



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

I want a dyke for president. I want a person with aids for president and I want a fag for vice president and I want someone with no health insurance and I want someone who grew up in a place where the earth is so saturated with toxic waste that they didn't have a choice about getting leukemia. I want a president that had an abortion at sixteen and I want a candidate who isn't the lesser of two evils and I want a president who lost their last lover to aids, who still sees that in their eyes every time they lay down to rest, who held their lover in their arms and knew they were dying. I want a president with no airconditioning, a president who has stood on line at the clinic, at the dmv, at the welfare office and has been unemployed and laid off and sexually harrassed and gaybashed and deported. I want someone who has spent the night in the tombs and had a cross burned on their lawn and survived rape. I want someone who has been in love and been hurt, who respects sex, who has made mistakes and learned from them. I want a Black woman for president. I want someone with bad teeth ~~and an attitude~~, someone who has eaten ~~that nasty~~ hospital food, someone who crossdresses and has done drugs and been in therapy. I want someone who has committed civil disobedience. And I want to know why this isn't possible. I want to know why we started learning somewhere down the line that a president is always a clown: always a john and never a hooker. Always a boss and never a worker, always a liar, always a thief and never caught.

Zoe Leonard, *I want a president*, 1992. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth, New York

HIGH LINE ART AND THE STANDARD, HIGH LINE PRESENT

ZOE LEONARD *I WANT A PRESIDENT*

OCTOBER 11 – NOVEMBER 17, 2016

ON THE HIGH LINE UNDER THE STANDARD, HIGH LINE

New York, NY (October 6, 2016) – Presented by Friends of the High Line in collaboration with The Standard, High Line, High Line Art is pleased to announce the new and timely presentation of *I want a president* (1992), the iconic work by American artist **Zoe Leonard**. The work will be presented in the form of a 20-by-30-foot wheat-paste installation on the western pillar of The Standard, High Line, overlooking the High Line between West 13th and Little West 12th Streets. Installed on the occasion of the upcoming 2016 U.S. presidential election, *I want a president* renders a poignant portrait of the cultural and political climate in the early '90s in New York City with words that still resonate today.

Zoe Leonard, an artist primarily known for her photography, sculpture, and site-specific installations, is also an influential feminist and queer activist who started working in New York City in the 1980s, an era marked by overwhelming loss during the AIDS epidemic. Throughout her work from that time, Leonard references the enormous loss of close friends and fellow artists and activists whose absence still reverberates today.

Leonard wrote *I want a president* in 1992, the year that poet Eileen Myles ran for president as an independent candidate alongside George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and Ross Perot. The queer magazine for which the work was originally intended dissolved before its publication, but the text circulated organically – passed between friends, and posted on refrigerators. Over time, the text gained a life of its own. In 2006, on invitation from the feminist genderqueer journal LTTT, Leonard revived the text in the form of a postcard, and subsequently the work has been read, translated, and reimagined by various groups in the context of numerous political elections in the U.S. and abroad. While Leonard says that *I want a president* is not the text that she would write today, she is





interested in the ways in which it asks: What is different today, and what remains the same? “I am interested in the space this text opens up for us to imagine and voice what we want in our leaders, and even beyond that, what we can envision for the future of our society,” says Leonard. “I still think that speaking up is itself a vital and powerful political act.”

“Zoe Leonard is one of the most influential artists of our time. We are looking forward to installing this significant work on the High Line, especially during this particularly polarized election year,” says Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art, Cecilia Alemani. “Our hope is that bringing the piece into the public sphere on a large scale will spark meaningful dialogue amongst New Yorkers and visitors alike.”

“While Leonard’s text speaks with the mourning, rage, and profound disappointment surrounding the AIDS epidemic and the consequent political inaction that left an indelible mark on our culture,” says Melanie Kress, High Line Art Assistant Curator, “it also breathes heavy with the timeless experiences of health, wealth, loss, and love.”

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Zoe Leonard (b. 1961, Liberty, NY) lives and works in New York City. Recent exhibitions have been presented at major institutions including MoMA, New York (2015); Chinati Foundation, Marfa, TX (2013); Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung, Vienna (2009); Dia, Beacon (2008); and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2008). She has been included in group exhibitions at institutions including Art Institute of Chicago (2016); The Kitchen, New York (2016); MoMA PS1, Long Island City (2015); Tate Liverpool (2015); and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2014). Her work has been presented in major international exhibitions including the Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1993, 1997, and 2014), Documenta IX (1992), and Documenta XII (2007). Publications include *Analogue* (2007), *Zoe Leonard: Photographs* (2008), *You see I am here after all* (2010), and *Available Light* (2014).

ABOUT HIGH LINE ART

Presented by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art commissions and produces public art projects on and around the High Line. Founded in 2009, High Line Art presents a wide array of artwork including site-specific commissions, exhibitions, performances, video programs, and a series of billboard interventions. Curated by Cecilia Alemani, the Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art, and produced by Friends of the High Line, High Line Art invites artists to think of creative ways to engage with the uniqueness of the architecture, history, and design of the High Line and to foster a productive dialogue with the surrounding neighborhood and urban landscape.

Major support for High Line Art comes from Donald R. Mullen, Jr. and The Brown Foundation, Inc. of Houston. Additional funding is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and Dorothy Lichtenstein. High Line Art is supported, in part, with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the New York City Council and from the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

For further information on High Line Art, please visit art.thehighline.org.

ABOUT FRIENDS OF THE HIGH LINE

Friends of the High Line raises 98% of the High Line’s annual budget. Owned by the City of New York, the High Line is a public park maintained, operated, and programmed by Friends of the High Line, in partnership with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

ABOUT THE STANDARD HOTELS

The Standard Hotels are located in Los Angeles, Miami and New York. Each property shares a commitment to providing distinctly personal and truly creative experiences that form cultural pillars to experience more than hotel hospitality. The Standard is acclaimed for its support and curation of diverse cultural programming throughout its venues while acting as a hub for collaborations with artists on publications, products, installations and events throughout its network of properties and shops.

For more information on The Standard, visit StandardHotels.com, and Instagram, [@thestandard](https://www.instagram.com/thestandard)

SOCIAL MEDIA INFORMATION

@HighLineArtNYC @TheStandard #HighLineArt #ZoeLeonard #Iwantapresident

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