

Ghazal Mojtahedi

PhD Researcher | Human-Centered Computing | Artist & Educator

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Human-Centered Computing

Spring 2026 – Present

University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), MD, USA

Research Interests: HCI, digital humanities, data visualization, accessibility and inclusive design, human-centered innovation, information justice, and the cultural dimensions of technology.

Master of Fine Arts in Intermedia and Digital Arts

2022 – 2025

University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), MD, USA

GPA: 3.83 / 4.0

- Research Assistant, fully funded, Graduate Assistantship
- Recipient of the Kathy O'Dell IMDA Award for Outstanding MFA Thesis

Thesis: Hanging Gardens and Echo of Home — multimedia installation on migration, memory, and belonging. Published in ProQuest Dissertations & Theses (ID: 31999149), 2025

Master of Arts in Painting

2016 – 2018

Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Tehran, Iran

GPA: 18.63 / 20

Thesis: The Representation of Death in Contemporary Art: A Visual and Theoretical Exploration

Bachelor of Arts in Scenic Design

2011 – 2015

Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Tehran, Iran

GPA: 18.32 / 20

Thesis: Paper Puppet Theatre: Eugène Ionesco's "Rhinoceros"

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Volunteer Research Assistant

Sep 2025 – Present

Designing Participatory Futures Lab, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC)

- Developed and experimented with NFC-based prototypes and mobile interactions to enhance hands-free accessibility experiences.
- Conducted a literature review on tactile and multisensory art for blind and visually impaired audiences in museum contexts.

Volunteer Researcher

2025

SynBio&Me Co-Design Workshop, UTEP–UMBC, BUGSS, Baltimore, MD

- Collaborated on a two-week NSF-funded biomaking workshop for 24 middle school participants at BUGSS, organized with UTEP, Loyola University Maryland, and UMBC.
- Managed audiovisual documentation, recording interviews and workshop sessions for subsequent qualitative analysis by the research team.
- Assisted with interviews, consent tracking, and observations to support ethical, community-based research on synthetic biology and co-design.

MFA Thesis Project — Hanging Gardens and Echo of Home

2022 – 2025

University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), MD, USA

- Conducted interdisciplinary research integrating migration studies, material culture, and digital media through qualitative interviews with Iranian students.
- Created a multimedia installation combining video projection, sculpture, and animation to explore identity, displacement, and belonging.
- Applied theoretical frameworks from Judith Butler, Edward Said, and E. Helmar Oberg to analyze livability, cultural identity, and stages of migration.

ACADEMIC AWARDS & GRANTS

- The Kathy O'Dell IMDA Award for Outstanding MFA Thesis and Exhibition | 2025
- Scholarly Development Fund, Dresher Center for the Humanities | 2024
- Best Costume Designer, The Wild Duck, 3rd University of Art and Architecture Theater Festival | 2013

SKILLS

Research & Methods: Qualitative methods, thematic analysis, grounded theory, contextual inquiry, interview design, data synthesis, literature review, grant writing, scholarly writing

HCI & Accessibility: Inclusive design, WCAG 2.1 AA compliance, ADA digital standards, assistive technologies, participatory design, user research, Silktide accessibility scanning

Software & Tools: Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects, Premiere Pro), Figma, MadMapper, TouchDesigner, Blender, AR/VR, Google Workspace, Microsoft Office

Digital & Intermedia Arts: Video production, projection mapping, motion graphics, 3D modeling, animation, digital installation, interactive media

Soft Skills: Leadership, collaboration, communication, creative problem-solving, adaptability, critical thinking, time management

WORK EXPERIENCE

Graduate Assistant — Digital Accessibility (GA)

2025 – Present

CommonVision Design & Print Center, UMBC | Sites Digital Accessibility Project, DoIT

- Serve as a Graduate Assistant on the UMBC Sites Digital Accessibility Remediation Project, working to ensure over 500 UMBC WordPress sites comply with WCAG 2.1 AA standards under Title II of the ADA.
- Audit and remediate websites for accessibility issues including missing alt text, color contrast violations, improper heading structure, and inaccessible PDFs and documents.
- Use Silktide accessibility scanning tools to identify, prioritize, and track remediation progress across UMBC Sites.
- Collaborate with site administrators, the DoIT project team, and disability services to support institution-wide digital inclusion goals.
- Apply knowledge of inclusive design, assistive technologies (screen readers, keyboard navigation), and ADA digital compliance to evaluate and improve usability for users with disabilities.

