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**Art Masterpiece: *Composition in Line and Color; Composition No. II\**, Piet Mondrian**

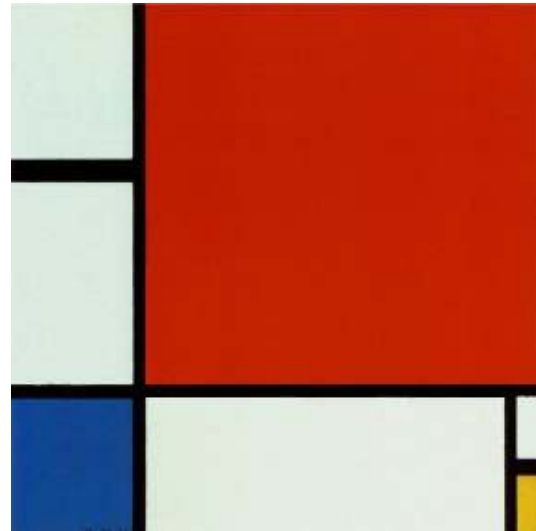
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**Keywords:** Horizontal, vertical, line, abstract, primary colors, and composition.

**Grade(s):** 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>

**Activity:** Linear Abstract Design

*\*Another of Mondrian's artworks can be substituted.*



**About the Work:**

- Piet Mondrian is pronounced “peet mohn-dree-ahn.”
- Mondrian was born on March 7, 1872 in Amersfoort, the Netherlands.
- Mondrian was introduced to art from a very early age. His father was a drawing teacher, and Mondrian often painted and drew along the river Gein.
- As an adult, Mondrian began his career as an elementary school teacher. While he was teaching, he also practiced painting. Most of his works from this time are landscapes: windmills, fields, and rivers.
- Mondrian painted in lots of different styles – Impressionism, Pointillism and the vivid colors of Fauvism.
- He is now most famous for his abstract paintings done in a precise, geometric manner mostly using primary colors. It was a style that Mondrian called “neoplasticism.”

**Possible Questions and Comments:**

1. Who thinks they could paint this painting all by themselves? It is a simple painting but that doesn't mean it is easy. When seen up close, Mondrian's paintings are not perfectly flat planes of color, as you might think. You can see brush strokes but they are subtle. The colored squares and rectangles have the most obvious brush strokes, all running in one direction.
2. You might think that the white spaces are just left blank but they aren't – Mondrian painted them with white paint. If you see the original art, you can see that the white squares and rectangles are painted in layers, using brush strokes running in different directions.
3. From 1922 onwards, Mondrian only used *primary colors* in his paintings. Do you know what primary colors are? (Red, yellow, and blue. By mixing these three colors you can make all other colors.)
4. This is an example of abstract art. *Abstract art* is the opposite of realistic art. It is art that is either a stylized impression of what the artist saw or non-representational art that is completely detached from the things that we see including only lines, shapes, colors, and textures. Because Mondrian uses only horizontal and vertical lines to make squares and rectangles, this particular style of abstract art is called *Abstract Geometric*. Can you point out the horizontal lines? The vertical lines?
5. The *composition* of any artwork is the way the parts of the artwork are arranged by the artist. In this painting, the red square takes up the most space and is what you notice first. The yellow rectangle in the very bottom corner is almost easy to overlook.

**Activity:** Create a linear abstract design in the style of Mondrian.

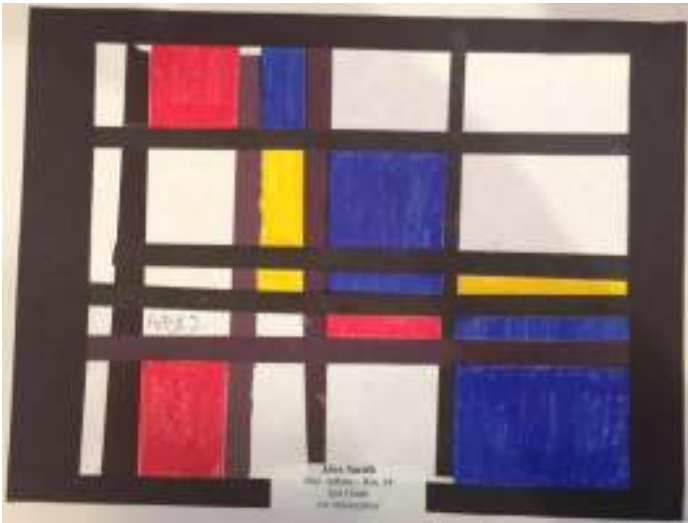
**Materials Needed:**

- White construction paper (9" X 13"), one per student
- Pencils
- Rulers, one per student
- Black strips of construction paper, cut ¼" wide –OR– black graphic chart tape, ¼" wide.
- red, yellow and blue markers
- Elmer's glue

**Process:**

1. Have the students draw 2" grid lines on the white construction paper.  
(There should be four squares across and five squares down)
2. Have the students color inside the squares they have drawn with the red, yellow and blue markers. Encourage them to make a pattern.
3. After the students have finished using color on their abstract design, they can use a thin bead of Elmer's glue on the black construction paper strips (or if they are using black graphic chart tape, no glue is needed) to make the horizontal and vertical lines that will outline their shapes.
4. Remind them to make some lines shorter than others. Not all lines need to continue from one side to the other side of the page.
5. Mount the drawings to the black paper background, hang and enjoy!

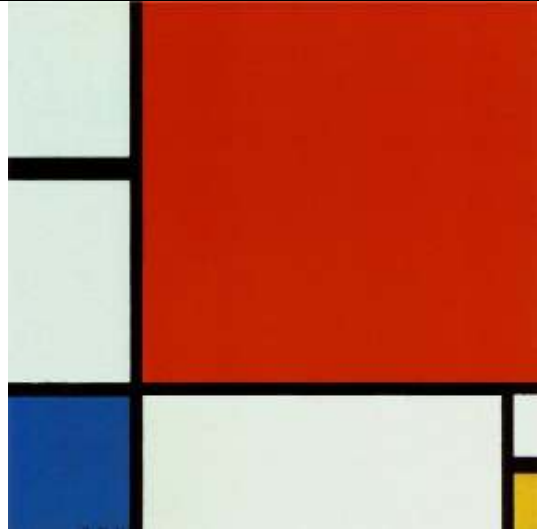
Examples:



**Parent Note:**

Piet Mondrian is most famous for his abstract paintings done in a precise, geometric manner mostly using primary colors. It was a style that Mondrian called “neoplasticism.”

In Art Masterpiece today, students learned about horizontal and vertical lines, primary colors, and composition. They created their own linear abstract design, done in Mondrian’s “neoplasticism” style.



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