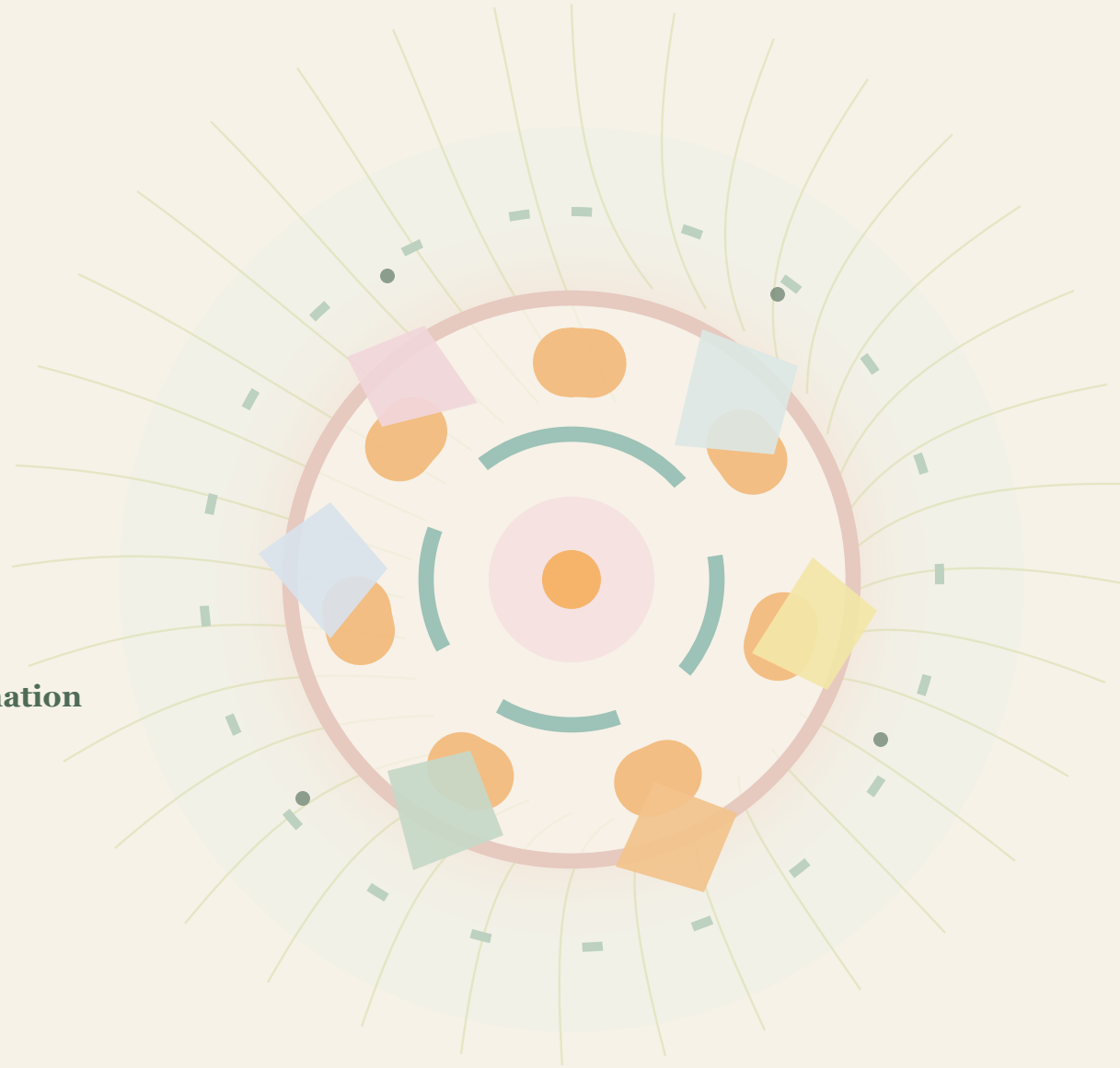
LOOK AGAIN:
LITE EDITION

A Field Research Workbook

Pattern • Colour • Material • Texture • Transformation



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Look Again

A GUIDE TO FIELD RESEARCH

Creative ideas do not begin only on a screen. They begin with what we notice: a repeated curve, the weight of a material, a shift in colour, or the marks left by a maker's hand.

Your surroundings offer a rich field of pattern, colour, material and texture. Explore streets, landscapes, collections and everyday objects. Where your references involve creative traditions, look beyond decoration to the makers, processes and knowledge behind them.

This workbook invites you to slow down, look closely and build a visual response. Collect what catches your attention, examine how it works, then begin transforming those observations into ideas of your own.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

01

OBSERVE

Look closely before deciding what something means.

02

RECORD

Save the source, maker, place, material and details.

03

QUESTION

Notice what you know, assume and still need to learn.

