

# Natures Patterns

## How to use Natures natural patterns to inspire artistic direction

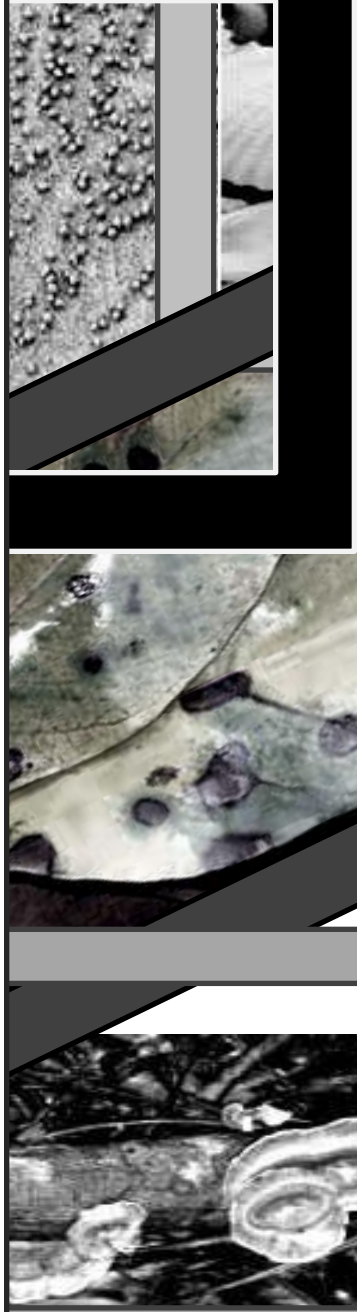
By Karen Elzinga

Ever started to create and that's as far as you got? Sometimes ideas are hard to come by but not if you get a little closer to nature.

Nature has an abundance of created patterns that you can use, if you understand how to use them. This blog post lesson takes a look at natural occurring patterns and how to utilize what is in front of you.



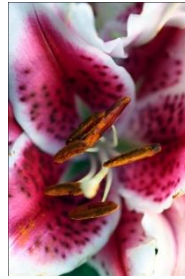
All created using natures pattern



# Research -Natures natural patterning



Mould and algae on rocks at the beach make for interesting and somewhat colourful arrays of patterning



You don't have to look past flowers to see naturally occurring patterns, from the petals through to their natural environment pattern is everywhere.



Patterns are not only for human enjoyment, parrots get excited by seeing their favourite tree patterns to, it's how they find their food source.



Spiders produce amazing patterns not only on their bodies but with their brilliant patterned webs

Nature has an abundance of pattern, everywhere you look whether you live coastal or hinterland, city or country, it is literally everywhere. I decided to go for several walks through the rain forest areas, to the beach, through the national parks and that is where I photographed most of these patterned photos.

The trick to utilizing nature's patterns successfully is to think through a microscope, so what does that mean. Well it means sometimes the true pattern is in the fine print. For example if you're looking at a tree's leaves for inspiration, take just one leaf off and look at the details of it, place a light behind it and look at the skeleton inside the leaf, it's a very complex pattern. You need to think outside the box, look for what makes up the bigger picture. A flower may be pretty but a petal maybe where you find your pattern.

**Lets have a look at some more examples.**

# Project 1, Exercise 1 -Natures natural patterning



Even the simplest details on tree bark or palm fronds can create detailed patterns when looked at close up.



When strangler vines invade host trees, amazing patterns can be produced



This could almost be classed as camouflage patterning or army print, maybe this is where the famous print was discovered!



This was amazing to find, caterpillars crossing a Noosa National park walk way, they were following each other in a straight line, there must have been hundreds of them, the pattern on their bodies were brilliant but the simplicity of the pattern of them walking across this path is awesome. Yes some didn't make it, stood on by people!



Simple shrubs with in a rocky outcrop can cause interesting patterning



I found this mushroom patterning on a fallen tree to be amazing

# Natures natural patterning



Shell patterning is wonderful, and so tactile, you not only see it, you can feel the patterns also



Where rocks meet the ocean numerous patterning can be found, patterns that may be continually changing from year to year



Water falls create interesting patterns through landscapes.



This is interesting because their is not only mould patterning on the tree bark but the roots act as a pattern also



The water falling from a large waterfall creates interesting busy patterning



I find tree bark really interesting because their individual patterning are as unique as finger prints



I found these fallen decaying leaves on the rain forest floor, the natural decaying pattern and colour is gorgeous



How could you go past the natural patterns made by the humble sand crabs at the beach



Fire creates a natural patterning that can be mesmerising to watch as the pattern is fast changing



