Pattern Recognition
by Jenifer K Wofford

“Pattern Recognition incorporates cheerful bold colors, graphic patterns, and comic-strip speech bubbles as a way of paying tribute to the intertwined creative legacies of Asia and Asian America. The patterns and motifs reference various craft and design traditions from the Asian Art Museum collection as well as from neighboring Asian communities. As someone who lives a short walk away from the museum, I wanted the mural to feel both local and global. My hope is that this mural adds vibrance to the Civic Center area, as well as the neighboring Tenderloin and SoMa districts, by showcasing cultures and histories that reflect and empower the immigrant communities that live here.” —Jenifer K Wofford

In this packet, you will engage with Wofford's mural, learn about different Asian cultures and identities, and celebrate Asian American artists from the San Francisco Bay Area. With what you’ve learned and researched, you will then create your own patterns in a digital collage art project.

DURATION
Two class periods or more
### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the title *Pattern Recognition* mean to you? What kind of patterns can you find in Wofford’s mural? What kind of recognition is the mural trying to promote?

2. What is the effect of having the artists’ names in the speech bubbles? What types of art are speech bubbles normally used in? What is the mural “saying”?

3. What is the effect of placing patterns created by the named artists among patterns drawn from traditional Asian art?

4. Wofford says, “Nine [names] is too few” for a mural celebrating Asian American artists, and “there honestly should be way more names than that.” Which other Asian American artists would you like to see added to the mural? Why?

5. If you were to create your own *Pattern Recognition* mural, what patterns and names would you include? From what cultures? Why?

### ACTIVITIES

1. Explore the Google Arts & Culture [online exhibit](https://artsandculture.google.com) on *Pattern Recognition*. Watch Jenifer Wofford’s interview to learn more about the inspirations behind *Pattern Recognition*. Why is it important that this mural is on an outer wall of the museum? What is the mural’s message to the community around the museum?

2. Learn more about the artists named on Wofford’s mural by exploring these [teacher packets](https://www.artsandculture.google.com). Are there patterns to their experiences as Asian Americans? At the same time, what’s unique about each of their stories?

3. Using Wofford’s legend for *Pattern Recognition* (next page), research one of the traditional Asian designs in the mural and its cultural significance. Share what you learn with a friend who researched a different pattern. Compare notes—what do your chosen patterns have in common? What’s different?

4. Writing prompt: If the exclamations in the mural’s speech bubbles were replaced by questions, what might those questions be?

5. Create your own [collage](https://artsandculture.google.com) using speech bubbles and patterns drawn from objects in the Asian Art Museum collection referenced in *Pattern Recognition* (next page). After finishing your collage, reflect: What is your collage “saying” to the viewer? Duration: 30 minutes or more
PANEL 1 Kay Sekimachi
1 Black-and-white circles: Lidded dish, China/Indonesia. Asian Art Museum
2 Black-and-white pattern: decorative motif adapted from Lidded offering container, Thailand. Asian Art Museum
3 Red/pink pattern: adapted from Kay Sekimachi weaving.
4 Orange/blue triangles: tapa cloth pattern, Toradja people, Indonesia.

PANEL 2 Chiura Obata
5 Yellow oval shapes: Oval inkstick, China. Asian Art Museum
6 Black-and-white zigzag: adapted from weaving, Atayal people, Taiwan.
8 Red/blue geometric pattern: tupik pattern, Cham people, Vietnam.
9 Pink/green curving pattern: Court collar with five dragons, China. Asian Art Museum

PANEL 3 Jade Snow Wong
10 Black-and-white curving lines: The bodhisattva Maitreya, Pakistan. Asian Art Museum
11 Red/yellow pattern: Bauhinia flower, adapted from flag, Hong Kong.
12 Black-and-white woven pattern: adapted from t’nalak weaving, T’boli people, Philippines.
13 Black-and-white vase silhouettes: various Jade Snow Wong ceramics in museum’s “treasure wall” cabinet. Asian Art Museum
14 Yellow/orange shapes: Lamp in the form of eight-petaled lotus dish, Thailand. Asian Art Museum
15 Blue/purple circles: Bowl with leaf-like decoration, Iran. Asian Art Museum
PANEL 4 Ruth Asawa
1. Red/blue pattern: traditional asanoha hemp leaf pattern, Japan.
2. Black-and-white pattern: adapted from Ruth Asawa tied wire branching form sculptures.
3. Green/yellow triangle pattern: tatala boat motif, Tao/Yami people, Taiwan.
4. Yellow circles: Bowl, Northern Thailand. Asian Art Museum
5. Pink shapes on yellow: Comma-shaped jewel (gobeun-ok), Korea. Asian Art Museum

PANEL 5 Carlos Villa
7. Yellow/orange circles: Coin of the Kushan king Vasudeva, Northwest India/Pakistan, ancient region of Gandhara. Asian Art Museum

PANEL 6 Bernice Bing
11. Blue/yellow pattern: motif adapted from Bernice Bing painting.
**LEGEND FOR PANELS 7, 8, 9 (Left to Right)**

**PANEL 7 Arthur Okamura**

1. **Purple oval shapes:** Oval inkstick, China. Asian Art Museum

2. **Black-and-white squiggle/hoof pattern:** adapted from Arthur Okamura’s “Ox Herding” prints.

3. **Black-and-white scale pattern:** traditional seigaha wave pattern, Japan.

4. **Yellow/orange pattern:** Head of a Lion sculpture, India. Asian Art Museum

5. **Pink/green geometric pattern:** traditional weaving, Yakan people, Philippines.

**PANEL 8 Ernie Kim**

6. **Blue shapes on orange:** boteh motif extracted from Wall hanging with trees, peacocks, tigers, and other animals, India. Asian Art Museum

7. **Black-and-white pattern:** Bone apron (sanmudras), Tibet. Asian Art Museum

8. **Red/pink ribbon pattern on yellow:** adapted from ceramic vase by Ernie Kim.

9. **Black-and-white geometric pattern:** matmata weave, Bontoc people, Philippines.

**PANEL 9 Leo Valledor**

10. **Black-and-white “S” pattern:** leiwen thunder motif, Ritual wine vessel (yayi jia), China. Asian Art Museum

11. **Green/pink pattern:** Star-shaped tile with inscription from the Qur’an, Iran. Asian Art Museum

12. **Blue/red pattern:** Snail motif, Hmong people, Vietnam/Laos/Thailand/Burma/Southern China.

13. **Black-and-white zigzag pattern:** adapted from Leo Valledor’s “Echo” painting.

14. **Black-and-white circles:** Plate with dragons, China. Asian Art Museum


