

## The Work of Artists Lost to AIDS Lives On

By J. Bryan Lowder



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Fireman. Martin Wong, c. 1990

Courtesy of Visual AIDS and POBA

One of the less appreciated tragedies of the original AIDS crisis—the one that wiped out much of a generation of gay men and others in the 1980s and early '90s—is the blow it struck to the arts. So many great talents from a range of disciplines were lost, the work they had produced often poorly cared for, and the work they might have produced precluded entirely. But on this World AIDS Day, a newly launched project promises to recover a slice of that art and reintroduce it, digitally, to the public.

Called “**Art Lives**,” the initiative is a collaboration between the art preservation nonprofit POBA and a handful of HIV/AIDS advocacy organizations. The digital collections went online Dec. 1, featuring an initial contingent of seven artists: disco icon Sylvester, painter and record executive Mel Cheren, fashion designer Patrick Kelly, painter Martin Wong, critic and painter Nicolas Moufarrege, architect and designer Jim Terrell, and graphic designer Ken

Kendrick. The project plans to continue adding artists over the coming months; members of the public may nominate artists for consideration as well.

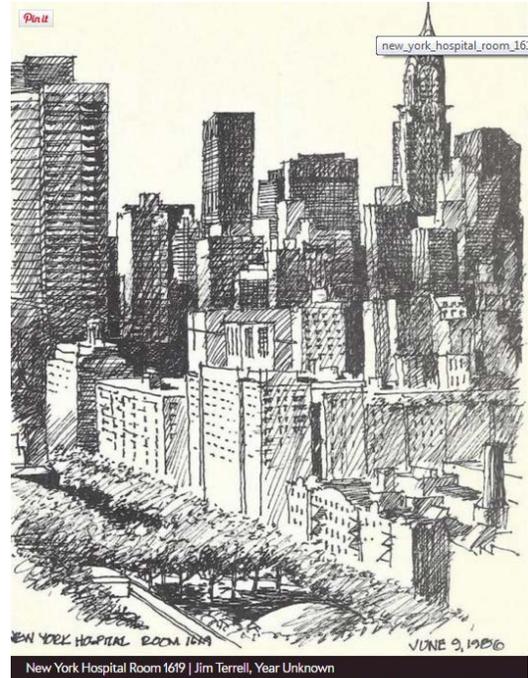
Art Lives explains its mission as one of both preservation and education: “Art Lives has been developed to digitally preserve and showcase the works by artists lost to AIDS, to re-ignite interest in their creative legacies, and to bring outstanding but previously unseen or rarely seen art works by these artists to the public for their pleasure and enjoyment. While we can never know all of the great work they had ahead of them, we can and should celebrate the great work and stories they have left behind.”

I can think of no better tribute to the dead on World AIDS Day than to spend some time admiring the work they created. Check out the sampling below, and find much more at the [Art Lives digital museum](#).



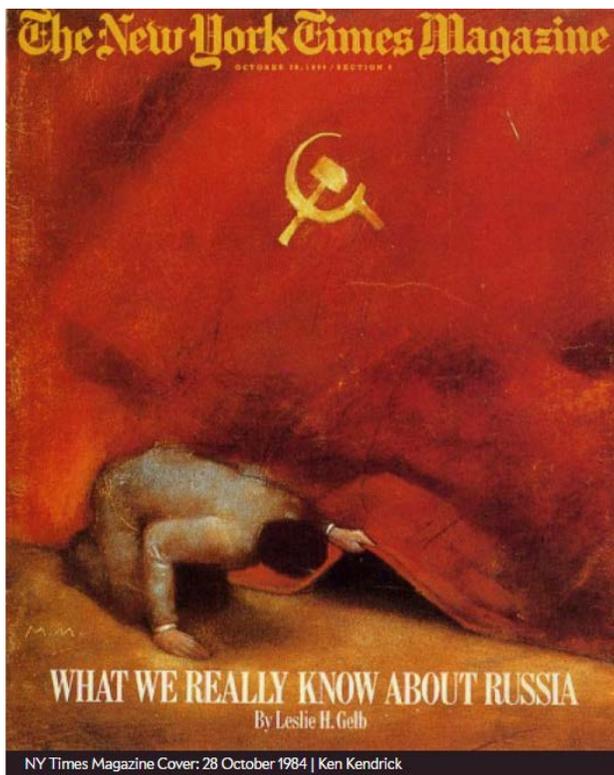
Athena's Lesson | Nicholas Moufarrege

Courtesy of Visual AIDS and POBA.



New York Hospital Room 1619 | Jim Terrell, Year Unknown

Courtesy of Debra Robusto, Stoneworks and POBA.



NY Times Magazine Cover: 28 October 1984 | Ken Kendrick

Courtesy of AIGA and POBA.



Black Dress with Bow Embellishments | Patrick Kelly, 1988

Courtesy of Philadelphia Museum of Art and POBA.