

# The Closet.

*A peek into queer  
spaces, fashion  
and culture  
through history.*







WE ARE  
YOUR  
CHILDREN



# Authors' Note

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**The Closet.** is a single-issue digital zine that acts as a summary inclusive to the materials we studied throughout our Spring 2024 semester in AMD 458: Queer Fashions: Culture, History, and the Industry, plus outside resources that we discovered on our own time.

This purpose of this project is to act as an informational source on culturally significant places, organizations, and events in the 1960s-1980s where fashion history and queer expression intersect.

Our original inspiration was Hal Fischer's "Gay Semiotics," a conceptual photography project, similar to a modern zine. Like Fischer, we aimed to create a creative and educational collection of the stylistic choices and events in the queer community throughout history.

Historical photographs are used in this zine as a stylistic aide to the research we conducted. Specifically, we curated a wide variety of photographs from the 1960s to the 1980s as a medium for collage-style spreads and visuals meant to supplement our informational (and pro-gay) articles.



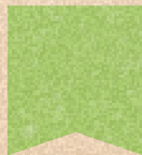
# The Hanky Code:

Left: Agressive

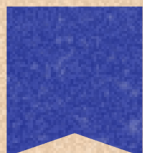
Right: Passive



Light Blue:  
Oral Sex



Kelly Green  
Hustler/Prostitute



Dark Blue:  
Anal Sex



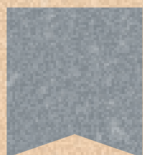
Red:  
Fisting



Black:  
S&M



Gold:  
Threesome



Gray:  
Bondage



Black & White:  
Safe Sex





# The Hanky Code

*A secret queer language*

The Handkerchief Code, or The Hanky Code, was a secret code used by gay men in the 1970s and 1980s as a way to discreetly communicate sexual preferences and kinks with each other.

What started as a way for members of the queer community to simply flag that they practice a certain kink evolved into a complex secret language that allowed queer people to express a variety of identities and preferences. For example, tops would wear bandanas in their left pocket, whereas bottoms would display their bandana in their right pocket.

Each color, according to sources such as Bob Damron's

## COLOR CODES (Handkerchiefs)

Left	Color	Right
Greek Active	Dark Blue	Greek Passive
FF'er	Red	FFA Receiver
Has 8" +	Mustard	Wants 8" +
69'er	Light Blue	No 69
Anything	Orange	Nothing
Golden Showerer	Yellow	Receives G.S.
Has Uniform	Olive Drab	Wants Uniform
Hustler	Green	Buyer
Scat Top	Brown	Scat Bottom
Master	Gray	Slave
J/O	White	Gives J/O
Whipper	Black	Whippee

The Hanky Code according to Bob Damron's address book, 1980s.

address book of the 1980s and decoder lists printed by local gay bars and erotica shops, had a special meaning that communicated a queer person's interests without using any words.

The Hanky Code was crucial to the queer culture in its time, as it was a way for queer people to identify each other silently in a society of homophobia and oppression.



STONEWALL MEANS  
FIGHT BACK! SMASH  
GAY OPPRESSION!

GAY CAUCUS

POWER  
TO THE  
PEOPLE





# Gay Bars & The Power Within Them

*How the bar scene of the 19th century gave the queer community a safe space and a voice*

## The Stonewall Riots



The gay bar scene was so significant, that one could even say the gay revolution was started in one. The Stonewall Inn was a popular NYC gay nightclub, and one that holds a lot of history. On June 12th, 1969, a police raid at Stonewall resulted in a riot and a 6 day long protest. This was the most the queer community had fought back thus far, marking it as one of the most important events in queer history.

The gay bar scene, especially in 1960s-1970s New York City, is a prolific aspect of queer history that made the queer community as strong as it was.

Queer people took to gathering in gay bars after being criminalized and outcasted by the U.S. government. In a shocking collaboration, gay bars were able to stay alive with help from the Mafia. Their disregard for the law, and the queer community's desire for a place to gather, came together in an equally beneficial business deal.

In gay bars, everyone was free to drink, have fun, meet friends and lovers, dress as they like, and behave as they like. It was the one place many people felt they could express themselves without consequence.



# DEFEND HUMAN RIGHTS Boycott

orange juice

they stop financing  
the war she leads ag

Sponsored by  
**HUAC**  
Hundred other at  
the 45th



for **DECENCY**

INDIANA FAIR GROUNDS  
COLISEUM

8:00 P.M.



**ANITA  
BRYANT  
SUCKS  
ORANGES**

**ANITA  
GAY BLOOD  
IS UPON  
YOU!!**  
WHO'S NEXT?

Oranges  
aren't the  
only things  
**'ANITA  
BRYANT  
SUCKS!'**



# Anita Bryant Sucks Oranges!



*Gay activism against homophobia*

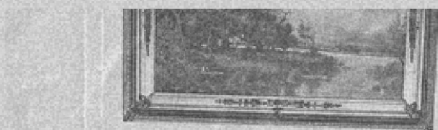
Anita Bryant was an American celebrity, former beauty pageant queen, and the face of the Christian anti-gay movement of the 1970s.

