POZ on Location: Mondo Guerra presents “Pozitivitrees”

October 14, 2016

At the 2016 United States Conference on AIDS, fashion designer and artist Mondo Guerra unveiled an installation called Pozitivitrees. These yarn-wrapped palm trees (the technique used is is known as “yarn bombing”) were created for the conference as part of Guerra’s collaboration with Merck’s HIV education campaign, “I Design.” The campaign aims to empower people living with HIV to have open and honest conversations with their health care providers.

Pozitivitrees represents Guerra’s own journey with HIV and comes together to create balance, courage, strength and beauty. The outermost trees represent the beginning, or the foundation, of life with HIV. The knit canvas on these trees is mostly white with black lines, which signify the unanswered questions that often come accompany an HIV diagnosis.

The middle trees introduce the color red, which symbolizes the HIV community. These trees represent the knowledge and strength that come from accessing information about HIV as well as advancements in care and treatment. For Guerra, this part of his journey was about self-love and learning to accept support from others.

The inner trees use the original Pozitivity design that Guerra created during his first season on Project Runway. These signify courage and strength and the importance of not letting HIV define you so you can be your most happy and healthy self. The reverse plus signs at the top of the trees represent those who we have lost to AIDS.

With Pozitivitrees, Guerra hopes to raise awareness and spark more conversations about HIV/AIDS as we continue to fight the epidemic.

Guerra is also a spokesperson for Dining Out for Life, an annual dining fundraising event raising money for AIDS service organizations across the country.

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