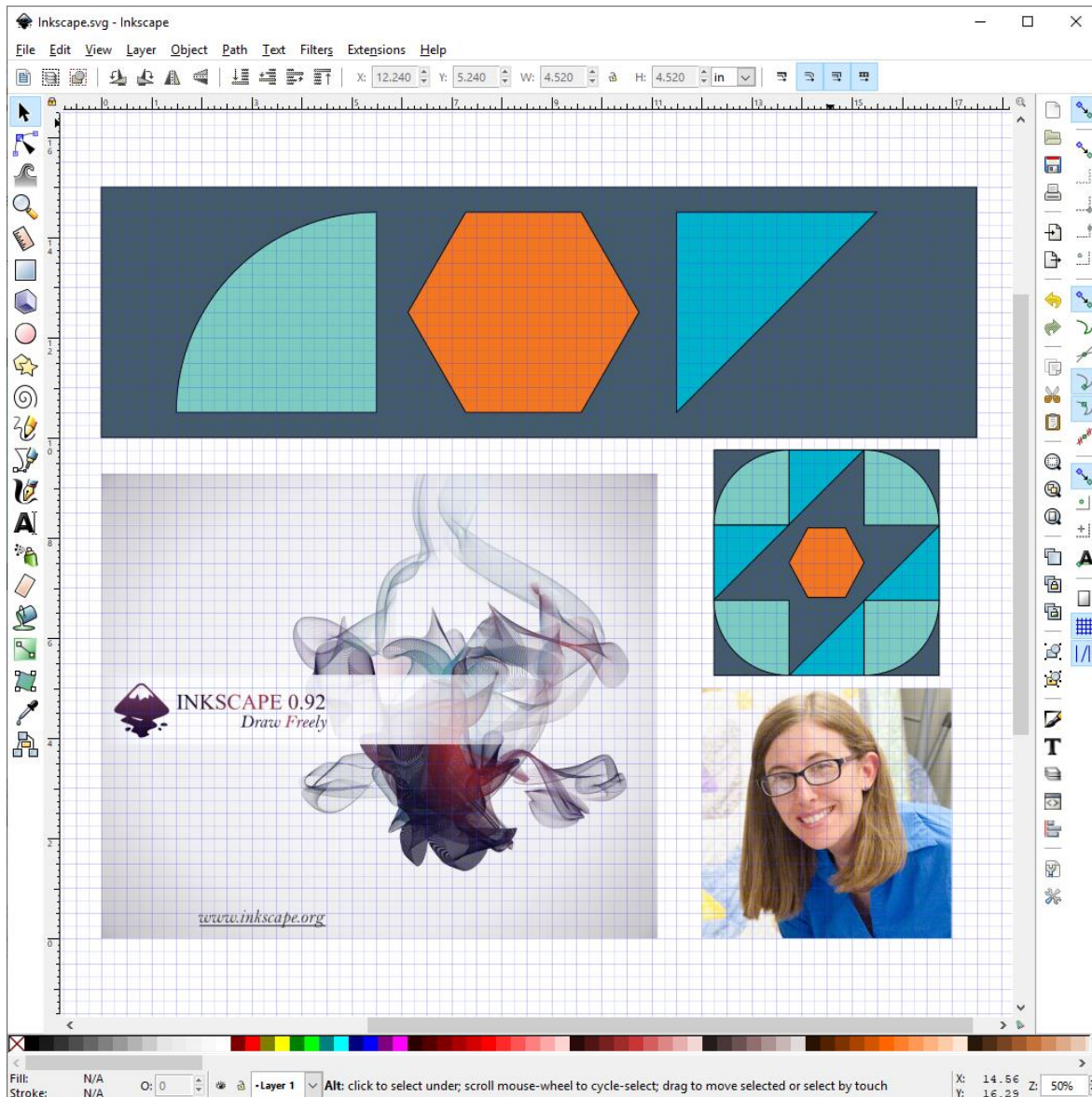


# Quilt Pattern Design in Inkscape

## Webinar Notes and Exercises

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Inkscape is a free and open source professional vector graphic editor for Linux, Windows, and macOS. Vector images can be exported to other programs or sent to a graphic designer, magazine editor, etc. in high resolution, loss-less file formats. Inkscape can export PNG images or the entire file can be saved in a PDF or EPS file format.

The following exercises are suggestions for getting used to any new software program for quilt pattern design. By starting with the basics, you will become familiar with the location of the tools on the toolbars.

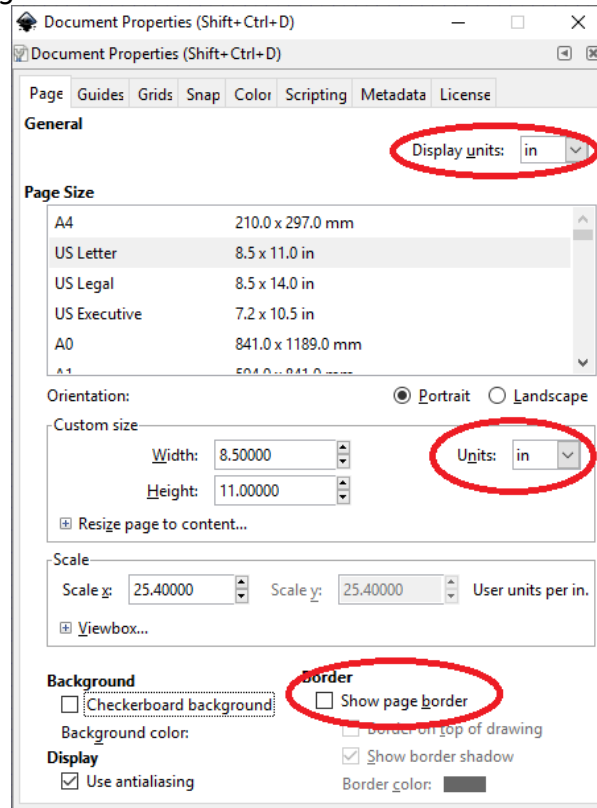
**Tip:** Save all of the initial shapes and blocks in a “Basic shapes” file that you can use to pull from for your designs to reduce the amount of time you spend on the computer recreating the same thing over and over again.

**Advanced Tip:** If you are quilt pattern designer, create a “Basic illustration instruction” file for the steps explaining typical block construction such as half-square triangles, flying geese (4 at a time and stitch and flip), hourglass blocks, square in a square, etc.

