



STUDENT
LEARNING
RESOURCE;

THE POLITICS OF CLOTH

THU 3RD OCTOBER >>>>
SUN 3RD NOVEMBER 2019

BRITISH TEXTILE BIENNIAL

ALICE KETTLE
GROUND - THREAD BEARING WITNESS
(DETAIL)

PHOTO: MICHAEL POLLARD

INTRODUCTION:

The first British Textile Biennial throws a spotlight on the nation's creativity, innovation and expression in textiles against the backdrop of the impressive infrastructure of the cotton industry in Pennine Lancashire.

In October 2019 the British Textile Biennial explores textiles as a vehicle for protest and cultural identity in installations, performances and art works that take a dynamic look at our relationship with that most basic and ancient of human creations, cloth. Find a programme of uniquely devised commissions, events and exhibitions in spaces around Pennine Lancashire.

The British Textile Biennial is a programme created and produced by Creative People and Places organisation Super Slow Way.

superslowway.org.uk

More can be found out about the British Textile Biennial programme at:

britishtextilebiennial.co.uk

The British Textile Biennial is made possible with funding from Arts Council England, whilst the heritage and education programme has been made possible with funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

BRITISH
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**ADIDAS SPEZIAL
EXHIBITION**

THE COTTON EXCHANGE,
BLACKBURN

PHOTO: DAVID LAKE

ADIDAS SPEZIAL EXHIBITION

THE COTTON EXCHANGE,
BLACKBURN

>>> The evolution of adidas footwear past and present is presented in all its glory at the *ADIDAS SPEZIAL EXHIBITION* in Blackburn's magnificent Cotton Exchange. Curated by **Gary Aspden** (adidas brand consultant and designer of the adidas SPEZIAL range), the exhibition features shoes from his personal archive alongside those of other fellow adidas collectors.

In the 1970s / 1980s young people adopted the trainer as a symbol of their identity, nowhere more so than in the North West; this exhibition charts the evolution of the design of this cult item. On the dance floors and on the football terraces, the brand has remained a firm favourite for decades. Going far beyond their original design and purpose, these products have become integral to the fabric of popular culture.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY:

Is there an item of clothing that you wear that could represent your identity? What items of clothing do your peers associate with you? How important is fashion and clothing in your life and to your identity? Discuss and share examples of these items as a group.

DESIGN ACTIVITY:

Sketch out ideas for your defining items as a product mock-up with distinct logos and signifiers personal to you. What colours and details would you use? How does that item reflect your style and your personality? How would you like to be remembered? What story would you want your trainer to tell people about you?

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ADIDAS
BLACKBURN SPZL

GARY ASPDEN
THE COTTON EXCHANGE, BLACKBURN



ADIDAS BLACKBURN SPZL
FROM ADIDAS SPEZIAL AW19.
IMAGE BY GARY WATSON

ADIDAS BLACKBURN SPZL FROM ADIDAS SPEZIAL AW19

GARY ASPDEN
THE COTTON EXCHANGE, BLACKBURN

>>> In keeping with the aesthetic of the adidas 'city series', **Gary Aspden** (adidas brand consultant and designer of the adidas SPEZIAL range) has designed a limited edition *ADIDAS BLACKBURN SPZL* featuring a colourway inspired by the red rose of Lancashire.

200 pairs of a 'Nightsafe' edition of these shoes are available exclusively from the adidas Spezial exhibition at the British Textiles Biennial, with all the funds raised going towards Nightsafe, a Blackburn charity supporting homeless youth. These 200 pairs have a Nightsafe branded footbed, a green suede upper that's paired with red leather Three Stripes branding on the side and on the heel, and a red leather Spezial swing tag.

DESIGN ACTIVITY:

What makes your school Spezial?

Design a bespoke adidas shoe that signifies your school. Make a series of concepts using key details, colours, patterns and words that you associate with your school. Research the materials, colours and measurements of existing adidas shoes to make your own design concept as authentic as possible.

- What are your school colours?
- Where is your school located?
- Are there any famous ex-pupils of your school?
- What unique symbols are on your school logo?
- What cultures are present at your school?

Use these questions to help you figure out how to characterise and design your shoe.

