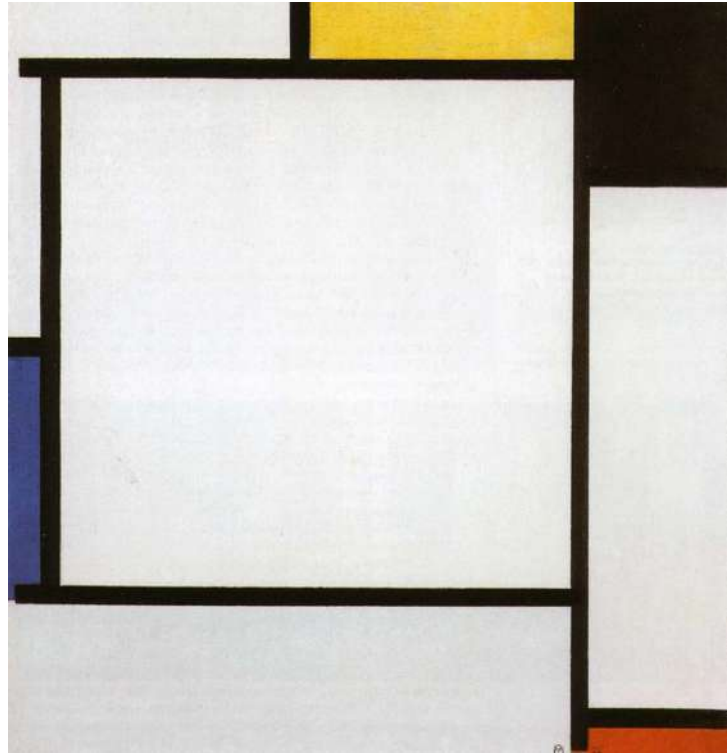

Art Masterpiece: "Composition #2" Piet Mondrian

Keywords: Informal balance, Texture, Composition, Non-Objective Art

Grade: 5th

Activity: Geometric Line Painting



Meet the Artist:

Piet Mondrian was born in the Netherlands in 1877. He was influenced by many artistic styles and even helped found an artistic movement called De Stijl. Artists following this movement wanted to simplify the subjects of their painting as much as possible until they were left with only lines and simple colors. They used only red, yellow, blue, black, white, and grey. The paintings that Piet Mondrian is most famous for are rectangles of white and primary colors, dissected by black lines. He did not always paint this way, however. Mondrian's first paintings depicted scenes found in real life. They were done in a style similar to impressionism. As his style grew and changed, he stopped using other colors besides the three primaries: red, yellow, and blue. Mondrian soon became interested in cubism. Cubism is an artistic style in which the subject is broken into meaningful pieces and rearranged in a different order. Because of the influence of cubism, Mondrian's paintings became more and more abstract. Mondrian moved to Paris in 1912 so he could further study cubism.

Mondrian was really interested in how the idea of harmony and balance might be expressed through painting, and how people's lives might also be harmonious and balanced. He became interested in the contrast of dark and light and he applied these ideas to his own paintings. It can be said that he invented nonobjective art. He has influenced many artists, architects, and philosophers.

Keywords Definition:

Informal balance: synonym for asymmetrical balance which is the kind of balance in which the parts of a design are organized so that one side differs from the other without destroying that composition's overall harmony.

Texture: the way an object looks as though it feels, such as rough or smooth.

Composition: arrangement or design of elements of an artwork to achieve balance, contrast, rhythm, emphasis and unity, to make an effective expression of an artist's idea.

Non objective art: is another way to refer to Abstract art or nonrepresentational art.

Essentially, the artwork does not represent or depict a person, place or thing in the natural world.

Discussion:

The artist, Piet Mondrian, calls this painting "Composition No. 2":

- What does the title tell you about the subject of the painting? (The title does not mention any objects)
- What is the painting made up of? (Lines, colors and shapes)
- What kinds of lines do you see? (Straight, horizontal, vertical)
- What shapes has Mondrian used? (Squares and rectangles)
- What colors have been used in this painting?
- Which of the colors are primary colors? (Red, yellow and blue)
- Do you see much texture in the painting? (No, it is very smooth)
- What kind of feeling does this painting give you?
- Why do you think Mondrian might have used basic shapes, colors and straight lines to create a painting like this?

Supplies Needed:

- 9" x 12" White Construction Paper
- Pencils
- Rulers
- Black Wide-Tip Sharpies
- Tempera Paints-Primary Colors Only
- Paper Plates (pour each color on plate/1 plate per student)
- Paint Brushes

Process:

- Using their pencil & ruler, instruct students to draw a geometric framework of straight horizontal & vertical lines
- Trace the lines with their sharpie
- Using paint, fill in some of the shapes with different colors, trying to create an informal balance (non-symmetrical)
- Mount finished masterpiece on black paper (optional)