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**GONZALEZ-TORRES MONUMENT AT SHERIDAN SQUARE**

The Public Art Fund Inc. is pleased to announce the installation of a billboard by **Félix González-Torres** in Sheridan Square. The work measures 18' x 40' and will be sited above the Village Cigar Store on the corner of Seventh Avenue and Christopher Street from March to September 1989. The billboard is in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion.

González-Torres' billboard was developed for this site and for exhibition during this anniversary year. Two lines of white type run across the bottom of a black rectangle and 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

The Stonewall Rebellion took place in June 1969 at the Stonewall Bar on Christopher Street. This event was the first civil uprising in response to police harassment and raids on gay bars and triggered further activism and the modern gay movement. Other references mark both tragic and empowering events that are significant in gay history. For instance, González-Torres refers to Oscar Wilde's courageous decision in 1895 to stay in England and face trial on charges of sodomy, as well as to the formation of the People With AIDS (PWA) Coalition in 1985, which the artist thinks has substantially strengthened the gay movement in recent years.

González-Torres calls his billboard, "a visual reference, an architectural sign of being, a monument for a community that has been 'historically invisible'." The work operates on an abstract level, yet the dates are keys to a complex content. The white date lines activate the viewer's historical knowledge and may stimulate various responses which the observer "projects" onto the empty black space.

(Continued)

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**González-Torres Billboard**

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In conjunction with the billboard exhibition, a signed, limited edition, silkscreen print of the artwork is available to supporters of the project. For more information contact the Public Art Fund at: 212-541-8423.

González-Torres was born in Cuba, and lives and works in New York City. He recently had a one person exhibition at The New Museum of Contemporary Art titled, "The Workspace," and a show of new work at INTAR Gallery. González-Torres currently has work in a group show, "After the Gold Rush," at the Milford Gallery. In June, he will have a public sculpture in Petrosino Park sponsored by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

This installation is sponsored by the Public Art Fund Inc. The Public Art Fund is supported in part by funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

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## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

People With AIDS Coalition 1985 Police Harassment 1969 Oscar Wilde 1891 Supreme Court 1986 Harvey Milk 1977 March on Washington 1987 Stonewall Rebellion 1969

The billboard is site and date specific. It is in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion, and is located in the same square as the original Stonewall Bar. In 1969, in response to a New York City Police policy of harassment of the patrons of gay bars, gay men in the Stonewall Bar decided to fight back during a raid on the evening of June 27th. This incident ignited the modern Gay and Lesbian movement. From that date on, a silent and invisible community decided to claim its civil and human rights. This work should function as an architectural reference and as an affirmation of the ongoing struggle.

The dates, names, and places are significant from a personal and public point of view. For example, the billboard refers to 1895, the year Oscar Wilde decided to stay in London to face prosecution on charges of homosexuality. In the print the dates are all the same as in the billboard, except for Oscar Wilde's. In the print the date is 1891 instead of 1895. The 1891 date refers to a photograph of Oscar Wilde in the prime of his life, happy and flamboyant. My intention was not to replicate the image of the billboard in a different medium. This print, which will support the entire project, is meant as a more private and personal object. Other dates and references refer to the more positive historical events such as the 1977 election of Harvey Milk as a Supervisor for the City of San Francisco, the 1985 formation of the PWA Coalition in response to calculated government inaction to the AIDS crisis, and the 1987 Gay and Lesbian March on Washington (one of the largest Civil Rights marches ever held).

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 billboard will be up during the Gay and Lesbian March in late June.

Félix González-Torres  
New York City, 1989