The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
October 1994

FACT SHEET

EXHIBITION  
KANDINSKY: COMPOSITIONS

DATES  
January 26 - April 25, 1995

ORGANIZATION  
Organized by Magdalena Dabrowski, Senior Curator, Department of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art

SPONSORSHIP  
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CONTENT  
As one of the great pioneers of modernism, Russian artist Vasily Kandinsky (1866-1944) is most closely identified with the beginning of abstract painting in the second decade of this century. This is exemplified in an exhibition devoted to what Kandinsky referred to as his most important -- and possibly his most beautiful -- body of work, the ten Composition paintings.

The exhibition features approximately forty works, many of which have never before been seen in the United States. Seven of the surviving Composition paintings are presented along with numerous, richly colored preliminary studies in oil, watercolor, ink, and pencil. Executed between 1910 and 1939, these monumental paintings and related studies make up a singular body of work exemplifying the artist's transition to "non-objective" painting, as well as conveying the fundamental principles of art Kandinsky expounded in his treatise On the Spiritual in Art (1911).

The evolution of Kandinsky's ideas and pictorial imagery is traced in the Compositions and their process works. The predominantly figurative style of Compositions I-III (1909-10) shifts to the gradual elimination of representational elements in Compositions IV, V, and VI (1911-13) to mere - more -
suggestions of recognizable subject matter in Composition VII (1913) and to the purely geometric idiom in Compositions VIII-X (1923-39). As a group, this distinctive body of work reveals not only Kandinsky's unusually deliberate and systematic creative process, but also the genesis of his concept of Composition.


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No. 61

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