

Project: Explore colour theory and produce an abstract artwork inspired by Wassily Kandinsky.

Key Knowledge – Wassily Kandinsky

Learn this information

Background

Wassily Kandinsky was born in Russia, in 1866. When he grew up, he worked as a teacher at a university but it didn't make him happy. When he was 30, he left his job and went to art school. He found art school easy and was very good at his studies.



Influences

Initially, Kandinsky was influenced by **pointillism**, **fauvism** and **expressionism** because they all used colour and form to try and express feelings and moods. Kandinsky thought a lot about what colours mean and how they make people feel. He **believed that colours had a soul**. Often Kandinsky would **listen to music while he painted** and try to paint what he heard.

Key ideas

He was the first painter to **stop painting pictures of things** and instead **paint just using colours and shapes**. This is called **Abstract art**: it is not interested in copying the world around us but in inventing new forms and shapes. He believed that this let him paint honestly about his feelings. Kandinsky felt that he could **express feelings and music through colours and shapes in his paintings**. For example, he thought that yellow had the crisp sound of a brass trumpet and that certain colours 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. He was a huge influence on later artists.

Key Skills

Practice and perform these skills

Mix **primary colours** to create **secondary colours** and mix secondary colours to create **tertiary colours**.

Apply paint in an even and controlled manner

Use **blending** to create different **tints**.

Use blending to create different **shades**.

Investigate the difference between **warm and cold colours**; investigate **contrasting colours**.

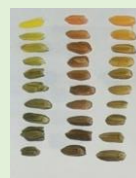
Examples of Kandinsky's work

Study and evaluate, to develop your own artwork



Examples of previous work

Study and evaluate, to develop your own artwork



Key Vocabulary

Understand these keywords

Colour wheel - shows the relationship between colours. See figure 1.



Figure 1

Contrasting colours - two colours that are on opposite sides of the colour wheel. This combination provides a high contrast and high impact colour combination.

Primary colours – red, yellow and blue

Secondary colours – orange, green and purple.

Tertiary colours – orange/red, orange/yellow, green/yellow, green/blue, purple/blue, purple/red.

Blending – gradual mixing of two colours creating a fading effect.

Tints – the adding of white to a colour.

Shades – the adding of black to a colour.

Warm colours – yellows, oranges and reds.

Cold colours – blues, greens and purples.

Abstract art – the creation of new forms using colour and shapes not the copying of things we see.

Fauvism – artist that copy things we see but use colours to try and create an emotional reaction. See figure 2.



Figure 2