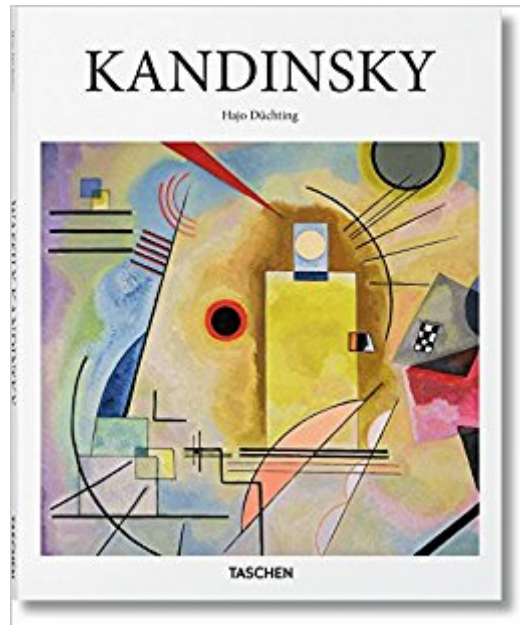




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# Kandinsky (Basic Art Series 2.0)



## Synopsis

Abstract beginnings: Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) transformed not only his own style, but the course of art history. From early figurative and landscape painting, he went on to pioneer a spiritual, emotive, rhythmic use of color and line and is today credited with creating the first purely abstract work. As much a teacher and theorist as he was a practicing artist, Kandinsky's interests in music, theater, poetry, philosophy, ethnology, myth, and the occult, were all essential components to his painting and engraving. He was involved with both the influential Blaue Reiter and Bauhaus groups and left a legacy not only of dazzling visual work, but also of highly influential treatises such as *Concerning the Spiritual In Art*. Key tenets included the connections between painting, music and mystical experience, and the purification of art away from material realism and towards an emotional expression, condensed in particular by color. This book presents key Kandinsky works to introduce his repertoire of vivid colors, forms, and feelings. Tracing the artist's radical stylistic development, it shows how one painter's progression paved the way for generations of abstract expression to come.

About the Series: Each book in TASCHEN's Basic Art series features: a detailed chronological summary of the life and oeuvre of the artist, covering his or her cultural and historical importance a concise biography approximately 100 illustrations with explanatory captions

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Hajo Döpfner studied art history, philosophy and archaeology in Munich, where he gained his doctorate in 1981 with a thesis on Robert Delaunay's "Windows" series. After working in museum and adult education, he moved on to teaching posts and guest professorships at the universities of Munich, Kassel, Leipzig, Saarbrücken and Mainz. Döpfner has published numerous articles on the art of the modern era, color theory and the teaching of art, and has authored a number of TASCHEN titles, including Paul Cézanne, Wassily Kandinsky, Robert and Sonia Delaunay and Georges Seurat.

Excellent information on one of my favorite artists. Good quality reprints of paintings but did not include some of his best known works and that's why I gave it 4 rather than 5 stars.

This book has great color photos

I wanted a book with color photos of some of Kandinsky's best paintings. This little inexpensive book fit the bill. Highly recommended.

love this book.

Good intro to Kandinsky. I saw a travelling exhibition of his works in Milwaukee that really got me understanding his work. This is a good complement, although the show was stronger on recurring themes and motifs in his work. His work is beautiful, and this book is a great way to get a feel for it.

Let me preface this review with the fact that I am an engineer, not an artist, and know almost nothing about art. That said... Kandinsky is one of my favorite artists, and I have a reproduction of "Composition VIII" hanging on my living room wall. The book contains many good quality pictures of Kandinsky's paintings throughout his life, showing his different styles, interspersed with text about his life. The writing is at times a bit pretentious and/or "etherial" for me. I would have preferred the descriptions of the paintings and reasons for the changings in style to be a bit more "concrete", but as I said, I'm not an artist. I also would have liked a bit more discussion of his childhood, how he got into painting, and synesthesia in general. But, given the book's very reasonable price, if you buy the book, you won't be disappointed.

This review is of the large format (9.1 x 0.3 x 11.8 inches) Taschen edition of this book, which was

the first edition published, as opposed to the latter smaller format editions (8.5 x 0.5 x 10.3 inches). The text is the same but, unsurprisingly, the illustrations are much larger and higher quality than in the smaller edition. If you can find the larger edition this alone makes it worth purchasing over and above the later smaller editions. This is true, in general, of all Taschen publishing books that compose the "Basic Art" series. Any review of this book would have to start out by stating that it is part of the Taschen "Basic Art" series. As such it is only 96 pages long and about half of these consist of illustrations of one type or another (primarily of the artist's work but also a few B&W of the artist himself, with well-known artists of the time, etc.). Hence if one is looking for an encyclopedic book on the artist this is not. However, despite the book's short length, it does a very good job at tying the artist's life to his works as well as expounding on how his style developed over the course of his life. If someone is looking for a short book on just this, the book is highly recommended. This, again, is very true of nearly all books in Taschen's "Basic Art" series. This book does a very good job at integrating Kandinsky's life with that of his art as well as examining how his "style" of art developed over the course of his life. One also learns how his art developed with his many travels. When he was young and lived in Tsarist Russia he was very much influenced by Slavic folk art. This influence stayed with him for the rest of his life albeit the form of this changed over time. When he moved to Germany his style, once again, changed but pretty much took the form that it would for the rest of his life (with minor modifications). He moved back to Russia, immediately before the first world war and stayed through the early 1920s. However, he found Russia stifling, especially in regard to political constraints on arts (it's a shame that the author does not provide much detail in regard to this) but, just as importantly, an artistic community that detested his "style". He returned once again to Germany for a few years but, thanks to the rise of the Nazis in the early 1930s, moved to France. His art was included in the Nazi's famous 1937 exhibit of "degenerate" art. In France he remained until his death in 1944 though the author does not mention why the Nazis left him unmolested. It would have been interesting to know why. In France he lived in poverty and in relative obscurity. More importantly, at least according to the author Hajo Duchting, his style did not evolve while there. One last point to note is that the illustrations are quite nice. Not up to par for art museum books costing \$50 - \$100 but unsurpassed for those in the \$10 - \$15 range. This is very typical of most books, but not all, in the Taschen Basic Art series (the book in this series on Hieronymus Bosch is one of the few

examples of poor illustration in a Basic Art book).All and all highly recommended for anyone seeking an introduction to this artist.

Great book.

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