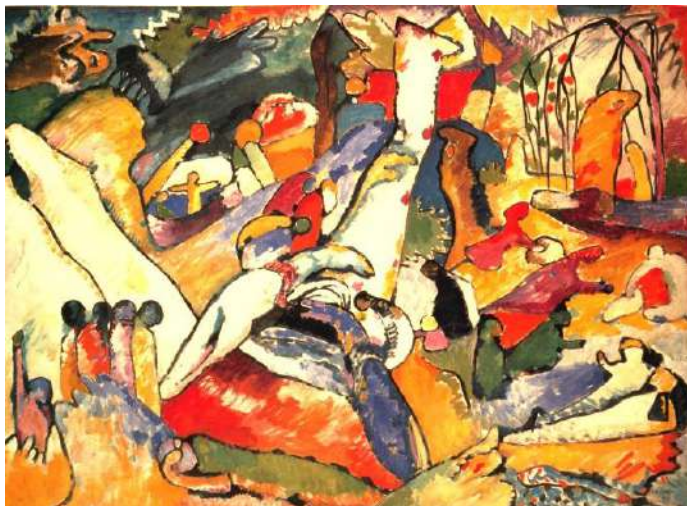

Art Masterpiece: Composition #2 - Wassily Kandinsky

Keywords: Abstract Expressionism and
Synaesthesia cognate

Grade: 6th

Activity: Abstract Foil Relief



Meet the Artist:

Wassily Kandinsky was born on December 16, 1866, in Moscow, Russia. His father was a tea merchant and his mother was a homemaker. At an early age, Wassily exhibited a very special gift called **synaesthesia** cognate. This gift gave him the ability to hear music when he saw colors & see colors when he heard sounds. This special gift was encouraged by his father who enrolled him in private drawing lessons as well as lessons in piano and cello.

Kandinsky went to college and became a law professor. However, when he was thirty he decided to change careers and become an artist. He attended art school at Munich, Germany. Early on his art was influenced by painters like Claude Monet and Georges Seurat, as well as famous music composers and philosophers.

About 1909 Kandinsky began to think that painting didn't need a particular subject, but that shapes and colors alone could be art. Over the next several years he would start to paint what would become known as **Abstract Expressionism**. The main characteristic of abstract art is that it has no recognizable subject and has theories on how emotions can be influenced by certain colors and shapes. Artists planned out their paintings to the last detail, and were produced with a spontaneous fervor. Kandinsky was one of the founding fathers of Abstract Art.

Between 1922 and 1933, geometrical elements became increasingly important to Kandinsky - particularly circles, half-circles, the angle, straight lines and curves. One of his first works to include these geometric shapes was *On White II* (1923).

When Nazis closed the Bauhaus school in 1933, Kandinsky moved to France. He remained there for the rest of his life.

Meet the Art:

Kandinsky felt that he could express feelings and music through colors and shapes in his paintings. For example, he thought that yellow had the crisp sound of a brass trumpet and that certain colors placed together could harmonize like chords on a piano. The shapes he was most interested in were the circle, triangle, and the square. He thought the triangle would cause aggressive feelings, the square calm feelings, and the circle spiritual feelings. With Composition #2, Kandinsky wanted to capture the emotions of his time as WWII approached and people were caught in the middle of turbulent, challenging & faithful times. He wanted to share a certain collection of history and humanity within these "Compositional" paintings.

Activity:

Abstract Foil Relief

Materials:

- Heavy Duty Foil (cut into pieces large enough to cover & fold around chipboard sheet)
- Yarn (cut into 3 ft. pieces)
- Spray Adhesive
- 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ X 11 Sheet of Chipboard (1 per student), found in supply cabinet (if possible, prep boards ahead of time)
- Black Permanent Markers
- Sharpie Brush-Markers (variety of colors)

Process:

- After discussing the artist and his art piece, ask students to follow Paul Klee's quote, "A line is a dot that went for a walk," as they decide on a design for their artwork. Pass out prepared cardboard, and begin their line on one side of their adhesive board. Using their piece of yarn, have students move the line back and forth, ending on the opposite side from where they started. I asked students to leave at least a finger space between yarn lines and between the edges of the paper (to give the foil space to "settle into"). Also, instruct them to NOT cross over lines
- After this task is done give each student a piece of foil, ask them to *carefully* center the foil on the board, gently pressing from the center outward, molding it to the yarn and over the edges of the board. Advise students to use their fingers only, and try not to use their nails, this may tear the foil. You may want to tape foil down on the backside of the chipboard
- Have students outline their foil covered yarn line with a black Sharpie and then use the Sharpie Brush-Markers to color in as desired