

BALTIC

Home&School Resource

Hope

Messages of Hope through
Contemporary Art and Creativity

C #balticconnect **ONNECT**

About the artist

This Home&School resource has been developed by BALTIC Freelance Artist, Megan Randall. Megan facilitates activities with schools, families, teachers and everyone in between. When making her own work she mostly uses clay, creating pots on the wheel and modelling to make sculptures. Megan also likes to use textiles, print and ceramics to create mini adventures that investigate materials and ideas considering kindness, fairness and activism to help people think about the world in a different way.

About the resource

During these uncertain times, society is reaching out to one another more and more with messages of support, love, humour and hope. As a society we have seen these messages spread through social media, FaceTime, TikTok, posted letters and postcards, e-mail and care packages to those in need. This resource is designed to provoke thoughts of hope: what hope means to you, what hope looks like and how you can create messages of hope through contemporary art and creativity.

What you will need:

- Scissors
- Paper
- Cardboard
- Glue
- Tape
- Pencils and/or Felt Tip Pens
- Paper

To make a den:

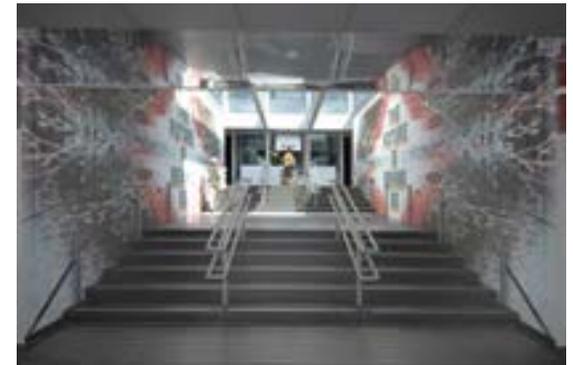
- Sheets and blanket from around your house
- paper, pegs, string

Suggested den items:

- Fairy lights, torches, music, toys, pillows



Image © Artist Megan Randall



Mark Titchner, *The Street*, 2007.
Photo © 2007 BALTIC / Colin Davison

Hope Hippo at BALTIC

Hope Hippo is a sculpture created by collaborative artist duo Jennifer Allora & Guillermo Calzadilla. It is a life-size, sleepy hippopotamus situated at the centre of BALTIC's Level 4 *Animalesque* exhibition. See more [here](#) online. Throughout the day, a member of BALTIC Crew climbs *Hope Hippo* reading a newspaper. Whenever the Crew member reads a story or headline about something they feel is wrong or unjust, they blow a whistle, tear out the page and throw the article on the floor.

But why do BALTIC Crew blow a whistle?

A 'whistleblower' is a person who exposes secretive information or activity that is deemed illegal, unethical, or not correct within an organisation. Here BALTIC Crew act as a whistleblower, blowing a whistle when they read something they don't see as being right and by tearing out the page they are exposing the truth of what they have read to the world. The sleeping *Hope Hippo* acts as a symbol of calm and positivity amongst the newspaper sea of injustice.

What issues do you feel strongly about? What do you want to say to the world?

This is your chance to make a performance piece in your living room. Grab some pens, paper and scissors. Cut the paper into small pieces about the size of a Post-it Note. When you have a pile, write down a list of words – any words... think colours, fruits, your friends' names, places etc. Then write another list about things you feel strongly about: climate change, plastic in the ocean, testing on animals, chopping down trees and more. Now mix the two lists up, make a pile of cushions from your sofa, climb on top with your list and start reading. Every time you read something you don't like, whistle and throw your paper to the ground. Share your performance on social media including the hashtag #balticconnect – we'd love to hear what you've got to say.



Allora & Calzadilla *Hope Hippo*. Photo: Rob Harris © 2019 BALTIC

How to make an animal mask



Imagine you were an animal. Think about all of the things you'd like to say and the injustices you might want to make heard. Follow these steps to make an animal mask and a protest sign.

Roughly draw round a pair of sunglasses or glasses on a piece of paper to get a mask shape.

