


# ON THE SPIRITUAL IN ART BY WASSILY KANDINSKY







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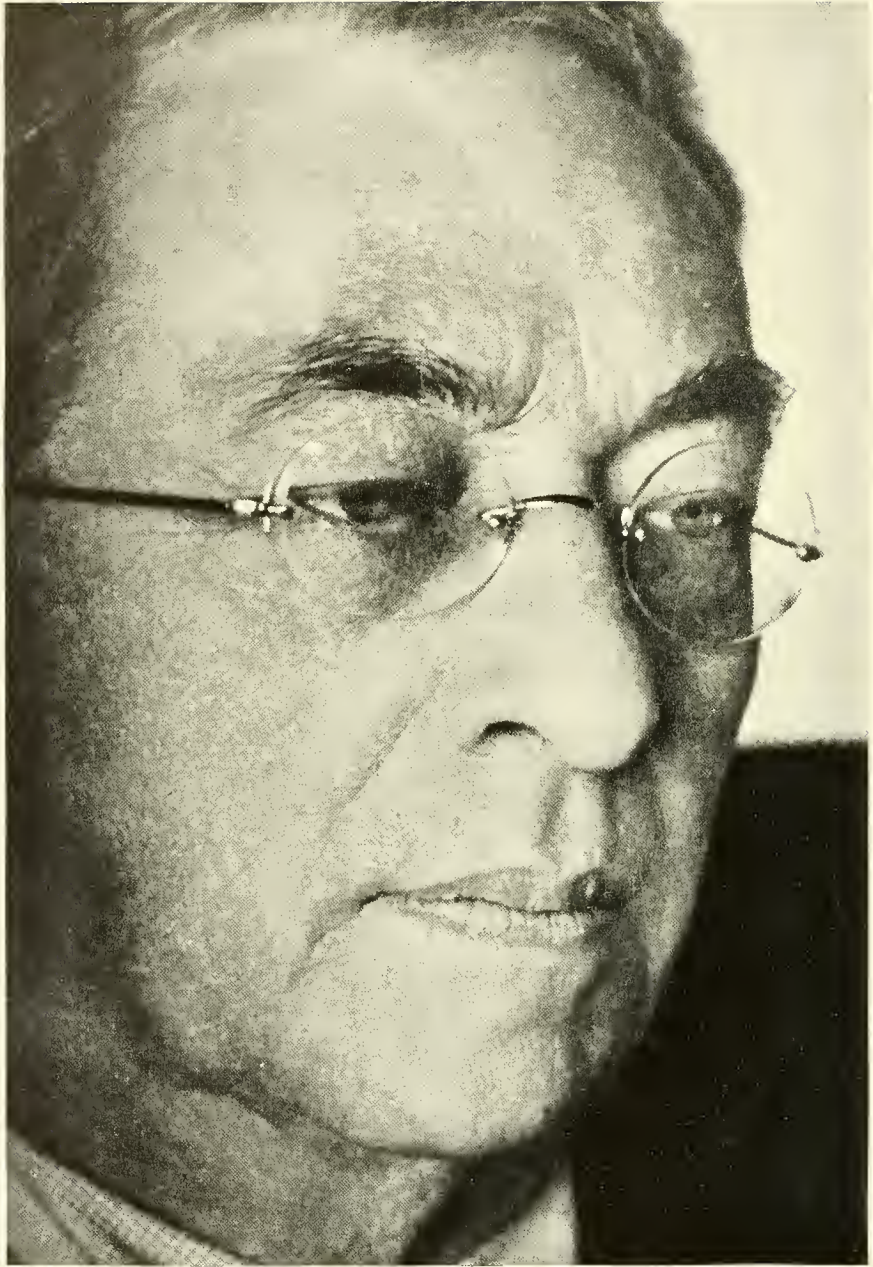


**KANDINSKY**



**ÜBER  
DAS GEISTIGE  
IN DER KUNST**

**DRITTE AUFLAGE**



WASSILY KANDINSKY

1866 - 1944

# WASSILY KANDINSKY ON THE SPIRITUAL IN ART

FIRST COMPLETE ENGLISH TRANSLATION  
WITH FOUR FULL COLOUR PAGE REPRO-  
DUCTIONS, WOODCUTS AND HALF TONES

PUBLISHED BY THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM  
FOUNDATION, FOR THE MUSEUM OF NON-OBJECTIVE  
PAINTING, NEW YORK CITY, 1946, HILLA REBAY, EDITOR

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF ELIZABETH TICHEJEFF

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SECOND PRINTING



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## FOREWORD TO THE FIRST ORIGINAL EDITION

By Piper and Company

Munich, 1911

The thoughts, which I am developing here are the result of observations and spiritual experiences, which have been assembled gradually during the last five, six years. My intention was, to write extensively on this subject, for which many experiments, in the realm of feeling, would have been necessary. For the time being, due to other important work, I have had to abandon my initial plan. Perhaps I shall never be able to realize it, for someone else will do it better and more exhaustively, which is necessary, while I am forced to content myself with a mere outline. My only purpose is to draw attention to this great problem, and I shall consider myself fortunate if this appeal should not be lost in the void.

## FOREWORD TO THE SECOND ORIGINAL EDITION

This little book was written in the year 1910. Previous to the publication of its first edition (January 1912), I added those further experiences which had come my way in the meantime. Six months have passed since then and my vision has grown ever freer, my horizons have widened. Yet after serious thought, I have refrained from further enlargement on what I had previously written because by doing so, only an incomplete growth of certain parts would have been achieved. I have decided, instead, to collect the new material, compiling sharp observations and experiences so, that these component parts would form basic elements, as a kind of "counterpoint of painting," which may some day, form the natural complement to this book. Thus, the second edition, which had to follow quickly after the first, has remained almost completely untouched. My article "On the Question of Form," first published in the "Blaue Reiter" (Blue Rider), is one part of the further development.

Munich, April 1912.

Kandinsky

## FOREWORD TO THE 1946 NEW YORK EDITION

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is publishing the first complete English edition of "On the Spiritual in Art" by Kandinsky. It was translated and checked by American, English, Russian and German scholars, who have collaborated to achieve the best possible way of doing justice to the original, and of preserving and conveying, in the most reverent manner, the ideas and style of Kandinsky.\* A French edition is also being published in Paris, indicating the growing interest and demand for Kandinsky's art and his epochal advent. To enrich this book further, it was decided to enclose a short survey of Kandinsky's artistic work since 1904 to 1944, when he died in France, to give an idea of his evolution. There is also included a survey of comments made by the public in the Museum of Non-objective Painting in 1945, which proves that the vision of Kandinsky has come true and that his art has found many enthusiastic followers and co-workers.

\* Finally the editor retranslated the entire book to clarify the correct artistic meaning.



I

## INTRODUCTION

Every work of art is a child of its time, while often it is the parent of our emotions.

Thus, every cultural period creates art of its own, which can never be repeated again. An effort to revive art-principles of the past, at best, can only result in works of art resembling a still-born child. For example, it is impossible for us to relive or feel the inner spirit of the ancient Greeks. The sculptor's attempts to employ Greek principles can only achieve a similarity in form, while the work itself remains for all time without a soul. Such imitation resembles the antics of apes. Externally, the animal's movements are almost like those of human beings. The monkey sits and holds a book an inch from its nose, turns the pages, makes thoughtful faces, but there is no sense or meaning in any of these actions.

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## INTRODUCTION

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However, another exterior similarity in artistic form-principles springs from a great need. The similarity of inner tendencies in the entire moral and spiritual atmosphere, the groping after objectives already followed through, and subsequently forgotten, invokes the similarity of inner feeling for an entire period; and leads logically to the application of such forms which, in a former period, had successfully served identical efforts. Thus, our sympathy, our understanding, our inner affinity to the Primitives came partly into existence.

Like ourselves, these pure artists sought to express inner truths in their work and, in consequence, automatically repudiated all consideration of external accidents.

This glimmer of spiritual closeness is, in spite of its great importance, no more than a spark. Our soul, after the long period of materialism, at last begins to awaken from despair born of unbelief, lack of purpose and ideals. This nightmare of materialism, which has turned the life of the universe into an evil, useless game, has not yet past. The awakening soul, while trying to free itself, is still under its domination. Only a feeble light flickers, like a tiny star, in the vast encircling darkness. As a presentiment, the soul does not as yet courageously admit its fear, that the light might be a dream and the encircling darkness, reality. This doubt and still-lingering oppression, through the materialistic philosophy, divides our soul from that of the Primitives. Like a precious vase dug up, though cracked, from the depths of the earth, our broken soul does not ring true. Thus, any return to the Primitives, now experienced in the temporary assimilation of form, can only be short-lived. The similarity between art forms of the past and present can easily be seen, though diametrically opposed to each other. The first is purely external and, therefore, without a future. The second is spiritual, therefore, containing the seed of infinity. After the period of materialistic temptation, to which the human soul apparently succumbed and from whose evil attraction it finally has freed itself, the soul emerges purified by trial and suffering. The elementary, baser emotions such as fear, pleasure, sorrow, serving the contents of

art during this period of temptation, will hardly attract the artist. He will endeavor to awaken more subtle, undefined emotions, as he himself lives a comparatively complicated, subtle life. His creative work will surely arouse in observers, who are capable of deeper response, emotions which cannot be defined in words.

The observer of today, however, is seldom attuned to those subtler vibrations. In the realm of art, he seeks a mere imitation of nature by serving a practical purpose (a life-like portrait of depiction in the ordinary sense); an imitation following certain conventions (Impressionist painting); and, finally, those expressions of an inner feeling called "Stimmung" by the Germans and best translated as sentiment\*) concealing its true essence in nature-forms.

All these forms, when truly artistic, fulfill their purpose and (as in the former instance) become food for the spirit. It is particularly so in the third instance, where the observer becomes conscious of a responsive vibration within his soul. Of course, such harmony (or contrast) cannot be either worthless or superficial. Indeed, the "Stimmung" or sentiment of a painting can intensify the observer's sentimental mood and purify it. In any event, such works of art safeguard the soul from coarsening its frequency, and keep it at a certain height, much as a tuning fork pitches the strings of a musical instrument. Yet, the refined measure of time and space in sound will remain one-sided and does not at all exhaust the utmost possible effectiveness of art.

. . . . .  
Visualize a large, a very large, a smaller or medium size building divided into various rooms. All the walls of the rooms covered with small, large and medium sized canvases. Through the medium of colour, items of "nature" are represented: animals — drinking water or lying in the grass

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\*) It is to be regretted that this word sentiment, which is meant to describe the poetical efforts of an artist's living soul, has been misused and finally ridiculed. Was there ever a great word that the masses did not try immediately to cheapen and desecrate?

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## INTRODUCTION

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in light or shade; next to them a crucifixion, painted by an artist who disbelieves in Christ; flowers; or human figures sitting, standing, walking, frequently naked, many naked women (often fore-shortened from behind); apples on silver dishes, the portrait of Councilor N; a sunset; a lady in Pink; flying ducks; the portrait of Baroness X; flying geese; Lady in White; calves, dotted by the bright yellow sunlight; the portrait of His Excellency Y; another lady in Green.

Carefully listed in a book are the names of artists, the titles of their pictures. People carry these books in their hands as they go from one canvas to another and turn over the pages and read the names. Then, they go away neither richer nor poorer in spirit than when they entered; and are at once, again engulfed by their personal interests, which have nothing whatsoever to do with art. Why did they come? Each painting mysteriously contains an entire life, a life of many sufferings, hours of doubts, of enthusiasm and of delighted inspiration. Whither does this life go? Whereto directs the artist's soul its active creativeness? What is its message? "To send light into the depth of human hearts is the artist's vocation," said Schumann. "An artist is a man who can draw and paint anything," said Tolstoi. Of these two definitions of artist's activity we must choose the second, if we think of the exhibition just described. With more or less skill, virtuosity and vigor, objects are re-created on a canvas, painted either roughly or smoothly. To harmonize the whole onto the canvas is the road which leads to art. With cold eyes and indifferent spirit the spectator regards this work. The connoisseurs admire "skill" (just as one would admire the prowess of a tight-rope dancer), and enjoy the "painting" (as one would enjoy a pastry). Hungry souls leave as hungry as they came.

The masses stroll through the rooms and state their opinion; some canvases are "nice," others, "splendid." The man who could have said something to the other man, did not say it, and he who could have heard, heard nought. This condition in art is called, "L'art pour l'art."



This destruction of the inner sound (the very life of colour) is the scattering of the artist's strength into emptiness, as is such "art for art." The artist seeks material reward for his skill, his power of invention, or vision. His purpose becomes the satisfaction of vanity and greed. Instead of intensified, co-operative work amongst artists, they scramble for possessions. There are complaints about too much competition and over-production. Hates, partisanship, cliques, jealousy, intrigues are the result of this aimless, materialistic art.\*)

"Understanding" is the approach of the observer to the artist's viewpoint. Yet, quietly the observer turns away from artists, who cannot see their life's purpose in such an art which is not needed, but who aspire to a higher goal. To understand is to elevate the onlooker to the artist's level.

Art, as the child of its age, can only repeat artistically what is already expressed in the contemporary trend. This art which bears no potentiality for the future and which, therefore, is only the child of its time, cannot grow to be a mother of the future. It is, therefore, a barren art; it is of short duration and does not survive the passing of the period nor the atmosphere which made it possible.

Such art, capable of further evolution, sprang from its spiritual period, while, at the same time, it is not merely its echo or mirror, but contains a wakening to prophetic power, which can have a deep and far-reaching influence.

Spiritual life, to which art belongs and of which it is one of its mightiest

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\*) A few singular exceptions do not change this sad and ominous picture, and even these exceptions are to be found mainly amongst artists, whose doctrine is merely, "art for art's sake." Even though they serve a higher ideal it is ultimately a useless waste of their powers. External beauty is an element of spiritual atmosphere. Beyond this positive fact, (beautiful equals good) there lies the weakness of a talent not used to its fullest extent. (The word, "Talent" is here used in its gospel-sense).

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## INTRODUCTION

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agents, is a complicated but definite and simplified uplifting movement. This movement is one of perception. It can take various forms, but basically it retains the same inner sense and purpose.

Veiled in obscurity are the causes moving us forward and upward by "the sweat of the brow," through suffering, evil, and pain.





II

## THE MOVEMENT

Many grievous obstacles along this road must be conquered, so as to arrive at the first stage; and even then an evil, unseeing hand may toss more obstacles in the way, so that this road sometimes appears to be totally impassable, as all landmarks vanish.

It is then that there unfailingly arises some human being, no different from the rest of humanity but for a secret power of "Vision" within him.

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## THE MOVEMENT

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He sees and points the way. Sometimes he would prefer to lay aside his power, as it is a heavy cross to bear; but he cannot do so. Though scorned and hated, he never lets go but drags the cartload of protesting humanity after him, ever forcing it forward and upward, over all obstacles in his way.

Yet frequently, long after his disappearance from this earth, when no vestiges of his bodily "I" remain, many seek to retain the form of his futile body in various ways, often in gigantic scales in marble, iron, bronze, or stone, as if there had been any intrinsic value in the embodiment of these divine servants of humanity and martyrs, who so decidedly despised the material, and only served spiritual aims. At any rate, this last resorting to the marble effigy shows that many, by now, have reached that high pinnacle, where he, whom they at last strive to honor, once stood so utterly alone.

A large acute triangle divided into unequal segments, the narrowest one pointing upwards, is a schematically correct representation of spiritual life. The lower the segment the larger, wider, higher, and more embracing will be the other parts of the triangle.

The entire triangle moves slowly, almost invisible, forward and upward and where the apex was "today," the second segment is going to be "tomorrow,") that is to say, that which today can be understood only by the apex, and which to the rest of the triangle seems an incomprehensible gibberish, tomorrow forms the true and sensitive life of the second segment.

At the apex of the top segment, sometimes one man stands entirely alone.

His joyous vision corresponds to a vast inner sorrow, and even those, who are closest to him, do not comprehend him. Angrily, they may call him

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\*) This "today" and "tomorrow" is in its inner sense comparable to the biblical "day" of creation.

a knave or a fool. So it was with Beethoven, who at his very highest peak also stood alone \*).

How many years had to pass until a greater segment of the triangle reached the spot where once he stood? Despite statues erected to him now, are there really men who have risen to this level\*\*)? Artists are to be found in every segment of this imaginary triangle. Each one of these artists, who can see beyond the limits of his present stage, in this segment of spiritual evolution is a prophet to those surrounding him and helps to move forward the ever obstinate carload of humanity. However, one of those not possessed by such vision, or misusing it for base purposes and reasons, when he closes the triangle may be easily understood by his fellow men and even acclaimed. The larger the segment (that is, the lower it lies in the triangle), the greater is the number of people to comprehend the words of the artist. In spite of it and correspondingly every group consciously or unconsciously hungers for spiritual food.

This food is offered by its artists to the next following segment which will be stretching out its hand tomorrow.

. . . . .

This schematical presentation, however, does not express the spiritual life. Among other things, it does not show the shadowside, a large deadly black spot. However, it happens too often that a low level of spiritual nourishment satisfied some, who are already in a higher segment. Even food becomes poisonous, and in smaller quantities affects their soul

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\*) Are not some memorials and statues a sorry answer to this question?

\*\*\*) Weber, the composer of "Der Freischuetz" said of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, "Now the extravagances of this genius have reached the limit, Beethoven is completely ripe for the mad-house." Of the fascinating phrase at the beginning of the first bar on a reiterated E Abbe Stadler said to his neighbor on hearing it for the first time, "Always that E he just can't think of anything else, the talentless fellow!" (Beethoven by August Goellerich, see page 1, series 'Die Musik' published by R. Strauss).

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## THE MOVEMENT

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in its higher segment, gradually lowering it to a lower section; while taken in larger quantities this poison casts the falling soul into ever lower spheres. In one of his novels Siemkiewicz compares spiritual life with swimming; whoever fails to work untiringly and does not continuously fight against sinking, will surely go under. Here, a man's gift, "The Talents," (again used in the sense of the Gospel can become a curse, not only to him, but to all those, who partake of this poisonous intake. Such an artist uses his strength to feed his lower needs; ostensibly garbing it in artistic forms, he presents the impure; attracting weak elements to himself, he constantly mixes them with evil; he induces others to betray themselves while convincing all, to quench their thirst from the pure spring of spirituality. This impedes the movement, drags back those, who strive onward and contaminates all around them.

Of course, there are periods, when art lacks a high champion altogether, when there is no spiritual nourishment. These are times of retrogression in the spiritual world. Ceaselessly, souls fall from the higher to the lower segments, and the entire triangle appears to be motionless. It even seems to move down and backwards. During these dumb, blind periods, men lay special and exclusive stress on outward success. They are only interested in material possessions and welcome any technical advancement, which only helps man's body, proclaiming this servitude as an achievement of major magnitude, while spiritual forces are neglected, if not completely ignored.

The solitary seekers, the hungry of soul, the visionaries are derided or dubbed as spiritually abnormal. Those rare souls, however, who refuse to be lulled into lethargy and forever yearn, however vaguely, for spiritual life, advancement, and knowledge, sound disconsolate and lamentful amidst the coarse materialistic chorus of spiritual darkness. Agony surrounds these terrified souls and their followers. Sorely tormented by doubt and fear and losing strength, they often prefer creeping obliteration to this sudden leap into darkness.

At such a period, when Art is basely degraded and only used for ma-

terialistic purposes, it seeks its inspiration in material harshness, as it cannot imagine any finer aims. Objective reproduction, unalteringly boring, remains its perpetual goal. The "what" in art disappears 'eo ipso.' Only the "how," the manner of reproduction by the artist persists as a question of creed. The soul in art is lost.

Art goes still further in its pursuit of the objective "how." It begins to specialize, thus becoming comprehensible only to the artists, who complain of the public's indifference to their works. An artist, in such times, is not even expected to have a message but can attract attention through some particular "originality" or "eccentricity." Consequently, being praised by a group of patrons and connoisseurs (usually resulting in material benefits), a large number of gifted and skilled people plunge into an art, which appears so easy to master. In each "artistic center," there are thousands of such artists, the majority of them merely looking for some new method, to produce millions of works utterly devoid of enthusiastic warmth of heart or the slightest stirring of the soul.

"Competition" grows. The wild battle for success renders the search increasingly superficial. Small groups of artists who, by chance, fought a way out of this artistic and spiritual chaos entrench themselves in small achievement. The public, which has been left behind, looks on in bewilderment, loses interest for such art, and quietly turns away from it.

Despite all this delusion, chaos, and wild hunt, the spiritual triangle continues, slowly but surely and with irresistible forces, to move ever forward and upward.

The invisible Moses descends from the mountain and sees the dance around the golden calf. Nevertheless, he brings to mankind wisdom's solace.

First realized by the artist, his language is inaudible to the masses. Subconsciously, the artist follows the call. That very question "how" contains a hidden seed of recovery. For even though this "how" remains essentially barren, a possibility still dwells in this "originality," this tend-

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ency (which some call "personality") of not only seeing the purely material side of an object, but also that which is condensed as differentiated from the objective of the realistic period, which meant to reproduce anything "just as it is," and "without employing any creative imagination" \*). If this "how" also engages the artist's emotional power and is capable of giving free scope to his finer feeling, it already pushes art to the crest of the road, where it will later unfailingly find its lost "what."

That "what" constitutes the spiritual food for the now beginning spiritual awakening. This no longer will be the material, objective "what" of former epochs but an artistic substance — the soul of art — without which its body (the "how") can never lead a completely sound existence, as is the case with individuals and entire peoples.

This "what" is the eternal truth embraced by art, and which only art can express by means essentially its own.

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\*) Frequently, use is made here of the terms "material" and "immaterial" and the interim phases which are terms "more or less." Is everything material? Is everything spiritual? Can the distinction, which we make between matter and spirit, be nothing but graduations of one or the other? Thought, which science terms the product of "spirit" is matter, a fine but not a coarse substance. Is whatever cannot be touched with the hand spiritual? It is not possible to discuss the subject further in this little book; it suffices if the boundaries drawn are not too definite.





### III

## THE SPIRITUAL TURNING-POINT

The spiritual triangle moves slowly onward and upwards. While presently one of the largest of the lower segments reaches the point of using the first slogan of this materialistic creed, the dwellers of its segment bear various religious titles. They are called Jews, Catholics, Protestants, etc. In reality, they are atheists, which the boldest and narrowest amongst them, quite openly admit. "Heaven" has become uninhabited. "God is dead." In politics, these people are Democrats or Republicans. The fear, horror, and hate, which yesterday they felt for certain political creeds, is now directed against anarchy, of which they know only its much-dreaded name. In economics, these people are socialists. They sharpen the sword of justice, with which to deal the death blow to the hydra of capitalism, and to hew off the head of evil.

Since the inhabitants of this large segment of the triangle have never solved any problem independently, but have always been dragged in the cart of humanity by self-sacrificing fellowmen, who stand high above them, they know nought of this progress which they always have observed from afar. They, therefore, believe that this progress is very easy and put their trust in infallible prescriptions and never-failing methods.

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Those in the segment next below are dragged blindly higher by those just described, while they cling to their old position and resistance in fear of betrayal to the unknown.

In a religious sense, the higher social segments contain those, who are not only blind atheists but who justify their godlessness with strange words and sayings; as, for example, those of Virchow, so unworthy of a learned man: "I have dissected many corpses but never yet discovered a soul in any." In politics, they know different parliamentary procedures, and read the political editorials. In economics, they are socialists of various grades and shadings and are capable of supporting their "convictions" by numerous quotations, (starting with Schweitzer's "Emma" via Lasalle's "Iron law on wages," to Marx's "Capital" and so on, down the line).

In those loftier segments gradually appear men of "science and art" (absent in those just described). Literateurs and musicians, also, belong to this category, while men of science are positivists recognizing only those things, which can be weighed and measured. Anything else they view in the same way — sometimes as discreditable nonsense, a title which only yesterday they attributed to those theories, which today have become proven facts.

In art, they are naturalists, believing firmly within those limits well established by others, and which they unconditionally accept, thereby believing in the personality, individuality, and temperament of artists they can esteem.

Despite the apparent well-ordered security, despite the infallible principles, there lurks in these higher segments a hidden fear, a confusion, a trembling and an uncertainty like that, which creeps into the souls of passengers on an ocean liner on the high seas, as the shoreline vanishes in the fog and the mournful wind whips the waves into towering mountains. This fear results from their race belief. They realize, that scientists, statesmen, and artists are admired today, who only yesterday were de-

riders as imposters, swindlers, or unworthy charlatans. The higher the segment in this visionary triangle, the clearer divided are these sharp angles of fear and sense of insecurity. In the highest segments, here and there are found eyes which can see for themselves, brains which are capable of deduction. Such gifted people ask themselves: Since this truth is overthrown by yesterday's truth and that again is swept away by that of our present day, isn't it equally possible that today's belief will be out-dated tomorrow? The bravest of them will answer: "It is within the realm of possibility." Secondly, there are eyes which can visualize what science of today "has not yet explained." Those ask themselves: "Will science, proceeding along the road it has followed for so long, ever attain a solution to these puzzles, and, if it does, will men be able to trust this solution?"

Also, in these segments are professional men and scientists, who can remember the time when facts, now recognized by academies as firmly established, were scorned by these very same learned bodies. Here also, are found those art theorists, who write profound books, recognizing today what they scorned only yesterday. In revered tones, they proceed at last to cross barriers which art had passed long before and set up new barriers, which are presumed to forever remain in their new positions.

