

# illumina8

I propose making a transparent sculpture in the shape of a large, 3D rainbow with solar and LED panels.

**WHY?** Homelessness and LGBT youth is an issue that is personal to me, especially now living so close to it. Although this area of Manhattan has been an LGBT hotspot for decades, the homeless LGBT population remains overlooked, especially elders- no LGBT shelters take residents over 24, leaving aging members at the mercy of the street. It is especially timely, because winter is indeed coming to New York, and with it, absolutely unlivable conditions and temperatures without shelter. I chose the sustainable materials I did to also keep in mind our current environmental situation, and the light to literally "illuminate" the issue.

**HOW does my project address these issues?**

Functionally, it provides short-term warmth for anyone who needs it, while preventing overuse and unwanted congregation by maintaining a heat that is comfortable when needed but uncomfortable once unnecessary, like a hairdryer. Aesthetically, the embracing rainbow is a symbol of the community, while the arch's seamless blend into the ground of the park keep it grounded to the neighborhood itself, and its perfectly semi-circular represents unity. I want this work to be something that people can both appreciate aesthetically, and take pause to reflect on their "invisible" neighbors upon seeing.

+ **Outcomes:** In the short term, while the project is standing, I hope it serves to make a hard night a little less difficult to someone who needs it. In the long term, I hope that this potential project would stir everyone's sympathy and drive them to keep their "invisible" neighbors in mind, fostering unity in the community and giving a more extensive support system to the homeless population.

**GESTURE:** Because the main utilitarian function of my project is to create temporary warmth in order to help those caught in the cold, I decided to create that warmth as best as I could. I reached out to a local friend of mine named Razer, who is a 50 year old homeless trans man. Razer guided me in conversation, listing off some items I could collect in order to help him (and others) survive. From there, I posted a long PSA on my instagram story, available to all of my several thousand followers, bringing awareness to Razer's story, and then inviting donations. The response I ended up receiving was tremendous; in one night we collected more than enough supplies for three people and secured an ongoing partnership with an employee at a local Patagonia store to recycle discarded or unsold products into the donation pool. After the night began to wind down, at about 3 in the morning, we suited up and carried the donations to Razer, who was overwhelmed with emotion and I received an outpouring of support for the gesture. To make something more long term to go with the monument, a community drive could be held periodically near the monument that collects and distributes resources for the homeless as the "pot of gold" at the end of the rainbow.



**ON LOCATION:** Washington Sq. Park Archway, Manhattan.

**WHO?**

+**Partner & Participants:** Partner organizations or individuals include homeless people who gave me input into things they needed, as well as LGBT and Homeless help organizations alike who could fund the artwork and technology, such as Cyndi Lauper's True Colors Fund. Because inviting the homeless to congregate is frowned upon by locals and police, the monument heats in a way much like a hairdryer does: comfortable for a bit and until you're warm, but the heat becomes uncomfortably (but not harmfully) high after being near for an extended period of time.

**WHERE will this project take place?**

+**Public Space Relevance:** This project will be implemented in Washington Square Park, a keystone of the LGBT hotspot Greenwich Village, where many pass by homeless people without a second thought. This project will be implemented there specifically to encourage that second thought in passersby, and aid those who are passed by.

+**Citywide Relevance:** This project could impact all five boroughs as its aesthetics and form invite people to be near and take pictures with it, spreading the idea. Similar structures implemented all over NYC could spur widespread positive change. See original location above.

**WHEN?**

+**Timeliness:** This proposal is timely due to the aforementioned winter being just around the corner, "according to a recent study from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, LGBTQ young people are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than non-LGBTQ youth," and because in a time where LGBT+ awareness and rights are rapidly expanding, the homeless population and the staggering statistics of LGBT youth left homeless are overlooked too often, which I want to combat.

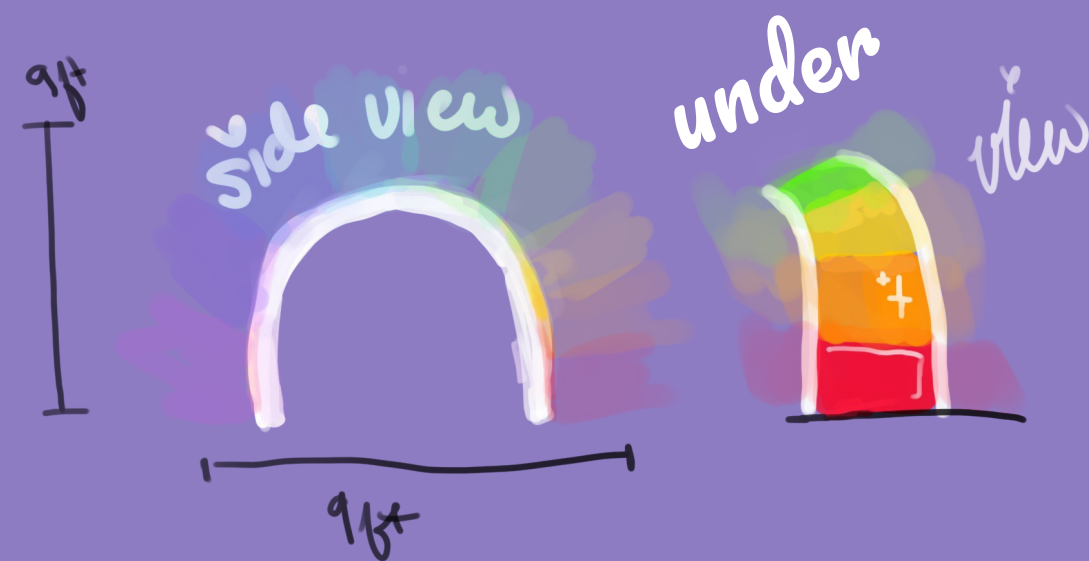


Daniel Mercadante



Jenny Holzer

Inspiration for the piece.



materials:



enamel



transparent solar panel



led lights

**GOALS + ACTIVITIES:** For this project, my focus is on LGBT Homeless population in and around Greenwich Village. To both bring awareness to and help out the population, I wanted to create a functional monument. Commemorating and bringing awareness to this population, the area and city as a whole would become more compassionate towards LGBT (and non-LGBT) homeless people. The work serves a functional purpose as a structure that emits warmth, but also serves an aesthetic and environmental purpose. It is a 3D arch comprised of bright, rainbow colored solar panel screens that absorb light during the day, and begins to emit warmth after thermometers within record temperatures below 40 degrees. The solar paneling leaves it entirely sustainable and self-powered, and the seamless rainbow is a splash of clean, bright color in the brown and green park. It looks like a gently illuminated arch from afar, but standing beneath, one is shrouded in color and warmth.