

# SLOG

Visual Art

## Yes! *Art AIDS America* Is Here

by [Jen Graves](#) · Jul 15, 2015 at 3:43 pm



JOEY TERRILL (Born Los Angeles, California, 1955) *Still-Life with Forget-Me-Nots and One Week's Dose of Truvada*, 2012. Mixed media on canvas, 36 by 48 inches. Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art. (*Art AIDS America's* sponsors are the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, and the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Support, and additional support is provided by Gilead Sciences, makers of Truvada.)

A bold, big, ambitious exhibition meant to address how AIDS changed the course of American art will open on October 3 at [Tacoma Art Museum](#), and will travel to the Bronx and Georgia after that.

[Art AIDS America](#) is Rock Hushka's whale.

For a decade, the Tacoma curator has been toiling away quietly to pull together the 125 works that will be included in the exhibition, including pieces by Keith Haring, Robert Mapplethorpe, Robert Gober, Catherine Opie, Jenny Holzer, Annie Leibovitz, Judy Chicago, Jasper Johns, Barbara Kruger, David Wojnarowicz, Andres Serrano, Martin Wong, Sue Coe, Karen Finley, General Idea, Nan Goldin, Jim Hodges, Peter Hujar, Kalup Linzy, Niki de Saint Phalle, fierce pussy, Gran Fury, Nayland Blake, Ross Bleckner, Scott Burton, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Charles LeDray, Glenn Ligon, Lari Pittman, and Paul Thek, plus many more.

He's joined by cocurator Jonathan D. Katz, the outspoken cocurator of *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*, which also came to TAM (in 2011), [controversy in tow](#). Which is why it's particularly poignant to read TAM director Stephanie Stebich's comments in the press release for *Art AIDS America*: "Tacoma Art

Museum is a **safe space** where people are able to address important and challenging issues. We are proud to present *Art AIDS America*. It is fitting that the exhibition debuts in Tacoma, the city that established the nation's first government-sanctioned needle exchange program in a proactive approach toward controlling the spread of AIDS."

The art, in all manner of media, dates from 1981 to today.



DAVID WOJNAROWICZ (Born Red Bank, New Jersey, 1954/Died New York, New York, 1992) *Untitled (Buffalo)*, (1988–89). Vintage gelatin silver print, 27 ½ by 35 ½ inches. Private collection, courtesy of the Estate of David Wojnarowicz and P.P.O.W Gallery, New York.

"AIDS fundamentally changed American art, remaking its communicative strategies, its market, its emotional pitch and—not least—its political possibilities," Katz says in the release. "But we've repressed the role of AIDS in the making of contemporary American culture, as we've repressed the role of AIDS in every other aspect of our lives. This exhibition underscores **how powerfully a plague that is still with us has changed us**. *Art AIDS America* creates spaces for mourning and loss, yes, but also **for anger and for joy**, for political resistance and for humor, for horror, and for eroticism."



NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE (Born Neuilly-sur-Seine, France, 1930/Died California, 2002) *AIDS, you can't catch it holding hands*, 1987. Book, 52 pages, 8 by 10 inches. The Lapis Press, San Francisco © 2015 Niki Charitable Art Foundation. All rights reserved, Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY ADAGP, Paris.

