# LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN Handmade Papermaking Workshop

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Fire Island Artist Resident Brendan Fernandes makes valentines for LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN

For LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN: Romance Starts at Home 2015, Visual AIDS, the Fire Island Artist Residency, Dieu Donné and the International Community of Women Living With HIV (ICW) hosted three papermaking valentine workshops on January 23 at Dieu Donné in New York City to support women living with HIV.

Jointly, women living with HIV and invited artists from each organization created hand-made valentines for women living with HIV around the world. The valentines were mailed with personalized messages to recipients as a gesture of love and support in hopes of lessening the stigma experienced by women living with HIV.

LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN is an ongoing project established by Visual AIDS artist member Jessica Whitbread in 2013. “Why not do something nice for the women most forgotten about?” says Whitbread. “Taking the time to do something for someone else is really beneficial to society as a whole. Don’t underestimate the value in something as simple as sending a valentine to a stranger.” LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN (LPW) is an international series of grassroots events that uses Valentines Day as a backdrop, creating a platform for individuals and communities to engage in public and private acts of love and caring for women living with HIV. Working from a place of strength, LPW focuses on the idea of interconnectedness, relationship building, loving oneself and loving ones community.

This event was dedicated to Samantha C. Smith (1970-2014), a great friend and supporter of Visual AIDS and FIAR as well as the former board co-chair of Dieu Donné. Smith’s dedication to supporting artists and connecting people inspired this program.

About Dieu Donné
Dieu Donné is the world’s leading cultural institution dedicated to serving artists through the collaborative creation of cutting-edge contemporary art using the process of hand papermaking.

About the International Community of Women Living with HIV
ICW is the only global network by and for women living with HIV. ICW exists to lead efforts towards securing and improving the quality of life for women living with HIV by mobilizing, organizing, advocating, mentoring and raising consciousness on the issues that directly impact lives.

About the Fire Island Artist Residency (FIAR)
FIAR is an organization founded in 2011 which brings lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer identifying emerging artists to Fire Island, a place long-steeped in LGBTQ history, to create, commune, and contribute to the location’s rich artistic history. FIAR provides free live/work space to five selected artist residents who work, research, relax, and immerse themselves in the Fire Island community, during which time they are visited by a handful of renowned visiting artists, curators, and art professionals who commune with residents through intimate visits, dinners, and discussions, providing support and feedback.

For more photos of the event, visit Visual AIDS.

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