INDEPENDENT PROJECT

Research and Development

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ADVA6000

BRIEF

Design a series of mural street art installations that highlight the dangers of rejecting an indvidual for their sexuality.

Source an appropriate location, and create an interactive guerilla tactic that brings awareness/conversation to those who typically would not advocate LGBT acceptance.

PERSONAL TO ME

Extending the basis off the changemakers module I decided to self reflect about my own experiences and what I have witnessed others close to me go through as gay men.

The person in the picture to the right is a relative who is close to me, I have kept them annonymous out of respect.

My changemakers module was a celebration of Queer identity and expression. However time and time again in my life this is not the case for everyone.

My relative drunkingly confided in me they were also gay. Always have been, but due to fear and rejection of Peers/Friends will not come out.





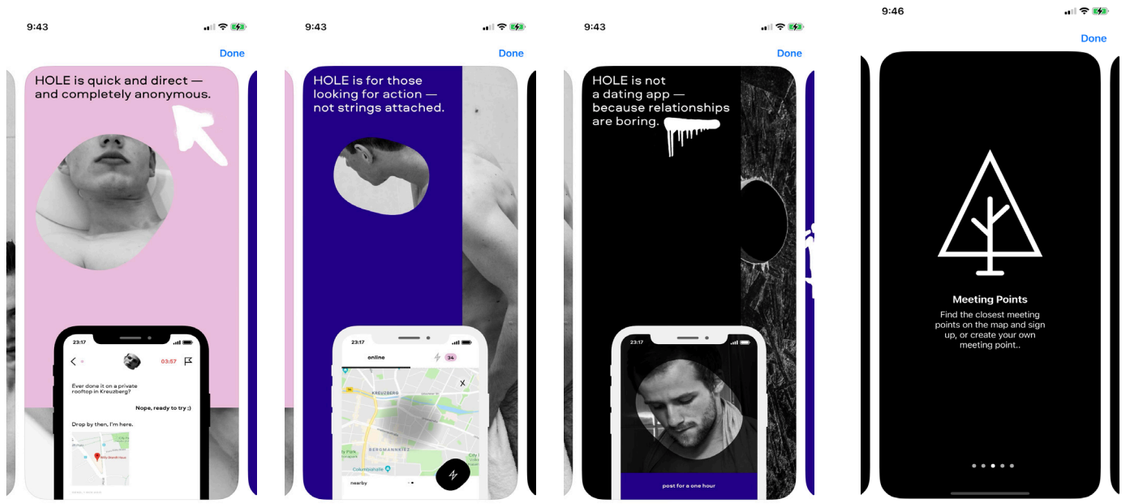
The image on the left is me and my ex. Every relationship has its ups and downs, however in this case a blatant dissaproving statement from his parents, "It's just a phase." Made the relationship hell for both of us, especially him.

Layered by internalised homophobia due to his football/hockey background and desire to work in full time education, the phrase spawned from his own father made him deeply ashamed of his identity, telling me that he wanted to end his own life due to those four words.

Ultimately 2 years since we ended (mostly due to his fathers distain). He has unfortunately reverted back into the closet. Had the support from family and friends been there for him at the start perhaps he could live an authentic life.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

These two examples are the most personal to me. I know many others that are experiencing the same thing. ranging from my age, all the way up to middle aged and married with kids. This sheds light on how many people fear rejection due to queer identity.



Oddly enough my initial idea was focusing on the dangers of queer dating apps. My plan was to make a 'safe space' gay friendship app that advocates for strong friendships above one night stands and hookups which have become so common in the queer community.

This idea was piggybacking off the experience of my relative, I do believe a service like that would be good for them.

However while I do feel passionate about the damage of gay dating apps I knew I could push further and really strike something that gets me fired up.

I then looked more into the experience of my ex and thats when I began to shift my idea onto a whole other topic, something that would perhaps benefit him and many others who have dissaproving friends and family.

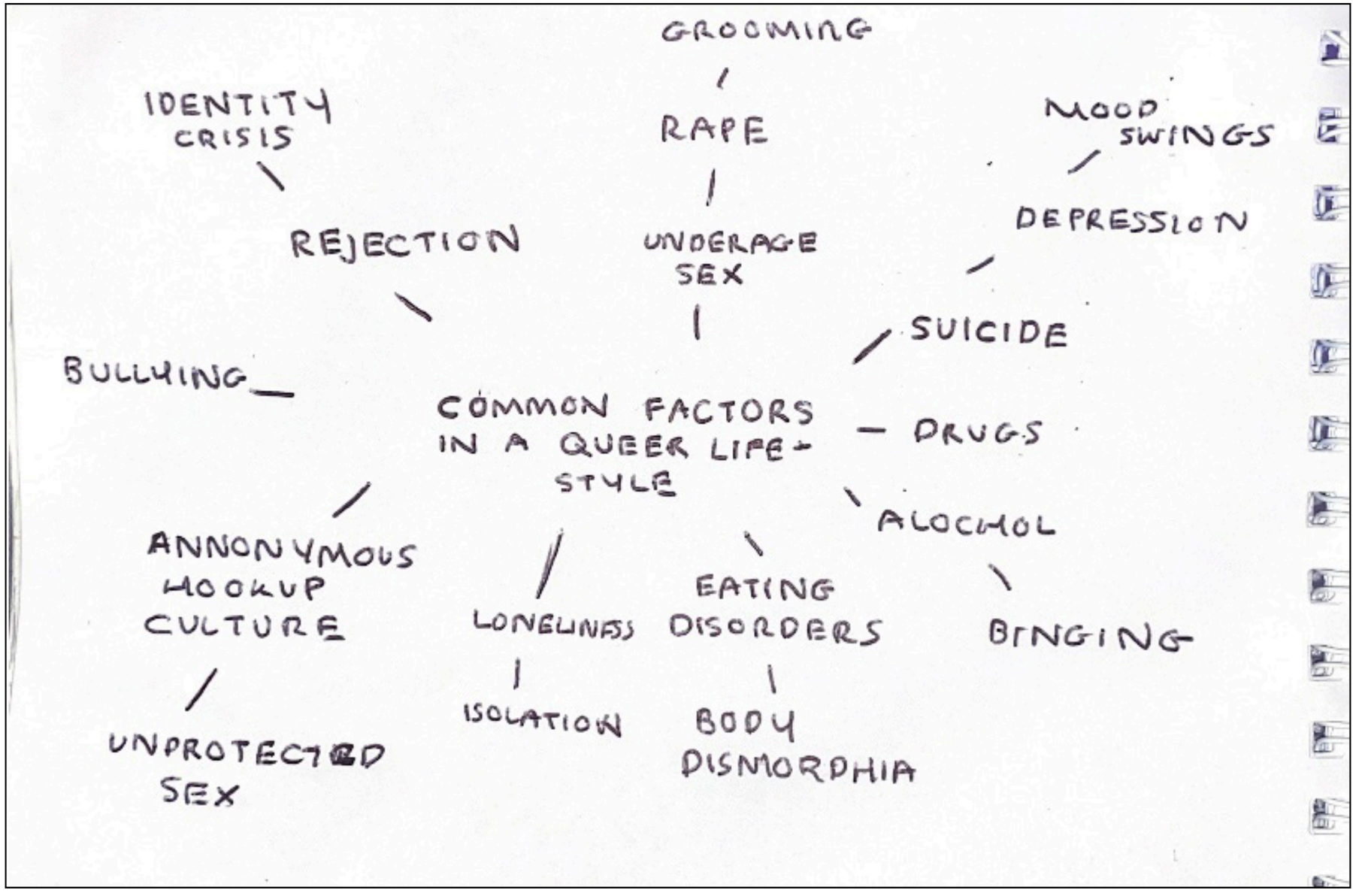
More than 60% of suicide attempts among LGBQ people happen within five years of realizing they are LGBQ

UPFRONT

Parents' rejection of a child's sexual orientation fuels mental health problems

By 10

These headlines really resonated with the tone and theme of what the project would later try and deflect away from.



Before fully settling on the direction of my final project I wanted to further explore factors of Queer identity more specifically men, I created this chart to visualise the vast areas of hurt and problems the community face.

