



THE FABRIC OF PROTEST

AUG 2020



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

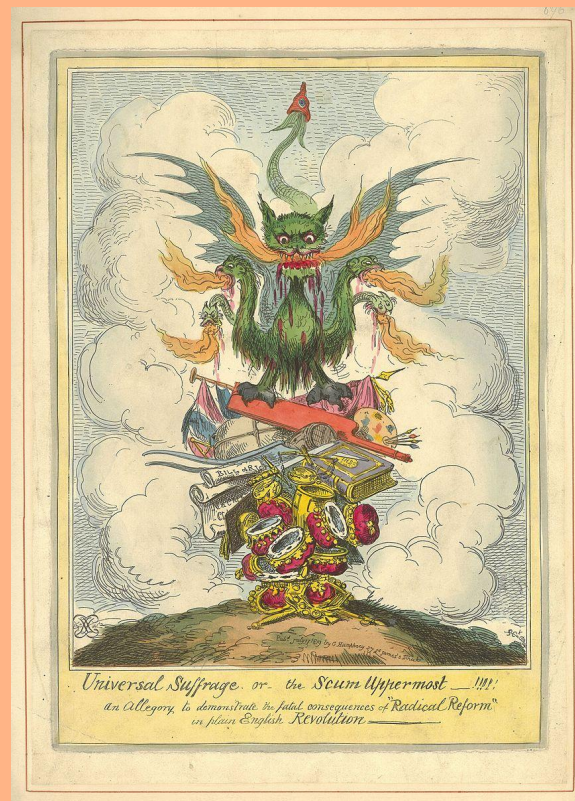
This resource is designed to provide inspiration and ideas for creativity online and at home.

Recommended for 11+

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

phm.org.uk

This month we are taking inspiration from the political print, *Universal Suffrage or The Scum Uppermost* by George Cruikshank, 1819.

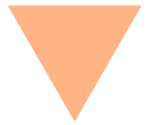


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This print shows a multi-headed beast sat on top of a precarious pile of symbolic objects; representing the arts, religion and royalty. It was designed to warn people of the dangers of reform and revolution, and was commissioned just one month before the Peterloo Massacre in August 1819. It was made at a time of immense inequality, when working class people were demanding the right to vote.

Throughout lockdown we have seen inequalities made more visible, for example in our care homes, in housing, and structures of racism and oppression. People are once again calling for change, reform, and a dismantling of the systems that do not work for everyone.

This resource shows you how to make a textile piece to acknowledge inequalities in our society and explore ideas of change to dismantle them.



We will be making 3D textile shapes which reflect the piling up of symbolic objects in the political print. With words stitched onto them, they can be dismantled and reassembled in ways to demonstrate ideas for change.



Materials

- **Fabrics:** At least six different pieces of fabric of varying sizes, from 10cm up to 20cm as a minimum
- **Stuffing:** wadding or fabric scraps & lentils or rice
- **Threads:** embroidery threads
- **Sewing needle & pins**
- **Scissors:** fabric & paper scissors
- **Pencil or pen & A4 paper:** for drawing

