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**Impactful Solutions**

## **Design Thinking in e-culture crowdsourcing platform** "2gether Case Study"



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The worth and benefits of the **design thinking approach** in the last decade keep growing and spreading across various fields that traditionally weren't even considered to be part of the new digital era. But, as the trends and consumer needs are ever-changing, design thinking was tested in the e-culture as well, with more than positive results. One such case was also the 2gether project.

## Get to know e-culture, 2gether

The idea was inspired by the general strategy that the European Union and its organisations set to abandon the traditional passive ways of presenting cultural heritage, and rather deliver alternative and more attractive digital methods to promote it. And although many have already tried this approach, what makes 2gether stand out is that it initiates the **active participation** of both artists and common people from Greece and abroad, who wish to either enjoy or create art with new digital tools.

With its **cutting-edge and state-of-the-art technological-conceptual framework** and **communication strategies**, 2gether gives access to the general public art. Through the eyes and work of modern artists and people of all backgrounds, ages, and ethnicities, 2gether, **re-establishes what it means to communicate with an art audience and promotes cultural heritage in the digital era.**

The project was delivered by a partnership among the Metropolitan Organisation of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki – **MOMus** (<https://www.momus.gr/>), the Information Technologies Institute (**ITI**) of the Centre of Research and Technology Hellas **CERTH** (<https://www.certh.gr/root.en.aspx>), and the Digital Solutions company **Hypertech S.A.** (<https://www.hypertech.gr/>).

As one of the project's goals was to enhance people's ability to be active members of the art community and allow the teams to reinvent the art world in the 21st with no geographical barriers, 2gether products were separated strategically.

Based on specific planning and methodology that spread to the 3 years duration of 2gether, the three partners presented a **Crowdsourcing platform** and a **3D walkthrough of the MOMus**. The project was launched in February 2020, funded by the Greek National General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT), and finished in January 2023.

Below follows a specific analysis focused only on the crowdsourcing platform to purely present all the steps the teams followed in its development following the design thinking approach.

## The goal and functionality of the crowdsourcing platform

The goal of the platform was to facilitate **user-generated content** with a **storytelling approach** and become a place where people could express themselves artistically. With that in mind, the platform ended up including different sections that reflect the needs of both artistic people and art enthusiasts.

Specifically, **artists** have their own space to upload their works of art and seamlessly share them with the rest of the world on the platform and their social media. At the same time, **general visitors** can explore new artists and their work, while both user categories can 'play' the role of a **curator** through the digital exhibitions that can be created within a web museum on the platform.

## Ideology and the execution of the framework

The whole platform design and development was based on the **Design Thinking ideology and its framework** that circles around the **user-centric approach** to problem-solving. This is a hands-on approach that helped the teams to focus on its 3 main phases (**Understand, Explore, Materialise**) and consequently to their **6 distinct sub-phases** to remain aligned on the end goal; to deliver extraordinary experiences to the end users.

## Understand

The overall flow started with the **1) Understanding** phase where the teams were challenged to conduct research (**Emphasise**) that would reveal more knowledge about who the end users are and what they need. For the most part, **research** was based on **MOMus web analytics deconstruction, competition analysis** as well as **open, yet guided, interviews with MOMus Museums executives and key staff**, who daily communicate with the museum's visitors and record their requests, possible issues, things they get excited about, things that frustrate them and, in general, any possible feedback they have given them since the establishment of the organisation.

The results pinpointed all the needs (**Define**) the potential users have and the problems that current similar solutions don't yet cover. This resulted in a tsunami of briefs that highlighted **innovation opportunities** for the teams involved in both technology and concepts. A crucial part of that phase, to better understand the user types, was to define the **Personas**. The three main types that occurred were the **Artists, the General Visitors**, and, as the platform had to be validated by an actual art/museum professional who would approve all the website content (works of art and exhibitions), the **MOMus Curators**. All personas were deeply analysed developing specific **use cases** that unveil their journey from the moment they learn about the platform till the time they personal goal on it, which is different for each persona, is met.

## Explore

Stepping into the **2) Exploration** phase, the team started to brainstorm and **Ideate** solutions for the discovered user needs. After rounds and rounds of suggestions, briefs, mixes, matches, sketches, etc., it was about time to start building the more obvious and solid solution that occurred and could be properly tested at the time.

