PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION
YOU ARE NOT ALONE

21 October 2011 – 22 January 2012

DATES
21 October 2011 – 22 January 2012

PLACE
Exhibition rooms on the ground floor

OPENING HOURS
Tuesday to Saturday (holidays included)
From 11am to 9pm
Sundays, from 11am to 3pm

CURATORS
Hilde Teerlinck & Irene Aristizábal

Exhibition coproduced by MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo, ArtAids Foundation and Fundació Joan Miró, with the help and collaboration of Mr. Han Nefkens

Sponsored by
With additional support from

ARTISTS

Otto Berchem (Milford, Connecticut, USA; lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Matthew Darbyshire (Cambridge, United Kingdom, 1977; lives and works in Rochester, United Kingdom)

Latifa Echakhch (El Khnansa, Morocco, 1974; lives and works in Paris and Martigny, Switzerland)

Elmgreen & Dragset (Copenhagen, Denmark, 1961 / Troedheim, Norway, 1969; live and work in Berlin, Germany)

Leandro Erlich (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1973; lives and works in Paris and Buenos Aires)

Pepe Espaliú (Córdoba, Spain, 1955-1993)

David Goldblatt (Randfontein, South Africa, 1930; lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa)

Juul Hondius (Ens, The Netherlands, 1970; lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

Sutee Kunavichayanont (Bangkok, Thailand, 1965; lives and works in Bangkok)

Deimantas Narkevičius (Utena, Lithuania, 1964; lives and works in Vilnius, Lithuania)

Shirin Neshat (Qazvin, Irán, 1957; lives and works in Nueva York, EEUU)

Lucy + Jorge Orta (Studio Orta, founded in Paris in 1992)

Christodoulos Panayiotou (Limassol, Cyprus, 1978; lives and works in Berlin, Germany)

Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook (Trad, Thailand, 1957; lives and works in Chiang Mai, Thailand)

Shirana Shahbazi (Teheran, Iran, 1974; lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland)

Danh Vo (Vietnam, 1975; lives and works in Berlín and Bangkok, Thailand)

Lawrence Weiner (New York, USA, 1942)

Lorena Zilleruelo (Chile, 1974; lives and works in Paris, France)
WORKS
The group exhibition YOU ARE NOT ALONE brings together 35 works by 18 artists from around the world who give their innovative visions on the causes, consequences and current context of HIV/AIDS, as well as ways of fighting it. For this special occasion, the ArtAids Foundation has produced works specifically conceived for the exhibition, by internationally acclaimed artists who don’t usually work on the subject of Aids. The new pieces are presented with a selection of works recently included in the ArtAids collection.

VENUES
Fundació Joan Miró: 1 July – 18 September 2011
MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo: 21 October 2011 – 22 January 2012

ARTAIDS FOUNDATION
ArtAids employs art in the fight against HIV/AIDS by inviting leading artists to produce work in order to raise public consciousness and to encourage involvement. ArtAids was set up by the Dutch patron and writer living in Barcelona Han Nefkens.

Han Nefkens (Rotterdam, 1954) is President of the ArtAids Foundation and owner of the H+F Collection, created in 2000. Apart from being a collector, he is currently developing a remarkable work as patron and promoter of artistic projects with a clearly social purpose, especially those related to the fight against HIV/AIDS. The slogan of the Foundation, ‘We fight AIDS with art. Worldwide’, reflects the personal satisfaction of verifying that art and the fight against AIDS can be complementary, hence giving his activities as a collector a new sense and dimension.
+ INFO en http://www.artaids.com/es

CURATORS
Hilde Teerlinck is a founder member of the ArtAids Foundation. Director of FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, Dunkirk, she previously was Director of the Centre Rhénan d’Art Contemporain (CRAC Alsace), Altkirch and artistic Director and coordinator of the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion in Barcelona. Between 1999 and 2002 she combined her work as a teacher at École Superieur d’Art de Perpignan, working as art critic and collaborating in various publications — Parkett, Kunstforum, Kunst nu, Artefactum, Transversai, Quaderns, and Ars Mediterranea — together with her curatorial work at l’Espace d’Art Contemporain - Halle au Poisson in Perpignan. Together with Han Nefkens, she created the project Access for All [Acceso para todos] in 2004.

