

## THE BEAUTY OF KOLAMS

Every day, before sunrise and sunset, women in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu and Tamil women in Sri Lanka create patterns known as kolams in front of their houses. Trickling white powder between their fingers, they make a grid of dots.

Then, with graceful, rhythmic hand movements, they draw a line that twists and turns around the dots or joins one dot to another to form a beautiful pattern.

The kolam is a woman's offering to the many Hindu gods and goddesses, in return for the well-being of her family and community. The tradition is passed down from mother to daughter, with each generation bringing its own creative style.

Kolam interact with and reflect their surroundings. During celebrations, the designs are increased in size and detail to complement the joyful atmosphere, but at times of mourning they disappear completely. Though kolam is chiefly a Hindu tradition performed by women, sometimes boys, men and people of other faiths participate in the drawing at special festivals.

Patterns related to kolams are created in many parts of India. They vary from region to region and are named differently in the local languages. International travel and migration between South Asia and other parts of the world is making the kolam tradition available to more and more people.

The traditional kolam, hand-drawn in rice powder, is always evolving. Kolam are sketched in notebooks or printed and sold in leaflets, to be transferred onto streets and altars. Different materials, shapes and tools are used to create the designs that bring beauty to their environment and make houses into homes.

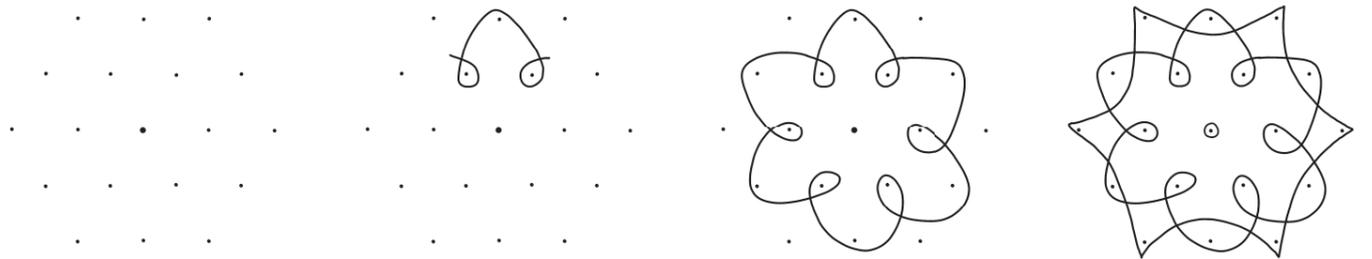
New, complex patterns and styles are constantly being invented, but it is the grid of dots that holds these variations together.

by Dr Anna Laine Ph.D

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The two main types of kolam are shown in this book – kambi kolam, where the lines are drawn around the dots, and pulli kolam, where the lines are drawn from dot to dot. There are also some designs where the two forms are combined.

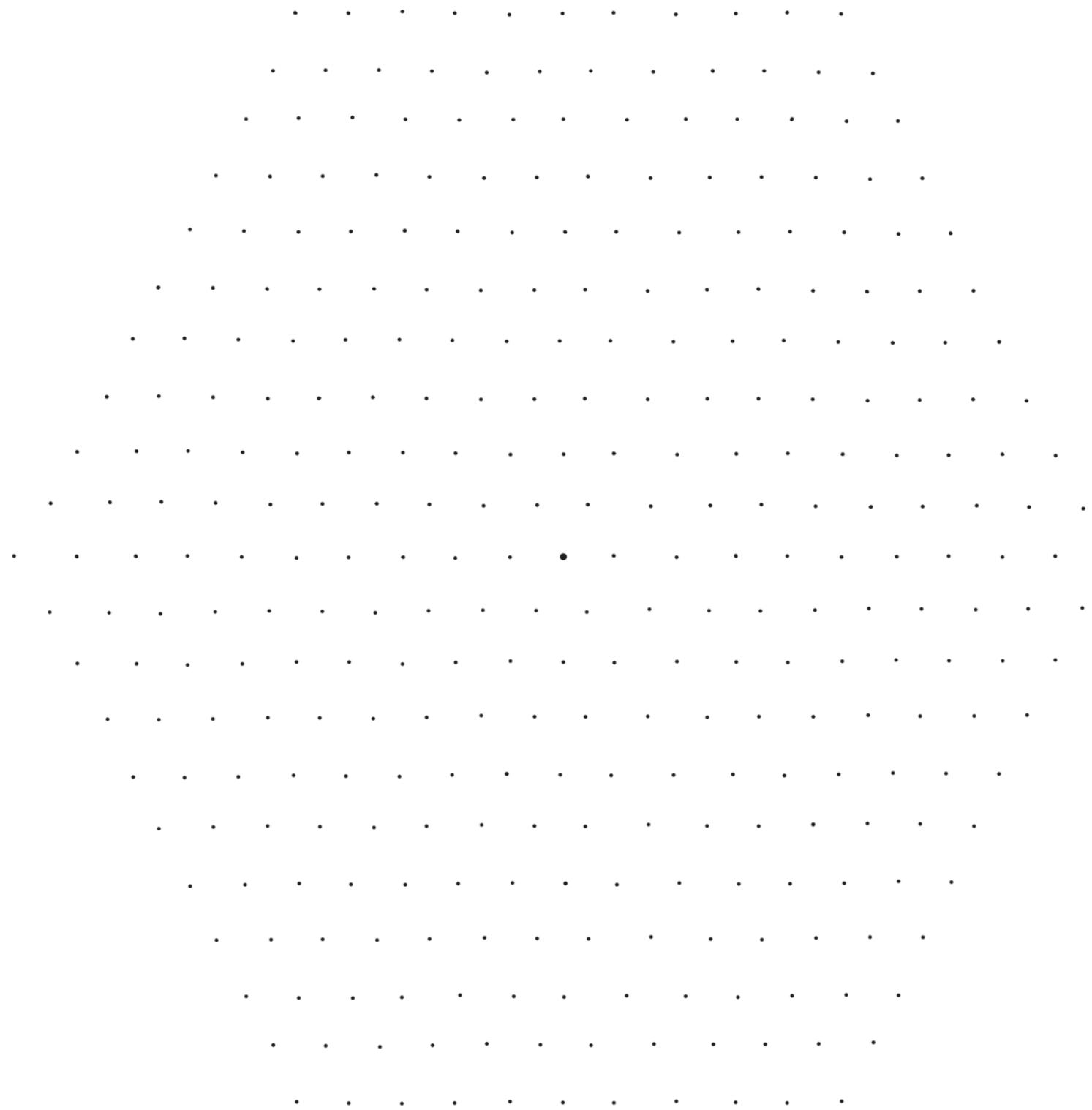
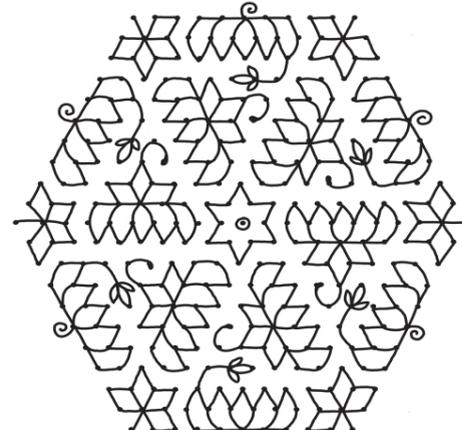
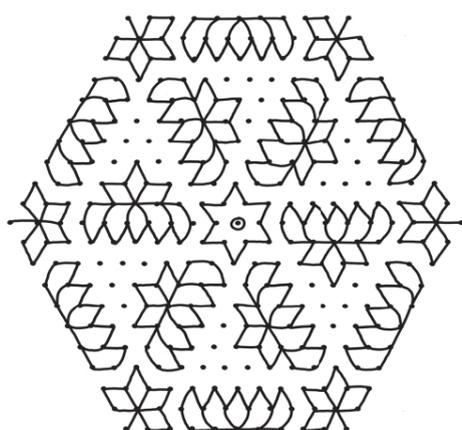
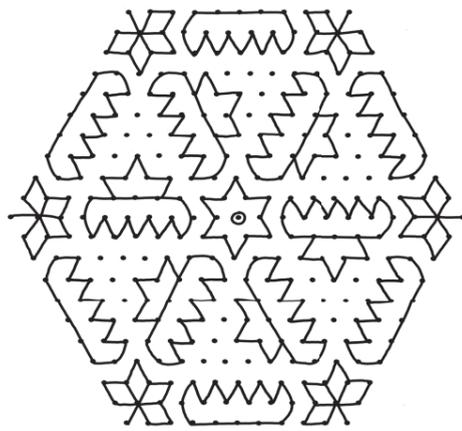
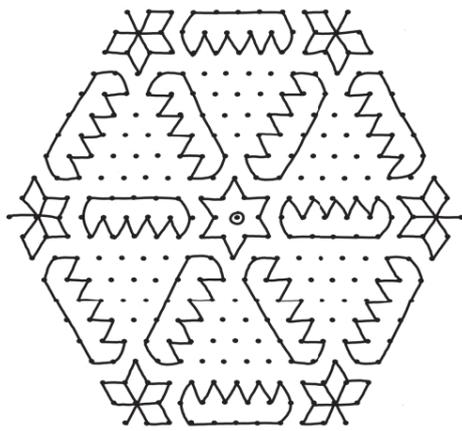
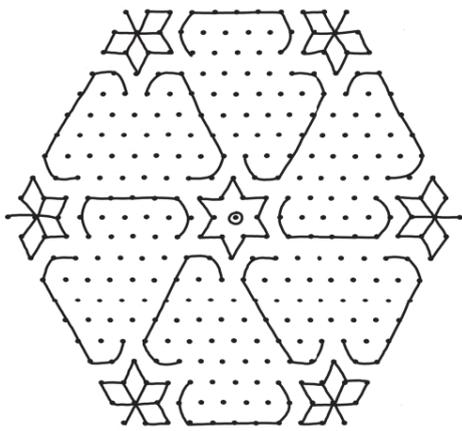
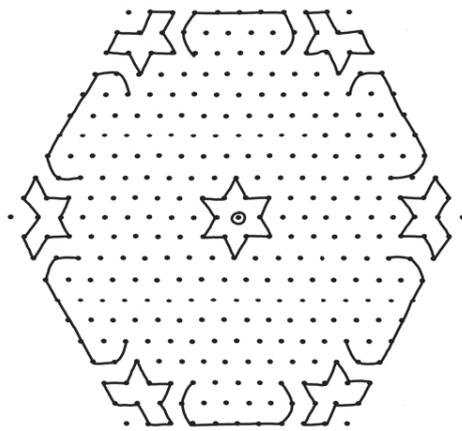
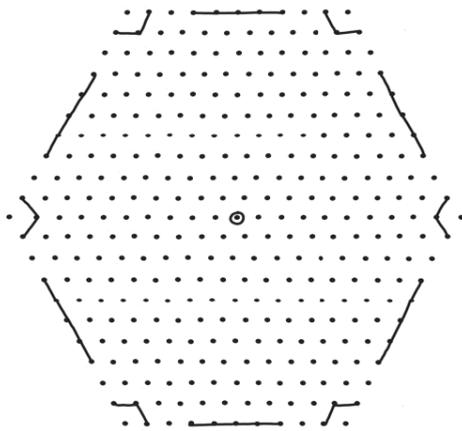
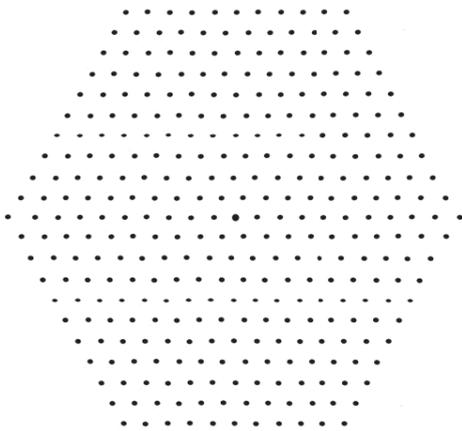
Follow the step-by-step instructions to create your own kolam on the empty grid or grids of dots provided. At every stage of a pattern the new details to add are shown in blue line, and the stages that have been completed are shown in black. The final step shows what your completed kolam will look like. Here's an example:

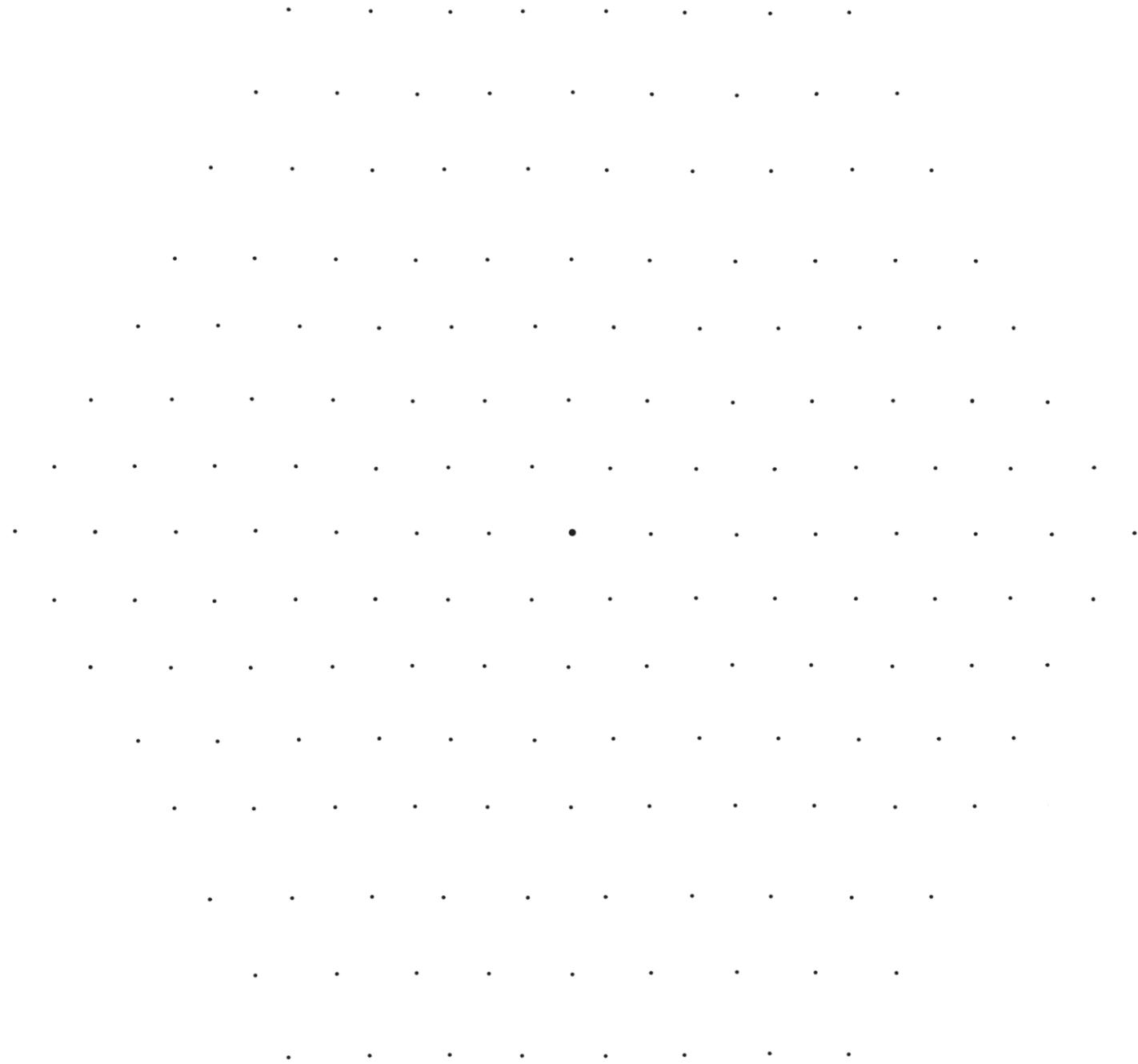
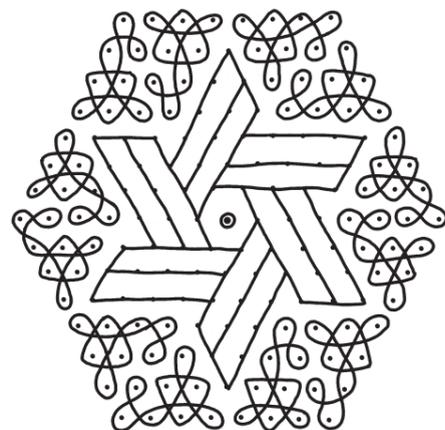
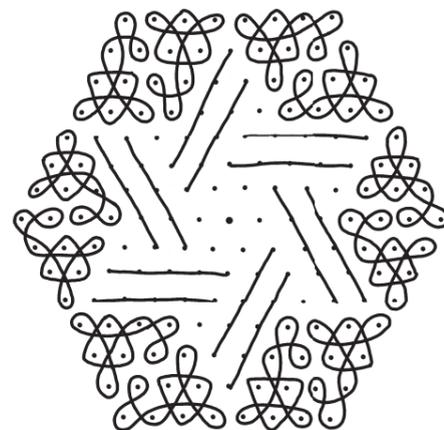
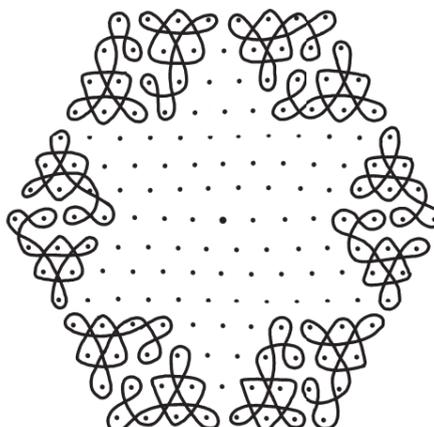
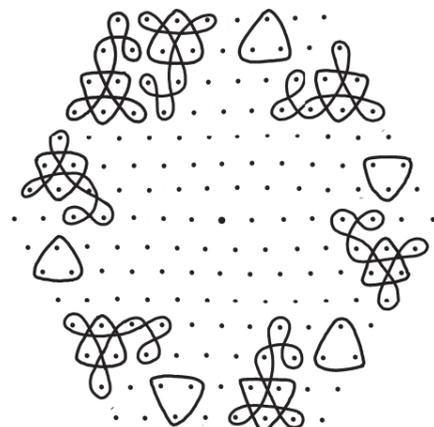
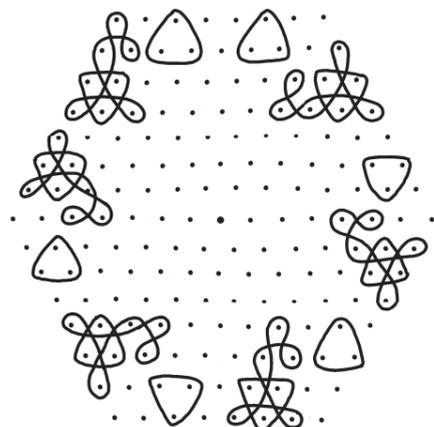
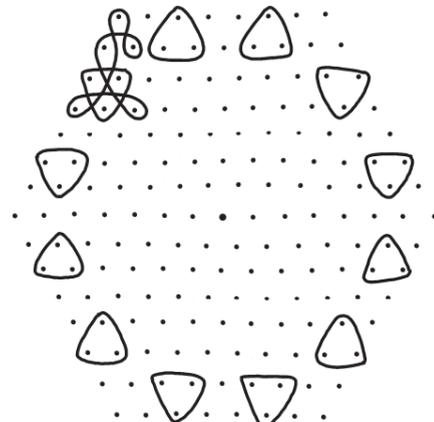
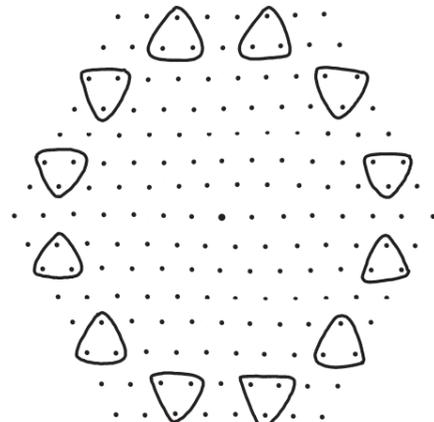
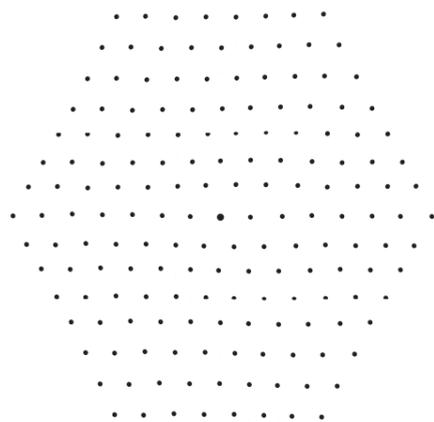


