SLIDESHOW: Can You Recognize These Sculptures of Famous Icons Lost to AIDS?

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Artist and interior designer Doug Meyer spent much of 2015 creating 50 portraits of creative people who died of AIDS-related illness in the 1980s and ’90s. Recently seen in New York at Liz O’Brien Gallery as part of a traveling exhibit titled “Heroes Tour 2016,” the artworks include tributes to singers Freddy Mercury and Sylvester, fashion designers Willi Smith and Halston, activist Elizabeth Glaser, supermodel Gia, performance artist Leigh Bowery, interior designer Robert Metzger and many others, some of whom Meyer counted among his friends.

The portraits, consisting of busts, statuettes and mixed-media sculptures executed in various styles that sometimes mimic the subjects’ own, serve as reminders of the many lives lost to AIDS in the early days of the epidemic, particularly among the arts communities of major cities like New York and San Francisco. Alongside the glass cases displaying the portraits are the obituaries of Meyer’s heroes as they were originally published in The New York Times. Some of the obits make no mention of AIDS as a cause of death, underscoring the shame and stigma surrounding the illness. Obituaries notwithstanding, the exhibit is a fun and whimsical way to honor some of those we’ve lost and to celebrate the joy artists bring to our lives.

The exhibition will next be on display at NIBA Home in Miami starting May 12 before heading to Dragonette in Los Angeles later this year and finally to Chicago and San Francisco.

Below are selected images from the “Heroes Tour 2016.” How many can you recognize?



Keith Haring (May 4, 1958–February 16, 1990), “Dr. Seuss,” by Doug Meyer, 2016, wood, plaster, plastic, paint, inkMark Roskams

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