Cut out your eye holes.

Stick this paper template to a piece of card. A cereal packet or some packaging will give it a bit of extra strength.

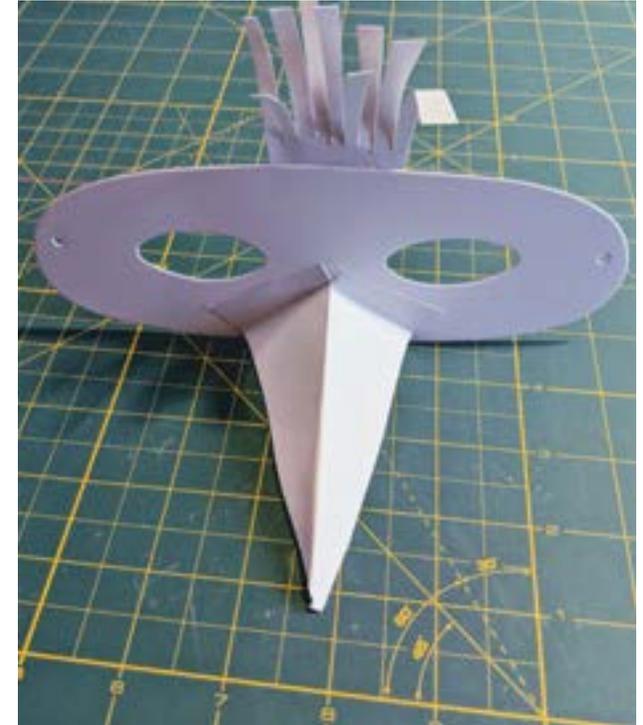
Cut round your edges once you have stuck it on. Put two holes in either side of your mask for some string or wool to hold it on your head.

Once you have your basic mask shape you can cut, fold and stick noses, beaks, tusks, ears and eyelashes.

Think about the texture of your animal, are they furry, feathery, scaly or smooth?

How materials can you use to achieve these effects?

Think about the different pen or pencil marks you could create to mimic these textures.



How to make a protest sign



Bob and Roberta Smith, *Help Build the Ruins of Democracy* 2005. Photo: © 2005 BALTIC

The best protest signs make use of alliteration; repeating words beginning with the same letters, rhyming words, funny puns or witty wordplay.

Here are some examples. Fill in the missing words (find the answers on the final page)

“Bee a hero”

“You otter be ashamed”

“Raise your _____ not the sea level”

“Don’t be shellfish keep the sea _____”

“Stop ‘lion’ about _____ change”

“Stop this ‘panda’ monium”

“Stop being ‘sealy”

“Stop the climate ‘ _____’astrophe”

“This is all very a ‘llama’ ing”

“A ‘turtle’ disaster”

Now compose your own slogan for a protest sign. Your protest signs should be bold and bright and the text should be easy to read.

Use a piece of paper and write your slogan on (it might be a good idea to do it in pencil first to get it the right size). Embellish it with drawings and colour.

The paper doesn’t need to be a regular size – if you were a mouse protesting for more cheese for example, your protest sign could be small and shaped like a wedge of cheddar.

If you want to make it look like a placard (fancy name for a protest sign) tape your card onto a wooden kitchen spoon, spatula, lolly stick or broom handle.

Now you’re ready to protest. Don your mask and hold your sign. Have a one animal protest around your house or school sharing your hopes for the future. If you want others to join your protest too, make extra protest signs for family, or some of your toys.

Get your grown ups to take a picture and share on social media using the hashtag #balticconnect Let’s get your message out there.

Where Hope Lives

Build a den for *Hope Hippo* and decorate the inside and outside with cut up paper leaves and flowers.

How to build a Den of Hope

All good dens need a safe and sturdy structure. If you're working outside, this could be the washing line, or if you're inside it might be a table or chair that you hang sheets over.

