



# MK MANDALAS KINETIKA FLAGS

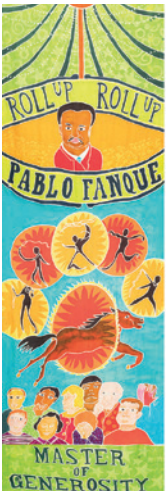
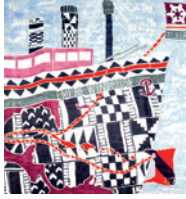
This Resource Pack is designed to inspire you to get creative on your own, in your bubble or with your family in April. It will support you through a step-by-step process in creating the design for one or more of the flags for IF: Milton Keynes International Festival.



# KINETIKA

DESIGN THAT MOVES

A selection of flags  
designed and made by  
community groups  
working with Kinetika





COVER IMAGE:  
Photographer:  
Frazer Waller  
[frazerwaller.com](http://frazerwaller.com)  
Artist:  
Gordon Young  
[gordonyoung.info](http://gordonyoung.info)



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# ABOUT IF: MILTON KEYNES INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

**IF** Milton Keynes  
International  
Festival 2021  
**10-30 July**

IF: Milton Keynes International Festival was founded in 2010 and takes place every two years.

Creating unique and memorable experiences, the Festival is designed to encourage people to see a different side to Milton Keynes, presenting a world-class, multi-arts programme which includes new commissions, outdoor and large-scale events, concerts, shows, installations, participatory projects and family activities.

Events take place in unusual locations across Central Milton Keynes, including parks, public squares, shopping areas, and the online and digital realm.

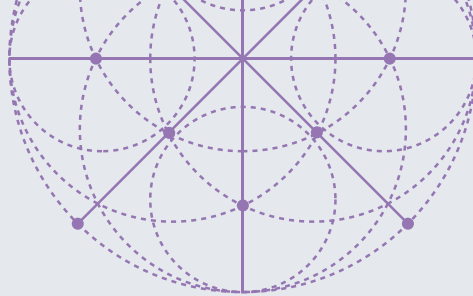
The Festival planned for 2020 was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and has been rescheduled for July 2021, in accordance with safety guidelines. This Festival will respond to the extraordinary times we are living through, look to the future, and celebrate the world and communities we live in - both within Milton Keynes and globally.

The Festival's Project Manager for Kinetika Flags is Rachel Wright. The Festival is produced by The Stables and is core funded by Arts Council England and Milton Keynes Council, with support and partnerships across the corporate, educational, charitable and community sectors of Milton Keynes and beyond.

[ifmiltonkeynes.org](http://ifmiltonkeynes.org)



# ABOUT KINETIKA



Kinetika is an internationally renowned company, specialising in creating large-scale hand-painted silks. For over 20 years we have been combining world-class design with community projects to produce spectacular outdoor commissions that engage diverse audiences wherever they work.

Founded by artistic director Ali Pretty in 1997 and inspired by her training in carnival arts in Trinidad and India, Kinetika now has an unrivalled reputation for working with local communities on projects that change the way people feel about where they live - from local community walks in Essex to high streets and city squares across the UK, out to the Great Wall of China, Ethiopia and West Bengal. In 2020

Kinetika responded to the challenge of Covid-19 and produced projects working in new ways and online in Essex and the Thames Estuary.

For Milton Keynes, we will make 30 hand-painted silk flags using batik- hot wax resist technique, and will work with you to create the designs.

**We invite you to be the designers of your own flags – you will be assisted by the Festival's Project Manager Rachel, and supported by a team of artists, Ali, Lisa, Jane and Ciara.**

[kinetika.co.uk](http://kinetika.co.uk)



# INSPIRATION: THE MILTON KEYNES ROSE

DESIGNED BY GORDON YOUNG

We have taken our inspiration from The Milton Keynes Rose, the design of which itself was inspired by the concept of mandalas.

The Rose, located in Campbell Park, is a new public space for Milton Keynes where everyone can commemorate, celebrate or remember a special person or event throughout the year. The commission was to create a public space, a 21st century cenotaph, where people could go to mark, commemorate, celebrate, irrelevant of faith, creed or colour.

The defunct fountain in Campbell Park was designated as a possible site and provided a perfect space in which to produce a circular design.

Based upon the mathematical beauty of a flower and the maths that inspired Cathedral Rose windows but remains constant as the 'Spira Mirabilis', the divine proportion whether a poppy, lotus or sunflower. It is the geometry behind much of the world's sacred architecture.

