Mel Yurttaş

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Linkedin | Portfolio | Design Example and More

Professional Summary

Game Designer with over **6 years of experience** specializing in **system design**, **level design**, and **narrative integration.** Proven track record in leading cross-disciplinary teams and shipping **projects from prototype to production**. Strong technical background in geophysical engineering supports a design approach grounded in **logic, iteration, and player-centric systems**. Passionate about building games that are both **meaningful and fun to play.**

Professional Experience

Lead Game Designer / Project Lead
The Phenix, Istanbul | May 2025 – Present

- Shaping the overall creative vision and ensuring a cohesive, high-quality player experience
- Designing and implementing **core gameplay systems, progression frameworks, and exploration mechanics**
- Guiding level art and lighting implementation to align visuals with design intent
- Running daily gameplay tests to ensure everything functions as planned
- Preparing bug reports and tracking progress to help keep development on schedule
- Ensuring fidelity to a well-known (but currently unannounced) IP by researching the lore and providing clear references
- **Designing systems, combat, AI behaviors**, and enemy-focused level design with a strong focus on gameplay feel and balance. (genre: **metroidvania**)
- Acting as a bridge between high-level creative ideas and day-to-day development needs

Game Designer
Freelance, Remote | Feb 2024 – May 2025

- Designed and developed an independent **bullet hell** game focusing on intense attack patterns, visual clarity, and moment-to-moment feedback
- Provided freelance game design and QA services for indie teams and remote studios

Project: CODE NAME: bc_proj1 – Designed core systems for a **roguelike deck-building game**
- Developed card-recruit synergy mechanics, procedural map generation, and turn-based combat systems

VR Archviz Project – Created a real-time **interactive architectural visualization in UE5**
- Designed user experience flows and fully implemented interaction systems using **Blueprints**
- Built scene toggles, camera transitions, and event triggers for client presentations
- Optimized the project for VR hardware performance.

Lead Game Designer
Madbyte Games, Istanbul | Feb 2022 – Feb 2024

- Led the design of a **co-op third-person shooter** (Project Calypso) from the ground up
- Defined core gameplay loops, progression systems, and encounter design
- Collaborated with a team of 20+ across departments to shape vision and feature implementation
- Contributed to **gameplay design, combat balancing, and level/map design** for Zula, **Turkey's largest MMOFPS**

Lead Game Designer
Panda Bear Games, Istanbul | Mar 2022 – Jan 2024

- Directed design vision for a **psychological thriller game**
- Built **narrative-mechanic correlations** and branching interaction systems
- Designed **AI behaviors, level design, and player progression**
- **Prototyped** key scenes and systems in Unreal Engine

Game Designer
Mynet Games (now Vuvy), Istanbul | Sep 2021 – Mar 2022

- Game designer for Real Basketball 2
- Designed core mechanics, in-game **economy, and monetization systems**
- Led QA sessions and balanced difficulty curves

Game Designer
F13 Entertainment, Remote | Mar 2021 – Sep 2021

- Created hyper-casual mobile game concepts and levels
- Oversaw production pipeline and testing for rapid prototyping

Game Designer
CBI Lab, Istanbul | May 2018 – Sep 2020

- Designed game economy and progression loops for a multiplayer mobile title
- Created characters, mechanics, and storytelling structures for a PC game prototype

Education

BSc in Geophysical Engineering

Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul – 2014

Skills

Unreal Engine 5, Unity (Basic), Blueprint Scripting, Systems Design, Level Design, Gameplay Design, AI Systems, QA & Testing, Project Management, Narrative Design, Game Economy Design, VR Development, C#, 2D Art (Digital & Traditional)

Certifications & Courses

Virtual Reality UE5 for Archviz – dviz (Jan 2025)

Game Pitch, Propose, and Practice – Brenda Romero (Jun 2024)

Worldbuilding for Video Games – UBCx (Feb 2024)

Writing Video Game Scenes and Dialogue – UBC (Jan 2024)

Game Design Foundations – Brenda Romero (Jul 2021)

Game Design Workshop – CBI LAB (2019)

MIT Game Lab: Introduction to Game Design – edX (2019)

Game Project Studio – ITU (Mar 2021 – Jun 2021)

Languages

Turkish (Native), English (Fluent)

Personal Interests

Digital & Canvas Painting, Scuba Diving, Journaling, Creative Content Creation (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube), and of course gaming.