

### 3: Hem top-pole (D)

Fold the top edge over the width of three fingers. Stick safety pins every 1 or 2 feet to form a hem. Thread the top cross-pole into the hem. Use gaffer to pinch a bit of the cloth tightly around each end of the top pole (E) so that the cloth is pulled taut, left-to-right.



*Banner-lock-on protesting against the Iraq War 2003*

### 4: Hem bottom-pole (B)

The bottom cross pole should be slightly shorter than the width of the banner. Saw it if needed. Fold the bottom edge over the width of three fingers. Stick safety pins every 2 or 3 feet to form a hem. Thread the bottom cross-pole into the hem. Use gaffer or more safety pins at each end so it can't fall out (C).

**Hems can be sewn if there's time.**

### 5: Done!

The two side poles are like legs and the whole thing should be able to stand against a wall, tree, fence, etc.

**For transport & storage:** fold the side-poles like the arms of a pair of glasses so they are lying against the top-pole. Roll up the banner like a

scroll around the 4 poles. Consider writing an appropriate email address on the back of one of the hems in case it's mislaid. **Sorted!**

### 6: Storage of Banners

If a banner gets wet in the rain try to open it out and let it dry later that same day, or as soon as possible. Only roll up and store dry banners, otherwise they will probably get mouldy and smelly.

### Inspiration & other useful creative-activism resources:

Photos of almost everything: [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)  
 Art-activism against BP & Shell: [artnotoil.org.uk](http://artnotoil.org.uk)  
 Powerful and effective stencil art: [banksy.co.uk](http://banksy.co.uk)  
 Radical cartoonist, and prop-maker: [polyp.org.uk](http://polyp.org.uk)  
 Cheap acrylic paint suppliers: [artdiscount.co.uk](http://artdiscount.co.uk)  
 Gaffer-tape shop in Oxford: [stagesuperstore.co.uk](http://stagesuperstore.co.uk)  
 Stig's cartoons, props, subverts, banners, etc:  
[shtiggy.wordpress.com](http://shtiggy.wordpress.com)

*This hand-out was originally written by Stig in 2008 for a workshop with People & Planet. Updated several times, most recently in July 2017 for Campaign against the Arms Trade ([www.CAAT.org.uk](http://www.CAAT.org.uk)) @nti-copyright*

# D.I.Y. Banners: fast & cheap!

A quick guide from Stig: [shtiggy.wordpress.com](http://shtiggy.wordpress.com)



## 1: Plan the design

Short & clear words, maybe with logos, cartoons, images, a website address? Jokes can help make the banner more positive and memorable. Do some **sketches** & work out the bits that need to be the biggest. Lower-case with serifs is the easiest to read. Tall thin banners can be carried by 1 person (or a tree / lamppost) chinese style. Big banners might impress but can be a handful. Spell-check!

## 2: Sketch it

Lay the cloth down on the tarp or dust-sheet, cut & trim to required size. Use chalk (colour chalk on white cloth) to mark the very middle, then sketch out letters / images starting in the middle and working outwards. A tape measure or long ruler can help. Leave about a foot of margin for a clearer look & for spare cloth for hems. **Step back** (stand on a chair?) and see what needs to be moved or changed to make it look better. A damp cloth can wipe off chalk marks.

## To get beforehand:

- Tarp** or plastic-coated dust-sheet to protect floor from paint.
- Cloth for the banner:** sheets, curtains or duvet covers from a charity shop.
- Scissors** to cut / trim the cloth.
- Chalk** / pens / markers to sketch letters / logos etc.
- Paints:** acrylic is best - water-based & waterproof (but not very cheap). Avoid oil-based paint: nasty oil-based & takes days to dry. Some water-based 'eco-paints' are great, but not cheap.
- Brushes:** cheap arty or DIY brushes, 1/4-inch to 3inch+.
- Access to a sink** with soap to wash and rinse brushes.
- Some space** free for several hours or overnight to let the banner fully dry.
- Bamboo poles** (or willow / hazel branches) and a **saw**.
- Safety pins** or access to a **sewing-machine** (& skills) to sew the hems.
- Gaffer tape** for hinges & joining poles & strengthening.



*Banner at DSEi, 2001*

### 3: Paint it!

Fill in the outlines with paint, thinly. Sprinkle a few drops of water into the paint-tub every 20mins or so, to keep it flowing. Avoid leaving lumps as they take longer to dry and might crack. Keep brushes specific to a colour - i.e. don't put a red brush in the black paint pot!

