

Memorial Art Gallery and River Campus Libraries Awarded IMLS Grant to Support the 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, Monday, August 31, 2020— The Memorial Art Gallery (MAG) and the River Campus Libraries at the University of Rochester are pleased to announce the receipt of a \$121,903 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services' (IMLS) Museums for America program in support of the upcoming major exhibition, [*Up Against the Wall: Art, Activism, and the AIDS Poster*](#), on view from March 6 through June 19, 2022.

IMLS's Museums for America supports projects that strengthen a museum's ability to benefit the public by providing high-quality, inclusive learning experiences, serving as community anchors and essential partners in addressing community needs, and by preserving and providing access to the collections entrusted to its care. *Up Against the Wall* is one of 190 projects that were selected from 631 applications requesting more than \$98 million.

Up Against the Wall will exhibit approximately 200 of the most visually arresting and socially meaningful examples of AIDS education posters held by the River Campus Libraries' Department of Rare Books, Special Collections, and Preservation. The exhibit is curated from a larger collection of over 8,000 posters from 130 countries and in 76 languages, spanning almost 40 years (1983–present), and explores how social, religious, civic, community, and public health agencies have addressed the controversial, often contested, terrain of the HIV/AIDS pandemic within the public realm. The organizations and creators behind these posters tailored their messages to both broad and very specific audiences, using humor, scare tactics, sexual imagery, and many other methods to get their message across. *Up Against the Wall* will explore the ongoing HIV/AIDS crisis through these posters, and examining how different groups, cultures, and audiences have responded across time and space. The collection is one of the largest of its kind in the world, and includes posters, as well as a broad range of ephemera that was created to educate and inform people about HIV/AIDS.

“We are honored to be the home of such an important collection,” says Mary Ann Mavrinnac, vice provost and Andrew H. and Janet Dayton Neilly Dean of the 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.”

Jonathan Binstock, MAG's Mary W. and Donald R. Clark Director, said “our museum does its best work when it partners with other UR departments and organizations in Rochester and beyond. We are excited about this collaboration, which brings the extraordinary collections of River Campus Libraries to a broad audience.”

About the Exhibition

[*Up Against the Wall: Art, Activism, and the AIDS Poster*](#) will also be complemented by an illustrated book to be published by RIT Press. The book will include important essays and rich illustrations, which are not meant to duplicate the exhibition and the collection's online interface, 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.



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

The exhibition is supported in part by awards from National Endowment for the Arts and the Institute of Museum and Library Services MA-245369-OMS-20. The views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this exhibition do not necessarily represent those of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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

About IMLS

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. We advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development. Our vision is a nation where museums and libraries work together to transform the lives of individuals and communities. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov and follow on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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.

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