Exploring Colour like Josef Albers: A Step-by-Step Art Guide for Young Artists

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Step 1: Learn About Josef Albers

What you need to know:

- Josef Albers was a German artist and teacher.
- He loved squares! He used them to explore how colours change when placed next to one another.
- His most famous works are from the series **"Homage to the Square."**

Look closely at his art. Notice how the colours seem to change based on their neighbours!

Step 2: Pick 3 or 4 Colours You Like

You'll need:

- Colour paper, coloured pencils, markers, or paints.
- Try to choose **two bold colours**, **one pale colour**, and **one neutral** (like grey or white).

Top Tip: Albers often used flat, even colours – no shading!

Step 3: Cut or Draw Squares

Create:

- One **large square** for the background (e.g. 15 cm).
- One **medium square** (e.g. 10 cm).
- One **small square** (e.g. 5 cm).

Layer them concentrically like this: Large square → Medium square on top → Small square on top

Ask yourself: *How does each colour look when placed next to another?*

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Step 4: Try Switching the Colours

Make more combinations using the same colours in different orders.

Does the **same green** look different when it's surrounded by red vs when it's surrounded by blue?

Albers said: *"Colour deceives continually."* He meant our eyes see colours differently depending on what they're next to.

Step 5: Explore Colour Illusion

Mini experiments:

- Put the same colour square on **light** and **dark** backgrounds.
- Try warm colours inside cool ones, and vice versa.

Goal: See if you can make a colour look **brighter**, **duller**, **warmer**, or **cooler** – without changing the colour itself!

Step 6: Create Your Final Piece

Plan:

- Choose your favourite combination.
- Make a neat version using the same square format (or try rectangles or triangles for fun).

Keep edges clean and colours flat – just like Albers.

Sign it with your name and title it something simple, like **"Study in Red and Yellow"**.

Step 7: Reflect Like Albers

Ask yourself:

- Which combinations surprised me?
- Which colours "changed" the most?

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- What did I learn about how colours interact?

Consider keeping a **colour journal** where you stick in your experiments and write your discoveries.

Additional Creative Ideas:

- Turn your square study into a **greeting card**.
- Use the format for a **mood board**: show how different colour groups can create different feelings!

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