

Colour Block Painting

Inspired by

Jon Plapp

This painting pictured is part of the Devonport Regional Galleries permanent art collection. It was painted by Jon Plapp in 1996 and donated to the gallery by the artist. It consists blocks of colour with precise straight edges.



Jon Plapp, 1996, acrylic on canvas, 'Singular Kingdom'

A bit about the artist...

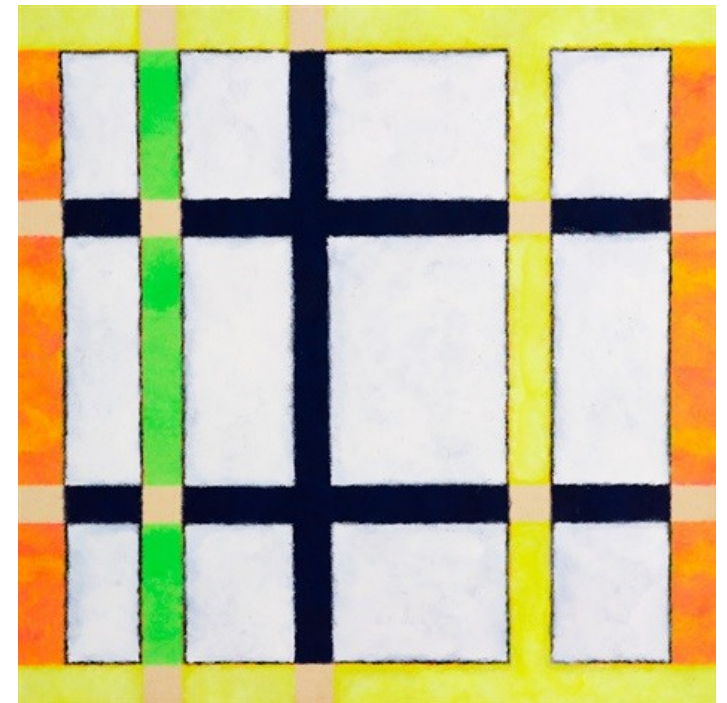
Jon Plapp was born in Victoria, Australia in 1938 and moved to the USA in 1966 where he studied psychology and took some classes in painting and life-drawing. He enjoyed the **abstract art movement** for its balance and serenity and thought it was a style he could himself enjoy creating; and so he began his practice in the **geometric abstraction art movement**.

For Plapp, being an artist was not just about painting, it was a way of life. Throwing himself into the art world, he engaged in its activities, enjoyed its attitudes, and made friends with other artists and art world personalities.

In 1977 he moved back to Australia where he continued to explore **colour field painting**.

Excerpt from Jon Michael Plapp Biography, Design and Art Australia Online: <https://www.daa.org.au/bio/john-plapp-1/biography/>

Jon Plapp, 1990,
'In Pretty Wrath'



Between 1979 and 2005 Plapp showed his works regularly in Sydney, Melbourne, Tasmania, Brisbane and Toronto. An exhibition of his work, *Elusive Meanings*, was held at the Tasmanian Devonport Gallery and Arts Centre in 1995. The galleries curator, Fiona Christie, had first met Plapp in 1990 on one of his regular visits to the northwest coast of Tasmania, where his family had settled in the 1850s.

As he got older Plapp developed Parkinson's disease, which caused his hands to shake. When his hands started to shake —Plapp used a technique of Jackson Pollock's (another well known artist) and laid his canvases on the ground, steadying his arm by leaning on the floor. The works produced at the end of his career, when the shaking was at its most extreme, ambitiously involved many fine lines and straight edges. The lines, some dead-straight, some with a slight waver, express Plapp's persistence and strict dedication to his art.

From Design and Art Australia Online, <https://www.daa0.org.au/bio/john-plapp-1/biography/>



1995, acrylic on canvas,
'World 'aint Square'

Art words

Abstract...

Refers to an art movement/
trend or style that has been around
since the early 1900s. It is a word used to
describe art that does not represent any
object, figure or thing, but rather an idea or
'abstraction' of something.