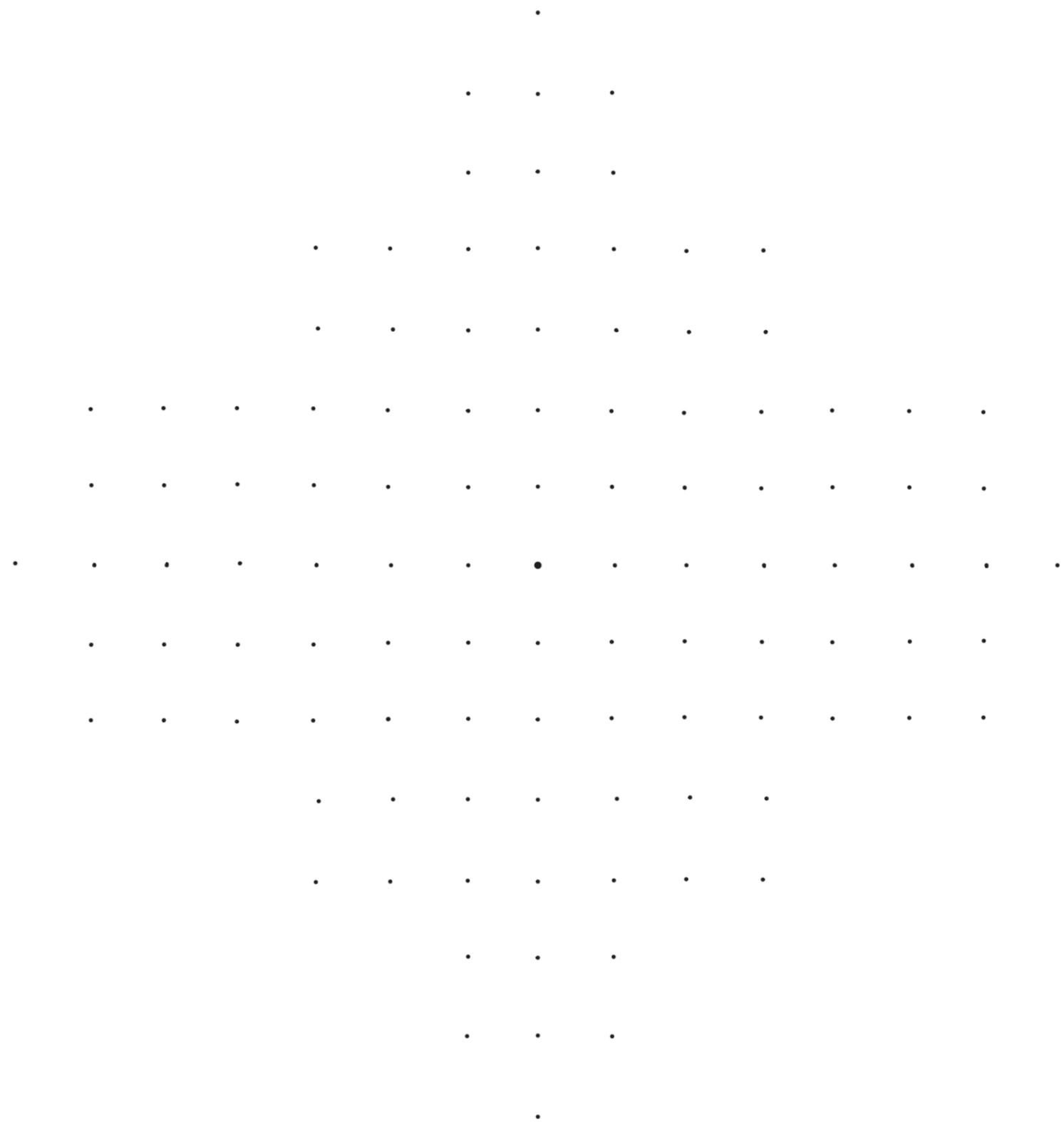
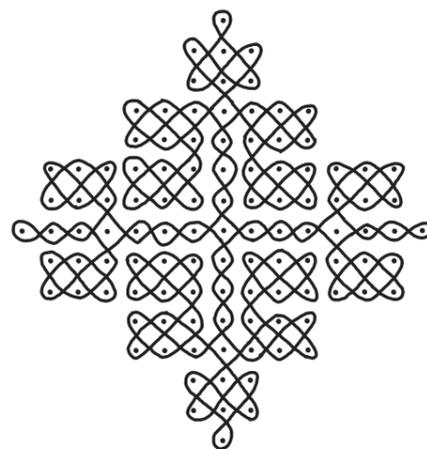
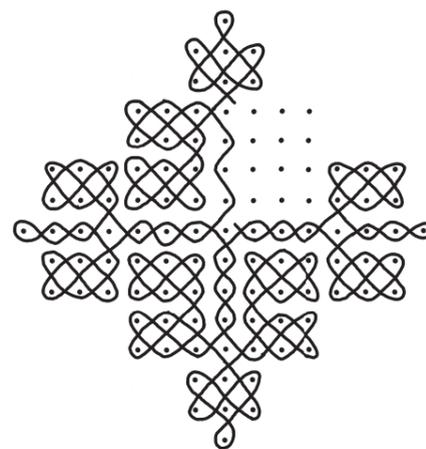
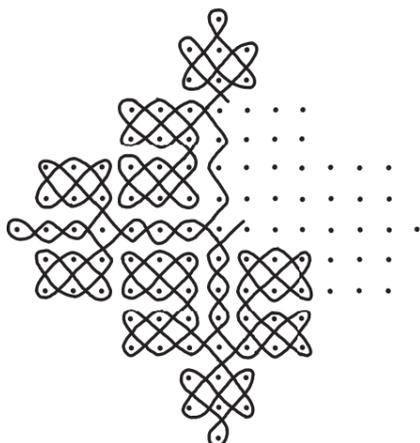
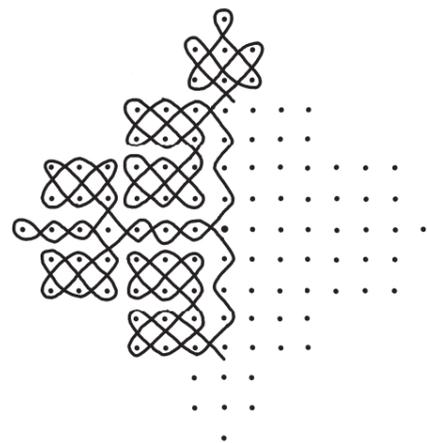
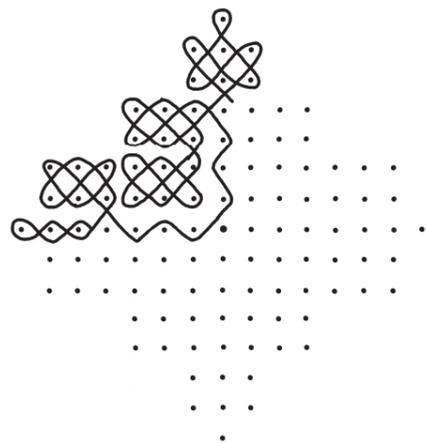
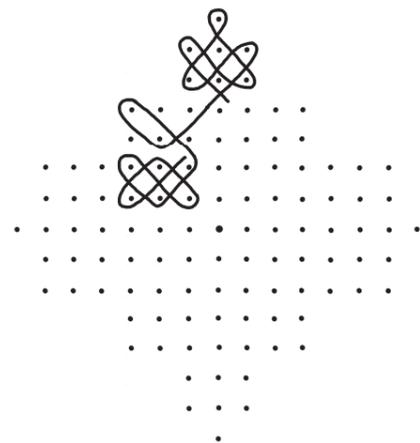
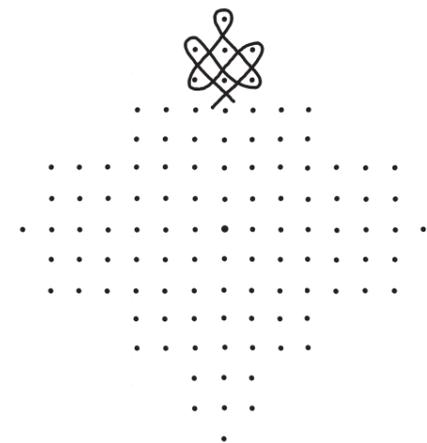
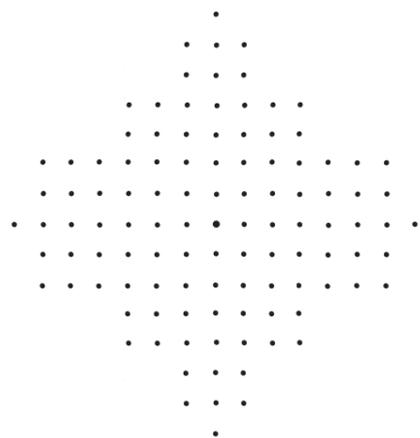
The designs increase in complexity as you work through the book. The first pages help you practise the rhythm and techniques of kolam and build your confidence. The designs of intermediate complexity have four stages, and the large, advanced designs have up to eight.

