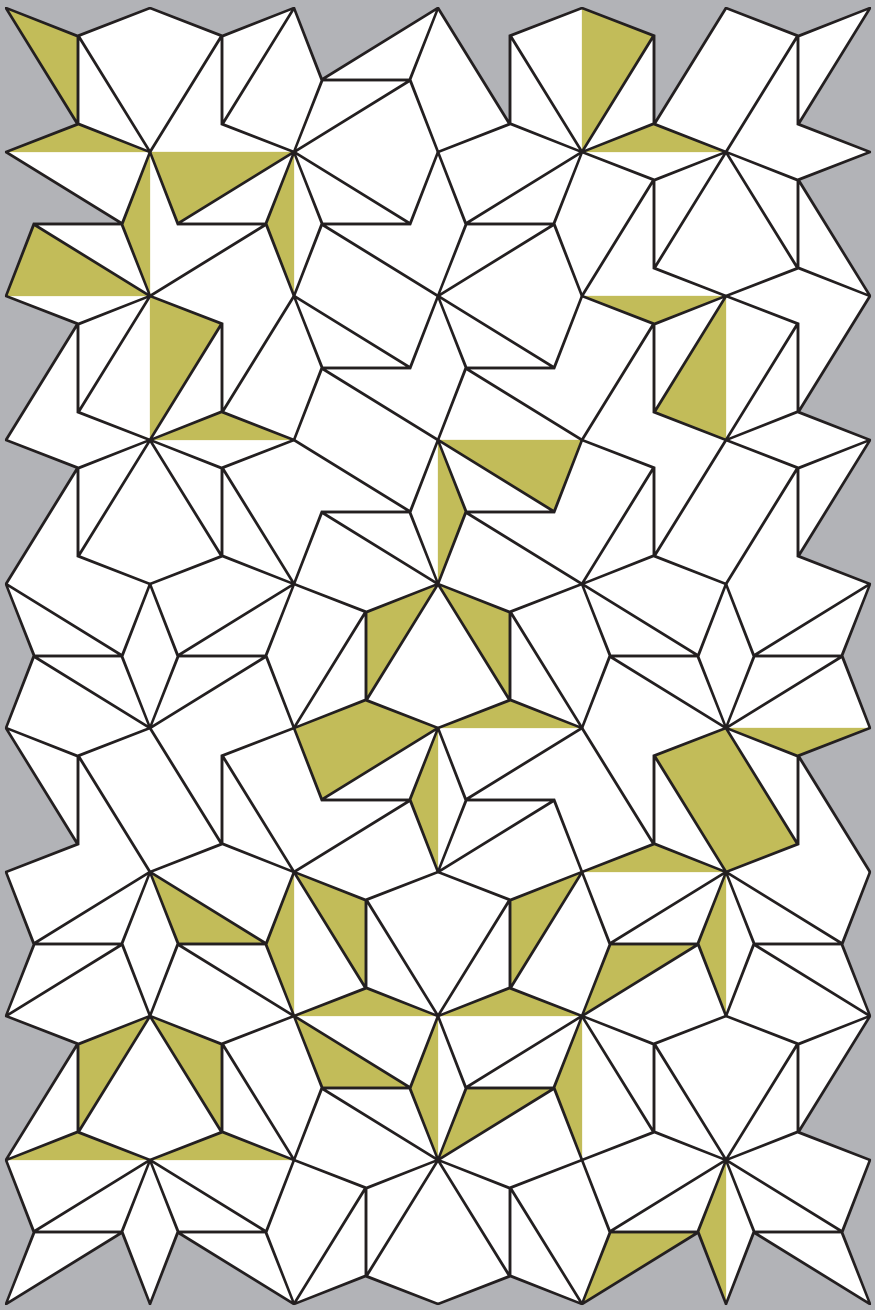
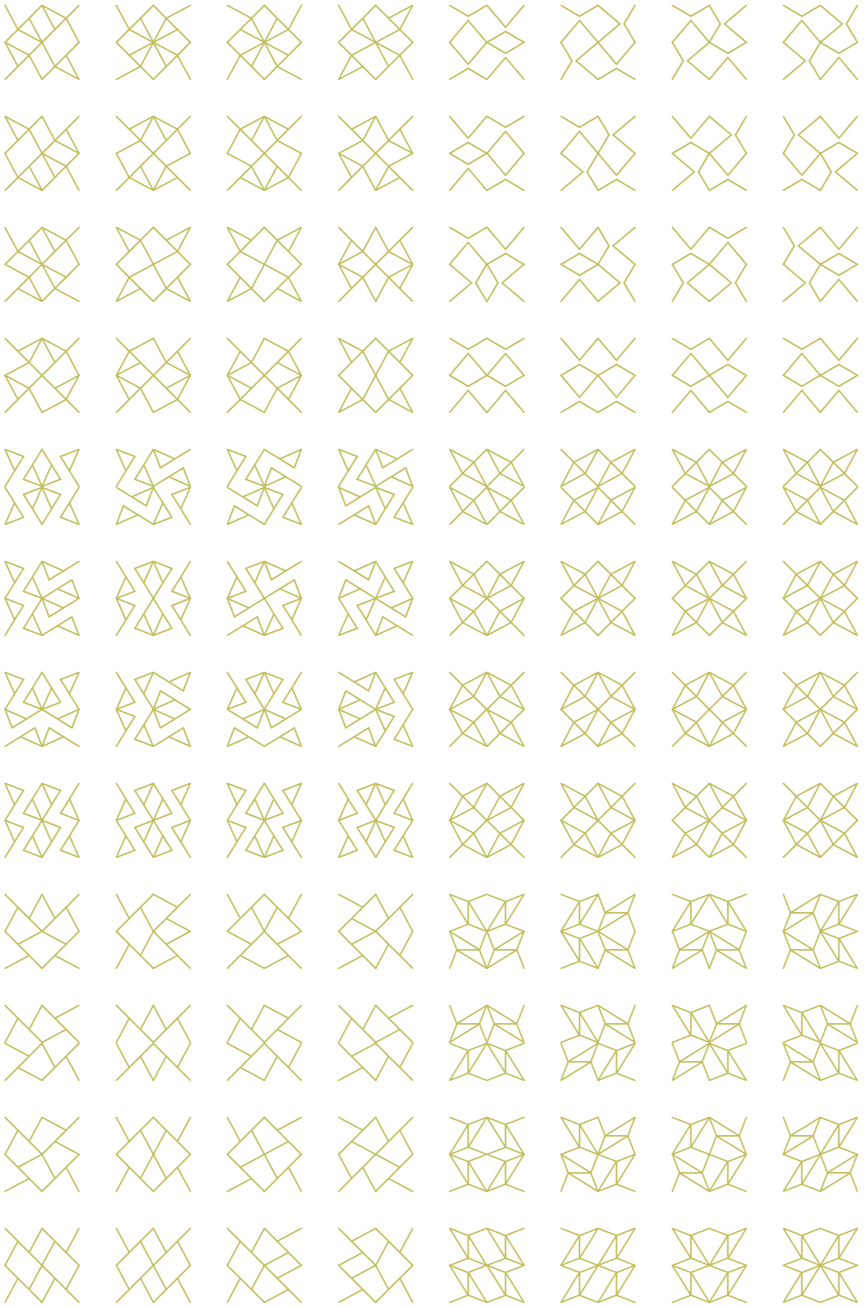
Introducing Crackly



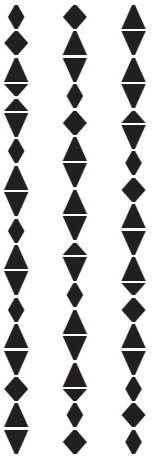


Years ago, during a visit to New York, we had lunch with Steven Heller and the topic of coloring books came up. It was during the time when coloring books were the next big thing in publishing. Publishers were producing them at a steady clip. Bookstores everywhere had entire sections devoted to them. "Emigre should do a coloring book," Heller suggested. "Millions hang in the balance!" he exclaimed. Heller, who has published over 100 books on graphic design and popular culture, is not a person whose advice we easily dismiss, but his tongue-in-cheek was hard to miss. We had a good chuckle about how to spend the riches, but we couldn't imagine what an Emigre coloring book would look like.

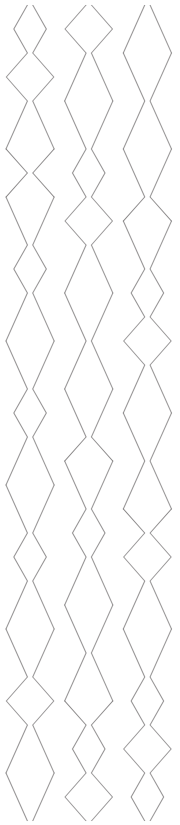
Until now. While experimenting with line patterns, designer Zuzana Licko stumbled upon the perfect font to create abstract graphics that would work perfectly for creating a coloring book. We called the font "Crackly."

The idea for these angular pattern fonts came from Licko's ceramic sculptures. She was composing stacked totems from modular cones and disks of various sizes and angles, and to help visualize these shapes in different combinations, she made herself a font (see top right) so she could type out the sculpture compositions before assembling them.

Recognizing that the font itself had potential, she started experimenting with its shapes and outlining them (see right), which then slowly evolved into the Crackly fonts. The actual cone shapes used for the sculptures were eventually dropped from Crackly in favor of elements that could be rotated in a square (see left) and combined into dynamic patterns, much like the



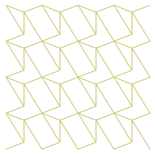
The idea for Crackly came from a font Licko designed (see left) to help her design the ceramic sculptures she was working on. She was composing stacked totems made from modular cones and disks of various sizes and angles. To help visualize these shapes in different combinations the font allowed her to type out the sculpture compositions before assembling them.



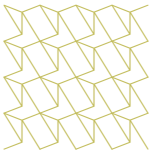
Seeing the cones in 2-D, Licko started experimenting with the font by connecting the diagonals (see left), which then slowly evolved into the Crackly fonts. The cone shapes used for the sculptures were eventually dropped from Crackly in favor of elements that could be rotated in a square and combined into dynamic patterns (see page 2), much like the process Licko used to create Tangly.

Crackly Lines 10

Crackly Lines 20



Crackly Lines 30



Crackly Lines 40

Crackly Lines 60

Crackly Lines 80

Crackly Shadows 10

Crackly Knockout

Crackly Knockout overlayed with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout was used to create the white background shape in the cover illustration. See more examples of the Crackly Knockout fonts on pages 31 through 57.

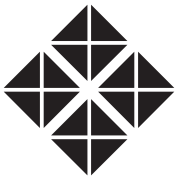
process Licko used to create Tangly, her previous pattern font design.

Many of the resulting patterns create 3-D illusions of depth with incongruous perspectives, also explored in Jonathan Barnbrook's Priori Acute font and its ornaments. The effect is also reminiscent of Cubism or M.C. Escher's plays on shifting planes and viewpoints.

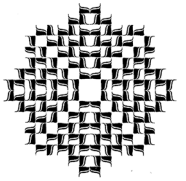
As Licko was experimenting with the patterns, it occurred to her that the compositions would make excellent graphics for coloring. This reminded her of the lunch with Heller and his suggestion for an Emigre coloring book. Realizing we had probably missed the boat, and presumably left millions on the table, we decided to make a coloring book disguised as a type specimen (or vice versa?), and give it away for free to help promote our new font Crackly.

What Crackly adds to the coloring book phenomenon, though, is that you can use these pattern fonts to make compositions, print them out on your laser printer, and generate your own coloring pages. We imagine that kids and adults alike can enjoy the experience of getting lost in the moment of experimentation and coloring. Or you can use Crackly for any other pattern applications, such as endpapers or backgrounds. The options are limitless.

Crackly comes in a variety of line weights to accommodate use at various sizes. In this way, Crackly contains some of the features of optically-sized fonts. Crackly also offers a Shadows version, featuring filled in components to create additional playful patterns.



Priori Acute
by Jonathan Barnbrook



Kaba ornament by
Bram de Does

Crackly has a number of inspirational sources and conceptual kinships. Besides the font that Licko designed for her modular ceramic totems, which got the ball rolling, Crackly's patterns create the same kind of 3-D illusions of depth and surprising perspectives explored in Jonathan Barnbrook's Priori Acute fonts and its ornaments (see left). The patterns that are created from rotations of the same element bear resemblance to Bram de Does' Kaba ornament compositions, which share the same underlying process (see below).

A

AAAA ...

AB | ab

ABab ...

AaBb | bBaA ...

AB | ab

AAAA ...

AaBb | bBaA ...

Dababc

Bo.BoB

A.oo.A

Bo;;oB

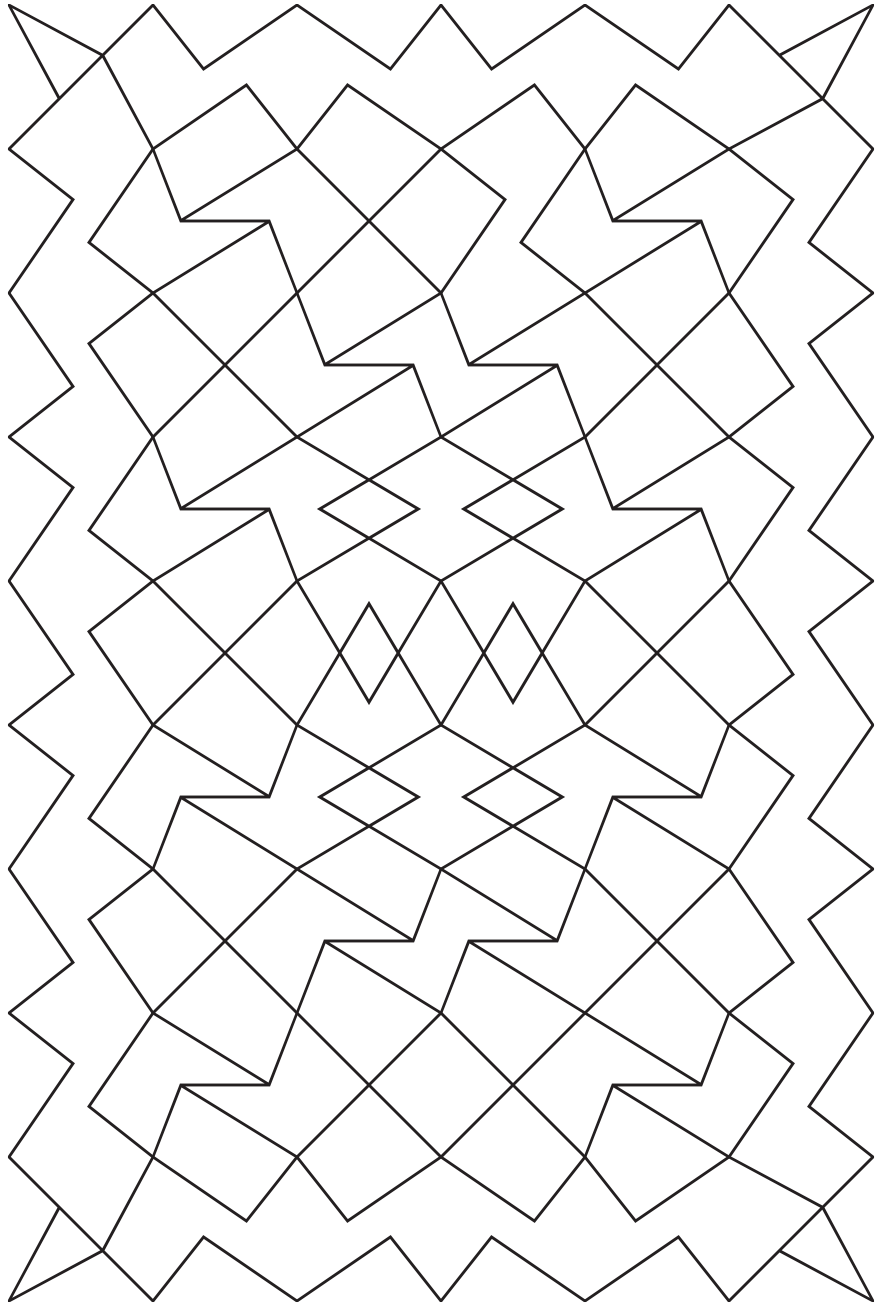
A.::.A

Bp;;pB

A.pp.A

Bp..pB

Fbabaf



C

CCCC ...

C D | c d

CDcd ...

DDcc | DDcc ...

E F | e f

CDEF ...

