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ART COMMISSION IS SOLE SILENT AUCTION PIECE AT AIDS BENEFIT

(Bellows Falls, VT) Bellows Falls artist, Sarah Machtey, was asked to create an image reflecting the 35-year landmark of the AIDS pandemic Vermont for the one-night-only performance of *Elegies for Angels, Punks and Raging Queens*. The benefit for the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont will be held at the Latchis Theatre in Brattleboro, VT on Saturday, October 15, 7:30pm.

Machtey works in polymer clay and found objects, those which we customarily would discard or recycle. The challenge to create a commissioned piece of art was presented by Executive Producer, Susan MacNeil, who served as the Executive Director of AIDS Services for the Monadnock Region from 2000-2014. Having seen Machtey's work from recycled aluminum cans at the Steampunk Festival in Springfield, VT, the relationship between repurposing found objects and the 35-year pandemic landmark struck a nerve. "So many people with HIV/AIDS feel as though they have been discarded, and it was always my work at my agency to make them feel whole again - reimagined, if you will. How would you create a work of art that characterizes this experience?"

Machtey instinctively knew how to proceed. "I felt very honored to be asked to create a piece of art for *Elegies*. Since the items that inspired the request were upcycled from aluminum cans, that is what I quilted together to form the ribbon. There are a total of 35 pieces of aluminum, stitched together with red ribbon, in a double-layered semi-woven structure."

Her deliberate process resulted in the elegant merging two iconic symbols, the ribbon and the Quilt. The piece itself, simply titled "Ribbon," is 11" wide x 23" high and mounted on a white canvas 15" x 30". "I made the sections by cutting up drink cans, embossing them with a woven pattern, and filling the low areas with Rub 'n Buff while exposing the high areas. Sometimes it mostly looks metallic, other times the colors and patterns of the cans are dominant - depending on the angles of lights and eyes. The Rub 'n Buff is half gold and half silver, in an alternating/checkerboard pattern. I used two rows of rectangles because that's how the sections of the quilt are."

"Ribbon" is the sole silent auction item at *Elegies*, the proceeds of which will benefit the AIDS Project of Southern Vermont. Machtey's polymer clay and fiber work is equally impressive and can be found on the links below.

<http://www.sageearth.com/cob-sculpture-ithaca-ny/attachment/036/>

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/SageEarthStudio>

<https://facebook.com/SageEarthStudio>

Tickets for *Elegies* can be purchased at www.elegiesvt.com. The show is a song cycle with music by Janet Hood and lyrics and additional text by lyricist Bill Russell. It debuted in 1989 at the Ohio Theatre in Manhattan's SoHo district before moving on to London. Each of the monologues is written from the perspective of characters who've died from AIDS, and the songs represent the feelings of friends and family members dealing with the loss. The piece was

developed in the late 1980s and originally entitled "The Quilt" to acknowledge the AIDS Memorial Quilt, founded in 1985 by AIDS activist, Cleve Jones.

Lead sponsor for the event is **The Samara Fund**, a component fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, helping to create a vibrant Vermont LGBTQ community and ensure that LGBTQ Vermonters are connected, healthy, appreciated, safe, and empowered. The Fund will celebrate its 25th anniversary as Vermont's premiere philanthropic organization for LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS causes in 2017. The Vermont Community Foundation is a family of hundreds of charitable funds and foundations dedicated to creating healthy and vital Vermont communities. <http://www.vermontcf.org/samara>

Net proceeds benefit the **AIDS Project of Southern Vermont**, a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded in 1988. <http://www.aidsprojectsouthernvermont.org/>

For all details about weekend events, visit www.elegiesvt.com. To purchase tickets visit <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?ticketing=larts>