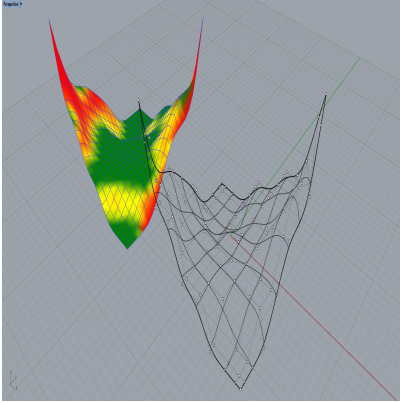




Rhino3D Grasshopper: Mesh Slope Colorizer

Description

In *Rhino3D* and *Grasshopper*, colorize a mesh surface dependant on its slope angle. Inspired by *Luis Fraguada's O'Reilly Course*, but the final solution I chose is by *David Rutten*.

New to Grasshopper? [I suggest you read this article in the first place.](#)

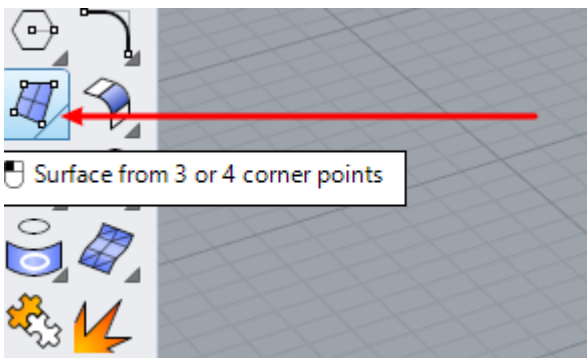
Need more learning resources? [Check this out.](#)

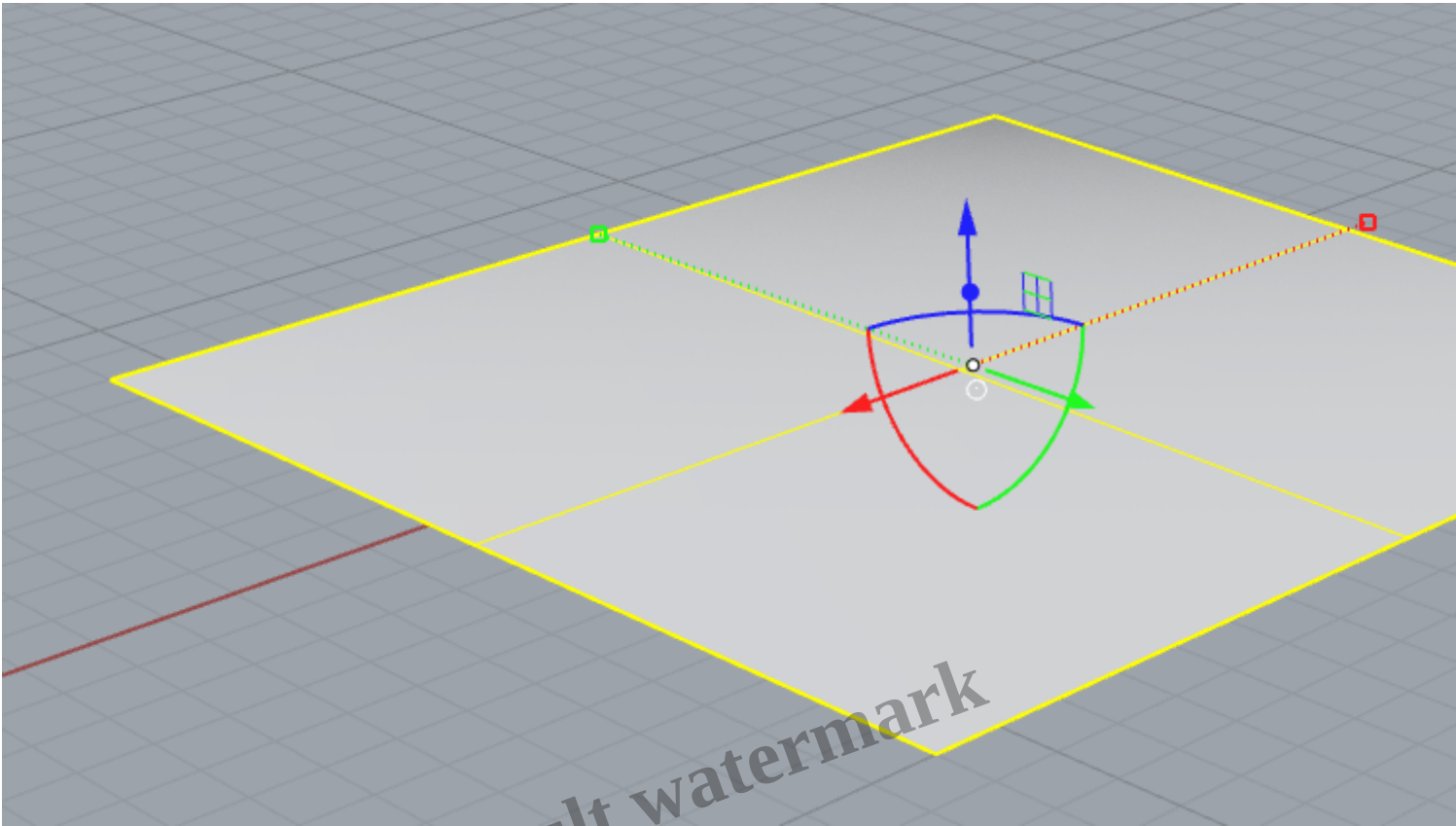
You can find the O'Reilly online course [here](#). I highly recommend watching it: Lots of useful information, fast, intense. And David Rutten's explanation can be found here in the [Grasshopper forum](#).

I also advise you to work through some literature like: [Arturo Tedeschi, AAD Algorithms-Aided Design: Parametric Strategies using Grasshopper](#).

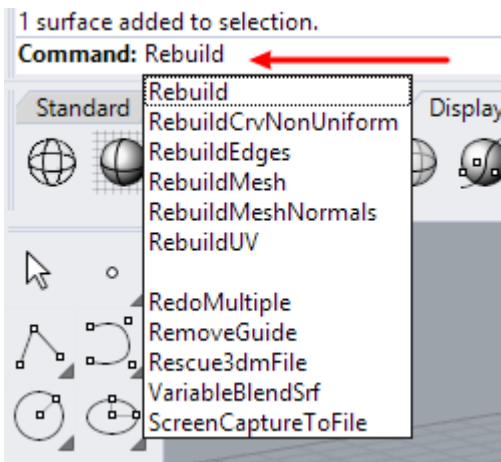
Let's start. The idea is to produce a terrain-like surface and assign colors that refer to the surface's slope. This works best with a mesh which we'll derive from a NURBS surface.

