

THE ALTERNATE GRID

JACQUIE GERING



All quilts have an underlying structure; typically blocks are set in a row and column grid that in many traditional quilts is easily identifiable. The alternate grid gives quilters the flexibility to manipulate the grid and with even small shifts make big changes in a quilt design.

For example, this is the "pointed block".



In quilt A the block is set with a traditional row and column structure.

In quilt B, pairing the blocks with one block rotated and setting the block pairs in an offset column breaks the grid. The area around the blocks is filled in with background fabrics. With a few small changes the quilt design changes dramatically. This is the power of the alternate grid.

Quilt A



Quilt B

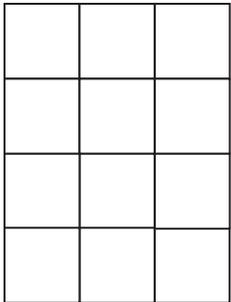


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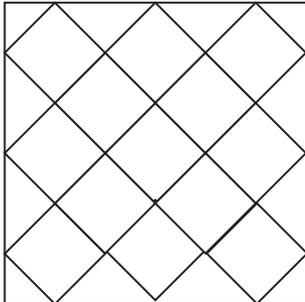
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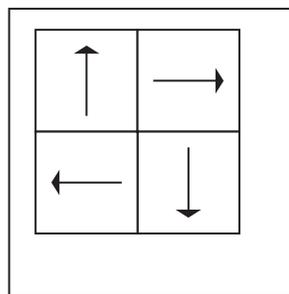
Here are a few traditional and alternate grid options to try with quilt blocks:



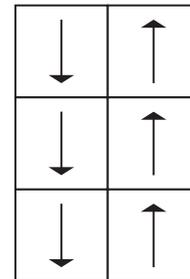
straight setting



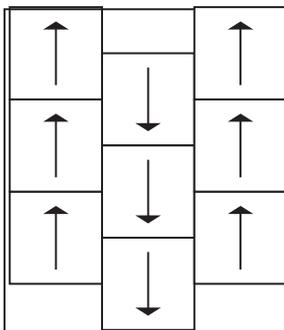
on point setting



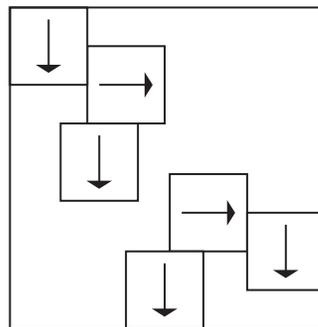
medallion setting



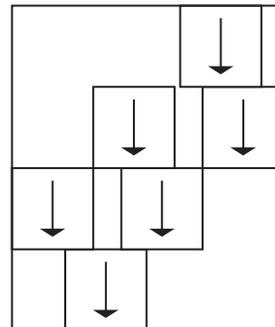
straight set with block rotation



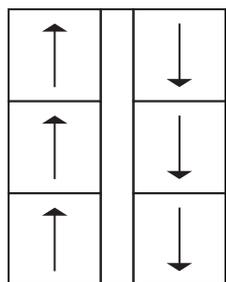
offset with 180 degree block rotation



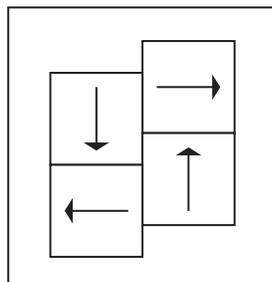
clustering with rotation



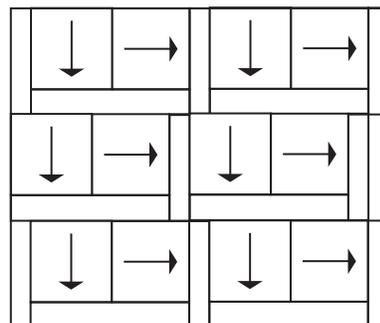
offset diagonal setting



straight set with block rotation and center sashing



offset medallion



paired blocks with sashing and block rotation



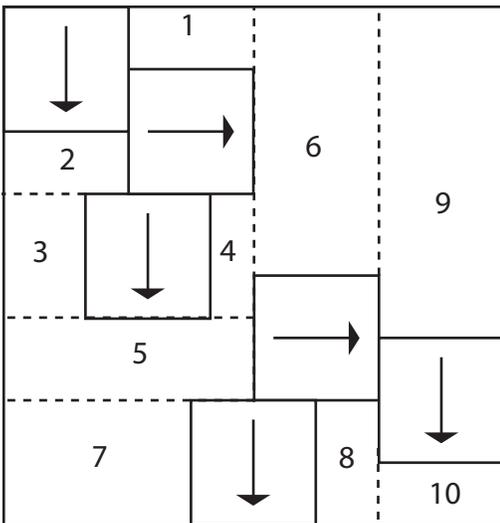
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TIPS FOR DESIGNING WITH THE ALTERNATE GRID CONCEPTS

- Make blocks out of paper or paper and craft foam to support alternate grid play. Play is an igniter for creativity. Move to digital work after manipulating blocks by hand.
- Rotation of blocks is a great way to create new primary and secondary designs.
- Sashing strips and borders are tools that may be manipulated in different ways to break the grid.
- Resist the urge to line up blocks or elements in blocks.
- Keep it simple. Simple shifts can make a big difference in a design.
- To support filling in with background fabric, tape the outline of the quilt on the design wall to create parameters against which to measure areas to fill in.
- Squares and rectangles are your friend. Look for how blocks and background spaces form shapes that come together simply. Avoid partial seams if you are uncomfortable sewing them. Notice in the diagram below how the background pieces are added to blocks to form larger squares and rectangles that come together like a simple puzzle.



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