



AIDS MEMORY UK

Press release
For immediate release

AIDS Memory UK announces shortlisted artists to create London's first permanent HIV/AIDS memorial

Today, 12 March 2024, AIDS Memory UK announces that **Anya Gallaccio, Ryan Gander, Harold Offeh, Shahpour Pouyan** and **Diana Puntar** have been shortlisted to create the first permanent HIV/AIDS memorial in London.

The memorial, located in Fitzrovia, will offer a space for remembrance and solidarity, commemorating those who have been affected by HIV & AIDS, then, now and in the future.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has committed £130,000 funding from the Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm towards the permanent memorial.

- AIDS Memory UK (AMUK) aims to raise awareness of the continuing impact of HIV/AIDS in Britain and the world
- The HIV/AIDS Memorial in London will commemorate those who have died from an AIDS defining illness
- It will celebrate life and the living and all those who fought so valiantly for people living with HIV
- It will spur us on to keep fighting to end deaths due to HIV disease and AIDS defining illnesses and to stop new HIV infections worldwide
- HIV/AIDS has disproportionately affected four communities: gay/bisexual men, Black African communities, the bleeding disorders community and injecting drug users
- The shortlist showcases a diverse range of artistic practices
- The winning artist, selected by a panel of judges, will be announced in summer 2024

Imagery can be downloaded [here](#).

The chosen location is close to the former Middlesex Hospital, where the UK's first dedicated AIDS unit was opened by Princess Diana in April 1987. It was at this hospital that Princess Diana famously shook hands with a man suffering from AIDS, challenging the belief that HIV or AIDS could be transmitted by touch.

The five shortlisted artists were selected following a targeted call out by art consultants **Modus Operandi**, while the winning artist will be selected by a panel, chaired by AMUK trustee and CEO of Arts & Heritage, **Stephanie Allen** and including: British physician **Professor Jane Anderson**, writer and director **Neil Bartlett**, **Jo Baxendale**, Senior Policy Officer, Visual Art and Public Realm, Greater London Authority, artist **Rana Begum**, director of the Delfina Foundation **Aaron Cezar**, author and the Mayor's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm member, **Jack Guinness**, AIDS Memory UK founder and Artistic Director **Ash Kotak**, writer **Olivia Laing**, curator **Michael Morris**, and art historian **Satish Padiyar**.

The shortlist showcases a diverse range of artistic practices:

- **Anya Gallaccio** lives and works in London and in San Diego, USA. She is known for employing organic materials to create site-specific installations that transform and decay over time. Her more recent work reflects on impermanence by creating organic objects in more enduring forms.
- **Ryan Gander** lives and works in Suffolk and London. His practice, which has been informed by his own experiences of hospitalisation, breaks down boundaries and stigmas. He challenges the assumptions around what art is, how it is made and who it is for, particularly in the realm of public art.
- **Harold Offeh** was born in Ghana and lives in Cambridge. His work is generally performance based, drawing from collaborative, social and participatory contexts. He's interested in generational disconnect and the space created by the inhabiting or embodying of histories.
- **Shahpour Pouyan** was born in Isfahan, Iran, educated in the USA and now lives and works in London. He collaborates with a diverse team of architects, computer designers, programmers, and artists. His work invites viewers to reflect on the complex relationships between power, memory and the human condition.
- **Diana Puntar** is a London based artist and educator originally from New York. Her research driven work includes sculpture, installation, and collaboration, often exploring how capitalist structures are embedded into contemporary life.

"It has been a long journey to get to this point of delivering the first permanent AIDS Memorial in London. It is incredibly exciting. This group of acclaimed and very inspiring artists, with their diverse practices, each bring a different perspective to

the Memorial. I look forward to seeing what the Affected Communities Advisory Board and our esteemed panel of judges makes of them,” comments **Ash Kotak, Founder and Artistic Director**, who has been campaigning for the Memorial since 2016.

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, said: “I’m delighted to see another important step being taken towards creating this important memorial to commemorate those affected by HIV/AIDS. I’m proud that London is leading the way in tackling HIV globally and we are doing all we can to address the stigma related to the virus. This permanent memorial will ensure we remember those affected and honour the ongoing fight against HIV/AIDS and tackle the discrimination around it, as we build a healthier and fairer London for everyone.”

