Free Palestine
“Knowledge is power and rage is action”

The practice of rage as a tool to fight oppression can be seen across a variety of themes we study within political resistance and social movements. Rage forms when we are informed of injustices, acts that go against our morals or beliefs. Rage forms when we become victims of situations or uncontrollable circumstances. Sometimes rage forms in place of sadness. We can look to artists such as David Wojnarowicz to see what rage as political action against injustice can become. Wojnarowicz is an artist from the 70s and 80s who expressed his deep-set angst via photography, painting, music, film, sculpture, writing, and neo-expressionist paintings. His art encapsulated how he felt during the height of the AIDS epidemic as he watched friends, family, and lovers fall victim to the disease while the U.S. government and the general public did nothing but place blame and ignore the LGBTQ+ community, who the epidemic primarily affected. In an infamous quote Wojnarowicz said, “To make the private into something public is an action that has terrific ramifications.”. Wojnarowicz channeled his rage into action and creation, which is exactly the goal of not only this zine, but this entire exhibit. To tie this back into the overarching theme of libraries and political action, knowledge sparks the flames of rage. To know, either by witnessing, reading, or experiencing, is to feel empowered and that is the genesis of our Open Books, Open Minds exhibit.

By Sarah Gornatti
“Cops Ride Again” comes from a zine produced by Mattachine Midwest in September of 1968. Initially known as the Mattachine Society of Chicago, the organization was just a chapter of the national Mattachine Society. After the latter’s disbanding in 1961, the branch rebranded and came back in 1965 as Mattachine Midwest, the “first modern Midwestern gay organization”1. The organization ran for 21 years off the work of Robert Sloane Basker, Ira H. Jones, and even Gerber Hart’s founder, Pearl M. Hart2. This particular issue covers the events that happened from August 12th to August 29th, including significant political unrest between law enforcement and the queer community. Tension started because the North American Conference for Homophile Organizations (NACHO) had its fourth meeting August 12th to the 17th in 1968, one week prior to the Democratic National Convention, set to meet from August 26th to the 29th. After repeated bar raids where victims were taken into custody at random with no clear reason for arrest, things finally culminated and on the 28th and the 29th, the queer community rallied for a protest. The protest quickly became violent once the police came on the scene, and the media found a way to make them the villain. The article expressed that it took them “several days to ‘discover’ assassination plots, plant false stories, and misrepresent the nature of the demonstrators”3. Unfortunately this article stays relevant, but that means its advice is too. They include a “Your Rights if Arrested” section that reminds their readers that “You should not permit the police to ask you questions under any circumstances. If they ask, you may refuse to answer. If they try to frisk you, demand to know what the charge is. Note down or ask for the badge number of any officer who arrests you or who tries to extract information from you”4. It’s just as crucial now as it was then to understand how you should be legally treated in the U.S. It brings to light the importance of this information, and how that information can be accessed. In 2023, over 3 million people in Chicago alone used the library for research purposes5. As third places — typically free and easily accessible places outside of work, school and home that allow people of similar interests and beliefs to connect — libraries are catalysts for political action and establishing community. How the Palestinian people and the protesters of this genocide have been treated has happened before — towards countless other minority groups and causes — and will continue to occur if areas like libraries don’t exist. Think about how your childhood library affected your ability to learn and grow as a person. Think about how you can utilize it now to further educate yourself. Find ways to fight back against this system that has erased years’ worth of knowledge, experiences, and people. Liberate yourself by going to your local library.

By Milo Zcher
The Homosexual Citizen is a short-running zine produced by the Mattachine Society of Washington and the Mattachine Society of Florida. The full run was a total of 17 volumes, released between 1966 and 1967, and the subheading on every issue is “News of civil liberties and social rights for homosexuals.” Vol. 1, No 5, the May 1966 edition includes the Mattachine Society of Florida’s contribution to the issue: “A Homosexual Looks at the ‘Sickness Theory’” by Warren D. Atkins. In this paper, Atkins tackles the idea of the ‘sickness theory,’ and psychiatry as a whole at the time. He makes sure to note that the paper is not an attack on all psychiatrists, rather only the ones who “reach a conclusion first and then look around for data to support it, rather than gathering data, testing it, and then reaching conclusions,” which refers to the beliefs of those like Edmund Bergler at the time.

Atkins argues that the most effective way to fight rhetoric like the sickness theory is for a queer person to stand on their own, and state proudly that they are not sick. Although people like to wait for experts and officials, hoping that someone with knowledge and prestige will convince people for them, it is far more important to not remain silent. He states that “an audience will respond to the cogent arguments of a sensible homosexual much more quickly than a professional expert who is several steps removed from homosexuals.” Another one of Atkins’ best arguments is that there are many open-minded heterosexuals, who just don’t think critically about the existence and freedoms of queer people, due to being removed from the issue. It is easy for people like this to accept the sickness theory as, “it may not have previously occurred to them to label homosexuals as ‘sick,’” but when the label is presented to them, they accept it without hesitation.” These people, hopefully when provided with the testimony of queer people who lead very fulfilling lives, may be able to change perspectives with the introduction of new information.

