

WEEK 4: Abstract Art

Level: Streamlined

MATERIALS NEEDED:

-Paper

-Pencils

-colored Pencils, markers, paint, whatever coloring agents you and your director have chosen. Color is more important this week than before, so if you can, have lots of different mediums available to play with. Ask parents to bring in some if that helps.

-Timeline Card #124 "US restores trade with Japan"

INCLUDED VISUALS:

- Paul Klee Quote
- Edward VI Official Portrait by William Scrots
- Edward VI anamorphic portrait by William Scrots
- Naruto Whirlpool by Hiroshige
- Japanese footbridge 1898 and 1922 by Claude Monet
- Simultaneous Windows on a City by Robert Delauney
- Tableau 1 by Piet Mondrian
- Heroic Roses by Paul Klee
- No 293 by Wassily Kandinsky

"A line is a dot that went for a walk...a drawing is a line that went for a walk." -Paul Klee, Abstract Artist¹

¹ Paul Klee (1879 – 1940, Swiss artist) loved music, particularly the works of Bach and Mozart (hello Cycle 1!). Originally trained as a violinist, Klee would play the violin as a warm up to his painting. One of the reasons Klee liked Bach so much was that he loved Bach's use of Counterpoint (Remember Cycle 1?) within his pieces. When he lectured, Klee compared the visual structure and rhythm within paintings with rhythm and structures within counterpoint and musical compositions. This particular piece is apparently a direct homage to Bach, and may have been painted while listening to Bach. Following Klee's death, other artists have used his technique to visually compose paintings based on musical pieces. There was also a counter-movement of composers composing music based on Klee's visual works!

Tutor: Okay, first week, we learned we can break down pretty much all images into OiLS. What do those stand for again?

Weeks two and three we drew mirror images and upside down. Do you remember why? *[To break the icon patterns and see the OiLS in an image, practice spatial reasoning, ect]*

Do exercises like these make us more practiced and accurate draw-ers, and artists, do you think? *[Hopefully, they say yes]*

So what happens when an artist uses the OiLS just for fun?

[Show official Portriat of Edward VI by William Scrotts

This is King Edward VI of England, a Renaissance King. We'll run into his dad, King Henry VIII during Week 9 this year.² Edward was born in 1537, became king when he was nine years old in 1547, and died in 1553, when he was fifteen. This is one of his official portraits done by William Scrots.

But it wasn't Edward's favorite portrait by Scrots.

This was.

[Show the "stretched portrait, may have to pause for some laughter.]

According to some historians,³ *this* was likely Edward VI's favorite portrait. It's a giant, visual trick: the only way to see it is to hang it on the wall and look at it from the right edge. Only then will the portrait of the then-nine-year-old prince look correct. William Scrots used his eyes and his OiLS to play a game with art. Artists liked to hide things in their art, secret messages, or hidden objects. They had fun!

Fast forward 300 years and two things would rock the art world.

The first was a new invention that's so common now, most of us use it every day. It's included in most phones, many devices, and some are so small, we don't notice them. Any idea what it is?

[Photograph/Camera]

With photography, the need and nature of art changed. Need a portrait of grandma? Take a photo, don't wait for a painting. Suddenly, artists had fewer people purchasing portraits, and things like that, and had to find something else to do.

The second great event in the art world was the US (and the rest of Europe) restoring trade with Japan.

² Of course, only during Cycle 2, otherwise, we can just say "during Cycle 2"

³ I learned about this from following a tour through the National Portrait Gallery when I visited London. It was fantastic!

[You can use the timeline card here, or, if it's Cycle 1, this event will be part of Week 10's history sentence]

Some of the first items to be traded back and forth was artwork between Europe and America with Japan. Both regions influenced each other. In the Western World, Japan's use of bright colors, flattened perspective, and stylized art was very different from what the West had been doing. The difference captivated artists. In fact, Van Gogh loved Japanese prints so much, he'd buy them instead of food!

Japanese artists wanted to capture "the perfect moment", and many of their paintings looked flatter, but more dream-like.

<If you haven't already, re-show Hiroshige's *Naruto Whirlpool*, and Feel free to re-show Week 1's "Couple under an Umbrella", or one of the timeline cards with early Japanese art, like "Japan's Shoguns" or "Japan's Isolation".>

So Western artists, freed from compositions that required accuracy, began to play with their art to capture emotions, beauty, anything, without needing to attach it to real-world objects.

