

tutorial // symmetryworks madness

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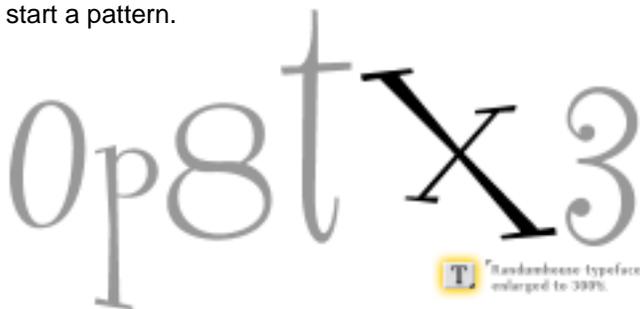
Use bits and pieces of letters to create intricate, eye-catching patterns using Artlandia's SymmetryWorks plug-in for Adobe Illustrator. To download a demo of the plug-in, visit the following:

<http://www.artlandia.com/products/SymmetryWorks/download>

1. Choose and Set the Type

Select the Type Tool and set some gibberish type on the artboard between 60-80pts; large enough to work with for now. Try to find some type that has character or that you think will create a most interesting pattern. The example below is a typeface called Randumhouse from House Industries (<http://www.houseind.com>). Once set, convert the type to outlines (TYPE > CREATE OUTLINES) and then ungroup (CMD/CTRL + G) the individual letters.

From the line of type, choose one of the letterforms to work with. The example below shows the uppercase X selected; it wins the beauty contest. Banish the other letterforms to either a hidden layer or to the trashcan. This letterform, with a few modifications, will create a good base from which to start a pattern.



2. Modify the letterform (optional)

I chose to modify the letterform for this pattern, however, keeping the letterform intact produces great results as well. To follow the example, select the Knife Tool and carve away pieces of the letterform to achieve a desired result. Anal Retentive Alert: To constrain the Knife Tool to a straight line, press the OPTION/ALT key before you start cutting and hold down the SHIFT key to constrain angles to 45 degrees. Feel free to rotate, reduce and fill your letterform with a new color (as shown below). The blue line indicates the cut path. The gray portion of the letterform is discarded.



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3. Apply SymmetryWorks

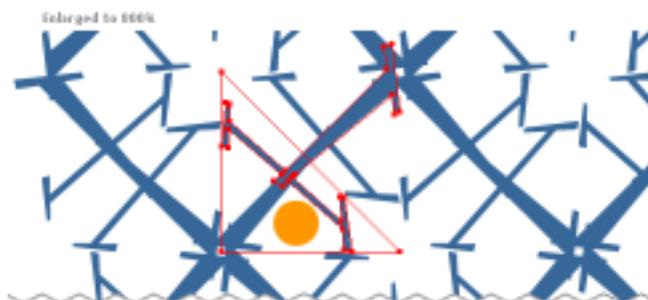
Select your letterform and, from the menu bar, choose OBJECT > SYMMETRYWORKS > MAKE. Instant intricacy! Now is the time to experiment with the settings in the SymmetryWorks palette. Choose from the 17 options in the SymmetryWorks palette to create different patterns. The first example below uses the "Pinwheel" option, the second uses "Quarter - turns & mirrors" and the third uses "Quarter - turns & rotated mirrors". Note in each example the highlighted "control path" and "seed" object/letterform. To view a larger pattern sampling, adjust the TILING options on the SymmetryWorks palette.



4. Enhance the pattern

Often, there is an overwhelming desire to add to a pattern you have created. In this case, the pattern below is clearly begging for small, orange circle.

With the Ellipse Tool, draw a small, orange circle. Click on the pattern to locate both the "control path" (the highlighted triangle path shown) and the "seed" object (the original letterform shape). Position the circle within this area. Note: Both the control path and the seed object can be modified. For instance, moving points on the control path will alter your pattern.

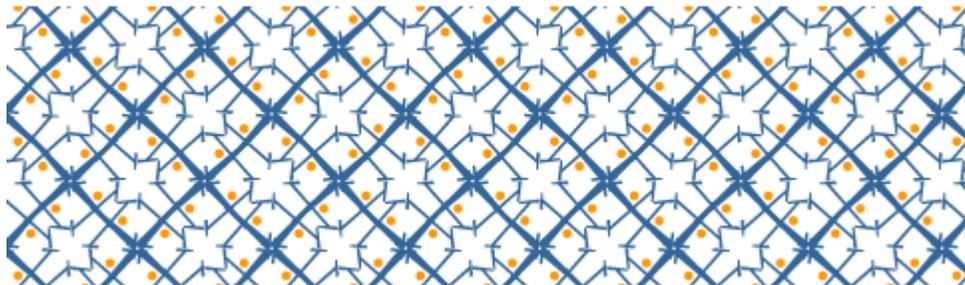


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4. Enhance the pattern (continued)

Select the circle and cut it (CMD/CTRL + X) from the artboard, then select the control path/seed object. From the menu, select EDIT > PASTE INSIDE IN FRONT and pattern will reflect the new addition.



5. Save the pattern

To share the pattern with others, you can save the file as is, however, other users will not be able to modify the pattern without the SymmetryWorks plug-in. In this case, it's best to expand the pattern by selecting it and, from the menu bar, choose OBJECT > EXPAND. Save the file as is at this stage or go one step further and define the pattern (EDIT > DEFINE PATTERN) to include in a pattern swatch. To create a seamless pattern fill, it may be necessary to modify the artwork further. Look for a future Ergodraw tutorial that covers this topic.

The EXPAND command affects the "control path" as well by expanding it and repeating it throughout the pattern. You may wish to remove this path overlay. Illustrator 10+ users can quickly remove this envelope. Select the pattern and apply the ungroup command (CMD/CTRL + G) several times until the pattern has been broken down into individual objects. Select the Magic Wand tool and select the control path only, then press Delete on your keyboard.



TIPS

» Feel free to use something other than type to create your patterns. Start from scratch and draw your own shapes to use. There are an infinite number of ideas you can experiment with in using SymmetryWorks so go crazy.

» With this plug-in, you can create your own "control path" for a pattern rather than allow the program to automatically create one. Also, apply gradients to your base objects for a greater variety of patterns. See full documentation included with the plug-in download for additional information not covered here.

» Download this pattern from both Ergodraw and Adobe xChange. Look for the "ergo-x.ai" file.