Ironing boards, sofa cushions and large umbrellas are great for creating structure, you can be really inventive by using items that you find around you. Do you have bamboo garden canes, bendy plastic pipes, goal posts or beach tents lying around? You could even make props from wooden kitchen spoons!

Dens are often made by draping or pegging sheets, duvets, old curtains, beach towels or blankets. Use your strong structure to drape or peg materials over and create a tent like feel in your den. Some materials will block out the light completely, some will make you feel extra snuggly and some will let in lots of light. Play around with this idea and see which you like best. Maybe you could have a day den and a night den?

Just remember to ask permission from an adult first and ask them to help you to check that your den building is safe.

Once you have built it you can now decorate your Den of Hope.

Pick colours, materials, lights and sounds that make you feel hopeful. In her 2015 exhibition, *It's not who you are, it's how you are*, artist Alice Theobald chose to fill den-like structures with white quilts, music, projections and lights see this [here](#). Take some time to sit and reflect



Alice Theobald and Atomik Architecture, *It's not who you are, it's how you are*.
Photo: Colin Davison © 2015 BALTIC

in your den. *Think about your friends and family – what would you say to them if they were in your den. What are you thankful for? What has made you smile today? When was the last time you belly laughed? Can you remember what was so funny?*

Draw and write hopeful messages for other people on cut paper leaves and flowers and peg them around your den. Make extras so you can post messages to friends and relatives, or string them together and display them in your window.

Artist Inspiration: Mark Titchner

Mark Titchner's work explores the use of words and language and takes a variety of forms including billboards, posters, light boxes, sculptures and installations. Mark is concerned with language and communication, and often uses extracts of text taken from a broad range of sources such as song lyrics, political manifestos and advertising slogans. For Mark's exhibition at BALTIC in 2008, *Run Black River Run*, he exhibited 8 banners with positive slogans, all of which came from the mission statements of the highly successful brands. See the exhibition at BALTIC [here](#) online.

Be more Mark:

- Which song lyrics makes you feel hopeful? Make a card and write your hopeful song lyric inside. Send it to someone who might need to receive some positivity at the moment.
- Think of a message you want the world to hear: Like Mark, design your very own billboard and imagine where you would place it. Look for hopeful words in magazines or newspapers. Cut and collage them to make new messages. Stick messages to your bedroom door as a warning to your siblings, to your wheelie bin as affirmations for the refuse collectors or to your letter box for smiles for the postie!
- Look at some famous brands; think about trainers, makeup, toiletries or food. How do they use slogans? For example: 'Just do it' (Nike) 'Think Different' (Apple) or 'Every Little Helps' (Tesco). Use these slogans to create your own messages. For example: Stay Home – Just do it!... Share your ideas with the help of an adult on social media using #balticconnect.



Mark Titchner, *Run Black River Run*, 2007.

Image © Colin Davison BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art 2007

Artist Inspiration: Bob and Roberta Smith

Artist Bob and Roberta Smith, also known as Patrick Brill, exhibited *Help Build the Ruins of Democracy* at BALTIC in 2005. His works are slogan-based, colourful and full of protest. His best known works include: *Make Art Not War*, which belongs to the Tate collection; and *Letter to Michael Gove*. Central to Bob and Roberta Smith's thinking is the idea that campaigns are extended art works. See his exhibition at BALTIC [here](#) online.

Standing up for what you believe is right and making your voice heard is a huge part of being an active citizen. Think about something you'd like to redress, it might be personal to you or something relevant to the wider world at the moment like the climate emergency, refugee and asylum issues, poverty or human rights. Paint or colour your own sign and prop it up in your window like Bob and Roberta Smith. Visit [@bobandrobertasmith](#) on Instagram to join in with his art tasks.



Bob and Roberta Smith, *Help Build the Ruins of Democracy* 2005. Photo © 2005 BALTIC

Key Words

hope/ ceramics/ sculpture
structure / temporary / permanent
natural / installation / messages
positivity / protest / placard
billboard / slogan / advertise
lyrics / affirmation/ human rights
climate emergency