The winning artist will be announced in summer 2024, followed by the further research & development of the public artwork. At the same time, AIDS Memory UK will deliver a programme of projects and events to explore why London needs an AIDS memorial.

Quotes from advocates and affected communities:

Juno Roche, writer, trans activist – “AIDS and HIV has taken great chunks out of often marginalised communities, chunks of emotional labour, sadness, and lives, countless lives of men, women and children. Whilst fighting the disease people also had to fight the stigma, day in day out, fighting hatred and discrimination.”

Winnie Ssanyu Sseruma, HIV Activist, Advisory Board member - “HIV/AIDS has been in part, the forgotten pandemic. Within that, minority communities remain largely marginalised and unrecognised. A memorial in the UK would go some way to recognise the enormity of the HIV /AIDS pandemic and the activism of people living with HIV from all walks of life, whose resilience needs to be celebrated.”

Kate Burt (Chief Executive) & Clive Smith (Chair), The Haemophilia Society - “As a result of contaminated blood, 1,243 people with haemophilia and their partners were infected with HIV during the 1980s. Around 250 of those people are alive today, with many still hiding their diagnosis. Those who died did so privately, without many knowing their true fate. The AIDS Memorial recognises this important chapter and acknowledges the pain and devastation so many families endured.”

Silvia Petretti, CEO, Positively UK – “As a woman living with HIV I feel very strongly that our Herstory must be remembered. Women with HIV have been at the forefront of responding to the HIV epidemic since the beginning. We fought hard for services and research to include women. I want the memory of those outstanding women to be celebrated. We need and a special place to express the grief for the enormous losses we have faced, as a community.”

Siân Berry, Assembly Member – “London was at the heart of this country’s AIDS epidemic which affected so many people, their loved ones and their friends. It’s also

where some of the most pioneering treatment and prevention methods are being carried out today. A dedicated memorial will pay tribute to the people we lost, as well as recognising those living with HIV now”

Peter Tatchell, activist – “London experienced the majority of UK deaths from AIDS-related illnesses. Gay and bisexual men were the prime victims - and were often demonised. Many thousands died. The real figure will never be known, as AIDS/HIV was not always written on death certificates. AIDS/HIV is not over. Ignorance and prejudice remain. The virus continues to disproportionately affect the most marginalised and disempowered communities in the UK and worldwide.”

-ENDS-

For more information, please visit: <https://aidsmemory.uk/>

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About the shortlisted artists

Anya Gallaccio (she/her)

British artist Anya Gallaccio resides and works in London. She first gained public recognition in the late 1980s as part of a cohort of young artists brought together by the *Freeze* exhibitions, curated by Damien Hirst. Gallaccio's artistic practice revolves around the use of organic materials, including flowers, ice, salt, grass, and chocolate. Her use of materials invites processes of continual transformation and decay, emphasising the process of the installation rather than the outcome. In 2003, Gallaccio was shortlisted for the Turner Prize alongside Grayson Perry, Jake and Dinos Chapman and Willie Doherty. Her choice of sites often reflects a rich historical context, with her installations frequently referencing the past. In more recent years Gallaccio has confronted the issue of impermanence, creating organic objects in more enduring forms. For example, her work *Beautiful Minds (2015-17)* attempts to 3D print the Devils Tower in Wyoming.

Ryan Gander (he/him)

Ryan Gander is an interdisciplinary artist, creating works in sculpture, film, writing, graphic design, installation, performance and more. His projects aim to break boundaries, defy expectations, and change assumptions on what art traditionally is. Gander likes to explore human condition, fluctuating value systems over time and to focus on time and attention as the new currencies of our age. Ryan Gander has worked on numerous international exhibitions and public artworks, such as *The Happy Prince* (2010), installed in High Line Park, New York City and *Time Moves Quickly* (2018), a set of five public artworks installed outside The Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool as part of the Liverpool Biennial. Gander was awarded an OBE in 2017 for his services to contemporary arts.

