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Opening extract from

Zen Doodle Mandala

Written & Illustrated by

Carolyn Scrace

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Mandalas and meditation

The word *mandala* comes from the Sanscrit language and means 'sacred circle'. Circles have been used as potent symbols by many cultures throughout history. In general, a circle symbolises the cycle of life, wholeness, continuity and harmony. Combining Zen Doodling with mandalas creates powerful images which can be used to aid meditation and help individuals focus inwards.

Sand mandala



Mandalas date back to the 4th century when they were originally created for the Buddhist religion. They were often in the form of scrolls carried by travellers, thereby spreading their popularity. Buddhist monks famously construct exquisite mandalas out of millions of grains of coloured sand. Shortly after completion, the monks destroy the mandala to symbolise the impermanence of existence. They then disperse the sand in a river in order to symbolically share its blessing.

Meditation

- Find a quiet spot that is neither too hot nor too cold.
- Make sure you can sit comfortably, and place your mandala at eye level in a well-lit position.
- Close your eyes. Breathe deeply, slowly and evenly letting your whole body relax. Start to visualise the mandala; picture the centre and try to focus your own energy inwards to your heart. Keep still and breathe deeply until you are ready to open your eyes.
- Still breathing deeply, look at your mandala with your eyes slightly unfocused. Keep your gaze centred and try to see the entire image as a whole. Now start to explore the different parts of the mandala.
- Focus your eyes and begin to study the outer edges of the mandala, slowly working your way towards its centre. Feel the power at the core of the design, close your eyes and let the energy flow back and forth.
- If you feel tired at any point, stop the exercise, concentrate on your breathing and, when you are ready, slowly stand up.
- Try meditating for just two minutes. Gradually increase the time you devote to it - meditation works best if done on a daily basis.

Tools and materials

There are endless art materials that can be used for Zen Doodling. The basic tools are scraps of paper and a pencil. Use whatever you have to hand. The most important thing is to get started, have fun and enjoy the experience!

Pens



Marker pens are ideal for filling in large areas of colour. Fine **technical pens** are great for adding delicate patterns.

Watercolour paints

Watercolour paints come in liquid form, in solid blocks or in tubes. Dilute the paint and use it to create washes to cover large areas with colour or to paint patterns.

Felt-tip pens

Felt-tip pens come in a wide variety of colours and line widths. They are ideal for blocking in areas of colour.

Experiment!

Here are some suggestions of materials you may want to try, many of which have been used in this book. Experiment with different combinations and discover what works best for you.

Fineliner pens

Fineliner pens are ideal for colouring in intricate patterns. They come in a wide range of colours.

