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THE FABRIC OF PROTEST

January 2021

**Valuing our garment makers
and the clothes they make**



A monthly textile workshop by People's History Museum (PHM) and artist Helen Mather. Learn new techniques and discuss the issues that matter to you. In this month's session we will continue to explore migration and textiles, by focusing on garment workers and homeworkers in the fashion industry.

This resource introduces some of the ideas and techniques that will be explored during the online session on Saturday 30 January 2021. Use it to prepare for the session or as inspiration for your own textile projects.

Recommended for 11+ (under 18s must have an accompanying adult present during session)

#fabricofprotest

phm.org.uk



Hampstead Labour Party banner, around 1920 © People's History Museum

We will be taking inspiration from the Hampstead Labour Party banner in the museum's 2020-2021 Banner Exhibition.

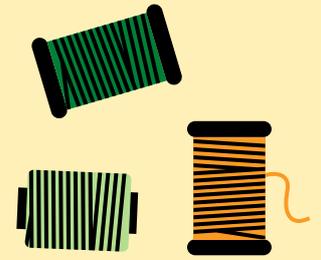
In the centre of the banner, a woman is scattering seed from a basket over a ploughed field. The woman has bare feet and in the foreground there is a cockerel. The main image is framed by a border of fruit and bunches of corn. The words 'The Earth For All' and 'Not For The Few' are written near the person's head.

This homemade banner has been designed in the Arts and Crafts movement style. The Arts and Crafts movement was established towards the end of the 19th century as a reaction against industrialisation, valuing the work of craftsmen and the objects that they made.

Members of the movement were concerned with the poor conditions that industrial and factory workers were forced to work in and the impact of mass production on the environment. The design on this banner reflects how the movement took inspiration from nature.

Today many garment workers around the world are working in dangerous and unfair conditions and migrant workers are often exploited by large companies.

Visible mending



This month we will be thinking about how we value the skills of garment workers and the clothing that they make, using visible mending as a way to highlight care, repair, value and use.

We will be making a square using darning samples to show visible mending and transparency of the issues around fast fashion. Adding words to describe the value of repairing.

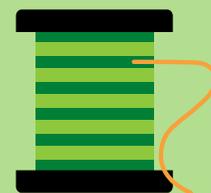




Materials

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

- Fabrics: **one piece of fabric 20cm x 20cm**
- Sample pieces / clothes with holes in to repair
- Scissors
- Pen and paper
- Threads: **embroidery thread/yarn**
- Sewing needle & pins



Prepare



Do you know how your clothes were made?

If you have time before the session you could consider:



- Are you aware of what processes and craft techniques were used to create the clothes you are wearing?
- How do you feel about repair and how you value your clothes?
- Do you know of any current or past campaigns that are helping to raise awareness or make changes in this area?
- Do you know who made your clothes, and where they were made?



You may want to start sketching out some of these ideas; if that helps you develop your thoughts



If you'd like to learn more about the issues of fast fashion you might find these links useful starting points for your own research:

- [Fashion Roundtable](#) - post about mending as activism against fast fashion
- [Fashion Revolution](#) #WhoMadeMyClothes
- [Labour Behind the Label](#)
- [Celia Pym](#) - An artist who uses visible mending to connect with people, the body and the value of clothes
- [Podcast by Kate Fletcher](#) - author of Craft of Use, talking on Wardrobe Crisis

Getting started



Gather your materials as listed on page 3.

Mark out (with pins or a marker) a square 20cm x 20cm on a piece of damaged fabric or knitwear.

This could be an old piece of clothing beyond salvage. If you haven't got any fabric with holes in it, cut some holes in a piece of fabric you wish to use.



Stitching techniques



Take a contrasting coloured embroidery thread and use a running stitch to stitch a straight line about 0.5cm from the edge of the hole.

