



Painting to Pattern

with

**GEORGIE FORBES
& RACHAEL KING**

Workbook

19th October 2025



Hello and welcome to the Painting to Pattern LIVE Workshop!

We are your hosts
Rachael King & Georgie Forbes



Rachael is an colourful Australian Surface Designer, Author and Creative.

Rachael is drawn to bright, saturated colour in mostly floral themes that reflect living in Queensland. Rachael is a keen learner, mentor and passionate advocate of artists in the Surface Design industry. Rachael's books, [Pattern Pulse 1 & 2](#), is a passion project that celebrates the world of Surface Design and the amazing Australian Artists working in that space.



Georgie is a colourful Australian Artist, Surface Pattern Designer and the Head Honcho of creative business Lordy Dordie.

Georgie's designs are packed with contrasting but harmonious, vibrant colour combinations, abstract shapes, quirky and fun florals. Georgie strives to convey a positive, joyful and happy message in her art. Georgie's Lordy Dordie pattern designs have appeared in successful collaborations both in Australia and internationally.

We are delighted that you will be joining us for one day workshop and encourage you to immerse yourself fully in the creative experience! Please feel free to reach out to us after today on our details below,

Rachael and Georgie x



Contact details

Rachael King

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Georgie Forbes

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Painting to Pattern LIVE Online Retreat Schedule

| Time | Session | Details & Supplies |
|----------------|--|---|
| 8:30 am | WELCOME! | Webinar opens – time to log in, check setup, and get comfy |
| 9:00–9:20 am | Introductions | Meet Georgie & Rachael – your hosts for the day |
| 9:20–10:30 am | Session 1: Analogue repeat pattern introduction | Exercise 1: Let's Doodle – simple motifs & line drawings Exercise 2: Paint Pens Multi-Directional Patterns Supplies: doodle paper (150–300gsm), pencil & eraser, ruler, washi tape, fine liner, markers (3+ colours) |
| 10:30–10:45 am | Morning Tea | ☕ Short break |
| 10:45–12:00 pm | Session 2: Introduction to Watercolour paints | Exercise 3: Explore Watercolour paints – floral motifs & textures Supplies: watercolour paper (300gsm), paints, round brush (6–12), optional flat brush, water container, palette, kitchen paper, tissues |
| 12:00–12:30 pm | Lunch Break | 🍴 |
| 12:30–2:00 pm | Session 3: Free-Flowing repeat pattern design for POD | Exercise 4: Analogue Repeat patterns using Watercolours Demo: Canva Background Removal for POD Supplies: extra watercolour paper, paints, brushes, water container, scissors, washi tape, Canva access |
| 2:00–2:15 pm | Afternoon Tea | 🌟 Short Break |
| 2:15–4:00 pm | Session 4: Digital Workflow for simple pattern design | Exercise 5: Scan, edit, digitise motifs. Build seamless repeat & upload to POD platforms Supplies: phone or scanner, computer with Photos (Windows) or Preview (Mac), optional Photoshop/Illustrator/Procreate, Canva logins |
| 4:00–4:30 pm | Q&A + Closing | Final questions + celebration 🎉 Replay link will be emailed a few days after the live zoom |





What is Surface Pattern Design?

It's pattern design that goes on any surface. As the name suggests, in its most true form, surface pattern design is primarily artwork that repeats in a pattern.

Surface Pattern Design involves taking your artwork, whether crafted by hand or created digitally, and converting it into a digital file (usually a seamless repeat pattern). This file is then sent to a manufacturer/printer to be applied to a particular product.

Surface pattern design involves creating designs that are intended to be applied to surfaces, such as fabrics, wallpaper, ceramics, or any other material where a pattern can be printed or imprinted. These designs often incorporate repeating motifs, colors, and textures, and they can vary widely in style, from simple geometric patterns to intricate floral designs or abstract compositions.

Surface pattern designers typically work digitally or by hand to develop their designs, which are then applied to various products to enhance their visual appeal.

Surface design is a highly creative and rewarding field. Working as a surface pattern designer, you have the opportunity to create beautiful, unique art that will be appreciated by people all around the world. Whether working for big brands or small independent companies, surface pattern designers play an important role in enhancing the visual appeal of products.

