

THIS IS NOT ART THERAPY ARTIST RESIDENCY PROGRAM AT PWA

Tobaron Waxman: *Letter From the 4th Son*



images: Tobaron Waxman

Tobaron Waxman writes:

Letter from the 4th Son is a series of collaborative photographs, collaboratively created with TINAT project participants. The images are generated out of an intergenerational dialogue, asking questions of an earlier generation, to know them and to understand our contemporary circumstances in response to their absence while also co-creating our contemporary reality as their inheritors. A small publication will share some of the findings of our collaborative process.

The project is an open gesture seeking mentorship from PWA constituencies of earlier generations. This project is not only directly aligned aesthetically, philosophically and practically with *This Is Not Art Therapy*, it is the culminating expression of my artistic investigations thus far. It is a 4D portrait of the experience of learning and unlearning again culturally specific internalized relations of dominance/subordination / superiority/inferiority as a matter of survival and choice. Resistance to stigma driven assumptions about Queer bodies has inspired much of my recent work. I endeavor to make constructive, impactful gestures of justice thru a live art practice, simultaneously maintaining the Queer and counter-colonial truths I have learned in the secular world.

Dr. Ben Waxman, my late uncle, was a highly esteemed obstetrician and gynecologist in Washington D.C. He came out as gay in the mid 1970s and passed away from AIDS related illness in 1989. We were estranged during the 1980s because of familial homophobia. At our final visit, I longed to come out to him, but didn't have the words. I have since then tried to find, posthumously, some mentorship from him through his deeds or people who knew him. This collaboration is my search for mentorship, and lineage. If my uncle were alive today, how would he feel about the current AIDS landscape, HIV criminalization, gentrification of gay culture, and access to health care? Would he respect my choices? Would he agree with my politics?

Tobaron Waxman brings their project, *Letter From the 4th Son*, to the PWA studio from February 20 to March 24 2017. Like the other artists in this program, Waxman will collaborate with 3 PWA clients.

This Is Not Art Therapy culminates with a group exhibition at Beaver Hall Gallery, 129 McCaul Street, in June 2017. Watch for details of special events: opening reception, artist talks, performances, and more!

CONTACT

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This Is Not Art Therapy is developed by artist Andrew Zealley (*Disco Hospital*) in collaboration with PWA. Zealley was PWA's artist-in-residence from July 2015 through March 2016. *This Is Not Art Therapy* is both community-based participatory research and the site of Zealley's doctoral research into artistic responses to the biopolitics of HIV/AIDS. He imagines *This Is Not Art Therapy* as a performative defining (and populating) of a research territory—the AIDS service organization as an active site of arts practice—and a form of activism, in and of itself. Zealley's Ph.D. research project is supervised by Professor Cate Sandilands, Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. Conceptualized as a template for AIDS service organizations (ASO) in general, *This Is Not Art Therapy*, developed specifically at PWA, seeks ways to understand the healing possibilities of art that is unbounded by "art therapy."

Toronto People With AIDS Foundation (PWA)

Founded in 1987, PWA's mission is to engage people living with HIV/AIDS in enhancing their health and well-being through practical and therapeutic support services and broader social change, and we inspire them to live into their dreams and discoveries. PWA provides four pillars of programs and services: Practical Supports, Community Access, Health & Therapeutic Care, and Dreaming & Engagement. The inspiration behind THIS IS NOT ART THERAPY comes directly from our strategic plan and from the powerful and meaningful history and connection between art and HIV/AIDS.

THIS IS NOT ART THERAPY is funded by The Ontario HIV Treatment Network (OHTN)



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