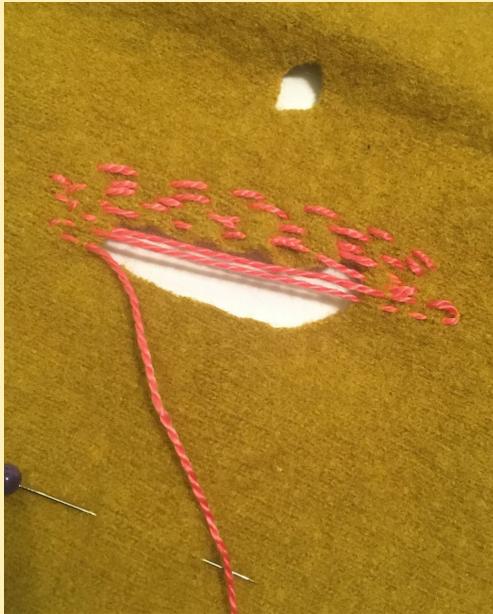


Stitch another straight line, in the opposite direction between the first line and the hole. Continue stitching straight lines until you reach the hole.

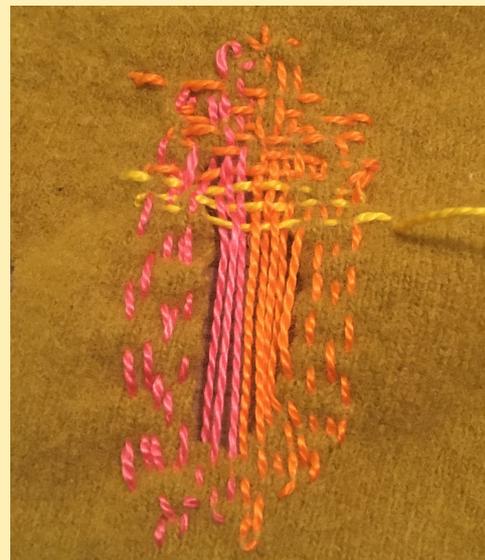
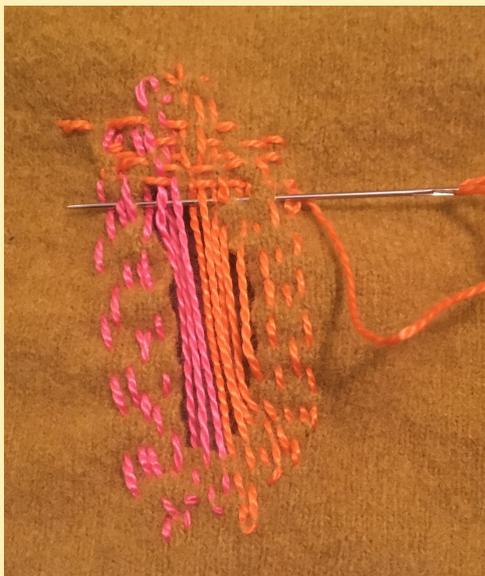


When you reach the hole, extend your thread over the hole and continue to stitch beyond by a few stitches to anchor.

Keep stitching back and forth like this until the whole area is covered.



Repeat these steps in the other direction, weaving the thread over and under the threads when you get to the hole, filling in the gaps and making a woven structure over the hole.



For more information on darning, you might find this link useful.

<http://www.fastfashiontherapy.co.uk/category/sustainable-fashion/page/2/>

Stitching your words



Consider where you want to stitch words on your fabric, around the holes. Stitch a word that describes how you feel about valuing and prolonging the life of our clothes into the square.

You could use backstitch, chain stitch or another stitch that you like.

During the session Helen will give a live demonstration of these steps. You can start your piece before, during or after the session.



Find out more

Sign up to [PHM's Blog](#) and read PHM Visitor Services Assistant Bob Dinn's blog that reveals more about the Hampstead Labour Party banner: [From violent protest to attic safety: The Vietnam War and a Hampstead Labour Party banner](#)



Join us on Zoom to get creative

All you need to do now is book onto the online Zoom session, bring a cuppa and join artist Helen Mather to stitch, chat and share ideas inspired by the ideas in this resource.

This month we'll be online on **Saturday 30 January, 2.00pm - 3.30pm.**



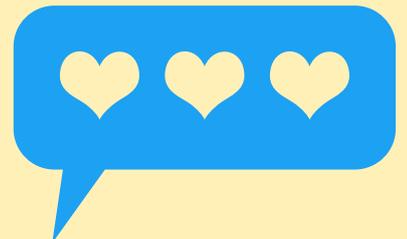
Share what you have created!



We would love to see what you have created!

We plan to bring together photos of participants' creations to make a digital patchwork banner.

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



Or if you prefer you can email a photo of your creation to learning@phm.org.uk.



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