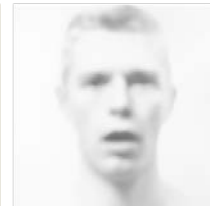




ART AIDS AMERICA Chicago



BEAUTY
SEX
LOSS
COURAGE
POLITICS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ART AIDS AMERICA CHICAGO **ANNOUNCES EXPANSIVE PUBLIC PROGRAMMING** **AT ALPHAWOOD GALLERY AND CITYWIDE**

Highlights include:

Opening keynote by exhibition co-curator Jonathan Katz;
On-going artist & expert talks, and free in-gallery HIV testing; and
Collaborations with arts and advocacy organizations across Chicago

(CHICAGO) November 10, 2016 – More than a groundbreaking visual art exhibition, **Art AIDS America Chicago** will serve as the catalyst for a citywide dialogue on the cultural impact of HIV/AIDS through robust public programming at the newly constructed Alphawood Gallery (2401 N. Halsted Street) and via a constellation of related events presented in association with local arts and advocacy community allies. *Art AIDS America Chicago* opens at the Alphawood Gallery on World AIDS Day, Thursday, December 1, 2016, and continues through Sunday, April 2, 2017. **Admission to the exhibition and all programming held at the Gallery-- artist & expert talks, panel discussions, performances, gallery tours, and HIV testing -- are free and open to the public.**

“*Art AIDS America* tells a story of struggle, pain, loss, and, ultimately, hope. It’s about the power of art to help us overcome insurmountable odds,” said **Christopher Audain**, program officer at Alphawood Foundation. Audain, who is working on programming and events for the exhibition, continued, “To help us tell this story, and to broaden the impact and access of this great work, we have joined with organizations and individuals from across the city who have eagerly embraced this project. Our joint programming provides a space for the multitude of people impacted by HIV/AIDS—across intersections of race, sexuality, gender, age, and artistic disciplines—to tell their story, particularly those we don’t often hear, from their own voice. We want to spark conversations that don’t happen nearly enough about how this disease has affected each of us in immeasurable ways. We know that artists, activists, and advocates standing together can create real change.”



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Following is a partial list of programming to date; for the most current listing, please visit <http://www.artaidsamericachicago.org/events/> often.

PRE-OPENING EVENT: Wednesday, Nov. 30, 7-9pm

We're Still Here: HIV/AIDS Then & Now

@ Center on Halsted, Hoover-Leppen Theatre, 3656 N. Halsted Street

HIV/AIDS Arts and Cultural Impact Panel discussion with *Art AIDS America Chicago* co-curator Jonathan Katz, Director of Exhibitions Tony Hirschel, Victory Gardens Theater Artistic Director Chay Yew, and playwright Karen Hartman, followed by QUEER, ILL, + OKAY performances by Phillip Blacknbrilliant, Joan Giroux, and a short film by Xena Ellison + Elizabeth Mputu. Free and open to the public.

OPENING EVENTS:

Thursday, Dec. 1, 6:30-9:30pm - World AIDS Day

Gallery Tour & Performance of *Roz and Ray*

@ Alphawood Gallery & Victory Gardens Theater, 2433 N. Lincoln Avenue

This World AIDS Day event in collaboration with Victory Gardens Theater starts with a special curated tour of the *Art AIDS America Chicago* exhibition on its opening night. Howard Brown Health joins to launch the free weekly HIV walk-in testing program. Following is a pre-show reception at the theater and the performance of Karen Hartman's *Roz and Ray*, a profound story of love, trust, sacrifice, and forgiveness between two friends unearthing a tragic and little-known event in HIV/AIDS medical history.