You can watch abstract art develop with Impressionist artist Claude Monet, (who we'll meet later in Cycle 2). Monet tried to capture an "impression" of a place and time. He loved Japanese art so much, he built a Japanese garden in his home, and painted this bridge, many times. This is the bridge in 1899.

But you can see, twenty years later, he's playing with shapes and colors so much that, unless you know from the title that is the same bridge, it just looks like whirls of color.

Other artists played with shapes, like Robert Delaunay, with his *Simultaneous Windows on the City*, and Piet Mondriaan, with his *Tableau 1*. These two are just playing with shapes, intersections of color. Sometimes, there was a recognizable element to abstract art, like this, Paul Klee's *Heroic Roses*, where you can see the swirls of the rose hidden in the forms. Klee also liked to paint while listening to music like his piece in today's quote. Other times, like this composition, there's not even a name to help us understand what the artist was expressing. Wassily Kandinsky's (Va-SIL-y Kan-DIN-ski) called this piece *No. 293*

And that, is what Abstract Art is. Using the tools of art to just PLAY. It is art that does not try to copy the real world, but makes art by playing with shapes, forms, colors, and textures.

So today, just play with your OiLS—play with shapes, play with colors, draw "happiness" or "fury". Draw nothing or everything. If one of these compositions inspired you, take it to your seat to work your own version of it. Just play with your art.

Review:

What do OiLS stand for?

What is Abstract Art?

About Copyright Law:

There are a number of copyright laws in the world. The most common is all work of a creator (author, artist, playwright) is copyrightable until 70 years after death. The USA follows this law with a caveat: all things published prior to January 1, 1923 is in the public domain regardless of creator's lifespan (hence why the Picasso Stravinsky is in public domain in USA, but not in the rest of the world. Picasso died in 1973, so his copyright term extends to 2043-except for his early pieces, like Stravinsky, which were published prior to 1923.).

This tutorial was created with the Life+70 in mind. All the artists featured died prior to 1946. If you teach outside the US or Life+70 jurisdiction, please keep that in mind, and you may have to resort to finding similar pieces in library books or art books. The history remains the same, and the Renaissance work and Japanese prints should be safe to use, since they date to the 1850's.

You can always look up abstract art in books to show your class if you want to show later works of abstract art.

Small warning:

Some people may be inspired to look up different Japanese woodcuts during the week. Be careful when you look up "Japanese Prints" or "Japanese Art" because some are really racy and yes, pornographic. (and yes, I do have "safe search" on my results filter. These 18th and 19th century prints frequently get through because they are historic pieces of art, like Michelangelo's David or the Venus di Milo, whose nudity some find offensive. But some Japanese silk prints can be graphic, nonetheless, more so than the David.)

Looking up certain terms helped me dramatically lower the chance that one of these prints might show up on my search results, especially since I wrote these while my kids were in the room. So if you want to explore more Japanese art this week try:

- -"Japanese Landscape Prints"
- -"Hokusai's Views of Mt. Fuji" (This will include "The Wave" print which is one of the most well known Japanese prints in the world.)
- -Hiroshige's 100 Views of Edo

As you can see, sticking to landscapes helps avoid the other. If you look up "**Utagawa Toyokuni**" (the top Japanese artist of his day-he was so well known he turned away many artists who wanted to train with him. He even refused to train Hokusai!) you will find a number of portraits of people in work and play. A couple of these will be women getting ready to bathe, and in states of undress. But even here, there is no guarantee: I saw at least two prints featuring people in the act of procreation (whether they were Toyokuni pieces or not, I didn't check). My top recommendation, especially if you or your student are interested in looking at more Japanese art (which I love! Don't get me wrong, it can be beautiful!) is to vet your images ahead of time, just in case. (Maybe I need to create a G-rated digital gallery someday.)

