

HIV MADE ME FABULOUS

Press Kit

www.lifeandlovewithhiv.ca/film

HIV Made Me Fabulous

A short film about living and loving as a woman with HIV

"I've now seen it four times and each time it evokes a strong emotional experience for me in a way that reading about HIV simply cannot achieve."

-RESEARCHER

"Inspiring"

-PERSON LIVING WITH HIV

92%

of audiences said the film helped them better understand the lived experiences of women living with HIV



Produced & Directed by **Edmond Kilpatrick** Written & Narrated by **Juno Roche**

Executive Producers: Life and Love with HIV, Faculty of Health Sciences, Simon Fraser University

Co-Producers: Dr. Allison Carter and Dr. Angela Kaida | **Performers:** Jacky Essombe, Quanah Style, Joleen Mitton

Director of Photography: Hannah Dubois | **Music:** Martin Gotfrit

Project Advisors: Florence Anam, Azra Bhanji, Dr. Lori Brotto, Dr. Mary Kestler, Marvelous Muchenje, Melissa Nelson, Elder Valerie Nicholson, Zoe Osborne, Dr. Sophie Patterson, Nicole Prestley, Dr. Kate Salters, Margarite Sanchez, Kath Webster

Funders: Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, BC Centre of Excellence in HIV/AIDS, Simon Fraser University's Community Engagement Initiative (CEI)



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About the Film

Synopsis

HIV Made Me Fabulous is a 10-minute film that tells the personal story of Juno Roche, a writer, activist, and trans woman, who has been living with HIV for over 25 years. Grounded in HIV science, the film examines issues related to HIV, intersectionality, and sexual health equity. The film features voice-over narration by Juno Roche and three performers who represent Juno's story visually. During the film, the performers prepare to meet a potential lover, find the courage to knock on their door, and ride the emotional journey that ensues. Despite the women's different circumstances and backgrounds, they are connected by their living experiences of HIV.

Why we created the film

The HIV Made Me Fabulous film was creatively designed to share findings from the Canadian HIV Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Cohort Study (CHIWOS, www.chiwos.ca), one of the largest studies of women living with HIV in the world. In our research, 1 in 2 women living with HIV say sex is important part of their life. Yet 80% of women are not completely satisfied with their sexual lives and this is strongly associated with gender inequality, violence, and stigma and discrimination within society.

Medical advances are said to have ushered in a 'new era of HIV.' Medication reduces a person's viral load to undetectable levels, meaning someone can't pass on HIV and their health is protected. This is captured by the phrase '*Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)*'. For many people living with HIV, the U=U message is liberating, offering more agency over their sexual choices and working to reduce HIV stigma. However, U=U is still not mainstream knowledge and promoting sexual health requires much more than state of the art medicine—it requires acting on the social determinants of sexual health.

The film uses embodied storytelling to present these complex issues, incorporating movement and dance to connect the viewer physically and emotionally to the story. By using this arts-based methodology, we hope that the film can disrupt people's learned prejudices around HIV and helps people better understand the experiences of women who live with the virus.

Goal of the film

The goal of the film is to share evidence-based information about HIV and sexual health and contribute towards the elimination of stigma against women living with HIV. The primary target audience is people outside of academia – service providers, policymakers, educators, students, women living with HIV and their families, and the public.

How the film was funded

The film was funded through support from the Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research (REACH Award), the British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/ AIDS, and Simon Fraser University's Community Engagement Research Initiative (SFU CEI).

Who the creative drivers are

A multidisciplinary team of women living with HIV, researchers, and artists were involved in the creation of the film. The research was led by Drs Allison Carter and Angela Kaida, the film was produced and directed by Edmond Kilpatrick, and the story was narrated by Juno Roche. Several partners and collaborating organizations acted as important project advisors, helping us to both disseminate evidence-based information and create space for women living with HIV to share their stories in a meaningful way.

