



A British Museum touring exhibition

# Pushing paper

## contemporary drawing from 1970 to now

Activities  
Booklet

The British  
Museum



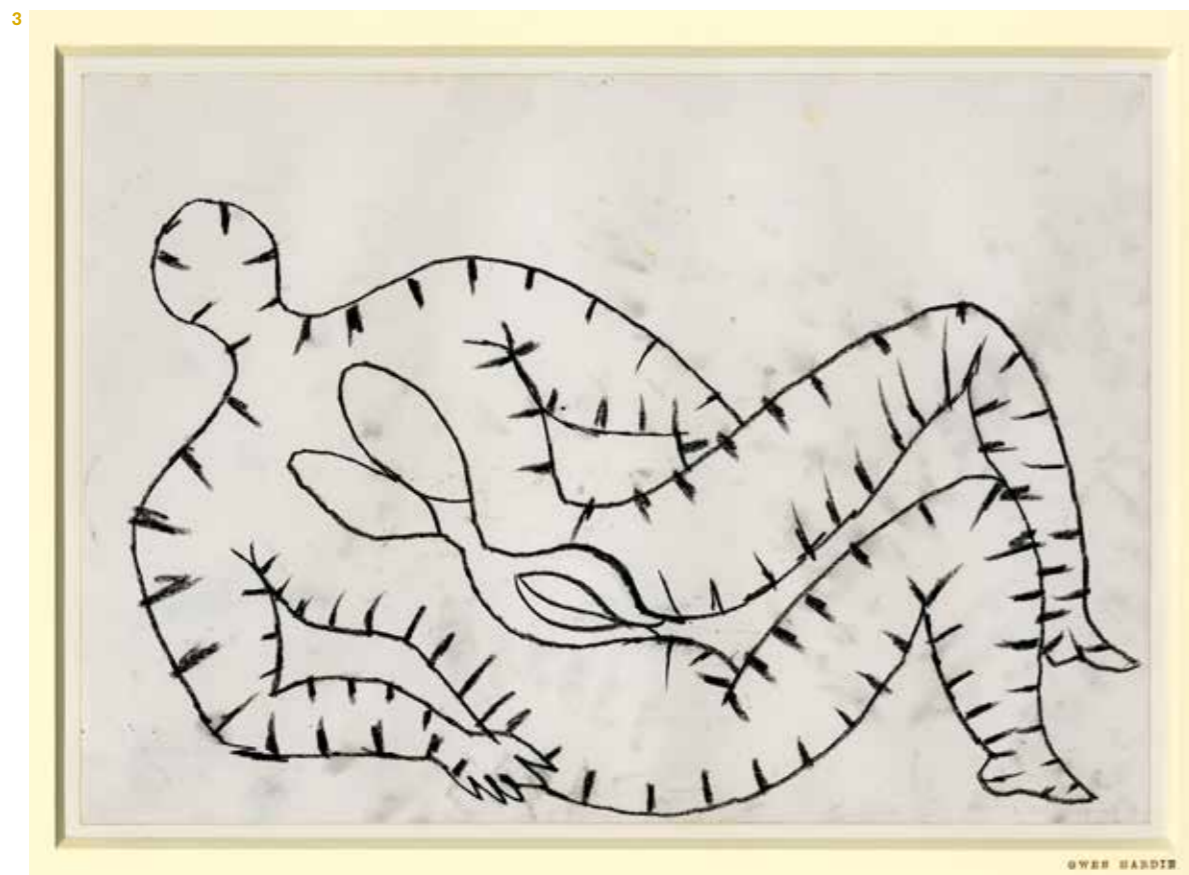
Supported by the  
Bridget Riley Art Foundation



<sup>1</sup> Front Cover: Grayson Perry (b. 1960), *Untitled*, c. 1984, coloured crayons, watercolour, gouache, pen and ink, with collage of photographs, magazine illustrations and silver glitter  
© The Trustees of the British Museum  
Reproduced by permission of the artist

<sup>2</sup> Jan Vanriet (b. 1948), *Ruchla*, 2011, watercolour over black crayon with white gouache  
© The Trustees of the British Museum  
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<sup>3</sup> Gwen Hardie (b.1962), *Untitled*, 1987, charcoal on thin white paper  
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# Introduction

**Since the 1970s, drawing has been at the forefront of artistic practice, no longer regarded as preparatory, but rather as a fully independent medium.**

Over the past 50 years, the definition of drawing has continually expanded, encroaching on territories traditionally associated with other mediums including sculpture, installation art and even performance. Artists are increasingly choosing drawing as a means to examine the modern world, with topics ranging from investigations of gender and political activism to questions of belonging and human sexuality. This exhibition explores the significance of drawing to some of the most important contemporary artists from across the globe.