WEEK 4: Abstract Art

Level: More information

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Pencils
- colored Pencils, markers, paint, whatever coloring agents you and your director have chosen.
- Timeline Card #124 "US restores trade with Japan"

Included Visuals:

- -Paul Klee Quote
- Edward VI Official Portrait by William Scrots
- Edward VI anamorphic portrait by William Scrots
- The Ambassadors by Hans Holbein the Younger
- Naruto Whirlpool by Hiroshige
- Japanese footbridge 1898 and 1922 by Claude Monet
- Simultaneous Windows on a City by Robert Delauney
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Optional Reused Visuals:

- -Couple under an umbrella (Japanese Print from Week 1)

"A line is a dot that went for a walk...a drawing is a line that went for a walk." -Paul Klee, Abstract Artist⁴

⁴ Paul Klee (1879 – 1940, Swiss artist) loved music, particularly the works of Bach and Mozart (hello Cycle 1!). Originally trained as a violinist, Klee would play the violin as a warm up to his painting. One of the reasons Klee liked Bach so much was the he loved Bach's use of Counterpoint (Remember Cycle 1?) within his pieces. When he lectured, Klee compared the visual structure and rhythm within paintings with rhythm and structures within counterpoint and musical compositions. This particular piece is apparently a direct homage to Bach, and may have been painted while listening to Bach. Following Klee's death, other artists have used his technique to visually compose paintings based on musical pieces. There was also a counter-movement of composers composing music based on Klee's visual works!

Tutor: Okay, first week, we learned we can break down pretty much all images into OiLS. What do those stand for again?

Weeks two and three we drew mirror images and upside down. Do you remember why? [*To break the icon patterns and see the OiLS in an image, practice spatial reasoning, ect*]

Do exercises like these make us more practiced and accurate draw-ers⁵, and artists, do you think? [*Hopefully, they say yes*]

So what happens when an artist uses the OiLS just for fun? Let me tell you a story of art.

[*Show official Portriat of Edward VI by William Scrotts*

This is King Edward VI (6th) of England, a Renaissance King. We'll run into his dad, King Henry VIII (8th) during Week 9 this year.⁶ Edward was born in 1537, became king when he was nine years old in 1547, and died in 1553, when he was fifteen. This is one of his official portraits done by William Scrots.

But it wasn't Edward's favorite portrait by Scrots.

This was.

[*Show the "stretched portrait, may have to pause for some laughter.*]

According to some historians, *this* was likely Edward VI's favorite portrait. It's a giant, visual trick: the only way to see it is to hang it on the wall and look at it from the right edge. Only then will the portrait of the nine-year-old prince look correct. William Scrots used his eyes and his OiLS to play a game with art. Artists liked to hide things in their art, like secret messages, or hidden objects.

Look at this piece "The Ambassadors", from Hans Holbein, court painter to Edward's father, Henry VIII. Do you see something odd about it?

[*Stretched out Skull in foreground between mens' legs.*)]

Some historians think this may have been painted for a stairwell, and you wouldn't see the skull unless you were going up or coming down the stairs! So artists always liked to play with their art, but they also had to be accurate and draw things realistically.

Fast forward 300 years and two things would rock the art world.

The first was a new invention that's so common now, most of us use it every day. It's included in most phones, many devices, and some are so small, we don't notice them. Any idea what it is?

[*Photograph/Camera*]

⁵ The technical term is "draftsman/woman" or "draughtsman/woman", but use "draw-er" if you like. Adjust as you need!

⁶ Of course, only during Cycle 2, otherwise, we can just say "during Cycle 2"

With photography, the need and nature of art changed. Need a portrait of grandma? Forget the painter, go to a photographer and get it done cheaply and quickly! Suddenly, artists had fewer people purchasing portraits, and things like that, and had to find something else to do.

The second great event in the art world was the US (and the rest of Europe) restoring trade with Japan.

[You can use the timeline card here, or, if it's Cycle 1, this event will be part of Week 10's history sentence]

Some of the first items to be traded back and forth was artwork. Both regions influenced each other. In the Western World, Japan's use of bright colors, flattened perspective, and stylized art was very different from what the West had been doing. The difference captivated artists. In fact, Van Gogh loved Japanese prints so much, he'd buy them instead of food!

Japanese artists wanted to capture "the perfect moment", and many of their paintings looked flatter, but more dream-like.