Surface pattern design is a fascinating and incredibly important part of the art and design world.

Whether we acknowledge it consciously or not, patterns and designs adorn every surface, profoundly influencing our visual encounters. From the humble paper towel to the cozy rug, from our clothing and bedding to our favorite mug or dinner plate, even down to our socks and phone cases, surface pattern design permeates nearly every facet of our daily existence.

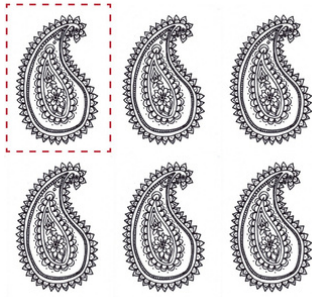
The two main types of surface design:

- **Placement print:** As the name describes, the print is designed to be placed in a specific space or created for specific dimensions. So this type of surface design you would see perhaps on a T-shirt, a towel, a mug.
- **Seamless pattern repeat:** In its simplest form, it's a design prepared as a square/rectangle tile with motifs, that can be repeated vertically and horizontally, forever, without a break in the design. The type you see on so many surfaces, so many products, in fact it's an amazingly flexible way of creating a design that can be used on infinite surfaces. Go to **page 5** for more info on pattern repeat styles.

Most common pattern repeats

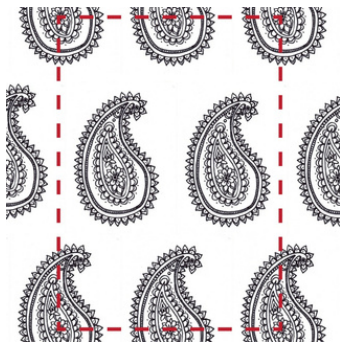
FULL DROP/BLOCK PATTERN REPEAT

The full drop or block surface pattern repeat is one of the most basic and widely used repeating systems in design. It involves stacking the original pattern block in a grid format to create a repeat unit. While it's typically in a square format, full drop repeats can also be rectangular.



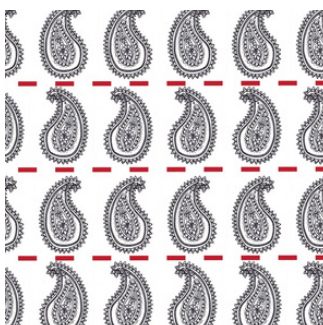
BRICK PATTERN REPEAT

The brick repeat is similar to the half-drop pattern, but instead of stacking the repeat unit vertically, it's stacked horizontally and offset by half in the next row, resembling a brick wall. This gives the design a less formal appearance, similar to half-drop patterns.



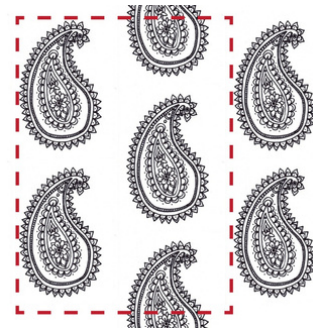
STRIPE/LINE PATTERN REPEAT

The stripe surface pattern repeat can have a vertical, horizontal, or diagonal arrangement. Stripes aren't limited to solid colors; they can also include textures, patterns, motifs, zigzags, or wavy lines.



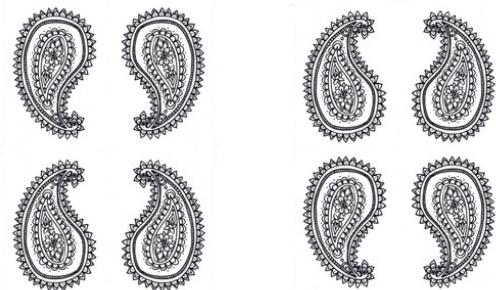
HALF DROP PATTERN REPEAT

The half-drop is another widely used surface pattern repeat where the repeat unit is stacked vertically in a column format and then offset by half in the next vertical row. This creates a more informal and dynamic look in the design.



