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With the COVID 19 restrictions coming to a looser end, we are approaching a lifestyle that is closer to what we knew as normalcy. Just on March 4th 2022, I received an email from the “Office Of The Chancellor”, about the mask restrictions in CUNY being lifted. The policy we once knew about wearing masks to protect yourself, and most importantly protecting others is what the world was trying to improvise on us. This brings up a campaign I looked through and gathered information about. Based on what Communication Design Theory brings to the table and how it communicates more than just in graphics and words. This is the campaign that is used throughout the public transit in NYC, MTA. Although there are different awareness used by the MTA for campaigning to protect you and others whether that is on the train, the bus or even in public. The message is always clear and simple with the design. The designers were not listed on the campaign, but according to MTA they belong to the creative team that works for MTA. The point from Walter Gropius; *The Theory and Organization of the Bauhaus* (1923), mentions the importance of education, even in designing. Even though the theory behind is the fact that education cannot bring creativity, the biggest factor is that education brings similar behaviors and thinking minds together and this is the team for the MTA creative team. This is from their website for creating the campaign “From the outset, the MTA in-house creative team knew that even though the pandemic was scary, our communications didn't have to be.”(Safe) The whole point of this campaign is to create a safe and friendly environment, despite the

ongoing scary pandemic. People that are required to work are the heroes we don't deserve, and we should do the best to protect one another for the purpose of health.

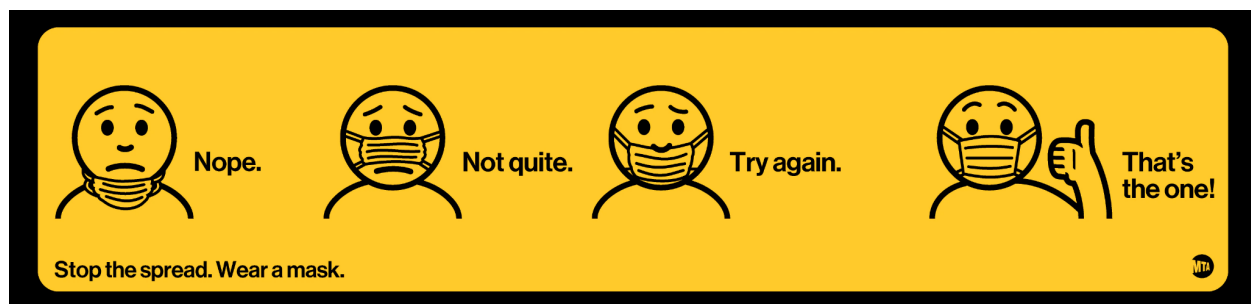
The response to a proper defense against COVID is the usage of masks, this is the biggest highlight they use for the MTA. Most of their designs are about usage of the mask. Whether that is about wearing one, the correct way to wear one or the need to wear one is a must on transit, and finally free offers on masks if you don't have one on you. However what I found in the style of the campaign is shared among all the other works. One of them is the spacing, it is intentional. What I mean by "spacing" is the usage of the blank space on the canvas. It implies the whole message of safe distancing. A popular example of this is the banners across the train cart. Although it isn't a lot of space, the usage of a gap between indicates safety. As a traditional campaign you could find a lot of information and all clumped up, showing as much as they can to tell a message.

Another key indication of the campaign is the usage of the color "yellow". Whether that is to save money on printing, as pantone colors can add up to thousands, or it is to be an alert kind of color. László Moholy-Nagy; *Typophoto* (1925) brings a good point in his writing about the usage of printing presses, how the usage of printing of typography and photography would be the next big thing since the introduction of the printing methods. Sure, you could use red as DANGER, but the way yellow shows is more of Caution.



Where in red would be too aggressive. Other colors such as blue and green would be cool colors, and that doesn't make sense due to those colors associated with sickness or cold.

The next big inspiration and goal of the success of the campaign is the way it reaches out to the community. MTA's website on the campaign "In developing the campaign, we used several research methods, including..." "Canvassing of transit systems of similar size in international cities, including Singapore, Hong Kong, Berlin, and Tokyo." (Safe) Methods from other countries to protect their communities are a big inspiration. Instead of using words only to describe the mandate of the mask, even a non-English speaking person can tell by the diagram. The one shown below for example is a good usage of not knowing English could allow you to understand the meaning behind wearing a mask properly.



The placement of the social distance of 6 feet also has some English words on it, but the universal language of design shows that without having to understand English.

Lastly, this is considered as an avant garde. The whole cautious of diseases such as cancer, diabetes are rarely seen as ads or awareness. Something as major as COVID sparked something that made it super clear and super important for us to take care of ourselves, whatever that is on a clean surface to sit on or walk your dog on the street. The importances of wearing a mask is still the main message of stopping the spread. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Varvara Stepanova, Aleksei Gan, and El Lissitzky, designers that we read about, show the importance of movement. Movement in the direction of the future, as much as we like

familiarity and certainty, things happen and we have to be prepared to take a stand. Although the whole campaign doesn't talk about getting the vaccine, it is something that is also shown on stations. I assume the whole point of not posting the campaign online about getting the vaccine would be a controversial topic. I believe that is something they should include, but as we learned from the class. Sometimes designers can include controversial things or not, it's all subjective and at the end of the day, MTA is a profit company and they have to respect their boundaries.

## Works Cited

“Safe Travels and Operation Respect.” *MTA*, <https://new.mta.info/safetravels>.