



# ART **AIDS** AMERICA Chicago



BEAUTY  
SEX  
LOSS  
COURAGE  
POLITICS



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## GROUNDBREAKING **ART AIDS AMERICA** EXHIBITION OPENS IN CHICAGO ON WORLD AIDS DAY AT NEW POP-UP ALPHAWOOD GALLERY, DECEMBER 1, 2016 – APRIL 2, 2017

*100+ works by internationally recognized artists including Roger Brown, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Annie Leibovitz, and David Wojnarowicz explore artistic responses to AIDS*

*Presented by the Alphawood Foundation, veteran arts administrator Anthony Hirschel tapped to lead new Alphawood Exhibitions*

(CHICAGO) July 14, 2016 – **Art AIDS America**, a groundbreaking exhibition which underscores the deep and unforgettable presence of HIV in American art, culminates its U.S. tour here at the **Alphawood Gallery** (2401 North Halsted Street, Chicago). This temporary space has been created in a former bank by the Chicago-based Alphawood Foundation to bring the exhibition to its only Midwest venue. Admission to the exhibition will be free with timed tickets; it opens on World AIDS Day, Thursday, December 1, 2016, continuing through Sunday, April 2, 2017. Prior to Chicago, *Art AIDS America* will have appeared at the Tacoma Art Museum in Washington State, the Zuckerman Museum in suburban Atlanta, and the Bronx Museum of the Arts in New York City generating considerable interest and attention at each location.

This is the first exhibition to explore how the AIDS crisis forever changed American art. Since the first reports of mysterious illnesses in the early 1980s, HIV and AIDS have touched nearly every American in some way, and operated as an undeniable, though often unacknowledged, force in shaping politics, medicine, culture and society. While acknowledging and honoring the enormous anger, loss and grief generated by the epidemic, the exhibition refutes the narrative that AIDS is only a tragic tangent in American art. Instead, *Art AIDS America* offers a story of resilience and beauty revealed through the visual arts, and of the communities that gathered to bring hope and change in the face of a devastating disease.



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The Chicago presentation of *Art AIDS America* will feature more than 100 significant contemporary works in a wide range of media – from oil on canvas and photography to three-dimensional installations and video. The artists represented include Judy Chicago, Chloe Dzubilo, Karen Finley, Robert Gober, Félix González-Torres, Keith Haring, Jenny Holzer, Derek Jackson, Kia Labeija, Annie Leibovitz, Robert Mapplethorpe, Kiki Smith, Joey Terrill, David Wojnarowicz and Martin Wong. Added to the traveling exhibition exclusively for its Chicago presentation will be works by a variety of other artists, among them major works by famed Chicago Imagist Roger Brown.

Racial and ethnic minorities have historically and presently not benefited from the same visibility as white male artists in shaping the narrative of the epidemic. The Chicago presentation of *Art AIDS America* will include additional works by artists, as well as programming, focused specifically on expanding the exhibition's inclusivity. Related programming in the form of panels, discussions, and performances will explore how the underlying issues of race, politics, culture, and institutional practice have created barriers to more equitable representation.

Throughout the exhibition's run, visitors will be encouraged to preserve and share their personal recollections of the AIDS crisis and of friends and loved ones lost to the epidemic through a partnership with StoryCorps, an organization dedicated to recording and preserving oral histories across America. The Foundation is also working with an array of local cultural and advocacy organizations that serve LGBTQ citizens and communities of color in order to encourage them to visit the exhibition and to share their stories and perspectives, along with presenting a range of related programs at their venues.

The Alphawood Foundation, a Chicago-based, grant-making private foundation working for an equitable, just and humane society, is proudly presenting *Art AIDS America* here. Each year the Foundation awards grants to organizations, primarily in the areas of advocacy, architecture and preservation, the arts and arts education, promotion and protection of the rights of LGBT citizens and people living with HIV/AIDS, and other human and civil rights.

"*Art AIDS America* represents a unique confluence of Alphawood Foundation's core values," said James D. McDonough, executive director of the Alphawood Foundation. The Foundation has long been a supporter and advocate of the treatment and prevention of HIV and AIDS. Our passion for this cause is born of experience with the epidemic on a personal level by many at the Foundation. Equally, Alphawood has long supported the arts in Chicago and beyond. The exhibition demonstrates how AIDS changed American art and, indeed, America itself. It's an important story that needs to be told. We are proud to bring this show to Chicago and the Midwest."

To enhance the Foundation's mission, it has launched a new initiative, Alphawood Exhibitions, to be led by veteran arts administrator **Anthony (Tony) Hirschel**. Hirschel, formerly the Dana Feitler Director of the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago, is overseeing the Chicago presentation of *Art AIDS America*.



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“Art has the power to change the world,” said Hirschel. “*Art AIDS America* was originally organized as a moving demonstration of the various ways in which artists coped with and responded to the epidemic. By working with the local arts community, academics, and Chicago’s advocacy organizations who have been supporting those affected by HIV/AIDS for decades, we intend to present an exhibition that will strengthen and bring together communities from across our great city like no other.”

## **Exhibition Credits**

The exhibition was originally organized by Tacoma Art Museum in partnership with The Bronx Museum of the Arts, where it will be on display until September 25, 2016. The exhibition is co-curated by Jonathan David Katz, director, Visual Studies Doctoral Program at the University at Buffalo (The State University of New York) and Rock Hushka, chief curator and curator of contemporary and Northwest art at Tacoma Art Museum.

Major support for the exhibition and catalogue has been provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. Additional support for the U.S. tour was provided by the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art and by Gilead Sciences.

The Chicago presentation of the exhibition and related programming are made possible by the Alphawood Foundation.

## **Exhibition Catalogue**

*Art AIDS America* is accompanied by an extensively researched catalogue written by Katz and Hushka. Featuring more than 100 works in color and essays by 15 contributors, it is the first comprehensive overview and reconsideration of 30 years of art made in response to the AIDS epidemic in the United States. Published by Tacoma Art Museum in association with University of Washington Press, it is available [online](#) from the University of Washington Press (\$45), and will be available for purchase at the Alphawood Gallery during the run of the exhibition.

## **Related Programs**

Programming will include exhibition tours, artist talks, panel discussions, performances and gallery conversations, as well as a number of other events presented in association with other cultural and advocacy partner organizations. The full schedule will be announced in Fall 2016.

## **Visitor Information**

Starting December 1, *Art AIDS America Chicago* will be open Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11am – 8pm, and Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11am -6pm. Admission to the Alphawood Gallery is free, however timed tickets are required to enter the exhibition. Visitors are strongly encouraged to reserve tickets online to ensure a specific entry date and time although walk-ups will be available on a limited basis. Tickets will be accessible this Fall by visiting: [ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org](http://ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org).



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The Gallery is conveniently located at 2401 N. Halsted in Chicago near the CTA Fullerton 'L' stop, as well as several CTA bus routes. Limited free parking is available in an adjacent parking lot, along with more plentiful metered street parking and garage parking nearby.

For more information and updates, please visit [ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org](http://ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org) as well as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Tumblr](#), and [Instagram](#).

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Images:

Tino Rodriguez. *Eternal Lovers*, 2010. Oil on wood, private collection.

*Art AIDS America* Chicago logo.

John Arsenault. *There Never Was a Woman of My Dreams*, 2004. Chromogenic color print, Courtesy of the artist and ClampArt, New York

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