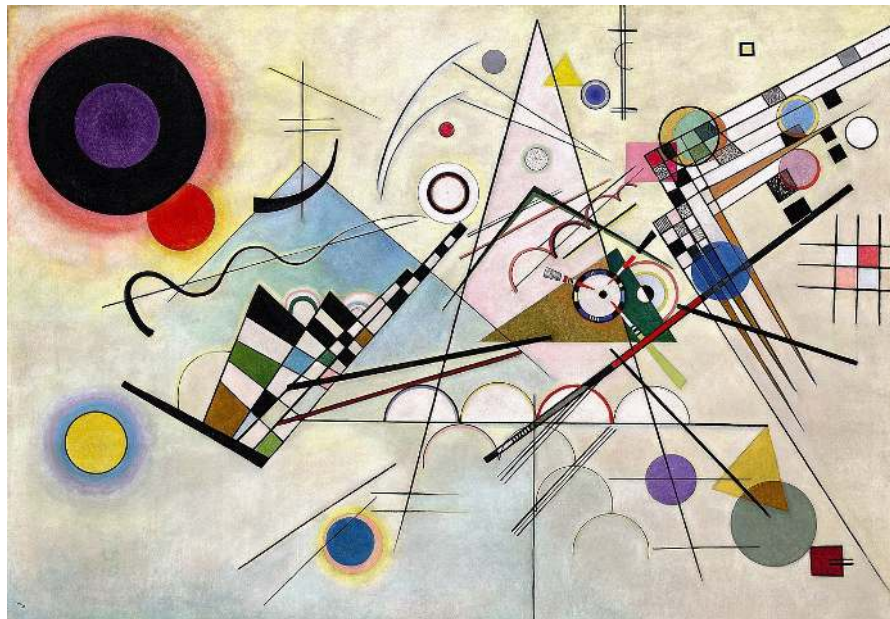
*Abstract art is art that does not attempt to
represent an accurate depiction of a visual
reality but instead use shapes, colours, forms
and gestural marks to achieve its effect.*

Definition sourced from TATE <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/abstract-art>

Different styles of abstract painting by other famous artists...



Jackson Pollock, 1952, Convergence

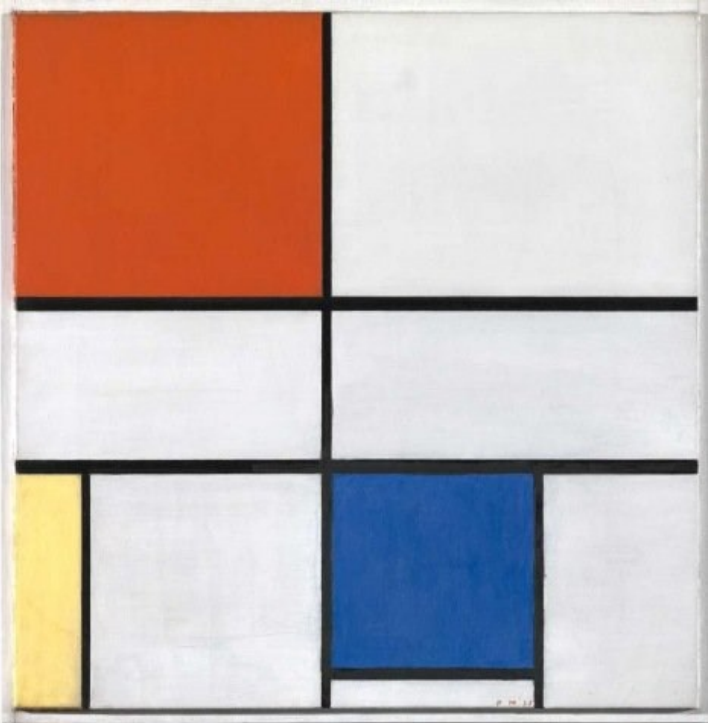


Wassily Kandinski, 1923, Composition 8



Mark Rothko, 1962, Untitled

Another famous abstract artist using straight (linear) lines in their work...



Composition C Number III with Red, Yellow and Blue.