The display's five sections explore themes of power and protest; systems and process; place and space; identity; and time and memory.

The British Museum has co-curated this exhibition with partner museums from around the UK, including Cooper Gallery. In a new way of working, curatorial staff from the partner museums collaborated to decide on themes within the exhibition and to research and select the works on display from more than 1,500 contemporary drawings in the British Museum's collection.

This booklet accompanies the exhibition and includes a number of different drawing exercises to be enjoyed at home or outside. We'd love to see your finished works! Share them with us and the world on social media using **#PushingPaper**

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# Systems and process

## Mindful drawing

Using the mark on the right-hand page, very carefully draw a line around it. Draw as close to the mark as you dare, without touching it. When you've drawn a full circle around the mark, draw a second line around the first. Be just as careful.

Repeat the process. If at any time you accidentally draw too close and touch the previous line then stop and draw a new line around them all. When you reach the edge of the paper, your drawing is complete.

Try using a thin brush to draw with ink or watercolour paints. You can even use food colouring or strong instant coffee – the choice is yours!



Drawn with coffee. Based on an idea by Lewis Robinson.



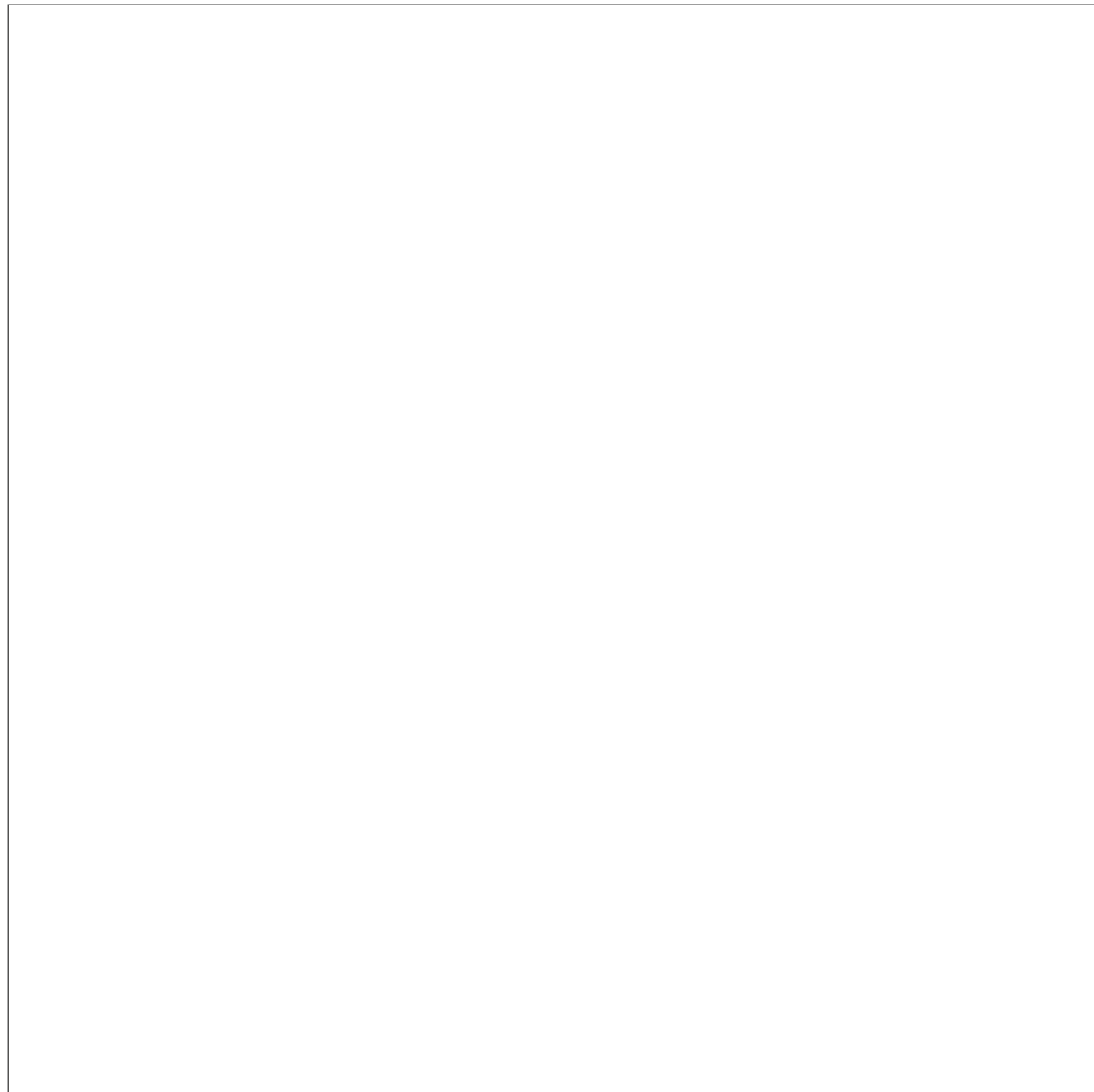
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# Identity

