

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, paintings were very structured. Artists painted what they saw. Knowing this is what the public expected, Wassily Kandinsky began his abstract painting in a way in which others could still distinguish features such as his most recurrent subjects such as mountains, villages, trees and churches. I feel Kandinsky was trying to fulfil what the public wanted rather than fulfil his own needs as an artist in the early years as a painter.

In 1908 Kandinsky made the life changing decision to move to Marnau, where he concentrated on his painting. Here is where he explored the areas in painting which neither he or anyone else had ever touched upon. In Kandinsky's earlier landscapes, although we do see a freer composition style, with passionate outbursts of colour I do not believe he had been painting in his true style. At this time, Kandinsky still favoured a more structured way of painting. But we do often, more regularly in his later paintings, see examples of shapes moving freely in space. Kandinsky's colourful palette is based on the primaries, red, yellow and blue.

Kandinsky continued to paint recognisable compositions for a number of years. Paintings such as 'Couple Riding' in 1906. And 'Beach Baskets' in 1905. Working alongside well known artists such as Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh. It is easy to look at Kandinsky's progress towards abstraction by looking at his work between 1908 and 1912. Recognisable paintings turn into completely independent compositions. Mountains and trees become lines and curves. Animals and buildings become fantastic figures. Colour loses its illustrative function. As his forms and colour become more independent, the topic of painting becomes less important. In his autobiography, Kandinsky wrote,

**“Several years where to go by before I reached the conviction – this more by a process of reasoning than by any sentimental attachment – that nature and art have different organic and historical ends, but that both are equally valid [...] everything that was ‘dead’ began to pulsate with life [...] everything revealed itself, its very essence, its hidden soul, which was silent more often than not. Thus, each point at rest and each point in movement (which equals the line) came to life and opened up its soul. And this was enough to enable me to seize, with all my being, and all my senses, the potential and the existence of art, this art which there days, by contrast to what is called the figurative, is termed abstract.”**

I believe Kandinsky comes into his own light in his First Abstract Watercolour, painted in 1910. From then on Wassily Kandinsky did not

turn back. His paintings went from strength to strength. 1910 is the year where Kandinsky set out his new inventive principles. He believed that each colour has its own quality that gives its own impression. Yellow is warm and stimulating where as blue is severe and cold. Kandinsky also gave forms and interpretation. Yellow is associated with the acute angle and the triangle where as blue is associated with the obtuse angle and the circle. Making 'optical features filter through the observers emotions to become an elementary means of expression.'

It is safe to say that Kandinsky was one of the most influential artists of the twentieth century. Without his revolutionary new style of painting a lot of artists of today would not exist. Kandinsky had the gift of synaesthesia, this is when one of his senses is stimulated, and another reacted. For instance, he saw a colour when listening to a note on an instrument. With Kandinsky, colours and sounds appeal to different feeling. To Kandinsky colour not only has a temperature, yellow being warm, but it also has a meaning. Yellow is active and aggressive whilst blue is shy and passive. Yellow is hard and sharp and blue is soft and yielding.

I myself have always associated certain things with certain colours, like numbers or words. The number four to me is red and the number one is white. Although it does not happen anywhere near to the extent as it does to Wassily Kandinsky, I can relate to his feeling and his paintings. Knowing these facts, I have learnt to appreciate Kandinsky's works to the fullest.

You can make your own mind up about his earliest works of which I am not a great fan of, especially after researching for this assignment. This is because I feel he was not painting in the style in which he craved for. It was not well known and I believe he thought the public would not have accepted his compositions. But by 1910, Kandinsky had learnt to express his own feelings into an art piece and discovered a world of his own. I am also particularly fond of Kandinsky, not just because of his excellent use of colour and space but for his great revolution in the art world. He changed the way people see art today, without him, a lot of artists would not painting the way they do, abstract expressionism has a lot to thank Wassily Kandinsky.

Dying in Paris at the age of 78 in 1944, I believe he lived a full life achieving his full potential. Looking back over his paintings and the way his style changed over the years I can see that the last few years of his life is where his true form was revealed.