



Author Statement Anne-christine d'Adesky The Personal is Political



The Pox Lover might be best described as a highly personal history of the 1990s, a mash-up activist diary-cum-battlefield-notes-cum-travelogue of a particularly hot decade and two pocked cities, Paris and New York. It was an intense decade framed by my involvement in HIV/AIDS and ACT UP — a global epidemic and a protest movement that have strongly shaped my life and work.

The Pox Lover is also a diary of overlapping investigations, including a bit of digging into my own family's roots and ties to unfolding and historical events in France. As the saying goes, the personal is political. But I appreciate the reverse too: the political is personal, so often, at least for me. Why or when do we care about political issues and causes? It's when we feel a personal connection to them. The more personal, the more one engages with the heart, the more one seeks deeper and more complex truths.

In this book, I've taken a highly personal approach to history, including events that took place before my lifetime, to better understand where I connect (and where I don't) to the larger picture and why this matters: How these connections have continued to shape my life and actions ever since. How the political battles that are paramount today — over terrorism and nationalism and the resurgence of fascism — can be traced to ideas and groups and people and political issues that emerged in the nineties. How we might learn from that decade of protest as we consider our actions now to stop the new wolves of the Far Right here and in Europe — the Donald Trumps and others.

This book is based on the intermittent journal I kept throughout the nineties (and after). Although it's tempting to revise one's views with the sage passage of time, I have avoided doing that. I've elected to use pseudonyms for individuals who are intimate relations but not necessarily public figures; most other friends, colleagues, and individuals are identified by name. After all, this is my version of our shared history, not theirs. We also know how unreliable memory can be, including nostalgia. I'm eager to hear from readers who can offer their view of events chronicled in this book.

Before I say too much more — spoil your fun — let me simply invite you now to take a walk with me. A stroll. Where we'll end up depends on you as much as me, you'll see. If you're like me, then perhaps you'll find that as you read this diary, my working journal, you'll begin making your own connections, taking your own notes. Maybe you'll discover our stories are linked in ways you would never imagine — as I found mine linked to distant events and even odious people in history. I, for one, won't be at all surprised. *Au contraire*.

All I ask here, at the start, is what was asked of me: that you keep an open mind. That's the best compass of all, I've found. I ask that and your willingness to take a trip, to dig in, and risk getting your hands a little dirty. To have some fun. *C'est tout*.