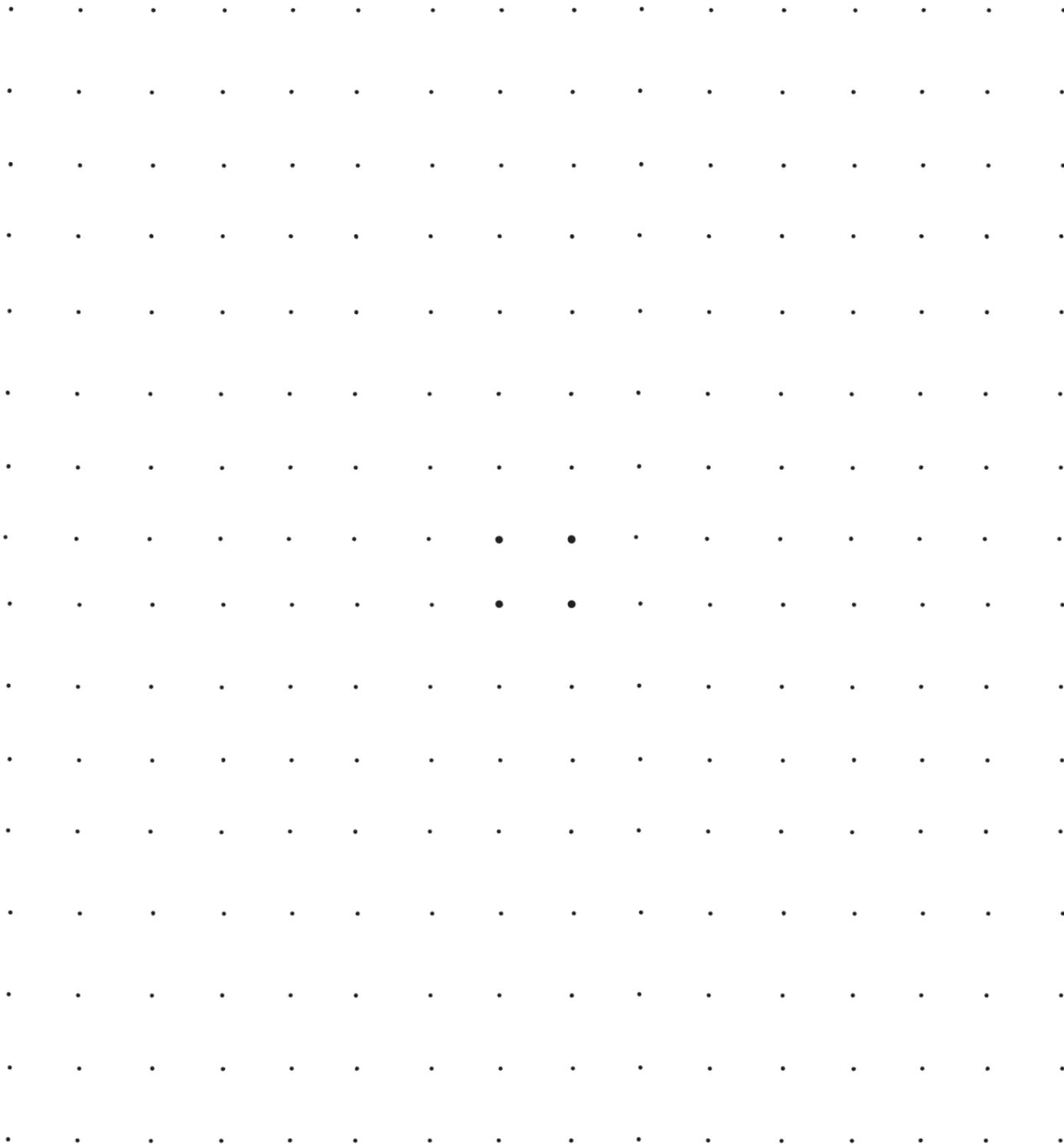
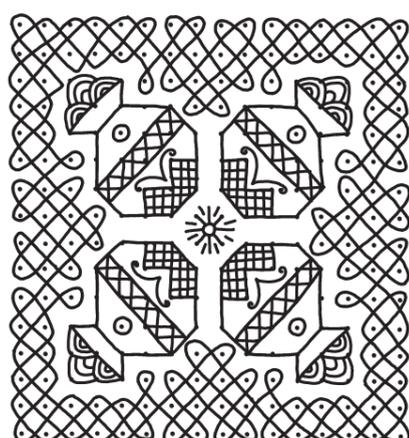
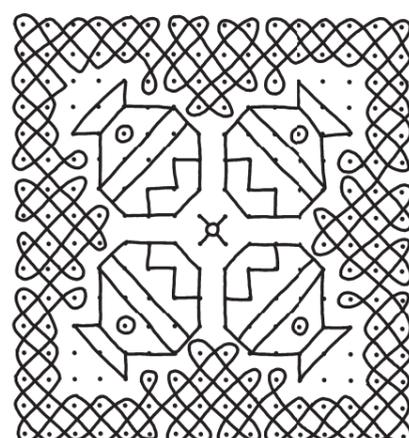
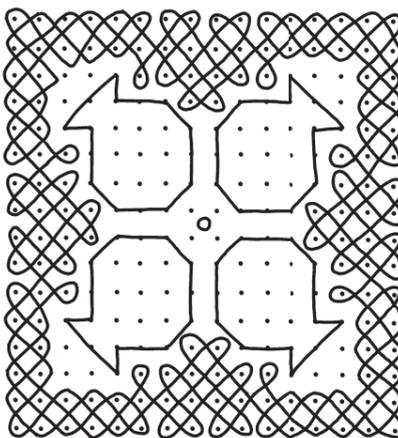
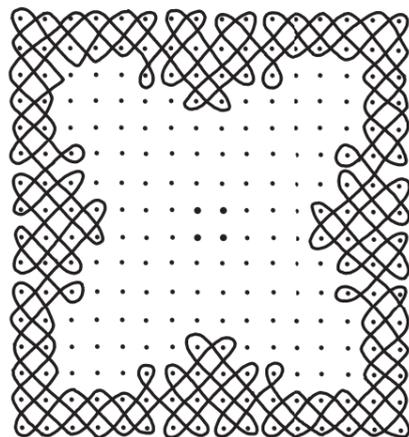
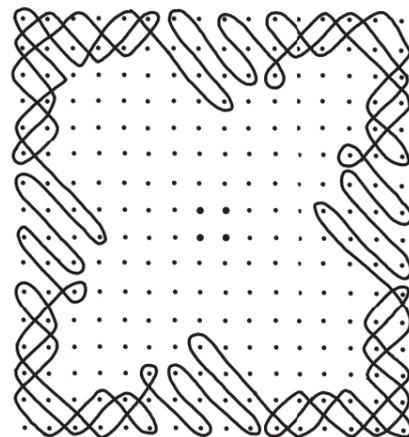
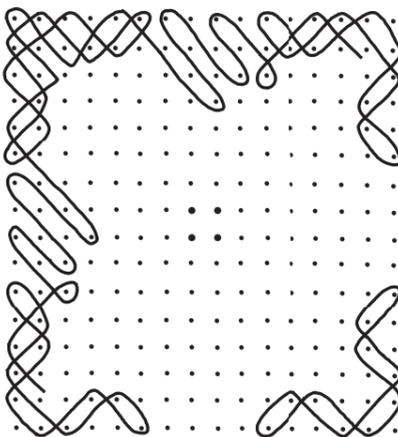
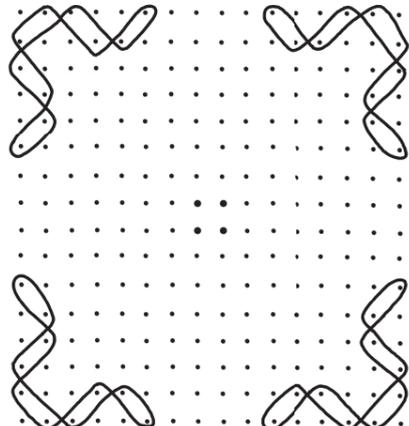
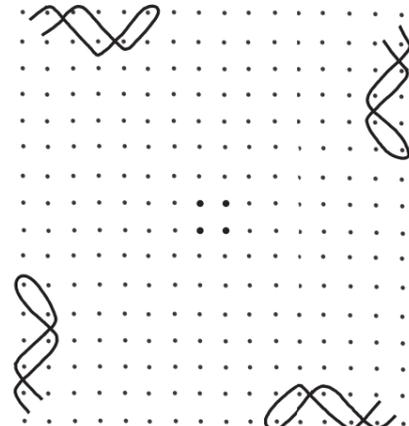
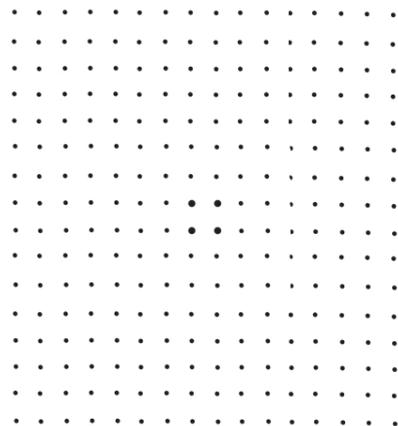
The central dots in each grid are bold to give you a point of reference. For beginner and intermediate designs, two empty grids of dots are provided. You could use a pencil to draw first and then go over your line in pen. Why not complete different parts of the design with different colours or colour the areas in? This approach is popular with Tamil women, who use multi-coloured powders to add flair to their creations.