Irene Aristizábal es comisaria independiente con nacionalidad colombiana y española que actualmente reside en Londres. Formada en el Royal collage of Art de Londres, Aristizábal ha sido la tercera comisaria en recibir la Beca H+F Curatorial Grant, que conceden el FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, el De Appel Arts Centre (Ámsterdam) y el coleccionista privado Han Nefkens (H+F Collection).
SYNTHESIS OF THE EXHIBITION PROJECT

"When you share, you are not alone".
Han Nefkens, Founder and President of the ArtAids Foundation

Coproduced between the ArtAids Foundation, Fundació Joan Miró and the MARCO, the exhibition YOU ARE NOT ALONE is intended to prompt reflection on the discrimination and stigmatisation to which, even today, AIDS sufferers are subject. Although medical advances have increased the expectancy and quality of life of sufferers, at least in the developed world, this progress has not been reflected in a reduction in the social rejection they experience. Social and collective initiatives can overcome false perceptions and habits arising from ignorance and prejudice, and art can help to change views and attitudes.

In YOU ARE NOT ALONE, 18 artists from around the world help to fight stigmatisation by reappraising the causes, consequences and current context of AIDS as well as the ways of fighting it. The works in the exhibition offer a vision of AIDS from the perspective of different countries on different continents, all of which suffer the illness to a greater or lesser intensity. These visions will help raise awareness among viewers of the need to exchange knowledge and experiences in order to fight the illness and prejudice both openly and fearlessly.

The ArtAids Foundation has produced works specifically designed for the exhibition by nine internationally acclaimed artists whose work does not generally approach the subject of AIDS. The selected artists are Deimantas Narkevičius (Lithuania), Latifa Echakhch (Morocco), Danh Vo (Denmark/Vietnam), Christodoulos Panayiotou (Cyprus), Lorena Zilleruelo (Chile), Lucy and Jorge Orta (United Kingdom and Argentina) and Elmgreen & Dragset (Denmark and Norway).

The new works are presented with a selection of pieces recently incorporated in the ArtAids collection by David Goldblatt (South Africa), Otto Berchem (United States), Sutee Kunavichayanont (Thailand), Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook (Thailand) and Juul Hondius (Holland). Finally, the work of Matthew Darbyshire (United Kingdom), intended to provide a space for reflection about AIDS, is presented at the end of the exhibition. The room recalls the approach to the subject in the nineteen-eighties and -nineties by artists such as Group Material and by AIDS awareness campaigns. A view of the illness by Pepe Espaliú, a Spanish artist who died from AIDS in 1993, appears by way of an introduction.

Through this exhibition, the ArtAids Foundation, Fundació Joan Miró and the MARCO wish to condemn and express in no uncertain terms current prejudices towards AIDS, which contribute to the isolation of sufferers. If, as Han Nefkens states, sharing means not feeling alone, then it is our wish to share this sentiment with the public to provide a reminder that ‘you are not alone.’ In the case of the MARCO, this exhibition is the second collaborative project with Han Nefkens — founder of the ArtAids Foundation —, who previously took part in the exhibition The Suspended Moment (2006) which displayed a selection of his personal collection.
CURATORIAL TEXT (1)

I started working as a freelance curator on a voluntary basis for the ArtAids Foundation within the context of the International Aids Congress held in Bangkok, Thailand. Several international artists — including some widely known names such as Rirkrit Tiravanija, Lawrence Weiner, Jef Geys, David Goldblatt and Shirana Shahbazi — were invited to produce an original print or poster to raise funds for the HIVNAT Foundation (a nonprofit research institute in Thailand supported by Australia, the Netherlands and Thailand). Everyone reacted very positively to this initiative. After being presented at the Queen’s Gallery (a mayor exhibition centre in Bangkok), the project travelled to several museums and cultural institutions in Europe. The success of the exhibition and the enthusiasm of the artists and medical teams involved convinced Han Nefkens and me to pursue this adventure further.

