



15 mothers. 15 cameras. 15 stories of courage.

"The House is Small but the Welcome is Big"

Photos by HIV Positive South African Women to be Exhibited at the International AIDS Conference in Toronto this Month

"I want to be alive when the cure comes. Whatever there is that tries to stop me I will jump over it. Nothing can stop me."

--Nozandulela Samela, an HIV positive South African woman, who used a camera to tell the story of her life—a story more personal, nuanced, and complex than the images typically seen in the media about AIDS in Africa.

August 7, 2006 — A team of photographers from Los Angeles-based Venice Arts traveled to South Africa earlier this year to teach 15 HIV positive women (all mothers or mothers-to-be in the townships of Cape Town) how to document their lives photographically. Their images, compiled in the exhibit "The House is Small but the Welcome is Big," previewed at the **Venice Art Walk** in May 2006 and will be at **Toronto's Gallery 44** for an exhibit at the **International AIDS Conference** from August 14–18, 2006.

The women's photos are beautifully rendered and compelling: The birth of a baby to an HIV-positive mother. A newborn receiving its first dose of AZT. Colorful, cozy shacks, without electricity or running water. Men socializing at a local Shabeen (bar). An AIDS Treatment Advocacy march in Khayelitsha township against "AIDS denialism." A gravedigger opening an old grave to accommodate a third body. Children playing on dusty streets. For sample images go to: <http://www.venice-arts.org/studentWork/socialart/ilivehere/iliverhere.html>

Commenting on the photos, creative director Jim Hubbard says, "There are images of loss, certainly, but also of love and support; of AIDS discrimination, but also of activism and pride; of dead children, parents, and partners, but also of hope for the future."

The project was supported by the Kaiser Family Foundation, television producer Dick Wolf/Wolf Films, Inc., Paradigm, and Canon, USA and is the first in a series of international projects by Venice Arts designed to raise awareness about global health issues. It will be exhibited in Los Angeles in November at the Venice Arts Gallery before traveling again, nationally and internationally.

"The House is Small" was created by **Neal Baer**, a **physician and producer/show runner for Law and Order: SVU**; Venice Arts' co-founder **Lynn Warshafsky**, who also worked in HIV/AIDS for nearly 20 years; and Venice Arts' creative director, **Jim Hubbard**, considered a pioneer in teaching photography to often-marginalized people so that they might raise awareness about social issues through the illustration of their lives.



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Venice Arts has been running innovative programs in photography, filmmaking, and digital arts, primarily for low-income children and teens, for 13 years. It has implemented national and international photo documentary projects since 1998.

For more about Venice Arts, go to: <http://www.venice-arts.org>

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For Hubbard's bio: http://www.venice-arts.org/about/awards_jim.html.

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