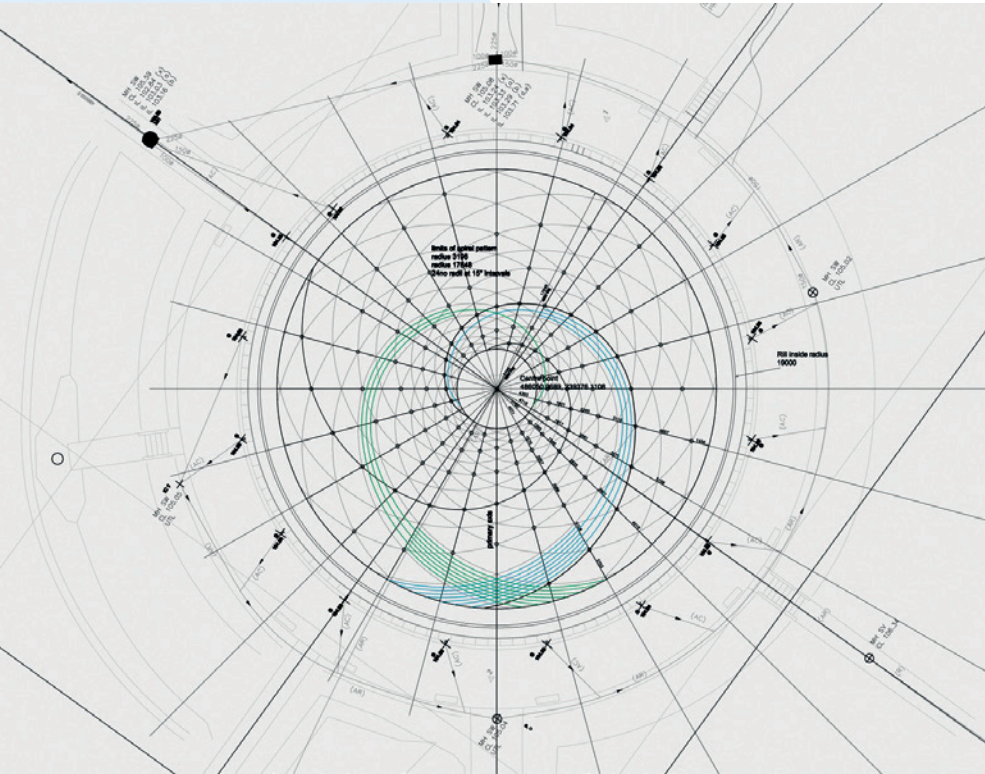
The Milton Keynes Rose features a calendar important days, chosen by the Cenotaph Trust and the people of Milton Keynes through a variety of community workshops. These are represented by 105 pillars arranged in the geometric design of a flower.

[miltonkeynesrose.org.uk](http://miltonkeynesrose.org.uk)



Photographer: Frazer Waller  
[frazerwaller.com](http://frazerwaller.com)  
Artist: Gordon Young  
[gordonyoung.info](http://gordonyoung.info)

Below: the technical drawing for Gordon Young's design for The Milton Keynes Rose  
(Drawing: Sawyerworks Ltd  
[www.sawyerworks.co.uk](http://www.sawyerworks.co.uk));  
right: some research images from his design presentation (courtesy Debbie Brock)



# INSPIRATION: WHY MANDALAS?

We are taking inspiration for our mandala designed silks from The Milton Keynes Rose. A set of new themes have been identified that resonate with now and will give a starting point for design discussions and creative exercises.

**COMING TOGETHER**

**GETTING OUTDOORS**

**NATURE**

**SAYING THANK YOU**

**MOVING FORWARD**

We will be working with you and your groups to design a set of 30 beautiful silk flags that reflect your experiences of the last year.

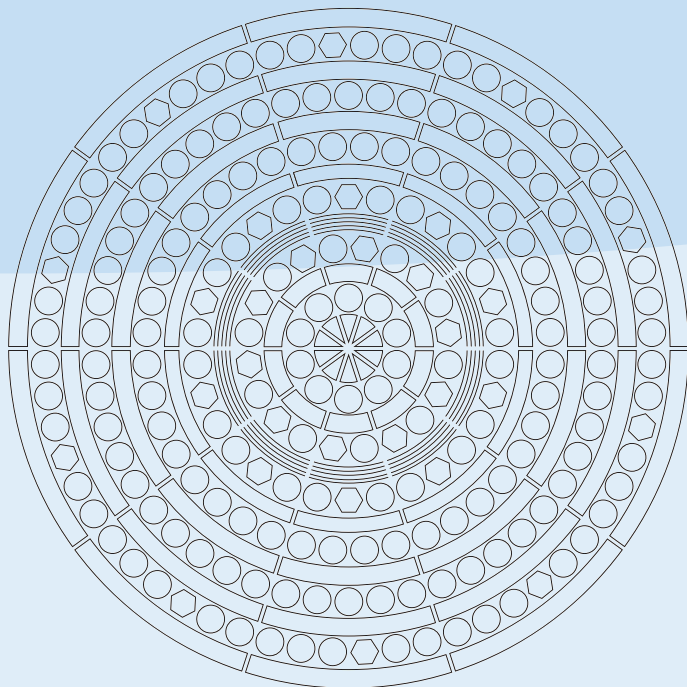
Each flag is 120cm x 120cm, within the square there is a circle, within which will be your mandala design.