<Show Hiroshige's Print "Whirlpools are Naruto" or feel free to re-show Week 1's "Couple under an Umbrella" at this point, or one of the Timeline cards that show Japanese art like "Japan's Isolation" or "Japan's Shoguns" >

So Western artists, freed from compositions that required accuracy, began to openly play with their art to capture emotions, beauty, anything, without needing to attach it to any particular realistic object. With the success of Japanese and Chinese art, merchants began to import⁷ artwork from cultures in Africa, and the Native cultures of the Americas. These pieces, which often featured bold patterns and exaggerated features, directly impacted artists like Picasso.

You can watch abstract art develop with Impressionist artist Claude Monet, (who we'll meet later in Cycle 2). Monet tried to capture an "impression" of a place and time. He loved Japanese art so much, he built a Japanese garden in his home, and painted this bridge, many times. This is the bridge in 1899.

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⁷Artwork was also forged, stolen and smuggled, but that's an issue for another time.

And that, is what Abstract Art is. Using the tools of art to just PLAY. It is “art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, forms, colors, and textures.”⁸

So today, just play with your OiLS—play with shapes, play with colors, draw “happiness” or “fury”. Draw nothing or everything. If one of these compositions inspired you, take it to your seat to work your own version of it. Just play with your art.

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⁸ This definition comes from Oxford English Dictionary Online.

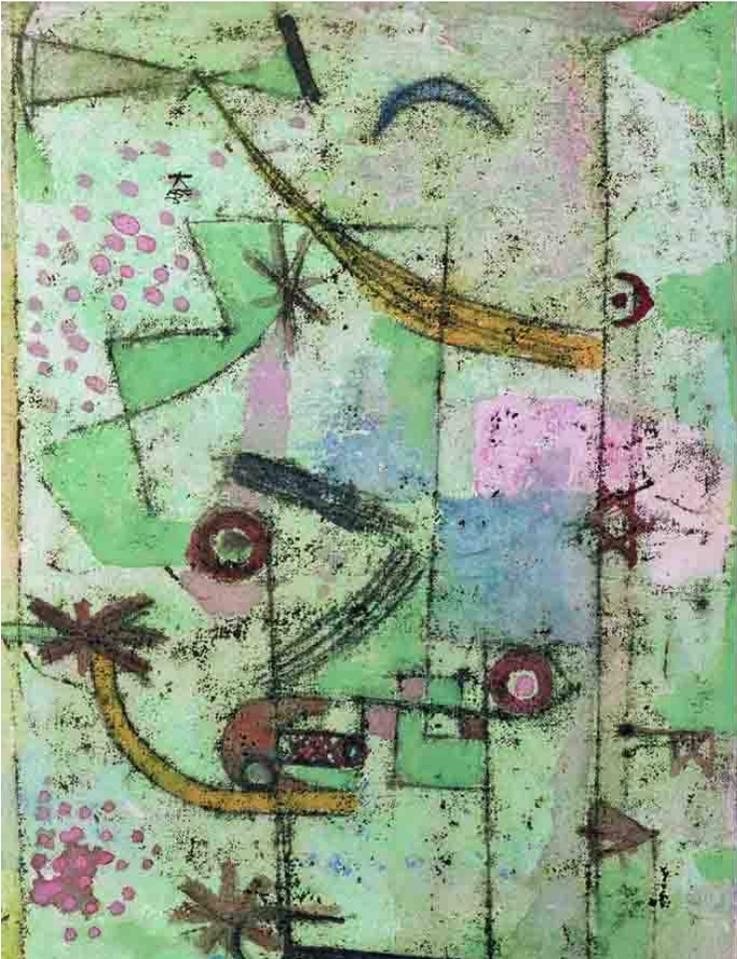
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-Paul Klee, Abstract Artist



Painting, “In the Style of Bach”
1919,
Gemertmuseum, the Hague
Netherlands



King Edward VI of England. Attributed to William Scrots. Royal Collection. Image from Wikipedia.



Edward VI Anamorphic Portrait. Attributed to William Scrots.
1547. National Portrait Gallery of London



"The Ambassadors" by Hans Holbein the Younger. 1533. National Portrait Gallery, London, England.