What these philosophers fail to realize is that they are raising these barriers not in the path of art but behind it. They will notice it only tomorrow and promptly write more books to continue the shifting of barriers a bit further. This unabating performance continues until it is realized that the principles of art can only be applied to the past but never to the future. No theory applies to that which lies beyond the realm of the immaterial. That which has, as yet, no material existence cannot crystallize materially. The spirit which leads into the realm of tomorrow can only be recognized by the sense (guided by artist's talent). Theory is like a lantern which sheds its light on the crystallized forms of the past. (For further details see chapter VII, Theory). If we climb even further up, we find still more confusion; such as would prevail if a mathematically

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constructed city were suddenly overthrown by uncontrollable forces of nature. Yet, people really do live in a spiritual city where forces become suddenly effective — not anticipated by architects and mathematicians. Imagine a great wall tossed to pieces like a flimsy card-house, the chambers of a huge tower soaring to the heavens with its lofty points of "immortal" spiritual pillars totally destroyed. The abandoned churchyard quakes. Forgotten graves open and release equally forgotten spirits. All artificially contrived suns burst into spots, leaving no substitute against darkness.

In this city there are people deafened through queer thoughts, who hear no crash and who are blinded by strange ideas. They believe the sun is becoming brighter, and that soon they shall see the last remnants of darkness disappear. These men will be able to hear and see.

Still higher-up there exists no fear at all. Here, work goes on, boldly attacking the very pillars of the foundation, which men have installed. Here, also, are professional scientists, who test matter over and over, who fear no problem and, finally, cast their doubts on that very matter considered only yesterday as the basis of earth. The theory of the electron, the ever restless atomic core, which is supposed to replace all matter, immediately finds its daring devotees, who ever so often, overstep the border of safety and die, while yet conquering another stronghold of science, in the manner of self-sacrificing soldiers forgetting all caution in their desperate fight, to win the stubborn fortress wall. Yet, "there is no impregnable fortress."

On the other hand, there is an ever increasing number of cases when science is greeted with the well-known word, "swindle." Even the newspapers, those most obsequious servants of success, and the masses, whose trade-mark is, "as you like it", find themselves compelled, in some cases, to modify their ironical judgments on the "marvels" of science, even sometimes to abandon them altogether. Various learned men, pure materialists among them, devote their strength to the scientific research

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of puzzling problems which can no longer be denied or passed over in silence \*).

There is also an increasing number of men who place no trust in the methods of materialistic science when it deals with questions referring to such "non-matter" or matter inaccessible to our minds — just as artists are looking for assistance from the Primitives and their almost forgotten methods. These vital methods, however, are still alive among the Primitives, to whom we turn in disdain, from the high peak of our so-called knowledge.

Included in their number are, for example, the Hindus, who, from time to time, confront these learned men of our civilization with puzzling facts, which have always been either overlooked, or brushed aside with superficial explanations, like so many troublesome flies\*\*). Mrs. H. P. Blavatsky was perhaps the first person who, after many years in India, tied a strong knot between these "savages" and our culture. From that moment on was started one of the greatest spiritual movements in this direction, which today unites a great number of people, and which has even assumed a material form in the "theosophical society." This society consists of groups who seek to approach the problem of the spirit by the

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\*) Zoellner, Wagner, Butloff, (Petersburg); Crooks, (London); etc. Later Charles Richet, C. Flammarion (even the Paris "Matin" bring the quotations of the latter under the title, "Je le constate, mais je ne l'explique pas," about two years ago). Finally, C. Lombroso, the originator of the anthropological methods in the question of crime takes part with Eusapia Palladino at serious spiritualistic meetings and admits the existence of the phenomenon. Besides the fact that the other scientists devote their time to such studies, entire scientific committees and clubs are formed for this same purpose. (For instance, Societe des Etudes Psychiques in Paris even organized observation trips in France, in order objectively to familiarize the public with the results achieved).

\*\*\*) In such cases, frequent use is made of the word hypnotism, that same hypnotism which in its earlier form of mesmerism was disdainfully pushed aside by numerous academies.

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way of inner enlightenment. Their methods, which formed a contrast to the positive procedure, are based on things that happened in the past, which are then brought forward and interpreted in a comparatively precise form \*).

The theory of Theosophy, which serves as the basis of this movement was set out by Blavatsky in the form of a catechism in which the people received definite answers to her questions from these theosophists\*\*).

According to her, theosophy is synonymous with eternal truth. "A new herald of truth will find the minds of men prepared for his message by these theosophists: A new manner of expression is created in which to clothe the new truths, an organization which will await his arrival, and will then proceed to remove the merely material obstacles and difficulties from his path." The last words in Blavatsky's book are, "in the twenty-first century, earth will be a heaven compared to what it is now."

At any rate, even though the tendency of the theosophists to create a theory and possible premature joy, with which they soon expect to answer the great, eternal question, it may easily make the observer skeptical, because the great, spiritual essence of the movement remains. It is a strong agent in the spiritual atmosphere and will reach into many hearts now lost in darkness and night. The voice of a redeemer, a guiding hand points the right way.

When religion, science, and morals (the latter by the strong hand of Nietzsche) are shaken and when the outer supports threaten to fall, man turns his gaze from the external to the deeper essence within him.

Literature, music, and art are the first sensitive spheres in which this

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\*) See for example, Dr. Steiner's "Theosophy" and his article in "Lucifer-Gnosis" or "ways to knowledge."

\*\*\*) H. P. Blavatsky: The Key of Theosophy, Leipzig, Max Altmann, 1907. The book was published in English in London in 1889.



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## THE SPIRITUAL TURNING-POINT

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which constitutes an inner sound. This sound is derived partly, or mostly, from the object's name. Yet, as the object is not perceived but merely named, the hearer receives an abstract impression of the de-materialized object. This creates a certain inner vibration. Thus, the green, yellow and red trees on the meadow are only the material fact, a co-incidental, corporeal conception of a tree which we may feel within us on hearing the word, "tree." Skillful application (in its poetical meaning) of the word itself, which, as an artistic necessity is repeated twice or three times, if not more frequently, not only intensifies the reiterated sound, but also brings to light unsuspected spiritual properties dwelling in the word itself. Similarly, there was the frequent repetition of a word in a child's favorite game, which was forgotten in later life.

The abstract value of the indicated object fades away into the pure sound of the given word. This "pure" sound of the word we may hear unconsciously, when in harmony with the real, or abstract meaning of the object. In the latter case, this pure sound comes to the fore and directly influences the soul. Here, it produces a non-objective vibration more complicated, I may say, more super-sensuous even, than that caused by the sound of a bell or the sound of a stringed instrument, the fall of a plank, etc. This indicates vast possibilities for the literature of the future. In its embryonic form, this power of the word is, for example, already employed in "Serres Chaudes." When used by Maeterlinck, such a word — at first seemingly neutral in its impression — rings a far more subtle note. A simple, everyday word (such as "hair"), if felt for its proper use, can convey a feeling of despair and hopelessness. Such is Maeterlinck's method. He takes us along the path where thunder, lightning, and dark clouds are but exterior, material means, which on the

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when they use a stick for a horse, or organize an entire cavalry regiment out of paper, or, with one extra fold can successfully transform a horseman into a horse. (Kuegelgen: "Remembrances of an Old Man"). This trend to arouse the imagination of the observer plays a great part in the theatre of today. This is a necessary transition from the material to the spiritual in the theatre of the future.



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stage, more than in nature, equal the "bogey-man" — so frightening to children. True inner forces do not lose their force and effect so easily \*). The word which thus has two meanings — (first the direct and then the indirect) — is the pure substance of poetry and literature which this art alone can use and through which it speaks to the innermost soul. Wagner's music contains similar means. His famous "leitmotif" is an attempt to emphasize heroic personalities beyond theatrical expedients, as make-up and light effects. He employs a definite "leit" motive, which is a pure musical medium. This motive, is, so to speak, a musically expressed spiritual atmosphere which precedes the hero, to effect a spiritual radiation felt from afar\*\*).

The foremost modern composers, such as Debussy, present spiritual impressions which they often derive from nature, and which they refine into spiritual visions by purely musical means. For this reason, Debussy is often compared to the impressionistic painters, who, also, use impressions of nature's phenomena in their art. The truth, contained in this statement, is another proof of the fact that the various art expressions of today seem to learn from each other, and often resemble each other in their aims. It would, however, be rash to say that the above-mentioned definition is an exhaustive statement of Debussy's significance.

Despite his similarity to the impressionists, the urge of this musician for inner spiritual harmony is so strong that in his work one hears immediately the suffering soul and shaken nerves of our present-day with all its sufferings. Debussy never uses the entire materialistic note, so char-

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\*) This becomes clearly evident when comparing the works of Maeterlinck and Poe. This is again an example of the advance of artistic means from the material to the abstract.

\*\*\*) Frequent attempts have shown that such a spiritual atmosphere can belong not only to heroes but to any plain human being. Sensitive people, for example, cannot remain in a room previously occupied by a person spiritually antagonistic to them even though they know nothing of his existence.

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## THE SPIRITUAL TURNING-POINT

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acteristic of program music, but restricts himself to the utilization of the spiritual value in the appearances.

Russian music (Mussorgsky) has had a great influence on Debussy; therefore, it is not surprising that a certain relationship of the young Russian composers to Scriabin, first of all, can be noted. There is a definite sound relationship in their compositions. The same errors are often disturbing to the hearer. Apparently, both composers, suddenly snatched out of the realm of the "new ugliness," follow the charm of the more or less conventional "beauty." The listener often feels truly insulted as he is tossed about like a tennis ball which separates opposing parties: those representing the "exterior beauty" from those searching for "inner beauty." This inner beauty is created by an imperative inner necessity which renounces conventional beauty. To the uninitiated, this inner spiritual beauty naturally appears ugly, because humanity inclines to outside charm, dislikes recognition of inner necessity, (increasingly so today!). Almost alone, enthusiastically recognized today by only a few, the Viennese composer, Arnold Schoenberg, advocates full renunciation of conventional beauty sacreligiously, while accepting all those means leading to unconventional self expression. This "propagandist," "swindler," and "charlatan," in his "teachings of harmony," says ". . . every harmony, every advance is possible. However, I feel today there are also here definite rules which determine whether I use this or the other dissonance" \*).

Here Schoenberg clearly feels that the greatest freedom of all — the freedom of an unfettered and unconditional art — can never be absolute. Every epoch is measured by a certain amount of this freedom. The greatest genius can not exceed these boundaries, but this measure must be exhausted to its fullest extent each time. May the obstinate heart resist! Schoenberg, too, endeavors to exhaust this freedom, and, on the road to inner necessity, he has discovered already treasures of new beauty.

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\*) "Die Musik" (Music) page 104 of the "Teachings of Harmony." (Edited by Universal Edition).

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## THE SPIRITUAL TURNING-POINT

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His music leads us into a new realm where the musical experiences are not acoustic but purely soul inspiring. Here begins the "music of the future."

Similar idealistic doctrines are followed by the impressionistic movement in painting, which, in their dogmatic and purely naturalistic form, arrives at the so-called Neo-Impressionism, and, at the same time, reaches over into the abstract. This theory, which the Neo-Impressionist considers a universal method, is to represent nature, with all its glitter and brilliance on canvas, instead of only one isolated part of it \*).

Almost at the same time, we notice three decidedly different schools: 1. Rosetti and his pupil Burne-Jones with his followers; 2. Boecklin with Stuck and their followers; 3. Segantini, with his stylized followers forming an unworthy train.

These three names were chosen as characteristic of their search in the realm of non-materialistic. Rosetti turned to the pre-Raphaelites and tried to revive their abstract forms; Boecklin turned to the realm of mythology and the imaginative, but, in contrast to Rosetti, he gave a pronounced material form to his legendary figures; Segantini, outwardly the most materialistic of the three, selected complete, natural objects (for example, mountain ridges, stones, animals, etc.). Often reproducing them in the most minute detail, in spite of the obvious material dominance, he always succeeded in creating abstract values so that in his inner conception, he is probably the least materialistic of the three. These are the searchers for the inner life of the external. A similar task to find a new law of form was realized by Cezanne. He made a living thing out of a teacup. To be more precise, he realized the existence of a being in this cup. He raised the "nature morte" to a height where the exteriorly "dead" object becomes inwardly alive. He treated these things as he would the human being, because he was endowed with the gift of divining inner life in everything. He gives to them a colourful expression,

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\*) See, for example, Signac, "De Delacroix au Neo-Impressionisme." (from Delacroix to Neo-Impressionism).

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which establishes an artistic, inner note and molds them into the form, which are elevated to abstract sounding notes of harmony radiating mathematical formulae. It is not a man, an apple, or a tree that are represented. All are solely used by Cezanne for the construction of an innermost artistically sound reality which we call a painting. One of the greatest contemporary Frenchmen, Henri Matisse, classifies his works in this category. He paints "pictures," and in these "pictures" he searches for the divine\*). To attain this end, he requires as a starting point no other means than the object (human or any other) and those tools that belong to painting and to painting alone — colour and form.

Through purely personal qualities of being a Frenchman and so an especially gifted colourist, Matisse lays too much stress on colour. Like Debussy, he cannot often free himself from the conventional beauty. Impressionism is in his blood. Thus, we find great inner vitality in some of his paintings produced by an inner necessity. Again, his paintings result entirely from an outer charm (how often one is reminded here of Manet) possessing mainly or exclusively materialistic existence. Here, the typically French refined "gourmanderie," the purely melodic beauty of painting, soars to austere heights far beyond the clouds.

The other great Parisian, the Spanish Pablo Picasso, never succumbs to this beauty. Always led by the need for self expression, often tossed hither and thither, Picasso throws himself from one exterior means to another. When a gulf appears between these means, Picasso makes a bold leap and suddenly appears on the other side to the bewilderment of his huge crowd of followers. No sooner do they believe they have finally reached him, when they must once again start the ungainly up-and-down pursuit. In this way, there came into existence the last "French" movement of Cubism, which is treated in detail in part two. Picasso is trying to arrive at the constructive proportion, by way of the mathematical. In his latest works (1911), he arrived by logical means at the destruction

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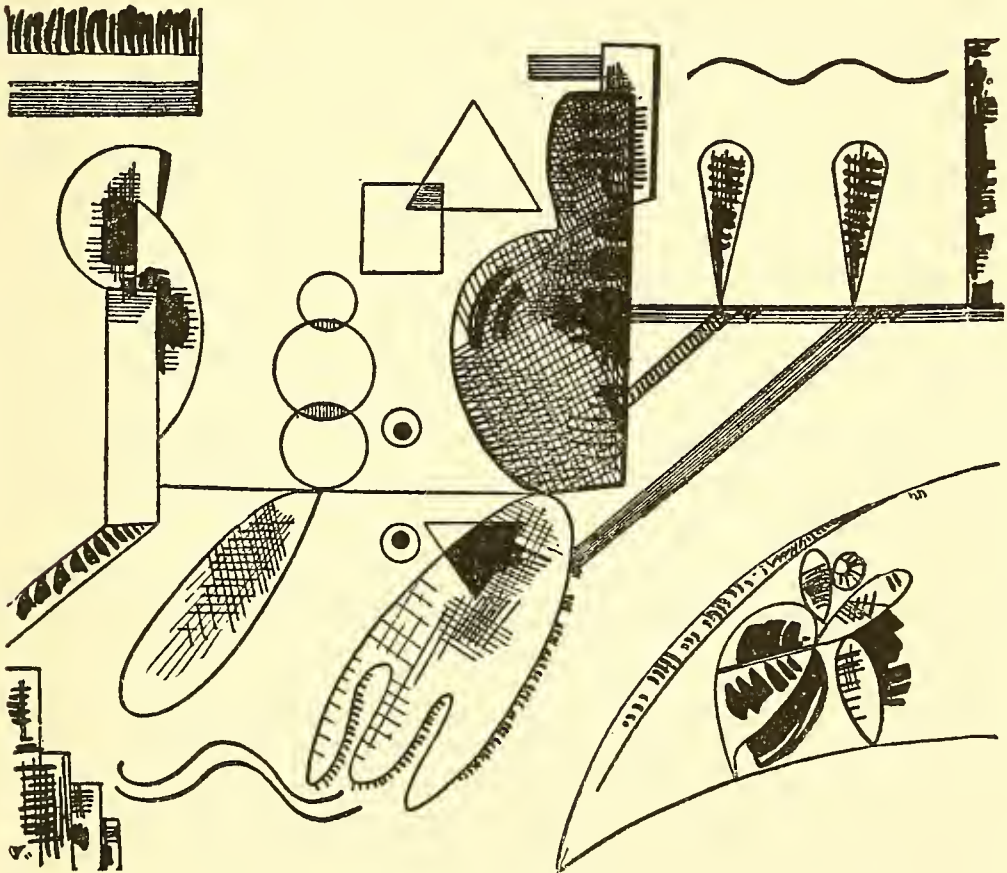
\*) See this article in "Kunst und Kuenstler" (Art and Artists) 1909 volume VIII.

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of the material, not however, by its dissolution but rather by a kind of destruction of its various parts and by constructional dispersion of these parts on the canvas. Strange to say, he seemingly wishes to retain the materialistic appearance. Picasso shrinks from no innovation and if the colour seems to disturb him in his search for a pure artistic form, he throws it overboard and paints a picture in brown and white. In such problems lies his force, Matisse, colour, Picasso, form, two great indications of a great goal.





## IV

# THE PYRAMID

The different art expressions display themselves each in its own way and peculiar manner.

Despite, if not due to this singularity, never in times before, have different art expressions been so close to each other as at this hour of spiritual evolution.

The seeds of strife towards the beyond, the abstract and the innermost nature are contained in each manifestation. Consciously or unconsciously, they obey the word of Socrates: "Know Thyself." Whether consciously or not, the artists gradually turn to their material to test the balance of each separate element's innermost value, out of which they derive their creations of art.

The natural result of this striving is a c o m p a r i s o n of the elements of each art with those of another. In this instance, we learn the most from music. With few exceptions and deviations, music has, for centuries, been the art which has used this means, not so much to represent natural phenomena but rather, as an expression of the artist's spiritual life and to the creation of a unique life of musical sounds.

A painter who finds no satisfaction in the mere representation of natural phenomena, however artistic, who strives to create his inner life, enviously observes the simplicity and ease with which such an aim is already achieved in the non-material art of music. It is easily understandable that he will turn to this art and will attempt to reciprocate it with his own medium. From this derives some of the modern search in painting for rhythm, mathematical abstract construction, colour repetition, and manner of setting colour into motion.

The comparison of various means with which each single art expresses itself, by learning from each other, can only be successful and conclusive if the lesson is not only superficial but truly fundamental. Thus, one art must learn from another how to use its common principle and how to apply it to the fundamentals of its own medium. Borrowing these methods, the artist must not forget that all mediums contain within themselves unique characteristics, and it is up to him to discover the proper application.

In this application of form, music achieves results which are beyond the realm of painting. On the other hand, painting outdistances music in many ways. For instance, music has, at its disposal, the duration of time, while painting does not possess this advantage but presents to the spectator its entire message in one single instance \*), something music is incapable of doing. Music, by its very nature, is ultimately and fully emancipated

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\*) These differences are, as everything in the world, relative. In a certain sense, music can avoid the extension of time while painting can utilize it. As already stated, all assertions have but a relative value.

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and needs no outer form for its expression\*). Painting today is still almost exclusively dependent on natural forms taken from nature. The painter's contemporary task consists of testing its power and means of counterpoint, as music did in the attempt to apply these means for the purpose of creation. Deeply concentric, each art is separated from the other, but on the other hand, they are combined in their innermost tendencies. Thus, it is found that every art has its own strength which cannot be substituted for another. Therefore, we finally arrive at the encroachment of the power of the various arts upon one another.

From this inner tendency will arise, in the future, the truly monumental art, which today we can already foresee.

Anyone, who absorbs the innermost hidden treasures of art, is an enviable partner in building the spiritual pyramid, which is meant to reach into heaven.

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\*) How miserably music fails when attempting to express the exterior form, is shown by narrowly understood program music. Such experiments often have been made. The imitation of the sound of croaking frogs, noises on a chicken farm, the sharpening of knives may be worthy of a vaudeville stage and may be very entertaining as an amusement. In serious music, however, such digressions can only constitute a warning against the failure of "representing nature." Nature has its own language which has an irresistible power over us. This language cannot be imitated. If a chicken farm is represented in music in order to create thereby the atmosphere of nature and with it present this atmosphere to the hearer, we find that this is an impossible and unnecessary problem. Such a feeling can be created by any art, not by outward imitation of nature, but by artistic representation of this atmosphere through its innermost values.





ALBRECHT DURER

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS



RAPHAEL

THE CANIGIANI HOLY FAMILY



## **PAINTING**

### **V**

## **THE EFFECT OF COLOUR**

When you let your eye stray over a palette covered with colours, two main results are produced:

1. The first is a purely physical effect when the eye itself is enchanted by beauty and the multiple delight of colour. The observer is pleased. He experiences a pleasure similar to that enjoyed by an epicure in tasting a delicacy. The eye is stimulated as the tongue is titillated by a spicy dish. Or it is refreshed and soothed as a finger touching ice.

All these are physical sensations which, as such, are only of short duration. They are superficial and leave no lasting impression if the soul remains unaffected.

Just as in touching ice we experience a physical feeling of cold that is quickly forgotten once the finger has been warmed again, so the physical effect of colour is forgotten once the eye is turned away. Just as the physi-

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## THE EFFECT OF COLOUR

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cal sensation produced by the coldness of ice when it penetrates further arouses a stronger sensation, so can the superficial impression of colour deepen into a lasting reaction.

With the average person, the impression caused by familiar objects will be purely superficial. However, those objects which we encounter for the first time at once impress us deeply. Thus, a child, to whom everything is new, experiences the world. Attracted by light it grasps the fire only to burn its fingers and so learns to respect and fear the flame. The child also learns the friendly side of light which drives away darkness, prolongs the day, cooks, warms, and brightens the hours of gaiety.

After collecting these experiences, a familiarity with light has been established, and the knowledge is then stored in the mind. The strong, intense interest disappears and the entertainment offered by the flame is replaced by an ever-growing indifference. In this way, the world gradually loses its enchantment. We know, as a matter of fact, that trees give shade, horses can run fast and automobiles still faster, dogs bite, the moon is far away, or figures seen in the mirror are not real.

As man develops further, the circle of impressions widens to embrace different beings and objects and the development continues until these beings and objects acquire the value of spiritual harmony. The same with colour, at first, it makes only a superficial impression upon a soul hardly developed to sensitiveness, an impression which disappears shortly after it has been evoked. Even the simplest effect varies in quality. The eye is attracted by light colours and still more by the lightest, warmest ones. Vermilion attracts and stimulates like the flame eternally craved for by all men. The bright yellow of a lemon hurts the eye after a while, as a shrill trumpet note may disturb the ear. The eye becomes restless, is unable to fix its gaze for any length of time, and seeks distraction and rest in blue or green.

This elementary effect comes from a deep-reaching emotion, that is due to spiritual development. In this case, the main effect produced by ob-

serving colour is a psychic effect. Here, the psychic power of colour takes hold, causing an emotional vibration. Thus, the first physical elementary force develops the channel, through which the deep, inner emotion reaches the soul.

Whether this second effect is actually a direct one, as might be surmised from the above, or whether it is achieved by association, remains a question. As the soul generally is tightly bound to the body, it is possible that the psychic emotion may be aroused by means of association. For example, red may cause a spiritual vibration, analogous to that caused by a flame, because red is the colour of flame. Warm red may prove exciting, or painful, even disgusting, through possible association with blood; as this colour recalls a physical agent which undoubtedly has a displeasing effect on the soul. This being the case, it would be easy, by association, to find the other physical effects of colour not only on the sense of sight but also on the other senses. For example, one could assume that light yellow would make a sour impression, because of its association with a lemon.

However, it is hardly possible to carry such explanations through to the end. Regarding taste in colours, various examples are known where this explanation would not follow. A Dresden doctor tells of a patient, whom he characterizes as "spiritual and exceptionally superior," who finds that a certain sauce invariably tastes "blue" to him, meaning that it reminds him of the colour blue\*).

One might assume a similar explanation that impressions reach highly developed people by way of the soul so quickly and directly, that an effect

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\*) Dr. Freudenberg "Spaltung der Persoenlichkeit"—(The Splitting of Personality), "Uebersinnliche Welt"—(Supersensuous World), 1908, pp. 64-65. Here, the aptitude of hearing colours, page 65, is mentioned. However, the author states that the comparative tables do not represent a general rule. See L. Sabaneyeff in the weekly "Musik," Moscow, 1911, No. 9. The immediate proximity of a law is here mentioned with certainty.

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created by taste is communicated immediately to the soul, as well as to the senses. This would be, so to speak, an echo or reverberation such as occurs when musical instruments, which are not being played, often respond to instruments which are being played.

In accordance with this explanation, to see is not only a question of harmonious taste but also one of effect on the other senses. In the case of the eye, some colours can look sharp or piercing, while others appear smooth like velvet, so that one feels inclined to stroke them (dark ultramarine, chrome oxide green and rose madder); even the distinction between the warmth and coldness of a shade is based on such feelings. Some colours appear soft (rose madder) and others seem to be cold and hard (cobalt green, blue-green oxide), so that even when such colour is freshly squeezed from a tube, it has a dry appearance.

The expression "scented colours" is also frequently used. Finally, the sound of colour is so precise that it would be difficult to locate anyone who would attempt to express the impression of bright yellow in the bass notes of the piano, or rose-madder as a soprano voice\*).

