

Claraboia

ALMEIDA & DALE

Paulo Pasta
*Gravuras
de Barcelona*

CRITICAL ESSAY
Antonio
Gonçalves
Filho

03–26
Sep 26

Paulo Pasta

Gravuras de Barcelona

The series *Gravuras de Barcelona* [Barcelona Prints], by Paulo Pasta, as the title indicates, was produced last year in the cultural capital of Catalonia. The nine works came out of the Polígrafa print workshop, a world reference that has printed works by Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Max Ernst, and Francis Bacon, among more than three hundred historic artists. Regarding the technical excellence of these lithographs and metal engravings, then, it would be redundant to speak. However, it is necessary to emphasize the role of the series within Pasta's graphic work, which differs from his pictorial work in many respects.

First of all, the constructive method of the two languages is not the same. The Barcelona prints do not reproduce already existing paintings. They are autonomous. The spatial structuring, in the case of the print, attempts to balance the chromatic order that runs from the opaque to the incandescent, drawing on the architectural orthogonality of his painting, but suppressing the relief of the canvases. It creates colors through the chemical processes of lithography and metal engraving, which retain the ink and reveal a velvety texture on the paper.

The meaning is clear: this construction radiates a tempered, serene vibration. From it result compositions that are shelters against the stridency of the contemporary world. In this Barcelona series, Pasta draws on the same themes as his painting (crosses, portals) without replicating the chromatic overlaps of the canvases. The language is different, the technique is different, but the artist's integrity is the same.

The slow, solid changes that have characterized his art for more than 40 years announce, in the series of Catalan prints, a transition close to the one described by Walter Benjamin in his posthumous book *The Arcades Project*. In it, the German philosopher reflects on the advent of a new society, born with the architecture of the Parisian arcades, the forerunners of shopping malls.

In Pasta's case, this “passage” toward a new, more attentive and sensitive society occurs through color: the overlapping of historical periods is translated through a physical palette that comes from the post-Impressionist Pierre Bonnard, passes through Richard Diebenkorn, and reaches Brice Marden — that is, it follows the chromatic mutation that begins in the 19th century, passes through Henri Matisse's American disciple, and arrives at the contemporaries.

As for the forms, what looks like the Christian cross in these prints is, in fact, an orthogonal arrangement of a vertical line supporting a horizontal one — that is, it follows the same principle that guided Piet Mondrian, a century ago, in building his harmonious universe, and that paved the way for the bands of the Irish artist Sean Scully.

It is unnecessary to recall that Pasta, besides being a painter, is a great master who studied all these painters and found his own path by reflecting on the physical presence of color and its immaterial correspondence through saturation. As his Catalan prints show, Pasta's “passage,” represented by his portals, invites the viewer to enter a silent world of contemplation.

By exchanging a metaphysical repertoire for a simpler one in the 1980s, concluding that the surface of the canvas was what mattered, Pasta arrived at the 1990s with an affirmative painting of disconcerting topographic flatness. Over the past three decades, he has won a new audience, both in Brazil and abroad, with his chromatic density that does not hide the forms of the world. Rather, it reveals these forms, which seem eclipsed by light, because colors, after all, hold that light within them. They are light itself, emanating from the physical palette and undergoing mutation. It is the light of Andrei Rublev's icons, of Rembrandt's sacred figures, of Matisse's interiors, and now, of these Barcelona prints.

Antonio Gonçalves Filho



Paulo Pasta
1959, Ariranha, Brazil
Lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil

A painter, draftsman, and engraver, Paulo Pasta seeks to build a temporality in painting. The colors and forms in his works seem to flatten the perception of the passage of time; when facing the canvases, the present is almost absolute. The forms and geometries represented in the dense atmospheres created by the artist are slowly recognizable by a viewer’s watchful eye – placed between horizons and obstacles, that prevent the representational space from being seen clearly. The density and time created by Pasta are contrary to any concession to the practical world and its demands for promptness and readiness; his poetics lies in the rumor and openness to the present time.

With a Ph.D. in Fine Arts from the University of São Paulo, Brazil (2011), Pasta has held the solo shows *Precisão e espírito*, Museu Lasar Segall, São Paulo, Brazil (2026); *Passages*, David Nolan Gallery, New York, USA (2025); *Viagem ao redor do meu quarto*, Almeida & Dale, São Paulo, Brazil (2025), *Pintura de bolso* (2023), *Correspondências* (2021), and *Lembranças do Futuro* (2018), at Millan, São Paulo, Brazil, and in several other institutions, such as Fundação Iberê Camargo, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2024, 2013); Cecilia Brunson Projects, London, UK (2022); Museu de Arte Sacra de São Paulo, Brazil (2021); Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil (2018); Palazzo Pamphilj, Rome, Italy (2016); Sesc Belenzinho, São Paulo, Brazil (2014); Centro Cultural Maria Antônia, São Paulo, Brazil (2011); Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2008); Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Brazil (2006).

Among his participations in group exhibitions are *Cinco ensaios sobre o MASP – Geometrias*, MASP, São Paulo, Brazil (2025); *Beyond the Modern*, Casa Zalszupin, São Paulo, Brazil (2024); *East of Eden*, Millan and Galeria Estação, São Paulo, Brazil (2024); *Abstração: a realidade mediada*, Millan, São Paulo, Brazil (2022); *Os Muitos e o Um*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil (2016); *30 x Bienal*, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (2013); *Europalia*, International Art Festival, Brussels, Belgium (2011); *Matisse hoje*, Pinacoteca de São Paulo, Brazil (2009); *Panorama dos Panoramas*, MAM São Paulo, Brazil (2008); *MAM [na] Oca*, Oca, São Paulo, Brazil (2006); 3rd Bienal do Mercosul, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2001); *Brasil +500 – Mostra do redescobrimento*, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (2000); III Bienal de Cuenca, Equador (1991), among others.