Bryant started her campaign in 1977, when she began voicing her disagreement with local queer discrimination laws won by the Florida queer community. Her homophobic “Save Our Children campaign” and other anti-gay efforts led to backlash from queer activists in the form of boycotting the Florida orange juice brand she regularly promoted, hence the anti-Bryant slogan “Anita Bryant

Sucks Oranges.” In addition to the boycott, an iconic anti-Bryant moment featured her getting pied in the face by gay activist Tom Higgins at a Des Moines, Iowa event. Props to you, Tom!







STUDIO





# Studio 54

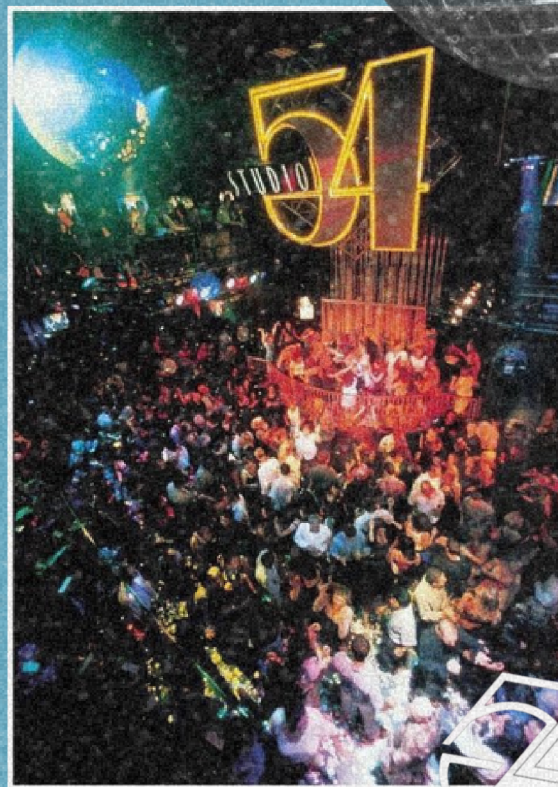
*A glimpse into an iconic 1970s night club*

Studio 54, opened in 1977 in Midtown Manhattan, and became quickly popularized for its theatrics and exclusivity. Studio 54's environment was a place where people could gather and have fun, regardless of things like sexual and gender orientation. In a quote from club-goer Felipe Rose, it was a place where “you could see everything and everyone, you could be as nice and demure as you wanted to be or full of debauchery [or] you could just go to dance.”

Studio 54 was one of the first places of its kind, somewhere that authors and lawyers and drag queens and every kind of person imaginable could come together to embrace their eccentricities

and express themselves without judgement.

Although Studio 54's doors closed after only 3 years, the disco-centered haven it provided became a symbolic part of queer history. In a time of stress and homophobia, it was a place of solace for the LGBTQ+ community.





**GAY  
LIBERATION  
NOW**

**LAVENDER  
MENACE**

**I ♥  
LESBIAN  
TONGUES**

**Born  
Again  
Lesbian**

**WE LOVE  
OUR  
DYKES**

**LAVENDER  
VISION**  
Vol. 1 No. 1  
for the gay  
woman community  
**FREE**



**MAKE OUT  
WITH BUTCHES**  
if you should be so lucky

**BEWARE!!!  
the  
LAVENDER  
MENACE**

**BUTCH**

**FEM**

**BUTCH**



# The Lavender Menace



## *Lesbians & the feminist movement*

The name “Lavender Menace” was first used as an insult to radical feminist lesbians by National Organization Leader Betty Friedman. Friedman thought that lesbians were threatening the integrity of the feminist movement of the late nineteenth century by distracting society from issues like economic and social equality for women. The Lavender Menace allowed lesbians to create a sisterhood of their own outside of the mainstream feminist movement.

What began as a snide remark transformed into a group meant to defend lesbians within the feminist movement. The group’s most notable protest was a disruption of the 1970 Second Congress to Unite Women, a congress whose agenda did not include any lesbian rights issues. This disruption included distractingly shutting off the lights, and appearing in iconic The Lavender Menace t-shirts. They did what they needed to fight their way into the conversation.





**DAILY STAR**  
BRITAIN'S BRIGHTEST NEWSPAPER

**FREDDIE MERCURY:  
LAST TRAGIC HOURS**

Only 25p

# AIDS KILLS THE KING OF ROCK

Music world is in mourning for Queen's superstar singer

FREDDIE'S NIGHTMARE  
Pages 2-3

**NEW YORK POST**

Triggered 'gay cancer' epidemic in U.S.

# THE MAN WHO GAVE US AIDS

STORY ON PAGE THREE



## A BAD REPUTATION ISN'T ALL YOU CAN GET FROM SLEEPING AROUND



## AIDS death toll tops 100,000 in United States

**MY BOYFRIEND GAVE ME AIDS.**

I WAS ONLY WORRIED ABOUT GETTING PREGNANT.