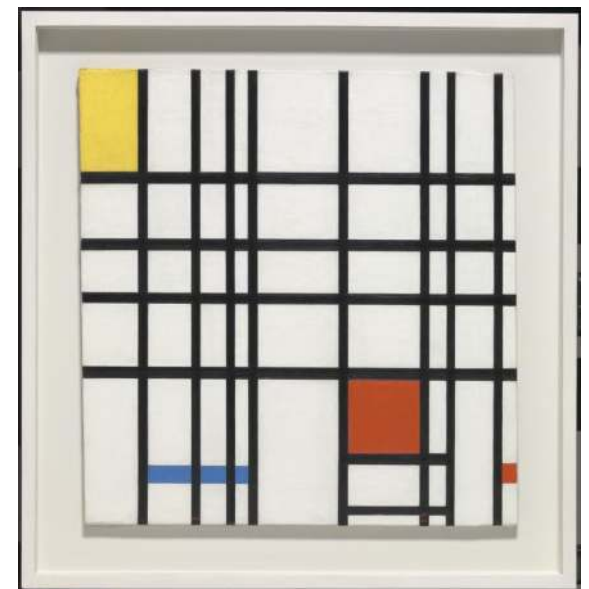
Piet Mondrain 1872– 1944

Pier Mondrian was an abstract artist who also incorporated straight lines and blocks of colour into his works similar to that of Jon Plapp. If you would like to know more about his work and life visit the Tate Kids website here:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/kids/explore/who-is/who-piet-mondrian>

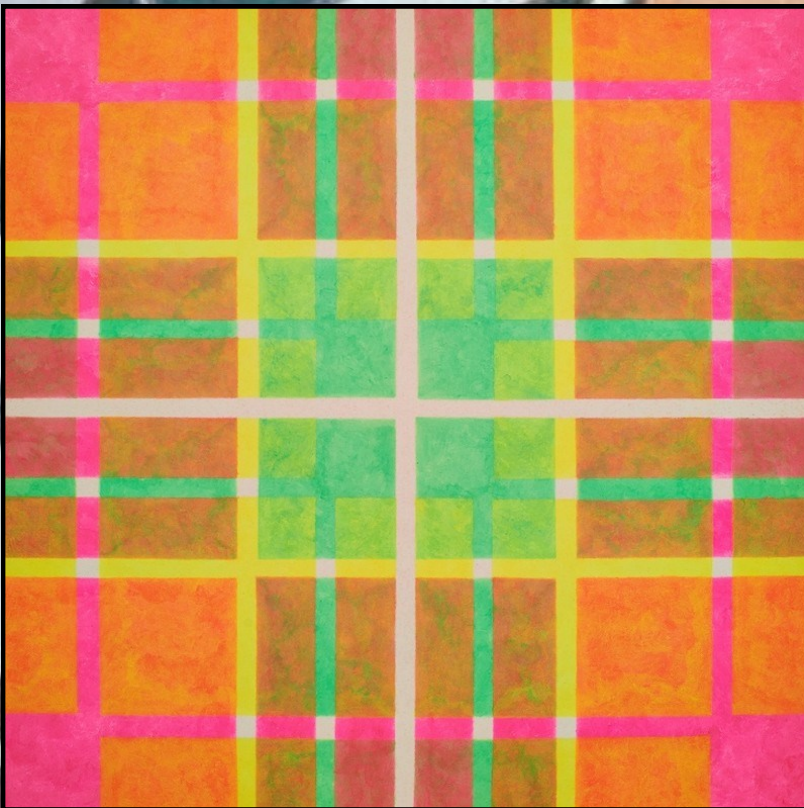
1937-42

Composition with Yellow, Blue Red.



Activity:

Create your own Jon Plapp inspired geometric abstract painting. Create straight lines and edges using masking tape and build up layers of paint to achieve blocks of colour.



Jon Plapp, 1989, Fragile Stinging



This Jon Plapp painting from the Devonport Regional Galleries collection titled *Singular Kingdom* painted in 1996, is our inspiration for this activity.

You will need:

- A board to paint on. Timber or canvas works well. Something that paint will stick to, but masking tape wont tear when you peel it off.
- Masking tape.
- Paint. Acrylic, oils or wall paints work best, but any paint you have will do
- Paper (optional) to stencil off areas as you work
- Paint brushes/ rollers/ sponges/ fingers and hands!