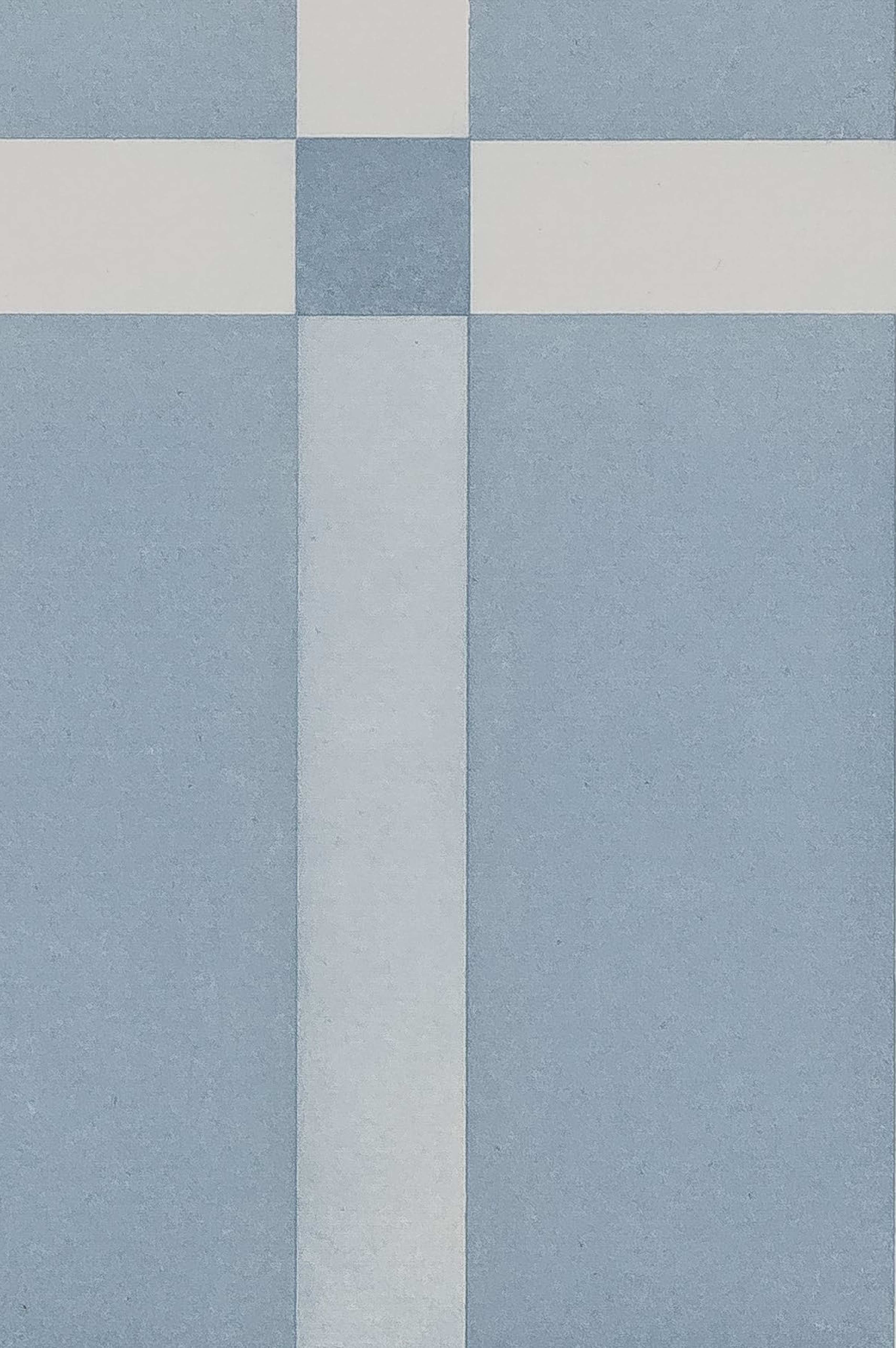
His works are featured in various global collections, such as: Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, Spain; Kunsthalle Berlin, Germany; Kunstmuseum Schloss Derneburg, Germany; and Hall Art Foundation, Germany. In Brazil, his work is held in the collections of several institutions, including the Pinacoteca de São Paulo; MASP; MAM São Paulo; MAM Rio; MAC USP; Museu Nacional de Belas Artes do Rio de Janeiro; and Instituto Figueiredo Ferraz.



