

Pietro Righi Riva, PhD

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Game director, producer, and curator specializing in narrative-driven, innovative games for a broad audience. Experienced in leading successful multidisciplinary, diverse, and international teams of various sizes, ensuring excellence despite budget and scheduling constraints. Notable achievements include bringing multiple award-winning, commercially successful games to market.

Work Experience

2010-2024 **Santa Ragione**, Milan, Italy santaragione.com

I co-founded & directed Santa Ragione, a design studio dedicated to the development of commercial, innovative games based on original IPs. At Santa Ragione I acted as director, producer, and business developer. On the biz dev side, I secured multiple funding and promotional opportunities with Apple, Epic, PlayStation, Xbox, and Humble, among others.

2016-2022 **Triennale di Milano**, Milan, Italy triennale.org/game-collection

I directed and curated multiple events that were part of the XXI and XXIII Triennale International Exhibitions, including the Triennale Game Collection.

2016-2023 **Horrible Guild**, Milan, Italy horribleguild.com

I directed digital products and acted as producer for all the *board to digital* game adaptations.

Studies

2014, **Ph.D Design School - Politecnico di Milano**, Milan, Italy phd.design.polimi.it

Ph.D in Interaction Design at Milan's Polytechnic. I joined the research laboratory for "Studies on Interaction and Perception", directed by professors Dr. Margherita Pillan and Dr. Marco Maiocchi. My thesis, "Designing Playful Artifacts", researched using cognitive science as inspiration for game design to create meaningful games that are not task-oriented. Dr. Dan Pinchbeck, author of the award-winning narrative games *Dear Esther* and *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture*, was outside examiner on the doctoral defense.

2009, **Politecnico di Milano**, Milan, Italy polimi.it

Master's Degree in Communication Design, magna cum laude.

2007, **Politecnico di Milano**, Milan, Italy polimi.it

Bachelor's Degree in Communication Design.

During my university studies, I participated in several international exchange programs. In 2006, I studied at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in Spain. In 2008, I attended the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. In 2011, I studied at the Shanghai Theater Academy in China.

Notable Teaching Experience & Conferences

Game Developers Conference (GDC), San Francisco, CA, USA gdconf.com

In 2024, I presented the "Saturnalia Postmortem", outlining the radical changes in scope, design and looks that allowed our team to fund and ship the game after three years of pitching to more than ninety publishers. The talk highlights the design challenges of our multi-character proc-narrative rogue-lite exploration-driven title, including a mid-development shift from first to third-person. A video of the talk is available [here](#).

Game Arts International Assembly, Buenos Aires, Argentina / Toronto, Canada gaiasymposium.net

In 2019 and 2023 I contributed to the symposia with a lecture on my experience as game curator, and a workshop on designing a game exhibition around a themed, pre-made selection of titles.

IULM University, Milan, Italy gamedesign.university

From 2017 to 2021, I designed and curated the M.A. in Game Design by selecting and coordinating the best international independent game authors to come to Milan and tutor the students' projects. Multiple student projects have been selected as finalists for international festivals, and were eventually published commercially on PC and consoles. For the M.A. I also taught the production and planning class.

Umberto Eco Center for International Studies, Bologna, Italy cue.unibo.it/eventi

In 2018, I presented the talk "*The problem with Interactive Adaptations*" on how to adapt linear stories to non-linear media at the conference about semiotics and adaptations organized by the Umberto Eco Center for International Studies.

Notable Awards & Exhibitions

Independent Game Festival (IGF), San Francisco, CA, USA igf.com

In 2024 *Mediterranea Inferno* won the Excellence in Narrative award and was nominated for the Seumas McNally Grand Prize, and the Nuovo Award. In 2022, *Saturnalia* received two honorable mentions both for the Seumas McNally Grand Prize and the Excellence in Visual Art award.

DStars Awards, dstars.it/dstars-awards/

In 2023 I was awarded the Production Star award. In 2024 Santa Ragione won the Studio of the Year award and *Mediterranea Inferno* won the Game of the Year award.

