



The Fabric of Protest

October 2022

Constructing a patchwork banner about
garment workers' rights



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 15 October 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
#NothingAboutUsWithoutUs
#PAYUP
phm.org.uk

Following on from the previous workshop we will be taking inspiration from the Nothing About Us Without Us banner in the museum's 2022 Banner Exhibition.

The banner was made by six learning disabled textile artists for an exhibition at People's History Museum in 2015.

The artists sent red patches out to other disabled artists across the UK who drew and stitched on their names. They were then sent to arts group Venture Arts, where they were brought together to form this banner.

The red and gold colours represent ambition and courage.



Nothing About Us Without Us banner, 2015.
Image courtesy of People's History Museum

Banner description:

The banner is made of small hexagons of varying shades of red in different fabrics, stitched together in a patchwork. The words 'Nothing About Us Without Us' in gold lame fabric are across the top half of the banner. Below these words two lines of gold hexagons are sewn on alternate patches. Sewn onto the first line of gold hexagons are the words '20th anniversary' and 'Disability Discrimination Act' is sewn onto the second line of gold hexagons. The banner is 1,190mm wide and 1,880mm high.

What are we making?

Following on from our previous in-person workshop held in July 2022, and online workshop held in September 2022, we will be working on constructing the patchwork banner made from patches we have created over the past two years about garment workers' rights.

What is the banner about?

The banner we will be making features work created by The Fabric of Protest participants over the last few years as part of PHM's programme exploring migration.

As part of this programme The Fabric of Protest workshops chose to look at textile and garment workers' rights, industries that are overrepresented by people who have migrated to the UK.

The patches feature calls for transparency in supply chains, fair pay and safety at work in support of garment workers' campaigns across the world.



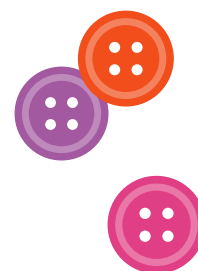
How will we make the banner?

The design

In our last in-person session in July 2022, we decided on the layout and design of the banner.

To do this, we discussed the content of the patches, how they might be displayed or used and how to communicate with people through design.

An example of this is how to use gaps in patchwork to allow the eye to see each individual piece as well as the whole.



Our discussions resulted in a design for a banner using patchwork.

The banner is a versatile design based on long horizontal strips of patches that can be used separately or buttoned together to make a bigger banner.



The construction

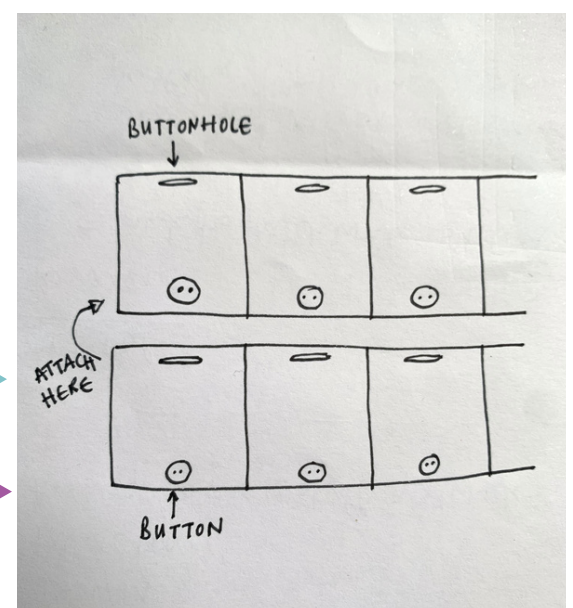
The patches will be hand stitched together using a running stitch along the seam allowance.



In the online session in September 2022, we individually stitched letters to spell #PAYUP, referring to a campaign asking brands to pay for orders cancelled during the Covid-19 pandemic. Those cancelled orders meant that workers were not paid for the work that they had done. #PAYUP asked for contracts to be honoured and those workers to be paid.

These letters will be sublimation printed onto fabric at an external textile print studio for us and will form the back of the banner strips (see further below for an example of sublimation printing).

