

Blyn Mus.  
Installation

Untitled, <sup>what work?</sup> an installation by Félix González-Torres as part of the Visual AIDS program and activities nationwide. 1989-20

AIDS is not an isolated phenomenon, or just a disease. It is also a symptom of a society that permitted it to become a crisis, a symptom of a society that has been out of balance for quite a while and whose sanity seems to have deteriorated rapidly during the last eight or nine years.

This crisis underscores a series of existing crises. Because it primarily affects segments of the population already burdened by stigma and discrimination, it is not surprising that the government decided to ignore the epidemic, failing for nearly a decade to develop a comprehensive federal plan to deal with it. Mandatory testing and contact tracing seem to be the favorite government answers to the public's desire for symbolic action.

AIDS happened at a crucial moment in American history. All warnings of the crisis fell into the vacuum of the frenzied early years of the Reagan Empire. This was a time in history in which boys' fantasies, nightmares, and fetishes became realities under rubrics such as SDI (Star Wars), Trident 2, and the Stealth bomber. While the Reagan administration considered it necessary to spend \$80 billion on a bomber designed to elude the radar of a fictitious enemy, basic human needs were shunted off as luxuries or "special interest group" issues. In the meantime, Congress struggled to decide whether or not to appropriate \$30 million to provide the anti-viral drug AZT to AIDS patients who could not afford it. These are just a few examples of our government's unbalanced and misplaced priorities.

AIDS happened at a time when racism, homophobia, ignorance, and bigotry were on the rise.

**Dannemayer Georgia Helms Cuba PTL Dan Quayle  
William Bennett Cardinal O'Connor**

The public discourse, the rulings by legislators and the courts, all affect our lives in many ways. Our most intimate and private memories, desires, and experiences are ruled and mediated by the social and cultural conditions in which we happen to exist.

This installation is about a particular intersection of the private and the public. It is also an attempt at creating some kind of consciousness, maybe even some action. We don't have to go too far to be active or effective. Our homes, our workplaces, our schools, or our minds are perfect places to start. Ignorance is afraid of the facts, afraid of education.

We need compassion, understanding, and an adequate health care system accessible to all. We need to reassess our social and military priorities. We need money, resources, and a real commitment to find a cure. We need to realize that everything is related to everything.

This installation is dedicated to the People with AIDS Coalition and the priests murdered in El Salvador by the death squads supported and trained by the United States military government.

Félix González-Torres, New York, 1989