Grid Pattern Portrait

For this project you will enlarge a photograph using the grid method and then fill in the values in each grid box with pen and ink patterns to create a patterned portrait. The examples below show how this project may look when complete.
INK PRACTICE:

The first thing you will do is to practice making light and dark patterns with your pen. On a sketchbook page (approximately 9" x 12") make a grid of boxes like the one on the left. In each box fill in a different pattern. Patterns will read as different values (light or dark). Some may also go from light to dark as you move across the box or have more than one value in the box (see examples below). Create as many different patterns as you can come up with!

After you have done your sketchbook page of different patterns you will make 6 step value scales of 6 pen designs on a new page. This means you will take the same design/pattern and make it darker or lighter by enlarging it, coloring more densely, etc... The example on the left shows specific patterns. You may want to use some of these (like hatching and cross hatching), but I encourage you to also choose your own patterns for which create value scales.
After practicing with pen and ink find your own photo to work from and print it out. ONLY WORK FROM PHOTOS YOU HAVE TAKEN PERSONALLY!!!! You may want to print it out in black and white to more easily see the values. You will then grid your photo for enlargement and your paper. If your photo is 8” x 10” you may wish to use a ½ inch grid to grid your photo using pen or colored pencil.

Then, grid the paper or illustration board you will draw onto. If you double your grid to a 1” grid for your final it will be 16” x 20”. Grid your final with pencil. You may use any size grid (the smaller the grid the more detail), but your final will be between 16” x 20” to 18” x 24. The grid should be 1 to 1. If you have 10 squares going across your picture, then ten squares should go across your paper. All grids should be exactly square – do not change the proportions from photo to drawing!

You will then copy each grid – square by square and shade it in using pen and ink and pattern. If you wish to do an outline drawing in pencil to begin you may, but no pencil lines should not be seen in your final work. Viewing each block as a separate sketch makes the task easier to complete.
Shade grid square by grid square looking closely at your picture reference and using the pattern of your choice in that grid. Pay close attention to value when you shade in your portrait! Do you see how the simple hatched portrait on the right is more successful at likeness and creating form than the one on the right despite the larger grid? Careful attention to the shapes of the light and shadow while you are filling in your squares with pattern will help you get a better result!

Notes about what to do and what not to do:

- Nice likeness! I wish there were shading!
- Really lovely, but all one pattern!
- No color! All value needs to be made by your patterns, not by coloring in a lighter color!
Chuck Close is probably one of the artists most famous for his use of the grid method. After a clot formed in his spinal cord in 1988, he became paralyzed and he developed a new painting style, still using a grid. He could make lozenge shape concentric circles in the grid with his limited movement and he filled in the grid with this pattern to create his large portraits.
DIRECTIONS:

For your assignment you will create your own way of working in the grid. Create a pattern of your own that you will use to create your portrait using the grid method. Will you cross hatch in colored pencil? Use all straight lines? Use puzzle pieces of different colors?

Whatever you do the grid and pattern should be easily identified in your final piece. The final piece should be large – at least 16” x 20” or 18” x 24”. You may go larger.

Following are some examples that may give you an idea of what you may want to do. The grid method is briefly explained earlier in this handout, but more comprehensive directions can be found online if needed.