

= Alien : Isolation =

Alien : Isolation is an action @-@ adventure video game developed by Creative Assembly and based on the Alien science fiction horror film series . It was published by Sega and originally released for Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 3 , PlayStation 4 , Xbox 360 and Xbox One on 7 October 2014 . The game is set 15 years after the events of Ridley Scott 's 1979 Alien film and follows Amanda Ripley , daughter of Alien protagonist Ellen Ripley , and her efforts to investigate the disappearance of her mother .

Unlike previous video game adaptations of the Alien franchise , Alien : Isolation places a strong emphasis on stealth and survival horror gameplay , requiring the player to avoid and outsmart a single alien creature over the course of the game with the help of gadgets like a motion tracker and a flamethrower . It was designed more in line with Scott 's film as opposed to James Cameron 's more action @-@ oriented 1986 sequel Aliens , and features a similar lo @-@ fi , 1970s vision of what the future would look like . The game runs on an entirely new engine that was built from scratch to accommodate technical aspects like the game 's atmospheric and lighting effects as well as the alien 's behavioural design . Creative Assembly originally intended to make Alien : Isolation a third @-@ person game , but the perspective was later shifted to first @-@ person in order to create a more intense experience .

Upon release , Alien : Isolation received generally positive reviews from video game journalists and sold over two million copies in Europe and the US as of May 2015 . Critics praised the game 's retro @-@ futuristic art direction , sound design , and the alien 's artificial intelligence , but criticized its story , characters , and voice acting . The game won several year @-@ end awards , including Best Audio at the 2015 Game Developers Choice Awards and Audio Achievement at the 2015 British Academy of Film and Television Arts Awards . Several downloadable content packs that extend the game with new missions and challenges were also released .

= = Gameplay = =

Alien : Isolation is a single @-@ player action @-@ adventure game with stealth and survival horror features , in which the player controls the protagonist , Amanda Ripley , from a first @-@ person perspective to interact with the environment . To advance through the game , the player must explore a space station and complete numerous objectives while avoiding , outsmarting and defeating enemies like human occupants or hostile androids . Objectives range from activating computers to collecting certain items or reaching a specific area in the game . The player has the ability to run , climb ladders , and sneak into vents . The player can also crouch and hide behind objects to break the line of sight with enemies , and covertly peek over or lean around to gain view . The player has also the ability to go under nearby tables or inside lockers to hide from enemies .

Unlike previous video game adaptations of the Alien franchise , Alien : Isolation features a single alien creature that pursues the player over the course of the game . The alien creature cannot be defeated , requiring the player to use stealth tactics in order to survive . Instead of following a predetermined path , the alien has the ability to actively investigate disturbances and hunt the player by sight or sound . Along the way , the player can use both a flashlight and a motion tracker to detect the alien 's movements . However , using any of these increases the chance of the alien finding the player . For example , if the alien is moving and close enough , the tracker 's sound will attract the alien , forcing the player to wisely use the tracker and remove it as soon as it detects motion . The motion tracker cannot detect enemies when they are not moving and cannot determine whether the alien creature is up in the ducts or on the ground level .

Although the player can use certain weapons to defeat enemies , Alien : Isolation emphasizes evasion over direct combat by providing the player with limited ammunition . The game features four weapons that become available as the player progresses throughout the game : a revolver , a shotgun , a bolt gun , and a flamethrower . The player can also craft several items by collecting schematics and different kind of materials throughout the game . Items range from EMP mines to noisemakers , molotov cocktails and pipe bombs , among others . These items help the player deal

with enemies and the alien . For example , the noisemaker can be used to attract enemies in one particular direction . The alien is afraid of fire , so using the flamethrower or a molotov cocktail will force it to retreat into the station 's ventilation system . The player has a limited amount of health which decreases when attacked by enemies . Nevertheless , the player can restore lost health using medkits , which can be crafted with materials in Amanda 's inventory .

The space station is divided into multiple sections connected by trams and elevators . Each section is composed of a set of rooms and corridors separated by doors . Some doors require certain actions to be performed first before entry is allowed . For example , some doors require a keycard or a numbered entry code , while others need to be cut with a variety of welding torches or hacked using an electronic device . The player may also encounter computer terminals that can be used to access information or trigger in @-@ game actions like disabling security cameras or manipulating the space station 's air @-@ purification mechanism . The game features an automap to help players navigate the different areas of the game . To save their progress , players need to locate a terminal in the game and manually insert Amanda 's access card in it . If Amanda dies , the player will need to start the game again from the last saved point . In addition to the campaign mode , Alien : Isolation features a separate game mode , called Survivor Mode , that focuses on short , player @-@ versus @-@ alien scenarios . In each scenario , the player needs to complete a set of objectives while avoiding the alien under a time limit .