Below are the profiles of the core team members:



Dr. Allison Carter, Senior Lecturer

Allie Carter is a Senior Lecturer at the Kirby Institute at the University of New South Wales, an Associate of the Australian Human Rights Institute, and an Adjunct Professor at Simon Fraser University. Her research program aims to strengthen responses to gender, social justice, and sexual and reproductive health in Australia, Canada, and globally.

“Social and structural factors have a significant impact on sexual health and are often interlinked. Our research with women living with HIV across Canada has shown that creating enabling environments – free of stigma, violence, and inequality – can lessen sexual health inequalities and improve wellbeing. We hope this film will foster a more in-depth understanding of these issues and affirm the rights of women living with HIV to enjoy all aspects of life, including sexuality, on an equal basis to people without HIV.”- Dr. Allison Carter, Co-Producer



Dr. Angela Kaida, Associate Professor

Angela Kaida is a global health epidemiologist, Canada Research Chair, and Associate Professor at Simon Fraser University. Her interdisciplinary research program centers on a rights-based and community-driven approach to sexual and reproductive health among women, men, and youth living with and affected by HIV in Canada and globally.

“We created this film to share a different type of story about the living experiences of women living with HIV, both the struggles and the triumphs. We also wanted to educate viewers about important well-established HIV prevention science showing that people living with HIV who are regularly taking ARVs and who have an undetectable HIV viral load cannot transmit HIV through sex, even when having condomless sex (known as ‘Undetectable equals Untransmittable’). But we wanted to share that science in a way that centers the experiences, priorities, and realities of women.” - Dr. Angela Kaida, Co-Producer



Edmond Kilpatrick, Storyteller and Artist

Edmond Kilpatrick held a professional dance career for over twenty years. His performing career is highlighted by nine years as a featured principle dancer at Ballet BC. Edmond’s career has transitioned from dance performance to film and arts for social change facilitation. He is a graduate of Simon Fraser University.

“I began embodied storytelling as a way to invite a physical/emotional reaction while hearing words that may be associated with unconscious bias. If Juno’s words are delivered with images that provide a visceral empathetic reaction, could old embodied biases that lead to stigmatized reactions to people living with HIV be replaced by new kinder ones?” - Edmond Kilpatrick, Film Director and Producer



Juno Roche, Author

Juno Roche is a writer and campaigner whose work around gender, sexuality, and trans lives has been funded by the likes of The Paul Hamlyn Foundation and described as 'provocative, cutting edge and innovative'. She studied Fine Art and Philosophy at Brighton and English Literature at Sussex and writes for a wide range of publications.

“This film, this project, felt so utterly important as it set out to encapsulate a depth of feelings rather than ‘another reductive surface level work about the difficult lives of women living with HIV’, it allowed words, hopes, fears and thoughts to flourish into life and breath.” - Juno Roche, Writer and Narrator

“Seeing my words come to life through the subtlety and beauty of movement allowed me to be both seen and witnessed. It remains a defining moment in my creativity and writing.” - Juno Roche, Writer and Narrator



Florence Anam, International Advocate

Florence Anam is a program manager with the Global Network of People Living with HIV. She has also worked as an advocacy and communications expert with Doctors Without Borders in Southern Africa. She has years of community engagement and international advocacy experience on issues related to sexual health, reproductive rights, equality and social justice, and expanded economic and education access for women and girls living with HIV.



Marvelous Muchenje, Peer Researcher

Marvelous Muchenje is a PhD candidate at the University of Toronto and has years of experience as a social work and global health practitioner. Diagnosed with HIV in 1995, she continues to participate passionately in the HIV movement, being a voice of the voiceless. Her greatest joys in life are advocating for women's sexual and reproductive health rights, talking about sex, and helping women empower themselves.