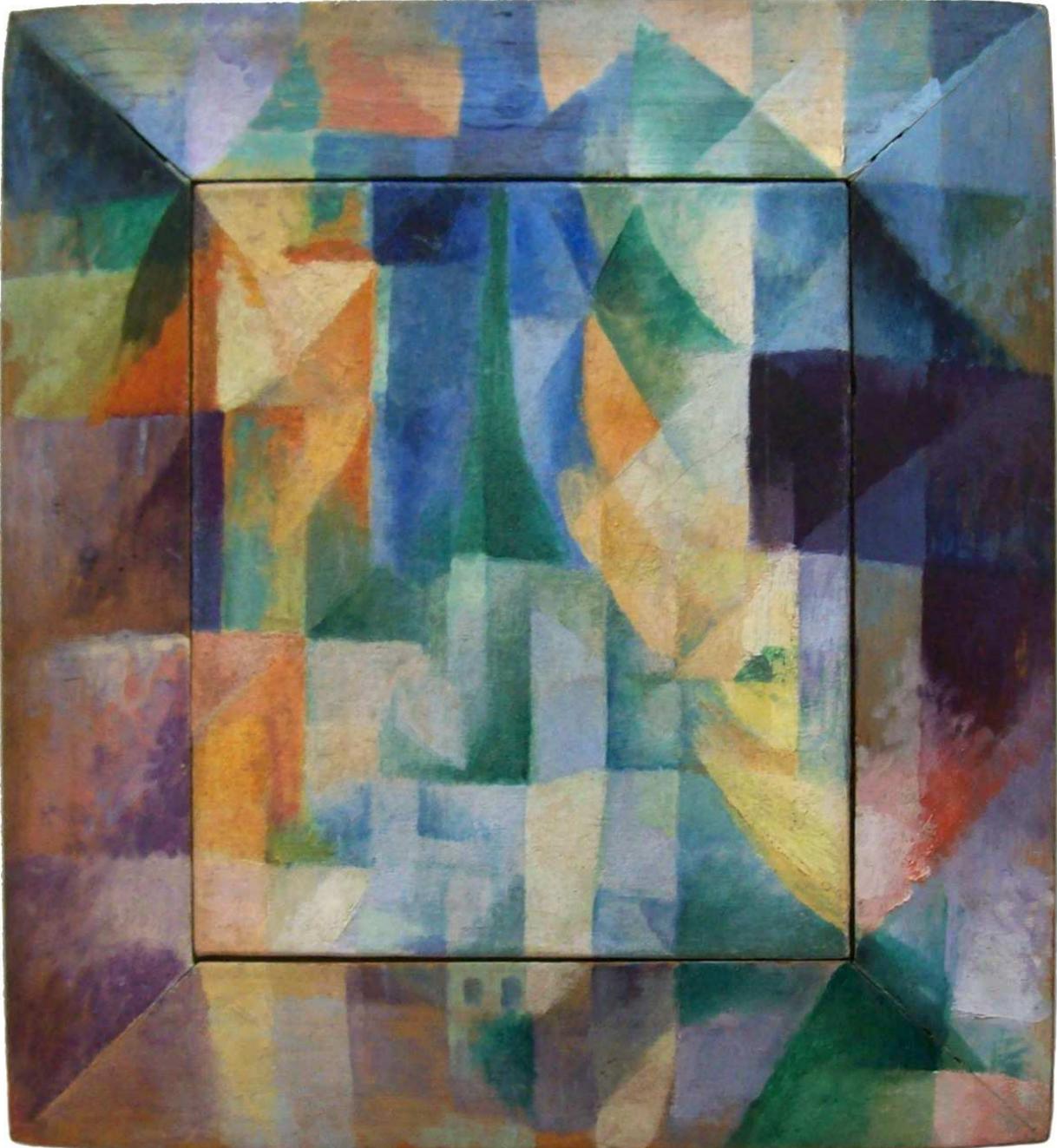
Hiroshige Utagawa (1797-1858) "Naruto Whirlpool, Awa Province" Edo Period, Japan. From Hiroshige's series, "Views of Famous Places in the the Sixty Odd Provinces."