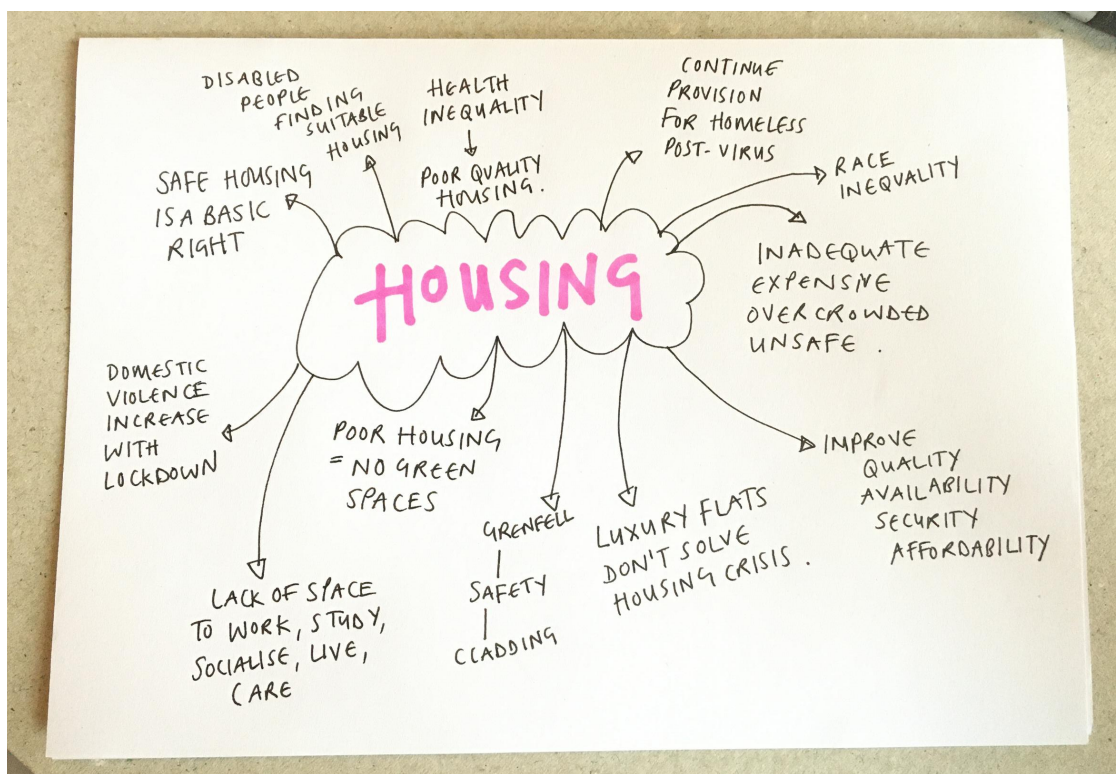
Method

1 What do you want to say?

We would like to hear your thoughts on inequalities that have become more visible through Covid-19. These may be things personal to you, or more general in society.

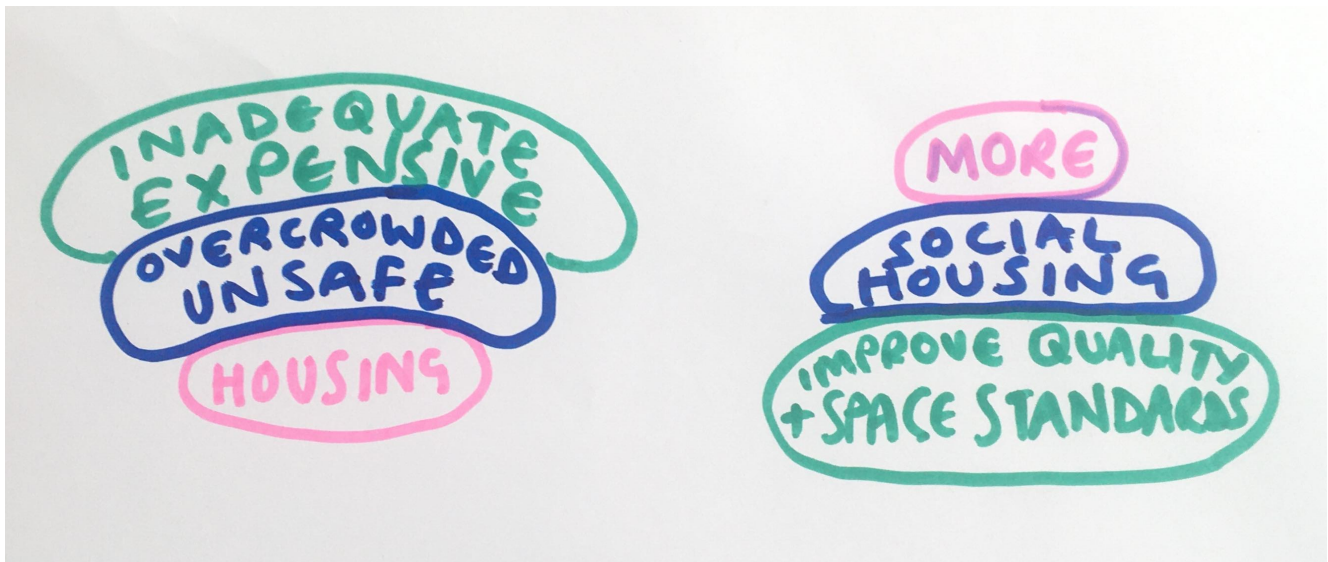
You may be thinking of issues around health and social care, housing, education, employment. And also the things that intersect these issues, such as race, age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, amongst others.

