



Press Release Saint Elmo's Experiential

## **A statement for diversity and inclusion: AR filter from Saint Elmo's Experiential for the Varo campaign of Serviceplan Group New York**

**Saint Elmo's Experiential has built an AR filter for the US campaign "Varo. A bank for all of us" an AR filter with a political message. The campaign, developed by Serviceplan Group's House of Communication New York for US bank Varo, promotes an accessible and inclusive financial system for all Americans. Saint Elmo's Experiential AR filter provides an interactive way to participate in the campaign: Anyone who wants can put their face on the twenty-dollar bill and take a stand for inclusion and diversity.**

**Berlin, 15 March 2021.** Serviceplan agency subsidiary Saint Elmo's Experiential, led by XR expert Kevin Prösel, developed the interactive component of the campaign "Varo. A Bank for all of us." It is an AR filter for Instagram that visualizes and brings to life the inclusive idea of the campaign and the Varo slogan "It's your money". The filter transfers the American twenty-dollar bill into augmented reality and gives everyone the opportunity to place their face on it and share the image with the world.

The Varo campaign, conceived in September 2020, is set in the context of the political debate over the design of U.S. currency. This has been criticized for not reflecting American history and diversity. Specifically, the debate is about the image of African American and abolitionist Harriet Tubman on the front of the \$20 bill. It was intended to replace the portrait of seventh U.S. President Andrew Jackson, who is considered an oppressor of Native North Americans. The project, which was halted by the Trump administration, is back on the political agenda under President Biden.

With its goal of providing easy access to the financial system for all Americans, regardless of gender, skin color, income and social status, Varo Bank is striking a chord with the times. The customizable \$20 bill as the motif of the new campaign makes a clear statement for diversity and inclusion.

Saint Elmo's Experiential has turned this statement into an interactive augmented reality experience. "We took the campaign idea and translated it into an AR filter," says Kevin Proesel, CEO of Saint Elmo's Experiential. "This allows people to really make the dollar bill 'their money' and take a political stand in that way. That's why we made a conscious decision to go realistic and keep the moiré look of the bill virtual, which we did brilliantly thanks to the excellent work of our team in the Serviceplan network and our technology partners. The Varo campaign is a perfect example of how augmented reality can usefully complement and enhance classic campaign elements."

Varo's "It's your money" IG Story Filter was developed using Facebook's powerful Spark AR platform, which enables the creation of responsive AR experiences for Instagram. The filter tracks the user's face and integrates it into a virtual \$20 bill via real-time filter rendering. This mimics the sophisticated engraving technique of the US currency. The result is a personalized digital banknote with a realistic look that users can save to their mobile devices and share with the network community.

The campaign for Varo Bank has been developed under the leadership of Serviceplan Group New York by an international team of experts across all continents and time zones. After kicking off at the Super Bowl on February 7, 2021, the integrated campaign will play out across TV, OOH, radio and digital throughout the United States.

Commenting on the collaboration with Saint Elmo's Experiential, Stefan Schütte, Managing Partner of Serviceplan Group New York, said, "I am proud to have created groundbreaking campaign extensions for the U.S. market with Kevin Präsel and his German experts in the group."

#### **About Saint Elmo's Experiential:**

Saint Elmo's Experiential was founded in 2021 as part of the Saint Elmo's group. The new Saint Elmo's unit specializes in innovative communication solutions that leave the two-dimensional frame and bring content to life in 3D. These include advertising with augmented reality, AR storytelling for social media, virtual staging for digital trade fair events and showrooms, virtual try-ons in online shopping, AR staging in the real estate sector and AR experience formats for tourism and destination marketing.

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**Client:****Varo**

Title: A Bank for All of Us  
CEO and Founder: Colin Walsh  
Chief Brand Officer: Halle Hutchison  
Head of Strategic Communications: Alexander Woie  
Social Media Manager: Genine Lob

**Agencies:****Serviceplan Group - House of Communication New York**

CEO: Stefan Schuette  
Creative Director/ Writer: Matt Ashworth  
Creative Director  
Art Director: Paul Foulkes  
Senior Producer: Jeff Ferro  
Client Account Lead: Joel Giullian Brand  
Strategy Director: Kelli Robertson

**Serviceplan Group**

Worldwide Executive Creative Director: Jason Romeyko  
CCO Serviceplan Germany: Matthias Harbeck

**Serviceplan Group Germany**

Global Executive Creative Director: Peter Gocht  
Executive Creative Director: Michael Wilk  
Global Creative Strategist: Max Schoengen  
Global Executive Creative Director: Wolf-Eike Galle

**Saint Elmo's Experiential**

Managing Director: Kevin Proesel  
Development: Henning Westerwelle  
Development: Justus Rosenkranz

**Production:****Scholar**

Directors: Will Johnson & Michael Tavaréz  
Managing Director: Jo Arghiris  
Executive Producer: Kirsten Noll  
Head of Production: Tyler Locke  
Senior Producer: Nicole Smarsh  
CG Supervisor: Brice Linane  
DP: Ernesto Lomeli  
Editor: Dominic Strazulo

**Mix & Sound Design: Formosa**

Mix & Sound Designer: John Bolen

**Music: Cordovan Music**

Composer: Greg Reeves

**Model:**

Instagram influencer: Carmen Perez (@makerealcents)