## Seeing the self

Make a drawing to represent your identity, but don't draw your face! Your face is what others see, but how do *you* see yourself?

Will you draw your hands or feet? Your favourite item of clothing or an object that is especially important to you? Perhaps something else entirely – your thoughts and dreams?



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# Place and space

## Drawing with the elements

Try drawing outside. Choose a safe place that feels right to you.

You could draw what you see or use chalk or charcoal to take a rubbing of a surface underneath your paper. Or use your materials to express how you feel in that place.

### You could try:

- Mixing soil with paint to give your artwork more texture.
- Making marks with a stick, feather, leaf or stone.
- Letting the elements draw with you. If it's raining, allow the water droplets to mark your paper.



Minjung Kim (b. 1962), *Mountain*, 2009, ink on hanji paper  
© The Trustees of the British Museum, Reproduced by permission of the artist

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# Time and memory

## Sensory drawing

### a) Blindfold drawing

1. Pick a small object from your immediate environment
2. First, draw the object without looking at the paper you are drawing on at all.
3. Then, try drawing the same object whilst blindfolded (or with your eyes closed – don't cheat!) exploring and recording the object by touch alone.

This activity has been inspired by the artist, Claude Heath whose work is in the exhibition. To see more work, visit [claudefheath.com/Blindfold-drawings](https://claudefheath.com/Blindfold-drawings)

