

*There is nothing lonelier than being one of the living dead.*

# When the Music Stops

**Darren Andrychuk**

Multimedia Installation

FAB Gallery

Dec 10, 2019 – Jan 11, 2019

*When the Music Stops*

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts  
in **Intermedia**

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My work is informed by decades of gay activist art, which helped to start the gay movement and later embraced the AIDS crisis and brought it to the attention of the world. I have always been involved with the activist movement by being part of ACTUP in the 1990s and participating in “Die-Ins”. I remember my first time at a Die-In (1990), which occurred on the steps of the BC courthouse in Vancouver. We used shock value and mobilized our people to bring awareness to the HIV crisis.



*Andrychuk\_001 When The Music Stops: Station Eight-Victims of the Taxidermy of Gender Studies, installation, (This bed approx. 30 inches by 72 inches and 34 inches high)*

Directly influencing me, and historically informing me, were Tom of Finland<sup>1</sup>, Félix González-Torres<sup>2</sup>, General Idea<sup>3</sup>, Robert Mapplethorpe<sup>4</sup>, and Joe Average<sup>5</sup>. I am one of the few survivors

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<sup>1</sup> Hooven, F. Valentine (1993). *Tom of Finland: His Life and Times*. New York: St. Martin's Press

<sup>2</sup> Lamontagne, Valerie (2012). "[How 179 pounds of candy can change the world](#)". *Etc Montreal*. 95: 62–65.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, Sarah E.K. *General Idea: Life & Work*. Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2016

<sup>4</sup> Fritscher, Jack. *Mapplethorpe : Assault with a Deadly Camera : a Pop Culture Memoir, an Outlaw Reminiscence*. Mamaroneck, NY: Hastings House, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> Local Vancouver artist.

from that time and my work draws from my experiences of that time while being informed by that history. HIV is still a crisis and I personally know people in the USA who are unable to access treatment for their HIV and are dying because of it. Rampant homophobia is still evident around the world. Pastors still call for our collective death. Gay men still get “fag bashed” at alarmingly high rates. The HIV crisis is not over. It lives on in our culture, in our souls, in the memories of the lost and forgotten. It is a war that has never ended.



*Andrychuk\_002 When The Music Stops: The Hung Man, Installation (Each photo approx. 36 inches by 74 inches)*

In the beginning, my work had the lofty goal of educating the public about the HIV crisis from 1981 to 1995.<sup>6</sup> While my work does ground itself in the history of the epidemic, and hopefully invites the public to educate themselves on a very difficult time in gay male history, it also touches on various themes like homophobia, internalized homophobia, and “gayface” (similar to

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<sup>6</sup> amfAR, Thirty Years of HIV/AIDS: Snapshots of an Epidemic, <https://www.amfar.org/thirty-years-of-hiv/aids-snapshots-of-an-epidemic/>, accessed Jan 2020.

the term blackface but for gay people<sup>7</sup>). Through a series of participatory and contemplative “stations” I invite the audience to consider these themes, before bringing them to a final station in which I reveal my internal narrative and perspective.



*Andrychuk-003 When The Music Stops: The Fucked Bench of Loss, Installation, (coffin with stand 76 inches by 34 inches by 84 inches)*

Using a gay male bathhouse as the foil for a series of interrelating ideas, this exhibition tries to communicate a series of concepts that evolve over time. One can read the project in a very cerebral way; however, the overwhelming feeling that the installation generates is grief. This project became a tribute to the dying, the dead, and the forgotten. It is not like the AIDS quilt, which is a memorial to individuals<sup>8</sup>, but more a woven narrative about the loss of innocence for an entire community. It is a dark work, one that is much more macabre than I had anticipated.

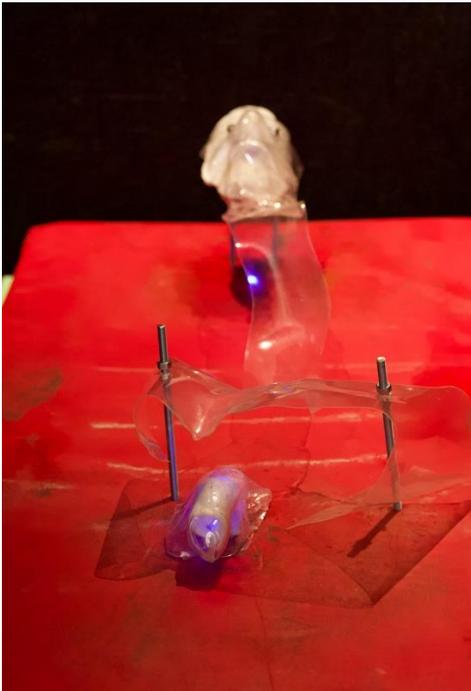
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<sup>7</sup> Lowder, J. Bryan, The Curious Case of Gay Face, Should Straight Actors Play Gay roles? <https://slate.com/culture/2013/06/straight-actors-in-gay-roles-is-gayface-ok.html>, accessed Jan 2020

