

Symbols of Pride

Listed below are some symbols that have been adopted by gays, lesbians and their allies along with the significance of each.

Stonewall & Pride Celebrations

On June 28, 1969, a routine raid on the Stonewall Bar on Christopher Street in New York City turned into a riot when patrons resisted. The patrons barricaded themselves inside the bar. The riot escalated until reinforcements arrived. The riots continued for several evenings. This rebellion, begun by drag queens and bar patrons, marked the beginning of the modern gay and lesbian movement. Each June, Pride marches, rallies, and celebrations are held throughout the nation commemorating Stonewall.



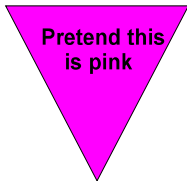
Double Woman Symbol

Also known as "the mirror of Venus". This symbol represents the planet Venus, metal, copper and femininity. The double woman symbol represents woman loving woman.



Double Man Symbol

Derived from the astrological symbol of Mars. Mars was the Greek God of War and patron of warriors. The arrow is a phallic symbol. The double man symbol represents man loving man.



The Pink Triangle

When the Allied forces liberated the Nazi concentration camps, the horrors they discovered shocked a disbelieving world. That millions had been systematically tortured and murdered seemed beyond human capacity for violence and hate. The Holocaust forever changed our understanding of the potential of evil..

Concentration camp prisoners were classified by a set of colored triangles, and pink was reserved for homosexuals. When liberation came in the mid-1940's, most of the survivors were set free. Homosexuals, however, were taken by the U.S. Army personnel from concentration camps to allied prisons.

Since the 1940's, the pink triangle has become one of the most recognizable and powerful symbols for gay people and the oppression they have faced throughout Western History. The pink triangle was a commonly used insignia throughout the early gay liberation movements. It appears in photographs and film footage of the early marches and demonstrations. The pink triangle was ubiquitous at the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1987. It is a reminder of the statement, "Never Again!"

Red
Orange
Yellow
Green
Blue
Purple

The Rainbow Flag

The Rainbow Flag has been adopted by the gay and lesbian community as its own design. It depicts not the shape of the rainbow but its colors in horizontal stripes.

Created in 1978 for San Francisco's Gay Freedom Celebration by local artist, Gilbert Baker, it was inspired by the "Flag of the Races", which had five stripes - one each for the colors of humankind's skin - flown at the 1960 college campus demonstrations.

Major gay and lesbian parades in New York, Houston, Vancouver and Toronto began to fly the six-stripe Rainbow Flag. It is prominently displayed at all homosexual events. In New York, the Rainbow Flag drapes coffins of people who have died of AIDS and is frequently displayed on hospital doors. The AIDS ward of a Sydney, Australia hospital flies the Rainbow Flag as a symbol of hope. A gay yacht club in the Netherlands uses a burgee based on the Rainbow Flag. In a few short years, the flag has spread worldwide to represent a movement. Its success is not due to any official recognition but to the widespread spontaneous adoption by members of the community it represents.



The Labrys

The double-bladed ax comes from mythology as the scepter of the goddess Demeter (Artemis). It may have originally been used in battle by female Scythian warriors. The labrys appears in ancient Cretan art and has become a symbol of lesbianism.

The Lambda

Chosen by the Gay Activist Alliance in 1970 as the symbol of the gay movement, the lambda is the Greek letter "L". A battle flag with the lambda was carried by a regiment of ancient Greek warriors who were accompanied in battle by their young male lovers and noted for their fierceness and willingness to fight to the death.



Freedom Rings

Designed by David Spada with the Rainbow Flag in mind, these six colored aluminum rings have come to symbolize independence and tolerance of others. They were quickly adopted by the Gay community and at a recent march in New York, onlookers waited five deep to purchase them. The rings are frequently displayed or worn as jewelry and can be found as necklaces, bracelets, rings, and keychains.

Adapted by Vernon Wall, 1992