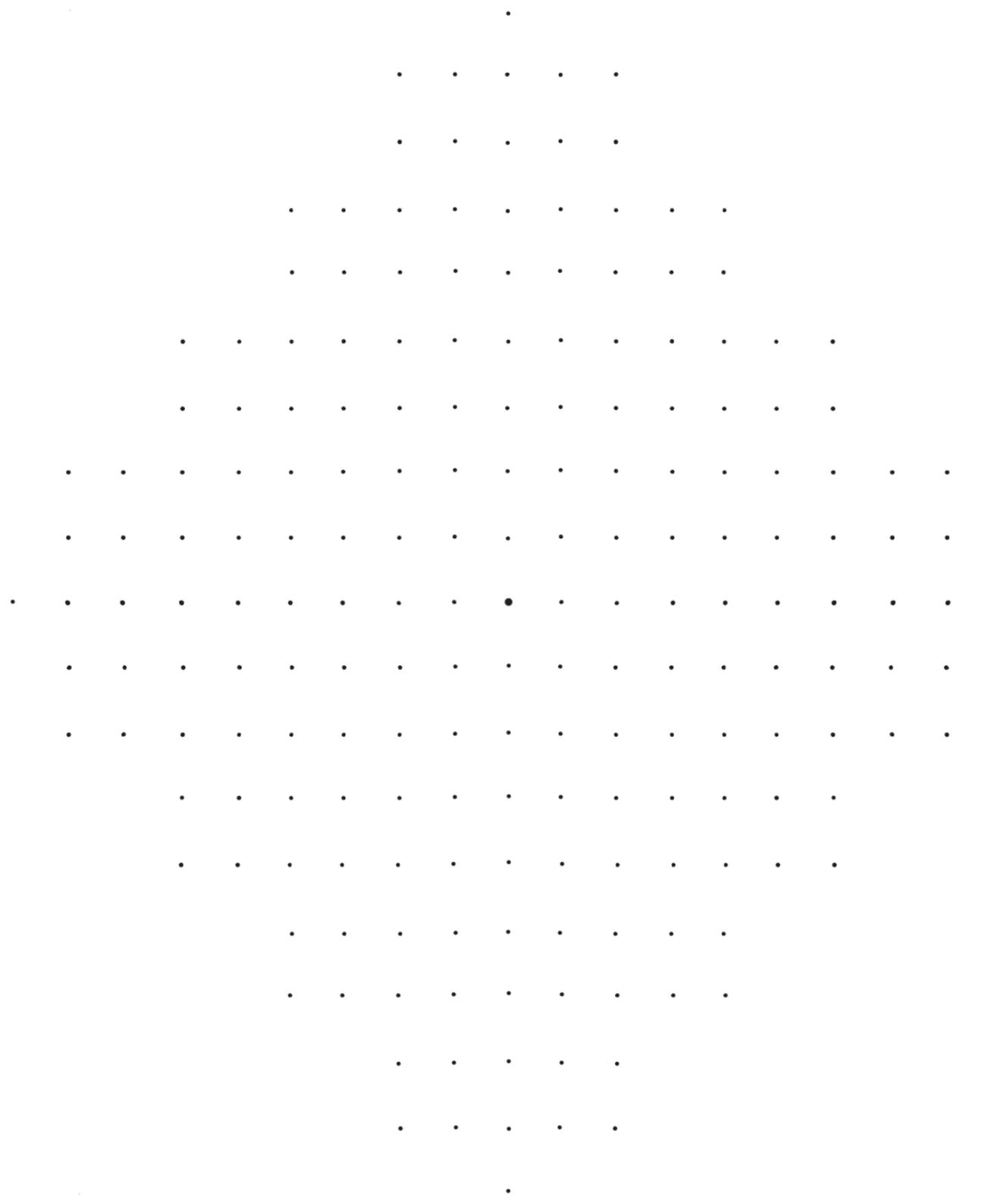
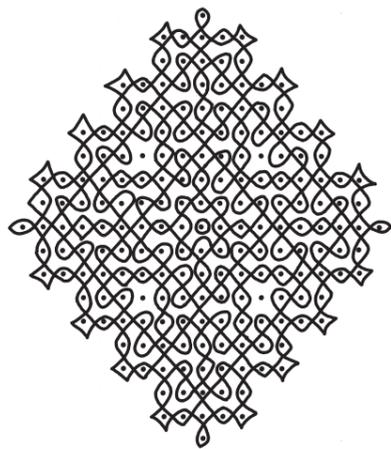
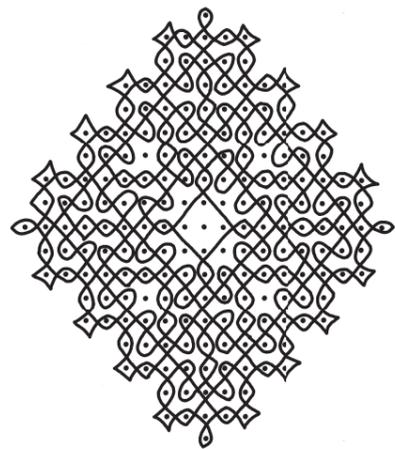
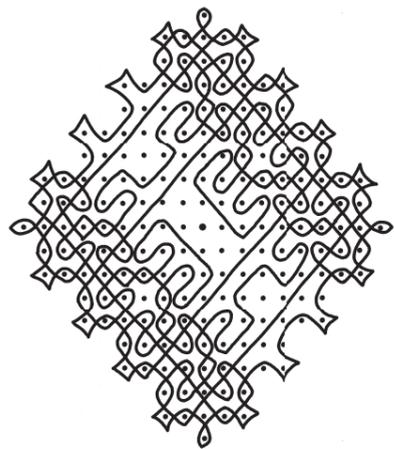
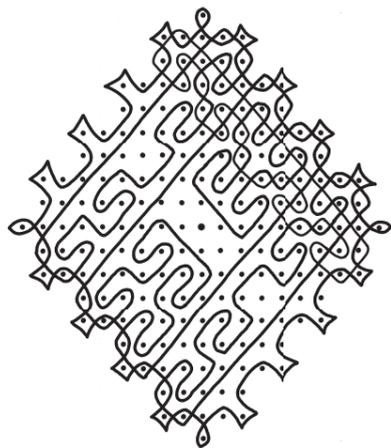
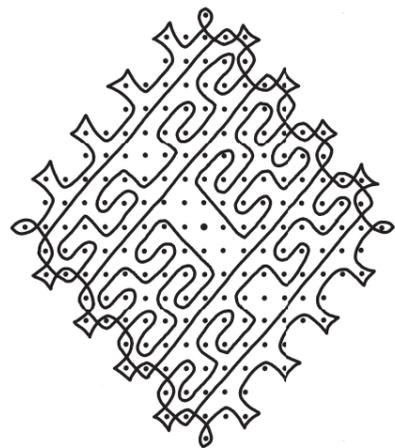
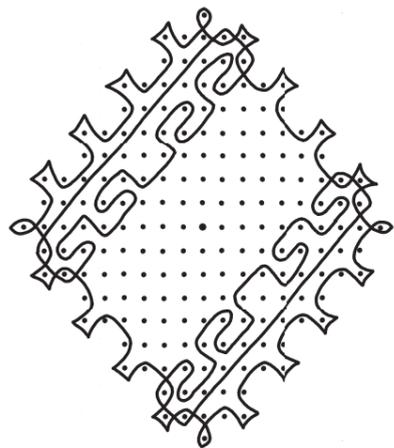
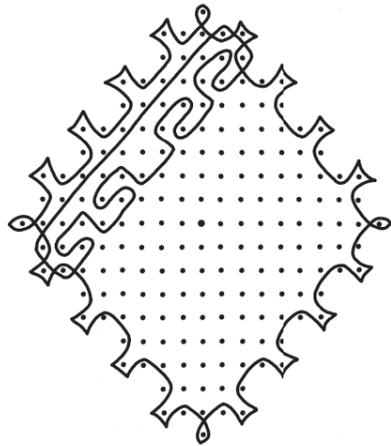
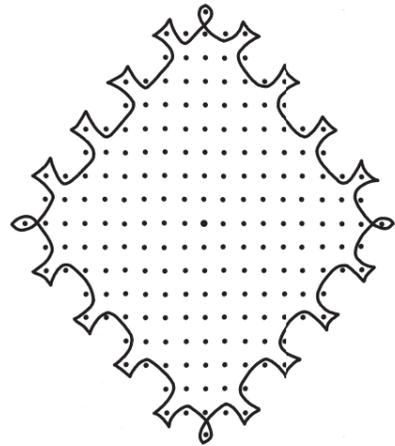
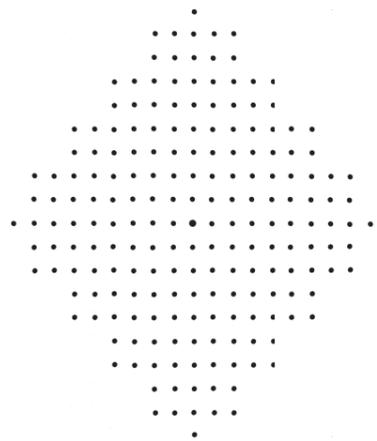
Now it is time to master the art of the dot.

