

Gideon Mendel (b. Johannesburg, South Africa 1959; lives and works in London, United Kingdom)

***130 Faces of Through Positive Eyes*, 2019**

Digital composite photograph

Courtesy of the artist

Artist Statement

Since 2007, I have worked with the UCLA Art & Global Health Center to develop *Through Positive Eyes*, a collaborative photo project with HIV-positive people in key cities around the world. This composite photograph puts together, in one visual field, their 130 defiant faces as a shared revolutionary act. All of the individuals pictured here have had distinct experiences when revealing their HIV status publicly. Some have done this many times, while others never before. Initially in the project, I felt it was important for me to express my personal photographic creativity. I travelled to the homes of the activists to make these portraits, so that each and every one would be as personal and unique as possible. However, over time, it became clear that the self-representations made by the activists were so much more compelling, and said much more than I ever could. After chronicling HIV for almost three decades, I am ready to hand over the camera to them.

– Gideon Mendel

Alison Saar, b. 1956

Cool Mama, 2019

Copper, video, found fabric, shells, and miscellaneous objects

Courtesy of the artist and L.A. Louver

In 1992, at the height of the AIDS epidemic—before the invention and availability of antiretroviral treatment—Los Angeles artist Alison Saar created an AIDS-themed installation titled *Slow Boat*. Curated by Thelma Golden for the Whitney Museum at Phillip Morris in New York City, the work was animated by Saar's personal sense of dread and mourning concerning AIDS. The installation featured a standing female figure made of copper, her body pockmarked with holes evoking the Kaposi's Sarcoma lesions that were one of the visible symptoms of HIV infection at the time. Accompanying this were images of rippling water, neon light glowing in a suitcase, a pair of wings made out of discarded sneakers, and a carved boat, which gallery visitors were invited to lie inside. Combined, these elements made the female sculpture a mournful goddess, contemplating what Golden called "the processes which mark the movement from one aspect of living to another." After the exhibition, the constituent parts of the installation were discarded, but Saar reserved the copper figure and placed it in her Laurel Canyon garden.

Now, that same copper figure has been repurposed and reconceived by Saar for a very different time, the AIDS treatment era. Whereas *Slow Boat* addressed fear and mourning, *Cool Mama* now speaks of health and resilience.

Please write a few words - a thought, a feeling, or a memory - on a paper strip, and hang it on the water-wall behind you to become part of the installation.

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Ross Levinson (b. Brooklyn, New York, States 1954; lives and works in Santa Monica),

***Voices of Through Positive Eyes*, 2019**

Eight-channel soundscore, 20'00"

Levinson's score, which can be heard between film showings, incorporates the voices of ten artists: Ilsa/Mexico City, Cleverson/Rio de Janeiro, Gugu/Johannesburg, Jose/Los Angeles, John/Washington, D.C., Raju/Mumbai, Aoy/Bangkok, Wideline/Port-au-Prince, Gordon/London, and Xoli/Durban. Music is from their short films at ThroughPositiveEyes.org, used by permission, with additional music by Ross Levinson.

Gideon Mendel (b. Johannesburg, South Africa 1959; lives and works in London, United Kingdom) and Mo Stoebe (b. Vienna, Austria 1978; lives and works in Los Angeles)

Music by Robert Een, Bham Ntabeni, and Lucia Mthiyane

Through Positive Eyes, 2019

Digital video, 8'50"

Paul Nandee, aka “SWANK” (b. 1976, Los Angeles; lives and works in Los Angeles)

Stigma Graffiti, 2019

Ultraviolet paint

Courtesy ICU Art