

NADFAS LECTURE

THEODORA CLARKE

KANDINSKY AND THE RISE OF ABSTRACTION

This lecture examines the development of abstract art through the work of the major artist and aesthetic theorist Wassily Kandinsky. We will trace Kandinsky's artistic development from representational art to abstraction. We follow his journey from figurative landscape to the non-representational works of his Bauhaus period. This lecture explores how his style evolved during different periods spent in Russia and Germany during the early twentieth century.

Kandinsky by developing abstraction created a powerful new way of portraying the world. He fashioned a new pictorial reality which abandoned traditional modes of representation that focused on perspective and illusionism. His new non-objective style of painting departed from reality and removed any trace of the visible world. Abstract painting created a new visual language of form, colour and line which existed apart from visual references in reality. Kandinsky had developed a new visual system of form and colour comprised of geometrical elements.

Significant moments in his artistic development to consider include his stay in Murnau with Gabriele Münter, his work with the Blue Rider Group in Germany, teaching at the Bauhaus and revolutionary politics in Russia. We will also examine his two major theoretical texts of *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1912) and *Point and Line to Plane* (1926). Key works of the artist's oeuvre will be investigated in detail including the abstract masterpieces of *Yellow-Red-Blue* (1925) and *Composition VII* (1913). Using elements of biography, pictorial analysis and cultural history we will trace how Kandinsky became a pioneer of abstract art.

Theodora Clarke is an expert and lecturer on Russian art and twentieth century modernism. Visit her website: www.theodoraclarke.co.uk.



Yellow-Red-Blue (1925)



Composition VII (1913)