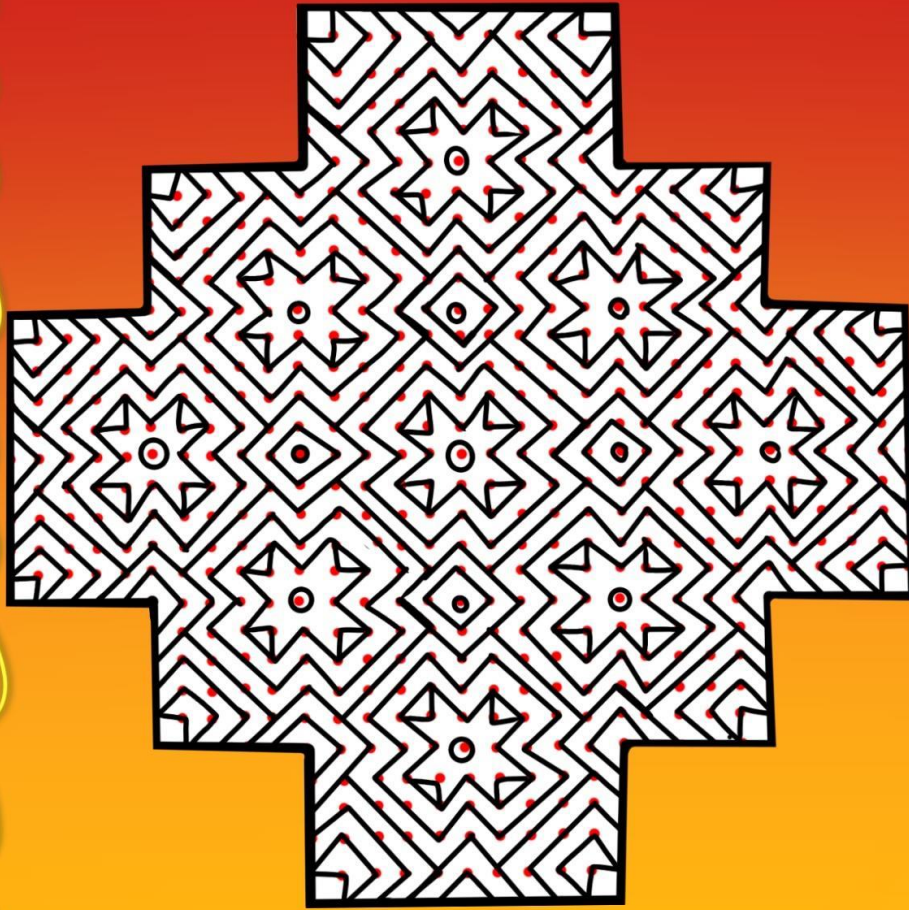


Kolam-Rangoli Handbook



Aparna Sainath Padinjare

G. Jyothi Priya Ponde

Dr. R. Saraswati Sainath

KOLAM-RANGOLI HANDBOOK

**Aparna Sainath Padinjare
G. Jyothi Priya Ponde
Dr. R. Saraswati Sainath**

**Vidyasthanam
Montréal**

Foreword

Kolam/Rangoli are designs drawn in front of the house or in the prayer hall, called puja room. Traditionally they are drawn with rice flour. When coloring is added to these designs they are called Rangoli. They are part of the Hindu culture and have been practised since ancient times. Kolams are popular in South India while Rangoli is popular in other parts of India.

Kolams are considered auspicious and those drawn in front of the houses are believed to ward off evil spirits. In addition to bringing auspiciousness kolams drawn with rice, powder have the advantage of providing food to small insects such as ants and also birds. Although traditionally rice flour is used for kolams in puja rooms, a special type of powder is used for kolams at the thresholds to give a bright appearance.

In the state of Tamil Nadu, there is the practise of putting huge kolams in front of the house in the month of Margasirsa—called Margali in Tamil—that corresponds from December 15 to January 14. On other days small kolams adorn the entrance of the houses. I remember kolams being put both in mornings and evenings in front of the house. These days with more apartment buildings occupying the cities, kolams are put only in the morning. Before putting kolams the floor is swept well and made wet by sprinkling water. Until a few years back and even now in villages, cow dung which is considered a germicide is mixed with water and is sprinkled. In the month of Markali in the middle of the kolam, a small amount of cow dung is kept, and a pumpkin flower is inserted. These cow dung pieces along with the pumpkin flower are then dried in the sun and are used as fuel. Flower vendors used to supply these flowers for the entire month.

Kolam designs are drawn based on dots. Connecting these dots in a particular pattern gives rise to the designs. Designs involve figures such as leaves, flowers, conchs, peacocks, elephants, and also triangles, circles, diamonds, straight lines, curved lines, and wavy lines. Kolams range from simple triangles to big intricate designs. They fall under two broad categories one containing various figures mentioned above and the other consisting of only lines. Sometimes even one line is connected around dots and results in a very complex kolam. In kolam involving lines, the lines circle the dots.

Kolams are made with dry rice powder and also with wet rice paste. While putting kolam with dry powder, a pinch of rice flour is held between the thumb and index finger. Placing the hand above the ground, the powder is released while moving the hand in the direction desired at the same time. This results in a thin line of flour. In case a very thick and flat line is desired then a little bit more rice flour is released holding the flour with thumb, index, and middle fingers. For the latter type, rice is soaked for some time and is made into a paste. Some more water is added to this paste. A small ball of cloth or paper towel is soaked in this liquid and is then placed in the right palm. This ball is pressed with the thumb and the liquid is allowed to fall through the middle and ring fingers. Straight or wavy lines are made according to the movement of the fingers. This type of kolam is usually put on religious occasions.

When white kolams are bordered in red, that indicates a religious occasion or marriage (see Kolam No. 93). I remember an incident in which our family priest dropped into our house on seeing the kolam with red border and assisted my mother with her puja and her joy knew no bounds. Kolams are not put when a death has happened in the family, or a death rite is being carried on. However, they are put on the thirteenth day of a death rite which is considered a good event. Likewise, kolams contain elements indicating the type of festival. During the festival of Krishna Janmashtami Krishna's feet are drawn from the entrance to the puja room with wet rice paste (see Kolam No. 94).

Although kolams are drawn manually, small plates and small cylinders in wood, steel, and plastic perforated with various kolam designs are also available for easy application of kolams. Rice flour is smeared on top of the plates and when the plate is lifted the beautiful kolam is seen beneath it. Likewise, rice flour is filled in these small cylinders and rolled on the ground to get the beautiful patterns. Kolams are part of the Tamil household that nowadays one can find kolam stickers in front of the house.

Vidyasthanam, School of Indian Music, Culture and Languages is pleased to release this Kolam-Rangoli Handbook in connection with the Kolam-Rangoli workshop conducted in partnership with Thanjai Restaurant, Montréal on September 26, 2021. The kolam designs are from the personal collections of myself and G. Jyothi Priya Ponde and they have been illustrated by Aparna Sainath Padinjare. I thank Mr. Kumaresan of Thanjai Restaurant for his encouragement and support. We hope this handbook will enable us to preserve this beautiful ancient artistic practise and carry it on to the next generation.

Date: September 26, 2021

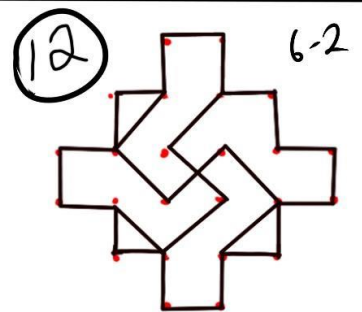
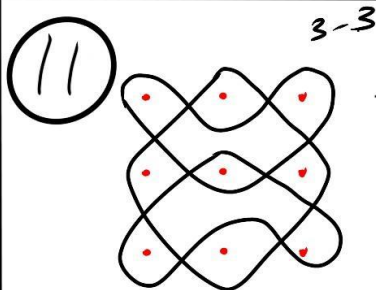
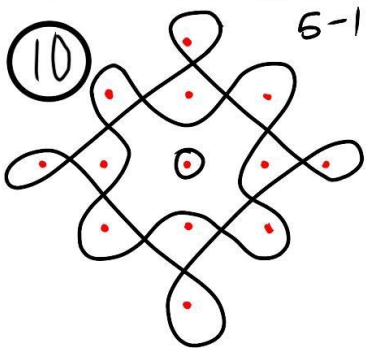
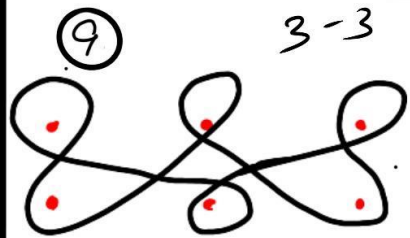
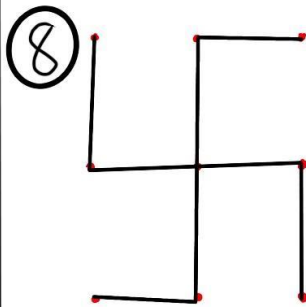
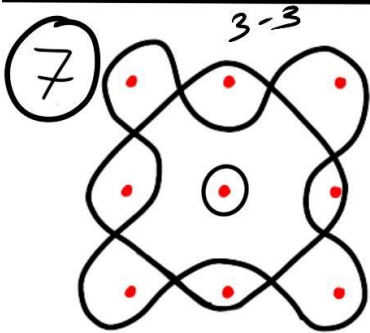
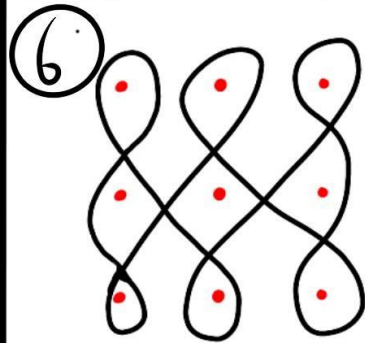
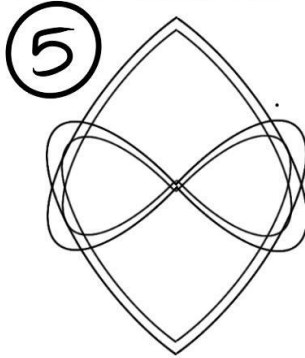
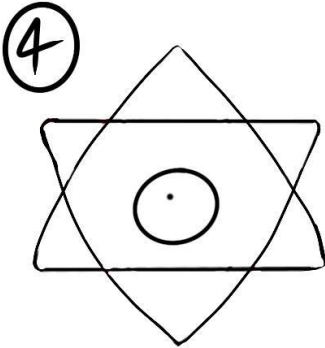
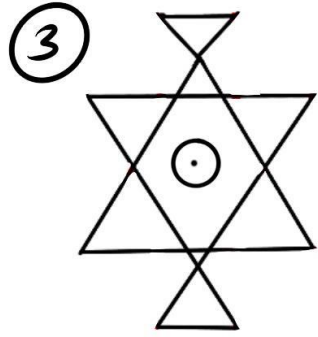
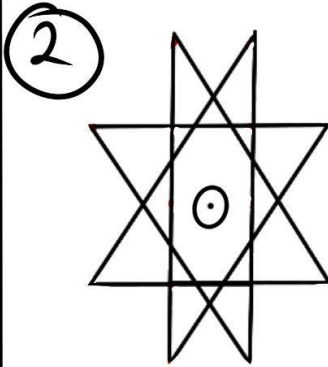
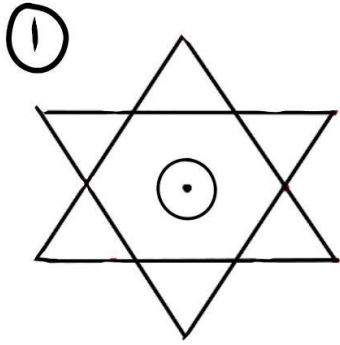
Dr. R. Saraswati Sainath