MIRROR PATTERN REPEAT

A Mirrored repeat is made by either horizontally or vertically reflecting the artwork/ element



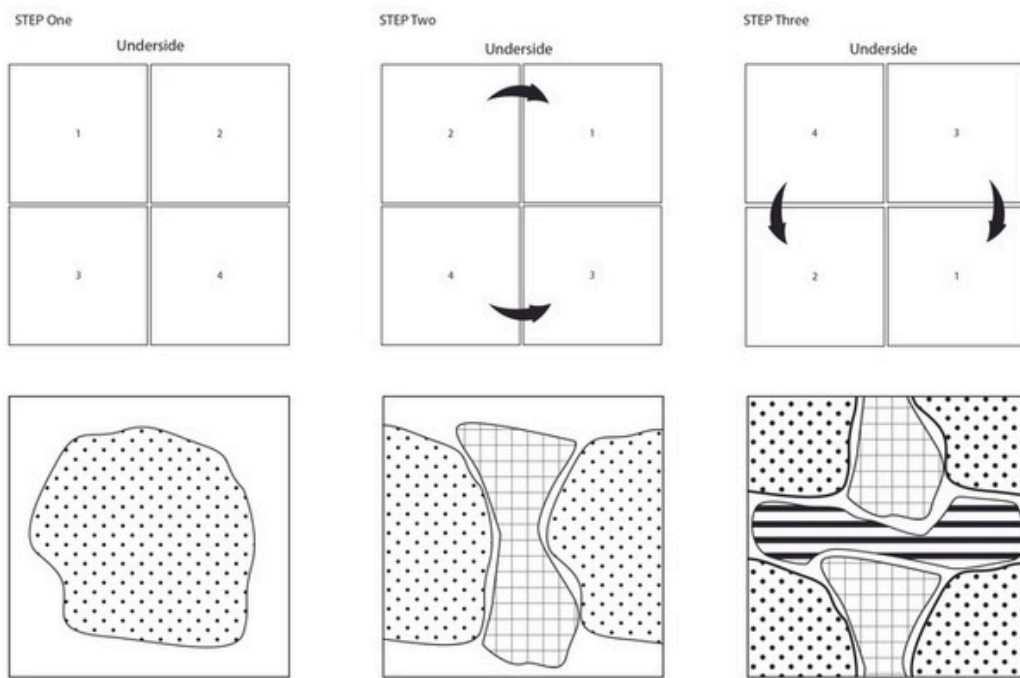
SCATTER/RANDOM PATTERN REPEAT

In a scattered/random surface pattern repeat, design elements are scattered within the repeat unit, creating an organic and non-linear look.



Steps to creating an analogue pattern repeat

Creating a handmade repeat tile



Measure, line and cut paper into a square.
Divide square into 4 with pencil lines. Place numbers 1,2,3,4 starting in top left square.

Step 1 - fill central area making sure to leave at least 2 cm free around all edges

Step 2 - Cut down the middle of the square (vertically). Swap left and right sides, washi tape square back together. Fill area in middle whilst leaving area free at top and bottom.

Step 3 - Cut across the middle of the square (Horizontally). Swap top and bottom sides, washi tape square back together. Fill remaining areas. Do not take artwork off the edges of left and right.

YOUR TILE IS COMPLETE!

Test your repeat

For a quick way to see if your repeat is working try this exercise



Step 1- Download the "PIXLR" APP on your Android or Apple phone.

Step 2- take a photo of your repeat tile making sure to line up the edges of your screen with the sides of the tile for the squarest image. Use your cropping tool to crop to the edges of the square. SAVE to your phone.

Step 3 - Open the **PIXLR app**. Click on the COLLAGE option. Click on the image you just saved in your phone which should be at the top of the images on the lefthand side. Tap the image 4 times, reduce the spacing between the images. Et Voila!

How does it look?