Rock placement can bring about pattern just by being close together in clumps

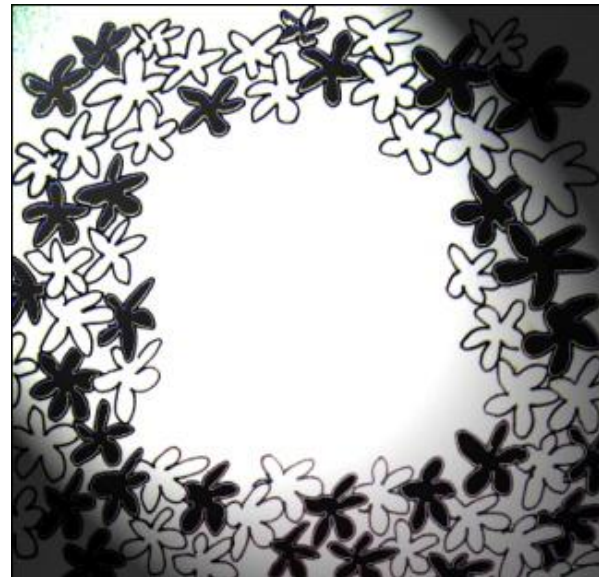
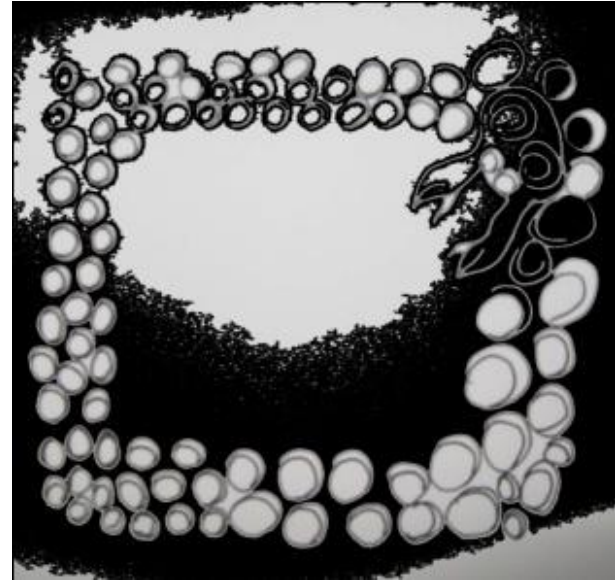
## Turning Nature into Design

Okay so you get the idea, so how do we take nature and put it into design. Well you take a photo, your picture can't move so neither can your pattern, it makes life a little easier so you can transfer that picture or part of your picture to paper.

Your not looking to transfer what you see to your paper, this is not an exercise in copy and paste, it is about finding the pattern in what you see and creating an artwork from it, being inspired by the pattern.

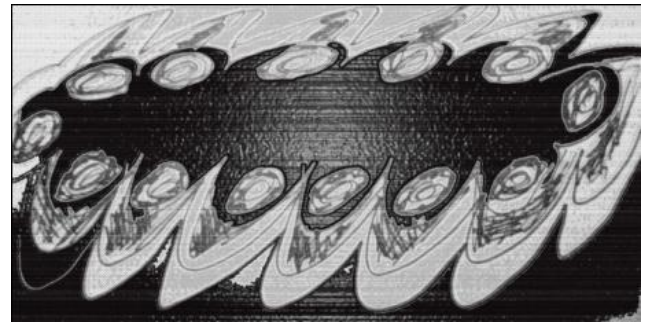
**Let's have a look at some of my examples**

Take a picture and turning it into a new artwork inspired by your picture





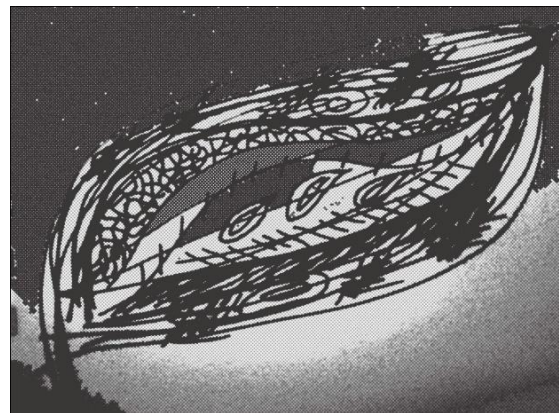
Its really easy to be inspired by something that is in front of you and that you have prepared well like taking a photo and printing it out of your subject, I like to turn the image black and white, I think patterns pop a little more and it's like filtering out all the noise, you cant get as distracted.