Harold Offeh (he/him)

Harold Offeh is an artist working in a range of media including performance, video, photography, learning and social arts practice. Offeh is interested in the space created by the inhabiting or embodying of histories. He is currently a tutor in MA Contemporary Art Practice at the Royal College of Art. His work has evolved over time from a focus on body based durational performance to working in more collaborative, social and participatory contexts. *Stranger in the Village* (2019) was a multi-media installation in the Art Tower Mito, Mito, Japan which focussed on the intersection of experiences for both queer people from the local community and that of recent migrants. In 2019, Offeh received the Paul Hamlyn artist award, the largest award of its kind in the UK.

Shahpour Pouyan (he/him)

A skilled painter, ceramicist, draftsman, sculptor, and conceptualist, Shahpour Pouyan makes art that crosses genres, historical traditions, and cultural borders. Pouyan's work has been exhibited internationally and has received critical acclaim for his insightful and thought-provoking pieces. His artwork has been featured in prestigious venues such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum. With a unique blend of aesthetic and thematic concerns, his practice offers a fresh perspective on the intersection of history, politics, and culture. Pouyan's multidisciplinary approach to art invites viewers to reflect on the complex relationships between power, memory, and the human condition, making his work valuable to contemporary discourse.

Diana Puntar (she/her)

Diana Puntar is a London based artist and educator originally from New York City. Her cross-disciplinary works includes sculpture, installation, drawing, and printmaking. Puntar's ongoing project *The Milky Way* (2009-) is an exploration of utopian ideologies with an ever-shifting series of shows, test sites, collaborations, and educational workshops. Puntar likes to focus is on exploring how capitalist structures are imbedded into contemporary life through conspicuous and covert systems. Various projects of hers offer interruptions to this post imperialist conditioning by offering a transcendent experience to viewer/participants through immersive installations, communal dinners, or thought-provoking discrete works.

About the judges**Stephanie Allen, Chair**

Stephanie is Chief Executive of Arts&Heritage, a national visual arts agency that forges connections between communities, artists and heritage organisations to explore our nuanced histories from a range of perspectives and hopefully create more inclusive futures, ensuring both tangible and intangible heritages are treasured by future generations. She is also Chair of Peak Cymru.

Stephanie has over 25 years' experience working as a producer, creative director and project manager in the visual arts. She has worked on a variety of artist-led projects for Artsadmin and the Hayward Gallery as well as enabling and supporting site-responsive projects nationally and internationally as a freelance producer. This is twinned with significant

business planning, partnership management, fundraising and strategic development roles across the arts and cultural sector including positions at Arts Council England, The Geffrye Museum, the Sidney Nolan Trust and Creative United.

Professor Jane Anderson

Jane Anderson is a London based physician (Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Barts Health NHS Trust) who has worked in the field of HIV since the 1980s. Jane is co-chair of London's HIV Fast Track Cities Leadership Group, that works to stop new HIV infections, tackle HIV associated stigma, see the end of preventable deaths from HIV and secure best quality of life for Londoners living with HIV. Jane is Chair of The National AIDS Trust, the UK's HIV and Rights charity, and in 2023 she became Chair of Paintings in Hospitals, the charity that works to bring the power of the visual arts into the health and care sector.

Neil Bartlett

Neil Bartlett is an author and director with a forty-year reputation as an out queer artist. Having started his career at the height of the 1980's AIDS epidemic, he went on to become Artistic Director of the Lyric Hammersmith. His recent work includes staging Derek Jarman's *Blue* at the Tate, writing the script for Emma Corrin's *Orlando* in the West End and publishing his Polari Prize nominated novel *Address Book*. He lives in London with his partner of 35 years, James Gardiner.

Joann Baxendale

After graduating with a Masters in Post War and Contemporary Art, Joann Baxendale's career has been focused on visual art and the public realm, working across the public and private sectors. In 2008 she joined Arts Council England and worked on a national programme of commissions for the London 2012 Olympics. Following that she joined the Mayor's Office to lead on the Fourth Plinth Programme in Trafalgar Square, which she continues to manage today. In 2018 she delivered the commission that realised the statue of suffragist Millicent Fawcett, the first statue of a woman, by a woman in London's Parliament Square. The commission came about in response to a campaign to address the lack of representation of women in London. It helped catalyse the Mayor's response to addressing representation more broadly in London's public spaces.

