The Fabric of Protest

September 2021

Cross stitch an orange heart in solidarity with refugees.

Online

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.

This resource introduces some of the ideas and techniques that will be explored during the online workshop on Saturday 25 September. Use it to prepare for the workshop or as inspiration for your own textile projects.

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

#FabricOfProtest   phm.org.uk
#TogetherWithRefugees #WhoWeAre

Inspiration: #WELCOME?

Bringing together ideas from previous workshops where we explored migration and the themes of the More in Common project, this month we are looking at the #WELCOME? exhibition on display at PHM until Sunday 9 January 2022.
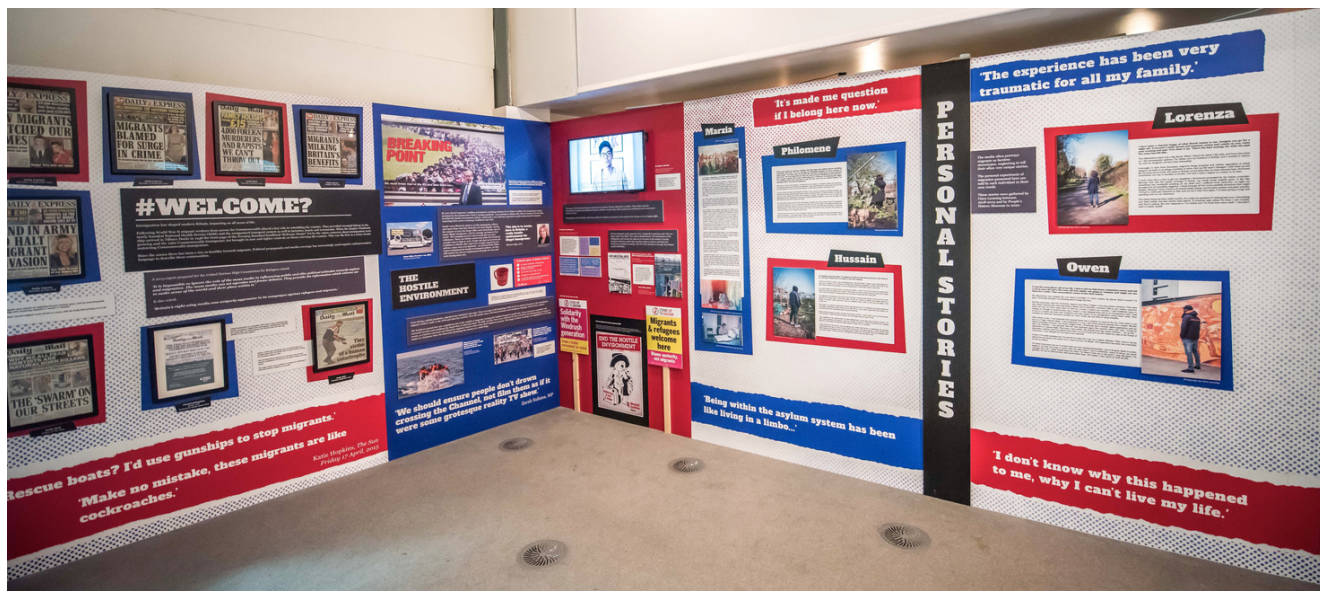
#WELCOME? exhibition 19 May 2021 to 9 Jan 2022 @ People's History Museum

The exhibition looks at how in recent years there has been growing hostility towards migrants, fuelled by the media and government policy. It explores the wider impact of negative media coverage and changing immigration controls, as well as highlighting campaigns to end the 'hostile environment' and its policies. It also presents the moving personal experiences of migration told by the people affected, in their own words.

The image above shows the display walls in the exhibition. It includes photographs, newspaper covers, campaign material and video.

The language used in the newspaper front covers featured in the exhibition aims to spread fear and dehumanise people migrating to the UK. The influence of mass media on the public and politicians is noted in a 2015 UN report on refugees, with the right-wing media stated as being 'uniquely aggressive' towards migrants and refugees.

Cross stitch orange hearts in solidarity

Using newspapers as a material, we will look at how we can subvert the use of the newspaper to counter the hostile language used to describe people who migrate to the UK, and in particular refugees, especially in the context of the recent arrivals of refugees from Afghanistan.
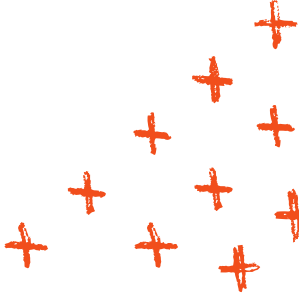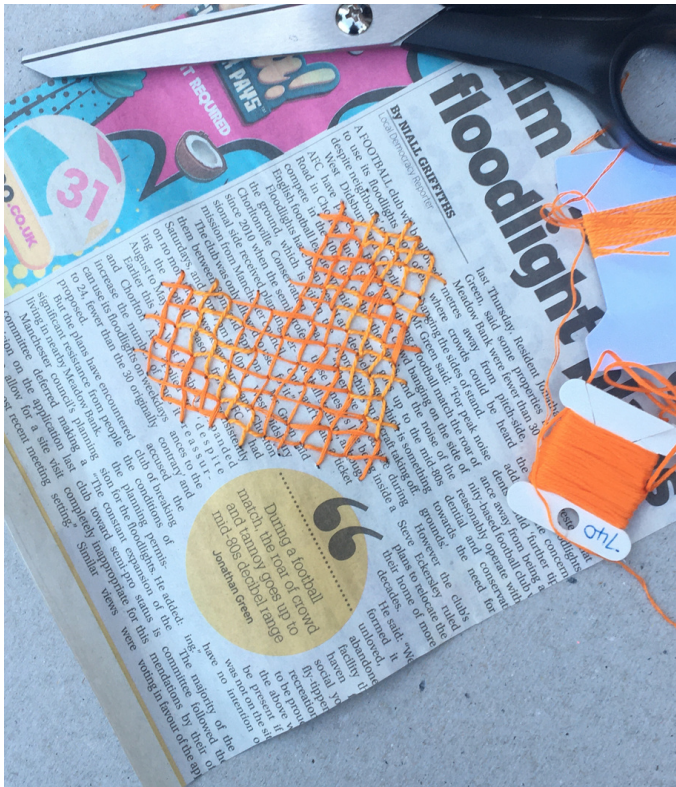
Orange hearts are a symbol of solidarity with refugees. We will be using orange coloured thread to stitch hearts onto newspaper backgrounds in cross stitch.

Cross stitch is a technique of counted thread embroidery in which X-shaped stitches are used in a grid like composition to make an image or word. It is often used with evenweave fabric where it is easy to count the holes between the weave, such as Aida cloth and some linens.

If you have time before the practical session, use the links below to find out more about the impact of media coverage and how to support refugees in the UK.

- Find out further ways to support the Together with Refugees campaign for a fairer, kinder and more effective approach to supporting refugees in the UK.

- Learn more about how to support Afghan refugees in the City of Sanctuary's guide and refugee charity worker, Bridget Chapman's blog post.

- Read The Guardian's article How the media contributed to the migrant crisis and The Conversation's piece UK press is the most aggressive in reporting on Europe's migrant crisis.

You might like to read further information on cross stitch:

- How to Cross Stictch: a beginners' guide

Materials

Gather some materials from around your home.

You will need:

- Newspaper – if you don't usually buy a newspaper,
  look for free local papers or ask if anyone is throwing one out.
- Orange embroidery thread
- Embroidery needle
- Scissors

Start your cross stitch

This is a template for the heart cross stitch pattern.
Each square represents a cross stitch (X). Use this as a guide for how many cross stitches to stitch in a row inorder for you create the heart shape.
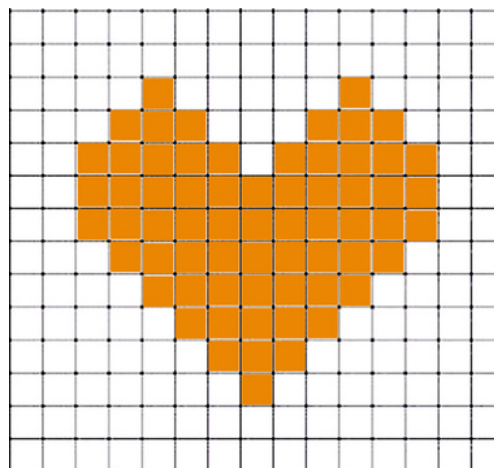
1

Pick a page from the newspaper. You won't be using the content of the story so you can be random with this. Trim the page down to a size you want to work on.
This piece is around 20cm x 20cm. Turn the page so that the text is vertical.

2

Start stitching on the newspaper with one cross stitch (X). You can make your stitch (X) as big or small as you want, all your stitch sizes will be the same as this first stitch. You might want to use the lines of the newspaper as a guide to keep your stitches in line.

Pull your needle up through the newspaper, leaving a tail of thread of around 4cm, and down at a diagonal, holding the tail when you pull the thread through so that it doesn't pull the stitch out.


