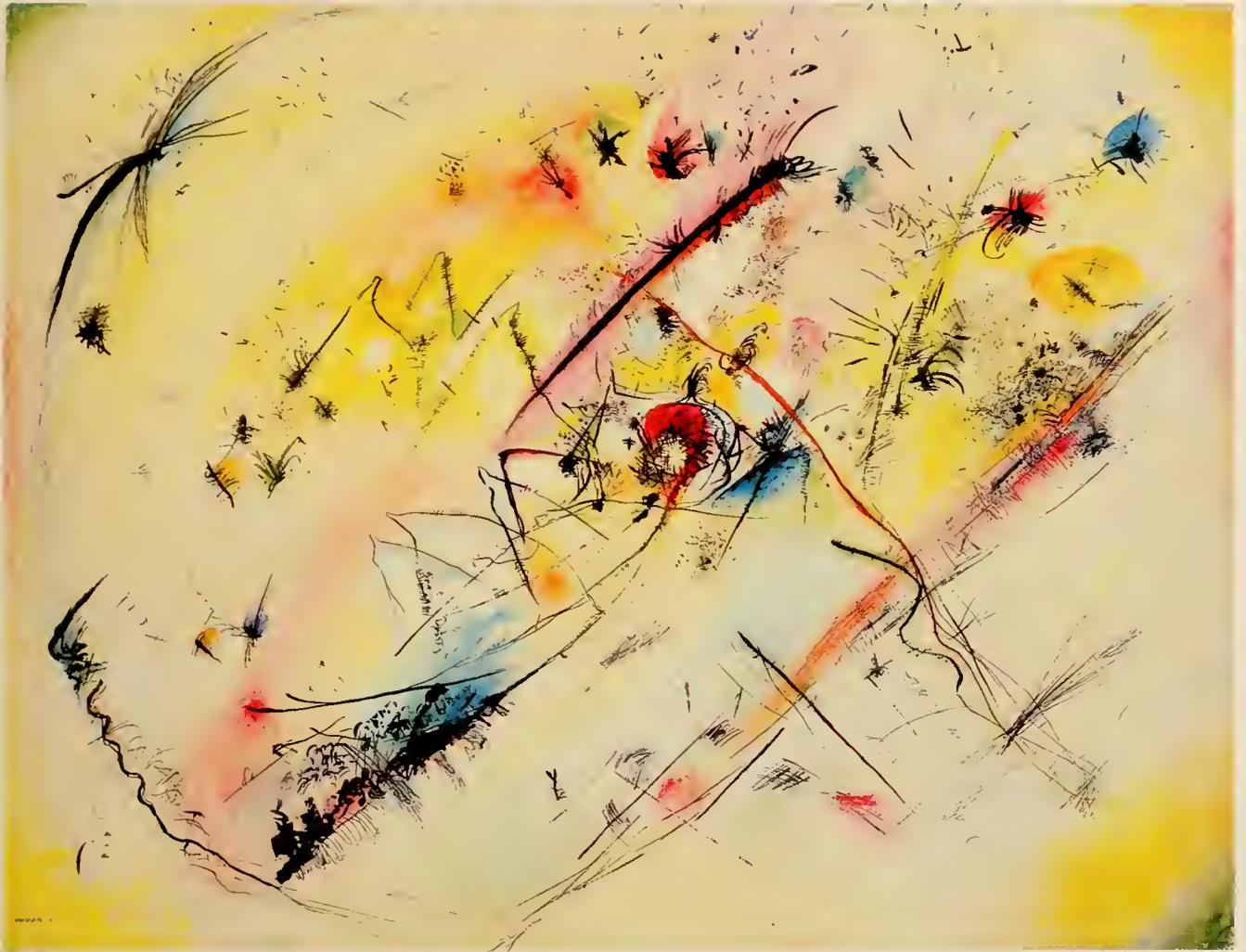


KANDINSKY



VASILY KANDINSKY
(1866-1944)

**A selection from The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
and The Hilla von Rebay Foundation**



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Oil on canvas, 30 $\frac{5}{8}$ " x 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ " in. (77.8 x 100.2cm)
Collection: The Solomon R.
Guggenheim Museum, New York.

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Sponsored by the
Peter Stuyvesant Cultural Foundation
and the
Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council

Arranged by the International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited
in conjunction with the
Art Gallery of New South Wales.

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The Peter Stuyvesant Cultural Foundation

The Peter Stuyvesant Cultural Foundation, formerly the Peter Stuyvesant Trust for the Development of the Arts, was inaugurated in 1963. Initially it was to bring to Australia the Peter Stuyvesant Collection, ART IN INDUSTRY, a group of modern abstract paintings which hung in a modern cigarette factory near Amsterdam, having been organised under the auspices of the European Foundation for Culture and the Netherlands Foundation of Art.

It was the focal point of the 1964 Adelaide Festival of Arts, after which it toured all Australian States and the A.C.T. The paintings earned universal praise from the national press, radio and television; and, in addition to the cover in news sessions, the ABC's channels devoted 27 minutes to the collection – the first of several such programs.

