

Creative XR engineer and researcher with 7+ years of experience delivering real-time immersive applications across gaming, education, and cultural sectors. Expert in Unity, interaction design and multiplayer systems. Proven ability to work with cross-disciplinary teams, run user testing, and produce compelling prototypes and human-centered products. Passionate about crafting software that offers meaningful experiences connecting people through emerging technology.

 **EXPERIENCE**

Technical Lead, ATHENA RC & NKUA, GR*October 2022 – Present**Narrative Team*

- Leading cross-functional teams and mentoring junior developers and researchers for EU and national projects
- Contributed to writing 2 EU and 4 national grant proposals

Lead Unity XR Engineer, ATHENA RC, GR*January 2024 - Present**RPGs4Museums National Project*

- Building NoFold, a social VR/MR multiplayer platform for tabletop games
- Leading iterative development of 2 other engineers in Unity (Meta SDKs and Photon) and 1 web developer (Angular)
- Conducted user research with 20+ board game creators
- Presented demos at FDG conference, Meta Hackathon 2024 and 4 local gaming events

Lead Unity VR Engineer, ATHENA RC, GR*November 2024 – May 2025**ARSINOE EU Project*

- Co-designed a multiplayer VR experience for environmental awareness through collaborative decision-making
- Led iterative development of 2 developers in Unity (Meta SDKs and Netcode)
- Won the 3DUI contest of IEEE VR 2025

Unity VR Prototype Engineer, NKUA, GR*January 2023 - February 2023**CAPHE EU Project*

- Conceptualized and prototyped in Unity (VRTK/Tilia) a live VR performance blending opera and interactive technology
- Showcased during a live concert in Kenya with 50+ attendees

Unity Engineer, NKUA, GR*January 2021 - January 2023**HPTK+ (Hand Physics Toolkit Plus)*

- Architected a system for simulating hand physics in Unity based on PhysX Articulation Bodies
- Evaluated its usefulness in a user study with 27 participants
- Integrated the system with an existing open-source library

UX Researcher, NKUA, GR*October 2020 - September 2022**BRIDGES EU Project*

- Co-designed scenario and interactions with EU partners for co-located free-roam XR group experiences
- Evaluated a virtual visit to Ancient Athens with 38 users and firefighters training with 20 firefighters

Unity VR Engineer, ATHENA RC, GR*August 2018 - September 2020**EMOTIVE EU Project*

- Created a multiplayer VR collaborative experience for a Neolithic site using Unity (SteamVR and Photon)
- Coordinated a group of 2 historians, 1 UX designer, 1 3D artist and 2 developers
- Designed and implemented all user interactions and game logic
- Piloted with hundreds of users; then released on itch.io

Front-End Web Engineer, ATHENA RC, GR

January 2017 – July 2018

EMOTIVE EU Project

- Designed and developed a suite of web (Angular, Bootstrap) tools for interactive narratives and virtual museum visits

Full-Stack Web Engineer, CERN, CH

October 2014-September 2015

S'Cool LAB Team

- Designed and developed two websites, for both the front and the back end, using Drupal and Moodle

EDUCATION

PhD - Computer Science, NKUA, GR

June 2020 - Fall 2025

- HCI, Virtual Reality, UX, Hand Interaction, Physics Simulation, Avatars, Embodiment - Advisor: Maria Roussou.

Visiting PhD Student - 3DI Lab, Virginia Tech, USA

October 2023 - April 2024

- Research on physics-based hand interaction: designed, implemented, and ran user studies - Advisor: Doug Bowman.

BSc & MSc - Computer Science, NKUA, GR

October 2017 – March 2020 & April 2007 – February 2016

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Programming tools:** Unity, C#, Git, VS Code
- **Unity Libraries:** Meta XR SKDs, VRTK-Tilia, SteamVR, Animation Rigging, AI Navigation, ML-Agents, HPTK
- **Unity Networking:** Netcode, Mirror, Photon, NormCore

TEACHING AND SERVICE

- Course Assistant: HCI (2018-2022) and Databases (2022) @ NKUA
- Mentored 10+ students on their Bachelor & Master theses in XR/HCI/AI @ NKUA and 1 undergrad @ Virginia Tech
- Reviewer: CHI ('22-'25), IEEE VR ('24, '25), TVCG ('24), VRST ('24, '25), Frontiers VR ('24, '25), FDG ('22), VR Journal ('21)

AWARDS

- **Winner @ 3DUI Contest – IEEE VR (2025)**
- **PhD Research Mobility Scholarship – Fulbright/IKY (2023)**
- **Gary Marsden Travel Award – ACM SIGCHI (2021)**

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- **"Effects of Different Tracker-driven Direction Sources on Continuous Artificial Locomotion in VR"**, Lougiakis, C., Mandilaras, T., Katifori, A., Ganias, G., Ioannidis, I.-P., & Roussou, M. (2024), [VRST](#).
- **"Comparing Physics-based Hand Interaction in Virtual Reality: Custom Soft Body Simulation vs. Off-the-Shelf Integrated Solution"**, Lougiakis, C., Gonzalez, J., Ganias, G., Katifori, A., Ioannidis, I.-P., & Roussou, M. (2024), [IEEE VR](#).
- **"Comparing Different Grasping Visualizations for Object Manipulation in VR using Controllers"**, Ganias, G., Lougiakis, C., Katifori, A., Roussou, M., Ioannidis, Y., & Ioannidis, I. P. (2023), [IEEE TVCG](#).
- **"Exploring the Effect of Personality Traits in VR Interaction: The Emergent Role of Perspective-Taking in Task Performance"**, Katifori, A., Lougiakis, C., & Roussou, M. (2022), [Frontiers in Virtual Reality](#).
- **"Effects of Virtual Hand Representation on Interaction and Embodiment in HMD-based Virtual Environments Using Controllers"**, Lougiakis, C., Katifori, A., Roussou, M., & Ioannidis, I.-P. (2020), [IEEE VR](#).