

## **Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue.**

Composition with red, yellow and blue, composed by Piet Mondrian from 1937 -1942 possesses a sense of simplicity whilst simultaneously comprises of complexity. Mondrian has used oil on canvas as his materials and has created the artwork to a size of 72.7 cm by 69.2 cm. Composition with red, yellow and blue is currently located at the Tate Gallery.

Piet Mondrian was Dutch but spent most of his time in Holland and Paris.

The art movement that Composition with red, yellow and blue was created in was Surrealism.

Piet Mondrian was associated with the mystique that an artwork could attain. He joined the Theosophical Society in 1909, and hence forward began to produce works, which had an abstract sense and another meaning to them. When Mondrian went to Paris – his inspiration – the Cubists, Mondrian viewed the work there in 1911-1913. After returning to Holland in 1914, Mondrian was fascinated by abstract paintings. With the war outbreak in Holland, Mondrian was forced to stay in Holland, where in 1916-1917, he helped form the Neo-Plasticism movement. Neo-plasticism impacted and brought out the best in a number of people, where it broke down the forms of nature, reducing the form to a pure, abstract design.

In the painting, Composition with red, yellow and blue, the overall image somewhat resembles a grid, where two squares have been coloured in, and two other places have been coloured across the grid. There are eight vertical lines spanning down the painting, with different lengths between each two lines. These are thick, black bold lines and create a web/structured/grid effect, and along with the four horizontal lines spanning across the painting, again, with different lengths between each line, makes the painting resemble a labyrinth. In the first box in the grid, the length is about twice as long as the width and this box is coloured a pale, bright yellow creating the effect of contrast between the white and black (outline) surrounding it. In a square near the right bottom hand corner, the colour inside it is a blood, shady red. Two the left of that box, slightly lower is a thick blue line that goes from the second box to the fourth box. The white spaces has been coloured in though, and it doesn't cover the bold vertical lines. The blue is a mellow blue and contrasts with the red and yellow well. Finally, in the first box from the left bottom hand side, about 2/7 of the way up is a small red coloured box. This single box is near the other larger red box so it does not stand out as much.

All the boxes that have been coloured in are of different size. The yellow box is a rectangle, the larger red box is a square, the smaller red box is a small rectangle and the blue box is a longer rectangle. This creates the effect of the colours being different to one another in colour, obviously, in size, and in the way they have been outlined and are located. The yellow and the larger red box are outlined (mostly) but the blue and the smaller red box are not outlined and just reach over a length of horizontal and vertical lines.

The artist has used oil on canvas and the oils that have been used are very smooth, rich and flawless in application. You cannot see a mistake anywhere and the painting seems as though it was originally created on a computer, but offcourse we know that colour printers and high-quality computers were not created at the time. The lines are all precise and there isn't a smudge of paint anywhere. Obviously this painting must have taken a long amount of time to accomplish as every detail of it had to be exact. The effect of it all is precision of the paint and the effect of *that* is an ordered, rectilinear overall image.

The lines in Mondrian's Composition with red, yellow and blue have to be the most significant visual element. The lines in this painting are stimulating, bold and very in line. The lines even appear mathematically sound and the angles and lines are all very even. To the eye, the lines all appear perpendicular. This creates the effect of orderliness, tidiness, and regulation. The lines appear very undiluted and arranged.

The direction of the painting is very simple to figure out, as the lines in the painting lead only horizontally and vertically, which means that there are two directions in the painting, and they are all the points on a compass. The lines basically lead north, south, east and west, a result of the structured line system that Mondrian has taken up.

The shapes in the painting again, appear very mathematical and accurate. All the shapes consist of right angles and parallel lines. We can see that there are no triangles or parallelograms in the painting. Each and every aspect of this painting is again, very rectilinear.

The yellow square in the image takes up about 1/30 of the image, while the red square does about the same thing. The blue rectangle takes up a very minimal amount of space and even more so – the single red square. Again, each shape ranges in size. To me, since the blue is such a strong colour, the painter has limited its size, and since yellow is such a light colour, the artist has placed it in isolation, so it attracts more attention. The red stands out between those two colours so much that there had to be a lot of it and at the same time it had to be the most pretty and normal shape – the square.

There appears to be no evidence of tone in this painting. Most of the colours used are just the single colour and because the painting is so abstract, there was no use of tone.

The overall texture of the painting is smooth, even, flat and horizontal – this relates to the line and shape.

Colour would be the second most important aspect of this painting. Only three primary colours are used, yet the painting possesses so much complexity. With the use of only three colours and a black, the artist was able to make the painting uncomplicated but with the addition of the lines, has turned the painting complicating again. The three primary colours contrast immensely from each other. That is why the painting is so easy to view and trouble-free. Like what Schoemaekers said in 1915, which basically summarises the colours, “...Yellow radiates, blue recedes and red floats.”

There is much unity in the artwork. The three colours are linked together through the contact of the lines and the repetition of the lines has also helped unite everything. And because the lines all overlap each other, more unity is a result has everything has a sense of linking because of it. It appears that the colours are related to each other as the lines and the overlapping of the lines connects everything to each other. Since this achieves the effect of everything being so inter-related, the whole image can be recognised and seen as one whole image itself, where the lines and coloured boxes are all contributing to the one overall image.

There is a great contrast between the colours and the colours and the line colour. Each colour contrasts a great deal from the next colour while at the same time, each colour contrasts with the black a great deal. The black and white are just overall contrasting colours to contrast the contrasting colours (the red, yellow and blue). As you can see, there is a lot of complementing happening in the artwork and Mondrian has used the fact to his advantage.

The painting appears somewhat balanced superficially but not if examined carefully. I think that the left hand side is not as balanced as the right. If the blue rectangle in the left bottom hand corner was moved one square to the left, I would be disagreeing with myself right now.

There is a great deal of repetition in the lines of Composition with red, yellow and blue and shapes are also greatly repeated. There is a constant recurrence of the symmetrical boxes and since the lines are all the same width, obviously the lines are continual, perhaps to the extent of achieving boredom in the viewer when seen too long – this is what repetition generally creates).

Because the lines and colours are all so unevenly spaced out, it appears any second now that the lines will just fly off in whatever direction they came in. Besides that, there seems to be no evidence of movement or rhythm in the image.

I particularly like the image as it is so simple and simple things to me are really beautiful in their own way. This artwork is unique because it is unlike any other painting I have ever seen before. This image comprises of so much, while only possessing so little, but at the same time doing so with perfection. Since the artwork is so abstract, and the image could have originally been a picture

of a park, I would not know what Mondrian was trying to communicate, but I know that the object Mondrian was drawing was either really complicated or really simple, like the artwork. This artwork has got to be one of my favourites. I like it because of its simplicity and complexity (mentioned a lot before). I like the fact that this painting is abstract yet at the same time revealing so much about anything. I guess it's a matter of letting your imagination run wild.