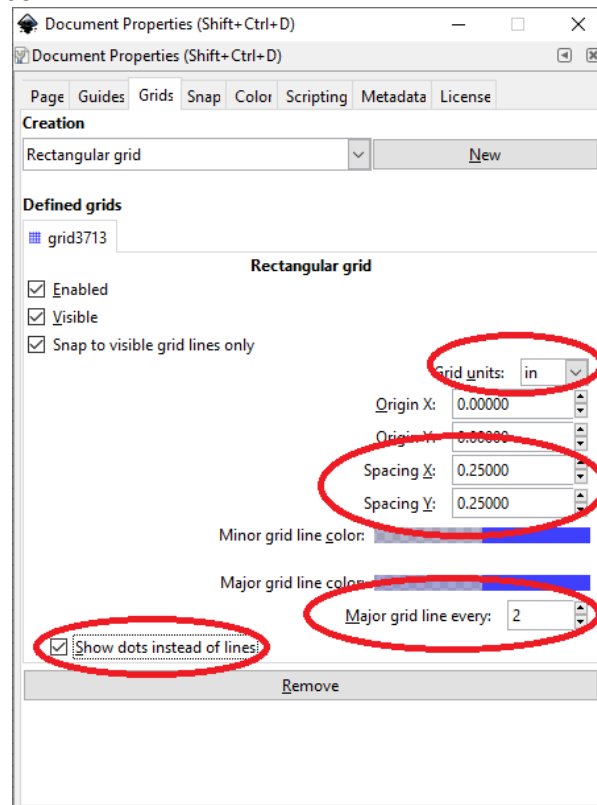
## Download and Install Inkscape

Click on Download, Current Version: <https://inkscape.org/>

After installation, open Inkscape and adjust the Document Properties to your liking.  
File > Document Properties > Page



File > Document Properties > Grids



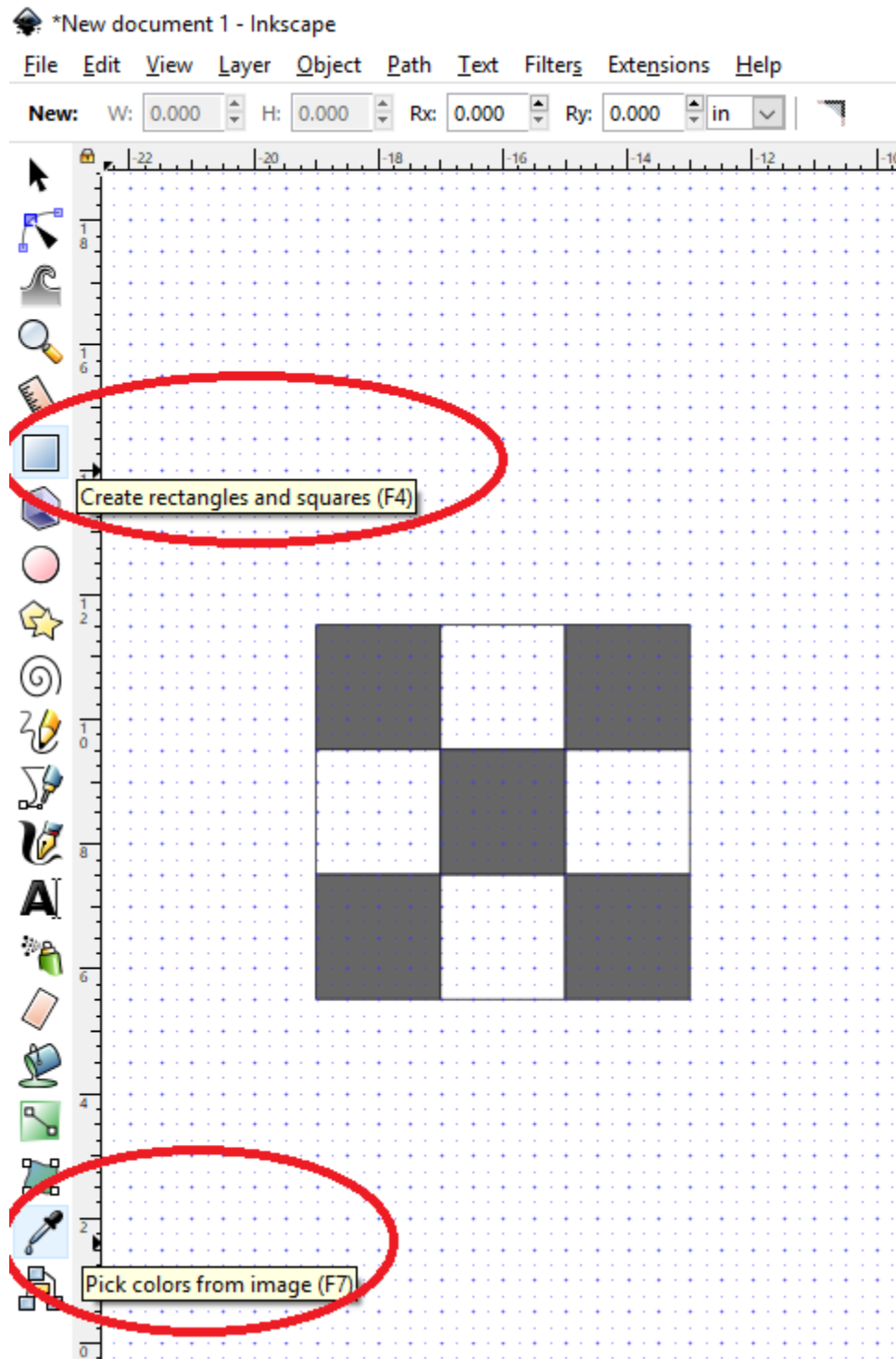
**Advanced Tip:** You can change the default Document Properties.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9gN8ld1psc>