Valerie Nicholson, Elder and Peer Researcher

Valerie Nicholson is a Spirited Indigenous Warrior Woman. Valerie became active in HIV/AIDS in 2008, two years after her HIV diagnosis, and was the first Indigenous woman to Chair the Board of Positive Living Society of British Columbia. She received the 2018 Red Ribbon Award from the Canadian Association for HIV Research (CAHR).

Film credits

Producer and Director | Edmond Kilpatrick

Film Narrator and Writer | Juno Roche

Executive Producers | Life and Love with HIV, Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University

Co-Producers | Dr. Allison Carter, Dr. Angela Kaida

Performers | Jacky Essombe, Quanah Style, Joleen Mitton

Director of Photography | Hannah Dubois

Music | Martin Gotfrit

Sound | Matt Drake

Colourist | David Tomiak

Online Editor | Ryan Mance

Finishing | RAW Camera

Project Advisors | Florence Anam, Azra Bhanji, Dr. Lori Brotto, Dr. Mary Kestler, Marvelous Muchenje, Melissa Nelson, Elder Valerie Nicholson, Zoe Osborne, Dr. Sophie Patterson, Nicole Prestley, Dr. Kate Salters, Margarite Sanchez, Kath Webster

Collaborating organizations | Life and Love with HIV, Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, The Kirby Institute at the University of New South Wales, CATIE, The Global Network of People Living with HIV, Oak Tree Clinic, Positive Living Society of British Columbia, Sophia Forum, Women's Health Research Institute at BC Women's, ViVA Women

Who will benefit from watching the film

We hope that everyone can benefit from watching the film including people living with HIV, their partners, health care workers, community advocates, policymakers, social service providers, educators, researchers and members of the general public.

We invite you to visit our website www.lifeandlovewithhiv.ca/film and:

- 1) Watch and share the film
- 2) Complete a short survey to let us know your thoughts of the film
- 3) Download our discussion guide and create awareness by hosting a screening with students, friends, colleagues, or family members
- 4) Contact the co-Principal Investigators of the project to share any experiences of screening: Dr. Allison Carter (acarter@kirby.unsw.edu.au, based in Sydney, Australia) and Dr. Angela Kaida (angela_kaida@sfu.ca, based in Vancouver, Canada)

Public launch

The film was screened publicly for World AIDS Day on November 26, 2021, at an online event hosted by CATIE and the Global Network of People Living with HIV.



Contact information

Media and project inquiries:

Please contact the co-Principal Investigators, please email Dr. Allison Carter (acarter@kirby.unsw.edu.au, based in Sydney, Australia) and Dr. Angela Kaida (angela_kaida@sfu.ca, based in Vancouver, Canada)

Administrative inquiries:

Please email the film coordinator Azra Bhanji (azra_bhanji@sfu.ca)

Website

www.lifeandlovewithhiv.ca/film

Social media

Twitter @LifeLoveHIV

Facebook/Instagram @LifeandLovewithHIV

Suggested hashtag: #HIVMadeMeFabulous

Other suggested hashtags:

#advocacy	#hivaid	#lovepositive	#sexpositive
#aidsday	#hivawareness	#movie	#sexualhealth
#art	#hivcare	#pleasure	#sexualrevolution
#confidence	#hiveducation	#pleaurerevolution	#sexualrights
#courage	#hivisnotacrime	#PLHIV	#Shero
#dating	#hivpositive	#positivity	#socialjustice
#disclosure	#hivstigma	#reducingstigma	#stigma
#discrimination	#HIVstigmafighter	#relationships	#trans
#education	#humanrights	#research	#transwomen
#equity	#iamgreaterthanhiv	#resilience	#uequalsu
#feminism	#letstalkaboutsex	#RockTheRibbon	#wellness
#film	#lgbt	#romance	#whatwomenwant
#healthequity	#lgbtq	#ScienceNotStigma	#womenshealth
#HIV	#lifeandlovewithhiv	#selflove	#worldaidsday
#hivadvocate	#love	#sex	#worldaidsday2021