

## Start at home

### Overlaid lines



You will all want to know how my 'Art' is thriving. Well, it is difficult to say... I know I am in the process of 'change', so I hope that means I am growing, and to my surprise and gratitude and wild joy it doesn't hurt a bit.

– Grace Crowley, letter home from Paris, 1927

### About the artist

As a little girl raised on a farm, Grace Crowley's first drawings were chalk scribbles on an old water tank. Growing up, she moved on to sketching the cows, chickens and horses around her family homestead. Despite knowing little about art, Grace's parents encouraged her talent, sending her to art school in Sydney. Grace went on to teach drawing and painting there before spending four years in Europe, where she was deeply inspired by modernism – an approach to art that favoured experimentation over tradition. Back in Sydney, Grace co-founded the Crowley-Fizelle school and became an influential figure in Australian painting.

### About the work

Grace Crowley's studies in France represented a turning point in her artistic practice. The focus of her paintings shifted from portraits and pastoral scenes to the formal elements of shape, line and colour. Grace's work became more and more abstract as the years passed, culminating in a series of rhythmic geometric paintings created in the 1940s and 50s. In *Abstract Painting*, 1953 the canvas is criss-crossed with diagonal bands of green, seeming to float above a fractured field of blue, orange and brown. Where the colours intersect there is a layered, translucent effect – like light passing through slivers of coloured glass.



## Materials you need

- white A3 paper
- coloured paper
- coloured tissue paper and/or cellophane
- coloured washi tape (any thickness)
- scissors
- a glue stick

## Take it further

Make a second collage, experimenting with your technique. You could cut out large geometric shapes to begin with, or try layering warm colours on top of cool.

Grace Crowley used collage techniques like these to develop the compositions for her paintings. Try to create a painting, or coloured pencil drawing, inspired by your collage. How many different colours will you need?

## Try it yourself Overlaid lines

- 1 Start by using washi tape to make a diagonal line all the way across your white paper.
- 2 Then add one or two more lines of tape, crossing the first one, to break up your 'canvas' into a few major shapes.
- 3 Cut out and glue pieces of cellophane or tissue paper between the tape lines, until most of the paper is filled with colour.
- 4 Now choose a light, bright colour of tissue paper or cellophane. Cut a long, wide strip of this colour.
- 5 Place this strip on top of your collage, and notice how it changes the colours underneath. Move it around to find a spot that looks interesting, and then glue it down.
- 6 Do the same with a darker colour. Can you still see all the colours underneath?
- 7 Add some final lines with the washi tape, and your abstract collage is complete!

detail Grace Crowley, Australia, 1890–1979, *Abstract painting*, 1953, oil on hardboard, 53.0 x 91.7 cm; Bequest Grace Crowley 1981, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

**Abstract Painting is currently on display in Gallery 4**

**We would love to see your work! Ask your parent or carer to post a photo on Instagram and tag the Art Gallery of South Australia. Or you can email your photo to us at [public.programs@artgallery.sa.gov.au](mailto:public.programs@artgallery.sa.gov.au)**

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