<https://quiltingjetgirl.com>

## Exercise 1: Nine-Patch Block

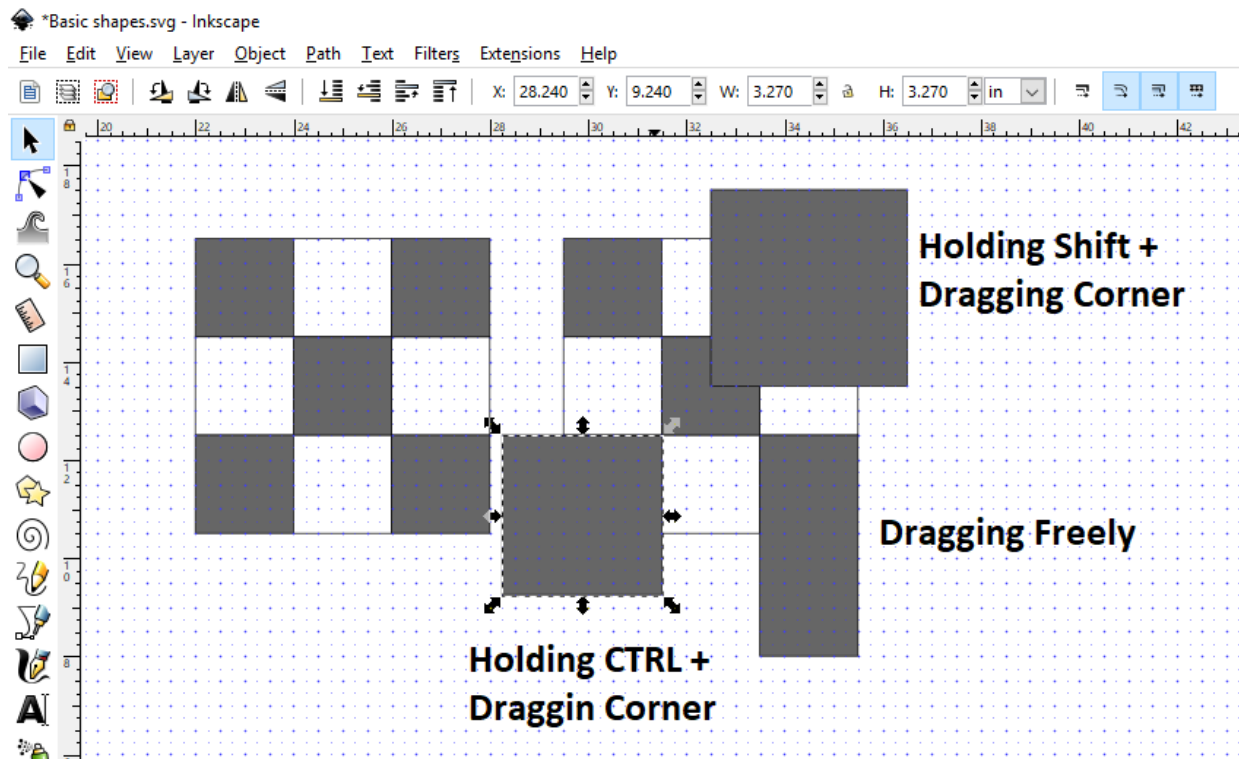
Using the 'Create rectangles and squares' and 'Pick colors from image' tools, make a 9-patch block.



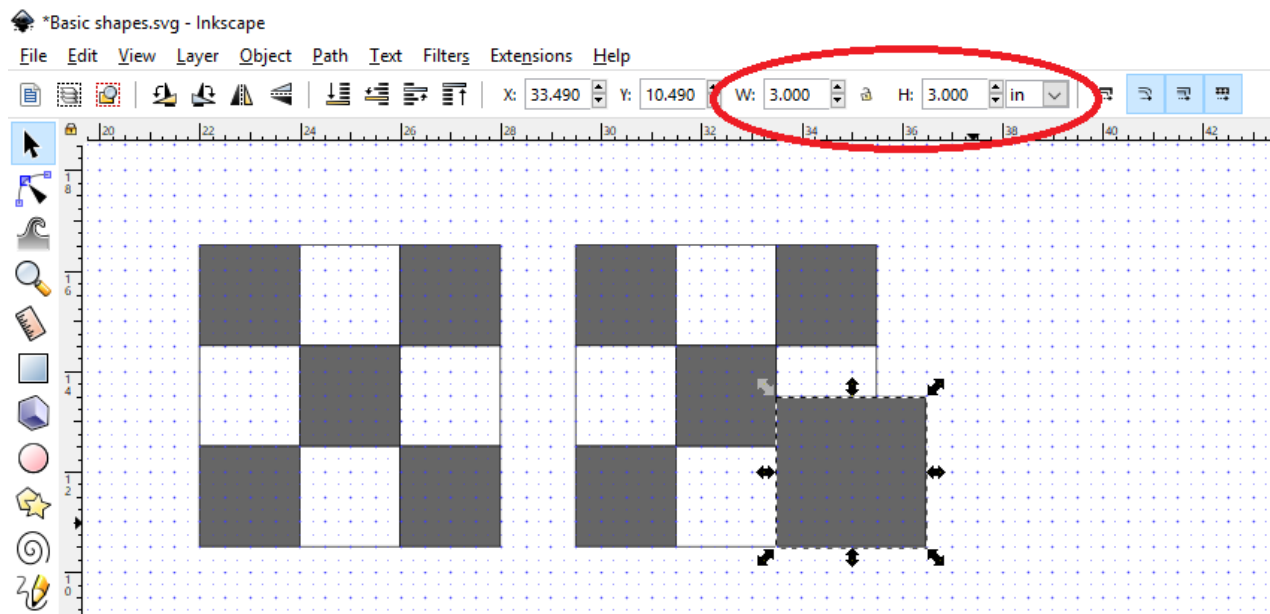
## Exercise 2: Resizing

Using the 'Select and transform objects' tool at the top of the left hand side toolbar, draw a box around the Nine Patch block to highlight all of the elements. Use copy and paste to create a second Nine Patch block and move the second version of the block to the side.

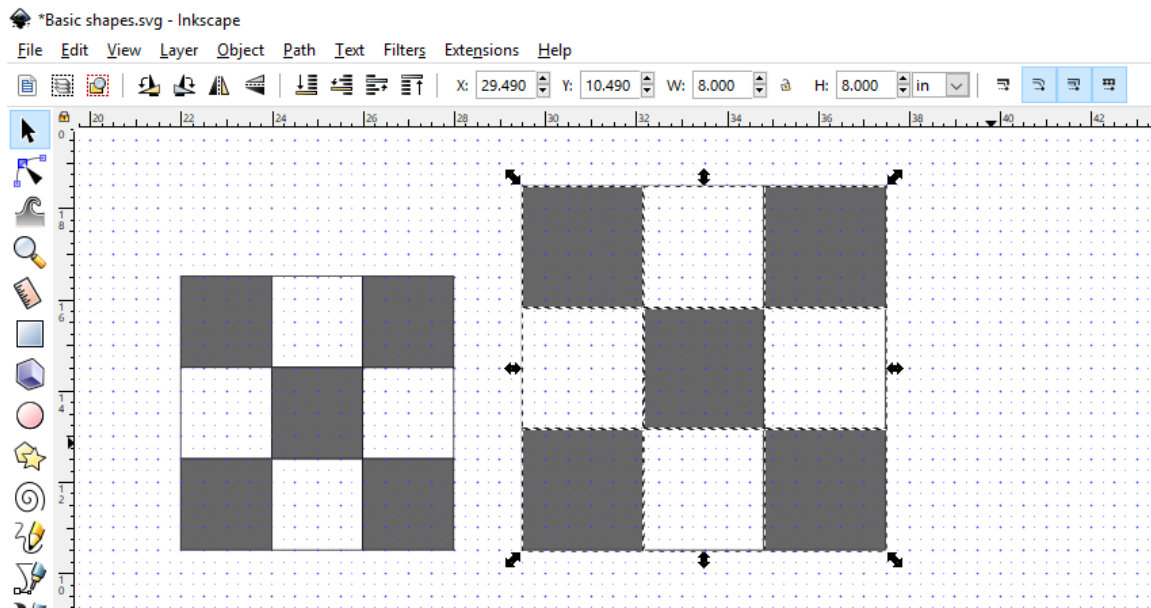
Explore how to resize elements of the Nine Patch block. Notice that you can select a single element and drag the sides to be larger independently or that you can select a corner to resize both sides at once. Note the difference in how the shape resizes when you press and hold the Shift key while you drag or when you press the CTRL key while you drag.