Alongside the activities outlined in this pack, there will be a series of weekly workshops led by Kinetika artist Lisa Meehan, and face-to-face sessions in Milton Keynes with artists Jane Charles and Ciara Callaghan.

Once you have completed your designs, they will be sent to the Kinetika Design Studio where the team of artists will use the process of batik and silk painting to transform them into beautiful silk artworks.



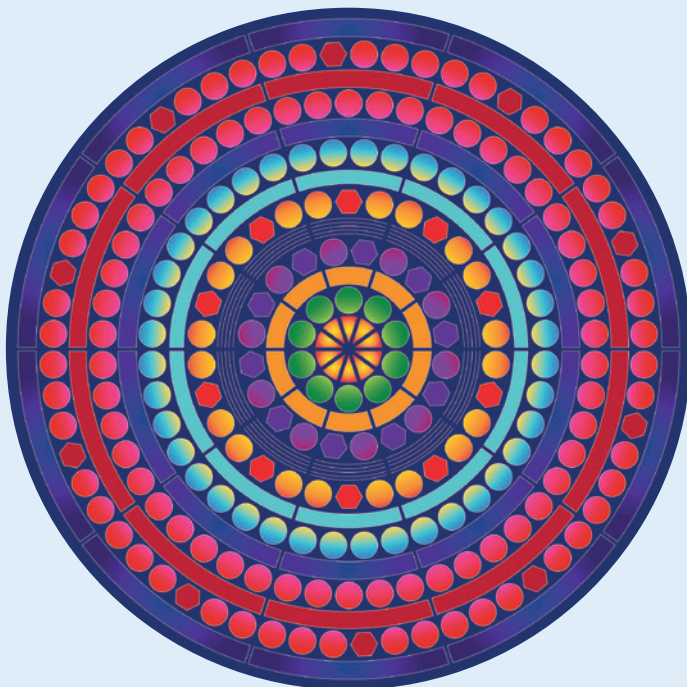
**We worked with over 250 participants from five choirs to contribute drawings incorporated into the design of this mandala for a silk backdrop for Singing Our Lives. Union Chapel, January 2020.**



### Digital Capture

Each of the finished individual designs will be photographed. These pictures will form an on-line gallery which will see the design married to the description that the individual or group has created.

Each group will be offered the opportunity of being filmed to tell some of their experience of being involved in the project, these interviews will form the basis of a short film which will tell the story behind the flags.



### Presentation of Flags

The set of 30 flags will be presented in public open spaces at the Festival in July. All the people involved will have times set aside when they are encouraged to come and view their design amongst the sea of designs. After the event, flags will be either retained for Festival use, displayed at other events or returned to community groups.

# MK MANDALAS

## KINETIKA

## FLAG

## ARTISTS

### ALI PRETTY

Ali's artistic direction and hand-painted silk designs are renowned for their quality, both in their individual style as well as their ability to engage and leave lasting legacies in communities and individuals alike. In 2015, Ali was commissioned to create 12 large-scale silks for the Royal Opera House's Paul Hamlyn Hall during the Deloitte Ignite Festival.

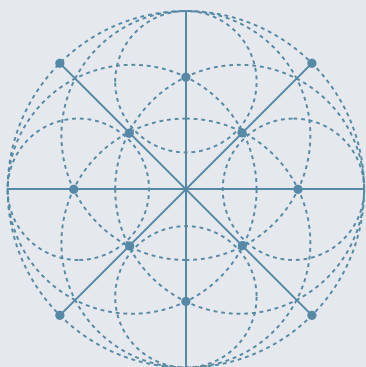


### CIARA CALLAGHAN

Ciara is a natural dye, textile and needlework artist from Milton Keynes.



## TIMELINE



**30 MARCH**

Introductory session for all participants, exploration of themes

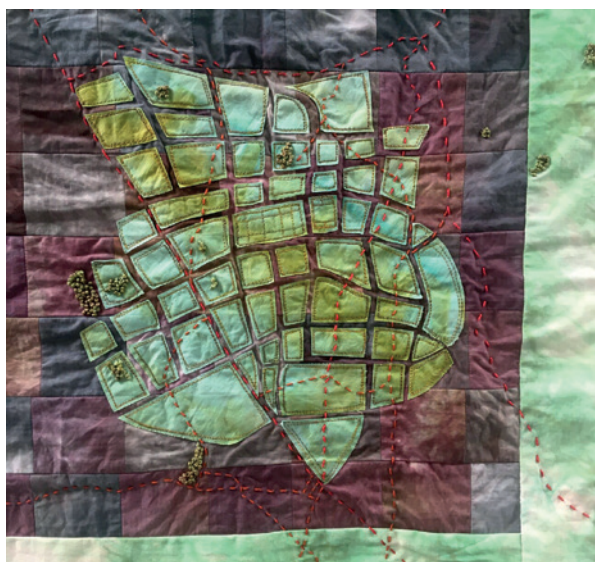
**APRIL**

Design workshops online and in person

## JANE CHARLES

Jane is a creative textiles maker and tutor.