Based on the above, the teams stepped into the **information architecture and navigation organisation** for all three user categories of the crowdsourcing platform, giving answers to questions like *'what information they need to know about the platform, what would be the difference between the logged-in user and the visitor, what would the processes be to upload a work of art or to create a digital exhibition, what the artist's profile should include and all the steps and functionalities that should lead them towards a successful journey on the platform'*.

ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΟΝΙΚΗ ΤΗΣ ΔΟΜΗΣ ΤΟΥ ΔΙΑΔΥΚΤΙΑΚΟΥ ΤΟΠΟΥ	
ΣΥΝΔΕΔΕΜΕΝΟΣ ΧΡΗΣΤΗΣ / LOGGED IN USER	
<b>Σύνδεση χρήστη</b>	
	Σύνδεση χρήστη με email & κωδικό πρόσβασης
	Εναλλακτικά login με social media google & facebook
<b>Διαχείριση προφίλ</b>	
	Όνομα, ημ. Γέννησης
	Δυνατότητα διαγραφής λογαριασμού
<b>Μεταφόρτωση έργου</b>	
	Όριο μεταφόρτωσης 5 έργων (ανεξαρτήτως διαγραφής κάποιων ή όχι)
	Ειδοποίηση αρίου μεταφόρτωσης έργων
	Προσθήκη τίτλου στο έργο
	Προσθήκη περιγραφικού κειμένου στο κάθε έργο (max 250 λέξεις)
	Προσθήκη ημερομηνίας έργου
	Προσθήκη διαστάσεων έργου κατω από την ημερομηνία
	Προσθήκη tags
	Προσθήκη πληροφοριών του έργου στα αγγλικά.
	Δυνατότητα επιλογής εγκεκριμένου έργου για προσθήκη σε συγκεκριμένη έκθεση πληθοπορισμού (webmuseum)
	Ταμπλό ειδοποιήσεων (για τα έργα που εγκρίθηκαν)

Image 1. Fragment from the Information Architecture documentation of the Logged-in user

**Wireframing** was the next natural step to follow in the **Prototype** phase. The initial designs were starting to form and the user interface was a reality to hold and review with both internal and external stakeholders. **Low-mid fidelity wireframes** were designed for all user types in a way to be easily adjusted in case tests proved they don't cover their needs or

aren't structured to ensure a satisfying customer experience. Specific **design components** were used to ensure all designs were **responsive on various devices** e.g., mobiles and tablets.

At this point, an obvious issue occurred regarding the platform's identity. Therefore, based on the research performed, everything from **content tone to typography, colors** were decided. These, alongside **buttons, image inputs, cards inputs, toggles and selectors, forms, viewports**, etc., were pre-defined and organised in the platform's **Styleguide**.

From there, the platform's initial identity was developed in terms of branding and Ui, resulting in **High fidelity designs** for what turned out to be only Concept A. Still, this part was crucial to realise all goals weren't met and the teams couldn't move further to the more complicated part of the technical development.