Remember try not to copy what you see use it to find what you don't see

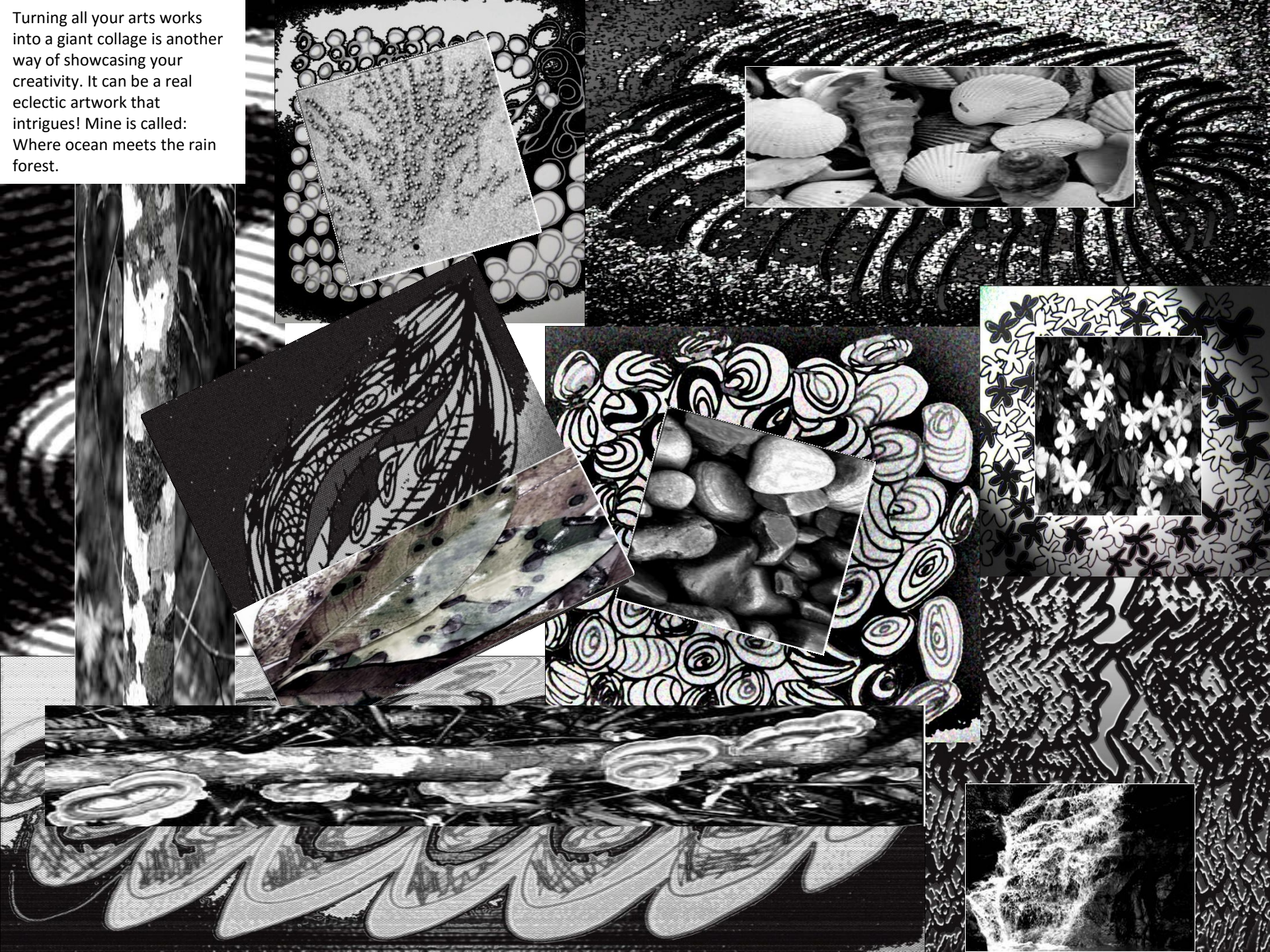




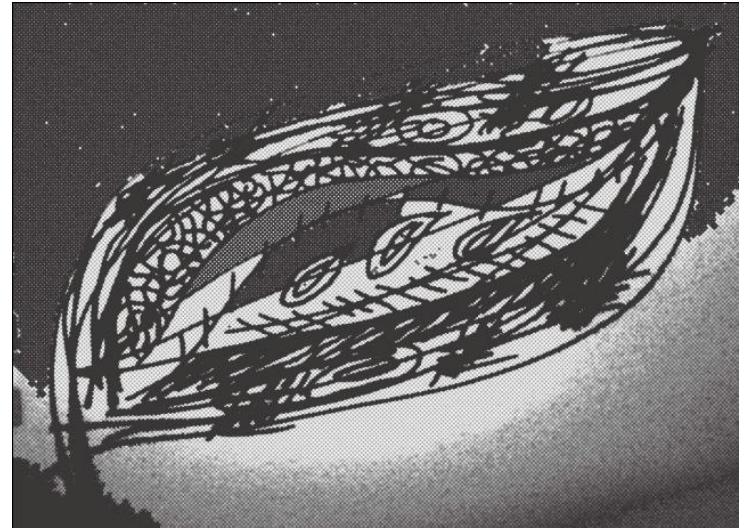
Sometimes using programs such as photoshop and playing around with various filters can add new dimensions to simple drawings such as these two examples. Basic outdated photoshop programs are free on the web, so download one and play around with even grey lead drawings to see what the effects are. These drawings were done using black felt tip pens or drawing pens.