- ▼ In a few words, describe how these inequalities are shown. You can use paper to write down some ideas and try to get your meaning across in a short sentence or group of words. These words will be stitched on one side of your piece.



On the other side of the piece, we want to hear what are your hopes for change. You may be aware of some radical ideas for reform and have thought about smaller ways to approach these issues, or have a vision of how things could be. However wide reaching or small the steps, these ideas can be stitched onto the other side of your piece.

The idea is that the inequalities are imbalanced and can topple over, whilst the ideas for change are stable, to be built upon.

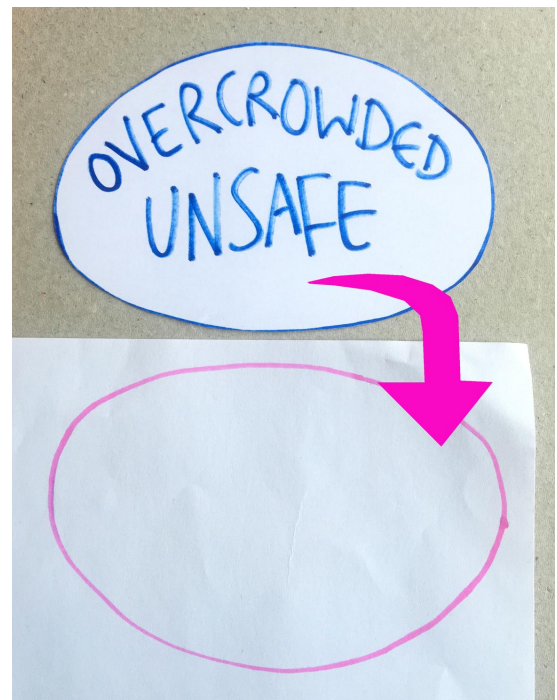
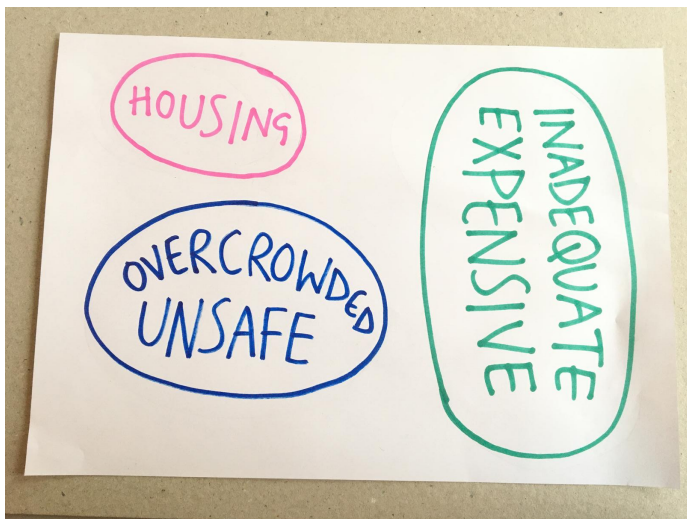


2 Designing shapes

The three oval type shapes will be stacked from small to large and then turned over and stacked from large to small. It is ok if you need to make a fourth shape so that the words will fit!

Your shapes can be any shape and size, from a minimum of around 7cm to however big you would like to go! When deciding the size, remember that once filled, the shapes will be smaller. As a guide, they could be about 10cm, 15cm and 20cm in size.