= = Plot = =

In 2137 , 15 years after the disappearance of the Nostromo spacecraft , Amanda Ripley , daughter of Ellen Ripley , is approached by the android Christopher Samuels of the Weyland @-@ Yutani corporation . Samuels informs her that the flight recorder of the Nostromo was recently located by a ship named the Anesidora and is being held aboard Sevastopol , a remote space station owned by the Seegson Corporation , in orbit around the gas giant KG348 . He offers her a place on the Weyland @-@ Yutani team sent to retrieve it so that she can have closure regarding the fate of her missing mother . Ripley , Samuels , and Weyland @-@ Yutani executive Nina Taylor travel to Sevastopol on board the courier ship Torrens , owned by captain Diane Verlaine . The group arrives at Sevastopol to find the station damaged and its communications offline . Ripley , Samuels , and Taylor attempt to spacewalk over to the station to investigate , but their EVA line is severed by debris , and Ripley is separated from them and forced to enter the station on her own .

Ripley attempts to find help , but is confronted by Axel , a survivor who explains that Sevastopol is out of control due to a " monster " loose aboard the station . Although Ripley convinces him to help her in exchange for a ride off the station aboard the Torrens , Axel is soon killed by said monster , an alien creature . While exploring the station , Ripley finds the Nostromo 's flight recorder but discovers , to her dismay , that it contains no data . After contacting Samuels and recovering medical supplies from the station 's medical bay to treat an injured Taylor , Ripley reunites with the station 's marshal , Waits , and his deputy , Ricardo . Waits explains that the alien was brought on board the station by Anesidora captain Henry Marlow , who is now in Waits ' custody . After speaking with Marlow , Ripley learns that the Anesidora crew discovered the flight recorder near the planetoid LV @-@ 426 , where they also found a derelict ship previously found by the Nostromo crew and the nest of alien eggs contained within . While exploring the ship , Marlow 's wife was attacked by a facehugger . Marlow then brought her aboard Sevastopol for emergency medical treatment , but an alien ultimately hatched from her . Waits convinces Ripley to help him contain the alien by luring it into a remote section of the station and sealing it inside . Ripley is successful , but Waits truly plotted to use Ripley as bait , and ejects the module from the station . As the module careens into space , Ripley manages to space @-@ jump back to Sevastopol using an EVA suit .

Ripley makes her way back to Ricardo , who explains that the station 's androids abruptly started slaughtering the remaining crew , including Waits . He also tells her that Samuels is attempting to interface with the station 's controlling artificial intelligence , APOLLO , to cease the rampage . However , APOLLO 's defensive countermeasures electrocute Samuels shortly after he managed to open a path for Ripley into APOLLO 's control core . Upon reaching APOLLO , Ripley discovers that

Seegson , who has been trying to sell off Sevastopol for years , has finally found a buyer : Weyland @-@ Yutani , who instructed APOLLO to protect the alien . When Ripley tells APOLLO that the creature is no longer aboard the station and demands to cease all activity , APOLLO refuses and turns its attention to the station 's reactor . Ripley descends to the base of the reactor and learns that it has been converted into an alien nest . She then initiates a reactor purge to destroy the nest , but multiple alien creatures escape and begin to overrun Sevastopol in the process . Ripley learns from Ricardo that Taylor was sent by Weyland @-@ Yutani to retrieve the alien , and that she freed Marlow in exchange for the location of LV @-@ 426 . However , Marlow double @-@ crosses her and takes her hostage aboard the Anesidora .

Aboard the Anesidora , Ripley discovers a message from her mother after her initial report of the events on the Nostromo , thus finally giving her closure . Marlow then appears with Taylor and tells Ripley that he plans to overload the Anesidora 's fusion reactor and destroy the station , thus ensuring that no aliens survive . In the ensuing confrontation , both Marlow and Taylor are killed by an electric discharge and Ripley is forced to escape the Anesidora shortly before it explodes . Ricardo tells Ripley that the Anesidora explosion destroyed Sevastopol 's orbital stabilizers , causing the station to slowly drift into KG348 's atmosphere . Ripley and Ricardo manage to contact the Torrens for extraction , but Ricardo is attacked and paralyzed by a facehugger . After making her way outside to help the Torrens detach from the station , Ripley is surrounded by several alien creatures and then thrown into the ship due to a blast . Aboard the Torrens , Ripley makes her way to the bridge to find Verlaine , but is confronted by another alien . Still in her EVA suit , Ripley is cornered into the airlock and is forced to open it , jettisoning both herself and the alien into space . The final shot of the game depicts Ripley , adrift and unconscious in her EVA suit , suddenly awakened by a searchlight that crosses her face .

