



DESIGNING FOR **CHANGE**



CHICAGO PROTEST ART
OF THE 1960s–70s



**ARTIVISM:
ART + ACTIVISM GUIDE**





WELCOME TO DESIGNING FOR CHANGE: PROTEST ART OF THE 1960s–70s!



Use this booklet as a guide to help you look closely at six examples of Chicago's changemaking art in the exhibition. When you see the guide symbol in the gallery, there is a corresponding activity printed here. Don't forget to visit the hands-on activity in the last section.

#1

A SYMBOL FOR THE CHICAGO FREEDOM MOVEMENT



Through marches, rallies, and other nonviolent actions, the **Chicago Freedom Movement** (CFM) challenged different issues facing the city's Black residents, but erasing racial segregation and housing discrimination became its focus. Learn how the CFM's easy to recognize logo motivated people to put the logo to use to inspire change.



DEFINITION

Symbol: *a mark, sign, figure, or word that represents an idea, object, or relationship*

The CFM's symbol was designed by two young members of the Atlanta-based Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) Communications Committee, Ann Gillie and Bennie Luchion, who moved to Chicago to support the CFM. Although the headquarters for the SCLC was in Atlanta, Georgia, a Chicago branch was established to serve the needs of the CFM.





LOOK CLOSELY!

Can you find the letter “V” in the CFM logo? For some people, the “V” stood for victory over slums, and for others, the “V” resembled the peace sign. Both meanings attracted lots of support for the CFM. Which meaning do you connect with the most and why?

The logo is easy to recognize and replicate. It was added to many different CFM supporting materials! Look at the images in this section, what types of items do you see that include the symbol?*

*Answers upside down on bottom of page



REFLECT

Can you think of a symbol for a cause that has meaning for you? How would you display the symbol to show your solidarity or support?

“Now is the time to get rid of the slums and ghettos of Chicago. Now is the time to make justice a reality all over this nation. Now is the time.” –Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



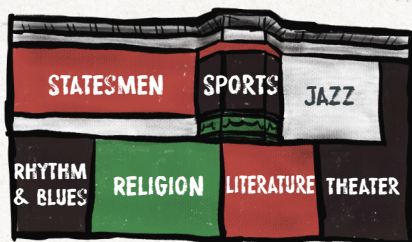
DID YOU KNOW?

Some of the pictures in this section were taken by photographer Bernard Kleina, who is the only person known to have taken color photographs of Dr. King during his marches in Chicago.

ANSWERS: album covers, buttons, pamphlets, banners, arm bands, and newsletters

#2

RESPECT & REPRESENTATION FOR BLACK LIBERATION



At over two stories high, the collage-like Wall of Respect mural shared a big message on Black culture and Black Power. At this stop, you will learn how the **Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC)** designed the mural to celebrate Black heroes defined by Black people and to build Black pride.



DEFINITION

Mural: a painting on a wall or ceiling. They are usually big and often in public places, such as the outside of a building

OBAC defined their Black heroes as a Black person who:

- “Honestly reflects the beauty of Black life and genius in his or her own style.”
- “Does not forget his Black brothers and sisters who are less fortunate.”
- “Does what he does in such an outstanding manner that he or she cannot be imitated or replaced.”



LOOK CLOSELY!

Use the outline image above to locate heroes on the Wall of Respect mural and learn how their lives reflected OBAC’s hero definition.

Muddy Waters was an influential musician who helped put Blues music on the map. On the Wall of Respect in the **Rhythm & Blues** section, Muddy is shown strumming his guitar in vibrant color. Why do you think the artist chose to paint him this way?

Gwendolyn Brooks was a renowned poet who celebrated the lives of ordinary Black people and was deeply connected to the Black Power movement. In this section, you'll find Brooks' poem honoring the *Wall of Respect*. Why do you think the artist painted her in the center of the **Literature** section?

Darlene Blackburn was an awarded dancer and teacher whose style connected Black people to their African origins. Why do you think a full-body photograph of Darlene was used in the **Theater** section instead of a painted portrait?



REFLECT

The *Wall of Respect* became a gathering space for Chicago's Black community and inspired a national public mural movement. How does the *Wall of Respect* mural inspire you? What benefits of public murals can you think of?