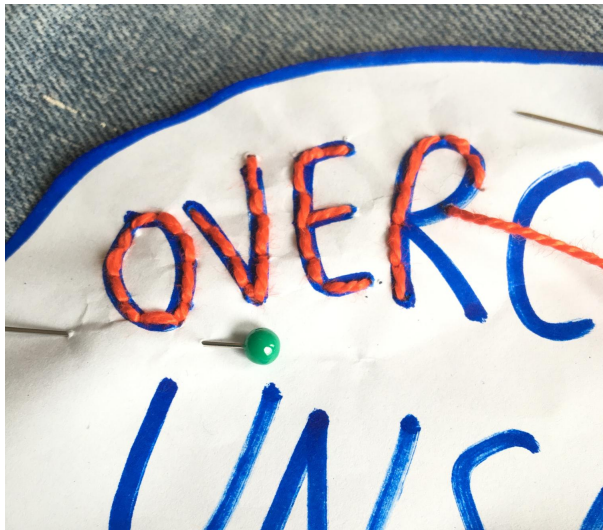
Draw some shapes on paper, writing your words in each to see how they fit. Cut around your shapes and copy them onto another sheet of paper for the other side. Turn them upside down to write the words for the other side.



3 Stitching words

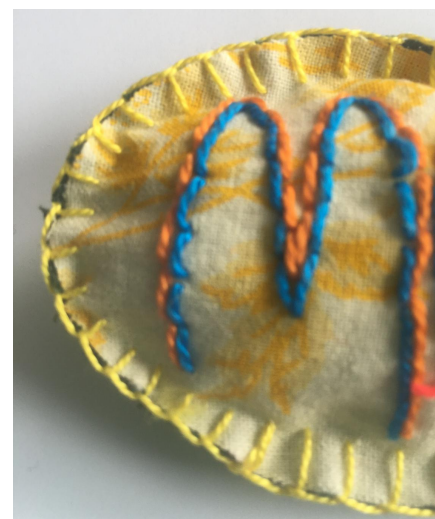
Pick two pieces of contrasting fabric for the front and back. Cut around your paper designs and pin to your fabric. Stitch over the words using backstitch as a way of transferring your writing onto the fabric.

When you have finished, cut the fabric around the shape. Tear the paper from the stitched writing, being careful not to pull the stitches.



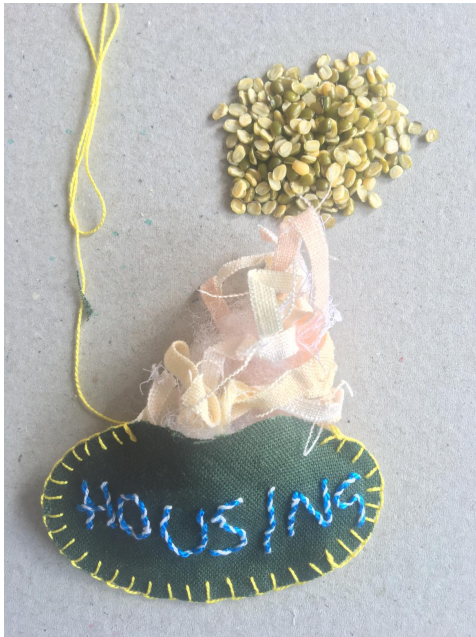
4 Making shapes

Put the two pieces together and stitch around the edge, using either running stitch or blanket stitch. Leave a space in the stitching to fill your shapes.



5 Fill the shapes

To fill your shape, use wadding or scraps of threads, yarns and fabric. Add something more weighty, either lentils or rice as this will help you to stack your shapes up. Stitch the hole up when filled.



6 Play

Play around with your stackable shapes, see if it topples over or lay the foundations for your positive vision of the future.



7 Share what you have created!

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

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



@PHMMcr



@phmmcr



@PHMMcr



Find out more

Sign up to read PHM Exhibition Officer Mark Wilson's next blog putting the spotlight on the Universal Suffrage or The Scum Uppermost print in [Fake news is old news](#).

The Fabric of Protest

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

This month we'll be online on
Saturday 22 August,
2.00pm - 3.00pm.