POWERFUL MURALS

Due to the nature of the project and the dissertation being side by side, I had been focusing on the significance of Northern Ireland (where I am from) and murals. Murals back home are very controversial with a long history of representing marginalised groups. This is disscussed throughly in my dissertation, it got me thinking of how powerful a message on a wall can truly be.

With this in mind I set out to design my own murals that would help represent LGBT individuals, highlighting the dangers of rejectful words, especially 'ITS JUST A PHASE'.









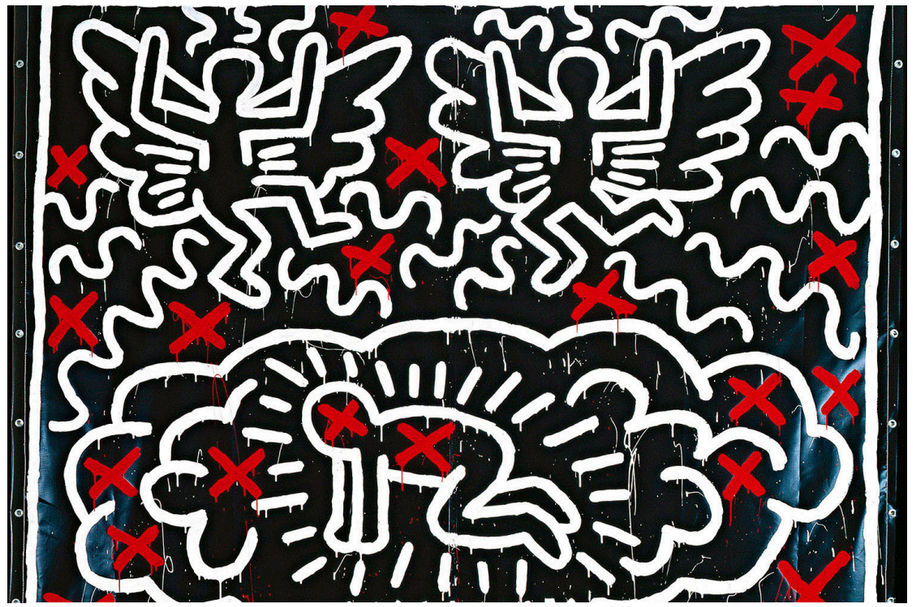


KEITH HARING

Whilst studying famous street artists and mural creators for my dissertation, Keith haring really stuck out for me as a lot of his work is based around gay identity and oppression.

Dawning some of the most famous campaigns and murals such as ‘STOP AIDS’ I was inspired by his punchy and to the point messaging that leaves little to the imagination.

His bright colours and simplistic style would inspire my final outomes, while Haring would be an inspiration I did not want to copy and paste his aesthetics, I wanted the mural designs to be my own distinguishable style, with reference to Haring throughout.







I got sketching later than planned, but that was okay because I knew the vision I had in mind. I roughly drew out some ideas that I thought would make strong mural campaigns. I was debating if some of the designs were too graphic for public consumption, for example, the man blowing his brains out with a bullet that is made from the word 'it's just a phase'. Later down the line I would modify these concepts to make it more digestible for all ages whilst still delivering a strong statement to those who need to hear it.

I normally do not enjoy sketching at all, in this case however I was enjoying coming up with ideas, perhaps due to the fact I felt so passionate about this cause.

As you will see in the upcoming design trials I adorned a little pink triangle at the start. When I began I thought this would be a nice logo/branding to put on the murals. The pink triangle was a nod to the oppressed gay men in the camps during WWII. The triangle was a marking of shame and belittlement.

Now in the 21st century the pink has been reclaimed by the community as a symbol of optomism and hope. At first I thought this would be nice as a feature, however many people who are not gay are not aware of the significance, which was an issue because my target demographic already lack education in this area. So I needed to start again and make something straightforward and targeted.

This branding did the idea behind the murals justice, getting the point across effortlessly. That being said this final logo is not what is featured on many of the upcoming early designs as I not only made a spelling mistake by not including an apostrophe between the T and S of 'it's' but also at the start the logo didn't feature the word 'NOT' so the branding actually looked like it was in support of telling people 'It's just a phase'

I learnt a valueable lesson, how a simple word or additional piece gives campaigns and logo a whole different meaning compared to its original intent. The details do matter.

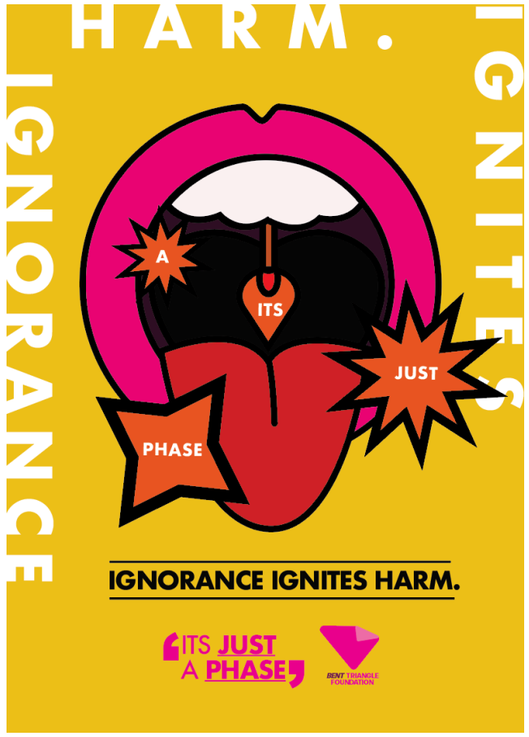


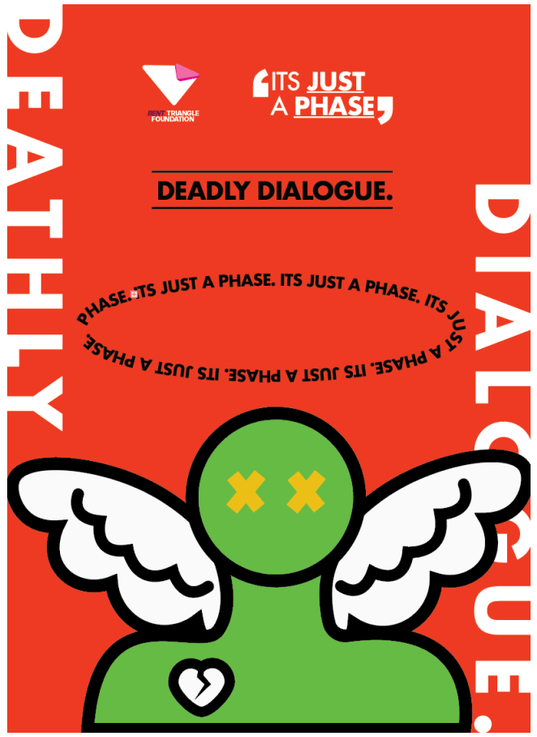
DEVELOPMENT

I was really happy with my first drafts of designs, they obviously needed tweaked and polished before they were ready to be mocked but at this point I wanted to get my design language grounded. As you can see they feature the old pink triangle, which I actually think looked really cool on the designs, however they do not communicate what the campaign is about.

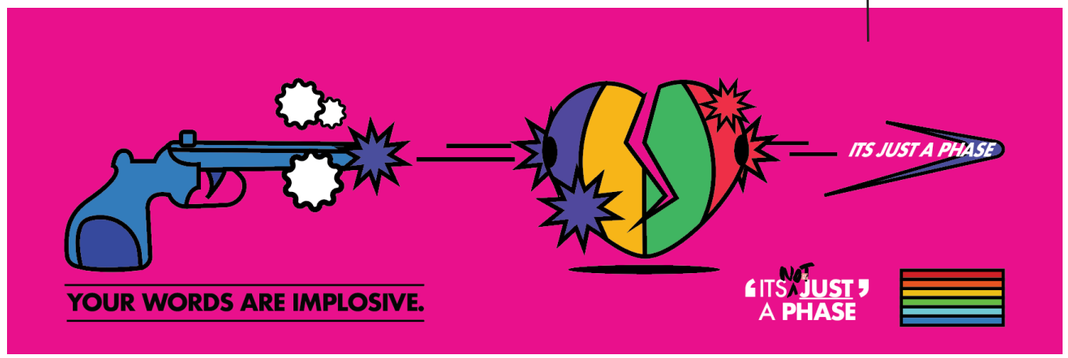
In these versions I snatched the text from the statements in each one to create a experimental border. I decided in the end to ditch this format as I felt this was unecessary information.