Another option for resizing is to select the object you want to resize and type in the desired width and height you want using the inputs on the top toolbar:



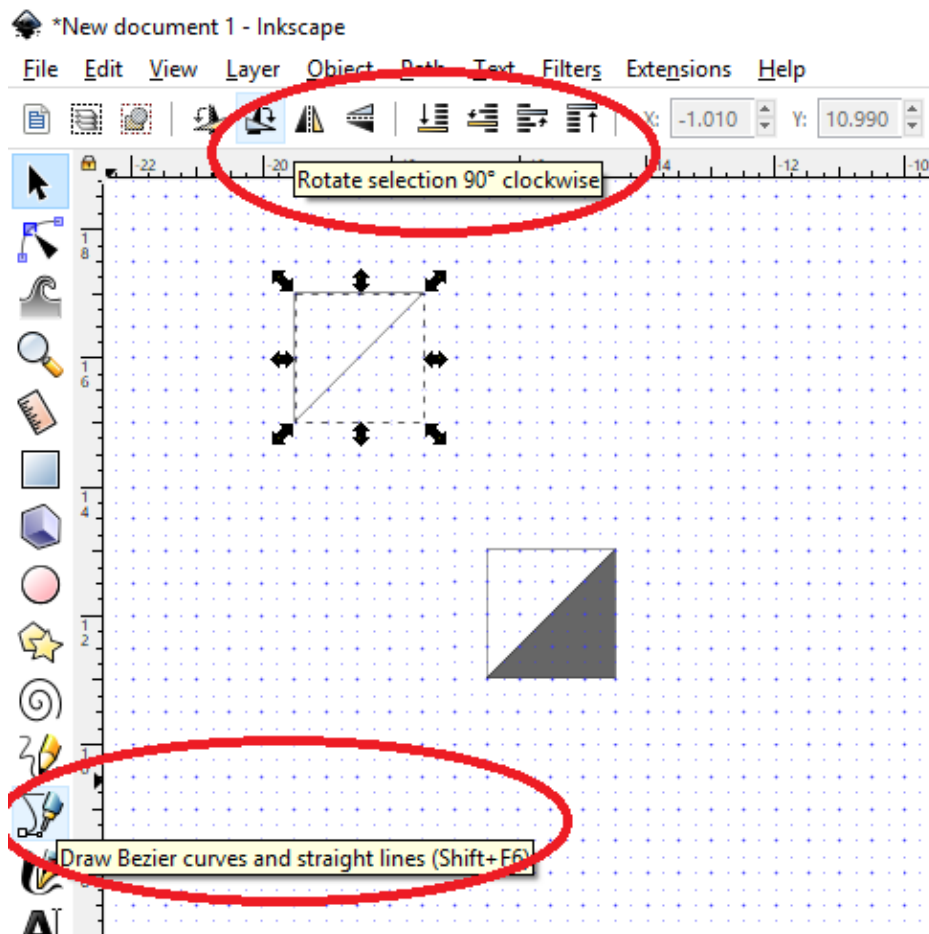
Finally, note that if you select multiple objects at once you can rescale them once as a group.



## Exercise 3: Half-Square Triangle

Using the 'Draw Bezier curves and straight lines' tool, make a half-square triangle.

