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Letters
Art Against AIDS

To the Editor:

Our faculty, students, and administrators die of AIDS. The University stands silent; its students will not. Tuesday marks the beginning of Art Against AIDS, a week of benefit performances, lectures, and exhibitions sponsored by the Arts Council and the Columbia Gay and Lesbian Alliance. It is a cry by the members of more than twenty undergraduate art groups at the University uniting because AIDS has changed our lives. Fear of AIDS has caused every one of us to reevaluate our relationships—past, present, and future.

Columbia's alumni, young and old, die of this terrible disease in greater numbers each year. The artistic gifts and contributions of celebrities and strangers stand as the only signs of our loss, but the number of deaths will rise each year. With each new death, the flag is lowered half mast. It waves soundlessly in the breeze, as silent as the University. But we will be silent no longer and neither will those who died.

From March 22 through April 12, the poetry of Bruce Cooper entitled "Reflections Past Midnight Toward Morning: Night Thoughts of an AIDS Patient" and paintings by Leslie Rosen will be exhibited at the Postcrypt Art Gallery in St. Paul's Chapel. The exhibition, "Images of Life Ending" gives voice to the special talents of these two Columbia affiliates, both of whom died of AIDS this year. Their work stands as testimony to their genius, to our loss, and to the tragedy that surrounds this life-taking disease.

AIDS is now an epidemic. Prejudice and ignorance are at fault, and education is the only solution. Art Against AIDS provides us with the first opportunity for self-education; it is our responsibility to participate.

To die of AIDS is a tragedy, not a disgrace. The disgrace lies in this country's failure to respond quickly and sensitively to a national epidemic. Let us not remain silent, but speak out together.

Debra Laefer, CC '89