Magic Leap’s lost work The Last Light gets a surprise release after its developers were laid off

The Last Light, Magic Leap’s in-house mixed reality experience thought to be lost after nearly everyone who made it was laid off, got a surprise – and official – release this week. (We spotted the release thanks to a tweet from former Magic Leap employee Alexandria Heston.)

In *The Last Light*, you follow along as a young woman, Kayah, moves through a story about her family that plays out on objects in the room in front of you. “It is not a game or a tech demo,” said former Magic leap employee Anastasia Devana . “It’s essentially a short film that is best experienced alone, in a quiet area, and uninterrupted for around 35-40 minutes or so.”

[embedded content]

The Last Light was originally set to premiere at SXSW in March, but the festival was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Then, on April 22nd, Magic Leap reportedly laid off around 1,000 employees, including many of the game’s developers. That same day, Magic Leap co-founder and former CEO Rony Abovitz said Magic Leap’s “near-term revenue opportunities are currently concentrated on the enterprise side,” which seemed to indicate a shift away from content like *The Last Light*. (Abovitz said he would step down from Magic Leap in May, and has since been replaced by former Microsoft exec Peggy Johnson.)

My colleague Adi Robertson spoke to developers who worked on *The Last Light*, and I highly recommend her article about it published on July 6th. The developers told her at the time that *The Last Light* was in limbo and was close enough to being done that Magic Leap could release it on its app store – which is exactly what the company has since done. It’s now available as a free download.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/8/20/21378202/magic-leap-mixed-reality-game-the-last-light-now-available