Pearl at Home

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

KANDINSKY TREES

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KANDINSKY TREES

Have you ever looked at someone’s art and asked yourself, “Why do they choose to make art that way?” The short answer is that artists have keen observations about our world and have developed their own ways to create art, to show us their ideas and how those ideas make them feel.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

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 used the relationship between color and form to create experiences that engaged sight, sound, and emotion. He believed that abstract art was the best way to express himself, and that copying from nature only interfered with this process.

Painting was a spiritual process for the artist. He saw art as a visual language that he could use to communicate with people across cultural and physical boundaries. Kandinsky’s art evolved throughout his life, as different experiences and people inspired him.

Music, however, was always an inspiration to Kandinsky – he saw it as another form of abstract art. Just like music can create images in listeners’ minds through sound, he sought to create emotion and sound through the unity of his abstract forms and color choices. He believed that color was the soul of an artwork.

Wassily Kandinsky, Squares with Concentric Circles, 1913
Watercolor, gouache, and crayon on paper, 9.4” x 12.4”
Lenbachhaus, Munich, Germany

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

- For the leaves: Color cardstock or construction paper
- For the trunk & branches: Brown construction paper, newspaper, or magazine text pages (torn into strips or pieces)
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Glue (like Modge Podge, clear Elmer’s, or glue sticks)
- Sponge brush

DIRECTIONS

1 Make the paper for the tree trunk by spreading liquid glue smoothly all over a piece of cardstock. Then place torn pieces of construction paper, newsprint, or magazine text over the whole sheet. You may need to use a little more glue to get the edges to stick.

Instead of liquid glue, you can also use a glue stick on the cardstock and place the paper piece by piece. Set aside to dry.

2 While your tree trunk paper is drying, cut colored cardstock and/or construction paper into circles of different sizes. Stack them 2 or 3 deep, and glue them together. See our example above to get an idea of how many stacks you might need. These are the leaves of your tree.
3 When your tree trunk paper from Step 1 is DRY, place your hand and wrist (and maybe some of your arm) on top of the paper with your fingers spread out. Use the pencil to trace around your hand, going between your fingers and including as much of your arm as you can. You can add some extra branching divisions near the end of the fingers for extra branches.

4 Cut out the tracing you made of your hand/arm – this is your tree trunk and branches.

5 BEFORE YOU GLUE, arrange your leaves from Step 2 on the branches of the tree. Once they’re in the right place, glue your leaves down. Let everything dry.

6 You can leave your art project flat, or poke a hole at the top to hang it. To make it stand up, wrap it around and glue it to a sturdy-paper tube (which you can construct with cardstock or construction paper and glue, to be around 1 1/2 inches wide and 2 1/2 inches high). You can create a whole grove of Kandinsky trees!