One of the most compelling details in this volume of the zine is the complete reprint of the February 25, 1966 letter from the Civil Service Commission to the Mattachine Society of Washington, which bluntly includes the following statement: “Persons about whom there is evidence that they have engaged in or solicited others to engage in homosexual or sexually perverted acts with them, without evidence of rehabilitation, are not suitable for Federal employment.” When we discuss political action a very large piece of that, albeit quieter than other actions, is the printing, publishing, and circulation of information. The information in this letter was sent to the Mattachine Society of Washington, and then alone. Taking the steps to publish it and make sure information like that is available to a person who usually doesn’t have access to that is impactful. We tend to forget how much harder the spread of information was before the internet, even as we face new issues with censorship and misinformation now. However, information gathered and sent out, with the express purpose of providing information to those who do not have access to it is the first step in raising awareness and kicking off further action with more support in the long run.

By Madi Biggs
Alfred Hitchcock, though he has been a more controversial character as of late, is rather well-known for being one of the greatest filmmakers of all time, a pioneer of crime films, and having homosexual characters in his films, mainly seen through the villains. Sometimes, the villains are explicitly attracted to another man more than others. Hitchcock has always been considered a "risk taker," bordering on the line of what is acceptable to the Hays Code. He liked making people uncomfortable towards his films and often ignored inspectors whenever he was asked to censor a scene. For Psycho (1960), Hitchcock famously fooled the inspectors by showing them the same footage unchanged, but only slightly blurring the scene and 2020. Even though the ending does not result in the main pairing getting together, which is how some queer stories were filmmakers often use film to fight back against the system. Even though censorship is huge, and films still get censored today them, as long as I created them with my best intentions and efforts. If these offspring of mine cannot live in their own country them, for whatever reason, let them be free. There is no reason to mutilate them in fear of the system. Otherwise there is no reason.

same-sex activity was illegal, and the government had started countrywide witch hunts and raids against anyone who identified as such or anyone who they suspected. Film has always been a source of politics, and many filmmakers often use film to fight back against the system. Even though censorship is huge, and films still get censored today for having any LGBTQ+ implications, many filmmakers refuse to back down and take as many “risks” as possible in order to tell their stories fully without being silenced.

Weerasethakul censor four scenes. In response, Weerasethakul decided to just not show the film in Thailand. Weerasethakul is known for being an activist against film censorship and bans, being one of the founders of the Free Thai Cinema Movement, as Thailand has been going through a period similar to the Hays Code in regards to film regulations. He says, “I, as a filmmaker, treat my works as I do my own sons or daughters. I don’t care if people are fond of them or despise them, as long as I created them with my best intentions and efforts. If these offspring of mine cannot live in their own country for whatever reason, let them be free. There is no reason to mutilate them in fear of the system. Otherwise there is no reason for one to continue making art.”

In this way, film itself has been an act of rebellion and activism. By also having films with queer themes for queer people - even if the representation is questionable, we are still essentially creating queer spaces where the community can come together in one place for one common thing. This is how queer film ties into the group exhibit theme of Open Books, Open Minds - queer film works in a similar way to how libraries serve as political spaces, and how we aim to make safe spaces for queer communities.

By Annabel Viravec
We have always taken care of each other. In extreme cases, it meant handling what happens when we’re arrested for existing or simply surviving. While diving into the G/H archives, I came across Bitch Queen, a zine originating in late 60’s/early 70s Boston that traveled all the way to Chicago and other parts of the country. It always amazes me to see how far we reach in order to connect. The anonymous author of Bitch Queen decided that the zine needed to serve as a vehicle for support and mutual aid. They did so by compiling resources that would affect the most vulnerable. The zine itself was easy to mail and carry on hand when needed.

This specific edition of Bitch Queen featured two prominent issues, abortion and arrest. Before the passing of Roe v. Wade in 1973, those seeking abortion treaded carefully. The author of Bitch Queen shared how faking a hemorrhage at safely deemed hospitals/doctors could save people. The article went through step by step to guide pregnant readers of what to ask for. Any misstep could lead to personal injury or arrest. Pictures were provided for examples.

Queer people faced constant threat of arrest for simply existing, but were also subjected to police harassment. An arrest could lead to imprisonment, high fines, or more state sanctioned violence. Bitch Queen featured a queer trans prostitute to explain how to avoid arrest, police harassment, or what to do when arrested. They printed public defender numbers, named rights, specific behaviors to avoid when out and about. Learning from each other about survival was key to persisting.

Bitch Queen’s zine focuses on community support and how we take care of each other. I drew connections from the sentiments of “we take care of each other” to DePaul’s Liberation Zone encampment. One of our community values was “we take care of us.” Even after the CPD raid, there were mutual aid efforts to raise money for stolen items and legal support for those arrested.

At our core, Open Books Open Minds is about community. Queer community delivers community through action. From making a zine and compiling resources to showing solidarity, the connections between our group’s theme and Bitch Queen lie within the timeless care for the people we surround ourselves with.

By Nadia Carolina Hernandez


“Cops Ride Again.” *Mattachine Midwest*, Chicago, Sept. 1968, 1

“Cops Ride Again.” *Mattachine Midwest*, Chicago, Sept. 1968, 5