04

TRANSFORM

Work with structure and principles rather than copying the surface.

Look slowly. Record honestly. Make something new.

What Caught Your Attention?

DATE

SOURCE / MAKER / PLACE

Use this space for first impressions, questions, fragments, sketches, unfamiliar words and details you want to look at again.

LOOK AGAIN *What do I want to return to — and why?*

Observe Before You Borrow

A pattern is rarely only decoration. It may be connected to place, material, technique, memory, identity or belief. Its meaning can also change between makers, objects, regions and periods of time.



Let careful observation, cultural context and conversation deepen your creative thinking. Explore what a reference can teach you about form, process and meaning as you develop a response of your own.

AS YOU GATHER REFERENCES

01 **NAME**
Name the maker or source whenever possible.

02 **LOCATE**
Record where the object, image or material came from.

03 **SEPARATE**
Distinguish observation from what you learned or assumed.

04 **QUESTION**
Ask how the design was made and what purpose it serves.

05 **TRANSFORM**
Work with rhythm, balance or repetition instead of reproducing a motif unchanged.

LOOK BEYOND THE SURFACE *What can this reference teach me?*

Look Closer

DATE

SOURCE / MAKER / PLACE

Choose one reference. Draw, trace, crop or annotate the details that reveal how it was made and organised.

NOTICE THE DETAIL

What becomes visible when I stop looking at the whole?

Pattern & Shape Families

Begin by noticing the forms in your reference: curves, angles, branching shapes or radiating structures. Group them by what you can see and how they behave.

Use these groups to organise your observations. Research any cultural names or meanings separately, recording the source and context.

LOOK FOR BEHAVIOUR

Repeat • Mirror • Rotate • Interlock
Scale • Border • Counter-shape • Rhythm

VISUAL CUES TO NOTICE

CURVING
Curls, spirals and mirrored contours.



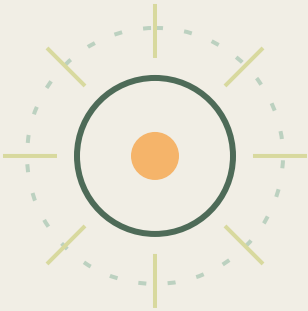
GEOMETRIC
Angles, diamonds, steps and grids.



PLANT-LIKE
Shoots, leaves and branching growth.



RADIATING
Circles, stars and outward movement.



ASK HOW IT WORKS

How does the pattern repeat, connect, balance or direct the eye?

Original observation diagrams — not replicas of traditional motifs.

Shape Studies

DATE

REFERENCE

Isolate, redraw, enlarge, rotate or combine the shapes you noticed. Keep the studies exploratory rather than resolved.

CHANGE THE FORM *Which shape still holds my attention after I change it?*

Structure

HOW PATTERN HOLDS TOGETHER

Pattern is not only the shape itself. Structure comes from how forms relate to one another: repeated, mirrored, rotated or interlocked.

Look at the spaces between forms as carefully as the forms themselves. The empty space may create a second shape, rhythm or direction.

THREE QUESTIONS

What is the repeating unit?

How does it change?

What does the space between forms create?

FOUR WAYS TO ORGANISE A FORM

REPEAT

One unit builds rhythm through return.



MIRROR

Reflection creates balance or tension.



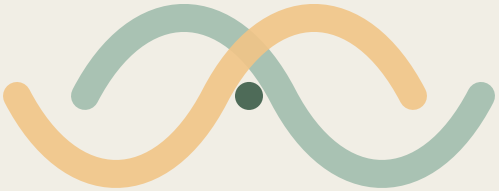
ROTATE

A unit turns around a shared centre.



INTERLOCK

Forms and gaps hold one another.



LOOK FOR THE SYSTEM

The same shape can create a different world when its relationships change.

Original teaching diagrams — not traditional motifs.

Build a Composition

DATE

REFERENCE

Use one or two shapes. Repeat, mirror, rotate or interlock them, leaving room to notice the spaces between.

FOLLOW THE EYE *Where does the eye enter, travel and rest?*

Colour Moodboard

ASSOCIATION, CONTRAST & CONTEXT

Colour shapes mood and contrast before we decide what it means. Begin by noticing what dominates, what supports and what catches the eye.

Colour associations depend on context. A colour may carry different meanings for different makers, places, periods and communities. Record any interpretation alongside the source that supports it.

