

For Immediate Release

**PUBLIC ART FUND HONORS
50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STONEWALL UPRISING
WITH BILLBOARD
BY FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES**

TO COINCIDE WITH WORLDPRIDE IN NEW YORK CITY THIS JUNE



**Felix Gonzalez-Torres: “Untitled”, 1989
June 1 – 30, 2019
Sheridan Square
Corner of Christopher Street & 7th Avenue
New York City**

April 8, 2019, NEW YORK, NY— This June, **Public Art Fund** will present the seminal billboard “*Untitled*”, 1989 by **Felix Gonzalez-Torres** (American, b. Cuba, 1957-1996) to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising and WorldPride in New York City. Public Art Fund organized the project in 1989 when Gonzalez-Torres first installed this work on the 20th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. “*Untitled*” – the first of Gonzalez-Torres’ billboard works – was originally described in 1989 as site and date specific. Thirty years later, the work will be shown in its original location: Sheridan Square in Greenwich Village, above Village Cigars and across from the historic Stonewall Inn bar. **Gonzalez-Torres’s iconic billboard work, “*Untitled*”, 1989, will be on view June 1 – 30 and is presented in collaboration with The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation with lead support by Google.**

This billboard by Gonzalez-Torres has two lines of white text that run across the bottom of a black background which read:

People With AIDS Coalition 1985 Police Harassment 1969 Oscar Wilde 1895 Supreme Court 1986 Harvey Milk 1977 March on Washington 1987 Stonewall Rebellion 1969

In 1989, an estimated 100,000 - 200,000 participants in the Gay and Lesbian Liberation Day March passed in front of this billboard by Gonzalez-Torres. Since 1986, the artist's practice included a significant body of date pieces which consisted of works with black backgrounds with lines of white text. In part, the nature of these pieces is about disrupting the hierarchy of chronology as well as the perceived distinctions between public and private histories. And while those works range in their subject matter, "Untitled", 1989 has more specific references to the AIDS crisis and the struggle for gay rights. This work was the first in the body of billboard works by Gonzalez-Torres. Essential to the nature of the billboard works overall is that they exist in the public realm and that there is no labeling or signage that dictates to a viewer that the billboard is an artwork. Gonzalez-Torres had a deep belief in the right for individual viewers to experience and interpret the work on their own terms.

The artist described the work as, "a visual reference, an architectural sign of being, a monument for a community that has been 'historically invisible'." In his 1989 artist statement about the work Gonzalez-Torres wrote: "The letters running across the lower part of the billboard suggest a long caption, capable of sustaining the projection of many images. The size of the letters is rather small for such a large space. This is not an ad; I don't expect it to be readable while speeding down Seventh Avenue to the Holland Tunnel. I hope the public will stop for an instant to reflect on the real and abstract relationships of the different dates."

The Stonewall Uprising took place in June of 1969 at The Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street. Following a police raid on the bar, six days of demonstrations and civil uprisings ensued around the bar, sparking similar movements in cities across the country and triggering further activism in response to human rights injustices and the lack of government action surrounding the AIDS epidemic. This historic incident ignited the modern LGBTQ movement and is a salient reminder of the human and civil rights injustices in the United States and around the world against which the LGBTQ community continues to struggle. In 2016, President Obama named The Stonewall Inn a National Historic Landmark.

"Felix Gonzalez-Torres stands among the most significant and influential artists of his generation. Direct public engagement is fundamental to his artistic practice, which expanded the possibilities for creative expression both within and beyond the museum walls," says **Public Art Fund Director & Chief Curator Nicholas Baume**. "His integration of personal and political content that can bring about both awareness and action in the viewer has continued to inspire artists and audiences. 30 years since Public Art Fund first presented this iconic work and on the 50th anniversary of Stonewall, we celebrate the enduring power and relevance of his art."

"As a longtime resident of downtown New York, I remember and admire Felix's arresting, provocative work as it appeared around the city. While "*Untitled*" was first shown in 1989, it still has personal meaning and political impact – perhaps even more so now, given that it's the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, arguably the modern day beginning of the LGBTQ civil rights movement. On behalf of Google, I am proud to partner with the Public Art Fund in presenting this iconic work at such an important time," says **William Floyd, Google, Director of Public Policy**.

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SUPPORT

Lead support for *Felix Gonzalez-Torres: "Untitled"*, 1989 is provided by Google.

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ABOUT PUBLIC ART FUND

As the leader in its field, Public Art Fund brings dynamic contemporary art to a broad audience in New York City and beyond by mounting ambitious free exhibitions of international scope and impact that offer the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Kellie Honeycutt | 212.223.7810 | khoneycutt@publicartfund.org | PublicArtFund.org

Sandrine Milet | 212.223.7074 | smilet@publicartfund.org | PublicArtFund.org

Allegra Thoresen | 212 223 7807 | athoresen@publicartfund.org | PublicArtFund.org

Image credit:

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, "Untitled", 1989, Installation view of "Untitled" (Billboard). Sheridan Square, New York, NY. Mar - Sep. 1989. Organized by Public Art Fund. Photo courtesy of Public Art Fund, NY, © Felix Gonzalez-Torres. Courtesy of The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation