

# CAPE ANN Museum

## The Cape Ann Museum pays tribute to local pandemic victims with new COVID-19 Memorial

*Virtual Dedication Ceremony: March 10 at 6 p.m.*



*Artist rendition of the COVID-19 Memorial projected onto the Janet & William Ellery James Center at the Cape Ann Museum (CAM) Green. Rendering by artist Pamela Hersch in collaboration with LuminArtz.*

GLOUCESTER, Mass. (February 18, 2021) – Nearly one year ago, the coronavirus pandemic forced the state to shut down and declare a state of emergency. To commemorate the community’s profound loss, the Cape Ann Museum is creating a temporary art installation to pay tribute to those who died from the deadly virus including 35 people in Gloucester, 55 people from Cape Ann, and more than 2,000 people from Essex County. The COVID-19 Memorial will be dedicated at CAM Green during a virtual online ceremony on March 10 and will be open to the public through March 14.

In partnership with the City of Gloucester and LuminArtz, the Cape Ann Museum COVID-19 Memorial is comprised of three parts: a video art installation from LuminArtz, the Cape Ann Cairns Memorial, and the Gloucester Memorial Quilt. These interconnected projects seek to humanize the unfathomably large number of deaths in the past year, place the deeply felt local losses in the broader national conversation, and provide a space for visitors to take steps toward the long process of grief and healing. Understanding that the pandemic is ongoing, this memorial takes place outside at CAM Green and is a temporary installation.

“Observing social distance practices to keep each other safe has left many of us wondering how we can process and acknowledge the tragic losses experienced locally, regionally, and internationally this past year,” says Oliver Barker, the Museum’s Director. “Art and cultural institutions, so devastated by this tragedy, have a central role to play as we reopen in telling these stories and providing ways for all of us to grieve, remember, and heal. It’s our sincere hope that this memorial will help start that long process.”

On Wednesday, March 10, the state’s emergency shutdown anniversary, the Museum will present a live-streamed virtual memorial ceremony at 6 p.m. that can be seen live on Facebook and YouTube. This

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ceremony will serve as an opening for the Cape Ann Museum COVID-19 Memorial and a vigil for those lost. Due to current gathering restrictions, visitors will not be allowed onsite during the ceremony. Instead, they are encouraged to watch from home and visit the memorial in person afterwards. Visitors can reserve free, timed entrance to see the memorial at CAM Green from Thursday, March 11 through Sunday, March 14 between 12:30 - 8:00 pm.

Among those scheduled to speak at the ceremony are: local political representatives, community members, and artists including Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken, State Senator Bruce Tarr, poet Caroline Harvey, musicians Brian King and Nathan Cohen, the Associated Clergy of Cape Ann, and representatives from the Museum.

## **About the Cape Ann Museum COVID-19 Memorial**

The three simultaneous projects that make up the Museum's COVID-19 Memorial recognize the local, regional, and national realities of the pandemic in unique yet interconnected ways.

The Gloucester Memorial Quilt was coordinated by the Cape Ann Museum and Roseanne Cody, Board Member on the Gloucester Council of Aging, at the request of Mayor Sefatia Romeo Theken. This quilt memorializes the 35 Gloucester citizens who died as part of the COVID-19 Pandemic, some remain anonymous and others are personally identified by request of the families. The names were embroidered by Monograms by Diane of Gloucester, and the squares were quilted together by Ingrid Schillebeeckx-Rice, a member of the Burlington Quilters Guild. There is a long-standing tradition of quilts used to memorialize and comfort, most significantly the AIDs Memorial Quilt which was displayed for the first time in 1987 and continues to this day.

To commemorate the 55 Cape Ann residents who died during to the pandemic, Miranda Aisling, the Museum's Education Manager, will work with volunteers to build 55 cairns out of Cape Ann Granite in front of the White Ellery house. By request, the Museum will put small markers in front of a cairn to designate it for a specific individual who died of COVID-19. Unless personally requested, the cairns will remain anonymous, holding space for all those who have been lost from the region. The Museum encourages visitors to bring tokens of respect, traditionally small stones or flowers, which can be left on the cairns.

The Cape Ann Cairns and the Janet & William Ellery James Center will be illuminated by LuminArtz, a nonprofit that brings art to light collaborating with local artists, businesses, and the community to transform streetscapes into vibrant installations. Pamela Hersch, a Boston-based, multidisciplinary artist originally from Mexico, will create a video art installation that places the local COVID-19 deaths within the regional, state, and national context.

The Cape Ann Museum encourages anyone who would like their loved one to be memorialized in these projects, or who would like to take part in constructing the Cape Ann Cairns on March 5 and 6, to reach out to Miranda Aisling at by email at [education@capeannmuseum.org](mailto:education@capeannmuseum.org) or by phone at 978-283-0455 x125. Family members and friends are asked to provide the name of the deceased as well as their town

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so that the Museum can make sure they are included in the memorial. For more information about the Cape Ann Museum Covid-19 Memorial, visit [www.capeannmuseum.org/covidmemorial](http://www.capeannmuseum.org/covidmemorial)

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*The Cape Ann Museum, founded in 1875, exists to preserve and celebrate the history and culture of the area and to keep it relevant to today's audiences. Spanning 44,000 square feet, the Museum is one of the major cultural institutions on Boston's North Shore welcoming more than 25,000 local, national and international visitors each year to its exhibitions and programs. In addition to fine art, the Museum's collections include decorative art, textiles, artifacts from the maritime and granite industries, three historic homes, a Library & Archives and a sculpture park in the heart of downtown Gloucester. In Fall 2021, the Museum will officially open the 12,000 square foot Janet & William Ellery James Center at the [Cape Ann Museum Green](#). The campus also includes three historic buildings – the White Ellery House (1710), an adjacent Barn (c. 1740), and the recently acquired Babson-Alling House (c.1740), all located on the site at the intersection of Washington and Poplar Streets in Gloucester.*

*The Cape Ann Museum is located at 27 Pleasant Street in Gloucester. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation, operating hours have been reduced to better protect the safety and well-being of visitors, staff and volunteers. The Museum is currently open Thursday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Timed tickets are required for all visitors at this time and can be reserved online at [www.camuseum.eventbrite.com](http://www.camuseum.eventbrite.com). Admission is \$12.00 adults, \$10.00 Cape Ann residents, seniors and students. Youth (under 18) and Museum members are free. Cape Ann residents can visit for free on the second Saturday of each month. For more information please call (978)283-0455 x110 or visit [www.capeannmuseum.org](http://www.capeannmuseum.org).*

For a detailed media fact sheet please visit [www.capeannmuseum.org/press](http://www.capeannmuseum.org/press).

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