"I'm addicted to textiles, adding colour with dye and often print, creating layers and details with machine and hand embroidery. I've been inspired by the landscape and grid roads of Milton Keynes a number of times."



## LISA MEEHAN

Lisa has been an artist with Kinetika for the past four years, leading and participating in multiple projects including Silk River, Norwich Circus 250 and Neasden Temple Scrolls. Lisa runs drawing, painting and printmaking workshops. After graduating from university, Lisa led a team at a historical fine art print studio, working from original illustrations at the Natural History Museum, and produced watercolour samples for collectable limited edition prints of the Banks Florilegium, Karl Bodmer's Illustrations, and Ferdinand Bauer's Botanical Illustrations.



**MAY**

Designs complete and collected

Film individuals from groups

Transfer of designs to silks, painting  
and dyeing (Kinetika Studio)

**JUNE**

Creation of on-line gallery  
of designs and stories

**JULY**

Installation of Flags for public  
display at Milton Keynes  
International Festival

# WHAT IS A MANDALA?

In their most basic form, mandalas are circles contained within a square and arranged into sections organised around a single, central point.

Mandalas are a spiritual and ritual symbol in Hinduism and Buddhism, representing the Universe. The circular designs symbolise the idea that life is never ending and everything is connected. The mandala also represents spiritual journey within the individual viewer. The mandala's purpose is to help transform ordinary minds into enlightened ones and to assist with healing.

Mandalas can become a springboard for reflection moving us from individual to community; from personal to environmental.

Explore the meaning of a mandala. What does it mean for you? What does it mean for your group? How will you reflect this meaning in your mandala? The process of making is also reflective and thought provoking .

Your reflections and creations will contribute to the design of the MK Mandalas – Kinetika Flags.

**On the following pages are a number of activities you can do at home to start reflecting on the themes.**



## BENEFITS OF CREATING MANDALAS

Relaxes the body and mind



Cultivates the feeling of happiness, inner peace, and general well-being



Eases stress, anxiety, worry, overwhelm, fear, and depression



Activates creativity and improves focus



Enhances self-esteem and self-acceptance



Fosters a sense of connectedness with one's self and others



Improves sleep



It's fun!





# PART 1 REFLECTIONS

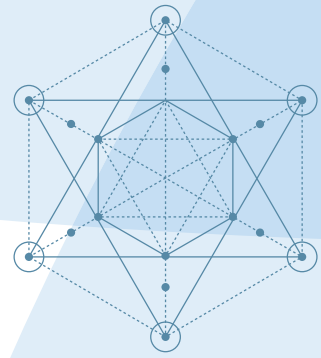
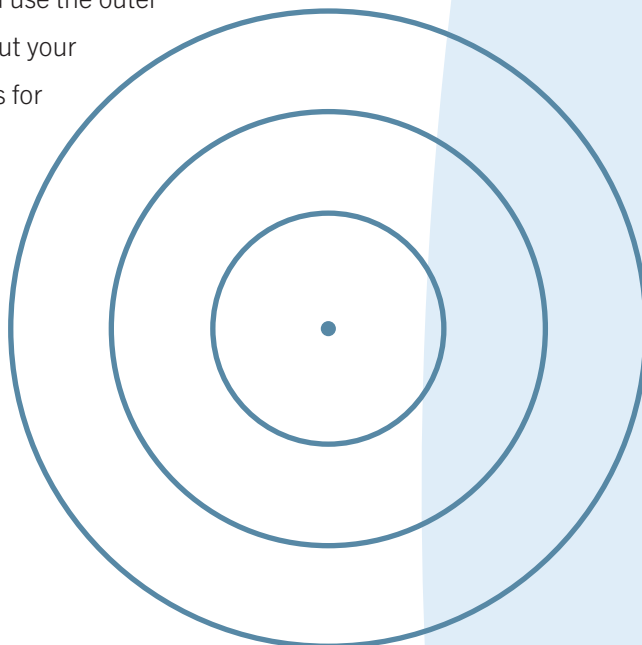
## SELF REFLECTION EXERCISE

A cosmogram is a flat geometric image depicting a cosmology. The most famous of the cosmograms are mandalas. Cosmology is the branch of astrology that explores the creation of the world and evolution, sometimes looking into the future.

Use the diagram below as a self-reflection exercise and to create your own cosmogram. Instead of beginning at the beginning of time, look at the year you have just had.

Take some quiet time to yourself to think about how you have grown and changed in the last year. In the centre write or draw about yourself at the beginning on the lockdown. Explore the shifts in how you felt and what mattered to you throughout the year in the middle circles and use the outer circle to think about your hopes and dreams for the future.

Use words, symbols, drawings or collage to fill out your mandala cosmogram.



In Tibetan Buddhism there is a meditational practice of making sand mandalas or *dul-tson-kyil-khor*. In this tradition, the mandalas depict the history of initiations from the historical Buddha to today.

These mandalas are carefully made very slowly and accurately using millions of grains of coloured sand. The act of making these mandalas - concentrating completely and becoming absorbed in the process - is the meditation.