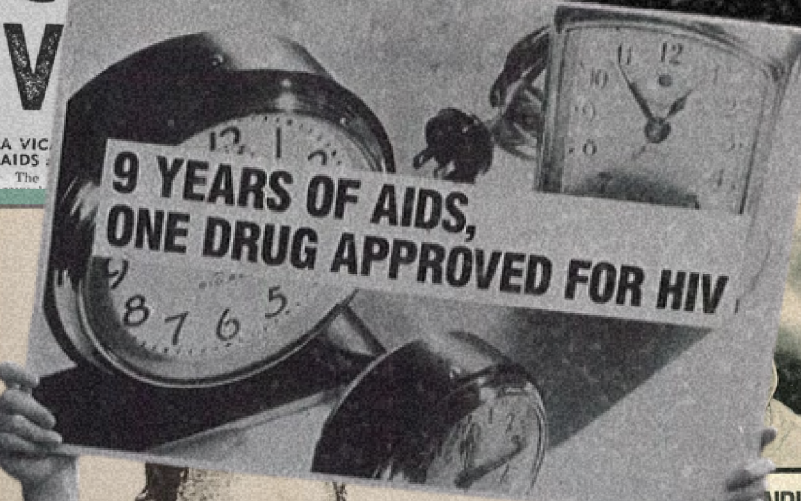
MICHAELA BATES

The other m  
Charlie bro  
home a qua  
milk, a loaf  
bread and a  
of AIDS.



Charlie  
affairs  
But Ch  
vines. Th  
His wife  
and when  
her own li  
pregnant s  
vires to be  
Charlie  
himself. Sa  
died it, or  
Right no  
AIDS, and  
what we k  
precautio  
AIDS  
If you thi  
you're de

# AIDS IS THE WRATH OF GOD, SAYS



Final Edition  
Giants take 3-2 lead  
A tough 6 miles  
The San Diego Union  
Burma air crash kills 2 La Jollans  
Senate may start Bork debate this week



# YOU CAN'T WEAR A RED RIBBON IF YOU'RE DEAD.

You can't serve in the military if you're dead.  
You can't march in the Saint Patrick's Day parade if you're dead.  
You can't register as domestic partners if you're dead.

WE WANT WILLIAMS OUT

**CANDLELIGHT MARCH**  
to honor the dead and support the living.  
NEW YORK  
8:00 P.M.  
FROM SHERIDAN SQUARE  
TO FEDERAL BUILDING  
BRING CANDLE AND WEAR  
BLACK ARMBAND WITH  
PINK TRIANGLE  
INFO: GSNH HOTLINE  
(212) 668-6800



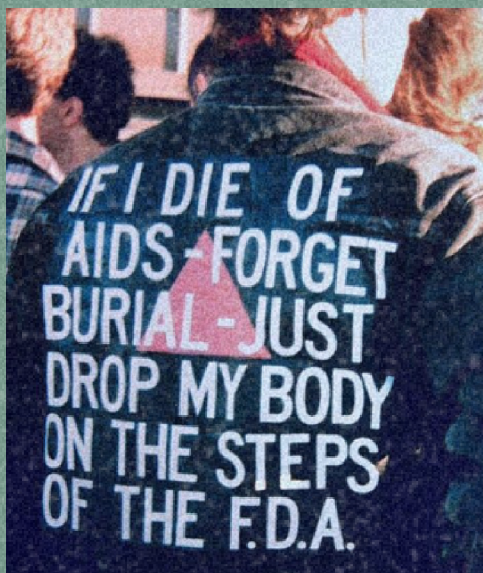


# ACT UP



*AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power: An influential response to the AIDS Epidemic of the 80s.*

The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, or ACT UP, was formed in March 1987 in Manhattan, New York City, in affiliation with the local Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center. By the time of the organization's establishment, it was estimated that AIDS had killed around 60,000 people world, with an active 40,000 people AIDS-positive. The Federal Drug Association (FDA) was not putting in the effort required to improve treatment for AIDS patients and work towards a cure for the disease. As a response of protest,



ACT UP was formed. ACT UP was one of the leading activist organizations for AIDS awareness. They gave the gay rights movement a new sense of power through their efforts including: boycotts against news outlets spreading misinformation, open forums, information sessions, and consistent public protests. The organizations general empathy for victims of the AIDS epidemic was an empowering and necessarily thing to behold; many say that ACT UP it is responsible for a significant positive shift in society's views on gay rights.







# Club Kids

*"The original influencers"*

The Club Kids, a group of dance club personalities in 1990s NYC, craved and encouraged deconstruction. They wanted to feel total freedom of expression regarding gender, music, sexuality, drugs, dancing, fashion, and everything in between. Some big names related to the Club Kid movement were Michael Alig, Julie Jewels, James St. James, and Walt (Waltpaper) Cassidy.

The Club Kid scene consisted of inclusive parties where anyone could show up in their best costumes and fashion pieces and have fun freely. Participants in this scene truly embodied the 90s ethos of deconstruction. They were



talented at manipulating the media in order to push their aesthetics and ideas to tear down harmful social norms. In addition to their PR, there was of course the dancing and the partying with drugs and alcohol that rounded out the lifestyle of the Club Kids. It was overuse of the substances, heroin in specific, that caused a decline in Club Kids presence.



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## Images Used:

