



The Fabric of Protest



**Orange hearts stitched
with messages of welcome and hope**

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 were explored during the online workshops on Saturday 11 December 2021 and Saturday 29 January 2022. You can use it to prepare as inspiration for your own textile projects.

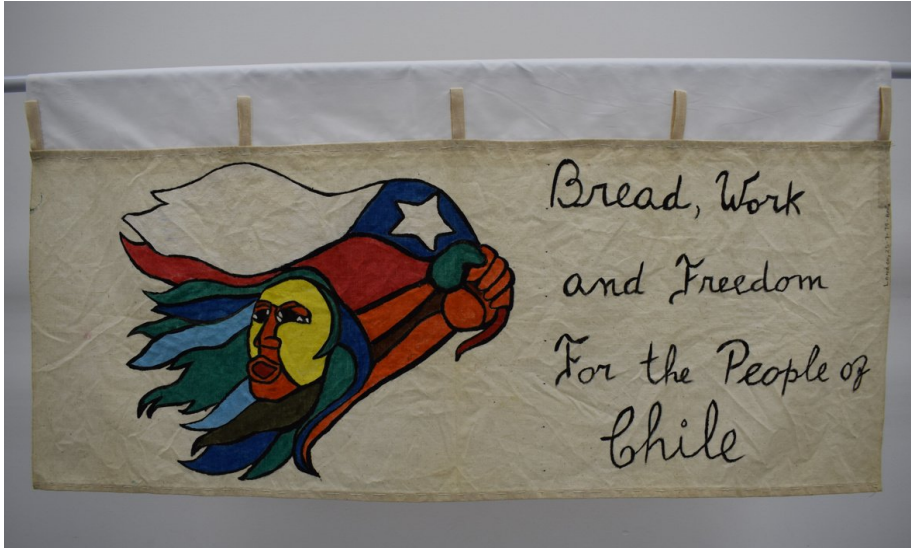
Recommended for 11+ (under 18s must have an accompanying adult present during the session).



#FabricOfProtest phm.org.uk
#TogetherWithRefugees #WhoWeAre

Inspiration

We took inspiration from this Bread, Work and Freedom for the People of Chile banner, around 1980, from the museum's 2020 - 2021 Banner Exhibition.



Bread, Work and Freedom for the People of Chile banner, around 1980, Image courtesy of People's History Museum

The Chilean military coup of 1973 led to an international outcry. In the aftermath of the coup individuals and organisations around the UK rallied to Chile's aid. The World University Service was central to this process, working with other groups to bring almost 3,000 Chilean refugees to the UK.

This banner was used in London in the early 1980s as part of the Chilean Solidarity Campaign. Demonstrations took place demanding human rights for the people of Chile and protesting against the torture of opponents of the country's dictator General Augusto Pinochet.

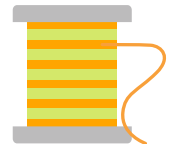
The support from the UK at this time shows our history of reaching out in times of crisis and welcoming people who are displaced from their homes and seek refuge elsewhere.

The banner is made from white cotton, the words 'Bread, Work and Freedom For the People of Chile' are painted black in a handwritten style on the right hand side. Painted in bright multi-colours on the left hand side is a person's face; their mouth is open and hair flowing down to their right; an arm and fist, clenching the Chilean flag, are stretched upwards on their left. It is 1,000mm wide and 400mm high.



3D Orange Heart

We'll continue to explore the ideas from previous workshops on how we can welcome and support people seeking asylum at a time when the UK government is proposing the Nationality and Borders Bill. The Bill represents a major risk to people seeking safety and undermines the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



We connected to the [Refugee Council's campaign](#) to send messages of support and solidarity to Afghan refugees who are spending their first winter in the UK. We made three-dimensional (3D) orange hearts with stitched messages of welcome and hope at a time of worry and uncertainty.

These messages were shared with the Refugee Council as part of their campaign. The 3D hearts were given to refugees who have recently arrived in the UK, offering a friendly and supportive gift at a difficult time.

Find out more



You can use the links below to find out more about campaigns to support people seeking asylum and the collective concerns around the Nationality and Borders Bill and the devastating impact it will have on people's lives.