Step 1:

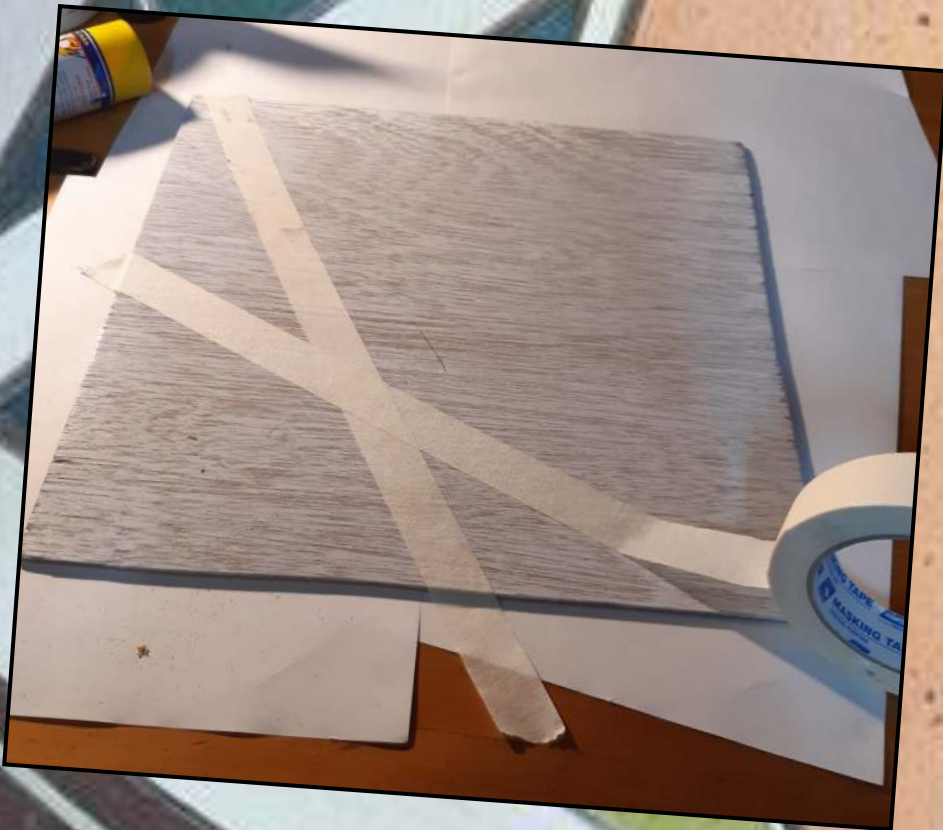
Prepare your painting board.

Lightly sand the surface if needed and you can prep it by painting the whole board one colour (white works well) as a background colour if you like. Let paint dry.



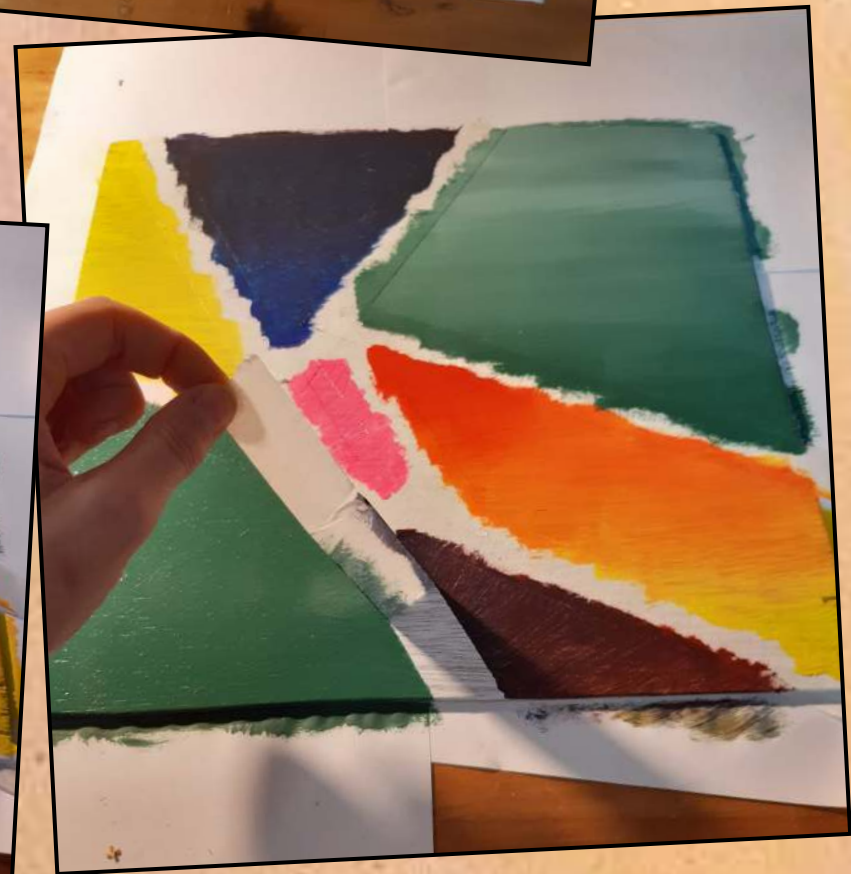
Step 2:

When your background paint has dried, stick down masking tape and paper where you don't want paint. Think about the shapes you are creating. Remember, the paint will go everywhere except where you are putting the masking tape.



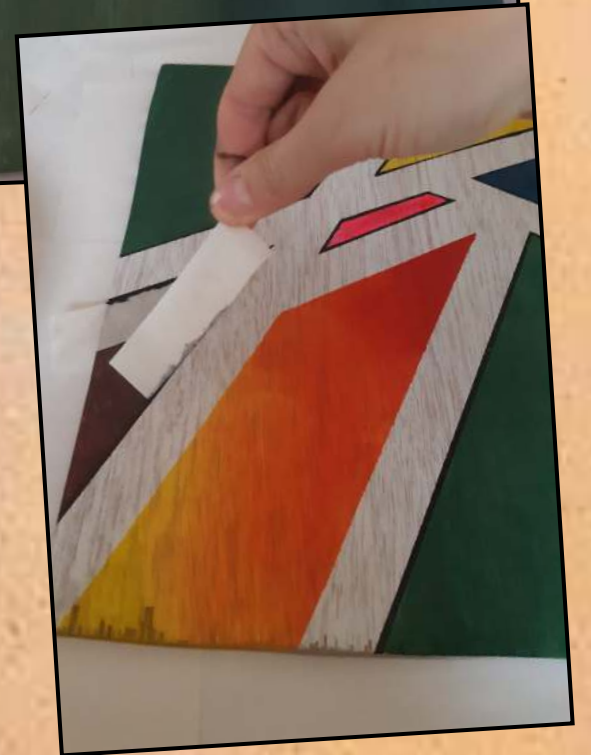
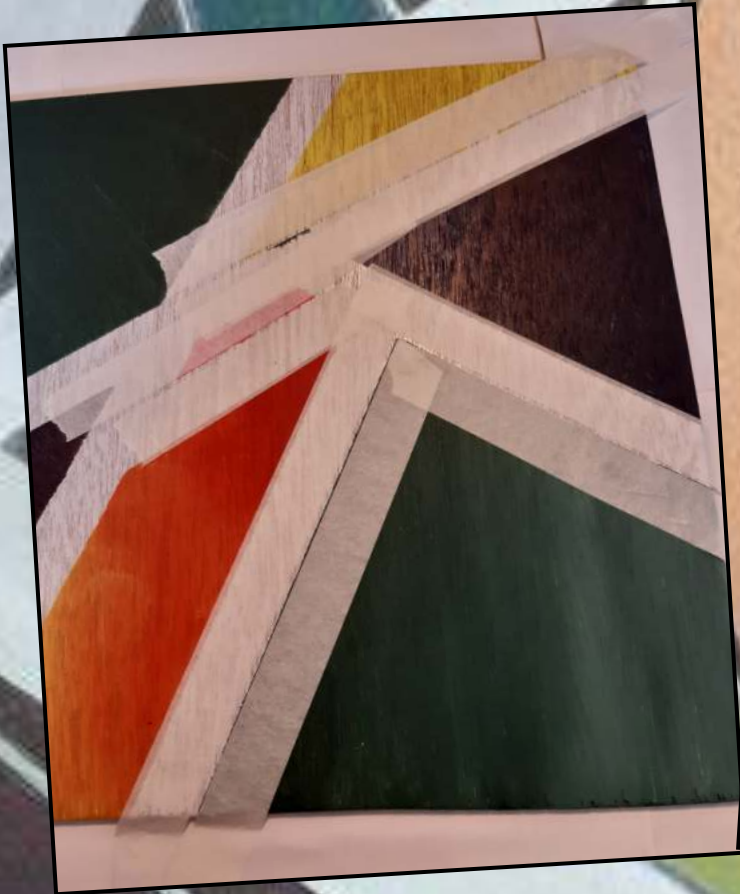
Step 3:

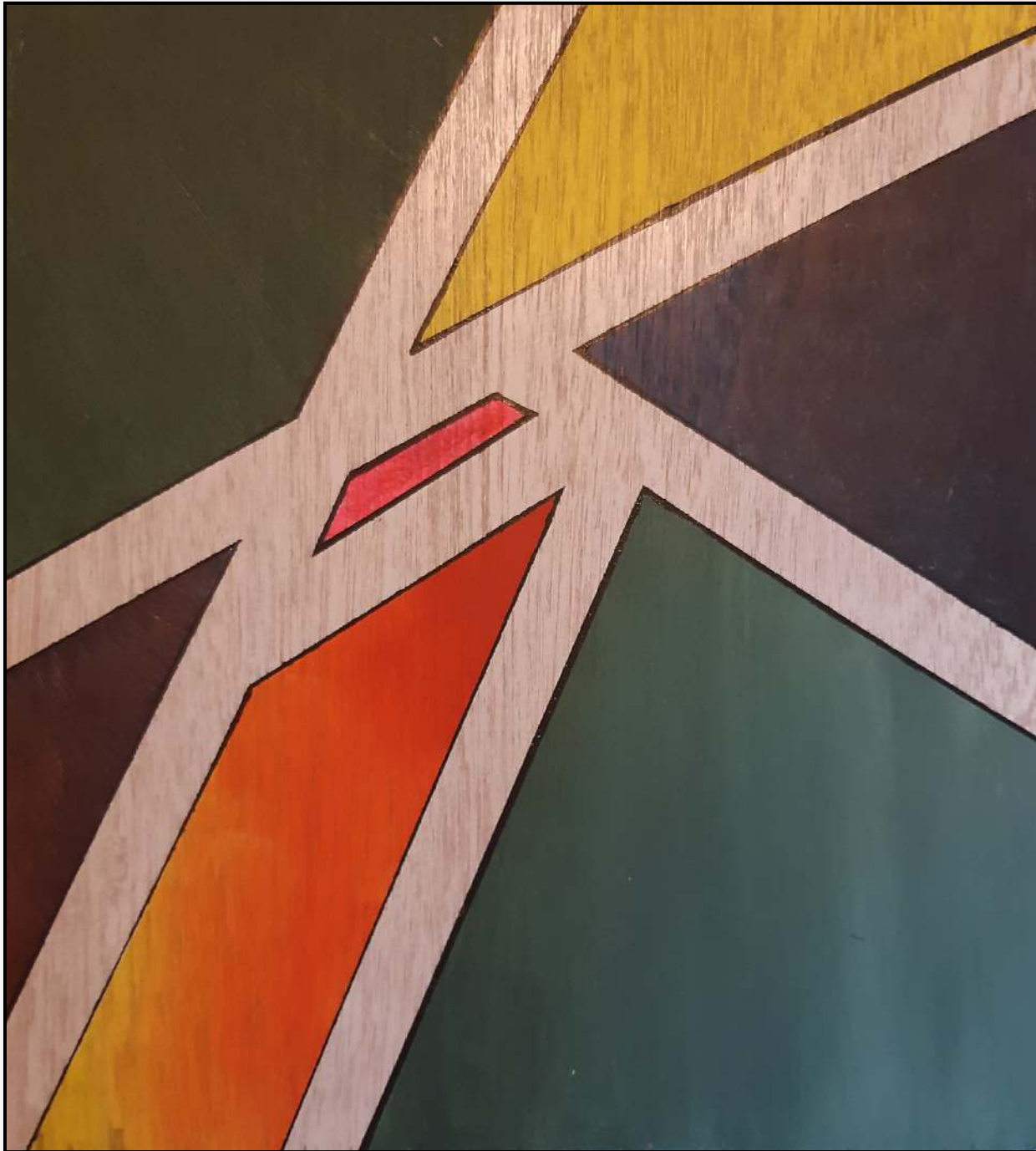
When you are happy with your masked off layout, paint your sections. Colour in each masked off section with different colours. You might like to have a go at shading— going from light to dark in some sections by gradually adding white or black to your paint. When you have finished painting all the sections remove the masking tape (and paper if you have used it) before the paint dries!



