



AIDS MEMORY UK

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## Artist Anya Gallaccio commissioned to create The AIDS Memorial in London



Anya Gallaccio in her studio with a maquette of her winning proposal for The AIDS Memorial London. © GW.

***Imagery can be downloaded [here](#).***

Today, 12 June 2024, AIDS Memory UK announces that artist **Anya Gallaccio** has won the commission to create The AIDS Memorial in London.

The AIDS Memorial in London, located on South Crescent, Store Street in Fitzrovia, will take the form of a felled tree. It will offer a space for remembrance and solidarity, commemorating those affected by HIV/AIDS in the past, present and the future.

Gallaccio's proposal features a tree trunk from which rings have been extracted from the core and displayed upright nearby. The resulting hollow space invites visitors to interact and engage with the memorial and serves as a reminder of those who have been lost to HIV/AIDS.

AIDS Memory UK (AMUK) aims to raise awareness of the continuing impact of HIV/AIDS, which has disproportionately affected four communities: gay/bisexual men, Black African communities, the bleeding disorders community and injecting drug users.

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

Gallaccio is a British artist who works and resides in London and San Diego, USA. She is known for creating site-specific installations using organic materials that transform over time. In recent work, she approaches permanence by creating organic objects in more enduring forms. This is her first permanent public commission in London.

This autumn, Turner Contemporary in Margate will present *preserve*, the largest survey exhibition of Gallaccio's practice to date. Early in her career in 1988, Gallaccio participated in the pivotal *Freeze* exhibition curated by Damien Hirst along with other artists who became known collectively as the Young British Artists (YBAs). In 2003, she was shortlisted for the Turner Prize. She has recently been awarded the Kenneth Armitage Foundation fellowship 2023-2025. Her permanent commissions are located at The Whitworth in Manchester, Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh and Houghton Hall, Norfolk. Gallaccio will bring her artwork 'Stroke' to her birth town Paisley, Scotland, in autumn for Jupiter+, a creative project by Jupiter Artland which uses art to promote agency and activism in young people.

### **Anya Gallaccio comments:**

"The proposal as it stands is holding space with the intention of providing a meeting place, a heart for community generated events and oral histories... The tree is a symbol of life. The planes that line the street side of the crescent are everywhere in the city, for good reason, they withstand pollution. They are survivors, living, despite their environment, a clunky but perhaps fitting metaphor for those living with HIV and AIDS. Hidden in plain sight."

Anya Gallaccio was selected for The AIDS Memorial by a panel of judges from a shortlist of five artists, including **Ryan Gander**, **Harold Offeh**, **Shahpour Pouyan** and **Diana Puntar**. The curatorial selection process was managed by art consultants **Modus Operandi**.

The panel was chaired by AMUK trustee and CEO of Arts&Heritage, **Stephanie Allen** and included: 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 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 **Affected Communities Advisory Board (ACAB)**, comprising representatives from affected communities, was consulted during the selection process.

One of the criteria for the winning artist selection was an engagement with global conversations around HIV/AIDS and a connection to the most impacted communities.

**On behalf of the AMUK Selection Panel, curator Michael Morris says:**

“Into the midst of a tree-lined crescent, Anya Gallaccio introduces a monumental trunk, its inner rings removed and standing upright close by. Such an expression of loss and resilience, and its constant presence through time, could not be clearer. The horizontal trunk and the vertical rings that watch over it powerfully and poignantly merge to memorialise the AIDS crisis, creating a living place of remembrance both for the communities most directly affected by HIV and for all Londoners.”

**Ash Kotak, Founder of AIDS Memory UK, says:**

“The announcement is a major milestone for the already seven-and-a-half-year-long campaign to deliver The AIDS Memorial in London. The foundations have now been laid: a historically relevant site; a brilliant internationally recognised artist who was directly affected by HIV & AIDS in London; and her beautiful and meaningful new public artwork. Now is the time for Londoners, and friends of this great city, to come together to fundraise and build this important new public artwork. It will survive longer than all of us and remain a tribute to the epoch we are all living through, a time of HIV & AIDS, as we fight on to its end.”

**The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said:**

“I’m delighted that Anya Gallaccio has been commissioned to create The AIDS Memorial in London, and I’m proud that funding from City Hall is helping to bring this project to fruition.

“Anya’s proposal is a powerful symbol of solidarity and a fitting way to honour those who have lost their lives to the virus and highlight the impact it has had on our communities, as we work to end transmissions in the capital and build a fairer London for everyone.”