= = Development = =

Alien : Isolation was developed by the Creative Assembly , which is best known for their work on the Total War real @-@ time strategy video game series . The idea of developing a game based on the Alien film series from 20th Century Fox was conceived when the company finished Viking : Battle for Asgard in 2008 , after publisher Sega acquired the rights to develop Alien games in December 2006 . A six @-@ person team developed a small multiplayer game to pitch the idea to Sega , a " hide and seek " prototype where one of the players had to control the alien while the others would need to conceal themselves in the environment . The game captured the attention of Sega and the project was eventually approved . Since the Creative Assembly had no experience with survival horror games , the company had to hire several people from other studios like Bizarre Creations , Black Rock , Crytek , Ubisoft , and Realtime Worlds for the project . According to director Alistair Hope , the development team grew from " a couple of guys crammed in with the Total War team " to a group of 100 people by 2014 .

The Creative Assembly decided to design the game more in line with Ridley Scott 's 1979 film Alien as opposed to James Cameron 's more action @-@ oriented 1986 sequel Aliens . To help the designers authentically recreate the atmosphere of the film , Fox provided them with three terabytes of original production material , including costume photography , concept art , set design , behind the scenes photos , videos , and the film 's original sound effect recordings . As artist John Mckellan recalls , " It was a proper gold mine . We saw angles of things we 'd never seen before . " During the first stage of development , the developers deconstructed the film to find out what made its setting unique . This would allow them to build new environments that were faithful to it . Similarly , the film 's original soundtrack was deconstructed so that composers could identify the main cues , which would then be used as templates to extend the soundtrack and fill out the length of the game . The developers also had the chance to meet Alien and Blade Runner editor Terry Rawlings , who would give them additional insight .

Rather than go for a shiny , high @-@ tech science fiction look , the designers opted to recreate the setting and feel of the original Alien film using the work of concept artists Ron Cobb and M?bius . As a result , the game features a lo @-@ fi , 1970s vision of what the future would look like . For

example , the game features clunky machinery like phone receivers , monochrome displays , and distorted CRT monitors . To create period authentic distortion on in @-@ game monitors , the developers recorded their in game animations onto VHS and Betamax video recorders , then filmed those sequences playing on an " old curvy portable TV " while adjusting the tracking settings . As digital hacking was not conceived in the 1970s , the game 's hacking device was built the way it would have been built on the set of the movie , and requires players to tune into a computer 's signal while selecting icons on its screen . Artist Jon McKellan noted , " We had this rule : If a prop couldn 't have been made in ' 79 with the things that they had around , then we wouldn 't make it either . "

The Creative Assembly wanted Alien : Isolation to have a story that was closely related to the film . As a result , the team decided to explore a story set 15 years after the events of the film which would involve Ellen Ripley 's daughter and the Nostromo 's flight recorder . Writer Will Porter explained that the process of creating a backstory for Amanda was " refreshing " as he felt that she was an overlooked character of the Alien universe . The derelict ship the Nostromo crew previously found in the film was also included in the game since the developers felt it was a central point in the Alien canon . Actress Sigourney Weaver agreed to reprise her role as Ellen Ripley to voice small sections throughout the game because she felt that the story was interesting and true to the film . Along with Weaver , the original Alien cast , which includes Tom Skerritt , Veronica Cartwright , Harry Dean Stanton , and Yaphet Kotto , reprised their roles for the game 's separate downloadable content missions , marking the first time they were brought back together since the release of the film . All the characters were created with 3D face scans .

Alien : Isolation runs on an entirely new engine that was built from scratch by the Creative Assembly . The new engine allowed the development team to accommodate technical aspects like the game 's atmospheric and lighting effects as well as the alien 's behavioural design . The alien itself was designed to look similar to H. R. Giger 's original design for the creature from the film , including the skull underneath its semitransparent head . However , the designers did alter its humanoid legs with recurved ones to provide the alien a walk cycle that would hold up to scrutiny during longer encounters with the player . Between 70 and 80 different sets of animation for the alien were created . The alien 's artificial intelligence was programmed with a complex set of behavioural designs that evolve as it encounters the player , creating the illusion that the alien learns from each encounter and appropriately adjusts its hunting strategy . As gameplay designer Gary Napper explains , " We needed something that would be different every time you played it . You ? re going to die a lot , which means restarting a lot , and if the alien was scripted , you ? d see the same behaviour . That makes the alien become predictable , and a lot less scary . " The save system was inspired by a scene in the film where Captain Dallas uses a key @-@ card to access Nostromo 's computer , Mother .