Next pull your needle up from the top left of the two points you have made, and down to complete the cross (X).
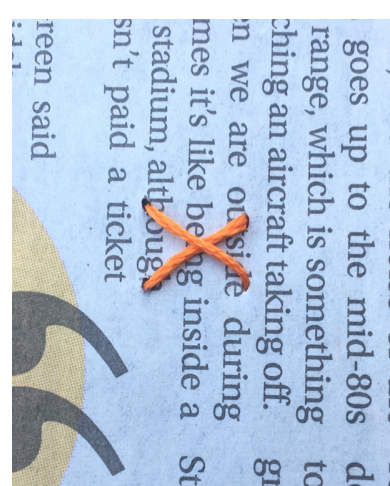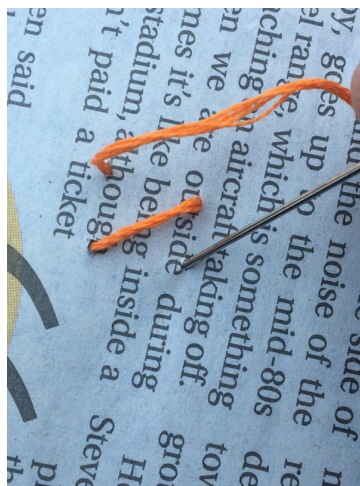
# Stitch your central row

3

Using your heart template as a guide, complete the vertical row of stitches going into the last holes to make the next stitch. This is your central row and you can use this to place the next row. Try to keep your stitches (X) even and the same size.
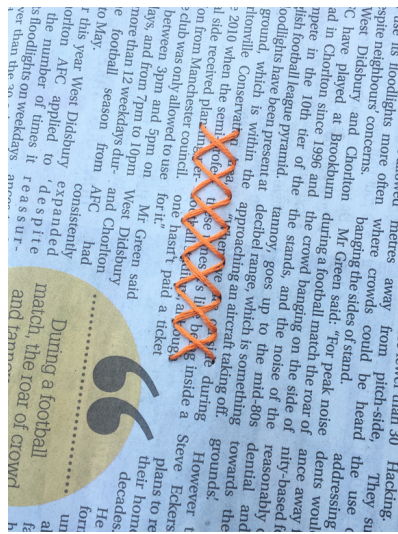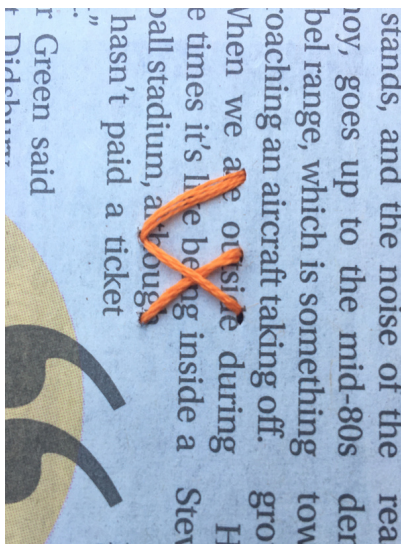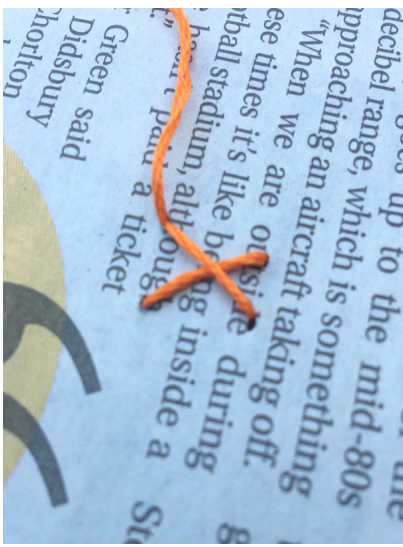
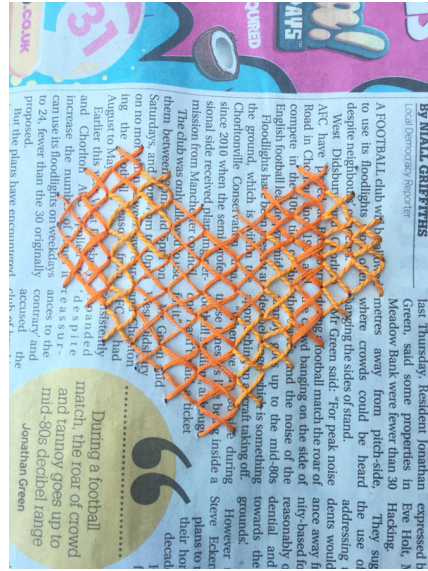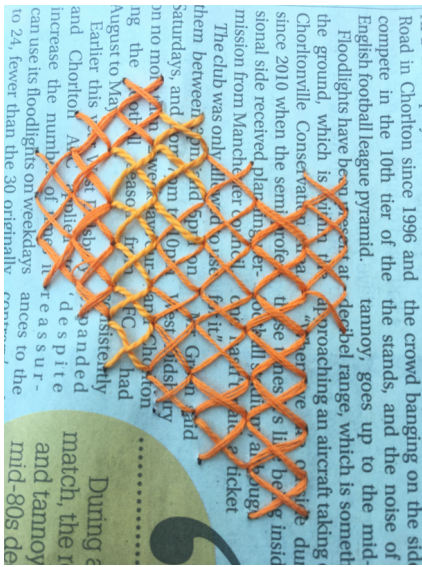# Stitch your rows to the left