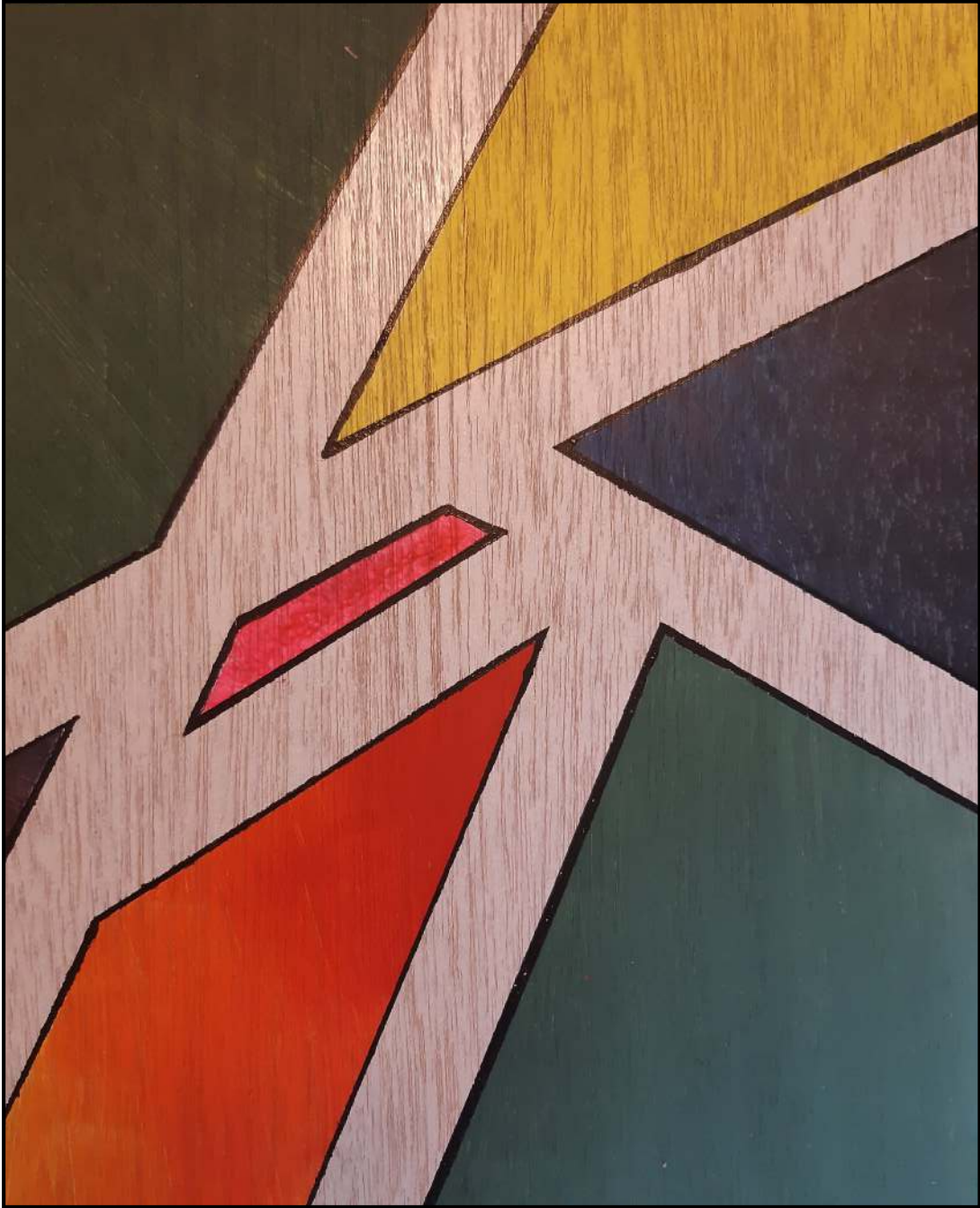
Step 4: (optional)