Photo: Julia Thompson

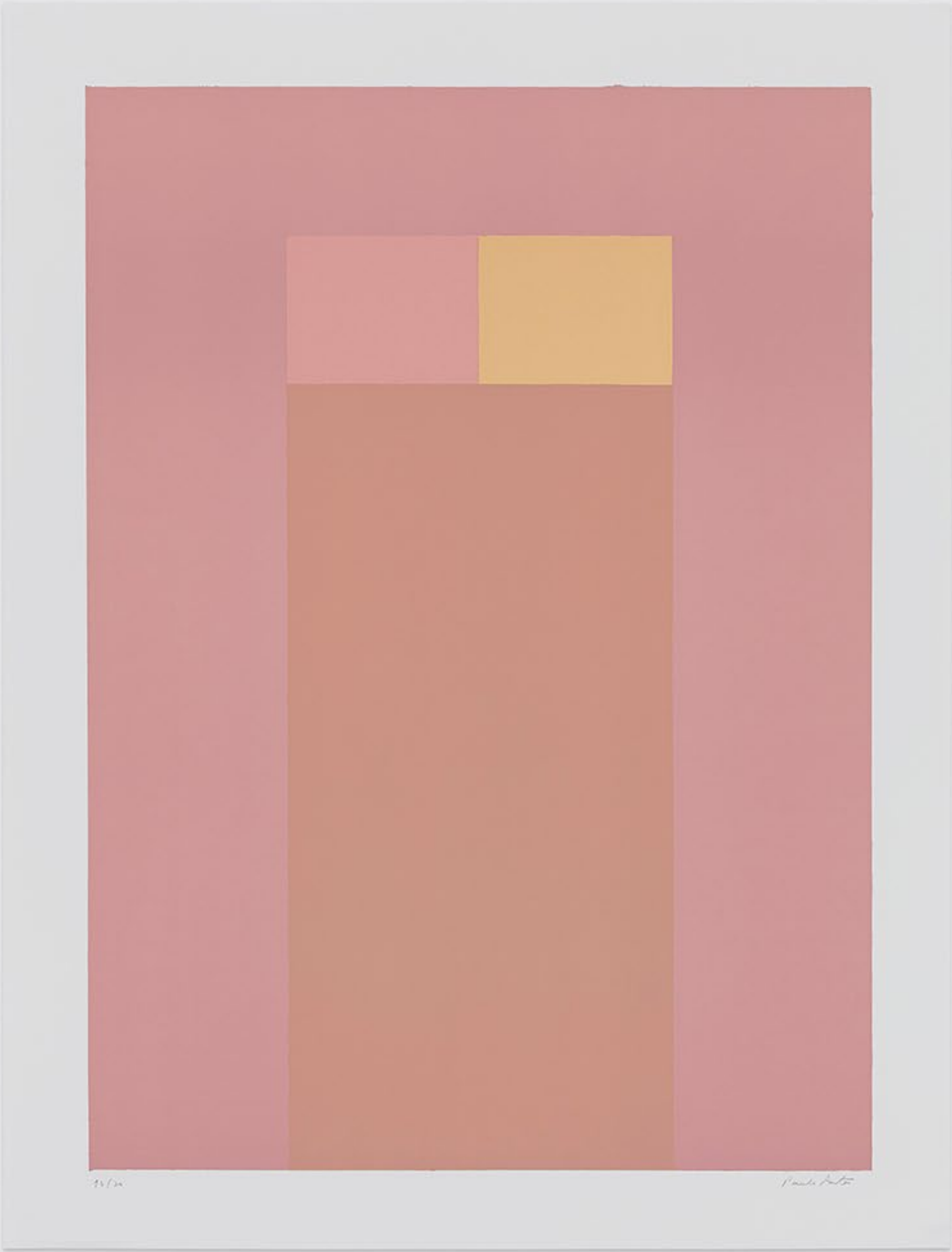


Photo: Julia Thompson



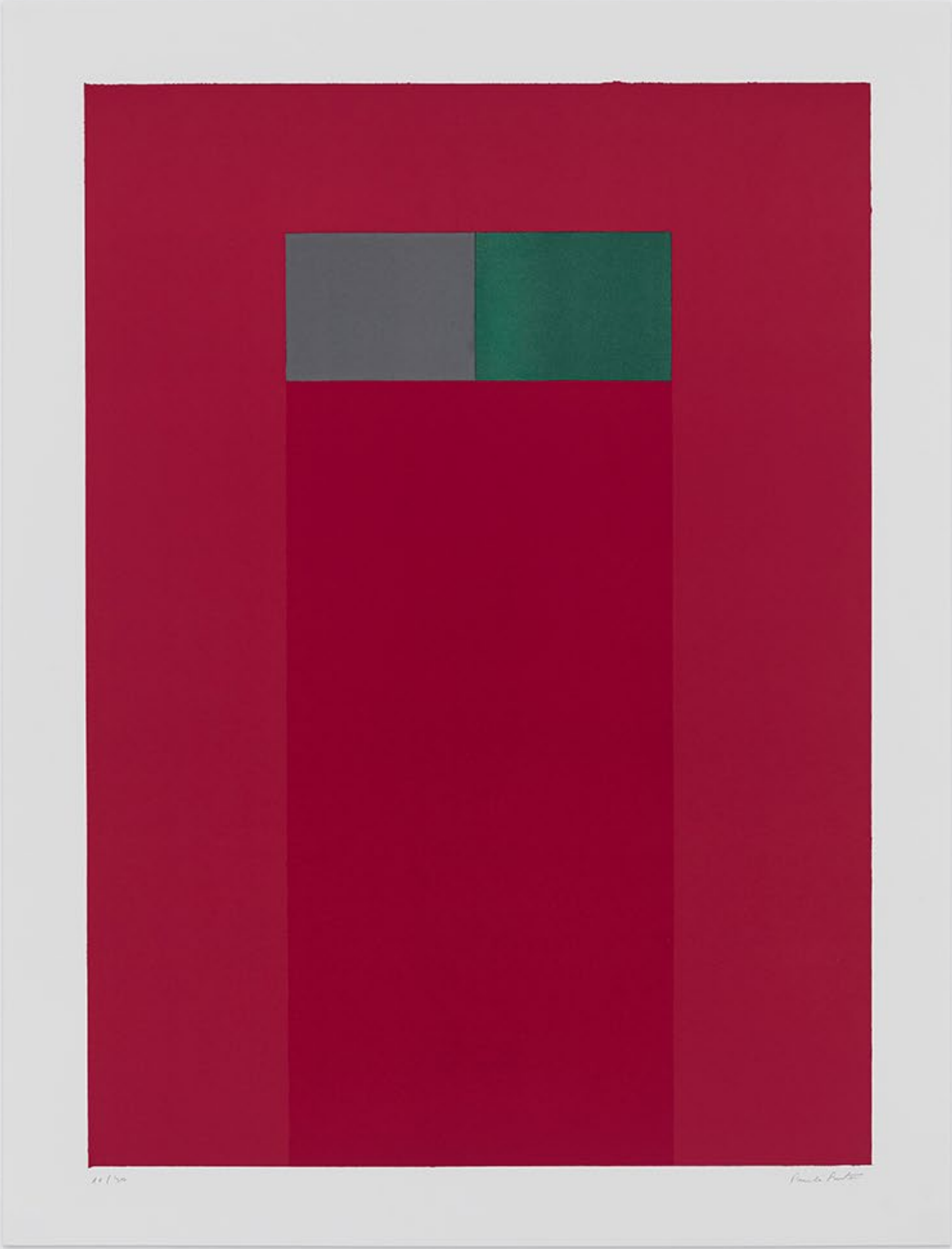
Paulo Pasta

Untitled, 2025
Lithograph on paper
84 × 64 cm (33 1/8 x 25 1/4 in)
Edition of 20 + 3 AP



