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**WASSILY KANDINSKY AND BIRTH
OF ABSTRACT ART IN MUNICH IN THE 1910S**

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Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) is credited as one of the pioneers of abstraction in western art. His creation of abstract work followed a long period of development of creative thought, based on his artistic experiences. Kandinsky was a pioneer, and all forms of abstract painting there is scarcely one that he himself did not initiate and experiment with. Wassily Kandinsky was progressing from lyrical outbursts of colour, a symbiosis of poems and paintings to a simple flawless architectural organization and a rigorous form. Kandinsky's work steadily and harmoniously gathered and spiritual power until it rose at last to a great cosmic synthesis. In this article we will analyse the emergence of abstract art in the period 1910-1914 and Wassily Kandinsky's influence on that process. Among other things through an analysis of a group of artists "Der Blaue Reiter" (The Blue Rider) including Wassily Kandinsky, August Macke, Paul Klee, and Franz Marc. Wassily Kandinsky was a kind of original source and inspiration for modern art, and he never felt himself bound by a rigid discipline, but aimed at extending the field of art to include all orders of knowledge.

Keywords: Wassily Kandinsky, "Der Blaue Reiter", 1912, Munich, expressionism, Paul Klee, art movement, abstract art, Franz Marc, Modern Art, Odessa, Moscow, August Macke.

**ВАСИЛИЙ КАНДИНСКИЙ И РОЖДЕНИЕ
АБСТРАКТНОГО ИСКУССТВА В МЮНХЕНЕ В 1910-Х ГГ.**

Христенсен К.С.

Василий Кандинский (1866-1944) считается одним из пионеров абстракционизма в западном искусстве. Появление его абстрактных работ последовало после длительного периода развития творческой мысли, основанной на художественном опыте. Кандинский был первооткрывателем, и

из всех форм абстрактной живописи вряд ли найдется хотя бы одна, которую бы он сам не создал и с которой бы не экспериментировал. Василий Кандинский шел от лирических вспышек цвета, симбиоза стихов и картин к простой безупречной архитектурной организации и строгой форме. Творчество Кандинского неуклонно и гармонично собирало духовную силу, пока не поднялось, наконец, до великого космического синтеза. В этой статье мы проанализируем возникновение абстрактного искусства в период 1910-1914 гг. и влияние Василия Кандинского на этот процесс. Среди прочего через анализ «Синего всадника» (Der Blaue Reiter) – группы художников, представленной Василием Кандинским, Августом Макке, Паулем Клее и Францем Марком. Василий Кандинский был своего рода родоначальником и источником вдохновения для современного искусства, и он никогда не чувствовал себя связанным жесткой дисциплиной, а стремился расширить область искусства, включив в нее все виды знания.

Ключевые слова: Василий Кандинский, «Синий всадник», 1912, Мюнхен, экспрессионизм, Пауль Клее, художественное направление, абстрактное искусство, Франц Марк, современное искусство, Одесса, Москва, Август Макке.

Wassily Kandinsky – artistic influences in childhood and adolescence

In the period 1910-1914 the Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky's work and his achievements during the search for a new form of expression in the art of painting, even after a coastal perception at all, may even in 2022 seem enigmatic, incoherent, and unconditional in the viewer's rear-view mirror. But with Kandinsky, almost like with any other artist, one can find biographical preconditions, imprinted experiences in the artist's childhood and youth, which, together with various inherited plants and an inner motivation and drive, reveal a real creative drive in his artistic project. Through his numerous works of art and other written works, Wassily Kandinsky has stated and pointed out the importance of this crucial point in his artistic work, which he describes as inner determination or inner necessity for the process of creation. One

can, however, in his life path find more precise clues to such a core of Wassily Kandinsky's art theoretical philosophy [14, S. 23-24].

Wassily Kandinsky was born on December 16, 1866 in Moscow and died on December 13, 1944 in Paris – 77 years old. He was born during an economic and cultural heyday in the Russian Empire. In 1861 Tsar Alexander II had embarked on a series of profound reforms. This also includes the recall of families who had been deported to Siberia. Among them was the Kandinsky family, who lived in Eastern Siberia for decades in the tea area of Khyakhta near the Mongolian border, south of Ulan-Ude near the Lake Baikal. His father, Vasyli Kandinsky, was a tea merchant, and around 1866 he married Lidia Ticheeva from Moscow [2, s. 7].