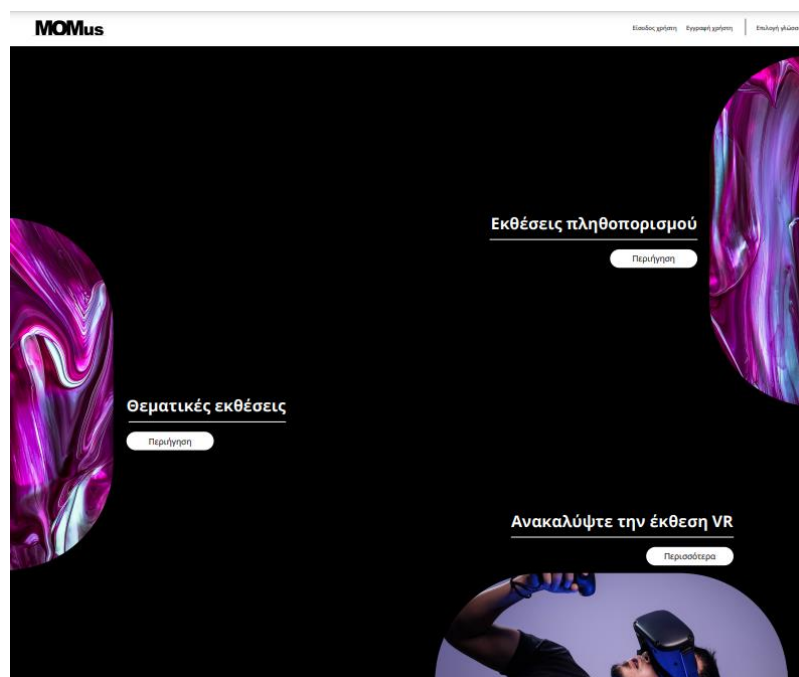


Image 2. Concept A, an example of a homepage

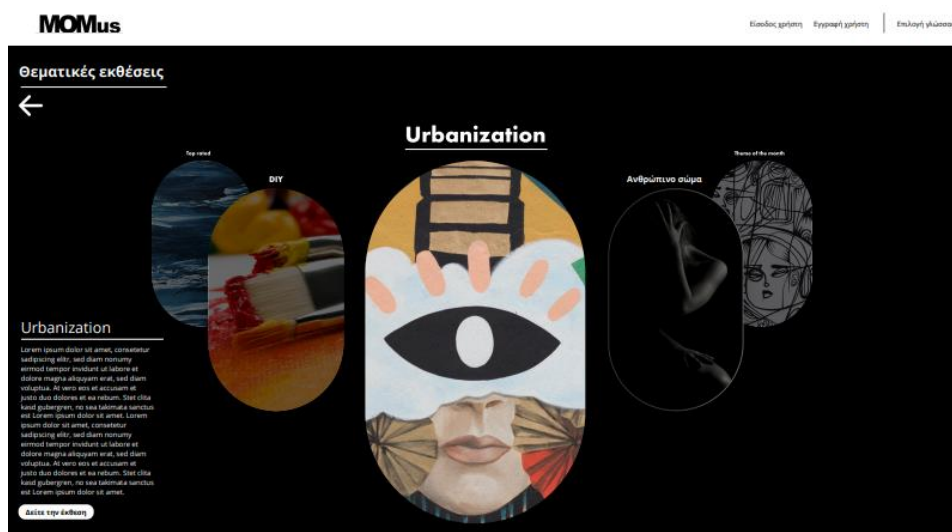


Image 3. Concept A, an example of an exhibition page

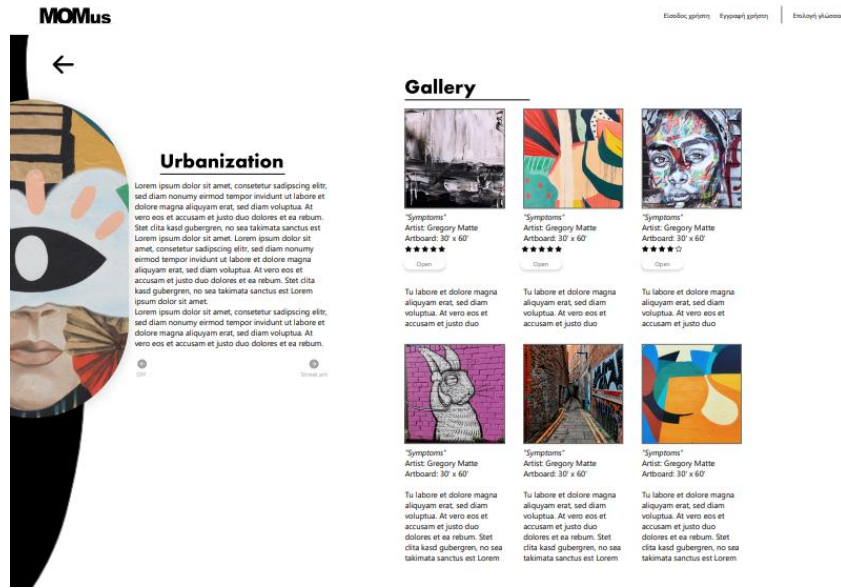


Image 4. Concept A, an example of a gallery

## Materialise

Soon after **Testing** Concept A designs, both internal and external stakeholders' feedback was proving that the way the platform was structured wasn't clearly stating the users' categories and covering their needs and journeys. Aspiring the **Agile philosophy**, the teams invested in the **framework's flexibility** and all **pivoted** and stepped back in the Design Thinking process to the wireframes. Once again, a new approach had taken place and created two solutions that seemed way more satisfying than the initial one in terms of **both processes/functionalities (Ux) and its image (Ui)**.