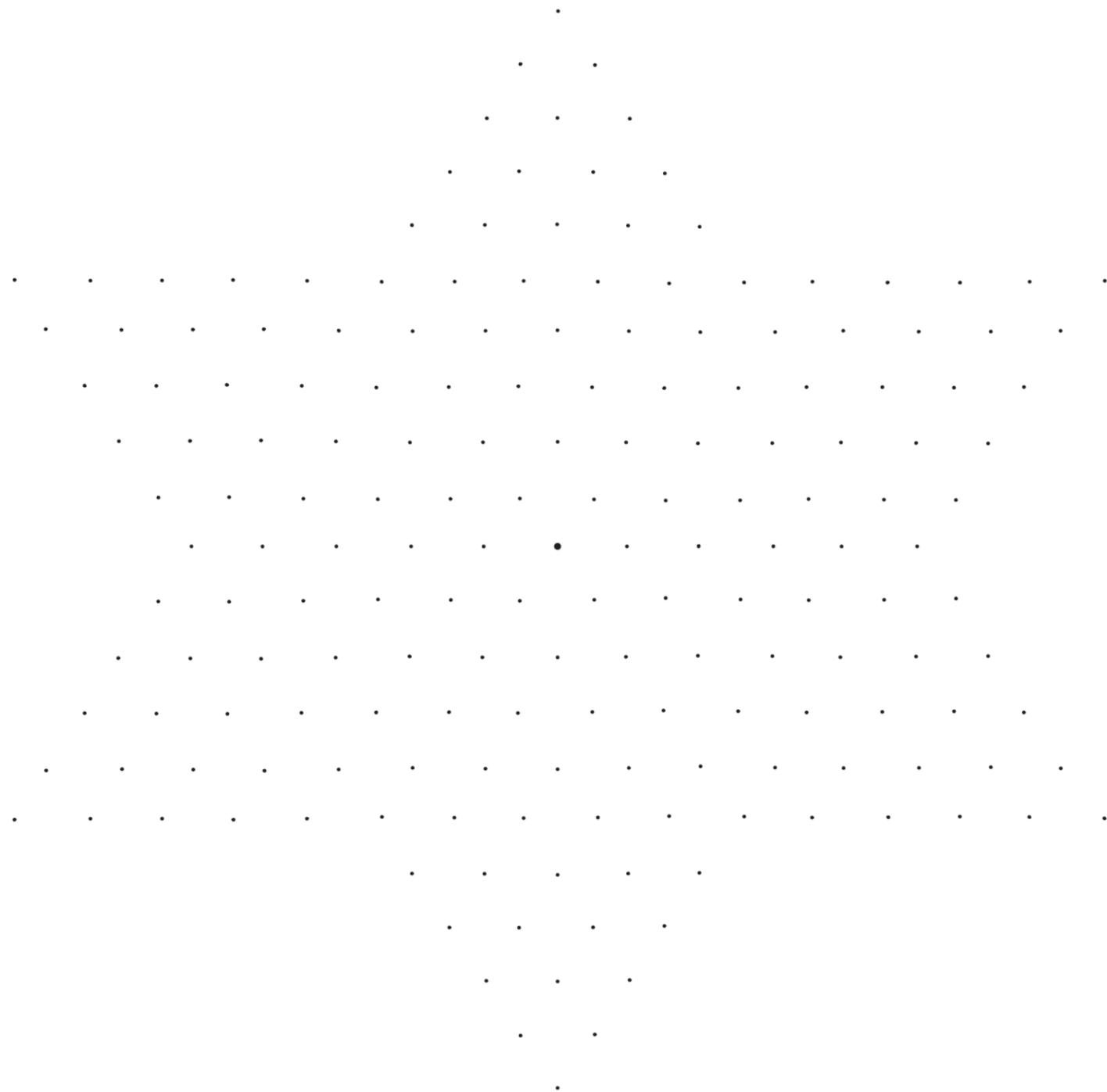
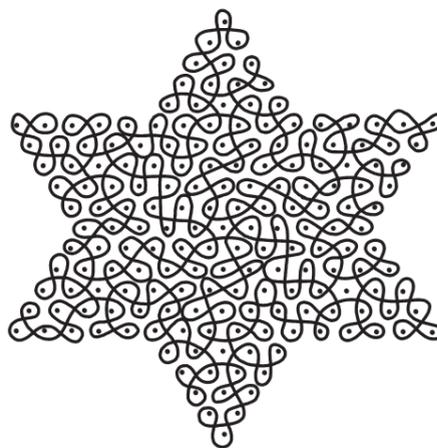
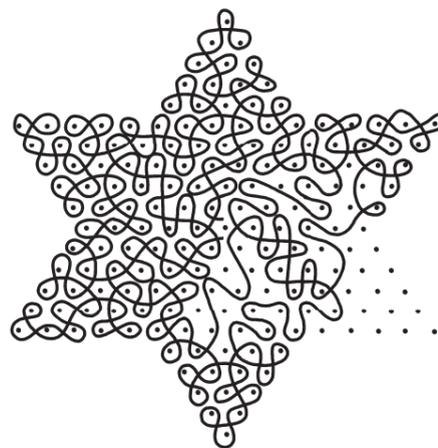
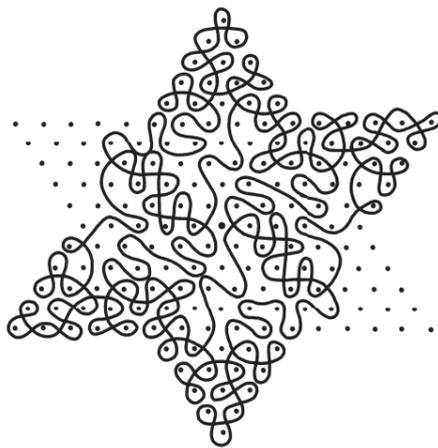
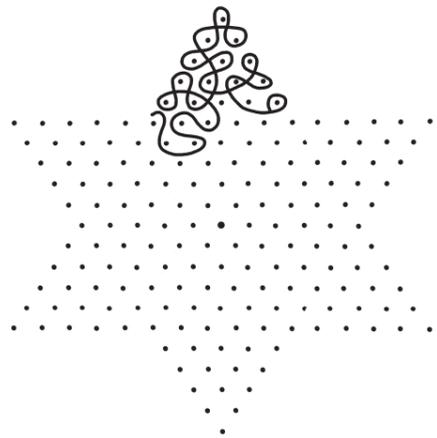
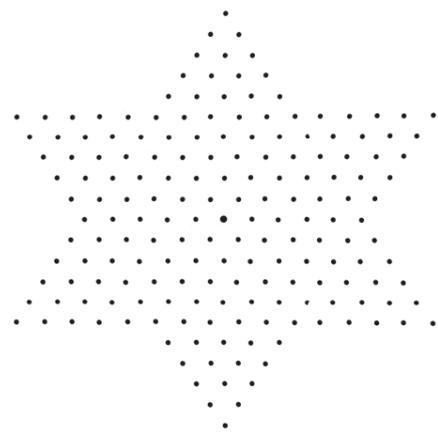


