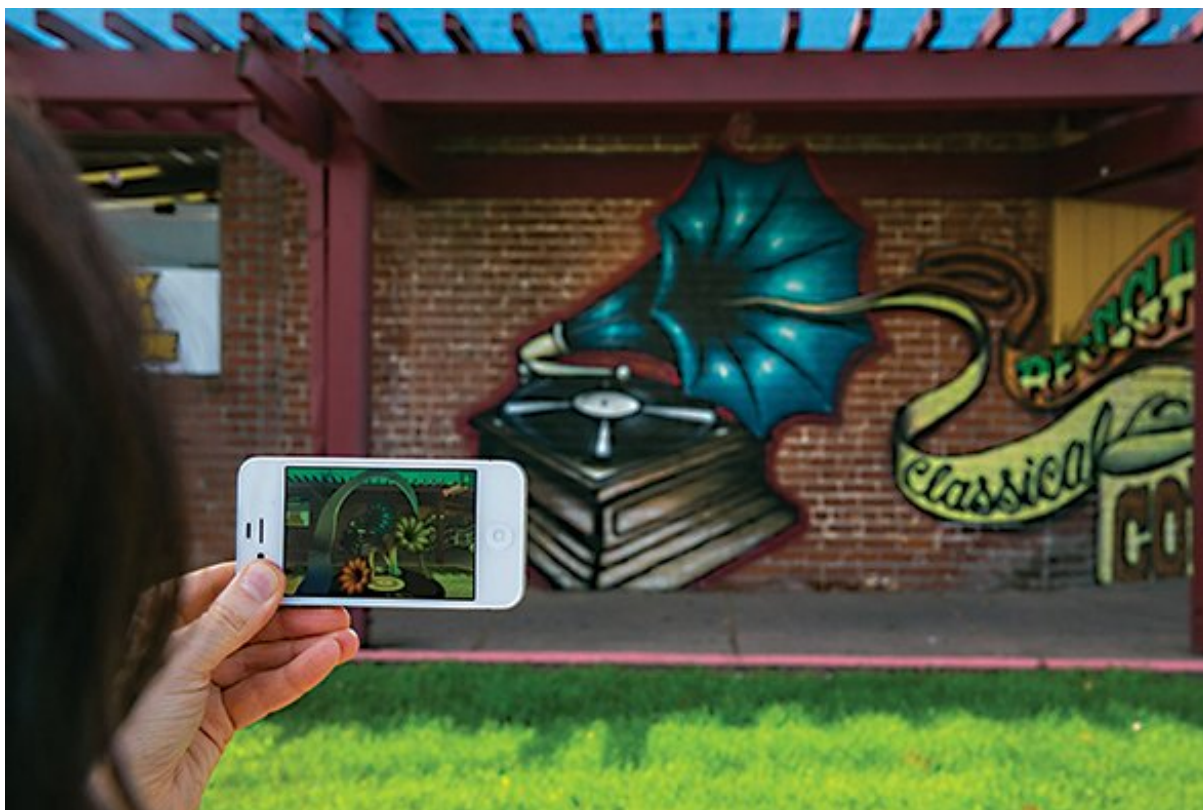


Reality Bytes

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A civic-minded and high-tech public art project brings a heightened sense of reality to an iconic Sacramento street

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A spinning record and animated flowers pop up in front of a mural at Dimple Records on Broadway as part of a new augmented-reality public art project launching in September.

Photo by Marc Thomas Kallweit

A giant vinyl record spins at the corner of Broadway and 16th Street. An animated comic-book panel comes to life in a shop window down the block. They join a pulsing billboard, a collection of statues, a new set of murals and other public art installations that have emerged literally overnight all along Broadway.

Come Saturday, this will be the new reality—or the new augmented reality, anyhow—when the eye-popping art project Broadway Augmented kicks off along the busy corridor. Visitors with smartphones or tablets can download the Broadway Augmented app that superimposes 15 digital artworks on their screens, turning locations along the thoroughfare into exhibition spaces for virtual paintings, sculptures, video pieces and more.

“We wanted to be able to do things that are logistically impossible and physically impossible—defy gravity, make things move, have things float around,” says Rachel Clarke, a professor of new media arts at Sacramento State who developed the project with a brain trust comprising the Sacramento Metropolitan

Arts Commission, the Greater Broadway Partnership District and the Urban Land Institute.

Broadway Augmented, the beneficiary of a \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, hinges on a deceptively simple app listing a series of locations where users can view the featured works. When their device's cameras are triggered, image-recognition technology imports the art intended for each setting—including Rebecca Krinke's mural of Chinese-American leaders on the headquarters of the Wong Family Benevolent Association, Sabrina Ratté's architecturally themed video pieces in the windows of Miso Japanese and Bac Hoa Viet restaurants, and Malcolm Cochran's five animals that join a lamb monument adorning a child's gravesite in the Old City Cemetery.

The team behind the project will offer guided tours when it launches amid this weekend's traditional Second Saturday festivities; the Sacramento Republic FC headquarters will host a public reception and BBQ on Saturday evening. And the movement won't likely stop on Broadway: Clarke says she expects to see the exhibition's augmented-reality treatment applied to other public art proposals around Sacramento in the near future. "We're taking over the city," she says with a wry grin, "with invisible art."

The Broadway Augmented opening reception is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 13, from 4-9 p.m. at Sacramento Republic FC headquarters. 2421 17th Street. 307-6100. The project will be on display through Oct. 31. For more information about the event and the exhibition, visit broadwayaugmented.net.