As a three-year-old Kandinsky was with his family on holiday in Italy, which made a big impression on him among other things because he experienced a growing ability to remember and experience colours. The first colours were bright-juicy-green, white, crimson, black and ochre yellow. Kandinsky maintained this special ability to experience and play with the colours for the rest of his life. This ability was also promoted when Kandinsky's family moved to Odessa in the 1870s. Here the climate and light were different than in Moscow. Wassily Kandinsky graduated from Grekov Odessa Art School in 1885. And as can be seen from his paintings, this became a significant creative source of inspiration among other things, in the works from his expressionist period and in the period of the creation of the abstract art. In the latter the birthplace of Moscow also plays a major role. It was the greatest source of inspiration in terms of the painter's completely unique symbiosis between lyrical poems and painting [2, s. 14].

A fundamental element of Kandinsky's earliest abstract canvases is the employment of resonant pure colours which possessed their own sentimental character for the artist. Kandinsky's love of colour was apparent from an early age, as Paul Overy notes: "With the invention of tube colours painting became more like magic and less like cooking [...]. As a boy Kandinsky was enthralled by them: "When I was thirteen or fourteen, I bought a paint-box with oil paints from the money slowly saved up. The feeling I had at the time – or better: the experience of the colour

coming out of the tube – is with me to this day". Kandinsky describes how the slightest pressure of the fingers on the opened tube lets the colours slip out like animate beings, some cheerful and jubilant, others meditative and dreamy. Some seem to emerge "self-absorbed"; others slide out with "bubbling roguishness", some with a "sigh of relief" as though glad to escape the prison of the tube, others with "the deep sound of sorrow". [...] Each colour seemed to him to be alive and independent, but always "willing" to mix with other colours and "create endless series of new worlds" [10, p. 82].

Two landmark events added new dimensions to his ability to remember and experience colours. The first was a research assignment in 1889 for the Moscow University, leading Kandinsky to the Vologda region about 500 km north. Here he was to account for the current agricultural law and the remnants of the non-Christian religion of the Syrian indigenous people. The Russian agricultural culture, the colourful, decoratively designed houses and furniture, the coloured folk costumes were to him like paintings. The feeling of moving around in these paintings arose especially when he walked around Russian churches, especially baroque. Letting the viewer stroll in the painting, forcing him to a self-forgetting resolution in the painting became a very important artistic inspiration and motivation in his artistic work.

The second landmark event in the early 1890s that challenged artistic sensitivity was when Kandinsky watched Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* at one of the leading theatres in Moscow. Here he was violently gripped by the instrumentation of the hitherto unheard sounds. The colours of the spirit should have stood before his eye, where the colours changed according to the sounds of the tones. The power of this music opened for Wassily Kandinsky possibilities for synesthetic experiences and at the same time allowed him to sense the forces of painting, which he had the good fortune to experience at that time. The not only assumed, but existing connections between colours and sounds, between music and painting captivated him to the extent that this secret correspondence between the arts became one of the cornerstones of his artistic conviction, indeed the starting point of his painting [2, s. 9-10].

Wassily Kandinsky in Munich (1896-1911) – metamorphosis

In 1896 at the age of 30 Kandinsky settled in Munich, studying first at Anton Azbe's private school and then at the Academy of Fine Arts. He returned to Moscow in 1914 after the outbreak of World War I. Following the Russian Revolution, Kandinsky became an insider in the cultural administration of Anatoly Lunacharsky and helped establish the Moscow Museum of Pictorial Culture. That same year, before leaving Moscow, he saw an exhibit of paintings by Monet. He was particularly taken with the impressionistic style of haystacks; this, to him, had a powerful sense of colour almost independent of the objects themselves. Later, he would write about this experience:

That it was a haystack the catalogue informed him. Kandinsky could not recognize it. This non-recognition was painful to him. He considered that the painter had no right to paint indistinctly. He dully felt that the object of the painting was missing. And Kandinsky noticed with surprise and confusion that the picture not only gripped me but impressed itself ineradicably on my memory. Painting took on a fairy-tale power and splendour [8, s. 48].

Furthermore, Kandinsky remarked with astonishment and confusion that the image not only grips but imprints itself unmistakably in the memory and constantly unexpectedly in the slightest detail floats before the gaze. After this, it was perfectly clear to Kandinsky that the unimaginable power of the palette exceeded his dreams, but that it also opened opportunities for new possibilities within the world of painting. The painting gained its own adventurous power and splendour. Like the forms faded in the indistinct painting of Monnet. In other words, the object had unconsciously as an inevitable element of the painting come into disrepute. And in such a way that Wassily Kandinsky questioned a painting with an object or motif at the centre [8, s. 50].

