

# Mina Rezaei

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## Summary

I am a creative product researcher, designer, and empathy-driven storyteller passionate about uplifting users' stories and experiences. I have a strong background in design and mixed-method research, with seven years of professional experience in the social aspects of spatial design. I am fluent in a wide range of UX methodologies and experienced in working with cross-functional teams. Additionally, I have extensive experience teaching advanced courses in Design, Social and Spatial Science, and Human Development.

## Skills

<b>Programming</b>	HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Python, RStudio
<b>Presentation</b>	Adobe Creative suite including Premiere, After Effects Procreate, Figma, Latex
<b>Research and Data Visualization Tools</b>	Arc GIS, Hotjar, MAXQDA, EXcel, Qualterics, Gainsight, Miro, Mural, User Testing
<b>Product management</b>	Product board, Asana, Smartsheet
<b>Languages</b>	English (Fluent), Farsi (Native), Arabic (Basic)

## Work Experience

### Design Research Experience in Tech-Related Projects

#### Mysaic

Remote

PRODUCT OWNER

Jan 2024 - present

- Designed a product (Mysaic) that creates a mosaic of people's favorite elements in a single frame, available as both canvas, prints and digital files.
- Conducted competitor research, focusing on AI art generators, to identify market gaps and opportunities, find target customers while managing social media and sales strategies.

#### Quantum Workplace

Remote, Davis

UX RESEARCH INTERN

Jun 2022 - Sep 2022

##### Improving Conversion Rate across QW Platforms

- Created and executed a research agenda involving interviews, surveys, A/B testing, usability reports, and analysis of qualitative data, leading to a 20% conversion rate boost for the Best Places to Work survey platform.

##### Creating Research Repository

- Championed research best practices within the product team, collaborating with cross-functional members to develop a cloud-based employee engagement solution for businesses of all sizes with surveys and feedback collection.
- Established a unified research repository catering to researchers, designers, engineers, and product managers, contributed to 4X increase in customers' touchpoints.
- Established a collection of research templates to standardize the process of research across the product teams.

#### Hack for LA

Remote, Davis

UX RESEARCHER INTERN

Jun 2021 - Sep 2021

##### Standardizing Research Across HackForLA projects

- Created research plan guides, Interview guides, screeners, and consent form templates for Hack for LA projects resulting in the facilitation of the research process.
- Created research template for generative and evaluative research to expedite the UX research process by UX researchers across Hack for LA.

#### Social Computing Lab, Computer Science Department, UC Davis

Davis, CA

DOCTORAL STUDENT RESEARCHER ON HUMAN COMPUTER INTERACTION

Jun 2022 - Dec 2023

##### Recreating Experience of Space in Social Virtual Reality

- Designed and executed a research study to assess users' spatial experiences in Social VR, recruited participants and employed in-depth interviews and content analysis. Analyzed and synthesized research data to derive actionable insights into the 3d design and experience design of the users in social VR.
- Worked cross-functionally with the team on creating user-centered educational products, shared feedback, and developed recommendations
- Engaged in a reading group reviewing the newest trends in HCI scholarship to stay up-to-date with the latest research trends and methodologies.

#### University of California, Davis, Department of Human Ecology

Davis, CA

DOCTORAL STUDENT RESEARCHER

Sep 2017 - Dec 2023

##### Designing and Strategic Planning of Creative Wanderer map-based App

- Led and conducted comprehensive foundational research to guide end-to-end product and design strategy. This included research, competitive analysis, data synthesis, prototyping, wireframing, and usability testing for an innovative map-based app. The app leverages films to enhance young people's critical spatial thinking.

##### Using Human-Centered Design in Creating Youth-Friendly Environments

- Assessed teens' engagement in redesigning the Rocky Hill trail project through interviews, literature review, and document analysis to gauge their level of participation.
- Mentored junior researchers in conducting observations and ethnographic research for the Growing up in Cities, developing protocols for youth presence in public spaces and creating behavioral maps.