- [Refugee Council's campaigns](#) to achieve positive change for refugees in the UK.
- Together With Refugee's [orange heart symbol](#)
- [City of Sanctuary UK](#) network of welcome and support for refugees
- [UNHCR The United Nations Refugee Agency - The Nationality and Borders Bill.](#)
- [The Refugee Council](#) - what we have learnt about The Nationality and Border Bill.
- [PHM's statement of support](#) for the #TogetherWithRefugees campaign against the Bill.

Support the campaign

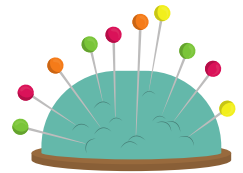


Join the [#TogetherWithRefugees](#) campaign in calling for the government to rethink its approach to the Nationality and Borders Bill.

- If you are in Manchester, complete a postcard at PHM voicing your concerns which we will send to the Home Secretary.
- Let us know the action you take. Take a photo, use the hashtag #TogetherWithRefugees and tag @PHMMcr so we can share.
- Not on social media? Email your pictures to events@phm.org.uk.



Materials



Gather some materials from around your home.
You will need:

- Orange fabric (approx 20cm x 40cm)
- Embroidery threads – a few colours
- Needle
- Pins
- Stuffing – use any waste threads, scraps of fabric, or cushion stuffing
- Paper, pen, scissors, ruler
- Dried lavender (not essential)

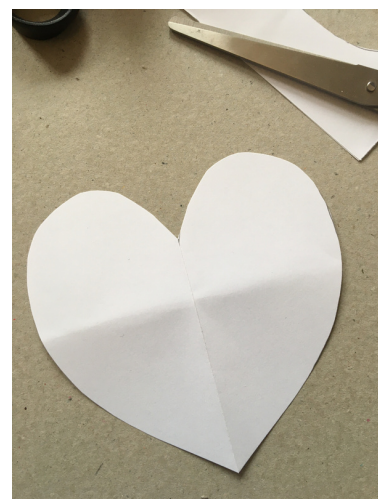
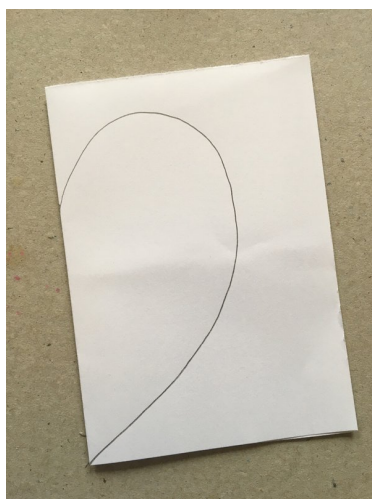
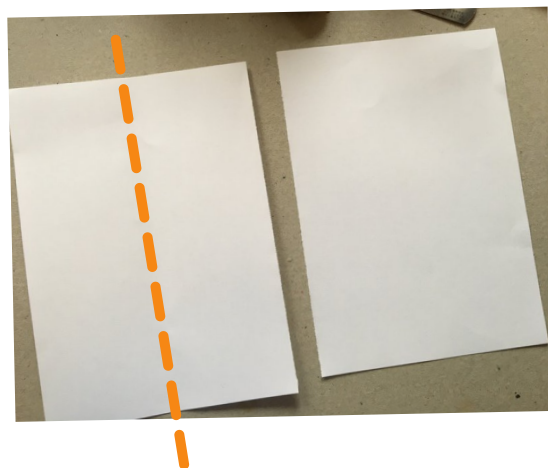


Make your template

1

Draw out or print a heart template, around 15cm x 15cm.

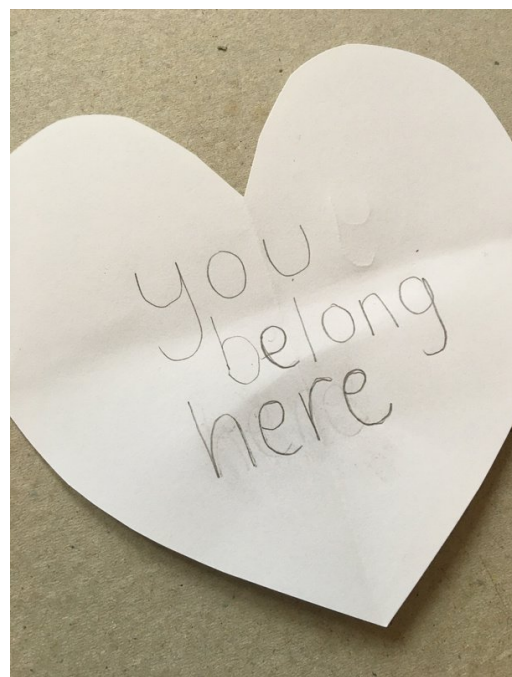
One way to do this is to fold a piece of A4 paper in half along the long edge. Draw half a heart shape up to the fold. Cut out with the paper folded so that the shape repeats creating a heart shape template.



