

Adventures of the Black Square: Abstract Art and Society 1915–2015 Whitechapel Gallery Family Activity Trail

There are over 100 artworks in this exhibition made by many different artists. Some were made especially for the exhibition and some were first shown 100 years ago!

There is a lot to look at. Try to find artworks that you think are interesting, funny, exciting, inspiring, confusing or that make you think about new things.

All of the artworks explore 'abstract' ideas – which means they might not be easy to understand straight away. It might make you think of one thing whilst making someone else think of something completely different! But remember – there are no right or wrong answers and it's fine for everyone in your family to have completely different ideas.

Abstract Adventure: Activity 1

Be inspired by the artwork in Gallery 1. Experiment with cutting or ripping the different papers in this envelope to create abstract collages and pictures of your own. Think about pattern, shape and form and how you might place things next to or on top of one another. Your collage might be quite simple or very complicated and detailed. You don't need to stick the pieces down. Try sharing your shapes and papers with someone else in your family and what they make.

Artists in the exhibition to inspire you whilst working on this activity:

Kasimir Malevich

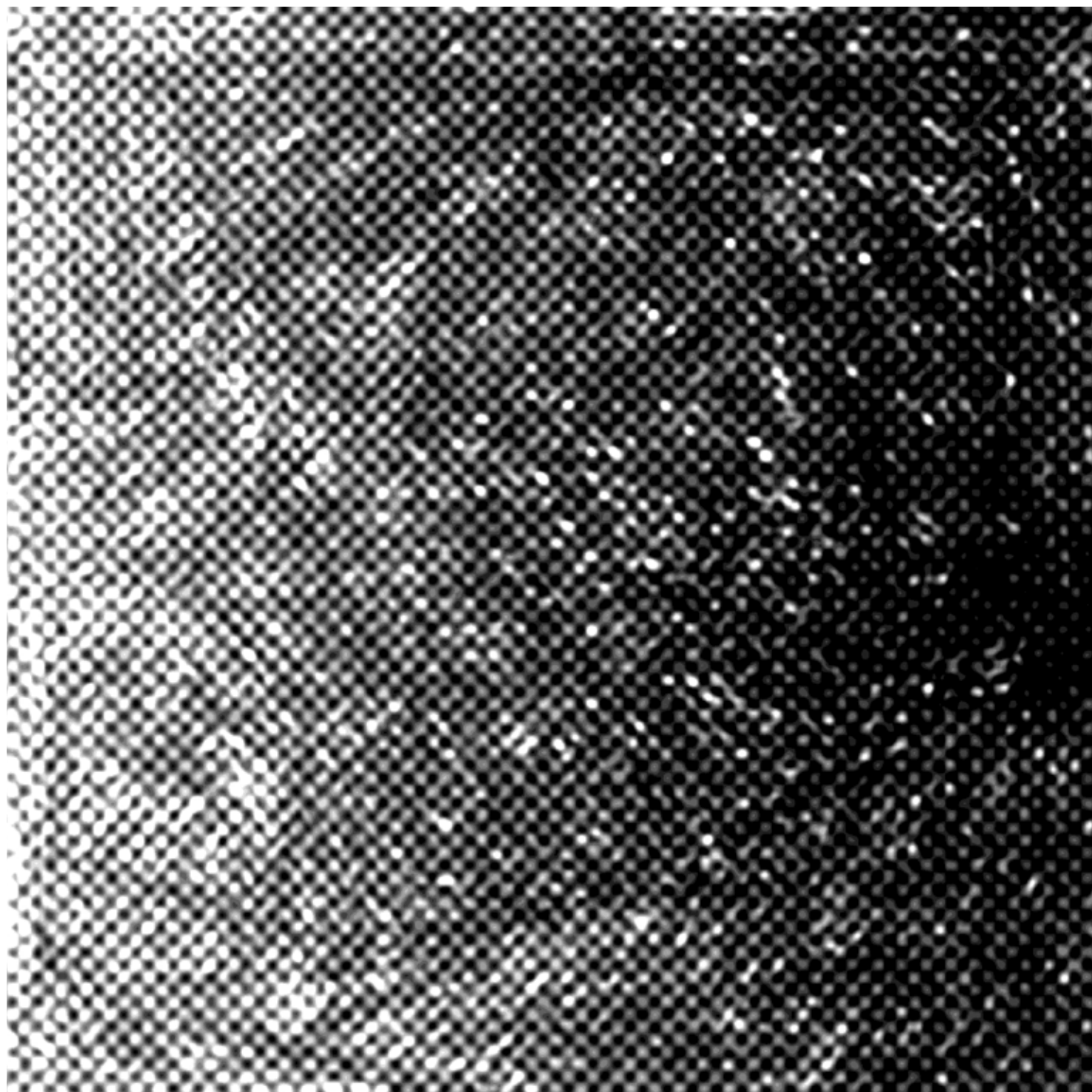
Lygia Pape

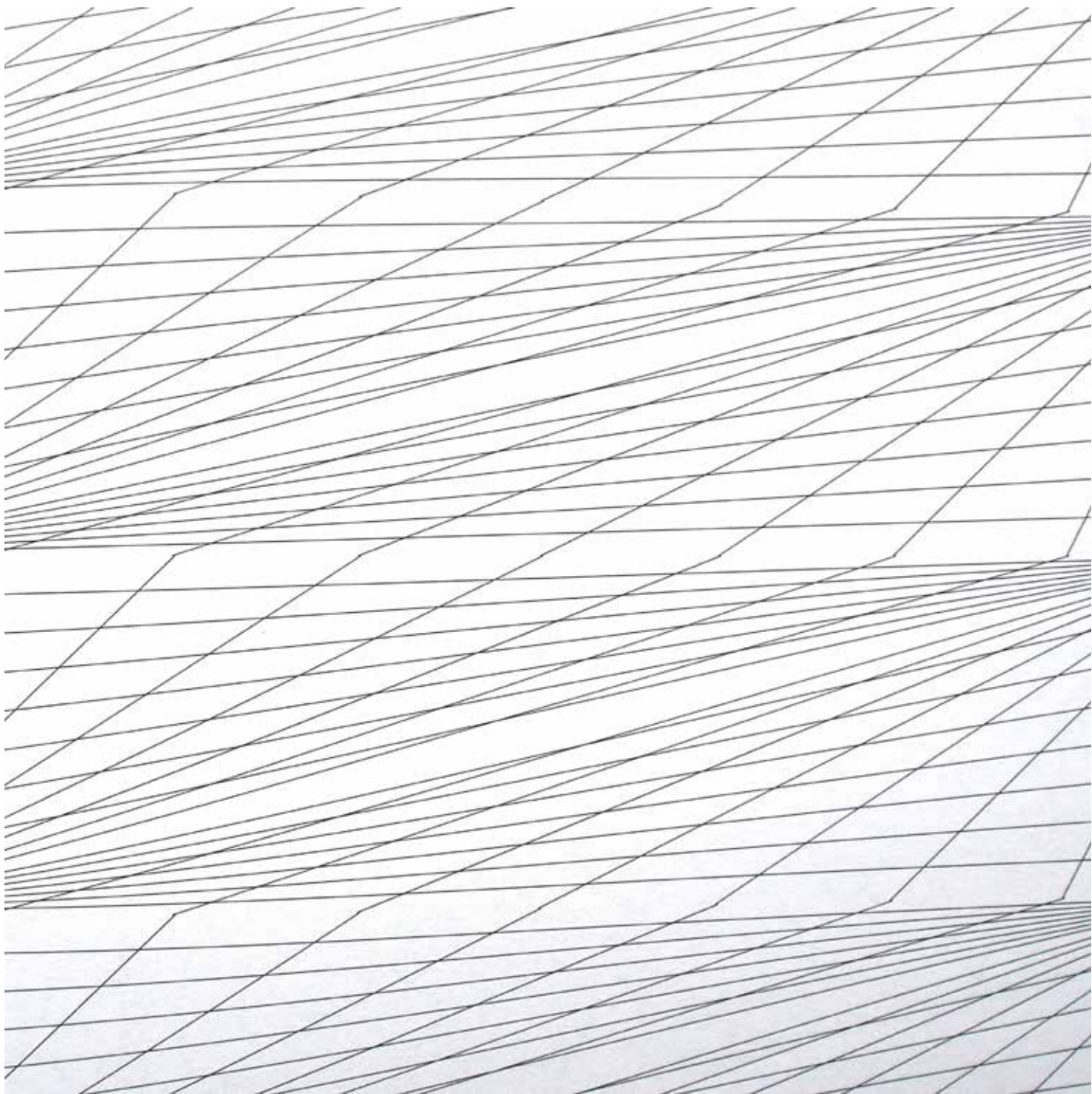
Helio Oiticica

Tomas Maldonado

Piet Mondrian

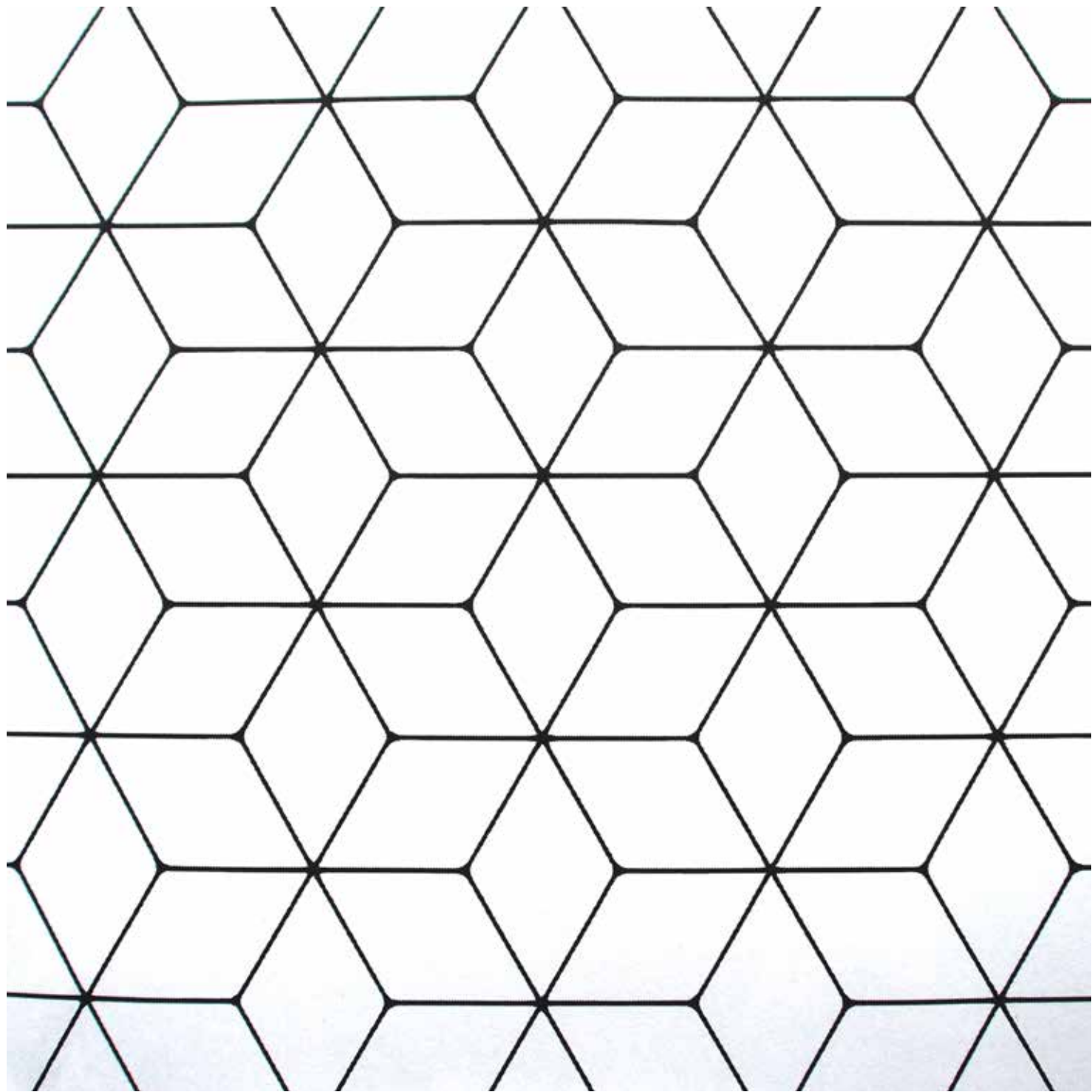
(All these artworks are in Gallery 1)