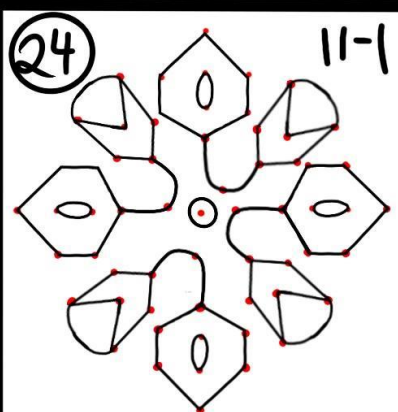
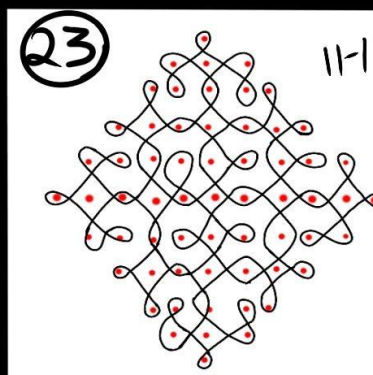
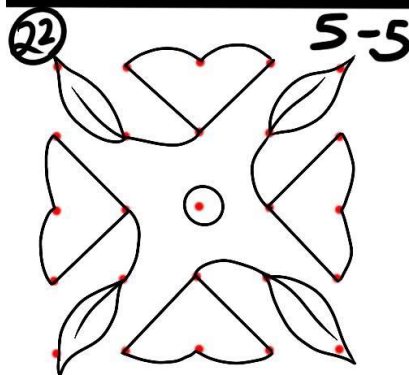
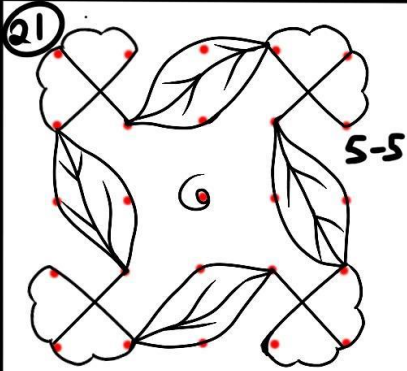
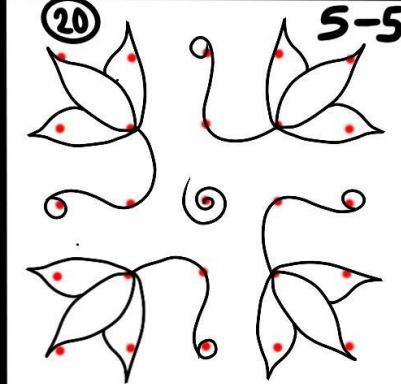
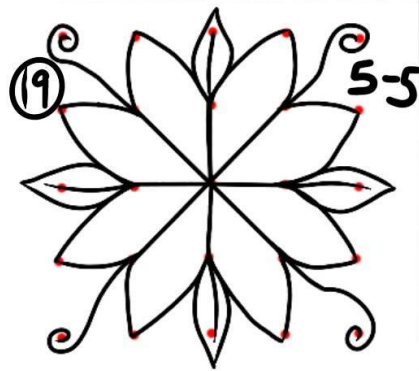
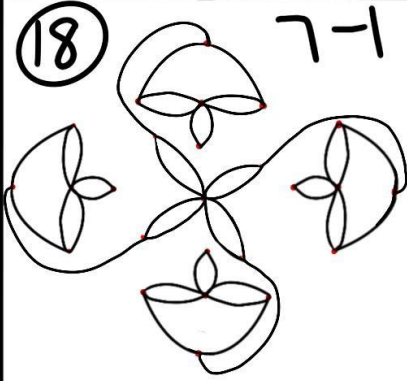
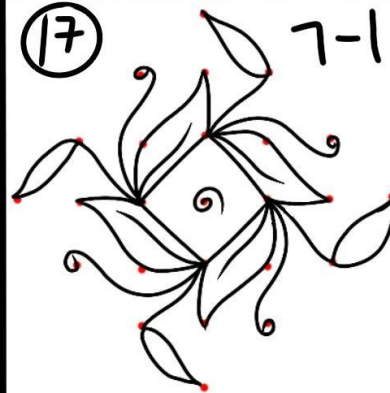
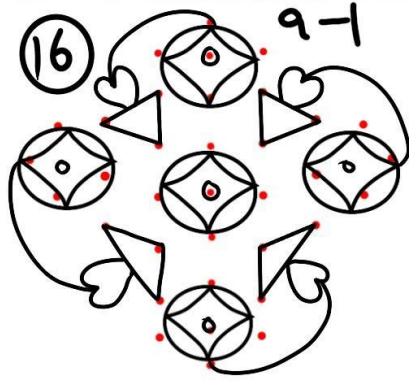
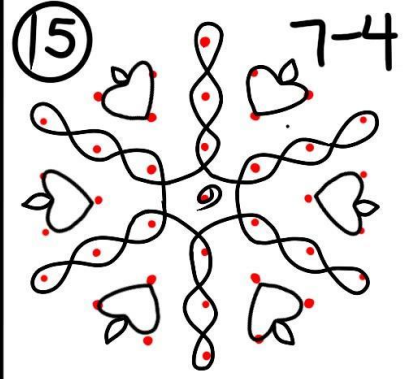
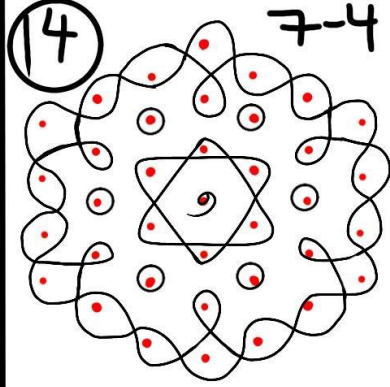
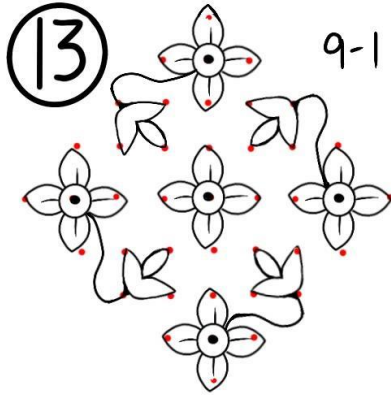
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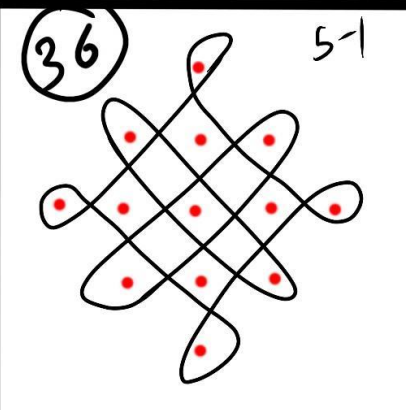
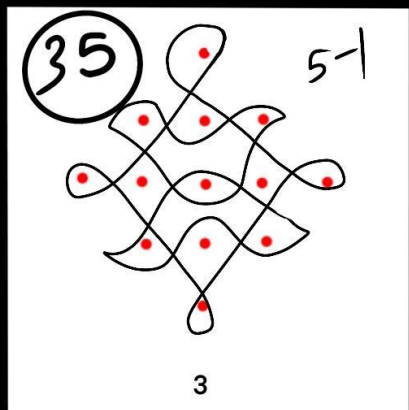
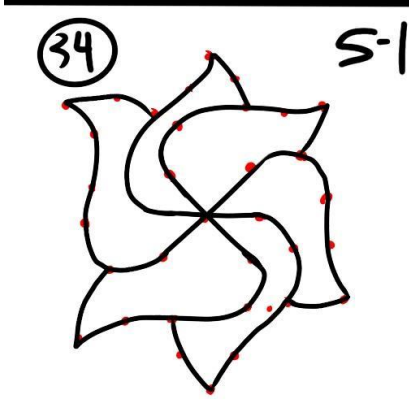
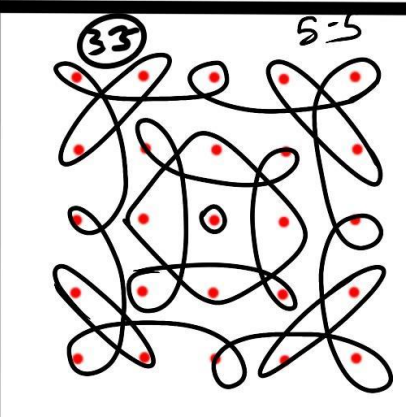
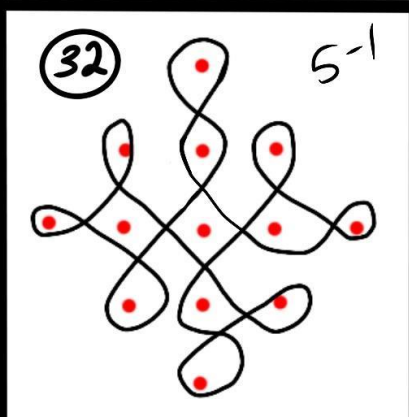
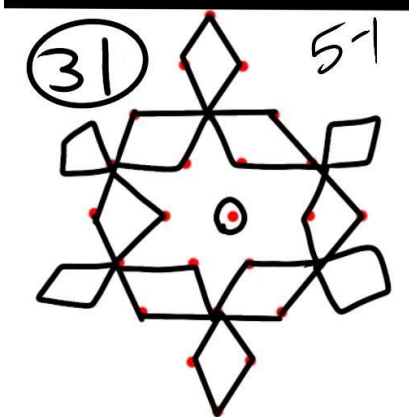
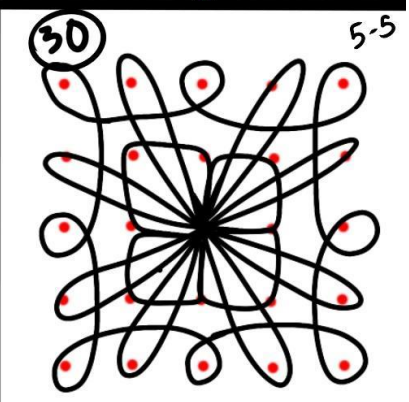
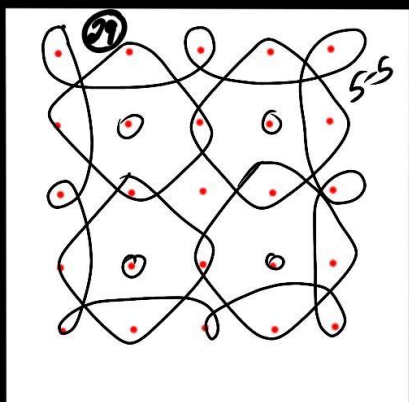
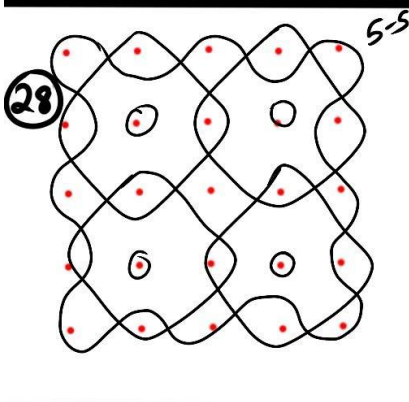
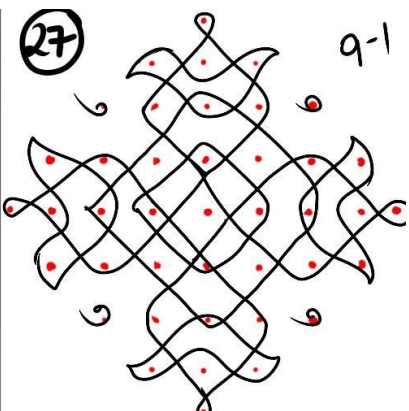
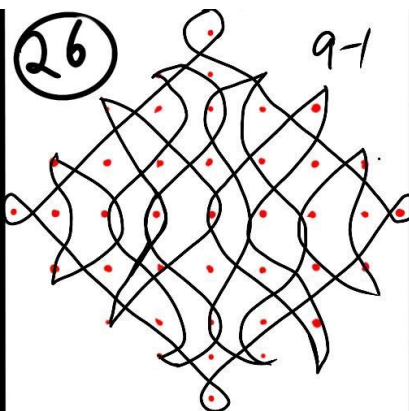
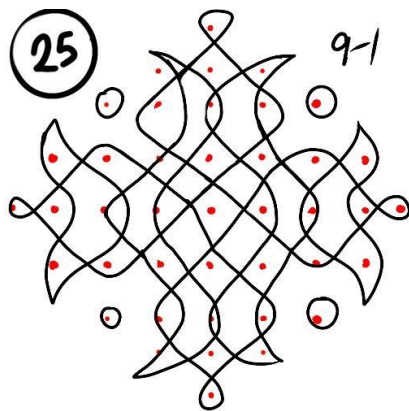
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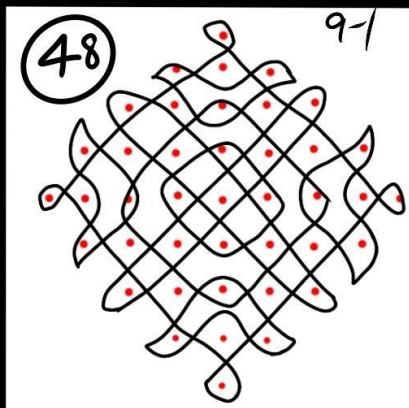
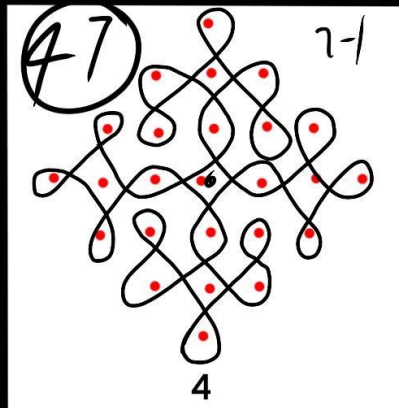
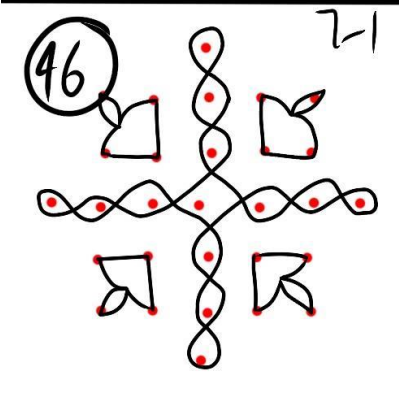
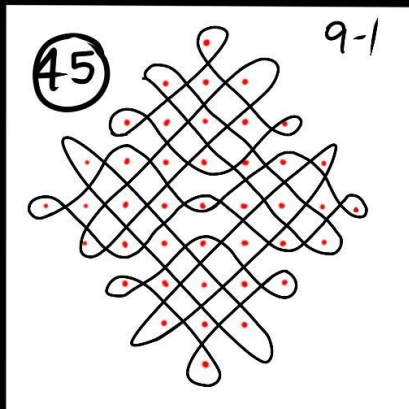
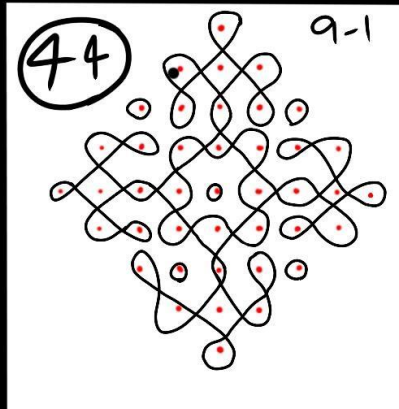
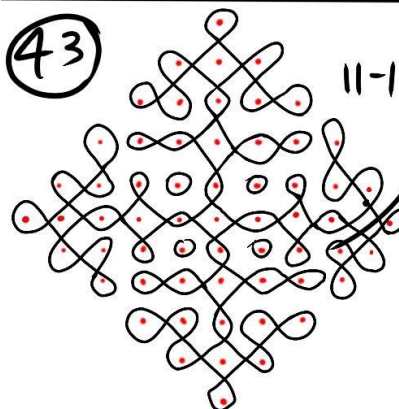
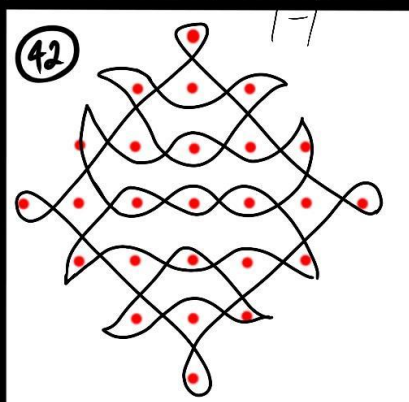
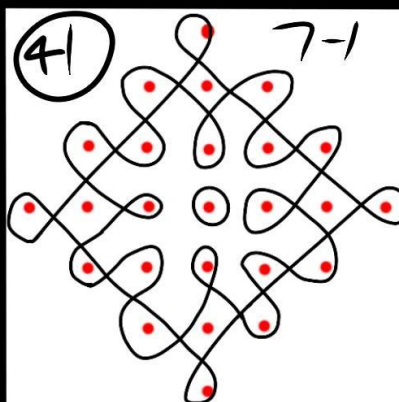
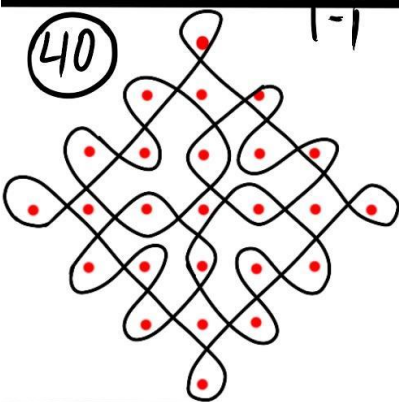
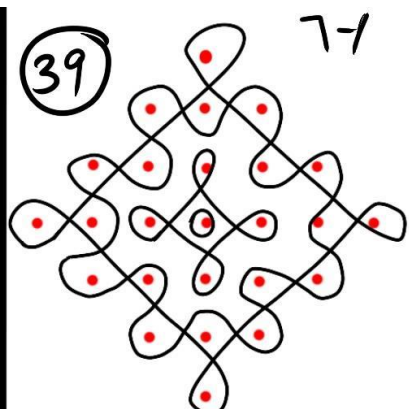
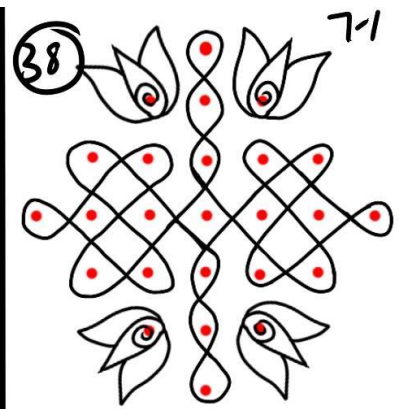
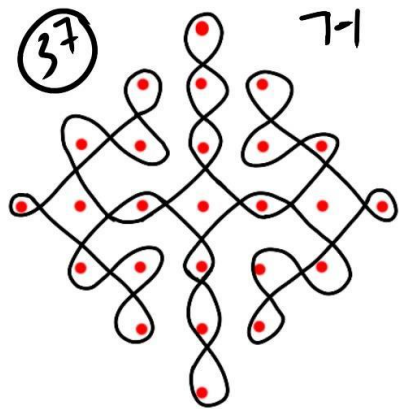
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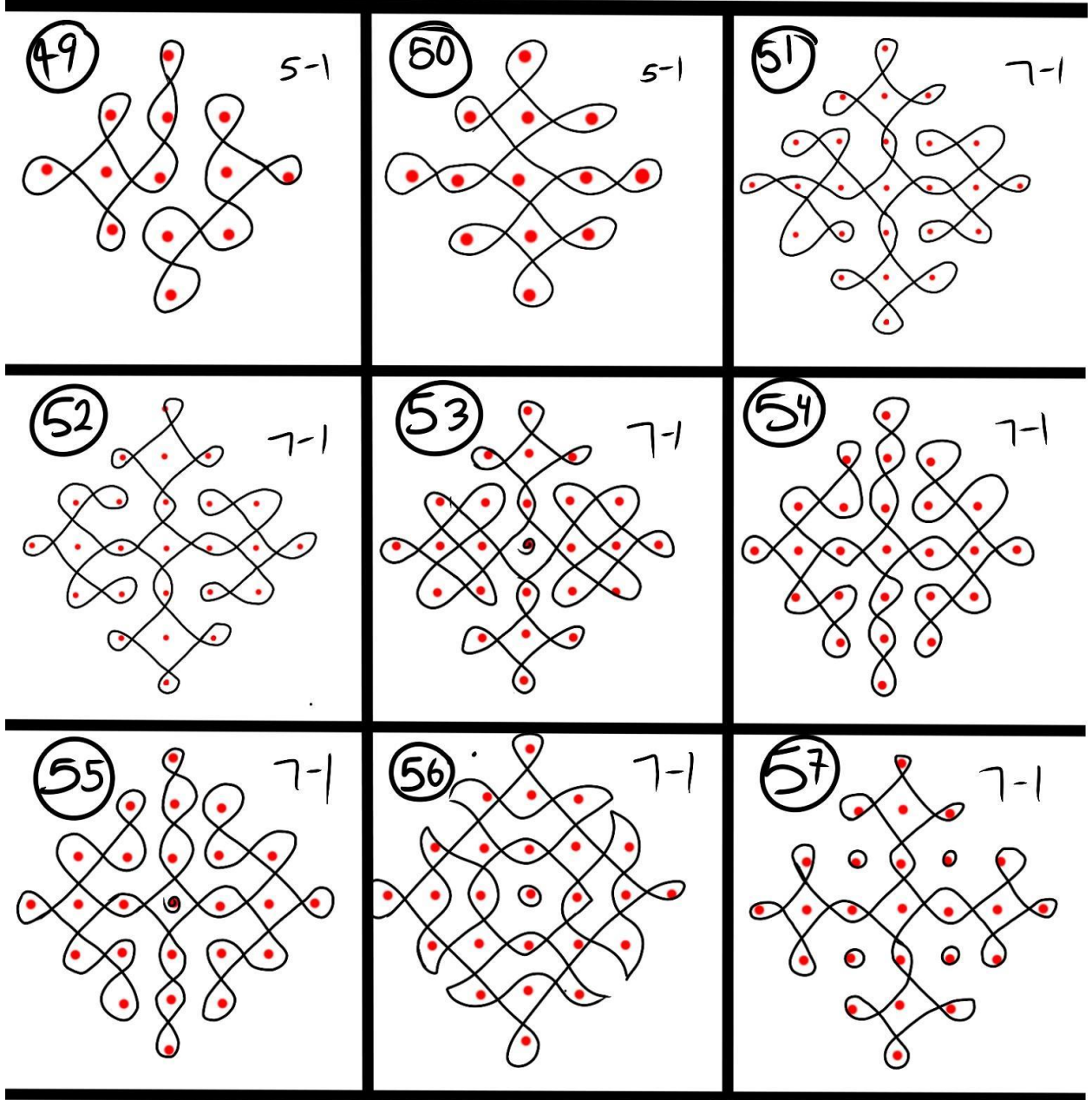
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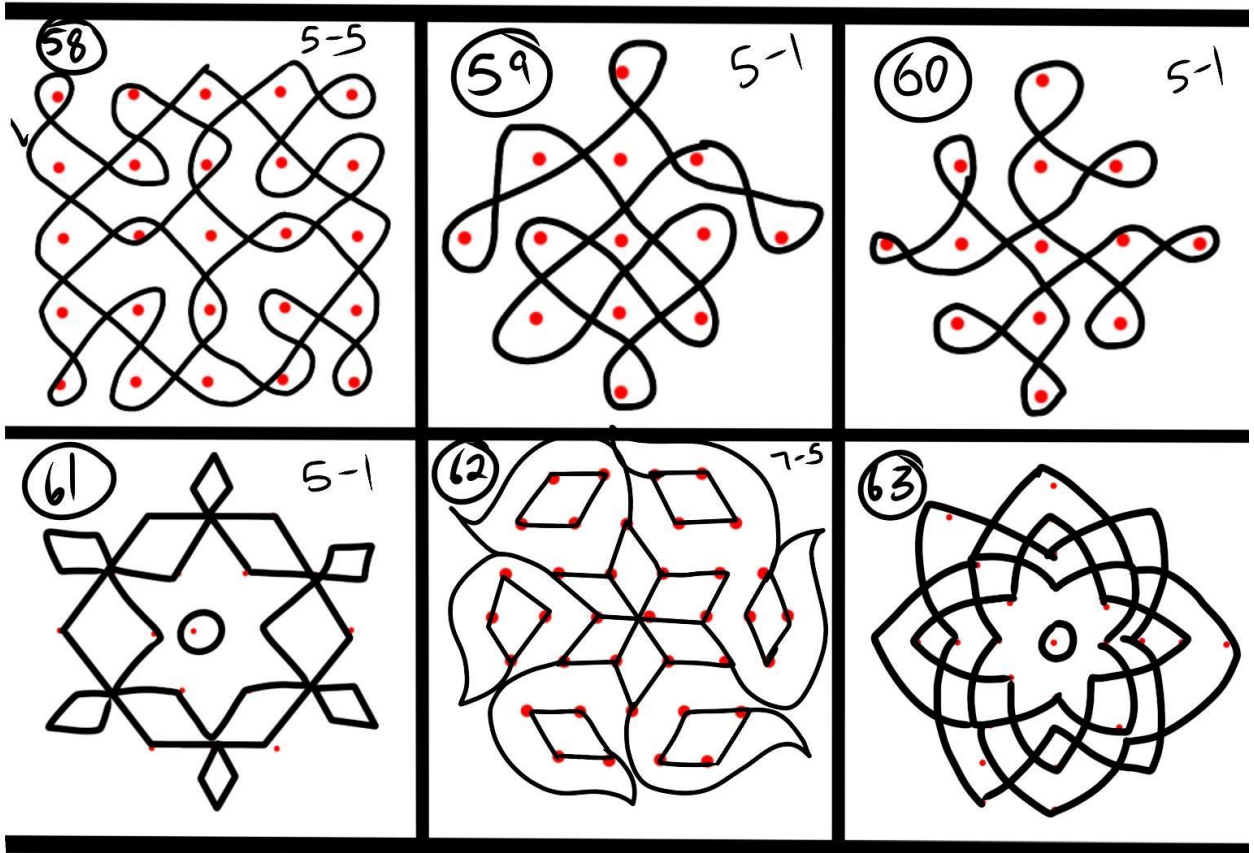




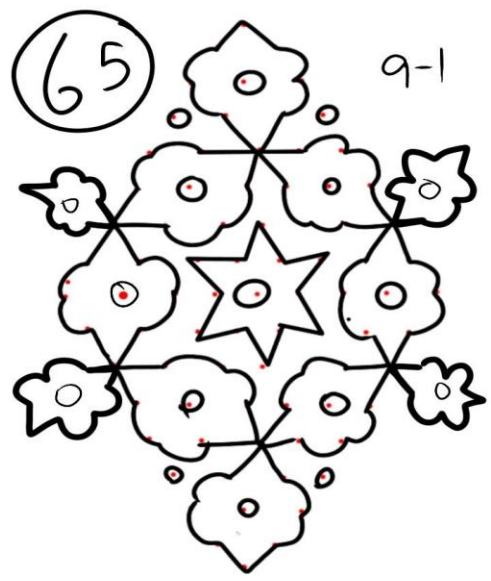
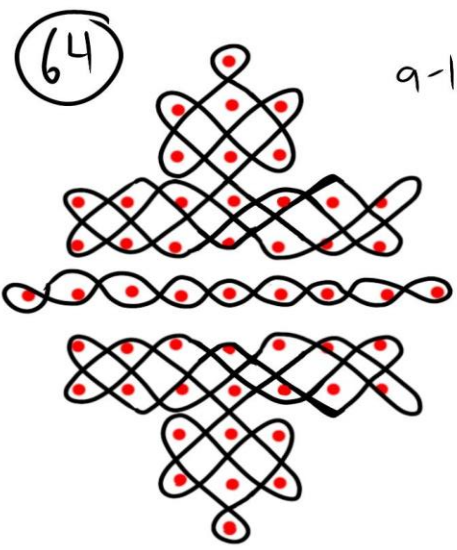




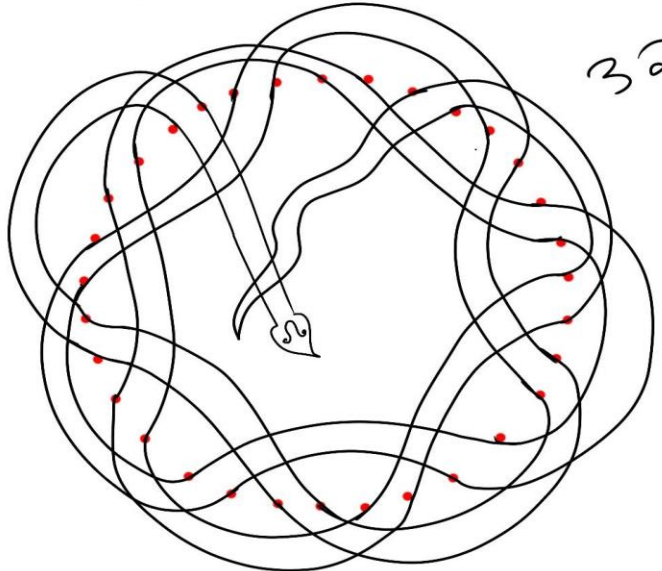




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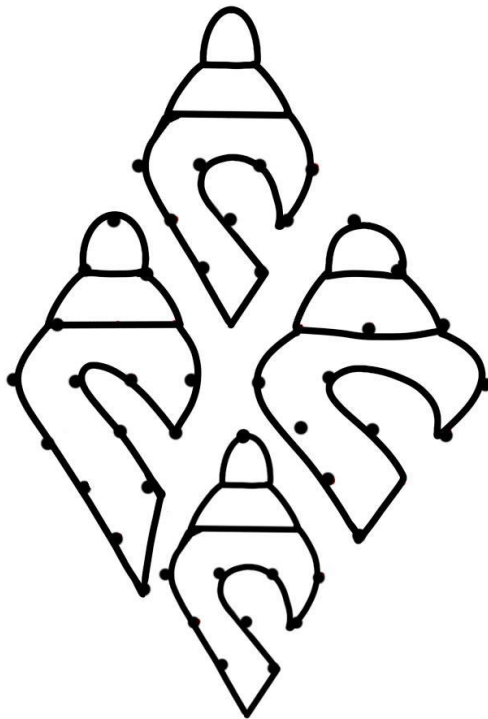


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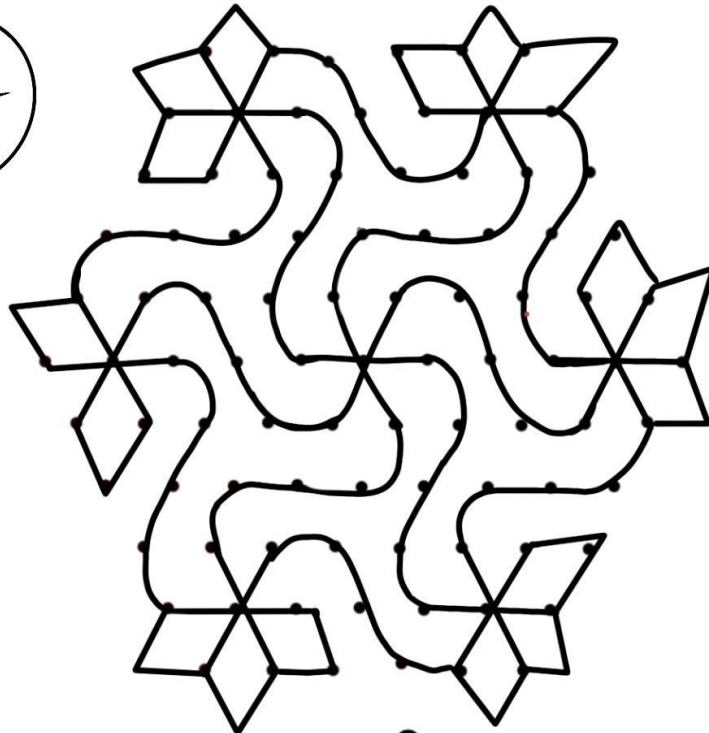
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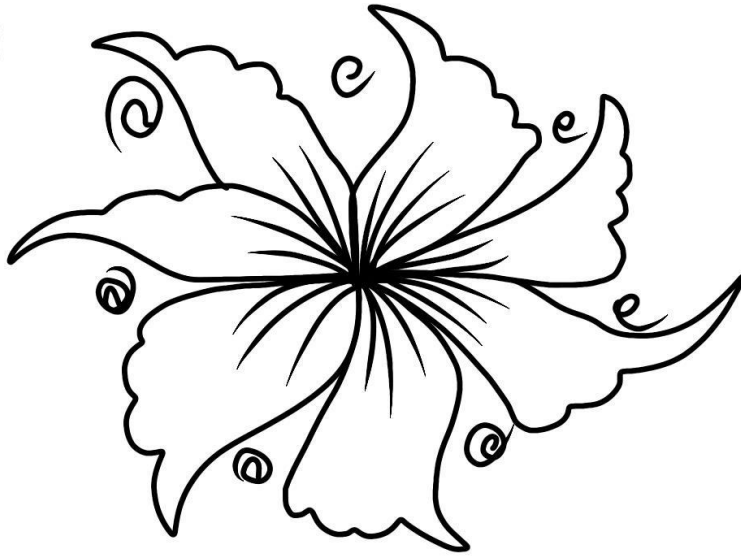


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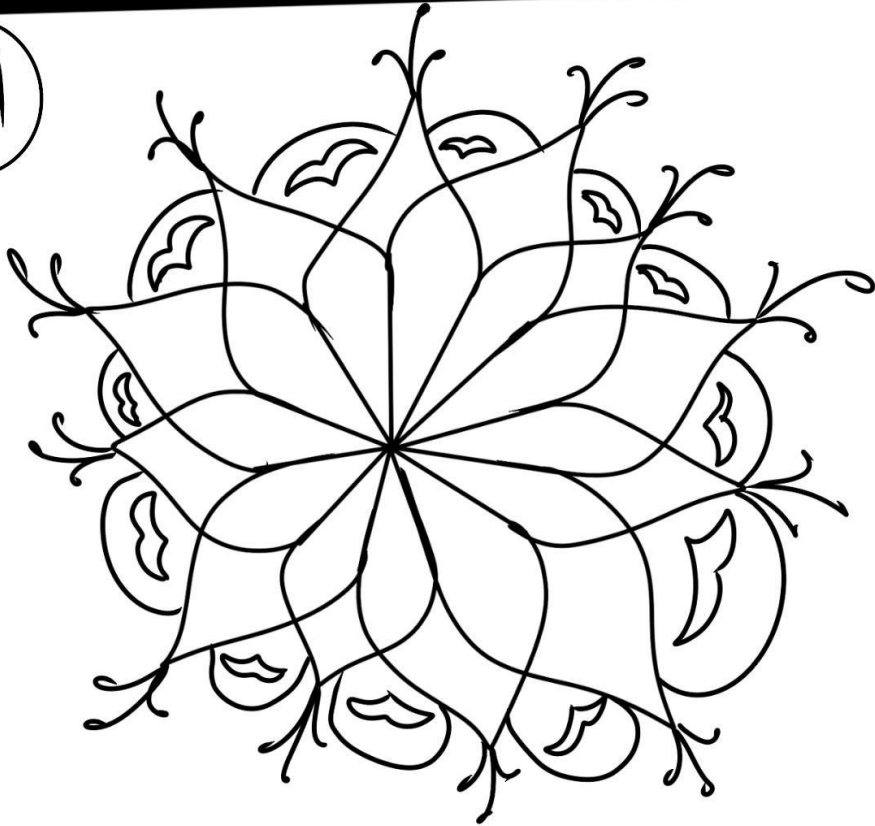