For ticket information visit: artaidsamericachicago.org/events

Saturday, Dec. 3

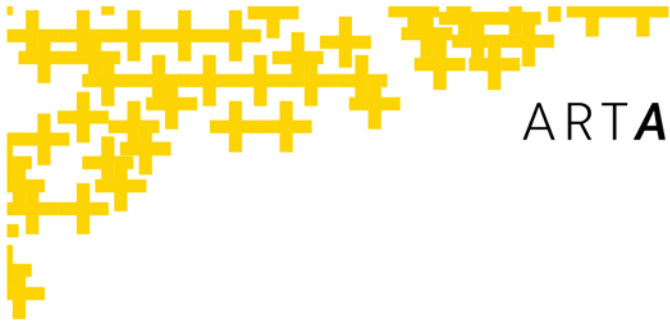
10:00am: How AIDS Changed American Art--An Illustrated Lecture

with opening performance by avery r. young

@ Alphawood Gallery

Widely considered merely a tragic tangent within US culture, AIDS has in fact been one of the most powerful shaping forces in American art since the 1980's. The repression of AIDS' role in the making of American culture is entirely consistent with the longstanding repression of public dialogue about AIDS in general—but repression is nonetheless the sign of great power. In this talk, Katz illustrates how AIDS has fundamentally shifted the American cultural landscape, exploring not only the manifold losses AIDS has inflicted, but also how, in response to both AIDS and the prejudice it engendered, a plague has rewritten both the form and content of American art.

Delivered by Jonathan Katz, co-curator of Art AIDS America, and Director of Visual Studies Doctoral Program at SUNY. Opening will be a spoken word performance by avery r. young. Free and open to the public.



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**12pm: *Disruption/Repression: How AIDS Changed America* panel
with performance by Joseph Ravens
@ Alphawood Gallery**

Medicine, politics, art, activism, sex, culture—everything in the US changed after the first reports of a mysterious illness in 1981. In the face of intense fear, repression, and prejudice, brave activists took to the streets in protest while enduring great loss; their goal was to create change, and ultimately, find compassion for the suffering and departed. This panel of an ACT-UP Chicago founder, artists, activists, scholars, and medical and museum professionals will discuss the response to HIV/AIDS at the height of the crisis, how it relates to today, and how it informs their work.

The panel will feature Dr. Renslow Sherer, Professor of Medicine, University of Chicago; Robert Vazquez-Pacheco, artist and member of Gran Fury; Peter Carpenter, Independent Choreographer and Associate Professor at the Dance Center of Columbia College Chicago; Mary Patten, Professor of Visual and Critical Studies, School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Jeanne Kracher, Executive Director Crossroads Fund; and Stephanie Stebich, Executive Director, Tacoma Art Museum. The panel will be moderated by Lora Branch, long-time Public Health Advocate. Chicago-based Defibrillator Gallery Director Joseph Ravens presents *Condom Cloud*. Free and open to the public.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES AT ALPHAWOOD GALLERY

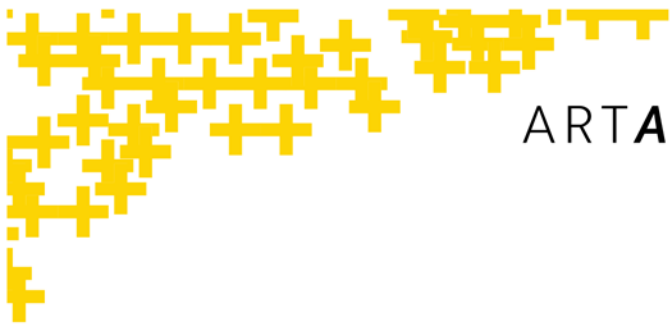
Art AIDS America Chicago will be exhibited from Dec. 1, 2016 – April 2, 2017. Through the run of the exhibition, the Alphawood Gallery offers engaging events related to issues raised by the content of the exhibition, from artistic inclusion to activism, health to history. All in-gallery programming is free and open to the public; confirmed events include:

Monthly Artist & Expert talks + On-Site Events

All take place @ Alphawood Gallery 6:30-9pm *unless otherwise noted

Embracing Equity: A candid conversation led by arts professionals on how to break down the barriers and structures that create a lack of equitable representation in the arts and arts institutions. Panelists include Aymar Jean Christian, founder of Open TV and Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at Northwestern University; Anthony Hirschel, Director of Exhibitions, Alphawood Gallery; and Amina Ross, transdisciplinary artist based in Chicago. The panel will be moderated by Tracye Matthews, Associate Director, Center for the Study of Race, Politics & Culture at the University of Chicago – **Wednesday, January 11**

Poetry Foundation Presents Poetry AIDS Chicago: A Response to Art AIDS America This reading brings together queer and trans poets based in Chicago, who will conduct their own poetic tour of the exhibition, reading works inspired by the themes in the show featuring Bea Cordelia, Avery R. Young, and T. Clutch Fleischmann -- **Thursday, February 2, 7PM**



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HIV/AIDS and Race: Race is a vital conversation. HIV/AIDS is a vital conversation. The intersection of HIV/AIDS and race exposes large and distinct trends of imbalance. In the U.S., HIV/AIDS disproportionately impacts communities of color, specifically Black/African American and Latinx/Hispanic populations, with youth, and women-identified persons most affected. In 2014, the CDC reported African Americans represent 12% of population, but account for 44% of HIV diagnoses. This discussion delves deep into why, and work towards solutions. -- **Wednesday, February 8**

Artist Kia Labeija in Conversation with Zach Stafford: *Art AIDS America Chicago* artist Kia Labeija discusses her artistic practice, which includes photography and voguing, with Zach Stafford, nationally known Chicago-based journalist and editor-at-large for *OUT Magazine*. Kia Labeija was born with HIV and lost her mother at age 14. She aims for her work to break through a silence that many experience, creating a community and a space to heal -- **Friday, February 17**

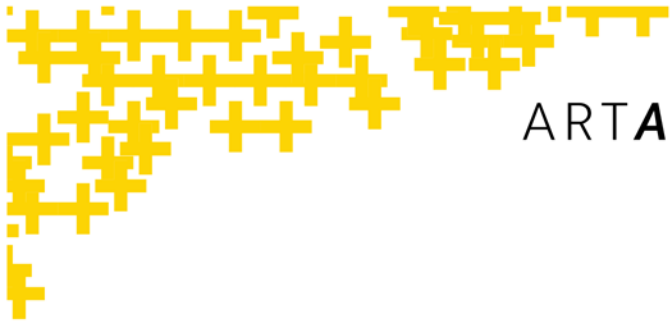
Love Positive Women: HIV & Women: Too often the conversation about HIV/AIDS does not include the impact it has on women or individuals who identify within the feminine spectrum - including transgender and gender non-conforming persons, and womyn - who represent the highest rates of HIV seroconversion. Beyond health statistics, increased levels of discrimination and criminalization have disproportionately affected women of color. This panel discussion brings women to the center of the conversation, providing a critical examination of the causes and effects the impact of HIV/AIDS has on their lives. -- **Wednesday, Feb 22**

Artist Karen Finley in Conversation and Presentation with Chicago artists

Using the exhibition *Art AIDS America Chicago* as a site of inspiration, Karen Finley and a selection of local Chicago artists of various disciplines and practice will tackle *Transforming Grief – The Power and Inspiration of Art*. Born in Chicago, Finley is internationally known and remembered as a one of the NEA Four from the 1990s, with her work addressing homophobia and misogyny during the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis. She is now a professor at the Tisch School of Art and Public Policy at NYU. -- **Sunday, March 12 time TBD**

About Face Theatre Presents: AIDS on Stage About Face Theatre presents a series of readings of HIV/AIDS focused plays to provide a retrospective look at how theatre artists have addressed the devastating health crisis throughout the decades, including: William Hoffman's *As Is*, Harrison David Rivers' *And All The Dead Lie Down*, *Jeffrey* by Paul Rudnick, and *In The Continuum* by Danaï Gurira and Nikkole Salter. -- **Mondays, March 6 - 27, 2017, 7-9PM**