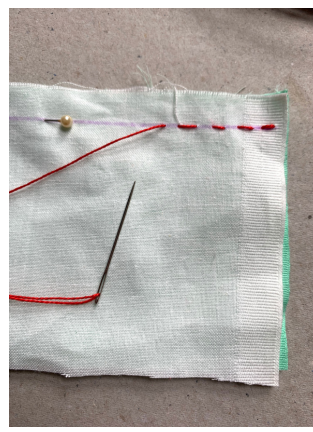
At a later date, each front and back will be stitched together to form separate strips with buttonholes and buttons attached, to be connected or used separately. They will have ties at the sides to attach to poles for carrying in protests.



What techniques will be used?

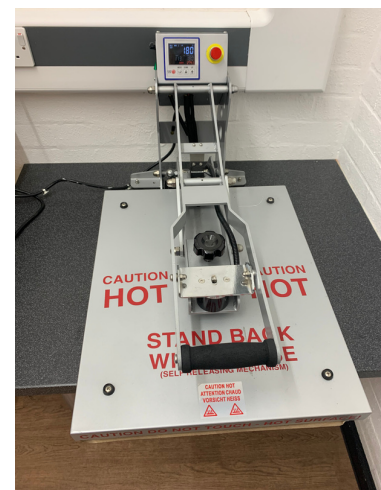
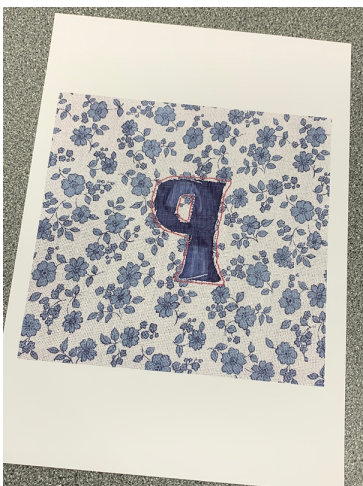
Running stitch to patch:

Measure 1cm seam allowance on the back of the two sides to attach. Pin and stitch making sure to keep on the drawn line front and back.

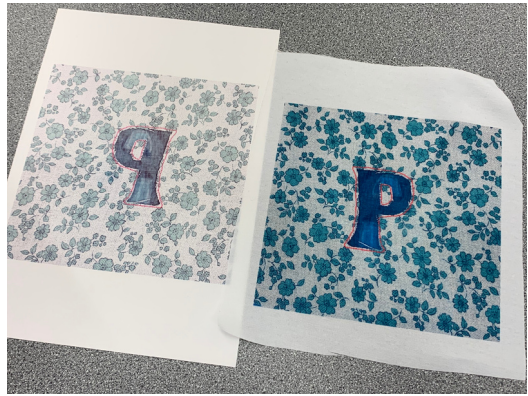


Sublimation printing:

This is an industrial process that allows a digital image to be printed onto fabric. The photograph of the letter is printed on a sublimation printer which uses dyes and not inks to print with. The printout is then heat pressed onto synthetic fabric, leaving a print that is dyed into the substance of the fabric.



This process uses less water than other printing methods but only works with synthetic fabrics. We will be using waste fabric saved from landfill to print onto.



Find out more

In previous sessions we created textile pieces to highlight the impact of poor working conditions on garment workers and show support for the campaigns to improve their working rights and conditions. You can find the supporting resources for those sessions on [The Fabric of Protest online resources webpage](#).

These include:

- [Transparency in the fashion and garment industry](#)
- [Migration and textiles: garment workers campaigns](#)
- [Stitch a message about garment workers' health & safety](#)
- [Visible mending: valuing the skills of garment workers](#)
- [Create a campaign slogan for garment workers' rights](#)
- [Patchwork: highlight hidden labour in the garment industry](#)
- Create a patchwork letter using reverse appliqué

You can learn about the campaigns to support garment workers through the links below:

- [Fashion Revolution](#)
- [Clean clothes](#)
- [Pay your workers](#)
- [Labour behind the label](#)
- [Home workers worldwide](#)

Join us 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 a workshop.

Upcoming workshops:

Saturday 12 November 2022 (online)

Saturday 10 December 2022 (in-person)



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 #PAYUP



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



@PHMMcr



@phmmcr



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