2

Decide what you want your heart to say. This is a message of hope and kindness to recent arrivals to the UK from Afghanistan. Words of welcome may help provide some comfort during this incredibly difficult time, away from loved ones and in an unfamiliar place.

Write your message onto the paper heart.



Stitch your message

3

Pin the paper heart to your fabric and draw around the heart edge directly onto the fabric.



Without removing the heart, stitch through the paper to transfer your words onto the fabric.

Use whatever stitch you would like to embroider your message onto your heart. We've used a whipped back stitch.

Whipped back stitch

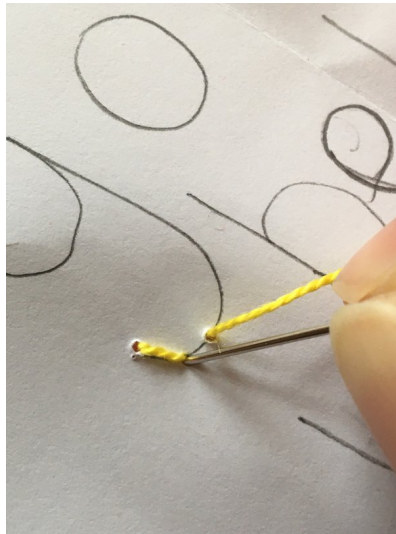
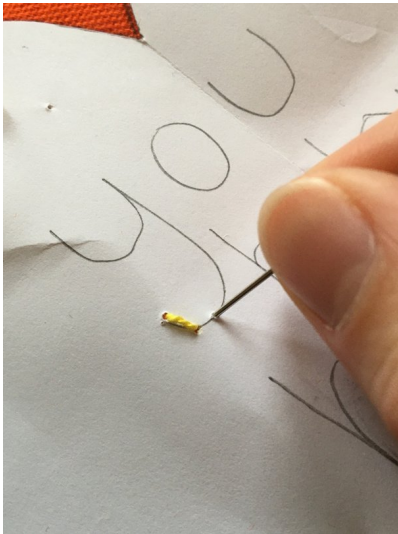
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Back stitch

Knot and thread your needle. Bring the needle up to the front and back down a stitch length away to make a stitch.



Bring the needle back up a stitch length away and then back into the last hole you made, this is the back stitch.

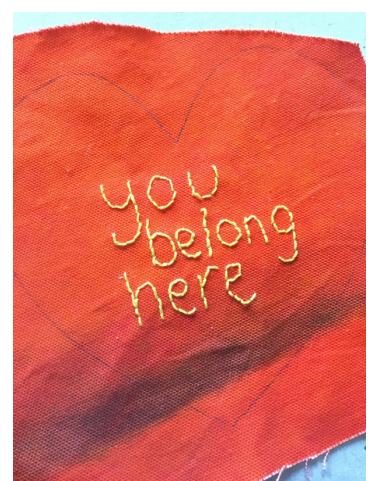


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Continue to do this following your drawn letters.

When you finish your back stitch, tear the paper off gently, being careful not to pull the stitches too much.

Then you can start your whipped stitch.



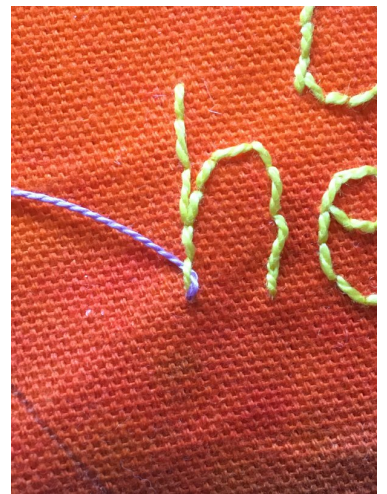
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Whipped back stitch

