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From the Philadelphia Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/news/2017/11/13/scavenger-hunt-philly-monument-lab-pokemon-go-blue.html>

Local firm creates augmented reality scavenger hunt for citywide Monument Lab initiative

The mobile augmented reality market is expected to balloon to nearly \$80 million by 2022, according to research

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Philadelphia has dipped its toes in the growing augmented reality industry once again, this time for the citywide arts initiative Monument Labs.

The chief executive of the firm behind the AR project said the company has seen a massive growth in business as virtual and augmented reality grow and are implemented in industries beyond technology.

Blue Visual Effects, a Philadelphia-based video production, post production and design firm, launched an augmented reality scavenger hunt with artist Marisa Williamson for the nine-week, Philadelphia-wide Monument Lab initiative.

The **Monument Lab project** running through Nov. 19, is a citywide public art and history project that includes temporary prototype monuments by 20 artists across 10 locations in Philadelphia around the question, "What is an appropriate monument for the current city of Philadelphia?"

Blue Visual Effects also **created an AR experience** utilized by the Philadelphia Phillies in conjunction with Major League Baseball Advanced Media. The experience was tested in the final three home games this year.



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Augmented reality has come to Monument Lab, a nine-week art initiative.

Its latest installation, **Sweet Chariot: The Long Journey to Freedom Through Time**, is on display through Nov. 19 at the Exhibition Hub at the Furness Building at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art.

Blue Visual Effects, which opened in 1999, developed the image recognition smartphone app and scratch-off map, which uncovers a series of videos that show stories of the African American struggle for freedom.

Viewers can follow the journey of Philadelphian Amelia Brown, and they can hear conversations with figures like Margaret Forté and W.E.B. DuBois.

The Monument Lab project, to date, has received 3,898 proposals from the public about their own monuments — including about 450 collected during a discovery phase in 2015, according to information given to the *Philadelphia Business Journal* from a spokeswoman.

There have been about 3,500 attendees for the more than 20 events held so far.

THE RISE OF AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY

The use of emerging technology like augmented reality and virtual reality have been a growing trend on a national level.

The VR industry is expected to increase from a \$5.2 billion market in 2016 to \$162 billion in 2020, according to Business Insider.

A number of Philadelphia organizations adopted VR, including a Fishtown restaurant called Mad Rex that **has a VR lounge**; and the Franklin Institute, which launched a **first-of-its-kind virtual reality project**.

The Jefferson Comprehensive Concussion Center **has also turned to VR** to raise awareness and challenge existing perceptions about concussions. VR also has potential to **impact the meeting and convention space**.

The use of technology like AR has the potential to enhance user experience, since it adds another layer of engagement. Static objects — or in the case of Blue Visual Effects' Sweet Chariot, maps and art — are brought to life.

"We understand how augmented reality and virtual reality can add to the power of storytelling, so we've been offering these solutions to our clients for years," Blue CEO Howard McCabe told the *Business Journal*.

"You don't have to be a tech brand, you just have to be open to experimenting with offering new ways to uncover content and connect with your customers, no matter the industry," McCabe said.

Blue Visual Effects is growing at a rate of 300 percent, according to McCabe, who said the firm projects a similar growth in AR and VR revenue in the coming year.

The Philadelphia firm has worked on AR and VR since 2009. It's not a shift for the Blue Visual Effets; it's a shift in consumer and brand acceptance, McCabe said.

"We invest in the latest technology, testing it the minute it hits the market," McCabe said. "I invest in talent who can imagine the best experiences for our clients."

Mobile augmented reality as an industry will not likely go away any time soon; the market is **expected to reach \$79.8 billion** by 2022, representing a growth of nearly 70 percent between 2016 and 2022, according to Research and Markets.

Destination marketing organizations Visit Philadelphia ([link](#)) and the Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board ([link](#)) also utilized augmented reality through scavenger hunts during the height of the craze of the Pokemon Go app.

"The major reason for the growth of the mobile augmented reality technology is the increasing use of smartphones and tablets, adoption of advanced technologies, and implementation of software applications in mobile computing, according to Research and Markets.

"The use of augmented reality applications in smartphones, tablets, smart glasses, and other devices have increased the scope of the mobile augmented reality market for different sectors," according to the website.

Kenneth Hilario

Reporter

Philadelphia Business Journal