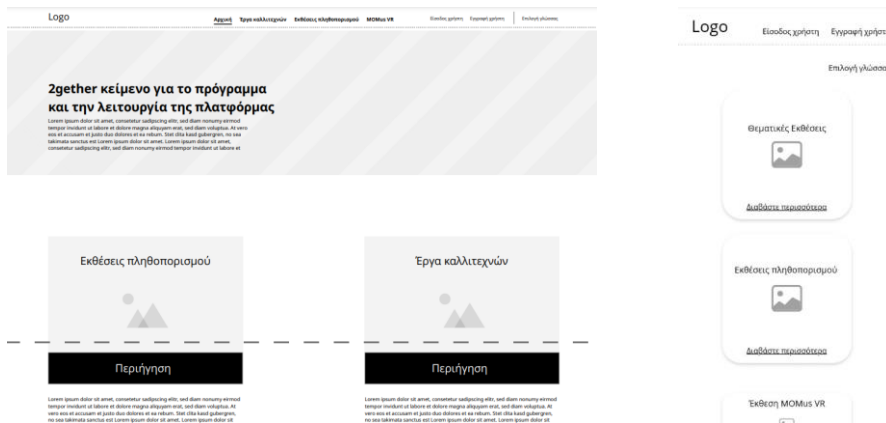


Image 5. Concept B, an example of web and mobile low-fidelity wireframes

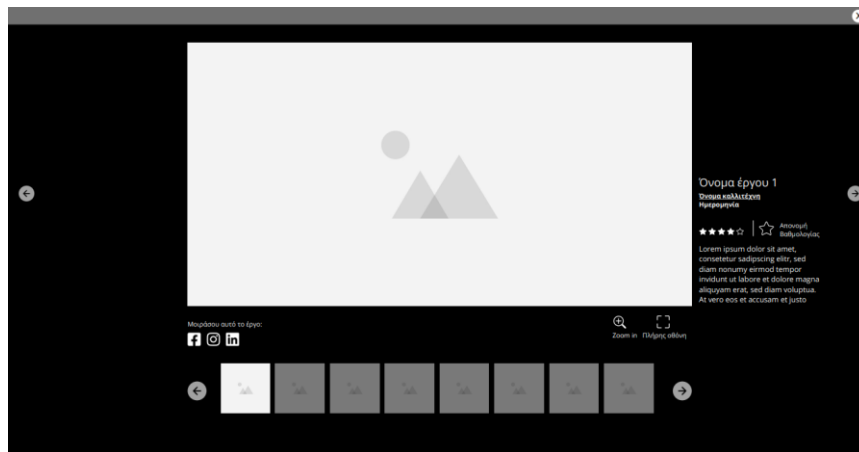


Image 6. Concept B, an example of gallery functionality in low-fidelity wireframes

Both concepts B and C made it to the high-fidelity designs to be tested again and see which was meant to go further in the development process.

