



The Fabric of Protest



Refugee Week June 2022

**Create a stitched hand symbolising
togetherness and reaching out in healing**



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 in-person workshop on Saturday 25 June 2022. 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
#HealingTogether
#RefugeeWeek2022



Refugee Week takes place from Monday 20 - Sunday 26 June 2022. This year the theme is 'Healing', a celebration of community, mutual care and the human ability to start again.



'Recognising our Shared Humanity', Manchester City of Sanctuary Banner, 2022, Image courtesy of People's History Museum

This month we are taking inspiration from a banner handmade by a group of people seeking sanctuary, who took part in a series of banner making workshops at PHM in early 2022 with artist Helen Mather. The Manchester City of Sanctuary (MCOS) banner is on display at the museum until Thursday 30 June 2022; it will then be returned to MCOS to use at events, celebrations and demonstrations.

The MCOS banner features stitched and embellished hands, like the leaves on a tree growing up and out with hopes and dreams for the future. The group shared these words about their work:

'It represents the hopes and dreams of refugees and asylum seekers and through this collaboration has lifted our voices to be heard far and wide. Manchester City of Sanctuary is a family that brings people together and understands that we are all unique and helps us communicate this to the community around us.'

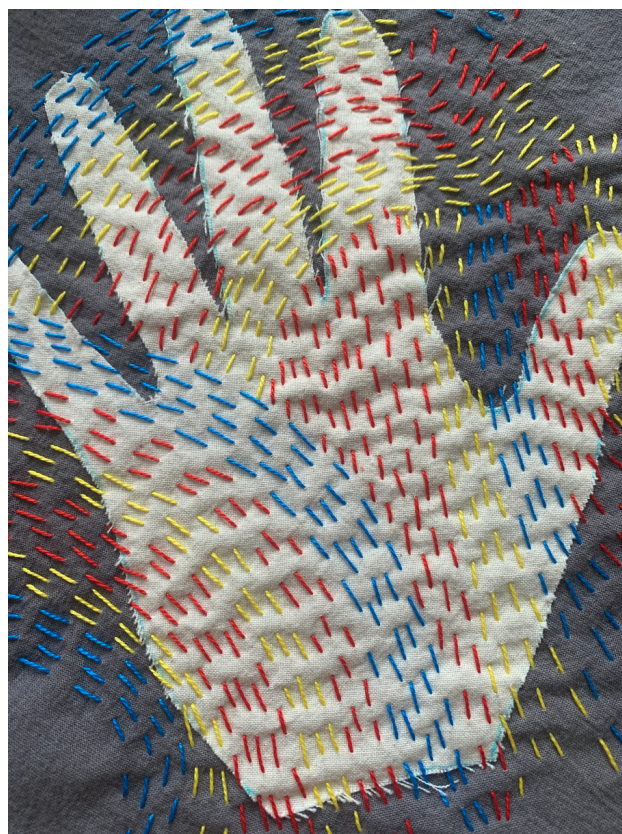
The banner has a golden yellow cotton backing, the lefthand side has a tree shape created from lines of black cord. Sewn along these lines are numerous hands in different fabrics and colours, embellished with embroidery, beads and sequins. The words 'female, freedom, empowerment, unity, peace, respect, opportunity, human rights' are printed along the tree lines. On the righthand side of the banner the words 'Manchester City of Sanctuary' is sewn in green. Yarn tassels in different colours are attached along the bottom. The banner measures 2,000mm wide x 1,200mm high.

Manchester City of Sanctuary works with refugees and asylum seekers to promote positive mental health and wellbeing and develops connections and networks with the local community. We recognise people's individual humanity and provide fun and friendship as a tool of resilience and empowerment.

What will we be making?

Using the hands as a symbol of togetherness and reaching out in healing, we will be making stitched hands on a patch.

The hands will be stitched using the visible mending technique of boro patchwork, a Japanese technique where layers of fabric are held together with running Sashiko stitching.



Boro refers to the practice of repairing textiles through piecing, patching and stitching. It is derived from the term 'boroboro' which means something tattered or repaired in Japanese.

The boro technique was developed before the introduction of cotton, when clothing was made from hemp which wore more easily, so clothing was patched where it was worn to make it stronger and more durable.

Patches were stitched using Sashiko stitches, running stitches through the layers of fabrics. The cloth would be patched over years and family generations, with the patches making a new fabric over time, filled with the touch, wear, and fabric of family.

