

Abstract Art

When?

1910 - ongoing

Where?

Europe, Russia, U.S.A.

Around 1910, artists began to paint pictures which were not meant to be pictures of things, but things in their own right. Instead of showing recognizable scenes, these paintings used combinations of colours, lines and shapes, put together with expressive or decorative purpose. This kind of art is called abstract art.

Two different trends

In spite of the similar formal result, lines, shape colors and texture might be used by the artists with different intention. All abstract research can be grouped in to different trends.

Expression One of the earliest pioneers of abstract art was Vassily Kandisky, a successful expressionist painter who in 1910 painted the first abstract watercolor (Untitled, 1910, 188 x 196 cm Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France). He believed that elements of art can be more effective if free from any representation of reality. In his paintings, colors, lines and space act like they were different instruments played together in symphony to evoke a big variety of emotions with their rhythm, contrast and harmony.

Construction Cubist taste for intellectual compositions of elements had a great influence on the origin of those abstract research which aim is the pure construction of a formal idea, often acting as a model of beauty for an utopic word, renewed by modernity. Russian suprematist artist Kasimir Malevic wrote "... trying desperately to free art from the dead weight of the real world, I took refuge in the form of the square..." Suprematism was one of the earliest and most radical developments in abstract art. Its name derived from Malevich's belief that Suprematist art would be superior to all the art of the past, and that it would lead to the "supremacy of pure feeling or perception in the pictorial arts."

Later on, in the years following the First World War, Dutch artist Piet Mondrian founded an art movement called De Stijl (The Style) based on strict geometry and colour. Mondrian drew up a list of rules for paintings based just on the combination of primary color, enclosed by vertical and horizontal lines to form rectangles. Following these rules would give their work a special sense of order, balance and harmony, ideals which seemed especially valuable after the horrors of war.

Abstract art trends has been having further development after the time of avant-garde movements and are still visible in contemporary art research. In the 1950s, a group of New York artists began making abstract paintings which were meant to express feelings. This came to be known as Abstract Expressionism. Jackson Pollock is the most famous artist of that movement.



<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-kandinsky-wassily.htm>

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-mondrian-piet.htm>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGVuJ3q8fuQ>