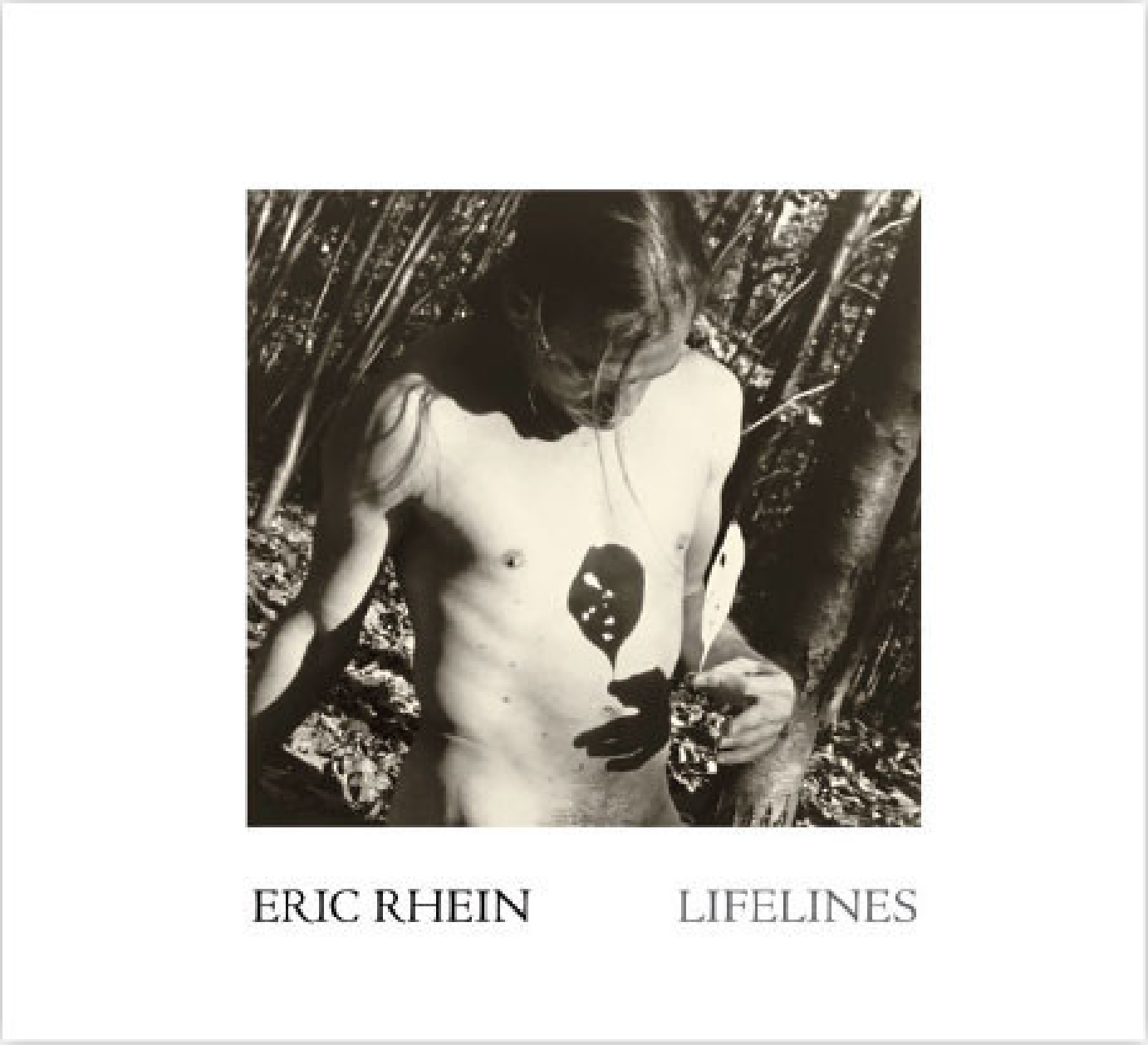
The Art of Connecting [SLIDESHOW]

Love, intimacy and HIV history abound in *Eric Rhein: Lifelines*.

January 4, 2021 By Trent Straube

Eric Rhein has roots in Appalachian Kentucky. He moved to New York's East Village in 1980 and was diagnosed with HIV in 1987. When you look at images of his artwork—delicate wire assemblages and photography of tender moments—and you read the heartfelt musings collected in the monograph-memoir Eric Rhein: Lifelines, you can sense his reverence for nature, AIDS history, medical advances, human touch and family (his uncle Lige Clarke was a pioneering gay rights activist who was murdered execution style in 1975).



On the cover of Rhein's monograph-memoir is "Company" (self-portrait), 1998Courtesy of Institute 193/Eric Rhein

"I'm grateful," Rhein tells POZ, "to my queer friends of a younger generation who see their lives informed by the height of the AIDS crisis that I've lived through, just as I see (and have been nourished by) my generation's lineage with the gay rights movement of the 1960s and '70s. There is healing within the consciousness of interconnection—including being awake to our relationships with those who died." He honors friends lost to AIDS through a series of over 300 memorial pieces titled Leaves, in which wire outlines—"lifelines"—of individual leaves give rise to metaphoric portraits. Rhein hopes the book offers "a voice that emphasizes the transformative qualities of love, intimacy and care—especially within life's great challenges."

Rhein and his work were featured on the cover of POZ in April/May 2015 in the article titled "The Course of His Life."

To read about other HIV-related books released in recent months, see "Reading Is Fundamental,"

which includes books about Keith Haring, African-American AIDS activism, Michael Callen and life in New York City during COVID-19.

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