Materials



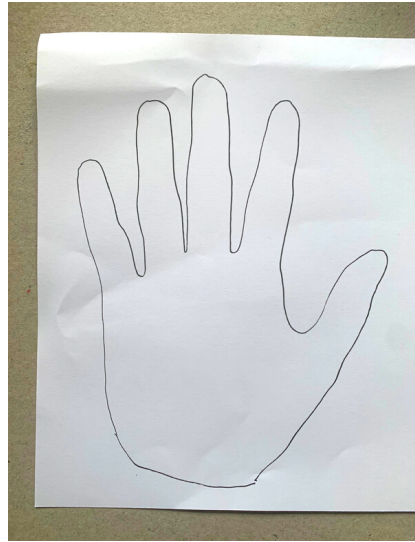
Materials you will need:

- Fabric - one hand-sized piece and one larger square piece measuring 25cm x 25cm
- Embroidery threads / needles / pins
- Fabric marking pen or pencil
- Paper
- Paper scissors & fabric scissors

Draw and cut out your hand shape

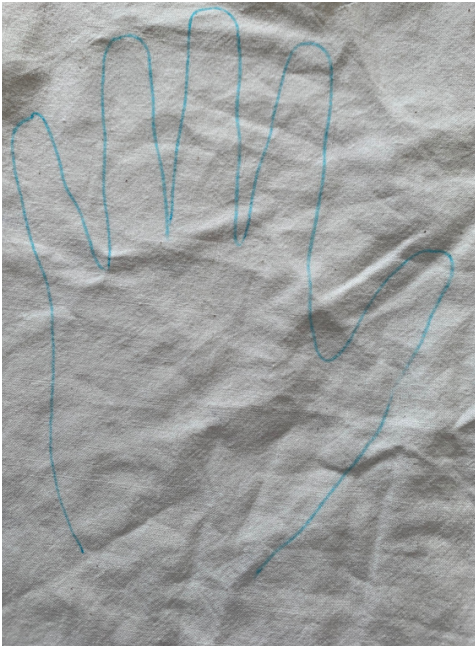
1

Draw around your hand either directly onto fabric or onto a piece of paper (which you can then use as a template to cut your fabric).



2

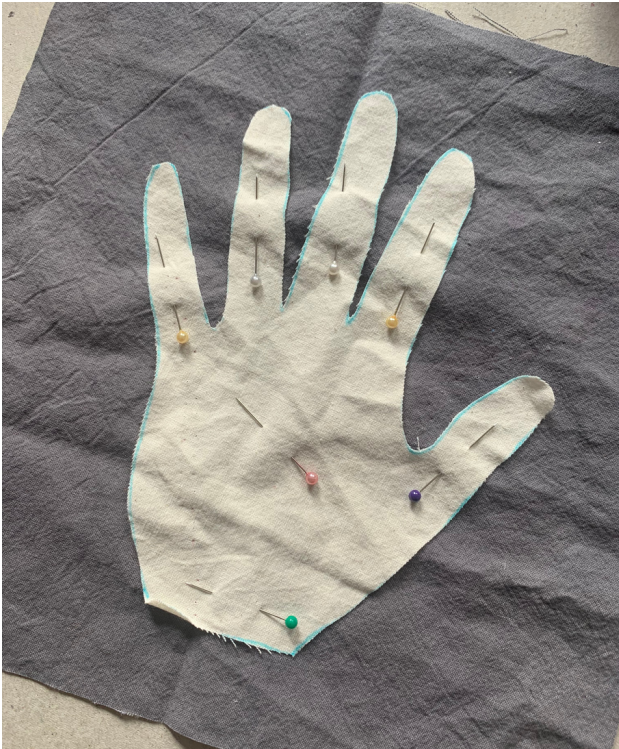
Cut out the fabric hand shape.



Attach your hand using a running stitch

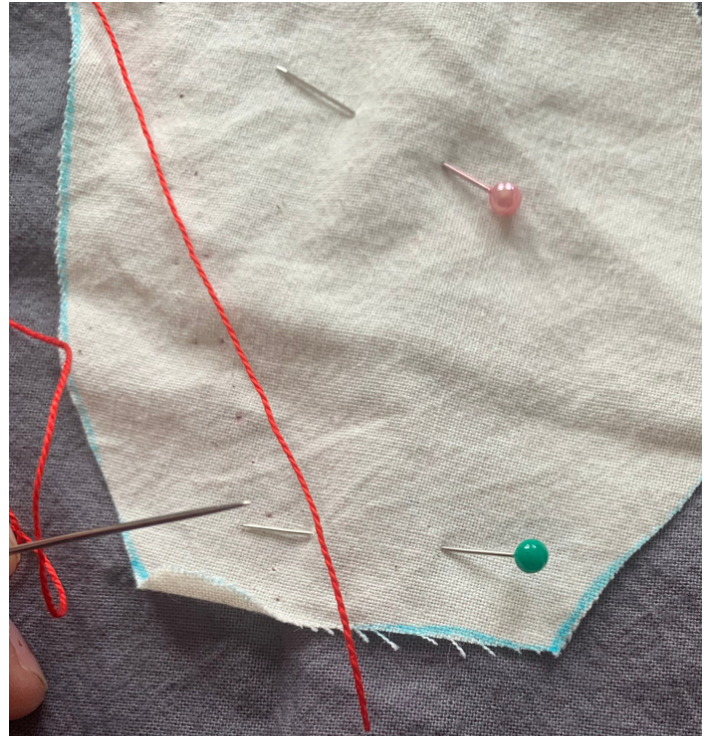
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Pin the hand shape to the 25cm x 25cm square.