FDDf | eCCE ...

c e | f d

CCCC ...

DDcc | DDcc ...

DDaacc

DDffcc

DDffcc

AabbaB

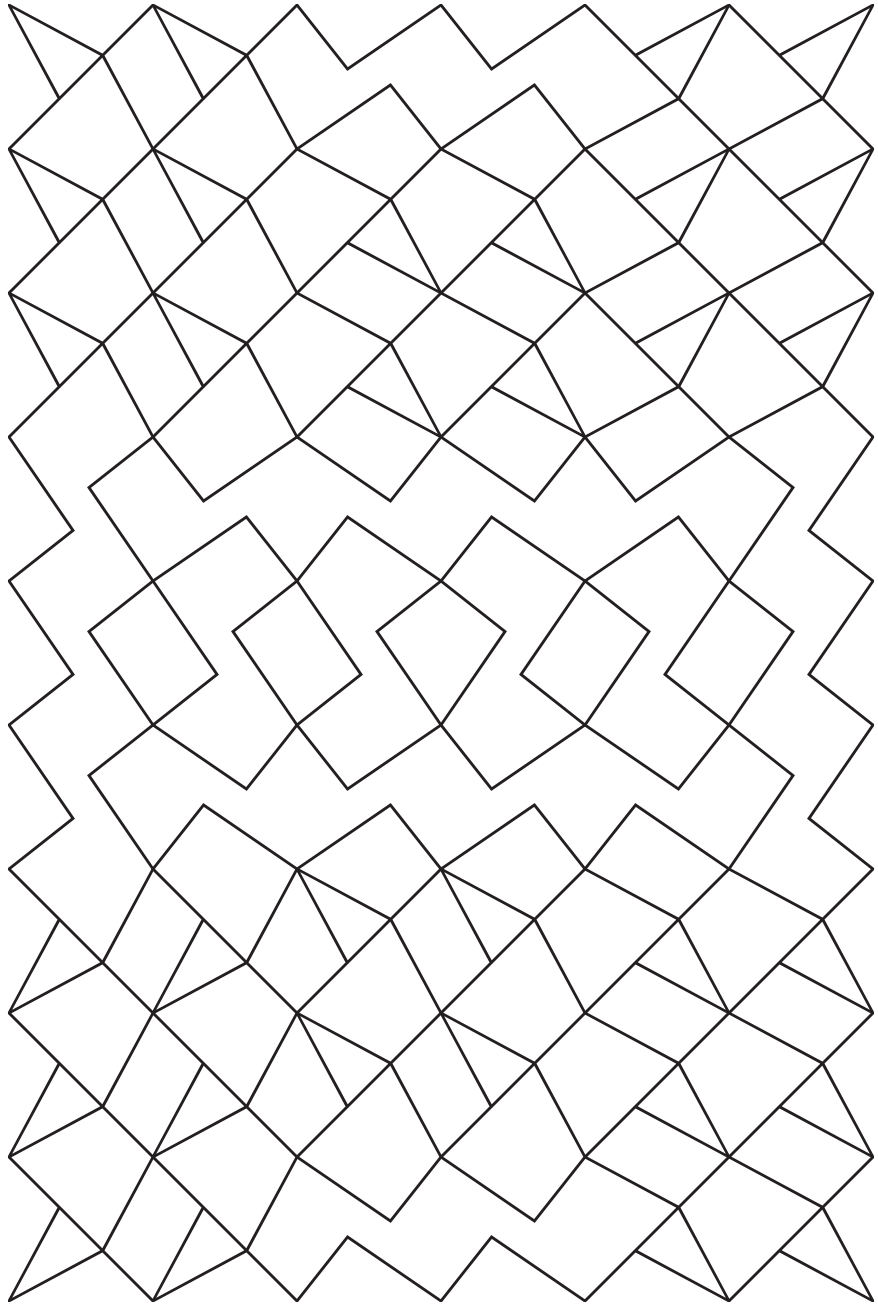
AAABBB

AbaabB

FFDDff

FFDDff

FFbbff



G

GGGG ...

vuVUuV

G g | g G

GGgg ...

GgGg | gGgG ...

VcdeFU

UwnNXu

H

HHHH ...

vyhAZU

UCaGdv

H I | h i

HIhi ...

HIhi | ihIH ...

VEigfu

UWMmxV

H I | h i

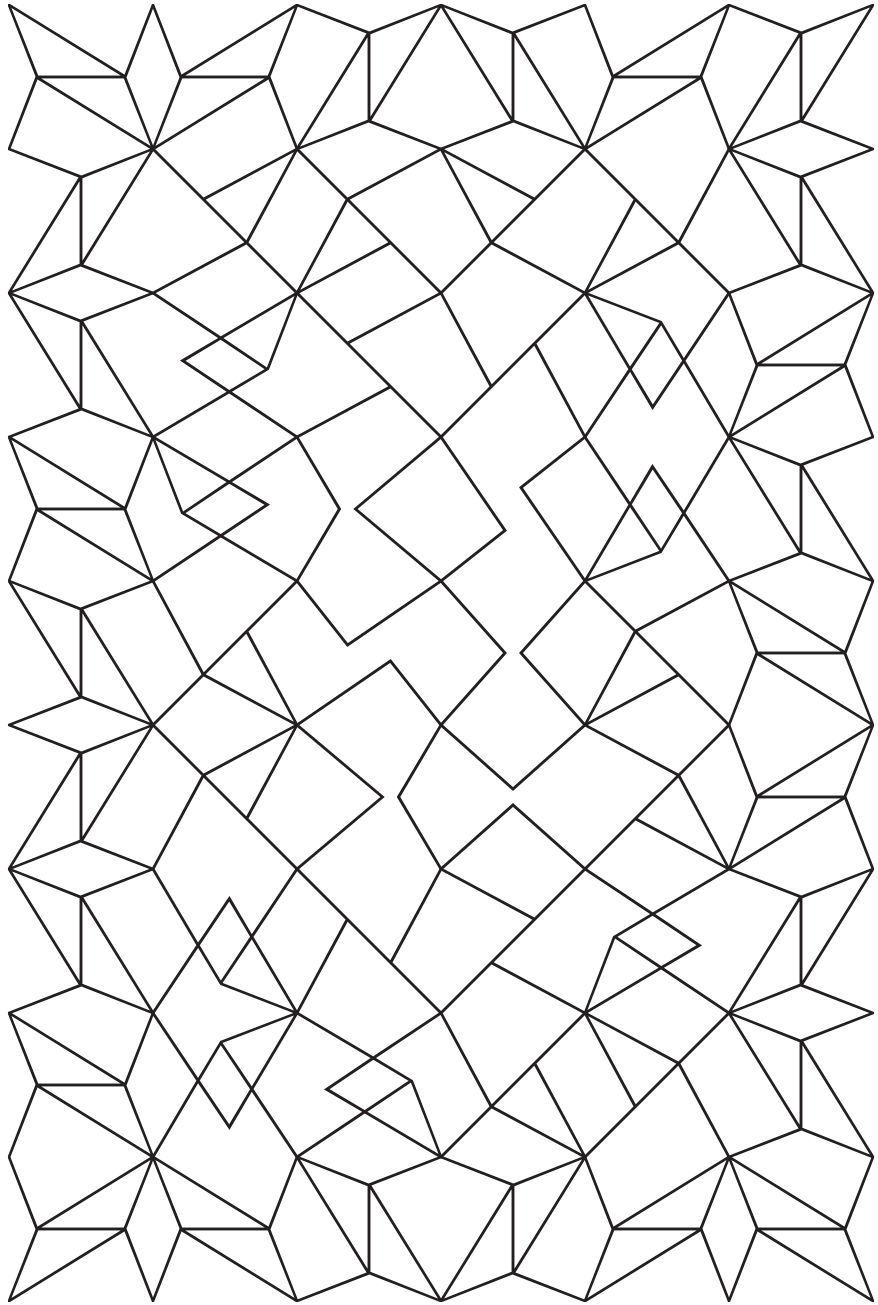
HHHH ...

HIhi | ihIH ...

GgGg | gGgG ...

vYzCDU

uvUVuv



J

JJJJ ...

J K | j k

JKjk ...

JKjk | kjKJ ...

J K | j k

JJJJ ...

JKjk | kjKJ ...

Ljjjjl

Jkkkkj

JkKKkJ

JjKKjJ

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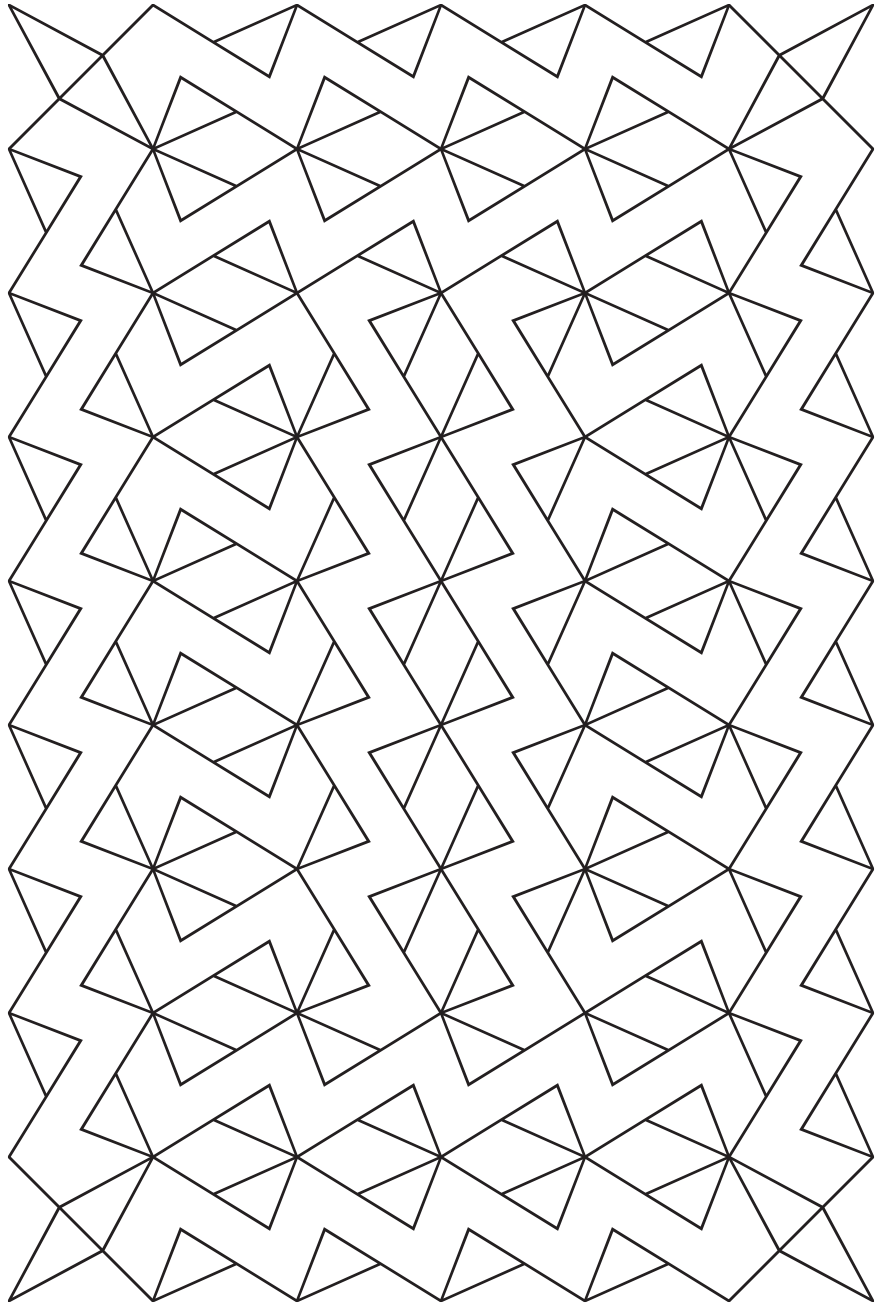
Jkkkkj

ljjjjL



L

LLLL ...

L I | I L

LLII ...

LILI | ILIL ...

L I | I L

LLLL ...

LILI | ILIL ...

LUuvVl

VVuvVV

UUvuUU

VVvuVV

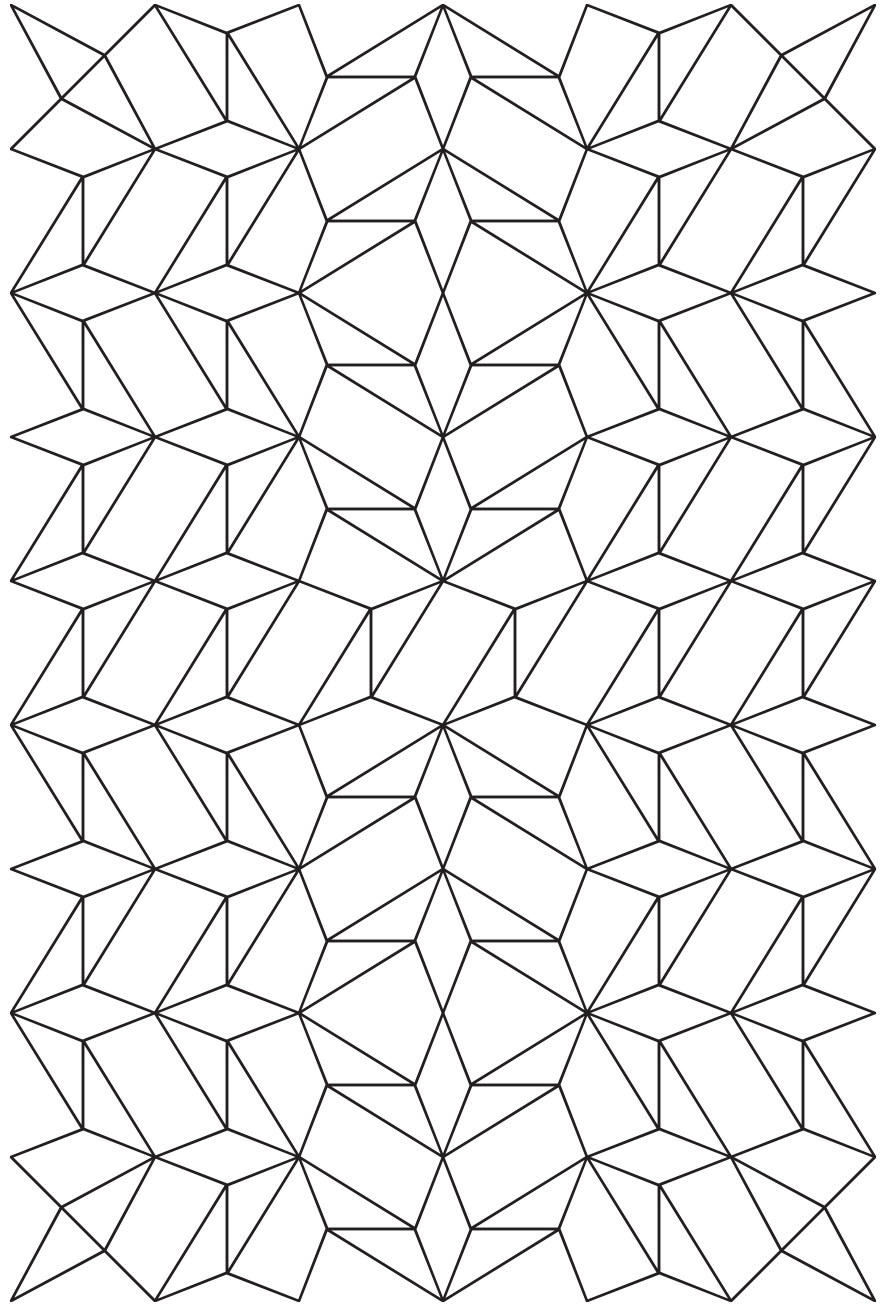
VVVVVV

UUuvUU

VVuvVV

UUvuUU

lVvuUL



M

MMMM ...

M N | m n

MNmn ...

MmNn | nNmM ...

M N | m n

MMMM ...