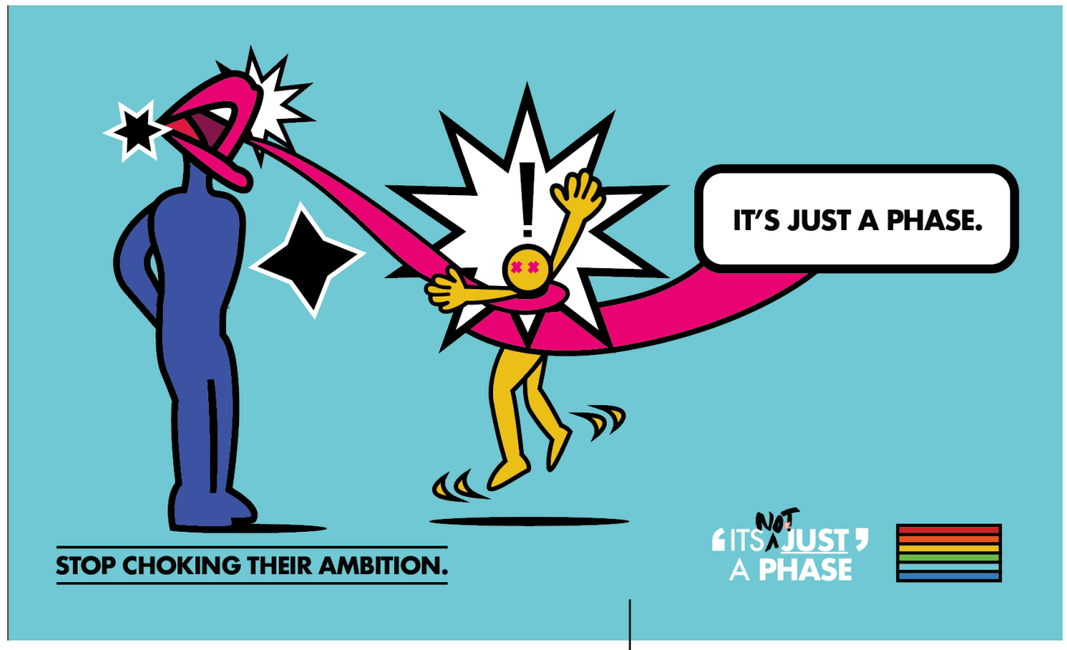




Minor tweaks to allow for a better flow of information. The word not had now been included into the body of the logo, however that spelling of ‘ITS’ instead of ‘IT’S” was something I did not catch until the very end.

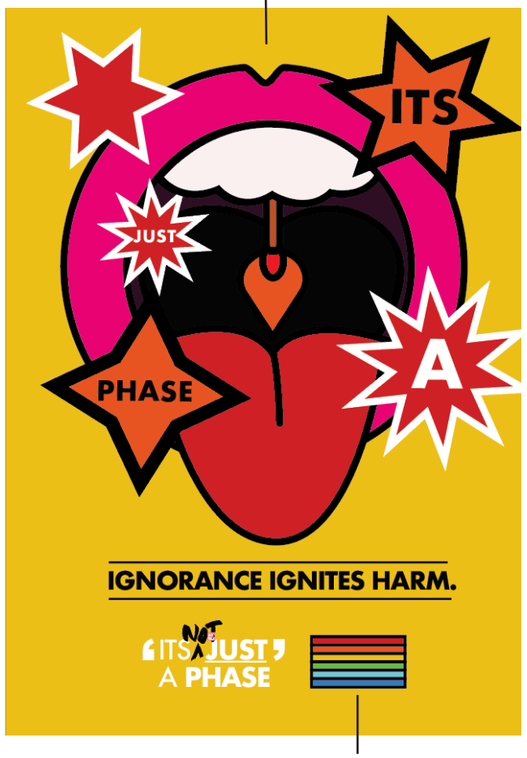


The gun is now shooting through a heart instead of a head from the original sketches, this is more tamed while still referencing the ‘heartbreak’ those words carry.



This was my first idea for when I thought of this project, it felt satisfying to see it come to life. I probably spent the most time on this one, trying to get everything just right, the most simple ideas are often the hardest to communicate. I like to think of the blue character as a monster with that big mouth for a head, I feel many people would see their oppressor as this monsterous/alien figure.

The matchstick as a tonsil prolong the idea that ignorance ‘IGNITES’ harm. The murals all feature star like shapes as part of the design principils, in this case they are the sparks flying out ready to burn its victim.