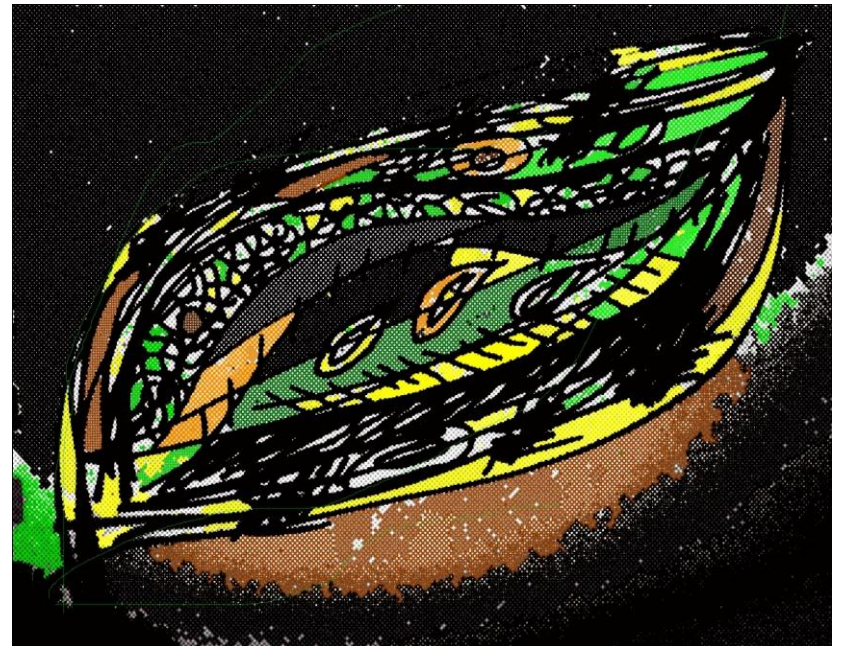
Turning all your arts works into a giant collage is another way of showcasing your creativity. It can be a real eclectic artwork that intrigues! Mine is called: Where ocean meets the rain forest.



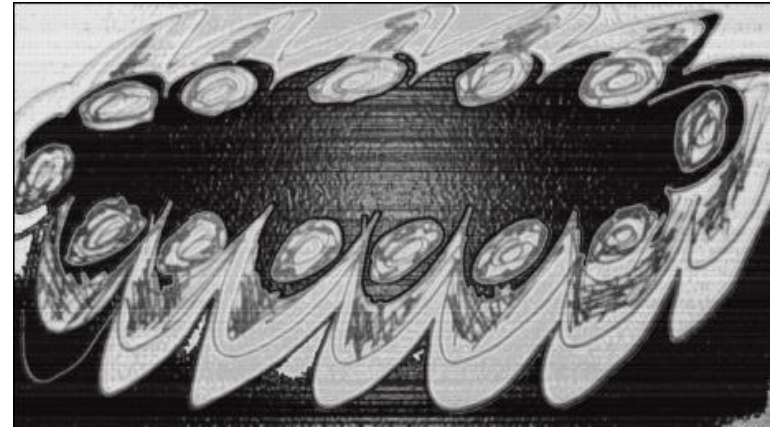
## Turning from B/W into colour



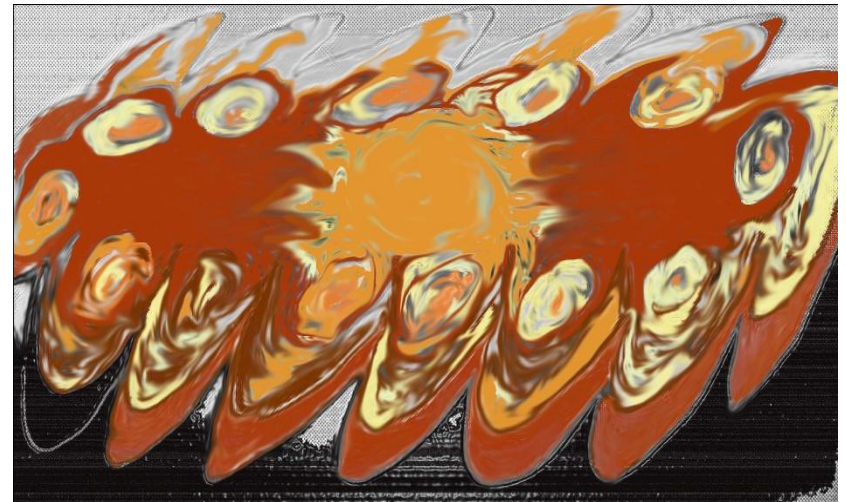
Every professional artist is trained in resolving their work, what that means is even with a finished work they need to devise and understand how it could have been better, so next time it is. It is how artists continue to improve. So with that in mind we move to colour, you could use pencils, coloured marker pens, paint, or even colour with photoshop as I have done here below.



