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Tensions between techno-futurist proclivities and nostalgia for craft traditions seem to drive a lot of design today, and a recent trend of intricate, repetitive patterns tinted in alternately exuberant and monochrome colors has accordingly taken a foothold in the design landscape. Perhaps because of the neat synthesis of algorithmic and craft-imbued patterning, products are displaying decorative surface designs whose simplicity belies a complex provenance. References to historical design and cultural moments abound, manifested in florals and fractals that recall Islamic geometries or industrial motifs. The patterns are especially suited for modular surfaces like textiles, wall panels, and ceramics. -A.B.