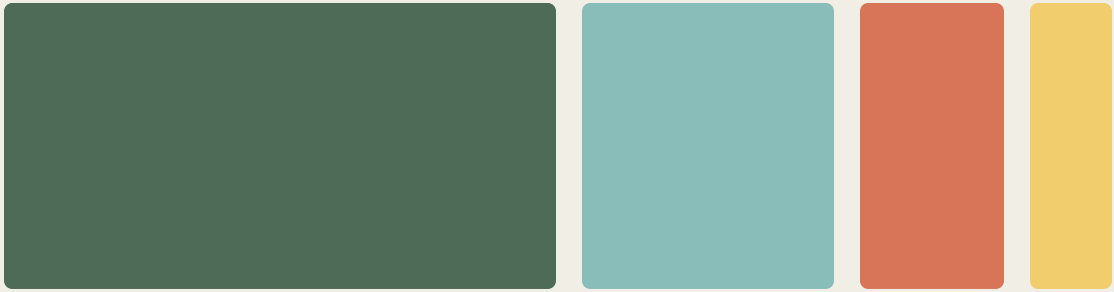
OBSERVE FIRST

Record your response before researching context. The difference between the two may be useful.

BUILD A COLOUR STUDY

PALETTE AS PROPORTION

A palette is not five equal squares. Notice how much of each colour appears.



NOTICE

- Dominant colour
- Supporting colours
- Accent or interruption
- Warm / cool relationship
- Contrast and visual energy

RECORD

- Source, maker and object
- Material and surface
- Your first response
- Context you later discover
- Questions that remain

COLOUR IS CONTEXTUAL

Build from a reference, not from a universal colour code.

Sample palette for observation only — create your own from your chosen reference.

Build a Colour Story

DATE _____ SOURCE _____

Collect, paint or paste colour fragments from one reference. Vary their size to show dominance, support and accent.

NOTICE THE RELATIONSHIP *What mood emerges between these colours?*

Material & Texture Moodboard

READ THE SURFACE

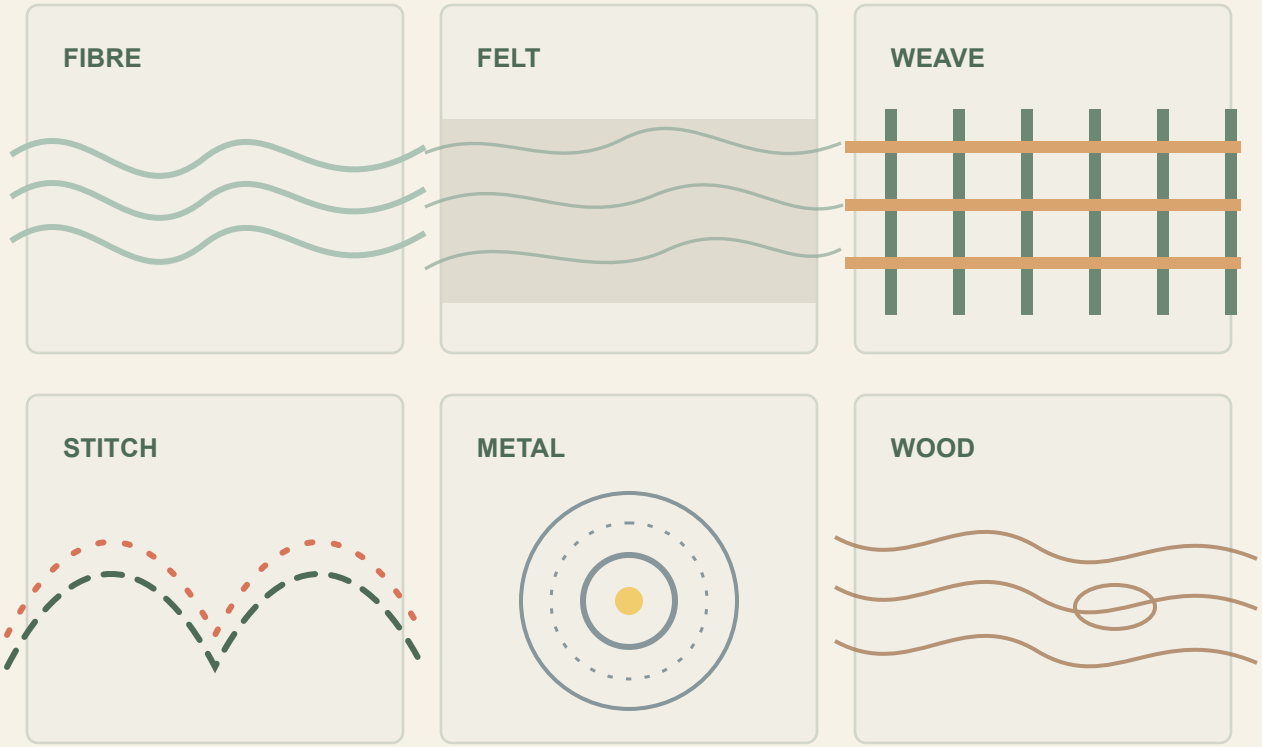
Explore materials such as fibre, felt, fabric, paper, leather, wood and metal. Material shapes what can be made, how it behaves and how it is experienced. Notice both the surface and the process behind it.