LISTEN

"The Wall of Respect was based on honoring Black heroes and sheroes in different areas of the arts." —Barbara Jones Hogu

Hear more from Barbara Jones-Hogu at the listening station in this section.



DID YOU KNOW?

The red, black, and green wall colors in this section honor the Pan-African flag. The flag was developed to foster solidarity between people of African descent across the world.

#3

PAINTING FOR PEACE: SAY IT WITH SYMBOLS



There are a variety of symbols in the **Peace mural**, and many have multiple meanings. At this stop, you will discover a few of them and see how **Mario Castillo** chose symbols that worked together to communicate messages of peace, Mexican identity, and the hippie or counterculture movement of the 1960s.



DEFINITION

High Saturation: *the level of intensity and vividness of a color; high saturation is bright colors and low saturation is muted colors*



LOOK CLOSELY!

Look at the photograph of the entire mural. Take in the high saturation of the colors and the mural's overall shape. Discover some of the mural's meanings by looking at the detailed images in the exhibition.

**Answers upside down on bottom of page 7.*

- **Explosion:** Why do you think Castillo included an explosion? The explosion is also an eye. Refer to the entire mural, can you find the larger figure the explosion/eye belongs to?
- **Peace Sign:** Why do you think it is red? What other shape is part of it?
- **Playing Cards:** How do you think the deck of cards represents an antiwar message?
- **Paisley:** Have you seen paisley in other places? Why do you think it is part of the mural?



REFLECT

To see other anti-Vietnam War arts design, visit the Chicago Seed section. What current antiwar images can you think of?



LISTEN

"While [my] friends were protesting the Vietnam War down on Michigan Avenue and Grant Park, [I] was painting a mural asking for and promoting peace."

—Mario Castillo, Peace mural artist

Hear more from Mario Castillo at the listening station in this section.



DID YOU KNOW?

Castillo blames gentrification for the destruction of the Peace mural, but its impact lives on. In 2022, artists Hector Duarte and Gabriel Villa incorporated Castillo's central peace symbol into a new antigentrification mural in Pilsen called *Fight to Stay*.

ANSWERS: Castillo's mural combined art styling and symbolism from indigenous peoples of Mexico, the Northwestern United States, Iran, and South Asia.

Explosion: The explosion represented bombs being dropped during the Vietnam War. It is also the eye of the Quetzalcoatl, a feathered serpent god important in many Mesoamerican religions.

Peace sign: Castillo used red to represent the blood being spilled in the Vietnam War. The hourglass shows the passage of time since the war started, indicating that it was now time for peace. The peace sign is layered in other images of good luck and references to the sun and Earth as a message that peace should come to all the world.

Playing Cards: Castillo chose cards to convey the idea that the Vietnam war was a dangerous game that both sides would lose.

Paisley: With roots in Iran and the Kashmir region near today's India-Pakistan border, paisley spread around the world in the United States during the 1960s. It was popular on clothing and other goods. Castillo used it to symbolize the hippie, or counterculture, movement of the era. Many hippies were active in the antiwar movement.

#4

LIBERATION IS BLOOMING: SCREEN PRINTS FOR SISTERHOOD



The **Chicago Women's Graphic Collective (CWGC)** developed design rules to make visually appealing screen print posters that called attention to social issues impacting women across the globe in the 1960s–70s.



DEFINITION

Screen printing: a technique where a picture or pattern is created by forcing ink onto a surface through a screen of fine material; this allows an image to be reproduced in large numbers on materials like posters and clothing



LOOK CLOSELY!

Find the orange and purple poster that reads “Sisterhood is Blooming.” Let’s start to explore the CWGC’s design rules with this poster.

CWGC DESIGN RULES

- 1. Design Rule 1:** Easy to recognize imagery. What is the main image on this poster?
- 2. Design Rule 2:** Easy to read and memorable slogans. Read the slogan on this poster.
- 3. Design Rule 3:** Large size posters with bright and appealing colors. Take a step back and notice the size of the poster and the colors.
- 4. Design Rule 4:** Collective creating. None of the CWGC posters are signed by an artist because they chose to communicate as a collective.

Look for examples of these rules in the posters on the next wall.

What color combinations and imagery catch your eye? Find a poster with a slogan you connect with. What makes the slogan memorable? Observe the many social issues featured in the posters. Which do you feel connect with life today?



REFLECT

By distributing their art across the world, the CWGC built a global community of supporters. What are some ways we can show solidarity with different social movements from far away today?



