

Wassily Kandinsky

What Did Kandinsky Create?

Kandinsky was one of the first artists to paint **abstract art**—pictures that don't look like real things but instead use shapes, lines, and colours to express feelings. He believed that colours and shapes could make music for the eyes!



Childhood

- Kandinsky was born in **Moscow, Russia**, in **1866**.
- He spent much of his childhood in **Odessa**, near the Black Sea.
- His parents divorced when he was young, and he was raised by **relatives**, including his **aunt and grandmother**.
- He loved looking at **brightly painted Russian churches** and **folk art**, especially their patterns and colours.
- He played **musical instruments**, including the **piano and cello**, from a young age.
- As a small boy, he said he could “**see music and hear colours**”, which we now call **synesthesia**.
- He was fascinated by colour combinations, once describing a painting of haystacks as “singing” to him.
- Kandinsky showed early talent in both **art and music**, but his family encouraged him to study law instead.

Education

- He studied **law and economics** at **Moscow University**, earning a degree with honours.
- He turned down a **professorship in law** to become an artist, despite having no formal training at first.
- In **1896**, he moved to **Munich, Germany**, to study painting at a private art school.
- Later, he studied at the **Munich Academy of Fine Arts**, one of the best-known art schools in Europe.

- He learned by copying **old master paintings** and experimenting with **colour theory**.
- Kandinsky read books on **philosophy, science, and psychology** to understand how colours and shapes affect the mind.
- He was especially interested in the work of **Goethe**, who wrote about the emotional power of colour.
- Kandinsky was inspired by the opera and music during his student years and studied how **sound and colour** could work together.

Career

- Kandinsky is known as a **pioneer of abstract art**, using colour and shape instead of people or objects.
- He helped found the art group **Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider)**, which included artists like Franz Marc.
- In 1911, he wrote a book called *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, which became one of the most important art books ever written.
- He created a new style of painting called **"Improvisations"** and **"Compositions"** to express emotions without realistic images.
- Kandinsky taught at the **Bauhaus School of Art and Design** in Germany, a centre for modern design and architecture.
- After the **Bauhaus closed**, Kandinsky moved to **Paris**, where he lived and painted until his death.
- In his later career, his paintings became more **organic**, with softer lines and more playful shapes.
- Today, his work is displayed in major galleries around the world, including the **Tate Modern, Centre Pompidou**, and the **Guggenheim Museum**.

Quotes from Kandinsky

- "Colour is a power which directly influences the soul."
- "The artist must train not only his eye but also his soul."
- "Everything starts from a dot."

Artworks

Yellow-Red-Blue



Improvisation 28



Colour Study: Squares and Circles



Lake Starnberg



Swinging