

## Exploring Abstraction Through the Grid With Paul Williams



Paul Williams *Grid study with colour block additions*, 2019, graphite, pencil, gouache and watercolour on paper, 15 x 21 cm.

This exercise is about layering using drawing and painting, with line, colour, space and shape. It allows you to be present in the moment and enjoy a process that simply asks you to trust in a set of steps while making some creative decisions of your own.

### You will need:

- Pencil
- Ruler
- Eraser
- A small brush
- A sheet of paper, A4 max (rough or smooth)
- 3 x coloured pencils of your choice (light, mid and dark tone)
- Gouache, watercolour or acrylic (your choice): red, yellow, blue, black, white

### Steps:

1. Using your lead pencil and ruler: rule up a rectangle in the centre of your A4 (or close to) page. It should be 1:1.5 ratio, so 10 x 15cm is an easy proportion to start. Other suggestions: 12x18cm, 14x21cm and so on.
2. Rule up the grid inside your rectangle with intersecting horizontal and vertical lines until your grid is complete and your rectangle is full. These lines can be

spaced closely - judge approximately 3mm with your eye if you don't wish to measure all those lines and don't worry if your lines are a little skewed.

3. With your three coloured pencils you are going to shade your grid into a layered checker pattern. With your lightest colour gently shade the entire grid. Once that is done use your mid tone colour to add another layer of shading. Here you will start to see a complexity with the two colours combined. Lastly, with the third and darkest colour create your checker pattern. Here you may choose to create a large checker pattern or a smaller pattern with more squares. The decision is yours to make. Just remember to select a consistent amount of gridded squares to colour each time.
4. To finish, we will then deepen the darker squares by shading with our lead pencil to add a little grit and texture. Remember to apply lead gently so you can add paint after.

Now that you have your beautifully grainy checker pattern we will introduce some flat shapes blocked in with paint. This will deepen the process of layering and add contrast to your composition.

5. With your red, yellow and blue paint you will create 6 coloured shapes, firstly using primary and then secondary colours. Here is where it gets interesting! Thinking about the size and where your first shape will go, trust your instinct and paint it in. It will be red. Don't think ahead. Trust the process.
6. With each consecutive colour (yellow, blue, green, violet, orange) you will continue this process of adding a different coloured shape to your composition. Suggested shapes: circle, square, oval, triangle, rectangle, hexagon (you may also decide to use other shapes than the ones suggested)
7. Lastly, using your neutral palette of white, grey and black: select three shapes and paint them with white, grey and black. Making your grey lighter than dark might work well here.

**And that's it! Well done! I hope you have enjoyed this creative exercise.**