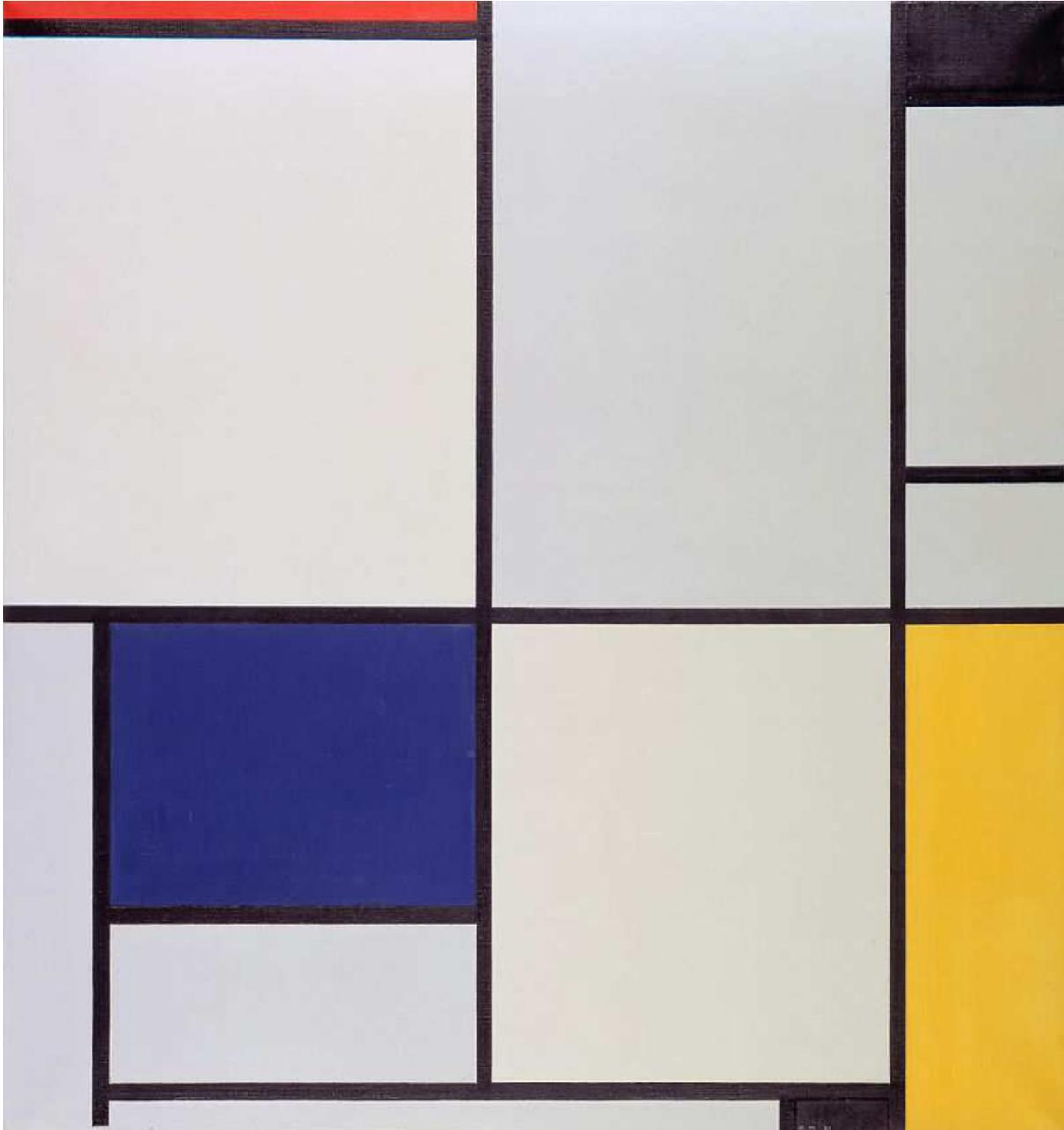
“Japanese Footbridge” by Claude Monet. 1897. Philadelphia Museum of Art



“Japanese Footbridge” by Claude Monet. 1920-1922; Museum of Modern Art



Robert Delaunay (1885 – 1941). *Simultaneous Windows on the City*. 1912. Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany



Piet Mondrian (1897 – 1944), *Tableau 1*, 1921; Gemeente Museum Den Haag



Paul Klee (1879 - 1940); Heroic Roses. 1938; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany



Wassily Kandinsky (1866 – 1944) ; No. 293; 1913

Script for Week Four Drawing Section: Abstract Art
2016-2017 / Cycle 2