The developers originally planned to add a feature that would allow players to craft weapons , but the idea was ultimately discarded . According to Hope , " We thought about what people would want to do in order to survive . We explored different ideas , and one of them was fashioning weapons to defend yourself . That was quite early on , but then we realised that this game isn 't really about pulling the trigger . " Another cancelled feature was the alien 's iconic acid blood as a game mechanic , which could melt through metal like in the film . Although the feature was implemented at one point , it was eventually removed from the game because the developers felt it would change the course of the game in a " weird " direction . In addition , the developers considered the possibility for the game to be played from a third @-@ person perspective , but then realized that it would significantly change the experience . Hope explained that it would become " a game about jockeying the camera and looking after your avatar . But in first @-@ person it 's you that 's being hunted . If you 're hiding behind an object and you want to get a better view of your surroundings , you have to move . " The actual development of the game took overall four years to complete after the Creative Assembly first pitched the idea to Sega . The game went gold on 9 September 2014 and is dedicated to Simon Franco , a programmer of the game , who died during its development .

= = Marketing and release = =

Alien : Isolation was first unveiled on 12 May 2011 when UK government minister Ed Vaizey visited the Creative Assembly and revealed on his Twitter account that the studio was hiring for an Alien game . Although no gameplay details were confirmed , the Creative Assembly did confirm to CVG that the game would be released for consoles , but did not specify any format . Sega boss Mike Hayes also said that the game was going to be " very much a triple @-@ A project . We want this to be a peer to the likes of Dead Space 2 . " Although the game 's name was anticipated following a trademark registration in October 2013 and some screenshots of the game were leaked in December 2013 , Alien : Isolation was formally announced and confirmed for the Microsoft Windows , PlayStation 3 , PlayStation 4 , Xbox 360 , and Xbox One platforms with the release of a teaser trailer on 7 January 2014 . The developers also stated that they were not worried about the fact that Sega 's previous Alien game , Aliens : Colonial Marines , received a negative public reaction . According to Napper , " It did completely reaffirm to us that there was a massive Alien fanbase out there [and] just to see such a vocal reaction to the game , everything that they 've said they want is something that we 're building and we 're very excited about that . "

In June 2014 , Alien : Isolation was presented at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) , where journalists had a chance to play a demonstration of the game . The game was also playable on the Oculus Rift virtual reality (VR) headset that was shown at the show . Danielle Riendeau of Polygon described the demo as " one of the most effectively terrifying slices of a game I 've ever played in my life . " The game was awarded Best VR Game and was nominated for Game of the Show , Best Xbox One Game , Best PlayStation 4 Game , Best PC Game , and Best Action Game at the IGN 's Best of E3 2014 Awards . Similarly , at the 2014 Game Critics Awards , the game was nominated for Best of Show , Best Console Game , and Best Action / Adventure Game . In August 2014 , a cinematic trailer for the game was shown at Gamescom .

Alien : Isolation was released on 7 October 2014 , featuring two pre @-@ order downloadable content missions that allow players to play two scenes from the original film . The first mission , entitled Crew Expendable , features the original crew of the Nostromo and involves the player controlling Ripley , Dallas or Parker attempting to flush the alien creature from the air vents and into the ship 's airlock . The second mission , Last Survivor , is set during the film 's finale and involves the player controlling Ripley as she tries to activate the Nostromo 's self @-@ destruct sequence and reach the escape shuttle . Unlike the first mission , the second mission is only available for players who pre @-@ ordered the game at certain retailers . Upon release , five additional downloadable content packs for the game were periodically released between October 2014 and March 2015 . These packs expand the game 's Survivor Mode with new characters , challenges , maps , and other features . A collection featuring the game and all the downloadable content packs was released for Linux , OS X , PlayStation 4 and Xbox One in late 2015 .

= = Reception = =

Critical reception for Alien : Isolation was divided but generally positive , with review scores ranging from IGN 's 5 @. @ 9 out of 10 to PC Gamer 's 93 out of 100 . Josh Harmon of Electronic Gaming Monthly felt that Alien : Isolation " succeeds as a genuine effort to capture the spirit of the film franchise in playable form , rather than a lazy attempt to use it as an easy backdrop for a cash @-@ in with an ill @-@ fitting genre . " Writing for GameSpot , Kevin VanOrd credited the game for its tense and frightening gameplay , stating that " when all mechanics are working as intended , alien @-@ evasion is dread distilled into its purest , simplest form . " However , he criticized the game 's " trial and error " progression and frustrating distances between save points . Jeff Marchiafava of Game Informer stated similar pros , but criticized the story and poor acting from the voice actors .

