

Art Masterpiece: Squares with Concentric Circles, 1913 by Wassily Kandinsky



Pronunciation: Va-see-l-yee Kan-din-skee

Keywords: Color: Primary, Secondary, Warm, Cool and Neutral, Abstract, concentric

primary colors: red, yellow, blue

secondary colors: orange, purple, green

warm colors: red, orange, yellow

cool colors: blue, green, purple

neutral colors: Not associated with a color-browns, blacks, grays and whites

abstract: style of art in which shapes, designs, textures and colors represented in a way that may look unrealistic but that emphasizes moods or feelings. It is characterized by the use of geometric lines and shapes and bright, bold colors.

Concentric: having a common center—all the circles are formed around the same circle

Grade: 3rd

Activity: Color Study- Watercolor Concentric Circles

Tools: Color wheel

Meet The Artist: (5 min)

- Wassily Kandinsky was born in Moscow, Russia in 1866. As a boy, he was a good student and took drawing lessons. He loved to draw, but eventually became a lawyer.
- That all changed in 1896 when he visited a Claude Monet art exhibition. Monet was an Impressionistic artist who used a large amount of color in his work. Kandinsky was so taken by the art-and the power of the color he quit his job, and at 30 years old, traveled to Munich Germany to study art again.
- Kandinsky is known as one of the first pioneers of abstract painting. (**abstract** paintings focus on geometric shapes, color and line instead of representing natural or recognizable shapes as their subject.) He discovered the power of abstract art by observing

a painting one day -he noticed "its' extraordinary beauty and glowing inner radiance", only to realize it was one of his paintings that had been turned upside-down!

- After that, Kandinsky believed that true artists could express their inner feelings through lines, shapes and especially color. He felt all colors and forms had meaning and carefully planned each painting to express the feelings he wanted to communicate. He did not feel the need to put recognizable objects in his work. In fact, he liked to title his works with words like Composition or Improvisation so viewers would not read too much into the meaning of the titles.
- Kandinsky retired in Paris and died in 1944 at the age of 78. He is often called the father of abstract art and is famous for his simple compositions and use of color and shapes.

Discussion: (10 min)

What do you see in this painting?

What shapes do you see the most? What could a circle represent to you? A square?

Discuss color concepts:

Be sure to write the color information on the board, also a color wheel is helpful for this discussion.

Color-An element of art with three properties: (1) **hue**, the color name, e.g., red, yellow, blue, etc.; (2) **intensity**, the pure color strength e.g., bright red or diluted red; and (3) **value**, the lightness or darkness of a color.

What are the **primary colors**? Red, Yellow and Blue .All other colors can be made from mixing these three colors.

What are **secondary colors**? Equal amounts of two primary colors they make: Orange, Green and Violet

Yellow + Red = Orange, Blue + Yellow = Green Red + Blue = Violet.

What are **complementary colors**? Colors directly opposite each other on the color wheel. Show color wheel.

red and green blue and orange violet and yellow

When complements are mixed together they form **neutral** colors of brown or gray.

What are **neutral** colors? Not associated with a color-browns, blacks, grays and whites- They can be used to change value of a color. Example: Red + white = pink

How do colors make you feel? **Warm colors** are: red, orange, yellow-artist use warm colors to

attract the eye. Red is the hottest. **Cool colors** are: blue, green and violet - Looking at colors can physically raise or lower your body temperature.

What do some of these colors represent to you?

Looking at the print-Can you find the square that has all warm colors?

A square that has a neutral color?

A square where the red has less intensity?

Project: Color Study: Watercolor Concentric Circles

Supplies needed:

- (9" X 12") watercolor paper-1 per student
- watercolors-class set
- watercolor brushes-one per student
- pencils
- rulers-class set
- water cups
- 11x14" black construction paper for mounting
- 6-8 bottles of glue
- color wheel

Advance Preparation:

Cut the watercolor paper to 9x12" measurement on this project is important, so please be precise. Cut 12 x 18 paper to 11x14". Please save the scrap black paper for future projects.

Mini Lesson: (5 min)

Before the kids begin on their masterpiece, have them experiment with color intensity and watercolors on a scratch piece of paper. The less water they add to the brush—the less diluted and more intense the color will be.

Process: (30-40 min)

****Be sure to go over instructions before passing out any art supplies.****

This is a two step process.

Step one:

Making the grid:

Tell the students we are making our own version of concentric circles. Have them place their paper in landscape position. Using a ruler, have them lightly mark (tic mark) the top and bottom edge of their watercolor paper at 3", 6" and 9". They should then use the ruler and a vertical line to connect the tic marks from the one on the top to the one directly below it. Have them rotate their paper to the portrait direction. Once again, using the ruler lined up at the left side, they should mark off at 3" and 6" on the top and bottom of their paper. They should connect the top tic mark with the one directly below it using a vertical line. Turn the paper back to landscape dir-

ection. The result is a grid with 4 boxes horizontally and 3 boxes vertically for a total of 12 proportional boxes.

Step two:

They will use watercolors to create their own concentric circles by using these directions:

Please write these guidelines on the board:

1 square must have a neutral color.

3 squares must have complimentary colors in them

1 square must have all warm colors

1 square must have all cool colors

The rest are their choice

*Remind students that more water on their brushes will make the paint more transparent and lighter-the less water will make the paint more intense and darker.

Mount finished painting onto black paper and sign masterpiece.

Clean up:

To extend the life of our supplies, please make sure that the watercolor brushes are thoroughly rinsed with clean water and stored bristles up so they won't mold. Watercolor cups should also be rinsed and watercolors in good condition.