# Promiscuous Rage: HIV/AIDS in art



At PPOW’s storefront gallery located on Broadway in Manhattan, an evocative two-person exhibition titled Promiscuous Rage is currently underway, juxtaposing the works of Berlin-based artist Dean Sameshima and late activist-artist Hunter Reynolds. This exhibition, which runs until January 25, examines the complex legacies of the HIV/AIDS epidemic within the context of queer sexuality. The display features Sameshima’s 2024 creation Anonymous Illness, a painting marked by an ambiguous title that neither specifies nor details the disease it references. This piece is paired with Reynolds's 1992 work Quilt of Names (panel 2), which documents the AIDS Memorial Quilt and explicitly commemorates the individuals lost to AIDS.

Sameshima's artwork employs a stark visual contrast, with the word "illness" depicted in a larger font than "anonymous". This stylistic choice is construed as a satirical commentary on the silences and misinformation propagated by the Reagan administration during the height of the crisis. In contrast to Sameshima's broader, more evasive approach, Reynolds’s work—an integral member of ACT UP—conveys the urgency of naming and memorialising victims of the disease. This detailed representation acts as a powerful political statement, challenging the tendency of official narratives to downplay individual loss in favour of impersonal statistics.

The exhibition encapsulates the duality of the human experience within the LGBTQ+ community, shifting between the specific and the universal. Exhibited alongside these central works are other poignant pieces from both artists that embrace and reflect on themes of mourning and memory. Reynolds’s Ray Navarro’s Bed of Mourning Flowers (1990/2018) pays tribute to the life of a video artist who protested against conservative religious attitudes towards sexuality, presenting a poignant collection of floral photoprints from Navarro’s funeral.

Additionally, Reynolds’s Moon Over Gerhard (FTL Bear Daddy Beach) (2004) takes a more abstract approach, using long-exposure photography to capture the nocturnal allure of cruising culture—a theme resonant with feelings of desire and community within queer spaces. On a similar note, Sameshima’s Anonymous Berlin Stories and Anonymous Blue Movie (2024) explore his own experiences within the gay porn theatres of Berlin, weaving a narrative that is both personal and universally relatable through a blend of hidden and exposed imagery.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.artrabbit.com/events/srijon-chowdhury-tapestry> - Provides information about the P·P·O·W Gallery and its location, which is relevant to the exhibition 'Promiscuous Rage'.
* <https://www.gavlakgallery.com/artists/dean-sameshima> - Details Dean Sameshima's background, education, and previous exhibitions, corroborating his involvement in the art world.
* <https://www.ppowgallery.com/exhibitions> - Lists the upcoming and current exhibitions at P·P·O·W Gallery, including 'Promiscuous Rage' by Dean Sameshima and Hunter Reynolds.
* <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/dean-sameshima-anonymous-illness> - Provides details about Dean Sameshima's 2024 artwork 'Anonymous Illness', which is part of the 'Promiscuous Rage' exhibition.
* <https://www.gavlakgallery.com/artists/dean-sameshima> - Mentions Sameshima's works and exhibitions, including those that explore themes of queerness and identity, relevant to the 'Promiscuous Rage' exhibition.
* <https://www.ppowgallery.com/exhibitions> - Confirms the dates and details of the 'Promiscuous Rage' exhibition, running from December 13, 2024, to January 25, 2025.
* <https://www.artrabbit.com/events/srijon-chowdhury-tapestry> - Although not directly about 'Promiscuous Rage', it provides context about exhibitions at P·P·O·W Gallery, supporting the gallery's role in showcasing significant art pieces.
* <https://www.gavlakgallery.com/artists/dean-sameshima> - Details Sameshima’s works such as 'Anonymous Berlin Stories' and 'Anonymous Blue Movie', which are mentioned in the context of the exhibition.