

Name: _____ Class: _____

WASSILY KANDINSKY – ABSTRACT PAINTINGS

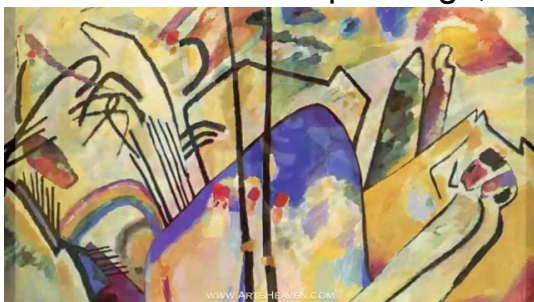
Wassily Kandinsky was a Russian abstract painter. In fact, he is often credited as the founder of abstract, or nonrepresentational painting! He was born in Moscow in 1866, and, when he was older, studied law and economics at the University of Moscow.

In 1895, Kandinsky attended an exhibition of French Impressionist Art and decided that his calling was not in law or economics, but in painting. To explore his new passion further, Kandinsky moved to Munich to study and practice German Impressionism. (Impressionist artists used short brushstrokes and color to emphasize the way light falls on objects. Van Gogh and Monet were Impressionist Artists.)

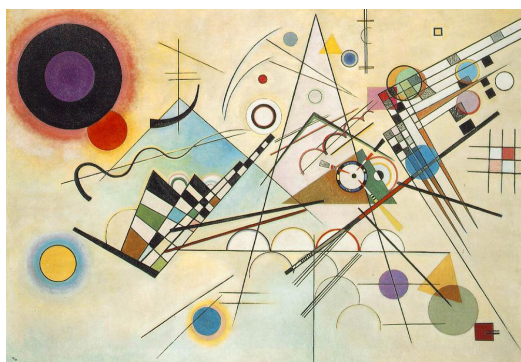
Kandinsky traveled a lot during the early 1900s. Especially influential to his art were his trips to Paris, where artists were involved with **Fauvism**. Fauvism is a style of art characterized by aggressive use of bold colors. Under this influence, Kandinsky began to develop ideas about the power of pure color.

He discovered the impact of **Nonrepresentational Art** by accident one day in his studio when he saw one of his paintings tipped on its side. When he saw the painting from a new angle he noticed that the colors, lines, and shapes were descriptive on their own; representation was not key to understanding the work. He combined these two discoveries into a new style of painting.

In 1911, Kandinsky helped form Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider) Group. These artists focused on the **expressive** qualities of art. During this period, Kandinsky created **abstract** paintings that exhibited colors and complex patterns of **organic** shape. He sought to reduce, or eliminate, the representation of objects without slipping into painting decorations. In his abstract paintings, Kandinsky did not contain his colors with lines.



Around 1920, Kandinsky's work changed dramatically. His paintings still contained areas of bold color, but the shapes he used were less **organic** and more **geometric**.



MUSIC was very important to Kandinsky, and his abstracting paintings are a reflection of that. Most of his paintings are titled with musical terms. Examples are **Improvisations, Impressions, and Compositions**. To further illustrate how he aligned painting with music, Kandinsky once said that, “Color is the keyboard, the eyes are the harmonies, and the soul is the piano with many strings.” He believed that he saw color when he heard music.

Kandinsky’s artwork created a lot of controversy. He was criticized because much of his artwork had no real subject. Kandinsky insisted that painting was like a piece of music; it did not have to be about something. Just like music gets its beauty from the arrangement of notes on a musical scale, arts beauty comes from the arrangement of its elements.

VOCABULARY

PRINCIPLES OF ART

Emphasis – a place of directed focus in an artwork. Emphasis shows that something is important.

Movement – arranging the elements in an artwork in a way that directs the eye to roam around the work

Rhythm – a regular repetition of elements to help create movement. For example, rhythm is the way the eye glides smoothly or jumps rapidly across an artwork.

ART HISTORY

Impressionism – use of many brushstrokes to record the way light affects the color of an object

Fauvism – use of bright, intense colors to show the mood of a painting

Representational – artwork with recognizable subject matter

Abstract – artwork that stresses the importance of elements and principles of design, rather than subject matter. Abstract (or nonrepresentational) artists select and then exaggerate or simplify the forms suggested by the world around them.

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Directions: Answer the following questions/Fill in the answers – based on the reading

1. What is Kandinsky credited as?

2. Finish the sentence: Impressionists used short brushstrokes and _____

3. What is Fauvism?

4. When he saw the painting from a new angle, he noticed that the

_____, _____, and
_____ were _____ on their own.

5. _____ was not key to understanding the work.

6. What changed about Kandinsky's work in 1920?

7. Kandinsky once said that "_____ is the keyboard, the
_____ are the harmonies, and the _____
is the piano with many strings."

8. According to Kandinsky, the beauty of his work came from (what)?