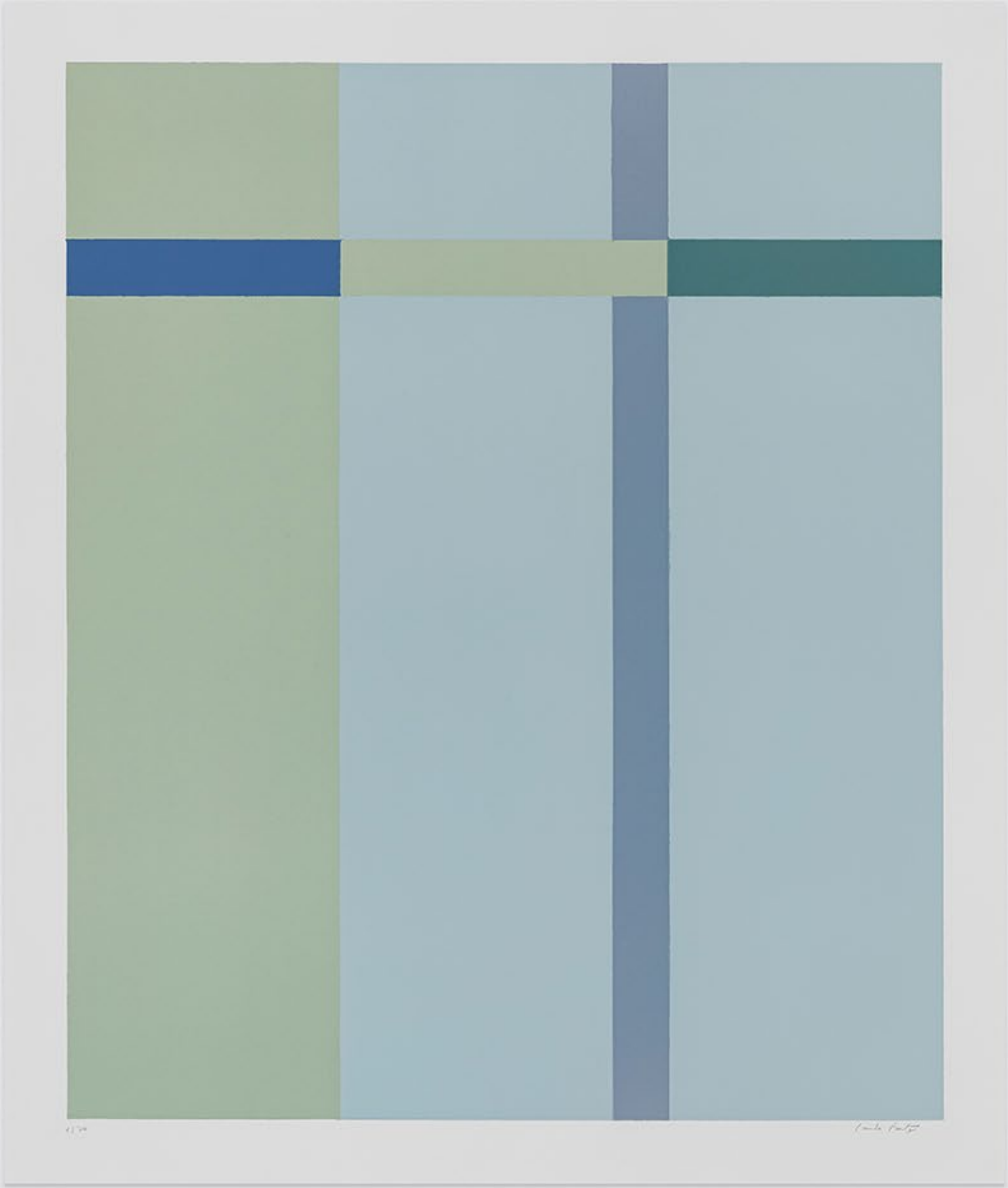
Paulo Pasta

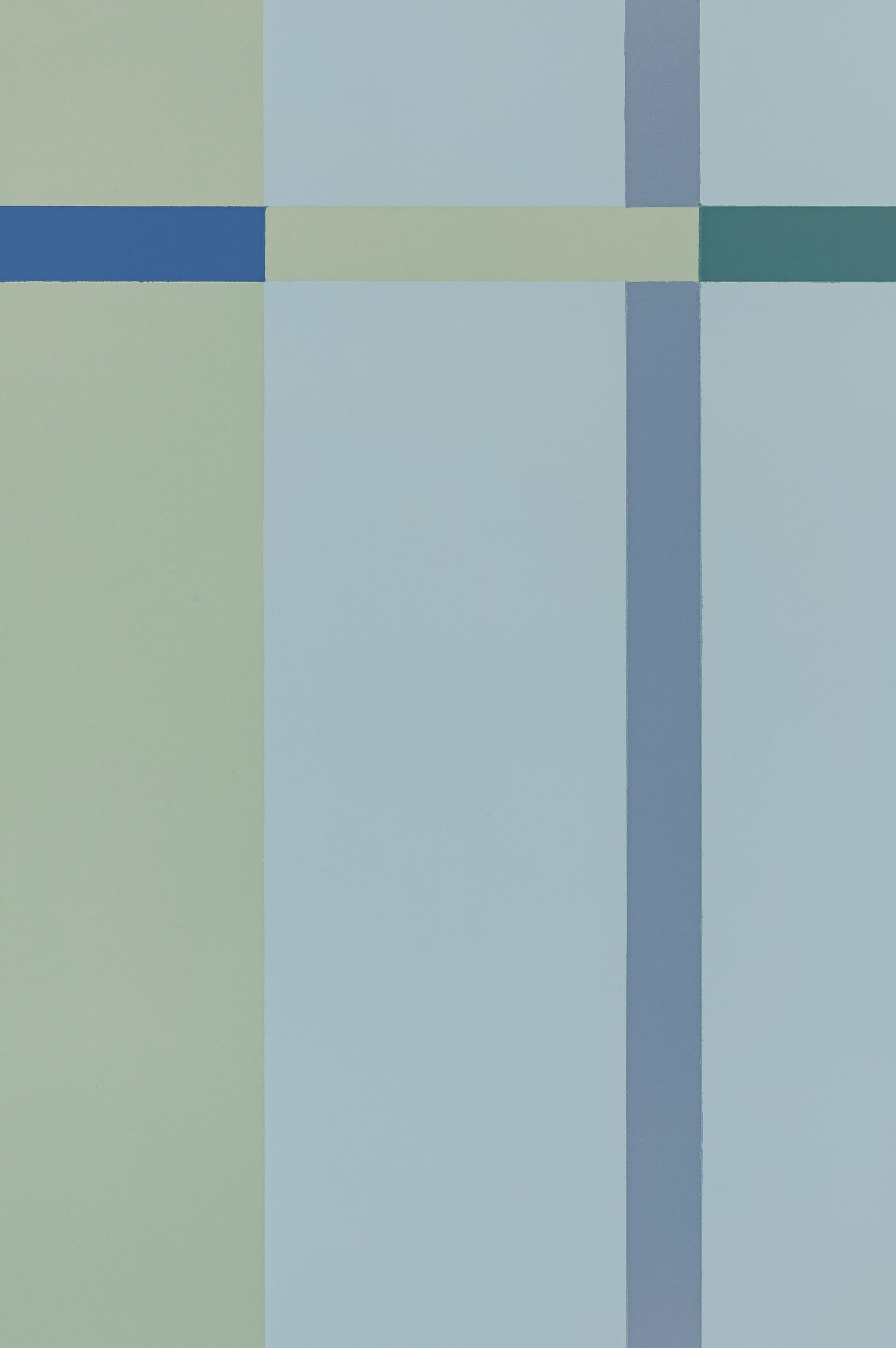
Untitled, 2025
Lithograph on paper
84 × 64 cm (33 1/8 x 25 1/4 in)
Edition of 20 + 3 AP



