

Pattern making and daily life

In parts of Papua New Guinea it is not unusual to find that patterns are associated with animal behaviour or with patterns observed in nature: such as the tracks of a mouse in the sand, the phases of development of a fly, the teeth of a crocodile. We have adapted this idea to reflect on ways in which we may associate pattern with our daily lives as a means of heightening awareness of our surroundings and habits we take for granted, and inspiring creativity in simple new ways.

Part one

Pattern making with movement, with habits, with stories and composition

Patterns from the body – performance art

We are pre-disposed to create or respond to rhythms corresponding to, or in contrast to the natural and customary rhythms of our own bodies.

Performance patterns

Listen to a range of pieces of music from different cultures, times or parts of the world and move your body in a pattern which is responsive to it. Possibly hold the pose as the music stops, to make a body pattern.

Do the same exercise in groups to make group patterns.

Part two

Symbolic pattern, pattern and ideas, moods

Pattern from observed behaviour or phenomena

What are the patterns of your day, of your moods, of your habits?

If you had to associate a pattern to each activity what would it be?

What pattern is breakfast?

Pattern, experience and activity

Create patterns which correspond to events and behaviour, pattern as communication, design through pattern, symbolic pattern.

Have a number of prompts, ideas of activities which can be associated with patterns, written on pieces of paper which can be drawn out of a hat or box. Encourage people to take papers out and draw a pattern corresponding to a prompt – drawing each pattern on a piece of card.

Part three

Combining patterns to make design, narrative and stories.

Once a whole range of patterns have been made, then a number of options can be explored:

- People can work individually or in groups to make a composite story by combining patterns.
- Or patterns can be combined to make the most satisfying aesthetic arrangement.

Decisions can then be made about improving the grouped patterns by rationalising the story, or adding more pattern, or by repetition of some patterns to improve the overall design.

Finally, each group could try to decode other stories or symbolism, or tell each other's stories.

Pattern associates and prompts

What pattern can you invent to represent the following activities etc.?

- Sleeping
- Getting out of bed in the morning
- Getting dressed
- Breakfast
- Brushing your teeth
- Combing your hair
- Going to school
- Having a bath
- Stirring tea
- Eating chips
- Writing
- Playing football
- Playing netball
- Walking in mud
- Running very fast
- Fish in the tank
- Snakes
- Stroking the cat
- Dogs running
- Picking flowers
- Collecting shells on the beach
- Trying on shoes
- Swimming
- Knitting
- Drumming
- Playing the piano
- Chewing gum
- Feeling angry
- Feeling happy
- Talking on the telephone
- Sailing
- Travelling by car
- Flying
- A windy day
- Thunderstorm

