

Over the past decade, South African photographer Gideon Mendel and his London associate Crispin Hughes, along with the UCLA Art & Global Health Center, have led *Through Positive Eyes* workshops in which they shared basic camera techniques and introduced a vivid discussion of photo aesthetics. Building on that foundation, each participant captured as many as 3,000 images over a 10-day span. That selection was edited down to 12 of their best to complete a mini-narrative and a three-minute film. This gallery features a sampling of the most resonant images, stories, and films; more are available at ThroughPositiveEyes.org.

In memoriam

In the decade since the Through Positive Eyes workshops began, 10 of the 130 artists in the project have died. We honor them here:

Mexico City

Ilián

Magos

Martín

Roberto

Rio de Janeiro

Alcione

Mara

Johannesburg

Betty

Washington, D.C.

Gemini

Mary

Mumbai

Priya

Artist Statement

When I first made *Slow Boat*, some of my friends were HIV-positive or had full-blown AIDS. I was responding as an HIV-negative person, trying to understand and to mourn. In 1992, the situation looked really dismal and hopeless. If you were HIV-positive, it was only a matter of time before you would have AIDS and be gone. Life was finite.



Now, almost 30 years later, I am illuminating that same copper figure to celebrate the survivors. Originally, the holes were like lesions or wounds. Now, I see them as scars, as proof of

having survived. I have created a halo around the figure and a wall of trailing fabric behind her, evoking African medicine costumes. Yemaya, the West African goddess, or orisha, associated with water and healing, is alluded to. As an artist, I always hold Yemaya in my mind. I am also making a nod to the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, which commemorates people who have died of AIDS.

Metaphorically speaking, I am inviting you to step inside the skin of someone who is HIV-positive and to look through those eyes.

– Alison Saar

Image: *Slow Boat*, as installed in 1992. Photo courtesy Alison Saar.

This quasi-theatrical environment, envisioned by New York-based designer Stan Pressner, serves as the setting for storytelling performances by the Los Angeles *Through Positive Eyes* Collective. Throughout the duration of this exhibition, school groups and members of the public will participate with these storytellers—identified by their “artist” T-shirts—celebrating the fact that they are part artist, part activist. They come from many different parts of the city and will share their distinct perspectives on what it is like to be HIV-positive in Los Angeles. Ultimately, this room is meant to combine the worlds of gallery and theatre, allowing viewers to become both spectators and actors. Check www.fowler.ucla.edu for the time and date of the next public performance, or to schedule a school visit.

Members of Los Angeles *Through Positive Eyes* Collective:

Thomas Davis

Porchia Dees

Lynnea Garbutt

Kelly Gluckman

Vasilios Papapitsios

Joey Terrill

Amiya Wilson