**Step back** to spot gaps, inconsistencies or weaker bits. Some cloth will absorb the first coat, especially white paint. Leave for 30-60 minutes to dry. A second coat of paint might help strengthen colours.

### 4: Clean brushes

...as **soon** as you finish using them or they may never work again. Use a small bit of soap or washing-up liquid and make sure to rinse them out very well - soap can mess with the paint when the brush is next used.



Banner for protest against BP-sponsored exhibition of stolen artefacts at the British Museum, 2015



Banner for B52two, 2003. The top & bottom pole pull cloth taut, hanging on side poles, with gaffer hinges.

### 5: Outline

Optional: let the banner dry & add thin outlines to key words to make them really stand out - this is also a good way to 'tidy' up any wobbly or wonky lines. Permanent markers can be faster than brushes for outlines, and easier to keep the line regular.

### 6: Let it dry

...ideally opened flat on a floor or hanging on a wall or on a clothes line, if possible, overnight. >

### In a rush?

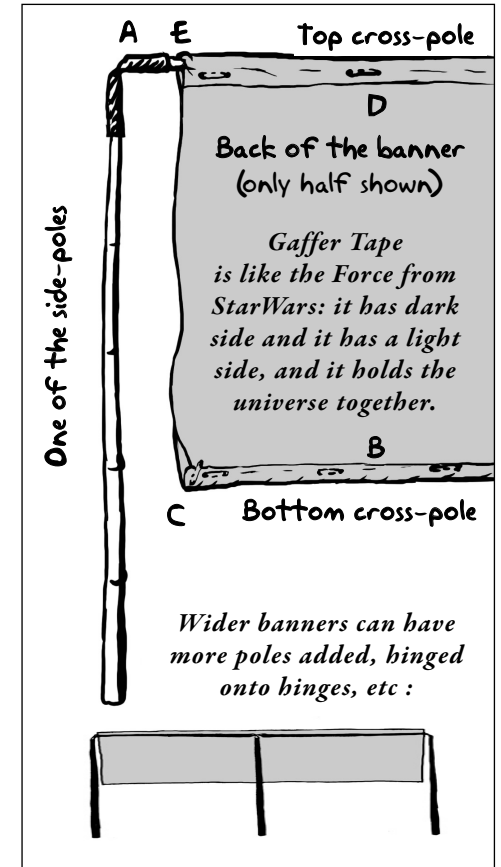
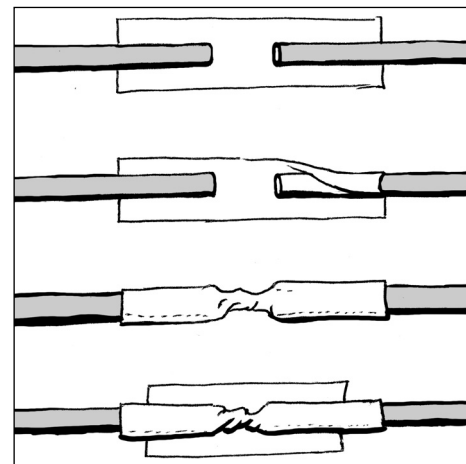
Spray paint or marker pens dry very fast. The inside of a cardboard box, like those outside bike-shops or big shops, can quickly become giant placards, for free.

## 'Sag-proof' Banner hanging

The best way to quickly and cheaply carry and hang a cloth banner is to use **Gaffer tape** and 3 or 4 **bamboo poles**. Two are vertical 'side-poles' and the other two are the 'cross-poles' running inside the top & bottom of the banner. The cross-poles keep the banner taut and readable. It can be carried on marches or leant against a wall, tree, railing, fence, etc.

### 1: Sizing

Lay the dry banner face down on a clean floor. Place the top & bottom cross-pole on it. The top pole could be about 10cms (A) wider than the banner. If a crosspole is too long, saw off a bit from the thinner end. If a cross pole is not long enough, join two poles together to make the required length, lashing the overlap in at least three places with **squeezed gaffer tape**.



### 2: Gaffer-tape Hinges

Take each end of the top cross-pole and join them with a **gaffer-tape 'hinge'** keeping a 3cm gap of flexible tape between them. As shown on the left, the easy way to do this is to cut two 15 cm strips and lay one down sticky-side up. Then lay the poles on it and gradually roll the tape over. Put the 2<sup>nd</sup> bit of tape down and repeat. **Squeeze the gaffer to make it a strong join.**