Rana Begum

The work of London-based artist Rana Begum distils spatial and visual experience into ordered form. Through her refined language of Minimalist abstraction, Begum blurs the boundaries between sculpture, painting, and architecture. Her visual language draws from the urban landscape as well as geometric patterns from traditional Islamic art and architecture. Light is fundamental to her process. Begum's works absorb and reflect varied densities of light to produce an experience for the viewer that is both temporal and sensorial. Born in Bangladesh in 1977, Rana Begum lives and works in London. In 1999, Begum graduated with a BA in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art and Design and, in 2002, gained an MFA in Painting from Slade School of Fine Art.

Aaron Cezar

Aaron Cezar is the founding Director of Delfina Foundation, where he curates and develops its interrelated programme of residencies, exhibitions and public events. Under his tenure, Delfina Foundation has hosted nearly 400 artists, curators and collectors in residence, across dynamic programmes from Politics of Food to Collecting as Practice. Cezar has also curated external exhibitions and performances at Hayward Gallery Project Space, SongEun Artspace, and as part of the official public programme of the 58th Venice Art Biennale. He has sat on numerous boards, advisory groups, and award panels including the Turner Prize, Korea Art Prize, Jarman Award and public commissions, such as the National Memorial to British Victims of Overseas Terrorism.

Jack Guinness

Jack Guinness is an author and the founder of LGBTQ+ community The Queer Bible which celebrates the works and lives of the global queer community. Each entry on the site is accompanied by an original illustration by a young LGBTQ+ artist. Attitude magazine named Jack as one of their '101 LGBTQ+ Trailblazers Changing The World Today.' Jack is a very proud member of The Mayor of London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm created to help ensure London's achievements across the capital's rich and diverse history are properly reflected around the city. Jack is the newly appointed brand director for Gay Star News - a digital-first LGBTQ+ community dedicated to inspiring, empowering and spreading queer joy!

Ash Kotak

Ash Kotak (He/Him) is a playwright, filmmaker, curator & poet. He founded the AIDS Memory UK Campaign in 2016. He is the artistic & vision director for the project, acting as a bridge between the charity and the Mayor's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm.

His works as a playwright include *Maa* (1995, Royal Court); *Hijra* (2000, Bush Theatre, Theatre Royal Plymouth, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Theatre Du Nord, New Conservatory Theatre). His films include *The Joneses* (2009, 10 mins) and *Punched By a Homosexualist* (2018, 55 mins). His poems have been included in four separate anthologies: *Poets4Grenfell* (2018); *Not Here: A Queer Anthology of Loneliness* (2017); *Not Here: A Queer Anthology of Joy* (2018) and the *Race Today* anniversary publication 2023.

He set up curating collective *Aesthesia* in 2014, working with dehumanised, marginalised and deliberately disempowered communities to amplify individual voices and reexamine accepted narratives through the creative arts.

Olivia Laing

Olivia Laing is a widely acclaimed writer and critic. She's the author of seven books, including *The Lonely City*, *Funny Weather: Art in an Emergency* and *Everybody*. She's written extensively about art and the Aids crisis, focusing particularly on Derek Jarman and David Wojnarowicz. Her work has been translated into 21 languages and in 2018 she was awarded the Windham-Campbell prize for non-fiction.

Michael Morris MBE

As Co-Directors of Artangel from 1991 - 2023, Michael Morris and James Lingwood commissioned and produced more than 125 extraordinary projects in a range of distinctive

and unexpected places. Working across disciplines and genres, Artangel became a byword for originality and integrity through landmark works developed slowly over time by Clio Barnard, Jeremy Deller, PJ Harvey, Roni Horn, Roger Hiorns, Miranda July, Michael Landy, Steve McQueen, and Sarah Sze, amongst many others.

During the 1980s, Michael was Director of Performing Arts at ICA London, prior to establishing the influential production company Cultural Industry (1988 – 2012) where he developed long term relationships with performing arts pioneers including Robert Lepage, Pina Bausch, Laurie Anderson and Brian Eno.

