

***Art AIDS America* Exhibition on View at The Bronx Museum of the Arts Summer 2016**

Bronx Museum Adding Works from its Collection to the Exhibition Also Featuring a Display by Visual AIDS, And Collaborating with Diverse Cultural Organizations on Public Programming

Bronx, New York—March 28, 2016—This summer The Bronx Museum of the Arts will present *Art AIDS America*, the first exhibition to examine the deep and ongoing influence of the AIDS crisis on American art and culture. The exhibition will feature more than 125 works in a wide range of media dating from 1981 to the present day, by artists including Félix González-Torres, Derek Jackson, Kia Labeija, Annie Leibovitz, Robert Mapplethorpe, and Martin Wong. The exhibition, on view from July 13 through September 25, is organized by the Tacoma Art Museum in partnership with The Bronx Museum of the Arts.

For this presentation, additional works from The Bronx Museum permanent collection will broaden the offering of artistic responses to the AIDS crisis by artists particularly connected to the Bronx, such as Willie Cole, Glenn Ligon, Whitfield Lovell, and others. The Museum is also working with Visual AIDS—a New York-based organization that supports HIV+ artists and uses art to fight the disease—to create a vitrine in the Museum’s lobby that features work from the organization, including works on paper by artist Glenn Ligon. The Museum is planning a series of public programs that will explore topics relating to AIDS in collaboration with Visual AIDS, BronxWorks, New York African Film Festival, and other organizations. The Museum has also organized an Advisory Committee of artists, leaders in the Bronx, community organizers, and individuals involved with HIV/AIDS issues to work with the Museum on events, outreach, and programming. The Committee is chaired by artist, archivist, and activist Sur Rodney (Sur).

“This exhibition traces for the first time how cultural expression has been influenced by HIV/AIDS, exploring how artists have grappled with the devastation of AIDS from the beginning of the outbreak in the 1980s, to its insidious presence today,” said Holly Block, Executive Director of The Bronx Museum of the Arts. “These artists give voice to perspectives that are too often suppressed, and the exhibition reveals how they have changed both the history of art in America and the response to this disease.”

Bronx Museum Director of Curatorial and Education Programs, Sergio Bessa, added, “The AIDS crisis has particular resonance in our region and in the Bronx, and we continue to feel the impact of HIV/AIDS. Through our presentation of this exhibition and a series of community engagement programs, we will promote dialog with our community on a topic that has been stigmatized for decades.”

Works from The Bronx Museum of the Arts that will be on view as part of the exhibition include:

- **Willie Cole’s** *How Do You Spell America? #2* (1993), which uses language to comment on the complexity of the American experience
- *Untitled* (1992), a suite of four prints by **Glenn Ligon**, who was born in the Bronx, based on quotes from African-American writers; as well as a poster Ligon designed for a queer activist coalition in Toronto

- *Wreath* (2000) by Bronx-born artist **Whitfield Lovell**, known for his drawings of African-Americans from the first half of the 20th century, paired with found objects
- *Reconstructions II* (1987), a collage that incorporates ephemera relating to the AIDS crisis by Chilean-born, New York-based artist **Catalina Parra**

Curatorial Team

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 at the Tacoma Art Museum.

Catalog

Art AIDS America is accompanied by a nearly 300-page catalog featuring essays by 15 contributors and with more than 200 illustrations. It is published in association with the University of Washington Press of Seattle and London and designed by Marquand Books, Seattle.

Funding

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About The Bronx Museum of the Arts

The Bronx Museum of the Arts is an internationally recognized cultural destination that presents innovative contemporary art exhibitions and education programs and is committed to promoting cross-cultural dialogues for diverse audiences. Since its founding in 1971, the Museum has played a vital role in the Bronx by helping to make art accessible to the entire community and connecting with local schools, artists, teens, and families through its robust public programming and education initiatives. In celebration of its 40th anniversary, the Museum implemented a universal free admission policy, supporting its mission to make arts experiences available to all audiences. The Museum's collection comprises over 1,000 modern and contemporary works of art in all media with a focus on works by artists of African, Asian, and Latin-American ancestry, as well as artists for whom the Bronx has been critical to their development. Located on the Grand Concourse, the Museum's home is a distinctive contemporary landmark designed by the internationally recognized firm Arquitectonica.

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