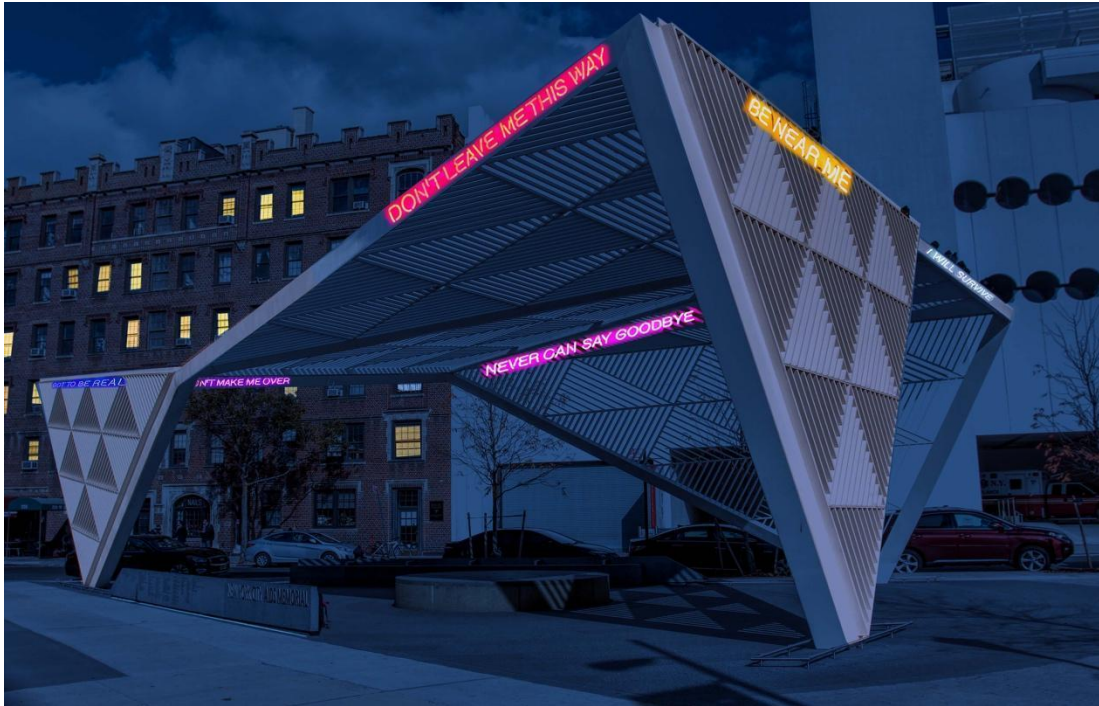




## SONGS FOR A MEMORIAL, SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION BY ARTIST STEVEN EVANS DEBUTS AT NEW YORK CITY AIDS MEMORIAL; SUMMER PROGRAMMING INCLUDES DISCO DANCE PARTY

June 1 – September 6, 2022  
New York City AIDS Memorial Park at St. Vincent's Triangle  
West 12th Street & Greenwich Avenue, New York, NY



Steven Evans, *Songs for a Memorial*, 2020-22 (illustration), LEDs, acrylic, components; various sizes; Courtesy of the artist

New York, NY – May 5, 2022– The New York City AIDS Memorial is thrilled to announce its next series of programs, launching June 1st for LGBTQ+ Pride Month in New York City, and running through September 6, 2022. Centered around a site-specific, sculptural installation by Houston, Texas-based artist Steven Evans, this is the fourth in the Memorial's ongoing series of visual art and cultural programs that illuminates the history, struggle and future of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in New York City.

*Songs for a Memorial* (2020-22) consists of 12 text-based, polychromatic, LED sculptures designed to evoke neon signage and the dynamic energy of nightlife, creating vibrant layers of color throughout the Memorial. This newly commissioned work exists at the intersection of language and memory by way of Evans' appropriation of titles from songs tied inextricably to the period surrounding the onset and height of the AIDS epidemic, from the 1970s hit "Love Is the Message" by MFSB, Sylvester's anthem "You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)," and the early 1980s British synth-pop protest song "Why" by Bronski Beat among other Downtown New York club and radio favorites.