This explanation of association will, however, not suffice in some cases, which to us are of the greatest importance. Those who have heard of chromo-therapy know that coloured light can have a very definite influ-

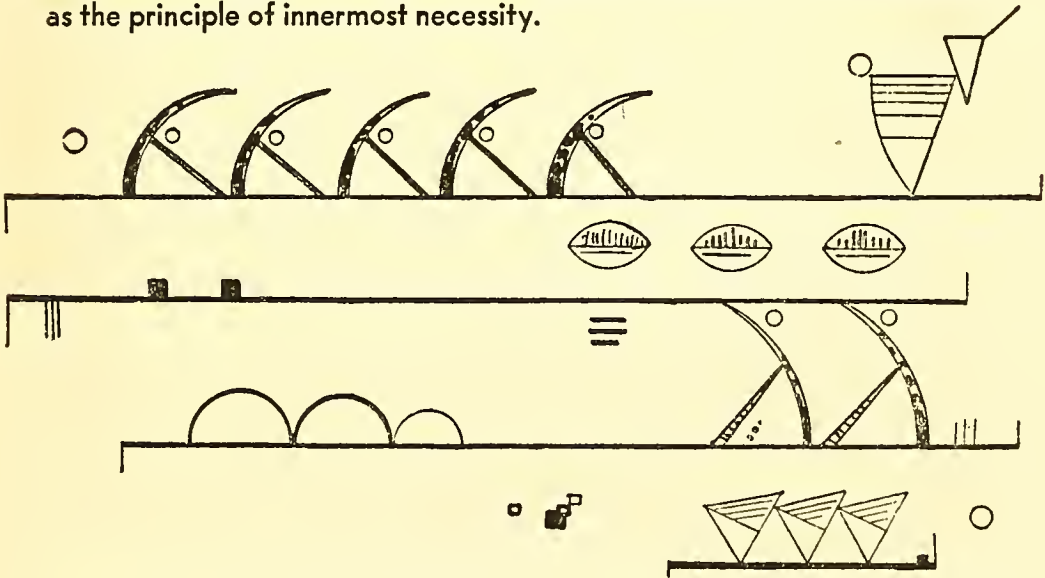
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\*) Much theory and practice have been devoted to this question. An attempt is made to give painting a possibility of building its counterpoint on the basis of the many similarities, also, physical light and air vibration. On the other hand, a successful attempt was made to impress a certain melody on unmusical children with the aid of colour, with for example, flowers. Mrs. A. Sacherjin-Unkowsky, who evolved a special precise method, has worked along these line for many years. This method is "to write music from the colour of nature, to paint the sounds of nature, to see sound in colour and hear colour musically." This method has been employed for years in the inventor's school and was accepted as useful by the St. Petersburg Conservatory. Finally, Scriabine, on more practical lines, has compiled a parallel table of musical and coloured tones which closely resemble the physical table of Mrs. Unkowsky. In "Prometheus," Scriabine has employed his principle successfully. (See table in the magazine "Musik," Moscow, 1911).

ence on the entire body. Repeated attempts have been made to utilize this power of colour and apply it in the treatment of various nervous diseases. It has been shown, in this connection, that a red light excites and has a stimulating effect on the heart, and blue, on the other hand, can even cause temporary paralysis.

If such an effect can, also, be noticed in connection with animals and even plants, which is an established fact, the theory of association in this case becomes wholly inapplicable. At any rate, it is proved that colour embodies an enormous though unexplored power which can affect the entire human body as a physical organism. If this association does not appear to us sufficient, neither can we content ourselves with this explanation concerning the effect of colour on the psychic existence. Therefore, colour is a means of exercising direct influence upon the soul. Colour is the keyboard. The eye is the hammer, while the soul is a piano of many strings. The artist is the hand through which the medium of different keys causes the human soul to vibrate.

It is, thus, evident that colour harmony can rest only on the principle of the corresponding vibration of the human soul. This basis can be considered as the principle of innermost necessity.





## VI

# THE LANGUAGE OF FORM AND COLOUR

The man that hath no music in himself  
Or is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night;  
And his affections dark as Erebus;  
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

(Merchant of Venice, Act V, Scene 1)

"The sound of music travels direct to the soul. There it is immediately echoed because "music is innate in man."

Everyone knows that yellow, orange, and red suggest and represent ideas of joy and plenty." (Delacroix \*)

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\*) P. Signac o. c.—Also, see the interesting article by K. Scheffler, "Notes on Colours" "Dekorativ Kunst"—Decorative Art—(February 1901).



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These two quotations show the deep relationship between the different art expressions, especially between music and painting. This striking similarity has probably caused Goethe to express the thought that all painting must have one general foundation. This prophetic expression of Goethe's is a presentment concerning painting and the place it occupies today. It is the first stage on the road by which painting will, according to her own possibilities, grow in an abstract sense and, finally, reach a purely artistic composition.

To create this composition, painting has, at its disposal:

1. Colour

2. Form

Form stands alone as a representative of realistic or unrealistic object, or as an abstract limitation of space or surface.

Colour cannot be extended "ad infinitum." A limitless red can only be imagined or visualized. Hearing the word "red," we feel no boundaries in our imagination. If necessary, it must deliberately be imagined. On the other hand, the red which is not seen materially but imagined in an abstract sense, creates a certain precise or non-precise spiritual imagination, which carries a pure spiritual note\*). This red has no independent transition from hot or cold. This, also must be imagined like subtle deviations of the red tone. For this reason, I term this spiritual seeing "un-precise." However, it is simultaneously "precise" as the inner harmony remains without coincidental inclinations to hot, cold, etc. This inner note is similar to the tone of a trumpet or an instrument which sounds in our imagination, when we hear the word "trumpet" or some other instrument is mentioned. This sound is not detailed. We associate particular sounds with a solo, from different instruments, from the open air, or a closed room.

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\*) Similar results can be seen in the following example of a tree, where, however, the material element of the imagination occupies a greater range.

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However, when this red must be present in material form as in painting, it must, first of all, be of a certain shade or tone from among the endless tonal variations of red. In other words, it must be given a certain subjective characteristic and, secondly, it must have a limited surface separated from other colours, which are undoubtedly there, but cannot be avoided and through which (limitation and proximity) subjective characterization is changed (giving it an objective shell). Here the objective note plays a part.

This unavoidable influence and mutual relation between form and colour causes us to observe the effect, which form has on colour. The form, even if entirely abstract and resembling a geometric figure, has its inner harmony and is a spiritual being with characteristics identical to it. A triangle (whether it is pointed, flat, or equilateral) is a decided being, possessing its very own spiritual essence. Although joined in conjunction with other forms, this essence changes and assumes novel shades, while basically it remains unaltered, as the scent of the rose, which can never be mistaken for a violet. The same is applicable to the circle, square, and other forms\*).

It is the same evidence as explained above in the case of the red colour, subjective substance in an objective shell.

Here, the contrasting effect of form and colour becomes clearly evident. A triangle filled in with yellow, a circle painted blue, a green square, another triangle in green, a yellow circle, a square in blue, these are different forms that have separate distinctive effects.

The value of certain colours are emphasized by certain forms and dulled by others. In any event, sharp colours sound stronger in sharp forms (for example, yellow in a triangle). Those inclined to be deep are intensified by round forms (for example blue in a circle). On the other hand, if a form does not fit the colour, the conjunction should not be considered "inhar-

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\*) An important part is here played by the direction in which, for example, the triangle stands, that is as movement. This is of great importance in painting.

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## THE LANGUAGE OF FORM AND COLOUR

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monious" but rather as a new possibility and, therefore, as harmony. As the number of colours or forms is endless, the combinations and effects are, also, infinite. This material is inexhaustible.

Form, in the narrower sense, is nothing but the separating line between surfaces. That is its outer meaning. As everything external also contains an inner meaning (more or less noticeable), every form also has its inner substance\*).

Form, therefore, is the outward expression of its inner meaning. This is its spiritual designation. Here, we should recall the previously mentioned example of the piano replacing "colour" by "form". The artist is the hand which, by touching the various keys, (form), affects the human soul to respond to certain vibrations.

Therefore, it is evident that forms of harmony reflect in a corresponding vibration on the human soul.

This principle has been designated here as the principle of the innermost need.

These two aspects of form are equally two sided in direction. The outward limitation of surfaces is, therefore, all the more expressive, if and when it is indicating the innermost content of the form\*\*). The boundary of form, that is its limitation, which, in this instance, serves the purpose of the form, may vary considerably.

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\*) If a form appears meaningless and, as people say, "has nothing to say," this should not be interpreted literally. There is no form, or anything in the world which says nothing. The message, however, often does not reach our soul which happens in a case when something said is meaningless or, to be more accurate, has not been applied in its proper place.

\*\*\*) This "expressive" designation should be properly interpreted; sometimes the form is fully performed when it is subdued. At times the form is most expressive when it does not appear fully but is only an indication, showing the direction for outward expression.

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Despite all variations which form offers, it will never exceed two exterior borders:

1. One form serves limitation with the purpose of deriving from it some material object, that is, to superimpose the material object onto a surface.
2. The other form remains abstract, that is, it represents no object of reality but in itself is a fully abstract being. Such purely abstract beings, which possess their own life, their own influence, and their own value, are a square, a circle, a triangle, a rhombus, a trapezoid, and innumerable other forms becoming more complicated with no mathematical designation. All these forms occupy space in the realm of the non-objective.

Within these two borders lies the endless number of forms in which both elements are contained and where either the material or non-objective predominates.

These forms are actually the wealth from which the artist derives all the component elements of his creation.

Today the artist cannot progress exclusively with purely abstract forms, as these forms are not sufficiently precise. Limiting oneself to the un-precise, it deprives one of possibilities, excluding the purely human and, therefore, weakening the power of expression.

On the other hand, no perfectly material form exists in art. It is impossible absolutely to reproduce a material object. For better or worse, the artist succumbs to his eye; his hands, more artistic than his soul, aim beyond photographic objectives. The genuine artist, discontented with an inventory of the material objects, definitely seeks to give the object an expression, something once called "idealization," then "stylization," and tomorrow something different \*).

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\*) The characteristic of "idealization" was the effort to beautify the organic form, to idealize it, which easily resulted in schematically dampening its inner personal sound. "Stylization," developing from impressionist reasons, had, as its first aim, not the

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## THE LANGUAGE OF FORM AND COLOUR

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The futility and uselessness (in art) in attempting to copy an object without a motive, this desire to give the object definite expression drives the artist by a long detour from the "literal" colouring of an object to the pure artistic aims. This brings us to the question of composition.

The pure artistic composition as seen from the problem of forms has two elements.

1. The composition of the whole picture.
2. the creation of the various forms which stand in different relationship to each other and subordinate themselves to the combination of the whole\*). Thus, many objects (real and possibly abstract) are subordinated to the dominating form in a painting, and are so altered as to fit themselves into this form, and create this form. Here the single form will have little personal meaning; it serves mainly the purpose of creating the major composition and should be mainly regarded as an element of this composite form. The single form is fashioned in no other way; aside from the major composition not because its own inner harmony implicitly demands it, but mostly because it is destined to serve as the building material of this composition. The first task, the composition of the entire

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beautifying of the organic form, but strong characterization through the omission of incidental details. For this reason, the tone and harmony created were of a purely personal character with a strong outer expression. The treatment and change of the organic form aims to uncover an inner sound. The organic form here no longer serves as direct object, but it is only an element of the divine message, which requires something human as it is directed from man to man.

\*) The general composition naturally consist of small compositions which outwardly may even appear antagonistic to each other and yet serve the great composition (in this case perhaps even this antagonism). These small compositions consist of individual forms and varied inner colouring.

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picture is followed as a definite aim\*).

The abstract idea in art is constantly creeping further into the foreground, although only yesterday it was hiding timidly and hardly visible behind the purely materialistic movement. This growth and final predominance of the abstract is natural.

The further the organic form is pushed into the background the further the abstract will automatically come to the foreground and increase in emphasis.

The remaining organic form, however, as previously stated, has its own inner tone and harmony, which may either be identical with the inner tone or harmony of the second component of the same form (the abstract element), a composition of the two elements; or it can be of a different nature (complicated, inharmonic combination). At any rate, the inner note of the organic form will be heard even though this organic form has been pushed into the background. For this reason, the choice of the material object is important. In the dual sound (spiritual accord) of the two component parts of the form, the organic one can sublimate the abstract one (as much by contrast as by similarity) or they may disturb each other. The object can only create a coincidental note, which, if replaced by another, will create no essential change of the basic note.

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\*) A good example of this is Cezanne's "Bathing Women," a composition in a triangle (the mystic triangle). Such buildup in geometric form is an old principle which was finally abandoned, because it led to stiff academic formulas which no longer possessed any inner sense or any soul. Cezanne's application of this principle gave it a new soul and the purely artistic purpose of the composition became particularly emphasized. In this case, the triangle is not an aid to harmony of the group but the accentuated artistic aim. Here, the geometric form is, at the same time, the means to the artistic composition; stress is laid on the purely artistic with strong accompaniment of abstraction. Therefore, Cezanne, with full justification, alters the human figure. He not only makes the entire figure point to the head of the triangle but also individual parts of the body are constantly driven, more and more strongly from the bottom to the top, as by an inner impulse. They become lighter and lighter until finally they expand visibly.

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Suppose a rhomboidal composition is made up of a number of human figures. We test them with our sense of feeling and inquire if the human figures are an absolute necessity to the composition, or could they be replaced by other organic forms in such a manner, that the fundamental harmony of the composition would not suffer. If the answer is yes, we have a case where the material appeal not only does not help the abstract conception but actually harms it. An indifferent note on the part of the object weakens the note of the abstract. This is not only logical but an actual artistic fact. In this case, therefore, another object, which is in better conformity with the abstract nature of the painting, (either through contrast or similarity), should be found, or the entire form should remain purely abstract. Here, we again bring to mind the example of the piano. For "colour" or "form" we substitute "object." Every object (irrespective of whether it was created direct by "nature or by human hand") is a being, which has its own life and, therefore, unavoidably its own appeal. Man is constantly subjected to this psychological appeal. Many results will remain in the "subconscious" (where they continue to be just as alive and creative). Many rise to the "super-conscious." Man can free himself from many of these, by closing his soul to them. "Nature," that is the constantly changing outer surroundings of man, sets in vibration the strings of the piano (soul) by manipulation of the keys (objects). This effect, which to us often seems chaotic, consists of three elements: the effect of the colour of the object, its form, and its combined colour and form.

At this point, the individuality of the artist comes to the fore and supercedes that of nature, as the artist disposes of these same three elements.

We arrive easily at the conclusion that the opportune is the decisive factor. It is clear, therefore, that this choice of object (one of the elements in the harmony of form) must be decided only by the corresponding vibration of the human soul.

Thus, the choice of the object originates from the principle of inner neces-

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sity. The freer the abstract form, the purer and more primitive is its appeal. In a composition, therefore, where the material side may be more or less superfluous, it can be accordingly more or less omitted and replaced by non-objective forms or through abstractions of de-materialized objects. In any case of translation into the abstract or the employment of non-objective forms, the artist's sole judge, guide, and principal consideration should be his feeling. Finally, the more abstractions the artist employs the more at home will he feel in the realm of the non-objective. Likewise the observer, led by artistic attainment to better knowledge of the language of the abstracted, finally, becomes fully conversant.

Confronted with the question, must we then utterly abandon everything material, pluck it out of our artistic storehouse, and throw it to the winds so as fully to reveal the purely abstract? This is the natural question, through which the harmonizing of the appeal of matter and the non-material, simultaneously gives us the answer.

As every spoken word (tree, sky, man) creates an inner vibration so does every object represented. Depriving oneself of these means causes an inner vibration, diminishing one's arsenal of expression-mediums. That, at any rate, is the case today, but besides today's answer, this question was settled by the eternal and immemorial answer which art gives to all questions, beginning with a "must." There is no "must" in art which is eternally free. From this "must" art flees as day shuns the night.

When contemplating the second problem of composition, the creation of the individual forms necessary to build the complete composition, it should be remembered that the same form in identical circumstances will always point to the same inner appeal. Only the circumstances are constantly varying, bringing about two results:

1. The ideal harmony changes in a composition according to its relation to other forms.
2. It also changes in the limits of its surroundings (so far as it is possible



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to retain them) when the direction of the form is changed \*). Automatically, this brings about a further result.

Nothing is absolute. Form-composition based on such relativity is dependent on: 1. The variability of a composition of forms; 2. The variability of each particular form down to the smallest.

Every form is as sensitive as a cloud of smoke. The slightest obvious change in each of its component parts alters it c o m p l e t e l y; in fact, it is perhaps easier to obtain the same note or harmony by means of various forms than by repetition of the same form. A truly exact repetition cannot be produced. As long as we are susceptible to the composition as a whole, this fact is mainly of theoretical importance. When we perceive a finer and stronger feeling through the use of the abstract forms, which will accept no material interpretation, this fact will gain more in practical significance. On one hand, the problems of art will increase. Yet, at the same time, the abundance of forms will grow, as the quantity and quality of form-expression increase. At the same time, the question of distortion in drawing will automatically be abandoned and replaced by another one of much higher artistic import. How far is the inner appeal of a particular form concealed and how far does it give full expression? This changed viewpoint will lead to further greater possibilities of expression because concealing or veiling plays an enormous part in art. The combination of the veiled and fully expressed will suggest a new possibility of "leit-motifs" in form composition.

Without similar development, the composition of forms would remain impossible. Anyone who cannot experience the inner appeal of form (the material and particularly the abstract) will always consider such composition exceedingly arbitrary. In this case, the aimless alterations in form arrangement on the surface appear as an empty play with forms. Once more we arrive at the same measure and principle, which we have thus far en-

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\*) This is called movement. For example, a triangle directed upwards has a quieter, more steadfast, stable appeal than the same triangle set obliquely on its side.

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countered everywhere and proved as the only one that is purely artistic, free of all that is unessential, the principle of the inner necessity.

When, for example, the features or parts of the body are changed or distorted for artistic reasons, we are confronted not only with the pure question of art in painting but also with anatomy, which hampers the work of painting and forces the artist's attention to the consideration of unimportant factors. In our case, however, everything unimportant is automatically dropped and only the essential remains, the artistic aim. The arbitrary, but in reality strictly directed possibilities of altering forms, is one of the sources of an endless array of purely artistic creations.

The adaptability of individual forms and their innermost organic variations, as well as their direction in the picture (movement); their inclination toward the material or to the abstract individual forms; the creation of the one dominant form amidst a group of forms; the compilation of the individual forms with the form groups creating the form of the entire picture; the principle of harmony or disharmony of all parts mentioned (i. e. the conjunction and juxtaposition of individual forms, the hindering of one form by another as well as the impulse, acceptance and disintegration of the individual form); identical treatment of various form groups combining the veiled and openly expressed appeals; the use of rhythmical or un-rhythmical treatments on the same surface; the combination of the abstract form as a pure geometric form (plain or involved) in forms beyond geometrical designation; the combination of continuity or repellence (either stronger or weaker); all these are elements which lead to the possibility of a purely artistic "counterpoint" and achieve this counterpoint. This will be the counterpoint in the art of black and white so long as colour is excluded.

Colour, which contains material for counterpoint combining endless possibilities, will, when combined with design, lead to the great artistic counterpoint, where painting will achieve composition and, as a truly pure art,

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will become a divine instrument. The same infallible guidance will carry it to the towering heights, the principle of inner necessity.

This inner necessity which consists of three mystical elements is brought about through three mystical ways:

1. Every artist, as a creator, has to express his own personality (element of personality).
2. Every artist, as a child of his age, is impelled to express the spirit of his age (element of style composed from the message of the epoch and the language of the nation, as long as the nation continues to exist).
3. Every artist, as a servant of art, is impelled to present art as such (element of pure, eternal art, which is constant among all people, nations and ages, and is evident in the works of every artist, every nation and every epoch, as the main element of art, irrespective of time and space).

It is necessary to penetrate these first two elements with the spiritual eye in order to visualize the third. Then, one will see that a "rudely" carved column of an Indian temple is an expression of the same spirit that inspires the most "modern" painting.

There has always been much talk of personality in art. One will hear discussed the subject of a coming style. Though these questions are of utmost importance, after a few hundred or thousand years, they will lose most of their importance and magnitude.

Only the third element, pure and eternal art, will remain forever. It does not lose its power with the passing of time; indeed, it constantly gains in strength. An Egyptian plastic probably moves us more today than its contemporaries, as it was too closely attached to them, in view of their knowledge of their period, and the personality of their times. Today, we hear about pure expression of eternal artistry. Similarly, the more a "modern

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work" has of the first two elements the easier, of course, it will find its way to the soul of its contemporaries. Furthermore, the more the third element exists in the modern work, the more the first will be submerged and the harder it will be for it, to find the way to the soul of its contemporaries. For this reason, it is sometimes necessary for many centuries to pass before the melody of the third element in the work of an artist betokens the greatness both of the work and of the artist.

These three mystic elements are the three necessary factors in a work of art, so closely connected with each other. Interwoven, they are the expression of that uniformity. In spite of this, the two former elements incorporate period and space, while in the pure and eternal artistry, which is beyond time and space, this creates a comparatively non-transparent shell. The process of development in art consists, so to speak, of the separation of the pure and eternal art from the element of personality as well as from the element of an epoch. Thus, these two elements, while cooperative, are equally retarding forces.

The personal and periodic style creates many precise forms in every epoch. In spite of the apparent major difference, they are so closely related organically that they can be designated as one single form; their inner sound is finally but one major chord.

These two elements are of a subjective nature. Every epoch strives to reflect itself, to express its life. Likewise, the artist wishes to express himself and chooses only those forms which are sympathetic to his soul.

Gradually, the style of the epoch shapes and takes on a certain exterior, subjective form. The pure and eternal art, on the other hand, is the objective element, which uses the subjective to become understood.

The unavoidable desire of the objective to express itself is the power which is here designated as inner necessity and which employs one generally subjective form today and another tomorrow. It is the constant,

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tireless lever, the spring which constantly drives "onward." The spirit moves on, and for this reason, today's inner laws of harmony are tomorrow's exterior laws which, in their further application, live through necessity which has become external. The inner spiritual power of art uses the form of today as a stepping stone to its progress.

In short, the working of the inner necessity and, therefore, the development of art is an ever advancing expression of the eternally objective in the temporary subjective. On the other hand, it is also fighting the subjective through the objective.

For example, the form recognized today, is a conquest of yesterday's inner necessity which, on a certain exterior level of liberation, has actually remained free. This present liberty was insured by strife and, as usual, appears to be "the last word" for many. The canon of this limited liberty is that an artist can use any form he wishes for his expression so long as he remains in touch with nature from which this form is derived. This requirement, however, as all its predecessors, is only temporary. It is the exterior expression of today's outer necessity. From the point of view of the inner necessity, such a limitation should not be made and the artist may restrict himself fully to the inner basis, which is deprived of the outer limitation, and which may, therefore, be defined as follows: the artist may employ any form to express himself.

Finally, we see (and this is of utmost importance for all times and particularly for "today") that a deliberate search for personality and style (and incidentally for the nation's element) is not only impossible but likewise does most certainly lack the great meaning, which today is attributed to it. We observe that the general relationship of art, which is not weakened by the passing of time, but constantly and progressively strengthened, is not an exterior relationship in outward form but is lodged in that mystic content of art. Clinging to a "school," searching for a "line of development," that insists on a work following certain "principles" and the means of expression of a period can only lead to misunderstanding, misconception,

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obscurity, and mutilation. The artist should be blind to the importance of "recognition" or "non-recognition" and deaf to the teachings and demands of the time. His eye should be directed to his inner life and his ear should harken to the words of the inner necessity. Then, he will resort with equal ease to every means and achieve his end.

This is the only way to express the mystic need.

All means are sacred when called upon by innermost necessity.

All means are a sin and lacking virtue, if they do not come from this source.

On the other hand, though we could weave infinite theories along these lines today, a detailed theory is premature. In art, theory never precedes practices. Here, everything particularly in the beginning is a matter of feeling. Only through feeling particularly in the beginning, is it possible to achieve what is artistically right. Though the general construction can be achieved in a purely theoretical manner, it is this feeling which remains the true soul of creation (and also its being) never conceived and never found by theory, only instilled into the creation spontaneously. Since art affects feeling, it can only be effective through feeling. The surest proportions, the most careful weighing and balancing will never bring about a proper result based on mental calculations and deduction. Such proportions cannot be figured out, and such scales cannot be ready-made \*).

They are not outside of the artist, but within him, and consist of what may also be termed a feeling of limitation and self restriction, an artistic tact, qualities which are inherent to the artist and which are increased through enthusiasm to ingenious revelation. This is the sense in which the basic

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\*) The many-sided genius Leonardo da Vinci devised a system of little spoons, with which various colours were used. It was to create a kind of mechanical harmony. One of his pupils tried in vain to use this system and after despairing, because of his lack of results, turned to one of his colleagues, with the question as to how the master himself used these spoons. "The master never uses them," answered the colleague. Merejkowsky "Leonardo da Vinci").

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fundamentals of painting, as foretold by Goethe, may be understood. Such a grammar of painting, at present, can be guessed at and should it ever be achieved, will not depend so much on physical means (which have been tried and are still tried today, "Cubism"), as the rules of the inner necessity, which we might well term the *necessaria* of the soul.

Thus, we see that at the basis of every small and great problem in painting there must be this inner necessity. The road along which we, most luckily, are moving today, leads away from the 'exterior,' \*) towards the opposite basis which is the main basis of inner necessity. The body is strengthened and developed by exercise; so is the spirit. As the neglected body grows weakened and impotent, so does the spirit. The feeling inherent to the artist is the talent, as spoken of in the Gospel, which should not be buried. The artist who does not utilize his gift is like the slave, who was worthless and lazy. For this reason, it is not only unimportant but absolutely essential for the artist to know the starting point for such exercises. This starting point, weighing the inner value of materials on the great objective scale, is, in our case, the examination of colour, which, on the whole, must equally have its effect upon all mankind.

It is, therefore, unnecessary to engage in the finer valuations of colour, for the elementary representation of simple colour will suffice.

Let us concentrate on isolated colour, that is letting individual

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\*) The term "exterior" should not be confused here with the term "material." I am using the former term only as a substitute for "outer necessity" which can never lead beyond the limits of the conventional, that is, traditional "beauty" only. The "inner necessity" does not know such limits and, for this reason, often creates results which are conventionally termed "ugly." "Ugly" is, therefore, only a conventional term which continues to lead a sham life long after the inner necessity (of an outgrown necessity, of which it is the result), has been superseded. At that time, everything was considered ugly if it was not connected with the inner necessity of the time, and anything so connected was termed beautiful. Everything, which appeals to the inner necessity is already beautiful by its virtue, and will be recognized sooner or later.

