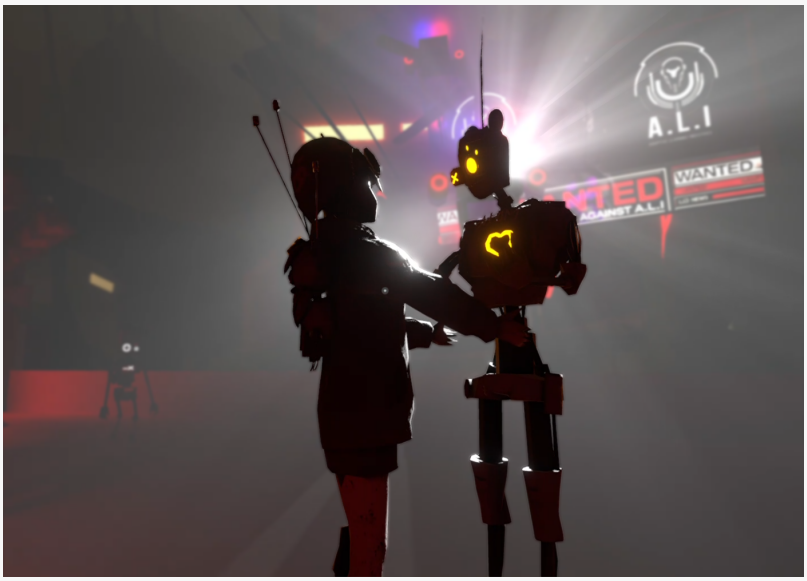
Uncanny Alley: A New Day earns Emmy Win for Outstanding Emerging Media Program

Defying the Odds, Uncanny Alley: A New Day this artist led team creates performances that can never happen exactly the same way twice.



Gh0st and Atom share a moment under surveillance in Uncanny Alley: A New Day, a live VR theatre show by Ferryman Collective and Virtual Worlds Company.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, September 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a major upset Uncanny Alley: A New Day, a scrappy, artist-led immersive experience created by Ferryman Collective and Virtual Worlds Company distributed inside a social VR platform, VRChat has taken home the Emmy for Outstanding Emerging Media Program at the 78th Emmy Awards.

A true underdog story, Uncanny Alley: A New Day came from a small, artist-led nonprofit team working in live VR theatre, competing in Outstanding Emerging Media Program against projects backed by major entertainment companies including Blumhouse and Amazon/Bethesda. That contrast makes the recognition especially meaningful: an independent live theatrical production, built through collaboration, ingenuity, and years of experimentation, stood alongside some of the biggest names in entertainment and proved that emerging media can still be driven by artists.

> “It is co-creation, but with a strong theatrical foundation underneath it, the script protects the story. The audience makes it alive.”
>
> *-Deirdre V Lyons, Ferryman Collective Artistic Director*

At the heart of the production is a deceptively simple idea: the audience is one of the most important characters in the show. Existing somewhere between theater, cinema, and games, audiences become part of a narrative, interacting directly with actors whose performances evolve in real time.

Uncanny Alley: A New Day grew out of the Uncanny Alley universe, created by Rick Treweek (aka

MetaRick). The groundbreaking live performance is co-created by Stephen Butchko and Rick Treweek's story IP and distinctive world building as a collaboration between their respective companies, Ferryman Collective (USA) and Virtual Worlds Company (South Africa). The theatrical writing-directing was helmed by Ferryman co-founding duo Stephen Butchko and Deirdre V. Lyons and Ferryman's Technical Director Christopher Lane Davis (aka Screaming Color) optimized and expanded Uncanny Alley: A New Day's environment, adding original visual effects, music and performance UI.



The Uncanney Alley team at the 81st Venice Biennale



Gh0st, stationed in her hacker den, directs the recently freed prisoners to activate the Electronic Pulse Generator, a desperate attempt to revive her friend, Atom.

"We know where the story begins and where it ends, but the audience determines so much about the journey between those points," says Whitton Frank, co-founder and development director for Ferryman Collective. "We want people to feel that their presence matters. When they give us something, we accept that gift, make it part of the performance, and continue the story."

Set in a cinematic cyberpunk world built with the Unity game engine and then performed in VRChat, Uncanny Alley: A New Day begins with audiences in prison after protesting at a rally against the impending New Day update to their world. When hacker Gh0st enlists her megabyte friend, Puck, to trigger an explosive jailbreak, audiences are thrust into a journey through a whimsical, dangerous, and unexpectedly human virtual world. Two actors portray 15 characters in real time, inviting audiences to speak directly with performers and interact with the world around them, as embodied characters inside the story.

Since its world premiere at Venice Immersive, Uncanny Alley: A New Day has been presented at leading international festivals including SXSW, Raindance Immersive, NewImages Festival and Augmented World Expo. The VRChat worlds for Ferryman Collective and Virtual Worlds Company boast almost 750,000 visitors, which rivals the average audience of a Broadway play.

That balance between structure and unpredictability is central to Ferryman Collective's approach to live performance in virtual reality. The audience is given considerable freedom to decide where to look, what to explore, when to speak, and how deeply to engage. Rather than restricting that agency, the production uses theatrical and environmental design to guide attention naturally back toward the unfolding story. The result is neither a traditional play nor an open-world game.

A Different Kind of Liveness:
For Ferryman Collective, the unpredictability of the audience is not a problem to be solved. It is the source of the performance's liveness.
Each performance reaches the same story destination, but no two journeys are identical.

A Theatre Without a Traditional Building:
Most performances take place remotely, with actors and audiences joining from different locations around the world. Participants may be standing in a bedroom, office, living room, or other familiar space when they put on a headset. Seconds later, they are standing beside strangers, friends, family members, and live performers inside the world of Uncanny Alley: A New Day. That combination of physical privacy and shared virtual presence can create an unusual sense of freedom. Audience members arrive from different countries and time zones, often without knowing one another, and leave having shared a story together.

"Every audience gives the show something we could never script," says Brendan Bradley, a company performer "Our job is to catch it, honor it, and weave it back into the story."

FERRYMAN COLLECTIVE is a multi award winning Los Angeles-based non-profit VR theatre company creating award-winning immersive experiences using interactive media, past work including Welcome to Respite, Gumball Dreams and Find WiiLii a collaboration with GiiÖii storytelling studio. Their work has been recognized at festivals worldwide including The Venice Film Festival, SXSW, Tribeca, NewImages; and featured by Forbes, The Hollywood Reporter, IndieWire, No Proscenium, Loud and Clear Reviews, and XR Must.

VIRTUAL WORLDS COMPANY is a Cape Town-based immersive studio operating globally, led by artist and worldbuilder Rick Treweek, also known as MetaRick. The company builds virtual worlds that people can step inside, including original IP, live shows, workshops, communities, and social VR spaces. Its original universe, Uncanny Alley, began as a VRChat world. Uncanny Alley's first narrative experience, The Search for GhOst, was selected for Venice VR Expanded in 2021 before winning the Spirit of Raindance Award in 2022. A New Day, a collaboration with Ferryman Collective, is the latest iteration of the Uncanny Alley universe.

VRCHAT is an ever-expanding virtual universe powered by a passionate community who create and share virtual worlds, avatars, and interactive experiences. Since its founding in 2015, the platform has grown to millions of users and features a passionate community of creators who

have published tens of millions of unique pieces of content.

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