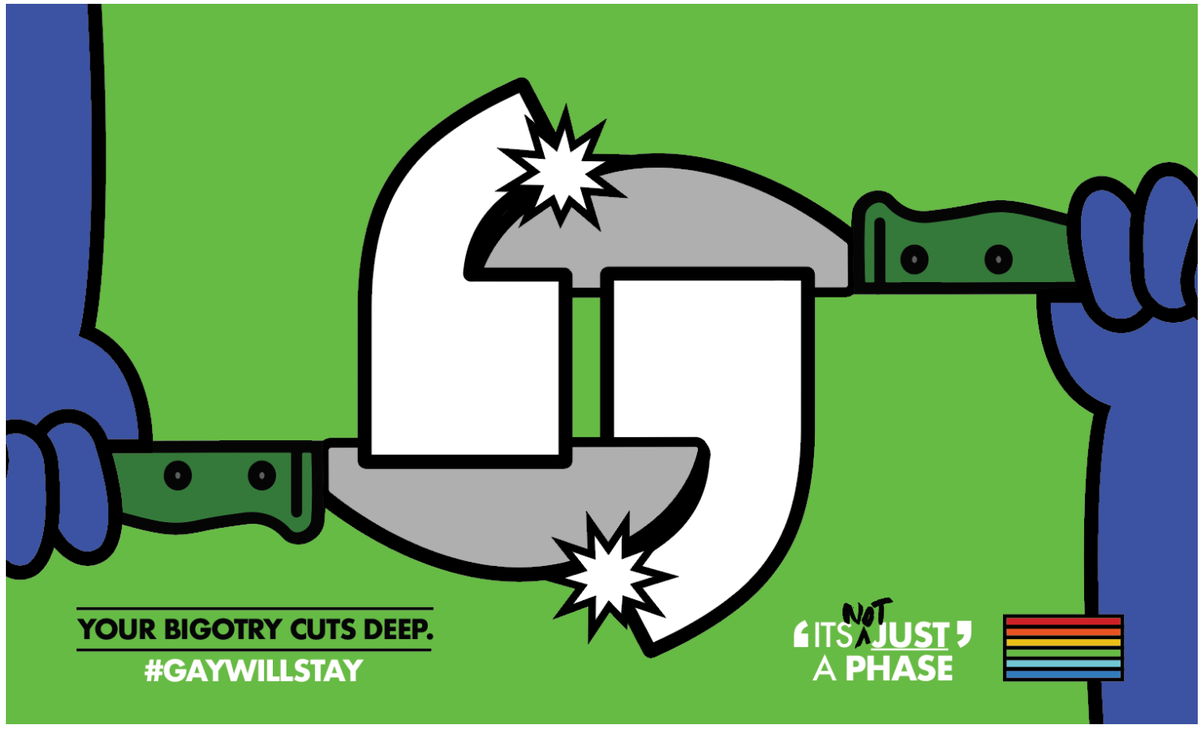


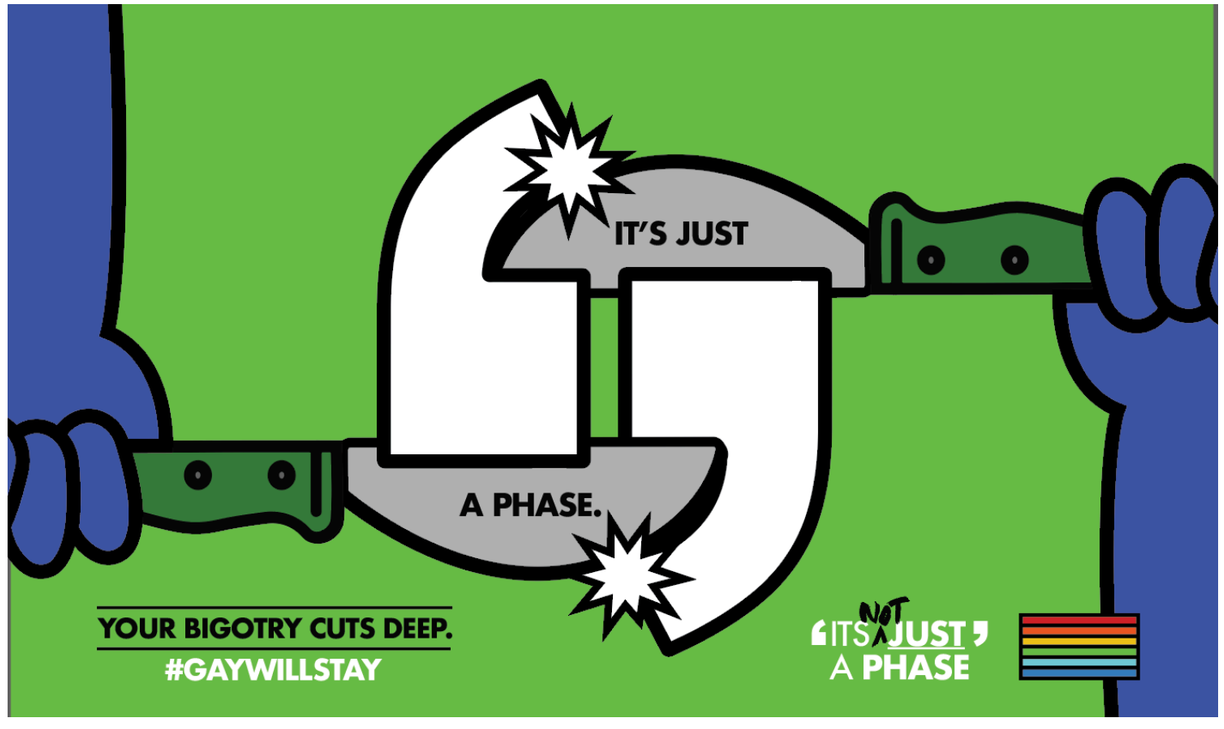
Me and my lecturer discussed the importance of the rainbow in the same way the triangle is important to LGBT members. This symbol is more recognisable, and demonstrates quickly that the designs are in aid of gay people. so it is placed beside the ‘IT’S (NOT) JUST A PHASE’ branding.

I really love this design and made this character a priority in other mocks for socks etc later down the line. Almost like a mascot for this campaign. His halo are the words that killed him.



This is another example of something simplistic taking ages to get just right. the curves in the speech marks house knife points of the the same size, looking like the knifes are jabbing the marks. Even though someone who did not make these or see them in order would arguebly never make a connection, I like to think the blue hands are the hands of the monster in 'STOP CHOKING THEIR AMBITION.'





For each design I tried to have a new colour scheme or anchoring colours swap E.G the background, this helped make each one unique and memorable.

This design is a bit of a sensitive subject for me! I was really proud of the idea and what it was trying to say, the figure is a product in a supermarket with expiration date labels across his body, with the tagline 'GAY HAS NO EXPIRY'. However I could not seem to get it how I wanted it to be. I got feedback from a lecturer saying good things, but I personally was not happy and felt it didnt visaully communicate the idea the way in which I wanted it too.





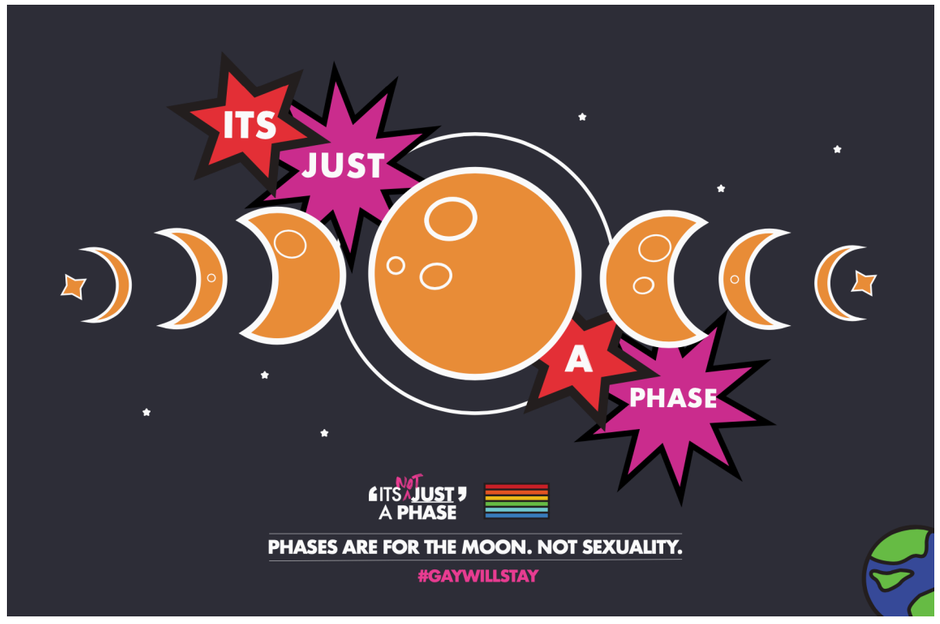
The design on the right is the latest version before I changed my idea, and in this case I think I prefer the first draft on the left, the newer iteration feels too simplified in my opinion. You win some, you loose some. This design did not make the final cut.



Moving forward I had quite the tumultuous relationship with this design. This is probably my favourite tagline I just needed to get my visual imagery in line with the aesthetics of the previous designs. This also had the biggest change in design for a piece that would make the final cut.

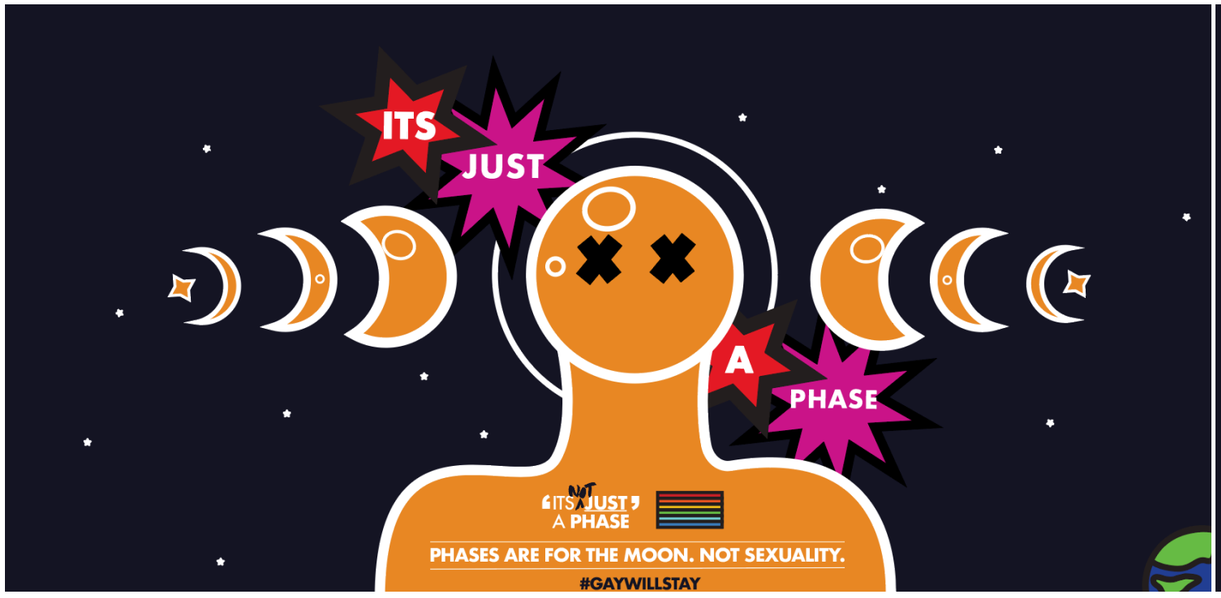
On the bottom right I felt at this point I was done and I loved the more saturated colours. However something was missing. Every design so far had some humanistic trait, E.G a heart, a hand or an actual figure. This did not and thats why I felt it was sticking out for the wrong reasons.