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colour work on us. A very simple method should be used, with the entire question condensed into as elementary a form as possible.

Two great divisions which come to mind are:

1. Warmth and cold of colour tonality.
2. Its valuation of light and dark.

Thus develop four main effects of each colour which can be, or

1. warm and equally I. light and II. dark, and again
2. cold with I. light, or 2 dark.

Generally speaking, warmth or cold in a colour is respectively an inclination towards yellow or blue. This distinction appears, as it were, on one surface, colour having the constant fundamental appeal but assuming either a more material or non-material quality. As it is a horizontal movement, the warm colours move on this horizontal surface towards the spectator striving to reach him while the cold ones retreat from him.

Colours themselves, which cause this horizontal movement in another colour, are equally characterized by this same movement. Yet, they possess still another movement, which strongly divides them from one another, through their inner appeal producing in this manner the first great contrast in the inner value. Therefore, the inclination of colour to cold or warm is of tremendous essential inner importance.

The second great contrast or antithesis is the difference between black and white, the colours which formulate the other two of the four main appeals, that is, the inclination of colour to light or to dark. They possess the same movement, to and from the spectator, although not in dynamic but static rigid form. (see Figure No. 1)

The second movement of yellow and blue, which forms part of the first great antithesis, is its eccentric and concentric movement \*). If two

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\*) All these statements are the result of spiritual experiences and are not based on any positive science.



# FIGURE I

First pair of antitheses: I and II

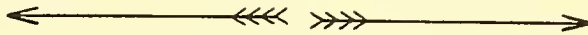
(Inner appeal acting upon the soul)

I Warm + Cold  
 Yellow + Blue

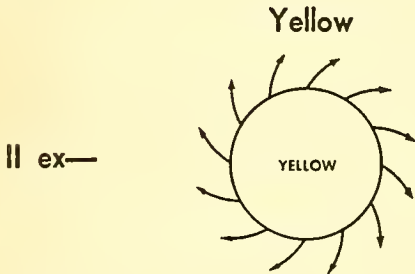
= First antithesis

2 movements:

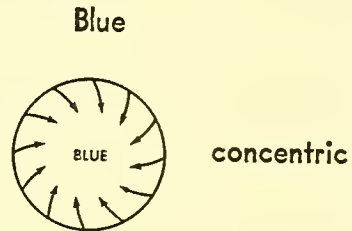
I horizontal  
 Towards  
 spectator  
 (corporal)



Away from  
 the (spectator)  
 spiritual



and



II Light + Dark  
 White + Black

= II Antithesis

Two movements:

I discordant

Eternal resistance but  
 with possibility (birth)

White

Black

Absolute lack of re-  
 sistance, devoid of  
 possibility (death)

II ex — and concentric, as in case of yellow and blue, but in rigid form

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circles of the same size are drawn and painted respectively yellow and blue, a brief concentration on these circles will reveal in the yellow a spreading movement outwards from the center which almost markedly approaches the spectator. The blue, on the other hand, develops a concentric movement (like a snail hiding in its shell) and moves away from the spectator. The eye is impressed by the first circle, while it is caught by the second.

This effect is emphasized in the case of light and dark colours; the effect of the yellow is increased when it is made lighter with an admixture of white. The effect of blue increases if the colour is darkened with an admixture of black. This fact gains in importance if we realize that yellow inclines to the light (white) to such an extent that there exists really no very dark yellow. There is, therefore, a deep relationship between white and yellow in the physical sense, just as there is between black and blue, blue being capable of such depth that it borders on black.

Besides this physical relationship, there is a spiritual one which, through its intensity, marks a strong division between the two pairs (yellow and white on one side, and blue and black on the other) leading to a close relationship between the two parts of each pair. (Further details will be found in a subsequent discussion on black and white).

An attempt to make yellow (typically warm colour) colder, produces a green tint immediately checking both movements (horizontal and eccentric). The colour receives a sickly, supersensuous character, as if a human being full of ambition and energy was checked in these ambitions or his vitality thwarted by outer circumstances. The blue by its contrary movement acts as a brake on the yellow and, finally, when more blue is added the two antithetic movements destroy each other, with complete quietude and immobility as the result. Thus, green is born.

This happens to white, when mixed with gray. White loses its permanence, and the gray finally imposes itself. In a spiritual sense, the latter is closely related to green. However, green contains yellow and blue as paralyzed

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forces which can be reactivated. It has a possibility of movement which is completely lacking in gray. It is so lacking because gray is formed of colours that have no purely active (moving) forces, as they consist, on the one hand, of motionless resistance and, on the other, of an immobility void of any power of resistance.

Since both component colours of green are active and have a movement all their own, it is possible to establish their spiritual appeal from the character of these movements. Likewise, if we experiment and allow the colours to influence us, we will arrive at the same results. As a matter of fact, the initial movement of yellow is the tendency to advance toward the spectator, which can be increased to a degree bordering on intrusion by increasing the intensity of yellow; and also, the second movement, spreading beyond the boundaries, the dispersion of the power into its surroundings are similar to the capacities of any material power which blindly assails an object to burst aimlessly in every direction. On the other hand, yellow, in any geometric form, if gazed at steadily, disturbs its observer, hurts him but also stimulates him. It displays all the characteristics of power expressed by a colour which finally carries an aggressive and insistent effect to the mind \*). This quality of yellow, which has a great inclination towards lighter colours, can be brought to a power and height unbearable to the eye and to the mind. When so intensified, it sounds like a shrill horn, blown constantly louder, or a high pitched flourish of trumpets \*\*).

Yellow is the typical earthly colour and never contains a profound meaning. With an intermixture of blue, it takes on a sickly

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\*) This is the effect of the yellow Bavarian letterbox, if it has not lost its original colour. It is interesting that the lemon is yellow (sour taste), the canary bird is yellow (shrill singing). Here, there is a particular intensity of the coloured tone.

\*\*\*) A parallel between the coloured and musical tones, can naturally be only relative, just as a violin gives very different tones which can be expressed by various instruments to reproduce the various shades. In making such parallels, the pure tone of colour and music is considered unvaried by vibration or damper, etc.

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colour. When compared with the frame of mind of some individual, it would be capable of the colour representation of madness — not melancholy or hypochondriacal mania but rather an attack of violent, raving lunacy. The mad man attacks other persons, smashes everything in his way, squanders his physical powers in all directions, uses them up without rhyme, reason or plan, until he has used them up completely. It is also akin to the utter waste when the last rays of summer strike the intense autumn leaves, deprived of the quieting blue which rises to the heavens. A very powerful colour is created, lacking all capacity of depth. This capacity of profound depth is found in blue and, theoretically, in all its physical movements: 1. retreating from the spectator; 2. moving towards its own center. The same applies, if we allow the blue (in any desired geometric form) to work on the mind. The inclination of blue to deepen is so strong that its inner appeal is stronger when its shade is deeper. The deeper the blue the more it beckons man into the infinite, arousing a longing for purity and the supersensuous. It is the colour of the heavens just as we imagine it, when we hear the word heaven.

Blue is the typical heavenly colour\*).

When very dark, blue develops an element of repose \*\*). When it sinks into black, it echoes a grief that is hardly human \*\*\*). It attains an endless,

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\*) . . . the halos are golden for emperors and prophets (that is for mortals), and sky-blue for symbolic figures (that is spiritual beings); Kondakoff, "Histoire de l'Art Byzantine, consideree principalement dans les miniatures," Paris 1886-1891, Vol. II, page 382).

\*\*\*) Unlike green, which as we shall see later, is earthly, self-satisfied repose of rather solemn, supernatural profoundness, this is to be understood literally. On the road to this "super" lies the "natural" which cannot be avoided. All the tortures, questions, contradictions of the earth must be experienced. None have avoided them. Here, too, there is this inner necessity which is covered by the outer. The realization of this necessity is the source of "repose." From such repose we are far removed. It is difficult to approach the realm of this predominantly spiritual blue.

\*\*\*) Also, different from violet.

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profound meaning sinking into the deep seriousness of all things where there is no end. Rising toward the light, a movement little suited to it, it takes on an indifferent character, growing more distant to men like the high, light blue of the sky. The lighter it is the weaker it becomes until it achieves a silent repose by becoming white. In music, light blue is like a flute, dark blue like a cello, and when still darker, it becomes a wonderful double bass. The deepest and most serene form of blue may be compared to the deep notes of an organ.

Yellow easily becomes acute and cannot attain deep significance. It is difficult for blue to become acute, as it is incapable of rising to great intensity.

An ideal balance in the mixture of these two diametrically and totally opposed colours is green.

The horizontal movements, movements from and towards the center, destroy and nullify each other. This results in repose, a logical conclusion. The direct effect, on the eye and through the eye upon the soul, achieves the same result. This is recognized by doctors, particularly oculists.

Absolute green, which is the most restful colour in existence, moves in no direction, has no corresponding appeal, such as joy, sorrow, or passion, demands nothing. This persistent lack of movement is a quality which has a quieting effect on the tired souls of men, though it becomes tiresome after a time. Pictures painted in shades of green confirm this statement. A picture painted in yellow will always exhale a spiritual warmth, or a blue painting appears cooling, (that is an active effect, because man, as an element of the universe, has been so created as to exercise constant, eternal movement). Green has a wearisome effect (passive effect). Passivity is the most characteristic quality of absolute green, carrying with it a certain emanation of this quality of richness and self satisfaction. For this reason, the absolute green in the realm of colour can be compared to the so-called bourgeoisie; it is an immovable, self-satisfied element, limited in every sense and, in many ways, resembling a fat, healthy, im-

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movably resting cow, capable only of eternal rumination, while dull bovine eyes gaze forth vacantly into the world \*).

Green, the colour of summer, comes to life after the winter months of storm and stress are left behind, and nature, the fabril activity and growth of springtime forgotten, sinks satisfied to rest. (See Figure No. 2).

When absolute green is brought out of balance, it rises to yellow and becomes alive, youthful, and gay. Through the dominance of yellow, an active power has reasserted itself. In the case of the dominance of blue, the green sinks deep and acquires an entirely different appeal by becoming grave, still, and contemplative. Here, an active element enters an entirely different character from the one affected, and adds warmth to the green.

Changing from light to dark, green retains its original character of equanimity and restfulness, the former increasing with the trend to lightness, the latter with the inclination to depth, all of which is quite natural because these changes are caused by black and white. In music, the absolute green is best represented by placid, long-drawn middle notes of a violin.

The latter two colours, black and white, have already been discussed in general terms. White is often considered as no colour, or a negation of colour, (thanks to the impressionists who see "no white in nature" \*\*).

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\*) This is also the effect of the much vaunted ideal gravity. How well Christ said this "You are neither cold nor warm. . ."

\*\*\*) In his letters, Van Gogh raises the question whether he may not paint a white wall dead white. This question which offers no difficulty for a non-representational artist, since he uses the colour as an inner harmony, appears as bold liberty against nature when viewed by an Impressionist, Naturalist painter. This question must appear just as revolutionary to the latter as the change of brown shadows to blue seemed previously, (the favorite example of "green sky and blue grass"). Just as in the latter case, the transition from Academism and Realism to Impressionism and Naturalism is recognizable, it is possible to detect in Van Gogh's question, the seed of "translation of nature." That is, the inclination not to represent nature as an exterior phenomenon, but to lay more stress on the element of inner impression, which was lately termed expression.

# FIGURE II

Second pair of antitheses

C and D

(Physical appeal of complimentary colours)

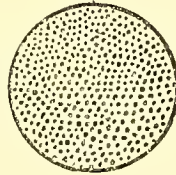
C. Red = Movement

Green

= Third antithesis  
The spiritually extinguished  
First antithesis

Motion within itself

= Potentiality of motion  
= Motionlessness



Red

Ex — and concentric movements are absent in optical blend  
In mechanical blend of white and black

= Grey  
= Grey

D. Orange

Violet

= Fourth antithesis

Arise out of the first antithesis from:

1. Active element of the yellow is red
2. Passive element of the blue in red

= Orange  
= Violet

ORANGE

YELLOW

RED

BLUE

VIOLET



In eccentric direction

Motion within itself

In concentric direction

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## THE LANGUAGE OF FORM AND COLOUR

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White is a symbol of a world from which all colour, as a material quality and substance, has disappeared. This world is so far above us that we cannot perceive any sound coming from it. There is a great silence which, graphically represented, appears to us as a formidable, indestructible wall, though infinitely cold, reaching up into eternity. For this reason, white affects us with the absoluteness of a great silence. It sounds inwardly and corresponds to some pauses in music, which, though temporarily interrupting the development of a melody, do not represent a definite end of the musical sequence. It is not a dead silence but one full of possibilities. The white has the appeal of silence which has suddenly become comprehensible. It is a 'blank,' infinitely young, a 'blank' which emphasizes the *B e g i n n i n g*, as yet unborn. Thus, probably, did the earth resound during the white period of the Ice Age.

Like a nothingness after sunset, *b l a c k s o u n d s* like an eternal silence, without future or hope. Represented in music, it is as a final pause, which precedes the beginning of another world, yet signifying a termination as the circle is completed. Black is something extinguished like a burned pyre, something immobile, corpse-like, which has no connection with any occurrences, and accessible to all things. It is like the silence of the body after death, the end of life. Outwardly, it is the least harmonious colour yet, for that reason, any other colour, even the weakest, will appear stronger and more precise in front of it while in the case of white all other colours are minimized in their appeal and some are dissolved completely and retain but a mute, weakened shadow of it\*).

For that reason, white is used to colour pure joy and infinite purity. Black is the robe of greatest, deepest sorrow and the symbol of death. A blend of these two colours, created mechanically, produces *G r e y*. Of course, a colour so created can offer no outer appeal or movement. Grey is with-

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\*) Vermilion rings dull and muddy against white, but against black it acquires a bright, pure, surprising power. Light yellow against white is weak; against black it is so strong, that it forsakes the background and plunges forward to strike you squarely in the eye.



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## THE LANGUAGE OF FORM AND COLOUR

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out appeal and immobile. This immobility, however, is of a different kind from the repose produced by green which lies between two active colours and is their product. Grey is, therefore, the immobility of desolation. The darker this grey becomes the greater the predominance of desolation, of suffocation. When lightened, the colour becomes lighter, airier breathing more freely as if in relief and with a new hidden hope. A similar grey is produced by an optical mingling of green and red which achieves a spiritual blend of passive self-satisfaction and a strong glow of activity \*).

Red, as we imagine it, as an endless typically warm colour, has an inner, highly vivid, lively, restless appeal, which, however, does not possess the irresponsible and self-dispersive character of yellow, and, in spite of all energy and intensity, it creates a strong note of almost tenacious immense power. It glows in itself and does not radiate much vigor outwardly, achieving a manly maturity (See Fig. No. 2). This ideal Red, in reality, endures great changes, deviations, and mutations. It is very rich and varies broadly in its material form. Think of the varieties of saturn red, vermilion, English red, rose-madder from the lightest to the darkest shades! This colour shows a possibility of adhering to the basic tone and still appearing characteristically either warm or cold \*\*). The light, warm red (saturn) has a certain similarity to medium yellow (as a pigment it also contains much yellow) and arouses the feeling of strength, energy, ambition, determination, joy, triumph (louder). In music, it sounds like a trumpet accompanied by the tuba, a persistent imposing, strong tone.

In its medium shades such as vermilion, red gains in the persistence of intense feeling; it is like a relentlessly glowing passion, a solid power within itself, which cannot easily be surpassed but which can be extinguished by

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\*) Grey—immobility and repose. Delacroix already sensed this and tried to create repose by mixing green and red (Sig. sup. cit.).

\*\*\*) Of course, every colour can be warm and cold but nowhere is this contrast so strong as in red. A wealth of inner possibilities!

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## THE LANGUAGE OF FORM AND COLOUR

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Blue, as glowing iron is put out by water. This red endures no cold, and through it loses in both sense and appeal. This forceful, tragic cooling-off creates a note which is today scorned and unjustly avoided by painters and insulted as "dirt," which as a material being, has its inner appeal like any other object. For this reason, the exclusion of dirt in painting today is just as one-sided and unjustified as yesterday's fear of "clean colour." It should never be forgotten that all means are clean, if they are created by an inner necessity. Here, what is outwardly dirty may be inwardly pure, and, on the other hand, the outwardly pure can be inwardly dirty.

Compared with yellow, saturn red and vermilion red are similar in character, but the appeal that reaches the spectator is much lower; this red glows but within itself, and the somewhat mad characteristics of yellow are almost completely lacking. It is probably more widely beloved than yellow. It is often used in primitive and traditional decorations and, also, in peasant costumes, because, in the open air, the complimentary colours to green are especially "beautiful." This red is very substantial and of a very active character as taken by itself and carries no deep appeal. This, also, applies to yellow. When it enters a higher sphere the appeal of red will be deepened, though it is dangerous to mix red with black because the dead black subdues the glow and reduces it to a minimum. This, however, brings about the unemotional, hard immovable Brown, in which the red sounds like a hardly audible simmering. Yet, out of this exterior, the soft sound develops one of forceful inner contrast.

Through the application of brown, an indescribably inner beauty is created, the delay. Vermilion now rings like a great horn and is comparable to the thunder of drums.

Like any basically cold colour, the cold red (such as madder) can be deepened through azure. It also changes its characteristics considerably; the feeling of deeper glow grows while the active element gradually disappears completely. On the other hand, this active motion is not as wholly absent in red as, for example, in deep green but gives vitality. Therein

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## THE LANGUAGE OF FORM AND COLOUR

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dwells the great difference between a deep red and a deep blue, because in red something of the material is invariably felt. It reminds us of an element of deep and middle tones, of the cello played 'con passione.' When lighted, the cold red gains in the material sense but only in the pure meaning of this word. It wounds like innocent, youthful joy, the glad innocence of a young girl. This picture can be easily expressed in music through the high, clear singing notes of a violin \*). This colour, intensified only by the mixture of white, is a colour well liked by young girls for clothes.

Warm red, intensified by yellow, produces O r a n g e. Through this admixture, the movement of the red becomes the nucleus of the impulse, spreading out towards the spectator. The element of red, which plays a great part in orange, retains the accompanying note of its usual gravity. It is like a human being, aware of his own power and emanating happiness and health. The appeal, exercised by this colour, is like a medium-sized church bell reminding one of a strong alto voice or the singing of alto violins.

As orange is red brought closer to humanity, so removing red through blue creates V i o l e t which has the tendency to move away from humanity. This basic red, however, must be cold because the warmth of red cannot be mixed with the cold of blue (regardless of procedure), something concerning the aspect of spirituality.

Violet, a cooled-red both in the physical and spiritual sense, possesses an element of frailty, expiring sadness. This colour is considered proper for dresses of older women, as the Chinese actually use it as the colour of mourning. It is similar to the sound of an English horn, the shepherd's flute, or the deep, low tone of wood instruments (for example, a bassoon \*\*).

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\*) Pure, happy, often consecutive, tones of small bells (also, bells worn by horses) in Russian are termed to have a "raspberry" note. The colour of raspberry juice is similar to this described light and cold red.

\*\*\*) Among artists the question, "how are you?" is often jokingly answered, "very violet," which presupposes nothing good.

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The last mentioned colours, composed of a mixture of red with yellow or blue, have a rather inflexible balance. Inclination for loss of balance becomes evident when colours are mixed. We have the feeling of a tight-rope dancer who must watch his equilibrium. Where does the orange begin and yellow or red cease? Where is the borderline of this violet which so definitely divides it from the red or blue? \*) The last two characterized colours (orange and violet) are the primary f o u r t h and last c o n t r a s t in the realm of primitive tonalities. Physically, they stand to each other in the same relation as the third antitheses (red and green) that is, as complementary colours (See Fig. No. 2).

As a great circle, or a serpent biting its own tail, (the symbol of eternity and endlessness) these six colours stand before us, while forming the main antitheses of three pairs. To the right and left stand two great possibilities of silence, death and birth (See Fig. No. 3).

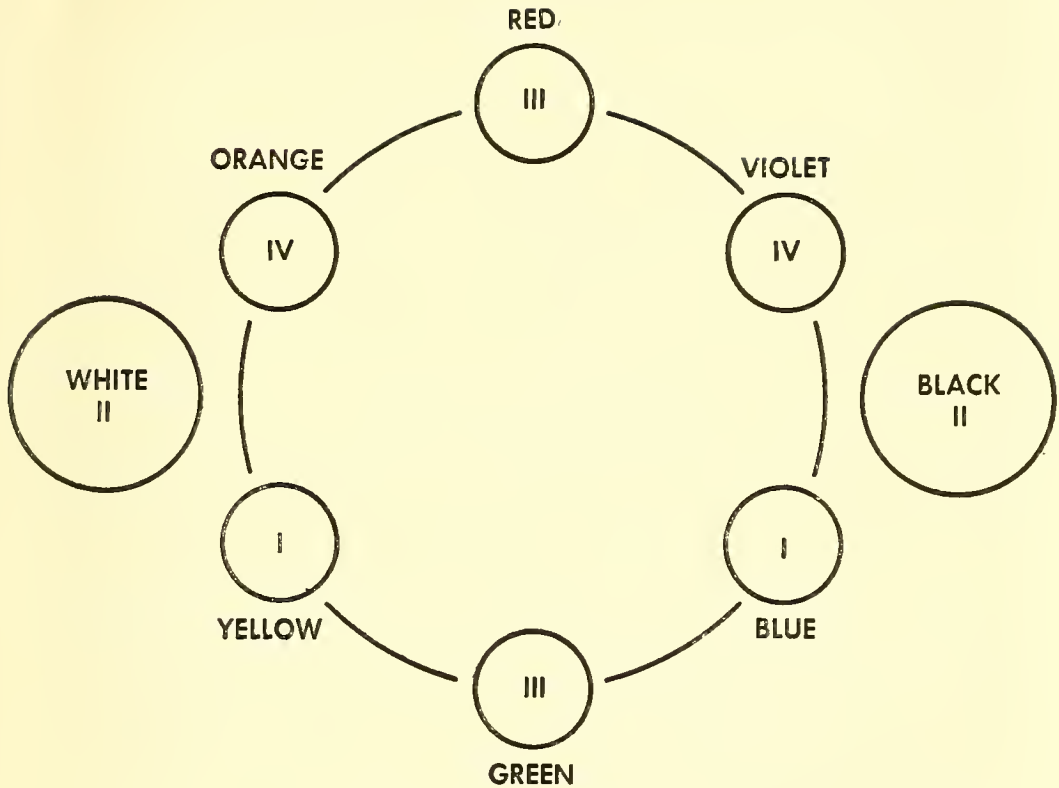
All I have said of these simple colours is very provisional and coarse. These feelings quoted as parallels to these colours (such as joy, sorrow) express the material conditions of the soul. Variations of colour, like those of music, are of a much subtler nature, and awaken in the soul much finer vibrations than words could.

Finally, each tone will certainly find some expression in the spoken word which must remain incomplete, not merely as an unimportant shading but rather as its innermost essence. Therefore, words remain more or less hints, rather than superficial indications of colour. In this impossibility to express the essential of colours in words or by other means lies the possibility of monumental art. Among many rich and various combinations will be found one precisely based on such a possibility. The same inner sound, can be achieved simultaneously through various art expressions. Yet, each art, while contributing its individual characteristics to the artistic

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\*) The violet also has an inclination towards lilac. When does the one begin and the other end?

**FIGURE III**



The antitheses as a circle between two poles, the life of primary colours between birth and death.

The roman numbers designate the pairs of antitheses.

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unit, adds a different power to the general result, which cannot be achieved by any one single art alone.

What inharmoniousness exists, that parallels the harmonious in depth, what infinite combinations between the various expressions, through the predominance of one art upon the other is possible can become evident to anyone.

Opinion is often expressed that the possibility of replacing one art by another (for example, by the spoken word or by literature) amounts to a denial of the essential differences between the expressions of Art. This, however, is not the case. As stated, absolute repetition of the same sound can not be achieved by these various art expressions. Yet, should this be the case, such repetition of sound would differ, at least, in outer colouring. Even, if this were not the case (suppose a repetition of the same appeal by various art would provoke exactly the same appeal outwardly and inwardly) such a repetition would still not be superfluous, because different people incline towards different forms of art, (actively or passively), which means as senders or receivers of the sound. Yet, were it not so, the repetition would still not become meaningless. Repetition of identical sounds and their gradual accumulation intensifies the spiritual atmosphere in its finest essence, to deepen emotions much in the same way, as the atmosphere of a hothouse enables the ripening of fruit. One could compare it with an individual, who receives a powerful impression from some constant repetitious action, thought, or feeling, even though he is hardly capable of absorbing the different actions as a heavy material would absorb the first rain drops\*).

This almost tangible example, however, should not serve to portray a spiritual atmosphere which, like air, can be either pure or replete with many alien elements. It contains not only the actions, which everyone observes but thoughts and feelings which may possess outward expression and those totally concealed actions, which "no one knows," unspoken thoughts, unex-

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\*) Outwardly, this idea of repetition is the fundamental basis of advertising.

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## THE LANGUAGE OF FORM AND COLOUR

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pressed feelings (that is, actions within a person). All these are the elements which create the spiritual atmosphere. Suicides, murders, acts of violence, low and unworthy thoughts, hate, hostility, egotism, envy, "patriotism," partisanship are all spiritual elements, of spiritual beings creating this atmosphere.\*) Conversely, self-sacrifice, helpfulness, pure and lofty thoughts, love's altruism, joy for happiness of others, humanity, or justice are elements which destroy the negative elements, as the sun destroys the microbes in restoring purity to the atmosphere\*\*).

The second, more complicated, form of repetition, is that in which different elements participate in different forms. In our case of different art expressions (summed up—the monumental art), this form of repetition is even more powerful, because the different natures of men react differently to various means. For some, the musical form, appealing to almost anyone, is the most impressive and moving; for others, it is painting; still others, it is literature. Apart from this, the powers hidden in the various art expressions are basically different, so that they intensify the result achieved in each person, even though each art may be working separately.

