



POZ Awards 2023

In an article titled “POZ Awards 2023: Winners,” the POZ editors compiled the winners, as voted on by readers, of the 8th Annual POZ Awards, which spotlighted HIV and AIDS in media and culture. Here is an edited excerpt.

February 12, 2024 By POZ Staff

BEST CELEBRITY ADVOCATE

[Adam Lambert](#)

Those who have followed Adam Lambert’s career know that he is not afraid to be out and proud, even on a show like American Idol, a favorite of the heartland. Since Lambert’s time on Idol, he has become the stand-in front person for the band Queen and taken on acting roles, including in Fairyland, the film adaptation of Alysia Abbott’s 2014 memoir about her relationship with her father, a gay man living with AIDS. While promoting the film, Lambert spoke openly about his own experiences growing up queer in a world with AIDS. “The history that the queer community has been through is really important now, more than ever, considering what’s going on in the country,” he told Collider.com early in 2023. “We [have] got to make sure everyone knows what’s happened already so that we cannot repeat our mistakes.”

BEST IN FILM OR TELEVISION

[Fairyland](#)

Almost a decade after the 2014 publication of Alysia Abbott’s Fairyland, the film version of her memoir found its way into theaters. Directed by first-time director Andrew Durham and produced by Academy Award winner Sofia Coppola, the film traces the story of Alysia’s move, at age 5, to San Francisco after the death of her mother. Her father, writer Steve Abbott, comes out after his wife’s death and begins to live as an out gay man while raising Alysia. However, later, as he is diagnosed with AIDS, the tables are turned, and Alysia must care for him. The film, which stars SAG Award winner Scoot McNairy as Alysia’s father and CODAactress Emilia Jones as Alysia, debuted at Sundance in January 2023; sadly, it is not yet available to stream.

BEST IN LITERATURE

[World Made of Glass](#) by Ami Polonsky

At a time when LGBTQ books meant for young adults are being pulled from library shelves, World Made of Glass is a story for young people about activism and breaking silence. In the novel, Iris is facing the death of her father, who is living with HIV, though she feels she cannot talk about it due

to stigma. As she wrestles with the silence surrounding the virus, she confronts the misinformation and prejudice around AIDS. The book, which earned a starred review in the magazine Kirkus Reviews, has been called a “poetry-filled, inspiring call to activism.”

BEST IN VISUAL ARTS

[HIV Science as Art](#)

Science and art represent two drastically different methods of understanding the world around us, including the AIDS epidemic. Featuring 12 original works, HIV Science as Art was the official art exhibit at the 12th International Conference on HIV Science, held in Brisbane, Australia, in July. The exhibit brought scientific advancements in HIV to life via collaborations between artists and scientists. It spanned various media, including fashion design, photography and sculpture, and the art was for sale, with proceeds supporting community- based HIV programs and services.

BEST REASON TO KEEP ACTING UP

[Trans Rights](#)

As we know, transgender people have often been counted last in the fight for the rights of the LGBTQ community. That made them an even bigger target in 2023, as state houses around the country have moved to ban and criminalize aspects of trans life, including removing information about gender identity from school library shelves and preventing trans youth from accessing gender-affirming care. AIDS activism is a health care movement, one that demands that people be allowed to access lifesaving medication and make the best decisions for their own health. As trans youth face a system looking to block them from flourishing, this fight is a clear continuation of what AIDS activism is all about.