



# The Kid Stays in the Picture

An HIV/AIDS art exhibit centers on youth.

April 3, 2017 By [Trent Straube](#)

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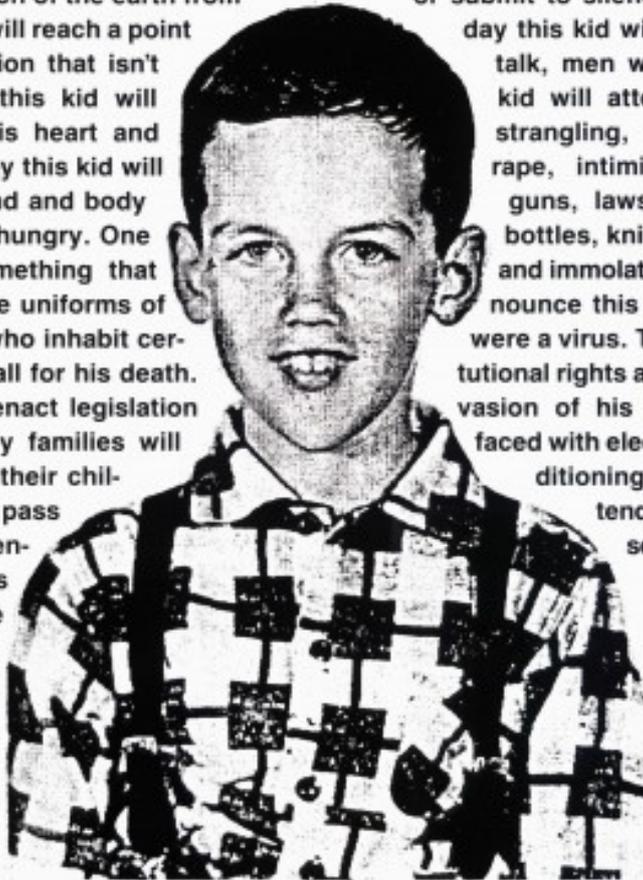
When you think about AIDS art, the words joyous and youthful probably don't come to mind—unless you have an eye like Danny Orendorff, who curated the exhibit *One day this kid will get larger* at Chicago's DePaul Art Museum. (The title derives from the text of an iconic 1990 piece by David Wojnarowicz, a prominent artist and activist.)

"I really didn't want to do a show that dwelled on the depressing aspects of all this," Orendorff says, noting that death tolls in the '80s and '90s inspired a lot of the artwork from that period. "It was important to me to showcase life and pleasure and joy."

Built around the theme of youth, the DePaul exhibition focuses not only on the formative ages from 13 to 24 but also on people born with the virus and HIV-positive parents raising children. Orendorff explains that he was also interested in "the intersection between contemporary HIV activism and the movement for Black and brown lives and also the disproportionate infection rates among youth of color." As he gathered artwork for the show—it turns out that many of the final pieces are film shorts and digital photographs—three subthemes emerged: *Childhoods, Educations and Nightlives*, and *Pop Cultures*.

Orendorff, who is tapped in to younger artists and activists, says that a lot of young people today think of HIV/AIDS "as being a disease that primarily affected white gay men in the '80s and early '90s." Thankfully, a new crop of artists are updating that narrative to 2017.

One day this kid will get larger. One day this kid will come to know something that causes a sensation equivalent to the separation of the earth from its axis. One day this kid will reach a point where he senses a division that isn't mathematical. One day this kid will feel something stir in his heart and throat and mouth. One day this kid will find something in his mind and body and soul that makes him hungry. One day this kid will do something that causes men who wear the uniforms of priests and rabbis, men who inhabit certain stone buildings, to call for his death. One day politicians will enact legislation against this kid. One day families will give false information to their children and each child will pass that information down generationally to their families and that information will be designed to make existence intolerable for this kid. One day this kid will begin to experience all this activity in his environment and that activi-



ty and information will compel him to commit suicide or submit to danger in hopes of being murdered or submit to silence and invisibility. Or one day this kid will talk. When he begins to talk, men who develop a fear of this kid will attempt to silence him with strangling, fists, prison, suffocation, rape, intimidation, drugging, ropes, guns, laws, menace, roving gangs, bottles, knives, religion, decapitation, and immolation by fire. Doctors will pronounce this kid curable as if his brain were a virus. This kid will lose his constitutional rights against the government's invasion of his privacy. This kid will be faced with electro-shock, drugs, and conditioning therapies in laboratories tended by psychologists and research scientists. He will be subject to loss of home, civil rights, jobs, and all conceivable freedoms. All this will begin to happen in one or two years when he discovers he desires to place his naked body on the naked body of another boy.

*Wojnarowicz 1990/91 4/6*

David Wojnarowicz's Untitled (One day this kid...) Courtesy of the Estate of David Wojnarowicz and P.P.O.W, New York