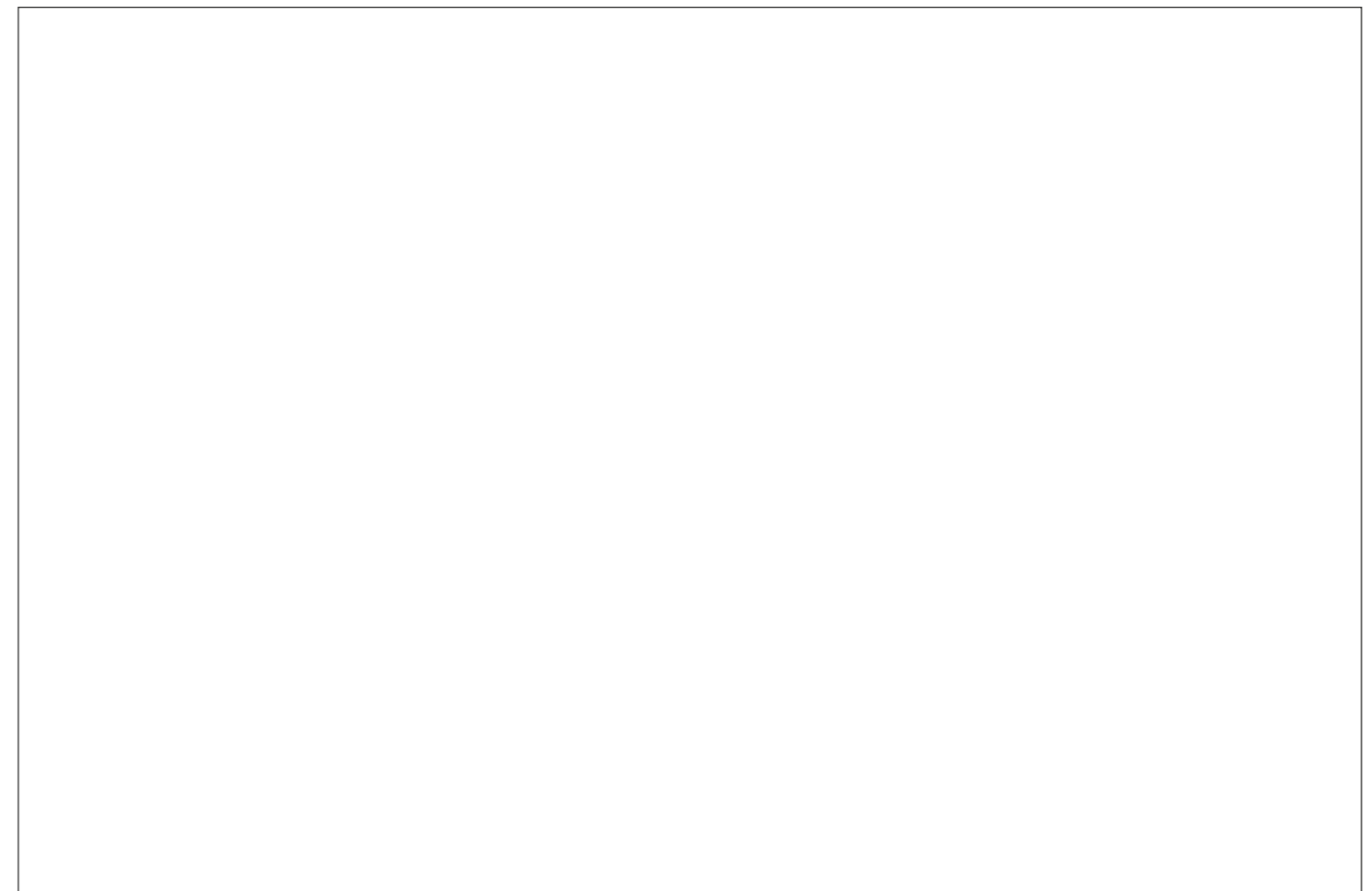
### b) Drawing with music

1. Play a favourite piece of music.
2. Using your chosen tool, make marks on the paper to represent the rhythms and melodies you hear.
3. Repeat your mark-making over and over, in time with the music. Don't worry about being neat. Express what you hear and feel!
4. Play the music over and over until your drawing feels complete.