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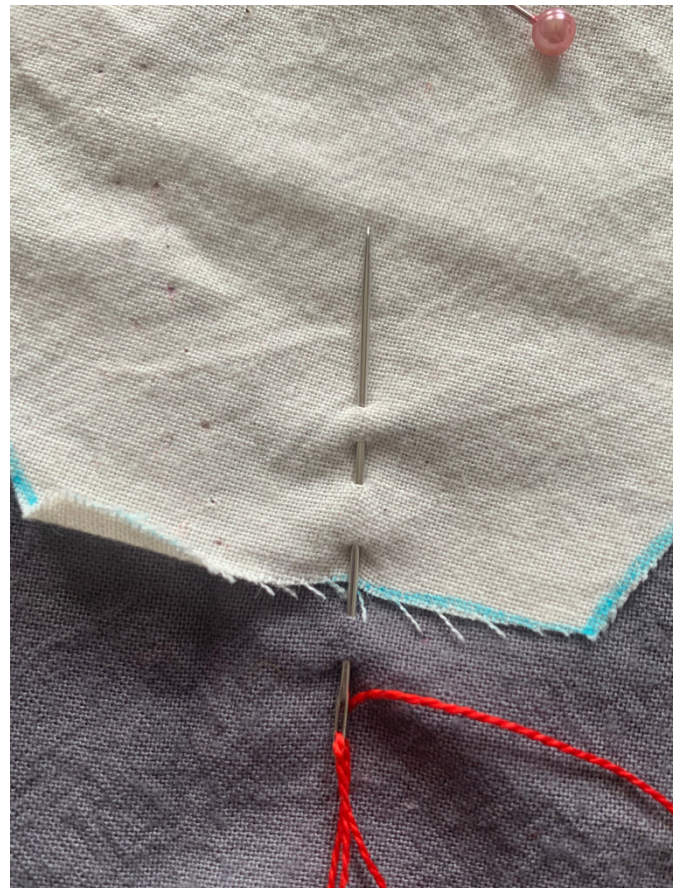
Thread up the needle with embroidery thread.



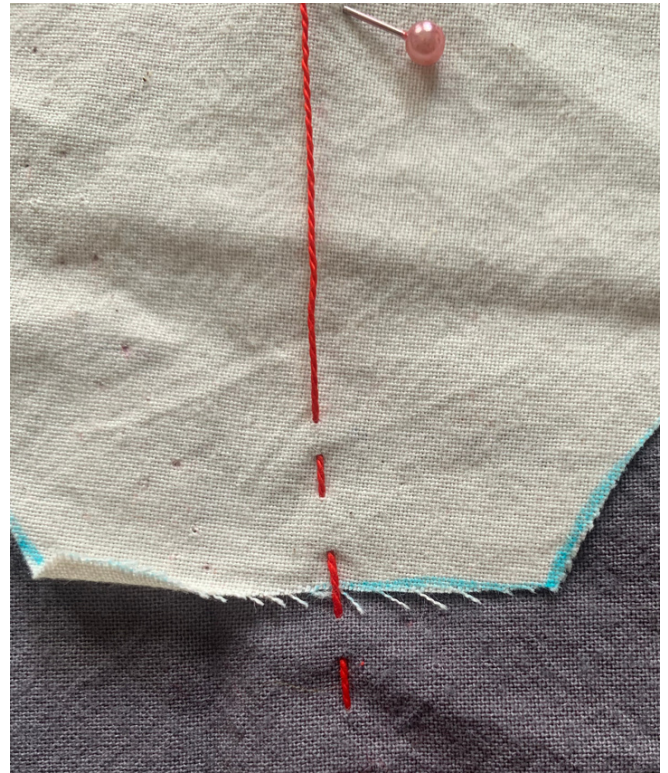
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Knot your thread and come up through the fabric from the back.

