

KATIE HUGHES

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Katie is an AI-native product designer and 0→1 builder who pairs strong people instincts with cross-functional leadership across global teams. Her work on AI-driven characters was showcased at Meta Connect 2024.

EXPERIENCE

Meta - Senior product designer; March 2021 - present

- **Growth + discovery**
 - Led 10+ cross-platform mobile growth features across Facebook, Messenger, Horizon, and Instagram, driving 1M+ acquisition, 508K MAU, and 16%+ WAU @ D30 in Horizon; scaled Instagram MAU 28× (HoH) through targeted growth initiatives
 - Designed new rewards content rollout leading to 6x retention
 - Integrated new reward type into Horizon’s game economy core loop, generating +546K mobile MAU and increasing retention by 25%
 - Design lead for cross-platform acquisition + re-engagement experiments, A/B testing, interactive ad units and app notification design system + governance
 - Define strategy with PM and XFN leads; lead design workshops, weekly syncs, and cross-platform reviews to align and scale high-impact experiments across key surfaces
 - Build and ship UI directly in codebase; rapidly prototype, create plugins and markdown files using AI tooling (VS Code, Claude, Cursor, Manus, Figma Make, Figma MCP, Openclaw)
 - Organized and led 5+ cross-discipline training workshops on AI design tooling
- **AI agents**
 - Secured leadership alignment on AI feature north star vision; led Instagram × Horizon partnership on implementation to deliver 350K unique visitors and the top-performing IG acquisition channel for conversion and account linking
 - Led interaction and UI design for 0→1, E2E genAI character experiences showcased at Meta Connect 2024
 - Unblocked launch of 100% of Horizon Worlds AI character content by driving cross-team alignment on 10+ legal and policy features across mobile, web, and MR, ensuring US/EU compliance
 - Shaped AI model personalities, knowledge bases and responses
 - Increased usability to 87% by designing scalable, cross-platform interaction patterns adopted by 3 internal studios; drove +30% time spent through improved UX and content strategy
- **Creator economy**
 - Designed web analytics platform to allow creators to optimize in-app monetization, as well as UI and E2E embodied creator and consumer user flows for in-world purchases
- **Creation tooling**
 - Owned the end-to-end design of a interconnected, two-part asset ecosystem used by 90% of active game worlds: a personal library for private object storage and reuse, and a public marketplace for community sharing, discovery, and remixing
 - Led the full UX process from research and IA to iconography, testing, and cross-functional delivery with engineering

Meta - Product designer; Nov 2019 - March 2021

- **Onboarding + new user experience**
 - Designed and launched Horizon Worlds’ first onboarding experience with a 93.5% completion rate
 - Developed onboarding strategy informed by competitive analysis, research, and multimodal design
 - Led product design for the inaugural spatial UI system used across the ecosystem

Beast, Inc. - Senior product designer; May 2017 - Sept 2019

- Sole designer for a VR experience launched across 250+ VR arcades globally
- Redesigned onboarding flow, increasing completion rate from <1% to 91%
- Designed AI-driven virtual pet interactions in VR in close collaboration with the CTO
- Led market research, user interviews and usability testing to define personas + drive data-informed product decisions
- Delivered end-to-end accessible UI design, from concept through implementation and testing in Unity

The Linus Group - UX researcher (contract); April 2019 - June 2019

- Conducted market + user research to inform biotech augmented reality app design
- Synthesized interview data to create user personas + identify consumer pain points

YBVR - UX/UI designer (contract); March 2017 - April 2017

- Designed & developed a high-fidelity VR UI prototype for Samsung GearVR using Sketch, Unity for NAB Show 2017 + whitelabel client platforms

Ad tech industry - Product marketing manager, account manager; 2012 - 2017

- Spearheaded omnichannel campaigns across desktop, mobile, and CTV
- Served as the Subject Matter Expert (SME) for programmatic buying, optimizing workflows between buyers, publishers, and agencies
- Leveraged real-time ad serving verification software to drive performance and platform integrity.

FEATURED SPEAKER

- “Designing AI Game Characters” - Pasadena City College AI Conference; April 2026
- "Designing Content for VR Arcades: Lessons Learned" - XRDC; Oct. 2018
- "Bringing Characters to Life in Virtual Reality" - UX Strat / XD Immersive; Oct. 2018
- "Intro to 3D VR Design Software" - Cascade SF, CA; Oct. 2017

EDUCATION

General Assembly: User Experience Design; Nov 2016 - Feb. 2017
University of Silicon Valley: VR Development; Sept 2016 - Aug 2017
New York University: Bachelor of Arts - Advertising, Graphic Design

SKILLS

AI product design / Conversational UX / Prompt design / AI-assisted prototyping / AI-assisted coding / Cursor / Manus / Claude / ChatGPT / Figma / FigJam / Product strategy / Platform thinking / End-to-end product ownership / Cross-functional leadership / Front-end collaboration / Experimentation & A/B testing / Stakeholder management / Usability testing / Competitive analysis / Data synthesis + insight generation / Prototyping / Mobile design / Framer