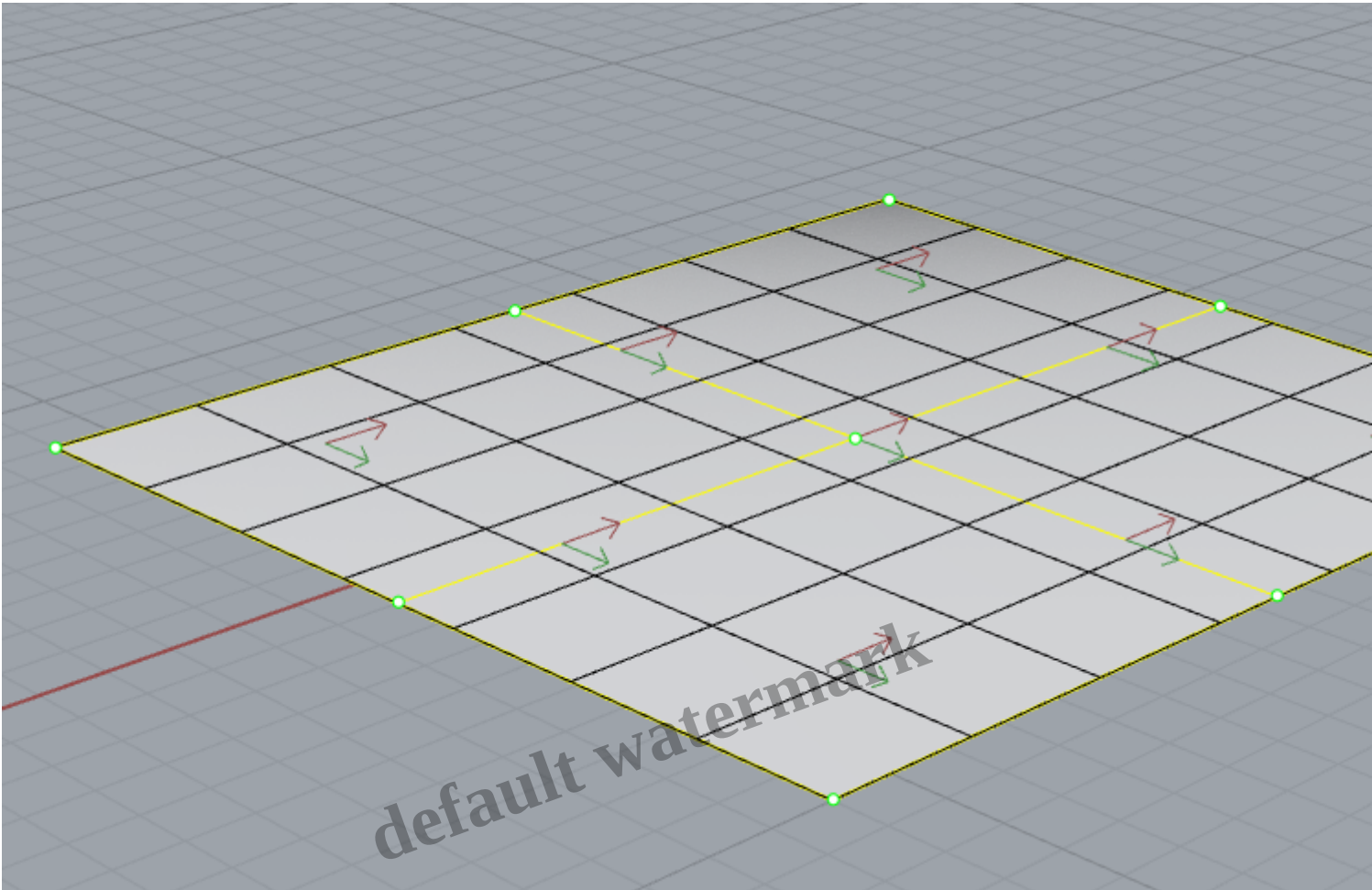
Start in Rhino3D: NURBS Surface



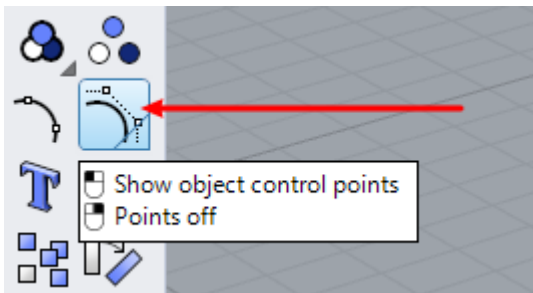


This surface is meant to be transformed into a mesh, so let's add some subdivision via *Rebuild*:





To distort our plain surface switch on *control point* display:



Then select small groups of control points and move them up or down to create a “terrain”.

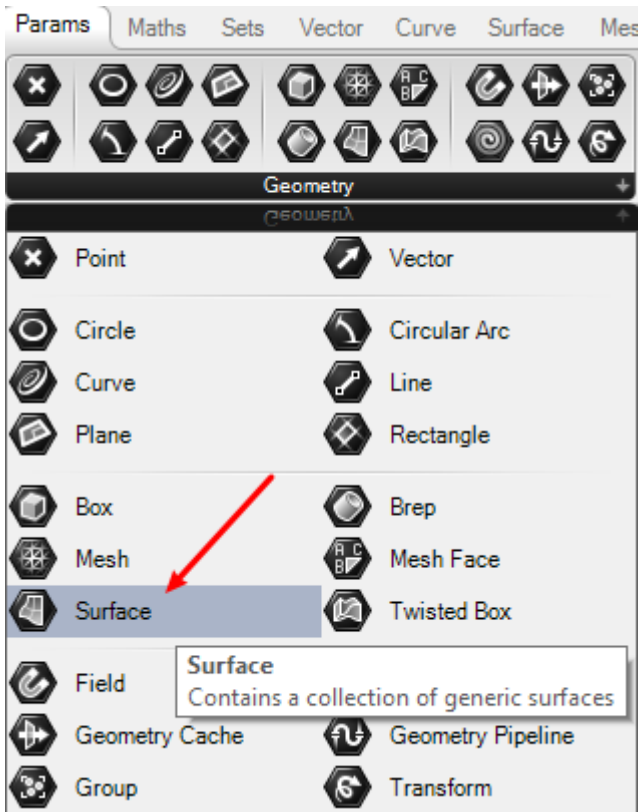
default watermark

New to Grasshopper? [I suggest you read this article in the first place.](#)

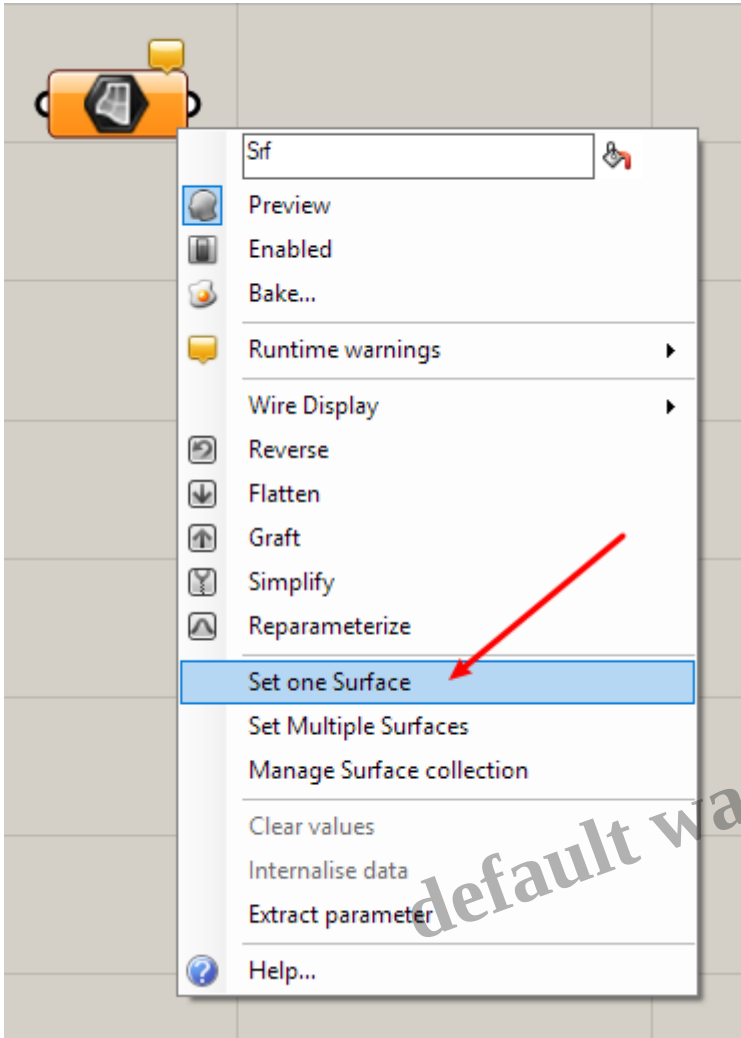
Need more learning resources? [Check this out.](#)

Grasshopper: NURBS to Mesh

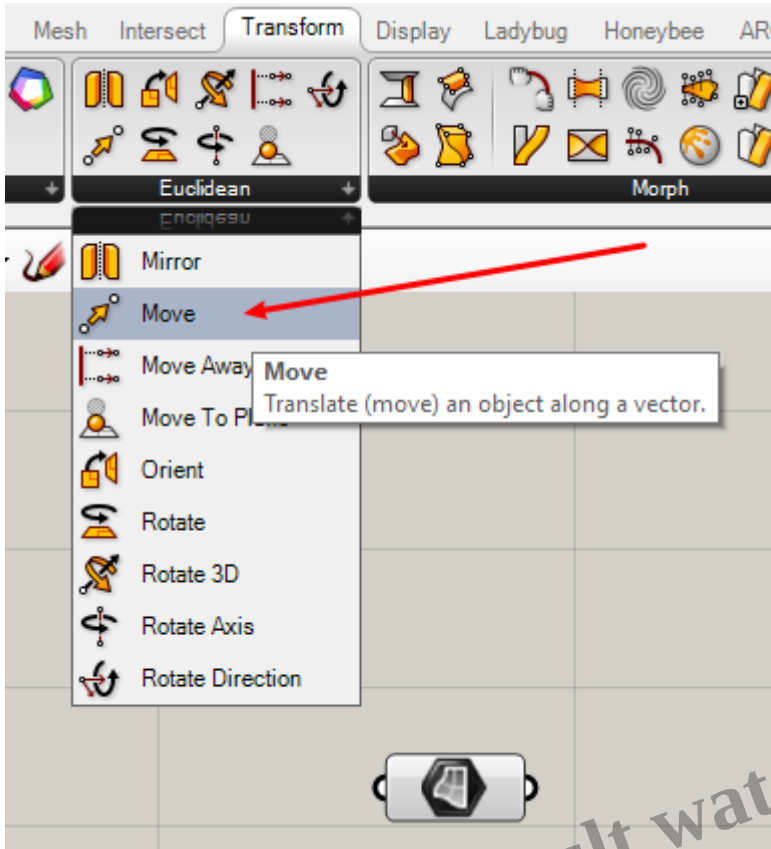
Pick a *Surface* input parameter ...



