

Artists Join Elyahou Lallouz to Capture “*Spirit of the Season*” at Stonewall AIDS Exhibit and Sale Raise Money for AIDS Project Florida

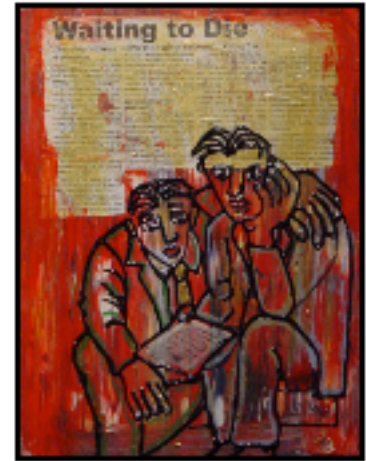
By Phil LaPadula

Coming on the heels of an emotional World AIDS Day Event at Fort Lauderdale public library, ArtsUnited’s “*Spirit of the Season*” fundraiser was a chance for some local residents to put their money where their hearts are. The event at Stonewall Library & Archives raised dollars for AIDS Project Florida through the sale of wreaths and a book titled ‘The Christmas Tree at Rockefeller Center’ by local artist Byron Keith Byrd and Carla Torsilieri D’Agostino. The fully illustrated book tells the story of the giant tree that dominates Rockefeller Center every year, tracing its history from 1931.

Most of the paintings at the Stonewall exhibit were on display at the World AIDS Day event a week earlier. Community members had a chance to see them in a more intimate setting and to meet and talk to the artists.

One of the most striking pieces was a triptych of digital photographs taken by Matthew Cottrell titled “Without, Within, With.” It shows a hand being offered a condom, a hand rejecting a condom, the condoms flipping away into the past, and then a hand holding pills. Cottrell actually photographed the hands of an HIV-positive couple, and the pills in the piece are their actual HIV medications. Cottrell said the piece shows the consequences of a decision to practice unsafe sex.

On a lighter note, Len Paoletti’s painting, “Lord of All He Surveys,” shows his interpretation of a “disco god”—a beautiful naked man standing up on a stage amid an adoring crowd. “I paint reality, but I paint it as we remember it, not as it really is,” Paoletti said.



“*Waiting to Die*” by Elyahou Lallouz

Renowned Artist **Elyahou Lallouz’s** painting “*Waiting to Die*” incorporates an article that appeared in *The Express* about three HIV patients who died while on a government waiting list to receive medications. “It’s an embarrassment that Americans treat sick people this way,” Lallouz said. “It seems as though everyone has lost interest in the AIDS problem. In reality, this is a terrorist that’s growing in leaps and bounds among us.” Will Spencer, director at APFL, gave a short talk at the event. “Five people die of HIV every minute,” Spencer said. “In the U.S., we are the haves in the have-have-not relationship with HIV.”

The exhibit runs through the end of December at Stonewall.