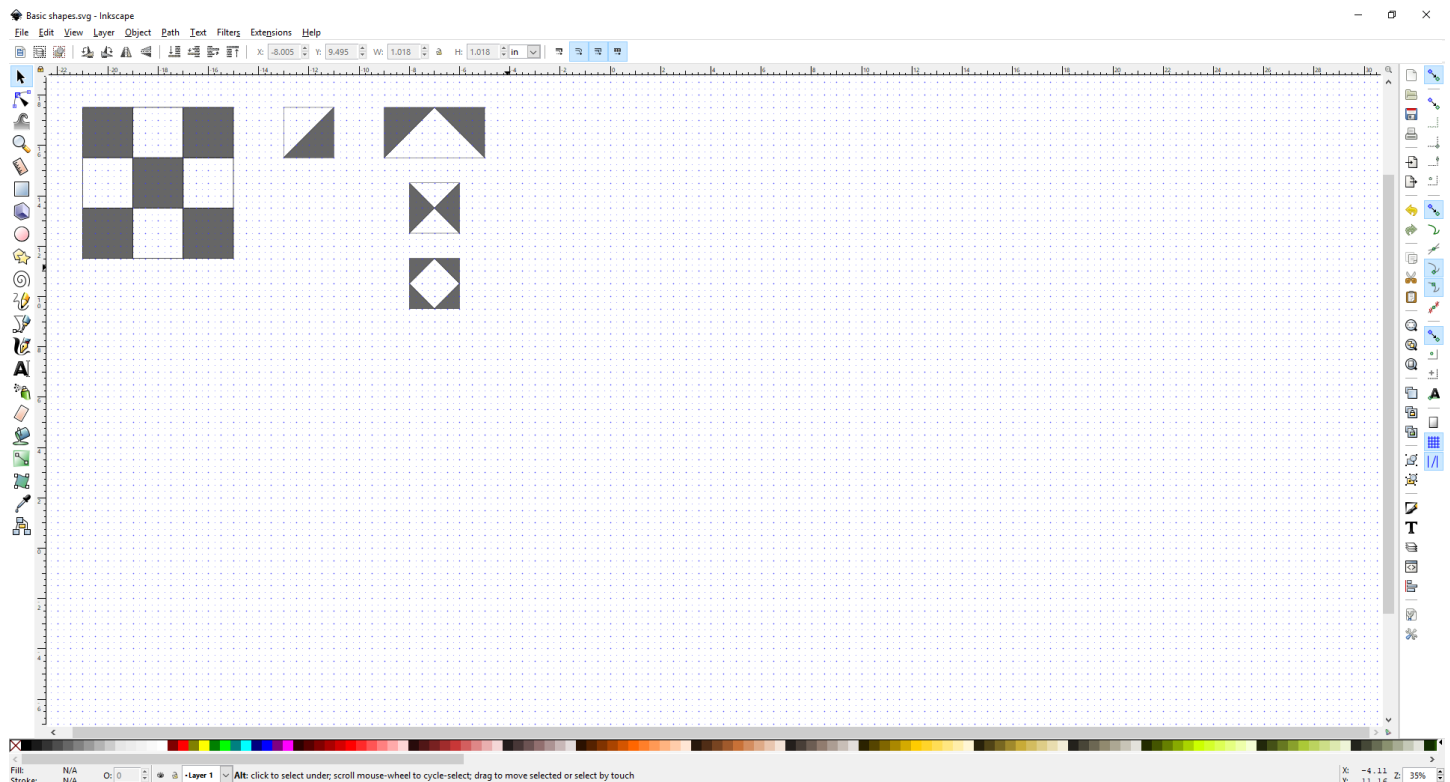
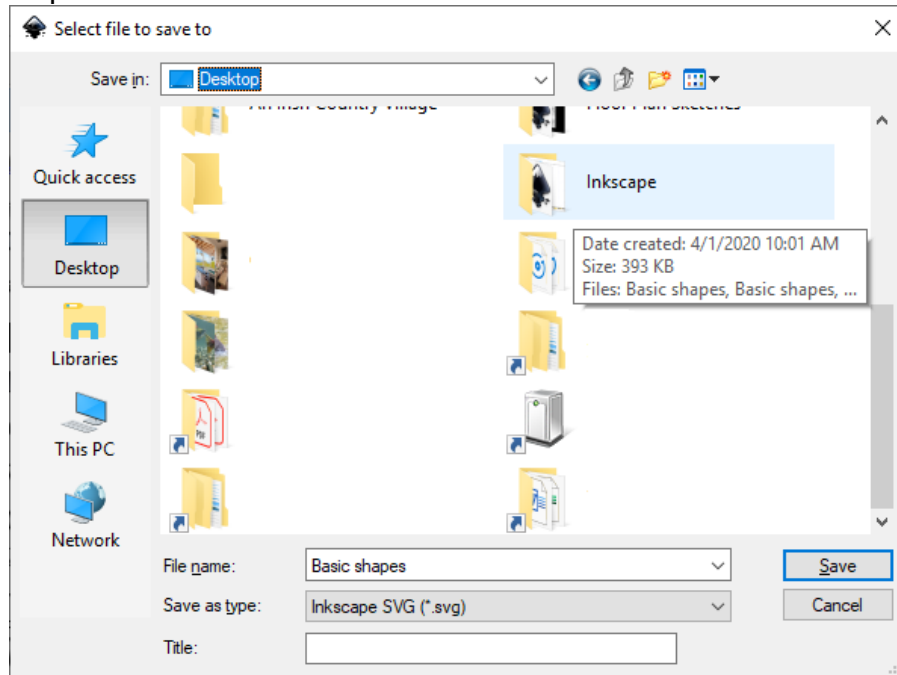
**Tip:** Use copy and paste and the Rotation tools on the top toolbar.



## Exercise 4: Flying Geese, Hourglass / Quarter Square Triangle, Square in a Square and File Saving

After creating a flying geese block, an hourglass / quarter square triangle block, and a square in a square block, save the file giving it the name 'Basic shapes'. Take care to save the file in a known location. I created a folder on my Desktop named 'Inkscape'.