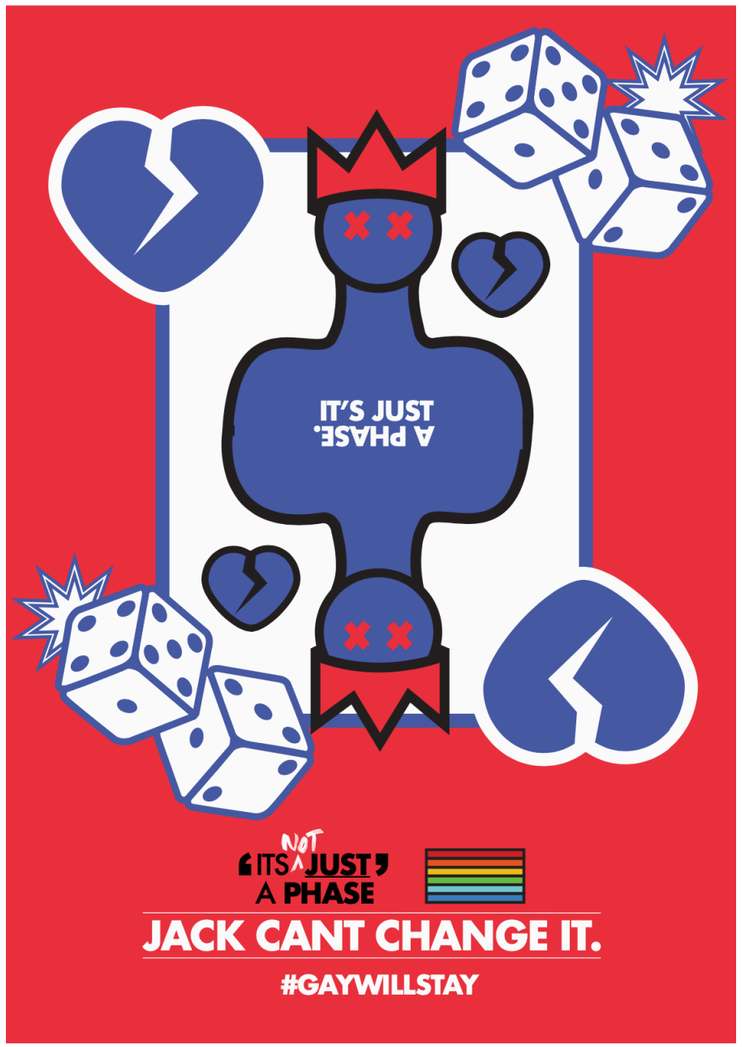
I then made the full moon in the middle, a figures head, I think this not only brought a humanistic trait but also brings a double meaning, the character is in space, with no air to breathe. Suffocating. I imagine many people who have been told their identity is a phase feel the same way.

This was going to be on a longer mock so I made the characters body bigger on the right, which also gave more freedom for the words to be registered.





Notice at this point I have made my 'figures' genderless. While my project is founded off a boys perspective of being told 'its just a phase' this is not limited to only men, women face the same scrutiny, I want the family and friends of women who have been told the same speech, to be apart of the conversation



This is the replacement for the 'EXPIRY DATE' design. At first I was apprehensive, as you can see in the design above the placment and style was rather awkward, even the tagline may not make immediate sense straight away. People may not even know its a card game card!



After adjusting some issues I was loving the final outcome, in fact this is probably my favourite, The sword of the king of hearts piercing the bleeding heart, The king can also be seen as a figure of greater influence (aka a parent) a nice metaphor to the situation at hand. The dice are an additive to back up the theme of games being played.



After some feedback I was advised to put 1 of the dice infront of the card for some perspective, I did this and turned up the saturation, visually this was my favourite design.



I did not intend for this design to be the one carrying the most blunt message or shock factor, however like the last few designs I have been basing them off how I feel at the time without much planning so it captures my authentic rage for anybody who would say those 4 words to their family or friends.

That being said the first version was mild, but did not evoke my anger or capture the spirit of what I was trying to say as clearly as it could.



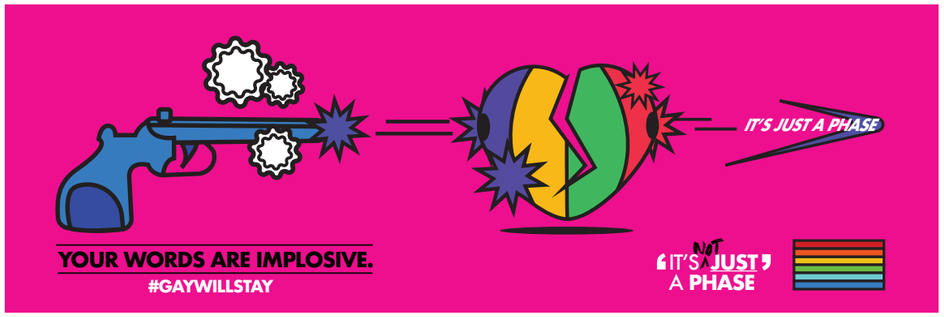
At this point I went rogue and just said exactly what I felt was neccessary to communicate the grievance people have been put through who are subjected to such cruelty. I think for me making these designs and dwelling on the past with my ex specifically it has stirred up a lot of emotions of anger/sadness and I feel this design is justified with the brutal tagline and sombre imagery (with a whitty twist of the coffin being served on a plate). Unfortunatley this is the reality. I know from others experiences all too well how negatively this impacts ones view of themselves and desire to live.