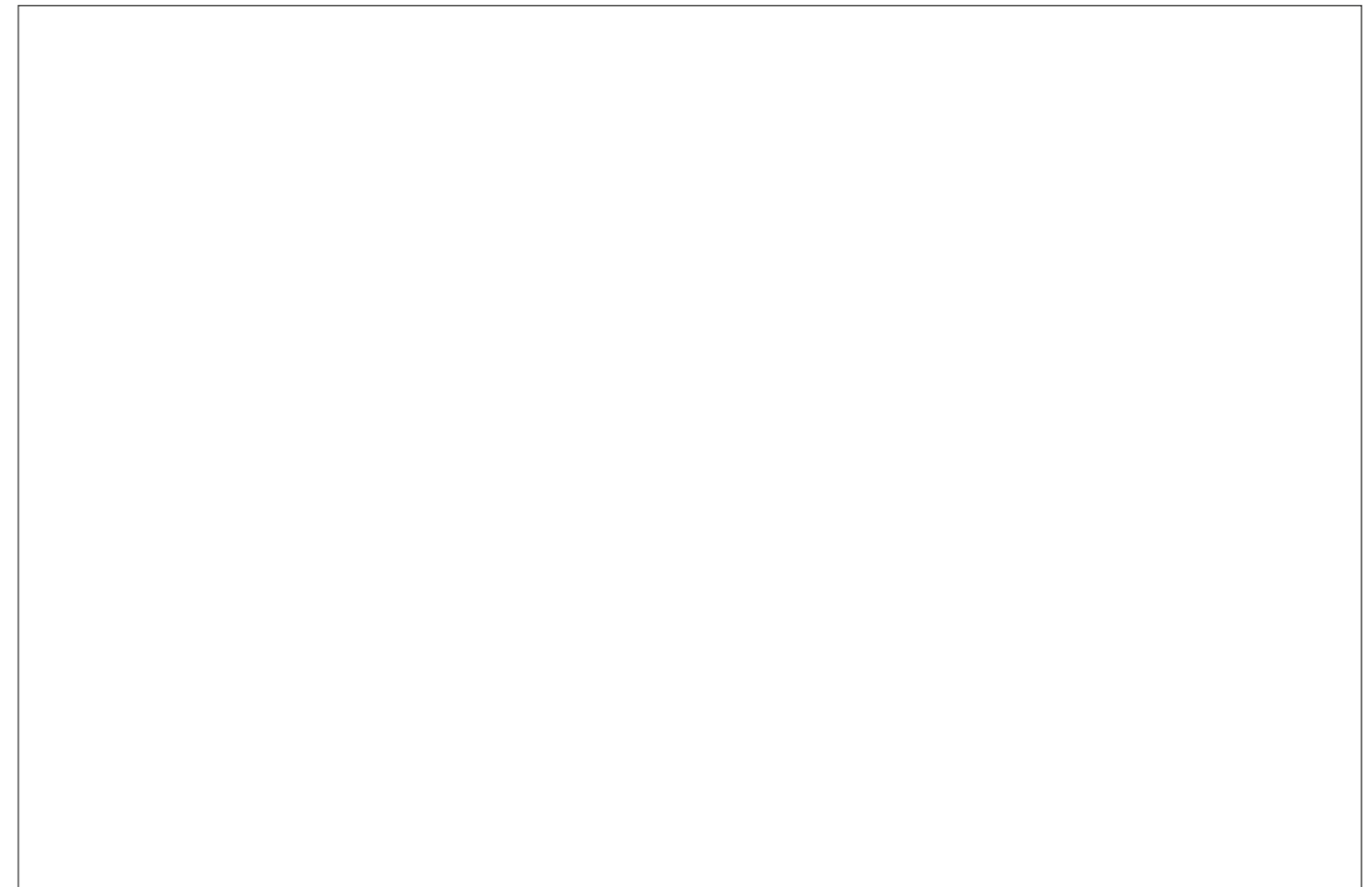
This activity has been inspired by the artist, Fiona Robinson whose work is also in the exhibition. To see more work, visit [fionarobinson.com](https://fionarobinson.com)

