

Newark Community Art Club with Elaine Winter

Session 9: Protest Imagery

Materials needed:

Pencil, rubber, sharpener

White paper to draw on (any size you like to work on and whatever you have at hand) – ideally several sheets

Colour materials – coloured pencils, paints, pastels, coloured paper – whatever you have to hand

Introduction: This activity is going to get you looking into the history of some of the symbols we now take for granted as being associated with movements. A strong and recognizable sign or symbol can ‘speak’ much louder than words. This session is about doing some research into the history of two symbols which are particularly relevant at the moment (early June 2020) : the Black Power symbol and the Rainbow Pride flag. It will also help you to analyse protest imagery and gain an understanding of what makes up a successful sign or symbol. You can then go on to design your own campaign symbol.

Activity 1: Do some research into the origins of the Black Power raised closed fist symbol. Questions to look into are: What is the origin of this symbol and how is it related to sport? Is the raised fist symbol also used by other movements, and if so what are they? Look at some examples of when it has been used. Analyse the image - what makes it instantly recognizable?



Activity 2: Do some research into the Rainbow Pride flag. Questions to look into are: When did it become the adopted symbol of the LGBTQ+ community? Which symbol did it replace and why did that symbol have a negative historical connotation? Has the flag changed recently? How has it changed and why? What do you think about the recent event of the rainbow image being used in other ways during the coronavirus crisis?



Activity 3: Over to you! Use the research you've done and reflect. Find out more about a cause or movement you are interested in and think about designing a new form of a symbol or sign for it. Steer clear of using words. You can start the process by writing down the message of what you want to say as a starting point but then look at that message and think about how you would translate those words into an image with no words at all. All the time think about the principles of the strength of the image itself – is it clear, recognizable, not to be confused with something else? Think about whether you want to use colour or not. Colour is symbolic too, everything you use will have a meaning and needs to translate.

Activity 4: Clear up!