

WASILLY KANDINSKY

1866-1944

Words to know

- Abstract - involving general ideas or qualities rather than specific people, objects, or actions
- Color Wheel - an abstract visual organization around a circle that shows the relationship between primary, secondary, and complementary colors
- Complementary colors - **colors directly opposite each other in the color spectrum**

1. Photograph of Kandinsky

Wasilly (**Va-si-lee**) Kandinsky is considered to be one of the founders of abstract art. He was a brilliant man and was always looking for more knowledge. Born in Russia in 1866, he showed talent for drawing from the age of ten. He took art lessons and played the piano and cello. He went to law school and eventually became a teacher of law at the University of Moscow, but continued to draw and play music in his spare time. He thought that painting could develop the same power as music. He was particularly moved by Wagner's "Lohengrin." In 1900 he gave up law and enrolled in the Munich Academy of Art.

2. Russian Beauty in a Landscape, 1905

Kandinsky always enjoyed fairy tales. He heard them as a child and they inspired some of his paintings such as this one.

SCANNING QUESTIONS:

- Are the colors warm or cool?
- Point out large and small shapes.
- What are some contrasts in the picture?
- Who is the lady? Is she royalty or a commoner? How do you think she feels?
- Is this fantasy or reality?

3. Die Nacht (The Night), 1907

What do you see in the picture?

Is it day or night? How can you tell?

4 Street in Murnau with Women, 1908

Look at the bright colors. Kandinsky was very sensitive to colors; he felt he could hear them. He thought that every color had a meaning or inner voice. He used in this picture some of the first colors that really made an impression on him. Can you name them? (green, red, black & yellow) His paintings were carefully designed, with many preliminary sketches and studies. His work is known for its brilliant colors and complex patterns.

5 Houses in Munich, 1908 & Painting with Houses, 1909

As Kandinsky grew in his painting confidence, he started painting things how he felt about them instead of how they looked. This meant that items in some of his paintings may look distorted, out of place, or a different color.

6. First Abstract Watercolor, 1910

Kandinsky created the first true abstract painting. He planned each painting to express feelings and ideas using color and form (shapes) to show how he felt. Music was one of the things that made him feel. How does this painting make you feel?

"Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul".

7. Improvisation 30, 1913

Kandinsky wanted art to make people feel with their eyes. He was influenced by music and wanted to recreate how music made him feel on paper. He eventually considered art and music a single language. He wanted to tell a story with his paintings. What do you see in this story?

8. Study of Abstract Squares, 1913

This study was done to practice and play with colors before starting another project. This piece has been reproduced many, many times and you may have seen it hanging in someone's house or an office.

9. In the Black Circle, 1923

Kandinsky did a lot of experimenting to see what shapes lines could create. Circles were his favorite shape because he believed they have a strong inner force.

10. Several Circles, 1926

Circles are always the same and yet they can be made to look so different. He noticed that circles changed their appearance when they are different colors. Some colors make the circles look close to us and other colors make them look farther away.

11. Circle and Square, 1943

Do you see the circle and square? What color are they? Are there other circles or squares in the picture? Are there any other shapes you see in the picture?

Kandinsky once said, "I applied streaks and blobs of colors onto the canvas with a palette knife and I made them sing with all the intensity I could..."