MmNn | nNmM

m3332m

mmmmmm

MMMMMM

MMMMMM

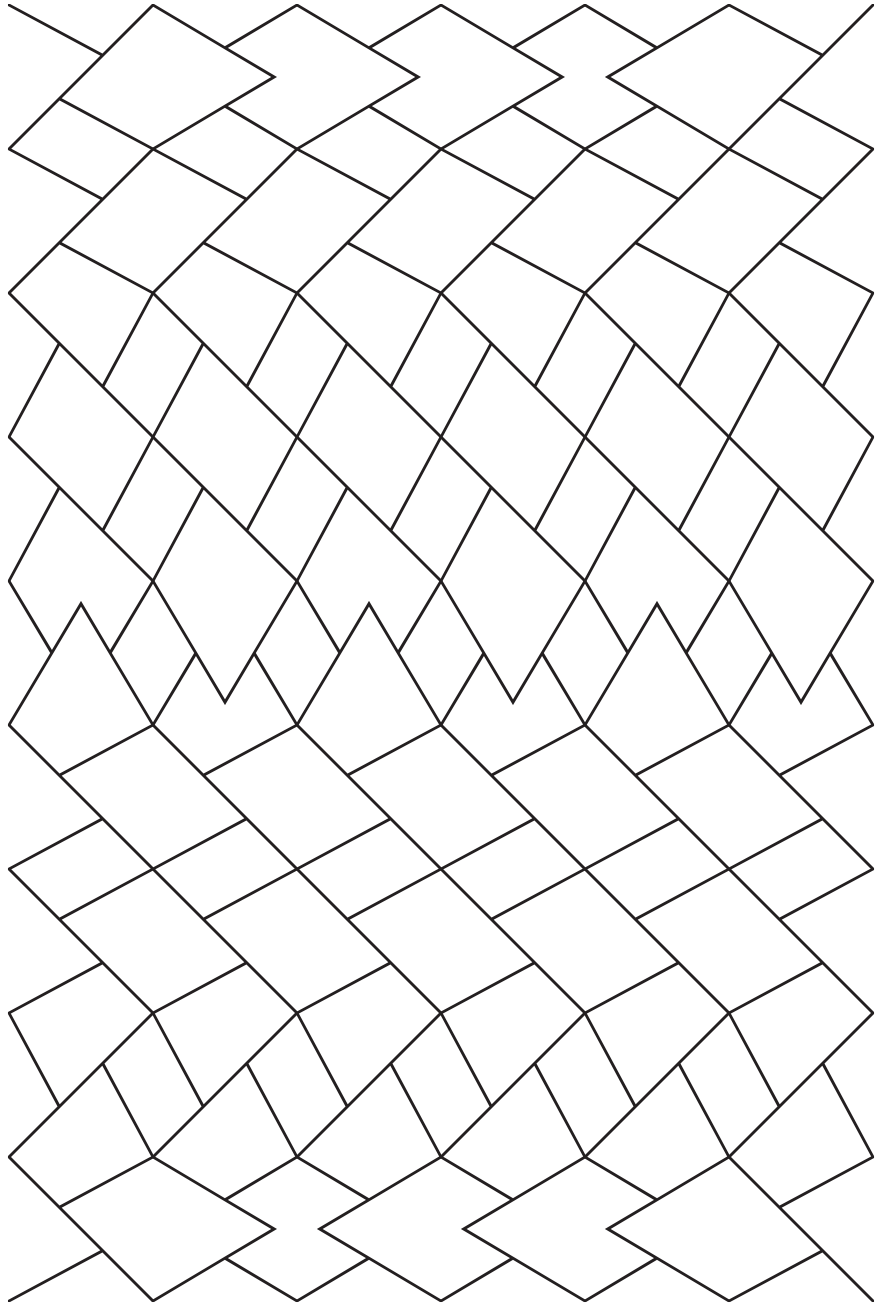
454545

nnnnnn

nnnnnn

NNNNNN

n3222n



O

OOOO ...

O P | o p

OPop ...

OPop | poPO ...

O P | o p

OOOO ...

OPop | poPO ...

eeopEE

PPopPP

OOpoOO

PPpoPP

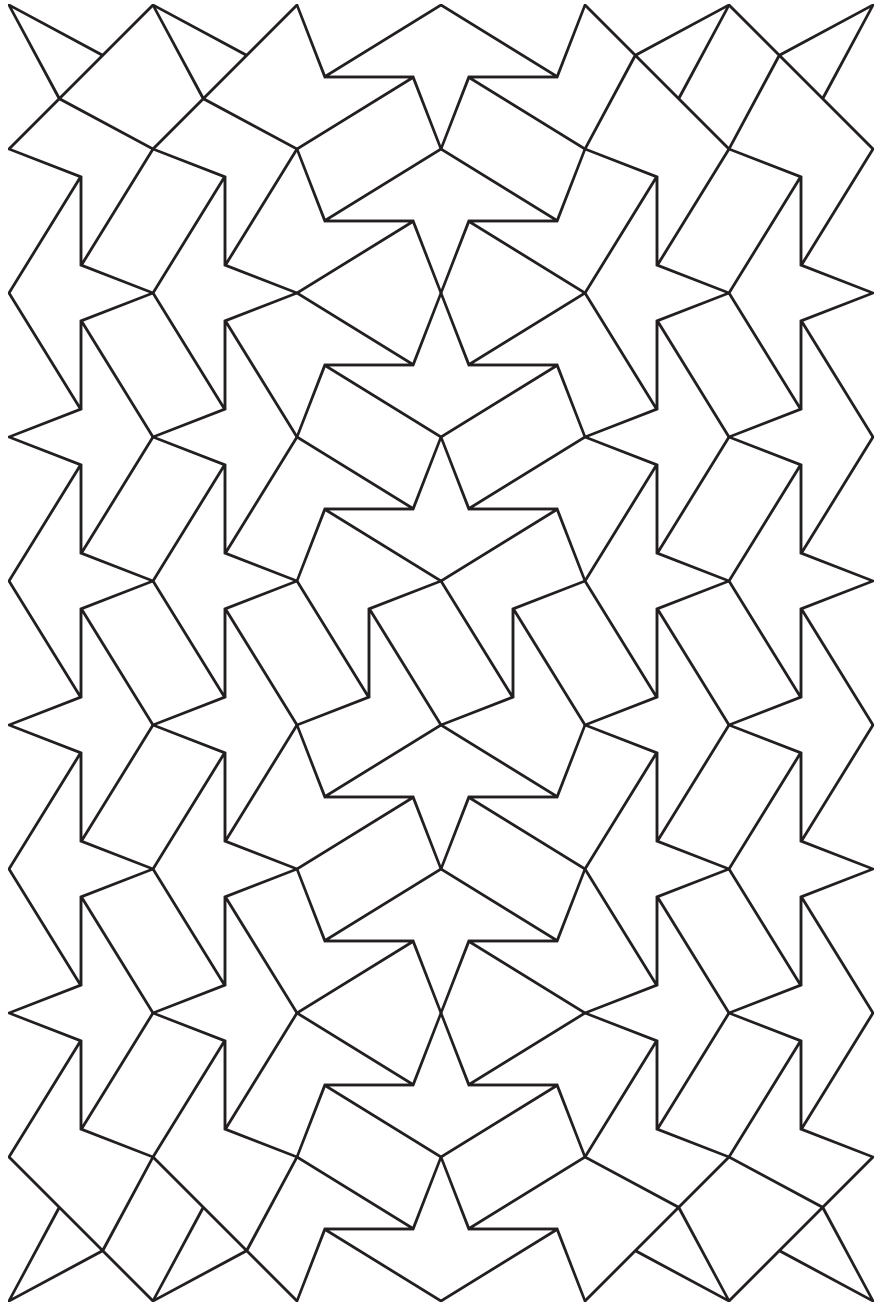
OOOOOO

PPopPP

OOopOO

PPpoPP

FFpoff



Q

QQQQ ...

eSeSsE

Q R | q r

QRqr ...

QqRr | rRqQ ...

SeSeSe

ueueue

S T | s t

STst ...

srqt | rstq ...

SuSuSu

uSuSuS

q s | t r

QQQQ ...

srqt | rstq ...

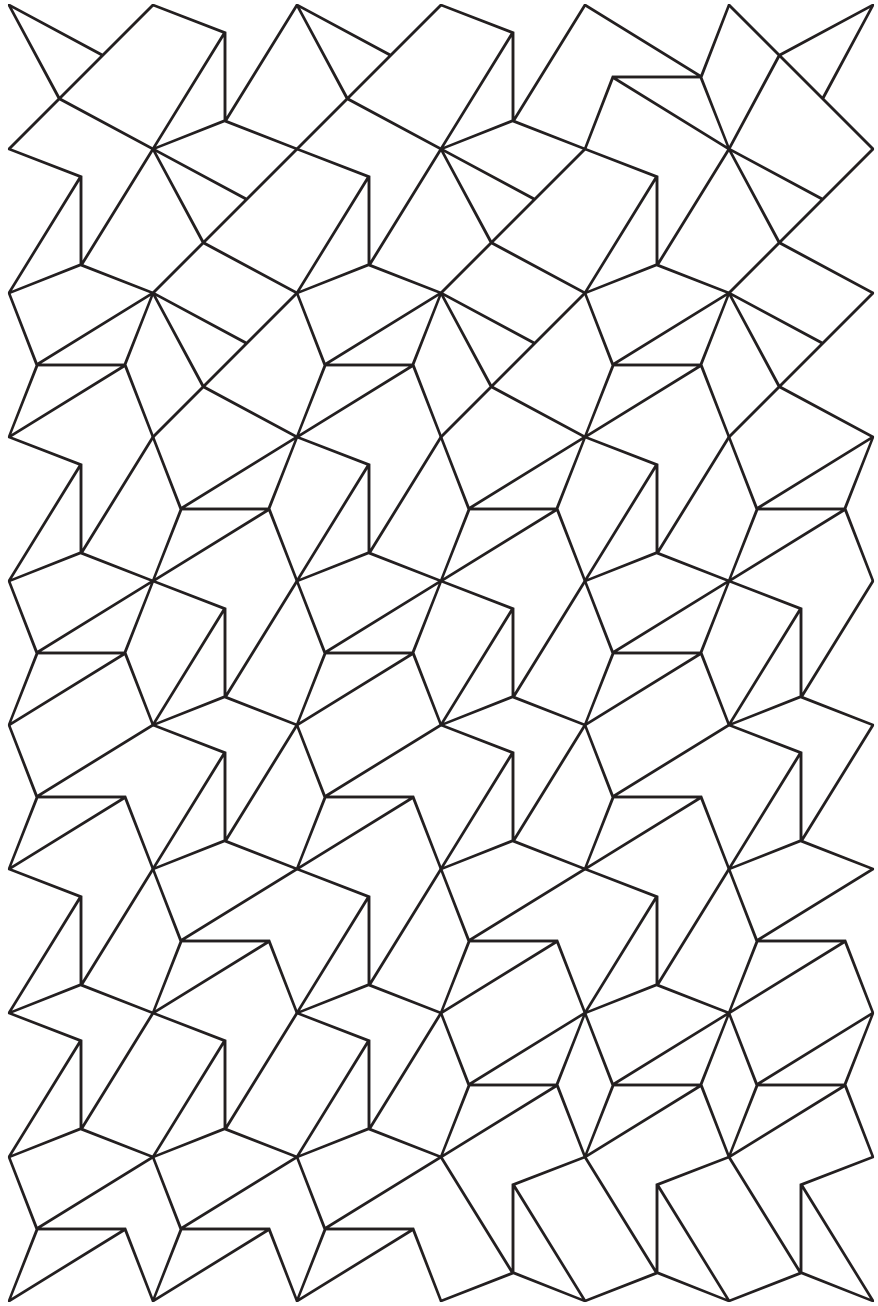
QqRr | rRqQ ...

qSqSqS

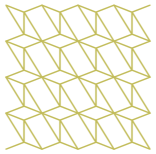
SqSqSq

SSSuuu

qqqRRR

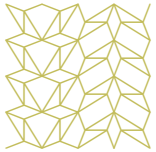


U



UUUU ...

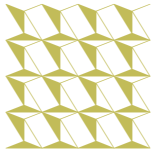
U V | u v



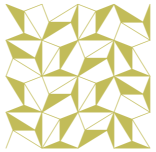
UVuv ...

UuVv | vVuU ...

U V | u v



UUUU ...



UuVv | vVuU ...

XUxWV|w

UvxWuV

U|VxWU|V

UvxWuV

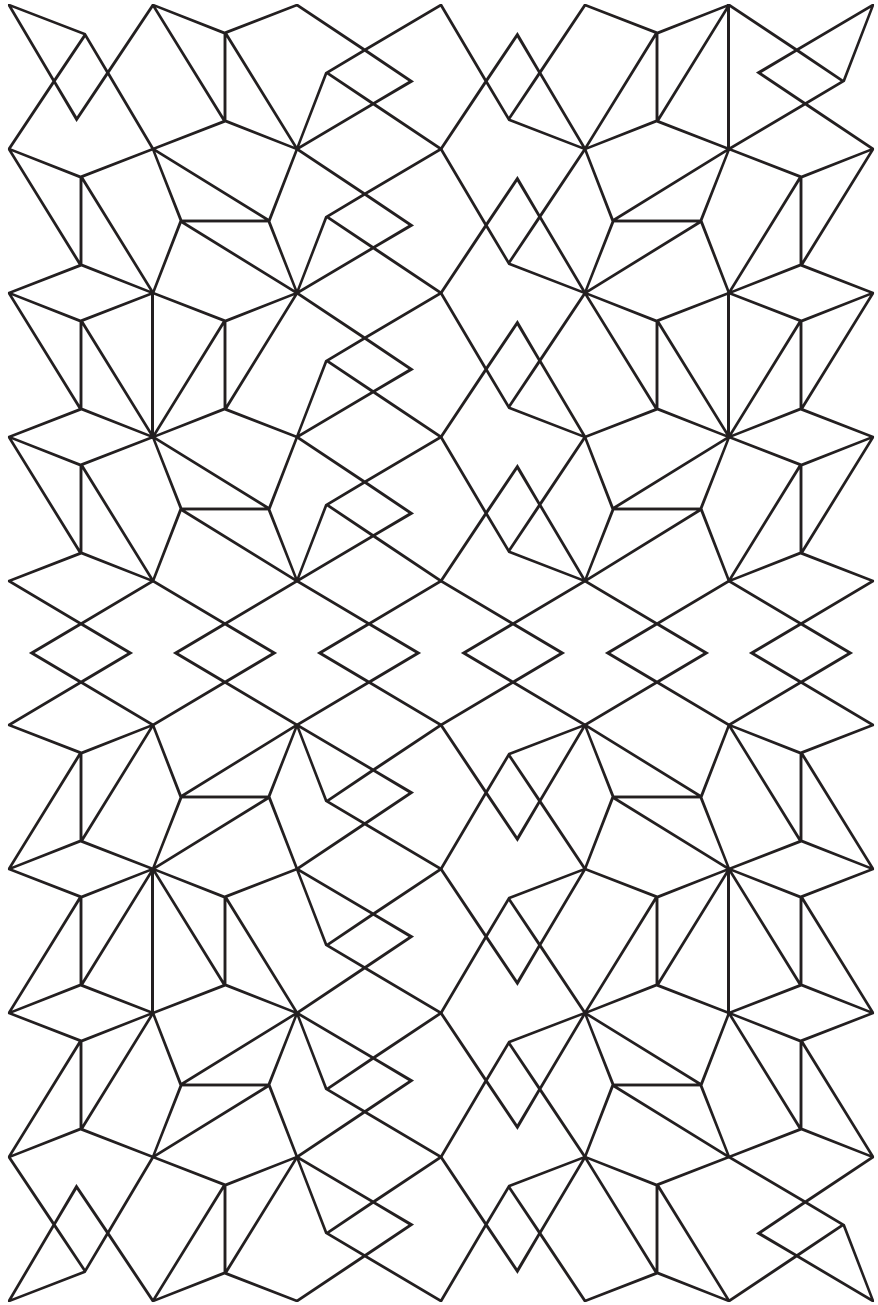
;;;;;;

VuyYvU

V|UyYV|U

VuyYvU

ZVyYUz



W

WWWW ...

kKBAJj

W X | w x

WXwx ...

iBaBAi

WwXx | xXwW ...

Wo::pZ

Y Z | y z

YZyz ...

Zo;;pW

wxwx | zyzy ...

HkAAkG

w y | z x

WWWW ...

