



POZ Awards 2024

In an article titled “POZ Awards 2024: Winners,” the POZ editors compiled the winners, as voted on by readers, of the 9th Annual POZ Awards, which spotlight HIV and AIDS in media and culture. Here is an edited excerpt.

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BEST CELEBRITY ADVOCATE

Madonna

In the fifth decade of her career, Madonna hasn’t let up on her HIV advocacy. At each of the stops on her 2024 victory lap of a concert tour, titled Celebration, the pop icon created a living musical memorial to the people she’d known who died of AIDS-related illness as well as many whom she had never met. The singer mined the Instagram account @theAIDSMemorial to gather photos of many people lost to the virus. At several shows, she spoke about how deeply personal the loss was to her.

BEST IN FILM OR TELEVISION

Fellow Travelers

Based on the 2007 novel of the same name, this eight-part miniseries tells the love story between two political staffers, Hawkins “Hawk” Fuller and Tim Laughlin, during and beyond the 1950s Lavender Scare. While the show begins with one moral panic, it spans decades, eventually showing the relationship between the two characters in the 1980s, when Tim is diagnosed with HIV while living in San Francisco. The series gives us American history through a queer lens and packs an emotional punch. The finale includes real panels from the AIDS Memorial Quilt. Travelers went on to receive much critical acclaim, winning a Peabody Award and earning three Primetime Emmy nominations.

BEST IN LITERATURE

Criminalized Lives: HIV and Legal Violence by Alexander McClelland

Despite the many advances made in HIV treatment and prevention since the beginning of the AIDS crisis, the legal framework regarding people with HIV lags woefully behind in many cases. With Criminalized Lives, Carleton University professor Alexander McClelland, a member of the Canadian Coalition to Reform HIV Criminalization, aims to lay out this harmful legal framework. Not only

does McClelland dive deep into the ways that Canada's laws harm people with HIV, but he also emphasizes their disproportionate impact on marginalized people, including people of color, Indigenous people, LGBTQ people and people living in poverty. In addition to McClelland's own views, the book includes personal stories from people who faced HIV criminalization firsthand.

BEST IN VISUAL ARTS

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 openly serophobic sermons. Regardless of your own take on the relationship between AIDS and religion, Christian iconography is deeply embedded in our collective subconscious, and artists creating works about AIDS often incorporate these images in their pieces. This show 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."

BEST REASON TO KEEP ACTING UP

Project 2025

Project 2025—an overarching conservative vision to reimagine and dismantle the federal government—was launched before the reelection of Donald Trump to the presidency. There is almost no marginalized group of people that won't be negatively affected by Project 2025, which would endanger the health of all people, workers' rights, reproductive freedom, LGBTQ rights and more. Some lowlights include consolidating presidential power, reducing spending on fighting poverty and eliminating the Department of Education.