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a



b



# Power and protest

## Drawing for change

### What would you like to change about the world?

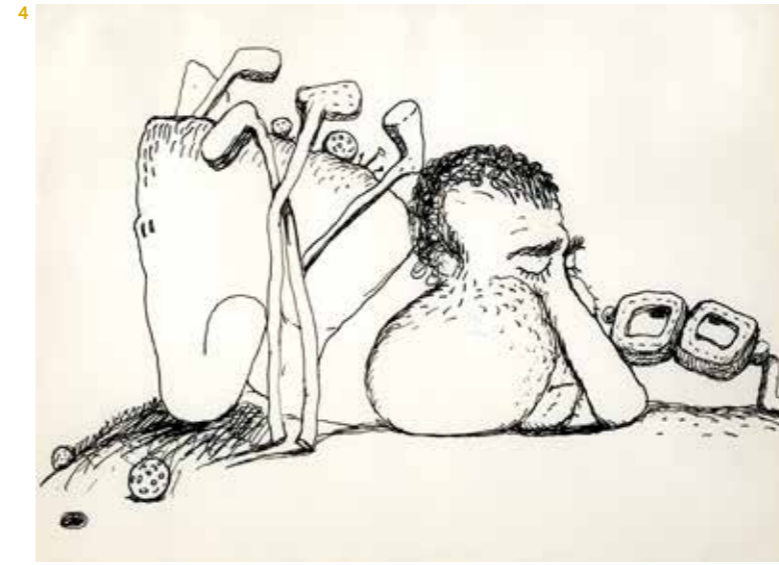
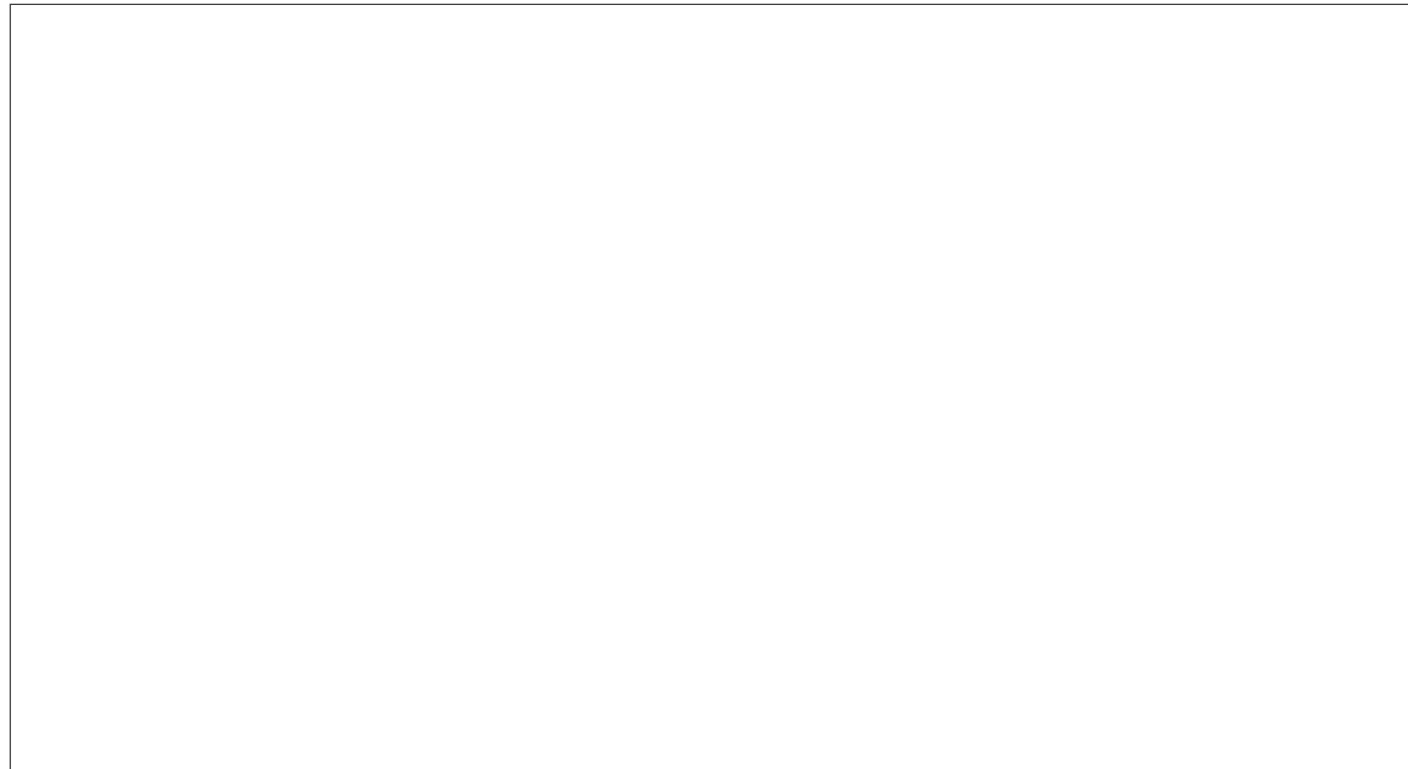
1. Give the question some thought. Then write one short, snappy sentence that tells people what you think.
2. Cut out a piece of cardboard to create a 'protest placard'. You could use an old cardboard box.
3. Create a placard using the words of your message. You can plan your design first in the box below.

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4 Philip Guston (1913 – 1980), *Untitled*, 1971, ink on paper  
© The Trustees of the British Museum  
Reproduced by permission of the artist's estate

5 Pablo Bronstein (b. 1977), *Greenwich Pendulum Mantel Clock*, 2018, ink and watercolour  
© The Trustees of the British Museum  
Reproduced by permission of the artist's permission of the artist.



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Entry to this exhibition is **free**, so here's a few ways you can give us a helping hand:

**Keep in touch!**

An easy one... Sign up to the Barnsley Museums & Heritage Trust newsletter.

**Come see us!**

Join in an activity or workshop, or maybe you fancy volunteering?

**Have an idea for an event?**

Host it here!

**We'd also love it if you...**

Buy gifts in our shop or online, make a donation in our gallery or online, or adopt one of our artworks in need of conservation.

**Enjoy your experience?**

Please consider making a donation in our gallery or online. Or simply text **COOPERG**, followed by your donation amount, to 70085.

**Questions?**

Visit [www.bmht.org](http://www.bmht.org)

**Thank you!**



@CooperBarnsley

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