From 2007 - 2022, Michael was Artistic Advisor to the Manchester International Festival and served in similar advisory roles for 14-18 NOW, Robert Wilson's Watermill Center in Long Island, the Roundhouse, Tate Modern, Rising Melbourne, the Pina Bausch Foundation and as a Trustee of Longplayer.

Satish Padiyar

Satish Padiyar is an art historian, writer and curator, and is Research Fellow at The Courtauld Institute of Art, London. He has published extensively on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European visual art, and also writes about contemporary art. Publications include the books *Chains. David, Canova and the Fall of the Public Hero in Post-Revolutionary France* (2007) and *Fragonard: Painting Out of Time* (2019). Padiyar has contributed to numerous exhibition catalogues. Essays include 'Leon Golub and the Banality of Evil', in Leon Golub, exh. cat., Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (Madrid, 2011), 'Behind Clothes: Fashioning Men at the Museum', in Fashioning Masculinities. The Art of Menswear, exh. cat., Victoria & Albert Museum (London, 2022), and 'Proust and Old Time: On 'Chardin' and 'Watteau' (Oxford Art Journal, 2016). His range of interests include masculinity, the body and desire, the history of sculpture and the lived experiences of time.

About AIDS Memory UK

Aids Memory UK CIO was established as a charity to commemorate those who lost their lives in the HIV/AIDS epidemic, to give comfort to those who grieve their loss and highlight the impact of HIV/AIDS on the lives of the communities most affected. Their current primary activity is to create the London AIDS Memorial.

Formed from a cross section of diverse members and skill sets it aims to reunite impacted communities to continue to fight on to end HIV transmissions and AIDS deaths worldwide, as well as demonstrating how overcoming barriers and working together can create remarkable change.

About Mayor of London

The memorial is supported by the Mayor of London. The Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm was established by the Mayor of London to enrich and add to the current public realm and advise on better ways to raise public understanding behind existing statues, street names, building names and memorials. The Commission has supported programmes to help enhance the representation of women, disabled people, Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and LGBTQI+ figures in our public spaces, but also improving our collective understanding of our shared history.

About Modus Operandi art consultants

Modus Operandi

Modus Operandi is an independent agency for public art. It delivers art commissions that are integral to architecture and the public realm, aiming to connect the vision of artists with commissioners, publics and places. Modus Operandi curates permanent and temporary commissions, collaborations and interventions by emerging and established artists.

Working with AMUK, Modus Operandi advised on the initial long-list of artists, selected from Expressions of Interest, and the final shortlist. The curatorial and management team for the AIDS Memorial is Vivien Lovell, Jenni Lomax and Poppy Heron.

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Vivien Lovell

Founder-Director, Modus Operandi

Vivien Lovell is a visual arts curator with established expertise in commissioning permanent and temporary art in architecture and the public realm. She founded Modus Operandi in 1999 as an independent consultancy, having been Founder-Director of Public Art Commissions Agency 1987 to 1999. She has initiated many strategies and collaborative projects between artists, architects and other design professionals. She is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and was Chair of the Faculty of Fine Arts, British School at Rome, 2013 – 2020.

Jenni Lomax

Associate Curator

Working in the fields of visual art and art education, Jenni Lomax was the Director of Camden Arts Centre, London, from 1990 to 2017, where she established an influential and forward-thinking programme of international exhibitions, artists, residencies and education projects, all of which have artists and their ideas at the core. She continues to work as an independent curator, writer and acts in an advisory capacity to a number of institutions and charitable foundations. She was awarded the Order of the Polar Star in 2017, Chevalier dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2007 and received an OBE for her services to the Visual Arts in 2009.

Poppy Heron

Administrator

Poppy Heron has worked with Modus Operandi since 2014. She assists with project coordination and administration focused on arts commissioning in the public realm, arts strategy and partnership working. She has supported a number of large-scale commissioning programmes with Modus in Oxford and central London. Her previous work has included arts festival delivery across the UK, temporary arts interventions and public programmes as well as working with the development team at Tate.

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