The game 's visuals and atmosphere were highlighted positively . Polygon editor Arthur Gies felt that Alien : Isolation is " a beautiful game , full of deep shadows and mystery around every corner , " while Dan Whitehead of Eurogamer praised the lighting and unusually compelling environment design . IGN 's Ryan McCaffrey gave high marks to the game 's retro @-@ futuristic art direction and sound design , commenting : " From wisps of smoke that billow out of air vents to clouds of white mist that obscure your vision when you rewire an area 's life @-@ support systems in order to

aid your stealthy objectives , Isolation certainly looks and sounds like a part of the Alien universe . " Similarly , PC Gamer reviewer Andy Kelly said that the game 's art design sets Alien : Isolation apart from the likes of System Shock or Dead Space and creates a " convincing science @-@ fiction world , with machines and environments that are functional and utilitarian , rather than overtly futuristic . "

The story and characters were generally criticized , with Game Informer stating that " Amanda exhibits little growth or personality , other than concern for her fellow humans and a desire to not die gruesomely . " Similarly , Blake Peterson of Game Revolution noted that none of characters are fully developed . According to him , " we never spend enough time with them to build the emotional bond necessary for their inevitable deaths to mean anything . " GameTrailers said that most of the computer terminals found in the game contain unoriginal logs to describe predictable events . Nevertheless , he remarked that reading reports from different computer terminals " grounds Sevastopol in an appreciable way . "

Writing for GamesRadar , David Houghton highlighted the alien 's advanced artificial intelligence , stating that " progress becomes a case of ' if ' and ' how ' , not ' when ' . Movement is measured in inches and feet rather than metres , and simply remaining alive becomes more exhilarating than any objective achieved . " Peterson praised the gameplay for being tense , scary and effective , commenting that Alien : Isolation is " a solid , incredibly striking example of the [survival horror] genre that uses its first person perspective to greater personalize the horror . " PC Gamer credited the crafting system for giving the game " a lot of unexpected depth " , allowing players to outsmart enemies in multiple ways . The game 's Survivor Mode was praised by Chris Carter of Destructoid , who felt it offered players different feelings and experiences each time they played it .

Although the gameplay was praised by several reviewers , some found the game to be unnecessarily long , repetitive and unforgiving . In a mixed review , McCaffrey felt that the game does not offer many options of survival , requiring players to spend most of their time hiding in lockers " staring at the motion tracker " . Polygon criticized the overexposure to the alien creature , turning Alien : Isolation into an irritating experience . As Gies explained , " Every time I thought I heard the monster , every blip on my motion tracker , was a cause for a tightness in my chest at first . By the 300th time I dived under a table or into a locker , I wasn 't scared anymore ? I was annoyed . " Despite the criticism , Alien : Isolation was considered a " brave " title due to its difficult and unforgiving gameplay , a feature that is uncommon in games with large development costs . As of January 2015 , Alien : Isolation has sold over one million copies worldwide according to Sega . As of March 2015 , the game has sold over 2 @.@ 1 million copies in Europe and the US .

= = = Accolades = = =

Alien : Isolation received several year @-@ end awards , including PC Gamer 's Game of the Year 2014 , Audio Achievement at the 11th British Academy Games Awards , Best Audio at the 15th Game Developers Choice Awards , and four awards at the 14th National Academy of Video Game Trade Reviewers . The game also appeared on several year @-@ end lists of the best games of 2014 . It was ranked 1st in The Daily Telegraph 's the 25 best video games of 2014 , 2nd in Empire 's the 10 Best Games Of The Year , 2nd in Time 's Top 10 Video Games of 2014 , 4th in The Guardian 's Top 25 Games of 2014 , 3rd in Reader 's top 50 games of 2014 by Eurogamer , and in Daily Mirror 's the 10 best games of 2014 . In 2015 , Alien : Isolation was ranked 7th in Kotaku 's list of the 10 Best Horror Games .

= = Possible sequel = =

In October 2015 , Creative Assembly studio director Tim Heaton stated that , while Sega was disappointed with the sales of the game , a sequel was " not out of the question " and that " there was more to be said . " However , he also highlighted significant obstacles in creating a sequel , commenting : " Spending very significant amounts of money , and getting close to break @-@ even or just about in the black ? That ? s not where Sega wants to be , when we have a brilliant portfolio

of other games that do great business . " Sega later confirmed that a sequel is still being considered , but the question of whether or not a sequel would be profitable will eventually decide the fate of the project .