The Care Plan Presents: HIV & Aging Panel Jackie Boyd, long time aging specialist and LGBTQI advocate and Founder of The Care Plan, leads this discussion, addressing a generational shift in HIV/AIDS culture. With the continued advances in healthcare treatment and therapy, early detection, and preventative tests for seropositive individuals having grown sharply, life expectancy of HIV+ populations has created the possibility of senior years. How has this shifted our perspective on the history and future of HIV/AIDS? What are the long-term support systems



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that can be provided to these aging populations? What gains can be made where once there were only losses? **Wednesday, March 22**

Weekly walk-in HIV testing, free of charge, will be hosted at the Alphawood gallery by established healthcare organizations including: Howard Brown Health, Center on Halsted, Chicago House, and Test Positive Aware Network. Check the *Art AIDS America Chicago* website for regularly scheduled dates/times.

COMMUNITY ALLIES PRESENTING RELATED PROGRAMMING

Following is a *sampling* of related programming presented off-site by arts and advocacy organizations (in alphabetical order); additional programming to be announced.

Art Institute of Chicago (111 S. Michigan Ave.) Public Gallery talk on artist Félix González-Torres -- January 25 @ 6pm
González-Torres is a Cuban-born American sculptor, photographer, and conceptual artist known for work in a variety of media that addresses issues of identity, desire, originality, loss, the metaphor of journey, and the private versus the public domain, whose work appears both at AIC and in *Art AIDS America Chicago*.

Additional artist talks TBA: Feb. 22 and March 29 @ 6pm

Chicago History Museum (1601 N. Clark St.) co-presentation: OUT at CHM March 3, 7-10pm
How was art used to speak out about the AIDS pandemic, advocate for its victims, and critique public response to this health crisis? Drawing on two exhibitions on view in Chicago—*Art AIDS America Chicago* at the Alphawood Gallery and *One day this kid will get larger* at the DePaul Art Museum—this panel examines artists who participated as activists in the AIDS crisis and contemporary artists responding to that time and to ongoing HIV health issues.

DePaul Art Museum (935 W. Fullerton Ave.)

One day this kid will get larger exhibition, January 26 – April 2, 2017

A group exhibition of emerging contemporary artists who address the ongoing HIV/AIDS pandemic in North America through the lens of childhood, education, popular culture and race. This exhibition is guest-curated by Danny Orendorff.

Art AIDS America Chicago Queer Heritage: Intergenerational Artists Panel
Feb. 24, 5-7pm

Taking Turns: Stories from HIV/AIDS Unit 371 by MK Czerweic, Graphic Narrative Release March 30, 6:30-8:30pm

Hyde Park Art Center (5020 S. Cornell Ave.) presents *Precariat*, Feb. 5-March 12, 2017
Precariat features artists whose interdisciplinary practices produce work in response to identity, social issues, and activism. The spectrum of how closely the artist's queer identity informs their practice varies but each individual confronts socially constructed ideals within their work.



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International Museum of Surgical Science (1524 N. Lake Shore Drive)

Whit Forrester: *Affinity in the Tall Grasses of California* exhibition, Nov. 15, 2016 – Feb. 26, 2017

Artist Whit Forrester documents the workings of medical cannabis farms in up-state California, and illuminates the history of cannabis legalization in the Golden State as a treatment for symptoms of HIV/AIDS.

Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art (756 N. Milwaukee Ave.)

Post Black Folk Art in America 1930-1980-2016 exhibition, thru January 2, 2017

This exhibition revisits the Corcoran Gallery of Art's 1982 *Black Folk Art in America 1930-1980*. On view during the height of the AIDS crisis, the exhibition featured artists affected and inspired to speak through their art about HIV/AIDS. *Post Black Folk Art in America 1930-1980-2016* features artists such as Ronald Lockett, who created more than 350 works before dying from HIV/AIDS related pneumonia.

