

Alex McLean

This image is generated from this TidalCycles pattern:

```
superimpose (rev . (0.25 <~)) $ superimpose  
(0.5 ~>) $ superimpose (blend <$> (slow 2 sine)  
<* "grey" *>) $ density 12 $ superimpose (0.25  
<~) $ every 2 (((blend 0.5 <$> (iter 4 "<yellow  
grey cornflowerblue>")) <*>) . slow 2) $  
superimpose rev $ "[lightgrey*2 black] darkgrey  
grey"
```

Generating patterned forms from such patterning rules has a long history in living craft traditions. The rules aren't there to fix or preserve but to guide experimentation and change. Slow handcrafts (and I mean handcrafts, not automated Jacquard machines) such as weaving and braiding are ancient, culturally grounded, sustainable, yet fundamentally computational and continually innovating. Software engineers have much to learn from them.

Alex McLean is a UKRI-funded research fellow at non-profit studio Then Try This, based between Penryn and Sheffield UK. He researches algorithmic patterns, investigating heritage algorithms and making new systems to support human creativity. He instigated the TidalCycles free software project, and co-founded AlgoMech festival and the Algorave and TOPLAP movements.