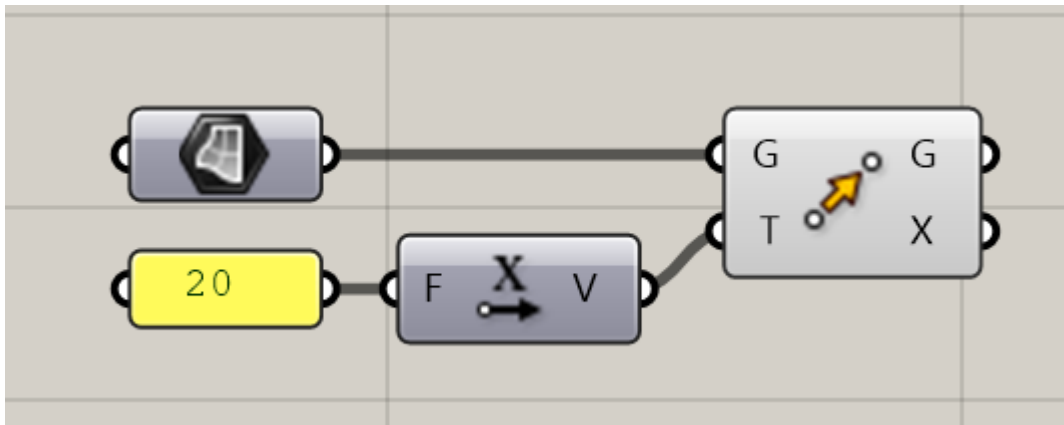
... and load your Rhino3D surface:



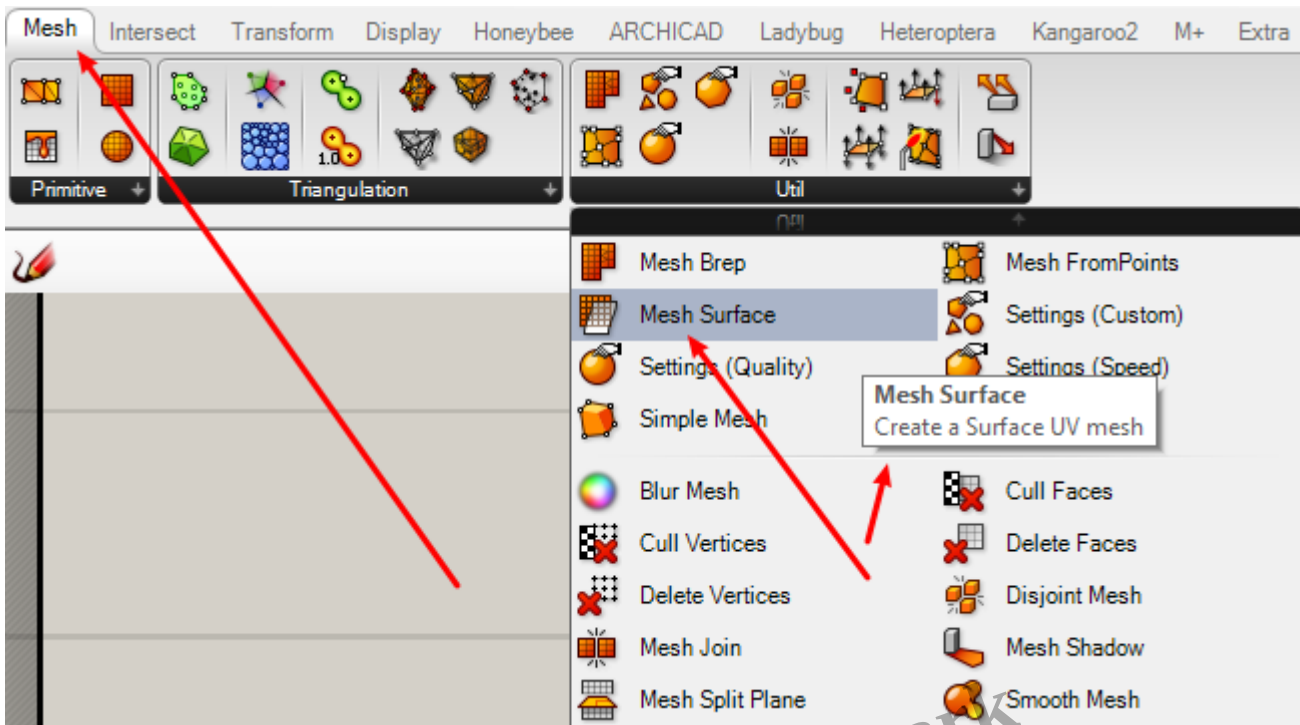
To keep NURBS and mesh surface apart, produce and offset a copy of the surface via *Move*:



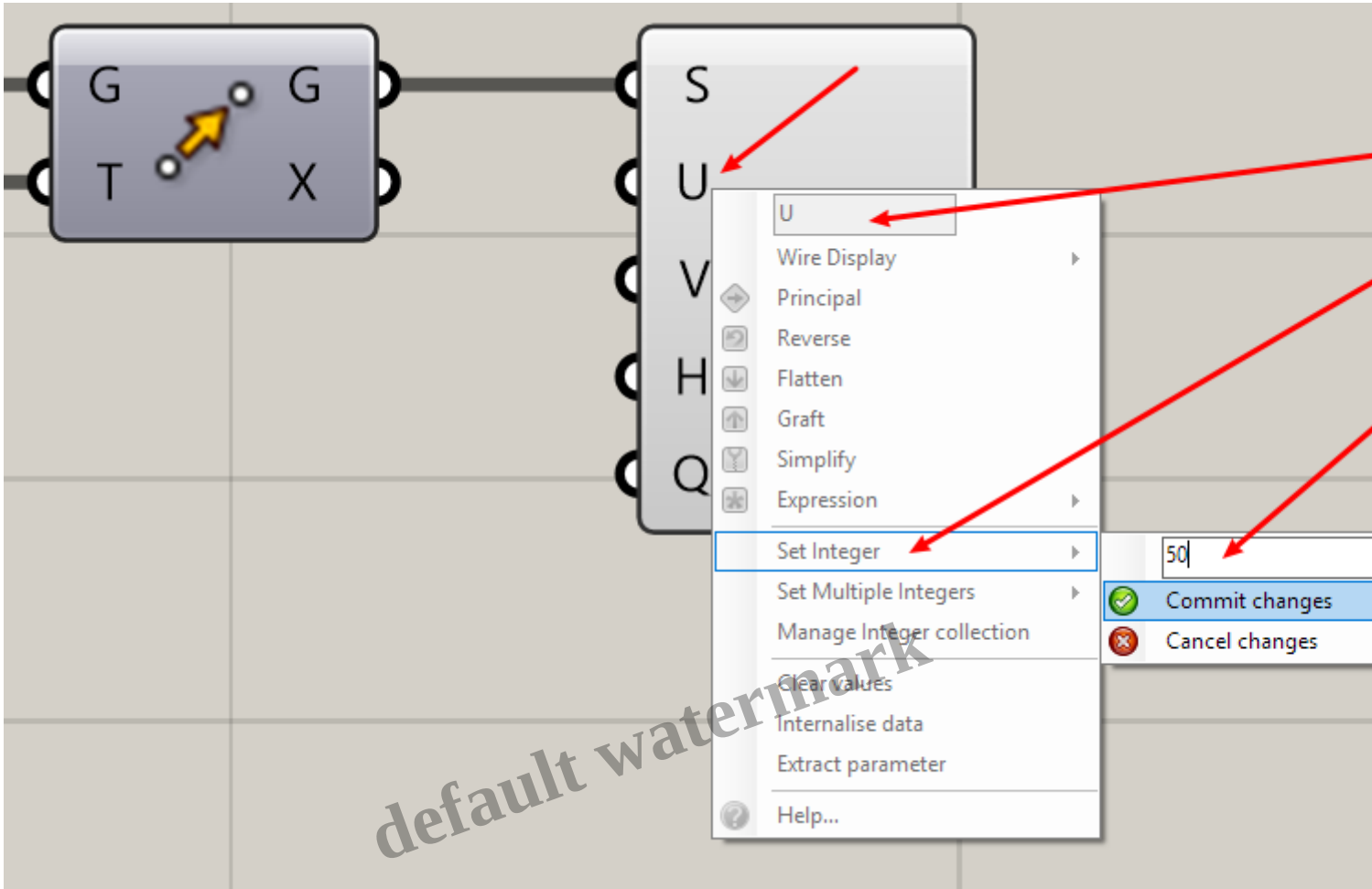
Choose a distance that makes sense, in my case it's 20 units:



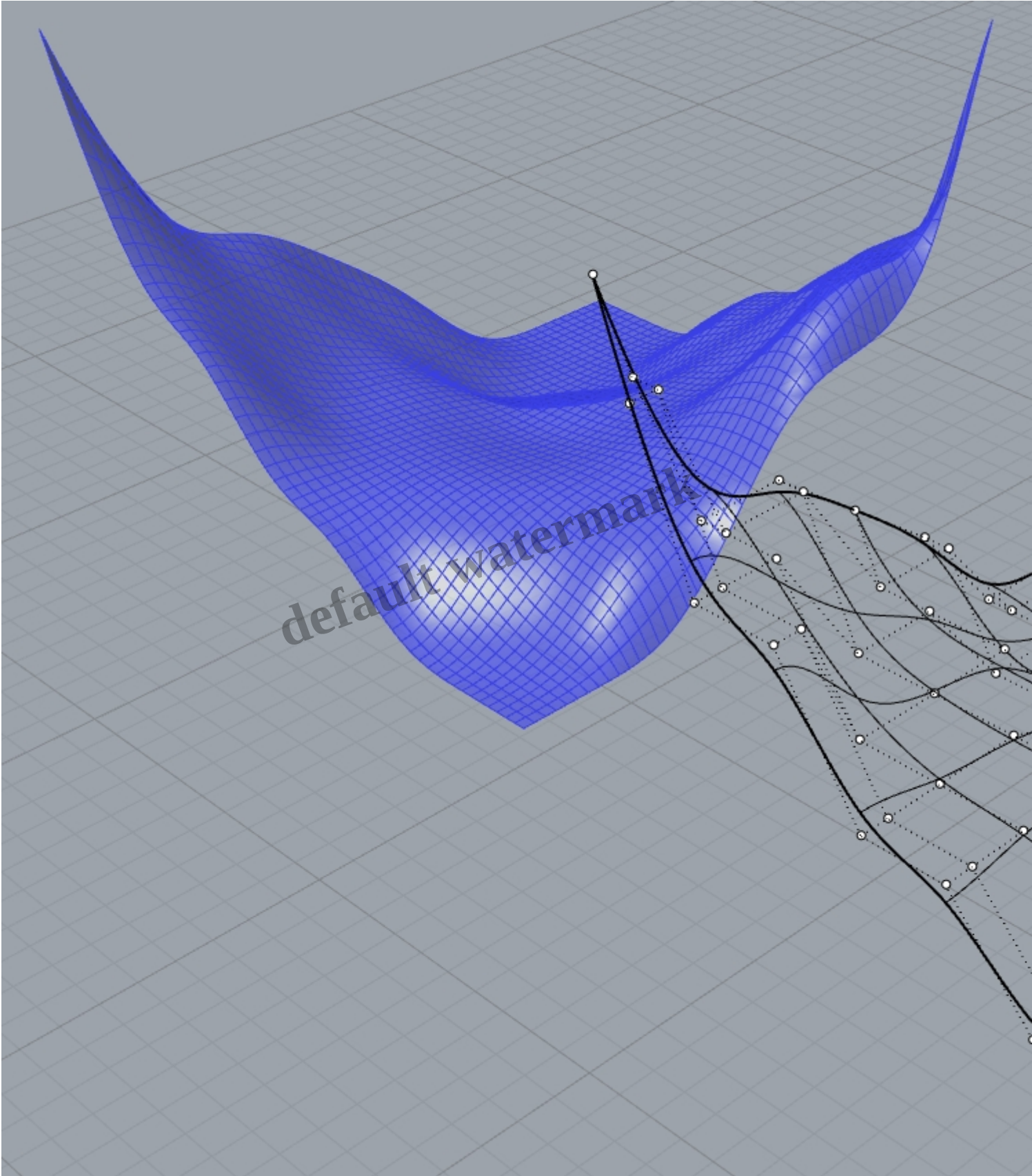
To turn the copied surface into a mesh, pick the *Mesh Surface* component:



Connect the moved surface's *Geometry* output to the *Mesh Surface* input. This component allows for a customized *UV* subdivision. Set appropriate values, in my example it's 50 for both *U* and *V*:



Switch off all previews but for the NURBS and mesh surface. Here you are:

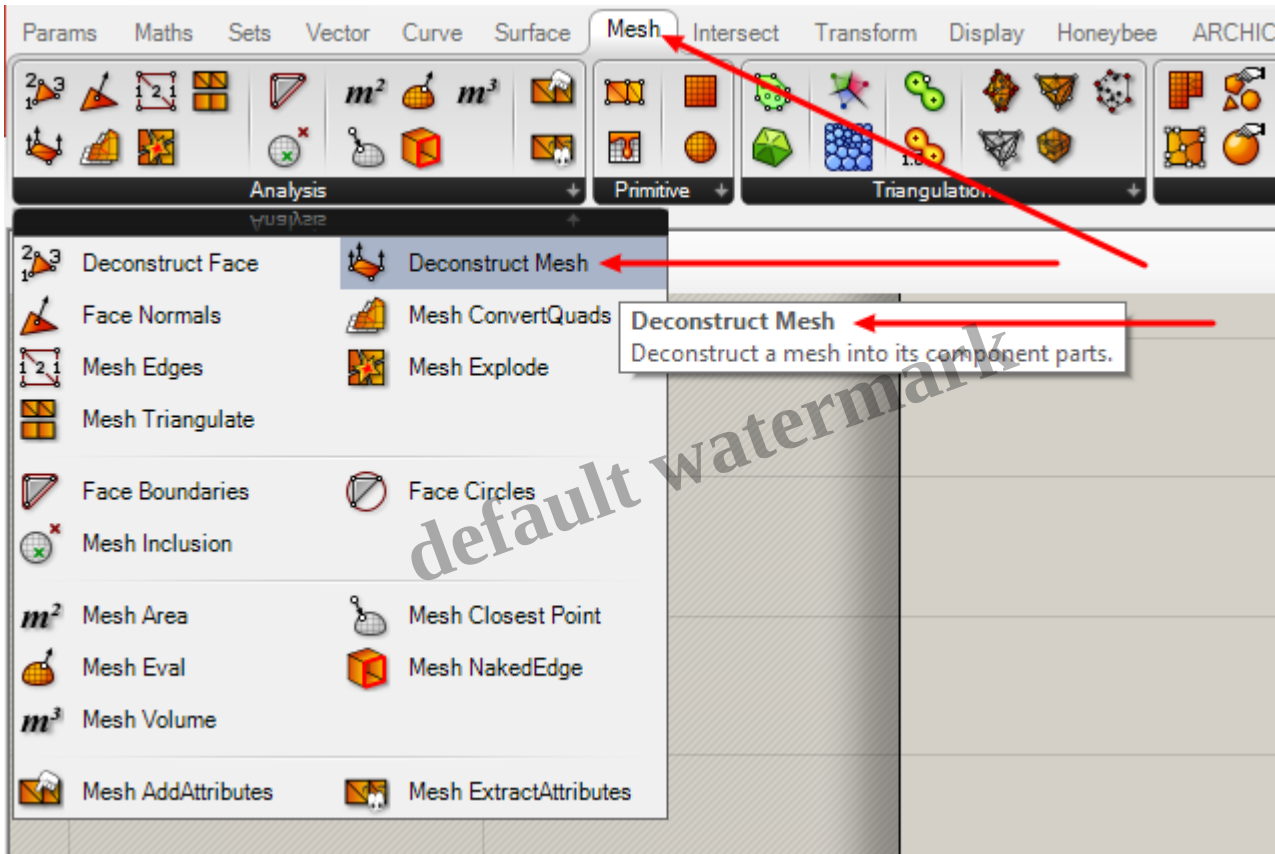


New to Grasshopper? [I suggest you read this article in the first place.](#)

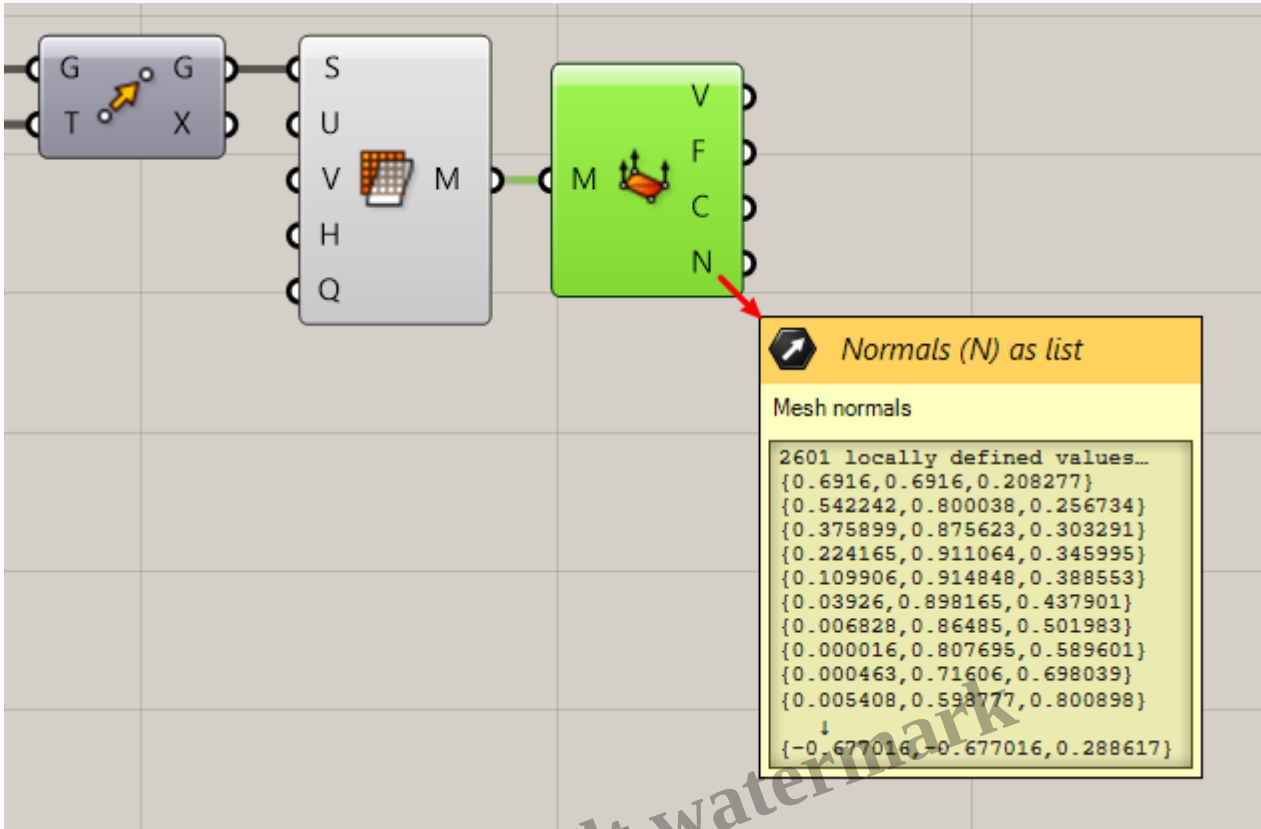
Need more learning resources? [Check this out.](#)