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This hard to define effect of individual colour is the reason why different values harmonize. Paintings, like artistically designed furniture and furnishings, are kept in a certain local tone according to artistic reaction. The penetration of one coloured shade, the combination of two adjacent colours, by mutual admixture, is the basis on which the colour harmony is built. Still, living in a time of many problems and questions, of presentiments and interpretations full of contradictions (reference is made to the various segments of the triangle), we reach the conclusion that for har-

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\*) There are periods of suicides, warlike alienations. War and revolution (the latter less than the former) are products of such an atmosphere which is further contaminated by such outbursts. "With the measure with which thou measurest thou shalt be measured!"

\*\*\*) Also, history knows such periods. No greater period than that of Christianity, which drew the weakest into its strife. Even the atmosphere of war and revolution contains such elements, which revitalize through spiritual counteraction.

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mony, concerning the reaction to individual colour, our age is particularly unsuited. Perhaps, envious with a certain mournful sympathy, we listen to the music of Mozart, a welcome relaxation from the turmoil of our innermost existence, a consolation and hope, yet only the past echo of another age, and fundamentally strange. The contrast of tonalities, loss of balance, dying "principles," like the unexpected beat of a drum, weighty questions, aimless strife, lost impulses and longings, severed chains or ties, the antitheses and contradictions comprise the harmony of our day. The composition based on this harmony is a compilation of forms in colour design, which each develops from their existence through inner necessity, blended into a mutual entity called a picture.

Only these individual parts are vital. Everything else, that is, the retention of objective elements, is unessential. The rest only is an accompaniment. Derived from it logically are the combination of two colour tonalities with each other. With the same principle of anti-logic, colours are now combined which were once considered discordant. For instance, red and blue side by side, which as colours have no physical relationship, yet achieve the strongest effect through their great spiritual contrast, which is our day's choice of harmony, relying on the principle of contrast, a most important principle in art at all times. Our contrast is an inner contrast, which stands by itself and excludes any assistance (as disturbing and superfluous) of other harmonizing principles.

This combination of red and blue, equally beloved by the primitives (medieval Germans, Italians, and others) has still survived today, especially in the popular form of religious wood-cuts \*). Often in such paintings or coloured plastics, with the Virgin wearing a red gown under a blue cloak, it seems the artist wishes to express the grace of heaven, descending upon an earthly being; by submerging the human through the divine.

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\*) With many colourful excuses, this combination was used by Frank Brangwin in his early paintings.



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## THE LANGUAGE OF FORM AND COLOUR

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This definition of our harmony logically proves the inner necessity which "today" particularly requires a vast arsenal in possibilities of expression.

Acknowledged or disproved combinations, the collisions of different colours, the extinguishing of one colour by another or many colours by one, the evolution of one from the other, the precise location of the colour spot, the dissolution of one or many, marked boundaries to dissolve colours, their over-flow of such binding design, the mingling, a sharp separation, open infinities of purely artistic (colour) possibilities.

A departure from the objective, and one of the first steps into the realm of abstraction was, (to use a technical, artistic term), the rejection of the third dimension, the attempt to keep a "picture" on a single plane as a painting. Modeling was abandoned and the material object, for the first time, became abstract, representing an advancement. With the immediate result of condensing the possibilities of a painting to one definite piece of canvas, and with this to the material part of the painting, it has curtailed its possibilities.

The attempt to free oneself from this material side and its limitations, together with the striving for composition, naturally lead to a renunciation of one single surface. An effort was made to bring the painting out on an ideal surface which projects itself in front of the material surface of the canvas \*). Thus, there has arisen out of the composition with flat triangles one with plastic three dimensional triangles, that is, with pyramids (the so-called Cubism). Very soon there arose the tendency to inertia which concentrated on this particular form and led to an impoverishment of possibilities. That is the unavoidable result of the external application of any principle born by inner necessity.

In this very important case, there are also other means of retaining the material surface while creating an ideal one, and establishing the latter

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\*) For example, see the article by Le Fauconnier in the Catalogue for the II Exhibit of the "Neue Kuenstlervereinigung," Munich, 1910-1911.

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not only as a flatness, but also utilizing it as a three-dimensional space. Already the thinness or thickness of a line or, placing the form upon the surface, or the over-lapping of one form by another, will suffice as examples of artistic means that may be employed in using the space. Similar means are offered by colour, which, when properly used, can advance or retreat, urge forward or backward and can make a living entity of the picture, thus achieving an artistic expansion of space.

The combination of both means of extension, in the counterpoint of tonality, is one of the richest and mightiest elements of design and colour composition.



## VII THEORY

Due to the nature of our modern conception of harmony, it follows that, at no time, has it been more difficult to formulate a complete theory\*) or to lay down a firm artistic general basis, than it is today. Such attempts

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\*) Such attempts were made. Here we owe much to the parallel with music, for example, "Tendances Nouvelles," No. 35, Henri Ravel—"The laws of harmony for painting and music are the same." p. 721.

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## THEORY

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would equal results as the previously cited case of Leonardo da Vinci's little spoons. Claiming there could not be any definite rules in painting; or principles considered as a general basis; or saying this would inevitably lead to academism would be too hasty. Even music has its grammar which, like all living things, changes with the passing of time and, yet, on the other hand, can be continuously used as a valuable aid, more or less as one uses a dictionary.

Painting today, however, is in a different position; its e m a n c i p a t i o n from a direct dependency on nature is in its very first stages. When colour and form were used as inner agents, this was done subconsciously. The subjection of a composition to geometric form was already employed in ancient art, for example, by the Persians. However, building on a purely spiritual basis is a tedious process, which, at first, begins rather blindly and aimlessly. Here, the painter must train not only his eye but also his soul, so that he learns to weigh colour not only by perceiving exterior impressions or some times inward ones, but also by utilizing it as definite power in his creations.

If we were to begin to sever the bonds which bind us to nature, striving to achieve freedom by force, devote ourselves exclusively to combination of pure colour and absolute form, we would produce works of equal artistic value as geometric ornamentation on neck ties or carpets. Beauty of form and colour: (despite the assertion of such pure aesthetics and even naturalists, who mainly claim "beauty" is not a sufficient goal in art.) Because of the elementary stage painting has attained today, we are not yet fully able to grasp the inner appeal of a truly emancipated colour and form composition.) The nerve-vibration may be there, (such as we would experience in applied art), but it goes no further than the nerves, because the corresponding vibrations of the spirit and appeal to the soul are too weak to be felt. However, a spiritual turn is speeding us on almost violently, even sweeping off that "supremely firm" basis of human spiritual life, called positive science, now opening the doors to the dissolution of

matter equally it can be said that only a few "hours" separate us from this absolute composition.

As a being, not entirely lifeless, ornamentation has its inner life which either is no longer comprehensible to us (ancient) or mere illogical confusion, as a world in which grown men and embryos are treated on an equal basis to play the same social role, where beings deprived of limbs are on the same plane as isolated noses, toes and navels. The confusion is similar to that of a kaleidoscope \*) where the material coincidence but not the spirit is the originator. Yet, despite our lack of understanding and inability to comprehend, ornamentation has its effect on us \*\*). Oriental ornamentation is essentially different from the Swedish, Negro, or ancient Greeks. Generally, not without reason, patterns are described as gay, serious, sad, lively by using musical terms such as allegro, serioso, grave, vivace. While ornamentation may have had its start through nature, its motives have been taken from meadows or forests. Assuming no other source than visible nature was used, natural objects and colours were treated not externally but symbolically. For this reason, they gradually became incomprehensible, no longer deciphering their real value. A Chinese dragon, for example, which, in its ornamental form, has retained much of its original object, has so little effect on us, that we can as easily bear it in our dining rooms or bedrooms as a doily embroidered with daisies. Toward the close of the epoch now beginning, a new art craft of ornamentation may develop, but it will hardly consist of geometrical forms. However, an attempt today to force ornamentation would be like hastening a bud by pulling its petals apart.

As we are still tightly bound to nature's exterior, we find our forms there. The entire question is how may we accomplish this? How far does our liberty permit us to alter these forms, and what colours may we com-

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\*) This confusion, of course, is also as precise as life though from another sphere.

\*\*\*) The world just described is a world with its own definite inner harmony, which, in principle, is a basic necessity and offers some possibilities.

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## THEORY

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bine? This may go as far as the feeling of the artist goes. From this viewpoint, we can recognize the endless necessity of cultivating such feeling.

A few examples will answer the second part of this question. The warm red, always stimulating when individually observed, will alter materially its inner value when no longer isolated, remaining as something abstract tonality when used as an element its own through combination with a natural form. Uniting red with various natural forms will result in different spiritual effects, which, in spite of the isolated value of red, will retain a relative sound. Let us combine this red with the sky, flowers, a dress, face, horse, or tree. A red sky suggesting a sunset, a fire, creates a so-called "natural" reaction, solemn if not threatening. Of course, the manner in which other objects are combined with this red sky, is of consequence. Should the treatment be faithful to nature and combined with colours true to nature, the naturalistic appeal of the sky is even greater. If, however, the other objects be removed from nature, they can weaken, if not destroy, the "naturalistic" impression of such sky. Much the same applies to the use of red for a face, as an expression of emotional irritation on the part of the painted figure, or explained by certain lighting. Any such effect can be destroyed only by extreme abstraction in the rest of the picture.

On the other hand, red in a garment is quite a different matter, since a garment can be of any desired colour. Such a red, however, supplies a pictorial asset, since it has no direct association to any materialistic aims. However, a mutual effect is created here in the combination of the red of the dress, as of the figure.

If, for example, the tone of the entire painting is melancholy and its tonality concentrated on the red-cloaked figure by the position of the figure's composition, its movement, facial expression, posture of head, or colour of face, then the red of the dress creates a mental discord and emphasizes a certain sadness evolving from the painting and, in particular, from the main character. Use of another colour, in itself sad, would certainly weaken

the effect by diminishing the dramatic element \*). Again, we have the previous example of the antithesis. The dramatic element here is created by the inclusion of red in the entire melancholy composition, because red, once fully isolated, that is, reflected on the silent mirror of the soul, cannot have a sad effect on the observer \*\*).

It is different when the same red is used for a tree. The fundamental tonality of red in cases mentioned remains the same. The association of autumn creeps in ("autumn" as a spiritual conception, real, abstract, non-objective or objective). The colour fully combines with the object, and continues as an isolated element, without any such dramatic clash, as in the case of the red garment.

Still, a red horse provides an entirely different case. Even the sound of these words projects us into another atmosphere. The utter impossibility of a red horse, if placed before us, demands an equally unnatural background. Otherwise, the entire effect can be taken for a freak (superficial and completely inartistic) or as a clumsy fairy-tale \*\*\*), that is, a freak originated by a purpose through an inner, artistic appeal. A plain, naturalistic landscape, and anatomically-drawn figures would be too great a discord if combined with such a horse; all appeal as well as coherence destroyed. Consequently, there would be no possibility of combining the two. What is understood by this "dependency" or what it might be, is evident from a definition of modern harmony. Therefore, it is possible to divide the surfaces and build up all sorts of exterior relationships, while the inner freedom will still remain the same. The elements of the pic-

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\*) It must be clearly emphasized, that all such cases are considered only as schematic values. All this is conventional and can be altered through the great effect of the composition as easily, by changing one line. Such possibilities are infinite.

\*\*\*) Expressions such as "sad," "joyful," are very superficial and serve only as guides to finer non-objective spiritual vibrations.

\*\*\*\*) If the fairy-tale is not exactly and fully "translated," its effect is similar to that of a cinematographic film of a fairy-tale.

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ture's construction are not derived from superficial ties but from its inner necessity. In such cases, the observer is only too eager to detect a "meaning," found in the outer connection, between the component parts of a picture. Again, the materialistic period of our entire life as a whole, as in art, arrived in educating the spectator to face a picture for its own sake (particularly if he is connoisseur of art) and to note all sorts of things in the search of imitations of nature, nature seen through the artist's temperament, sentimentality, "painting," anatomy, perspective, exterior sentiment. He does not even attempt to feel the inner life of the picture itself, or allow it to exercise any direct effect on him. Blinded by technical skill, his spiritual eye does not discern the deeper message through such a medium. When we carry on a conversation with a scintillating person, we endeavor to peer into his soul, we search for his inner being, probe his thoughts and feelings. We do not remind ourselves that his words consist of letters; the letters are simply a collection of suitable sounds and their pronunciation requires inhaling air into the lungs (anatomical detail) followed by exhaling, as well as certain movements and contortions of the tongue, lips, and other parts. This, in turn, causes vibration of the air (physics) which then through our ear-drum reaches our consciousness (psychological sequence) affecting our nerves (physiology). We know, that all these things are unimportant aspects of our conversation, that they are coincidental and represent the exterior means, while the truly important part in conversation is conveying ideas, feelings, and emotions. We should observe a painting with the same valuation in mind and receive a direct absolute effect from the work of art. When the possibility of speaking through artistic means will be developed, it will become superfluous to borrow forms from the exterior world for spiritual expression, while today this offers us a possibility, by using form and colour and will enable us to increase or decrease their inner value. The contrast (such as the red garment in the sad composition) can have an infinitely strong effect but must remain, in its entirety, on one and the same moral plane.

However, the existence of this plane does not entirely solve the problem



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of colour. The "unnaturalistic" objects and their colours may achieve a literary appeal, in which case the composition assumes the effect of a fairy-tale. This result imposes upon the spectator an atmosphere which he accepts, because it is magical, and in which he proceeds: 1. to search for the fable, 2. to become unsusceptible, or scarcely susceptible to the effectiveness of the colour's inner appeal. In any event, a primary reaction to colour is no longer possible. The exterior outweighs it by far. Man, in general, avoids depth of thinking by preferring things requiring less exertion. In fact, there is "nothing deeper than superficiality," though it is the depth of the swamp. No other artist's skill is accepted so readily as plastic make-believe. Once the observer believes himself to be in a fairy-land no sooner does his soul become immune to any strong vibrations. Thus, the real aim of a work of art is void. Therefore, a form is needed, which, at once, excludes a fairy-tale's effect \*), and, secondly, in no way, restricts the power of colour. Form, movement, and colour, taken from nature (realistic or not), must not avoid an outward effect or any hindrance, which an objective narrative dominates. The less the movement is motivated externally or intellectually, the purer, deeper, and more spiritual will become its effect.

. . . . .

A simple movement whose purpose is known reveals itself as mysterious and solemn. Yet, as long as we do not know the practical purpose of this, its effect is harmonious. A simple, mutual task has an obscure, dramatic, and overpowering effect as though we are contemplating a vision of life on a different plane, until suddenly the magic disappears and the practical fulfillment of the intended task hits us. An unmotivated movement carries tremendous possibilities. Such scenes strike us, when we are absorbed in abstract thoughts. They transfer our thoughts from the practical, mundane affairs of life. Therefore, the observation of such movements outside the circle of practical evidence is possible. However, no sooner do we

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\*) This struggle with magic reminds one of the struggle with nature. How easily against the colour composer's wish, "nature" forces its way into his work, as it is easier, by far, to paint nature than to fight its dominance.

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ponder about the impossibility of anything inexplicable may occur in our streets, our interest in movement immediately disappears. The realization of the practical purpose of the movement destroys its abstract appeal.

On this principle, the "new dance" should and will be built as the only means of giving importance and inner meaning of motion, in terms of time and space. The origin of the dance is of a sexual nature. We detect these elements in folk dances, still the necessity, of utilizing dances for religious ceremonies (means of inspiration) remains on the surface in the exploration of movement. Gradually, these two practical utilizations became enriched with an artistic note, which had developed through the centuries, ending with ballet movements. Today this language is comprehensible to a few, while losing more and more in clarity. Aside from this, it is far too naive for the coming times, since it only serves the expression of material feelings such as love and fear; therefore, it must be replaced by another, which is capable of arousing finer spiritual vibrations. For this reason, the dance reformers of our time turned their thoughts to past form expressions, where they continue to seek aid. Thus, Isadora Duncan used the Greek dance as a basis for the interpretative dance of the future. This happened for the same reason that motivated the painters in seeking aid from the Primitives. Of course, in painting as in the dance, this was a transitional period. In creating our new dances, the very same law of implicit utilization of the inner sense of movement, as the main element of dancing, will be effective. Too, the conventional beauty of movement must be overthrown, and the "natural" process (narrative—literary element) must be abandoned as useless and ultimately disturbing. As no "dissonant notes" exist in music, nor in painting "inharmony," in these two art expressions every sound, whether harmony or discord, is beautiful (appropriate), if it results from inner need. The inner value of each and every movement will soon be felt, as the inner beauty replaces the sensuous aspect. Thus, "ugly" movements suddenly appear beautiful, from which an undreamed power and vital force will burst forth instantly. This will start the dance of the future.

The dance of the future, which is placed on one level with present day's music and painting, then attains the ability to create stage composition as a third element, becoming the first creation of the monumental art.

The stage composition will consist of the following three elements:

1. Musical movement
2. Pictorial movement
3. Artistic dance movement

Regarding pictorial composition, anyone will understand the triple effect of the inner movement (stage composition). As the two main elements in painting (design and painted form, each leading an independent existence and expressed through their individual, personal means,) combine these elements with their many qualities and possibilities, the composition in painting is created, in such a manner that on the stage it uses the three mentioned effects, to make the counterpoint of movement possible.

As previously mentioned, Scriabine's attempt to intensify the effect of the musical tone through the effect of the corresponding colour tone is, of course, an elementary attempt presenting one possibility. Besides the harmony of two or three elements in stage composition, the counter play of alternating effects in the use of various elements, or presentation of the single individuality of the exterior completion of each element, may be employed. The latter technique has been applied by Arnold Schoenberg in his Quartettes.

There we may realize the inner harmony's gain in power and significance, when outward harmony is used in the sense of contrast. Imagine the happiness in a world with three such mighty elements which serve creative aim. Yet, I am forced to refrain from further development of this important idea. By applying the principle used in painting the visionary eye will automatically realize the happy stage of the future. The tortuous roads in this new realm may enmesh the pioneer, take him through dark primeval

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## THEORY

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forests, amidst bottomless chasms, past mighty precipices, up to snow clad heights, but with it all, unerringly the guide leads to the principles of inner need.

Concerning our previous research for comparison in the application of colour, or the necessity and importance of natural forms with colour demonstrating tonal effect, it can be derived:

1. Where lies the road to painting
2. How to follow this road in general principle.

The path lies between two possibilities, equally dangerous. For one, the entirely abstracted use of colour in geometrical form (ornamentive), and second, the more realistic but paralyzed use of colour (phantasy). There exists a possibility of over-stepping the right border as well as the danger of over-reaching in the opposite direction. Behind these border-lines, and leaving behind schematic theory, we find, to the right, the absolute a b s t r a c t i o n (further than any geometric form), and, to the left, intense r e a l i s m (phantasy in its sharpest materialistic sense). Between these two lies the boundless freedom, depth, width, and wealth of possibility in the field of pure abstraction and absolute realism. Ours is the day of liberty only conceivable at times in the rise of a great epoch \*). At the same time, this freedom is one of the greatest dependencies because all these possibilities between the boarders develop from the same root, the persistent cry of the inner necessity (or the need for entering the cosmic law).

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\*) In connection with this question, see my article "On the Problem of Form" in the "Blaue Reiter" (publishers R. Piper & Co., 1912). Starting with the work of Henri Rousseau, we prove that the coming realism is not only equivalent, but even identical, with abstraction, the realism of the visionary.

That art is above nature is certainly no new discovery \*). New principles do not fall from heaven but are connected with the past and future. At present, what is the position of the principle and where will it get us tomorrow? Such a principle, repeated over and over, should never be used forcibly. If the artist tunes his soul to this note, his work will resound its echo. "Emancipation" is born of inner necessity, which, as already mentioned, is the spiritual power behind the objective creation of art. The intention of art manifests itself today with a forceful intensity. That is to say, present-day forms are dissolved to express the objective more clearly. As natural forms create boundaries, they often constitute an impediment to expression. Therefore, the objective in the form must be set aside to free the space for the purpose of constructing the composition. This explains the general impulse to develop the constructive forms of the epoch. Cubism, as one of the transitory stages, has often demonstrated how natural forms are dissolved for constructive purposes and what unessential obstacles these realistic forms are in presenting themselves.

The general revelation of construction seems to be the sole possibility of expressing the form beyond the objective inspiration. However, if we bear in mind how modern harmony has been defined in this book, we recognize the spirit of our time in the realm of construction, not as a clear

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\*) Literature has particularly, and since long ago, expressed this principle. Goethe, for example, says: "The artist with a free spirit stands above nature and can treat it according to his higher aims. He is its master and slave at the same time. He is its slave insofar as he has to operate with earthly means in order to be understood. It is his master, however, insofar as he subjects these earthly means to his higher intentions and utilizes them for this purpose. The artist wants to speak to the world through an entity: He does not find this entity in nature but rather as the fruit of his own spirit, or, if we wish to express it thus, in the breath born of divine power." (Karl Heinemann, Goethe, 1899, page 684). In our time, Oscar Wilde: "Art Begins Where Nature Ends." (De Profundis). Also, painters, often use such ideas. Delacroix, for instance, says that nature is only a dictionary for the artist and "realism should be defined as the antipode of art." (My Diary, page 246, Bruno Cassierer, publisher, Berlin, 1903).

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## THEORY

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"geometric" construction, which is immediately noticeable, rich in possibilities and expressive, but as an inscrutable one, which inadvertently lifts itself beyond the painting; and which, therefore, is meant less for the eye than for the soul. This hidden construction may arise from an incidental selection of forms displayed on a canvas, as the forms have no connection with one another. The external lack of connection here constitutes its internal existence. What is loosened externally is here consolidated inwardly. This continues to apply equally to both elements in designed or painted form.

This is the future of counterpoint in painting. Somehow, the related forms in their final analysis have a great and precise relation to each other. Finally, this relation can be expressed in a mathematical form, as the irregular rather than the regular figures seem to count. The figurative remains as the final abstract expression in any art.

This objective element demands the cooperative power of reason in the conscious objective knowledge of the artistic basis of counterpoint in painting. This objective will give the creative work of today the possibility in the future, to proclaim "I am" instead of "I was."



## VIII

# ART AND ARTISTS

In an obscure and puzzling way, the artist develops a work of art. As it gains a life of its own, it becomes an entity, an independent spiritual life, which as a being, leads the life of material realism. It is, therefore, not simply a phenomenon created casually and inconsequentially indifferent to spiritual life. Instead as a living being, it possesses creative active forces. It lives, has power, and actively forms the above-mentioned spiritual atmosphere. From an innermost point of view, the question finally should be answered as to whether creation is strong or weak. If too weak in its form, it is impotent to cause any kind of spiritual vibration \*).

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\*) The so-called "indecent" works are either incapable of causing a spiritual vibration (in which case, according to our definition they are not artistic), or they do cause a spiritual vibration, if, in some way, they possess the proper form. Then, their result is "good." If, however, aside from this spiritual vibration, they create a purely bodily vibration of lower taste (as we term it today), we should conclude that it is the work which should be spurned, instead of the person, who reacts to such low vibrations.





Painting as an art is not some vague projection into space but a power, so strong and full of purpose that it serves the refinement of the soul, (the movement of the triangle). It is its language which speaks to the soul.

If artists avert this task, a chasm remains unbridged, and there is no power entitled to take the place of art \*). Inevitably, while the human soul will gain in strength, art too will increase its vitality since both are inextricably connected and complimentary to each other. Periodically, when the soul suffocates, downridden by the intrusion of materialistic disbelief and low ambitions, there promptly arises the fallacy that "pure" art is not bestowed upon man for special purposes but purposelessly exists only as "art for art's sake," ("L'art pour l'art")\*\*). Thus, the bond between art and the soul is drugged into unconsciousness. In this case, retribution follows swiftly, as the artist and the spectator (whose bonds are purely spiritual) cease to comprehend each other and the spectator turns his back on the artist, who is admired merely for his skill and inventiveness.

In such an event, the artist should modify his position by recognizing his duty towards art and towards his spiritual self, in finding himself not only the master of a situation, but a servant of the highest whose duties are precise, great, and holy. He develops and searches his innermost soul and molds it into an entity.

The artist should have a message to convey; mere mastery of form should not be his goal, but rather the adaptation of form to inner contentment \*\*\*).

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\*) This chasm can easily be filled with poisonous pestilence.

\*\*\*) This opinion is an unconscious protest against materialism, which demands that everything be practical and have a purpose. It proves the strength and permanence of art and of the human soul, eternal and eternally alive, which can be bent but not broken, stunned but never destroyed.

\*\*\*) I speak here of the evolution of the soul, not forcibly endowing every work of art

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## ART AND ARTISTS

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The artist is not born to a life of ease and pleasure, with the right to live idly avoiding all arduous duty. Seriously, he performs a task which can prove to be his cross. Every deed, feeling, and thought form the untouchable, solid material from which his work emanates. For that reason, his freedom is not in living but in art. The artist has a triple responsibility in comparison to the layman: 1. he must repay the talent given him; 2. his deeds, thoughts, and feelings, as concern all men, must create a spiritual atmosphere according to their nature; 3. these deeds, thoughts, and feelings are the artistic tools for his creations which, in turn, exercise influence on the spiritual atmosphere. In reality, the artist is a "king," as Sar Peladan called him, not because of equally heavy duties, but because of the power accorded him.

If the artist is the priest of "beauty," then this beauty is pursued according to the same principle of inner value that we have found elsewhere. This "beauty" is measured according to greatness and inner need, which, so far, have rendered us unerringly correct service \*).

