

In A Dream

You Saw A Way To Survive and You Were Filled With Joy

Organized by Keith Fox & Stephen Truax

October 28 – 31, 2026

New York

Press Release

The New York City AIDS Memorial and David Kordansky Gallery are pleased to present *In A Dream You Saw A Way To Survive and You Were Filled With Joy*, an exhibition organized by Keith Fox and Stephen Truax to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the New York City AIDS Memorial. The exhibition will open on Wednesday, October 28, with a public reception from 6 to 8 PM, and will remain on view through Saturday, October 31, at 520 W. 20th St.

In A Dream brings together landmark works by LGBTQ+ artists and estates, including Joe Brainard, General Idea, Peter Hujar, Robert Mapplethorpe, Harold Stevenson, Tom of Finland, David Wojnarowicz, and Jimmy Wright, made from 1971 to 1994, with newly created works by leading contemporary artists, including Cy Gavin, Hugh Hayden, Loie Hollowell, Shara Hughes, Sam McKinniss, Hilary Pecis, Adam Pendleton, and Nicole Wittenberg, creating a multigenerational dialogue around queer art, culture, identity, and experience.

The exhibition pays tribute to the ongoing legacy of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in New York City while advancing the Memorial's mission as both a vital site of remembrance and a dynamic platform for activism, culture, public art, and community engagement. *In A Dream* takes its title from artist Jenny Holzer's seminal *Survival Series* (1983–1985) work, *In A Dream You Saw A Way to Survive And You Were Full of Joy*. Holzer designed the Memorial's iconic granite paver installation.

"Artists have been some of the greatest stewards of the New York City AIDS Memorial through memory work, programming, and generous fundraising support since its creation," said Dave Harper, Executive Director. "For this exhibition, we are honored to bring together an intergenerational group of artists whose work, histories, and legacies are fundamental to the vitality of the Memorial."

Participating artists: Leilah Babirye, Gretchen Bender, Joe Brainard, Jared Buckhiester, Kyle Dunn, George Dureau, Austin Eddy, Cy Gavin, General Idea, Sam Gilliam, Jennifer Guidi, Simon Haas, Hugh Hayden, Loie Hollowell, Shara Hughes, Peter Hujar, Natia Lemay, Glenn Ligon, Robert Mapplethorpe, Chris Martin, Ryan McGinley, Sam McKinniss, Jamie Nares, Justin Liam O'Brien, Paul P., Hilary Pecis, Adam Pendleton, Jack Pierson, Peter Shear, Aaron Michael Skolnick, Harold Stevenson, Alessandro Teoldi, Hank Willis Thomas, Wolfgang Tillmans, Richard Tinkler, Tom of Finland, Nicole Wittenberg, David Wojnarowicz, and Jimmy Wright.

"This exhibition reminds us that we must uplift and preserve the multigenerational networks of artists, advocates, and friends most affected by the traumas of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The New York City AIDS Memorial is an essential partner in caring for these cultural lineages," remarked Adam Pendleton.

"The painting I have featured is about passing down life skills and embodied knowledge to friends. Preserving the New York City AIDS Memorial felt like an appropriate context for this work, as connecting to community and supporting one another through collective action is and was central to the mobilization of the fight against AIDS," said Loie Hollowell.

"It's an honor to contribute to a wonderful monument and cause that encourages one to look into the past all the while teaching us to act now for the future. Moments like this show us that tenderness is strength," commented Aaron Michael Skolnick.

"The portrait I have included in this exhibition creates an imagined space outside of time for my friend to fit into. The New York City AIDS Memorial reminds us that, though the real world can be brutal and in crisis, we can still create a beautiful world with painting. My project is to figure out how to fit my friend into it. The world becomes real once you paint it," shared Justin Liam O'Brien.

"I am honored to be among this group of artists presenting work for the benefit of the New York City AIDS Memorial. Since the Memorial's dedication ten years ago, artists have continually engaged with the site, the histories of the surrounding neighborhood, and dozens of programs responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and related movements. This benefit sale extends an ongoing, collective effort," added Kyle Dunn.

Since its dedication in 2016, the Memorial has presented the work of more than 260 artists, musicians, choreographers, filmmakers, and writers through exhibitions, public art commissions, performances, screenings, readings, and interdisciplinary programs. Its history includes landmark projects by Jenny Holzer, Jim Hodges, and, most recently, Oscar Tuazon. This exhibition also builds upon the success of the Memorial's 2021 benefit auction with Christie's, *Unquestioning Love*.

Support

The New York City AIDS Memorial is supported, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature; and by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York City Department of Youth and Community Development, in partnership with the New York City Council. Additional support for the Memorial's 10th Anniversary has been provided by AARP, Alphawood Foundation, Bank of America, Google, Johnson Family Foundation, Kors LePere Foundation, Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation, and many generous individual donors.

About the New York City AIDS Memorial

Founded as a grassroots advocacy effort in 2011, the New York City AIDS Memorial is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to honoring the more than 100,000 New Yorkers who have died of AIDS and recognizing the contributions of caregivers and activists who mobilized to provide care, fight discrimination, lobby for research, and alter the drug approval process, ultimately changing the trajectory of the epidemic.

Located at the corner of Greenwich Avenue and West 12th Street in Manhattan's West Village, the New York City AIDS Memorial occupies a prominent public park adjacent to the former St. Vincent's Hospital campus, which housed the city's first and largest dedicated AIDS ward, and became a central locus of care and activism during the epidemic. The Memorial serves as a highly visible civic space for reflection, remembrance, and engagement, offering free public programs in arts, education, and culture both on-site and digitally. Previous initiatives include Jenny Holzer's *#LightTheFight* (2018) and public art commissions by Avram Finkelstein (2023); Jim Hodges (2023–24); Derek Fordjour, Jacolby Satterwhite, Tourmaline (2025–6); and Oscar Tuazon (2026–27). In 2026, the Memorial celebrates its tenth anniversary since its dedication on World AIDS Day in 2016, marking

a decade of artistic, cultural, and civic engagement that preserves the history and lessons of the epidemic at the very heart of the city it affected most. For more information, please visit: www.nycaidsmemorial.org.

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