



## Synopsis

True beauty is found in nature, making this the perfect sketch book for your art inspiration! As if being responsible for dazzling sunsets and the aurora borealis were not enough, nature is also guardian to the universal principals of design. With mathematical perfection, its recurring structures seem to magically adapt as they show up in hundreds of ways: the radial star at the center of snowflakes, fruits and flowers, and the arms of starfish; spirals at the heart of nautilus shells, unfurling plants, and swirling storm systems. Borrowing the beauty of nature's forms can help you create beautiful artwork. Observing the structure of nature's forms can help you to be a better designer. The inspiration is limitless. Nature's design magic is a balancing act found in its perfect ratios. The sections of this sketchbook--Star, Branch, Spiral, and Fan--focus on four of those deceptively simple design principles and why they work. Author/artist Yellena James uses her own nature-based drawings to guide readers toward looking closely at each design form and the places where it occurs. Readers will discover ways to use each form in their own artwork, realistically, abstractly, or as motifs in repeat borders and patterns. In a non-academic fashion, the text explains nature's beautiful balances, and the art of using them when you draw and design.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Yellena James's [Yellena James](#) is an artist and illustrator who lives and works in Portland, Oregon. James's work explores the intricate and delicate forms of an imagined ecosystem, inventing flora and fauna that twist and float together in a magical dreamscape. Preferring pens,

watercolors, and acrylics, she combines colorful arrangements of animate shapes and tangled lines that are at once floral and alien, organic and sci-fi. Each piece she creates is a glimpse into an intimate world that possesses its own ethos and radiates its own emotional range. James has participated in shows around the United States and overseas, including solo exhibitions at Giant Robot (San Francisco and Los Angeles), the Here Gallery (Bristol, UK), the Hijinks Gallery (San Francisco), LeQuiVive Gallery (Oakland, CA), and more. She also has done illustration work for Anthropologie, La Mer, Crabtree and Evelyn, Crate and Barrel, Relativity Media, and many others. For more information visit [yellena.com](http://yellena.com).

This little book is magical! Yellena, from Portland OR, is a genius with lines, curves, fans etc. and turning them into amazing pieces of art. I have followed her on her Etsy website for years. I own some of her posters and art work and was thrilled to see her show us how she does it. She has a talent that is one of a kind! An accomplished artist with a style of her own, you will totally enjoy every page of this book. It is one you will go back to time and time again to try to duplicate some of her pieces or to just sit back and admire her drawings..... a delightful book you should add to your library.

I've been in love with Yellena James' artwork since I saw her show in Portland a few years ago. As a designer, I find this book very inspiring. It has a wide range of exercises exploring the natural shapes: star, branch, spiral and fan. James shows detailed instructions on how to turn these simple shapes into more vibrant and lively designs and compositions. The exercises are easy to follow and I love that I can draw directly on the pages. The paper has a nice matte finish. It's perfect for drawing with pens and colored pencils, and there's tons of room for sketching. I'm excited to apply what I'm learning in this book to my own artwork. Love it!

Yellena is an incredibly gifted artist and what a treat it is to have her tricks and secrets shared with the rest of us! This book is a beautiful collector's item as well as an informative and fun activity book that's great for all ages and artists of any level. The print quality is top notch and the pages have a nice tooth to them. Great for the drawing exercises! This book is really, really well done and I hope there are more to follow!

This book is wonderful! First of all, the artist does delicate, beautiful drawings. Secondly, she walks you through how to draw some stars, branches, spirals, and fans. Now, usually I intensely dislike

books that have blank pages for you to use to practice, but James has incorporated exercises into this book so subtly and artfully, that even though I won't do the exercises inside the book itself, they do not interfere with the book's great beauty. Just plain inspirational. I will be incorporating some of her ideas into my mandalas and my bible journaling.

A beautiful book filled with great artwork. Highly recommend!

Already drawing stars! This book is like a modern day breakdown of "How to Draw Like Ernst Haeckel." Or "Art Forms in Nature" but in a scaled down, really cool sort of way. I love it. Part Botanical, Part Zoological, Part Zentangle, Part Doodle, All Creative Fun! All the instruction is useful and easy to follow. All of the pages are beautiful. The only complaint, as such, is once again, with the pages were I am supposed to practice on them. Practical me likes to not pay for empty pages, creative me enjoys drawing in the art instruction books! Also, I can't help but brag that the artist lives in my area, and I am proud of the cool books I've been getting from local PDX artists and authors lately, like Botanical Line Drawing, for example.

This book is absolutely delightful. James's illustrations are beautifully and intricately realized on good quality sketchbook paper. She leads the artist through a series of organic, step-by-step drawing exercises, first by introducing the four forms and providing examples (shells, crystals, seed pods, snowflakes, flowers, leaves, etc., all labeled with their common or scientific names), and then offering blank or partially blank pages where the artist can practice the forms by adding on to James's illustrations. Interspersed throughout the book are full-page, color samples of James's compositions. I love how each one looks dreamlike and magical, yet, after reading this book, I can easily recognize specific techniques and constructs borrowed directly from nature. As a person who has never considered herself artistic, this book makes art accessible and doable for me. The directions were easy to follow, and my left-brain tendencies appreciated the mathematical approach James takes for teaching each shape. For example, she suggests using a compass and angles to draw a 5-point star or a fan, applying the Fibonacci sequence to draw spirals, and modeling fractals to draw branches. Perhaps most fun and rewarding is the final chapter in which James invites the artist to synthesize everything and finish drawings in different stages of completion, including coloring, tracing, expanding, etc. These pages offer just enough direction while also encouraging creativity and confidence. What I appreciate most is that although foundational drawing skills are important and useful, James's real

purpose in the book is to inspire artists to enjoy the process of drawing: be adventurous, see the beauty in "mistakes", and have fun creating!

My mom recently retired, started drawing, so I bought this book. I thought that she would not be able to reproduce the shapes and textures that were laid out by the author. I guess I myself was overwhelmed by the beauty and complexity of the drawings in the book. I was very surprised to see my mom catching on to the techniques presented. There are so many shapes and beautiful colors. Some of the themes remind me of the nature portrayed in the film Avatar. In sum, it is amazing!

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