Spectrum of Audience Participation" through **expert interviews**, **codesign sessions** and an extensive **literature review** of theater, theme park, and game domains. Best paper award at ICIDS.
- Wrote **grant proposals** and mentored students in the DIS group.

Doctoral Work in Human-Computer Interaction [2014-2019], Human Computer Interaction Lab,

College of Information Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

- **Conceptualized, designed, and tested** the usability and value of of **StreamBED VR**, a tool to train citizen scientists to make qualitative assessment of stream habitats in multisensory VR. Designed tool through user-centered process, including **expert interviews**, **focus groups**, **co-design sessions**, and **usability studies**. Designed and developed **3D assets** in Unity/Blender, and designed **branding**.

- Led a group of 6 student developers to build StreamBED VR in Unity, and to prototype the Ambient Holodeck multisensory VR system with ambient sensory stimuli (heat, humidity, wind, smell).
- Designed and conducted qualitative co-design research with children (Kidsteam) on interactive participation in music performances using cooperative inquiry. Authored related research on audience participation in musical performances.
- Authored "Using Web Analytics" section in Rogers, Preece & Sharp Interaction Design Textbook.

Visiting Researcher and Designer [2017-2019], OH Game Lab,

Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA

- Conceptualized and created a design space theme map for game live streaming on Twitch (CHI '21) through grounded theory qualitative analysis. Mentored related game design course.
- Mentored masters students semester project ("Lights Out") at the Entertainment Technology Center (ETC).
- Developed narrative design method for students to appraise and critique story fit for design goals.
- Ran a series of codesign workshops at CMU and UC Irvine to study how audience interactivity can help designers create interactive audience VR prototypes for Broadway theater and games.

Research Associate [2016-2017], Disney Research, Pittsburgh, PA

- Conceptualized, designed, and developed a haptic sports experience using a tactor actuator and MaxMSP.
- Developed questionnaire on haptic experiences. Designed and conducted quantitative research study, and analyzed using multiple regression and factor analysis. Presented findings at Disney Research, Pittsburgh.
- Co-authored and presented proposal for interactive multi-level storytelling experiences.
- Tutored interns to create visual advertisements using Photoshop. Designed study materials in Adobe Suite.

Education

2014-2019

PhD, Human-Computer Interaction & Information Studies

Advisor: Jennifer Preece

College of Information Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

2012-2014

Master of Sciences, Human-Computer Interaction

Thesis advisor: Ben Bederson

College of Information Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, MD

Awards & Honors

ICIDS Conference Best Long Paper Award (2019) - \$500	Dean's Award for Outstanding iSchool Project (2016)
ERCIM Alain Bensoussan Postdoctoral Fellowship (2019)	Goldhaber Travel Grant (2015, 2018) - \$600
Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship (2018) - \$15,000	International Conference Student Support Award (ICSSA) (2015, 2018) - \$500
Research Improvement Grant (2018) - \$600	Maryland Summer Scholars Grant (2011) - \$3,000
Dean's Fellowship Award (2017) - \$5,000	Rosenberg Merit Scholarship for Music (2007) - \$2,500
University of Maryland Outstanding GA (2017)	Polinger Scholarship for Performing Arts (2005) - \$3,000
Graduate Summer Research Fellowship (2016) - \$5,000	

Methods and Tools

Research

- Mixed methods: co-design, in-depth interviews, focus groups, surveys/questionnaires, contextual inquiry, heuristic evaluation, context mapping, A/B testing, and usability studies
- Analysis: thematic analysis, content analysis, linear regression, MRA, factor analysis
- Research Tools: Qualitative coding, R, SPSS, Qualtrics, Gephi, LaTeX

Design

- Methods: bodystorming, cooperative inquiry, affinity maps, user personas, scenarios/use cases, storyboarding, paper prototypes, design sketches, wireframes
- Prototyping Tools: Adobe Creative Suite, Figma, Miro, Balsamiq
- Programming experience in Java, Python, MaxMSP, Javascript/HTML/CSS, Arduino
- Game design using Unity/Oculus Rift/Blender

Other

- Native Speaker of English and Russian. Competent in French and Italian, and learning Dutch (A2-). Proficient in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and German Diction.

Personal Interests

I enjoy observing patterns that occur across nature and art. I create immersive multisensory storytelling experiences using poetry combined with smell, taste, and sound. I am also a classical singer and a vintage fashion enthusiast.