

ILYA IVANOV

LEAD GAME DESIGNER · GAME DIRECTOR

Moscow · Remote / Hybrid

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PROFILE

Lead Game Designer with 6+ years of experience in gameplay systems, combat, enemy design, and first-time player experience. I define game direction, connect combat, enemies, progression, and exploration into a cohesive experience, and carry decisions from concept and documentation into a playable build. Experienced in leading design teams and cross-functional production across PC, console, and VR projects.

CORE EXPERTISE

Game Direction and Systems Design · 3C, Combat Design, and Game Feel

Enemy / AI Design, Behavior Trees, FSM · FTUE, UX Audits, and Playtesting

Player Progression and Quest Design · Team Leadership and Mentoring

Prototyping in Unreal Engine 5 and Unity · Feature Documentation and Task Definition

EXPERIENCE

WATT STUDIO JUL 2025 — JUN 2026

Lead Game Designer (Systems & Combat) · GRIMPS

FPS Action-Adventure · PC / Console · Production

- Led a concept pivot and established a unified game direction across combat, exploration, and progression.
- Developed 3C and combat feel; following multiple playtests, reworked weapons, enemy reactions, and impact feedback until complaints about weak hit response stopped recurring.
- Designed the Combat Director: enemy roles, active-attacker limits, and rules for readable group encounters.
- Defined the systemic role of the pigeon companion as narrator, onboarding tool, and source of abilities for combat, exploration, and puzzles.
- Helped ship a production-quality Steam demo in six months: 30-minute target length, 36+ minute median playtime, 4/5 playtest score, and 20k+ views on the IGN video.

CLAPPER-HEADS DEC 2024 — DEC 2025

AI / Enemy Designer · Zoochosis

First-Person Horror Simulator · PC / Console · Post-release

- Reworked combat and enemy behavior for five bosses, improving the readability of attacks and combat situations.
- Implemented behavior through Behavior Trees, Blackboards, and FSMs: patrol, aggression, evasion, navigation, and player reactions.
- Contributed to three major post-release updates; the Steam user rating recovered to Mostly Positive.

GFA GAMES AUG — OCT 2024

Game Designer / UX & FTUE · PIONER

Action MMORPG · PC · Early Access

- Audited the FTUE across pacing, navigation, objective clarity, learning sequence, and world interaction rules.
- Reworked the wolf-chase sequence — staging, route, pack behavior, and audiovisual guidance — reducing exits during the episode by 15%.
- Defined tasks for engineering, level design, animation, environment art, UI, and audio; supported changes through implementation and retesting.

HYPETRAIN DIGITAL SEP 2022 — MAY 2024

Lead Game Designer · Breathedge: Cosmic Cluck

FPS Action-Adventure · VR / Oculus Quest · Released

- Owned game direction across a full 18-month production cycle, from concept and system rules through release and support.
- Led a team of 5+ designers and handled hiring, team development, and product-wide design alignment.
- Established rules for quests, level design, combat, and enemy behavior; contributed to balancing and A/B testing.
- Improved cross-team communication and supported the release of multiple free DLC updates.

ITHUB GAMES MAY 2022 — AUG 2024

Lead Game Designer

VR, Web, and Casual Games

- Led the design team and owned concepts, prototypes, gameplay systems, and design documentation.
- Coordinated development with engineering, art, and audio; ran testing, market analysis, and post-release support.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

MEPhI · Game Designer / Producer · 2020–2022. Led an educational VR platform that prepared students to work with a quantum encryption training setup.

IGN · Game Designer / Producer · 2021. Shipped a browser game that reached 17k+ players in its first week without paid marketing.

Sber · Unity/C# Intern · 2019–2020. Built an MVP VR application for post-stroke neurorehabilitation; tested it with clinicians and tracked cognitive-function metrics.

TOOLS & SKILLS

Unreal Engine 5 · Unity · Blueprint · Behavior Tree · Blackboard · FSM · NavMesh · Git · Jira · Miro · A/B Testing · PC · Console · VR

EDUCATION

Moscow University of Psychology and Social Sciences · Law · 2021

School 21 / École 42 · Digital Technologies · 2022

LANGUAGES

Russian — Native · English — B1