

In February 2020, we (Foundation Press) started a pattern making project with the participants at The Comfrey Project. Our ambition was to support participants to design printed patterns that visually told a story unique to them. We started the process with a set of drawing exercises, visualising different memories and experiences - for example thinking about objects that were important to us, the specific foods we love or places that meant a lot to us. From there, we used a number of collage and drawing processes to remix and turn specific personal references into repeat pattern designs. Here are a selection of 5 different pattern samples made by Yusuf, Yvette, Reza, Ilyas and Florence - hidden within them are their own stories.

ILYAS

I began by drawing an alphabet made up of figures. I picked natural figures, for example animals and floral plants. I was thinking about the beginnings of people making art and the beginnings of written languages. I picked things to represent nature and life. The meaning of life is hidden in colours and patterns. Symbols from primitive communal societies became a part of life and made a meaning of life, without them we would not have done this artwork now ;)



YUSUF

I started to draw some mathematical symbols, different shapes, bits of geometry or symbols. I have taught maths for a long time and since coming to the UK I have really missed teaching. I remember really well the different classrooms where I have worked, especially my class at Haji Kamal High School in Dushanbe, the capital city of Tajikistan. I use maths as a way to communicate and I love being able to help prepare young people for a good future. I have recently been able to start teaching again by doing some online tutoring for the children of friends.



FLORENCE

Florence had a list of recipes that she liked to make with mangoes. She spoke about seeing them growing in trees and started off making mango collages.

REZA

I began by thinking about my memories of the rice fields where I used to live, near the Caspian Sea in the north of Iran. I really remember this landscape, the way it changed with the seasons and even the smell of harvest time each September. These days, I spend most of my time working in the gardens at The Comfrey Project, both in Gateshead and in Walkergate. My pattern features magnified images of rice as well as other grains, seeds and foods. Recently in the gardens at The Comfrey Project, we have grown plants including sweetcorn, squashes, sunflowers, beans and garlic - I find that gardening and working with plants connects me with a feeling of home and calm.



YVETTE

The image which inspired my pattern was a memory of a gold earring given to me by my mother when I got married in 1998, in Kinshasa, the capital city of Democratic Republic of Congo. The earring belonged to my mother and I was very moved when she passed it onto me at my wedding. For various reasons, I do not have this earring anymore so to make my pattern I had to use an image of different gold earring taken from a catalogue, but when I want to remember my mother I often think about this gift from her.