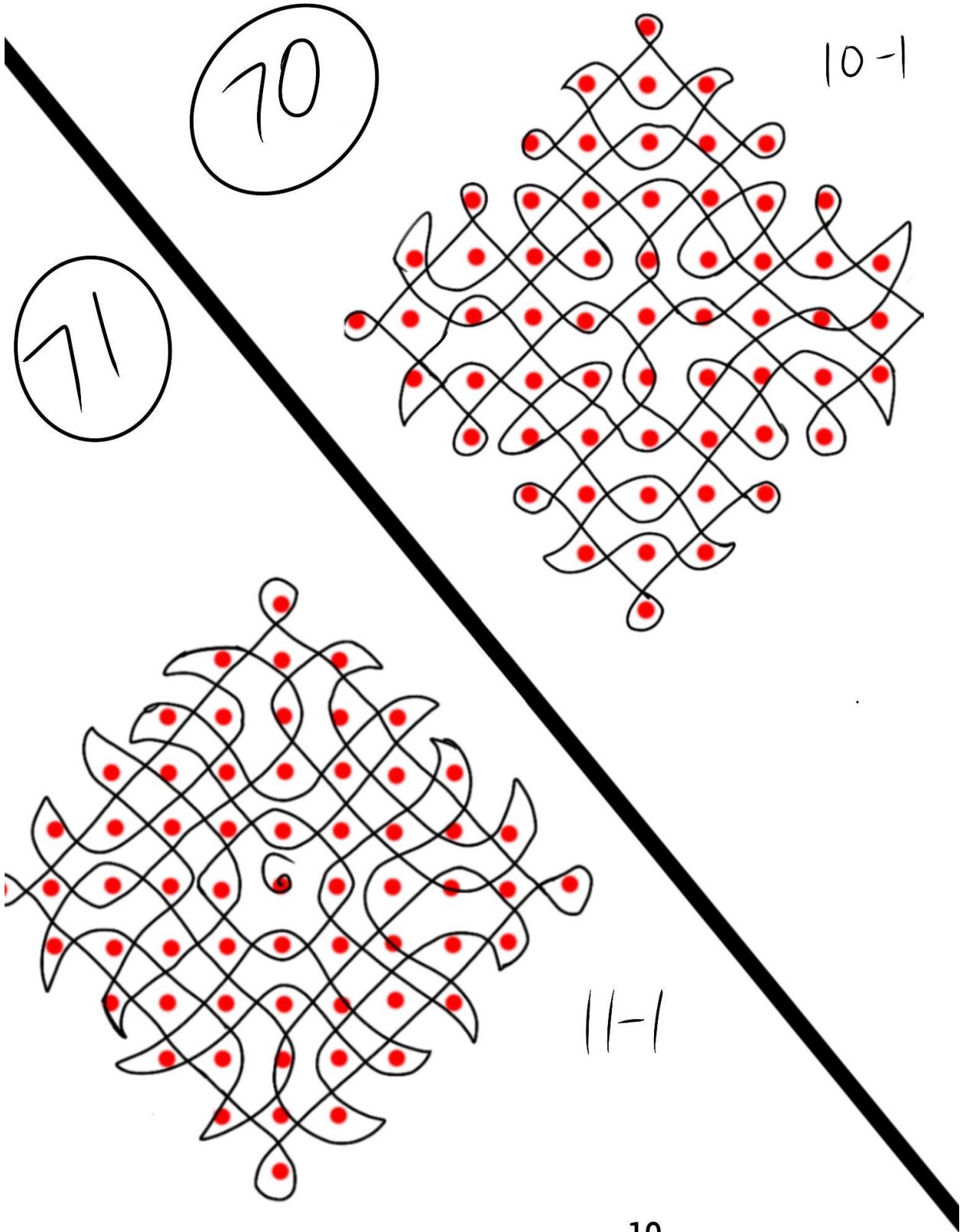
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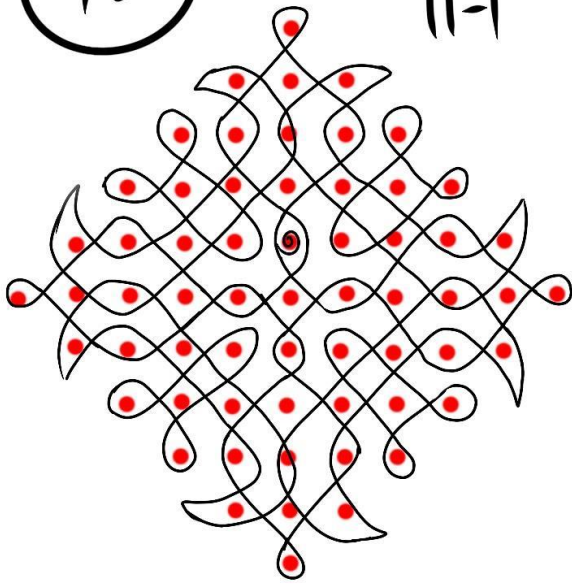
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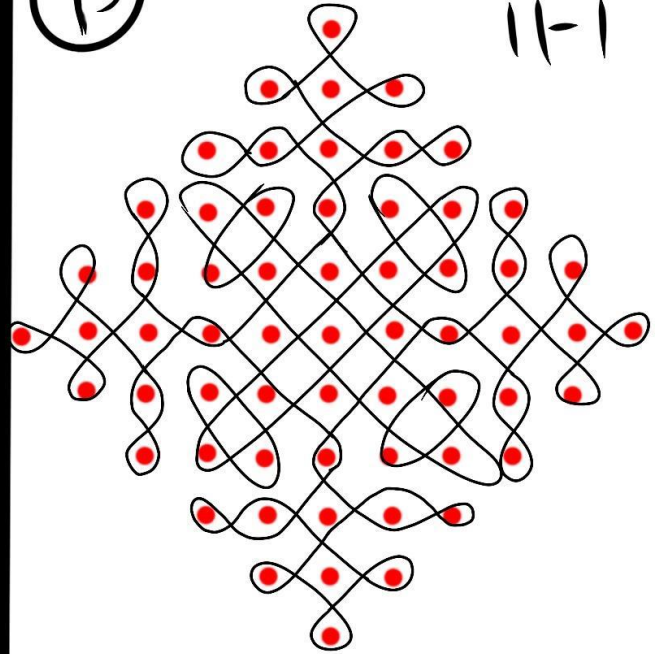
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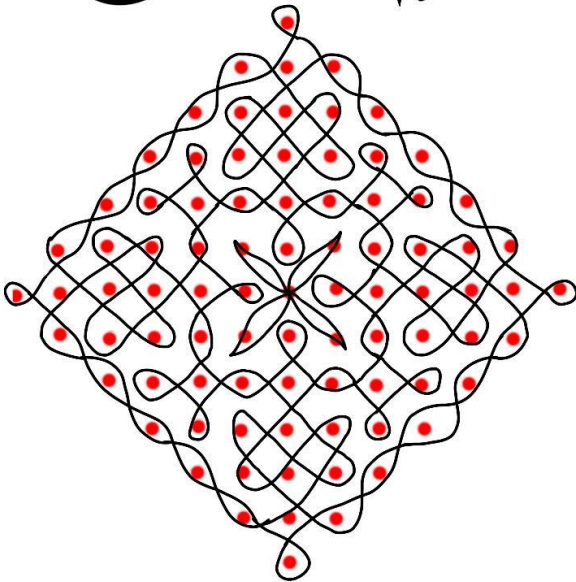
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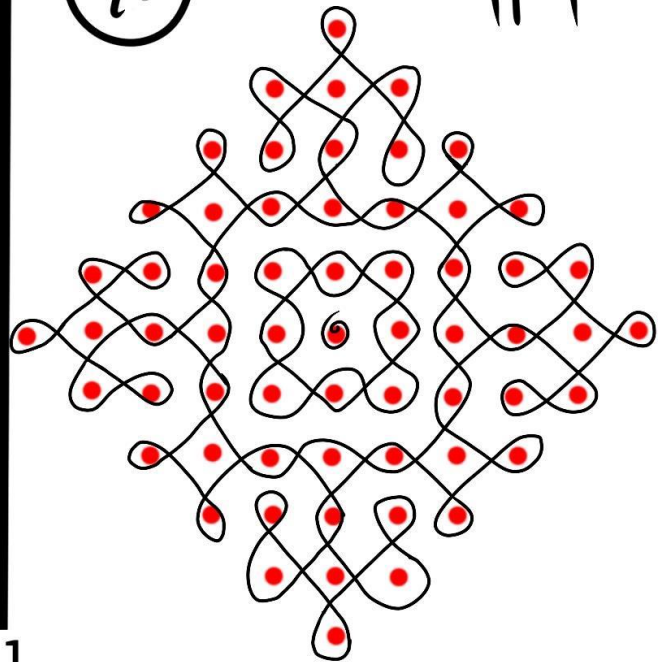
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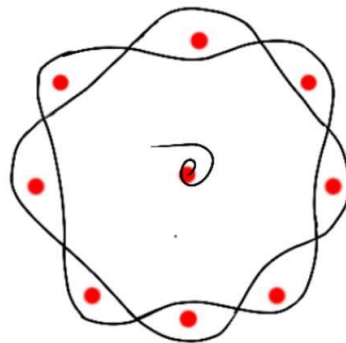
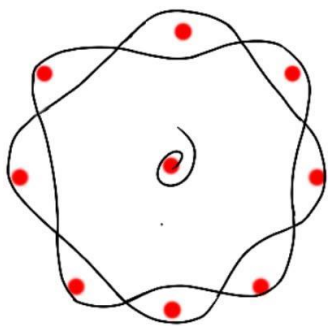
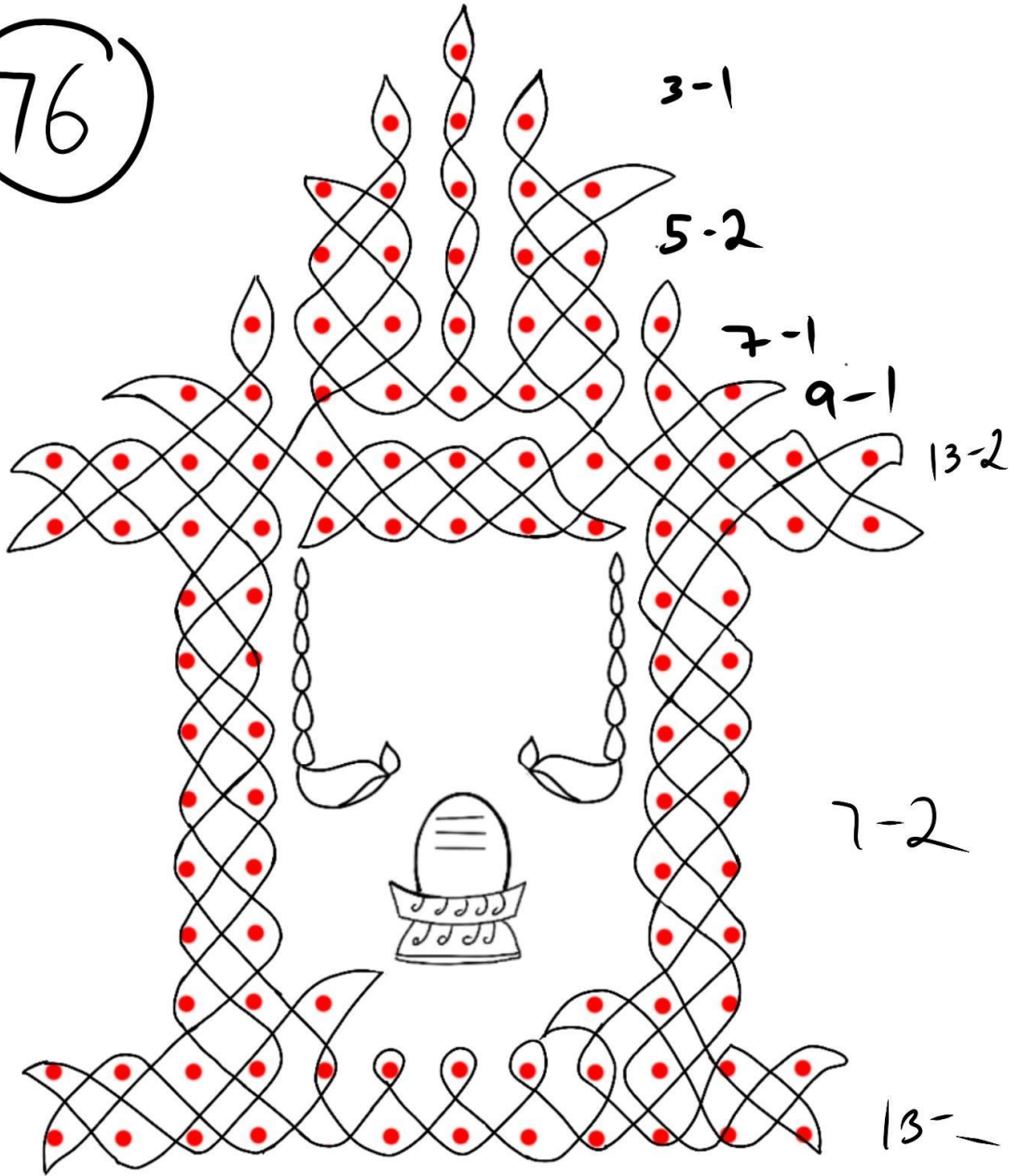
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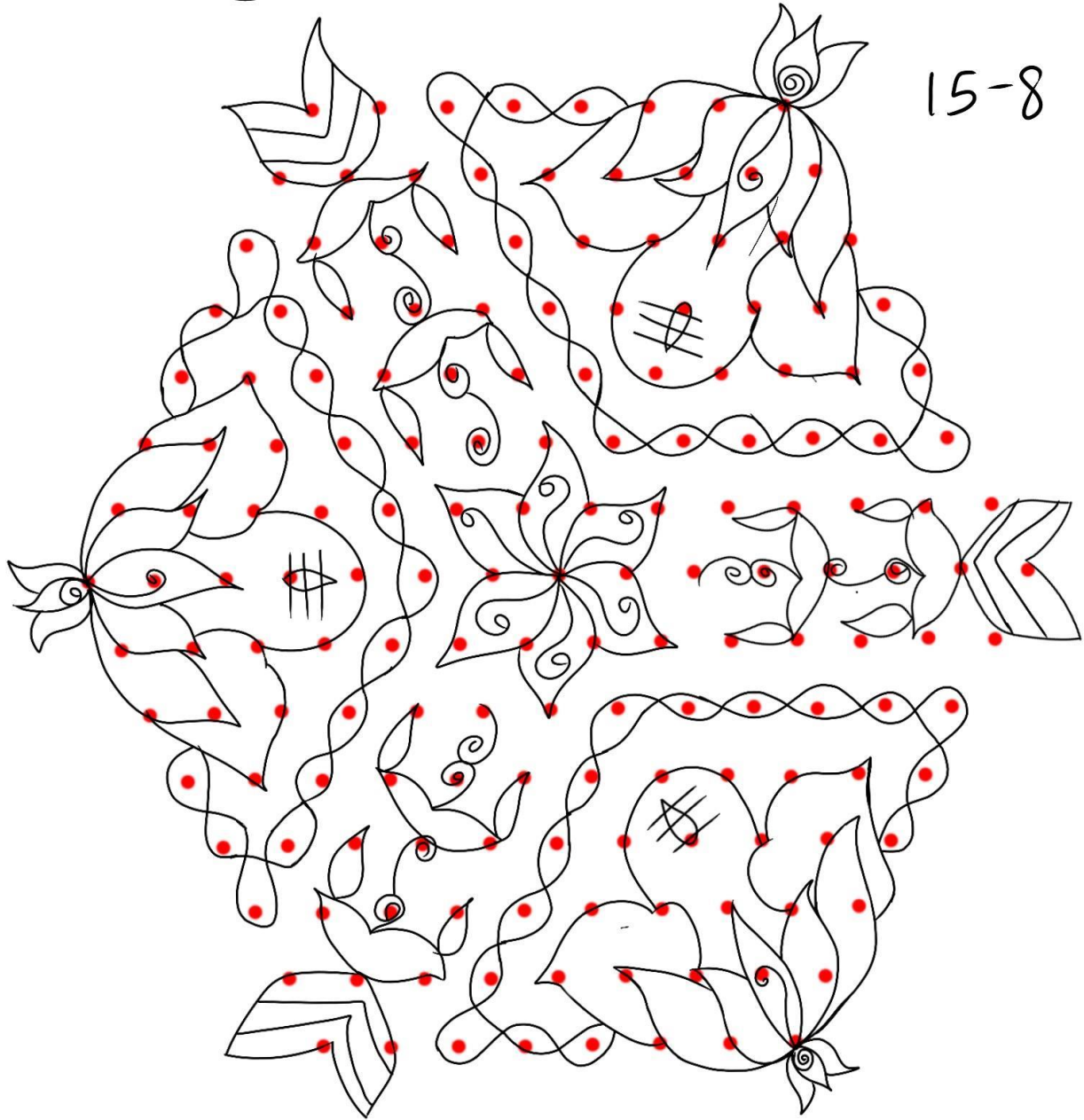
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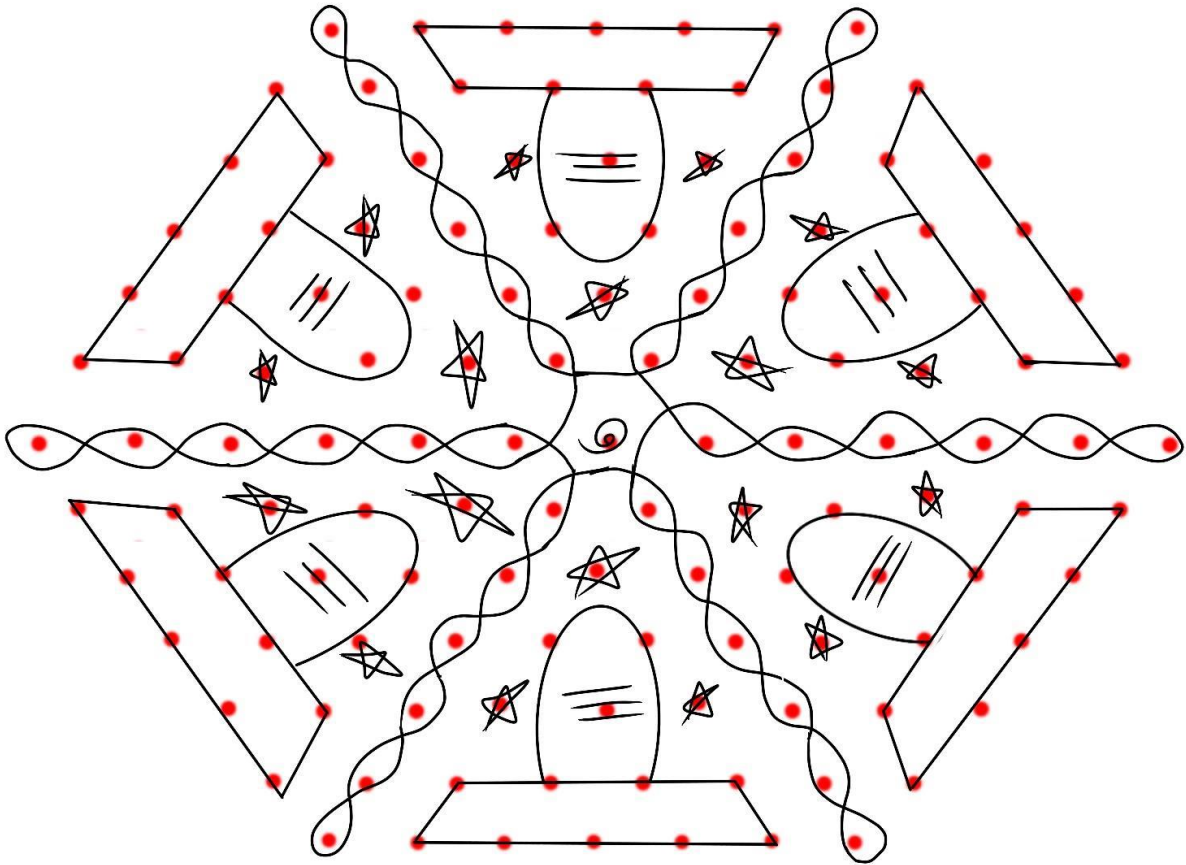
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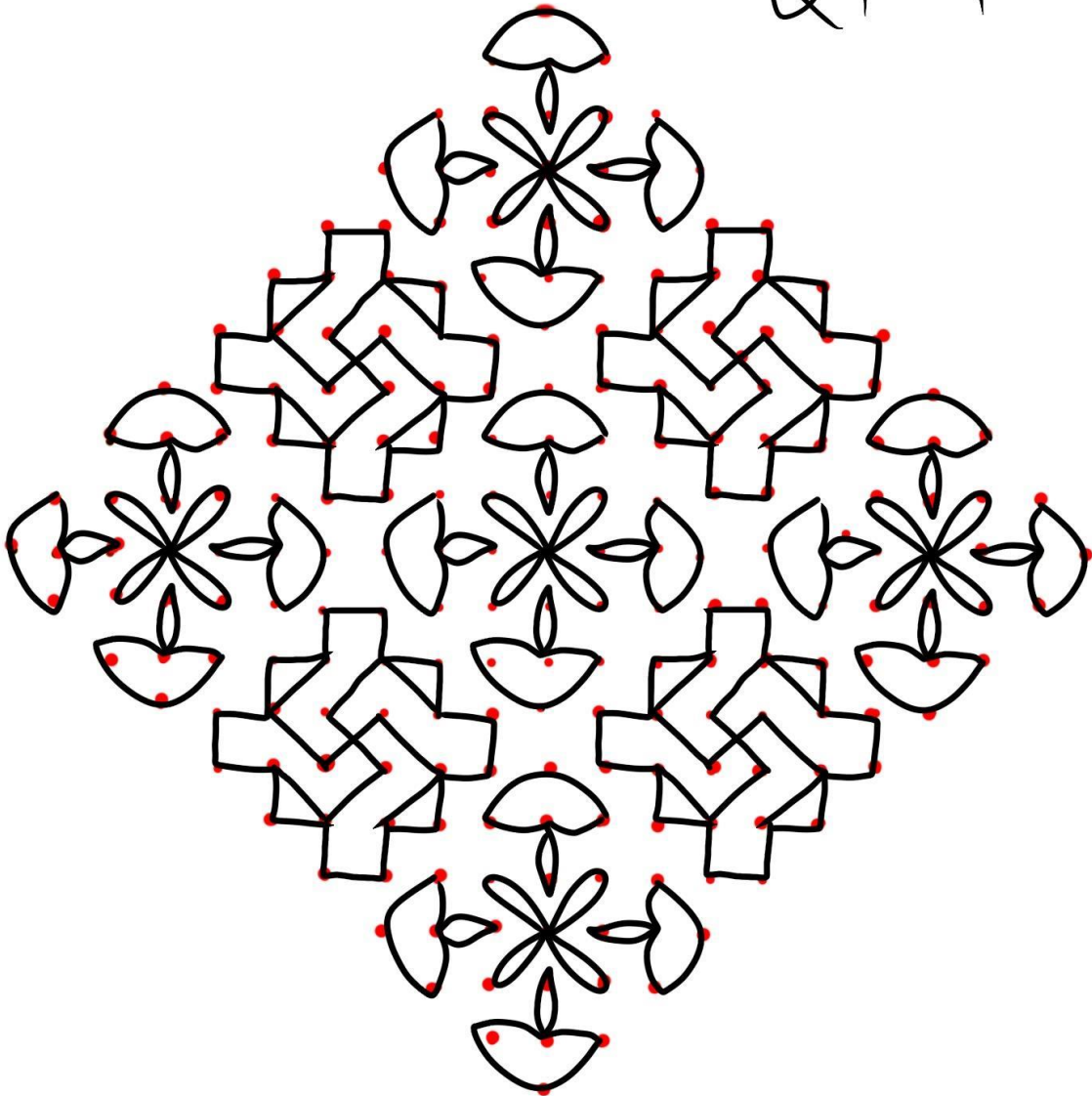