Using a running stitch, start on the backing fabric and stitch through the centre of the hand to the top.



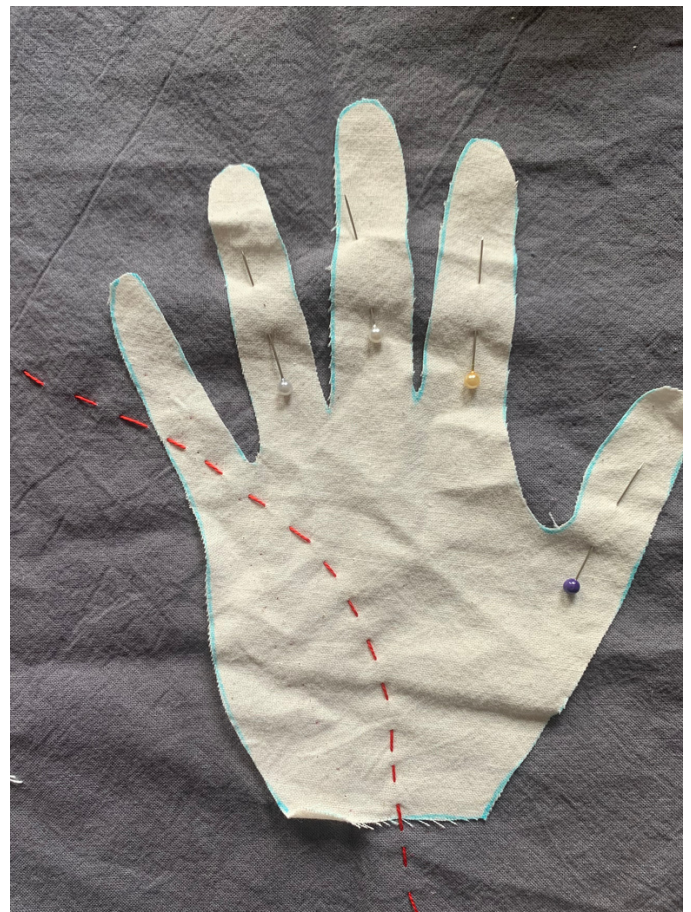
A running stitch is a line of stitches that run in and out of the fabric all at once. Push your needle in, out, in, out and pull the thread through.



6

It's up to you whether you want your stitches to be in a straight line or a wavy line, or even in a curve. If you have a vanishing fabric marking pen you can use this to mark out lines on the fabric.

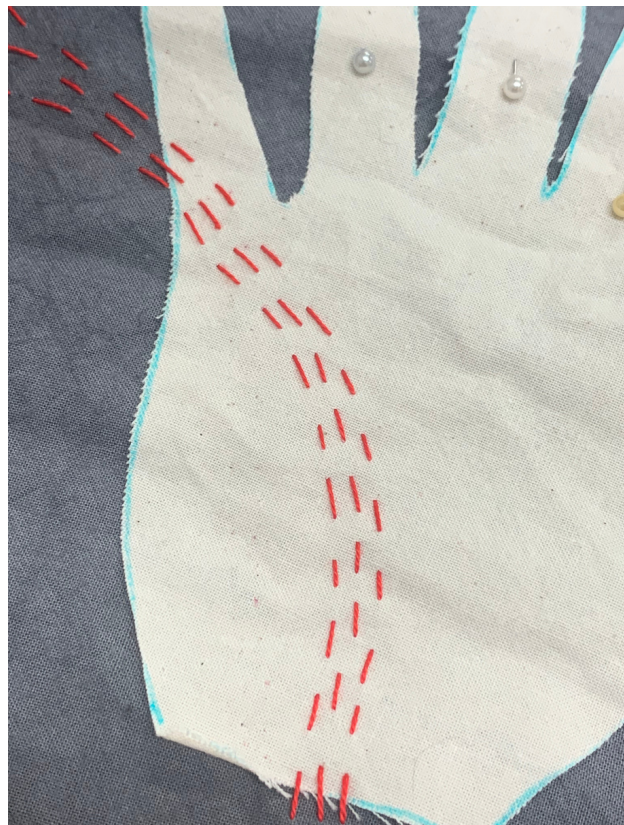
When you stitch, just make sure that you start on the backing fabric and continue off the hand and back onto the backing fabric, leaving 1cm seam allowance around the whole backing fabric (ie. not stitching up the edges).



