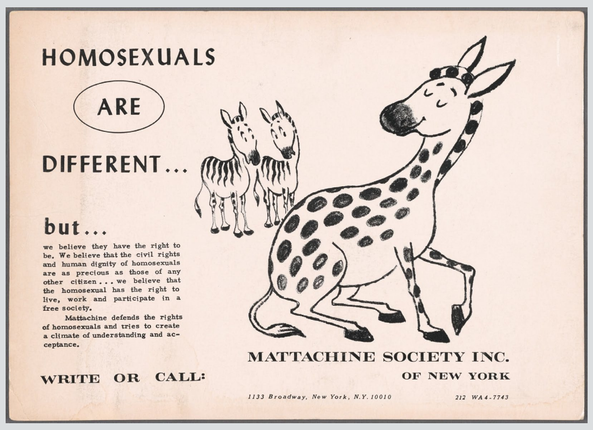
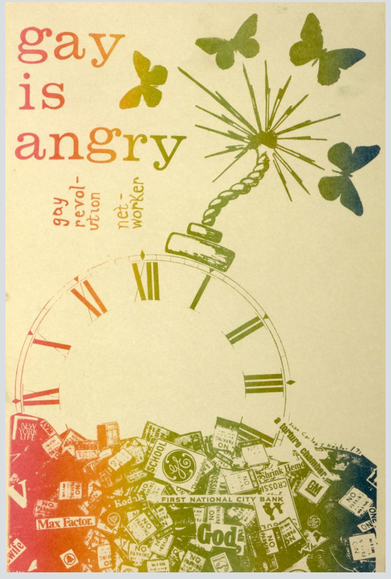


history inter-twined



before the gay liberation movement of the 1970s, lgbt+ design had a more passive and at times a secretive, yet still defiant role when organizations campaigned for equal rights. this passive nature was evident for organizations like the mattachine society, who after the stonewall riots pleaded with the lgbt+ community to maintain the peace on the streets of the village. meanwhile the lgbt+ community made their presence known with magazines, posters, the introduction of "transgender," and homoerotic art.

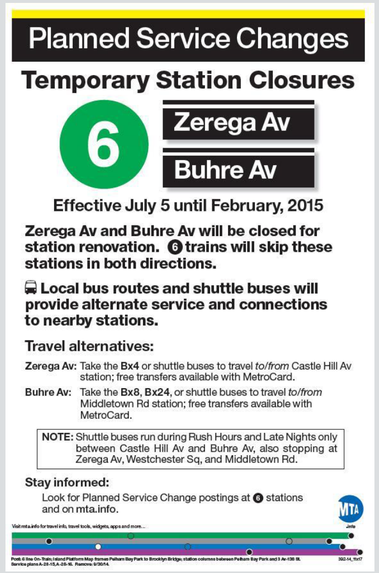
in 1969 police officers raided a mafia controlled gay bar called the stonewall inn. tired of the abuse and descrimination one of the bar patrons threw the first brick at a window (often attributed to marsha p. johnson) inciting the first riot of many in a 6 day period. after the riots, this led a cultural shift in queer design, from passive to rebellious. the 70s saw the creation of the pride flag designed by gilbert baker. as well as the "gay is angry" poster by juan carlos y nestor. This time period also saw the creation of the association of black gays, an organization meant to improve the lives of gay black people.

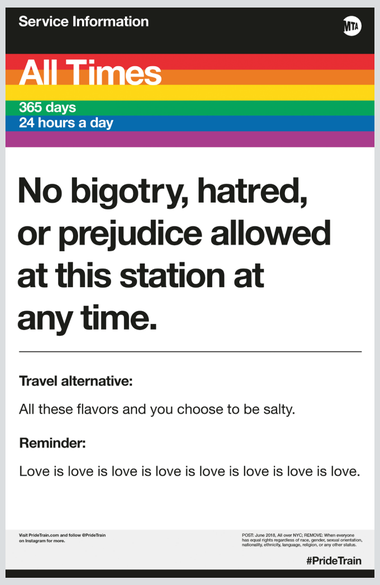
the 1980s saw the hiv/aids crises in america, halting any advancements for gay rights. with an administration not acknowledging the crises until it was too little too late as it decimated america's unwanted. the lgbt+ community took it upon itself to spread awareness of the "gay related" disease and their unfair treatment by the government. the pink triangle once used by nazis to identify gay men was being reclaimed with the silence = death poster. the aids quilt also came into being, documenting the many deaths within the lgbt+ community as protests raged on.

the 1990s and the 21st century saw the "acceptance" of the lgbt+ community and advancements of rights with same-sex marriage being legalized in all 50 states, some states allowing transgered people to use the bathroom to their corrected gender, the creation of the bisexual and trans flag, the black lives matter movement being started by a trio of black women two who identify as queer, lgbt visibality in cartoons like steven universe, the pride train take over of the mta, and despite all that the lgbt+ community still have a long way to go for equal rights.

queer ass poster

structure against the machine



the pride train takeover was spearheaded by designer thomas shim who is asian-american and his collaborators jack welles and ezequiel consoli in 2017 during pride month. i have two theories for this poster, one is that it follows the design principles of international typographic style design & new typography, intentional or not, and that it is an example of culture jamming. like the posters designed by brockmann, tschichold, and gerstner, the poster communicates a clear message that there is no room for bigotry.

additionally, the poster is modeled after the mta service advisories which seems to use the font type known as helvetica, a popular font among modernist designers. the poster also has a moderate amount of negative space, and the usage of sans-serif, as well the amount of fonts being kept at a minimum, and the flush left ragged right text are aspects important to swiss design and new typography. the advisories and in turn the pride train posters may have been influenced by massimo vignelli, a modernist who designed the signage for the nyc subway system. like new typography and swiss design, the pride train posters lack any ornaments, it is straightforward. my other theory that the poster is an example of culture jamming is because it incorporates memes, usually the memes are used to parody, be satirical, and/or send a message, in this case it is used to combat bigotry, and give reassurance to the lgbt+ community, and it parodies the mta service advisories. it also provides social and political commentary as these posters were created under the trump administration, which has failed to acknowledge pride month. another reason i would consider this culture jamming is because it is not backed up by any organizations nor are the posters affiliated with the mta. these posters were placed by activists and volunteers trying their best not to get caught, essentially it is a guerilla campaign. to cap it all off i feel like these two quotes sum up the pride train take over as culture jamming, "since most residents can't afford to counter corporate messages by purchasing their own ads, they should have the right to talk back to images they never asked to see." and "taking an object that usually invokes annoyance and distress and transforming it into a public reassurance for lgbtq people is a queer move to be sure."