

The MAKE ART/STOP AIDS Exhibition

Opening at the UCLA Fowler Museum in Early 2008

In February 2008, the Fowler Museum plans to open this multi-media, contemporary art project that demonstrates the power of art to raise awareness, to inspire activism, and ultimately, to help end global AIDS. *Make Art/Stop AIDS* examines how artists around the world are responding to the disease, using it as motivation for new, genre-defying works, and incorporating it as content to function at artistic, activist, and conceptual levels. It is curated jointly by UCLA World Arts and



Adriana Bertinini's Condom dresses

Cultures Associate Professor, David Gere, and former Columbia University research scholar in art and public health, Robert Sember, in collaboration with an international team who bring remarkable depth and professional diversity in the fields of fine art and museum curatorship, public health, performance, education, and activism. *Make Art/Stop AIDS* is one of the first museum exhibitions of its kind to deal with the AIDS epidemic on a global scale drawing primarily on the work of practicing contemporary artists.

Featuring nearly 75 works from the United States, South Africa, Brazil, and India—the four countries that presently exemplify the different types of AIDS epidemics and artistic responses at national and global levels—the 4,000-sq.-ft. *Make Art/Stop AIDS* exhibition will include painting and sculpture, photography, performance video, posters, audio recordings, animation, digital media, and site-specific installations dating from the 1980s to the present. Included are early works by U.S. art collectives such as Gran Fury and General Idea—key players in the North American art world of the 1980s when the virus was first discovered—as well as works by David Wojnarowicz (1957-1992), video performance art by Tracy Rhoades (1961-1993), drawings by Sue Coe (b.1951), and installations by the sound art collective Ultra-Red; from South Africa it includes photography by Pieter Hugo (b.1934), David Goldblatt (b.1930), and Brenton Maart (b.1968), a mixed-media installation by Fiona Kirkwood (b.1949), and beaded ribbons made in the popular Zulu art tradition; from Brazil, poster art by the Brazilian Interdisciplinary Association on AIDS, a commissioned installation from collective Projeto Axe, avant-garde design by multi-media artist Adriana Bertini (b.1971), and a mixed-media work by Leonilson (1953-1994); and from India, painted narrative scrolls from women artists from the Chitrakar family, photography by Sunil Gupta (b.1953), and a newly commissioned light installation by the West Bengal State AIDS Prevention and Control Society.

Make Art/Stop AIDS is organized around a series of seven interconnected and at times overlapping concerns expressed in the form of open-ended questions, some of which include direct art historical references to the epidemic.¹ They are: *What is AIDS?; Who lives, who dies?; Condoms: what's the issue?; Is it safe to touch?; When is the last time you cried?; What good does a red ribbon do?; Are you angry enough to do something about AIDS?; and, finally, Art is not enough. Now it's in your hands.* With artworks thematically arranged according to this structure, our strategy is to foreground the diverse and even contradictory aesthetic practices that contribute to the ongoing social construction of the epidemic; to challenge existing social and cultural systems and beliefs about the epidemic around the world; and even to dismantle the various social and cultural processes that worsen its impact.



Educational programming for the exhibition will be essential to fulfilling its activist goals and the Fowler has already developed a series of outreach programs specifically for LAUSD high schools, in addition to a variety of programs designed for the general public. In 2006-2007, the Fowler launched its *Teen AIDS Awareness and Action* program, a comprehensive AIDS education, anti-



The Keiskamma Altarpiece, UCLA 2007

stigmatization, and “activism through the arts” initiative targeting 10th graders, their teachers, and by extension their families and communities from twenty schools throughout Mid-City and South Central Los Angeles. This program was in conjunction with a *Make Art/Stop AIDS* pilot project that included two exhibitions: *Dress Up Against AIDS: Condom Couture* by *Adriana Bertini* and *The Keiskamma Altarpiece: Transcending AIDS in South Africa*.

Our intention is to build on the success of year one (which reached over 1,000 students) and continue *Teen AIDS Awareness and Action* in 2008, using the *Make Art/Stop AIDS* exhibition as its centerpiece. Additionally, the Fowler will offer a series of free public programs including performances, artist workshops and a film series; documentation of the project via a web interface; and a 10-week artist-residency with Anurupa Roy, an Indian performance artist whose work educates youth about HIV through engaging puppet theatre. Attendance for the exhibition and its related programming at the Fowler is projected at 30,000. Plans are also underway for the exhibition to tour internationally during subsequent years.

The Fowler Museum at UCLA is the only museum in Los Angeles exclusively dedicated to exploring non-Western arts and cultures, past and present. Exhibitions and programs cover a wide range of global artistic expression, from historic traditions to contemporary work by artists from Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Native and Latin America, and their respective diasporas. In recent years they have intensified their programming of solo exhibitions of contemporary international artists whose work emerges from a dialogue engaging the local and the global. Since 2002, the Fowler is one of the few museums in Los Angeles to be free of charge to all visitors.

The *Make Art/Stop AIDS* exhibition is supported by the Ford Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Arts, the UCLA Center for Community Partnerships, the UCLA Art|Global Health Center, and the School of the Arts & Architecture to help underwrite education and outreach expenses.
