Where a Giant X Marks the AIDS Memorial Spot

The AMP: AIDS Memorial Pathway in Seattle was officially dedicated in late June.

August 16, 2021 By Trent Straube

Six years in the making, The AMP: AIDS Memorial Pathway in Seattle was officially dedicated in late June, coinciding with the month that marked 40 years of the AIDS epidemic.

By the time lifesaving HIV meds became available in 1996, records from King County, which includes Seattle, showed that 5,111 county residents had been diagnosed with AIDS and 3,273 had died of the disease; statewide, the total loss of life was 8,000 people.

“Their names and stories are central to what we’re trying to do,” said AMP steering committee member and former Seattle council member Tom Rasmussen at the ceremony, explaining that the neighborhood and park where the AMP is located—Capitol Hill and Cal Anderson Park—have been central to the LGBTQ community for decades.

To honor the stories of those lost to AIDS, TheAMP.org offers a collection of videos and interviews with local people affected by HIV; visitors to the site are invited to share their own recollections. What’s more, an app allows viewers anywhere in the world to experience the memorial in 3-D augmented reality.

The $2.8 million AMP consists of four installations by regional artists:

“andimgonnamisseverybody” by Christopher Paul JordanCourtesy of The AMP

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The X, or a positive sign on its side, is made of audio speakers and recalls, according to The AMP, “the spaces of radical gathering, hospitality, celebration and care that Black, brown, poor, trans, queer and [other] excluded communities have forged to take care of their own.”

“We’re Already Here” by CivilizationCourtesy of The AMP

We’re Already Here by Civilization

The artist collaborative was inspired by actual “protest signs and their accompanying messages to evoke historic moments of public convergence.”

“In This Way We Loved One Another” by Storme WebberCourtesy of The AMP

In This Way We Loved One Another by Storme Webber

Images in this work restore “missing narratives of working-class activists, healers, leaders, witnesses and ancestors lost to the AIDS crisis.”

“Ribbon of Light” by Horatio Hung-Yan LawCourtesy of The AMP

Ribbon of Light by Horatio Hung-Yan Law

This series of three human-scale laminated glass sculptures will be installed in the park later this year. Words related to the epidemic are etched in the glass; they appear and disappear in response to changing light.

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