# Turning from B/W into colour

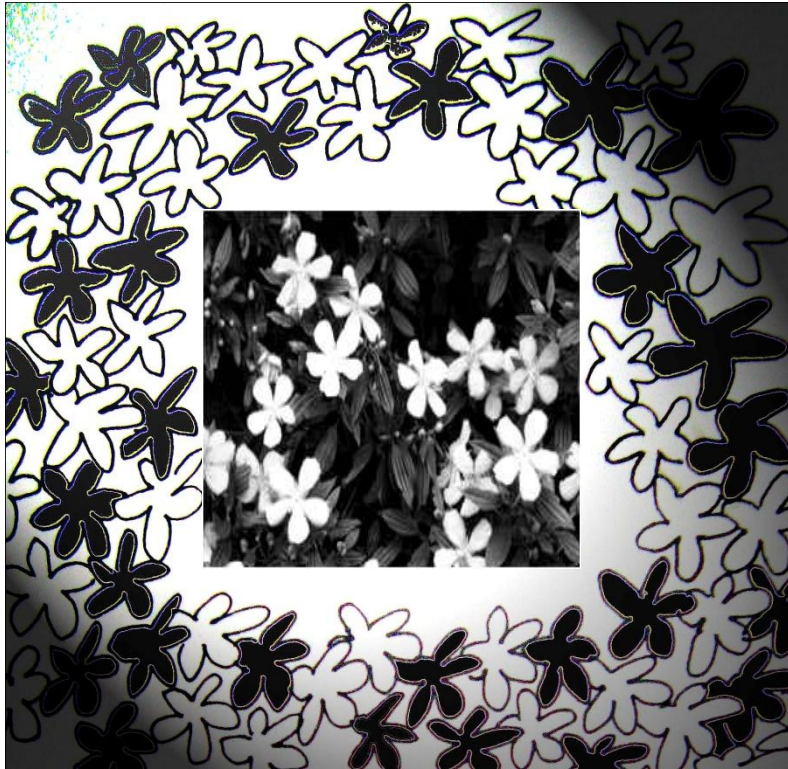


Again I used the same black and white image and turned it to colour with the aid of the computer, this time I decided to use the paint function and the smudge tool in photo shop to get the effect of the mushrooms, but again use what ever colouring tools you have or are comfortable using.



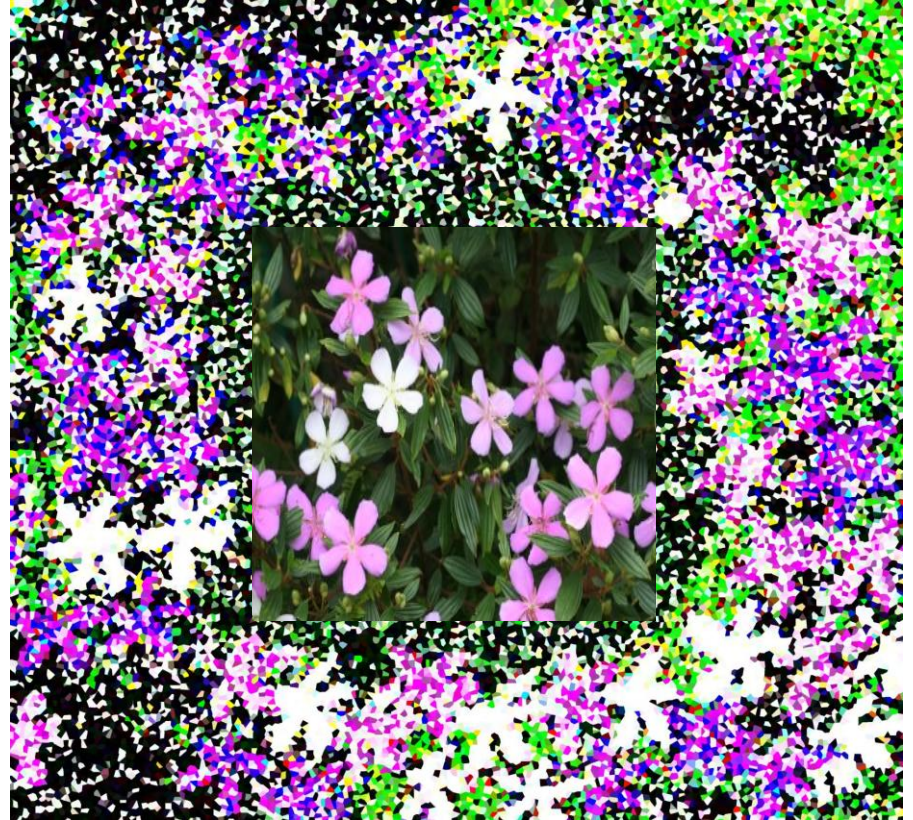
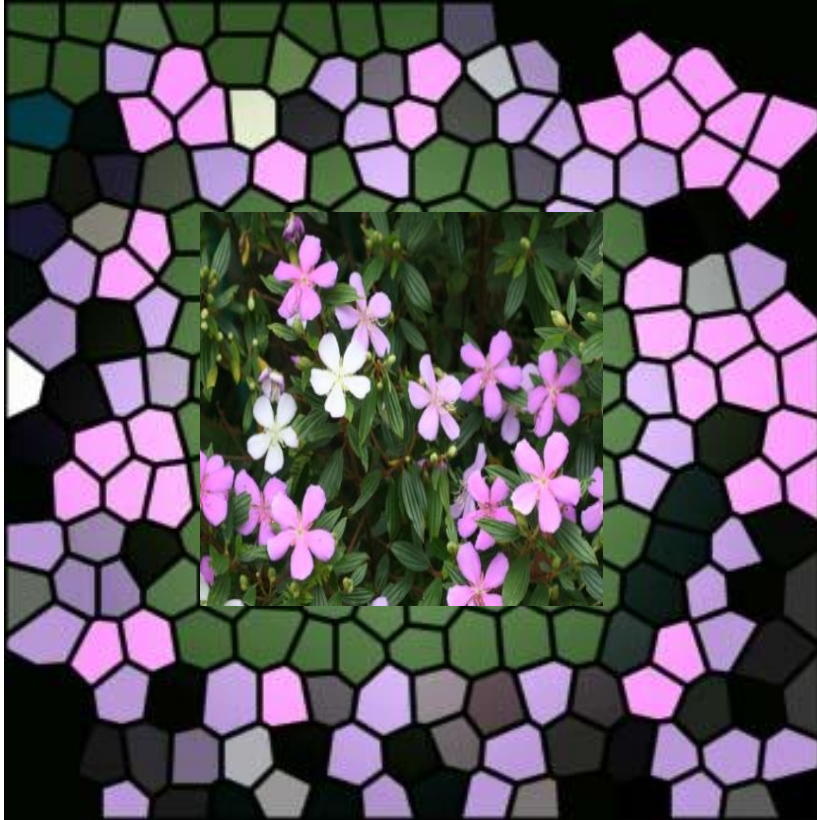
# Turning from B/W into colour