In 1908 and 1909 in the village of Murnau am Staffelsee near Munich, he renewed contact with the forces of nature, while in Munich he was increasingly active as an artist and theorist conscious of his vocation and of the role he could – and should – play vis-à-vis his day and age. Murnau am Staffelsee is splendidly situated

beneath the Bavarian Alps, between the Staffelsee and the marshland. In 1908 the region was still complete secluded and unspoilt. The village itself was extremely picturesque, the houses were of wood with sloping roofs and large balconies and the church had a tall onion-shaped steeple. The village was built on different levels and this would have given it rather a straggling appearance if it were not for the masses of greenery between the houses. For Wassily Kandinsky it was a little world which could be interpreted in a variety of ways and endowed with a significance going far beyond appearances. Its basic elements took on new meaning when seen in isolation and could be used in compositions on other themes [9, p. 37-38].

This contact with nature in one specific place was decisive for the artistic expression of Kandinsky. He very soon went on from literal renderings of the village and neighbouring landscapes – like those he had made and would continue to make of other villages and landscapes in the Murnau region. However, he passed on the themes that, in so far as they were derived from his inner soul, so it no longer hampered him, but upheld his imagination and responded to it. They were bridges or stepping-stones, and by using them as a starting point, he was able to express the whole range of his emotions. He came to see them in terms of colour harmonies and lines of force, employing these with such intensity as to endow them with a life of their own [9, p. 24].

Wassily Kandinsky later recorded in his journal *Reminiscences* the precise moment at which the “spark” was ignited: “Once, while in Munich I underwent an unexpectedly bewitching experience in my studio. Twilight was falling; I had just come home with my box of paints under my arm after painting a study from nature. I was still dreamily absorbed in the work I had been doing when, suddenly, my eyes fell upon an indescribably beautiful picture that was saturated with an inner glow. I was startled momentarily, then quickly went up to this enigmatic painting in which I could see nothing but shapes and colours and the content of which was incomprehensible to me. The answer to the riddle came immediately: it was one of my own paintings leaning on its side against the wall. The next day, by daylight, I tried to recapture the impression the picture had given me the evening before. I

succeeded only halfway. Even when looking at the picture sideways I could still make out the objects and that fine thin coat of transparent colour, created by last night's twilight, was missing. Now I knew for certain that the subject matter was detrimental to my paintings. A frightening gap of responsibility now opened before me and an abundance of various questions arose. And the most important of them was: what was to replace the missing object?" [11, p. 25].

Peg Weiss writes that Kandinsky's return to Bavaria was the catalyst of change in his output: "As if a gate had suddenly opened onto a new vista, Kandinsky now experienced liberation in style that represented a drastic break with the recent past. All at once, there seemed to be a way to resolve the dichotomy between his impressionist landscapes and the lyric works that had held his heart for so long. In several later statements Kandinsky explained that his transition to abstraction had been affected by means of three major steps: the overcoming of perspective through the achievement of two-dimensionality; a new application of graphic elements to oil-painting; and the creation of a new "floating space" by the separation of colour from line" [17, p. 59].

These major developments enabled Kandinsky to create in works such as *Herbstlandschaft* a more purely abstract arrangement of form which sublimates any specific figurative references, whilst reinforcing the emotional impact of his use of colour.

The breakthrough to abstract art (1910-1911)

"Painting is like a thundering collision of different worlds that are destined in and through conflict to create that new world called the work. Technically, every work of art comes into being in the same way as the cosmos, by means of catastrophes, which ultimately create out of the cacophony of the various instruments that symphony we call the music of the spheres. The creation of the work of art is the creation of the world. The very word composition called forth in me an inner vibration. Subsequently, I made it my aim in life to paint a "composition"" [6, s. 367].

The term “composition” can imply a metaphor with music. Kandinsky was fascinated by music's emotional power. Because music expresses itself through sound and time, it allows the listener a freedom of imagination, interpretation and emotional response that is not based on the literal or the descriptive, but rather on the abstract – a quality that painting, still dependent on representing the visible world, could not provide. Kandinsky's special understanding of the affinities between painting and music and his belief in the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or the total work of art, came forth in his text “On stage composition”, his play “Yellow sound” and his portfolio of prose poems and prints “Klänge” (Sounds) in 1907-1912. Music can respond and appeal directly to the artist's “internal element” and express spiritual values, thus for Kandinsky it is a more advanced art. In his writings Kandinsky emphasizes this superiority in advancing toward what he calls the epoch of the great spiritual [1, p. 12; 3, S. 80-81].