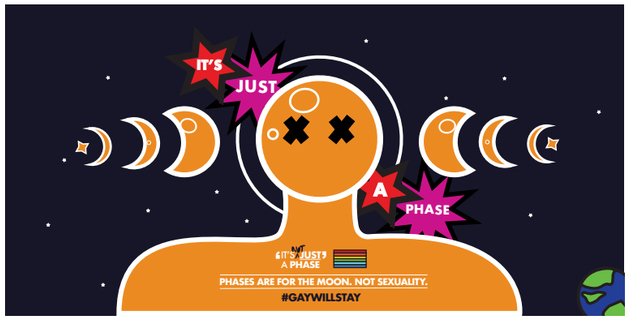
ALL DESIGNS OVERVIEW



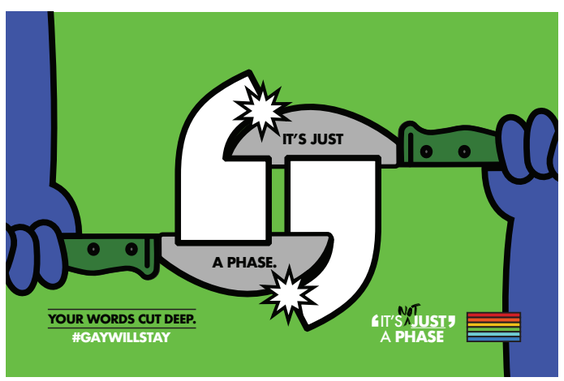




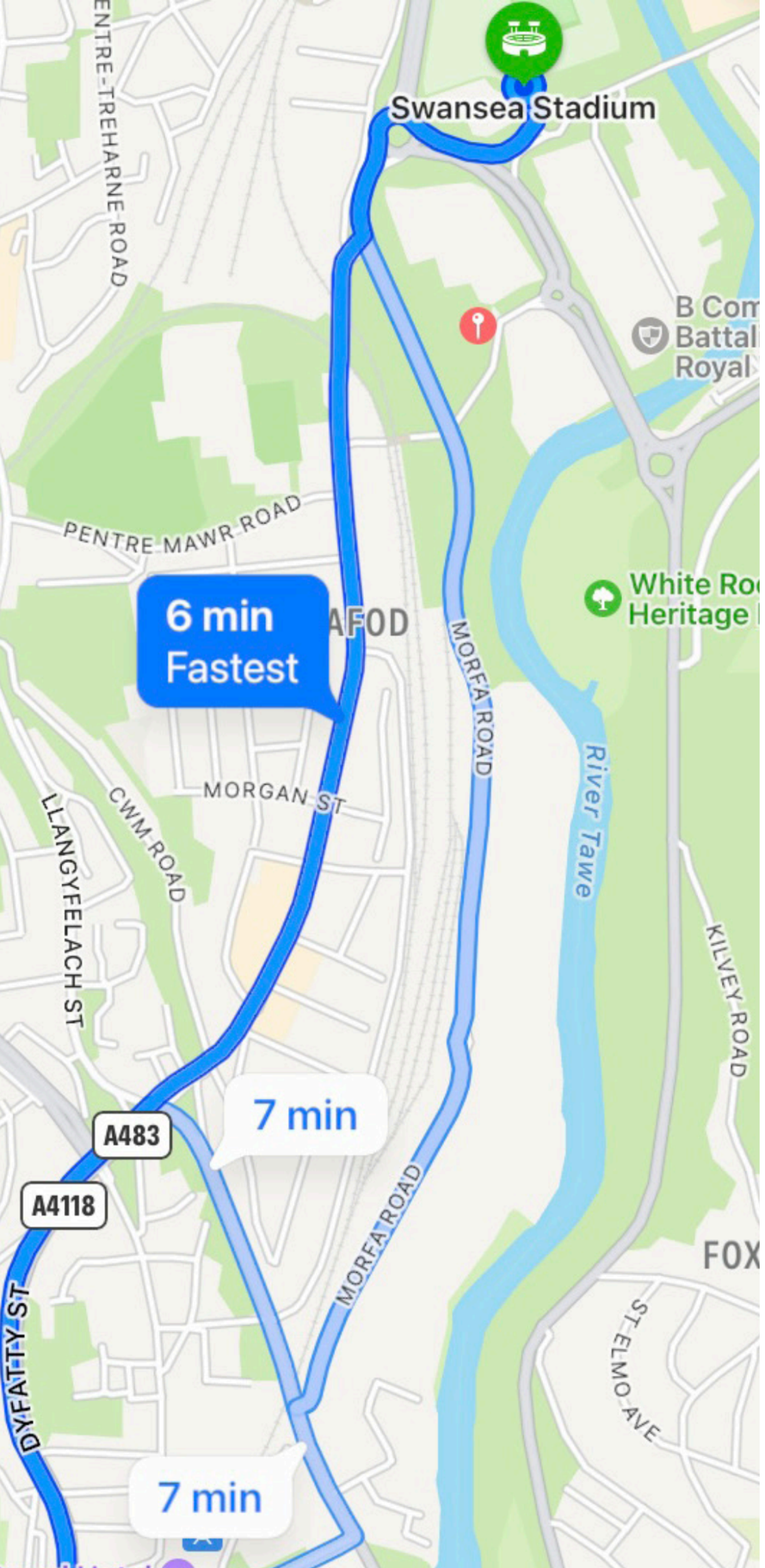












‘THE WALK’

While disscussing the location for these designs to be be mocked as murals I disscussed the signifiant role that sports had in the diminishing of LGBT people. Whether it’s team mates, or family and friends who are into sport. While I am aware that this can be viewed as a sweeping statement, I am not saying that everyone who plays or enjoys sports is homophobic, that is simply not the cause or true.

However what I am trying to communicate is that from my own experience, and experience of others I know, there is a lot of hateful language in football stadium crowds, lockerooms, sports bars during a match etc. In the case of my ex boyfriend, his football mad dad lived up to the cliche of biogated sports fan who will not accept any less than a hetronormative son.

Historically sports and queer identity have never gone hand in hand.

Talking to my lecturer he explained the signifiance of ‘The walk’ to the staduim on match day. Due to insuffient parking many fans park in town and walk to the staduim, which is part of the experience of match day, everyone walking as one, making new mates, having a laugh, the camaraderie in the air walking to the stadium is what many fans look forward too just as much as the match itself.

This gives many fans a chance to soak up the enviroment around them, given that homophobic sports fans are my main demographic, the streets leading up to Swansea stadium was a perfect set of locations to place my murals and street art installations.

I went out with my camera and walked to the stadium, photographing ideal locations for my work to be painted on if this was a real campaign. The importance of them being painted on large scale structues, E.G walls and bridges calls back to my research into murals in ireland in my dissertation and the importance of large scale works, alongside location.













WORLD CUP 2022 AND PREJUDICE

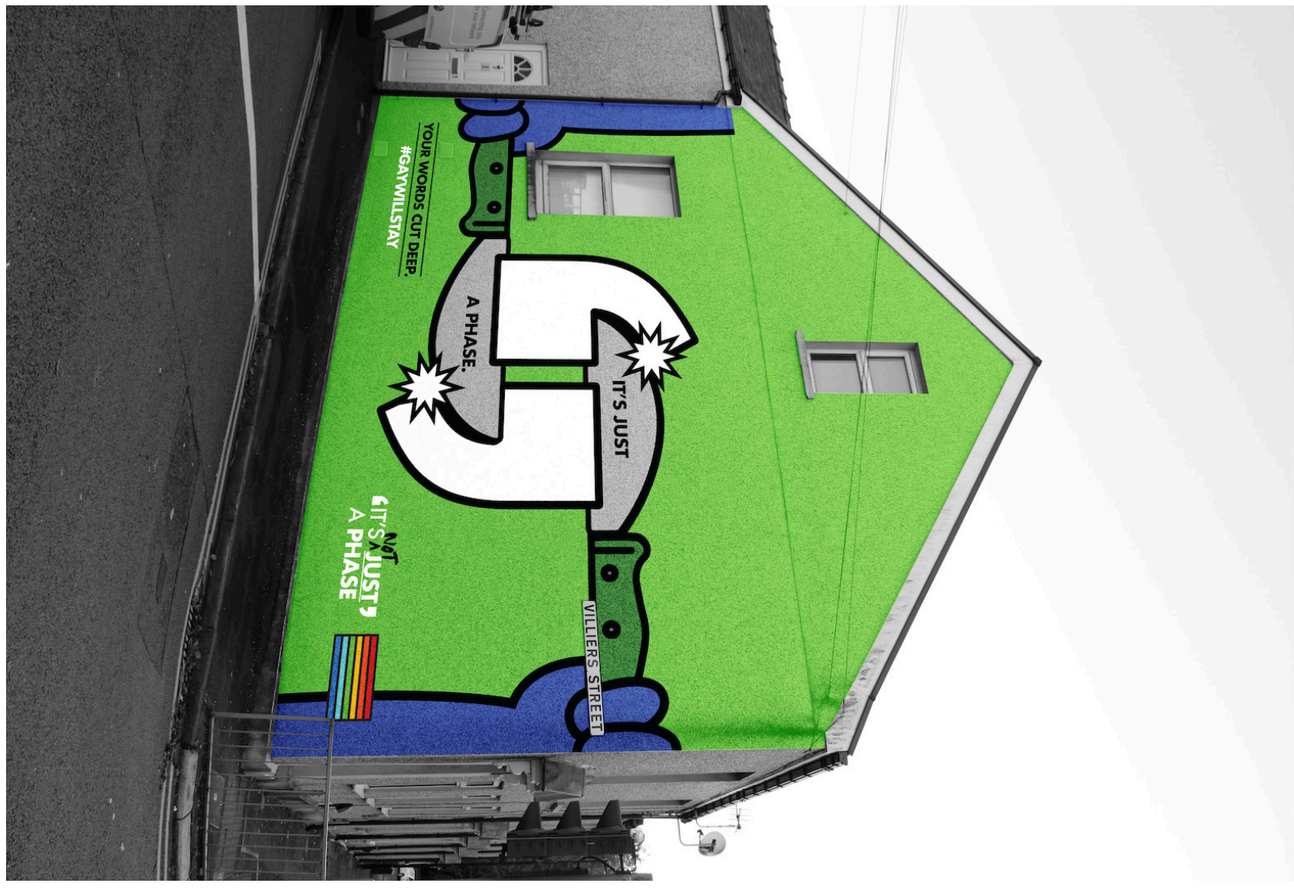
I chose a very interesting and relevant time to create a mural campaign on the basis of sports and homophobia, considering the FIFA World Cup had been gearing up to start with many conversations about human rights/LGBT issues and sports due Qatars strict dissaproval of gay people in particular,

Heigtened even further by European teams opting to not wear the rainbow armband which has been a new addition in the world of football as an anti-discrimination campaign.

