



# 7 Film Shorts Remind Us That “The AIDS Crisis Is Still Beginning”

They’re screening at over 100 locations worldwide as part of the 30th annual Day With(out) Art, an event by Visual AIDS.

November 27, 2019 By [Trent Straube](#)

---

For its 30<sup>th</sup> annual Day With(out) Art event, nonprofit group Visual AIDS commissioned seven video shorts about today’s HIV epidemic. They’re screening together as an hourlong program titled Still Beginning that will premiere Sunday, December 1, which commemorates World AIDS Day.

This year’s films cover a variety of topics, including a the opioid epidemic, queer Asians and social media (see a full synopsis below). The seven filmmakers are Shanti Avirgan, Nguyen Tan Hoang, Carl George, Viva Ruiz, Iman Shervington, Jack Waters/Victor F.M. Torres and Derrick Woods-Morrow. The program’s title arrives from a banner reading “The AIDS Crisis Is Still Beginning” that was displayed at a 2019 retrospective of artist Gregg Bordowitz.

Courtesy of Visual AIDS

More than 100 locations worldwide will screen the films, some with artist talkbacks and related World AIDS Day event. You can find a full list of dates and locations at [VisualAIDS.org](https://VisualAIDS.org). But the marquee screenings include:

- December 1: Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City
- December 5: Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
- December 7: Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn
- December 13: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

When the Visual AIDS event debuted in 1989, it was originally titled Day Without Art. The idea was for galleries and museums to cover up art or to close and send staff to volunteer at AIDS organizations. This was a way to mark the loss and absence caused by the epidemic and to encourage people to take action.

In 1999, on the event's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the title became Day With(out) Art. The parentheses were added to signal that the creation of art was now a part of the event.

The Visual AIDS webpage on this year's Day With(out) Art includes the following video synopses for the works commissioned for Still Beginning:

## Shanti Avirgan, Beat Goes On

Shanti Avirgan, "Beat Goes On" Courtesy of Visual AIDS

Beat Goes On is an impressionistic portrait of the activist Keith Cylar (1958–2004), cofounder of Housing Works and a central figure in the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) NY. Cylar spoke clearly, frequently and with moral force about the struggles of people living with HIV/AIDS in New York City, many of whom were impoverished and struggling with multiple social and medical

problems. His openness about his own drug use and the centrality of the fight against the criminalization of drugs for AIDS activism make Cylar’s legacy especially resonant and relevant at this time. A fellow harm reduction activist recalls how “Keith moved from mixing with the government, to threatening the government, to beating the government—all in the space of five minutes.” By resurfacing and weaving together archival media of Cylar’s own words and actions, this video will endeavor to convey—in the space of about five minutes—some of the personal charisma, political savvy and fearlessness that characterized Cylar’s advocacy.

---

## Carl George, The Lie

Carl George, “The Lie” Courtesy of Visual AIDS

The Lie is the latest in an ongoing series of short films by Carl George drawing on found footage and materials from the artist’s archive. Offering “ruminations on ruined nations,” the film aims to expose the links between war, AIDS, capitalism and the persistent mythologies that bind them all.

---

## Nguyen Tan Hoang, I Remember Dancing

Nguyen Tan Hoang, "I Remember Dancing" Courtesy of Visual AIDS

I Remember Dancing brings together an intergenerational cast of "trans and queer gaysians" ruminating on the past and future of AIDS, activism, gay culture, love and (un)safe sex. Inspired by Joe Brainard's I Remember poems, these confessions illuminate perspectives of queer Asian communities often absent from whitewashed narratives of HIV and AIDS. Grief, regret, longing, risk and pleasure surface as their memories and fantasies blur into one another.

---

Viva Ruiz, Chloe Dzubilo: There is a Transolution

Viva Ruiz, "Chloe Dzubilo: There is a Transolution" Courtesy of Visual AIDS

Viva Ruiz invites transgender AIDS activist, artist and beloved friend Chloe Dzubilo (1960–2011) to speak via never before seen Hi-8 footage filmed by Chloe's then partner Kelly McGowan in the 1990s. The process triangulates mother (Chloe), lover (Kelly), and child (Viva) in a deliberate ritual to uplift the spirit and legacy of an ancestral teacher. Through artifacts from the moment when video first became accessible and before mobile phone cameras became ubiquitous, we witness Chloe declare herself and her sisters as leaders in art, advocacy and culture for evermore.

---

Iman Shervington, I'm Still Me

Iman Shervington, "I'm Still Me" Courtesy of Visual AIDS

I'm Still Me explores how digital platforms have created community and connections for Sian, a Black woman living with HIV and navigating the stigma and misinformation that is prevalent in the American South. Through her blog, social media accounts and online video platforms, Sian connects with (predominantly) heterosexual Black women who send her messages, ask questions and share their experiences with stigma and fear, all the while creating community that may have previously only existed in the shadows.

---

Jack Waters/Victor F.M. Torres, (eye, virus)

Jack Waters/Victor F.M. Torres, "(eye, virus)" Courtesy of Visual AIDS

Through an experimental collage of video and pictographs, (eye, virus) explores how conversations around disclosure, stigma and harm reduction shift across generations and from public to private realms. Combining street interviews with footage from a punk show and a mobile testing site, the video centers pleasure and community as it expands the conversation around HIV to include hepatitis C and the opioid epidemic. (eye, virus) extends from documentation of a 2017 public program titled AIDS OS Y Version 10.11.6 and is collaboratively produced with Nikki Sweet.

---

Derrick Woods-Morrow, Much handled things are always soft

Derrick Woods-Morrow, "Much handled things are always soft" Production still by Patric McCoy

This work unearths the unwritten and undocumented histories of public sex culture in the South Side of Chicago. Through conversation with long-term survivor Patric McCoy, the film traces the height of activity in the 1970s, the downfall of cruising culture in the 1980s and the prevailing summer heat, which continues to linger. Together, McCoy and Woods-Morrow reflect on their relationship to cruising, to photography and to each other; attempting to bridge the gap between what was and what still remains to be explored.

---

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

<http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/7-film-shorts-remind-us-aids-crisis-still-beginning>