Multimedia Designer Technician

2022 – Present

CommonVision Design & Print Center, UMBC, Baltimore, MD

- Reviewed and remediated websites and digital documents to improve accessibility and ensure compliance with ADA and UMBC digital standards.
- Designed and printed posters, digital assets, and motion graphics for academic presentations, campus events, and exhibitions.
- Produced 3D-printed components and assisted students and faculty with fabrication, printing, and design support.
- Operated digital and large-format printers with precise color calibration and quality control.

Exhibition & Curatorial Coordinator Assistant

2022 – 2025

Center for Art, Design and Visual Culture (CADVC), Baltimore, MD

- Co-curated and coordinated 11 contemporary art exhibitions, overseeing layout, installation, and development of wall text.
- Developed public programs (talks, workshops, community events) to expand audience engagement.
- Digitized and cataloged two art collections and 50+ MFA works spanning 20+ years, along with CADVC's full archive of posters and promotional materials.
- Filmed, edited, and subtitled artist talks for two exhibitions to expand digital access and archival preservation.

Independent Film Projects — Director & Producer

2023 – 2025

Producer – Burial Permit | Tehran, Iran

- Managed production logistics and festival distribution.
- Short narrative on women's issues; selected by 10 international festivals including Maryland and Baku, and semifinalist at the Oscar-qualifying Rhode Island International Film Festival.

Director – Flight Among Shadows | Baltimore, USA

- Conducted interviews, co-directed, edited, and produced subtitles.
- Short documentary on student visa challenges; selected by 5 festivals and screened at UMD.

Director/Animator – Passport Tale | Baltimore, USA

- Created all illustration, animation, editing, and narrative design.
- Short experimental animation selected by 8 festivals in 4 countries; award-winning.

Creative and Collaborative Projects

2018 – 2025

Designer – Timeline of Theatre and Performance in Iran, Roshan Institute, UMD | 2025

- Created a visual timeline highlighting major developments in Iranian theatre for the Persian Studies Program.

Co-Creator – Your Story Belongs Here (UMBC Theatre) | 2023

- Produced short videos for an interdisciplinary project on identity, race, and belonging.

Founder – Noa Gallery, Iran | 2018–2022

- Founded and managed an independent handmade brand producing limited-edition designs.
- Designed product collections, managed branding, and distributed works through local art markets and online platforms.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Art Instructor

Sep 2025 – Present

Art with a Heart, Baltimore, MD, USA

- Deliver studio-based visual arts instruction to elementary, young adult, and senior learners in community programs.
- Provide inclusive, adaptive teaching using diverse techniques aligned with AWAH's mission of accessible arts education.
- Collaborate in adapting and delivering pre-planned lessons that support creativity, confidence, and community engagement.

Projection Mapping Instructor

2025

Dance & Bmore, Baltimore, MD, USA

- Led a four-day intensive workshop on projection mapping using MadMapper for live performance and interactive art.
- Taught participants hands-on techniques in digital projection, spatial installation, and creative software workflows.

Workshop Instructor

2025

Keswick Adult Living Center, Baltimore, MD, USA

- Led a three-session workshop, Carve. Print. Create., teaching woodblock carving and textile printing.
- Emphasized creativity, mindfulness, and accessible hands-on artmaking for adults and seniors.

Art Instructor

2020 – 2022

Homaye Mehr School of Visual Art, Alborz, Iran

- Taught art, printmaking, theatre, and performance to over 50 youth and adult students through studio and performance-based classes.

Theatre Instructor

2019 – 2022

Maha Talk Language Training Center & Armaghan High School, Alborz, Iran

- Taught English-language theatre to 3–6-year-olds in four classes of 10 using UC Irvine's early childhood theatre curriculum.
- Directed two student performances at Maha Talk with live audiences, contributing to a 30% increase in enrollment.
- Launched the program pre-COVID and adapted lessons for remote and hybrid learning.