Scale

TO CHECK YOUR ARTWORK SCALE - open your image in the PHOTO app on your desktop PC or Laptop. Right click to find out file properties. **Look for pixels and resolution.** If 300ppi then your design is good for reproduction at 100%. Please check end use requirements to see if the pixels are enough. If not, rescan at higher resolution, allowing the image to be scaled UP without losing resolution. (eg. 600ppi = 200% image increase at 300ppi res)

Always best to test it before committing to a huge order

CANVA (free) allows you to have some control over what type of files you can export depending on the end usage. CANVA Pro (\$18 p/mth) more options when exporting.

Colour profiles explained

A quick guide to UNDERSTANDING COLOUR FORMATS

Here's a quick handy quick guide to deciphering these colour formats. **Why are there different colour names?** Basically, it comes down to how & where your design is being used. Your design will need to be set up differently depending on whether it's being used on-screen (digital) or off-screen (print). **Printed colours are subtractive** while **digital colours are additive.**



CMYK (subtractive light) = best for PRINT

CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Black)

Used: Off-screen (offset printing and digital printing)

Unlike Pantone ink (which is one solid colour), a CMYK colour is actually comprised of a pattern of transparent, overlapped dots in the four ink colours (cyan, magenta, yellow and black). These dots absorb coloured light, which is why it's a subtractive colour model.

How it CMYK works:

- CMYK can be used on printing presses or digital printers.
- The finished printed result typically lacks the vibrancy seen in RGB colors due to the limited range of print colors available.
- Since machine and press calibration paired with the quality and material of paper all play a role in the finished result, you may see some slight colour variation occur in the printed result.
- Choosing a dependable printer is crucial as poorly maintained machinery or subpar ink can lead to less accurate results.

RGB (additive light) = best for DIGITAL, WEB GRAPHICS

RGB (Red, Green, Blue)/HEX (Hexadecimal)

In SPD designs are mostly created as JPEG in RGB

Used: On-screen (RGB is digital only with HEX used on websites only)



RGB is the colour format language of the digital domain. Unlike CMYK, RGB is an additive colour model and renders colours on-screen by mixing combinations of red, green and blue.

How it works:

- RGB is great online but isn't great for off-screen purposes because it only appears vibrant when it's illuminated by a computer screen. There are also more colour options on-screen than off-screen.
- a HEX code is simply a translation of RGB used by designers and developers for web design. Your designer can convert RGB into a print-friendly colour format, although usually, your print service provider manages this conversion (which is preferable given the uniqueness of every tool and device). Nevertheless, there will persist a colour disparity between RGB and printed CMYK.

You need Canva or Photoshop to convert files. There is a free conversion from RGB to CMYK at www.rgb2cmyk.org



Print on demand sites

WHAT IS A PRINT ON DEMAND SITE?

Print on demand sites allow you to upload your designs and then place them on various products that the site sells. Each site will have a different range of products for example, stationery, homewares, fashion etc. POD shops are a great option if you want to start selling your pattern designs on products without having to handle shipping, production, and all that hassle of worrying about any of the stock or inventory. These sites pay around 10-20% of the sale price directly to the artist, with some sites even having higher rates. The great thing about print on demand sites is that they can be a great way of creating passive income. You can also upload the same design to across multiple sites, you don't have to have to worry about creating different designs for each site.

Spoonflower

Spoonflower is an online store where you can upload your own patterns or buy other artists' patterns on fabric, and wallpaper. A great way to get started is to participate in the bi monthly design competitions as placing among the top patterns will get you into the Spoonflower shop on ETSY, Amazon and Ebay. If anyone buys a product with your patterns on Spoonflower you'll earn a 10% commission on the sale price. Keep in mind that you are hoping that people will find your work amongst the 2 million designs that already exist!

Redbubble

Redbubble is one of the bigger shops with a large selection of products. We're talking clothing, notebooks, phone cases, even shower curtains. The cases for laptops and iPhones work especially great for pattern designs. It is easy to upload your pattern to the site, and then you can see what it would look like on a large selection of products.

Other POD companies to consider: Society 6 / Zazzle / Printful / Creative Market

Moving your Artwork to the digital space – Digitising your patterns

1. Using your Smartphone (Android / Apple)

- Choose a bright but indirect light source (e.g. near a sunny window or outside on a cloudy day).
- Keep your phone parallel to the artwork to avoid distortion – use the grid display for alignment.
- For larger pieces take multiple shots at a consistent distance (a phone tripod helps).
- Capture 4-5 photos refocusing each time and leave a margin around the artwork for editing.
- Transfer images to your computer via your phone's software Dropbox or Google Photos.

