Life

FUTURE TENSE HALLOWEEN SPECIAL: TAKING A LOOK AT VIDEO GAME DEAD SPACE

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Originally released in 2008 by the now defunct Visceral Games, Dead Space is a sci-fi survival horror video game that invites players to take on the role of Isaac Clarke, a systems engineer sent to perform maintenance on a spaceship called the Ishimura.

However, this is more than just a routine assignment for Isaac, as his long-distance girlfriend Nicole is serving as the chief senior medical officer onboard. Excited to finally see her again, Isaac's day goes awry when his team discovers that the ship has been ravaged by mutated monsters known as Necromorphs. After a violent confrontation, Isaac finds himself trapped on the Ishimura with little of his team still alive. He must scavenge for materials and use his engineering knowledge to figure out what created the Necromorphs, what happened to Nicole and how he can evacuate the doomed Ishimura.



ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES CARLTON, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

It's not very controversial to say that Dead Space is an excellent video game. In fact, it's a game that's become even better in its 2023 remake developed by Motive Studios, which is the version of the game that this article will be discussing.

The remake preserves the game's core narrative while adding gameplay elements from later entries in the series, most notably converting Isacc Clarke from an old school silent video game protagonist into a fully voice-acted character. For that reason alone, I'd say that the remake is the superior way to experience the game, as it introduces a new layer to the narrative by allowing Isaac to speak with other characters and voice his own thoughts to the player. The feature also provides an especially memorable gameplay mechanic, being that Isaac shouts expletives when the player runs out of ammo or kills a particularly annoying enemy.

Looking at Dead Space as a whole, the game takes a lot of mechanics from other video games. For starters, the game's third-person over-the-shoulder view was taken from the original Resident Evil 4, which is effectively the father of all modern third-person shooter games. The perspective of Dead Space makes the player feel immersed as Isaac during traditional gameplay while allowing the camera to naturally transition into sweeping cinematic shots during boss battles or when entering areas that have been annihilated by the Necromorphs.

Dead Space also features many gameplay mechanics that feel very inspired by 2004's Half-Life 2. This is most obvious when looking at the inexplicable telekinetic powers Isaac's engineering suit possesses, which seem to be taken from Half Life's famous gravity gun.

However, I'm not one to complain, as these powers open up a new level of gameplay, beyond the traditional aim-and-shoot mechanics of most shooter games, with players now able to use Isaac's kinesis to interact with objects located throughout the ship. While this is primarily used for puzzle solving, the player can also use it to pick up dangerous looking items scattered throughout the ship, like saws and spikes, and ram them into enemies. Get good at it, and you might even be able to shoot a Necromorph's arm off, pick it up, and impale it with its own dismembered limb.

These dismemberment mechanics make up the bulk of Dead Space's combat. Unlike traditional shooters, which are typically designed around landing headshots, Dead Space is built around dealing limb-based damage to the Necromorphs, with the goal being to cut off their limbs to immobilize them. The design of the Necromorphs themselves supports this, as almost all the enemies in game have elongated limbs and appendages that sprawl out from their bodies.

In fact, players will be actively penalized if they revert to traditional shooter muscle memory during gameplay, as body shots do little to no damage and headshots only make enemies more enraged during combat, increasing your chances of getting jumped and having your body reduced to dining hall spaghetti.

This inversion of traditional gameplay mechanics makes up much of Dead Space's horror, with players often battling their traditional shooter instincts during the heat of attack while getting swarmed by waves of enemies. This is where those expletive mechanics really make an impact.

The design of the Necromorphs also adds a lot to the game's horror. Typically, when most sci-fi films or games make a horror design, they usually go for one of two routes. They either make the monster look like a combination of bug anatomy and human genitalia (think the Xenomorph from "Alien"), or make their monster look like a grosser, more misshapen version of a zombie (think the Flood from Halo).

Dead Space goes firmly with option B, with the Necromorphs resembling twisted, decaying human figures, often writhing about when they're not actively trying to rip your face off. Of all the enemies in game, the most disturbing are easily the Lurkers, which can best be described as resembling human fetuses with 3-foot-long hemorrhoids that spew acidic discharge at you. They're about as much fun to fight as they are to look at.

Outside of just the body-horror of its enemies, Dead Space also excels at making the Ishimura a genuinely terrifying setting to traverse. The ship almost entirely consists of long hallways filled with distant screaming, flickering lights and walls caked in viscera and bodily fluids. In short, it does a great job at accurately recreating the atmosphere of freshman residence halls on Halloween.

All in all, Dead Space is a master work of horror that stands on its own as an all-time great video game despite taking heavy inspiration from other games. I recommend the 2023 remake to any that are brave enough to follow Isaac and take on the Ishimura and all the horrors it holds. Have a great, safe Halloween, and if you're at Storrs, avoid North Campus unless you're looking to experience the Ishimura in real life.

MORE OF THE SAME FROM FONATINES D.C.'S FIFTH ALBUM

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Irish quartet Fontaines D.C. released their fifth studio album on Friday, Oct 16.

"Dopamine Chamber" is the first release from the band since 2024's "Romance." Fontaines D.C., led by lead singer Grian Chatten, is regarded as one of the more popular bands in the modern post-punk scene. With James Ford on production duties once again, returning from their last album, how does "Dopamine Chamber" stack up with the rest of Fontaines' discography? Let's dive in.

