Pearl at Home

Art projects designed for family fun, for suggested ages of 5 and up to be completed at home with easily-accessible art materials.

COMPOSITION X REVISITED

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MATERIALS

- Large canvas, canvas board, or piece of cardboard (for the background)
- Color cardstock or construction paper
- Paint and brush
- Glue
- Scraps of cardboard from a box, or scraps of foam core
- Scissors
- Ruler and/or items with interesting shapes (to trace)

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) is a well known abstract artist who used color, line, and shape to express himself through art. He thought of art as a musical composition, with different notes – or shapes – coming together to tell a story.

Kandinsky didn’t use the color black very often in his work, but he used it in the background of Composition X. The dark background contrasts with the brightly-colored shapes and makes them “pop” off the canvas. The shapes are positioned in a particular way so they appear to have a lot of movement.

Wassily Kandinsky, Composition X, 1939
Oil on canvas, 51.1” x 76.7”
Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen Collection, Düsseldorf, Germany
DIRECTIONS

1 On your canvas or cardboard, paint a dark background that will complement the colors of paper you want to use.

**TIP:** If you are using cardboard for your background, be aware the edges might curl up a bit as it dries. Once your cardboard is fully dry on the front, spray the back with water and it should lay flat.

2 Draw and cut out several shapes from different colors of paper. Look at Kandinski’s work to get ideas for what kind of shapes you like. Keep in mind the importance of color and how he used them. Use the ruler or other items to help you draw the shapes.

3 Next, plan your composition. Experiment with color and value combinations. Decide if some of your shapes will be “floated” above some of the other shapes. Should you add lines or other marks on your shapes?

Don’t glue anything down until you are sure of your design. You can make a sketch first if you like.

4 To make shapes “float,” glue small pieces of thick cardboard or foam core to the back of the shapes.

5 Glue your shapes one layer at a time to the prepared background, adding the floating layers last.