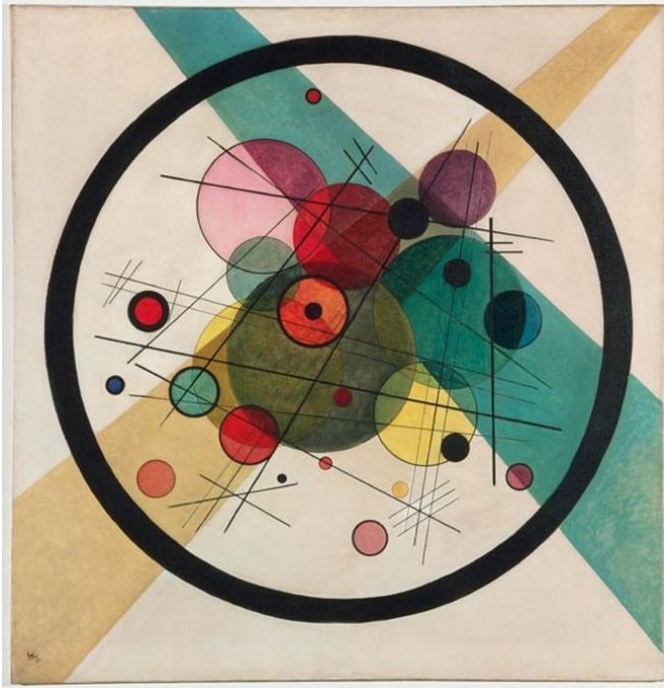
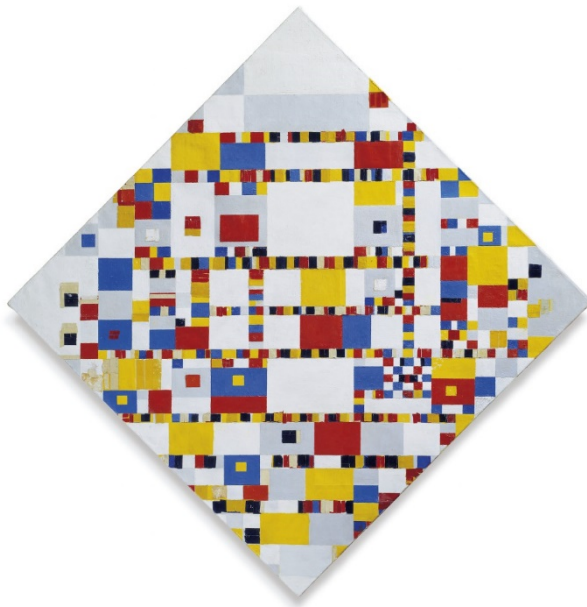


Philosophy @ The Virtual Art Museum: Abstract Art



Wassily Kandinsky, *Circles in a Circle*, 1923, Philadelphia Museum of Art

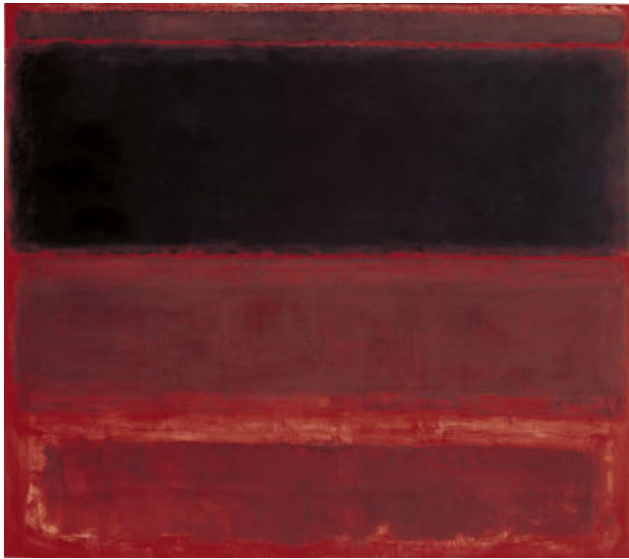
1. What are the most prominent features of this painting?
2. How does the presence of the intersecting tan and green figures affect your experience of the painting? The large black circle?
3. Are there any elements of the painting that remind you of landscapes? Of anything else?
4. Do you think this painting is beautiful?



Piet Mondrian, *Victory Boogie Woogie*, 1942-1944, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag

1. What features of this painting strike you right away?
2. Does the painting remind you of anything?
3. If it does, do you think the painting is not really abstract?
4. How does the title of the painting affect your viewing of it? Do you know what “victory” and “boogie woogie” refer to?

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**Mark Rothko, *Four Darks in Red*, 1958,
Whitney Museum of American Art**

1. How does this painting differ from the other abstract paintings you have seen?
2. How do the large, rectangular fields of color affect you?
3. What do you think the artist is trying to communicate?
4. Do you think this painting is beautiful?

Philosophy Questions:

1. Why are these paintings called *abstract*? Are there specific feature(s) of the works that the term refers to? Are there other ways of describing the works that you think are more appropriate?
2. Besides certain works of art, what sorts of things are called abstract? (Hint: Think about the different subjects you study in school. Are some of them more abstract than others? Which ones? What makes those subjects abstract?)
3. How does the term “abstract” describe those things? Does it evaluate them, say in a positive or negative way? Does it refer to certain properties of those things?
4. What makes something abstract? What is the opposite of abstract? Does the word “abstract” have a definite meaning? Can you define it?
5. Philosophy is sometimes termed abstract. Do these paintings and philosophy share something that makes them both abstract?

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