

Journey Acquires 59 and VMI Studio Strengthening their Multidimensional Global Experiences Offering

Expansion Creates a Comprehensive Offering in Physical, Immersive, Virtual and Story Driven Design

NEW YORK/LONDON - December 5, 2024 - Journey, a global design and innovation studio pioneering multidimensional experiences (MDX), today announced it has acquired story-driven design leader 59 and creative technology leader VMI Studio. Joining together solidifies Journey's MDX leadership globally by uniting 250 employees across strategy, design, architecture, video, technology and narrative to create sensory-rich experiences that ignite emotion and deepen connections between people, brands and culture.

"Joining forces with 59 and VMI Studio adds exciting new creative, theatrical and technical dimensions to our work, making Journey the first truly multidimensional experience studio in the world that spans verticals including entertainment, healthcare, retail, hospitality, financial services, real estate and cultural institutions," said Journey Co-Founder and CEO Andrew Zimmerman. "Together we can literally and figuratively design the theater *and* create the show, redefining the boundaries between space, story and spectacle."

Based in New York and London, 59 is a multi award-winning interdisciplinary studio that conceives, directs, designs and delivers ambitious, large-scale story-driven artworks, stage shows, events and immersive experiences, from Vogue's "Inventing the Runway" immersive show debuting in London this month, to Sting's sold-out "My Songs" residency in Las Vegas, and collaborations with performers and musicians from Nitin Sawhney, Anne Nikitin and David Bowie to visual artists such as David Hockney.

59 started by revolutionizing the live theater experience for modern audiences, working at the UK's National Theatre and the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and more recently on genre-defining shows such as "Stranger Things: The First Shadow," which makes its Broadway debut in 2025. 59 has also collaborated on industry-leading design projects with other Journey partners, including a pavilion for Expo 2025 in Osaka for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (with Foster + Partners). 59 was also a founding partner of Lightroom, a pioneering venue in London and Seoul that creates unique, IP-led immersive storytelling experiences including "Moonwalkers: A Journey with Tom Hanks."

“In Journey, we found a true partner that shares our vision for interdisciplinary design and placemaking, whilst widening the creative and technical possibilities available to us,” said Leo Warner, Founder and CEO of 59, who now joins Journey’s board and leadership team as a Managing Director. “This partnership helps us conceive and deliver storytelling experiences at an even more ambitious scale, to supercharge the creative possibilities of our work and to take that work to new audiences.”

The addition of London-based VMI Studio strengthens Journey’s creative technology and virtual twin practice for real estate and architecture clients globally. The new partnership builds on VMI’s work on Illuminated River, a long-term art installation transforming the Thames at night, and Thresholds, a virtual reality artwork by Mat Collishaw, in addition to collaborating with Journey on TSX Broadway in New York. Together, they will focus on growing Journey’s global reach and impact with clients reimagining the future of cities and real estate.

“In Journey we saw like-minded partners that could help us accelerate our vision to become world leaders in visualisation, interactive tool sets and Unreal Engine-powered virtual twins,” said VMI Studio Co-Founder Nicholas Byrne, who also joins Journey’s management team as a Managing Director. “This partnership allows us to grow our presence in EMEA while also expanding into new markets and capabilities that are at the leading edge of MDX and virtual world building.”

Journey was formed in 2022 to meet today’s most complex design challenges with tomorrow’s most potent design solutions. Central to Journey’s approach for clients including Empire State Realty Trust, JPMorganChase and MSG’s Las Vegas Sphere is its Experience Stack, a pioneering framework inspired by how technology companies build software, layering different design capabilities to create MDX across physical, digital and immersive spaces.

“The Experience Stack becomes stronger with each strategic partnership,” said Jules Coke, who has been elevated to Chief Operating Officer of Journey to help oversee the company’s continued global expansion. “ICRAVE and Squint/Opera formed the foundation. Now 59’s roots in story-driven design, and VMI’s expertise in Unreal Engine-powered virtual twins add new capabilities and dimensions to our work, all while maintaining the cohesive experience that sets Journey apart.”

The deal was backed by private equity firm Growth Catalyst Partners, which targets investments in tech-enabled creative businesses.

About Journey

Journey is a global design and innovation studio pioneering multidimensional experiences (MDX) that transform how people perceive, engage and interact with the world. With studios in New York City, Miami, London and Dubai, we blend strategy, design, technology and narrative to create sensory-rich journeys that ignite emotion and deepen connections between people, brands and culture. Our innovative Experience Stack draws on expertise in physical design, lighting, live & immersive, and emerging technology to deliver industry-first solutions for entertainment, healthcare, retail, hospitality, real estate and cultural institutions. At Journey, we're not just designing experiences that are consumed, but that are lived and felt across every dimension of human interaction. Get started at www.journey.world.

About Growth Catalyst Partners

Growth Catalyst Partners is a middle-market private equity firm with offices in Chicago, IL and Rowayton, CT. GCP invests in tech-enabled services businesses with a strategy of targeting growth segments of industries and strives to identify and build market-leading companies with breakout potential. GCP partners with company founders and owners along with top executives within those industries to provide capital, proprietary deal origination and operating expertise to the management teams. Members of the GCP team have deep sector expertise and have collectively led hundreds of transactions and investments in services businesses for over 20 years. Since the firm's founding in 2017, GCP has completed over 100 acquisitions across its 15 industry-leading platform companies. For more information, visit www.growthcatalystpartners.com.