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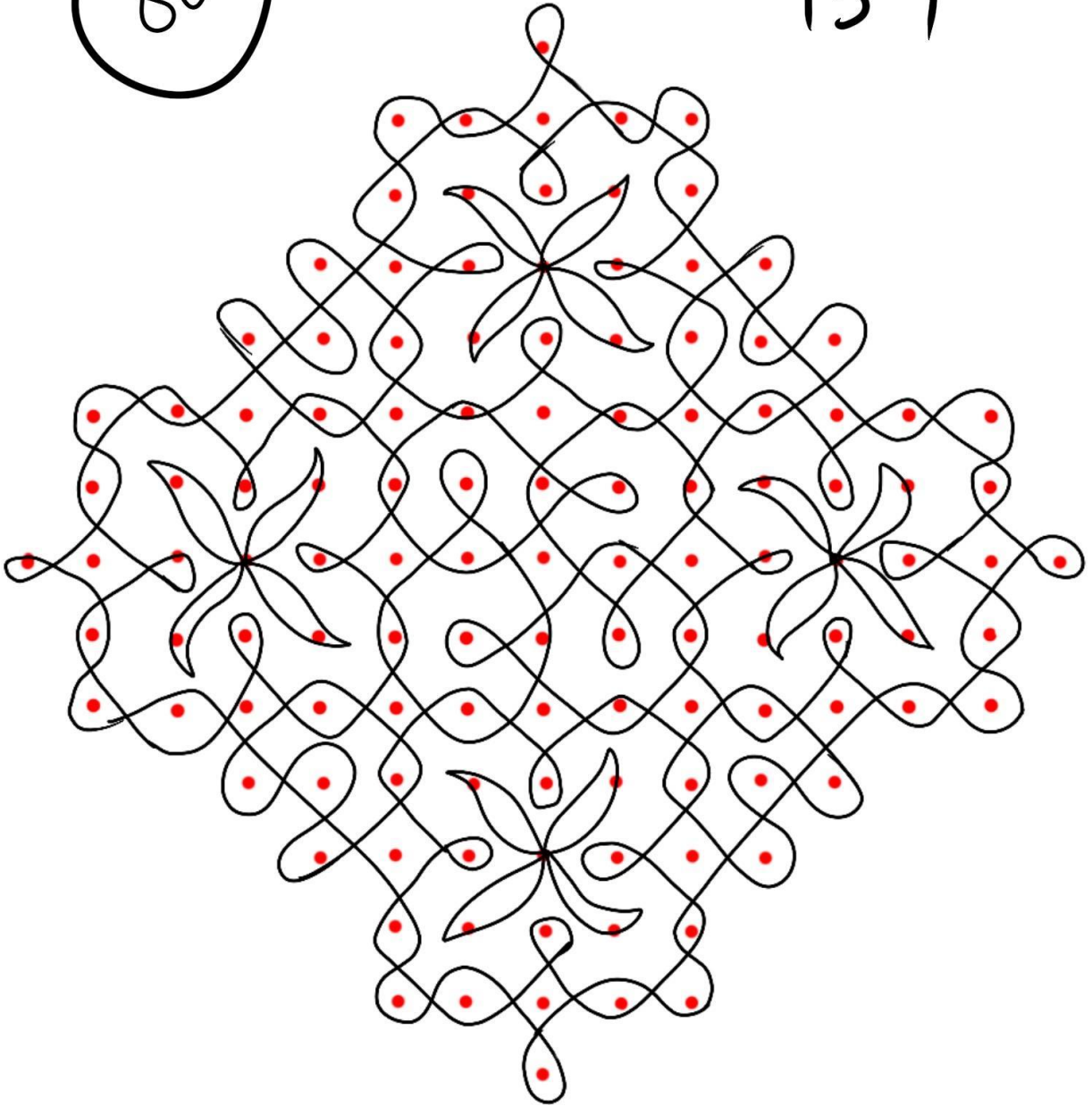
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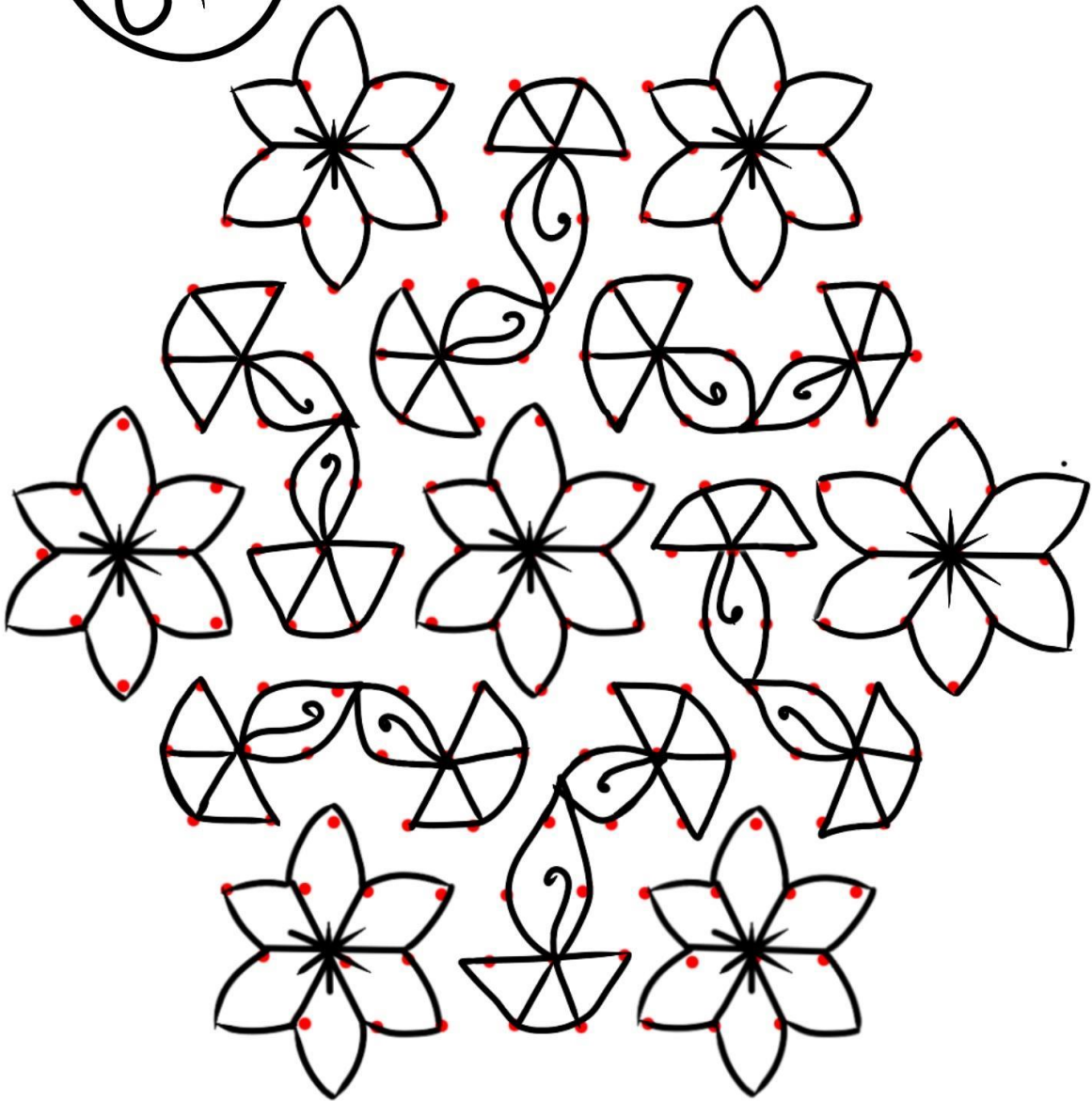
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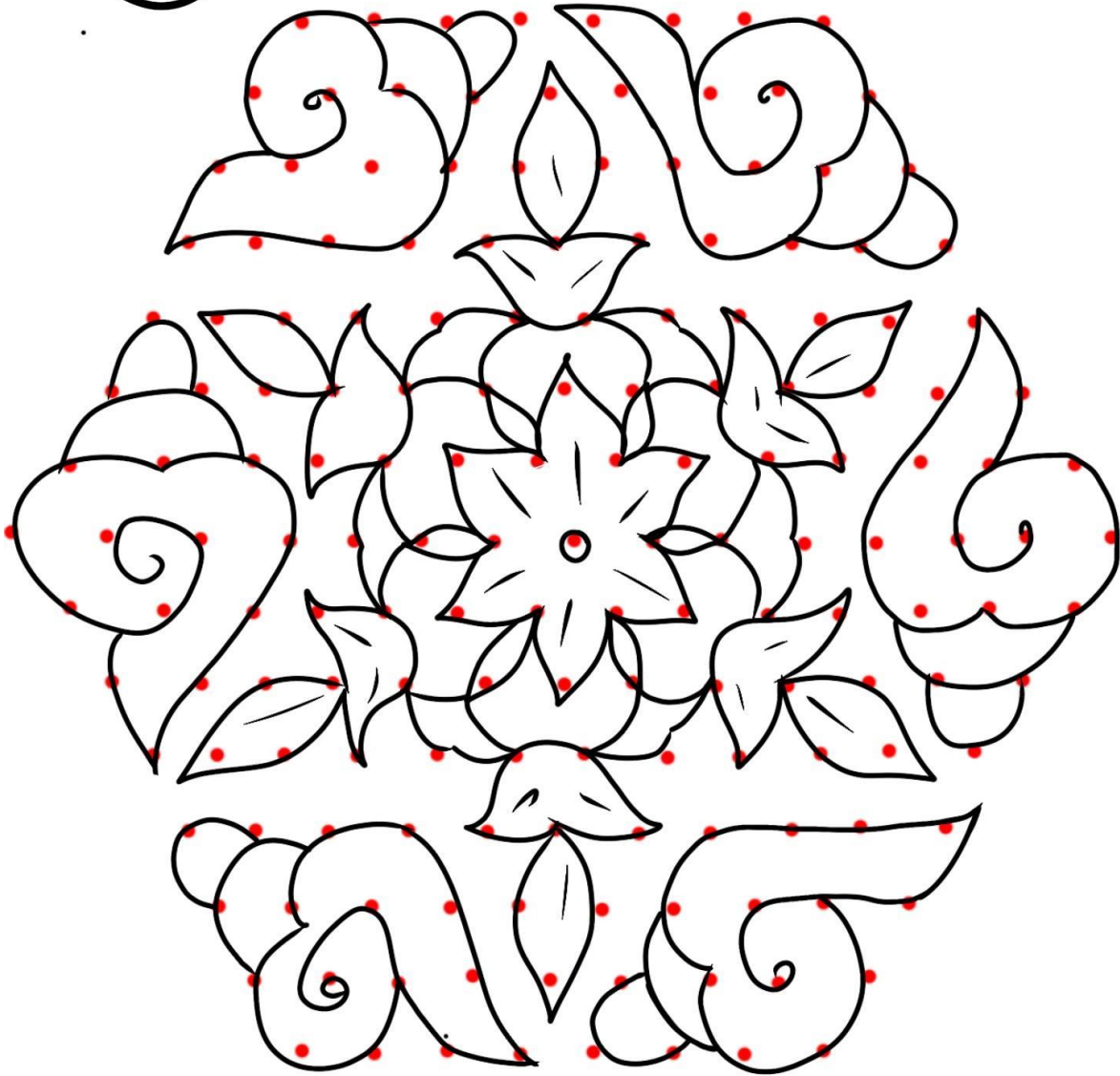
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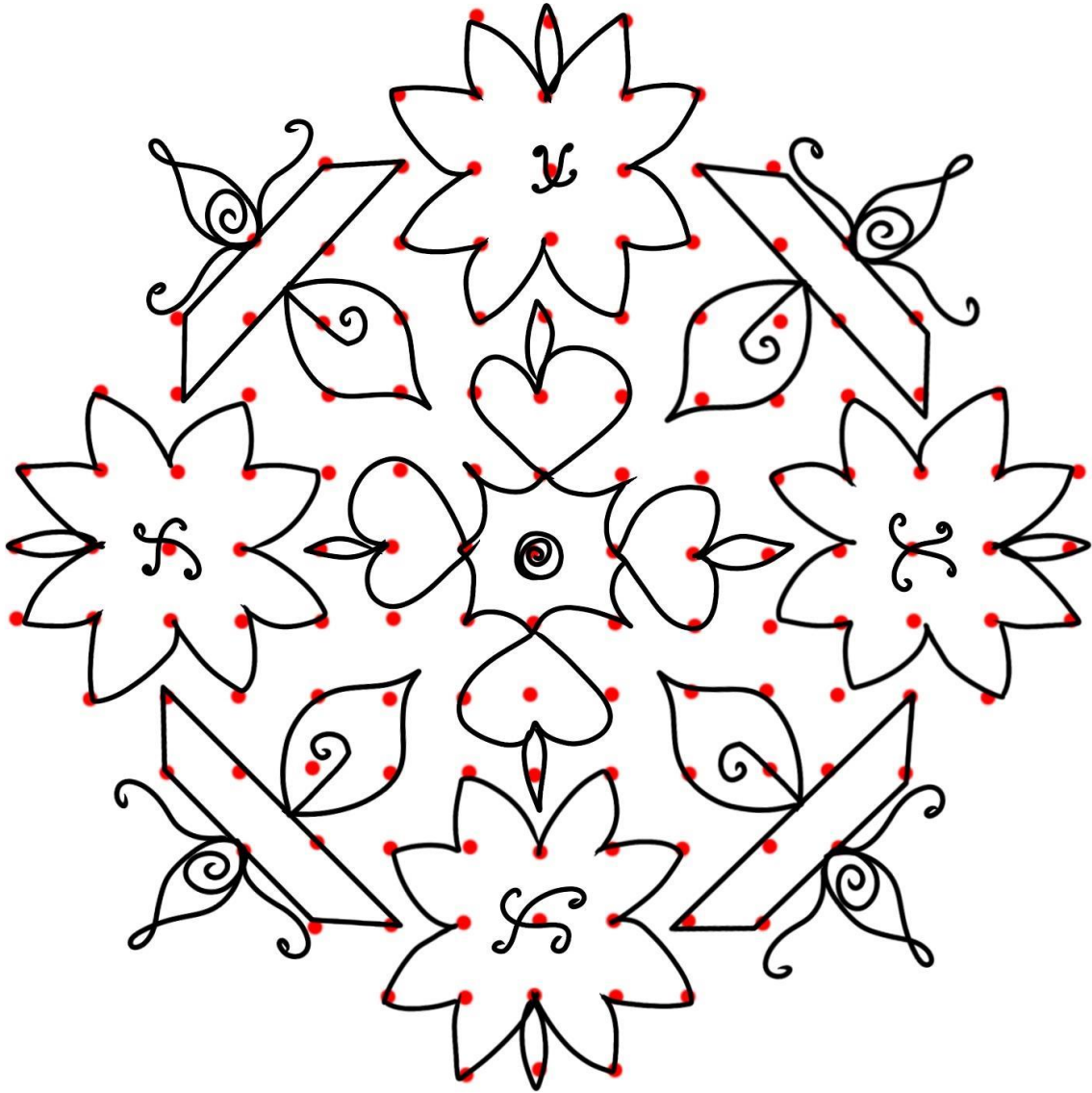
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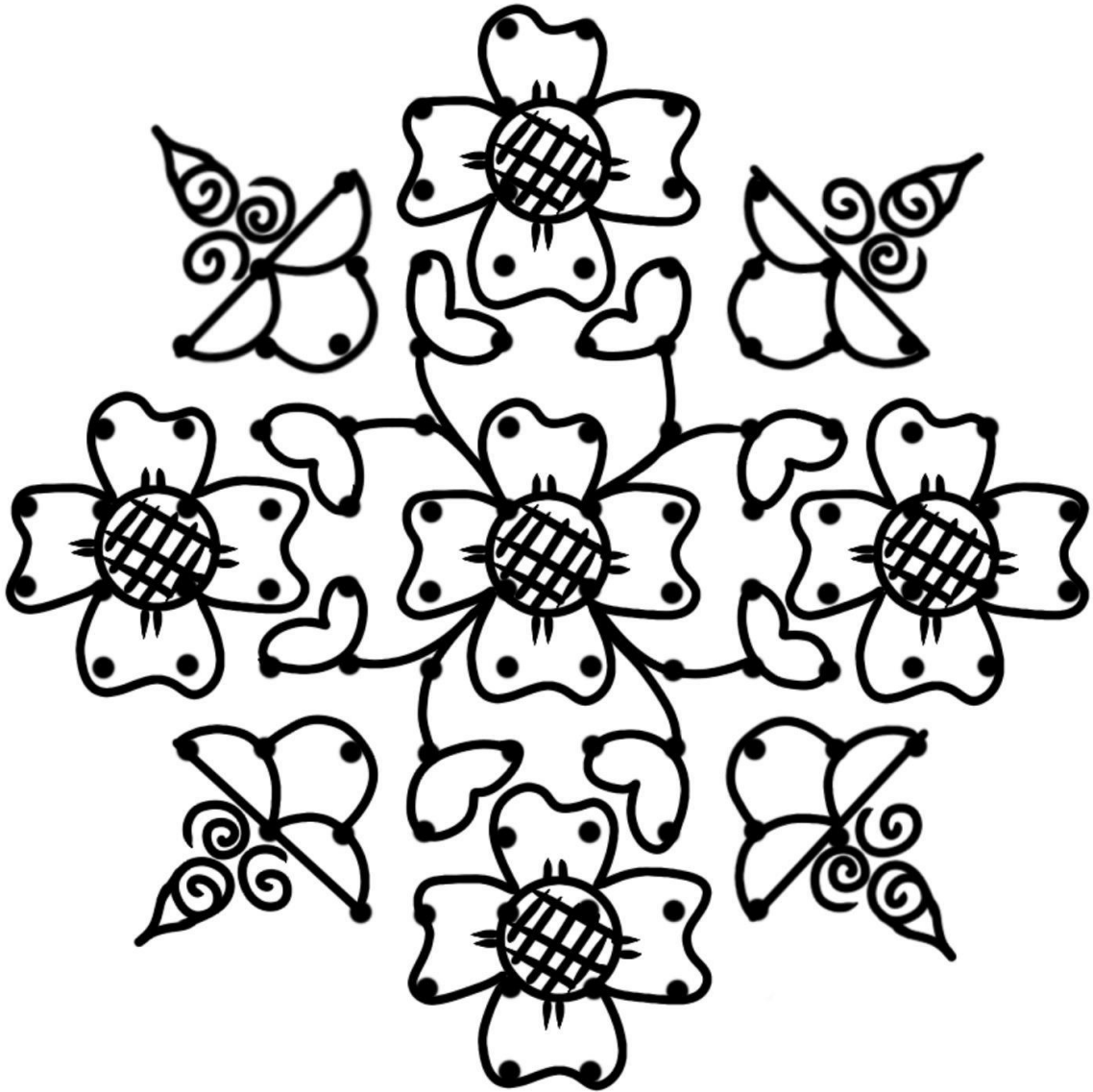
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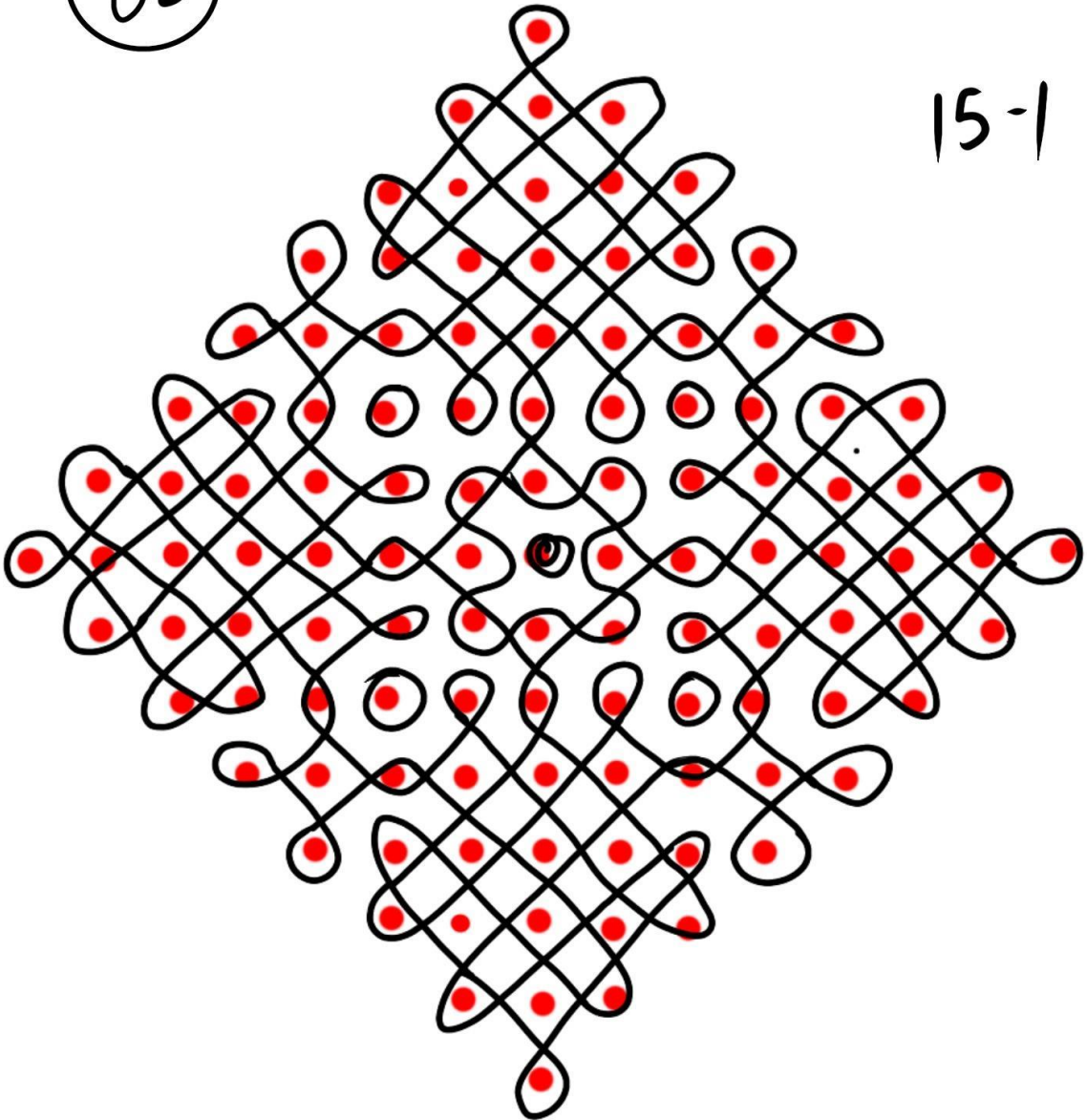
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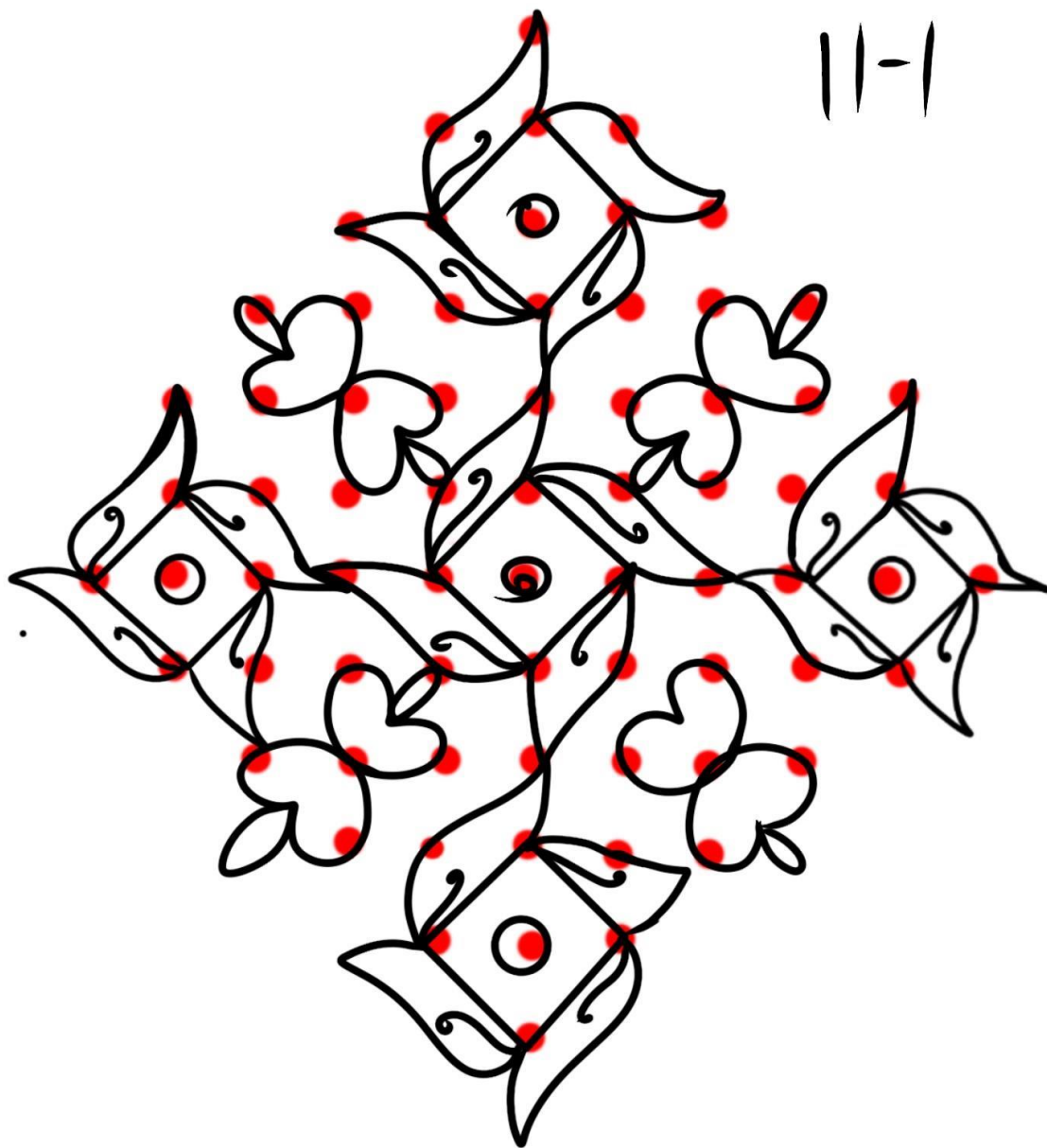
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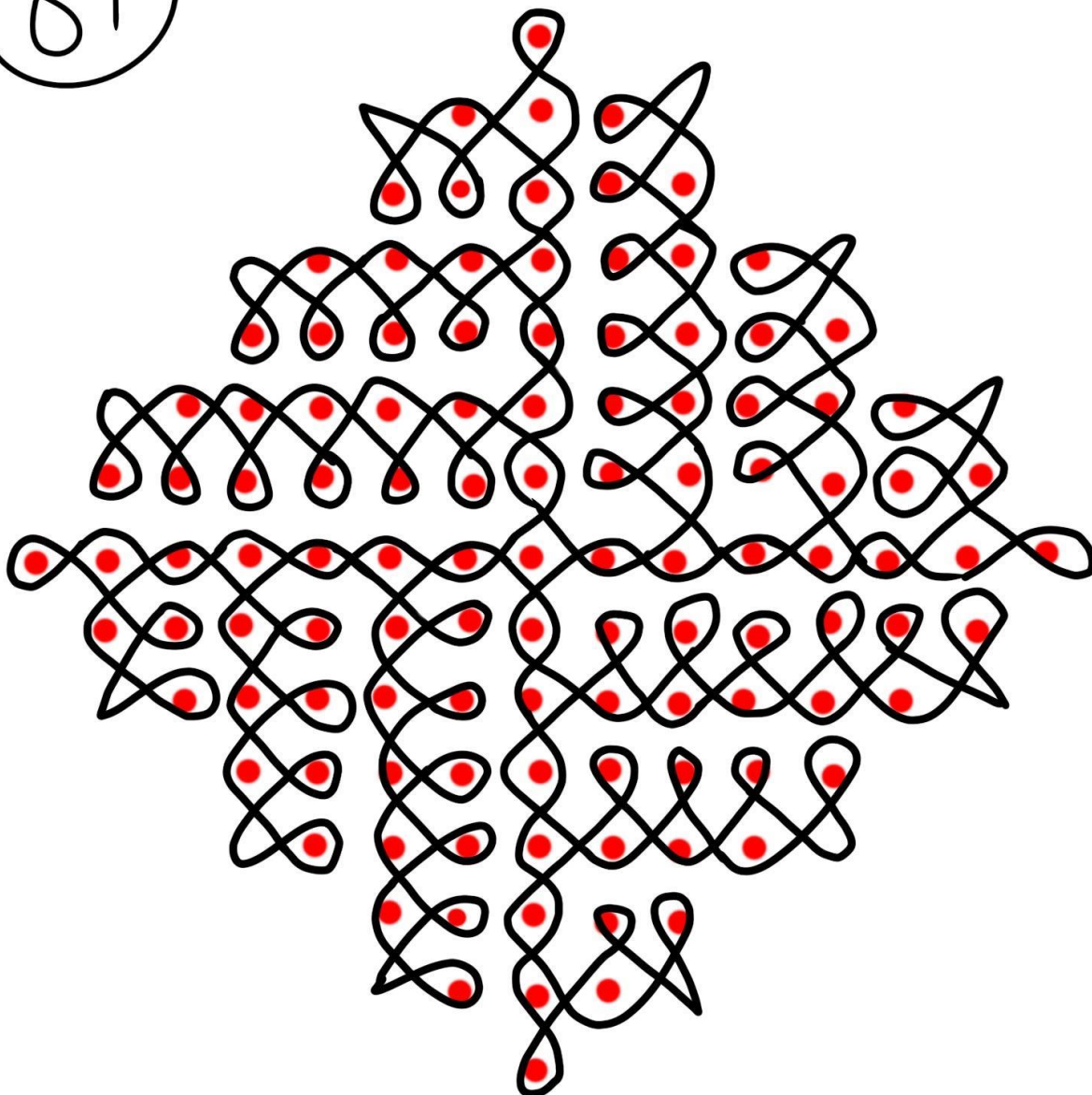
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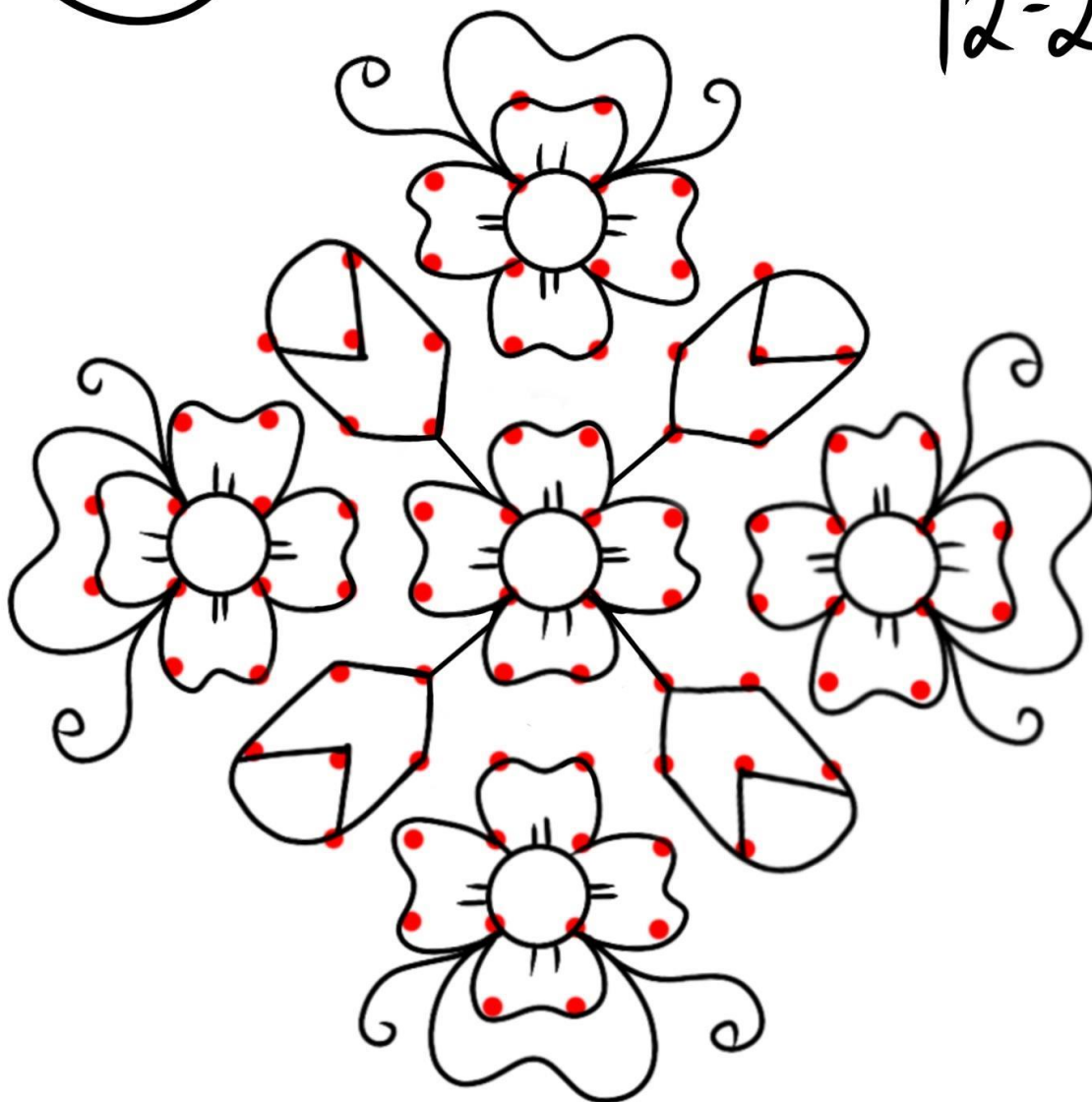
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15-1