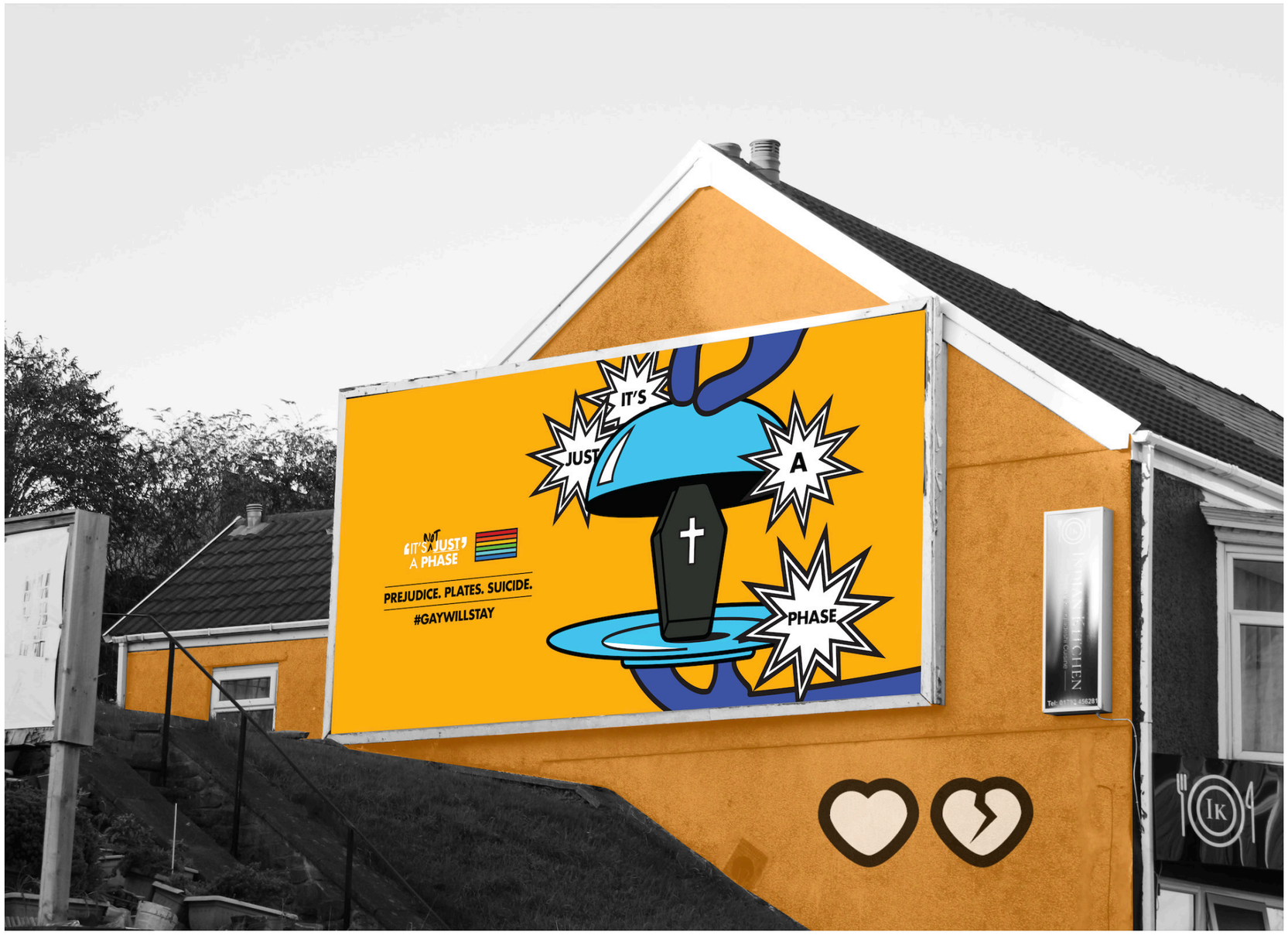
The discourse of the armband and human rights of those attending the football matches only further highlight the work that needs to be done to stop bigotry whether it is corporal or within our own circle.

MOCK-UPS


IT'S NOT JUST A PHASE
DEATH BY FOUR WORDS.
#GAYWILLSTAY
IT'S JUST A PHASE. IT'S JUST A PHASE
IT'S JUST A PHASE. IT'S JUST A PHASE


IT'S JUST
A PHASE.
WILLIERS STREET
YOUR WORDS CUT DEEP.
#GAYWILLSTAY
IT'S NOT JUST A PHASE


IT'S
JUST
A
PHASE
"IT'S JUST" A PHASE
PHASES ARE FOR THE MOON. NOT SEXUALITY.
#GAYWILLSTAY
MORGAN STREE
(NUMBERS 1 & 2)
LEADING TO
TAWE AVENUE
T
OE64 EEU


IT'S
JUST
A
PHASE
IT'S NOT JUST A PHASE
PREJUDICE. PLATES. SUICIDE.
#GAYWILLSTAY


YOUR WORDS ARE IMPLOSIVE.
#GAYWILLSTAY
IT'S JUST A PHASE
4.4m
15'-0"


#GAYWILLSTAY
ITS
JUST
A
PHASE
IGNORANCE IGNITES HARM.
#GAYWILLSTAY

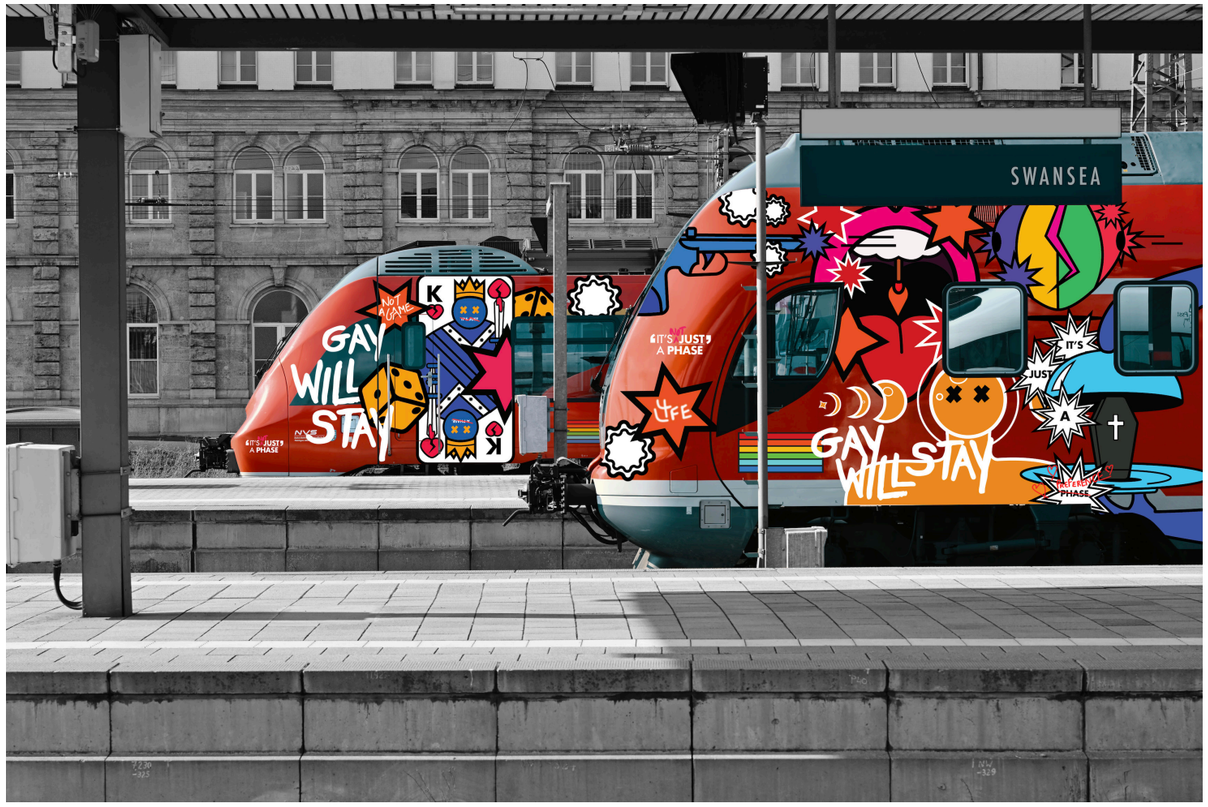

IT'S JUST A PHASE.
STOP CHOKING THEIR AMBITION.
#GAYWILLSTAY
EXIT
TICKET OFFICE
ENTRY


SEXUALITY ISN'T A GAME.
#GAYWILLSTAY

In my disseratation I discussed how important graffiti sprayed onto to trains in the 1970s was for street art and expression of beliefs and identity through public artwork.