After spending anything up to three years making these mandalas out of sand, they are ritualistically destroyed by brushing them away. The sand is then collected in a jar and returned to the earth by any moving water, like a river or stream.

This destruction is an important practise to remind us to appreciate impermanence, all things come to an end and we should remain present and joyful in the moment.



# TWO EXERCISES IN IMPERMANENCE

## EXERCISE ONE

We would like to invite you to create your own creation/destruction mandala.

Pour salt or sugar onto a flat surface in your home. Spend half an hour to an hour working quietly on making a mandala in the grains using your finger, a chopstick or a paintbrush depending on how intricate you want to make your design. Can you turn your phone off? Can you let other people know you need some quiet time? Try and let your mind go blank as you are absorbed into the making process.

When you have finished the mandala we invite you to spend a few minutes looking at it and contemplating how beautiful it is and then we challenge you to brush it away without photographing it or showing anyone!!

After you have done this consider how the whole process has made you feel.

## EXERCISE TWO

This mandala will last slightly longer but will still come to an end before long; we invite you to enjoy the process and the beauty while it lasts!

Using face/body paints or even some eyeliner spend some time creating a mandala pattern on your body. This can be a delicate wrist image or anywhere on your leg.

Enjoy this mandala while it's there and let it remind you of the slow meditational process of making it if you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed.

Then next time you have a bath or a shower, pay attention to the process of washing the art away.



# PART 2

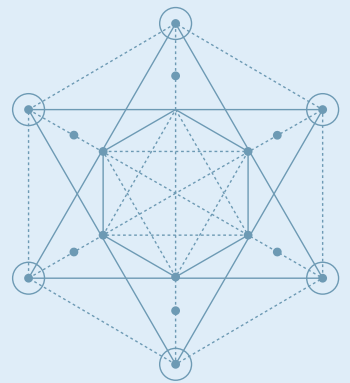
# MAKE A MANDALA

# WITH OTHERS

## WITH FOUND OBJECTS

## FROM HOME AND NATURE

**Choose a theme and create a mandala pattern on the floor, on the table or in the garden or park. How will we reflect our thoughts, feelings, desires etc in our mandala making? Create your own ideas or use our examples as inspiration. Have fun, take some photos and write about it.**



### COMING TOGETHER

Make a human mandala with your family or bubble friends. Draw round each other, hands, arms, legs, feet, whole body and create a mandala pattern.

Use clothes - select your favourite clothes, old clothes, new clothes, clothes that remind you of someone, clothes that make you feel good, and create a mandala pattern.

Create a mandala from kitchen utensils, pots, pans, tins, fruit, vegetables and other household objects, keys, books, makeup etc.

### GETTING OUTDOORS

Collect up all your shoes and make a shoe mandala outside – use trainers, walking boots, sandals, flip-flops etc.

### NATURE

Make a mandala using natural objects found in your garden or local park. Can you see nature's patterns? Collect leaves and twigs, pine cones, pebbles etc create a mandala pattern.

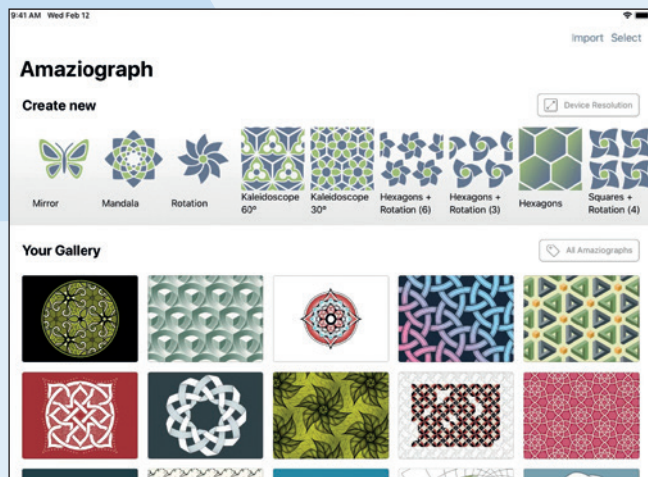
### SAYING THANK YOU

Create words and graphics to say thank you. Use hands and rainbows to thank key workers.

### MOVING FORWARD

What does the future hold? How do we portray this? What have you missed during lockdown? What do you hope will be different? How about a collage of photos of places and people you are looking forward to meeting and visiting later in the Summer.

**Take photos of what you have created.**  
**Write about what you have made.**



## MORE IDEAS

- Try out different colour ways on the five examples included as separate pages.
- Make a mandala to decorate your pack envelope using stickers provided.
- Download and use the Amaziograph app (shown left) to start designing your own mandala.