Abstract Adventure: Activity 2

Have you seen the artwork by Hassan Sharif in Gallery 1? He has made grid patterns and given them numbers. You could try and make the same pattern or invent your own by drawing around the tiny cube in your envelope. If you keep drawing around the cube your artwork will always get bigger, even though the object you started with is very small.

Another artist in the exhibition Cildo Meireles (Also in Gallery 1) has made a very tiny wooden cube. Can you find it? You will need to look very carefully. What do you think Cildo wants us to think about? Is this the smallest artwork you have ever seen?

Abstract Adventure: Activity 3

Artist Bela Kolarova (Gallery 1) uses everyday objects to make patterns for her artworks. She is interested in the small things we use everyday but hardly ever notice. Look in your envelope for the page with images of snap fastener pictures. Carefully cut or tear them up to separate them. Now use them to make arrangements and patterns of your own.

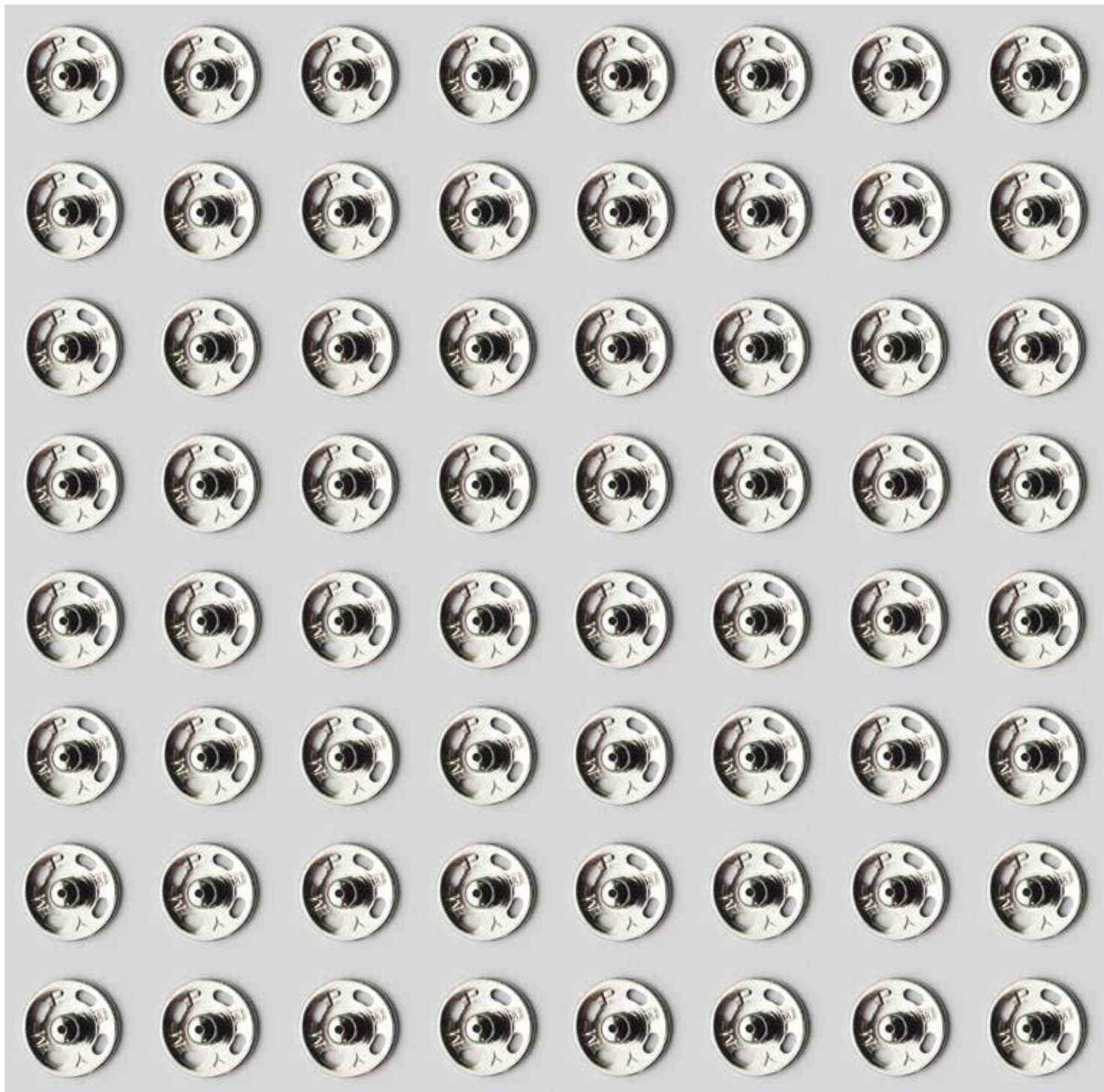
Artists in the exhibition to inspire you whilst working on this activity:

Nazgol Ansarinia

Gunilla Klingberg

Kamal Boullata

(All these artworks are in Gallery 8)



Abstract Adventure: Activity 4

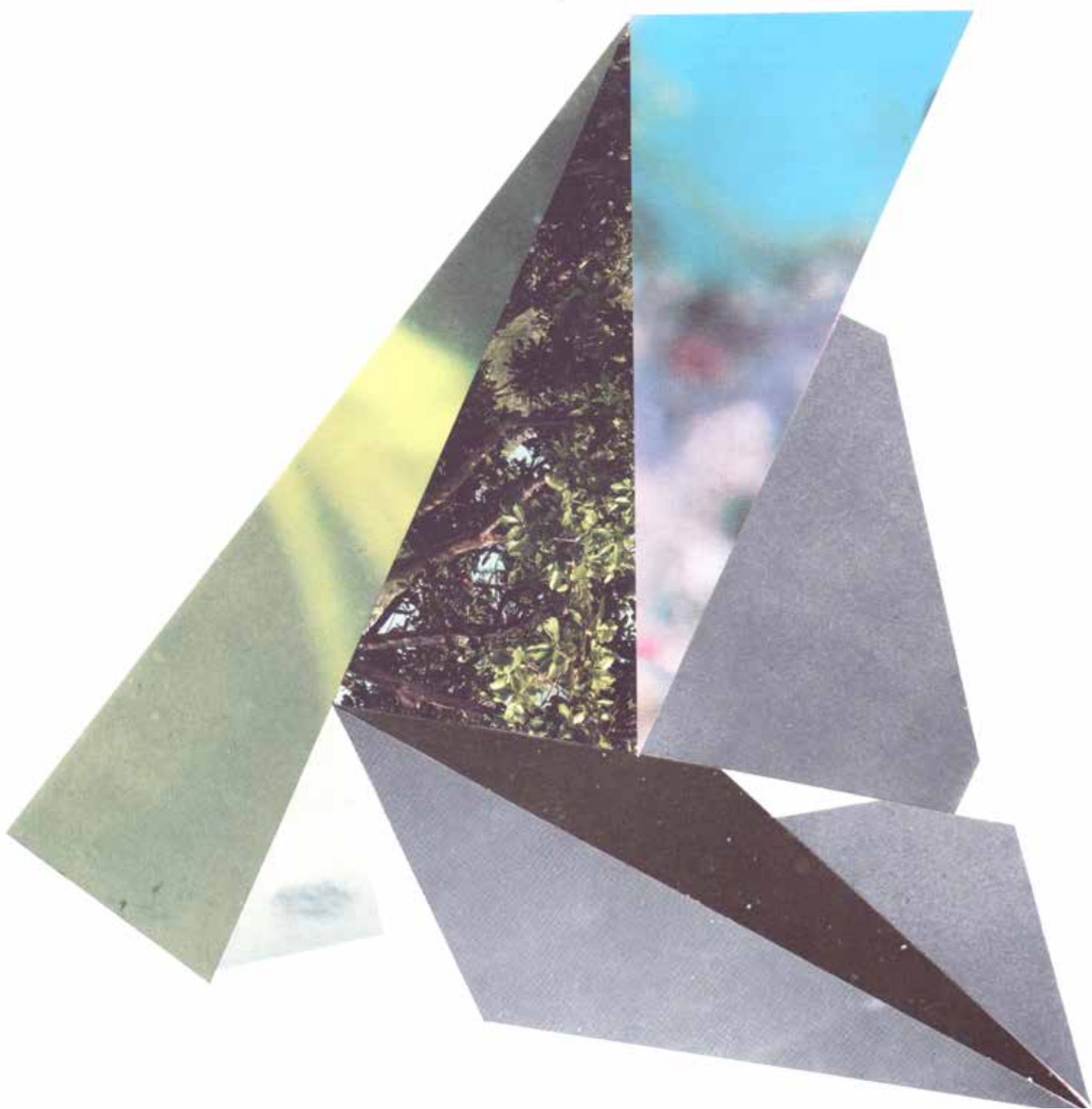
Find sculptures made by artist Lygia Clark (Gallery 1). When she first made these she wanted them to be moved and changed by the people who saw them. How would they would move if you were able to touch them? Can you also imagine that these forms can be made to lie down and become completely flat? Inside your envelope you will find some pages with images and lines that you can fold into your own abstract sculpture. Try folding it along the lines to create interesting shapes and forms.