Zo;;pW

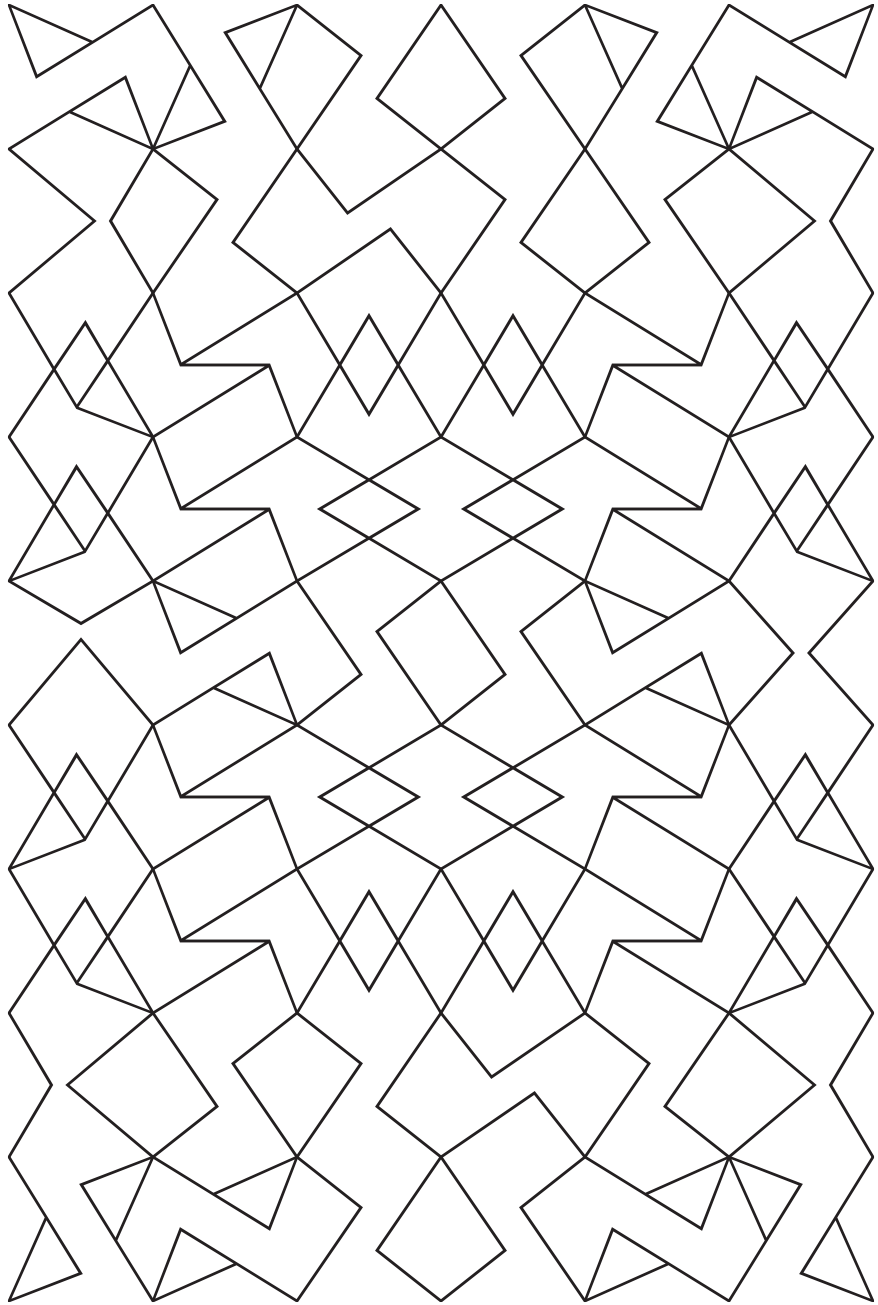
wxwx | zyzy ...

wyzx | zxwy ...

Wo::pZ

hABaBi

KjBAjJ



;

;;;; ...

; : | : ;

;;:: ...

;;;: | :;;; ...

2

2222 ...

2 3 | 4 5

2345 ...

2435 | 5342 ...

2 ; | : 4

2222 ...

2435 | 5342 ...

;;;: | :;;; ...

;3452:

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54;:54

234523

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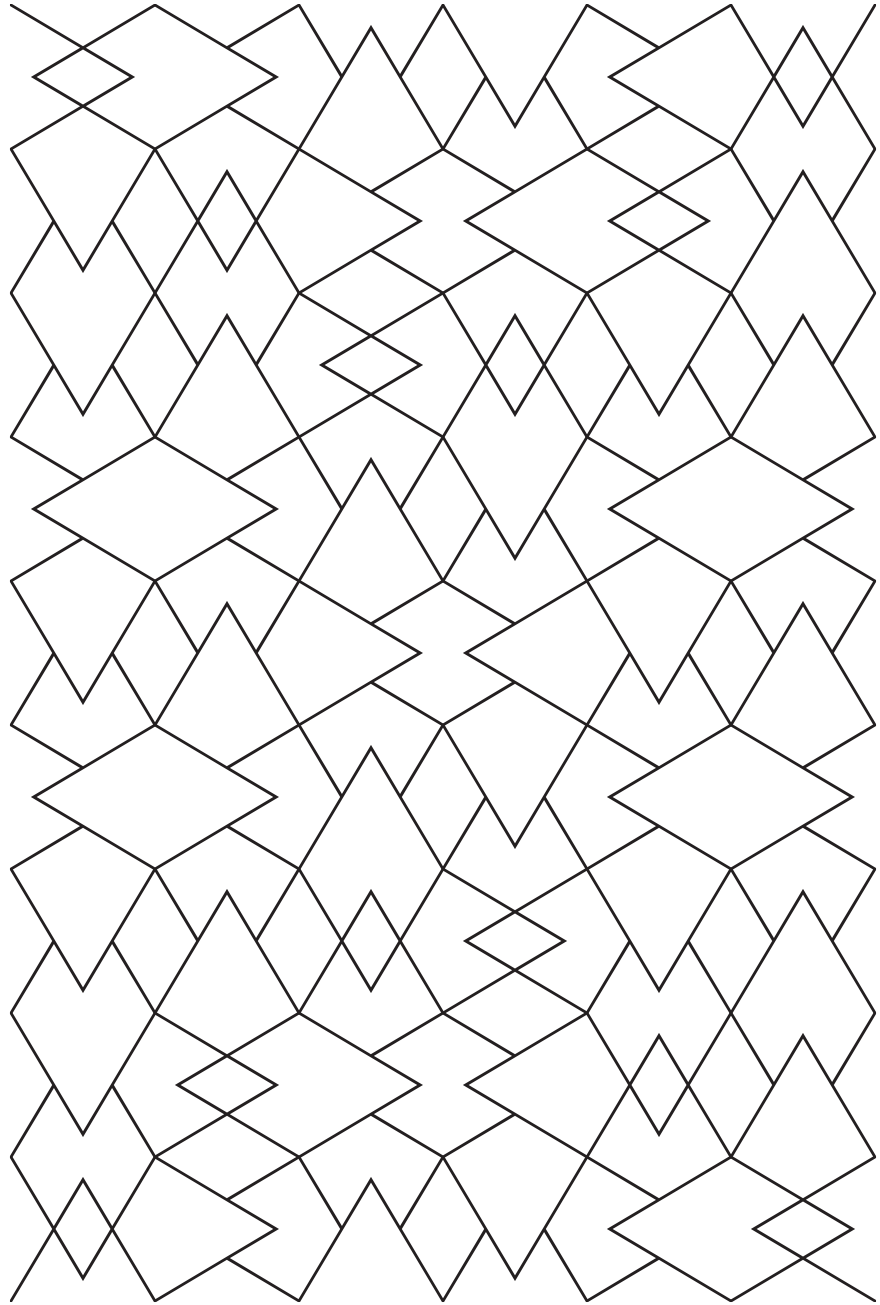
5;32:4

:3452;



0

0000 ...

061041

0 1 | 1 0

0110 ...

0101 | 1010 ...

213203

150171

6

6666 ...

061041

213203

6 7 | 8 9

6789 ...

7689 | 8976 ...

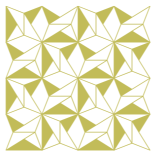
150171

061041

6 7 | 8 9

6666 ...

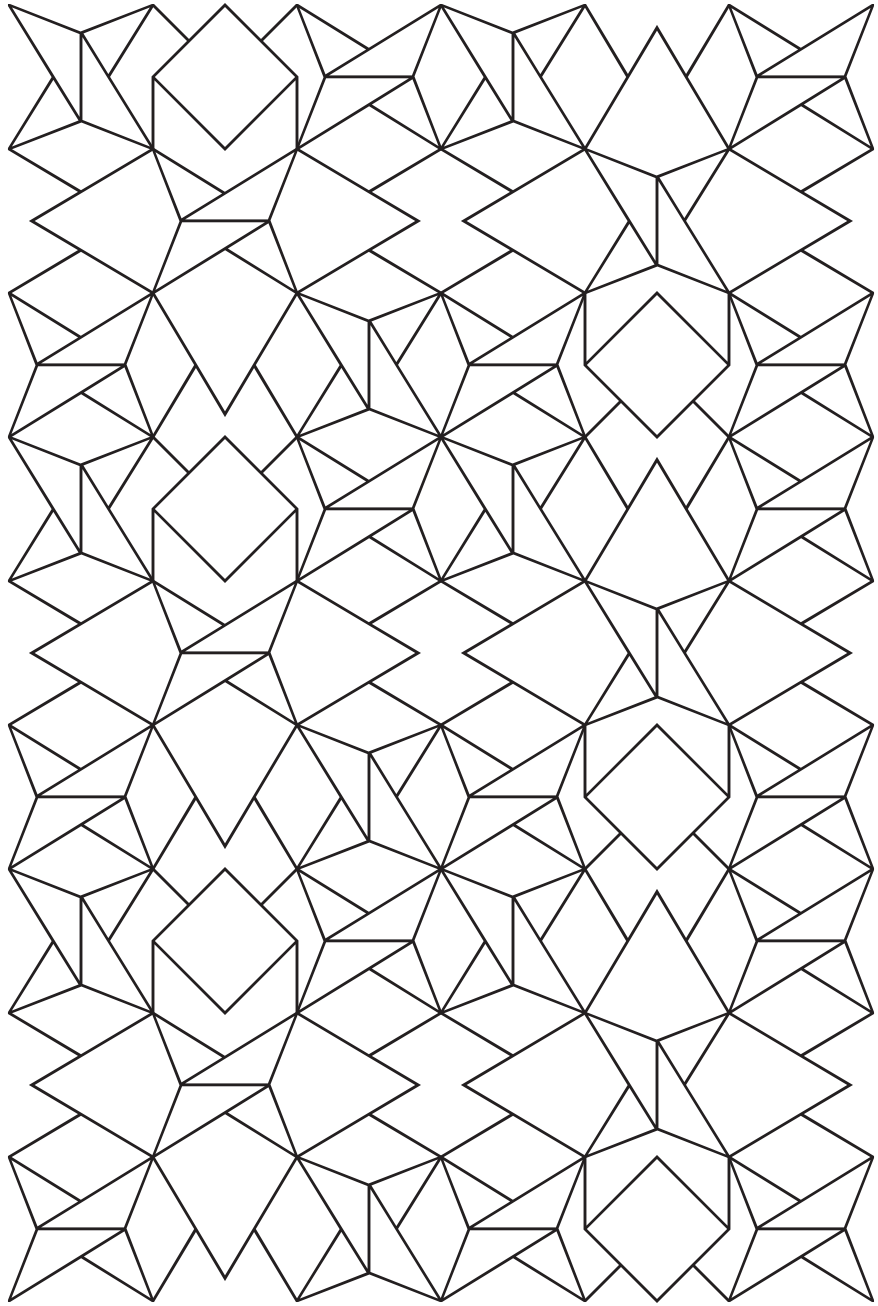
7689 | 8976 ...

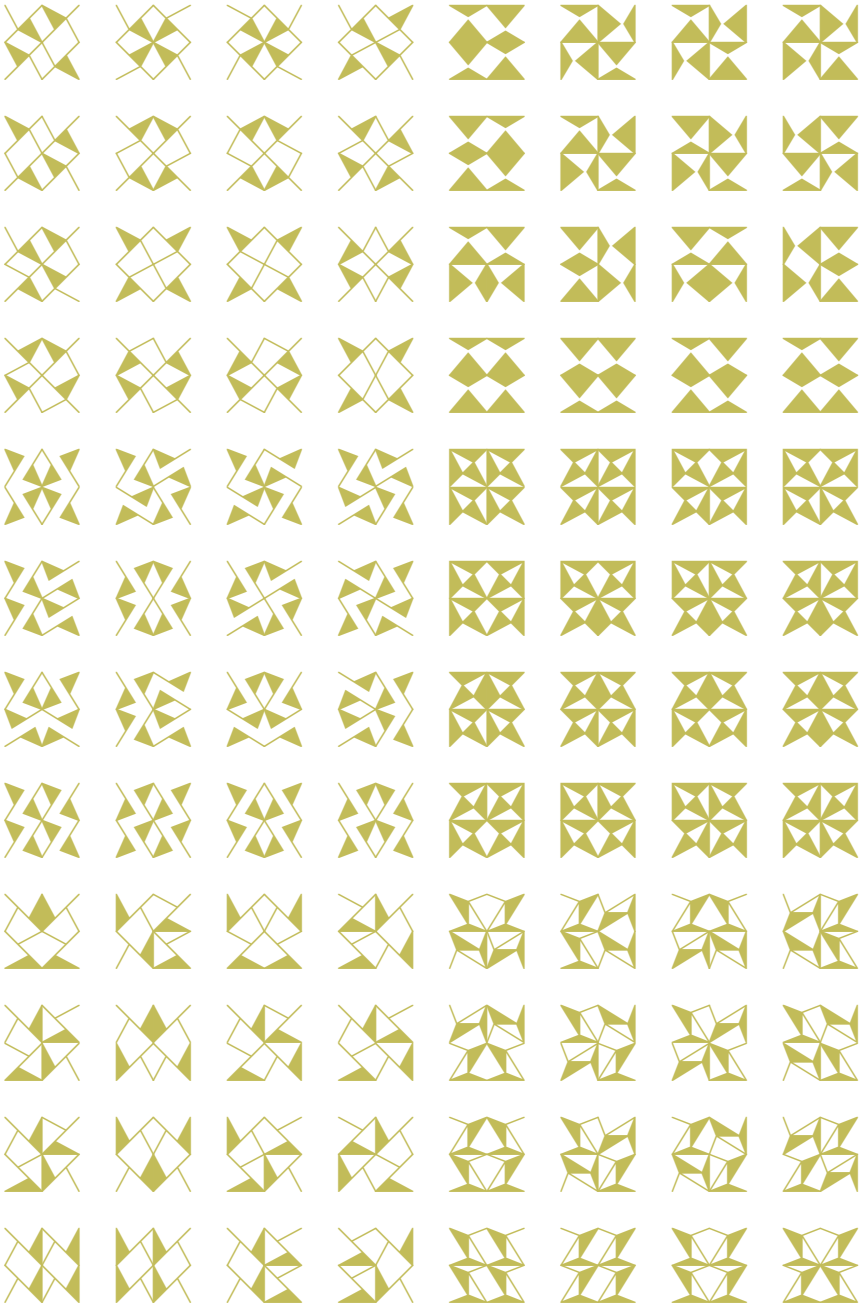


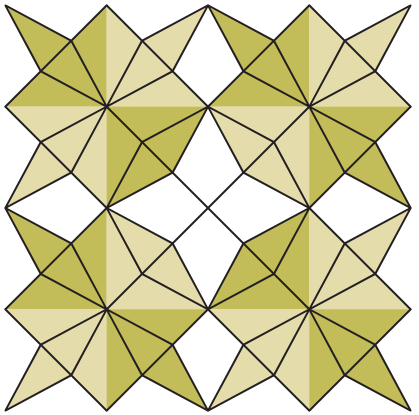
0101 | 1010 ...

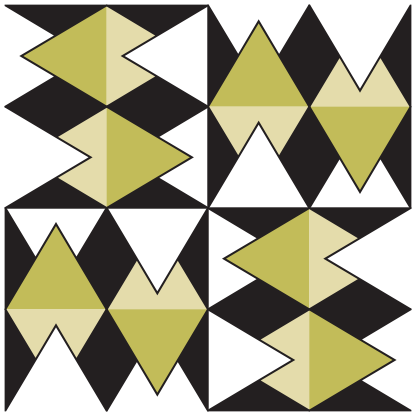
213203

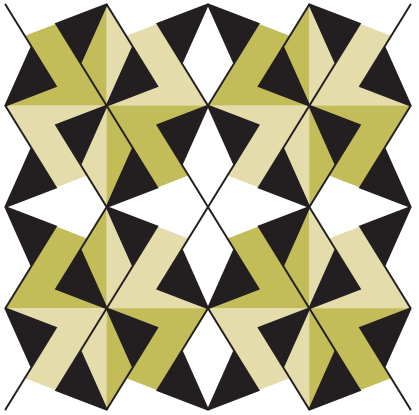
150171











While the previous pages show us how Crackly can be used to create a variety of patterns using the basic Crackly Lines fonts, additional visual effects can be generated by combining and overlaying Crackly Lines with Crackly Knockout and Crackly Shadows.

