Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts

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.

KANDINSKY CIRCLES

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) is well known for being a pioneer of abstract art. Abstract art, in simple terms, is a type of art that does not have a recognizable subject. Instead, abstract art focuses on shapes, line, and color. It portrays what an artist feels and thinks, rather than what the artist sees.

Kandinsky believed that art was a tool of expression. Color was particularly important to him. It was more than just part of a painting—it was its soul! He experimented with color in his paintings, tending to use bright colors in different shapes. You can see in his artwork below how color looks different depending on what colors are around it. Yellow against black looks very different than yellow next to beige!

Kandinsky also experimented with lines and shapes. He was fond of the circle, believing it was an ideal form and could create a sense of harmony in a work of art. A circle can also represent many different things to the artist and viewer.

In this project, we’ll explore how lines, shapes, and color interact to produce a work of art. You can make several pieces to decide which color combinations you like!

Wassily Kandinsky, Several Circles, 1926
Oil on canvas, 55 3/8” x 55 1/4”
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York City, NY, US

Wassily Kandinsky, Circles in a Circle, 1923
Oil on canvas, 38 7/8” x 37 5/8”
The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection, 1950
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA, US
MATERIALS

• Paper: White cardstock, mixed media paper, or watercolor paper
• Media of your choice:
  Watercolor, markers, colored pencils, crayons, oil pastel
  *If using watercolor: Brushes with points (called rounds), water, and container
• Pencil
• Black Sharpie
• Optional:
  • Round items in several sizes
    Bowls, tumblers, food container lids, etc.
  • Ruler

DIRECTIONS

1 Use a pencil to LIGHTLY draw curves and lines freehand on your paper. Go over your lines with the Sharpie. You can also skip the pencil, and draw your lines directly with the Sharpie. **Be sure you have overlapping lines!** The lines should overlap many times, as in our example below.

  **Optional:** Trace the rim of a bowl, glass, or other round object to help you draw circles. Use the ruler to draw straight lines across your circles.

2 Use watercolor or other media to add color to different sections you’ve created with your lines. The “rules” for adding color to this project are to continually change the color you are using, and to not have two sections of the same color next to each other. Keep in mind that you do not need to put color in every section.

  **TIP:** Make a plan before you work. If using watercolor, work in different areas at a time so the colors don’t run together.