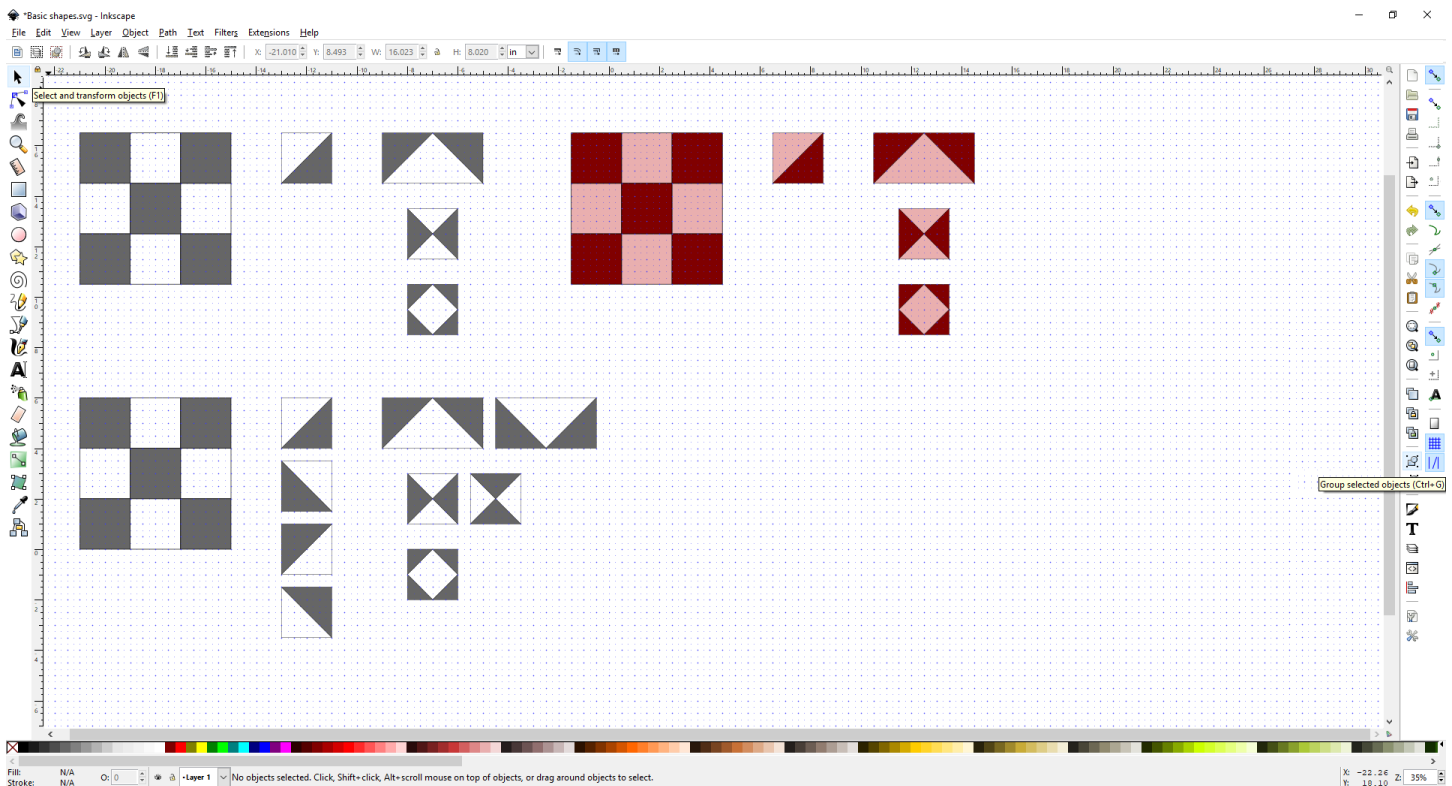
File > Save as > Basic shapes



## Exercise 5: Grouping

1. Using the 'Select and transform objects' tool, drag a box around all of the blocks in the Basic shapes file. With all the shapes selected, copy and paste a second version of the blocks inside the file.
2. Using the 'Select and transform objects' tool, select all of the dark colored shapes in the group of blocks that you just created, and group all of the dark shapes together using the 'Group selected objects' tool.
3. Select and group all of the light colored shapes in the group of blocks that you just created.
4. Using the 'Select and transform objects' tool, select the grouped dark colored shapes and then use the 'Pick colors from image' tool to change the color.
5. Practice copying blocks, rotating blocks, and grouping shapes together by block.

**Tip:** Grouping shapes will be the fastest way to recolor quilt designs for alternate colorways after you complete your design.



## Exercise 6: Import Fabric Swatch, Scale Fabric Swatch, Create Pattern, and Fill Shape with Fabric Pattern

Find a fabric swatch on the internet with a ruler indicating the print size or save this Tula Pink Pinkerville Enlightenment Frolic swatch:

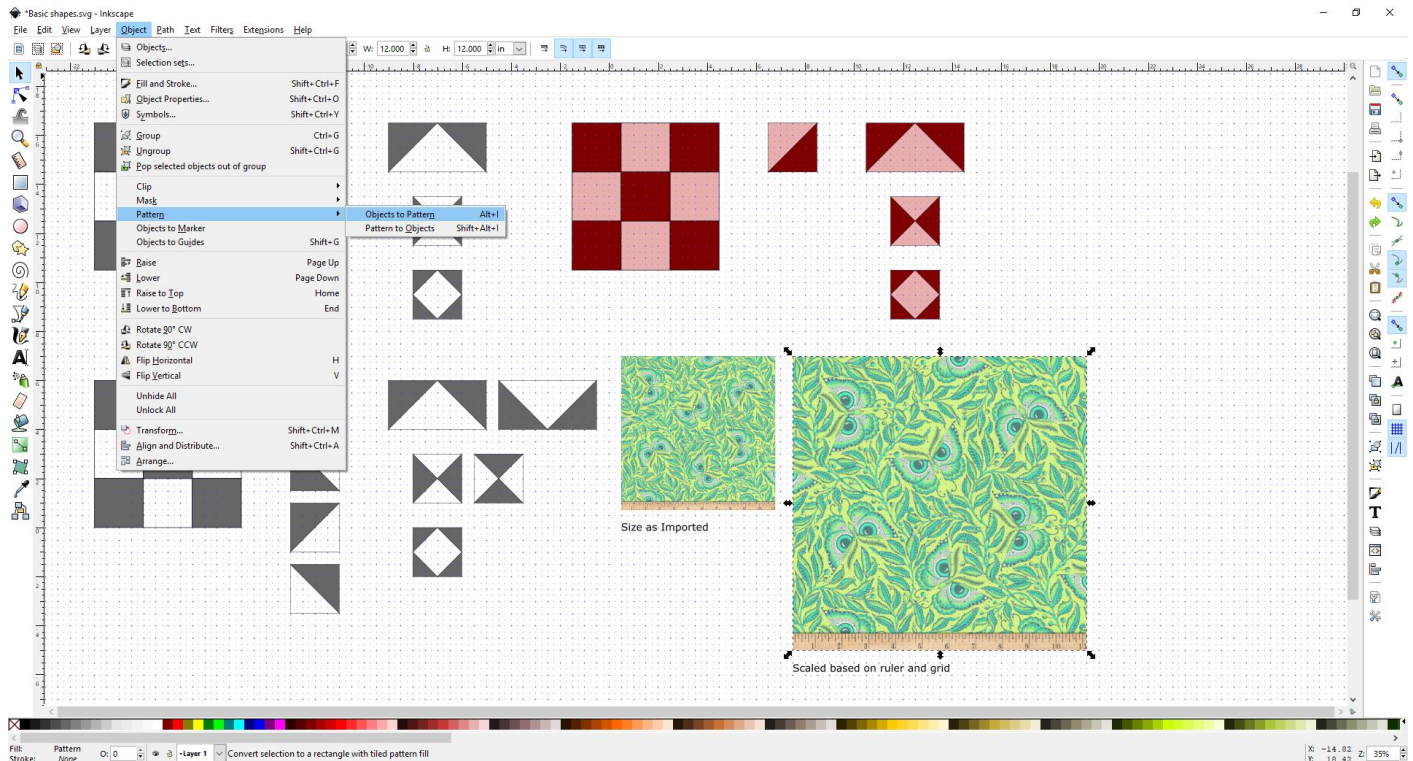


Once saved on your hard drive, open the folder containing the file and simply drag and drop the image into your open Inkscape file. Alternately, use File > Import and then browse to select the saved image. Click OK to accept all the defaults on the menu that pops up.

