



Art  
Gallery  
NSW

# CHILDREN'S TRAIL KANDINSKY

SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL ART SERIES

Vasily Kandinsky (1866–1944) was one of the most imaginative artists of the 20th century. He worked in Europe during a time of great change and is famous for developing new ways of painting and thinking about art. Unlike traditional painters, he used vivid colours and shapes to evoke emotions and was inspired by music to create his own language for art. He said:

Open your ears to music, your eyes to painting. And don't think! ... Ask yourselves whether the work of art has made you feel like you've walked into a new world.

Make sure you visit *Point and Line to Plane*, a family-friendly space within the *Kandinsky* exhibition designed by artist Desmond Lazo. There you can create your own drawing using the circles, triangles and squares that fascinated Kandinsky.

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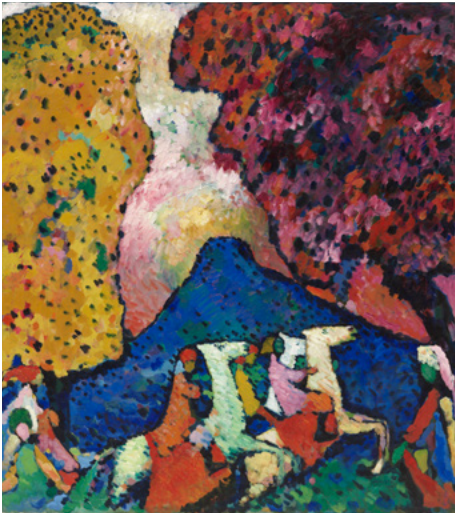
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Organised by the  
Solomon R. Guggenheim  
Foundation, New York

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The Art Gallery of New South Wales gratefully  
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The horse-and-rider motif features in many of Kandinsky's artworks, symbolising the union between humans and nature. How many horses and people can you count in this painting of a blue mountain?

# BLUE MOUNTAIN

Kandinsky dreamed of a better future and saw the colour blue as a spiritual link to heaven. List your ideas for what these colours could represent. They could be objects, people, places, or feelings.

Red

Orange

Yellow

Green

Blue

Purple

Pink

**At home,** find objects that are the same colours. Photograph them in groups to express different feelings and moods.

*Blue mountain* 1908–09, oil on canvas, 107.3 × 97.6 cm, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, by gift

This painting is named after a fun kind of music where musicians can change the notes, harmonies and rhythms as they go along.

If you could listen to the colours and forms, what type of music would you hear? Would it be loud or soft? Fast or slow? Sway in time to the beat of this artwork.



# COLOUR MUSIC

Draw lines and shapes over these sheet music lines to improvise your own artwork.

**At home,** listen to different types of music and create artworks that express how the music feels.

*Improvisation 28 (second version)* 1912, oil on canvas, 112.6 × 162.5 cm, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, by gift



Kandinsky often used geometric forms like circles, rectangles, triangles and lines in his artworks. What forms do you notice first when you look at this painting?

Describe the angles, lines and colours. Do they remind you of anything? Could this be a landscape or a city scene?

# THE ART OF GEOMETRY

Use geometric forms and lines to draw your own landscape or cityscape. Or play with geometry until a scene pops out at you!

**At home,** make a cardboard version of your landscape or cityscape using boxes and recycled materials.

*In the black square* June 1923, oil on canvas, 97.5 × 93.3 cm, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, by gift

# CHANGING SHAPES

Kandinsky liked to explore the relationships between colours, lines and shapes. How do the coloured circles in this painting feel different from each other?

What shapes are made when a circle or a triangle has been cut through with a line?



Draw a composition of circles and triangles and change their shapes by adding lines and angles.

**At home,** cut out and paste coloured shapes onto a piece of paper then paint lines over the shapes to create a composition.

*Composition 8* July 1923, oil on canvas, 140.3 × 200.7 cm, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, by gift



In his later paintings, Kandinsky used lighter and brighter colours and experimented with shapes that look like living things, like plants or parts of bodies. These shapes are called biomorphic forms.

Can you spot any biomorphic forms in this painting? Imagine if the shapes began to move. What words would you use to describe their motions?

# BIOMORPHIC FORMS

Imagine and draw a new biomorphic form based on something from nature – even something tiny!

**At home,** make a three-dimensional sculpture out of modelling clay or plasticine based on your drawing.

*Dominant curve* April 1936, oil on canvas, 129.2 × 194.3 cm, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection

# SHAPES & PATTERNS

Circles were important to Kandinsky, as he felt they had symbolic and spiritual meanings. What does the main circle here remind you of?

Describe the expressive shapes and bold colours. What effect does the darker background have? What does it do to the lighter colours? Does it feel still or is there movement?

Notice how the shapes are mixed, layered and filled with patterns.



Draw your own combination of shapes and patterns that might fit into this painting.

We acknowledge the Gadigal of the Eora Nation, the traditional custodians of the Country on which the Art Gallery of New South Wales stands.

This page: *Around the circle* May–August 1940, oil and enamel on canvas, 97.2 × 146.4 cm, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection; Cover: *Sketch for 'Composition II'* 1909–10 (detail), oil on canvas, 97.5 × 131.1 cm, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection  
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