Save Our Poonie's: Resistance. Healing. Legacy. @ Links Hall (3111 N. Western Ave.) Sunday, Nov. 20, 7-8:30pm

Poonie's is named for Poonie Dodson, a much-loved Chicago dancer/choreographer who died of AIDS in the early 90's. Originally inspired by Patrick's Cabaret in Minneapolis, Poonie's Cabaret welcomes all forms of expression. Save Our Poonie's: Resistance. Healing. Legacy. will feature curators Joseph Varisco, Carole McCurdy, Rebecca Kling, and J'Sun Howard with works from Emilio Rojas and Paul Escriva, Xena Ellison and Elizabeth Mputu, Bea Cordelia, and Mar Curran.

QUEER, ILL, + OKAY (@Oracle Public Access Theatre, 1802 W. Berenice Ave.) Dec. 9-10, Dec. 16-17, 2016

Independent Curator and *Art AIDS America Chicago* Program Coordinator Joseph Varisco presents the fourth annual performance showcase exploring intersections of what it means to be LGBTQIA and live today with HIV and/or other forms of chronic illness. QIO examines, challenges, and reinvents narratives that unearth the history of stigma surrounding HIV and illness across multiple generations and disciplines. The event will feature 14 artists from across the country including avery r. young, Tim'm West, Kay Ulanday Barrett, Lucas Baisch, Michelle Zacarias, and Bea Cordelia.

Victory Gardens Theater (2433 N. Lincoln Ave.) Nov. 11- Dec. 11, 2016

Victory Gardens presents *Roz and Ray*, the profound story of love, trust, sacrifice, and forgiveness between two friends. Artistic Director Chay Yew (*The House That Will Not Stand*, *Death and the Maiden*) pairs with playwright Karen Hartman to unearth a tragic and little-known event in medical history.



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About Art AIDS America

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.

Art AIDS America Chicago is the local - and largest - iteration of this groundbreaking national exhibition which underscores the deep and unforgettable presence of HIV in American art. The exhibition will feature some 140+ significant contemporary works on display at the Alphawood Gallery, a temporary space created in a former bank by the Alphawood Foundation to bring the exhibition to its only Midwest venue. 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.

Exhibition Credits

The exhibition was originally organized by Tacoma Art Museum in partnership with The Bronx Museum of the Arts, where it was on display until September 25, 2016. The exhibition is co-curated by Jonathan Katz 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.

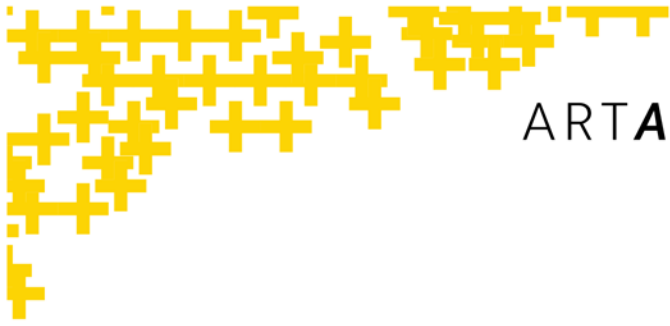
The Chicago presentation of the exhibition and related programming are made possible by the Alphawood Foundation.

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.

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, to ensure entry, timed admission passes may be reserved by visiting ArtAIDSAmericaChicago.org. Walk-ups will be available on a limited basis.



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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 as well as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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Images (from left):

Joey Terrill, *Still Life with Forget-Me-Nots and One Week's Dose of Truvada*, 2012. Mixed media on canvas, 36 × 48 inches. Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, Foundation purchase.

Art AIDS America Chicago logo

Bill Jacobson. *Interim Portrait #373*, 1992. Chromogenic color print, 24 × 20 inches. Courtesy of the artist.

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