Eye of the Beholder

January 1, 2000 By Shana Naomi Krochmal

The debut of the new San Francisco AIDS Foundation (SFAF) gay-focused prevention posters in October—above is one of three variations—set tongues wagging. “People make assumptions about the image, which is what the campaign is about—making assumptions about status,” said SFAF’s communications director, Gustavo Suárez. *POZ* appointed a red-ribbon panel of condom connoisseurs, and then appointed each opinion a score (1-5).

Walt Odets, PhD
Prevention theorist
I was a little puzzled by the design. But I find most stuff like that not very interesting graphically. I think it’s intelligent. It acknowledges that people aren’t using condoms every time, but that they are conducting negotiated safety and that disclosure needs to be part of that. But some positive men who only see one of the posters directed at them might feel they were being singled out for special responsibility. **SCORE: 3**

Michael Musto
Village Voice columnist
It’s really good. Honesty is generally not the best aphrodisiac, but in cases like this, it still needs to be encouraged.

But what is this—a big flower made of pecs? What the fuck is that? I’d rather see two men sitting in bed. I know that’s pretty literal, but this is some kind of artsy collage, and I don’t know if that’s necessary. **SCORE: 4**

Steven Gibson
STOP AIDS Project
program director
Gay men in San Francisco have learned to give the p.c. answer: “I assume all of my partners are positive.” But they don’t really. This looks at the rift between what’s the right thing to say and what men actually do. **SCORE: 4**

Hal Rubenstein
InStyle magazine editor
I think that the text is supposed to be referring to individuals, but what I see are multiple bodies—the assumption being that this is more about promiscuity than one-to-one contact, which

sends a mixed message. Plus, the colors are depressing. They're just murky. **SCORE: 1**

Michael Shernoff
Therapist
I don't know what the hell it is. A torso? An atom bomb? The idea is great. The biggest anxiety I hear from patients—and that I felt when I was single—is when to tell. It's easy to put it off. Then, all of a sudden, it's the third date and it feels too late. Disclosure could level the playing field.
SCORE: 2

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