POZ Awards 2019 / Best in Performing and Visual Arts

Read about the nominees, then scroll down to vote for your favorite!

October 1, 2019

Welcome to the 4th Annual POZ Awards, which spotlight the best representations of HIV/AIDS in media and culture.

The POZ editorial staff selects the nominees, but POZ readers choose the winners.

Eligible nominees were active or were presented, published or produced between October 1, 2018, and September 30, 2019.

Be sure to vote for your favorite nominees by the World AIDS Day deadline: Sunday, December 1, 2019.

VOTING IS CLOSED!

Here are the nominees:

Broadway Bares (Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS)

We've made this promise before and we are keeping it: as long as Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS produces this annual, spectacular night of nearly naked Broadway professionals strutting their attractively toned stuff, we will probably nominate it in this category. This year, their flight-themed Broadway Bares: Take Off show broke fundraising records, making our close inspection of the flesh on stage totally, completely legit.

The Fathers Project (Leo Herrera)

Our only challenge here is trying to describe a truly visionary project that defies description. Artist Leo Herrera – and make no mistake about it, this video series is a work of art – has reimagined a world in which AIDS never happened, and the many, many influential people who perished from the epidemic are still with us. This is not simply wish-fulfillment; Herrera dives deep into the social, political, and even sexual ramifications and finds imaginative accomplishments these men and

women might have achieved. It is fascinating filmmaking that captures your attention and brings an ache to your heart and soul.

First Time (Nathaniel Hall)

We all know the value of telling stories of our lives with HIV, but this one is a doozy. Actor Nathaniel Hall became HIV positive as the result of his first sexual experience when he was 16 years old. So naturally, he wrote a play about it (albeit 14 years later, now that he has had time to gain confidence and perspective). Hall's play, First Time, was produced this year at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in partnership with HIV Scotland. Hall has created a devastating, heartfelt and humorous piece of theatre that not only transforms audiences into HIV allies, but also helps them rid toxic shame from their own lives.

And So It Happened (Francesco Di Benedetto)

Photographer Francesco Di Benedetto's digital project And So It Happened includes interviews with and portraits of people living with HIV or on PrEP. The results are at once intimate, inspiring, educational and mesmerizing. The title, Di Benedetto says, "looks at the fact that something happened as a starting point for a broader and more articulate discussion. What happens next?"

Transformation Tunnel (John Burnette, Lisette Correa, Ajmal Millar, Maite Nazario and Ash Walsh)

On the Atlanta Beltline, an urban walking trail and park project, passersby are confronted by a gorgeous mural, located at the heart of an area of Atlanta hit hard by the epidemic. "We Are All Thriving with HIV!" the mural proclaims, and the colorful and joyous artistry that surrounds those words serves as an illustration of its bold announcement. The popular walking trail will most certainly create conversation among the many joggers, pedestrians and families that visit the trail, and that's the best kind of advocacy art. All five of the mural's artists are impacted by HIV in some way, and their personal commitment is evident in the artwork, which was developed by the CDC's "Start Talking. Stop HIV." campaign in partnership with Living Walls Atlanta.

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