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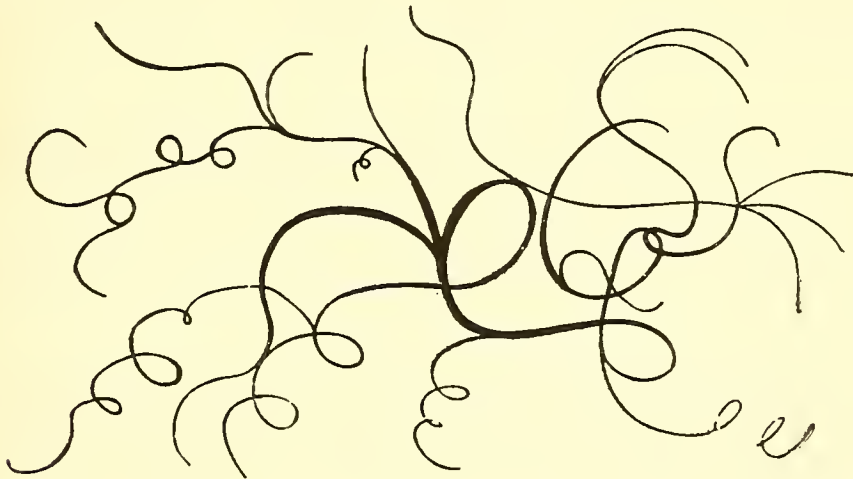
with a conscious meaning, or cloaking, 'volens nolens,' the inventive content in artistic expression. If so, the mental work would be conceived lifeless and dead. As previously mentioned, the creation of the true work of art is a mystery beyond comprehension. The artist's soul, when alive and vital, needs no assistance from various theories or cerebrations. It has something of its own to convey, even, at the moment, utterly incomprehensible to the artist. The inner voice of the soul points out the form he needs and where to obtain it, from exterior or inner 'nature.' Every artist who works from the so-called "feeling," knows with what suddenness and unexpectedness he often perceives the wrong sound of some form previously evolved, and how "automatically" the correct one comes to replace it. Boecklin said, "The real work of art must be as a vast improvisation." That necessitates construction and contemplation. Also, previous compositions should not serve as preliminary steps to the achievement of a goal, which may be revealed quite unexpectedly to the artist. In such a way, the future use of counterpoint is understood.

\*) By this beauty, I do not mean the outer or inner beauty of the general concept of morals but all which purifies and enriches the soul in its inviolable form. For this reason, every colour is inwardly beautiful in painting because every colour creates a spiritual vibration and every vibration enriches the soul. Everything can

That is to be considered beautiful which results from an inner spiritual need, as only that which is spiritual can be beautiful.

Maeterlinck, one of the first pioneers and truly modern composers, that artist of the soul, ever striving for the art of tomorrow, said: "There is nothing on earth that yearns more for beauty, or is so susceptible to it, than the soul . . ., and, it is for that reason, that few human souls withstand the leadership of another devoted to the service of beauty." \*).

This quality of the soul is the oil which facilitates the slow, scarcely visible yet ceaseless, untiring motion of the spiritual triangle, ever forward and upward.



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be spiritually beautiful though outwardly ugly. In art as in life nothing is "ugly" spiritually that has its effect on the soul.

\*) Of inner beauty. (K. Robert Langewieshe publishers, Duesseldorf and Leipzig. Page 187).



## CONCLUSION

The first seven reproductions included are examples of the constructive efforts in painting. Their form divides them into two main groups:

1. The simple composition, which is subject to an obvious simple form. This kind of composition, I call the *m e l o d i c*.
2. The involved composition, consisting of various forms, which are subjected more or less clearly to the principle form. While this main form may be hard to grasp outwardly, it gives to the inner basis its very strong appeal. This composition, I call the *s y m p h o n i c*.

Between these two main groups lie various transitional form-elements, in which the melodic principle definitely predominates.

The entire process of development is strikingly similar to music. Deviations in these two procedures are the results of another law, the contrast of which has always been subjected to the first intention in development. For this reason, these deviations are not of consequential importance.

If the objective is removed from the *m e l o d i c c o m p o s i t i o n*, revealing the basic artistic form, one discovers primitive geometric forms or an arrangement of simple lines, which serve as common movement. This is repeated in various sections and may be varied at times by single lines or forms. These, in the latter instance, serve different purposes, as for example, they form a kind of control to which I shall give the musical

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## CONCLUSION

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name "fermata" \*). All of these constructive forms have a simple inner value like every melody. It is, for this reason, that I call the composition melodic.

Brought to light by Cezanne and later by Hodler, these melodic compositions, in our time, are designated as "rhythmic." That was the core of resurrection of the compositional aims. The restriction of this term, "rhythmic," is an obvious limitation. Though in music each construction has its own rhythm, and, as in the "accidental" distribution of things in nature, some rhythmic law always prevails, painting alike has its rhythm. In nature this rhythm is sometimes not evident to us, because its aims are not evident. This non-apparent compilation is, therefore, called unrhythmic. The division into the rhythmic and the unrhythmic is relative and conventional like a division between harmony and discord, which does not exist \*\*).

Complicated rhythmic compositions, with a strong flavor of the symphonic principle, are seen in numerous paintings, wood-cuts, and miniatures of past epochs in art. One might mention here the work of old German masters, the Persians, the Japanese, the Russian Icons, and Broadsides \*\*\*).

In nearly all these works, the symphonic composition is still very closely related to the melodic. This means that on removing the objective element and unveiling the compositional it creates a feeling of repose, quiet

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\*) See, for example, the Ravenna Mosaic (page 101) which, in its entirety, forms a triangle. Less and less obviously the remaining figures lean towards this triangle, while the outstretched arm and the door curtain are the fermata.

\*\*\*) As an example of this clear melodic construction with plain rhythm, Cezanne's "Bathing Women" is reproduced in this book.

\*\*\*) Many of Hodler's pictures are melodic compositions with a definite symphonic inclination.

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## CONCLUSION

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repetition, almost equally distributed \*). Involuntarily, there comes to mind the old choral compositions or those of Bach and Beethoven.

All these works are related to the quiet, solemn, and dignified architecture of Gothic cathedrals. Balance and equal distribution of the individual part is the tuning fork and spiritual basis of such creations. Such works belong to the transitional period.

As an example of those new symphonic compositions in which the melodic elements, (while employed only at times, or as a subordinate part), receive simultaneously a new shape, I have included reproductions of my own works which are of three different sources of inspiration:

1. A direct impression of "outward nature," which is expressed in pure artistic form. These pictures I call "i m p r e s s i o n s." (See page 110.)
2. Intuitive, for the greater part spontaneous expressions of incidents of an inner character, or impressions of the "inner nature," this kind I call "i m p r o v i s a t i o n s." (See pages 111 and 113.)
3. With slowly evolved feelings, which have formed within me for a long time, and tested pedantically, developed after they were intuitively conceived. This kind of picture I call "c o m p o s i t i o n s." Reason, consciousness, purpose, and adequate law play an overwhelming part. Yet, it is not to be thought of as a mere calculation, since feeling is the decisive factor. (See pages 108, 109, 117, 123.)

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\*) Tradition plays a great part. This is particularly the case in national art. Such works are created mainly at the height of a cultural period, frequently reaching into the next. The unfurled, open blossom spreads an atmosphere of inner quietude. At the time of birth and ripening, there is too much collision, fighting, impeding elements for rest to form an obviously predominant part. In the final analysis, of course, every serious work is quiet. This latter quietude (dignity), however, is not easy for a contemporary to detect. Every serious work inwardly sounds like a quiet, dignified spoken word: "Here I am." Love or hate towards the work of art evaporates and is dissolved. The sound of these words is eternal.

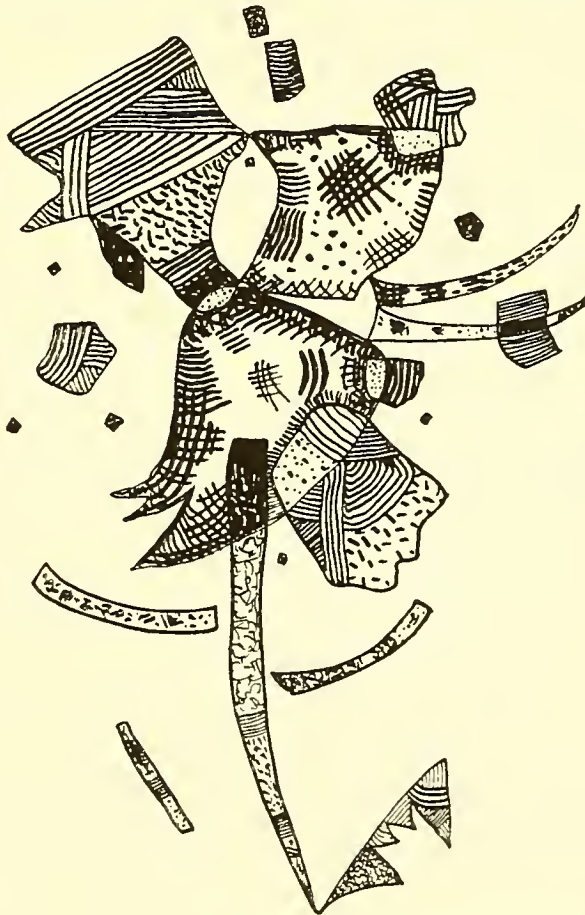
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## CONCLUSION

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Conscious or unconscious constructions underlying all three categories of my paintings will be evident to the patient reader of this book.

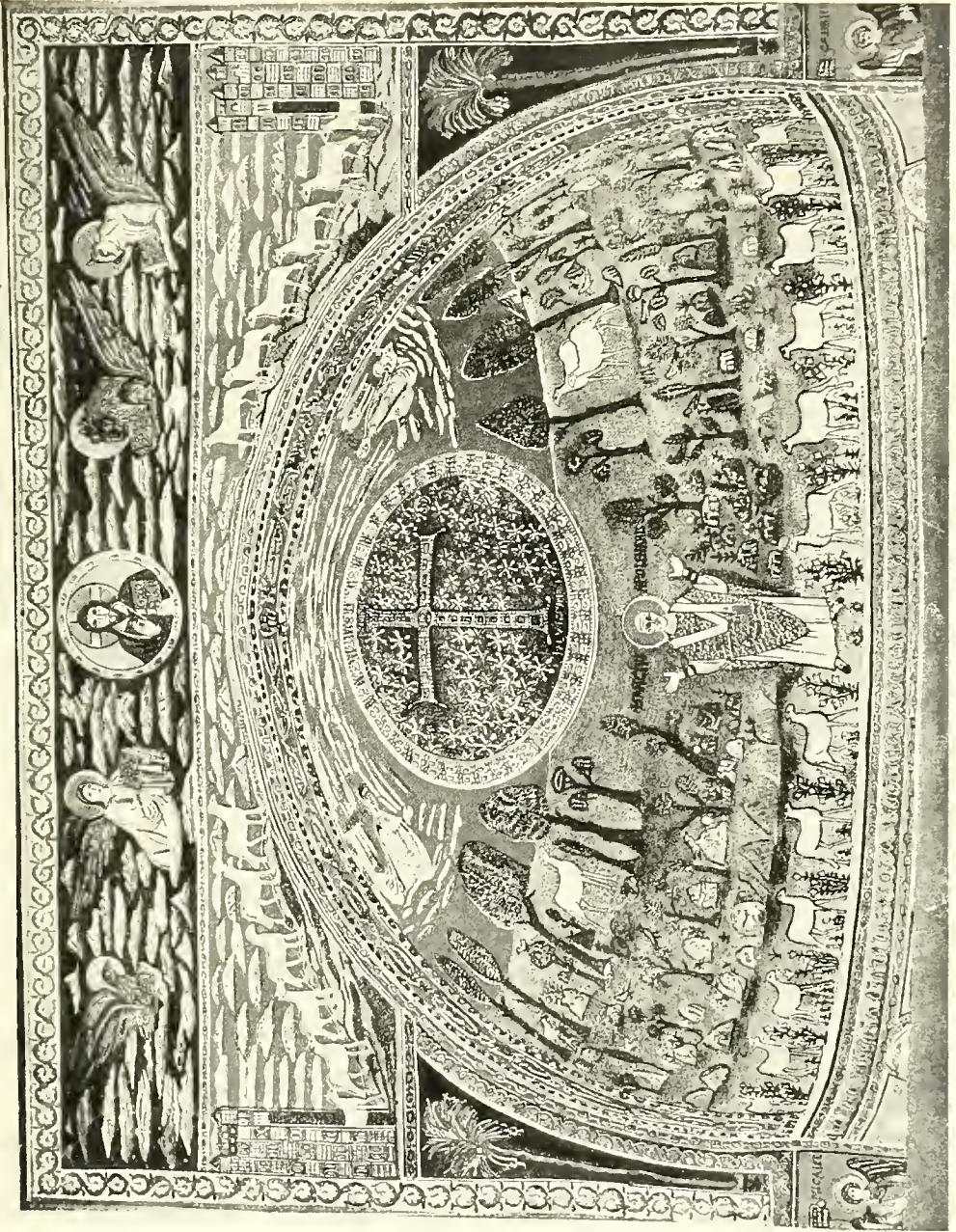
Finally, I wish to state that we are fast approaching the time of conscious composition, when the painter's reason prides itself to explain his work constructively, (contrary to the accidental Impressionists, whose main pride it was, that they could not explain anything). We have before us the age of conscious creation with which the spiritual in painting will be allied organically; with the gradual forming structure of the new spiritual realm, as this spirit is the soul of this epoch of great spirituality.



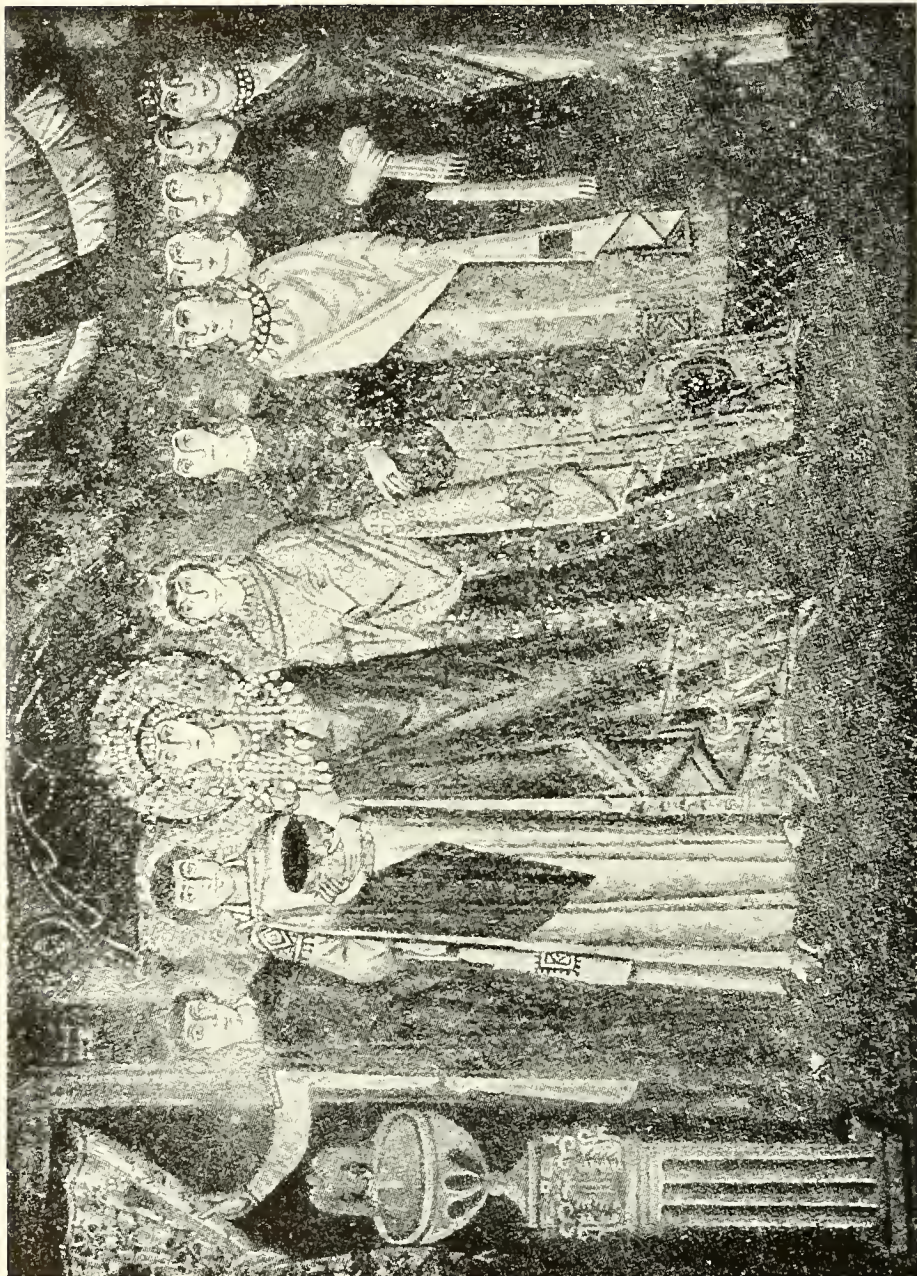
V. 9







MOSAIC IN S. VITALE, RAVENNA

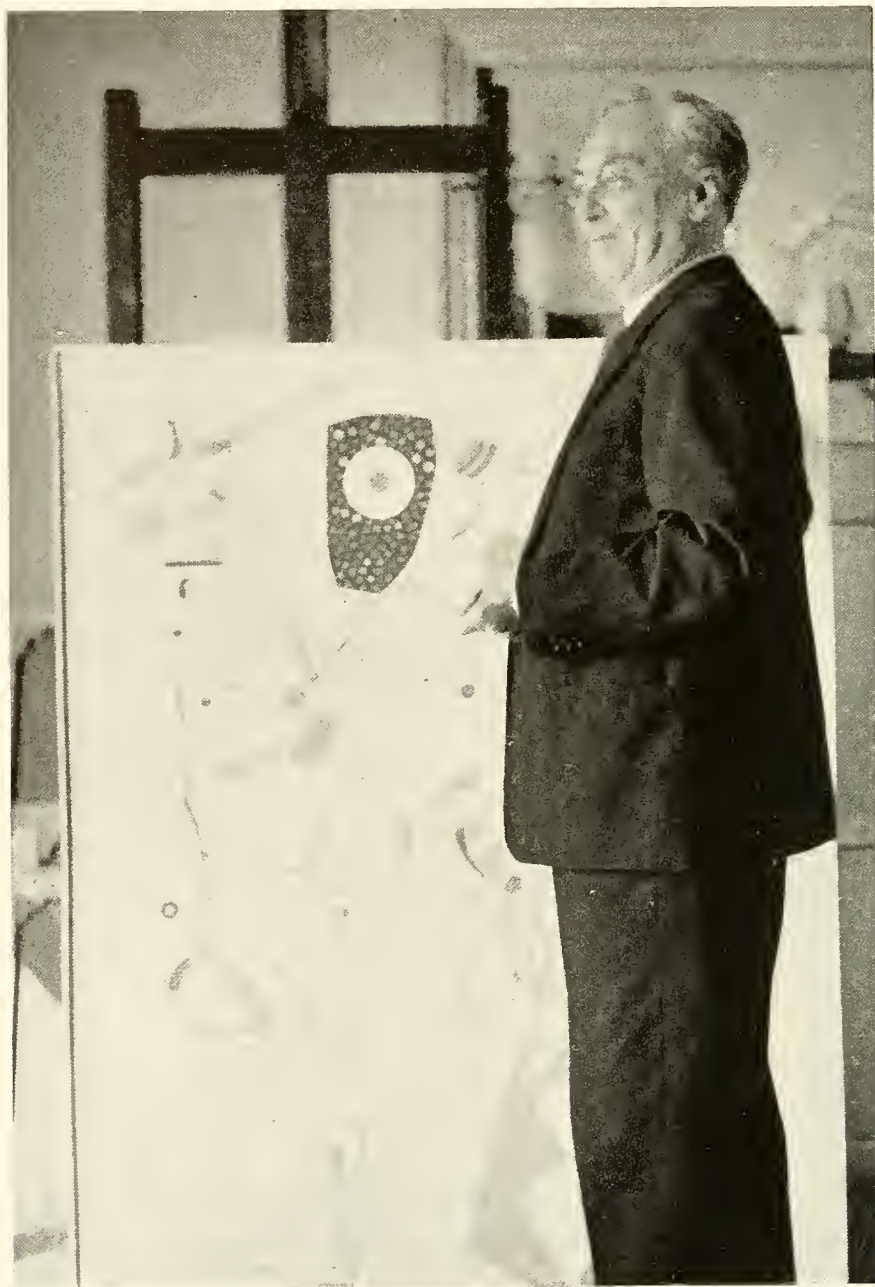


MOSAIC IN S. VITALE, RAVENNA



PAUL CEZANNE

BATHING WOMEN

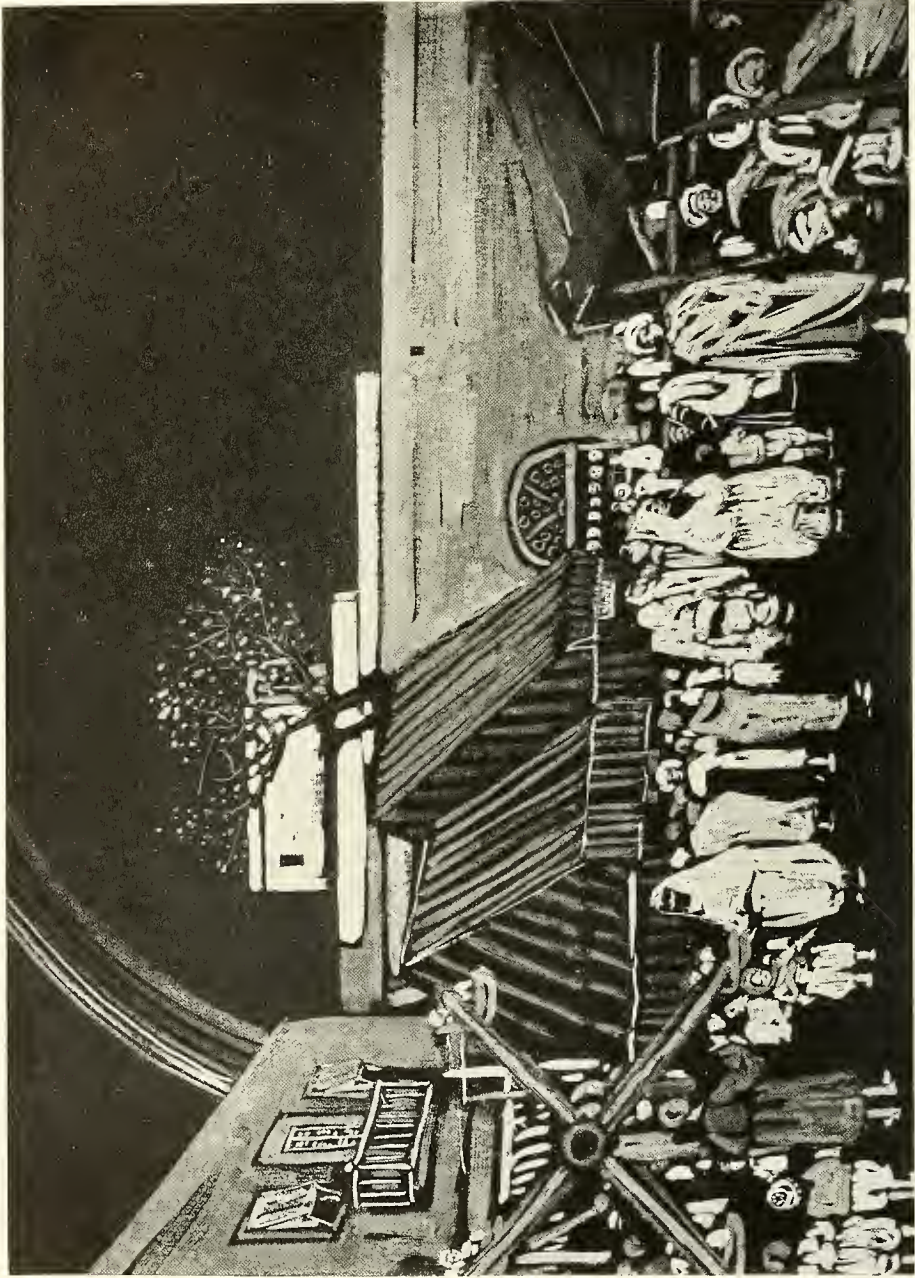


Kan Ivis Ky

SHORT SURVEY, COVERING FORTY YEARS  
OF KANDINSKY'S ARTISTIC EVOLUTION  
FROM 1904 TO 1944

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TUNISIAN SHEEP FESTIVAL	1904
BLUE MOUNTAIN	1908
COMPOSITION NO. 2 (oil)	1910
COMPOSITION NO. 4 (oil)	1910
IMPRESSION NO. 4 MOSCOW	1911
IMPROVISATION NO. 18	1911
IMPROVISATION (in colour)	1912
SMALL PLEASURES	1913
WHITE EDGE	1913
BLACK LINES (in colour)	1913
COMPOSITION NO. 8	1923
ABOVE AND LEFT (in colour)	1925
POINTED AND ROUND (in colour)	1933
COMPOSITION 678	1940
AROUND THE LINE	1943
WELL TEMPERED EMPHASIS	1944
ISOLATION	1944



KANDINSKY

TUNISIAN SHEEP FESTIVAL 1904



KANDINSKY

BLUE MOUNTAIN 1908



COMPOSITION NO. 2 (oil) 1910

KANDINSKY







KANDINSKY

IMPRESSION NO. 4 MOSCOW 1911



KANDINSKY

IMPROVISATION NO. 18 1911





KANDINSKY, "IMPROVISATION"