Kandinsky's conviction that music is a superior art to painting due to its inherent abstract language came out forcefully in the artist's admiration for the music of the Viennese composer Arnold Schonberg, with whom he initiated a longstanding friendship and correspondence and whose “Theory of harmony” (1911) coincided with Kandinsky's “On the Spiritual in Art”. Kandinsky's complex relationship to Schonberg's music is central to his concept of composition, since Schon Berg's most important contribution to the development of music, after all, occurred in the area of composition [1, p. 13].

These new compositional structures led him to ward free chromaticism, which emphasized nonharmonic tones and “emancipation of dissonance” (i.e., unresolved dissonance), one of the principal features of atonal music. Having such constant transformations, rather than the repetition of melodic pattern, endowed the work with a totally unconventional psychological depth, evocative power, and emotional strength. Schonberg's innovations, which permitted any pitch configuration, ruptured traditional conventions of musical composition.

However, for Wassily Kandinsky the most important question was: what could replace the object in the painting? He had unconsciously been asking himself this

question ever since he had seen Claude Monet's "Haystacks" in 1896. After 14 years considerations, now it was clear in his mind, and he set about finding the answer. His search for it proceeded on two levels, that of thought and that of technique – and this after years of groping in the dark and he now went firmly ahead, and was to be remarkably brief, covering a period of about two years. In 1910, after methodical trials of the effectiveness of pure forms, he produced his first complete abstract paintings. This did not prevent him from going on, for some considerable time, with his interesting representational works. Though a man of great conviction, he kept an open mind and would not arbitrarily dismiss any approach as invalid. His theories were based not so much on logic as on feeling. Furthermore, he was never dogmatic [2, s. 11].

Kandinsky's whole work was devoted to them, was a silent exposition of them. Through it we can witness the rapid disappearance of the old formulas and the opening of new realms in art – realms so vast and comprehensive that they are still being explored in 2022. He may perhaps have owed something to the isolated experiments of the Norwegian expressionist painter Edvard Munch (1863-1944), starting where Munch left off.

Again, the theoretical and mystical side of the French painter Paul Gauguin's (1848-1903) teachings may have influenced him indirectly through his friend the Russian expressionist Alexej von Jawlensky (1864-1941), who visited Wassily Kandinsky several times in Murnau am Staffelsee. For instance, in 1908 and who had been in close contact with the Dutch post-impressionist, Jan Verkade (1868-1946) and the avant-garde French painter Paul Sérusier (1864-1927), a pioneer of the abstract art. Thus, the work of Kandinsky may be linked with a tradition of experiment going back to the beginning of the century and leading from symbolism to abstraction.

The fundamental stage in Kandinsky's voyage of discovery was his realization of that colour is made expressive, not by overcharging it with significance and laying it on as thick as possible, but by giving full play to its sonority. Kandinsky resorted to a technique of daring dissonances and contrasts which raised the colder colours to the

same degree of intensity as the warmer ones. In this way every part of picture, however minor or obscure, could be fanned into glowing life. No longer restricted by the need to describe, he selected the colours he found most telling and used distortions and repetitions to achieve greater expressiveness of form [13, p. 10].

In the beginning of 1910 Wassily Kandinsky becomes increasingly allusive and indulges in a kind of periphrases, occasionally employing minor or accessory – through always striking – features of his subject to define it. Churches, roofs and fences seem to fly off in all directions. The density of the sky is no less than that of the earth. The landscape is recreated in primal untamed innocence and the onlooker is drawn into world of vividly convincing make-believe.

“Der Blaue Reiter” – Franz Marc, Paul Klee and August Macke

“Der Blaue Reiter” (The Blue Rider) was originally formed as an alternative to an opposite pole the “Neue Künstlervereinigung München” (Munich New Association of Artists). In fact, Kandinsky was a co-founder of this association too. Problems arise among the artists. However, the German expressionist painter Franz Marc (1880-1916) and Kandinsky did not intend to create a new artists association in the sense of a community with fixed statutes or to propagate a particular direction, but rather to bring together the diversity of artistic expression in an editorial context. Kandinsky wrote retrospectively in 1935 that there never was a “Der Blaue Reiter” association, nor a “group” as it is often erroneously described, caring about any opinions or desires [7, S. 5-7].