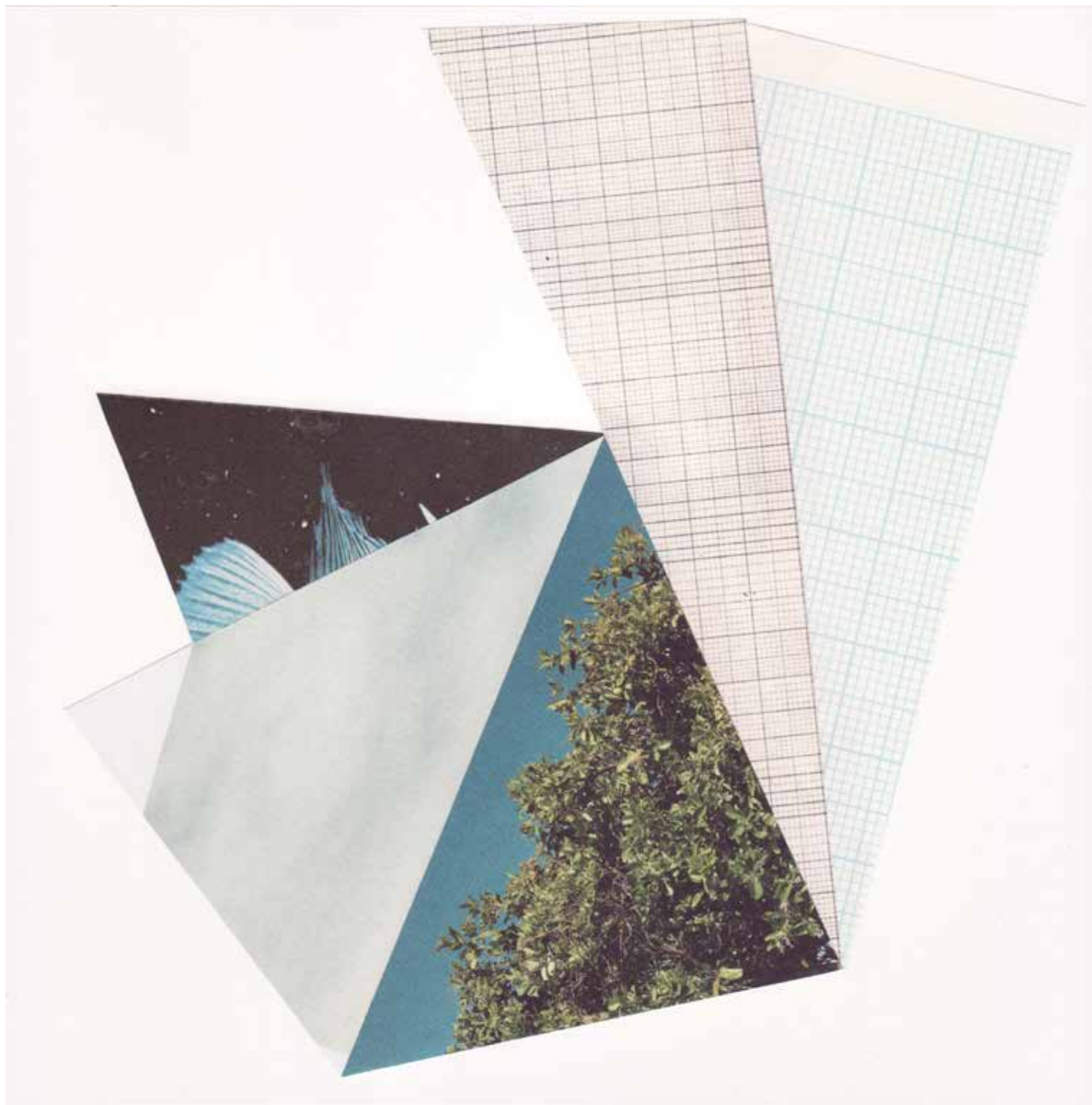
Experiment with simple cuts or folds to make the paper stand up on its own. Back at home you could add other parts to your sculpture.