On the following pages we'll show you how to use the different Crackly versions in combination to generate a number of different effects.

On pages 32-35 we show how Crackly Knockout can be used to add background colors, and on pages 36 - 37, we explain, step by step, how the cover image was created using a combination of all three Crackly variants.

On pages 38 - 43 we show examples of texture variations using the different Knockout fonts together with the Shadows font.

Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout Corner Top Left

Crackly Knockout Corner Top Right

Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Left

Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Right

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout Corner Top Left

Crackly Knockout Corner Top Right

Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Left

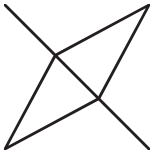
Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Right

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20



Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout Corner Top Left

Crackly Knockout Corner Top Right

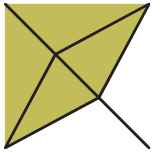
Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Left

Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Right

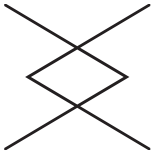
Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20



Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20



Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout Corner Top Left

Crackly Knockout Corner Top Right

Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Left

Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Right

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout overlaid with Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Shadows

Crackly Shadows 20

Crackly Knockout
Corner Top Left

Crackly Knockout
Corner Top Right

Crackly Knockout
overlaid with
Crackly Shadows

Crackly Knockout
overlaid with
Crackly Shadows

Crackly Knockout
Corner
Bottom Left

Crackly Knockout
Corner
Bottom Right

Crackly Knockout
overlaid with
Crackly Shadows

Crackly Knockout
overlaid with
Crackly Shadows

Crackly Knockout
overlaid with
Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout
overlaid with
Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout
with Crackly
Shadows 20

Crackly Knockout
with Crackly
Shadows 20

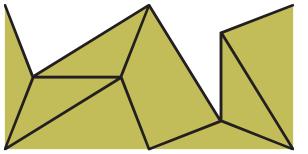
Crackly Knockout
overlaid with
Crackly Lines 20

Crackly Knockout
overlaid with
Crackly Lines 20

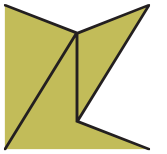
Crackly Knockout
with Crackly
Shadows 20

Crackly Knockout
with Crackly
Shadows 20

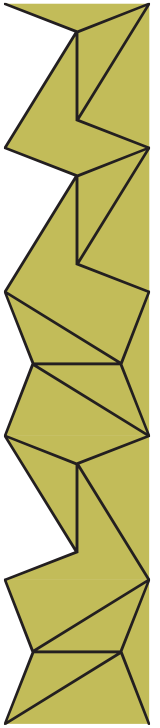
Crackly Knockout
Corner Top Left



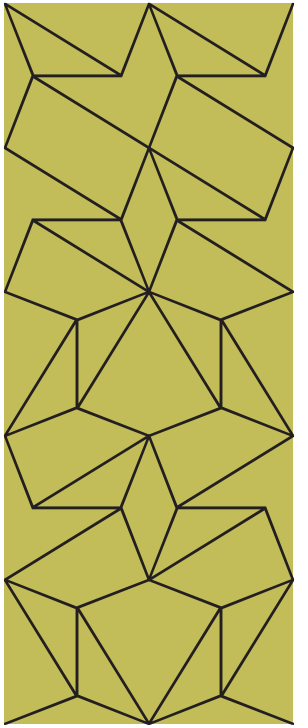
Crackly Knockout
Edge Top



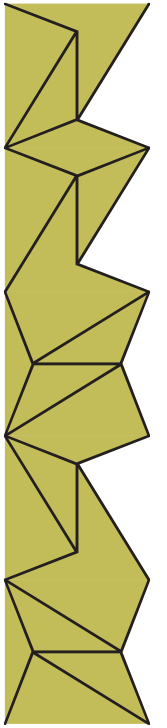
Crackly Knockout
Corner Top Right



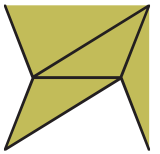
Crackly Knockout
Edge Left



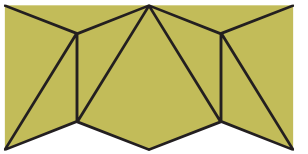
Crackly Knockout All



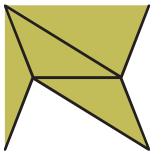
Crackly Knockout
Edge Right



Crackly Knockout
Corner
Bottom Left



Crackly Knockout
Edge Bottom

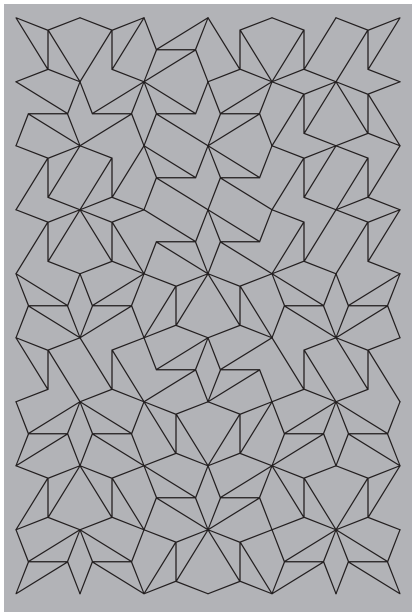


Crackly Knockout
Corner
Bottom Right

Crackly Knockout was used to create the white background shape in the cover illustration.

Follow these steps to create the cover image:

1. Start with a Crackly Lines composition, with the text set to black, on top of a grey color field.
2. Duplicate the Crackly Lines text block, set the color to white, and change the font to Crackly Knockout All.
3. Change the top line to Crackly Knockout Edge Top, and change to bottom line to Crackly Knockout Edge Bottom.
4. Change the top left element to Crackly Knockout Corner Top Left. Similarly, change the remaining three corners; change the top right element to Crackly Knockout Corner Top Right, change the bottom left element to Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Left, and change the bottom right element to Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Right.
5. Change the left edge elements to Crackly Knockout Edge Left. Similarly, change the right edge elements to Crackly Knockout Edge Right.
6. To add the green accents, duplicate the black layer, change the text color to green, and change the font to Crackly Shadows.
7. Remove unwanted shadows by replacing them with a space character.



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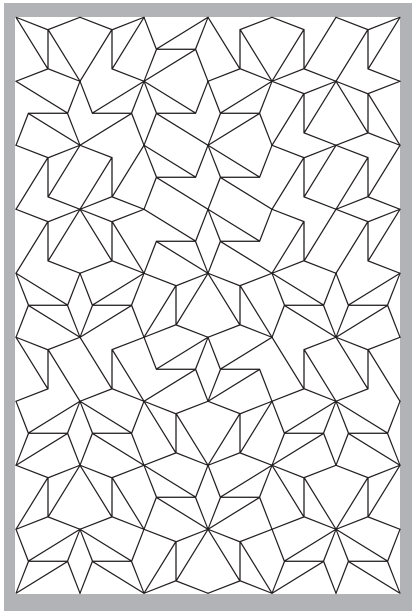

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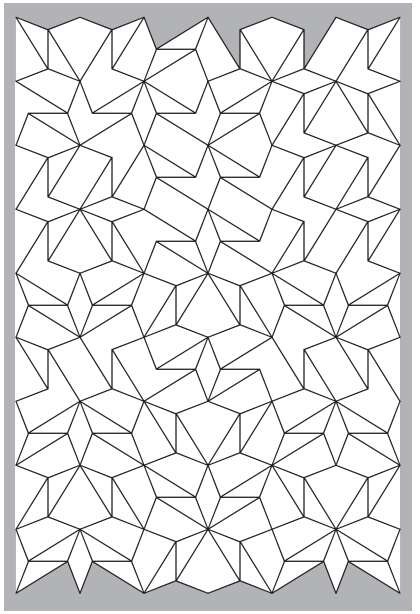

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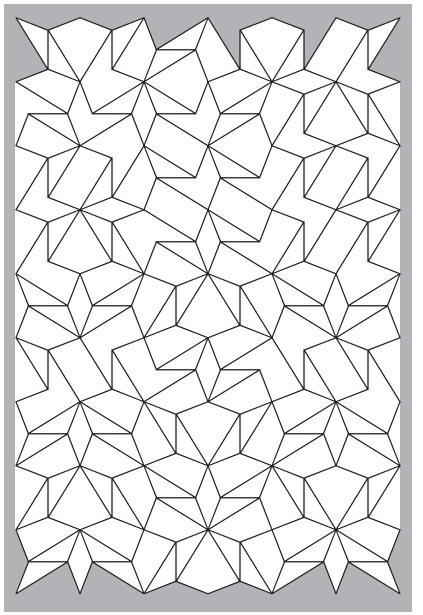

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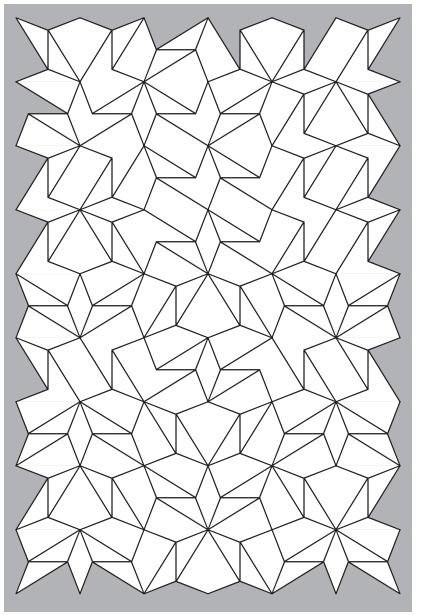

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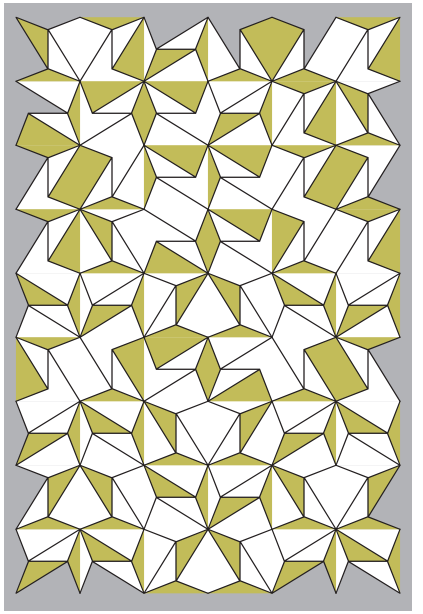

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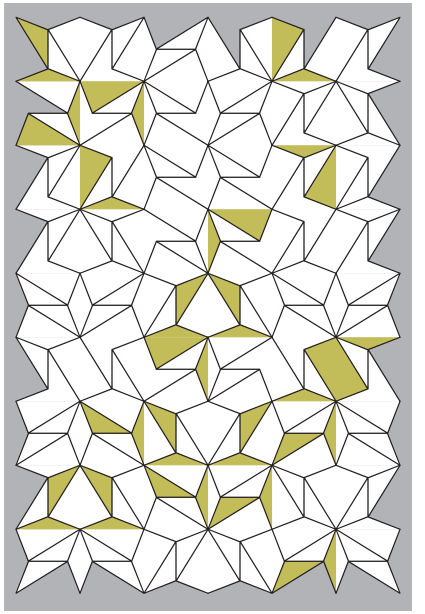
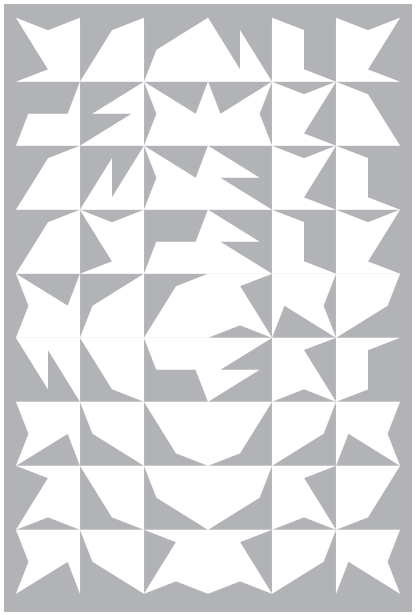


7

The Crackly Knockout and Shadows fonts can create additional effects through layering.

1. This Knockout layer has the 15 top left elements set to Crackly Knockout Corner Top Left, the 12 top right elements set to Crackly Knockout Corner Top Right, the 12 bottom left elements set to Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Left, and 15 bottom right elements set to Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Right. All seven compositions on this spread use the same Knockout layer, with the following additions:
2. The same text block is set to Crackly Shadows and overlaid in black.
3. The same text block is set to Crackly Shadows 30 and overlaid in black.
4. The same text block is set to Crackly Lines 30 and overlaid in black.
5. The same text block is set to Crackly Lines 30 and overlaid in white. The knockout layer is set to black.
6. The same text block is set to Crackly Lines 30 and overlaid in white. The knockout layer is set to black, and a third text block with same text is set to Crackly Shadows and set to white.
7. The same text block is set to Crackly Lines 30 and overlaid in black. The knockout layer is set to black, and a third text block with same text is set to Crackly Shadows and set to green.



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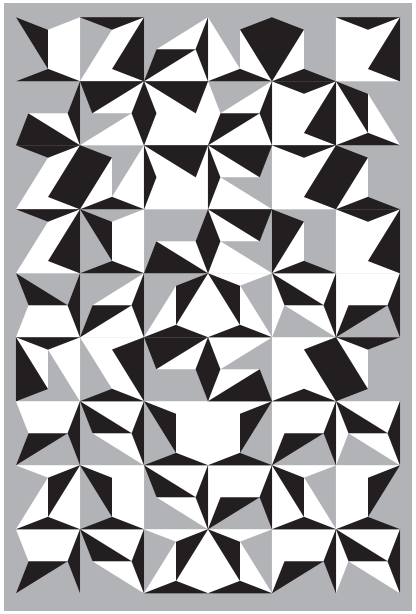

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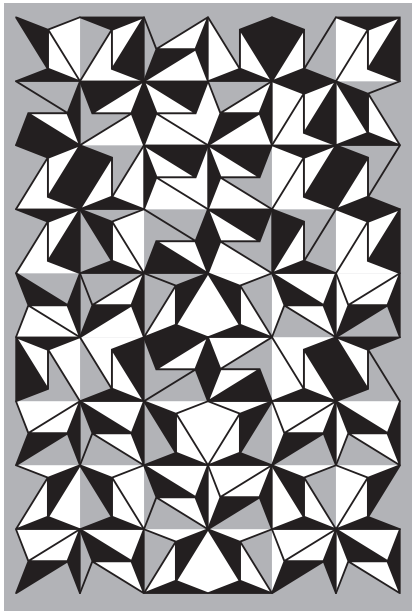

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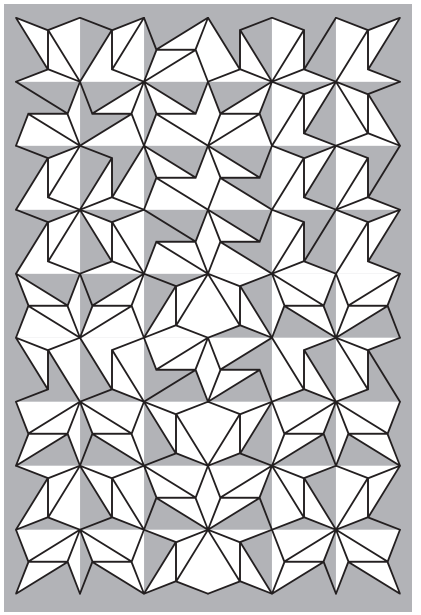

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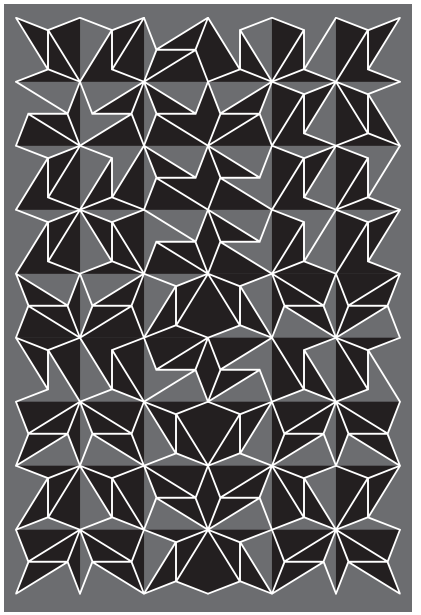