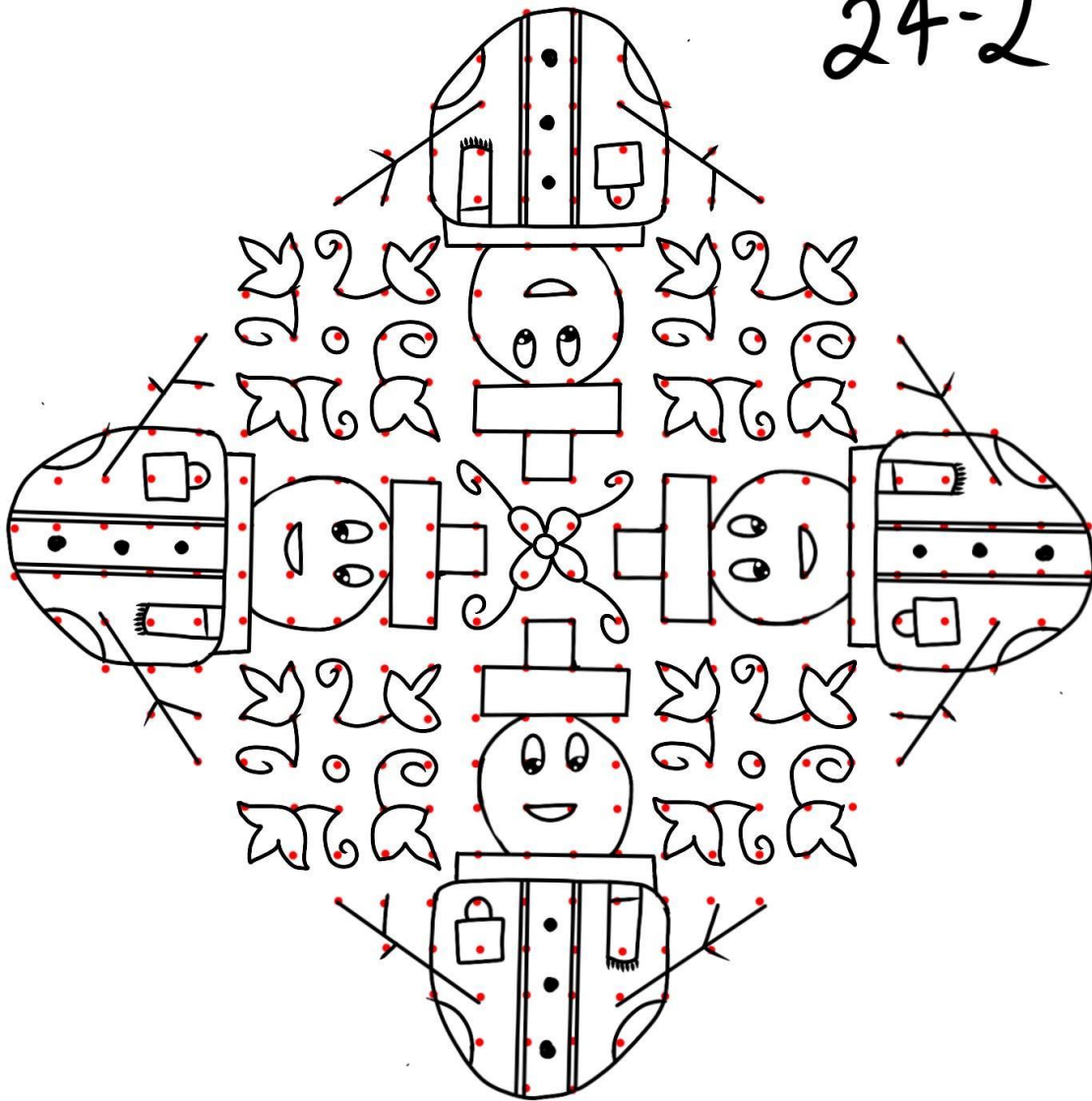
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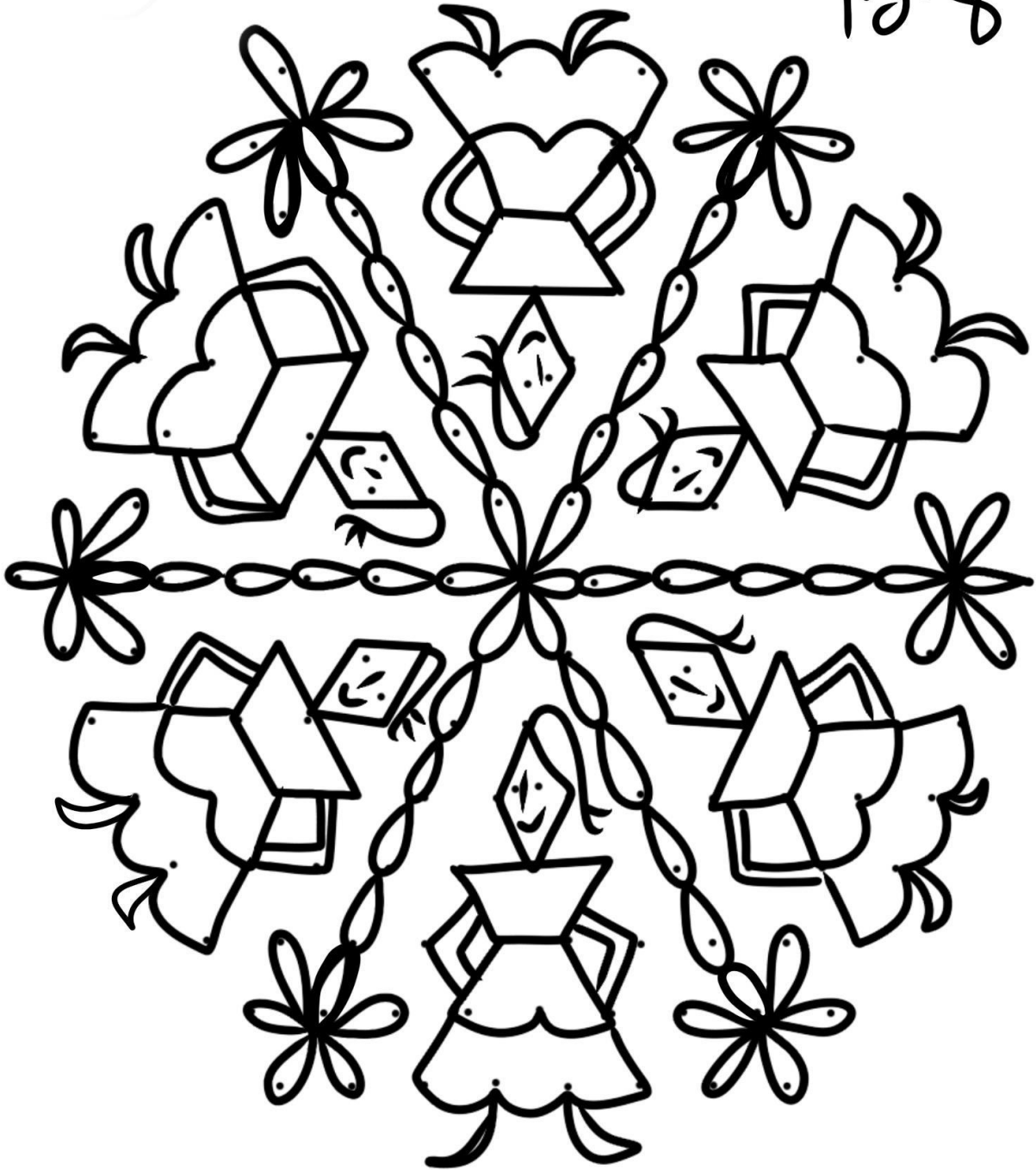
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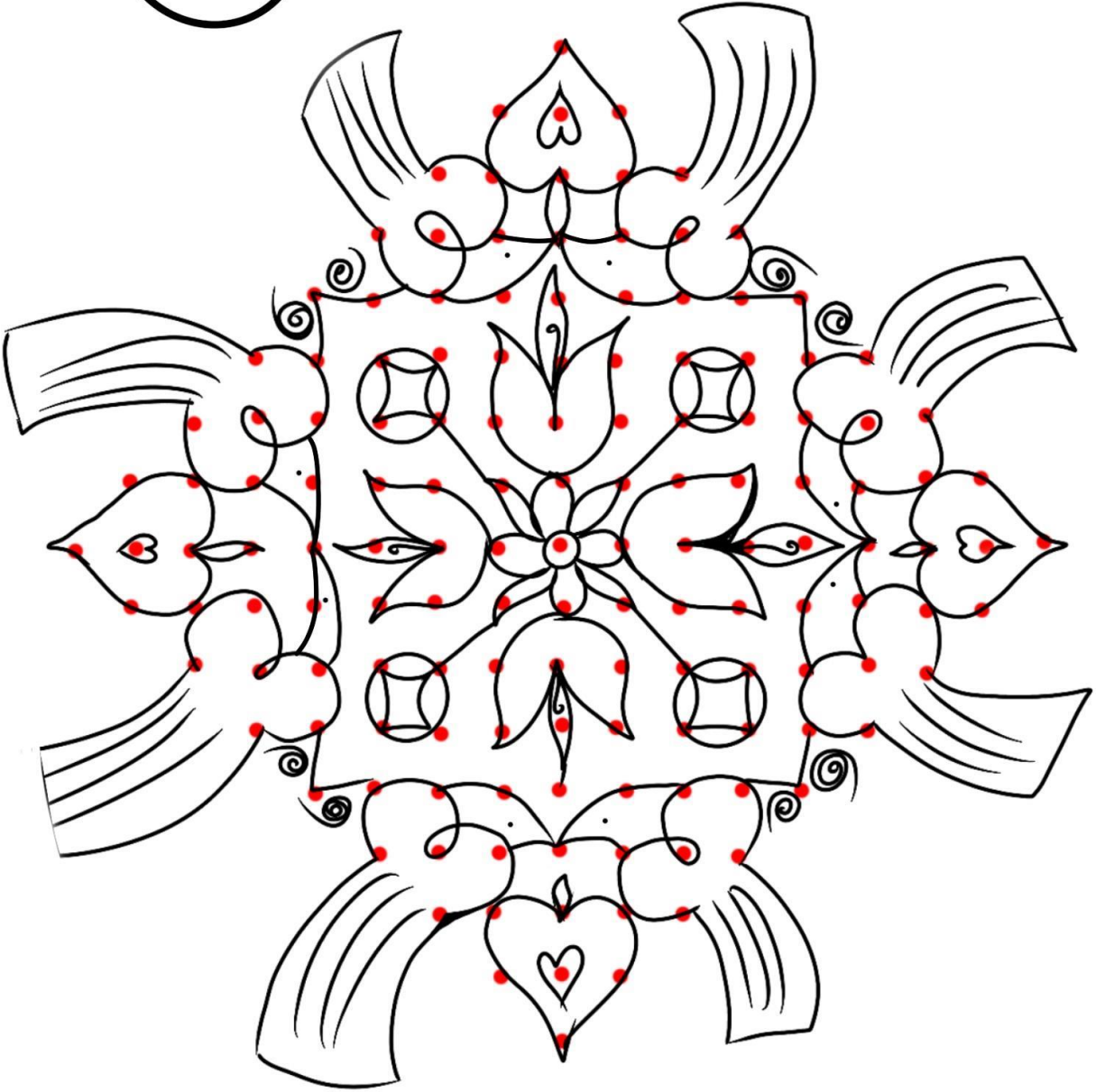
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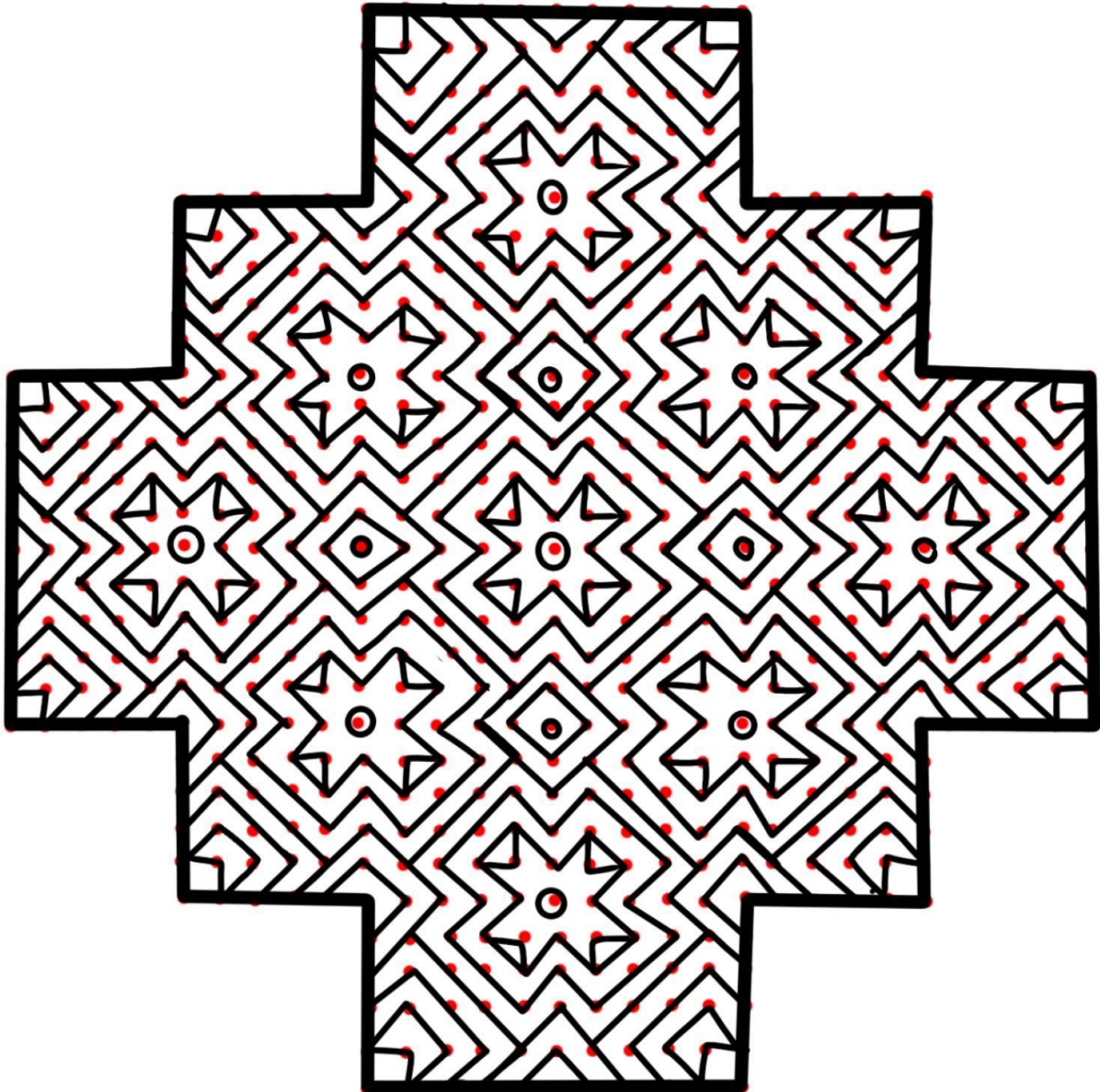
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17-1

