



Shapes: Nature's patterns: a tapestry in three parts

Philip Ball

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Patterns are everywhere in nature - in the ranks of clouds in the sky, the stripes of an angelfish, the arrangement of petals in flowers. Where does this order and regularity come from? It creates itself. The patterns we see come from self-organization. Whether living or non-living, scientists have found that there is a pattern-forming tendency inherent in the basic structure and processes of nature, so that from a few simple themes, and the repetition of simple rules, endless beautiful variations can arise.

Part of a trilogy of books exploring the science of patterns in nature, acclaimed science writer Philip Ball here looks at how shapes form. From soap bubbles to honeycombs, delicate shell patterns, and even the developing body parts of a complex animal like ourselves, he uncovers patterns in growth and form in all corners of the natural world, explains how these patterns are self-made, and why similar shapes and structures may be found in very different settings, orchestrated by nothing more than simple physical forces. This book will make you look at the world with fresh eyes, seeing order and form even in the places you'd least expect.

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