

## Activities to use with Thoughts about Art (and the use of ICT)

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So how do we do it?

Since we are going to be asked for the techniques involved, this next section, though not intended to be a recipe for instant artistic success, is intended to concentrate on the lower level mechanistic skills. This should allow us to help pupils move on to the higher level thinking skills about why they are doing what they are doing.

### Mondrian

Pre-work:

- How many of his grids use symmetry?
- How does he lay out his grids, e.g. large areas/small areas/strips?
- How many primary colours does he use?
- How many times does he use the same primary colour more than once?
- Does he use landscape as well as portrait, (or square canvases)?

Work:

- Copy a grid
- Select a large area and fill it with a strong primary colour.
- Try to use a small area filled with another primary colour to "balance" against the large area.
- Will you need another small area of another colour to achieve "balance"?
- Are you happy that your picture has "balance"?
- If not, change the small area(s) until you feel that you have "balance".

Things to think about:

- Does colour have "weight"? If so, we are aiming to balance a large light area with a heavy dark area.
- Do the grid lines all have the same thickness?
- How thick should the grid lines be? Alter one of your images and consider the effect(s).
- What would happen if you had used an isometric grid? Or a polar grid?
- What happens if you use "weak" blended colours?
- Try changing the colours of the grid lines.
- What happens if the background is not white?

- At what point in the above have we deviated from Mondrian's ideas? Do you think he would have approved? Explain your reasons.

## **Rothko**

### Pre-work:

- Does Rothko have preferred colours?
- Does he prefer landscape or portrait canvases? Why might this be?
- How large are his "works"? Does this have implications for us emulating his work?
- How does Rothko prefer to have his work presented?

### Work:

- Use the rectangle tool to make a large rectangle in the middle of the work area (screen).
- Use the palette tool to select and fill the background.
- Move only one position away from the background colour to select the colour for the colour of the rectangle. If you have a colour lightner, then alter the first colour by only one notch.
- Use the water tool to smudge the perimeter of the rectangle.
- Note that Rothko sometimes uses more than one rectangle but these are usually parallel. He also sometimes uses the rectangle colour as a border.

### Things to think about:

- Rothko wanted the rectangles to "float" above the background. Does darker "float" on lighter or the other way around?
- Does it matter which way round the rectangles are arranged? i.e. horizontally or vertically?
- What happens if the rectangles are at an angle to each other?
- What is the effect of using parallelograms?
- Does the use of triangles, circles or other shapes change the "work"/mood significantly?
- Is the closeness of the colours significant? What if we were to use more than one notch difference in colour?
- You may need to use a data projector in a darkened room to see if your images can affect the viewer's mood.

## Riley

### Pre-work:

- Note her use of colours. How would you describe them?
- Is there a pattern to the way she uses shapes?
- Where she has used an isometric grid, are there interesting shapes that you would like to use?
- Is the isometric grid regular?

### Work:

- Use the line tool with a colour very little different (but visible on screen) to the background. Try to keep the line to 1pt or 0.5pt.
- Create vertical lines across the page/screen.
- Where each vertical line meets the top of the screen, draw parallel lines across the screen. Aim for about 30 degrees to the horizontal.
- Remember to save this blank screen!
- Use a selection of bright colours to fill in the parallelograms. Try to create some of the shapes you will have seen Riley use.
- Fill every cell.

### Things to think about:

- Remember that you can always edit previously chosen colours.
- What happens if you create larger, (or smaller), same colour shapes? Does the position of these on the screen make a difference?
- Try different angles to the horizontal for your grid, say 45 or 60 degrees to the horizontal. Do you have a preferred angle? Explain why? Is it one that Riley uses?
- Sadly, the grid lines remain in your finished work which is the price to pay for using a computer. However, what happens if you use different colours for the grid lines?
- What happens when you use a rectangular grid?
- What happens if you use a polar grid?
- Try the effects of keeping to tones of one colour only. Do you think Riley would approve? Explain your thinking.