Sashiko stitch

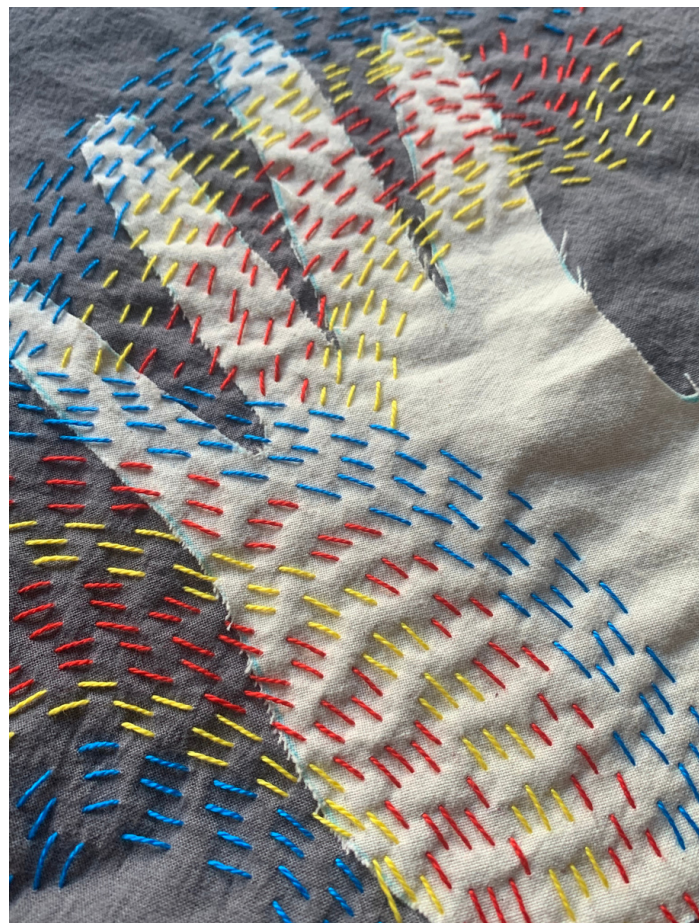
7

Continue stitching on either side of the last line you made, following the line of the stitching until the whole hand is complete.

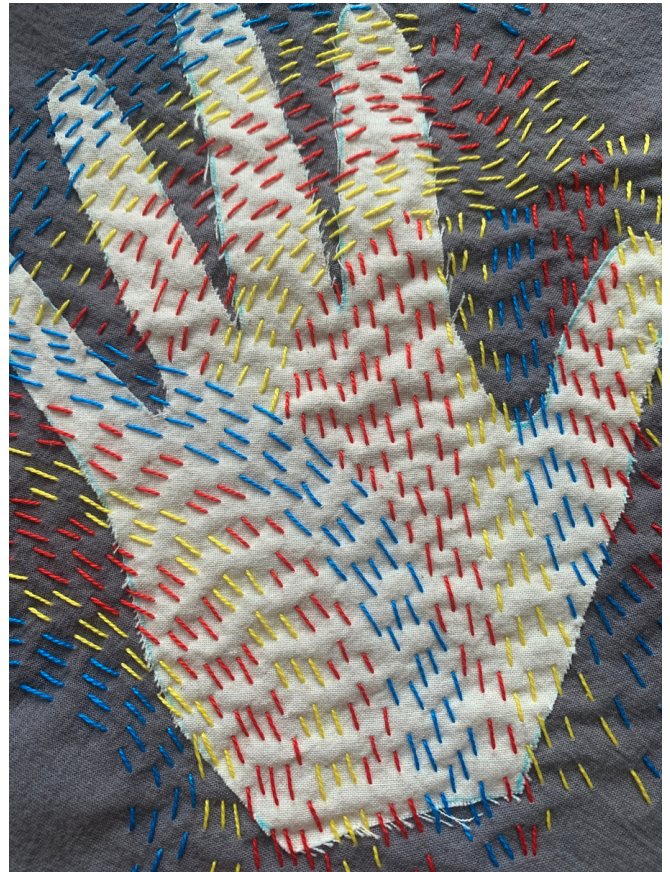


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You can change the colours and directions of stitch as you go, if you wish!



Finished piece



Find out more

You can read more about

- [Refugee Week 2022](#)
- [Manchester City of Sanctuary](#)

You might like to read further information on boro textiles:

- [The V&A's description of boro patchwork](#)
- [Eye on Design's History of Design 101 - Japanese Boro Textiles Tell Histories of Labor and Love Through Patchwork](#)

Explore other Fabric of Protest activities where we have used the Boro patchwork technique:

- [Patchwork cross: a response to the Lampedusa cross](#)
- [Boro patchwork technique: symbolic patchworks](#)

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 June 2022
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 #HealingTogether
#RefugeeWeek2022



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



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