To preserve a generation of artists whose legacies were cut short by AIDS, virtual art center POBA and AIDS relief groups have digitized paintings, fashion design, sketches, and other works for historical and cultural reference. Footage and recordings from disco icon Sylvester, couture by Heart Strings Dress designer Patrick Kelly, paintings by influential NYC artist Martin Wong, designer of the Just Say No to Drugs logo Ken Kendrick are among the trove of creative treasure on POBA's Art Lives online gallery.

"More than 30 years after HIV was first identified, it continues to affect all of us, every day," said POBA developer Jennifer Cohen. "Besides the heartbreaking loss of life, there is the loss of the creative energy, vision, and talent of a whole generation lost to AIDS. While we can never know all of the great work these artists had ahead of them, we can and should celebrate the great work and stories they left behind."
The organizations contributing to the collection include DIFFA (Design Industries Foundation Fighting AIDS), LifeBEAT: Music Fights AIDS, and Visual AIDS, with more set to add their contributions throughout the week.

DIFFA Executive Director Johanna Osburn says, "So many of the design creatives who we lost to AIDS in the 80s and 90s shaped our lives today in ways we might not recognize. Art Lives gives DIFFA a chance to honor the enduring talent of visionaries of fashion, of spaces, and of important cultural images that might otherwise be left to the footnotes of design history."

Through technologocical advancements, these organizations can preserve the creativity of these lost artists for posterity sake. The gallery launches on December 1, World AIDS Day. Find a sample of work from the first seven immortalized in POBA's Art Lives collection.
POBA is funded by the James Kirk Bernard Foundation. See more images and learn more about the artists on POBA's website, and nominate your own greats here.