This time I decided to use photo shop paint to add colour to the image then transformed it by using a variety of different effects, I really liked this one, it gave back a feeling of having the leaves with the flowers that are in the original photograph.



# Using Photoshop to transform images

I have to say, I really enjoyed taking these images as far as I could from their original state, you can do this even on the basic free photoshop program, there are literally thousands of ways this flower work could have turned out, it's just about experimentation and what sort of style you are looking for . Adobe photoshop is definitely worth trying out, especially if you wish to be an artist today. Just look how far we have come from a humble flower bush in the rain forest.



# Let's go wild

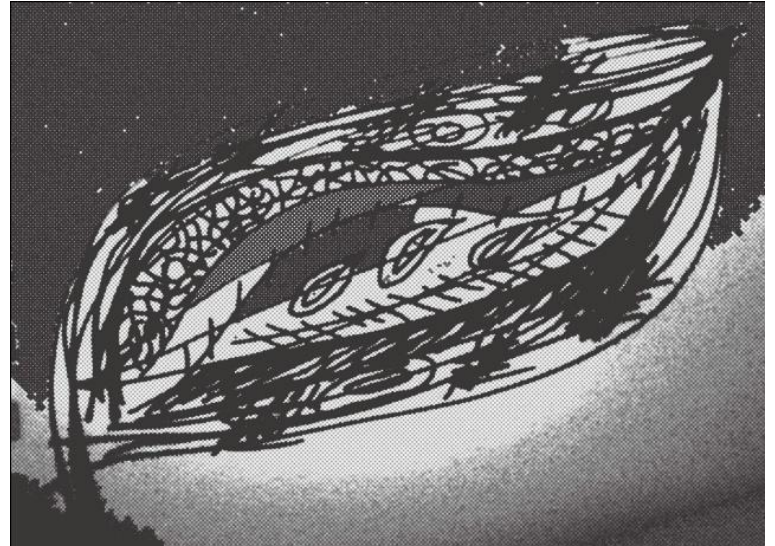
Utilizing different mediums to extend your design even further.

Thanks for sticking around phew.... Okay so now it's time to knock up your design to the next stage of design.

Pick an image...your favourite one, because we are going to create in with real life materials, it can be anything, wool, fabric, craft bits and pieces, paper, beads, bark, whatever you think fits with what your design is.

Mapping out your ideas can help to keep to keep your design on track and keep your ideas from overwhelming you.