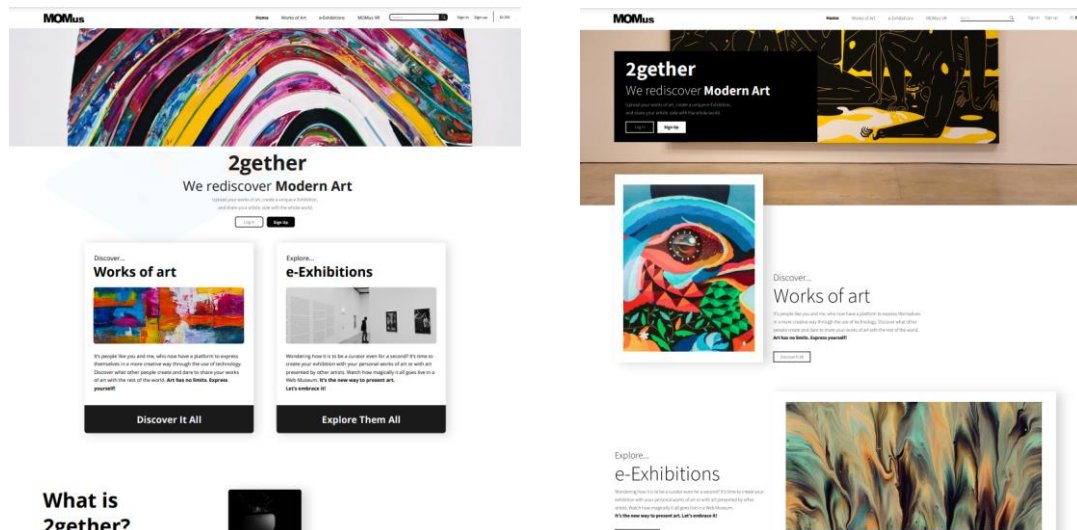


Image 7. Concepts B and C, are examples of high-fidelity web homepages

With slight iterations Concept B was chosen by gaining more points in the 'competition' and the final **Styleguide** was designed with new exciting details incorporated.

## 2gether Styleguide

Page 1

### Colours

#### Primary colours



Black

#000000



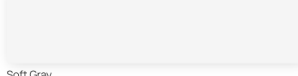
White

#FFFFFF



Gray

#808080



Soft Gray

#A9A9A9

### Typography

# Aa

Manrope

Weights:

Extra Light

Light

Regular

Medium

Bold

Paragraph:

"The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog"