LISTEN

"We needed images. We needed artists. We needed our own art... We defined the principles of what our group would be... which meant creating collectively."
—Estelle Carol, CWGC co-founder

Hear more from Estelle Carol at the listening station in this section.



DID YOU KNOW?

The CWGC also reproduced designs that were originally created outside their collective. The CWGC used money from the sale of these reproductions to help pay for CWGC operations costs.

#5

WEAR IT WITH PRIDE: WEARABLE SYMBOLS FOR GAY LIBERATION



The **Chicago Gay Alliance (CGA)** was founded in 1971. Members of the CGA proudly displayed symbols as wearable art and in printed materials. These symbols represented their shared identities and their solidarity for the Gay Liberation Movement despite the risks of discrimination and violence. Gay Liberation refers to a social and political movement starting in the late 1960s that urged lesbian women and gay men to engage in direct action, activism, and community building.



DEFINITION

Wearable Art: *buttons, patches, and other articles of clothing that allow people to express ideas and communicate their identities and values publicly*



LOOK CLOSELY!

Find the traditional male (♂) and female (♀) gender symbols on the clothing, banners, buttons, and printed materials in this section. How many versions do you see, and why do you think these different versions might exist?

Look at the US Army shirt worn by Gary Chichester. Around this time, he made the decision to add a Gay Liberation Movement symbol to a US Army shirt. Why do you think Gary chose to add the symbol to the shirt? What is powerful about designing wearable art for yourself?



REFLECT

Symbols for different movements can change over time based on the goals of the users and social context. For example, the male (♂) and female (♀) symbols you see on the walls were later altered to make the symbol you see here (⚥) to represent transgender people. Have you ever made your own wearable art?



LISTEN

"There's something about getting hit with a tear gas canister for doing nothing but walking down a street that really makes you think about what's right and what's wrong... you make it known what you believe was right, and hopefully you'll have an influence on making a better world." –Gary Chichester

Hear more from Gary Chichester at the listening station in this section.

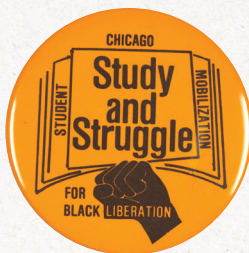


DID YOU KNOW?

The first Chicago Gay Liberation March was on Saturday, June 27, 1970, and the parade route was from Washington Square Park/Bughouse Square to the Chicago Water Tower. Back in 1970, there were 100–200 marchers; today, the Chicago Pride Parade has grown to approximately 1 million attendees.

#6

DESIGNING FOR CHANGE TODAY



Today's **Chicago artists** continue to create to call attention to civic and social issues, and their role remains of critical importance to our society. By supporting the arts and artists, we all benefit from the unique capacity art has to help make sense of the world around us.



LOOK CLOSELY!

The eight artists in this section are remarking on today's social issues using different art types.

- #1** What issues do you see reflected in their work?
 - #2** What connections can you find between the art and social issues in this section and the social issues in previous sections?
 - #3** Which social issues in this section impact your life?
 - #4** What pieces of art in this section are you drawn to?
 - #5** What different types of art can you see?
-



REFLECT

Art is a medium that allows for the quick transfer, adoption, and understanding of ideas—social, political, or otherwise. What role does art play in your life?



MAKE!

Contribute to the fiber art display! Weave your thoughts and ideas into the installation before you leave.

*"The function of art is to do more than tell
it like it is—it's to imagine what is possible."*
—bell hooks



THANK YOU!

Thank you for visiting *Designing for Change: Chicago Protest Art of the 1960s–70s*



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and upcoming related programs online:
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Image credits: p. 2 Chicago Freedom Movement button, courtesy of the Busy Beaver Museum, Chicago; view of crowd marching in the Cicero March, 1966, CHM, ICHI-036903; Declan Haun, photographer, p. 6 Peace symbol buttons, CHM, ICHI-179687, p. 8 Sisterhood Is Blooming, silk screen poster by Estelle Carol and CWGC, CHM, ICHI-176515, p. 10 Chicago's first gay liberation march, June 27, 1970, ST-70001326-0008, Chicago Sun-Times collection, CHM, p. 12 "Study and Struggle for Black Liberation" button, CHM, ICHI-179581