Belgian artist Leo Copers was invited to create a piece especially for the UNAIDS headquarters in Geneva. He presented a poetic installation with roses painted in contaminated blood but covered by precious golden boxes. Kofi Annan honoured us by being present at the opening of the exhibition. Later, Leo Copers became one of four foreign artists (along with Gerald Van Der Kaap, Otto Berchem and Erich Weiss) to take part in AIDS-related workshops in Bangkok and Chiang Mai. Curated by Kate Chattiya and entitled More to Love, this exhibition project received a lot of attention in the press and local media and revealed the stigma that HIV/AIDS still carries in Thailand. The next project was organised in Barcelona, Spain, and brought together several younger artists who had a special relationship with the city. This exhibition, entitled On the Outside Looking In, was curated by Catalan art critic Miquel Bardagil. All the artists produced new and sometimes site-specific works. The ArtAids Foundation was also present at two editions of Benicàssim Festival [...] and organised a video competition and announced the winner at the international Loop Festival in Barcelona. A new edition, with an international jury including Steve McQueen, is scheduled for 2011. [...] To broaden our horizons, an exhibition was held during the Dakar Biennale in Senegal. Belgian curator Stef Van Bellingen selected both European and African artists to engage in a dialogue on the problem of HIV. Finally, American curator Lumi Tan, who received the H+F Grant, organised a wide range of activities in the city of Lille in France: exhibitions, performances, film screenings and conferences.

Our latest project, You Are Not Alone, which is hosted by the Fundació Joan Miró and will then travel on to MARCO in Vigo, is the logical continuation of these activities. Once again, contemporary artists are invited to create new works reflecting on the subject of AIDS. This is a multilayered exhibition bringing together different nationalities and several generations. As a curator, it is an honour to be able to continue my collaboration with the ArtAids Foundation because I have always believed that individual actions can bring about major change.

Hilde Teerlinck

[Excerpt from the text for the catalogue of the exhibition]
Given the medical advances of recent years, people in developed countries no longer experience a diagnosis of HIV or AIDS as a “death sentence” as they did in the eighties and nineties. Now, with the appropriate medication, HIV-positive persons can carry on with their lives, barely affected by the virus. This is the situation from the medical point of view, but is it also the social reality? Unfortunately, in the rest of the world people with limited financial means continue to live under that old “sentence”.

Although beliefs and habits have evolved significantly over the past twenty years, we cannot claim that the substantial medical advances are currently reflected in the social situation of HIV-positive persons. The discrimination and stigmatisation that these people are subject to has by no means disappeared in contemporary societies. This is why it is important to highlight the problem of stigma, and to provide a space for reflection that offers alternative, positive visions of an illness that can affect anybody, directly or indirectly through relatives, friends and acquaintances.

In the first decade after the virus was discovered, many artists took action to denounce the social problems generated by misinformation, and to draw attention to the human reality of the illness. The first cases of AIDS were discovered on the West Coast of the United States in 1981, and North American artists proved to be the most prolific in terms of dealing with the issue of AIDS in the eighties and nineties. [...] AIDS and Democracy: A Case Study (1988-1989), organised by Group Material at the Dia Art Foundation in New York, was paradigmatic of the type of collaborative and discursive aesthetic developed over the years by this artists’ collective which had been founded in 1980. [...] 

When conceiving his installation Resource Room for this exhibition, Matthew Darbyshire decided to rethink the educational models that we are faced with at different points in our lives. This led him to draw inspiration from the exhibition Education and Democracy, the first part of the series AIDS and Democracy: A Case Study, in which a classroom offered an open platform for discussion. In a space inspired by a schoolroom, Darbyshire offers visitors the chance to discover a new way of reading a selection of posters produced by the Department of Public Health in England during the eighties, with the aim of preventing the spread of AIDS. What we are faced with is a series of aggressive slogans that are discriminatory in regards to social difference. Darbyshire draws attention to the way in which this type of advertising language, which has been used since the eighties, uses fear as a weapon in the fight to prevent AIDS. This fear has taken root in society, to such an extent that it has become one of the apparently natural, inherent elements of the idea that forms in people’s minds in regards to this virus and the illness.
Latifa Echakhch’s installation, *Tkaf*, also raises questions around the way in which the media and governmental institutions have handled HIV since it emerged in 1981, and how this may have affected the relationship between people who are HIV positive and those who aren’t. *Tkaf* is based on a nationwide scandal that hit the French press in the eighties, with the revelation that, in the Spring of 1985, blood contaminated with the HIV virus had been knowingly given to haemophiliac patients, even though the test to detect the virus had been available for several months. The French population thus learnt about the virus in a context of panic and indignation.

