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The internationally recognized symbol for peace (U+262E ☮ peace symbol in Unicode) was originally designed for the British nuclear disarmament movement by Gerald Holtom in 1958. Holtom, an artist and designer, made it for a march from Trafalgar Square, London to the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston in England, organised by the Direct Action Committee to take place in April and supported by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Holtom's design, the original of which is in the Peace Museum in Bradford, England, was adapted by Eric Austen (1922–1999) to ceramic lapel badges.



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Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). Holtom's design, the original of which is in the Peace Museum in Bradford, England, was adapted by Eric Austen (1922–1999) to ceramic lapel badges.

The symbol is a combination of the semaphore signals for the letters "N" and "D," standing for "nuclear disarmament". In semaphore the letter "N" is formed by a person holding two flags in an inverted "V," and the letter "D" is formed by holding one flag pointed straight up and the other pointed straight down. Superimposing these two signs forms the shape of the centre of the peace symbol. Holtom later wrote to Hugh Brock, editor of Peace News, explaining the genesis of his idea in greater depth: "I was in despair. Deep despair. I drew myself: the representative of an individual in despair, with hands palm outstretched outwards and downwards in the manner of Goya's peasant before the firing squad. I formalised the drawing into a line and put a circle round it." Ken Kolsbun, a correspondent of Holtom's, says that the designer came to regret the symbolism of despair, as he felt that peace was something to be celebrated and wanted the symbol to be inverted. Eric Austen is said to have "discovered that the 'gesture of despair' motif had long been associated with 'the death of man', and the circle with 'the unborn child'". Some time later, Peggy Duff, general secretary of CND between 1958 and 1967, repeated this interpretation in an interview with a US newspaper, saying that the inside of the symbol was a "runic symbol for death of man" and the circle the "symbol for the unborn child".

Graphical characteristics:

Symmetric, Closed shape, Monochrome, Contains both straight and curved lines, Has no crossing lines.

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