2. Flatbed Scanner

- Recommended models: Epson Perfection V600/V39 or Canon Lide 220.
- Scan at 300-1200 DPI (600 DPI is ideal for flexibility and crisp detail).
- Large artwork? Officeworks offers high-quality scans for ~50c per scan – ask for 600 DPI.

3. Professional Photography (DSLR or Outsourcing)

- Hiring a professional ensures high-resolution print-ready images but it's costly.
- Brisbane services: Print Room Editions or Arthouse Reproductions.
- Ideal for art prints pattern repeats and large-scale reproductions.



What to do with your finished artwork square tile

If you do not have a tech savvy person who can open Photoshop and edit the image for you (square crop, adjust, mend lines) then these directions are for you! Open the scanned file in the PHOTOS program on your PC.

Scanning & Uploading Your Artwork for Print

Step 1: Scan Your Image

- Use your scanner to scan your artwork into your PC at 300–600 DPI/PPI for the best results.
- Save the file as a JPEG or PNG.

Step 2: Find Microsoft Photos app

- On your PC, click the Start Menu (bottom left).
- Type Photos into the search bar.
- Select Photos from the options.

Step 3: Open and Crop Your Image

1. Open your scanned file in Microsoft Photos.
2. Click Edit Image.
3. Select the Crop & Rotate tool.
4. Choose the Square crop setting.
5. Make sure your whole artwork fits, then click Save a Copy.

Step 4: Adjust Colour and Brightness

1. Still in the Edit Image panel, click Adjustments.
2. Use the sliders to tweak:
 - Colour – brighten or enrich colours.
 - Brightness – lighten the background.
 - Contrast – sharpen edges and reduce dark shadows.
3. When happy, click Save.

Step 5: Clean up blemishes (Erase tool)

1. Still in the Edit Image panel, click the Erase tool.
2. Brush over the object, speck, or blemish you want to remove and release the mouse button — it will blend into the background.
3. For more control, you can disable “Auto apply” to fine-tune your selections or remove multiple objects at once. When you’re happy, click Save.

Step 6 (Optional): Advanced Editing

If you have Photoshop, Canva, or AI tools, you can:

- Remove the background entirely.
- Mend joins and tidy lines with erase/patch tools.

(Screenshot placeholder: “Photoshop showing background removal or line fix”)

🌟 End result: A neat, square, colour-balanced scan with blemishes removed, ready to use in your repeats or upload to Canva/POD sites.





Uploading to Print on Demand (POD) sites

Once you've saved your newly adjusted, square-cropped JPG, you can upload it to print-on-demand (POD) platforms like Next State Print, Redbubble, or Spoonflower. Each platform works a little differently, but here's how to get started:

Uploading to Next State Print

www.nextstateprint.com

1. Go to Menu → Custom Printing → Upload File.
2. Upload your square JPG file.
3. Adjust Image Scale → Ensure PPI is 150 or above.
4. Arrangement → Select Grid Repeat.
5. Choose Your Cut → Select Linear Meter.
6. Select Fabric → Pick your desired fabric.
7. Set Quantity & Price → Minimum order is 1 metre.

Uploading to Redbubble

www.redbubble.com

1. Create an account (if you haven't already).
2. Go to Add New Work → Upload your JPG file.
3. Name your work & add tags (especially if you want to sell it).
4. Choose Product → Click EDIT to adjust your design.
5. In EDIT Mode:
 - Adjust the scale of your design.
 - Open the Choose Pattern dropdown → Select Regular Grid.
6. Apply changes.
7. Enable Products → Turn on any items you want to sell (mugs, tote bags, stationery, etc.).
8. Scroll to the bottom, check the boxes, and click SAVE.

Now your design is live and can be sold worldwide! 🎨✨

Uploading to Spoonflower

www.spoonflower.com

1. Create a free account.
2. Go to Design → Upload Your Design.
3. Upload your square JPG file (recommended at least 150 DPI).
4. Select the fabric, wallpaper, or home decor product you want to preview.
5. Adjust the repeat type → options include Basic, Half-Drop, Mirror, or Center.
6. Choose scale → default is small; increase/decrease depending on your pattern.
7. Order a test swatch before making your design public (required before you can sell).
8. Once approved, you can sell your design in the Spoonflower marketplace.

🌟 Tip: Other POD platforms like Society6, Contrado and Zazzle also accept uploaded artwork, so once you've got your square JPG file, you can easily expand your designs onto multiple platforms.





Quick go-to guide of SPD terms

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Flatbed Scanner | Like a modern day copy machine that digitizes analog images into digital files for use on your computer. |
| Adobe Photoshop | Powerful computer software made by Adobe which allows you to manipulate art, photos, and text into collages, repeats, and more. |
| Raster Image | An image that is made up of tiny dots (pixels). Best for detailed artwork, created in Photoshop. |
| Vector Image | An image that is made up of curves, lines, and colour fills (paths) being scalable, having crisp edges and created in Adobe Illustrator. |
| Pixels | The tiny dots that form a raster image. |
| Resolution | The measurement of an image's pixel density. The higher the resolution, the more pixels and better quality it has. |
| Scale | The measurement of an image's dimensions (2x2", 5x7", 8x10" etc). |
| DPI (or PPI): | Dots per inch (or pixels per inch). This is the value used to measure an image's resolution. |
| RGB | Refers to the primary colors of light used in monitors (red, blue & green). |
| CMYK | Refers to the primary colors of pigment in 4-color printing (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black). |
| JPEG | A popular graphics file type that offers compression without a substantial loss in quality. These files take up less room on your computer. For photos and images and supported by all devices. |
| TIFF | A larger graphic file than a JPEG that offers high quality with zero compression. These types of files take up more room on your computer. |
| PNG | A popular web graphics file that offers compression with zero loss in quality. These types of files take up more room on your computer but also offer transparent backgrounds. Best used for logos, icons, elements that need transparent surrounds. Great for web but not good for print |
| Motif | A single design element within a pattern. |
| Exclusive vs Non-Exclusive License | Exclusive (sold to one client only), Non-Exclusive (can be sold to multiple clients). |

CANVA CLASS ON SKILLSHARE:

Go to Rachael's instagram, click on bio, follow link to class



Businesses we use in our Surface Pattern Design businesses

A BIG THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES FOR SUPPORTING OUR
PAINTING TO PATTERN ART RETREATS:

Winsor & Newton Australia (Watercolours) – www.winsornewton.com

Jasco Australia (art supplies) – www.jasco.com.au/

Organic Print Studio (tea towels)– www.organicprintstudio.com.au

Print Together (stationary) – www.printtogether.com.au/

Bright Star Stickers (stickers) – www.brightstarprints.com.au/

Eckersley's (art supplies) – www.eckersleys.com.au/

Life of Colour (Acrylic Paint Pens) – www.lifeofcolourproducts.com

BUSINESS WE USE & RECOMMEND IN OUR SPD BUSINESS:

Next State Printing (Melb) – www.nextstateprint.com

Leftbank Art Group – www.leftbankartgroup.com.au

Organic Print Studio – www.organicprintstudio.com.au

The Print Bar (Brisbane) – www.theprintbar.com

Meriton – Homewares fabric printing – www.mereton.com.au

Officeworks – Print & Copy for scanning artworks

APPLIK Digital Fabric Printing – www.applik.com.au

Streets Imaging (West End) Fine Art printing & scanning –
www.streetsimaging.com.au

Arthouse Reproductions – Fine Art printing & scanning –
www.arthousehq.com

Printroom Editions – www.printroomeditions.com.au

Thank you so much for joining us!

Please feel free to reach out & keep us up to date with your journey into Surface Pattern Design! ✨ We hope this list helps you continue your surface pattern journey long after the retreat. Supporting these businesses means supporting fellow creatives, printers and makers who help bring art into the world.