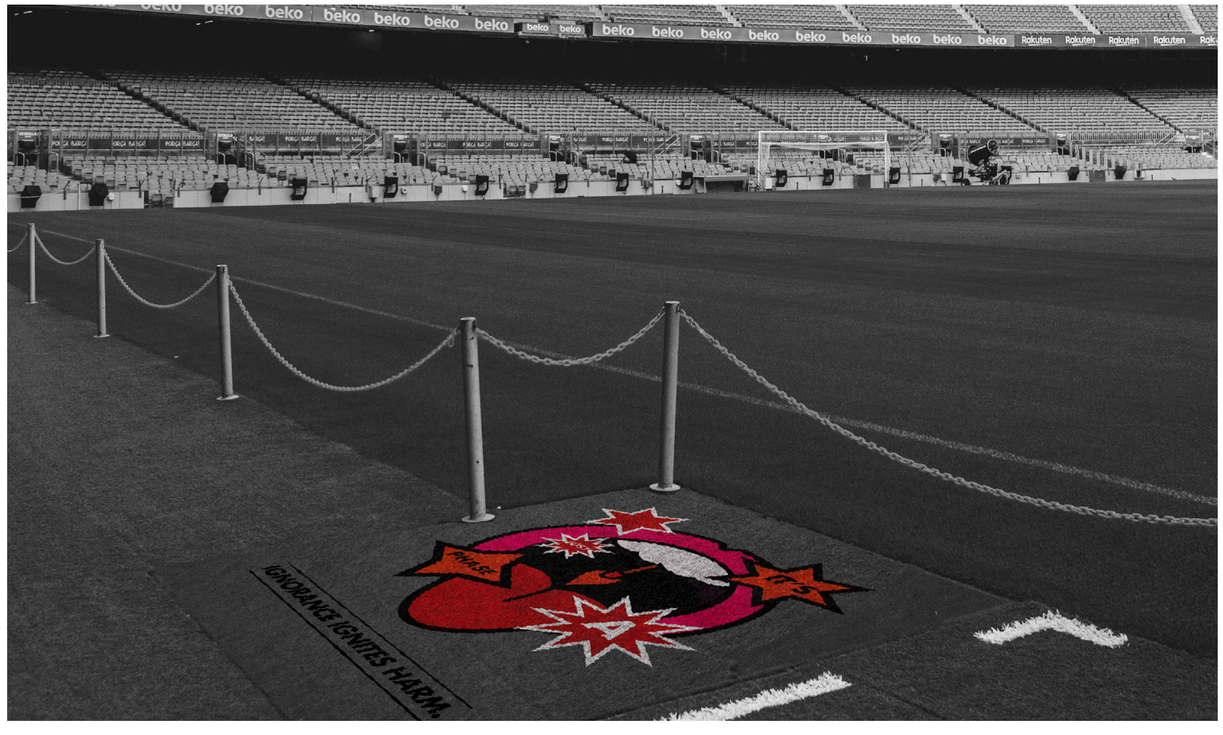
I had to honour these pioneers somewhere in my project, I mocked up this graffiti/mural bomb that would be done on match day for those travelling to the staduim to watch the game. Particularly relevant to Swansea as the trains drive past the stadium on an elevated track for all to see.






MAPFRE STADIUM
IT'S
JUST
A
PHASE
PHASES. PLAYS. SUICIDE.
#GAYWILLSTAY


IT'S NOT A JUST PHASE
#GAYWILLSTAY
IT'S NOT A JUST PHASE
#GAYWILLSTAY


beko
Rakuten
IGNORANCE IGNITES HARM.


IT'S JUST A PHASE. IT'S JUST A PHASE
IT'S JUST A PHASE. IT'S JUST A PHASE
#GAYWILLSTAY

GUERILLA TACTIC

I stated in my brief I wanted to make a guerilla tactic that was interactive and emerses the user. Having talked about the role of 'The Walk' to the staduim on match day, I created these 'IT'S NOT JUST A PHASE' footballs.

The idea is to have these scattered throughtout the streets leading up to the stadium in hopes that those who interact with them kick them about and start a conversation

My ideal scenario would be a parent who is going to the game with mates, who has had a son/daughter come out to them, and they do not know how to feel about this news. Perhaps this conversation spurred by the balls campaign motive signals for a friend to offer advice as they have a gay child too.

Perhaps this tactic prompts someone to come out to a friend or family member that is assisting them to the match.

At the end of the day these are all idealisations but it would be nice to imagine that these simple footballs used to kickabout before the match starts, could be the gateway conversation to acceptance among friends and especially family.




Please be prepared to use
four coins* to pay
the initial minimum fee of 60p.
IT'S NOT JUST A PHASE


IT'S NOT JUST A PHASE


IT'S NOT JUST A PHASE


IT'S NOT JUST A PHASE


IT'S NOT JUST A PHASE

MATCH DAY MERCHANDISE









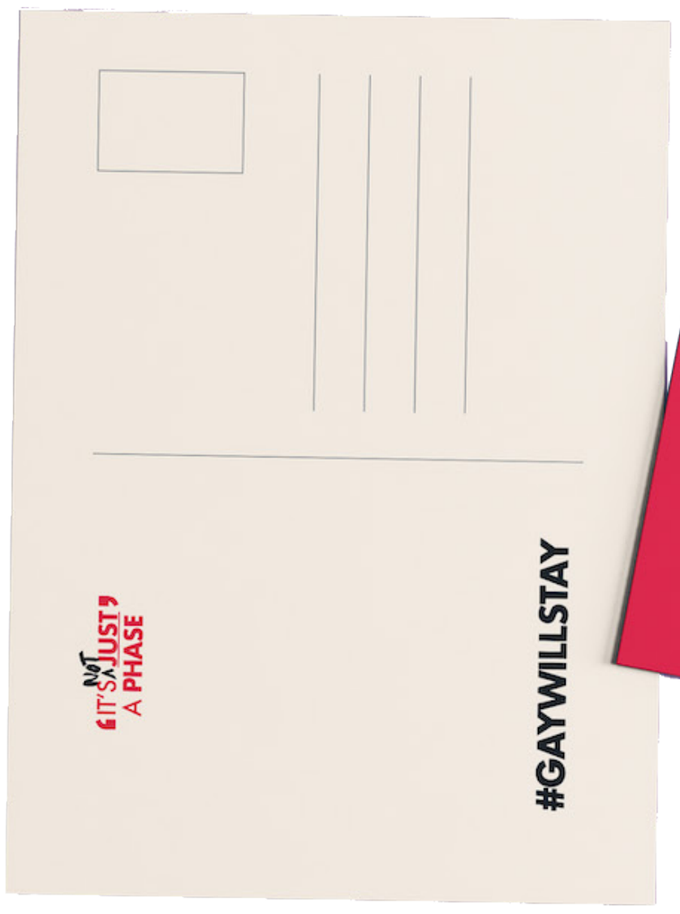





IT'S JUS
A PHASE.
YOUR WORDS CUT DEEP.
#GAYWILLSTAY
IT'S
A
PHASE
IGNORANCE IGNITES HARM.
#GAYWILLSTAY


STOP CHOKING THEIR AMBITION.
IT'S JUST A PHASE.
NOT
&IT'S JUST
A PHASE


IT'S JUST A PHASE.
STOP CHOKING THEIR AMBITION.
#GAYWILLSTAY
"IT'S NOT JUST" A PHASE


"IT'S NOT JUST" A PHASE
#GAYWILLSTAY


"IT'S NOT JUST" A PHASE
SEXUALITY ISNT A GAME.
#GAYWILLSTAY