



THE FABRIC OF PROTEST

JUNE 2020



A monthly textile workshop by People's History Museum (PHM). Learn new techniques and discuss the issues that matter to you.

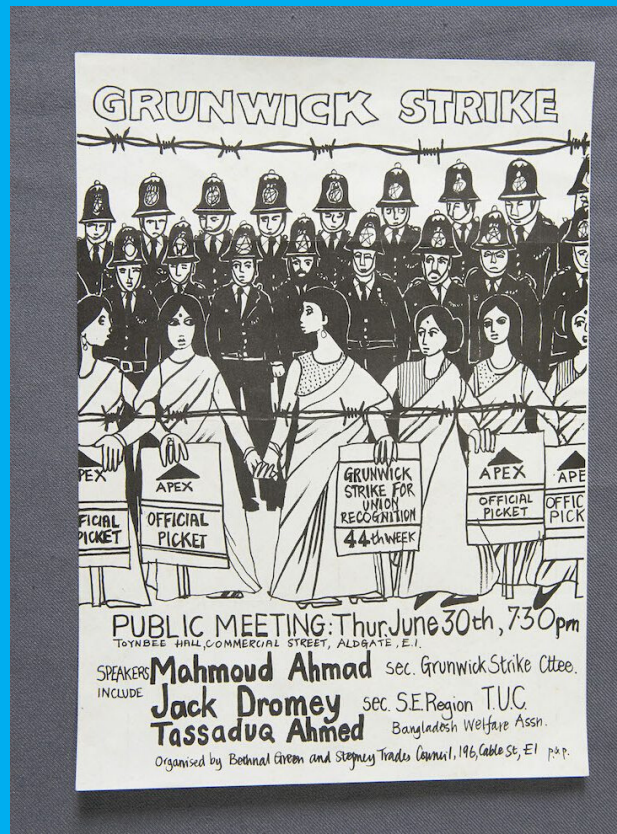
This resource is designed to provide inspiration and ideas for creativity online and at home.

Recommended for 11+

[#fabricofprotest](https://twitter.com/fabricofprotest)

phm.org.uk

This month we are taking inspiration from a 1977 **Grunwick strike poster** in the museum's collection. The hand drawn poster was used to publicise a meeting during the Grunwick strike of 1976 to 1978.



Grunwick strike poster, 1977 © People's History Museum

Jayaben Desai, a migrant originally from Gujarat, India, led the strike at the Grunwick film processing factory in north west London. The workers protested against the ways their managers treated them and demanded trade union recognition.

This poster is a reminder of how Covid-19 has emphasised our reliance on migrant workers and the essential services that they provide. Many migrant workers still face discrimination, inequality and vulnerability at work. Now more than ever we need to listen to their concerns and defend their rights.

This resource shows you how to make a mini textile banner to capture your thoughts and concerns about migrant workers and their rights.



We'll show you how to decorate the banner with designs inspired by embroidery techniques used in Gujarat, where Jayaben Desai was born.



MATERIALS

Gather some materials from around your home.
Here are some suggestions:

- **Fabrics**: brightly coloured piece of fabric a bit bigger than A4 size, and some smaller scraps of fabric
- **Paper**: newspaper or magazine
- **Shiny material**: foil, shiny sweet wrappers etc
- **Embellishments**: any other trims, beads, sequins etc
- **Threads**: embroidery and sewing threads
- **Sewing needle & pins**
- **Scissors**: fabric scissors and paper scissors
- **Felt tips, pencil, pen, ruler and some A4 paper**: for drawing
- **Pegs or garden canes**: for hanging the banner

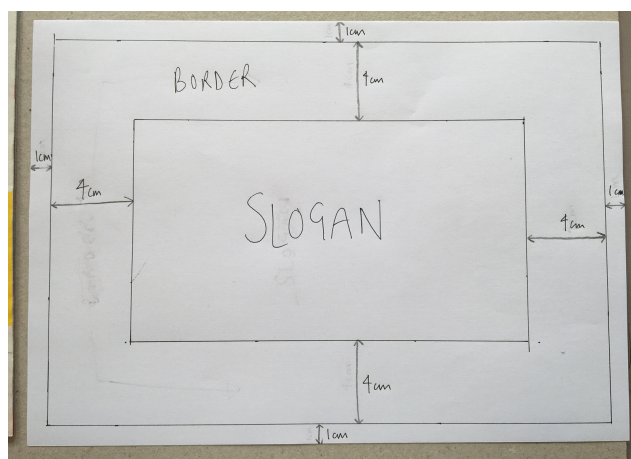
METHOD

1 Choose a bright piece of fabric

Use fabric that you will be able to write on with a pen. Cut your piece of fabric so that it is a little bigger than A4 paper.