Paulo Pasta

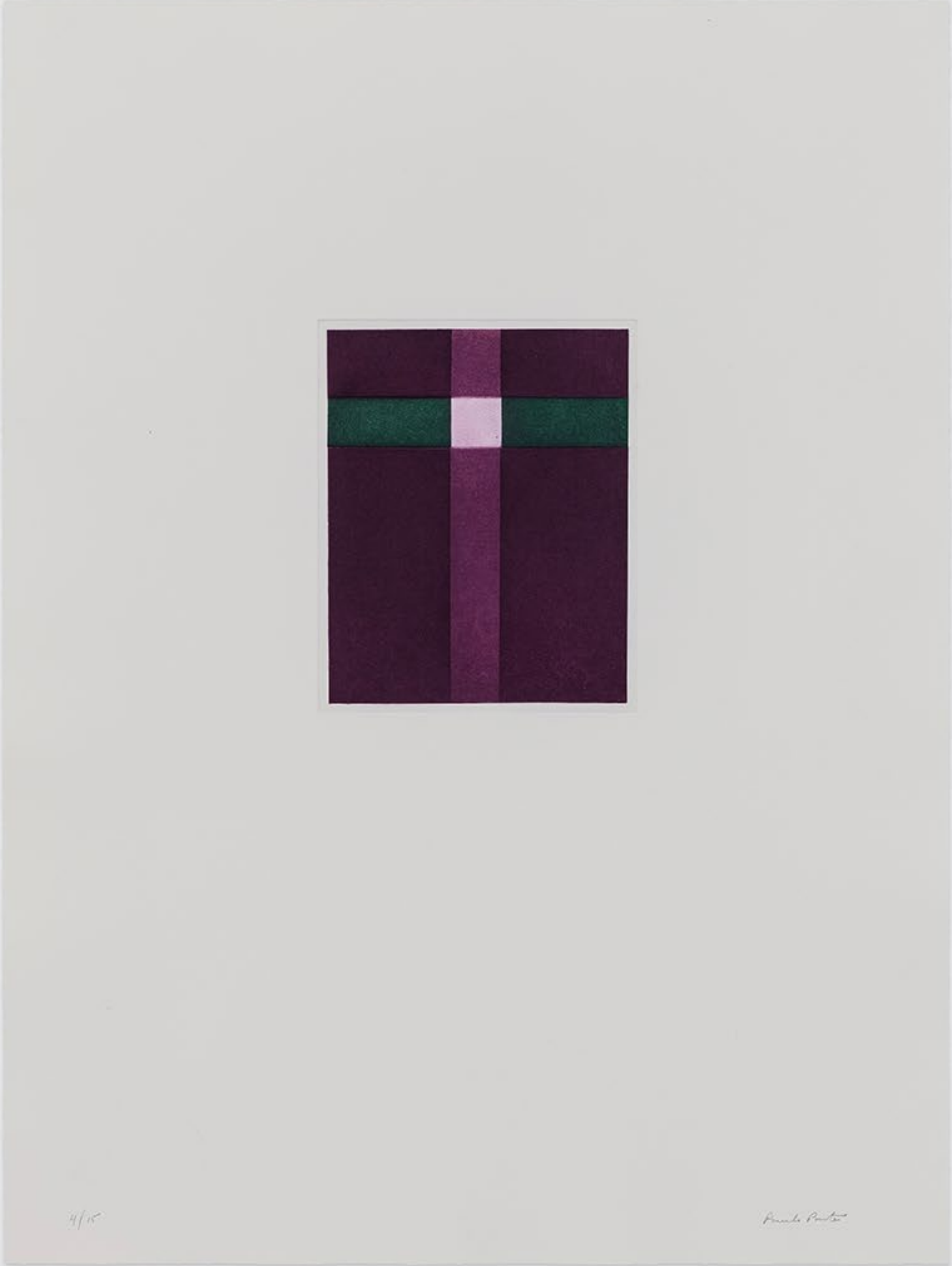
Untitled, 2025
Lithograph on paper
84 × 70.5 cm (33 1/8 x 27 3/4 in)
Edition of 20 + 3 AP





Paulo Pasta

Untitled, 2025
Metal engraving on paper
89.5 × 67.5 cm (35 1/4 x 26 5/8 in)
Edition of 15 + 3 AP





Paulo Pasta

Untitled, 2025
Metal engraving on paper
89.5 × 67.5 cm (35 1/4 x 26 5/8 in)
Edition of 15 + 3 AP





Paulo Pasta

Untitled, 2025
Metal engraving on paper
89.5 × 67.5 cm (35 1/4 x 26 5/8 in)
Edition of 15 + 3 AP