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*TRANSFORM AND
ESCAPE THE DOGS*

50-54 CHURCH STREET,
BLACKBURN



TRANSFORM AND ESCAPE THE DOGS

50–54 CHURCH STREET,
BLACKBURN

>>> *TRANSFORM AND ESCAPE THE DOGS* is a series of new works by artist **Jamie Holman**, celebrating a history of radical gatherings where the working class youth of the north resisted, rejected, and finally reclaimed the spaces that cotton made and then abandoned. From Malkin tower to Mill Hill; a defiant history of witches, hand loom poets, blacksmith painters, football casuals, and pioneer film makers, challenging accepted notions of textiles heritage, and of those people and events that have shaped us.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY:

The Mills were built for cotton, then became spaces where people danced and now have 'makers' returning to make clothes and exhibit art works.

- What could we do next to change the culture and identity in the North?
- What can we do with our empty buildings?
- What should the mills be used for next?

Hold a class discussion to explore your own ideas for what you would like to see done with Blackburn's empty spaces.

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TRANSFORM AND ESCAPE THE DOGS

50-54 CHURCH STREET,
BLACKBURN



PHOTO: ANDY WALMSLEY

TRANSFORM AND ESCAPE THE DOGS

50–54 CHURCH STREET,
BLACKBURN

>>> Blackburn has a secret history that is hidden in plain sight. Famous people from Blackburn changed the world, from James Hargreaves with the Spinning Jenny, to Mitchell and Kenyon inventing modern cinema! Blackburn has produced poets, painters, politicians and famous fashion designers including Wayne Hemmingway, Gary Aspden and now Patrick Grant from The Great British Sewing Bee. The streets of Blackburn still hold clues to the past. Northgate still looks like it did two hundred years ago – if you look up! There are blue plaques all around the town, commemorating the town's historical significance, and these are breadcrumbs we can follow to discover the past.

DESIGN ACTIVITY:

Research the blue plaques of Blackburn to find out where they are located and who is on them. Read the stories behind the plaques and create a map of their locations across the town centre.

Get together with your class to nominate a famous Blackburnian who should have a blue plaque of their own. Where should it go? What should it say?

Research the measurements, dimensions, fonts and materials used when creating a blue plaque. Make your own to-scale mock-up of this blue plaque using materials found at home or at school.

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CULT, CULTURE,
SUBVERSION

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL
CRYPT



CULT, CULTURE, SUBVERSION

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL
CRYPT

>>> Explore the t-shirt in the 20th Century through this inspirational exhibition; charting the history, culture and subversion of the most affordable and popular item of clothing on the planet.

T-SHIRT: *CULT, CULTURE, SUBVERSION* highlights the multi-faceted role of this humble garment. From men's underclothes to symbol of rock and roll rebellion, through punk and politics to luxury fashion item, t-shirts broadcast who we are and who we want to be.

Co-curated by The Civic, Barnsley and Fashion and Textile Museum, London.

DESIGN ACTIVITY:

Think about current issues that you are passionate about, such as animal rights or climate change. Write a slogan that represents this issue, and design a set of t-shirts that feature this slogan. Think about what colours and fonts you would use in your design? Think about the types of places you would wear your t-shirt for the most impact?

Next think about what other products your slogan could be put on? Mugs? Stationery? Posters? Badges?

Design a full set of merchandise using your slogan and share it with your friends and family for their feedback.

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GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL
CRYPT

IMAGE: EMMA COLBERT

SCREEN PRINTING WORKSHOPS

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL
CRYPT

>>> **girls girls girls** is a feminist based artist duo and curatorial practice who create work around the themes of equality, diversity, mental health, self-love and gender. Working together with communities' girls girls girls create thought provoking workshops exploring important and sometimes challenging themes in a collaborative way. girls girls girls believe art is a powerful tool for communication and something that brings communities together.

For the British Textile Biennial 2019 girls girls girls will be delivering a series of screen printing workshops for all to enjoy. Inspired by the history of the t-shirt being used as a canvas for political agendas and the Biennial's theme '*THE POLITICS OF CLOTH*,' girls girls girls have created a series of political slogans to be screen printed onto both prints and tote bags.