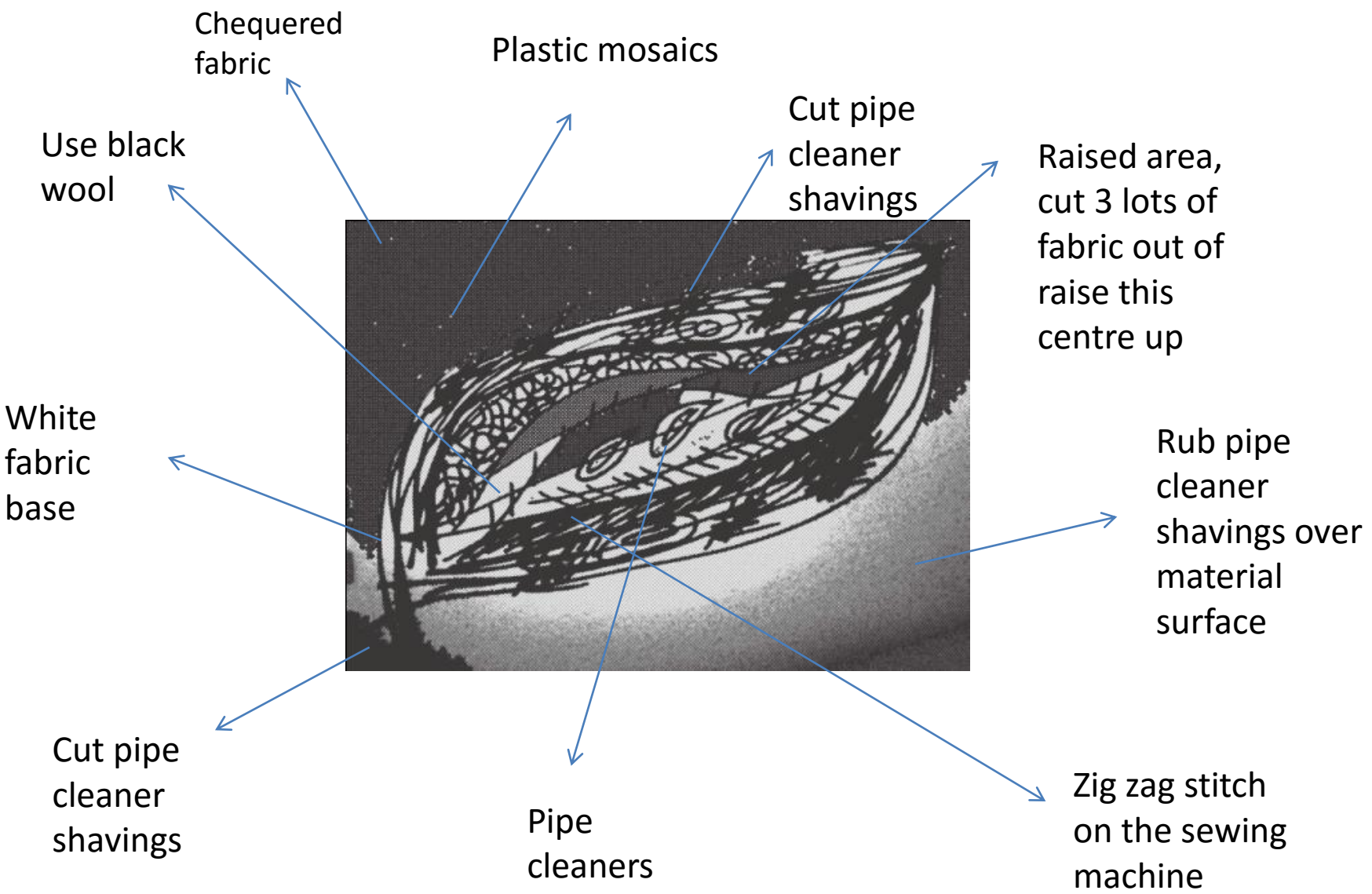
**Next I'll show you an example of a map of materials**