## University of California, Davis, Several Departments

Davis, CA

ASSOCIATE INSTRUCTOR, TEACHER AND TEACHING ASSISTANT

Sep 2017 - Dec 2023

**Designed and Taught "Sociology of Adolescence", an upper division course at the Department of Sociology, Co-Taught different courses such as UI/UX, 3d modeling, and 2d drawing at other departments**

- Conducted lectures on youth-related subjects including Social Media, Online Gaming, and VR/AR/XR impacts. Created course materials, administered exams for a class exceeding 95 students, assessed papers, and offered mentoring support.

**Taught STEM and Design Thinking courses as part of STEM program and English in Business at UC Davis International Center**

- Instructed and curated diverse course materials in Mathematics, Biology, Design Thinking, and Technology for visiting international youth aged 10 to 17, as well as college students.

### Design Research Experience in Architecture and Planning-Related Projects

## California Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

Remote, Sacramento

RESEARCH AND POLICY ANALYSIS PROGRAM MANAGER-SENIOR LEVEL

2024 - Present

**Coordinated and Managed Research Projects Across the Division**

- Managed research contracts with universities for the Future of Mobility project, as part of the California Transportation Plan.
- Created a directory of the transportation plans in Caltrans by coordinating with stakeholders to facilitate the research across the division
- Created a list of project metrics for transportation projects across the division, and presented to the director and VP levels.

## Paramadan Architecture, Planning and Design Firm

Tehran, Iran

DESIGN RESEARCH LEAD

Nov 2015 - Sep 2017

**Using User-Centered Design Methods in Designing the Built Environment**

- Conducted user studies to evaluate spatial experiences through interviews and surveys, analyzed findings, and communicated insights to the stakeholders.
- Fostered leadership support through consistent meetings, presentations to the Executives, and alignment of project outcomes with business and social objectives for revitalizing Tehran's historic districts.
- Mentored Junior designers and researchers and improved collaboration in the team of designers and engineers.
- Managed the redesign of a historic center in Shiraz (A city in Iran), including the design framework, 2D plans, sketches, and 3D models (With AutoCAD and SketchUp of the proposed design)

## Farnahad Architecture, Planning and Design Firm

Tehran, Iran

DESIGN RESEARCHER

Nov 2014 - Sep 2016

**Using Human-Centered Design Research in Designing the Built Environment**

- Conducted diverse studies, including interviews, focus groups, and ethnography, improving quality of life in disadvantaged communities across various Iranian cities.
- Co-led design research activities, including research planning and the preparation of general plans for multiple cities, including making 3d silhouette of the cities using ArcScene.

## Payest Architecture and Design Firm

Tehran, Iran

DESIGN RESEARCHER

Nov 2015 - Sep 2017

**Using Human-Centered Design Research in Re-designing a Historic Cemetery**

- Conducted ethnography research to explore the historical, environmental, and social values of the historic cemetery geared toward improving it as a tourist destination.
- Synthesized research data to craft reports and 3d maps (using AutoCAD 3d) showcasing the cemetery's impact on the neighborhood, leading to the preservation of its historic sections.

## Rayab Engineering Consultant Firm

Tehran, Iran

DESIGNER

Sep 2011 - Sep 2014

**Landscape Design for Water Treatment Facilities**

- Designed landscape, created 3D models (With AutoCAD 3d, SketchUp and 3ds Max), and designed informational pamphlets

## Education

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### University of California, Davis

Davis, CA

PH.D. IN GEOGRAPHY WITH A FOCUS ON HUMAN COMPUTER INTERACTION

Sep 2017 - Dec 2023

## Extracurricular Activity

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### Maptime Davis (Geospatial Skills Workshop Series)

Davis, CA

COUNCIL MEMBER

Sep 2021 - Jun 2022

- Facilitated and coordinated workshops, collaborating with local partners to educate on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other spatial programming tools for interactive mapping such as D3.

## Honors and Awards (Selected)

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### Berkeley I Corps Cohort:

Remote, UC Berkeley

ONE WEEK NSF-FUNDED VIRTUAL TRAINING AIMED AT TRANSLATING ACADEMIC RESEARCH INTO A STARTUP.

Jan 2021

- Activities: Worked on customer discovery and the business model of the Creative Wanderer App (my startup idea)

## Publications (Selected)

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- Rezaei, M., Owens, PE., Wang, HC, (2024). Recreating Experience of Space in Social Virtual Reality, Submitted to DIS 25