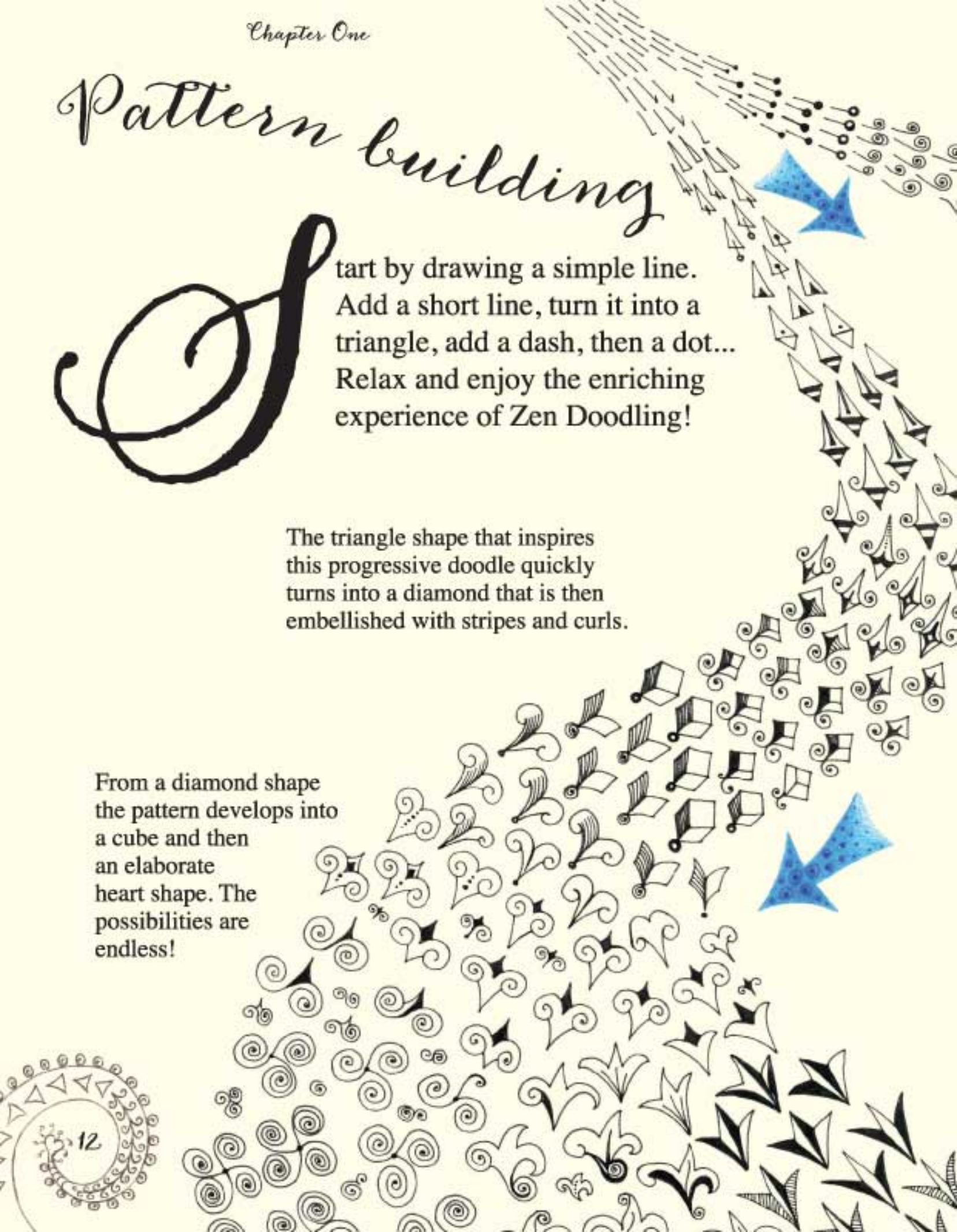

Watercolour paints
Notebook
For jotting down ideas for patterns and doodles!
Cartridge paper
Cartridge paper comes in different thicknesses (weights) and surfaces. Use thick cartridge paper for washes and smooth-textured paper for fine, detailed work. Some cartridge paper has a tendency to make felt-tip and fineliner pens bleed.
Gel pens
Metallic gel pens come in several colours including gold, silver and bronze. Use them to add richness to areas of detail. White gel pens look most effective when used on dark colours.
Bristol board
Both sides of Bristol board (or Bristol paper) can be worked on. It comes in various thicknesses (2-ply, 3-ply, etc.) and textures. Smooth is best for detailed work.
Pencils
Pencils vary from hard to soft and make a wide range of shades from grey to black. Pencil crayons produce subtle shades. Use them to fill in blocks of colour, layering different colours for added depth and richness.
Metallic gel pens
Pencil crayons
Pencils

Pattern building

Start by drawing a simple line. Add a short line, turn it into a triangle, add a dash, then a dot... Relax and enjoy the enriching experience of Zen Doodling!

The triangle shape that inspires this progressive doodle quickly turns into a diamond that is then embellished with stripes and curls.

From a diamond shape the pattern develops into a cube and then an elaborate heart shape. The possibilities are endless!



See how a single doodled line can develop into a series of striped shells.

The line becomes a curl, the curl becomes a spiral...

...and develops into a flower... then a star...

Before long you have created a myriad of patterns to Zen Doodle! Begin Zen Doodling by drawing a bold curving shape, then start to fill it with patterns.