By juxtaposing multiple song titles across genres, Evans weaves narratives of both individual and collective memory and history that simultaneously speak to complex relationships between loss, love, sadness, joy and celebration—paradoxes which exist at the crux of his practice. As Julie Ault quoted Andrew Holleran, in her essay for Evans' 2019 solo exhibition at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, "any memory of those days is nothing but a string of songs."

The soundtrack of Evans' work is the jumping off-point for *Dance for a Memorial*, a celebratory dance party featuring live DJs playing tracks inspired by Evans' installation, closing out Pride Month on June 29. Immediately following *Meet Me on the*

*Dance Floor*, an hour-long storytelling program presented with the Generations Project focused on sharing tales from nights under the disco ball, this joyful gathering will feature special guests including DJ Lady Bunny and guests will be invited to dance the night away. *Meet Me on the Dancefloor* and *Dance for a Memorial* will both take place at the New York City AIDS Memorial Park at St. Vincent's Triangle on June 29, from 6 – 9 PM and are free and open to the public.



Steven Evans, *Songs for a Memorial, 2020-22* (illustration), LEDs, acrylic, components; various sizes; Courtesy of the artist

In addition, the New York City AIDS Memorial will present a new edition by Steven Evans - *Don't Leave Me This Way/Never Can Say Goodbye, 2022*, a handmade neon edition of 10. The edition will be available in booth C4 at NADA New York, running May 5 – 8, 2022 at Pier 36 in New York, with all proceeds going to the New York City AIDS Memorial.

### Public Programs

These events will take place at the New York City AIDS Memorial and are free and public unless indicated otherwise. Additional special programs and performances to be announced throughout summer. Please visit [nycaidsmemorial.org](https://nycaidsmemorial.org) to RSVP or for more information.

#### **Press Preview - June 1 at 7:00 PM**

Join artist Steven Evans and the Board of the New York City AIDS Memorial to celebrate the premiere of *Songs for a Memorial (2020-22)*.

*Invitation only, RSVP required. To request access email Lourdes Miller, [Lourdes@bluemedium.com](mailto:Lourdes@bluemedium.com)*

#### **Storytelling Event: Meet Me on the Dancefloor - June 29 at 6:00 PM**

Join the New York City AIDS Memorial and the Generations Project for a live storytelling event, featuring tales from the LGBTQ+ community about nightlife, clubs, shimmy-shaking and connecting under the disco ball.

*Free & public*

#### **Dance Party: Dance for a Memorial - June 29, at 7:00 PM**

Featuring live DJs, including DJ Lady Bunny, and curated playlists, this festive gathering in New York City AIDS Memorial Park features a disco dance party, special guests, and more.

*Free & public*



Songs for a Memorial is exhibited through NYC Parks' Art in the Parks program. Funding has been generously provided by the New York City Council Speaker's Fund, Ralph Lauren Corporate Foundation, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, and Avenue 8.



Steven Evans, *Don't Leave Me This Way/Never Can Say Goodbye*, 2022, Glass and neon sign, hardware and electronic components, 6 x 38 x 1.5 inches, Edition of 10

#### About Steven Evans

In a career that has spanned more than three decades, artist Steven Evans (b. 1964, Key West, FL) has consistently explored the connections between music, language, memory, identity, and collectivity. Evans earned a BFA in photography at the Atlanta College of Art and an MFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Canada in 1989. Evans is an artist, writer, curator, and Executive Director of the award-winning arts organization FotoFest International, which founded and sponsors the first and longest-running international Biennial of Photography and New Media Art in the United States. Prior to FotoFest, Evans worked with a wide range of artists and collaborators as Managing Director of Dia:Beacon and as Director of the Linda Pace Foundation in San Antonio. He has participated in solo and group exhibitions in New York City, New York; Los Angeles, California; Paris; Berlin; and elsewhere, including most recently his inclusion in group exhibitions *Macho Man*, *Tell It To My Heart* at Artist's Space, New York, *Powerful Babies*, *Keith Haring's Impact on Artists Today* at Spritmuseum, Stockholm, Sweden, and a 2019 solo exhibition, *If I can't dance, it's not my revolution!*, at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Texas.