# PART 3 DESIGNING YOUR MK MANDALA KINETIKA FLAG

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## ARTIST-LED ONLINE DESIGN SESSIONS



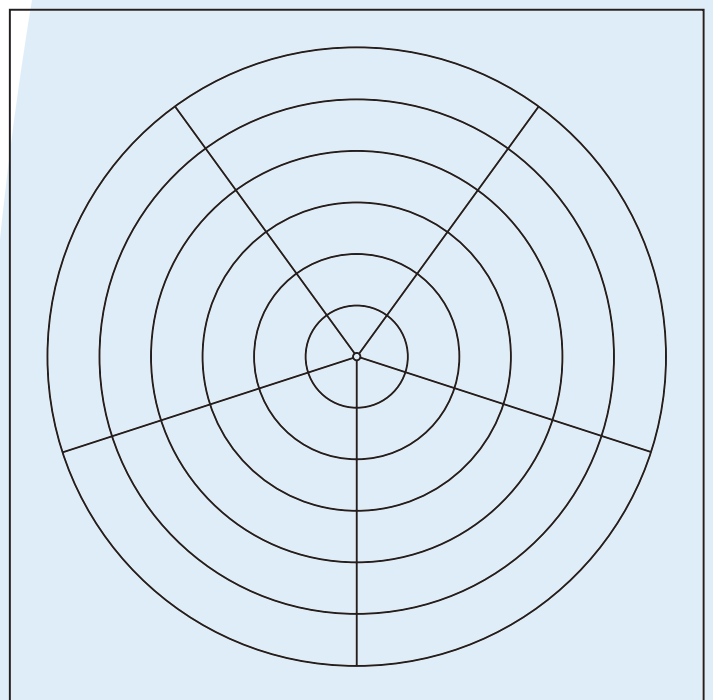
All the design sessions will be available online to guide you through the process from initial ideas to the completed flag design. These will be supplemented by face to face sessions with the MK artists Jane and Ciara. Sign up by 6 April with your group leader.

### Before your first session

Start collecting any drawings, magazine pictures, newspaper cuttings, photocopies, fabric pieces, wrapping papers, packaging, labels etc, and images you might like to include in next week's project. Select your favourite colours, textures or patterns, favourite labels and packaging, save off-cuts of wallpaper and wrapping papers. We will use all these to create a personal collage in next week's workshop session.

You can try the warm up exercises at home or with your family over the Easter holidays. Think about making your own mandala pattern, design or outline in response to one of the themes.

**Read about each session's content on pages 20 to 22.**



# MK INSPIRATION

Here are some suggestions to get you going.

**What Milton Keynes makes Milton Keynes?**

**Ideas for visual references and inspiration. Collect local references that locate designs in your area.**



- ☀ Explore over 6,000 acres of parkland and green spaces managed by The Parks Trust [theparkstrust.com](https://theparkstrust.com)

- ☀ **Natural parkland – Ouse Valley Park**

- ☀ Campbell Park – with sheep grazing to keep the grass in trim!

- ☀ **The Grand Union Canal runs through MK**

- ☀ Wonderful planning and vistas when we drive or travel around the area – MK is looking its best after 50 years in the making!

- ☀ **A well-designed road system, the iconic grid roads and interesting mapped patterns in the smaller roads**

- ☀ Roundabouts – iconic as a town with a hundred+ roundabouts

- ☀ **The most public art in a town in the UK**

- ☀ The Redway cycle routes connecting places

- ☀ **Community – a diverse cultural community that is celebrated with festivals and events**

- ☀ Milton Keynes International Festival for wonderful memories over the last 10 years



# SESSION 1

**Tuesday 6 April**

## **THEMED MANDALA COLLAGE WORKSHOP LED BY LISA MEEHAN**

Reflection and sharing on what you have done during the Easter holiday. Begin to think about your design and your MK Mandala theme.

Select a template or create your own mandala wheel if you feel inspired. You could use one of the templates from the colouring exercise or try the app. Drawing with circles, plates, cups, compasses.

Begin to think about your design.

### **Themes**

Create a collage around your chosen theme and give it a personal twist adding your own images, photos, favourite colours, textures, patterns, fabrics, wallpapers, wrappers, labels etc you can also photocopy and cut out any chosen printed images from the web.

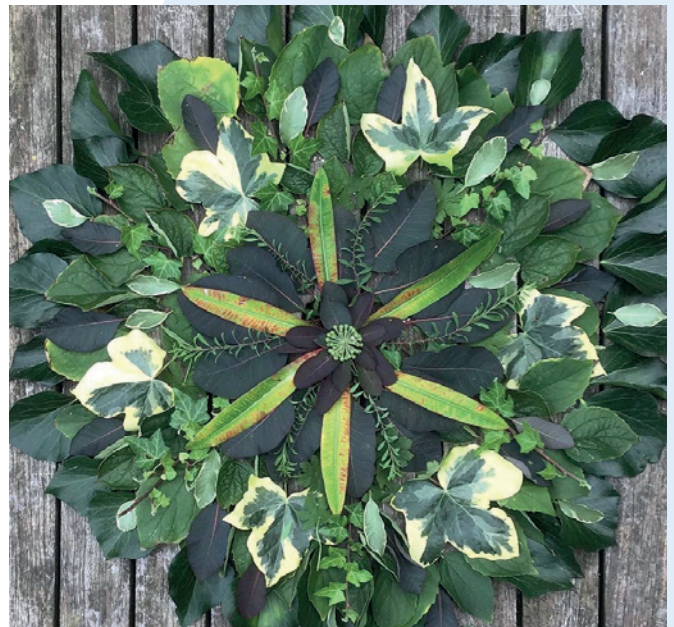
### **Suggestions**

You could have a theme of colours from light to dark, contrasting colours, and colours that create a mood. You might like to develop a theme of pattern and texture, rough and smooth, summer and winter, spring and autumn, old and new.