"Dopamine Chamber" begins with a wave of drone and synths akin to those in "Hunter" by Björk. Chatten croons melodically over the drone creating a futuristic, apocalyptic atmosphere. It's not until the drum beats kick that the song feels like classic Fontaines. The song then breaks down into some sweet synths, getting us off the rails and starting the album off strong.

Track 2 is the lead single "Marianne" — textbook Fontaines D.C. This would fit right in on "Romance" and that's not an insult at all. The band sounds great, very loose, like they are messing around. Chatten's vocals are on point; a laid-back delivery on the verses helps make the chorus feel fuller.

"Mimesis" and "Demolition" are unique to Fontaines' overall discography. "Demolition" feels like it was ripped straight out of the late 2000s or early 2010s. The song is a heavier indietronica, instead of feeling sweet like a Phoenix track or a Bloc Party ballad. "Demolition" is dark and muddy.

"Mimesis" is a well-written pop track. It features some similar background vocals to those found on tracks on "Romance." Nothing extraordinary, but a solid song. At the beginning, the lyrics of the song remind me of "Tonight, Tonight" by The Smashing Pumpkins.

Funnily enough, "Happy For You" also reminds me of "Tonight, Tonight." The drums that come in after the first chorus evoke the drums from that song. "Happy For You" is a solid track; the driving guitar line gets a bit old towards the end, but the chorus is sweet, and the distortion in the end makes the song.

The other singles "Tongue" and "Where Is Gone" are two more highlights. "Tongue" is a heater with great production. Chatten's refrain of "More abuse than an Adderall, S--- I'm sorry, didn't realize I called" is an earworm. It's a grimy track that oozes with their patented style. Then "Where Is Love" (feat. Rosalia) is a grand track. Chatten digs deep into his lower register and sounds phenomenal. Combining Rosalia's vocals, they work very well together. This along with "One Man" provides a nice contrast to the upbeat tracks.

"You Miss Me" is a solid track; it can feel a bit clunky in the verses, but the chorus is strong.

"Japan" is an acoustic track. Chatten's vocals and line delivery help save the track from being dull. Like most of the album, this song doesn't move the needle but it's a pleasant listen.

"Intimate" as the closing track does not hit as hard as it should. It creates a nice atmosphere and a good build but doesn't supply the knockout punch this album needs. It's not a bad song but, a bit lackluster.

"Dopamine Chamber" doesn't reach the heights of their previous album but is a more consistent outing from the band. This serves as a nice companion album to "Romance."

Rating: 3.5/5

UCONN DINING SERVICES FOSTERS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS PINK OUT DAY

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Students visiting the University of Connecticut's dining halls on Friday, Oct. 16, may have noticed something different about the employees serving their meals. Some wore pink clothing, while others had pink ribbon pins attached to their uniforms.

The change was part of Pink Out Day, an event held across UConn's dining halls during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Organized by UConn Dining Services, the event encouraged students and staff to wear pink in support of breast cancer awareness. At South Dining Hall and Connecticut Hall, employees took part while continuing their usual responsibilities, bringing the campaign into a familiar part of campus life.

Yilin Wang, a third-semester sport management major and student worker for UConn Dining Services, said that although wearing pink was a minor change, it had positive impacts.

"I think it's pretty meaningful. Even though it's a small thing, it's a good way to show support and raise awareness for breast cancer," Wang said.

Wang said that dining halls were a good place to hold an awareness event because students visit them every day. She thought seeing employees wearing pink could catch students' attention and encourage them to learn about the event, even if they had not heard about it beforehand.

Cindy Dancosse, a kitchen assistant who has worked for Dining Services for approximately two years, also emphasized the importance of showing support. She discussed how wearing pink could encourage people to think about cancer and share their experiences.

Logan St. Denis, a first-semester biomedical engineering major and student worker, said that raising awareness is not usually what students have in mind when visiting a dining hall. With classes and busy schedules, students are often more concerned about getting something to eat.

He believed the pink clothing could still serve as a reminder of breast cancer awareness, especially for students who already understood what the color represented.

"It's definitely not at the forefront because it's a dining hall, but it's nice to have," St. Denis said.

His observation was reflected in the experiences of two students eating at the dining halls.

UConn students Zhaoyuan Zhang, a third-semester undecided major, and Zezheng Han, a third-semester sport management major, said they had not known about Pink Out Day before arriving. At first, neither paid much attention to what people around them were wearing, but they began noticing more pink clothing and asked each other whether they had seen the same thing.

Although the students were initially unaware of the event, both felt that raising awareness about health-related issues was worthwhile. They said health is an important topic that deserves more public attention, even if it's something students don't normally discuss during a meal.

Pink Out Day turned a regular trip to the dining hall into the chance to learn about a meaningful topic.

The students' reactions showed how something as simple as wearing pink could lead to questions and conversations during an otherwise ordinary day on campus.

SUBOG Weekly Events:

October 19th – November 8th

November 4th – GTA VI Trivia @ 7:00 pm in the Student Union Theatre

November 5th - Coffee House @ 4:30 pm at the Benton Museum

November 6th – Jersey Day @ 6:00 pm in SU 325

November 7th – Harvest Fest @ 12:00 pm on the Student Union Mall

November 8th – Amazing Race @ 11:00 am across campus

Any questions? Email subog@uconn.edu.