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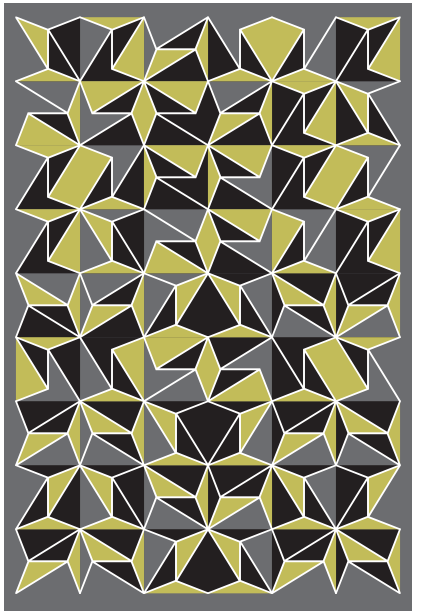

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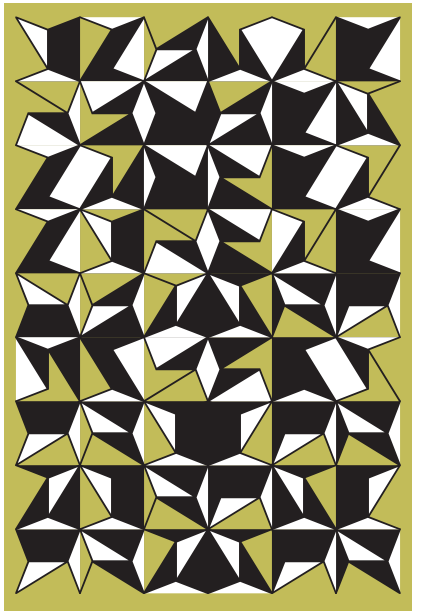
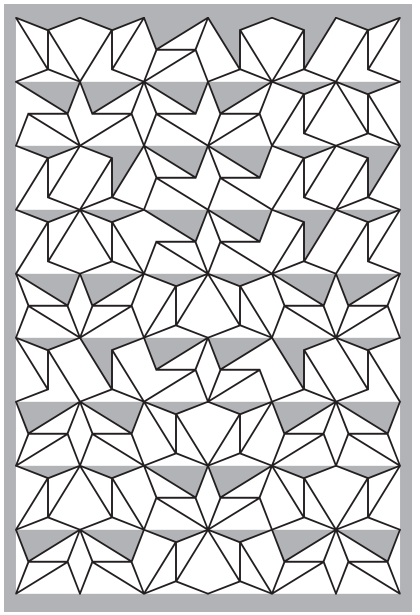


7

Examples of texture variations using the different Knockout fonts.

All seven examples use the same top layer, with the following Knockout versions in the background set to white:

1. Crackly Knockout Edge Top
2. Crackly Knockout Edge Left
3. Crackly Knockout Edge Bottom
4. Crackly Knockout Corner Top Left
5. Crackly Knockout Corner Top Right
6. Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Left
7. Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Right



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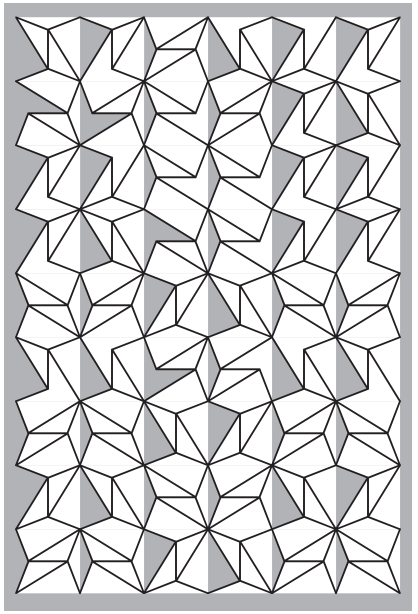

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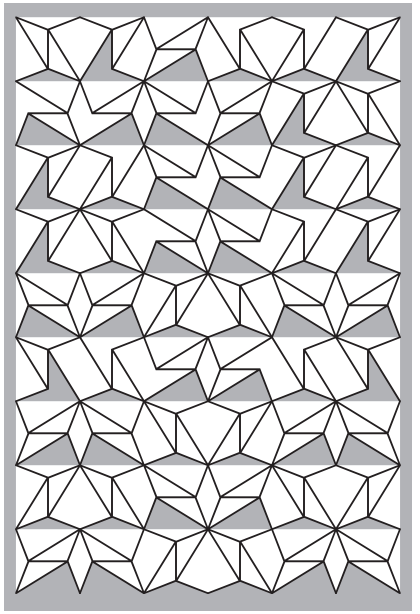

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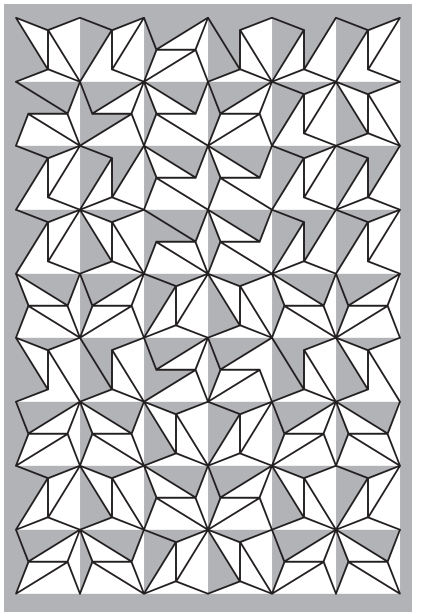

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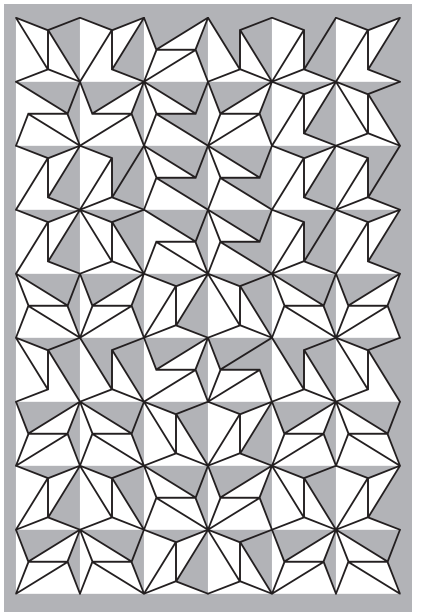

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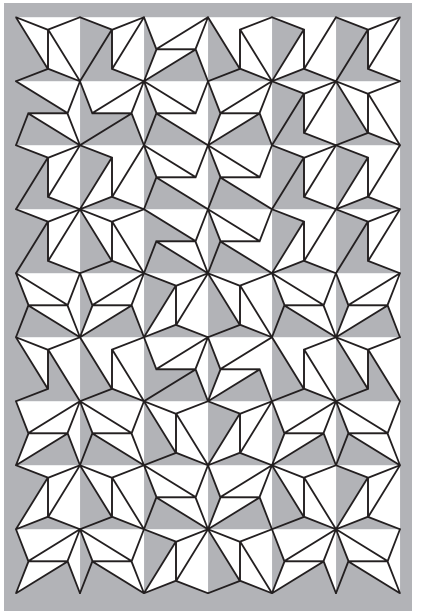

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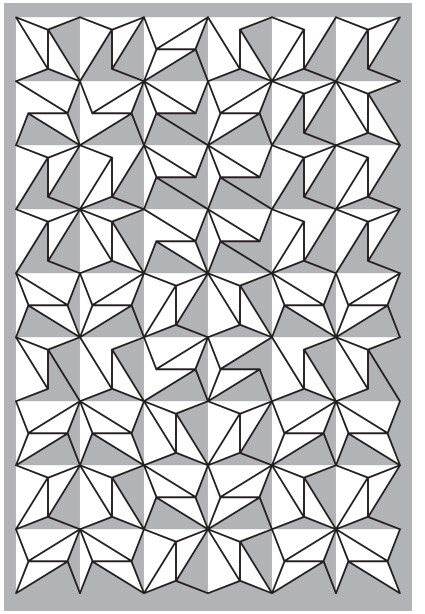
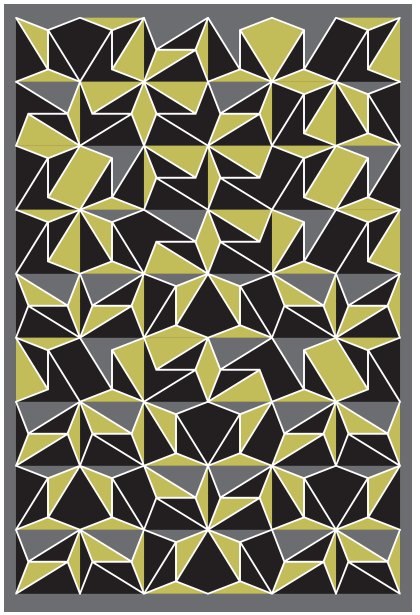


7

Examples of texture variations using the different Knockout fonts together with the Shadows font.

All seven examples use the same top layer and Shadows layer, with the following Knockout variants in the background set to black:

1. Crackly Knockout Edge Top
2. Crackly Knockout Edge Left
3. Crackly Knockout Edge Bottom
4. Crackly Knockout Corner Top Left
5. Crackly Knockout Corner Top Right
6. Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Left
7. Crackly Knockout Corner Bottom Right



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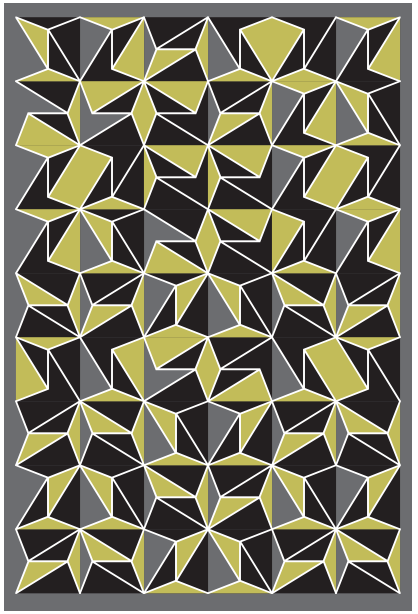

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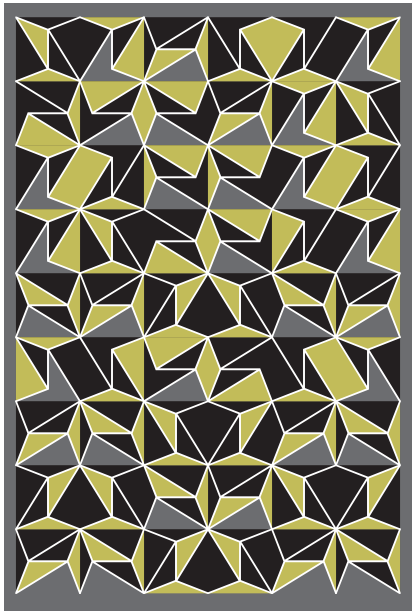

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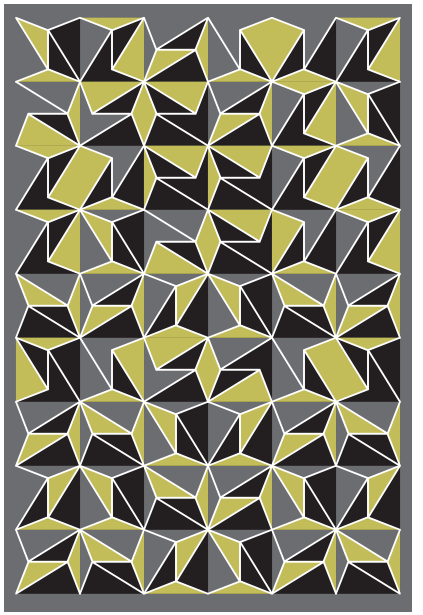

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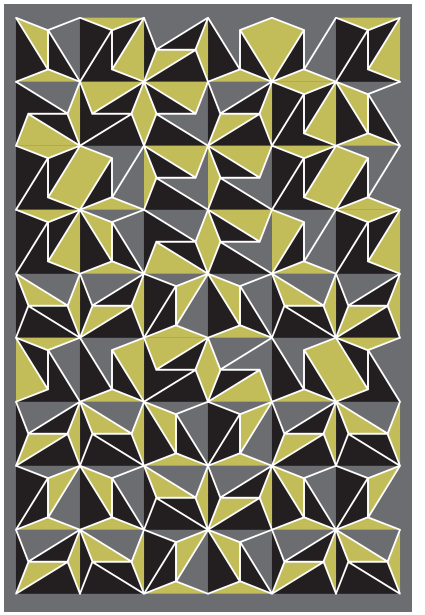

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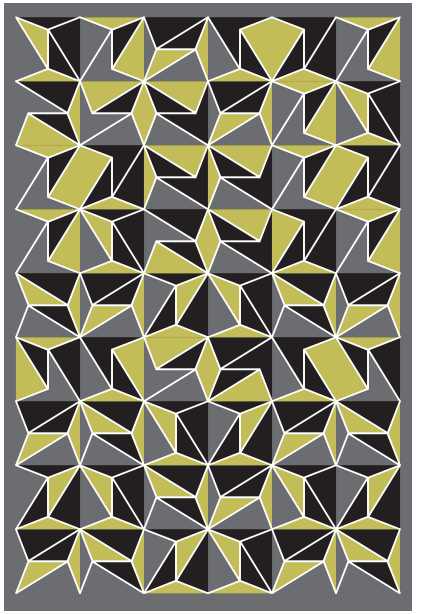

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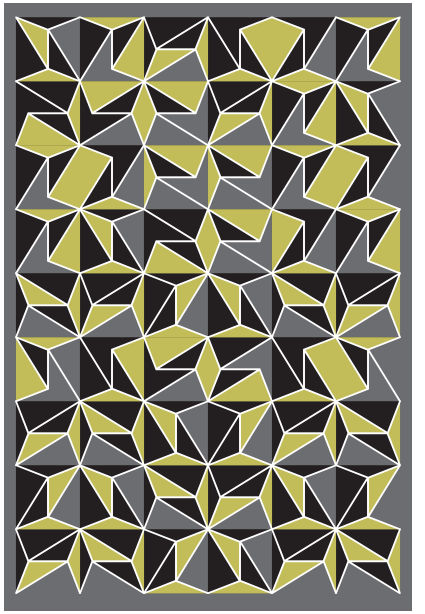

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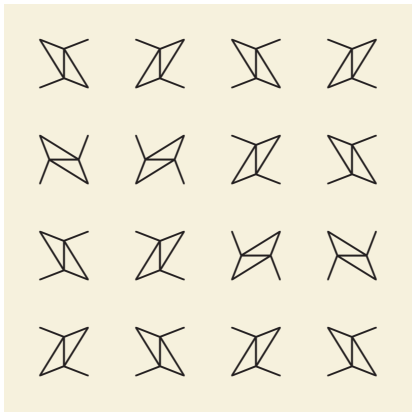