#### Heading 1

Weight: Extra Bold

Font size: 75

Line height: 96

Character spacing: 0

#### Heading 2

Weight: Extra Bold

Font size: 60

Line height: 72

Character spacing: 0

#### Heading 2 regular

Weight: Regular

Font size: 60

Line height: 72

Character spacing: 0

#### Heading 3

Weight: Extra Bold

Font size: 35

Line height: 45

Character spacing: 0

#### Heading 3 regular

Weight: Light

Font size: 35

Line height: 45

Character spacing: 0

#### Heading 4

Weight: Light

Font size: 24

Line height: 32

Character spacing: 0

#### Body/Paragraph text

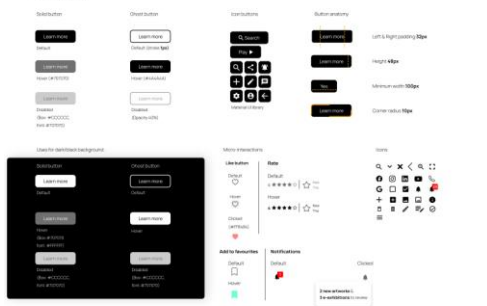
Weight: Light

Font size: 18

Line height: 30

Character spacing: 0

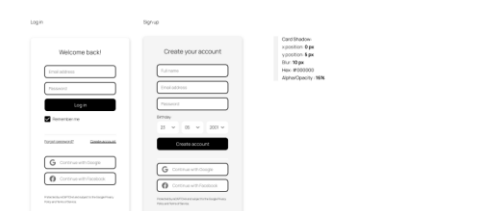
### Buttons



### Toggles & Selectors



### Log In - Sign Up forms



### Image inputs

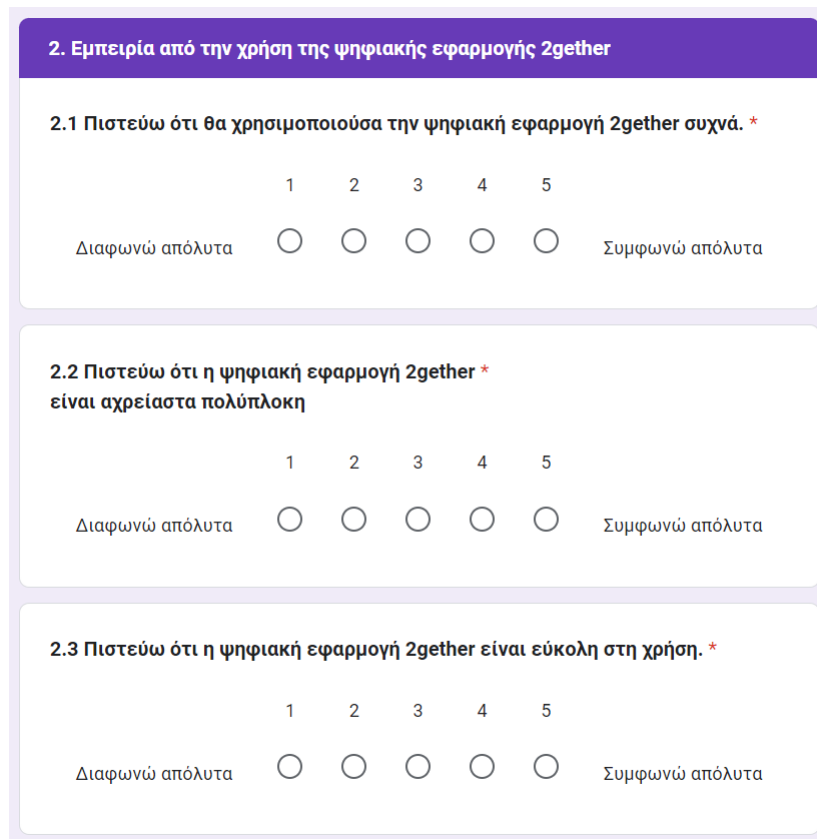


Image 8. Final Product fragments from the Styleguide

The **implementation** of the product was a fact and a reason for celebration but, once again, the final product had to be tested not only by the **1. technical teams** and the **2. museum curators** but by the **3. actual end users in a more realistic environment**. Therefore, the platform was initially launched and promoted in a **BETA version**.

For **usability testing** purposes, the teams relied on the **System Usability Scale (SUS)** tool. It was set up on **Google Forms**, linked to each user's profile on the platform, and communicated through MOMus newsletter and social media. The goal of the testing was to check everything, from the environment and digital tools, to the actual product value.





The image shows three fragments of a usability testing questionnaire. Each fragment contains a question in Greek, a 5-point Likert scale, and radio button options for 'Disagree completely' and 'Agree completely'.

**2. Εμπειρία από την χρήση της ψηφιακής εφαρμογής 2gether**

**2.1 Πιστεύω ότι θα χρησιμοποιούσα την ψηφιακή εφαρμογή 2gether συχνά. \***

1 2 3 4 5

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα      Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**2.2 Πιστεύω ότι η ψηφιακή εφαρμογή 2gether \* είναι αχρείαστα πολύπλοκη**

1 2 3 4 5

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα      Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

**2.3 Πιστεύω ότι η ψηφιακή εφαρμογή 2gether είναι εύκολη στη χρήση. \***

1 2 3 4 5

Διαφωνώ απόλυτα      Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

Image 9. Fragments from the usability testing questionnaire

The users' acceptance was more than enthusiastic with far more positive than negative feedback. Small details and changes were done to ensure a seamless flow and the final product was finally successfully launched on January 2023 for all people to explore their creativity and embrace this new way of **connecting with culture through digital tools for free**.

The platform already counts several users in its first weeks and hopes to bring more aspiring artists and art/tech enthusiasts to give it a try.