The German impressionist painter August Macke (1887-1914), the abovementioned Alexej von Jawlensky and the German-Swiss avant-garde painter Paul Klee (1879-1940) felt close ties to the editors of “Der Blaue Reiter” and repeatedly exhibited with them. Composers like the Austrian Arnold Schönberg, who was also a painter, belonged to the “Der Blaue Reiter”. The members united their interest in medieval and primitive art and the contemporary movements of Fauvism and Cubism. August Macke and Franz Marc took the view that every human being has an inner and an outer experience that should be brought together through art. This

idea was theoretically supported by Kandinsky. Equality of art forms was sought [14, S. 118].

One could leave August Macke anywhere, even in the darkest alley, and it always ended up that he painted something beautiful. His images are harmonious with powerful colours, and they bubble with zest for life. Each picture contains something bright, something soothing, something about a longing to be at home. Someone has called Macke “the painter with children’s eyes”.

Maybe that’s right, possibly children see the world differently than we adults do. Maybe they see our world with wonder and enchantment, where everything is new every day, colourful and exciting. He has been experimenting with his skills – just like his artist friends at the time. But he stood out from them because he refused to swim with the current. He did not paint dot by dot points like the pointillists, nor did he fragment people like Picasso. The bright colours that many expressionists used, he did not choose either. Like any gifted painter, he went his own way and painted what he felt he was called to properties and skills that Wassily Kandinsky partially implemented in her own development towards the abstract art [5, p. 32].

After a spin-off Secession from the “Neue Künstlervereinigung München” the editorial team of “The Blue Rider” arranged their first exhibition of the editorial team – “Der Blaue Reiter” opened on December 18, 1911 in the Thannhauser Gallery. At the same time, the third exhibition of the remaining eight members of the “Neue Künstlervereinigung München” on the floor above. All in all 14 artists were represented at the first exhibition, alongside Franz Marc and Kandinsky artists such as the Dutch painter and graphic Heinrich Campendonk (1889-1957), the French painter Robert Delaunay (1885-1941), August Macke, the famous German avant-garde expressionist painter Gabriele Münter (1877-1962), the French post-impressionist painter Henri Rousseau (1844-1910) and Arnold Schönberg.

The exhibition then went on tour to other cities, for example to the Gereonsklub in Cologne and to Herwarth Walden’s “Der Sturm” (The Storm) gallery in Berlin. Further stations up to 1914 included Bremen, Hagen, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Budapest, Oslo, Helsinki, Trondheim and Gothenburg. The traveling exhibition also

featured works by Alexej von Jawlensky, which have since also come from the “Neue Künstlervereinigung München” had resigned and joined “Der Blaue Reiter”.

The second exhibition of “The Blue Rider” followed from February 12 to March 18, 1912 under the programmatic title “Black and White” in the Munich book and art dealership Hans Goltz at Brienner Strasse 8. It showed only prints and drawings, under including works by Paul Klee and the Brücke artists. It was here that Franz Marc met Paul Klee for the first time, a meeting that led to a close friendship between the two artists.

In January 1911 Paul Klee met Alfred Kubin in Munich, who encouraged him to illustrate Voltaire’s *Candide*. At this point in time, Klee’s graphic work took up a great deal of space, and his tendency towards the sarcastic, the bizarre and the ironic suited Kubin very much. Not only did he become friends with Klee, but he also became his first well-known collector. In 1911, through the mediation of Kubin, Klee met the art critic Wilhelm Hausenstein and in the summer of the same year was a founding member of the Munich artists’ association “Sema”, of which he became managing director. In autumn he made the acquaintance of August Macke and Wassily Kandinsky. In winter he joined the editorial team of the almanac “Der Blaue Reiter”, founded by Kandinsky and Franz Marc. Other employees included August Macke, Gabriele Münter and Marianne von Werefkin. In the few months he worked there, Klee developed into an important and independent member of “The Blue Rider”, but one cannot speak of complete integration [12, p. 80-81].