When the paint has dried from step 3, you can repeat the process using another colour if you want to, or add some fine black lines.

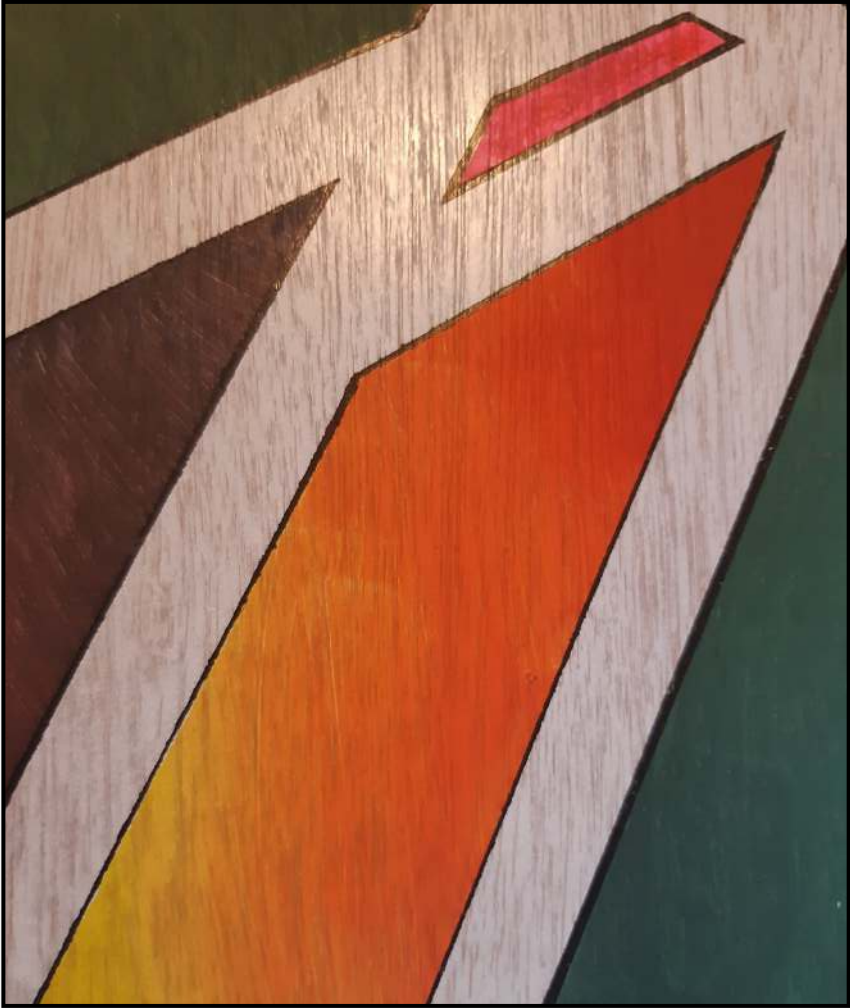




Finished Jon Plapp
inspired art
work...



Finished Jon Plapp
inspired art work
details...



**Don't forget to
Share your creations!**

SEND IN PHOTOS OF YOUR CREATIONS TO HELP

INSPIRE AND MOTIVATE OTHERS

ARTGALLERY@DEVONPORT.TAS.GOV.AU

Eve Williams Creative Learning and Public Programs Officer Devonport Regional Gallery

