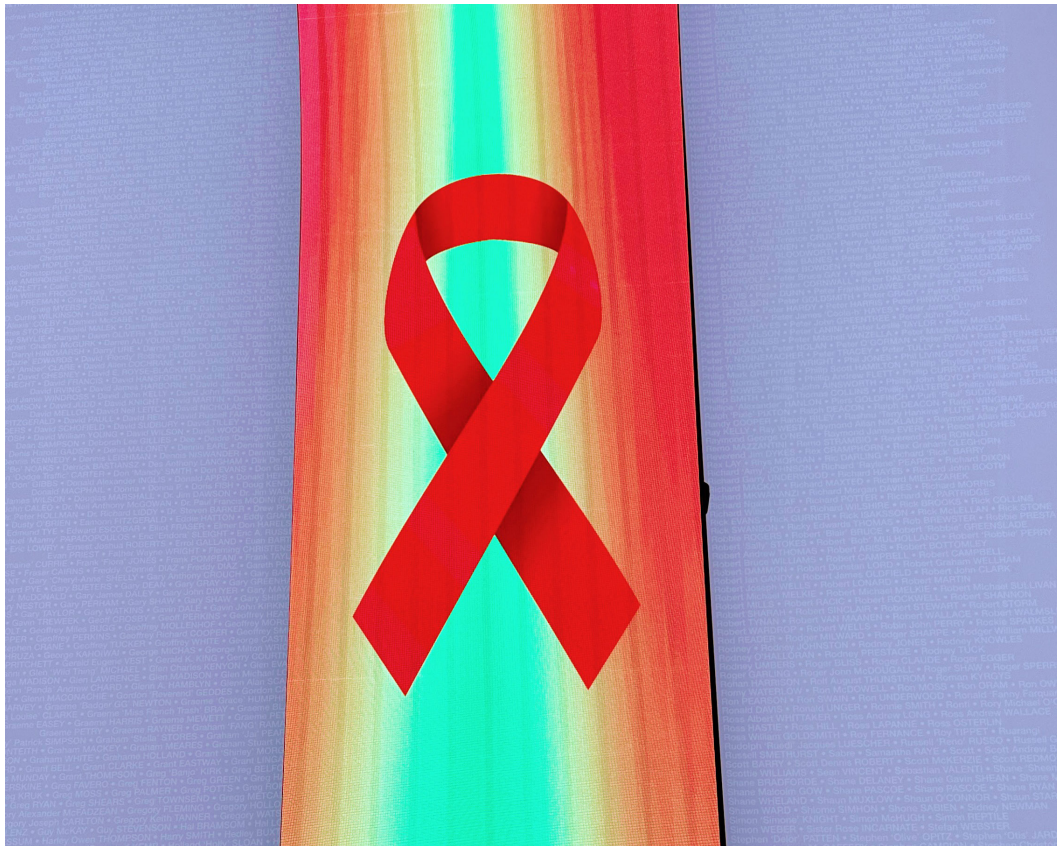


Andrew Burrell

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HIV / AIDS Memorial [Qtopia]

Community story-telling, and generative design come together to create a space for remembrance and celebration at the Qtopia Museum, Sydney.

A project in collaboration with: the research assistance and ribbon rendition of Eduardo Wolfe-Alegria

The HIV/AIDS Memorial at Qtopia Sydney stands as both a remembrance and a celebration of those lost to HIV/AIDS. By weaving personal stories, archival materials, and vibrant visual design, it honours the resilience and activism that emerged during the pandemic, while inviting visitors to reflect on the ongoing impact of HIV/AIDS today. In doing so, it not only preserves a vital chapter of queer history but also fosters a living archive—one that continues to grow through collective participation.

The Memorial contains an archive of material including images from the quilt project, obituaries from the Sydney Star Observer, and a number of personal stories provided by the diverse community.

This archive of images and texts is mixed live to create an ever-changing visualisation to remember and celebrate those we have lost. While they are not the focus of the Memorial, statistics accompany the stories to provide context and for many, an insight into the scale of the pandemic.

The Memorial's visual design was developed to create a space of contemplation, bringing the material together in a manner that evokes a connected, yet diverse community.

PROCESS



The colours and layout of the HIV/AIDS Memorial have been chosen to remind a viewer of both the colours of the rainbow/pride flag, in its many iterations, as well as political posters, health advertisements and art works from groups such as ACTUP, ACON and artists like Keith Haring.



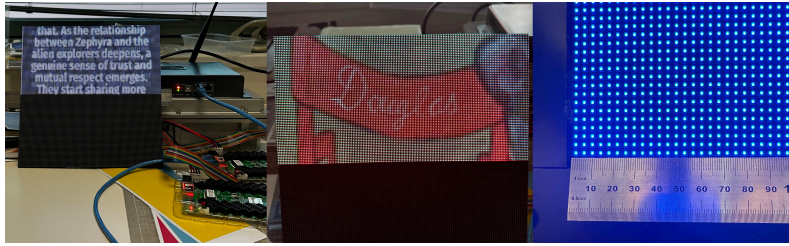
We are also reminded of the spot colours and structured grids used in newsprint street press such as the Sydney Star Observer. Fonts are based on those used to both advertise club events and remember those who were lost in these very pages. The colours and content slowly blend and merge over time, creating a dynamic and era-appropriate presentation of the stories contained within the Memorial.



Material Research

The 5 metre curved screen was co-designed with Peter Teremi of Octopus Screens. Translating newsprint, photographs and

hand sewn quilts to the pixels of the led-screen was done through a considered and thoughtful process.



The Memorial

The memorial is an invitation to the community to provide images and stories of those they have loved and lost, and their own experiences through the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The memorial is a living archive and will come alive through community input as it evolves.

With the support of community LGBTQIA+ newspaper, the Sydney Star Observer, the names of family and friends whose deaths were announced in its classifieds all those years ago, have been uplifted – now forever recalled.

The gravitas of the memorial is experienced in person, this image taken on World AIDS 2024 is offered with the understanding that the memorial is full of stories, lives, histories and memories that cannot be reflected in a fuller documentation of it, therefore the reader is invited to visit it in person when the opportunity arises.



"Andrew's expertise in the creative use of technology and his depth of knowledge of the late 80s early 90s cultural field, and of queer art and activism in particular, has ensured the memorial is a sophisticated, complex, multilayered and continually growing work of visual storytelling – it has a terrific sense of history, a calm gravitas, and is I believe the most beautiful HIV/AIDS memorial in the world, and significant for both local and global communities, including all those touched by HIV/AIDS."

Dr Liz Bradshaw
Lead Curator, opening exhibiRons
Qtopia Sydney

Credits and Attribution

This project was commissioned and funded by Qtopia Sydney.

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