However, publication of the almanac was postponed in favour of an exhibition. The first of the two exhibitions of “The Blue Rider” took place from December 18, 1911 to January 1, 1912 in the Modern Gallery Heinrich Thannhauser in the Arco-Palais in Munich. Paul Klee was not represented in this exhibition; in the second exhibition, which took place from February 12 to March 18, 1912 in the Goltz Gallery 17 graphic works by him were shown. This second exhibition was programmatically called “Black and White” since it only included prints. In May 1912 Kandinsky and Marc published the almanac “Der Blaue Reiter”, which had already been planned in 1911 in Piper Verlag in which Steinhauer Klee’s ink drawing

had been reproduced. At the same time Kandinsky published his art-theoretical treatise “On the Spiritual in Art”.

Abstraction and forces in action

In his theories, writings and in the actual works Wassily Kandinsky assigned much greater evocative power to colour than to form, although what he calls a “purely pictorial composition” (one must assume this means one devoid of clear subject matter) can only be achieved through the appropriate combination of colour and form. Yet according to Kandinsky it is colour that like musical sound is the direct gateway to the soul. Form, whether the delineation of an object or an abstract division of a space or a surface, always operates with colour; the triangle, the circle and the square each interact in unique ways with each colour, which can either re in force or weaken their effect [4, p. 8].

Kandinsky’s colour symbolism is very specific; for instance, he associates red with a spiritual vibration caused by a flame or, in a different hue, blood. As such, the psychological effect can be either stimulating or painful, and can be enhanced by 36 a circular, triangular, or square form. Such colour symbolism looks back to Goethe and to Eugene Delacroix. The philosophical elements come to play a significant role in the interpretation of the compositions, where different colour combinations and formal arrangements provide the insight into the mood of the paintings, the imagery itself being hidden within the ostensibly abstract form [4, p. 9].

In May 1912 Marc and Kandinsky, financially supported by the German collector and patron Bernhard Koehler (1849-1927), published the almanac “Der Blaue Reiter” with a woodcut by Kandinsky on the title with Piper Verlag in Munich. The names of these various artists are of great significance to us in 2022. They were all representative of the most important movements in the 1910s. The very fact that they belonged to different movements, however, demonstrated a certain eclecticism rather than any collective intention. It was not so much a question of defining a program as of bringing together experimental work of a certain quality. “Der Blaue Reiter” cannot be considered as a real movement; it was rather a climate of thought, a search for a common spiritual denominator. The writings prefacing or introducing the

exhibition suggest that they were intended to illustrate the various manifestations of an inner awakening in contemporary art and their relationship to the work of earlier periods [12, p. 82].

The almanac “Der Blaue Reiter” contained articles on different arts. However, the most original feature in this almanac was the striking and unexpected way in which it represented reproductions of contemporary paintings and wood engravings side by side with works from different periods – primitive art, gothic sculptures, painting on glass. This presentation of art was largely due to Kandinsky, who assembled and selected these works from various sources, evolved suitable typography to set them off, and gave the whole layout variety and momentum.

Besides the almanac at Christmas 1910, Wassily Kandinsky began writing the journal “Concerning the Spiritual in the Art” and in it he divulges his state of mind when he painted the watercolours that were his first attempts at purely abstract art. From it the reader can see this represented only one facet of his preoccupations at that time. In the noble treatise, published at Christmas 1911, Kandinsky was proclaiming the liberation of art from the crushing burden of materialistic doctrines, he asserts that it should press forward and be visionary and prophetic; its object is not to capture the concrete appearance of the object, but its essence its soul. In other words, the artist sees what will be, and makes it seen. Wassily Kandinsky, asserting the bankruptcy of scientific materialism, he was a believer in such movements as spiritualism and theosophy – Kandinsky suggest as an antidote some recent experiments in the sphere of ideas, music and art [16, p. 93].

Furthermore, he concluded that harmony was achieved when the touch was effective and complied with the principle of inner necessity. Forms and colours conditions, according to Kandinsky, acted upon each other. Faced with the futility and indeed the impossibility of copying the object, the artist would resort to a type of composition that would make each picture a great and unique combination of the real, the semi-abstract and the pure abstract. Gradually the abstract element would take over. The object would simply be replaced by transposed and even purely abstract forms to achieve greater purity of tone. The artist and his audience would grow

familiar with this approach and all its subtleties. As a result, art would become more difficult, but at the same time infinitely richer [16, p. 94].

However, theory could not precede practice and that the kind of painting Wassily Kandinsky anticipated would be based not so much on physical laws that had already been thoroughly studied as on spiritual laws of a more mysterious kind. Something that the viewer also gets an impression of when he looks at Kandinsky's later paintings in the 1920s and 1930s are the works "Improvisation I-VIII" and "Composition I-X". Furthermore, he mentioned the various laws, the significance of colours, their tendency to warmth or coolness and the value of contrasts Kandinsky considered to be a kind of drill. This is exactly what makes his paintings completely unique and sets the paintings apart from the works of other abstract painters.

The real process of creation and the shape completion

Certain combinations of forms and colours are for Kandinsky clearly incompatible, while other combinations offer new possibilities, comparable to a harmonic form that calls forth a vibration of the soul. In that sense, form itself has an inner content that stimulates a psychological and emotional response. For Kandinsky, the most expressive works are not those that present an obvious geometric or Cubist construction, arrived at by distorting and manipulating the object in space, but those in which the subject is obscured, in which forms that appear to be randomly scattered across the canvas in fact have precise relationships to each other by both linear and coloristic constructions. These objectives come across very distinctly in the compositions, particularly when one analyses the numerous sketches and studies for different sections of these paintings and their relationships with the final works [2, s. 20].

A mantra was that the artist should express himself, his period, and the pure and eternal values of art. In a way that it was only in so far, he expressed the last of these that he could hope for true and enduring greatness a very high ambition, indeed, almost unobtainable. Dissolution of the known "painting world" represented other problems of the artistic development. Through this forthcoming emancipation of

painting, the danger of producing purely decorative or geometrical figures could arise.

The act of creation was still mysterious, but Wassily Kandinsky foresaw a time when it would become a conscious process and the artist would be proud elucidate a work, that was something more than himself and would live on after his death. But stubborn, Kandinsky still completely refused to cut himself from nature, because according to himself, it was from nature that he derived his special artistic strength. Even he felt himself at liberty to change it at will. The new dogma was the fact that the time was past when a certain painting might be expected to yield up a meaning. It should from now on be considered as something existing in its own right and acting on the spectator [2, s. 48].

Wassily Kandinsky himself determined the respective roles of intuition and construction in each of his works, and second became progressively more and more important. The contours of the objects and figures, though emphasized in places, tend to become increasingly allusive without necessarily being misshapen or distorted. The colours overflow the outlines and, no longer coinciding with them, become expressive in themselves. In a way, they do not form part of any preconceived scheme: lively, lucid, and flowing. Colours were handled with great sensitivity, suggestiveness, and ingenuity. The abstract art was almost born. The old symbols were given immediacy. Their concrete presence can be felt and they themselves become half-formulated themes, part of a mysterious yet exciting whole [6, s. 360].

From now on, the object provided a starting point, a motivation and a foundation. Its form being subject the relationship established between it and the artist. This form, however, was also subject to antecedent structure, and existed before it was broken down by analysis into its component's parts. The significant it thereby gained was not due to memory, education, or personal impression alone, but instead to something intrinsic as well.

If the emphasis of the so-called centre of gravity, were shifted from the object itself to the created form, thereby unperceived characteristics would be revealed. These ideas are closely associated with the Gestalttheorie which is commonly applied

to everything in the most arbitrary fashion. In his writings, Wassily Kandinsky spoke of a philosophy that sees the world as a cosmos of forces whose significance, freed from the tyranny of sense impressions, detached from the object and its substance, undergoes the pressure of surrounding forms.

The influence of “Der Blaue Reiter”

The name “Der Blaue Reiter” (The Blue Rider) refers to a key motif in Kandinsky’s work: the horse and rider from 1903, which was for him a symbol for moving beyond realistic representation. The horse was also a prominent subject in Marc’s work, which centred on animals as symbols of rebirth. The group was disrupted by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Franz Marc and August Macke were both killed in combat. Wassily Kandinsky and Alexej von Jawlensky were both forced to move back to Russia because of their Russian citizenship. However, there were also differences in opinion with the group. As a result, “Der Blaue Reiter” was short-listed, lasting for only three years (1911-1914). Supported by their dealer Galka Scheyer (1889-1945) – a German American art collector, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Alexej von Jawlensky and Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956) – a German American painter, formed “Die Blaue Vier” group in 1923. Together they exhibited and lectured in the United States from 1924 and onwards [14, S. 217].