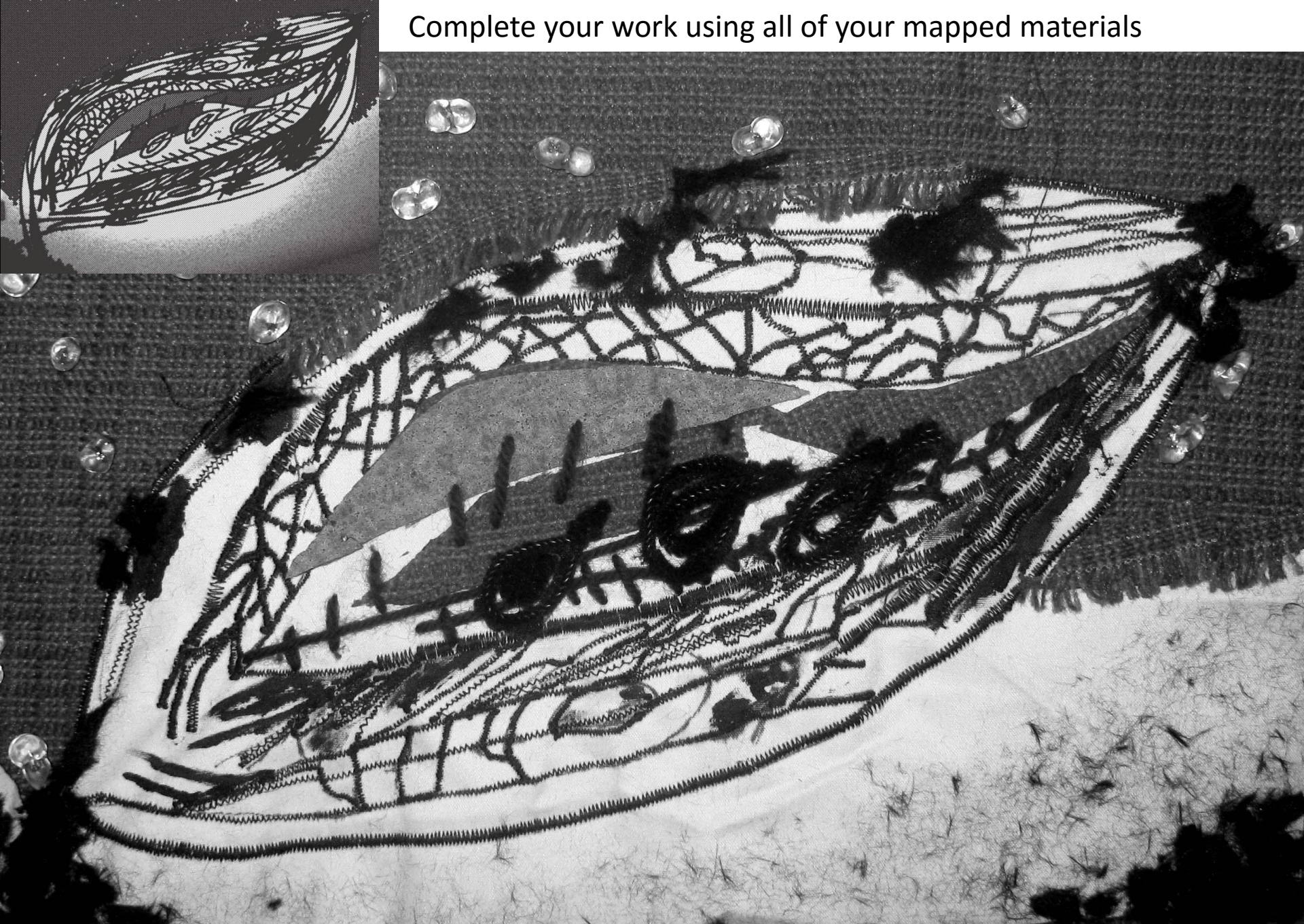
I'm going to use this image as my example to work with.



Planning stage – Think about what materials your going to use for each part of your design.

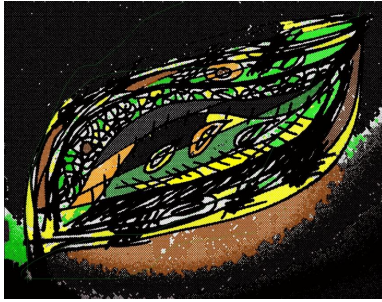


Complete your work using all of your mapped materials

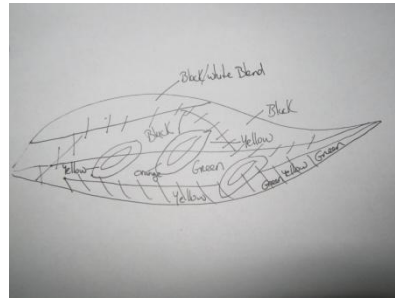


This lonely leaf from humble beginnings is now a 'textile' art work

Let's try another example – if you have access to a sewing machine



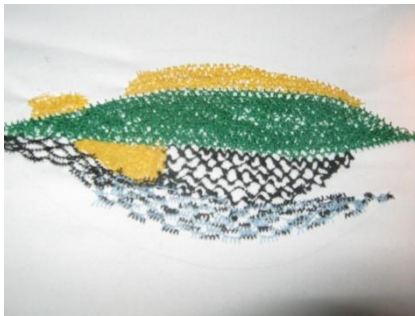
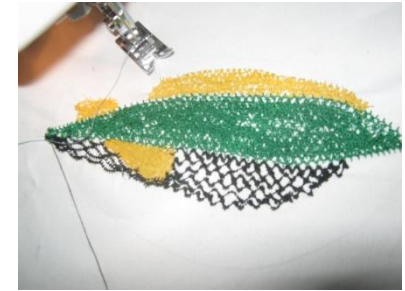
Original image



I decided to take the centre part of the image to embellish



I tried as many different stitches as I could



Why not try and recreate your image with a sewing machine using different settings and thread colours or even by hand with a needle and thread.

Final work

Well as you can see this has been another way of working and being inspired by nature's patterns, but why stop here you could paint it, pastel it, build it in 3D, the list really is endless.



My finished work, and with the different stitches came different textures.

I hope you have enjoyed learning about patterns from nature, if you have any ideas or new lessons please email me at [elzingacollective@outlook.com.au](mailto:elzingacollective@outlook.com.au).

This has been another blog post lesson by Karen Elzinga for Elzinga Collective.



*elzinga*  *collective*



*\* Eccentric Fashion & Accessories \* Original Art \* Eclectic Oddities \**

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