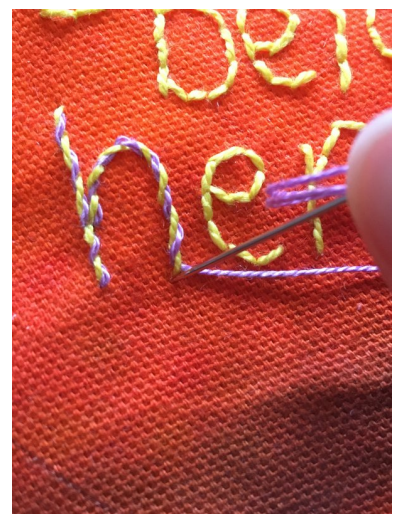
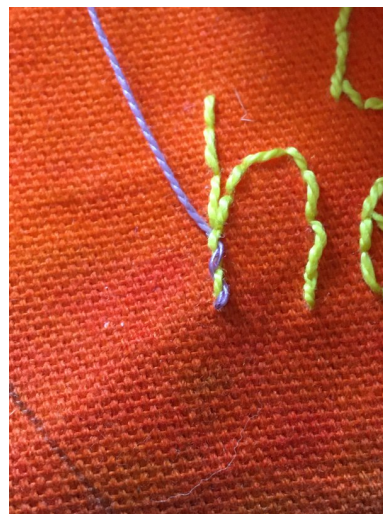
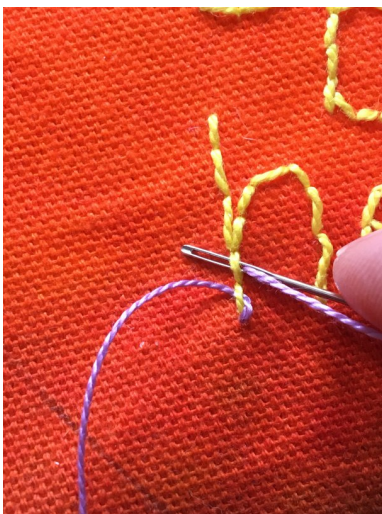
Knot and thread your needle in a different colour thread. Bring the needle up at the start of a letter.



Push the eye of the needle (the blunt end) under the thread of the stitch from one side to the other (in this picture right to left). Pull the thread through to see it wrap around the stitch.



Keep going from the same side to the other under each stitch until you reach the end of the letter and put the needle back in the fabric.



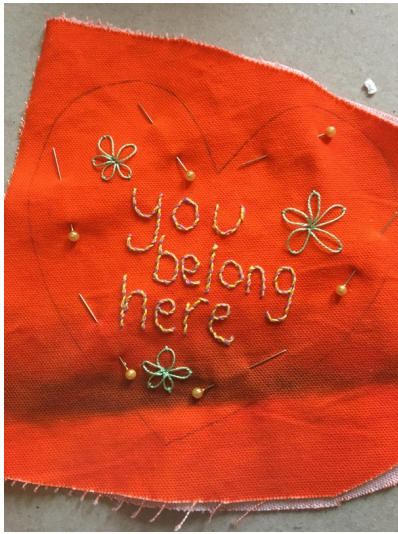
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Add any embellishment you want to – beads, sequins, decorative stitch, to make this a beautiful and thoughtful gift.

Cut and stitch heart shape

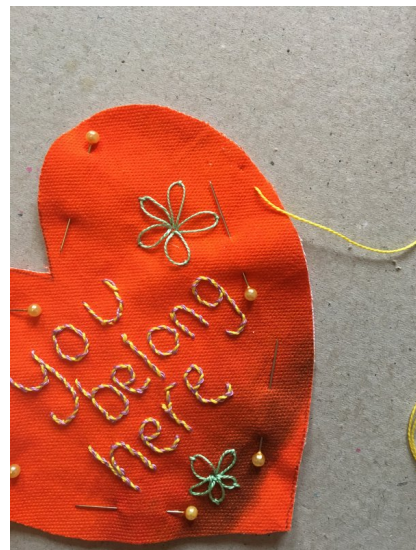
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When you have stitched your message, add another piece of fabric to the back of your heart (good side facing out), and pin together.