You may also like to include written words and text.

### **For next week**

Complete the collage for next week where we can show what we have created. Collect images, reference material of MK area, buildings, maps, architectural patterns, logos, local emblems etc for next week's drawing session.



# SESSION 2

Tuesday 13 April

**DRAWING AND SKETCHING**

**LED BY LISA MEEHAN**

Reflections and sharing last week's collages.

This week's session is all about drawing and sketching MK. In your groups or individually think again about your theme..... what images would you like to see portrayed on your mandala flag? Maybe, landmark buildings, parks, a favourite walk, landscape, notable people, friends, family, clubs, groups, you might like to include words. Draw as many images as you would like. You don't have to be good at drawing, you can trace your favourite image and draw over with a black pen. You can also include photocopied images, photographs and magazine pictures which can be enlarged and drawn again for our final design.

## For next week

Collect images ideas for border patterns, you may already have several drawings and patterns you can use.



## Outside pavement chalk mandalas

Try this additional activity if you are able to go outside in a small socially distanced group. Take your template and transfer the design onto a patio, pavement or outside space using chalks add additional patterns and colours.

# SESSION 3

Tuesday 20 April

**BORDER PATTERN, COLOUR AND DESIGN**

**– AS A GROUP**

**LED BY LISA MEEHAN**

Reflections and sharing of our drawings and sketches from last week.

Creating a border pattern, from logos, images and drawings that reflect MK. Take inspiration from architecture, local landscapes, parks, sculptures, MK motifs etc. During this session we will look at our reference material and create a border pattern and decide on colour ways for each of our themed groups.

Take photos of your work.



# SESSION 4

**Tuesday 27 April**

## **COMPOSITION AND CONSTRUCTION**

**LED BY LISA MEEHAN**

Reflections and sharing our border patterns and designs.

Bring everything you have created along to this session, your chosen template design, any photos you have taken and printed out, your collage, drawings, photos and photocopies of MK architecture, buildings, parks, landscape, road maps, etc.

What images are going inside your templates? Consider the theme within your group. If you have a large group, you will have enough reference material to work on a few flag designs.

Remember every image is important so don't discard any drawings, photos or photocopies. We can always copy, enlarge and trace in order to add to our final design.

On your large sheet of dot and cross paper draw an outline of your chosen mandala template in pencil. Begin to lay out your images considering the overall composition, shape and pattern of the image you are creating.

When you are all happy with your overall design you can cut and tape the images on the paper mandala.

### **For next week**

Begin to write your thoughts and reflections about your design and this process that led to it.

# SESSION 5

**Tuesday 4 May**

## **COMPLETED DESIGNS AND WRITING**

**LED BY LISA MEEHAN AND ALI PRETTY**

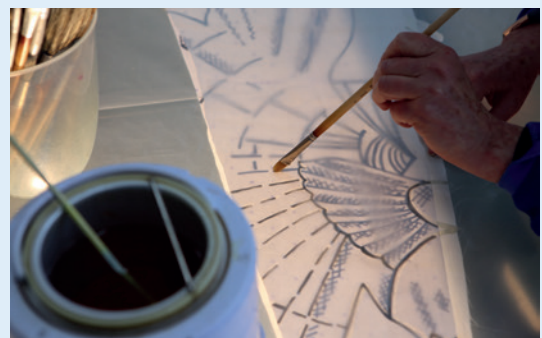
Reflections and sharing of our final designs.

Writing exercise. Describe your mandala. Tell us how the images represent the theme. What do you feel about the process you have been through? Has it made you think differently about where you live, your community, and how you feel about the future? In a few words, a poem or sentences up to 500 words.

Discussion how all the flags are going to work together as a set.

### **What happens next?**

Your designs go with the artist to the Kinetika Design Studio where we will scale up your drawings and transform the designs onto silk using hot wax (batik). We will then paint in the colours according to your design and work up layering of colours to bring out the detail (double waxing).





# ABOUT MURSHIDABAD SILK

Kinetika is an importer of this heritage-quality hand-woven silk from West Bengal. Sales support Kinetika's charitable work and help the weavers to continue their skilled craft. Murshidabad silk is now our preferred choice when making batik flags due to its ability to hold bright dye colours and the soft but durable texture.