<sup>8</sup> Morris, Charles E. *Remembering the Aids Quilt*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2011.



*Andrychuk\_004 When The Music Stops: The Breathing Bed, Installation (30 inches by 72 inches by 36 inches)*

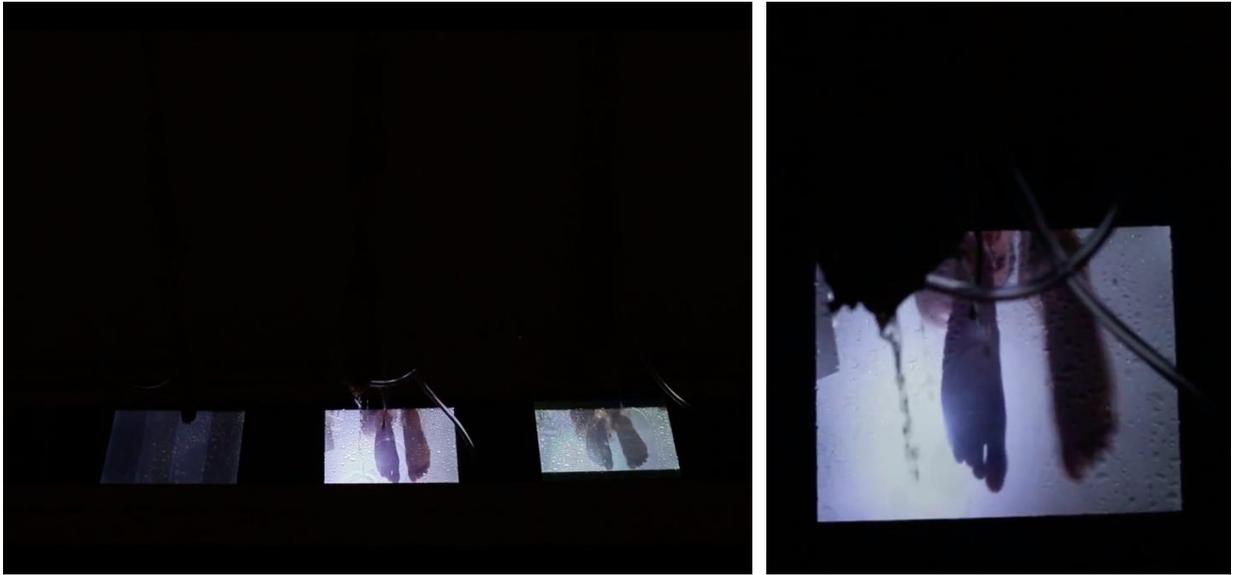


*Andrychuk\_005 When The Music Stops: The Electric Bed of Ideology, Installation, (approx. 32 inches by 30 inches by 72 inches)*

Through the development of this large-scale project, I realized that the only voice I could use was my own. I found that this history that I had lived through could not be communicated without



This installation exposes me in a way no other work I've done has. It represents me in the raw. This work is an autobiography, which I hope will humanize me. I hope that it provides the viewer a glimpse into my world. I feel broken beyond repair. I feel distant to the rest of humanity. I live in a place that not many people can even dream about. This project outlines some of the reasons why I ended up here. I would normally say "come and enjoy it," but that's not the point. Instead, I hope that that an audience views my work and that it engages them deeply.



*Andrychuk\_009 When The Music Stops: The Life of Blood of Tears Shower Room, Installation, (approx. 70 inches by 40 inches by 96 inches)*



Andrychuk\_010, *When The Music Stops: Porn: Masturbatory Screens Of Value*, Installation, (approx. 16 inches by 80 inches by 48 inches)



*Andrychuk\_011 When The Music Stops: Porn: Masturbatory Screens Of Value, Installation, (approx. 16 inches by 80 inches by 48 inches)*

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