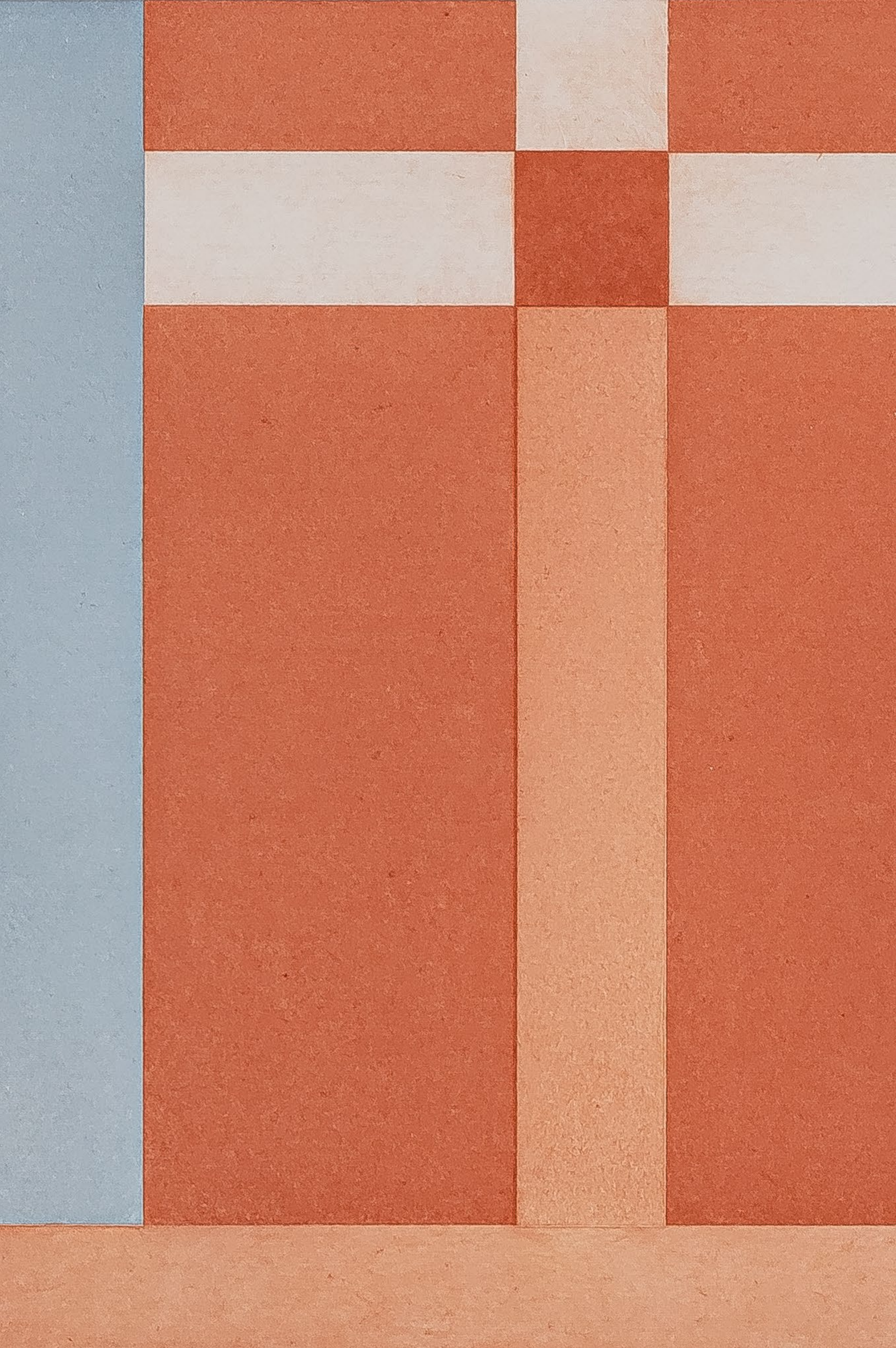




Paulo Pasta

Untitled, 2025
Metal engraving on paper
89.5 × 67.5 cm (35 1/4 x 26 5/8 in)
Edition of 20 + 3 AP