Colorize your Mesh

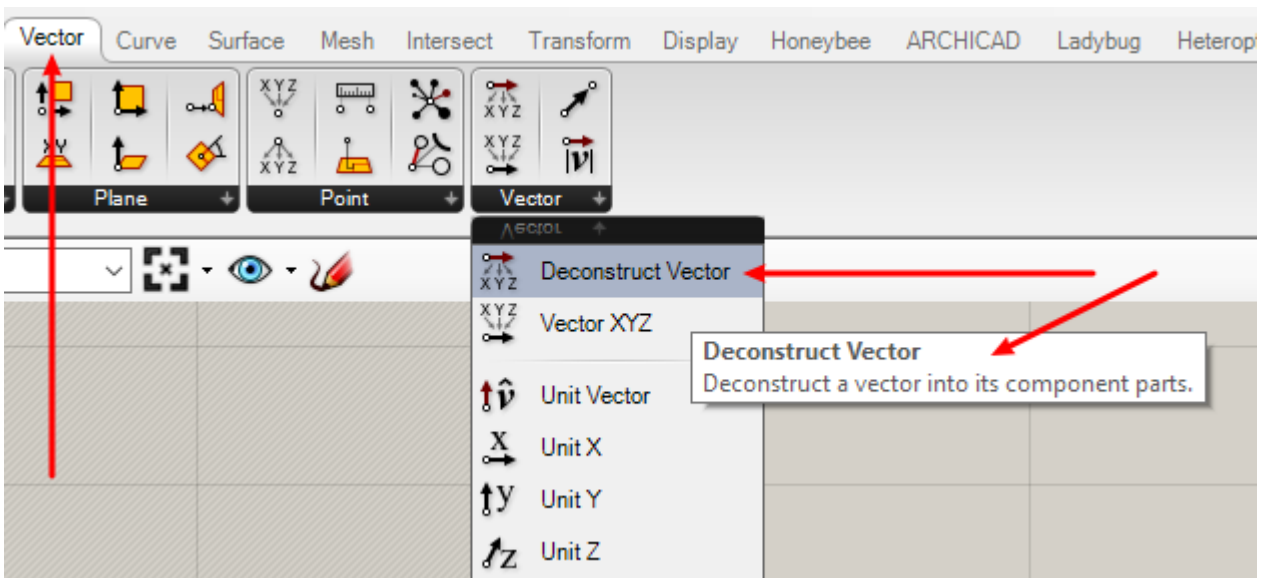
To colorize the mesh slopes we need access to the corresponding mesh parameters, e.g. the mesh *normals*. We get these via a *Deconstruct Mesh* component:

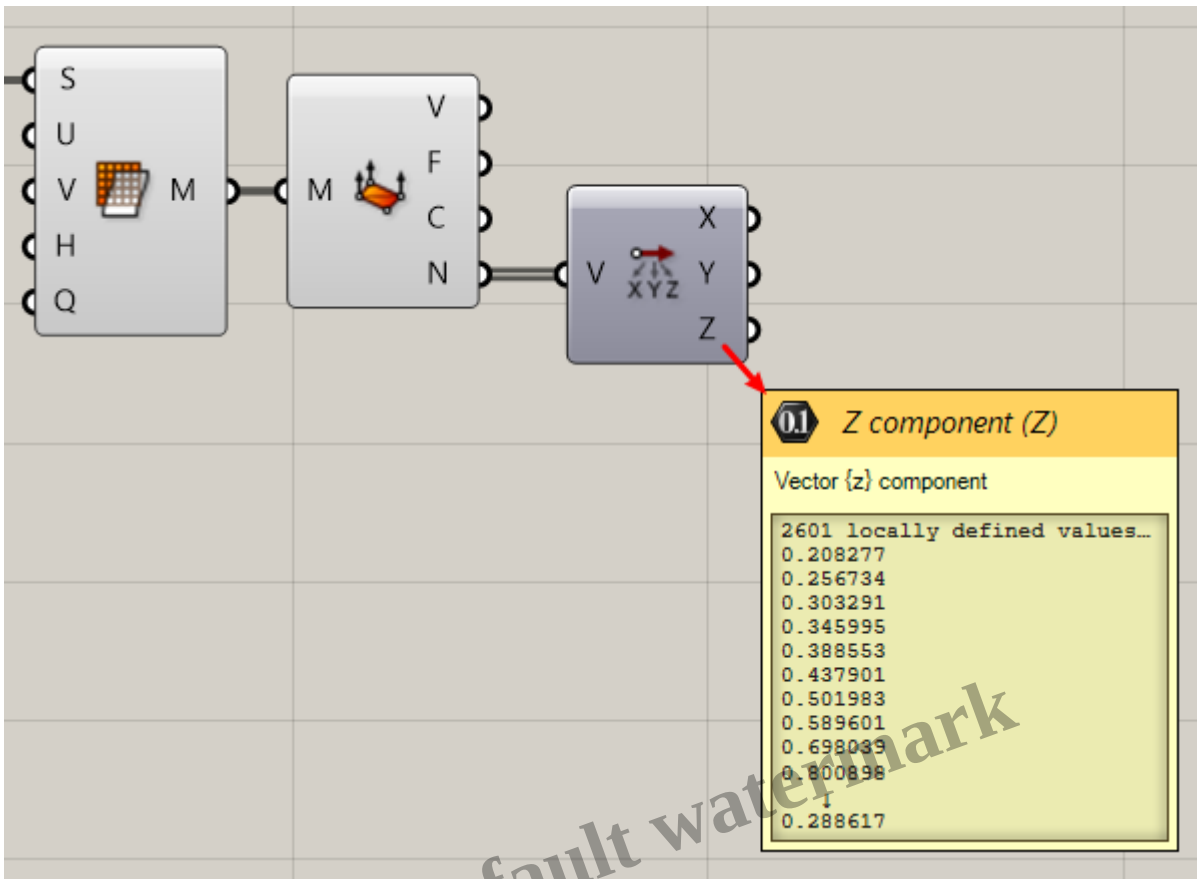


As you can see, this component produces a list of vector coordinates (N) which define the directions of the mesh normals:

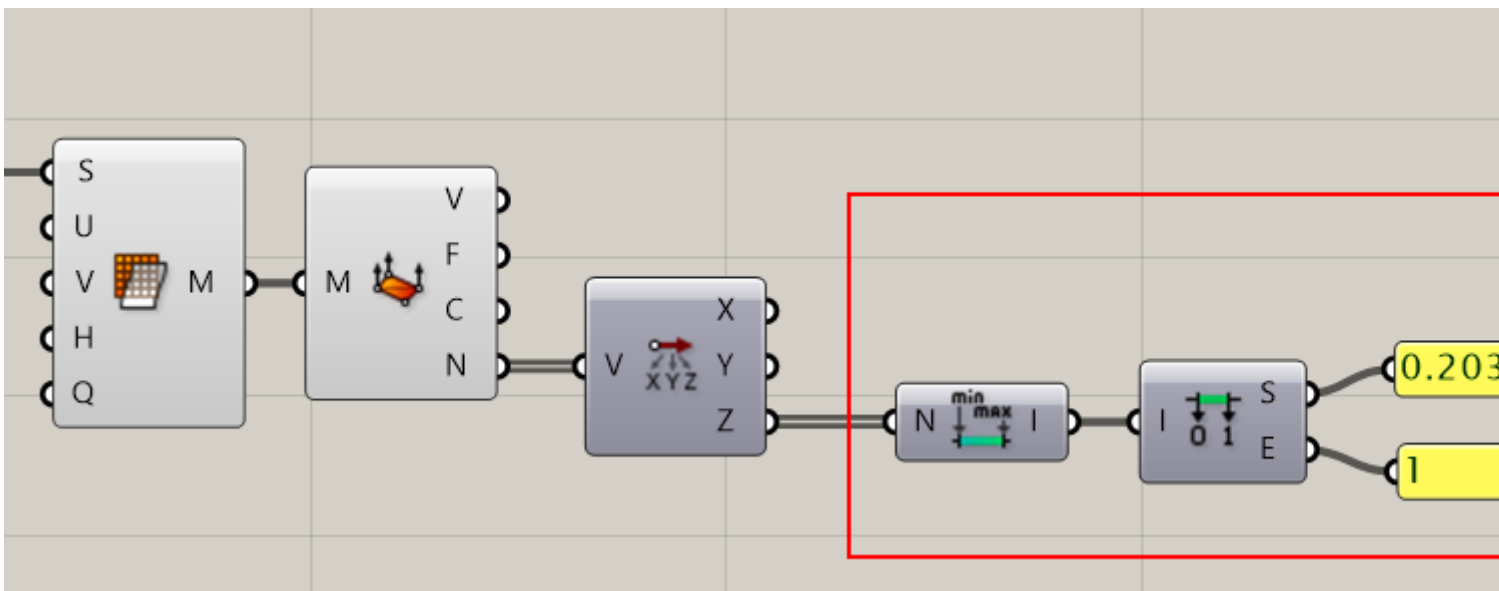


And of course, the higher the Z-value, the steeper the normal. And vice versa: The lower the Z-value, the steeper the slope. So it makes sense to use these Z-values for the coloring. How to extract them? Pick a *Deconstruct Vector* component and connect it to the *N* output:

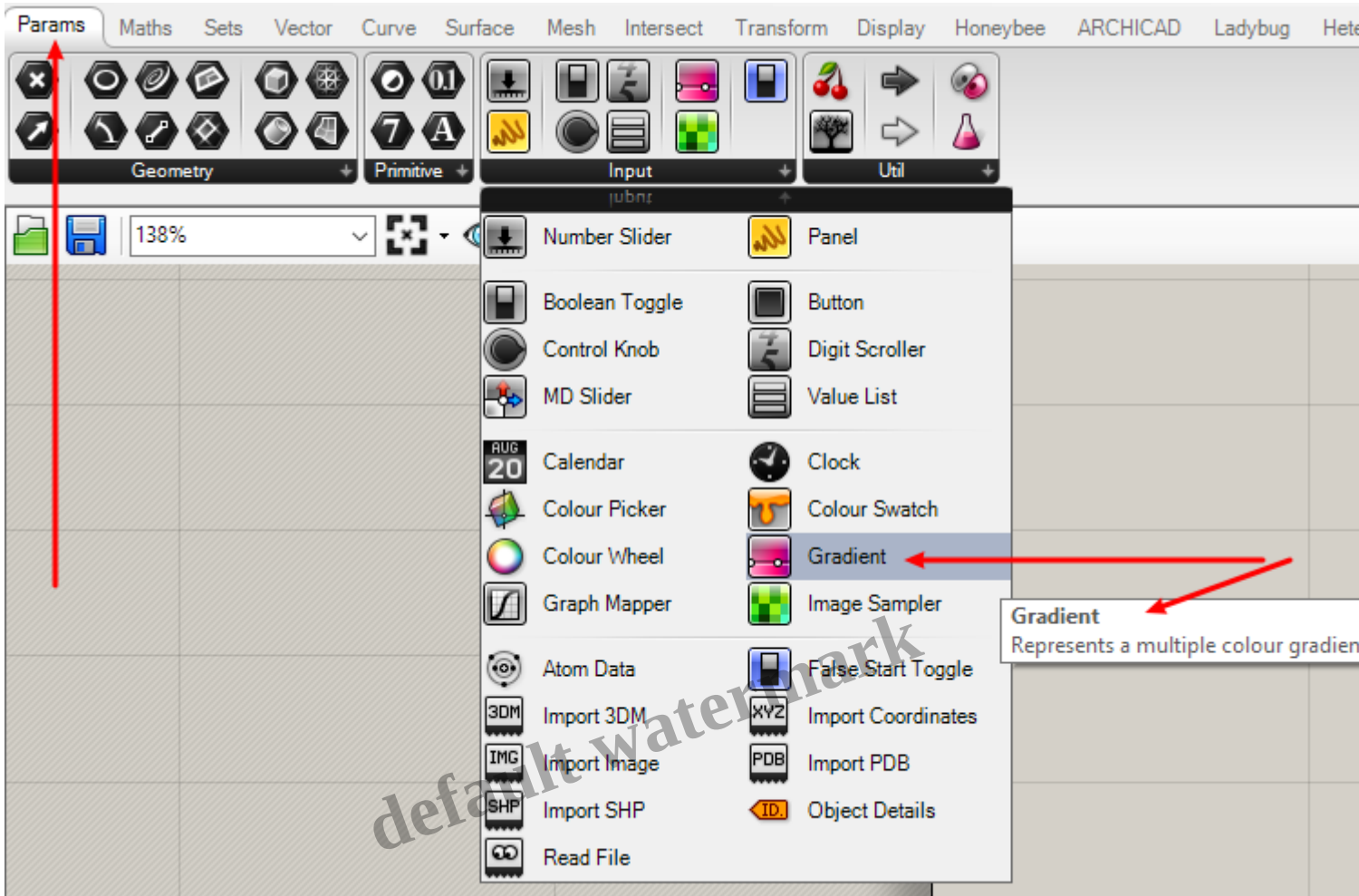




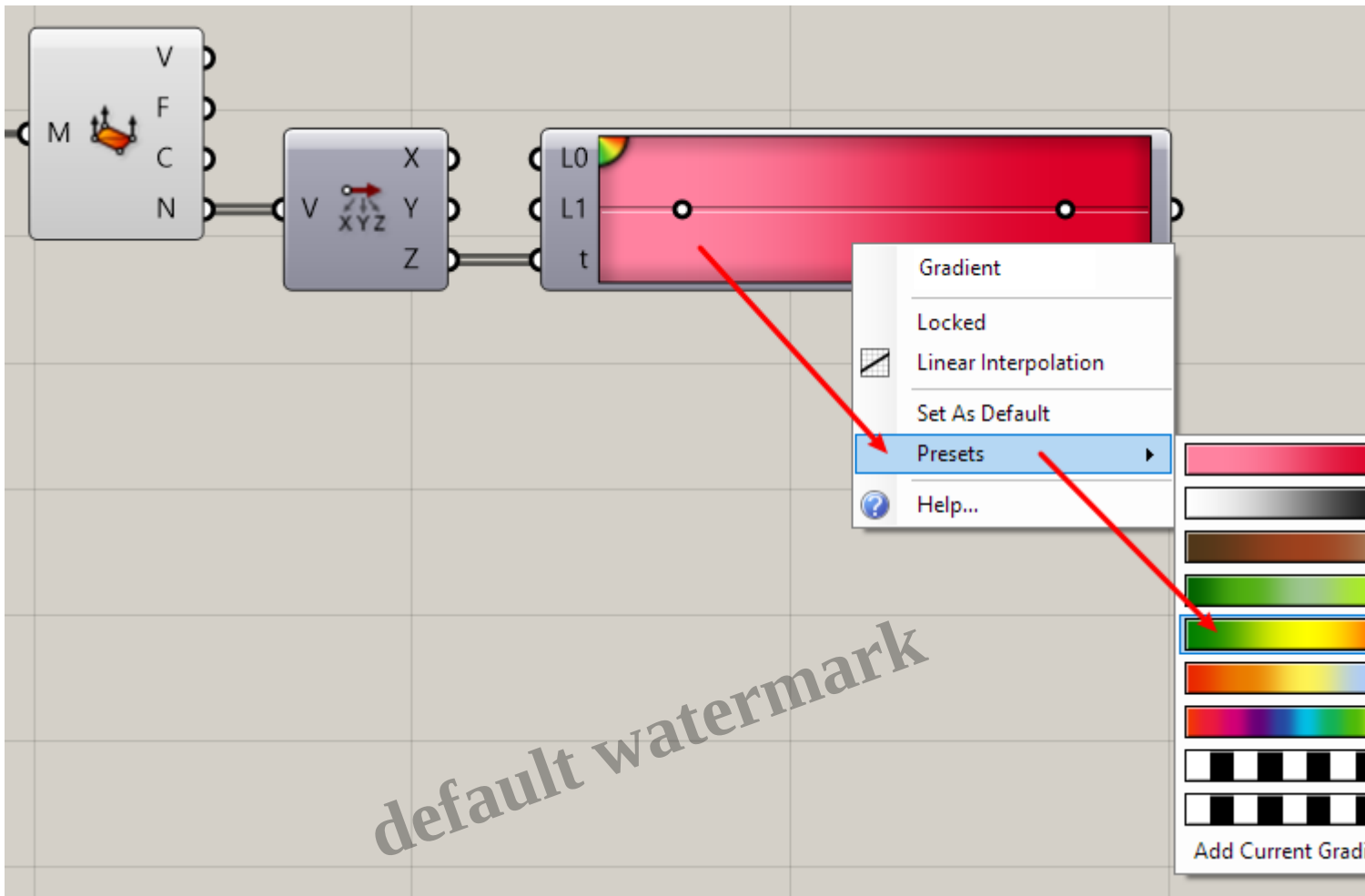
Just for a better understanding what's going on, I used a [Bounds](#) and [Deconstruct Domain](#) component to display the *Z min* and *max* values. In my example, the lowest Z-value is 0.20327 which defines the steepest slope in my terrain. The highest Z-value is 1, meaning here my terrain is absolutely horizontal.



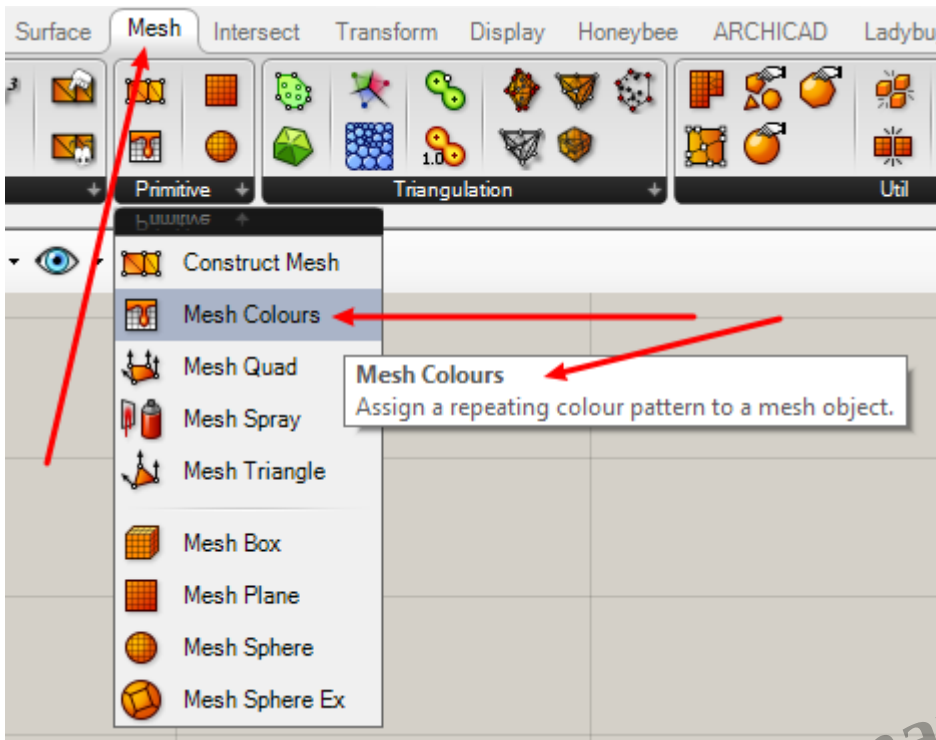
As I said, this last step's purpose was only to display the Z-value domain in this mesh. Now let's move on with coloring. A *Gradient* component can be used for our purpose:



Choose a preset with more than one colour, but not too many:

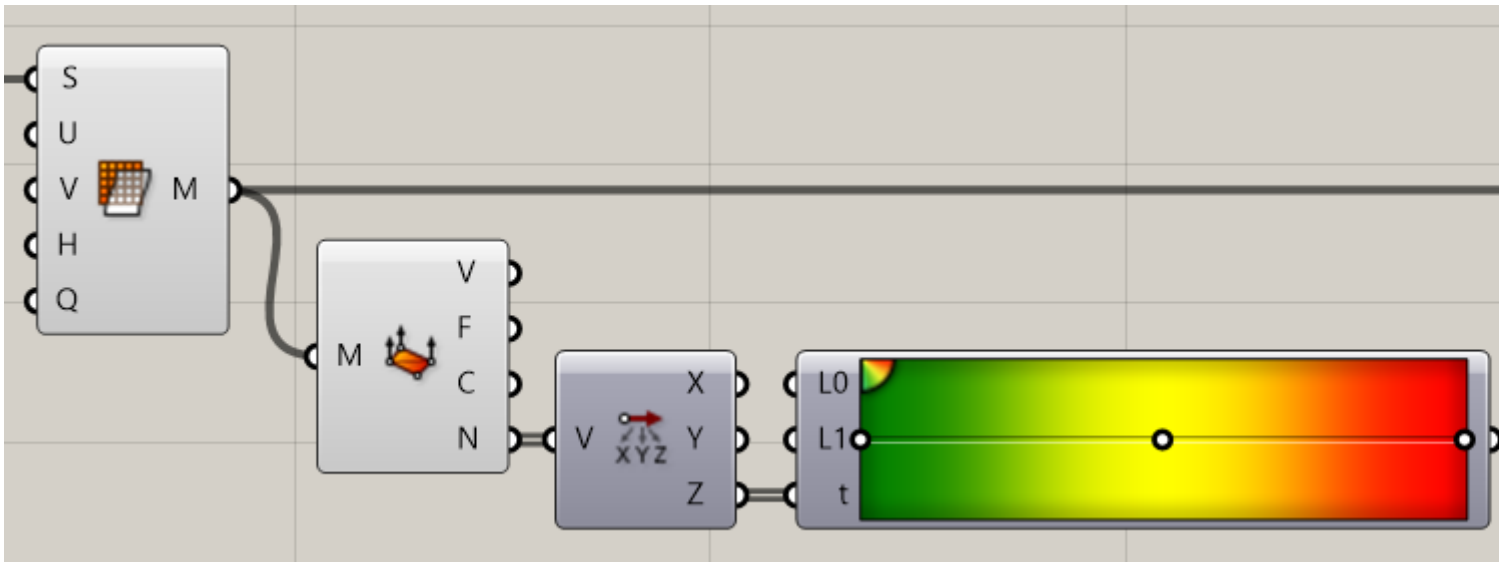


Then, to assign the gradient to the mesh, we need a *Mesh Colours* component:



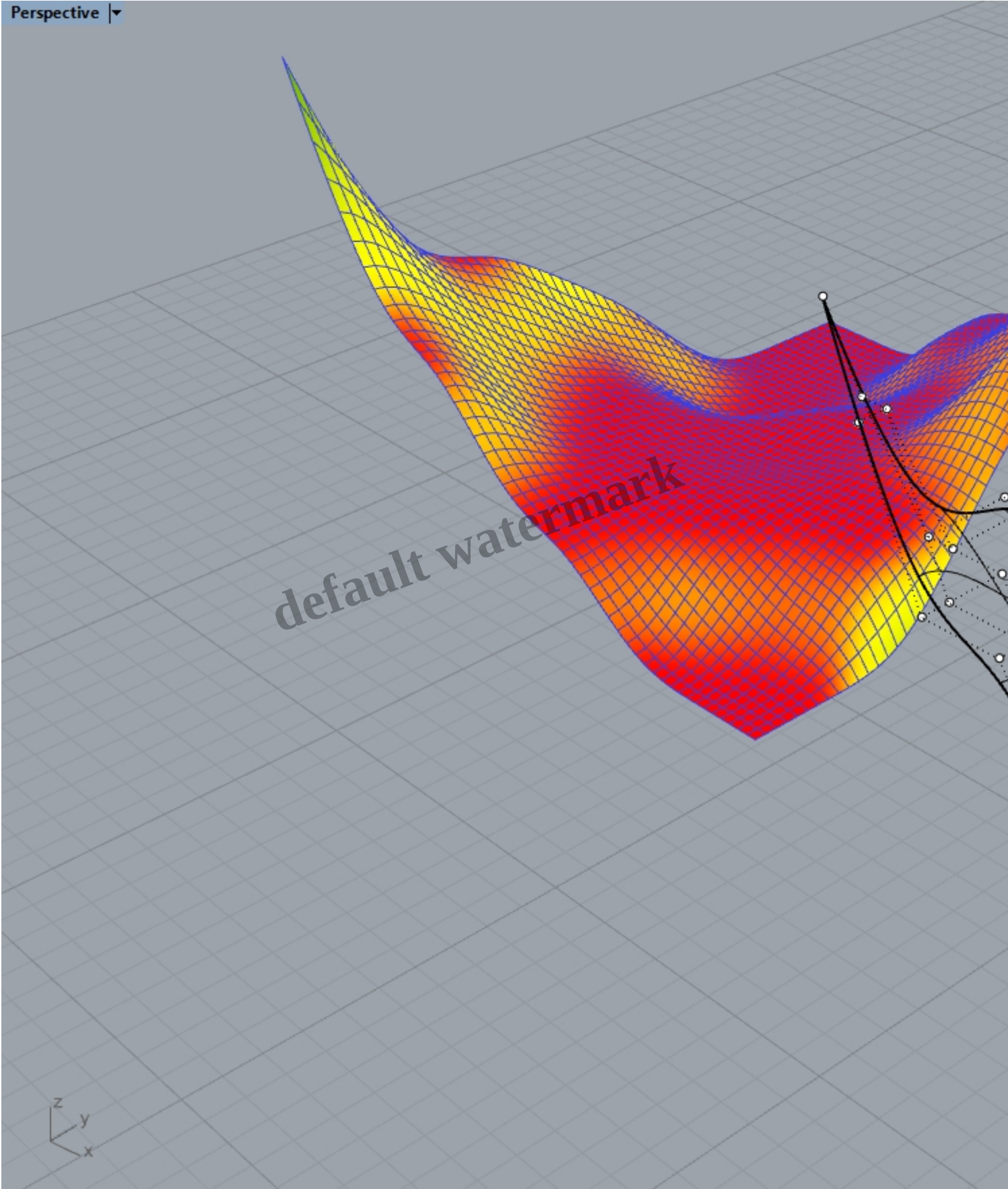
Connect the *Gradient's* *t* input to the *Deconstruct Vector* *Z* output. Now each *Z* value will have a gradient colour assigned dependant on its position on the range between our min and max *Z*-values as shown above.

Connect the *Mesh Surface* output to the according *Mesh Colours* input. To make things complete, connect the *Gradient's* output to *Mesh Colours'* *C* input.

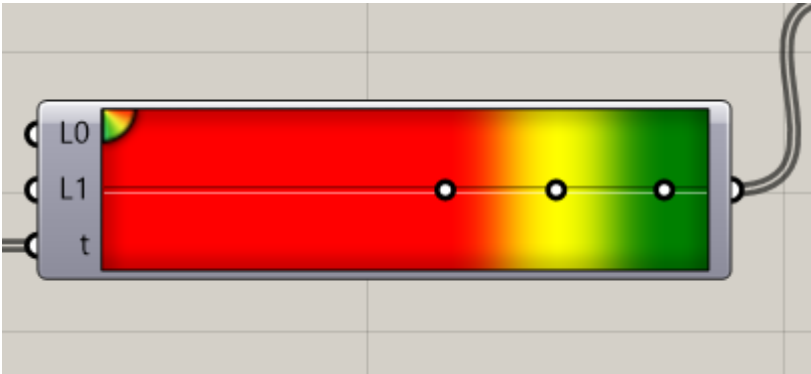


Already you see that it works:

Perspective ▾

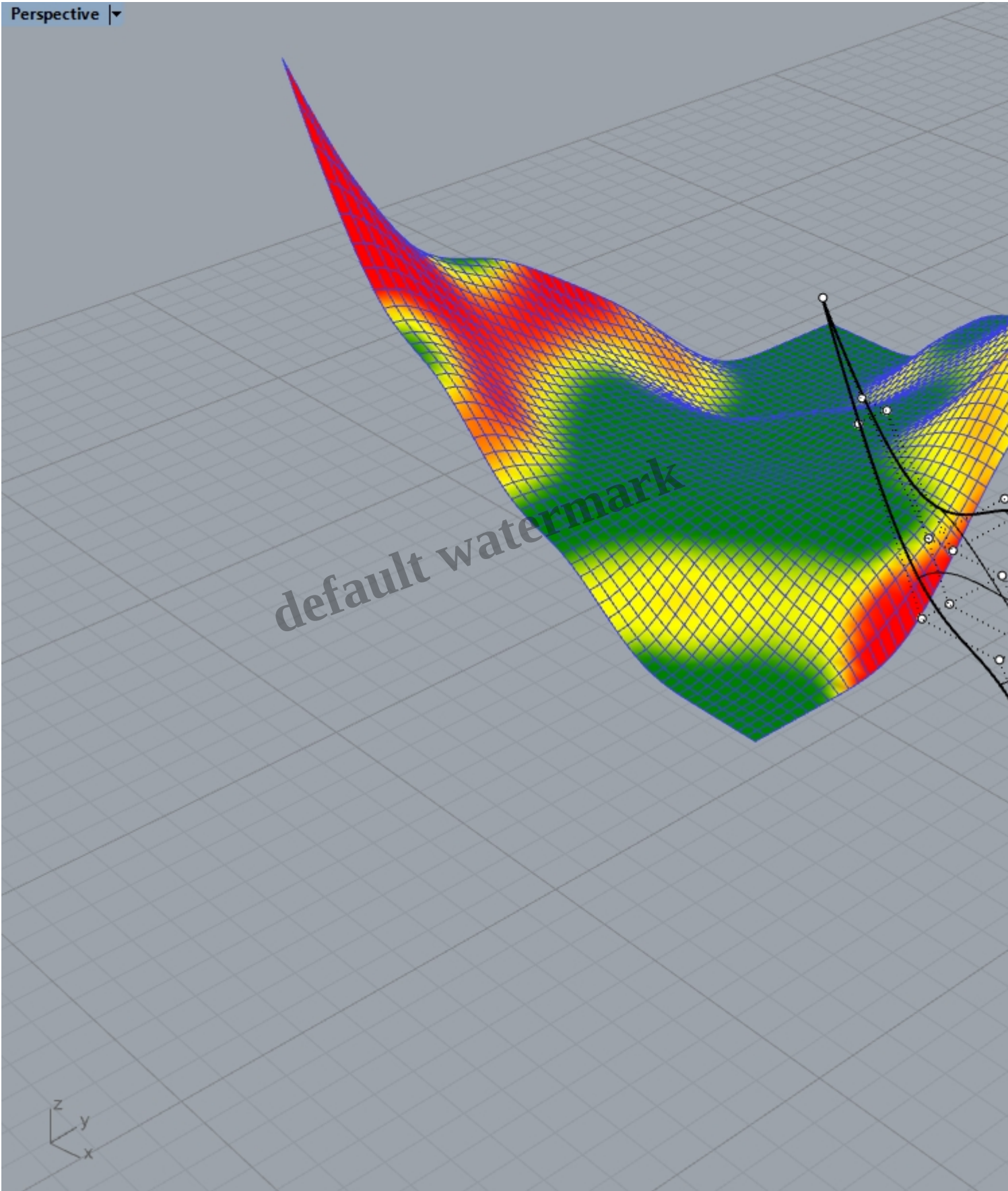


It may be necessary to tune the gradient to get a more explicit colouring:

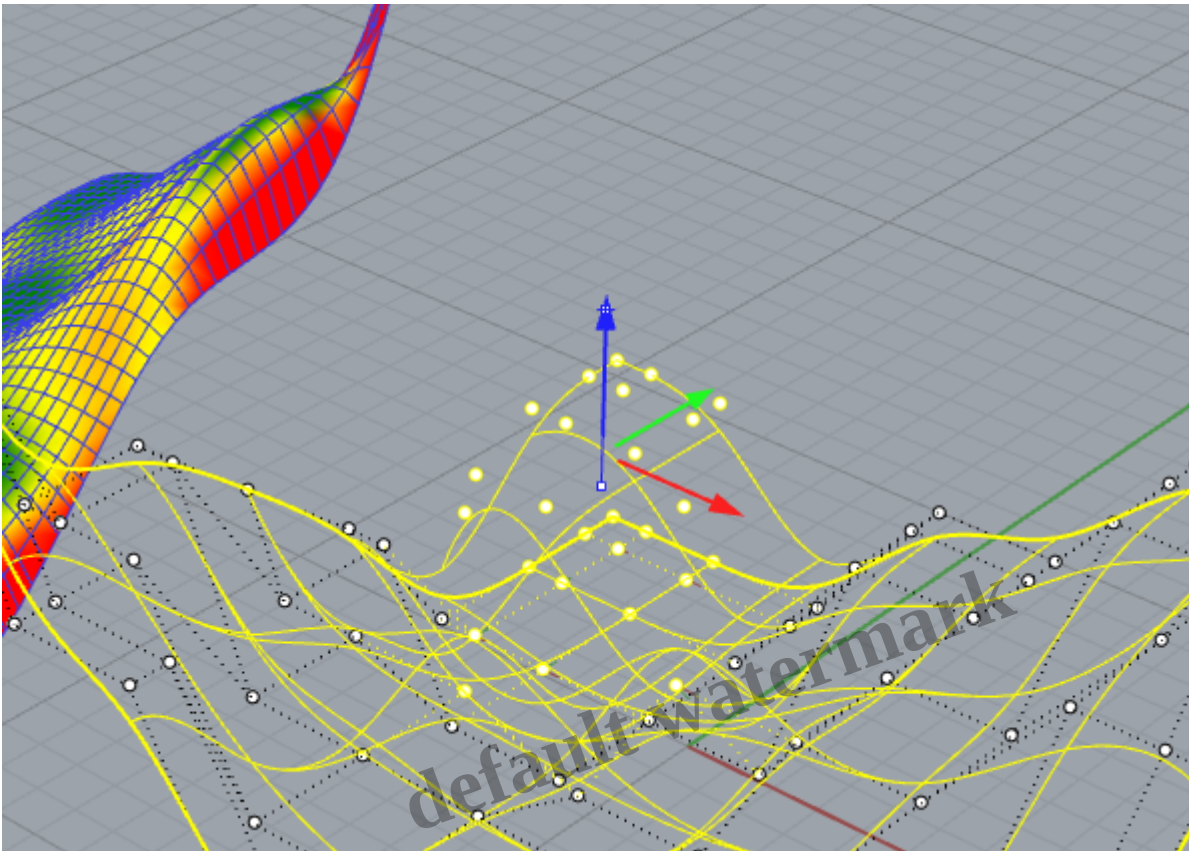


default watermark

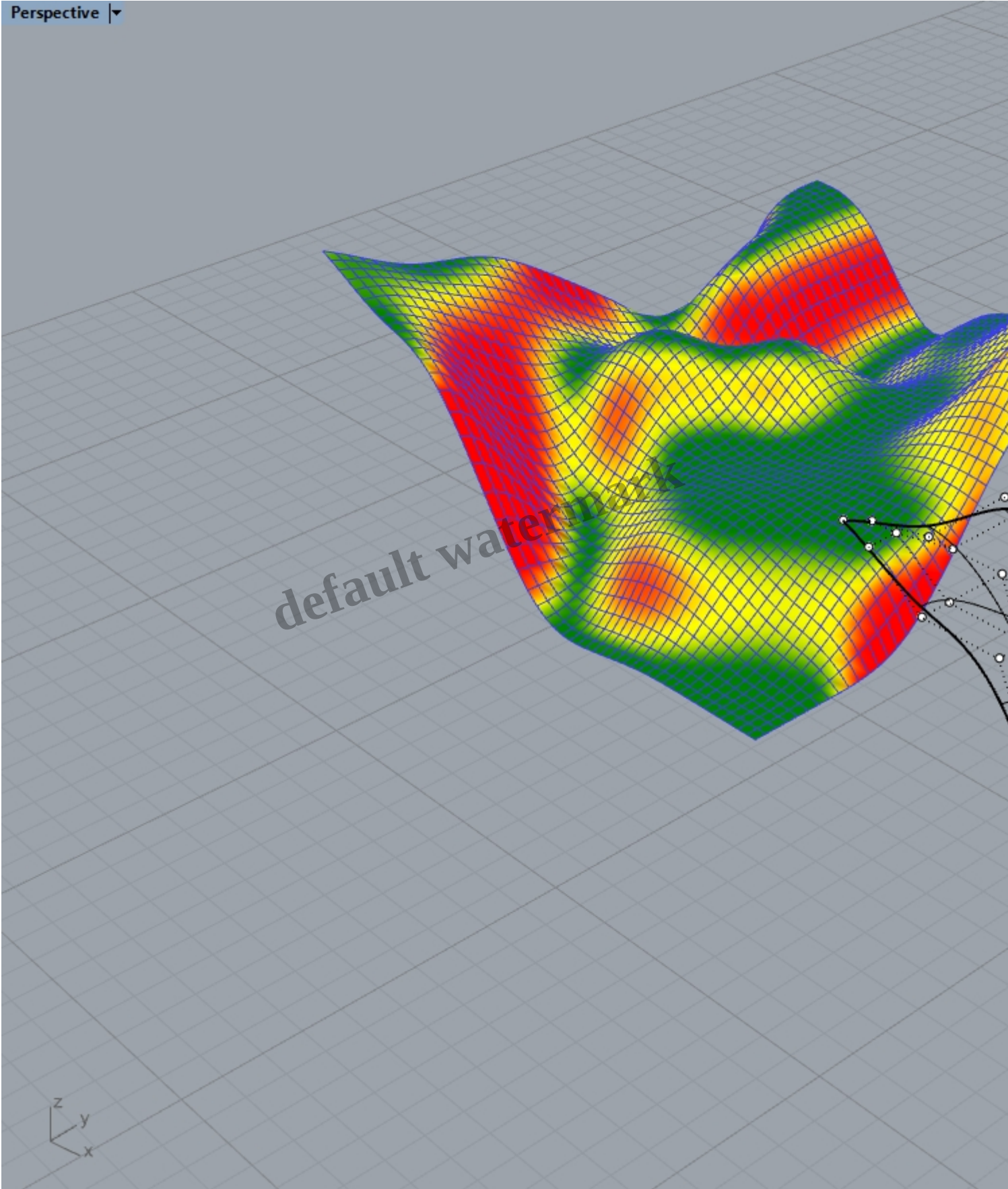
Perspective ▾



That's fine. Now, as we still have a live connection between NURBS and mesh, feel free to recreate your NURBS surface and observe the change of mesh colours:



Perspective ▾



That's it.

New to Grasshopper? [I suggest you read this article in the first place.](#)

Need more learning resources? [Check this out.](#)

Grasshopper-ARCHICAD-connection: See [here](#) for more information.

[© 2019 / Horst Sondermann / All Rights reserved](#)

Category

1. Rhino/Grasshopppe

Tags

1. Parametric Modeling

Date Created

January 2019

Author

hsondermanncom

default watermark