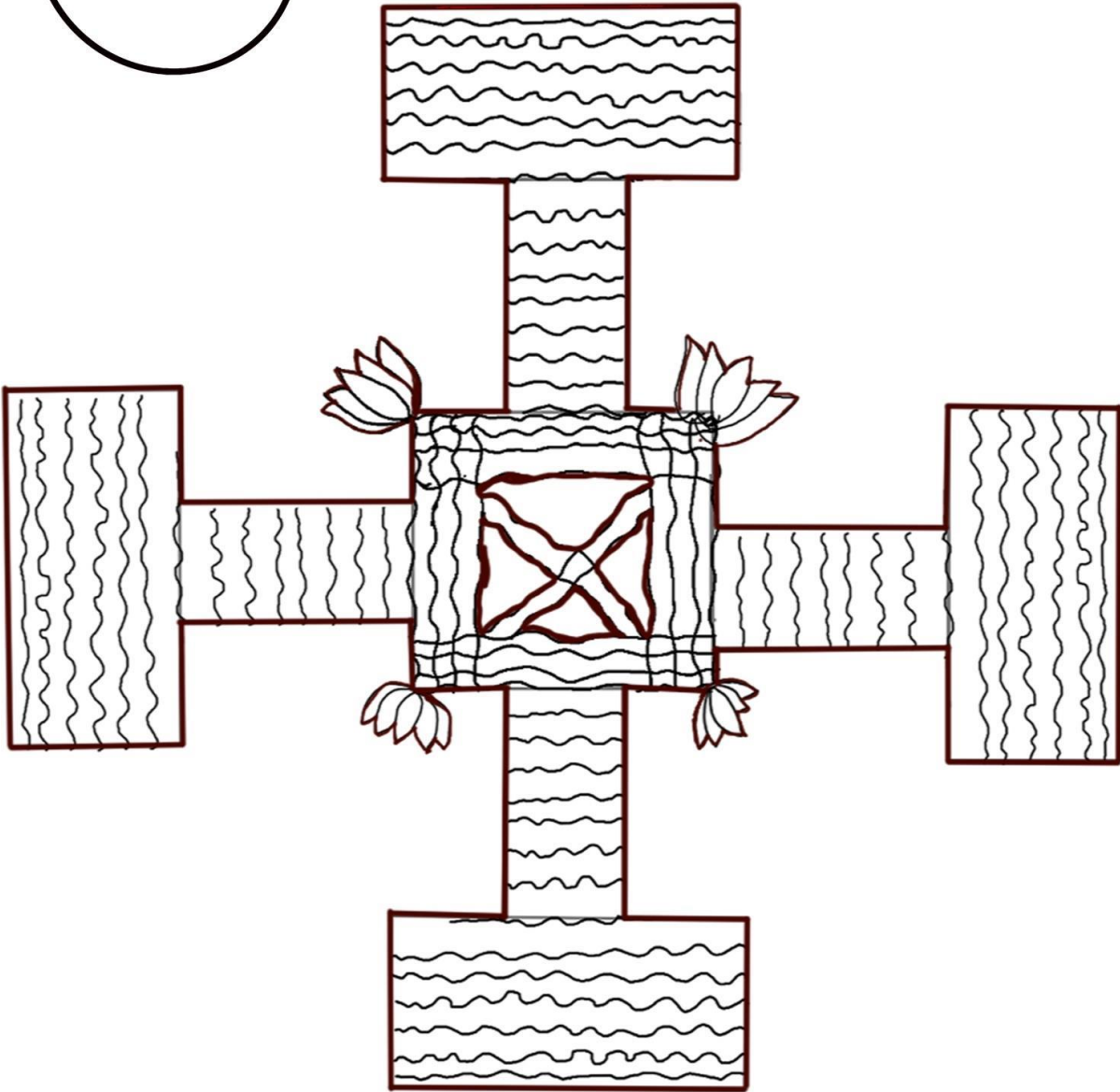


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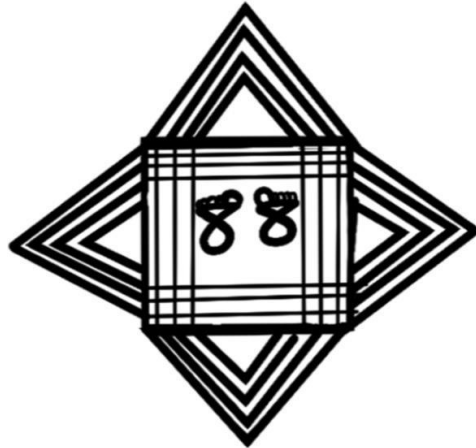
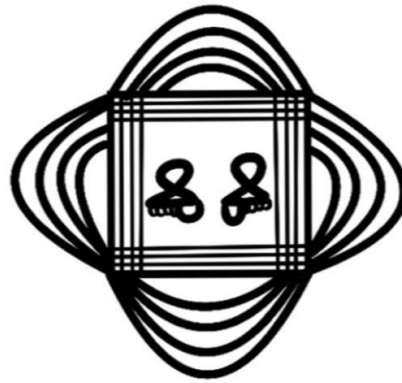
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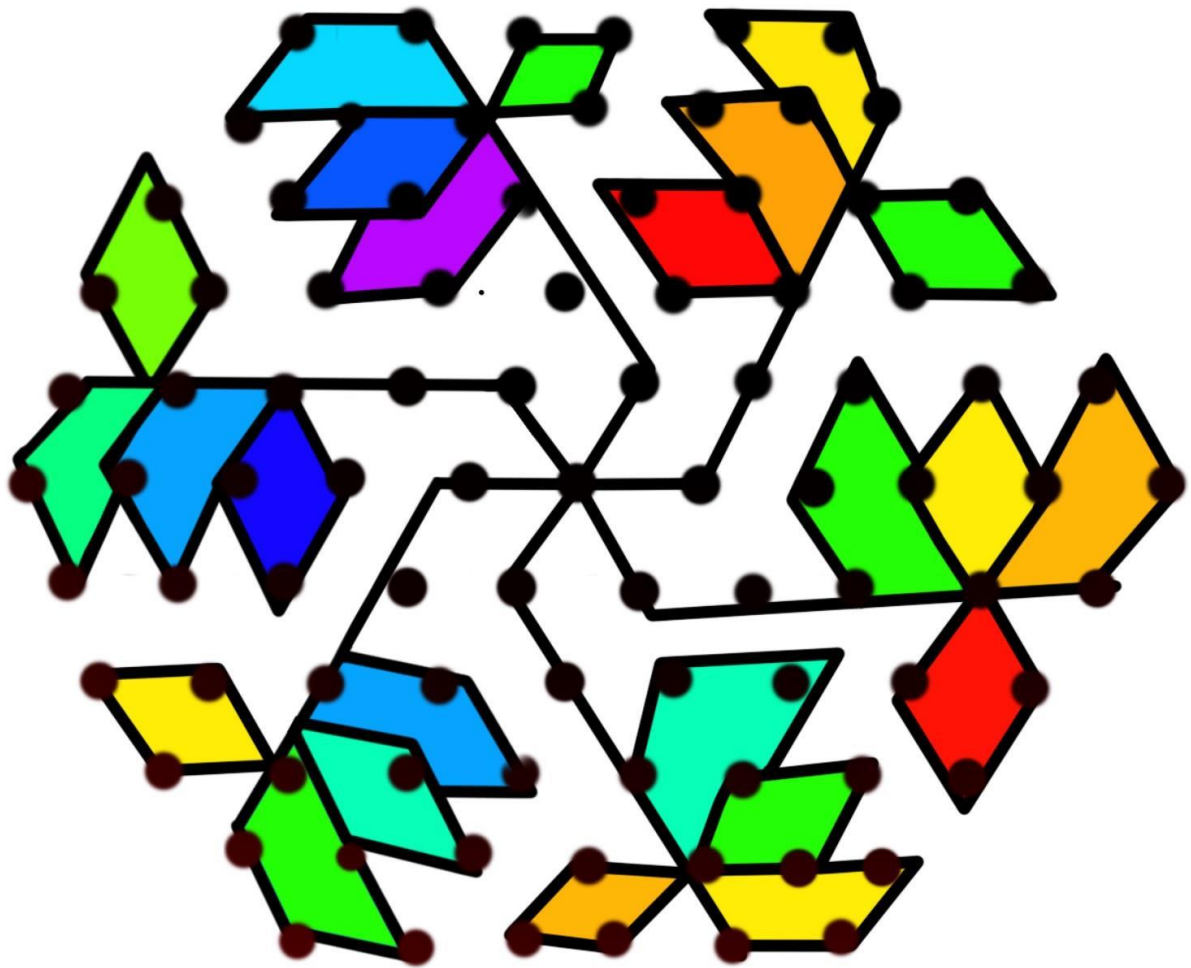
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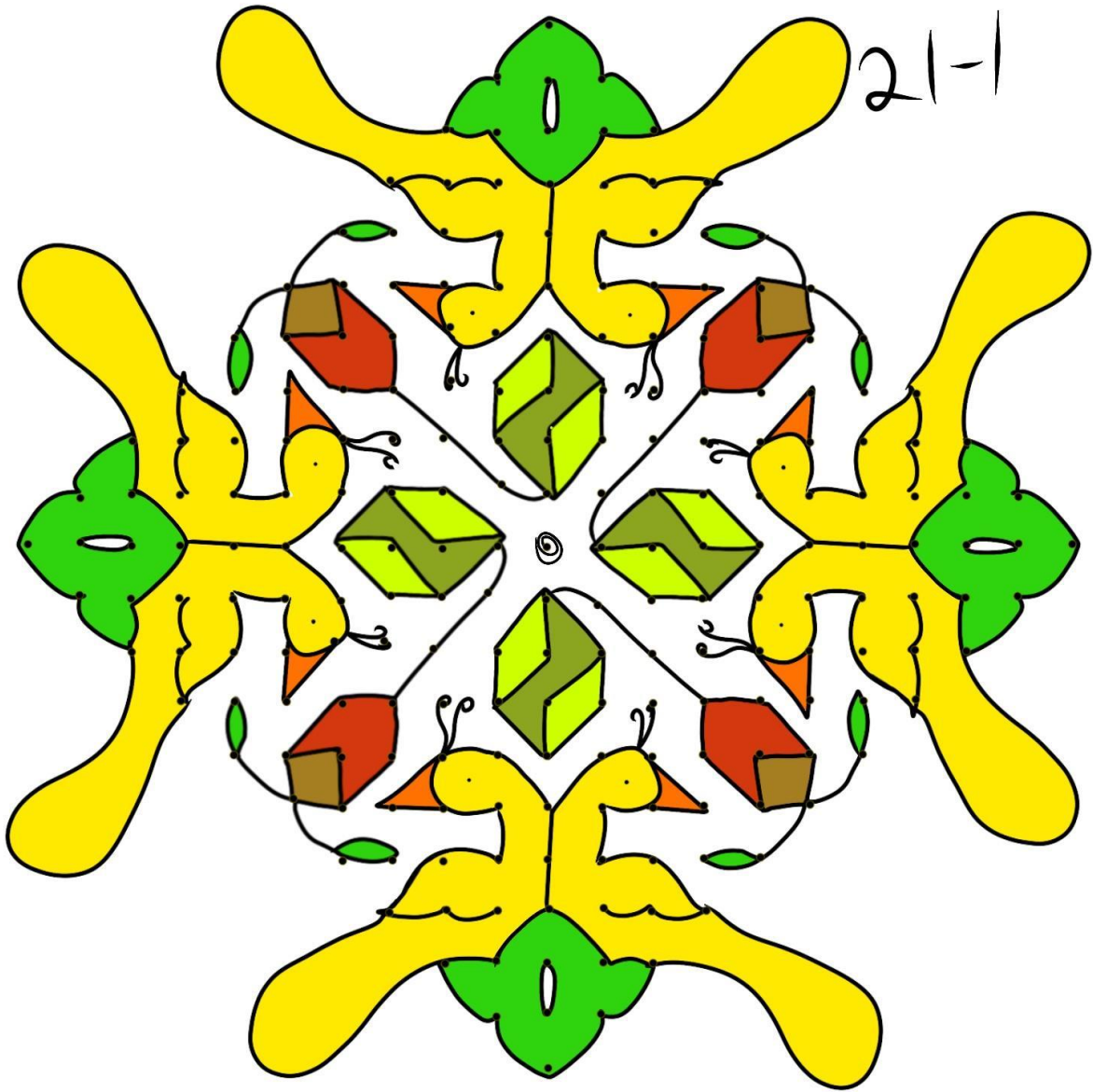
Chapter 4: Rangoli

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11-6



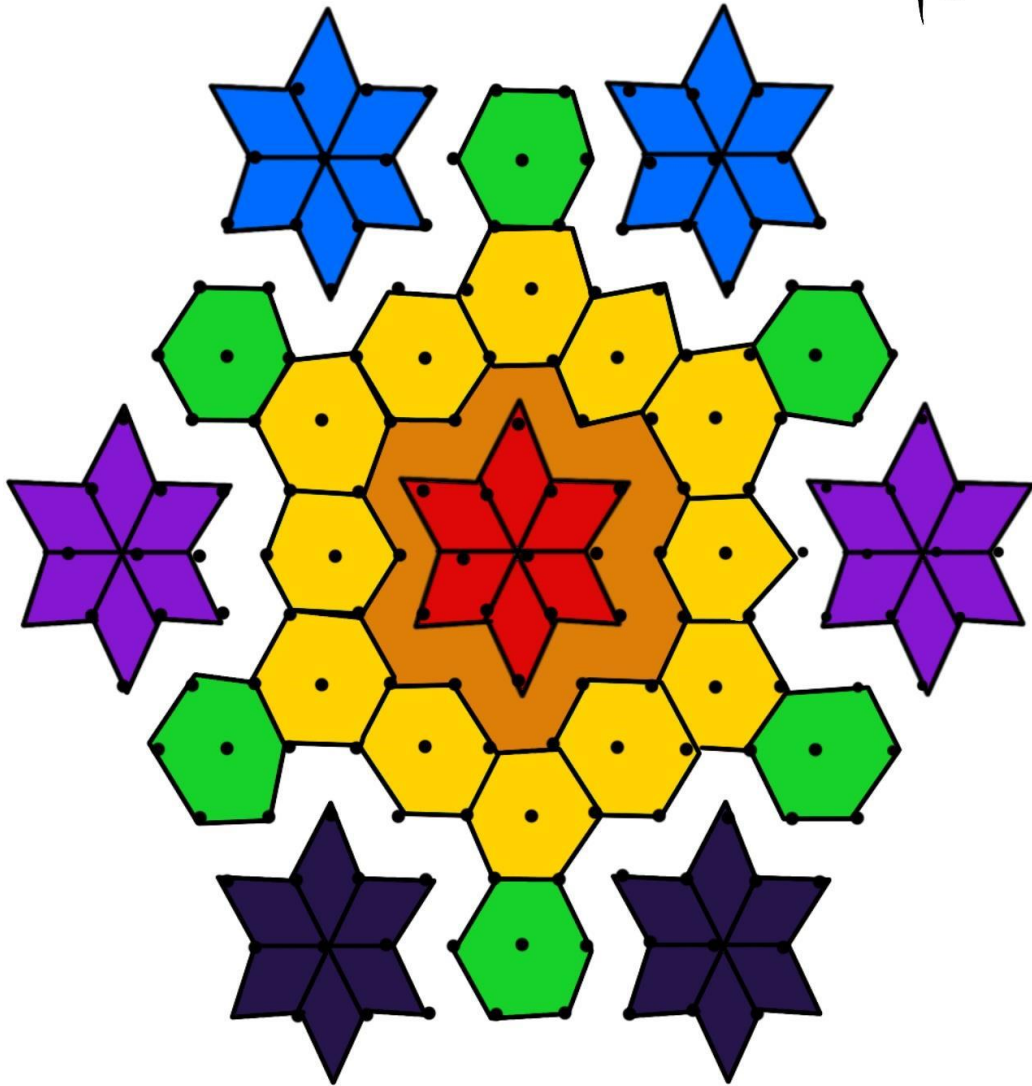
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21-1

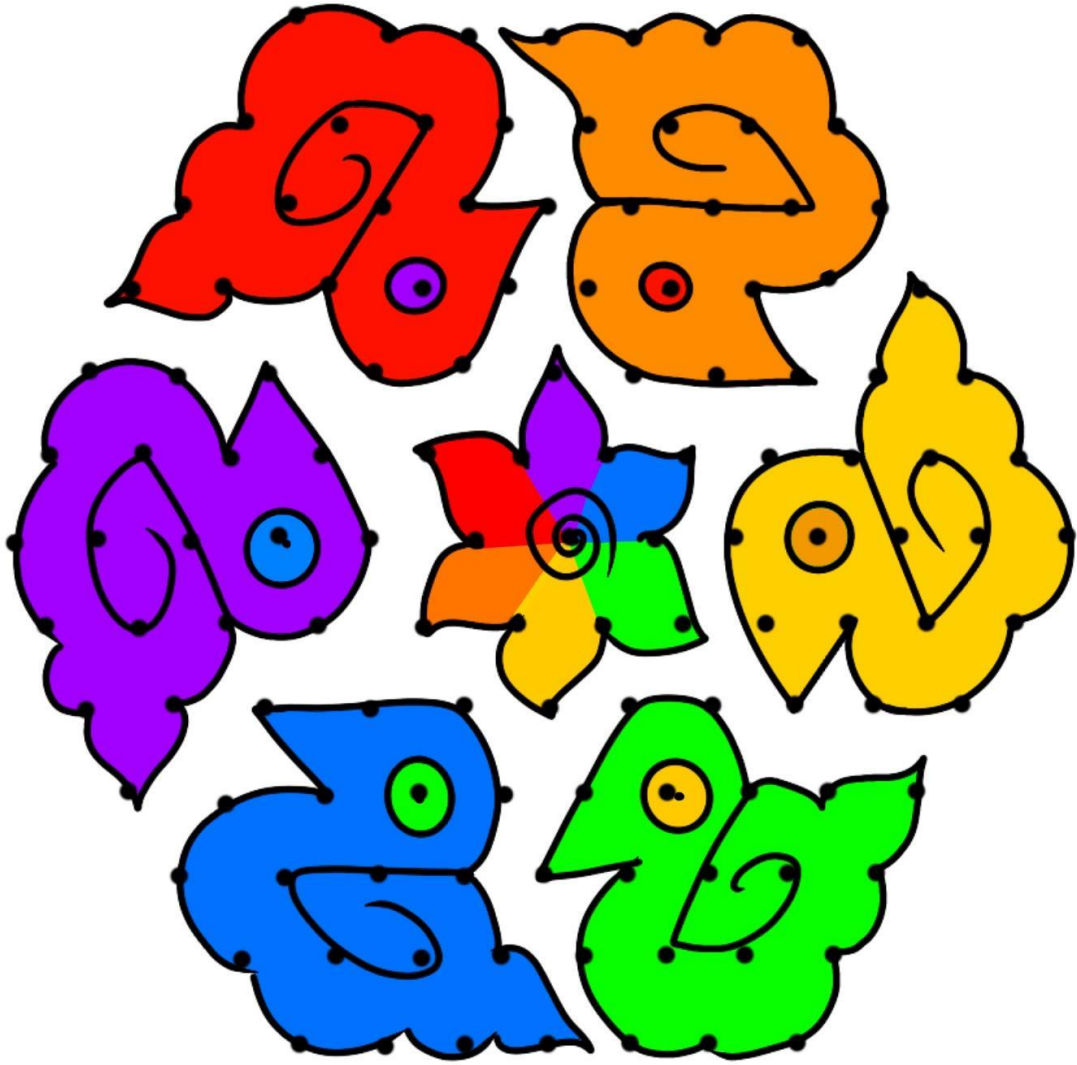
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15-8



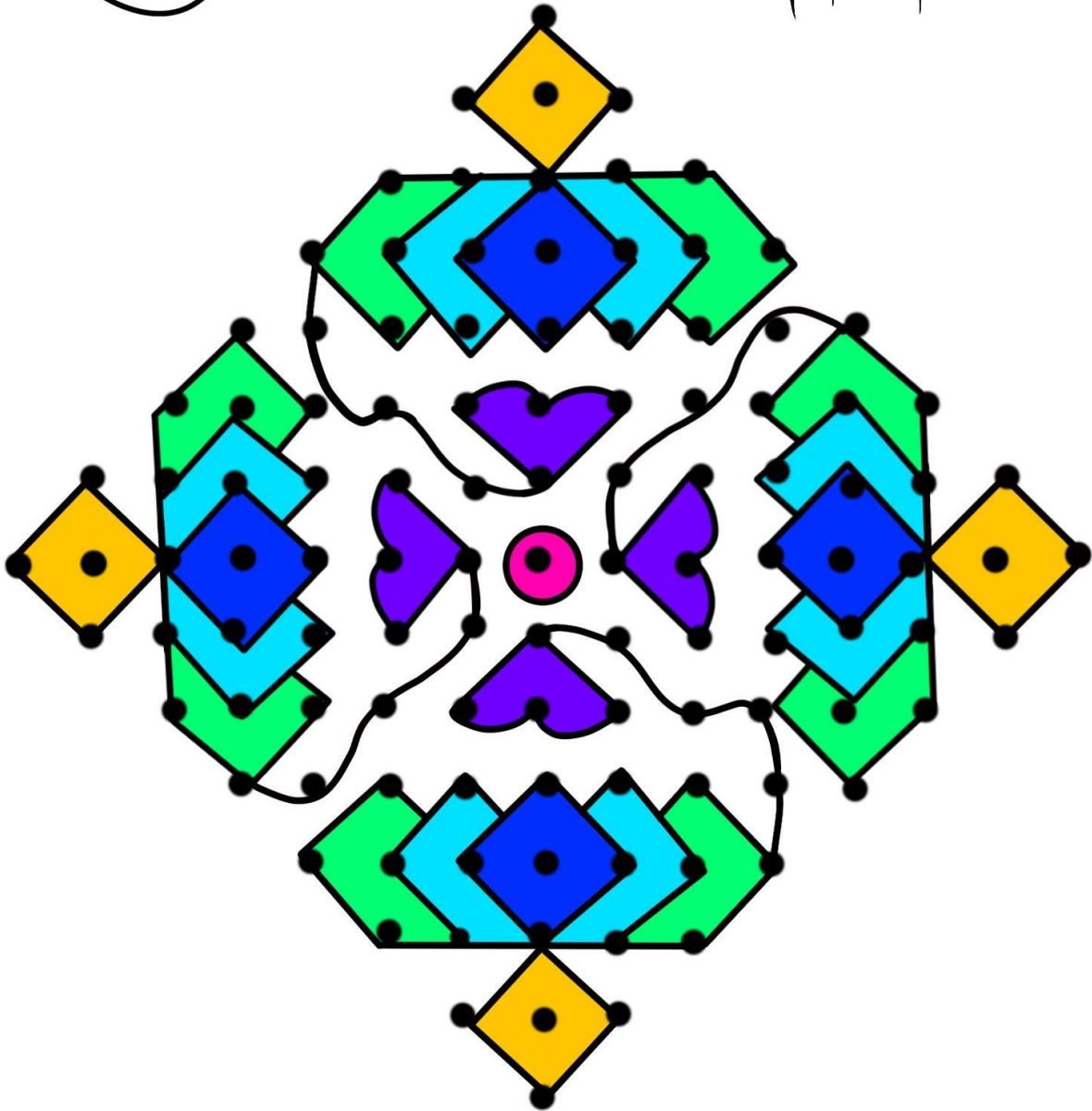
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13-7