4

Go up one stitch (X) from the bottom and start the next row to the left, using the holes on the left to form the new stitches.
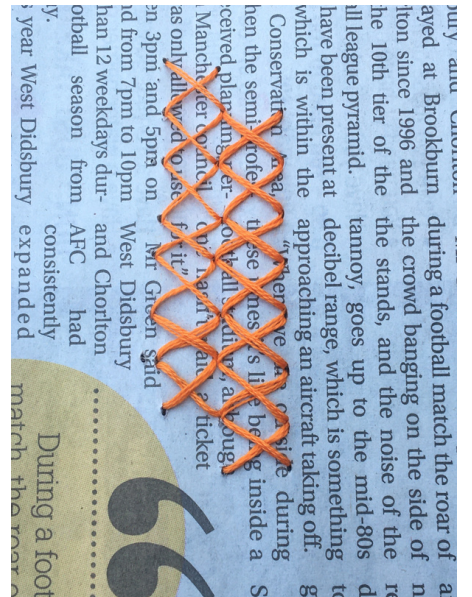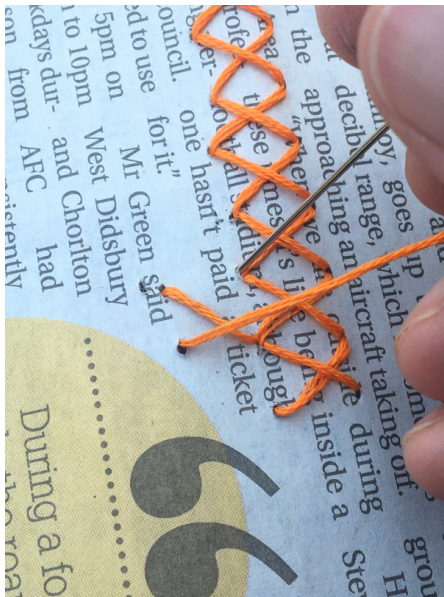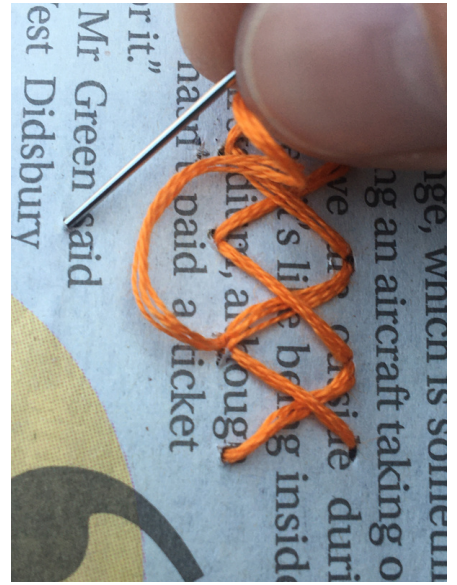
Complete your pattern

5 Keep following the pattern to completion on the left side and then move to the right side to complete.

6 When your thread is about to run out, leave a similar 4cm tail of thread. Tie this to the first tail of thread to secure both ends. Alternatively, you can stick these down to the back with tape.

Join us on Zoom to get creative!

If you would like to join artist Helen Mather and others to stitch, chat and share ideas inspired by this resource, book onto the online Zoom workshop.

Don't forget to bring a cuppa!

This month we'll be online on **Saturday 25 September 2021 2.00pm - 3.30pm.**
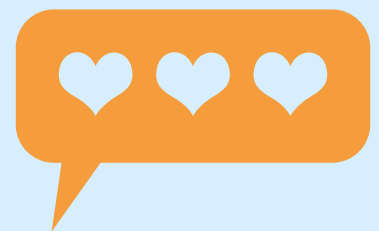
Share what you have created

We would love to see what you have created!

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.

@PHMMcr

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