

Shockoe Institute Explores Richmond Slave Trade in World's First AR Tour Pairing ARtGlass Software and Snap Spectacles

RICHMOND, VA, UNITED STATES, April 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- History comes alive in a powerful fusion of innovation and storytelling as the [Shockoe Institute](#), in partnership with [ARtGlass](#) and [Snap Inc.](#), launches a groundbreaking wearable augmented reality (AR) tour, exploring Richmond's pivotal role in America's trade in enslaved people. The immersive touring experience is the first in the world to combine Spectacles, Snap's standalone, see-through AR glasses, with ARtGlass' powerful storytelling technology.



With see-through lenses, Snap's Spectacles let users stay engaged with the world around them while experiencing AR content. Image courtesy of Snap.

Richmond was an epicenter for the forced relocation of over one million enslaved people, yet many sites related to this history were destroyed, remain unmarked, or are difficult to interpret. By merging 3D reconstructions of lost buildings, first-person narratives, virtual artifacts, and interactive touchpoints, visitors gain a deeper understanding of the past as history unfolds before their eyes.

Marland Buckner, President and CEO of the Shockoe Institute, explained, "Central to our mission is to reveal the enduring impact of racial slavery on our shared American experience, and thanks to this crucial tool, we will tell this story in a way that is engaging, intellectually rigorous, and sets the stage for further conversations that inspire learning, reflection, and action."

The project is the first public result of a collaboration between two global leaders in innovation and technology: ARtGlass, the world's foremost creator of wearable AR tours for cultural sites, and Snap Inc., the technology company behind innovative products including Snapchat, Lens Studio, and Spectacles, which are designed to enhance how people naturally interact with the world. The companies have married their respective AR platforms to enable powerful features, such as gesture control, surface recognition, multi-stop narratives, and code-free design,

allowing cultural sites to build visitor experiences that involve unprecedented levels of engagement.

“Through this collaboration, Spectacles invite visitors to explore this chapter of history firsthand through the eyes of those who lived it,” said Karolina Matras, Spectacles Partnership Manager at Snap Inc. “Our augmented reality technology is an immersive medium to deepen our connection to history and ultimately bring people closer together.”

“We are honored to help bring this painful but essential history to new audiences,” said ARtGlass Executive Vice President Lexi Cleveland. “We see this collaboration and combination of technologies as the next step in transforming cultural tourism.”

At the heart of the experience is a full 3D recreation of Lumpkin’s Slave Jail— a site so infamous it is frequently called “the Devil’s half acre.” By wearing Spectacles, visitors “explore” its walls, interact with virtual objects connected to real-life testimonies, and uncover the experiences of former prisoners. An interactive map traces the national and global trade routes and helps visitors easily visualize complex data about how people became commerce.

The AR experience is now available by special invitation and will be featured during the Institute’s groundbreaking ceremony and reception on April 3. For more information, please visit www.shockoeinstitute.org/spectacles.

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About the Shockoe Institute

The Shockoe Institute is a national organization headquartered in Richmond, Virginia, dedicated to revealing the enduring impact of racial slavery on our shared American experience. The Institute has undertaken a transformative project to develop an over 12,000 square foot exhibition and educational facility, located in Shockoe Bottom at Richmond’s historic Main Street Station.

The Institute is an independent, nonprofit entity that will serve as a place of learning, reflection, and action by examining the evolution of racial slavery in the Commonwealth, Richmond’s pivotal role in America’s internal trade in enslaved people, and the national ramifications of this history. Through data informed, evidence-based examination of America’s legacy of enslavement, the Shockoe Institute seeks to play a constructive role in creating solutions to help create a better future. Visit shockoeinstitute.org.

About ARtGlass

ARtGlass, headquartered in Richmond, Virginia, and Milan, Italy, is the first company to scale wearable AR experiences in cultural tourism. Through its TourBuilder platform and managed services, museums, archaeological sites and beyond can create immersive, compelling location-based digital experiences for smartglasses, tablets, or smartphones. Millions of visitors

worldwide have engaged with ARtGlass experiences at iconic historic and cultural sites. Visit artglassgroup.com.

About Snap Inc.

Snap Inc. is a technology company. We believe the camera presents the greatest opportunity to improve the way people live and communicate. We contribute to human progress by empowering people to express themselves, live in the moment, learn about the world, and have fun together. Visit snap.com.

Greg Werkheiser

ARtGlass

+1 703-408-2002

greg@artglassgroup.com

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