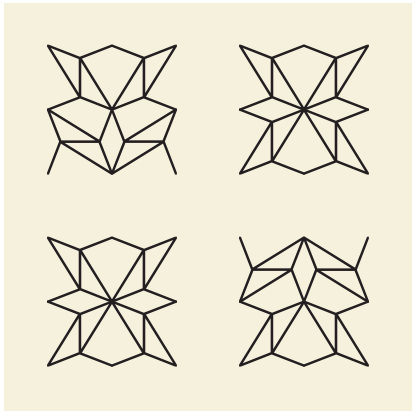

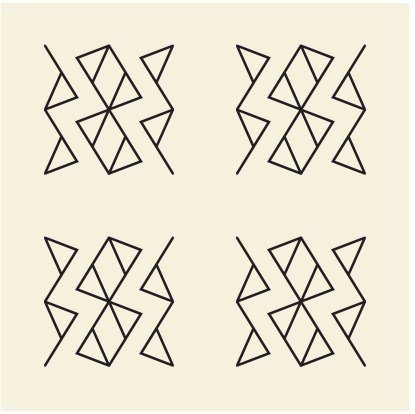

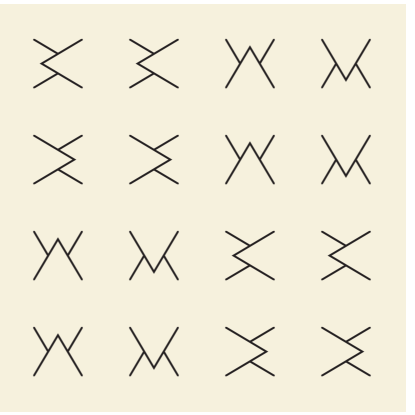

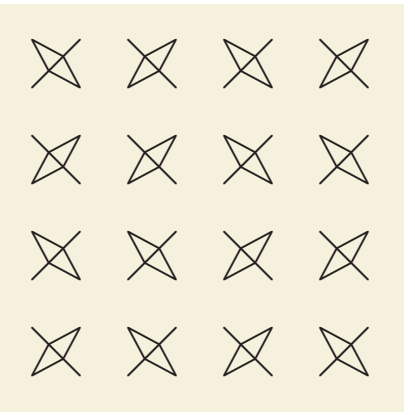

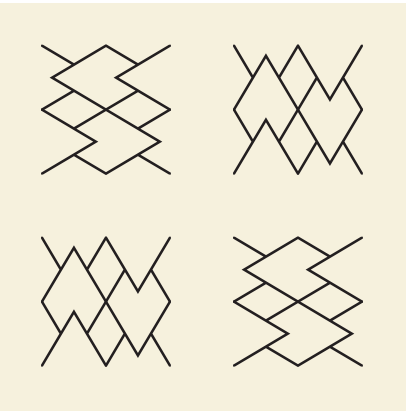

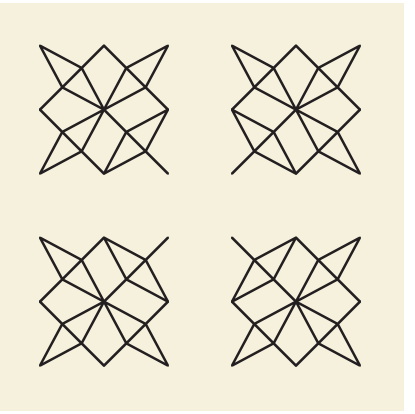

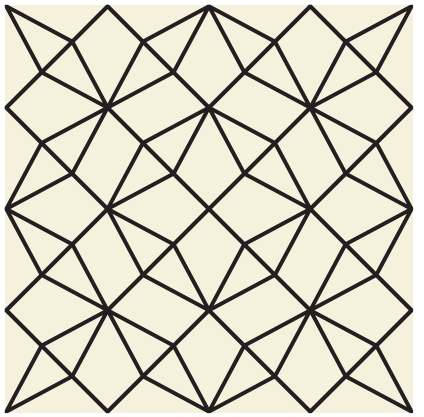

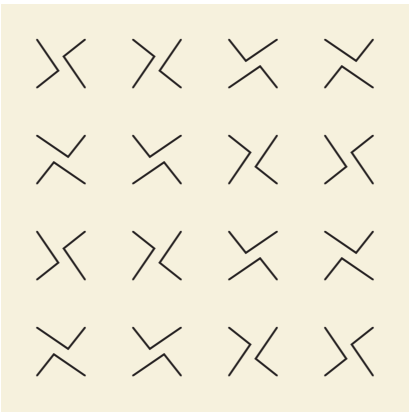

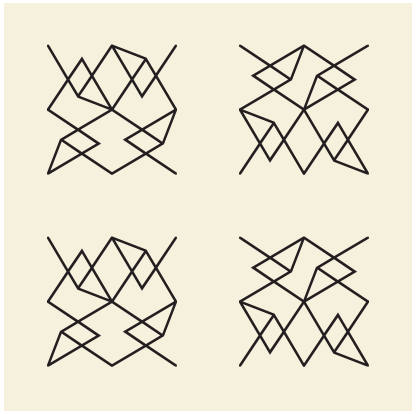

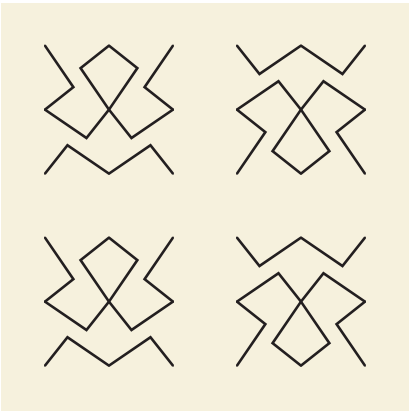

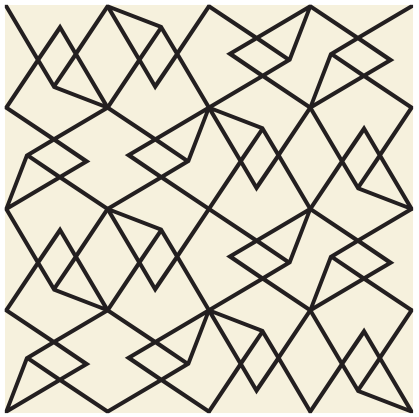

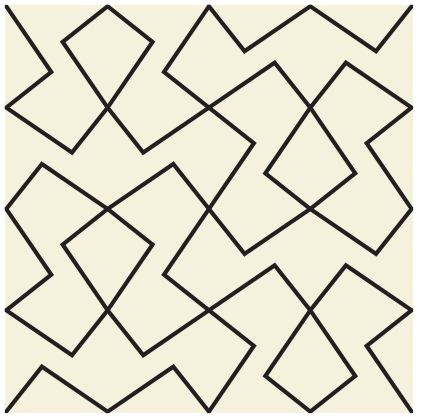

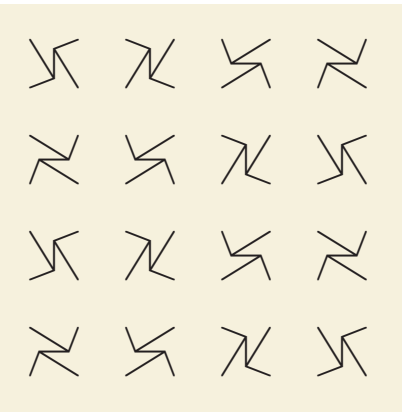

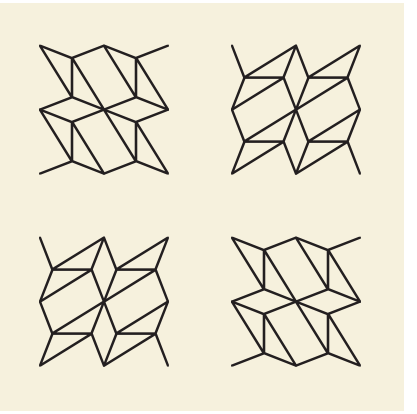

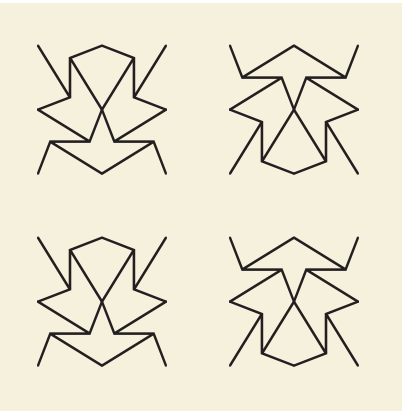

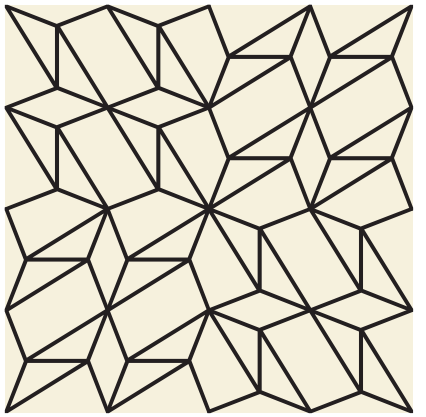

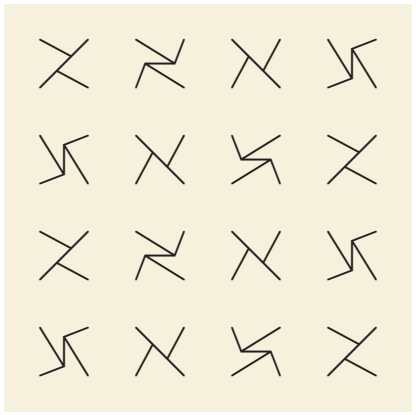

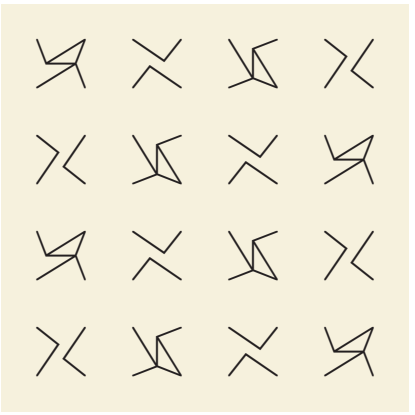

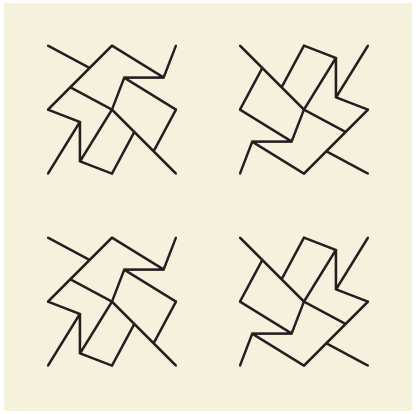

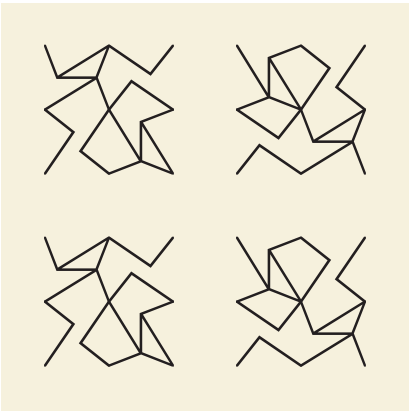

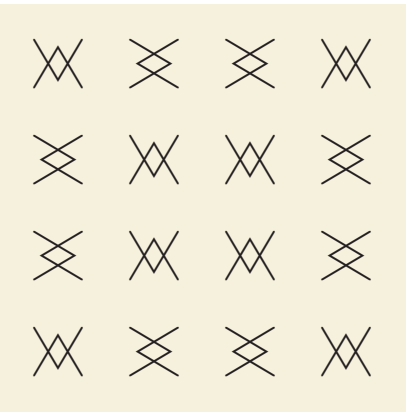

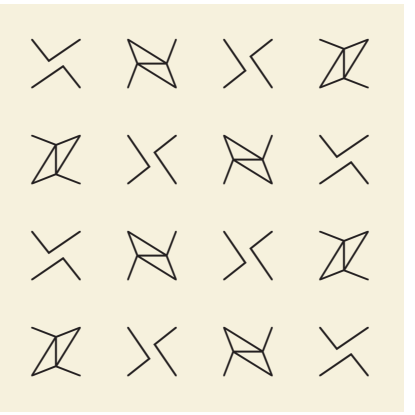

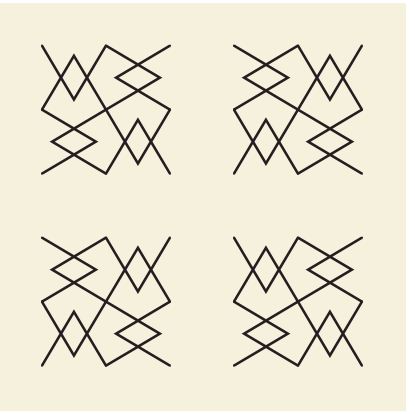

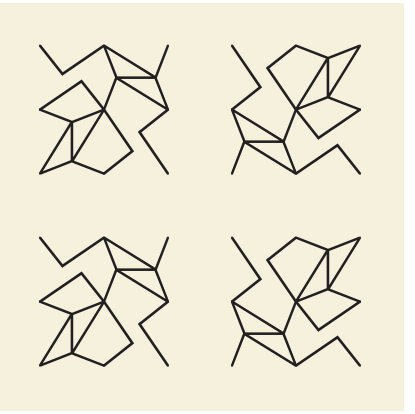

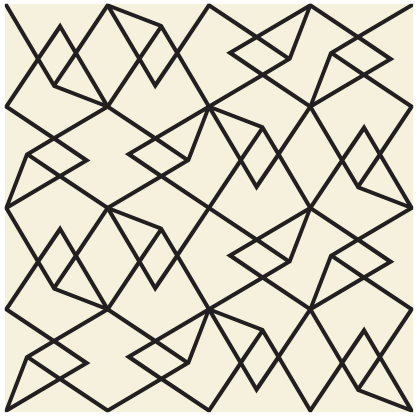

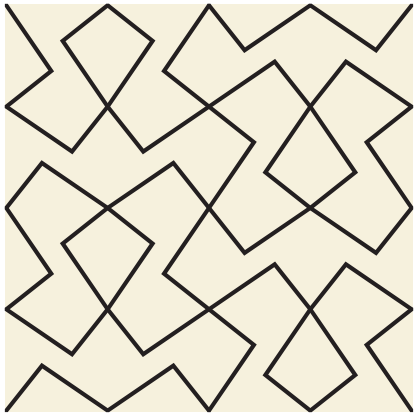

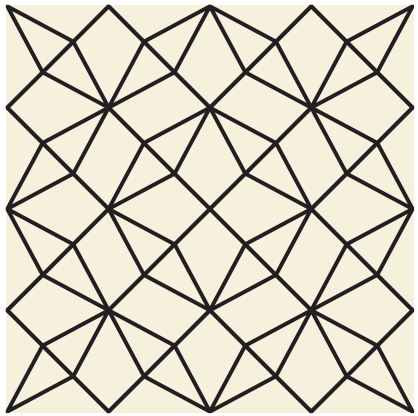

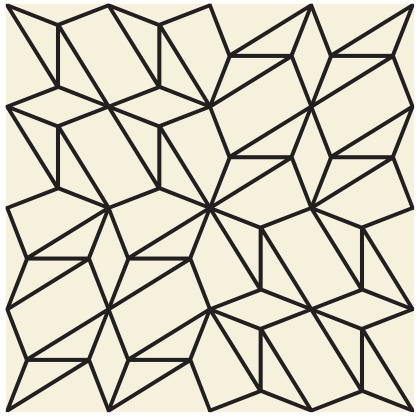

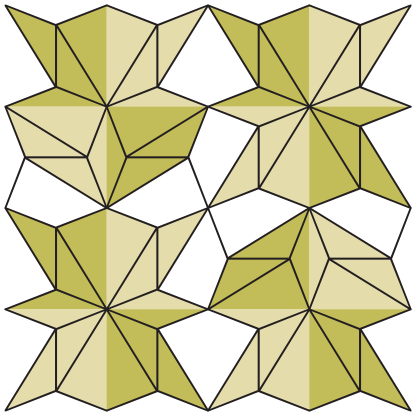

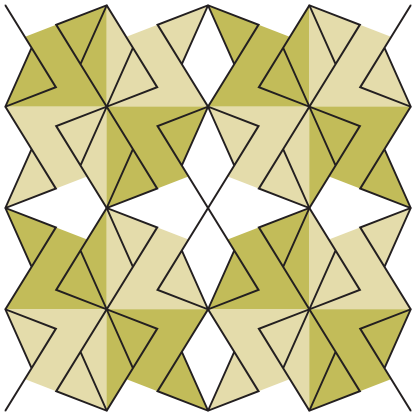

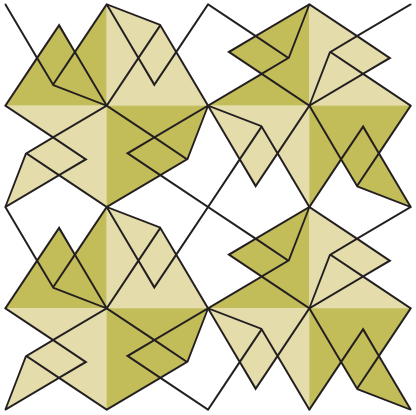