From the outset, homosexuals have been considered to be the group at greatest risk of contamination, and homosexual men have been associated with infected blood. [...] This association between homosexuality or bisexuality and AIDS is still deeply rooted in the mentalities of developed countries. It is also easily linked to homophobic attitudes, which are a major element of the stigmatisation of HIV-positive persons. In the countries of the former Soviet block, discrimination against the homosexual population was entrenched to the point that anti-homosexual legislation was passed in the Soviet Union, and it continues to re-emerge in certain ways, as is the case of Lithuania. [...] In his video *Restricted Sensation*, against this background of stigmatisation and discrimination of the Lithuanian homosexual community, the Lithuanian artist Deimantas Narkevičius seeks to explore the mechanisms of the intolerance that has increased in recent years and pervades Lithuanian society today. [...] In his installation *Thai Village*, Thai artist Sutee Kunavichayanont presents a scale model of a traditional village from his homeland. Although Thailand has been one of the pioneering countries in the fight against AIDS in South East Asia since 1991, strong social taboos in relation to the illness continue to persist in traditional Thai society. [...] A situation that frequently recurs in developing countries is the “silent” infection of one of the partners in a relationship when the other partner has engaged in extramarital sex. [...] In her video *Pasos* (*Steps*), Lorena Zilleruelo takes up one of these stories through a narrative that is set to tango music. The intensity of the dance reveals the immensity of the feelings that must be faced by a woman who has been infected by her partner: not only the fear that the diagnosis entails, but also the death of the man she loves. [...] The installation *Deadheading*, by Otto Berchem, also offers a perspective of transformed time. In this case, flowers are cut from their stems and left to wither on the ground. The regular evolution of time stops, the nature of the flower changes, and it perishes. As the withered flowers pile up on the ground day after day in the course of the exhibition, *Deadheading* brings us face to face with the essence of the *memento mori*. 
Another work that explores the constant tension between life and death is *Nowhere*, in which Christodoulos Panayiotou's presents a study of the sky and its representation, through the *mise en scène* of an endless moment and its disappearance. For *Nowhere*, Panayiotou presents a performance in which two set painters employ themselves with almost dream-like slowness in painting a backdrop of a sky that seems to go on for ever. Once the performance is over, the sky is folded up, and only the memory of it remains. In this work, the artist’s vision of the illness is latent in the existential desire for eternity, which makes itself felt through the representation of the immensity of the sky.

In a play on the immensity of a monument that is familiar to everybody, Danh Vo has set himself the challenge of reproducing a life-size model of the Statue of Liberty. Aside from symbolising liberty, the Statue of Liberty has now become an allegory of the information saturation in which we are immersed. To come face to face with a life-size reproduction of this symbol in an exhibition space also reminds us of the statue’s original value, which has been vanishing into the global cacophony of its mass reproduction. Similarly, stigma and the negative values linked to AIDS have suffered from overexposure, which has overshadowed the positive medical advances that have increased the life expectancy and quality of life of people with HIV.

Irene Aristizábal

[Excerpt of the text for the exhibition catalogue]
GENERAL INFORMATION

INFORMATION AND VISITS

Members of the museum staff are available in the halls to provide visitors with information, in addition to the regular guided tours:

- Every day at 6 pm
- ‘A la carte’ tours for groups, by appointment at the tel. 986 113 900/11

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

‘ART & LIFE’

From November 4 to December 23 2011
Tours and workshops for schoolchildren and families on YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Addressed to schoolchildren and families, the learning activities of the MARCO will be based on the exhibition YOU ARE NOT ALONE within the following months. Visits and workshops for groups of Pre-School, Primary, Secondary and High School — specially designed and adapted to every age —, will get us closer to the works of the artists included in this group show and let us analyse the different ways of grasping and perceiving reality.

Should you wish additional information, please contact:
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