KANDINSKY

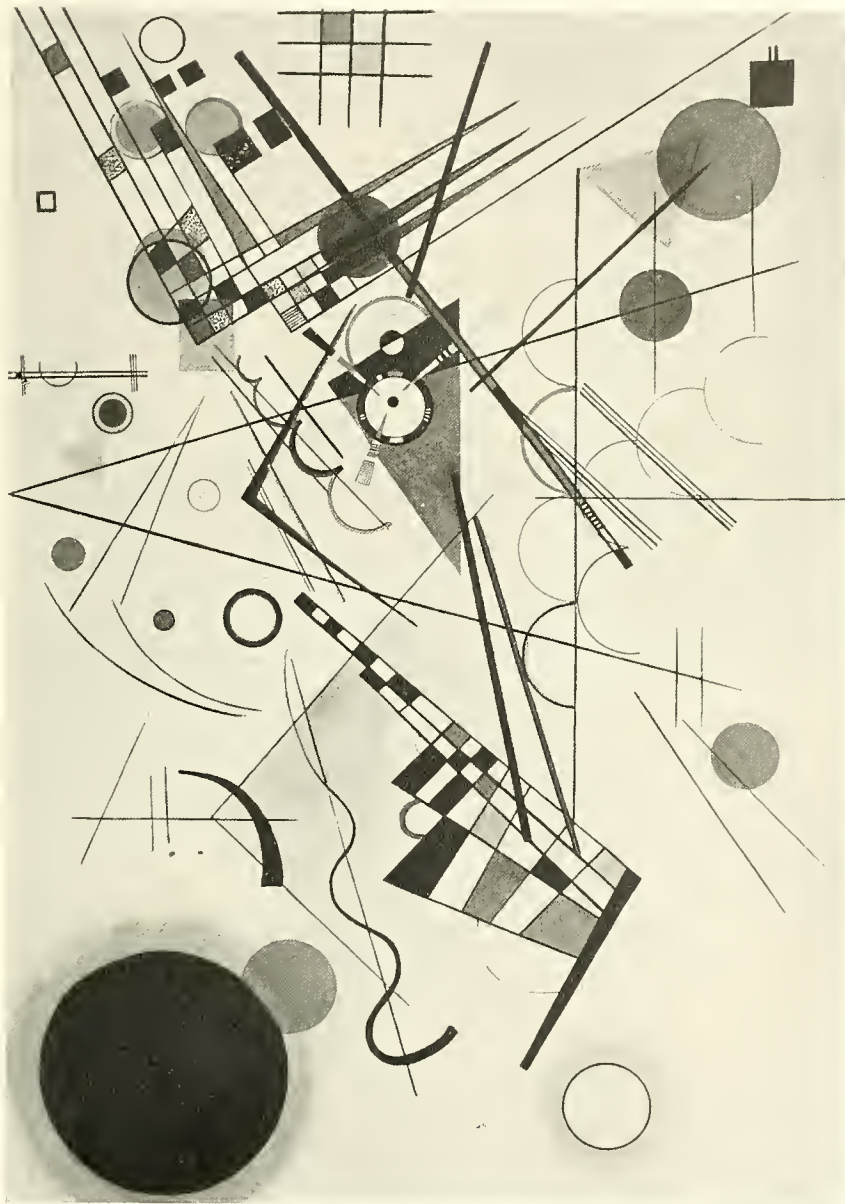
SMALL PLEASURES 1913



WHITE EDGE 1913

KANDINSKY





KANDINSKY  
COMPOSITION NO. 8 1923

KANDINSKY





KANDINSKY, "ABOVE AND LEFT"

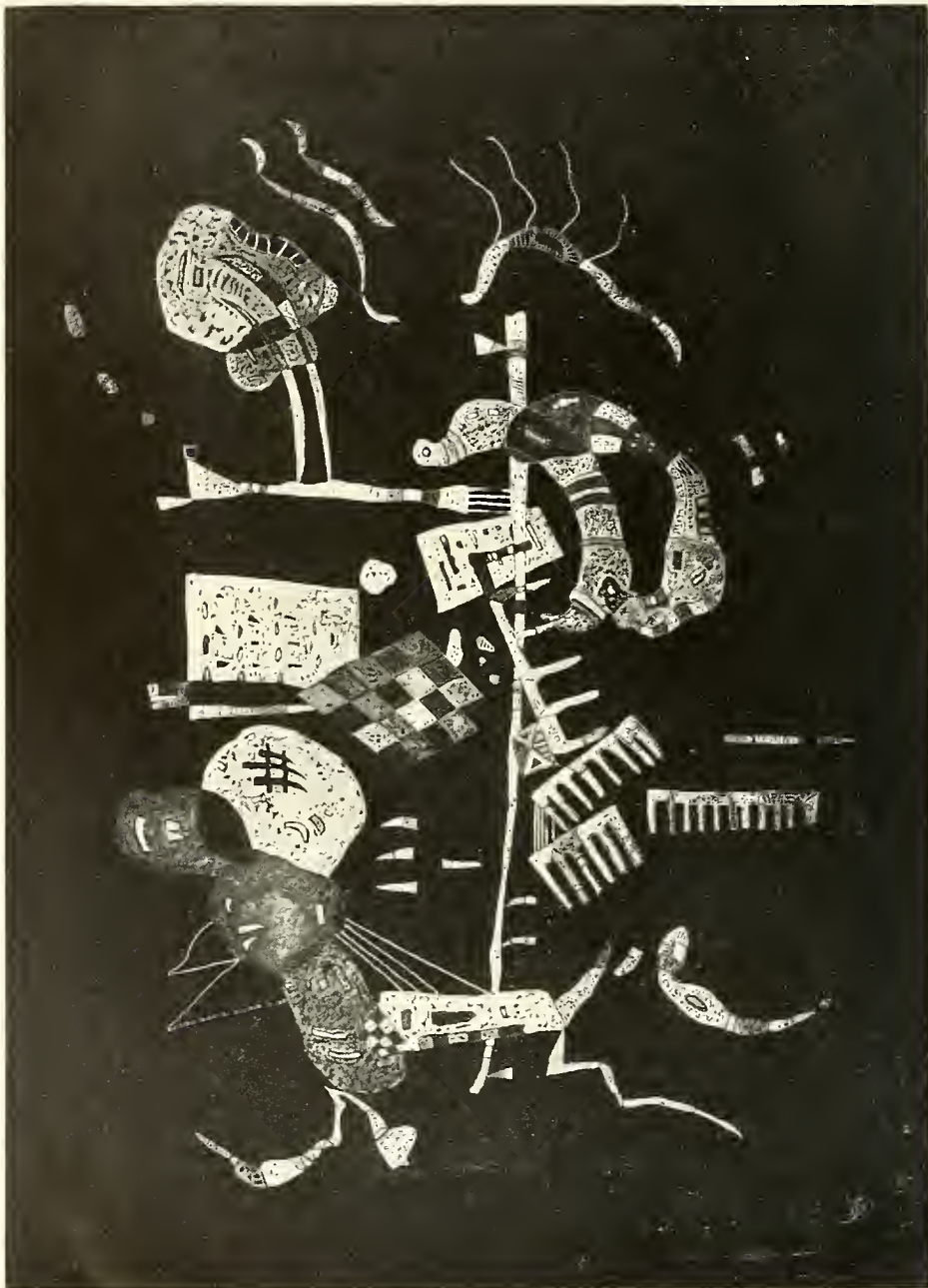




KANDINSKY, "POINTED AND ROUND"







KANDINSKY

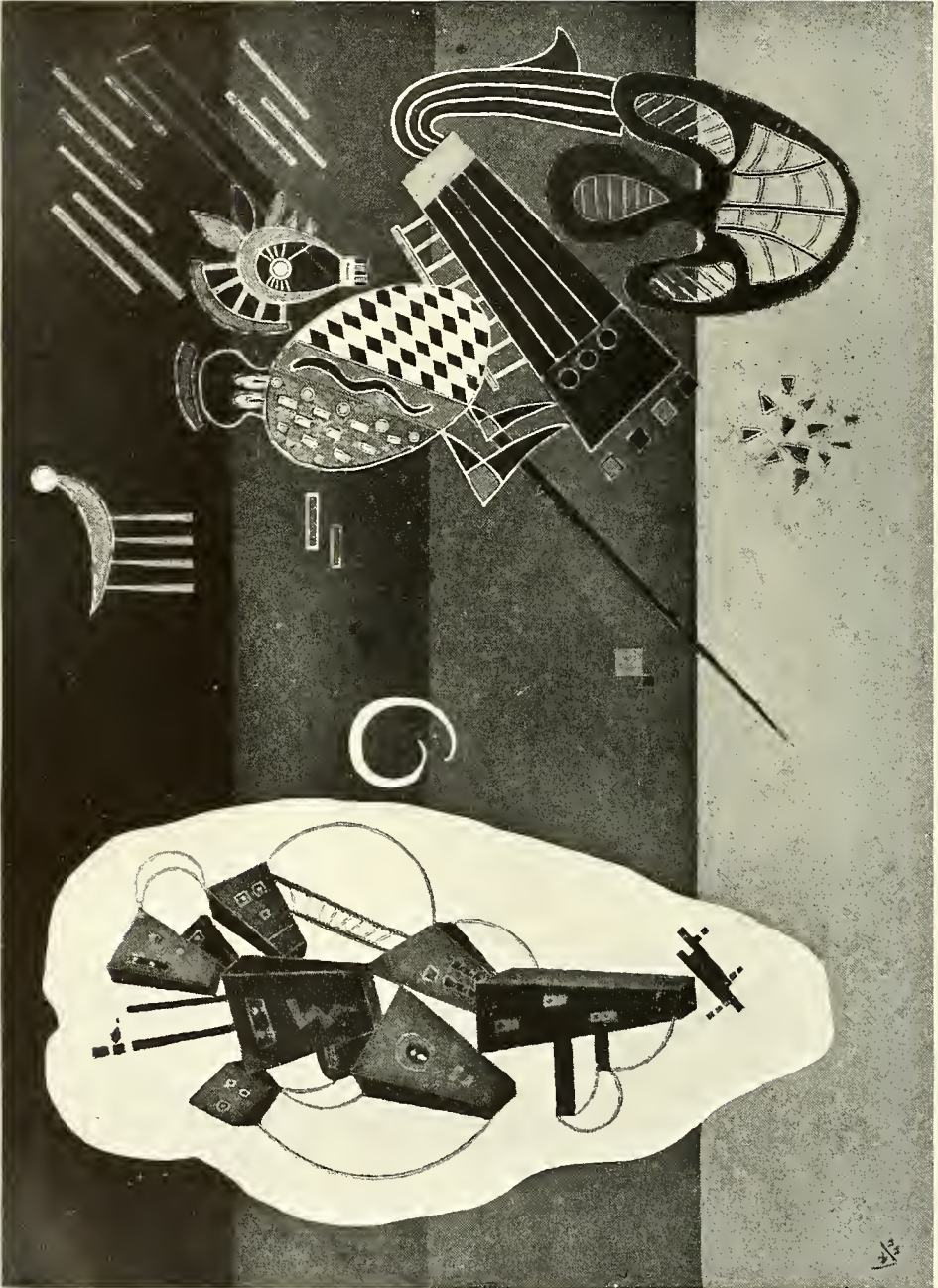
AROUND THE LINE 1943





WELL TEMPERED EMPHASIS 1944

KANDINSKY



PUBLIC COMMENTS MADE IN THE MUSEUM OF NON-OBJECTIVE PAINTING IN NEW YORK CITY (FROM JANUARY TO APRIL 1946) THIRTY-SIX YEARS AFTER KANDINSKY WROTE "ON THE SPIRITUAL IN ART." THE COMMENTATORS' NAMES AND ADDRESSES, TOGETHER WITH THEIR REACTIONS, ARE ON RECORD IN THE MUSEUM OF NON-OBJECTIVE PAINTING OWNED BY THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION, NEW YORK CITY.

"It is as if the artist was God, designing and creating new worlds in His own likeness."

"Non-objective painting is the natural progression of all modern painting. Painting has developed in purity of expression and enlarged the range of knowledge of its media (and particularly colour); its primary purpose has changed from that of recording deeds and events for posterity, to creating something so beautiful in itself that the human spirit is revived, expanded, and uplifted by looking at it. It is only as the collective mind of many painters has grasped this change that they have been free to investigate the potentialities of form, space, and colour. The human response to colour and form as phenomena, is as valid and valuable as the response to sound, or the emotions invoked by literature. That this realization came so late was probably due to the fact that sight, or the visual apprehension of objects, was necessarily used in everyday living for the solution of practical problems by actions. Sight was subsidiary to action and thereby bounded by the petty world of affairs. With the release of mere sight from this constriction it becomes vision, and vision both creates and lives in Art."

"My visits here have become almost a religion with me. I do not undertake any project before I commune with these glorious works. These paintings give me that necessary lift and courage to begin a new work. "Composition No. 8" by Kandinsky is a giant of strength and beauty. Never have I received such assurance about any work in representational form. It is the absence of worldly experience which makes Non-objective

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## PUBLIC COMMENTS

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painting so decidedly great. I do not think that any other Art form could do more to impress me than these pictures do. When I come here, a strong desire to share my enjoyment with others comes over me. In a way, I do, because I am always talking about your collections and seeing, that many of the people I know, come to visit this Museum."

"When I look at Kandinsky's magnificent painting, 'The White Edge', I feel as though I am seeing the genesis of life both in quality (colour and texture) and in quantity (form). The swing of movement undulating through the colour, the quality in the definition of some forms, in contrast to the gentle blending of others, is profoundly moving. The superimposed lines seem to work a counter rhythm over the evolving existence and mass. Non-objective painting is capable of giving to man what no other kind could, the spiritual principles of the creation and organization of matter and the keys of spacial movement and rhythm, that sense of order, which the evolving human spirit needs. How could an objective painter who never penetrated beneath the superficial extensions of matter, portray the essence of life? That is just what Non-objective painting can do and does do, as it works more within the discipline and ordered relations of colour, space, and form."

"You may find it strange, but I never did know how to breathe before I came to this Museum. To breathe properly, spiritually, with complete freedom and realization, so that every breath is an elevation, and at the same time, a renewal of life . . . and many people never realize this . . . as one of the most important founts of initiation and joy, given by God to every man. I have long been aware of this problem, have read a great deal and studied Yoga, but do you know, despite all my practice and concentration, it was not until I came here, that the physical rhythm and spiritual realization suddenly came over me, in its fullest meaning. The visual experience of these profound paintings made me know with my whole being what man is and his relation to God."

"How wonderful it can be, to be able to commune with a Bauer or a

Kandinsky masterpiece. You sense what it must be like to lose your intellectual blinders and to have your eyes become visionary. The power of the disciples touches you with the sense of the power of their God."

"This is the most beautiful Museum. I am a great art lover from Buenos Aires. I have been around the World and to Paris six times, but this is the most illuminatingly hung and the completest showing of Kandinsky that I have seen. I was excited by him very early. He is the most wonderful painter. I love him."

"A child's world of colour is part of his whole living scheme, not an isolated interest or development. It may simply take the form of rhythmic pulsations in his movements, but it is of course of much more value to discover the way a child is affected by and absorbs a painting when he has comparative freedom than when he is prodded, such as when he is at school. These Non-objective works, I feel are quite perfect to present to these youngsters, to assimilate and enjoy. Because from the view of spiritual needs they combine beauty, good taste, common sense, and an equally simple and harmonious tonal structure that is necessary to a child's growth and rhythmic expression. The Rebays and Kandinskys are the most expressive and pleasureable I've found because of their harmony and the creative response they evoke from the children."

"About three years ago I began to feel dissatisfied with my work as a sculptor. Stone animals and portraits become monotonous. Each new subject was only a technical problem to be solved. I knew I wanted to create but that little of my own force, or vitality could be expressed while doing this type of thing. My search for a new creative outlet was accompanied by an increasing sense of futility, of never being able to find a personal media. One day I saw a reproduction of Kandinsky's 'Rigid and Bent,' and I recognized in it the immediacy and directness of emotional rhythms for which I had been looking. Working in stone is only physically hard, in contrast to the different problems of delicate, treacherous balancing a painting. Now I work four to six hours a day

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## PUBLIC COMMENTS

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on my canvases. I feel that I am searching and finding things in a world that I had only felt must exist because my need for it was so great. I always come to the Museum when I feel discouraged. The power and precision of the Bauers, the warm flowing richness of the Kandinskys give me new courage and teach me to see with a fresh vision."

"Art is a most important function of the human soul. Everyone needs it and is capable of it. It allows man to utilize his creative and imaginative elements, and Non-objective painting gives the greatest freedom to this side of man's nature. Non-objective painting has restored to the canvas its original purity of space, freed from the artificial horizon, which bears no relation to the beautifully proportioned, linear canvas-space. And in doing this, Non-objective painters have gained much greater depth of distance than the superficial three-dimensional one, which they have abandoned. They have found the eternal distance of perfect form in limitless space. The depth of the spirit, which looks at the painting is no longer bounded by a false horizon."

"At first I did not like 'Composition No. 8' by Kandinsky, but almost in spite of myself I was fascinated by it, and after prolonged concentration, I discovered that although it may not have the lyrical quality of that masterpiece, 'The White Edge,' there is a wealth of rhythm that is continually grasping and eluding the vision. To think I could ever have felt it was cold geometry! After a transformation such as I underwent, the initial impression is so understandable. I think this Museum has a distinctive purpose, which is in line with progressiveness in other fields, such as science. The human spirit has been gaining freedom through the millions of years man has existed, and this Museum shows its greatest advance through painting. The modern era is wonderful, and I think it is of the utmost importance that such a place as this exists."

"My work lies in the field of occupational therapy, and I realize to work well with mentally ill people, I must have a constant renewal of my own sources of vitality, and continual contact with Art so that my patients

can feel a great spontaneity of spirit and health. It so happens that painting, more than music or literature, affects me. My present position is with the American Red Cross and this is the first time I have ever been near enough to New York to come here. You cannot imagine with what excitement I awaited my first trips to the Art museums. Yet, I was sadly disappointed. All these famous paintings I had heard about and those things I had expected would move me so intensely, seemed almost uninteresting. Yet, today is the most beautiful day I have ever spent. I cannot express to you the ecstasy in which this afternoon has passed. You don't know how much it means to me, to have found the Cathedral where my spirit can worship freely, and constantly come away newly balanced and inspired, to face my daily work. I wish I could express the reverence I feel and my gratitude to the people who make such a place as this possible."

"I have attended many Art classes, but was basically dissatisfied. It was not until I came here that I realize why. The power of colour and form in these paintings is so much greater than anything I have seen before, and within the discipline that properly belongs to the ordering of colour, form and space, which makes the individual's creative expression so meaningful. You are going to see a lot of me, because I am sure I will learn more from studying these paintings, than from any number of classes or instructors."

"Although my brother is a landscape painter, he was stimulated greatly by the paintings of Kandinsky and Bauer as well as the works by the contributing artists in the Loan Show. His work has taken on a new significance through the contact with Non-objective painting. This Museum is so unique, so vibrating with the breath of life, that it should prove a haven in the midst of our fast whirling existence. The paintings are very exciting in their quiet, clearly defined harmony of colour and design. They give me a feeling of completion."

"Aside from the wonderful inspiration that these paintings give me, this

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Museum is such a tremendous source of pleasure to me that I want all my friends to share it with me. Most of my friends are really grateful for my acquainting them with Non-objective painting. Each time as I look through your catalogue the pictures appear new and fresh. This book is invaluable to me."

"I am particularly concerned in bringing this revelation of aesthetic enjoyment of Non-objective painting into the lives of the younger generation. My favorite pictures in the collection are 'Animation' by Rebay, 'Black Lines' and 'The White Edge' by Kandinsky."

"By not cluttering up my mind with representational painting, I retain that beautiful spiritual quality which I receive from Non-objective painting. I am extremely happy in my contact with this Museum and Non-objective Art."

"After I came back from the war, I found myself faced with many difficult psychological problems. Contact with my former friends somehow seemed to be very strained. My brother and I had been very close to each other before I had gone overseas, so we both worried about what I should do. Nothing appeared to be of any value to me; friends, music, painting, all seemed dead. Then he asked me to come to this Museum with him. It was like magic. Here was reality, truth, and emotions expressed warmly and honestly. It was the beginning of my re-admission to a balanced way of life. Something inside of me woke up, and I began to see and feel again. Since then I have returned many times to this reservoir of strength and come away freshened. I am grateful to the people who created this Museum, for they have literally given me life."

"Art must be an integral part of life. It can't be limited to museums. Non-objective painting has such a great force that no museum or gallery can contain it. Every person who sees these masterpieces will be permanently affected by them. The people who designed this Museum knew that. Kandinsky, Bauer, Hilla Rebay, and Mr. Guggenheim to me are the



symbols of creative progress. It is the artist alone who can save our civilization from chaos, by pointing the way to the world of tomorrow."

"These paintings are most inspiring. I never felt so close to any other paintings as I do to these, because they are so rhythmically alive in their limitless conception of pure design. They flow like life itself, like a beautiful song eternally creative in its expression."

"Kandinsky's 'Black Lines' is the sort of painting which permits the appeal throughout the senses, rather than through the rational mind, which is akin to the appeal of music."

"I am enthralled by the Kandinsky show to a degree that makes my heart beat faster. At school we have never been very interested in Art—that is, we are less interested in it than in our regular academic subjects. But after the lectures we had at school, I really can't blame the students. It is necessary to see and feel these paintings by oneself to get the real joy and happiness."

"I came to the Museum frequently and have read all the articles I can find on Non-objective painting. I am glad to see this list of new publications, particularly, Kandinsky's 'Point Line to Plane.' The whole problem of the development and the implications of this Art should be studied."

"I felt as bleak as the weather and wanted something to do, so I came into the Museum. It was like entering another world. The soft gray walls, the music and these magnificent paintings. Almost immediately, I felt a deep serenity and quiet joy. The luminous tones of the paintings, the gay delicacy of Kandinsky's 'Black Lines' and the dynamic rhythms in Rebay's 'Animation.' All of them changed my entire emotional situation and I felt alive again. Really, Non-objective painting seems to have a strong uplifting effect."

"These paintings are marvelous. The pictures have given me a sense of values whereby I will be able to enjoy the other forms in painting much

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more significantly. It would be wonderful if a visit to this Museum would become a must, through the various branches of our educational system. To conceive the beauty in a Non-objective painting makes for a more aesthetic, sensitive living, thereby creating greater harmony among men. I feel I could look at anything now in nature and see it through the loveliness of a beautifully created Non-objective painting. Non-objective form in painting makes for a more complete life."

"Really, this Museum is wonderful! I hardly know how to tell you how exciting it all is to me. I must try to get my college friends to come here and see these marvelous paintings. I like the work of Bauer the best of all, for he seems to have such a magnificent ability to organize his canvases in an inspired manner. 'Squares' is my favorite painting. When I first looked at it, I didn't like it at all, but now I like it better than any other painting I know. I suppose painting is much like music, for at first I didn't like Bach and now he seems to me to be the greatest of them all. Bauer to me is like Bach. He is emotional, but in a highly organized way. I am so thrilled to know there is a Museum where I can always come to see my favorite painter."

"When I set out to visit this Museum, I had no idea that I would encounter anything quite so magnificent. It is a complete new world to me. I have given many years to the study of the various periods in painting, but no other form has afforded me the intrigue and pleasurable excitement these pictures do. I am so happy about my adventure here this morning."

"I'm certainly glad I was able to see this Museum before I finished my Army leave. We have galleries in Toronto, but they are not nearly as progressive as this Museum. I am a painter myself, and it has meant a great deal to me to see these inspiring paintings. I have the feeling that this is the turning point in my artistic career. You see, for the last few years, I have been gradually becoming more and more abstract in my work, but for some reason, I have never quite been able to break away from realistic representation. Now, however, after seeing these paintings,

I feel sure that I will have the courage to follow the direction I believe is the highest ideal of artistic creation, that of Non-objectivity."

"I am so fascinated by these paintings now that I cannot understand how at the very beginning several years ago, I could not see anything in them. It was not even that I did not like them then, as I saw immediately that they vividly presented what every great artist has to have, knowledge of colour, form, and organization. Yet their most profound message of great beauty, and the imperceptible moulding of my own spirit into a greater sense of freedom and harmony, is what I did not expect; and which has taken time and prolonged acquaintance with these great paintings, for me to realize. It is as though I had wandered blindly through a Cathedral, commenting on trivial details, or differences from some other building but never knowing the great meaning of the building as a whole, never seeing that it was something immense, more than a collection of material elements."

"It is as if the painting were demanding certain things from me which, so far, I cannot give, and, in turn, it refuses to reveal itself. These canvases are anything but passive. They are so elusive, challenging, and very much alive."

"The music playing here is no accident. The best way to learn something is to discover it yourself; the things that strike you suddenly with a powerful illumination are the things you never forget. Playing great, perfectly ordered, and profoundly rhythmic harmonies puts the observer into an artistic consciousness of such depth, that as he stands looking at a great masterpiece of Non-objective painting, he suddenly feels the spacial purity and sees the rhythmic movement of form and colour. Such a sudden relationship of himself to the picture and such an insight, in which he is directly involved, always partakes of the miraculous. It does more to enlighten and deepen one's conception of Art than extensive reading or listening to explanations could ever do. I had such an experience before Bauer's great painting, 'Blue Balls.' With the greatest sensation of pleas-

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ure, without any warning from one second to another, I became a different person. I was suddenly and hypnotically focussed within that painting and moving in the most amazing and mysterious rhythms of circular harmonies. It is something that cannot be explained. Only to someone who felt it himself can it be communicated or be discussed. I have also been very moved by Mattern's 'Forzato,' as it reminded me somehow of the second movement of Beethoven's 'Fifth Symphony'."

"I am a teacher of pottery at the Art and Industry School. When I wanted to know about pottery, I started by looking at primitive ware. The deep bowls with their hand-polished finishes and linear designs were to me more moving than anything I had experienced. There was emotional directness and satisfaction in the shape and colour. To hold these objects is like taking into one's hands a charge of power that permeates one, setting one in rhythm with the earth. Today, when I came into this Museum, I experienced the same thing—that recognition of the 'essence.' Many people have called it by many names. I like Kandinsky's phrase, 'spiritual harmony.' That is exactly what I find in these paintings, as in primitive pottery. Art has thrown off self-conscious gestures. It has freed itself from the imitation of nature. Now and here it is the character of nature itself, integral, expressive, and one with life."