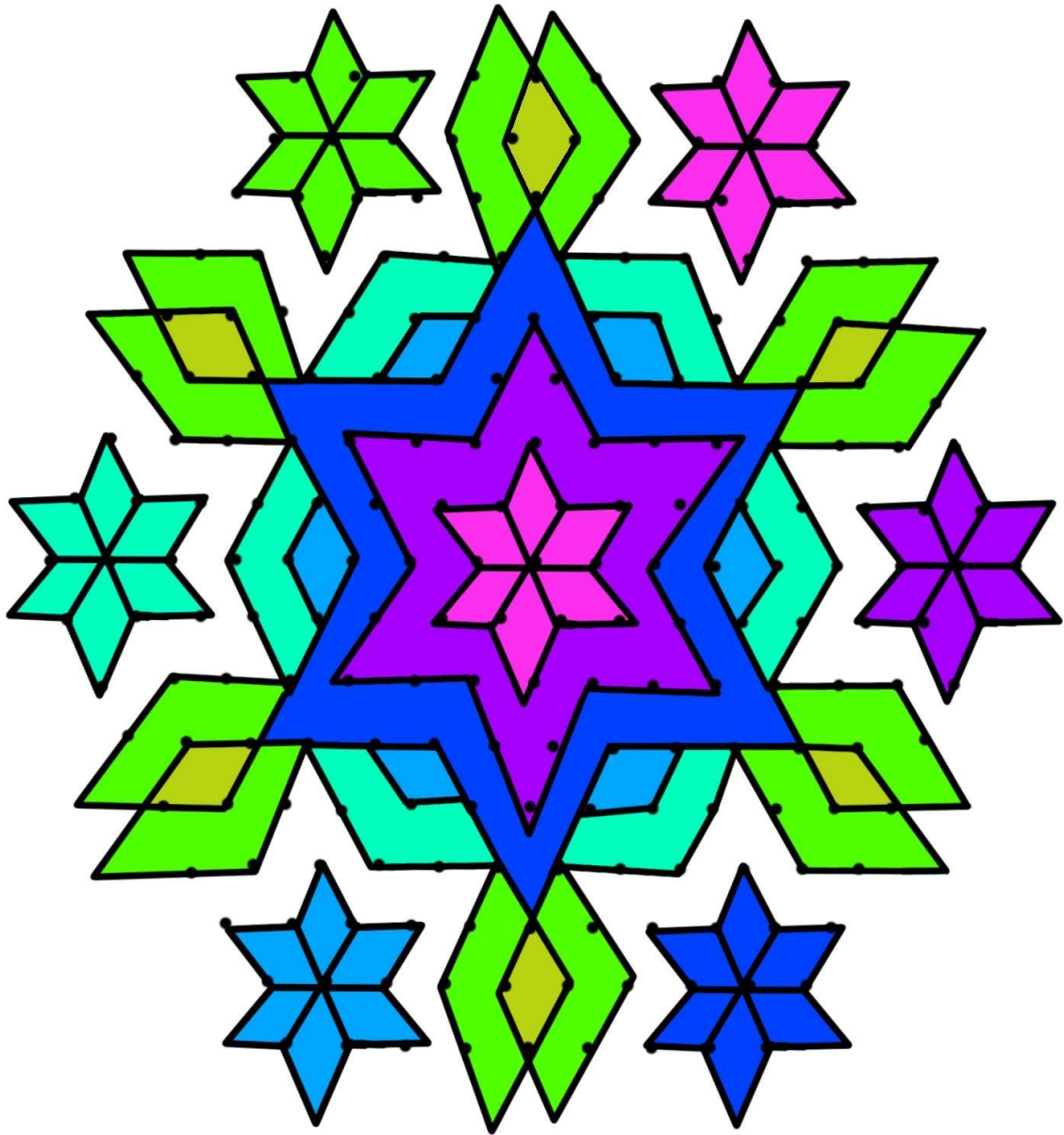
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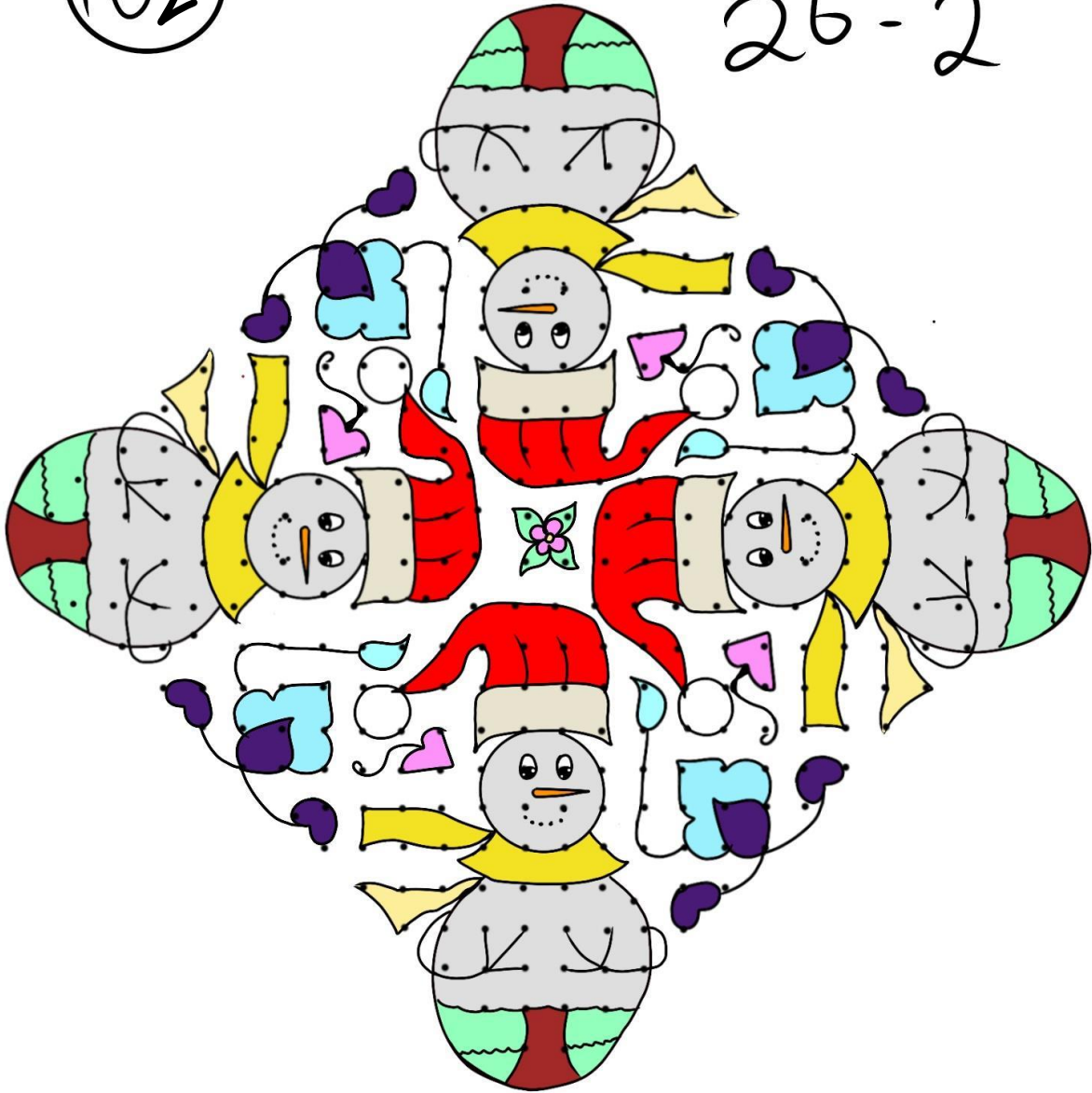
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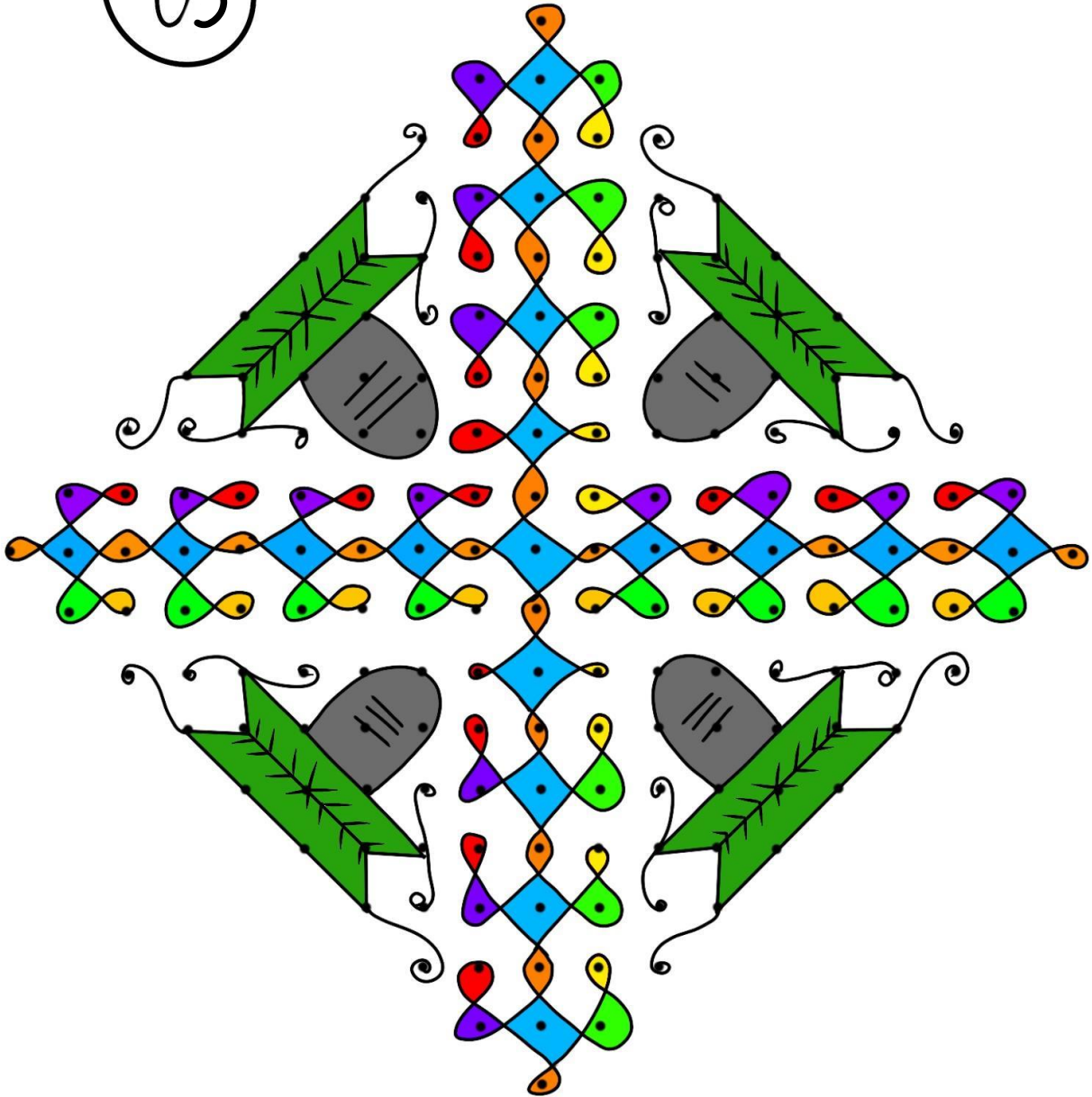
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26-2



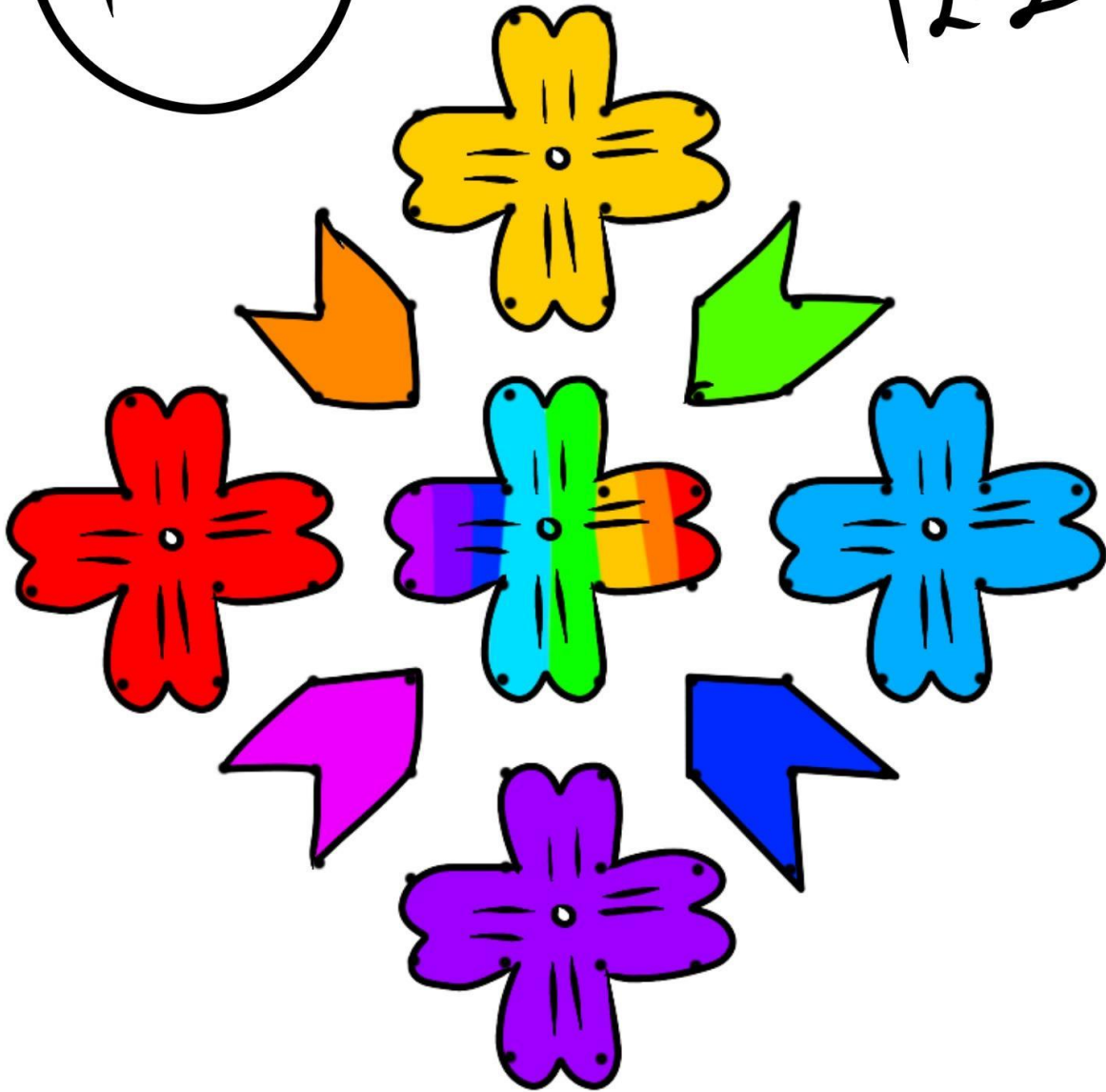
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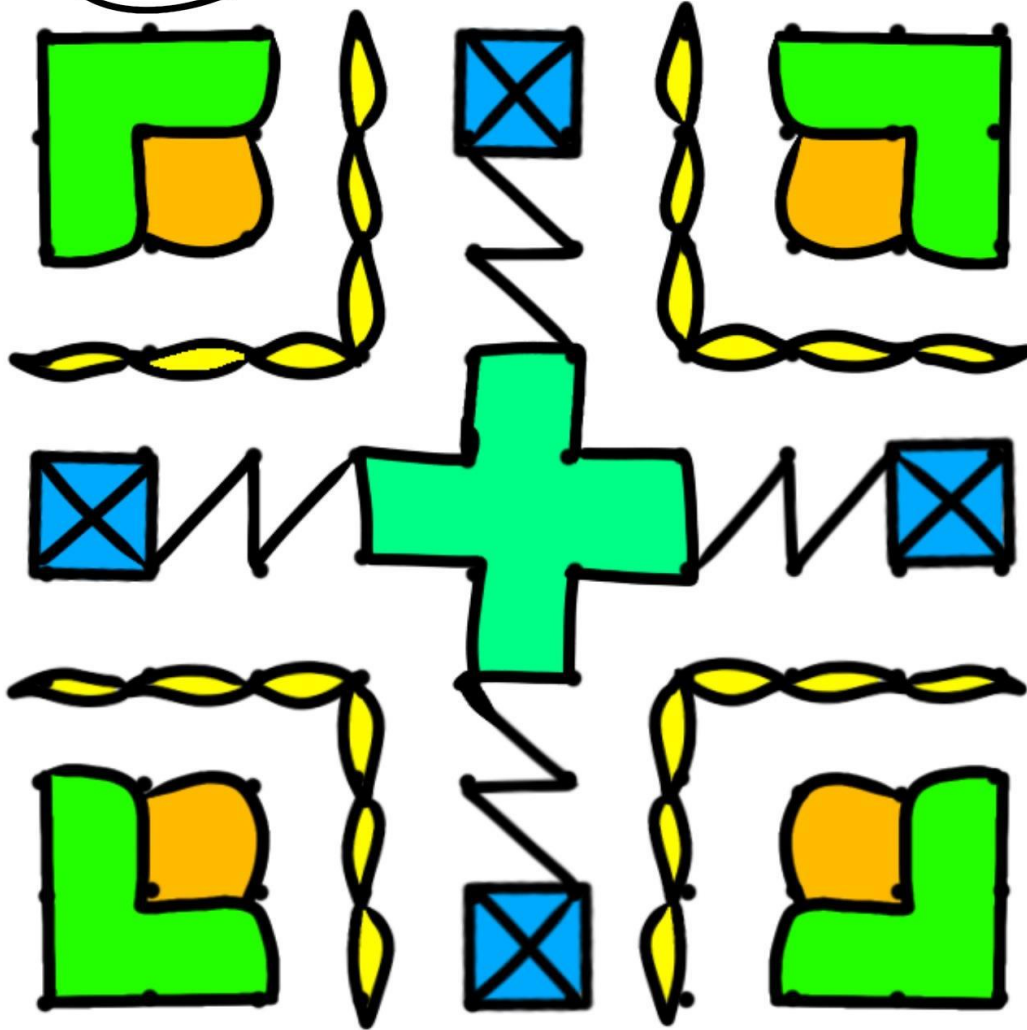
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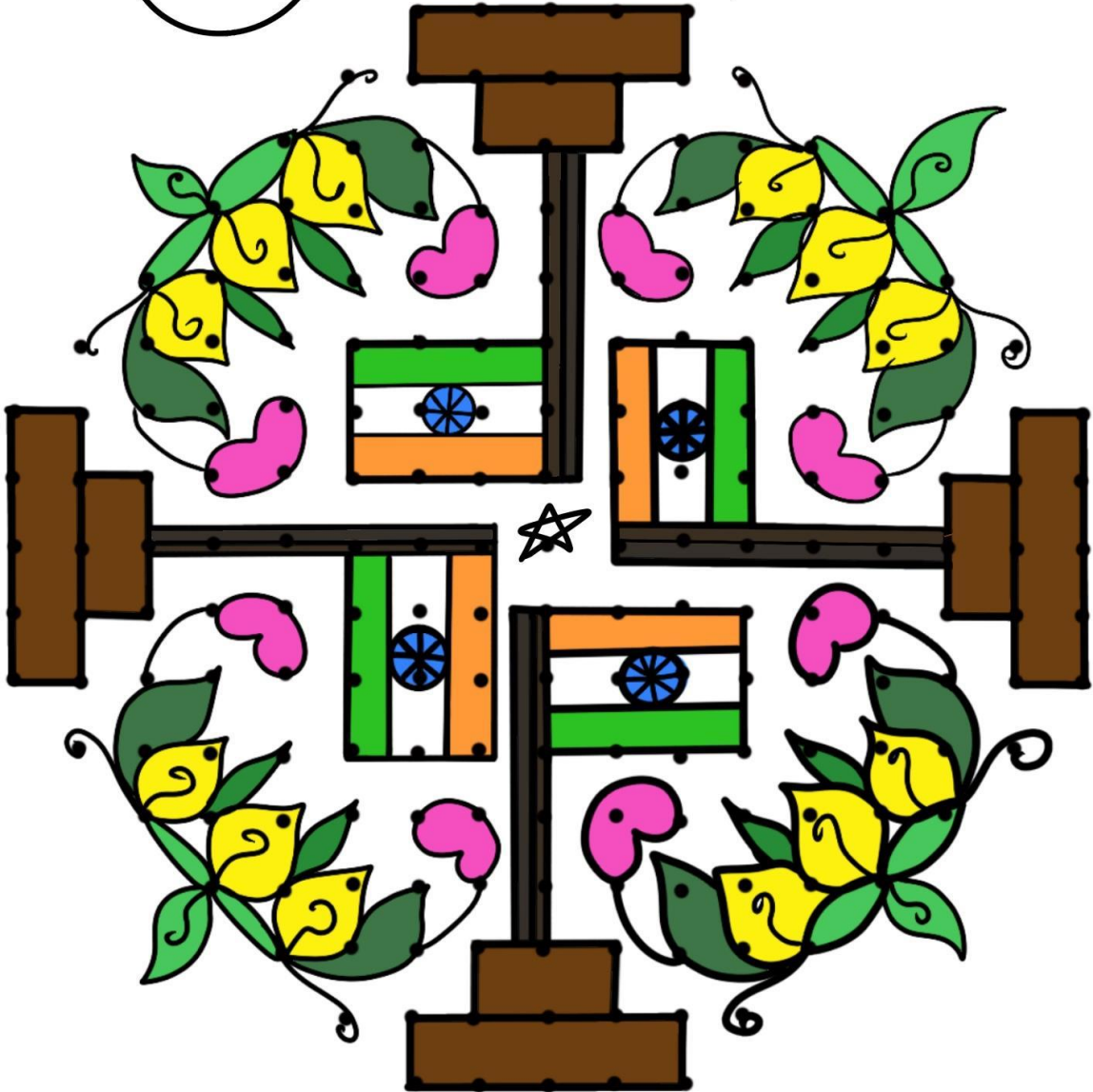
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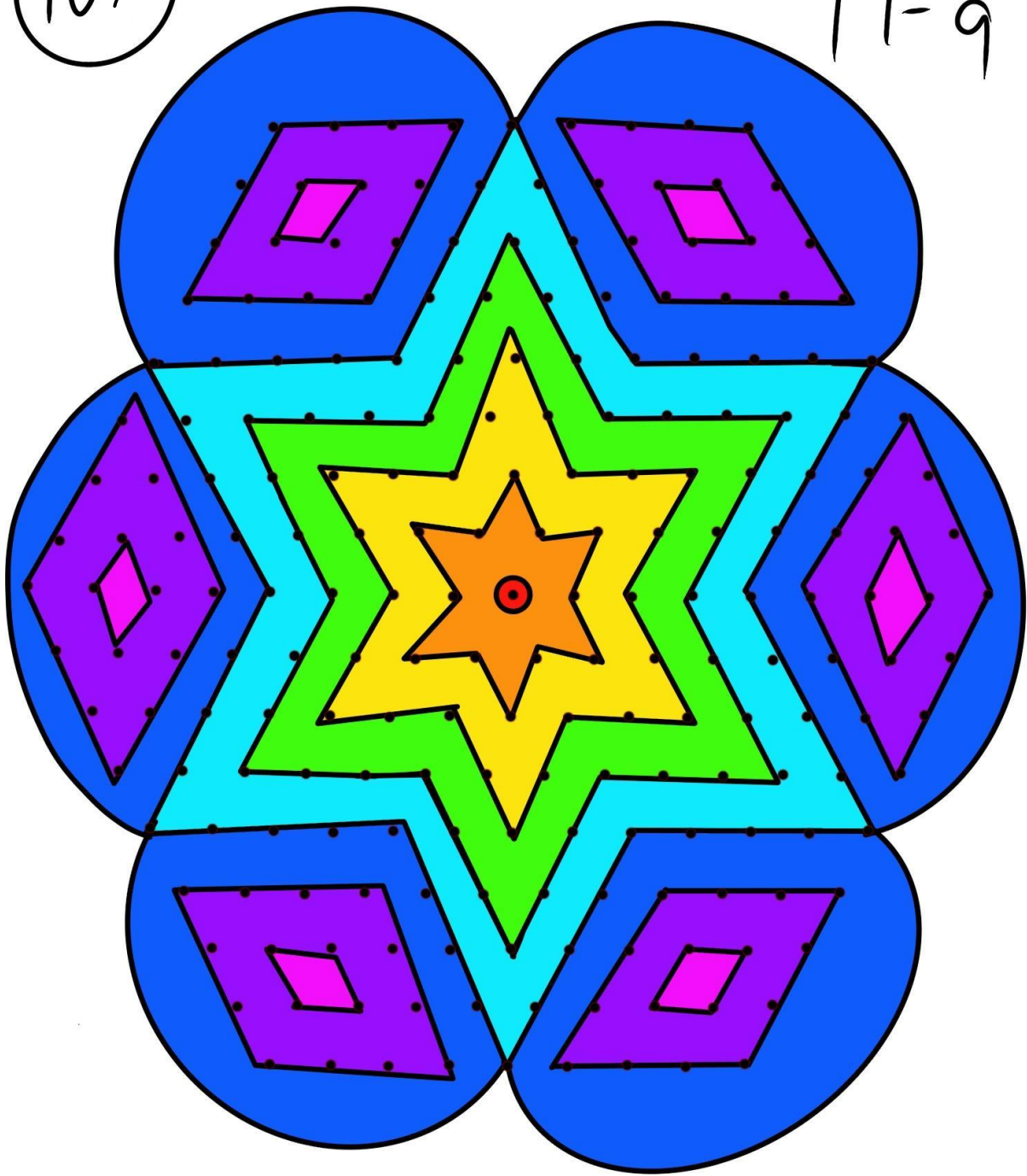
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17-5