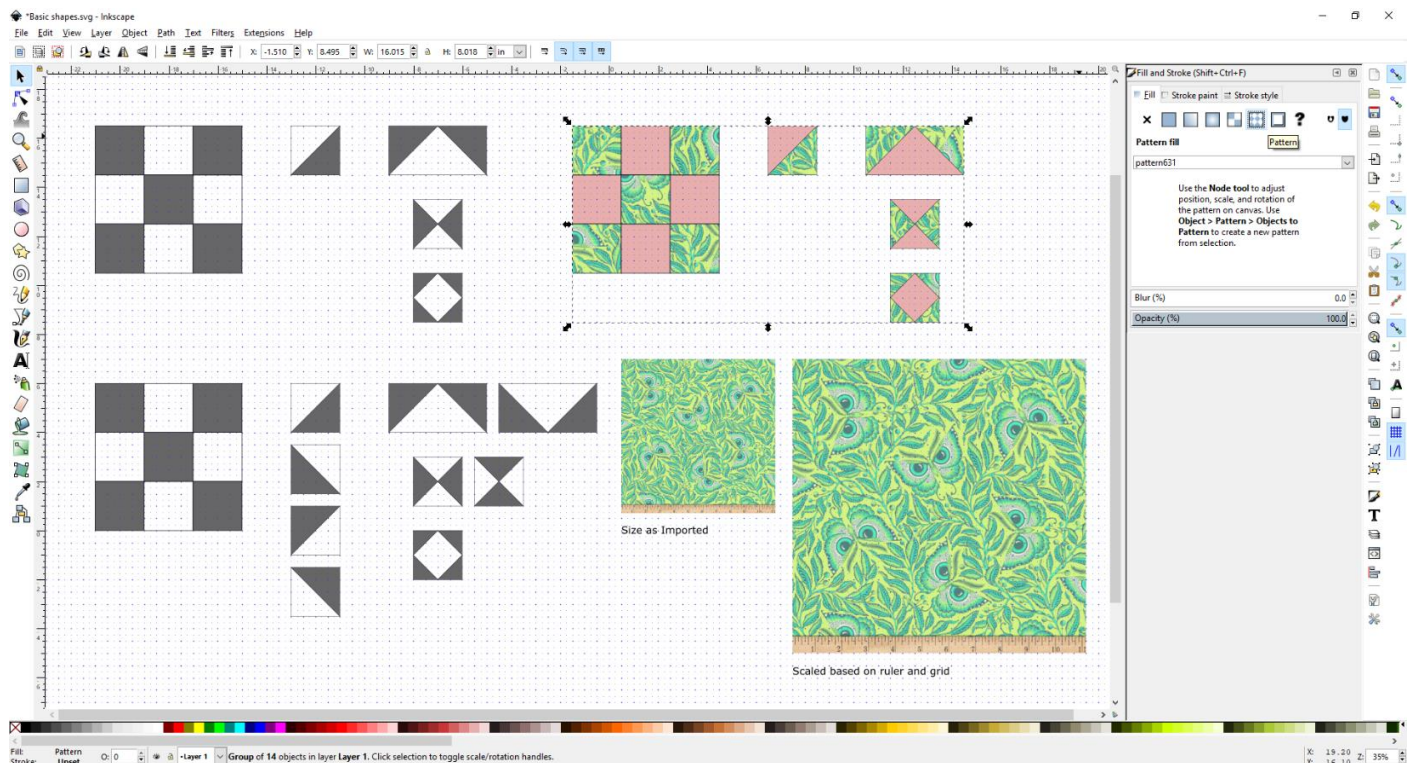
I recommend using fabric swatches with a scale reference because you can resize the images within Inkscape to get the print repeat to correct size / scale. To scale the image, select it and hold the control key on your keyboard while you drag a resizing arrow from any corner until the scale in the image matches the grid size (refer to the top ruler around the workspace).

With the scaled image selected, turn the fabric swatch into a pattern by going to Object > Pattern > Objects to Pattern.

**Note:** The down side to using an image with a ruler is that the ruler also becomes part of the pattern. If you find that the ruler is appearing in the fill, simply move the shape you are filling up or down in the workspace and try the fill command again until you can no longer see the ruler in the fill, then move the shape back to its correct design placement.



Use Fill and Stroke (Object > Fill and Stroke) to Fill selected shapes with the Fabric Swatch pattern created.

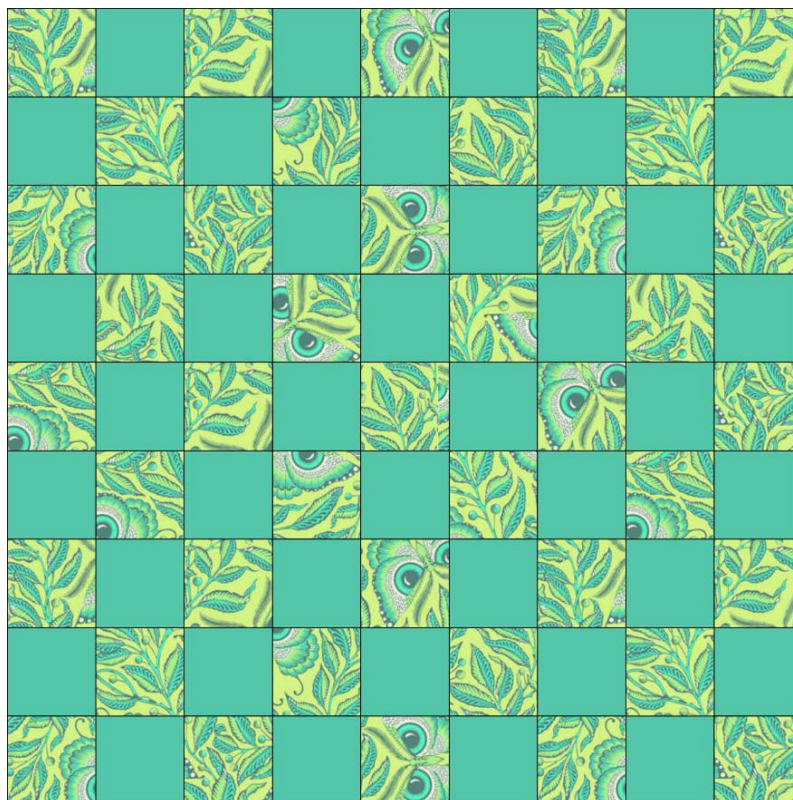
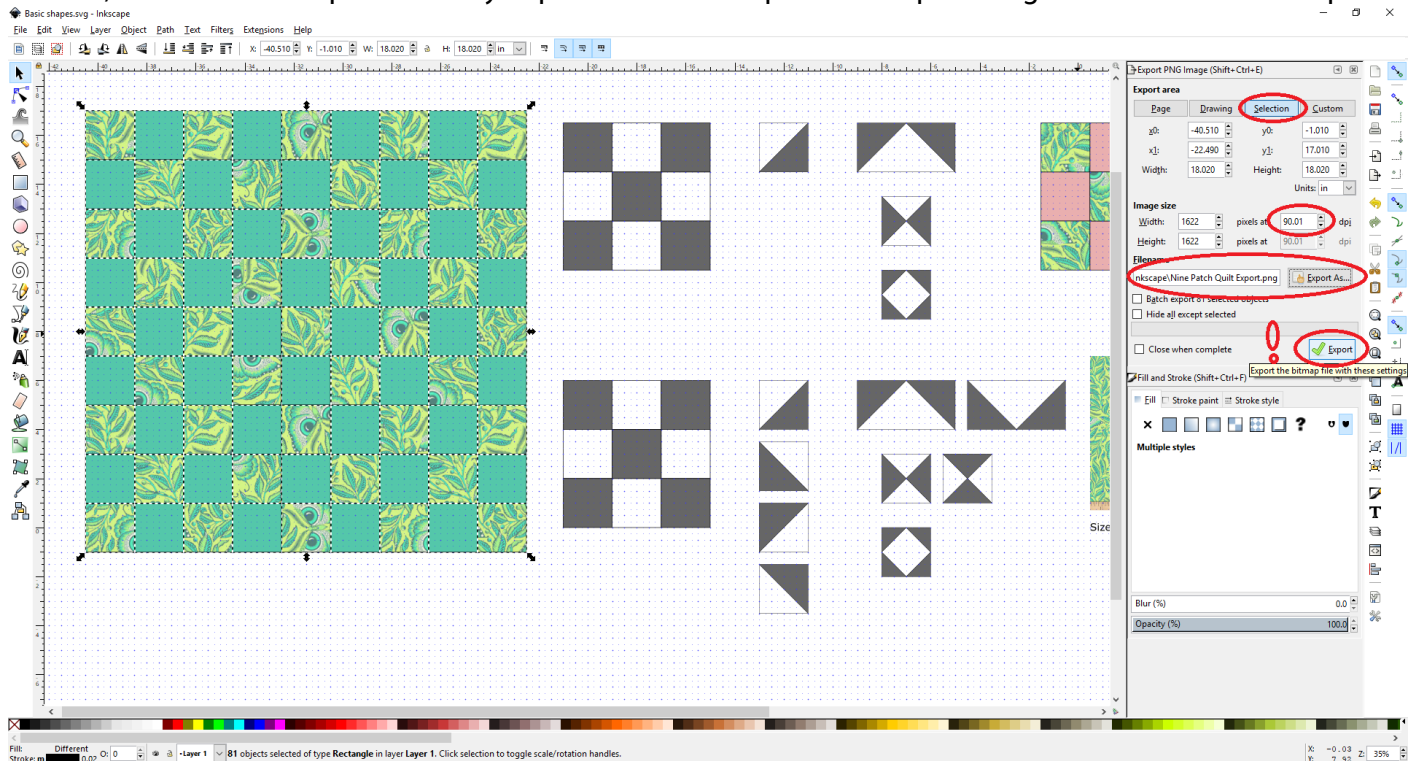