"I am studying abstract design at Queens College, and we had an assignment to come here and write about two of the paintings. How beautiful these paintings are; I'm enjoying them much more than any landscapes or portraits. I feel as though I am floating in space. One of the paintings I have chosen is 'Animation' by Hilla Rebay. It is so luminous and delicate, organized and spontaneous. I cannot tear myself away from this painting, it is so rich, beautiful, and enchanting."

"When my friends inquire, 'What do you want to do?' I answer immediately, 'Go to the Museum of Non-objective Painting!' Not one of them has ever been disappointed."

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"I did not know what was wrong with me—my writing just has not been coming off. It seemed dead and unmoving. It was nothing I could analyze, so I decided to come downtown and go to the Art exhibitions, but I was very dissatisfied with what I was seeing. They were like my poetry, technically all right, but very drab. Then, I decided to come here before I had lunch. Well, now it is four o'clock and I am still here. I know now what was wrong; it was not the rhyme scheme or syllabic pattern. It just did not have what all these paintings do contain. The rhythm of spaces between forms that gives each the ability to swing and expand and move, being in relation to all other parts. They are magnificent, deeply satisfying, and varied in mood. I must express this in words somehow. These painters have found the way, poets must learn to follow. All creative art will be influenced by the revelation so beautifully presented in this Museum. I am deeply grateful to the people who make it possible for me to see these masterpieces, full of purity and insight."

"I am from Kansas, an ex-flier, now in the Merchant Marine. Non-objective paintings impress me more than any others I have ever seen. This is the first time that I have ever felt that in any Art. I especially like 'Forzato' by Mattern for its powerful colour contrasts and spinning movement."

"In the West, we have a sense of expansiveness, everything is laid out physically on a larger scale, and we are accustomed to vivid colours. I feel that Bauer has captured that sense of space, of the larger magnitudes in the rhythms of existence of which man is but one slight penetrator. Perhaps it is the order in his paintings which is so immediately present and yet so dynamic, so full of space, and yet so perfectly controlled within the canvas limit. After so many of the absurd configurations and confused masses of colour that are today presented as modern Art, it is both reassuring and inspiring to see the work of a man with a mature sense of form and economic use of colour. Could anything be more exciting than his work? And yet is there one unnecessary line or circle? It must have taken a very gifted person to first appreciate and collect this great painter's work. Bauer seems to me to be an Academician, in the best

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sense of that word. He is the master of a new Art, who does not try to impress by loud blares and superficial dramatics, which the humanity of his own generation never fails to recognize."

"The harmony that Non-objective painting creates makes life significant. This Museum is infinitely more thrilling than anything else that exists at present. Rebay's 'Animation' has inspired me to start painting."

"These paintings will enrich and stimulate my work. As for me this Museum is the most unique and interesting place in New York."

"I am not surprised that this Museum shows such greatness and such an advanced spirit. To my knowledge, the artist has always preceded the philosopher in establishing the forms of his own age. It happened in Greece, in Italy, in Paris in the Nineteenth Century, and it happens here. The philosophers deal with what they know, the artists with what they find, in the world about them, in the spirit that motivates their time. They do not seek to know, for they are that which the philosopher tries to find out. They do not have to look, for that is given to the painter, to the Non-objective painter to pour out from himself the greatness of spirit that belongs to the modern world. He cannot help but do this, for he is this spirit, and breathes and lives it. Michelangelo, Raphael, and Leonardo breathe the spirit of the High Renaissance. For so perfectly integrated is this artistic truth that when we think of the Renaissance, the paintings float before our eyes, achieving a kind of anonymity. The work of Bauer and Kandinsky appears before us in this same veil of anonymity. It is not necessary for us to know about the artist—there is none of his own personality between the spectator and the painting in which is revealed the modern world. I think this even truer of Bauer than of Kandinsky, for here the subjective is gone, and only the universal remains."

"Last time I was here I bought the 'Public Comments' booklet and took it home. It was so interesting and exciting to read. All my friends were fascinated as well as myself. It is wonderful to think that people respond

to these great paintings so intelligently, so raptly, and with such intense awareness of spiritual beauty. One realizes anew what a great force for good, for peace, and for the spiritual development of human beings the works of great masters are."

"I have a small gallery in Kansas City, but Modern Art confused me. It seemed like a hodgepodge of the old and the new, always shedding one form and coming out in another. But like the worm, which finally emerges as a beautiful butterfly winging its way into freedom, so Non-objective painting is now soaring above the confusion; winging its way into the purity and rhythmic pulse, which all modern Art has been blindly striving toward. Non-objective painting expresses the Art which paints spiritual forces and relationships, while the old Art represents man's perceptions of the brutal forces of nature and his construction in it. The old Art strived to spiritualize matter, but today, with so many mechanical methods of controlling matter, we realize that the spirit is something that transcends the material. We no longer have to paint objects to symbolize our relationship to them, for our relationship today is a practical matter, and we can now turn our attention to the universal laws activating matter and even more important to the forces of spiritual order toward which every man, at some point, feels his soul is turning. I was lucky to come here the day before Hilla Rebay's last lecture. Her inspired insight into Art is what put me onto the track of this clarification. I am so sorry I will be gone before her next talk."

"I have been an interior decorator in Europe and America and these paintings take on a special significance for me. I can visualize entire homes built around these paintings. It would be magnificent. I have a friend who has done that very thing, and her home is of rare beauty. If only people would realize that paintings such as these in your Museum can become a really integral part of one's life, it would indeed be wonderful."

"I studied for years at an Art school only to find, when I left, that I felt completely stifled by the analytical technique I had been taught. Three

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months ago when I was in New York, I happened to come in here. I was dazzled and bewildered. Here was everything that I lacked, that my painting hungered for. I was tremendously shocked—I loved the paintings, their use of the medium was masterful, and yet their conception of Art seemed so foreign to me. How would one go about such a painting? What laws did they have of formation and formulation? Bauer's paintings especially were so ordered and yet so free. I have been so confused for the last three months that I had to return—I wish I lived in New York. I think I could put up with all the chaos of a great city just to be near this Museum. I am sure with prolonged contact I would be able to regain my native creative vitality. Every time I come here I want to rush right home and paint. These paintings seem to set fire to my spirit, I am consumed with ambition. I have not felt like that since before I went to school."

"This Museum haunts me. I never plan to come here, yet I always find myself wondering if there are new paintings hung up or if I remember the precise tone of green in Kandinsky's 'Extended.' Twice a week here I am, looking at everything once more almost protectively, as if in some unexplained way this were 'My Museum'."

"Although I know little about Art, I feel that my lack of knowledge does not exclude me from the appreciation of these Non-objective paintings. Each picture seems to convey a basic message through simplicity of line and congruity of colour. Because my response to this Art is one of the most pleasing sensations I have ever known, I plan to come into this Museum often and absorb the high essence of spirituality which these paintings seem to emit."

"Many people have told me that they did not like Art until they saw the paintings in the Museum of Non-objective painting. I wondered why paintings of this type were more capable of 'getting across' to the observer. It would seem on the surface that they offered nothing to 'grasp' them with, that is, no story to remember. Yet now at last I know what it is. In these canvases, those who respond to them, see the reflections of



their own souls, comprehend that immeasurable experience which is already familiar to them. Thus, the recognition of similar qualities in the observer. It is a greeting of equals. I also know that as I grow, I find myself more capable of understanding these paintings, created by artists whose richness and amplitude of spirit can never be exhausted."

"I am from the Middle West, and one of the principal reasons I came to New York for a vacation was to see first hand the work of the masters, Kandinsky and Bauer. You see, I am a painter myself and I feel that I owe a real debt to the Guggenheim Foundation for all that it has done for me. A friend of mine sent me some reproductions of the paintings of Kandinsky and Bauer and they so inspired me, that I changed my style of painting to the Non-objective approach. Since then my work has seemed to take on a new life and vitality. I vowed that sometime, somehow, I would get to New York to see this great collection, and now here I am. It is even more wonderful than I had anticipated! I wish I could thank Mr. Guggenheim personally for all he has done for the Art of mankind."

"In Moholy-Nagy's work, I receive the impression of vastness that has been handled with the comprehension of the continuity of universal rhythms, rather than as in the phrase 'Extra galactic nebulae,' and intellectual, endless, non-human void. This is to me the difference between Art and Science. Art has found the great integrating, uniting forces of existence. Science stands before overwhelming problems with no solution, and can only describe it with impermanent and frequently variable data. What other medium would deal so perfectly with these great emotional problems, the individual's position in the universe? I can only answer: 'Non-objective painting' is the only Art that is capable of sustaining such content. It is the only Art that embodies permanent elements of the human creative spirit, that will still be valid a thousand years from today."

"These paintings exist; they are real because they do not imitate nature; they have a life all their own, an inner reason for being. Here is life enclosed, capable of complete movement and vitality within the frame.

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They are not dependent upon the observer's ability to teach a story, as in narrative painting, nor do they ask you to respond to the artificial duplication of natural panorama. Instead it is as if the artist himself were God, forming and fashioning new worlds in His own likeness, and when we discover the beauty of one of these works, it is like a great revelation. It is a rare experience as of suddenly understanding what another person is, or as identifying similar basic forms in ourselves and in the universe."

"For me, Non-objective painting is the best form of inspiration I know and the most spiritually uplifting hobby a man can have. I shall always be grateful to this Museum and the Foundation for the wonderful work it is doing in spreading Kandinsky's work and ideal further. The more people who know about it, the happier, healthier, and better balanced will be our world."

"To see these great paintings is very exciting. You get the positive feeling that Kandinsky's purpose in painting was definitely not to make Art, but to be in this wonderful state which makes Art inevitable. I have derived great benefit from his paintings. Non-objective painting has been a great source of inspiration to me as a painter and also in my work as an interior decorator. This form of painting brings forth an aesthetic beauty rarely experienced in any other Art form. Non-objective painting stands before one in all its greatness like the vastness of the moon or sun, or the other elements in the universe."

"The unadulterated aesthetic inspiration of this Art compares with reproductive painting in the same way, that the music of Bach compares with an instrumental reproduction of sound by a locomotive or any other functional sound. It is no more logical to limit artists to the subordinate inspiration of material objects, which he sees around him, than it would be to limit composers to combinations of the sounds in every day life."

"There is a particular quality of 'Absolute Beauty' in these paintings. A contrast to the old master type, a beauty which is bounded completely

by the limits of the painting, needing no reference to outer phenomena in order to give it meaning or validity. Take a painting like 'Extended' by Kandinsky, for instance—there is in this a certain basic balance, a sense of delicate tensions and fusion of colour which needs only itself, to form a complete unit of meaning. There is the heavy quality of the large mass, including the arrow-shape, the heaviness of that balanced by the up-reaching light form. I like the equation of the square, firm dynamics of the lower part to the more evolved rhythmic ones above. Furthermore, there is a subtle interplay of the reduced intensity of complimentary colours, red and green, and their variations."

"These paintings are saying something very important. I am going to come back here every week. I will take a couple of these prints home and hang them where I can see them all the time. I have never had such a baffling thing happen to me before; I certainly did not ever expect any painting to affect me like this. It is as if the painting were demanding certain things from me, which so far I cannot give, and in turn, it refuses to reveal itself. These canvases are anything but passive. They are so elusive, challenging, and very much alive."

"I feel that Non-objective painting has played and will play even more, in the future, a tremendous part in influencing industrial design. The concepts of space relationship is one of the most important elements of design. I am thrilled that there is such a place in New York as this Museum where one can come and see beautiful organization of colour, line and form."

"This is a Museum which, I am ashamed to say, I have never visited before. But now that I have discovered it, I shall certainly come here often. I had made a resolution to see as many of the museums of New York as possible on my two-week vacation, but I find that the impact of the great emotional content of the work here is so powerful that I am forced, though not at all against my will, to spend more time, than I had intended, here."

"It seems to me, as a matter of fact, that the discovery in one's personal

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life of something like Non-objective Art is so great, that it is enough to occupy one's mind for some time. There are so many new things to think over, one of them being the release from the morass of despair that one is in, after looking at the great body of modern painting, most of it completely directionless, the rest charlatanism."

"What a great discovery on the part of the artist, when here is found the cessation of the frantic search for subject matter, or for a means of concealing the fact, that they felt its lack. How magnificently simple, as are most of the great things in the world, is the beautiful basis of Non-objective painting. It finds itself purely in the aesthetic emotion, in the direction of the pure aesthetic spirit, through the mind of the artist, and directly out to the observer."

"Frankly, I do not know what I would do, if it were not for this beautiful Museum. It has given me more help and inspiration than any other one thing in New York. In a sense, it has changed my whole life; for I am sure that I would never have started painting if it had not been for the stimulus I received here. When I first came in, I was frankly rebellious because I related this painting to other schools such as the surrealists. But it was not long before I was in complete harmony with the paintings, for I realized that these creations did not pretend to be anything they were not. In other words, they did not pretend to represent anything, but beautiful colour and form, which I think is as it should be. I just cannot express my great thanks and enthusiasm."

"As an officer recently discharged from the Army, I have always wanted to come here, ever since 1938, when while attending Blue Ridge College, I saw the loan exhibit of some paintings from this Museum in Baltimore. I was tremendously moved and creatively stimulated—I think all the students were, for it was discovered a few weeks after that loan exhibit opened, that the students had gone back to college and attempted to paint, following the forms of certain of their favorites, Non-objective murals on the dormitory walls. I am afraid we were not too successful, but you know there is

something about these paintings that is so exciting, that you feel forced to express your emotions creatively—even when you know you are totally incapable."

"Mattern's painting, 'Abandon,' makes me want to laugh and dance and sing. I just want to behave as if it were spring, and I were barefoot in my own garden in the country. It is a shame people have to act so ponderous and proper in a Museum, when this painting is misbehaving in such a care-free way."

"These paintings are a beautiful example of perfection. Each picture radiates a definite spiritual mood of a deep mystical harmony. How successfully both colour and line are combined to give these paintings such singular strength and power. I like 'Carnival' and 'Open Green' by Kandinsky, and 'Animation' by Rebay, an artist of vigorous temperament. Her paintings is distinguished by an expressive conciseness of form, accented by simplicity of colouring, calculated to intensify its forcefulness."

"I have just been released from the Navy, where I served for four years. This Museum is like a new-found world for me. I cannot express how wonderful it is to be here. Since my contact with these great works, I have experienced a great urge to create in Non-objective form. I have completely lost interest in my studies in the field of industrial design. The wonderful thing is, that I begin to realize that these paintings are far greater than they even appear to be."

"For many years in Kentucky, I have devoted myself to making tapestries. Love for colour and design have grown to be almost part of me. Imagine, then, the thrill of this Museum, where composition and colour have been gloriously combined with spiritual inspiration."

"For me Ralph Scarlett is the most important painter in America today. He catches and transposes for us in terms of paint the infinite beauties and rhythms of modern life. They begin to have a meaning for us when they are taken hold of in such a masterful way, and so beautifully given

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to us—as beauty, not as confused ugliness. Scarlett proves to us the validity of our own period here in America. He, as an American, uses those forms of Art, that are so often misused, and paints our world. He is, I understand, a man who has worked with mechanical things, with electricity, modern architecture, and with the elements making up our life, without descending to the banality of actually putting any of these things into his work."

"How great a handicap mothers force onto their children by not taking them to see the great Art of today, which would help them to realize their own world, but to see the dusty Art of the past, of importance only to historians. I am certainly going to bring my own child in here, as soon as he is old enough to comprehend the meaning of the ideas of colour and form, and light and rhythm, and acquaint him at once with the great masters of his world to come, for it is his world and his children's world, far more than it is ours."

"I have been to this Museum a number of times now, and I find that it offers me a very real source of personal strength. It is magnificent to find that Art has continued to advance so, that it has maintained its position as a personal comfort to mankind. That it has finally expressed itself in such a free form, is especially significant, because it offers the individual complete freedom of interpretation and doesn't narrow his field of imagination, as do representational paintings. Non-objective Art is more akin to music than any other type of painting for this reason, and because of this, I feel sure of its long survival."

"When vacation time from Vassar College arrives, this is always one of the first places I come to. I do so hope there will be a lecture before I go back to school. Baroness Rebay is a most inspired speaker, and I come away feeling my appreciation of Art tremendously increased. It is so wonderful to hear a painter talk about painting and not a critic or historian. Who but a creator is truly aware of the force and value of Art in his day?"

"I have just come from Chicago where I was introduced to Non-objective

painting by the Kandinsky show at the Arts Club. The people in Chicago are grateful for the cooperation of this Museum in loaning some of his greatest works. I see most of the shows that come to Chicago, and this one was a knockout; everyone was talking about it. And now I come to New York and discover that there is another Non-objective painter, Rudolph Bauer. If it is possible, I am even more excited now, than I was in Chicago. Bauer has a majestic simplicity which makes me revere his paintings even more than Kandinsky's, where great vitality is the dominant thing. To be here at the center of Non-objective painting is a great privilege. I am not at all surprised, that many new talents are merging under the tremendous stimulation of this place."

"I just said to my friends, 'Isn't this the most beautiful place in the World?' I didn't exaggerate at all, now did I? But then, it is impossible to explain. Coming here, one is transported by sensations of loveliness, that one was hardly aware existed before. Isn't that a beautiful painting? (Pointing at 'Carnival' by Kandinsky) I try so hard to remember what one of these paintings looks like, but I cannot. If you break it down into certain large sweeps, or repetitive forms you can remember that, but the direct response is so strong, that the remembrance seems absolutely false. Like in music, one remembers a symphony by the number of movements, slow, fast, etc. One can even sing the major themes, but the total aesthetic, ecstatic reaction only occurs, when one hears it played in all its complexity, velocity and volume. How I love to come here. I can never get enough of these wonderful paintings."

"I wish my vacation from medical classes would last longer. The more time I spend here, the more excited and enthusiastic I become about Non-objective paintings. I am not trying hard, I am just sitting here looking, but the more I look, the more I want to look. The rewards increase by leaps and bounds. You don't know the sense of freedom I derive from these paintings, and how it strengthens my understanding of human dignity and wisdom. These painters are not inhibited by prejudice, past discipline, or proper subject matter. They are experimenters, are led on

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by all the possibilities of their medium and, at the same time, are humbly concentrated in the act of creating something beautiful. Whoever made this Museum possible was really inspired. As its influence widens, I feel sure it will constitute a major force for the advancement of individual tastes and ideas, that will extend far beyond the fields of Art. A person is initiated into spiritual freedom here, which reinforces what is right in him and his best abilities, no matter what field they may lie in. This Museum is to me the spearhead of progress, and its importance greatly transcends what is usually thought of, as the field of Art."

"I've been meaning to come here for a long time. A friend of mine has some of Mr. Scarlett's work. She herself is interested in the spiritual content of this Art. I can see what she feels in his paintings . . . The subtle blending and shading in the background in contrast to some clear forms in the foreground gives a sense of great distance and spiritual reverence."

"I feel the discovery of Non-objective painting is somewhat synonymous with the many great discoveries of my age, such as that of atomic power, for instance. In years to come, I'm sure that Non-objective painting will be regarded as the greatest development art has ever made. In a way, it is like the bursting forth of light, where existed only darkness before. This is the most wonderful manifestation of our age, and I am sure that the masters of this art, Kandinsky, Bauer, and Rebay, will go down in history as dynamic forces in the conception of a new age in art."

"I have just come from Paris where I have been directly connected with the art world, and I must say that I feel that this Museum has a far greater collection of progressive paintings, that I have seen in Paris at any time. Your country should indeed feel proud that such an amazing place is contributing so materially to the most enlightening movement in art today. Certain paintings in your collection I feel are particularly outstanding. For instance, Kandinsky's 'Carnival' is a very exciting work, with magnificent colour and movement, and 'Black Lines' is also a very great painting. In the Loan Exhibit, 'Royally' of Hilla Rebay seems to me to be the most mature



and dynamically constructed of any paintings exhibited. Her technique is superb, as is her variety and her subtle manipulation of paint. Also Xceron's 'Composition #279' appeals greatly to me. He is a fine artist and I have long appreciated his work. His simplicity of form and controlled use of colour is very outstanding. I am very happy to know that such a powerful force as the Guggenheim Foundation is backing so thoroughly the most advanced type of painting today, the Non-objective form."

"I am not a painter and know absolutely nothing about the technical procedures in Art, and yet these beautiful paintings create an inward peace and tranquillity of spirit such as I have never experienced before. Lately, I have been spending part of my lunch hour each day at the Museum and invariably I leave feeling at peace and in harmony. It is as if an all-powerful force suddenly took control of me and lifted me into another world. It is a very new and wonderful experience."

"Isn't it wonderful that colleges and high schools are waking up to the existence of this beautiful and inspiring art? I've been coming here for years because my mother was an early disciple of this great new expression of spiritual harmony. It has been an entrancing and expansive force in our home for years. And then I go to college, and one of my first assignments is, to come here and write up my reactions to six of these masterpieces! Academic people are usually behind the times, but the proximity of this majestic collection which influences so many people has already built up such a strong, eager following in New York that it has penetrated even the beginners' art classes in school. I think it is so wonderful. Could there be any better preparation of young people for life than learning early and intuitively through the beauty of art the value of order, joy, spontaneity, relaxation, and spiritual ecstasy?"

"As an electrical engineer, I know little about Art. I saw a painting in the window which made me stop and come in. I was curious about the strange feeling I had, when I saw it. Something in me seemed to respond, something that never before had been stirred. I realized that never having

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found my way into the realm of Art, I had missed a profound aesthetic experience. The more I look at these paintings, the more I know why it is that they stir me so. It is because the elements with which I work every day have been transmuted into an immeasurable realm. The rhythms and forms set forth visually those forces which are at work in the cosmos. No other painting has ever seemed to me important, or to state the underlying truth of the universe, as these do."

"In all activities of great spiritual meaning there are unprovables, intangibles—in the Bible, in literature, in metaphysics; so, why not in Art? Why should Art be the one medium where a true expression of the spirit is lacking? And that is why painting inevitably moved into the realm of Non-objective, for great spirits of real creative magnitude could not be forever contented while bound by the limited dimensions of earth and drab, grey colours. That is why this Art heals those who are sick, for it is not a repetition of the scenes and objects connected with their illness, but puts them in contact with the higher forces of order that permeate the universe."

"The two things I valued the most while I was overseas were the two prints I purchased at this Museum some time ago. One was Kandinsky's 'Black Lines' and the other was Bauer's 'Dark Accents.' Actually, I never transferred a position without being sure that the pictures were with me. I never tired of looking at them. They gave me inspiration in my darkest moments."

"This Museum gives to me a happiness that is past, present and future. My past visits have given me invaluable help in my occupation as an architect and designer of moving picture sets. They have brought out in me a sensitivity for colour and spacing, which had remained dormant throughout my extensive formal education. My present exposure to this Art is a highly pleasant antidote for the drab materialism with which people permit their lives to be filled. To be surrounded by such purity of expression is a profound experience. My future interest in this Museum is that of both an architect, who is eager to see the completion of the

glorious project for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation by Frank Lloyd Wright, the most accomplished master in his field, and an enthusiastic observer of Non-objective Painting who looks forward to the day, when this Art will be housed in what will surely be a shrine of cultural progress."

"I am strongly impressed by Bauer's clarity of power. The decisive composition and sureness of colour give his works an incomparable intensity."

"It is, to state it mildly, extremely gratifying for me to see this Art. For the seventy-six years of my life, I have been watching people struggle in various fields of Art to find the 'true' form of expression. At last, I am seeing the results of unhampered inspiration. The high quality of work in the loan exhibition is proof of the eagerness of contemporary artists for an opportunity to paint with freedom and purity; the interest and enthusiasm which shine on the faces of my fellow visitors are proof of the receptiveness which this Art arouses in the people."

"I am a completely inartistic person; I know nothing of Art, and yet it brings a great quietness to my soul to be able to breathe the wonderful beauty of these paintings. I am not used to expressing myself about things like these, so I don't quite know what to say. I only wish that somehow, I could make those responsible for this Museum know, what an important island of beauty it is, and could be to more New Yorkers. An island separated from the tiresomeness of the ever-returning morning to evening schedule lived by most New Yorkers, and from the dullness of most of our lives.

"Many people, who have the time or the money, can get away in time and space from these things, but for those who cannot, what a blessing it is to know, that this Museum is here; and how hard it will be when it moves into a big palace uptown, where one perhaps will not have the time to see it, though I think that I will and must make the time."

"Bauer's paintings give the impression of being the work of one who has an inclusive comprehension of the fundamental order and balance of our

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very universe. He translates this comprehension into compositions of perfect shape and colour. Each painting seems to be an interpretation of the cosmic forces, which control the universe. His style evidences a rare combination of highly developed sensitivity and disciplined arrangement, which gives powerful directness to his creations."

"I have been a professor in a university for the last twenty years. During this time I have discovered the inadequacy of the intellect. There are two ways anything can be approached: emotionally and intellectually. In our present civilization the emphasis has been placed on the latter, coupling it with science and technology. Politicians have been concerned with the physical welfare of people. Few have been interested in that thing which separates human beings from animals—the soul. That is probably because it cannot be understood by analytical means. No—the finest part of our lives consists of spiritual-emotional response. I find these paintings completely spiritual-emotional. The paintings in this Museum offer the world a true peace and harmony, where man's dignity and spiritual strength win for him a place in the cosmic system. One cannot merely accept this Art. One has to reach out for it."

"The smothering effect of materialistic dominance in our present way of life is melted, when I enter this Museum. Here there is a strong core of high purpose around which the Art of future generations will build itself. The people who planned this Museum are to be highly complimented for there is nothing to detract from the brilliant beauty of the Art of Non-objectivity which Kandinsky was the first to proclaim."

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PRINTED BY THE GALLERY PRESS, NEW YORK