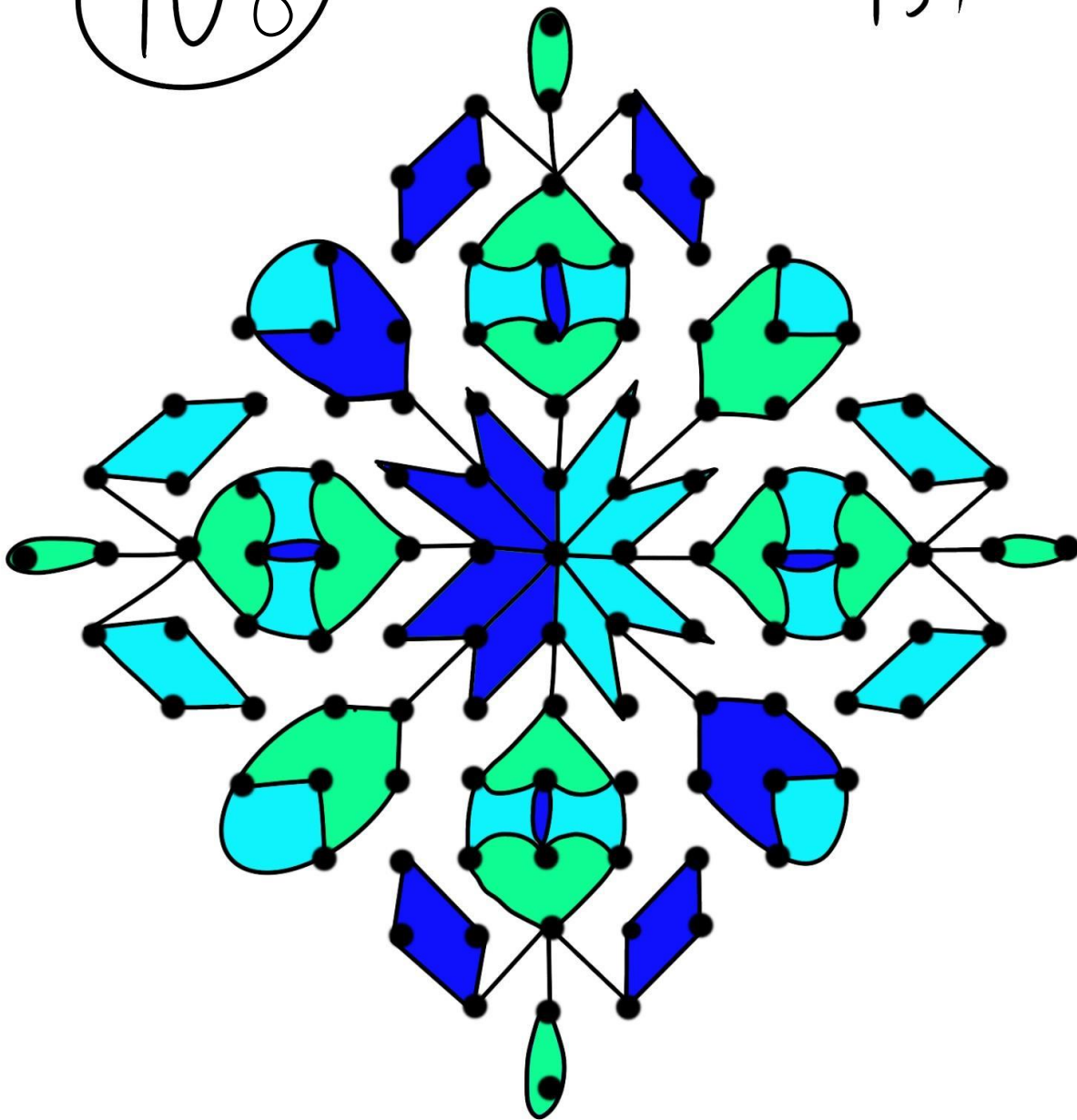
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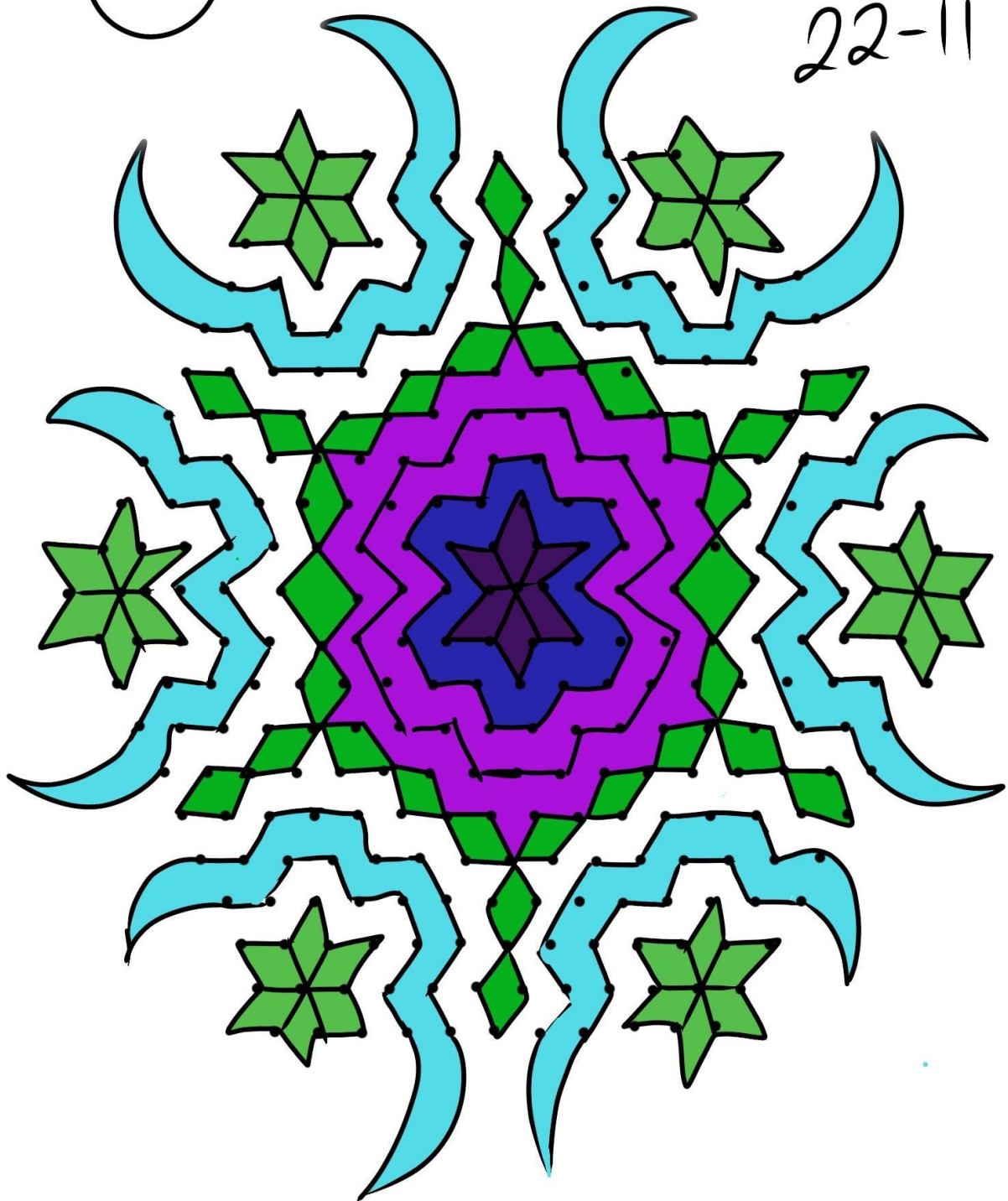
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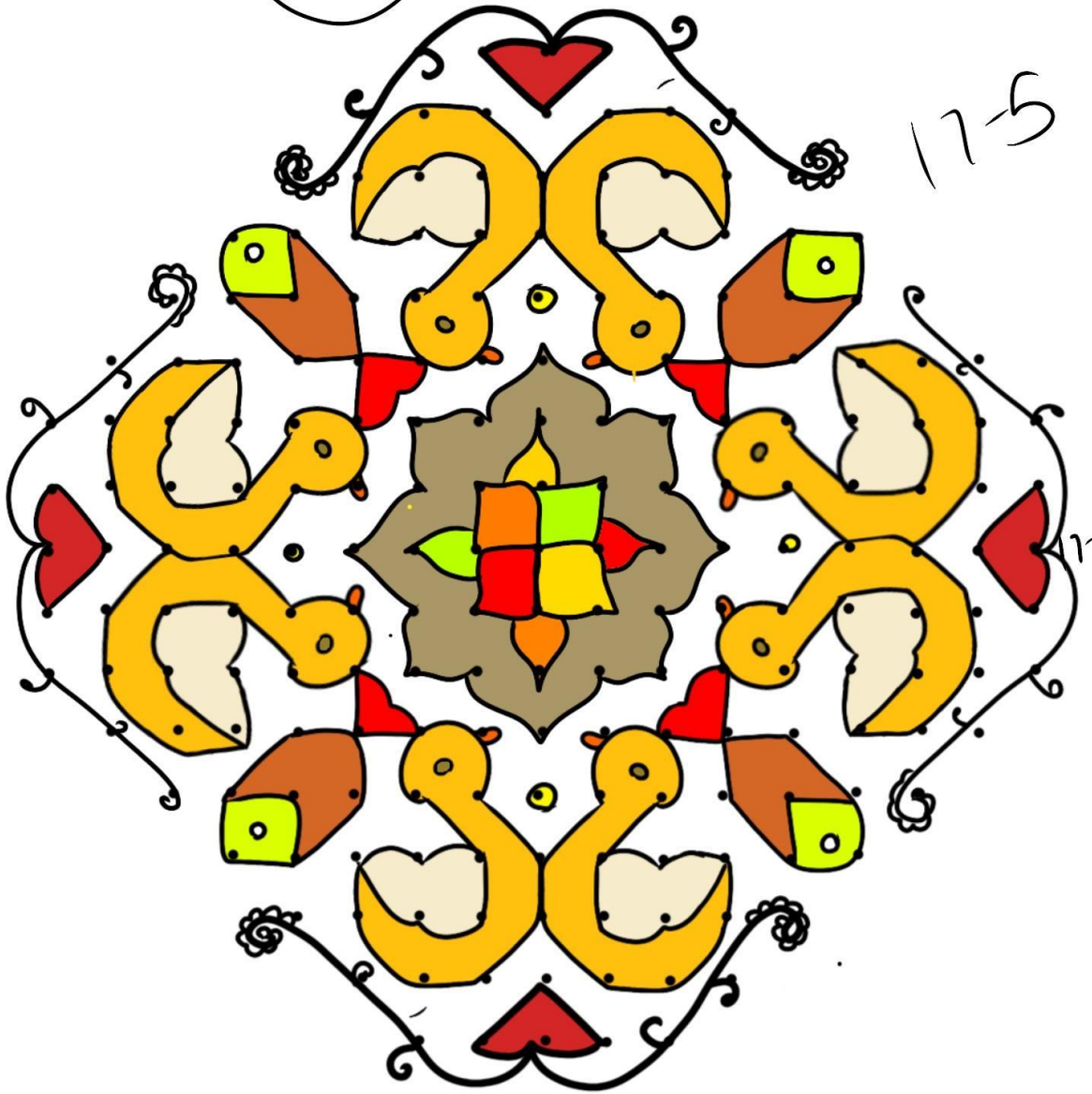
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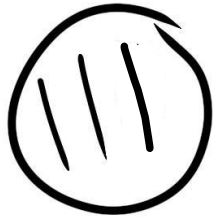
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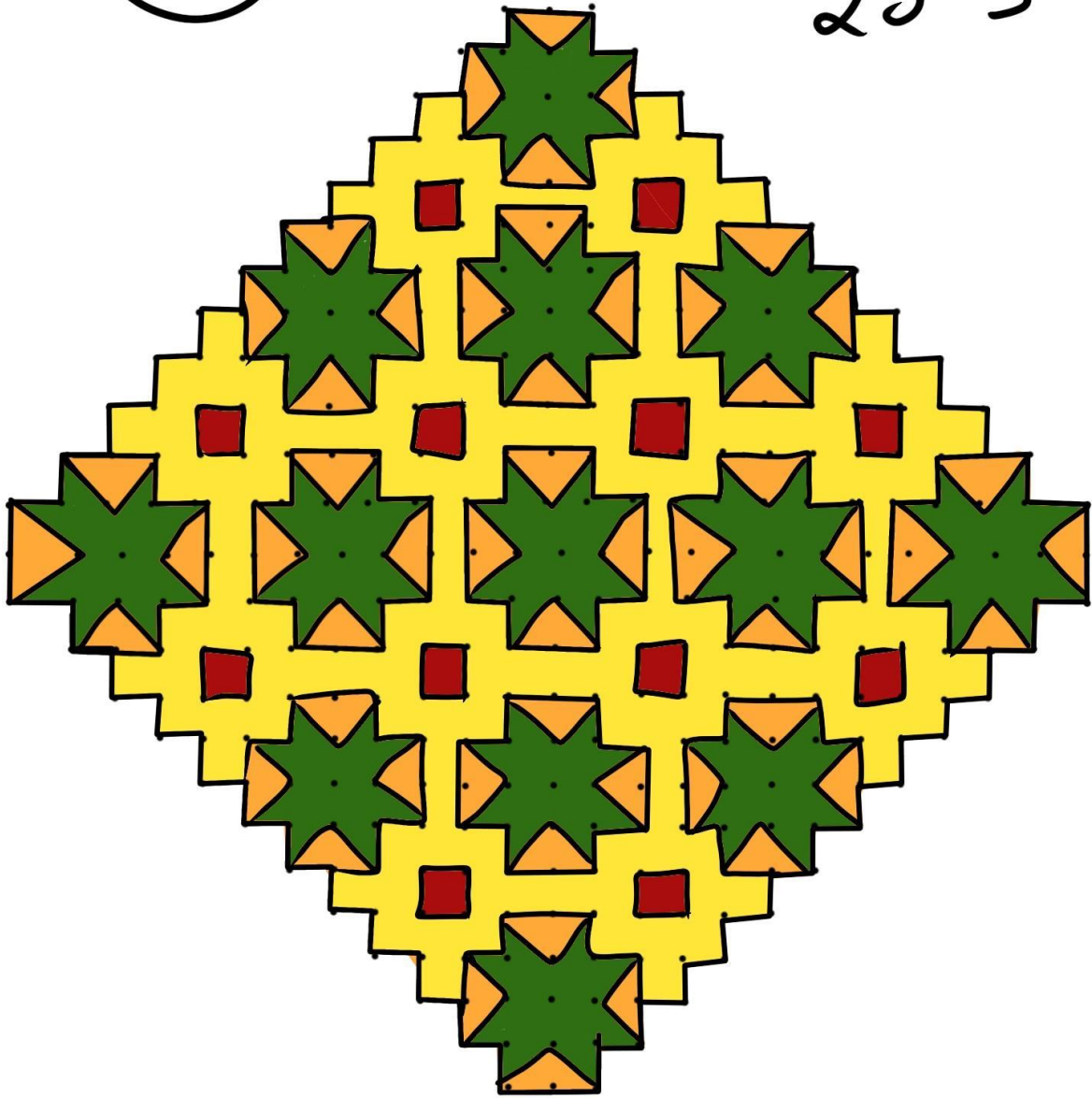
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175

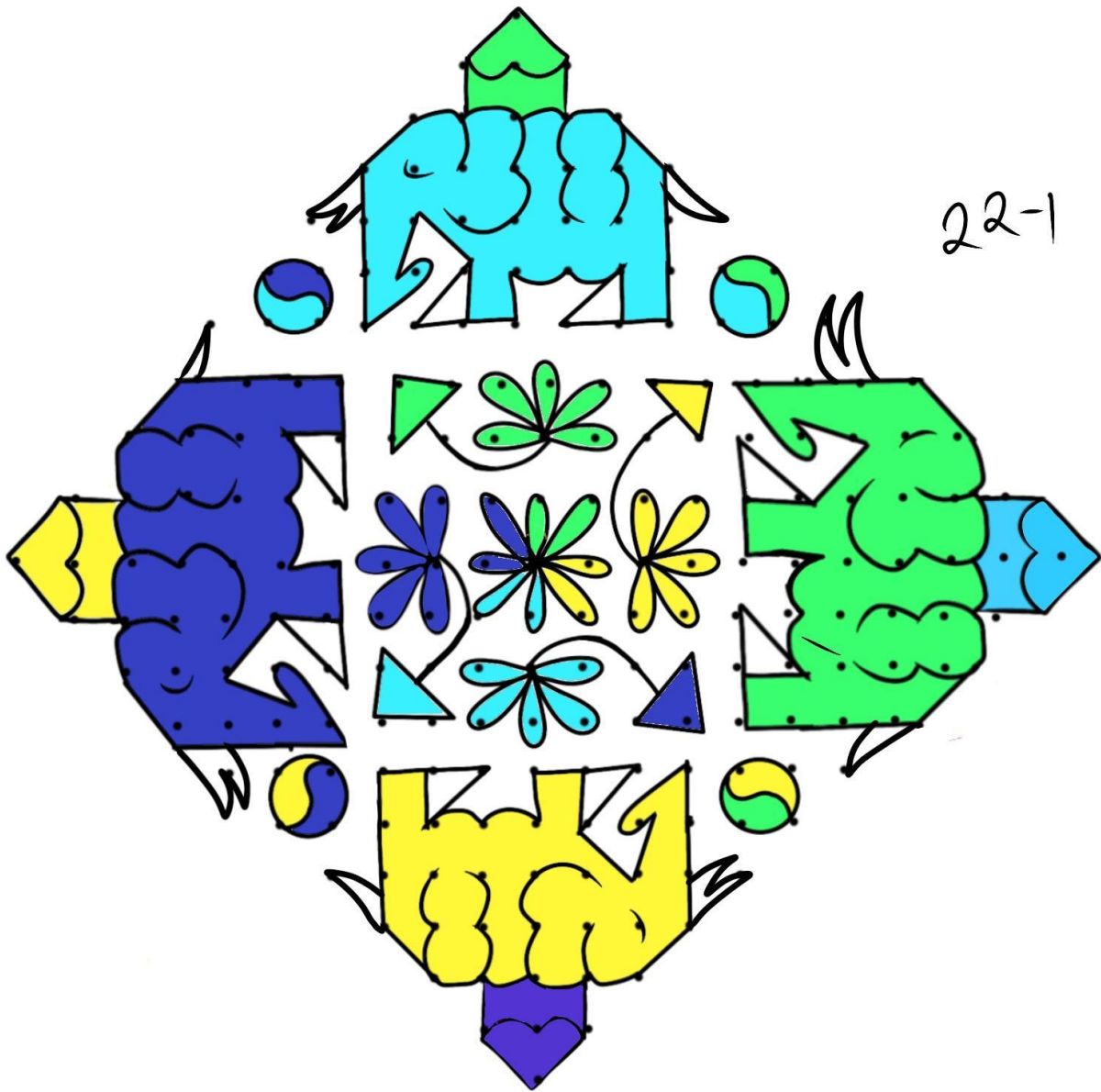




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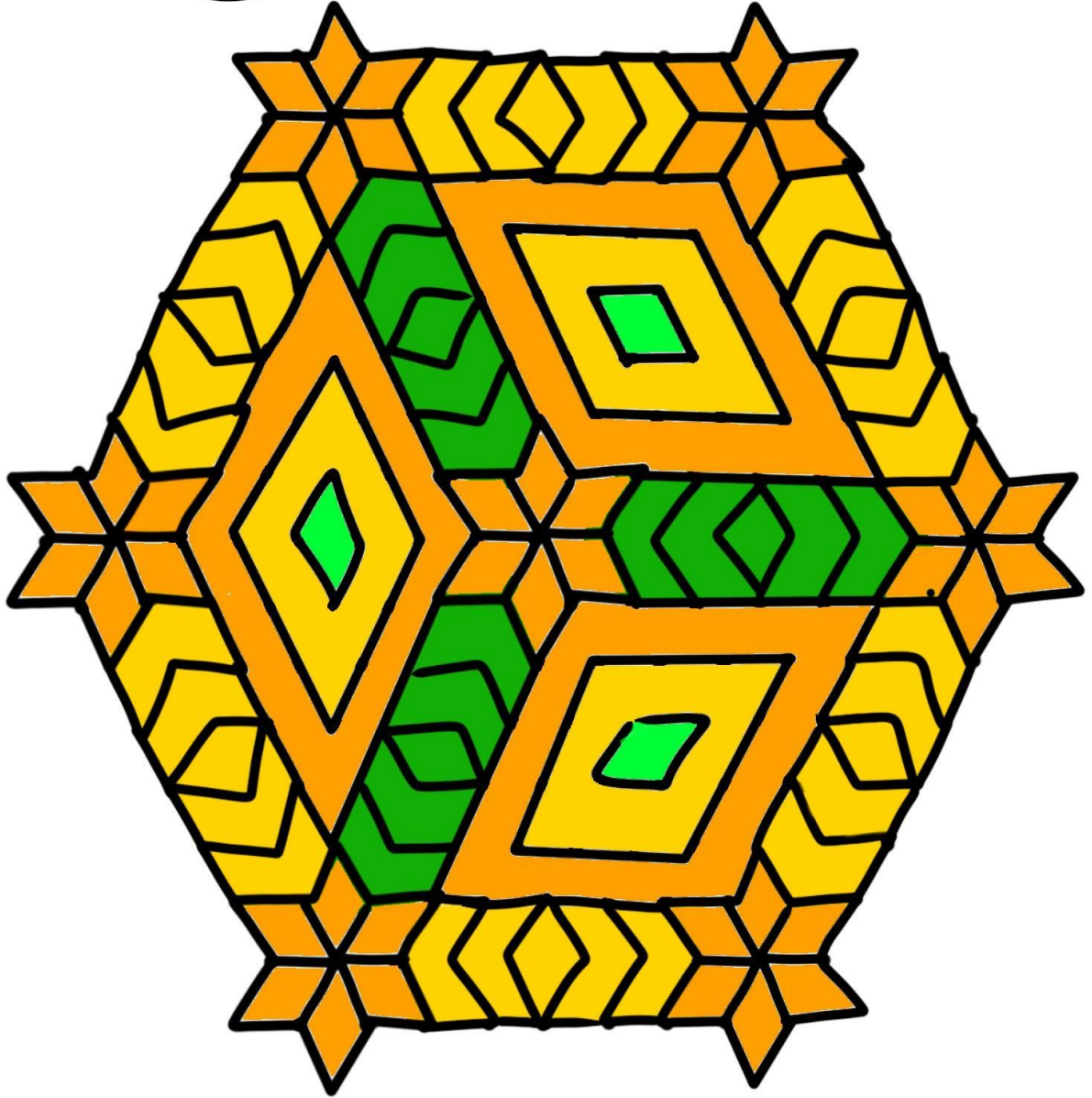
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22-1

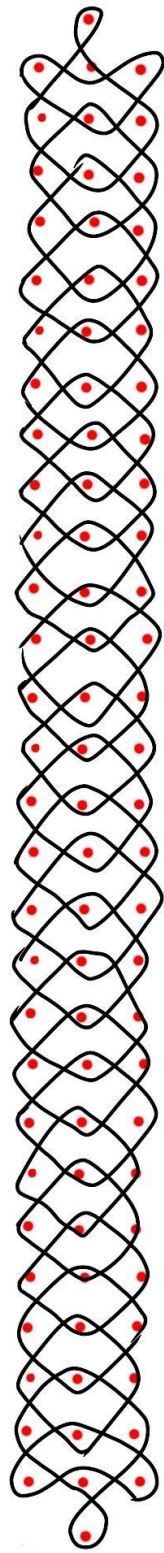
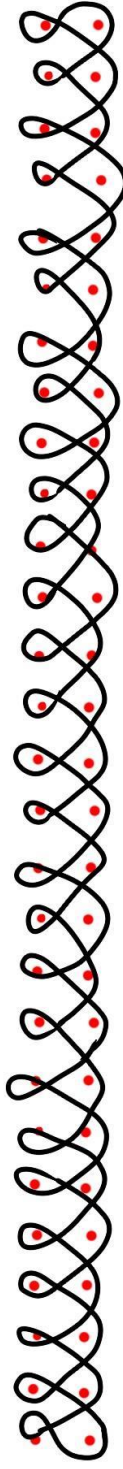
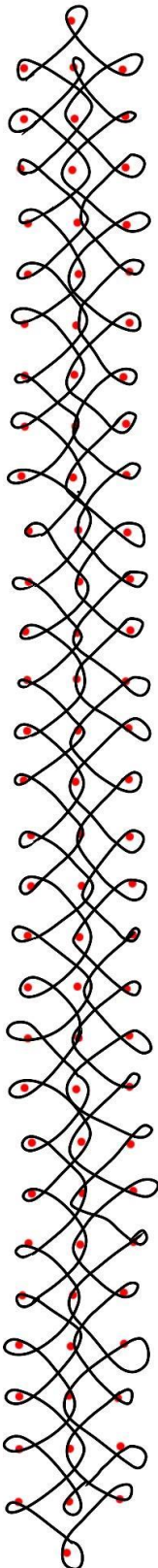
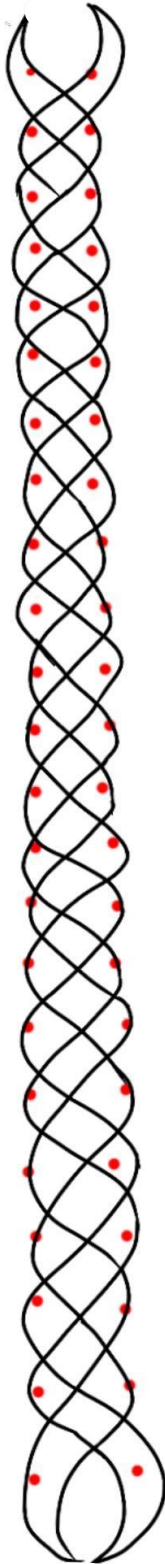
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