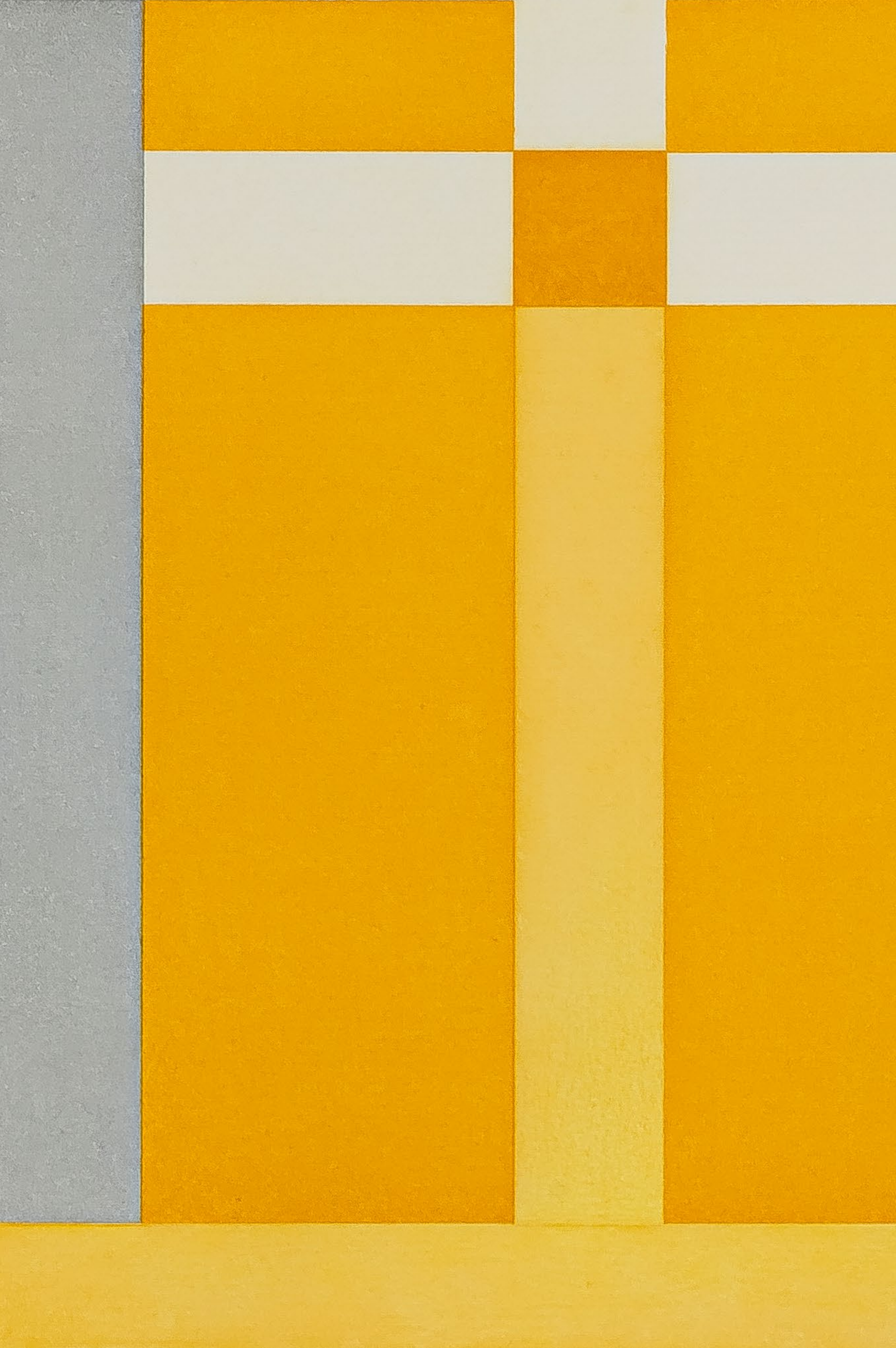




Paulo Pasta

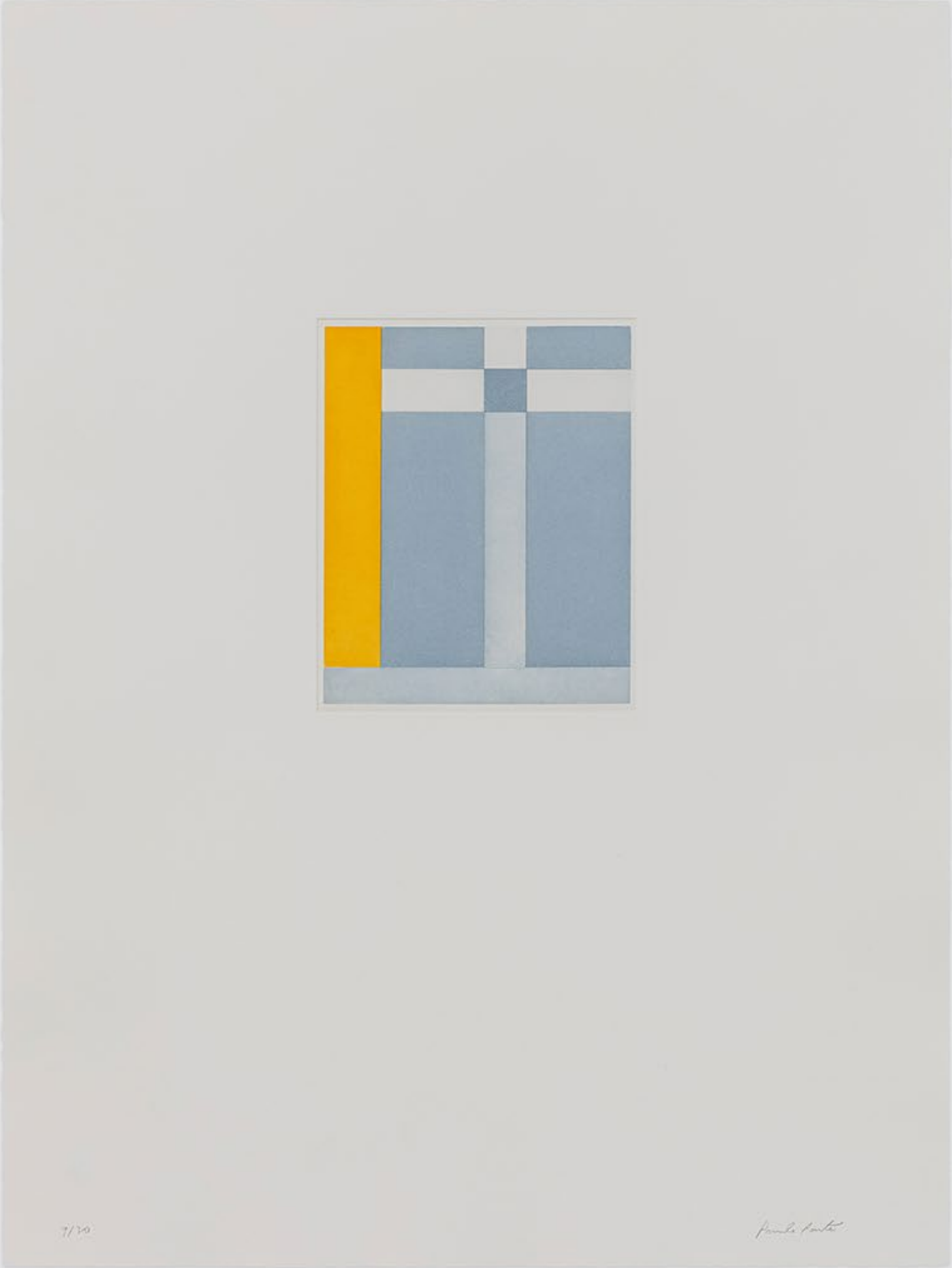
Untitled, 2025
Metal engraving on paper
89.5 × 67.5 cm (35 1/4 x 26 5/8 in)
Edition of 20 + 3 AP





Paulo Pasta

Untitled, 2025
Metal engraving on paper
89.5 × 67.5 cm (35 1/4 x 26 5/8 in)
Edition of 20 + 3 AP





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