Invite someone in your family to change or move parts of your sculpture, like Lygia did. How do you feel having someone altering your artwork? Do you like what they have done?

Artists in the exhibition to inspire you whilst working on this activity:

Blinky Palermo (Gallery 1)
Zhao Yao (Gallery 8)
Isa Genzken (Gallery 8)
Josiah McElheny (Gallery 8)
Rasheed Araeen (Gallery 1)





Abstract Adventure: Activity 5

Some artists in this exhibition have used textiles in their work – fabric, thread and wool – sometimes woven, sometimes sewn or stretched to create surfaces. One artist, Andrea Zittel, has even made a textile you can sit on. As you look around the exhibition try to spot all the artists who have used textiles.

Inside your envelope you will find a needle, fabric and wool. Use these things to try out your own abstract textile artwork. You could use embroidery stitches and you could wrap, tie or wind up the materials. You can add in the other papers and images you find in the envelope if you want to.

Artists in the exhibition to inspire you whilst working on this activity:

Sophie Taeuber-Arp (Gallery 1)

Rosemarie Trockel (Gallery 9)

Andrea Zittel (Gallery 8)

Adrian Esparza (Gallery 8)

Andrea Buttner (Gallery 8)

Abstract Adventure Activity

David Batchelor *Monochrome Archive, 1997-2015*

Gallery 2 – Free Exhibition

Over the last 20 years, artist David Batchelor has been collecting images of white squares and rectangles that he finds as he walks around towns and cities. In Gallery 2 you can see his whole collection – over 500 of them – presented as films, slides and photographs.

Try this...

Spend some time watching the white squares changing on the screens. It looks like the squares are jumping and moving. In your envelope you will find some pages of white squares. Draw in your own collection of found rectangles and squares. Carefully cut or rip along the lines on the pages and make a small pile of your squares. Perhaps when you get home attach your pile of pages together to make a small book. You could use glue, a stapler, thread or tape. You could ask a grown up to help you. Once the book is made try flicking the pages as quickly as you can so your collection of squares moves on its own too.

Try this...

Look at the images in your envelope of some squares and shapes that were photographed in and around the Whitechapel area. Do they look like gaps that need filling or blank artworks waiting to show something? Add drawings, writing or ideas into the spaces to fill them with your ideas.

Try this...

Think carefully about the things you notice as you walk down your street everyday or when you sit and look out of the windows of a bus or train. Do you remember noticing any white squares or rectangles on your way to the Gallery today? Look out for some on your way home...

Think of a collection of things you could look out for on your way home today or during the rest of this week, when you are out and about. It could be squares like David's or perhaps a different geometric shape – a circle or triangle or a particular colour that you could try looking for. You could have a family looking competition where you each look for different shapes and see who spots the most. Make drawings or take photographs on a mobile phone camera every time you see your shape outside. Once you start really looking, is it easy to notice more things around you?