Kinetika is internationally renowned for creating stunning large-scale hand-painted silks, using the process of batik to make beautiful flags, costumes and products for the last 25 years. While developing the Silk River project in India, Kinetika was introduced to a very fine, high

quality 100% hand-woven silk from Murshidabad, a district in West Bengal.

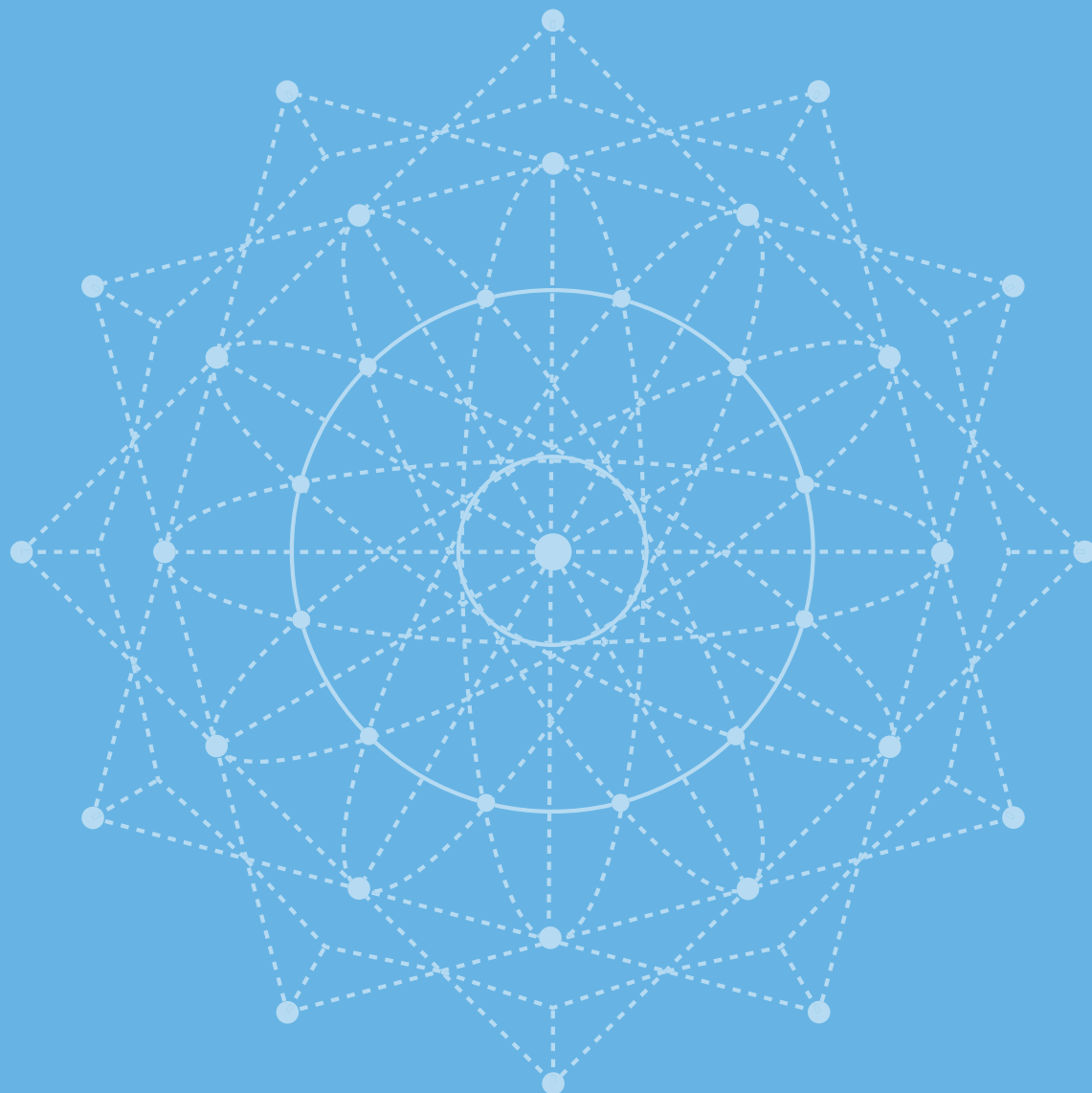
Kinetika were very keen to work with this exquisite silk and through the Crafts Council of West Bengal (CCWB) were able to connect directly with the local weavers who still had the original looms and the required level of skill. Realising that the weaving skill required for this heritage fabric is



in danger of being lost, Kinetika is now working closely with Ajoy, a local silk merchant and CCWB to make it available in the UK to silk painters and lovers who will appreciate how unique it is.

The silk is woven in Dangapara, a small village in Murshidabad by 14 families of weavers who are the last generation who have this skill. Kinetika hope that by creating a new demand for this silk, they will encourage this community to continue this ancient tradition.

**Find out more, and purchase, from <https://kinetika.co.uk/about-murshidabad-silk>**



THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN

# MK MANDALAS

## KINETIKA FLAGS

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE INSTALLATIONS



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

With thanks to The Parks Trust, The Milton Keynes Rose,  
Gordon Young and the people of Milton Keynes