Furthermore, Paul Klee taught from 1921 and Wassily Kandinsky from 1922 at the Bauhaus in Weimar and later in Dessau. Munich as a place of the avant-garde in modern art ended with the dissolution of Der Blaue Reiter. His ideas fell into oblivion, and during the Nazi era numerous works by their artists were denigrated as “degenerate”, destroyed or sold abroad. The sale certainly had an unintended consequence: the paintings of “Der Blaue Reiter” became known to the international public and after 1945 the artists’ concepts were more popular abroad than in Germany. Artists from Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands such as the Danish painter Asger Jorn (1914-1973) or the Cobra group continued ideas from Kandinsky and Marc [14, S. 218].

It was not until 1949 that the Munich House of Art, under the direction of art historian Ludwig Grote (1893-1974), showed in the exhibition “Der Blaue Reiter”. Munich and the art of the 20th century. Der Weg von 1908-1914” works by the participating artists. Gabriele Münter was a member of the honorary committee and was able to witness the rediscovery of abstract painting, which Kandinsky had consistently continued. Among many other collectors, she was one of the lenders of the exhibits, as were the artist widows Nina Kandinsky and Sonia Delaunay. Pictures from the collection of Hildebrand Gurlitt, Adolf Hitler’s former art dealer, were also represented.

The organizers were the Bavarian State Painting Collections, the Munich Städtische Galerie and the “Cultural Affairs Branch”, a department of the American occupation authorities responsible for cultural exchange. Parallel to this memorial exhibition, the Stangl Gallery showed the Franz Marc exhibition from August 30, 1949 watercolours and drawings, for which a catalogue with a foreword by Klaus Lankheit was published. From today’s point of view, “The Blue Rider” is one of the most important stations of classical modernism [15, s. 29].

Conclusion

Kandinsky explored the boundaries between the arts, between art, science, and technology, researched analytically to work synthetically. There are no special questions for him, everything works into each other, and the roots meet deep down. It comes everywhere depends on him to experience the spirit of things and the ability to experience of the contemporaries to awaken the spirit in the material and abstract. This is the purpose of “On the Spiritual in Art”. The investigations the form, on the other hand, is more workshop thoughts for himself and for contributors, grammar, figured bass. Nowhere installed Theory is the future; it wants to find what is alive and establish its laws.

That is why Kandinsky does not become a theoretician, but a prophet. He foresees the turn towards the spiritual in art as there are only a dozen creative people with this in all of Europe belief in the future. As early as 1910 he suspected pictures that could only be painted much later. Synthetic works that appeared as a utopia at

the time and yet became fact: Mussorgsky-Kandinsky stage dance; Milhaud-Leger-Cendrars; Satie-Picasso-Cocteau. He anticipates the idea of working groups of art, technology and science, such as the art-technical workshops in Moscow in 1918 and realized the “Bauhaus” in Weimar and Dessau in 1919. Already in 1910 he was certain that art would be the world pictures of the future to a high degree determine dimensions and point to all sides of practical evaluation will give suggestions. The “epoch of the great spiritual” seems in indeed to have begun.

The beholder has a significant role in Kandinsky’s works. Obviously no serious painter doesn’t care about the audience but Kandinsky has some high expectations that someday many people learn how to be an “advanced” beholder, that has some insights towards what is happening in his painting particularly – and in art in general. Therefore, this thesis tries to activate the beholder by focusing on the way of thinking behind and in the art of Kandinsky. Thereby, the Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky revolutionized painting when he turned it upside down by introducing the “non-representational painting”. This type of painting seems to be standing on the shoulders of Hegel, because the theory behind Kandinsky’s painting has a plainly “dialectical” approach in a Hegel inspired sense.

As an artist, Kandinsky created a new concept of art that is independent of any burden of external comparisons. Art around but the art does not come about for the sake of it, its origin lies in the spiritual like you goal in the soul. “Emotion – Feeling – Work – Feeling – Emotion” is reduced to a formula from the conception until it ends in the viewer. The richness of the invention is inexhaustible, the consistency of the design uninterrupted, the curve of ascent obvious, the effect of the work on intellectual history indispensable. Kandinsky’s art has indeed helped change the atmosphere, it has become a spiritual being helped determine the course of history through active, supporting forces and even had an educational effect in France. But in it sees Kandinsky a main value of art that they, by no means of all liberates purposes, creates irrevocable deeds and a higher purpose serves. Just like apart from the individual of the disposition, apart from nation and epoch the objective spirit of the world resounds in the work of art the finished work gives thanks to the creator, the

people, the time and the eternity. As always with Kandinsky, the circle is closed. A glimpse of one of the greatest periods that mankind has ever lived through – a period of great spirituality – the period of “Der Blaue Reiter”.

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