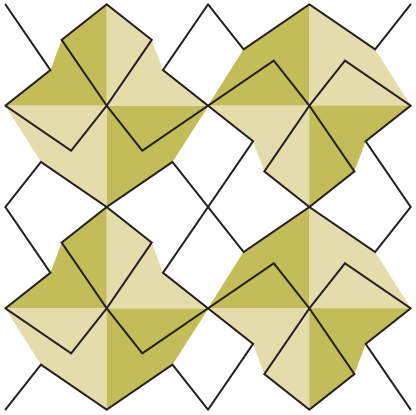

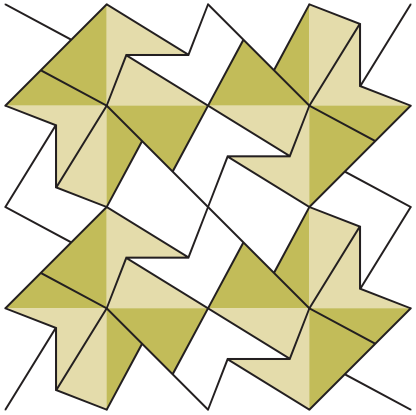

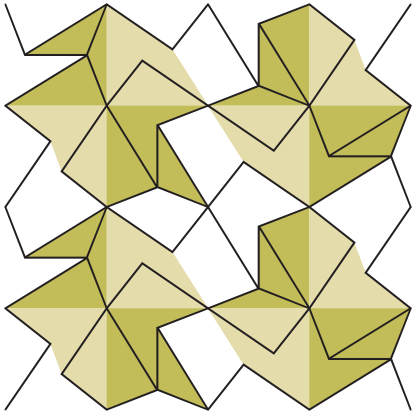

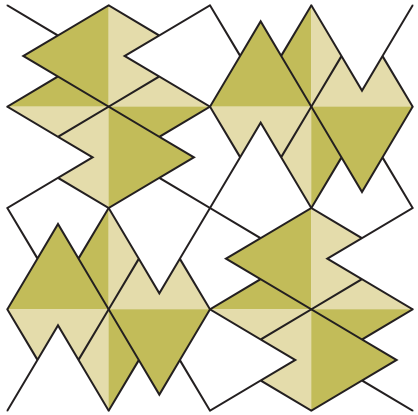

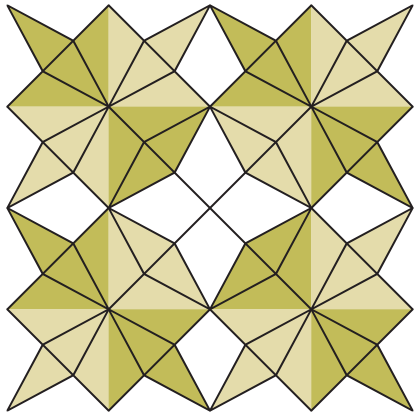

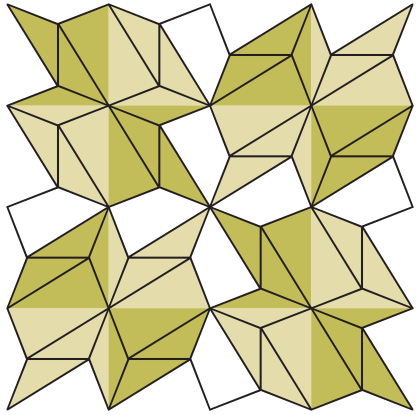

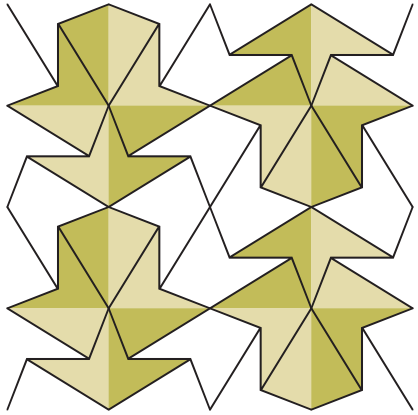

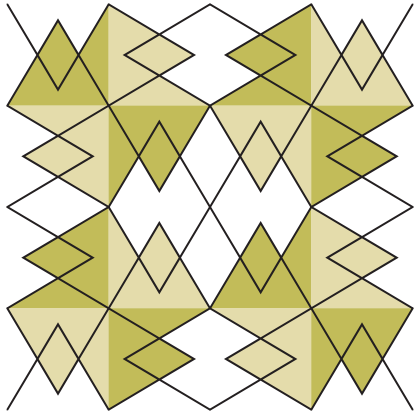

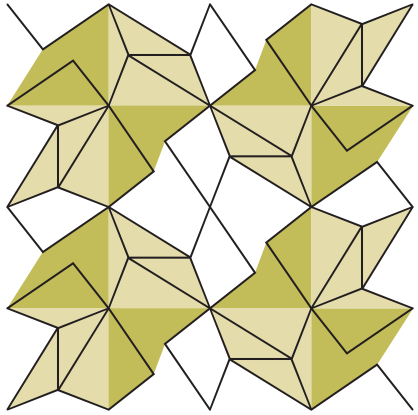

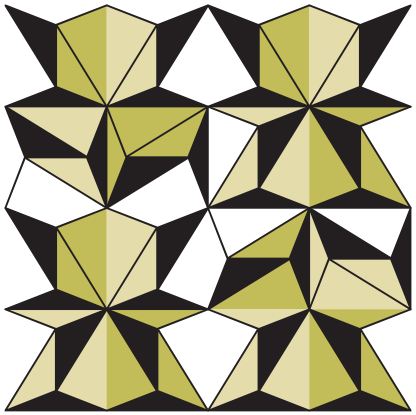

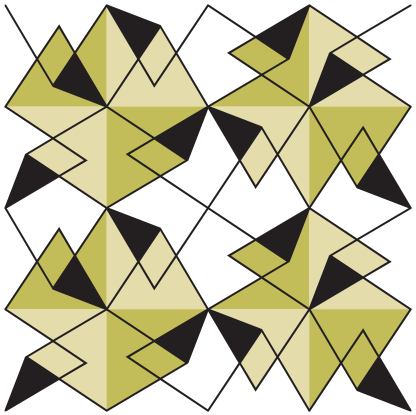

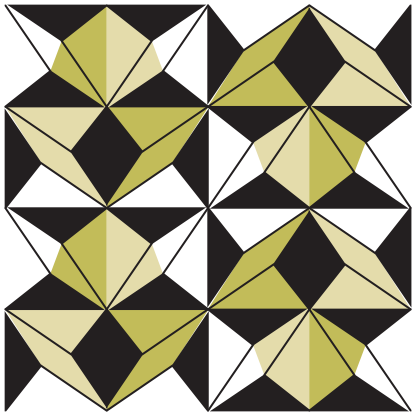

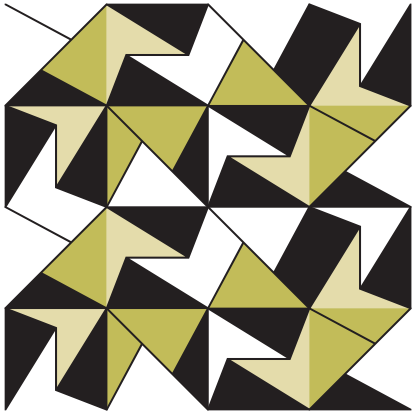

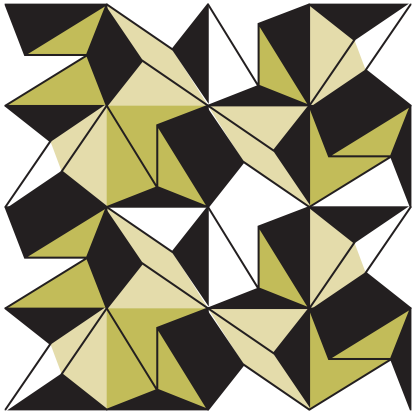

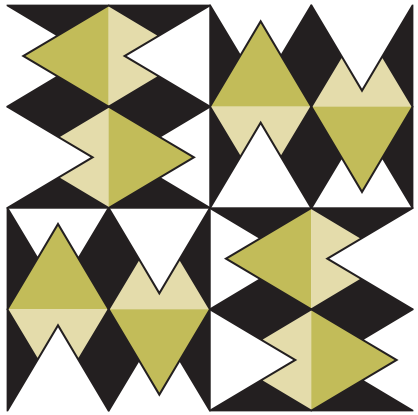

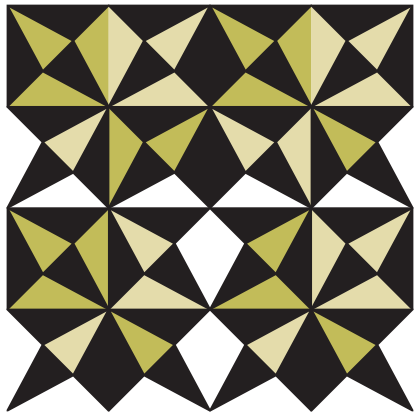

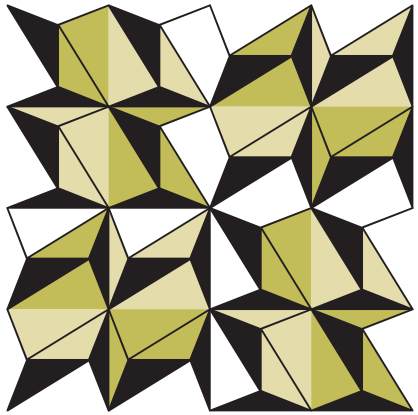

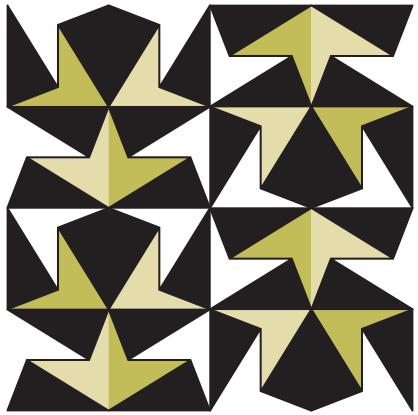

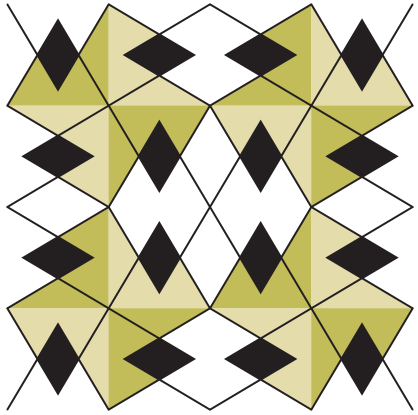

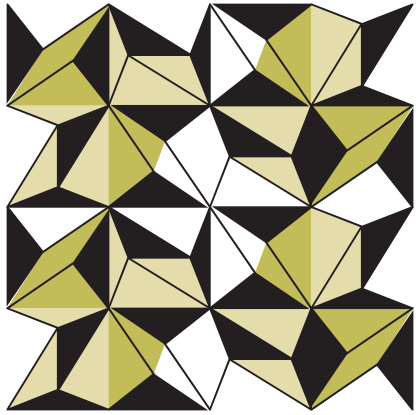

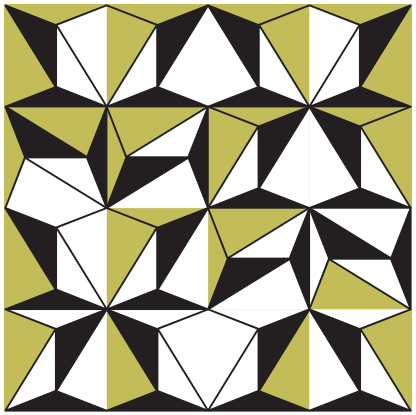

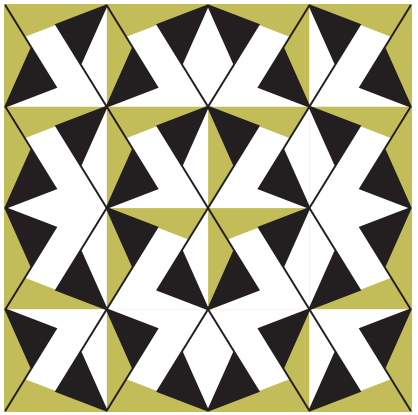

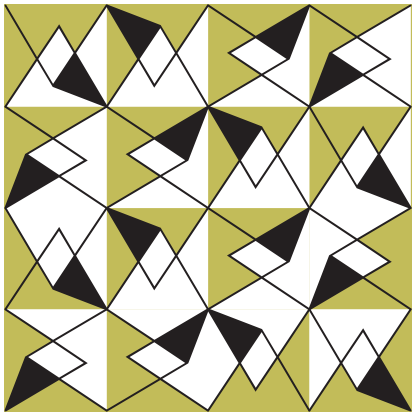

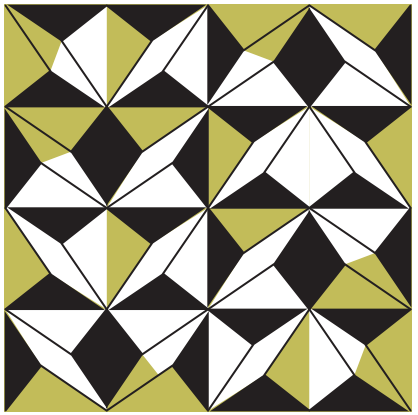

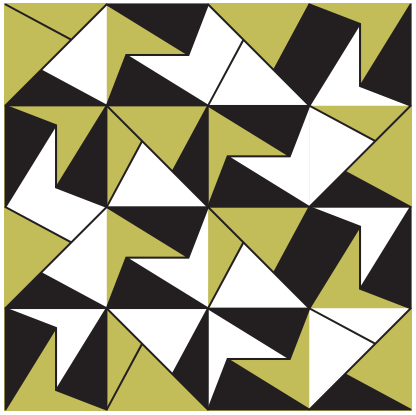

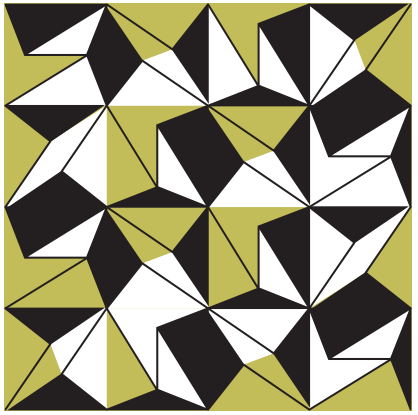

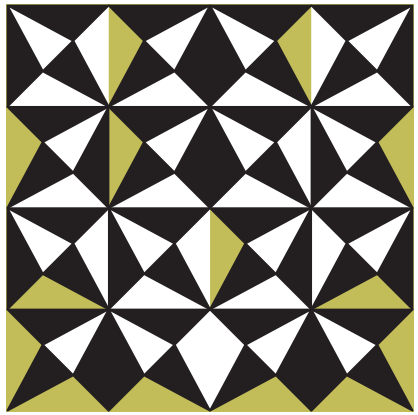

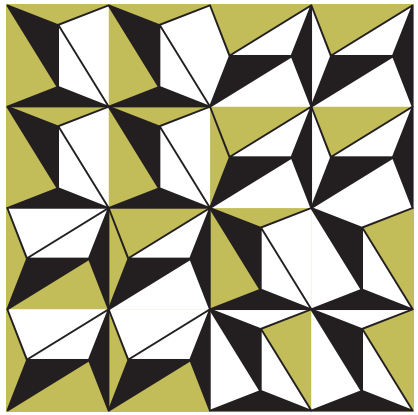

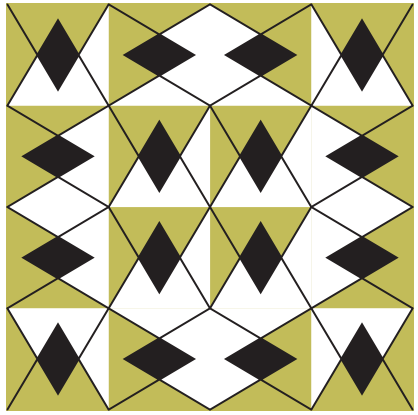

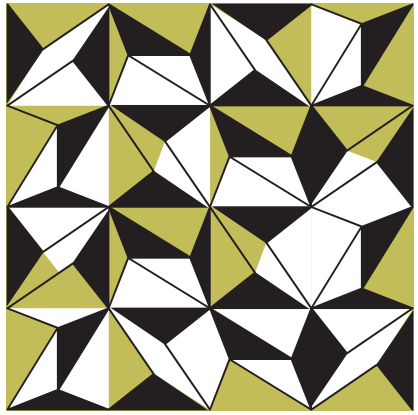

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