



POZ Awards 2024 / Best in Visual Arts

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

October 1, 2024

Welcome to the 9th Annual POZ Awards, spotlighting the best representatives of HIV and 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, 2023, and September 30, 2024.

VOTING IS CLOSED

BEST IN VISUAL ARTS

[Christian Walker: The Profane and the Poignant](#), SMFA at Tufts, Boston

An artist, critic, curator and activist living between Boston and Atlanta, Christian Walker engaged in both more traditional forms of photography, as well as experimental practices that explored queer sex, race — especially interracial queer sex — the AIDS crisis, as well as drug use. Walker, who was Black and gay, was most active from the mid-1970s through the mid-1990s and this exhibit, housed at Tufts University, where Walker was once a student, brings together his images alongside his critical writing. During his life (he passed in 2003), he cocurated an exhibition titled *Against the Tide: Art in the Age of AIDS and Censorship* alongside historian Cindy Patton. While this exhibition is touring, some of Walker's work is part of the Studio Museum in New York City's permanent collection.

[The Plural of He](#), Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York

Consisting of newly-commissioned art from five artists, *The Plural of He* explores the work of Colin Robinson, a Trinidadian-American poet who was also a force in New York City's queer and AIDS activist movements. The works presented in this exhibition are displayed alongside, and in conversation with, archival objects from Robinson, including carnival costumes and love letters. While living as an undocumented migrant in New York, Robinson co-founded the New York State Black Gay Network, the Audre Lorde Project and was the director of HIV prevention at Gay Men's Health Crisis. Each of the artworks presented in this exhibition respond to a different part of his

archive in order to illuminate a different aspect of this critical literary, activist and artistic mind.

[The Body, The Host: HIV/AIDS and Christianity](#), Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio

There's no doubt that the relationship between the HIV community and religion is fraught: while some nuns responded to the early crisis by caring for the sick, some preachers spouted sermons that were openly serophobic. But regardless of your own take on the relationship between AIDS and religion, there is no doubt that Christian iconography is deeply embedded in our collective subconscious, and that artists who are making art about AIDS often incorporate these images in their work. This show, at Oberlin College's Allen Memorial Art Museum, explores artists who used Christian motifs to respond to the AIDS crisis, as well as concerns regarding "judgment, shame, guilt, suffering, martyrdom, plague, death, redemption, resurrection, salvation through blood, and the sacredness of wounded bodies."

[Darrel Ellis and Miguel Ferrando](#), Candace Madey Gallery, New York

Just a few blocks from where the two artists lived on New York City's Lower East Side, this exhibition puts the work of two artists, Darrel Ellis and Miguel Ferrando, into conversation. Ellis and Ferrando were lifelong friends who often tackled the same themes. Both also eventually died of AIDS-related illnesses. Ellis died in 1992, while Ferrando died four years later. As described by the Candace Madey Gallery, which hosts the exhibit, Ellis and Ferrando's ruminations on identity and autobiography were largely "out of step" with the artistic trends of the time. But, this exhibition is part of a critical re-engagement with their work, led primarily by organizations such as Visual AIDS.

[Madonna: The Celebration Tour in Rio](#)

Those who attended Madonna's Celebration Tour know that she dedicated a large chunk of her concert to talking about the [AIDS crisis](#) and its impact on her as a person, as well as her music. So when she announced that the final stop of her show would be a free concert in Rio de Janeiro, one that people could watch via livestream around the world, this suddenly became a frank discussion about the cultural history of AIDS with a global audience. While 1.6 million people watched the concert in person, many more were able to livestream the concert online, making Madonna's visual memorial of people who were lost to AIDS one of the most-watched AIDS remembrances of all time.