Evans first arrived in New York City in the late 1980s and became involved in two scenes that fundamentally shaped his artistic practice: activism, as a member of activist groups like ACT UP, Queer Nation, and Visual AIDS, and dance music. Since this period, Evans' works have referenced pop, disco, and nightclub anthems blended with agitprop graphic strategies to create radiant works made from neon, vinyl, paint, and—for the first time in this new work—LEDs.

#### About the New York City AIDS Memorial

Founded as a grass-roots advocacy effort in early 2011, the New York City AIDS Memorial organization is now a 501(c)(3) corporation, with a 15-person board, chaired by Keith Fox.

The mission of the New York City AIDS Memorial is to honor the more than 100,000 New Yorkers who have died of AIDS and to acknowledge the contributions of caregivers and activists who mobilized to provide care for the ill, fight discrimination, lobby for medical research, alter the drug approval process, ultimately changing the trajectory of the disease. The Memorial, dedicated on December 1, 2016 (World AIDS Day) aims to inspire visitors to remember and reflect as well as empower current and future activists, health professionals, and people living with HIV in the continuing mission to end AIDS.

Today the organization maintains the New York City AIDS Memorial as a highly-visible and architecturally significant landmark and a community space for the reflection and remembrance of men, women, and children lost to AIDS; bears witness to the lessons of the epidemic through engagement and free, public community-centered educational, arts, and cultural programming at the Memorial site; and virtually extends the reach of the Memorial through digital content and interactivity. Previous programs

have included Jenny Holzer's #LightTheFight in 2018, the exhibition *Visual Impact: On Art, AIDS, and Activism* in 2019, and the site-specific soundscape installation *Hear Me: Voices of the Epidemic* in 2020.

The Memorial sits at the gateway to a public park adjacent to the former site of St. Vincent's Hospital, which housed the City's first and largest AIDS ward and became the symbolic epicenter of the disease through depictions in *The Normal Heart*, *Angels in America*, and other important pieces of literature and art that tell the story of the plague years in New York. The park site is also a block from the LGBT Community Center on 13th Street, where ACT-UP and other AIDS advocacy/support groups first organized. Furthermore, the site is highly visible, accessible, and surrounded by amenities for visitors. For all these reasons, New York City officially named the park that houses the memorial the "New York City AIDS Memorial Park at St. Vincent's Triangle."

#### Press Quotes

**Artist Steven Evans** says: "this installation is a monument to a time in New York. It is intended to be part of a continuation of public expression in Greenwich Village, another paragraph in a story that includes the Stonewall Rebellion, Félix González-Torres' 1989 billboard work presented in Sheridan Square, and the New York City AIDS Memorial that the work compliments and amplifies."

**New York City AIDS Memorial Executive Director Dave Harper** says: "for me, like many, music has always been tied deeply to memory and nostalgia. It has also been called the heartbeat of the ongoing response to AIDS. Evans' installation will bring color and light and activity to the Memorial. This work reveals an extremely important element of a significant time period of the AIDS epidemic, helping to resurface memories for those who lived through it, inspiring those who came after, and connecting them all through the power of music."

#### Media Contact

For additional information, images, or to request an interview please contact:

Lourdes Miller, Blue Medium Inc.

[lourdes@bluemedium.com](mailto:lourdes@bluemedium.com)

212-675-1800