



## Wassily Kandinsky Biography

**Wassily Kandinsky (1866 - 1944) was a Russian painter, printmaker and art theorist. One of the most famous 20th-century artists, he is credited with painting the first modern abstract works.**

**Born in Moscow, Russia in 1866,** Kandinsky spent his childhood in Odessa. He enrolled at the University of Moscow and chose to study law and economics. Quite successful in his profession—he was offered a professorship (chair of Roman Law) at the University of Dorpat—he started painting studies (life-drawing, sketching and anatomy) at the age of 30.

In 1896 he settled in Munich and studied first in the private school of Anton Ažbe and then at the Academy of Fine Arts, Munich. In 1909, after a trip to Paris during which he was introduced to the works of the Fauve artists Henri Matisse, Georges

Braque, Andre Dérain and Maurice de Vlaminck, his paintings became more highly colored and loosely organized. Kandinsky's creation of purely abstract work followed a long period of development and maturation of intense theoretical thought based on his personal artistic experiences. He called this devotion to inner beauty, fervor of spirit, and deep spiritual desire inner necessity, which was a central aspect of his art. In 1911,

along with Franz Marc and other German Expressionists, Kandinsky formed Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider) a group of artists who shared a belief that art should be in the service of the spiritual and transcendent rather than a description of the material world. **Around 1913 he began working on paintings that came to be considered the first totally abstract works in modern art;** for they





made no reference to described or recognized objects in the physical world. He went back to Moscow in 1914 after World War I started. He was unsympathetic to the official theories on art in Moscow and returned to Germany in 1921. There he taught at the Bauhaus school of art and architecture from 1922 until the Nazis closed it in 1933. He then moved to France where he lived the rest of his life, and became a French citizen in 1939. **In 1944, he died at Neuilly-sur-Seine in Paris.**

**Kandinsky's influence on the course of 20th-century art was further increased by his activities as a theorist and teacher.** In 1912 he published *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, the first theoretical treatise on abstraction, which spread his ideas throughout Europe.



As one of the first explorers of the principles of **nonrepresentational or "pure" abstraction**, Kandinsky can be considered an artist who paved the way for all **non-representative expressionism** painting.