The artist duo is **Emma Colbert & Lydia McCaig** who met at university and created girls girls girls in their second year. Emma's studio practice is predominantly painting, printmaking and mural commission and origination. She explores colourful compositions in her work creating abstracted forms often depicting personal experiences with an articulation of gender, sexuality and the sharing of stories of 'the female experience.' Lydia's practice is mainly photography, poetry and printmaking. She explores themes of female sexuality, mental health and challenges gender stereotypes through the use of text and photographs, challenging taboos and hidden thoughts to create subtle and intimate pieces of work.

BRITISH
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QUILTING STORIES

BLACKBURN MUSEUM AND
ART GALLERY



PHOTO: LOKESH GHAI

KATAB: QUILTING STORIES

BLACKBURN MUSEUM AND
ART GALLERY

>>> Since 2014 *KATAB: QUILTING STORIES* has worked collaboratively with a group of female artisans in the migrant communities scattered across the city of Ahmedabad, Western India. Led by textile artists/researchers **Lokesh Ghai** and **Emma Sumner**, the project elevates the value of katab as a craft, and honours the creativity of its participants through commissions that provide them autonomy over the design, and allow them to put their own name on the work they have made.

For the British Textile Biennial, the project brings a series of quilts to Blackburn inspired by iconic films (both Hollywood and Bollywood) and Hindi TV series, Exhibited alongside items from the Museum's South Asian collection, the exhibition includes a quilt inspired by Ghandi's 1931 visit to Lancashire, created by Lokesh during his 2012 cotton exchange residency in Blackburn.

DESIGN ACTIVITY:

Make a note of the colours, shapes, styles and fabrics used within the katab quilts. Can you pick out any Hollywood or Bollywood film references?

On paper or on the computer, design your own katab quilt based on a scene from your own favourite film. Reference the colours, styles and patterns used in the katab quilts when constructing your scene.

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QUILTING STORIES

BLACKBURN MUSEUM AND
ART GALLERY

VANISHALI

PHOTO: LOKESH GHAI

KATAB: QUILTING STORIES

BLACKBURN MUSEUM AND
ART GALLERY

>>> As a tradition the women of the Meghwal communities have practised the craft of katab (appliqué), often making domestic household decorations such as quilts, torans (door hangings) and bed covers, by sewing together small geometric units of recycled waste fabrics from local tailors and garment manufacturers. The quilts created using this technique are known as ralli and are constructed using clever simplified motifs such as stars, kites, peacocks or the tube-lights which are repeated in the textile design and imitated by other makers. Over the last two decades, a large majority of the women who are involved in the craft of appliqué have started to work for numerous different clients including Fab-India, local design students, clothing boutiques and independent designers.

DESIGN ACTIVITY:

With a group of classmates, consider how you can use the katab technique of using recycled waste fabrics, within your school. Begin by researching into the different creative departments at your school. What type of waste materials are left over from old projects?

Come up with an idea for how this waste could be better used. What else could be made with this waste material? Or could it be used in another subject?

Think about how you could communicate this with the rest of your school.

BRITISH
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*AARON DUNLEAVY & COMMUNITY
CLOTHING FILM SHORT*

BLACKBURN MUSEUM AND
ART GALLERY



PHOTO: AARON DUNLEAVY

AARON DUNLEAVY & COMMUNITY CLOTHING FILM SHORT

BLACKBURN MUSEUM AND
ART GALLERY

>>> A new film collaboration between this award winning young film-maker, and designer **Patrick Grant's** social enterprise **Community Clothing**, uncovering the lives & families of Blackburn's textile factory workers. From the outskirts of Blackburn, Community Clothing produces simple stylish clothing striving to use only British sourced materials, making clothing at home in Britain. Encouraging skills building in the UK through apprenticeships training new workforces of pattern cutters and tailors; whilst encouraging a sustainable approach to manufacturing the clothes we wear.

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY:

With a group of classmates, consider your sustainable fashion choices. What are you wearing today, and what did you wear yesterday? Do you know where it was from and where it was made? Research into this and see how sustainable your wardrobe is. Come up with ideas for how to make your wardrobes more sustainable.

DESIGN ACTIVITY:

As a class, create a series of sustainable fashion posters / social media posts to inform your family, friends and peers of the benefits of shopping sustainably with fashion. Think about what slogans and colours you could use to make the most impact on your poster, and speak to your teacher about getting these displayed around school.