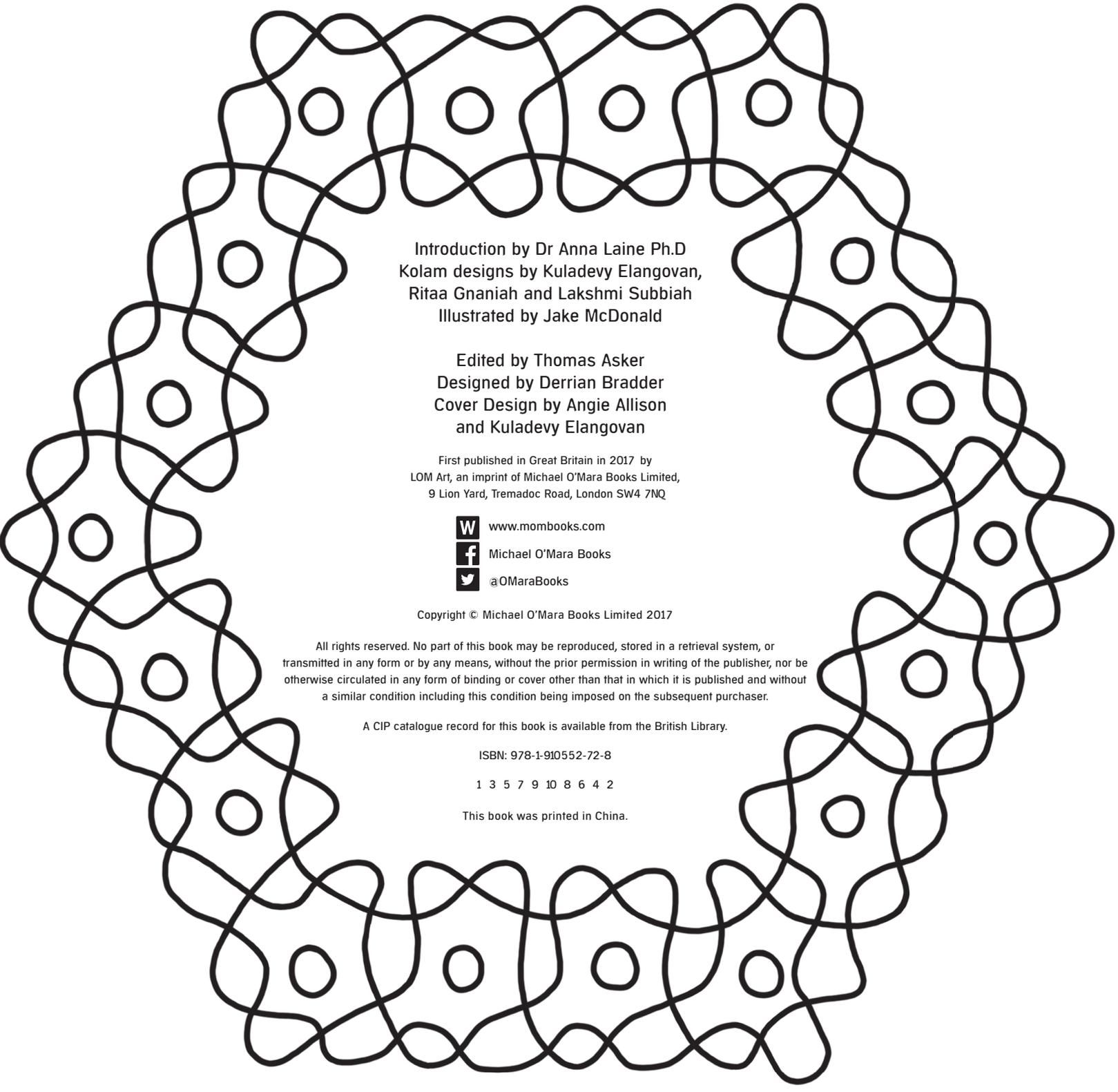












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Kolam designs by Kuladevy Elangovan,  
Ritaa Gnaniah and Lakshmi Subbiah  
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Edited by Thomas Asker  
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Cover Design by Angie Allison  
and Kuladevy Elangovan

First published in Great Britain in 2017 by  
LOM Art, an imprint of Michael O'Mara Books Limited,  
9 Lion Yard, Tremadoc Road, London SW4 7NQ

 [www.mombooks.com](http://www.mombooks.com)  
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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 978-1-910552-72-8

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This book was printed in China.