Italian Video Games Awards, Florence, Italy firstplayable.it/italian-video-game-awards

In 2024, *Mediterranea Inferno* won the Best Italian Game award, as well as the Outstanding Experience award. In 2023, *Saturnalia* won the Best Innovation award, and was also nominated for Best Italian Game. In 2021 Santa Ragione won the Outstanding Italian Company award.

IndieCade Award, Los Angeles, CA, USA indiecade.com/awards5/2018-awards

In 2018, my solo project, *Asta Grande*, an interactive performance and crowd game inspired by art auctions, won the Innovation in Experience Design Award. The game was originally commissioned by NYU for their annual No Quarter exhibition.

Biennale di Venezia, 54th International Biennial of Art - Venice, Italy labiennale.it

I participated in a collateral event of the 54th Biennial of Arts called "Neoludica", an exhibition about the role of video games in arts, and the use of games as a medium. A special version of my video game "FOTONICA", called "Fotonica #0", was on showcase until the end of October 2011.

Technical Skills

Languages: Native Italian speaker, full professional proficiency in English, limited working proficiency in Spanish, and elementary proficiency in French.

Production Methodologies and Tools: Familiar with Agile, Scrum, Jira, Trello, Codecks, Asana, Subversion, Git, Slack, and Cacao.

Creative Tools: Familiar with Adobe Suite, Affinity Suite, Final Cut, and Blocs.

Engines and Programming, Scripting and Markup Languages: Familiar with Unity, Unreal (fellowship pending), Twine, C#, PHP, MySQL, Javascript, HTML, and CSS.

Game Credits

Year	Title	Platforms	Director	Producer	Coder	Key Accolades
2023	Mediterranea Inferno	PS4/5, Xbox Series, Switch, Steam		Yes		8/10 from Edge Magazine, 84 on Metacritic, 2024 IGF winner of the Excellence in Narrative Award, and nominated for Nuovo Award and the Seamus McNally Grand Prize.
2023	The King's Dilemma: Chronicles *	Steam, iOS		Yes		
2022	Saturnalia	PS4/5, Xbox Series, Switch, Steam	Yes	Yes		8/10 from Edge Magazine, 80 on Metacritic, 2022 IGF honorable mention for Excellence in Visual Art and Grand Prize, winner of Best Innovation at the 2023 IVGA.
2021	Railroad Ink Challenge *	iOS, Android, Steam	Yes	Yes		
2021	Similo: The Card Game *	iOS, Android, Steam	Yes	Yes		
2020	Milky Way Prince – The Vampire Star	PS4/5, Xbox Series, Switch, Steam		Yes		
2020	Vampire: The Masquerade – Vendetta *	Board game		Yes	N/A	From designers Bruno Faidutti (<i>Citadels</i>) and Charlie Cleveland (<i>Subnautica</i>), based on the <i>Vampire the Masquerade</i> IP.
2019	Dragon Castle: The Board Game *	iOS, Android, Steam		Yes		
2018	Potion Explosion *	iOS, Android, Steam		Yes		
2017	ASTA GRANDE	Performance Game	Yes	Yes	Yes	Winner of the IndieCade 2018 Innovation in Experience Design award, originally commissioned by the NYU Game Center for the 2017 No Quarter exhibition.
2016	Wheels of Aurelia	PS4, Xbox One, Switch, Steam	Yes	Yes	Yes	2016 IndieCade finalist, 2016 A Maze Grand Prize finalist, 2017 IGF Nuovo Award honorable mention
2014	FOTONICA	iOS, Android, Steam	Yes	Yes	Yes	App Store best of 2014, featured at the 54th Venice Biennale, 2015 IGF Excellence in Audio honorable mention.
2013	MirrorMoon EP	Steam	Yes	Yes	Yes	2013 IGF Nuovo Award finalist, Eurogamer 9/10, 2013 Fantastic Arcade selection, 2014 SXSW Gamer's Voice Award nominee.
2011	Escape from the Aliens in Outer Space	Board game	Yes	Yes	N/A	2011 Diana Jones Award for Excellence in Gaming nomination, Ultimate Edition published by Bloomsbury.

*Produced by board game publisher Horrible Guild

End of document, an exhaustive CV is available [here](#).