2 Make a template for your design

Take an A4 piece of paper. Using a ruler, draw a line 1cm in from each edge. Measure 4cm in from these lines to create a border. You will create a stitched design for the border and inside you can write your slogan. Your banner can be portrait or landscape.



3 What do you want to say?

Think about what you would like to say on your mini banner. Look at the recent PHM blog post for more information on the Grunwick poster and strike. How have your experiences under lockdown changed your perceptions of migrant workers? Write these down on paper.

4 Design your border

The border will be inspired by Rabari embroidery, a type of Kutch embroidery which originates from Gujarat, where Jayaben Desai was born.

The Rabari designs use chain stitch and mirrors (shisha) and are reflective of the Rabari community's daily lives and mythology. We are not looking to appropriate this important cultural imagery. We will be making our own designs, referencing Jayaben Desai's legacy through the use of this embroidery technique. Search online for images and the history of Rabari embroidery to find out more.

On a new piece of paper, spend some time doodling to come up with some designs. Think about lines, geometric shapes and repeated patterns. How might you incorporate 'mirrors' in this design? Some of the stitching will be time consuming so keep the design simple.



5 Draw your design on the template

Draw out your final design on the template you made earlier. This will be your guide for the fabric banner.

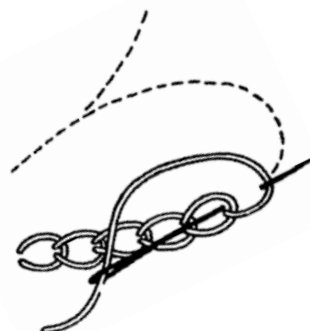
6 Add your slogan

Cut out the rectangle from the centre of your template and pin the border to the fabric. You can now add your slogan to the fabric in the centre. Words can be written in felt tip pen, stitched or appliquéd with fabric letters or words from magazines/newspapers.



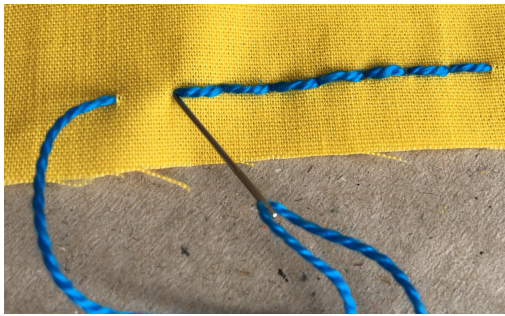
7 Stitch your border design

Copy your design onto your fabric using a pen or pencil. Again, use the border from the template to mark out the area. Rabari embroidery uses bright colours and black outlines. Use chain stitch to stitch out your design, starting with black and repeating the lines with different colours.



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You can experiment with a whipped or wrapped backstitch using different coloured threads.



8 'Mirrors' - shiny materials

Use your shiny materials to act as mirrors. Cut shapes and use sewing or embroidery threads to attach them to your fabric. Use chain stitch to stitch around the 'mirrors', incorporating them in your design.

Mirrors or 'shisha' are traditional symbols of protection against evil eyes or spirits.



9 Hang it up!

Use pegs or stitch a garden cane to your banner to hang it up in your home, a reminder of rights that need defending.

10 Share what you have created!

If you use social media, share photos of your work using **#fabricofprotest**

Tag People's History Museum in your photos so we can see what you have created.



@PHMMcr



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THE FABRIC OF PROTEST

Once a month join **artist Helen Mather** as she takes over PHM's Instagram stories @phmmcr for an hour of **stitching, chatting** and **sharing** inspired by the ideas in this resource.

This month we'll be online on
Saturday 27 June,
2.00pm - 3.00pm.