Look for evidence of tools, pressure, tension, heat, time and touch. Ask what the material permits, resists or remembers.

COMPARE

Soft / dense • rough / smooth • flexible / rigid

TEXTURE CUES TO NOTICE



ASK OF THE MATERIAL

How was it formed, joined or finished?

What does the process leave visible?

FOLLOW THE MATERIAL

Let the surface tell you how it came into being.

Simplified texture cues — not reproductions of specific objects.

Material Notes

DATE MATERIAL SOURCE / MAKER

Attach samples, make rubbings or record how a material feels, behaves and changes as you handle it.

LISTEN TO THE MATERIAL

What does it allow me to do — and what does it resist?

Transform

MOVE FROM REFERENCE TO RESPONSE

Transformation begins when you stop asking how to reproduce a reference. Ask which underlying quality matters: rhythm, balance, contrast, process, material behaviour, scale or mood.

TRY CHANGING ONE THING

Crop or simplify the form

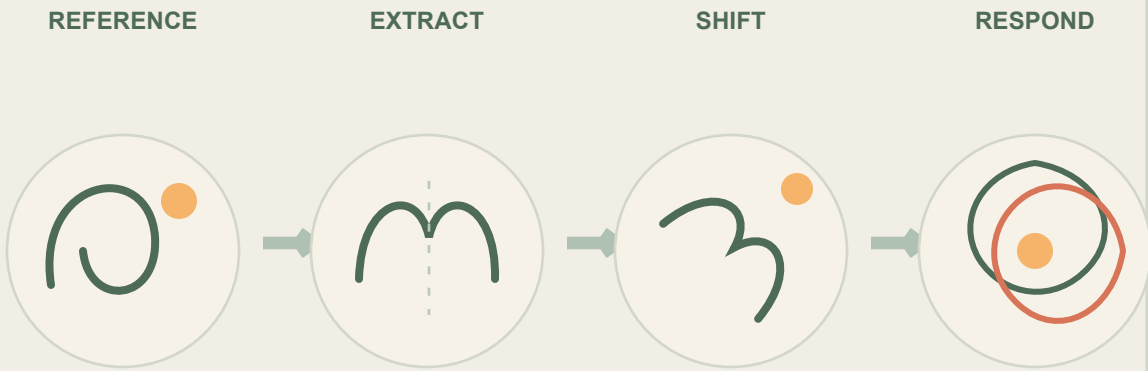
Alter scale, orientation or rhythm

Translate it into another material

Combine it with your own question or process

Transformation does not erase origin. Keep the maker, object and source in your notes as the work develops.

FROM REFERENCE TO RESPONSE



Carry the principle forward; let the surface change.

KEEP A TRACE

Original maker or source

Object, place and material

What you retained and changed

BE PRECISE

Describe the result as your response.

Do not label it traditional or authentic without the relevant cultural authority.

MAKE THE SHIFT VISIBLE

What principle am I carrying forward — and what am I changing?

Original teaching diagrams — not traditional motifs.

Direction 1: Creative Moodboard

Bring together what feels most alive. Build a direction, not a finished design.

WORKING TITLE

DATE

YOUR DIRECTION

paste • sketch • layer • annotate • connect

WHAT AM I CARRYING FORWARD?

What feels mine — and what needs more context?

ONE PRACTICAL NEXT STEP

Next, I will...

Keep your source notes with the work. Curiosity and attribution belong inside the creative process.

Direction 2: Alternative Moodboard

Develop a contrasting direction from the same research. Change one major quality: mood, scale, material, colour or structure.

WORKING TITLE

DATE

YOUR DIRECTION

paste • sketch • layer • annotate • connect



PUSH ANOTHER POSSIBILITY

What becomes possible when I refuse my first answer?

ONE PRACTICAL NEXT STEP

Next, I will...

Keep your source notes with the work. Curiosity and attribution belong inside the creative process.

Keep looking.

A moodboard is not an ending.
It is a record of attention.



You have noticed, questioned and begun to transform. Keep the sources, makers and places visible as your own visual language develops.

CONTINUE YOUR EXPLORATION

Travel. Learn. Create. Explore.

Discover Atlas & Nation's creative workbooks, travel and learning experiences. Keep developing ideas through observation, making and exchange.

ATLAS-NATION.COM

SELECTED SOURCES & FURTHER READING

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A NOTE ON CONTEXT

Motif and colour meanings are contextual, not universal. They may vary by maker, object, region and period. Use this workbook to begin looking and asking—not to assign a fixed meaning from a distance.

CREDITS

Concept, writing and design: Atlas & Nation
Original teaching diagrams: Atlas & Nation
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Original closing mark — not a traditional motif.

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