**WARNING:** It is a current known bug for Inkscape to occasionally crash if you try to copy and paste shapes with a pattern fill from an image. Be sure to save your file often!

## Exercise 7: Export Design

Create a basic quilt design using the blocks in the Basic shapes file. For example, use (9) Nine Patch blocks and recolor them using the 'Pick colors from image' tool and fill the shapes using the imported fabric swatch. Save the file.

Using 'Export PNG Image' (File > Export PNG Image), select the quilt design, toggle the option to Selection, set the dpi for your export, Select Export As... to route to the correct directory and give the pattern design your desired file name, and then click Export. It is very important to click Export or the quilt design will not be saved / exported!

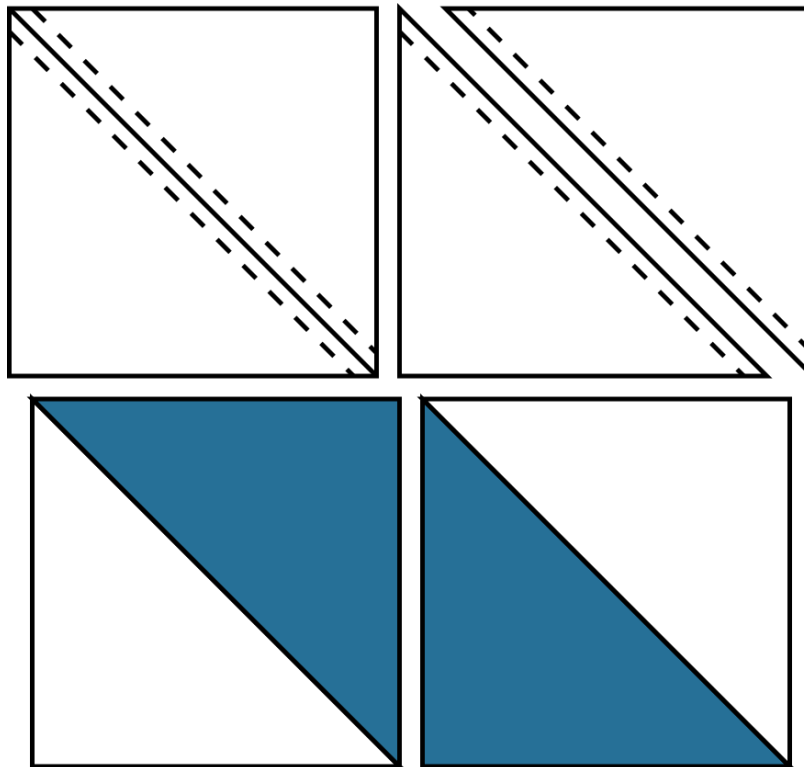


## Other suggested Inkscape Resources

Learning Inkscape: <https://inkscape.org/learn/>

Inkscape Manual: <http://tavmjong.free.fr/INKSCAPE/MANUAL/html/index.php>

Inkscape FAQs: <https://inkscape.org/learn/faq/>



Quilt Pattern Illustration Example Made in Inkscape



**Yvonne @Quilting Jetgirl**  
Quilter | Designer | Tech Editor | Blogger

Yvonne is a former aerospace engineer turned modern quilter, designer, and technical editor. She was introduced to quilting by her paternal grandmother in high school when her grandmother offered to hand quilt a twin-size quilt to use in her college dorm room if Yvonne made the quilt top. Now, 25 years later, Yvonne has developed a style that bridges her technical background and love of bold color, specializing in transparency color play and bold, geometric designs. Yvonne's quilts have been featured in numerous national and international magazines, quilt shows, and Modern Quilts: Designs of the New Century. She lives in Tehachapi, California, with her husband.

Yvonne seeks to change active, generous, caring creatives who want to learn to quilt or improve their quilting skills into people who approach quilting with joy. Into people who recognize that quilting creates connections and builds community. Yvonne loves to help quilters become excited about every step of the quilting process, whether you are a beginner or a seasoned veteran looking for a technical editor.

For more information, visit [Teaching](#), [Technical Editing](#) or contact [yvonne@quiltingjetgirl.com](mailto:yvonne@quiltingjetgirl.com).