Professional Development

- Art & Activity: Interactive Strategies for Engaging with Art, MoMA, 2025
- Teaching with Art: Using Inquiry, Activities, and Themes Specialization, MoMA, 2025

CERTIFICATES & TRAINING

- CITI Program, Social/Behavioral Research (Human Subjects) | 2025
- CITI Program, Health Information Privacy & Security | 2025
- AI for Work and Life, University of North Florida | 2025
- Google, Virtual Reality (VR) | 2024

- Coursera, UI Design | 2023

FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS

Flight Among Shadows (Short Documentary, Director & Producer) | 2024

- Jury's Award, FIAC, Mexico
- Special Jury Award, Tanizagam International Film Festival, India
- Honorable Mention, Aussie Gold Film Festival, Australia
- Top 3 Finalist, Athens International Monthly Film Festival, Greece

Passport Tale (Experimental, Director & Producer) | 2024

- Best Experimental Short, Mashkilbithaan International Film Festival, India
- Winner of the Season, Ural Shorts, Russia
- Top 3 Finalist, Athens International Monthly Film Festival, Greece
- Nominee, Couch Film Festival, Toronto, Canada

EXHIBITIONS & PUBLIC ART

- Hands of the Artists, Area 405 Gallery, Baltimore, MD, USA | 2025
- Wise & Well Art Show, Keswick, Baltimore, MD, USA | 2025
- Windows on Charles, Public Art Installation, Baltimore, MD, USA | 2025
- The Only Way Out Is Through: IMDA MFA Thesis Exhibition, CADVC, Baltimore, MD, USA | 2025
- Immigrant Contributions Mural, Public Art Installation, Baltimore, MD, USA | 2024
- Artscape 2024, Annual Arts Festival, Baltimore, MD, USA | 2024
- The Eighth Painting and Third Persian Garden Biennial, Municipal Gallery, Qazvin, Iran | 2022
- Sateen Visual Arts Recall, Cultural Center, Kish Island, Iran | 2022
- Sateen Visual Arts Recall, Art Space, Tehran, Iran | 2021
- Backpack Video Project, Online Screening curated by videoartist.ir, Tehran, Iran | 2021
- 5th Annual Painting Exhibition of Alborz Province, Cultural and Artistic Hall, Tehran, Iran | 2021
- Golden Autumn, Ehsan Gallery, Tehran, Iran | 2019
- Rooya Jamali's Artworks Exhibition (Live Performance), White Line Gallery, Tehran, Iran | 2018
- Printmaking & Painting Exhibition, Elaheh Gallery, Tehran, Iran | 2017

JUROR & SELECTION COMMITTEES

- Wake Forest Film Festival, North Carolina, USA | 2025
- Apexart Open Call Juror (Fall & Spring), New York, NY, USA | 2024
- Apexart Open Call Juror, New York, NY, USA | 2023

INVITED TALKS & PRESENTATIONS

Artist Q&A and Screening, Flight Among Shadows | University of Maryland, College Park | 2025

- Screening and discussion of artistic practice and documentary methodology with co-director Hashem Aliakbari.

Artist Talk, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies | University of Maryland, College Park | 2025

- Invited speaker at the Virtual Fall Welcome Event, presenting on artistic practice, migration, and the Iranian diaspora.

PRESS & INTERVIEWS

- BmoreArt, "Sweaty Eyeballs: Hands of the Artists," exhibition listing, USA | 2025
- IMDA.UMBC.edu, "Ghazal Mojtahedi is the 2025 Kathy O'Dell IMDA Award Winner." | 2025
- CADVC.UMBC.edu, "Featuring Ghazal Mojtahedi as one of five exhibiting artists." | 2025
- BmoreArt.com, "BmoreArt's Picks: March 25–31," USA | 2025
- HonarOnline.ir, "Interview with Ghazal Mojtahedi," Iran | 2019
- Theater Review, "Moza Moza: A Theatrical Critique on Corruption," Iran | 2019
- MehrNews.com, "Review of Moza Moza at the 15th Theater Critique Session," Iran | 2019

ADDITIONAL CREATIVE WORK

Freelance Costume & Set Designer (Theatre, Film & Television)

2013 – 2025

- Led set, costume, and prop design for 12+ theatre, film, and TV productions in Iran and the U.S., including six public shows at Silver Spring Black Box Theatre and Vahdat Hall.
- Recognized with Best Costume Designer Award for The Wild Duck at the 3rd University of Art and Architecture Theater Festival, Tehran.

Selected credits: Bmore Broadway Live (2025) · Jegar-e-Khoob, Silver Spring Black Box (2024) · Cold Blood TV Series (2022) · Blue Days TV Series (2020) · Moza Moza, Vahdat Hall (2019) · Oliver Twist Stage Opera, Vahdat Hall (2018) · The Wild Duck, Iranian Artists Forum (2013)