

Memorial Art Gallery and River Campus Libraries Receive RACF & NEA Grants to Support Upcoming Collaborative Exhibit, *Up Against the Wall: Art, Activism, and the AIDS Poster*

HIV/AIDS Education Posters from the AIDS Education Posters Collection, at the University of Rochester

ROCHESTER, NY, July 20, 2020— The Memorial Art Gallery and the River Campus Libraries at the University of Rochester are pleased to announce the receipt of a \$20,000 grant from Rochester Area Community Foundation's Lloyd E. Klos Fund as well as a \$25,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in support of the upcoming major exhibition, [*Up Against the Wall: Art, Activism, and the AIDS Poster*](#), on view from March 6–June 19, 2022.

In collaboration with generous philanthropists and community partners, Rochester Area Community Foundation works to improve the quality of life for people who live and work in the eight-county region through its leadership and strategic grantmaking. “These posters are important to understanding the evolution of how HIV/AIDS has been portrayed and what we have learned along the way,” says Jennifer Leonard, president and CEO of the Community Foundation. “We are proud to partner with MAG and UR to showcase this collection.”

“These awards demonstrate the resilience of the arts in America, showcasing not only the creativity of their arts projects but the organizations’ agility in the face of a national health crisis,” said Mary Anne Carter, chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. “We celebrate organizations like the Memorial Art Gallery for providing opportunities for learning and engagement through the arts in these times.”

Up Against the Wall will display approximately 200 of the most visually arresting and socially meaningful examples from more than 8,000-strong AIDS Education Posters Collection in the University’s River Campus Libraries Department of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation. The posters, spanning from 1982 to the present, show how social, religious, civic, and public health agencies have addressed the controversial, often contested, terrain of the HIV/AIDS pandemic within the public realm. Organizations and creators tailored their messages to specific audiences, both broad and very specific, and using a wide array of messages, employed humor, emotion, scare tactics, simple scientific explanations, sexual imagery, and many other methods to get their message across. Organized into two primary sections, *Up Against the Wall* will explore the “who, what, and where” of the HIV/AIDS crisis as reflected in the posters, bringing together the works of different sponsors’ targeted messaging, focusing on key messages, and examining the posters from various countries and different national responses.

“We are honored to be the home of such an important collection,” says Mary Ann Mavrinac, Vice Provost and Andrew H. and Janet Dayton Neilly Dean, University of Rochester Libraries. “This exhibition will embody the depth of meaning, historically and currently, that the AIDS Education Poster collection embodies, using art as vehicle for community engagement, education, and – ideally – a reduction in those affected by HIV/AIDS.”

The exhibition will also be accompanied by an illustrated book to be published by RIT Press, which will include important essays and rich illustrations. The book is conceived to complement, not duplicate, the exhibition and the online interface of the entire collection, which is available here: <https://aep.lib.rochester.edu/>.

Throughout the run of the exhibition, MAG will be offering a broad range of public programs and community engagement opportunities that explore the intersection of art, design, advocacy, and health to continue the conversation surrounding the HIV/AIDS pandemic and create opportunities to learn more about its past, present, and future prevention.



MAGRochester



MAGRochester



MAG_Binstock



MAG_Rochester



MAGRochester

Continued...

For more information on this National Endowment for the Arts grant announcement, visit arts.gov/news.

Up Against the Wall: Art, Activism, and the AIDS Poster is sponsored by Vicki and Richard Schwartz, DKT International, the Gleason Family Foundation, and the Rochester Area Community Foundation's Lloyd E. Klos Fund. Additional support has been provided by the Family of Dr. Edward C. Atwater, Canandaigua National Bank and Trust, the Gallery Council of the Memorial Art Gallery, the Anthony J. Mascioli Trust, and an anonymous donor. The exhibition is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Funding is also provided by the Robert L. and Mary L. Sproull Fund and gifts made in memory of Dr. Edward C. Atwater.

The book that complements the exhibition is made possible by William M. Valenti, M.D.

About River Campus Libraries

With more than 3.5 million volumes, extensive digital resources, and world-renowned collections of rare and unique materials, River Campus Libraries forms the intellectual foundation of learning and research at the University of Rochester. The Libraries' strategic plan for 2018–2025 focuses on making its collections accessible for all, designing spaces that serve their users' needs, enriching educational experiences, supporting scholarly research at the University, and engaging communities on and off campus.

About The Memorial Art Gallery

The Memorial Art Gallery showcases visual art from antiquity to the present day, including the outdoor public Centennial Sculpture Park. In addition to its permanent collection, MAG offers a year-round schedule of special exhibitions, lectures, concerts, tours, after-hours social events, and family activities.

Hours: Wednesday–Sunday 11 am to 5 pm, and until 9 pm on Thursdays and select Fridays. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Admission: \$15; senior citizens, \$12; college students with ID and children 6–18, \$6. Always free to members, University of Rochester faculty/staff and students, and children 5 and under. Half-price general admission Thursdays from 5–9 pm is made possible in part by Monroe County. For more information, call 585.276.8900 or visit mag.rochester.edu.

###

Press contact: Meg Colombo (585) 276-8934 / mcolombo@mag.rochester.edu

MAG Contact: Rachael Brown, Director of Marketing and Engagement: 585.276-8937 / rbrown@mag.rochester.edu