

Pierre Mikhiel

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EDUCATION

New York University Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi, UAE

B.A. in Interactive Media; Minors in Computer Science and Film & New Media

Graduation Date: May 2026

- *Relevant Coursework: VR Research and Applications, Designing Virtual Worlds, UX Design, Sound Technology, Data Structures, Algorithms, Virtual Body Performance.*

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Interactive Media NYUAD

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Machine Learning Research Assistant – ML5

Jan - Current

- Contribute to the development and creative application of ml5.js, an open-source, browser-based machine learning library built on TensorFlow.js.
- Design and prototype interactive, creative coding experiments that explore machine learning as a critical and artistic interface.
- Design a Machine Learning program that teaches ASL by recognizing hand gestures using HandPose.
- Develop visualizations and interfaces that communicate ML concepts to artists, educators, and students.

Aim Lab NYUAD

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Research Assistant – VR Emotion Induction Toolkit

May - Sep 2025

- Contributed to a modular VR toolbox designed to systematically induce and study the six universal emotions and stress.
- Led the design of the Anger module, engineering interactive scenarios that use social unfairness and time pressure to evoke measurable emotional responses.
- Designed and implemented the 3D environments and animation sequences in Unity, crafting the visual pacing, movement, and interaction cues needed to reliably evoke targeted emotional states.

Co-Author – vER: Virtual Human Companionship for Preoperative Care

- Designed virtual agents that leverage social presence to mitigate patient anxiety in simulated pre-operative hospital settings.
- Validated the agents' efficacy by conducting a pilot study that integrated biometric tracking with qualitative post-study surveys.
- Presented research findings at prestigious international venues, including the IMX ACM Conference 2025 and EMRN Barcelona 2025.

PROJECTS & INSTALLATIONS

- **Mondrian's Mirage – VR installation, Louvre Abu Dhabi**

Immersive VR environment inspired by Mondrian's compositions, allowing visitors to step inside shifting planes of color.

- **Whispers from the Depth – XR performance, NYUAD Black Box Theater**

XR dance performance where a motion-captured dancer's body is mapped to a virtual avatar projected behind her, appearing to dance on the souls of marine animals lost to pollution.

- **Beat-Hoven – Interactive music game (p5.js + Arduino), IM Showcase**

Playful music-making game that combines p5.js and Arduino, using beatboxing and physical interaction to build layered musical pieces in real time.

- **Alien Meta Rave – Live VR music performance, New York**

Live VR performance in which the audience sees only the performer's silhouette between projector and screen, dancing in a headset while a virtual rave world unfolds behind them.

- **Are You There? – Hybrid performance, La MaMa Studio (NYC)**
Hybrid live–digital performance blending projection, DJing, machine learning, and audience interaction to explore embodiment, virtual identity, and presence across physical and online space.
- **The Spiral – Large-scale sculpture, NYU New York**
Suspended wooden sculpture lit with RGB DMX fixtures arranged to cast overlapping colored shadows, transforming the form through shifting light and shadow.
- **Future of Rights of Nature – Sustainability diplomacy project, Swissnex**
Top 10 globally in a Swissnex-hosted sustainability diplomacy competition exploring environmental governance and Rights of Nature.

PRESENTATIONS & CONFERENCES

- **IMX ACM (2025)** – "Virtual Companions in Preoperative VR"
- **EMRN Conference, Barcelona (2025)** – "Affective Presence in Immersive Tech"
- **Louvre Abu Dhabi (2024)** – VR immersive experience
- **ArtsIT2024** - Assisted in organizing the event, and covered the digital documentation including photography and media management.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Mental.ae **Abu Dhabi, UAE**
Internship *Nov - Jan 2025*

- Performed QA testing on interactive food safety training modules, documenting key UX issues and informing design revisions that streamlined learner navigation.
- Used Cinemachine in Unity 3D to create dynamic camera systems and cinematic sequences that increased immersion in training simulations.

NYU Housing **Abu Dhabi**
Residential Assistant *Aug - Nov 2023 & Aug 2025 - Present*

- Executed diverse social and educational events to foster an inclusive and engaged residential community.
- Advised students on academic and personal concerns, connecting them with key university resources to support their overall well-being.

NYU Athletics Center **Shanghai**
Fitness Assistant coach *Jan- May 2024*

- Guided patrons on the safe and effective use of fitness equipment to maximize workout results and prevent injury.
- Developed and led wellness activities and group fitness sessions to promote a campus-wide culture of health and well-being.

SKILLS & INTERESTS

- **Technical / Programming** (C#, Python, JS, C++, Arduino, p5.js)
- **Creative / Production Tools** (Unity3D, Blender, DaVinci Resolve, Ableton, QLC+, OBS)
- **Frameworks** (XR Interaction Toolkit, FaceMesh, Arduino IDE)
- **Other:** Biometric integration (Motion capturing), Performance design, Creative coding
- **Languages:** Arabic, English
- **Volunteering:** Over 200 hours of volunteering in event management for international events

Interests: Passionate about designing emotionally resonant XR experiences by weaving together VR, kinetic hardware, Light, Sound, and interactive software to push the boundaries of immersive storytelling.