9

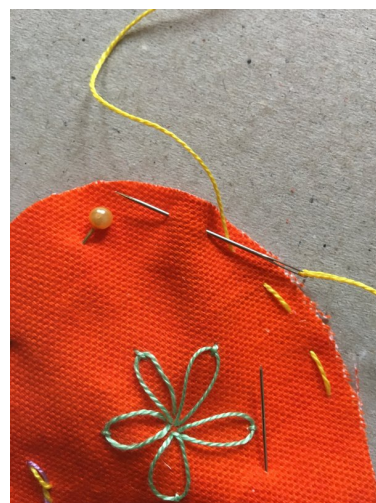
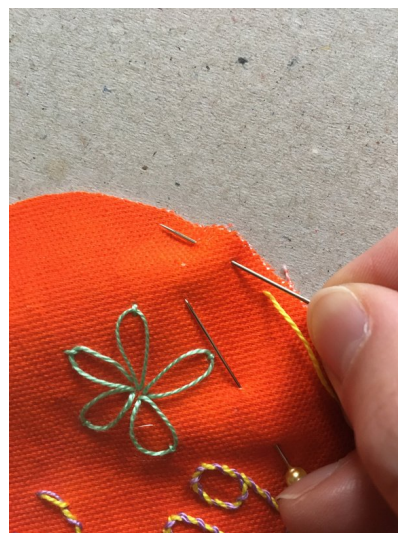
Cut around the heart shape through both layers of fabric. Stitch around the outside edge of the heart using a running stitch. Start at one of the longer sides and leave a gap in your stitching to fill the heart shape.



10

Running stitch

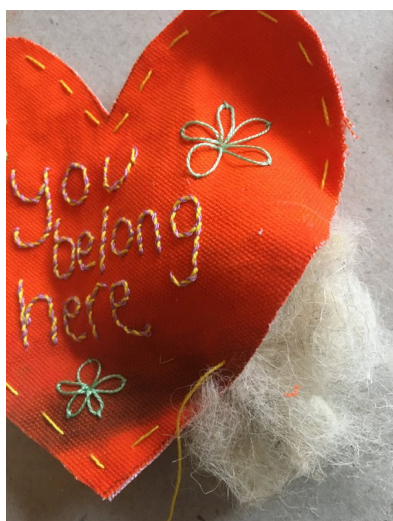
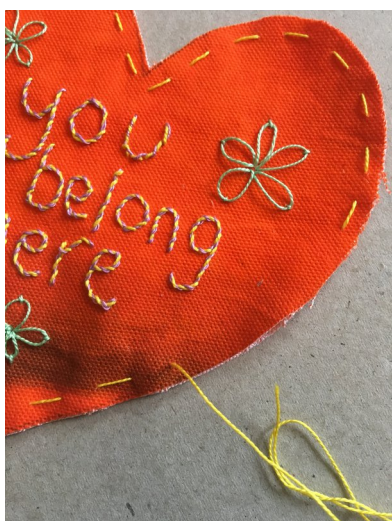
Knot and thread your needle. Bring your needle up through both layers of fabric. To make the running stitch, push the needle back in and out of the fabric in one move, and pull the thread through.



Fill your heart shape

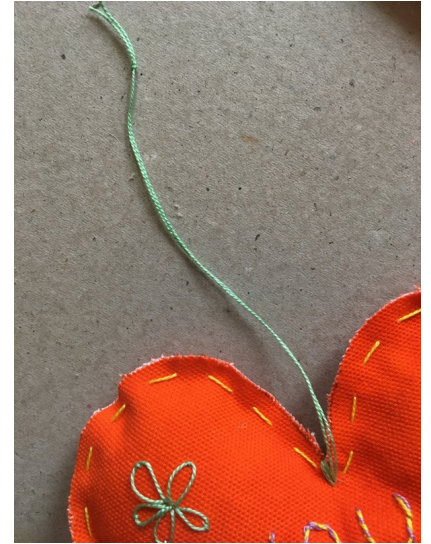
11

Fill the shape with stuffing, you can add lavender or anything else scented if you like at this point. Finish off the stitching when its filled.



Finishing stiches

- 12** Knot a double threaded needle and make a couple of stitches in the crease of the heart. Cut the thread long and make a knot in the end to hang the heart from.



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](#).

Explore [The Fabric of Protest resources](#) created for other sessions.

Be inspired by the [textile creations of participants](#) who have taken part in our monthly public workshops.



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 #TogetherWithRefugees



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



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