Add Your Own Face to This Iconic Artwork From a Gay AIDS Activist

Artist David Wojnarowicz died 30 years ago. A childhood photo of yourself can now be part of his LGBTQ-themed poster “One Day This Kid.”

July 11, 2022 By Trent Straube

Artist and activist David Wojnarowicz died of AIDS-related illness July 22, 1992. His body of work remains more relevant than ever, especially his 1990 LGBTQ-themed photo collage Untitled (One Day This Kid…), which depicts an image of the artist as a child surrounded by text decrying homophobia. As the 30th anniversary of Wojnarowicz’s death approaches, you can become part of this iconic work and its timeless message.

PPOW Gallery and the Estate of David Wojnarowicz invite you to upload a childhood photo of yourself that will become part of a collective work shared across the globe. Here’s how the project is explained:

> Given the recent and continued malicious legislative attacks policing LGBTQIA+ bodies, the Estate of David Wojnarowicz and P·P·O·W invite you to join in a visual chorus of solidarity and protest. Throughout the month of July, participants will be able to upload their own childhood pictures into Wojnarowicz’s work on onedaythiskid.com. And, on July 22nd, the anniversary of Wojnarowicz’s passing, the website will be given over to a stream of all submitted photos, with participants taking to social media to share these images using the hashtag #OneDayThisKid.
>
> We invite you to join us in displaying the ongoing relevance of Wojnarowicz’s message and the power of community from across the globe by adding your image to this collective work. Please share the message far and wide because we are all this kid.

View this post on Instagram

A post shared by P·P·O·W (@ppowgallery)

Wojnarowicz's Untitled (One Day This Kid…) is part of the collection at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. On its website, the museum describes the work as follows:

> The subject pictured in this photo-text collage…is David Wojnarowicz himself as child, his toothy grin and neat hair and dress evoking an all-American school snapshot from the 1950s. Surrounding this image of prepubescent innocence, however, are texts forecasting the artist's future as a homosexual who is persecuted by his family, church, school, government, and the legal and medical communities. Among other abuses, he will "be faced with electro-shock, drugs, and conditioning therapies" as well as "be subject to loss of home, civil rights, jobs, and all conceivable freedoms"—all because, the text concludes, "he discovers he desires to place his naked body on the naked body of another boy." With its imperative declarations and use of the future tense, Wojnarowicz's text demands attention, transforming "this kid" from a specific figure to anyone subject to homophobia. Like many of the artist's projects, this work insists on a presence and visibility for the gay community of which he was a part, proposing art as not only an instrument of protest but a vehicle for enlightenment.

In 2018, the Whitney exhibited a collection of his works in a show titled David Wojnarowicz: History Keeps Me Awake at Night. To read more and to view a slideshow of his other work, see "Why ACT UP Protested an Exhibition of ACT UP Artist Wojnarowicz's Work."

And to learn more about the artist, check out the documentary about the artist titled Wojnarowicz: F**k You F*ggot F**ker (the linked article includes a trailer for the film).

The original Wornjarowicz work Untitled (One Day This Kid…) is below.

David Wojnarowicz: "Untitled (One Day This Kid...)"Courtey of The Whitney Museum of American Art

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