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**IV. What ideals, principles, motto and design qualities might you use to describe and define the next emergent design trend valid over the next 5 years, current to your practices? What name would you give to the design movement?**

In 2016, Augmented reality (AR) technology came into the limelight through the success of Pokemon Go, a mobile game developed by Nintendo based on its most popular franchise. The game utilized AR to project small animated fantasy creatures, called Pokemon, onto the real world where the users could see and interact with them through their smartphone (Eric, "Augmented reality is shaping the future"). The new emerging AR tool is utilized to create an immersive experience, creating an opportunity to engage users through stories and the use of real spaces. Many companies and organisations saw this leap of AR technology as an opened door to provide their customers with a user-centric experience through AR application.

Moving forwards to 2020, with the pandemic sweeping the social interaction away by its restriction, AR technology is back in the limelight once again. The interaction of people shifted from the physical world to the online virtual world with Zoom meetings, online learning and even virtual shopping experience. People's attitudes towards technologies have shifted from functionality to focusing more on user's experience. In this essay, I will look into how Augmented reality can influence the trend in visual communication and interactive media practices over the next five years.

One of the biggest impacts of AR technology is the ability to convert a product into an immersive experience for its users, providing a unique interaction. Augmented reality functions by overlaying digital visual and other sensory information onto the real world (Hayes, "Augmented Reality Definition"). This is often through the use of smart devices like handphones and Ipad or wearable glass devices. Besides this, the digital overlay can interact superficially with the environment in real-time, relying on AR technology to convey a message by entertaining or educating its users (Georgiou, "Council Post: Is Immersive Storytelling the New Marketing Frontier?"). In Singapore, designers used the immersive and interactive aspect of AR to enhance the experience in a physical space. This characteristic of AR could be seen in the Light Up 2021 AR experience at Mandarin Orchard. The AR Technology will transform a sidewall of Mandarin Orchard into a wall of wonder with multimedia projections with 10-minutes clips running on a scheduled interval. To enhance the viewing experience with immersive AR effects, viewers simply need to download the PopAR application on their smartphone devices. This AR show enhances the experience of a familiar place (Chevi, "Christmas Light up on Orchard Road")



Fig. 1.0. Augmented reality show at Orchard Road Light Up 2021 at Mandarin Orchard.

While AR technology was mainly used to create an immersive experience in Orchard Light Up, the BuzzAR application was designed with an aim of fostering customer engagement through a virtual-navigation shopping experience. Partnering with Marina Bay Sand, AR Wayfinder was conceptualized to launch a personal virtual guide to bring the users to their desired location within the Marine Bay Sand mall. Along the way, useful information will also be delivered through the customized virtual advertisement billboard on their mobile devices directly.



Fig. 1.1. Demonstration of BuzzAR from Singapore Tourism Board.

The “try-before-you-buy” trend has been populated during the COVID-19 outbreak period by utilizing AR technology. With the pandemic, many industries, especially the retail sector has progressively shifted to the digital and virtual shopping experience.

Many companies strike to recreate social experiences such as shopping with friends or testing beauty products on faces virtually through leveraging technologies like virtual reality and AR (Harvard Business, “How AR is redefining retail in the pandemic”). Tech-savvy furniture retailer like IKEA was one of the leading retail jumped into the AR bandwagon. The company launched IKEA Place AR app in 2017, designed with the Apple ARKit framework which is constantly updated with new product lines of IKEA. The app allows the instant and highly accurate scaling of products based on the user’s room dimensions. The textures of fabric, light and shadow of the furniture are stimulated realistically through the smartphone camera. AR is used in this way to design experiences that are user-centric, delivering virtual experience at home, while also remaining imperative to drive e-commerce sales and gather unique user data for the company.

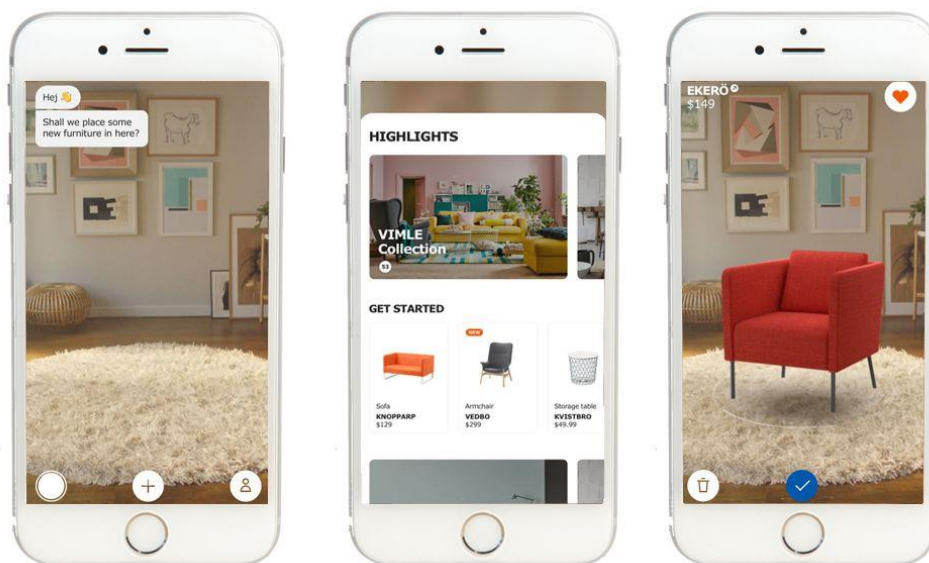


Fig. 1.2. Demonstration of IKEA Place AR App

Hence, with the development of the current AR trend, I predict that the next emergent over the next 5 years underlies in creating an immersive user experience, with a focus on promoting products, brands and services through enhancing experience. Designs would emphasise being interactive and user friendly, bridging both virtual and reality together. Inspired by this ability of AR, I would name the trend “Hyper-experience”.

Word Count: 698

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## Figures

Fig. 1.0.

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Fig. 1.1.

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Fig.1.2

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