**Representatives from the Affected Communities Advisory Board said:**

“Today is significant in many ways for the different communities touched by HIV and AIDS. The United Kingdom has finally recognised us and as the passage of time advances we shall never be forgotten again. In 2016, Ash Kotak reached out to surviving victims of the contaminated blood scandal with HIV, not only to support our fight for justice but to ensure equality and dignity are at the heart of the new AIDS Memorial in London. Now everyone sees what his compassion and determination has achieved. We finally have a place for mothers, lovers, friends and those who care to visit, to connect, to remember. The public gets to see Anya’s vision of “our” memorial for the first time and as her emotive design transitions from paper to reality, those of us

still here are united in this long overdue moment of history together.” – **Mark Ward, LGBT Ambassador, Haemophilia Society**

“This announcement is welcome because it is critical and incredibly important that London has this clearly inclusive memorial. It is a place where many of us can go, where we can quietly contemplate the now, connect with those who have gone before us, and celebrate the achievements and progress made so far. The artwork is beautiful. It fits in with and respects the surrounding environment and will provide a peaceful, calm, and reflective space” – **Angelina Namiba, Founder member, 4M network of Mentor Mothers living with HIV**

"As a woman with HIV, I am deeply grateful that Anya Gallaccio has been selected to finally provide the art that will infuse a corner of central London with a sacred geometry. This space will be a place where people with HIV can be remembered; a place where we can stop for a moment to reflect and contemplate all we have lost and all we have gained as individuals and as a community as we overcame the challenges of the AIDS crisis. It will be an altar, an urban grove where we can quietly celebrate all we have achieved through love, solidarity, and community action." – **Silvia Petretti, CEO, Positively UK**

The chosen location for the memorial is close to the former Middlesex Hospital, where the first ward dedicated to the care and treatment of people affected by HIV/AIDS in the United Kingdom was established. The Broderip Ward took its first patients in January 1987, and was officially opened by Diana, Princess of Wales on 9 April 1987. It was at this hospital that Princess Diana famously shook hands with a man living with AIDS, challenging the belief that HIV or AIDS could be transmitted by touch.

The AIDS Memorial in London will be further researched and developed by Anya Gallaccio, aiming for unveiling at the end of 2027. In the meantime, AIDS Memory UK will deliver a programme of projects and events to raise funds and explore why London needs an AIDS memorial.

**-ENDS-**

**For more information, please visit:**

[aidsmemory.uk](https://aidsmemory.uk)

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**Notes to editors**

**About Anya Gallaccio**

British artist Anya Gallaccio (she/her) 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. Gallaccio is represented in London by [Thomas Dane Gallery](#).

### **Anya Gallaccio at Turner Contemporary, Margate**

From 28 September 2024 – 12 January 2025, Turner Contemporary, Margate will present *preserve*, the largest survey exhibition of Anya Gallaccio's practice to date. Exploring her radical rethinking of the relationship between art and environment over the past 30 years, the exhibition will also celebrate and connect to Kent's natural heritage. Gallaccio creates site specific sculptures and installations often using organic materials such as flowers, apples and trees, that naturally transform and decay over the duration of display. Inherently interested in the process of making and the physical qualities of materials, Gallaccio has shifted the boundaries of what sculpture could be and embraces the unpredictable results this brings. A new commission will be presented alongside works from throughout her career. The exhibition will be accompanied by An Apple a Day, a wide-reaching schools programme. *preserve* is the first in Turner Contemporary's new Art+Environment programme strand, where curatorial research is generously supported by John Ellerman Foundation. Since it opened, Turner Contemporary has welcomed over 4.1 million visits, put over £80 million back into the Kent economy, and connected with thousands of people from the local community through our world-class programme. [Turner Contemporary](#)

### **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. [AIDS Memory UK](#)

### **About Ash Kotak**

Ash Kotak (He/Him) is a playwright, filmmaker and curator. He founded the AIDS Memory UK Campaign in 2016. He is the founder and artistic director for the project.

His works as a playwright include *Maa* (1995, Royal Court); *Hijra* (2000, Bush Theatre, Theatre Royal Plymouth, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Theatre Du Nord Brussels, New Conservatory Theatre San Francisco) and his latest work in development with *Freddiebhai*. His films include *The Joneses* (Exec Producer, 2016, 80 mins, USA) and *Punched By a Homosexualist* (Producer, 2018, 55 mins, Russia).

He set up curating collective *Aesthesia* CIC in 2014, working with dehumanised, marginalised and deliberately disempowered communities - eg Palestinian Artists from Gaza (2014-16), the Grenfell Community (2017-18) and people living with or affected by HIV & AIDS (2016 onwards) - to amplify individual voices and reexamine accepted narratives through the creative arts.

### **About the 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 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.

[www.modusoperandi-art.com](http://www.modusoperandi-art.com)

### **About Jupiter+**

Jupiter+ is a creative learning programme delivered by Jupiter Artland which brings world-class art to High Streets across Scotland. It aims to use the power of art and creativity to promote agency and activism in young people. In Autumn 2024, Gallaccio will take over an unoccupied shop space on Paisley High Street, coating the walls with layers of chocolate. Jupiter+ projects were delivered in Ayr and Perth, with Scottish artist Rachel Maclean.

### **About Jupiter Artland**

Anya Gallaccio's sculpture, 'the light pours out of me', is on permanent display at Jupiter Artland. Jupiter Artland is an award-winning, contemporary sculpture park, located between Edinburgh and Glasgow. Set over 100 acres of meadow, woodland and five indoor gallery spaces, Jupiter Artland has to date commissioned over 35 permanent site-specific sculptures from the world's leading artists including Tracey Emin, Anya Gallaccio, Rachel Maclean, Anish Kapoor and Charles Jencks. [www.jupiterartland.org](http://www.jupiterartland.org)

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