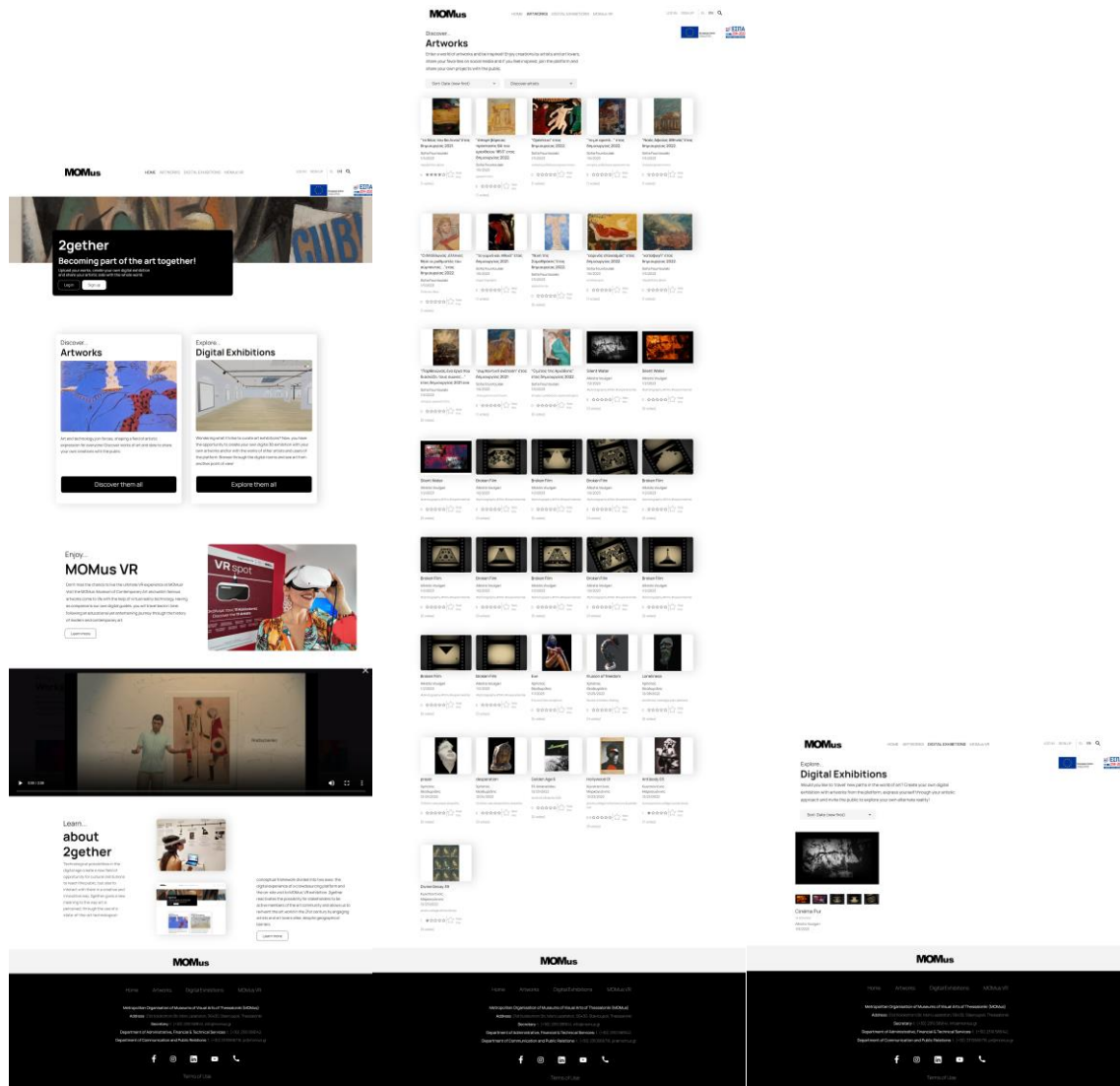
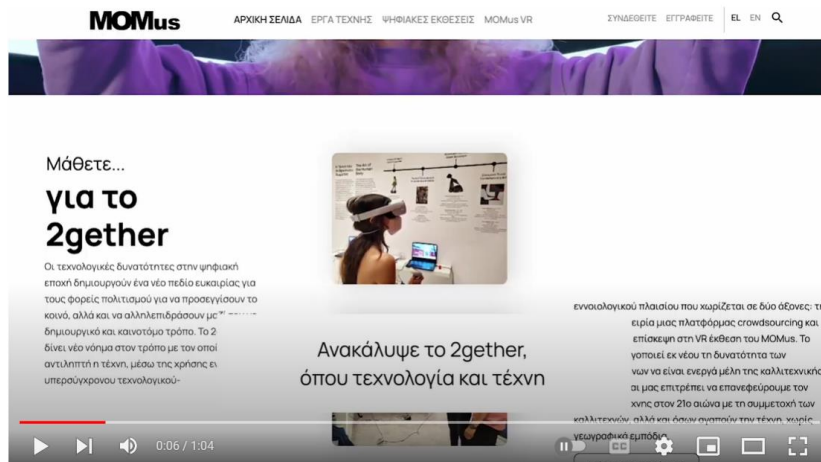


Image 10. Final Product's actual homepage, artwork, and exhibition pages

Learn more about the 2gether project and enjoy the [crowdsourcing platform](#) and the [VR spot](#).



# Hypertech



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