The aim of the Peter Stuyvesant Cultural Foundation is to develop the visual arts and culture in Australia True to the international flavour of its name, the Foundation is bringing to the capitals and the provincial cities of the Commonwealth, the universities and Colleges of Advanced Education, a variety of art so that the average Australian may see, enjoy and study the best the world has to offer.

In March 1966, for instance, the Foundation was associated with the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the British Council in bringing to Australia the London Symphony Orchestra, whose then chairman, Mr. Barry Tuckwell, OBE, is an Australian. The London Symphony Orchestra earned the warm praise of both critics and public alike in its seasons in Adelaide (again during the Festival of Arts), Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane, before continuing its world tour via the U.S.A.

The Foundation is immensely proud to be associated with the International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited and the art galleries of New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, in this outstanding exhibition of Kandinsky's works and will continue to bring to the Australian public recognised and outstanding art in its various forms which the people would not otherwise be able to enjoy.

Preface and Acknowledgements

Vasily Kandinsky is a central figure in the development of twentieth-century art. More than any other painter, with the possible exception of Piet Mondrian, he is identified with the transition from representational to abstract art. Kandinsky, who was born in Russia in 1866, did not begin his career as a painter until the first decade of our own century. He made his most original and important contributions to modern painting and aesthetic ideas in Munich between 1908 and 1914. After his return to Russia upon the outbreak of World War I, he worked for the revolutionary government, teaching and organising cultural institutions based upon modern ideas. When the Soviet government became hostile to avant-garde art, Kandinsky left his homeland once more for Germany and took a teaching position at the Weimar Bauhaus. He was forced to leave Germany again in 1933, when the Nazis closed the Bauhaus. This time the artist found refuge in Paris, where he spent the last eleven fruitful years of a creative and influential life.

The sequential progression of Kandinsky's revolutionary oeuvre is exceptionally clear and illuminating. His early work is representational and reveals its sources in Post-Impressionist modes. Gradually and to a certain degree paralleling the innovations of the contemporary French Fauves, Kandinsky attenuated the forms in his paintings and prints for decorative and expressive purposes. These forms, still rooted in the art of the *Jugendstil* movement and popular paintings on glass, ultimately were reduced almost to imperceptibility in their representational function in the most radical departure in the history of twentieth-century art. Kandinsky proclaimed the autonomy of form and colour from recognizable subject matter in his art and in his writings early in the second decade of our era, when others like Mondrian, Malevich, Kupka and Delaunay were moving towards similar conclusions. Thus, Kandinsky was not alone in achieving this fundamental revision in the painting of his time, but the inventiveness and originality, the authority and strength of his work made him a leader in the development of a new style. The same intellectual integrity and courage that assured this position of leadership before World War I later enabled him to invent new modes and exert a decisive influence during his years at the Bauhaus. During that period the expressiveness of the earlier work gave way to an emphasis upon geometric structure, as painterly intuition was controlled by carefully established, rigorous systems. The emotional detachment and the freedom from dogmatic

attitudes which mark the works of the last years in Paris make these paintings and watercolours particularly moving. The paintings and watercolours of these late years are profound insights gained in a wise and measured life.

Kandinsky's name has been closely associated with the Guggenheim since the Museum's formative stage in the late 1930s under the guidance of Hilla Rebay, Solomon R. Guggenheim, the Museum's founder and initial benefactor, acquired many watercolours and oils by Kandinsky, which, together with works by other modern pioneers, he gave to the Foundation he established in 1937. The collection grew as Miss Rebay, in her position of Director of the Museum of Non-Objective Painting (as the Guggenheim Museum was then called), continued to enrich the institution's already formidable Kandinsky holdings. More recently the collection was refined through sales as well as acquisitions, particularly in the area of graphics. Since 1970 the important collection of The Hilla von Rebay Foundation has remained on deposit at the Museum, enhancing the Guggenheim's own concentrations of Kandinsky's work. Thanks to The Hilla von Rebay Foundation collection and the essential co-operation of its trustees, we are able to present the comprehensive range of the artist's work. We are extremely pleased to be able to share with Australian State Galleries some of these treasures in an exhibition which represents Kandinsky's development from 1903 to 1943. Our gratitude must here be expressed to Vivian Endicott Barnett, Research Curator at the Guggenheim Museum, who organised and selected the exhibition for the International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited which arranged its circulation. Mrs. Barnett's sensitivity to Kandinsky's work is apparent in the choices she has made as well as in the cogent essay she has contributed to the catalogue. Louise Averill Svendsen, Senior Curator of the Guggenheim Museum, was extremely helpful, sharing her knowledge of the history of the Rebay collection and the Museum's Kandinsky holdings. We are also indebted to Susan Alyson Stein who assisted Mrs. Barnett in her research and wrote the informative texts which accompany the catalogue illustrations, and to the Guggenheim's Editor, Carol Fuerstein, for her careful editing of the publication. Finally, our very special thanks are due to the Australian sponsor, the Peter Stuyvesant Cultural Foundation, which generously supported the exhibition.

Thomas M. Messer, Director
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Introduction

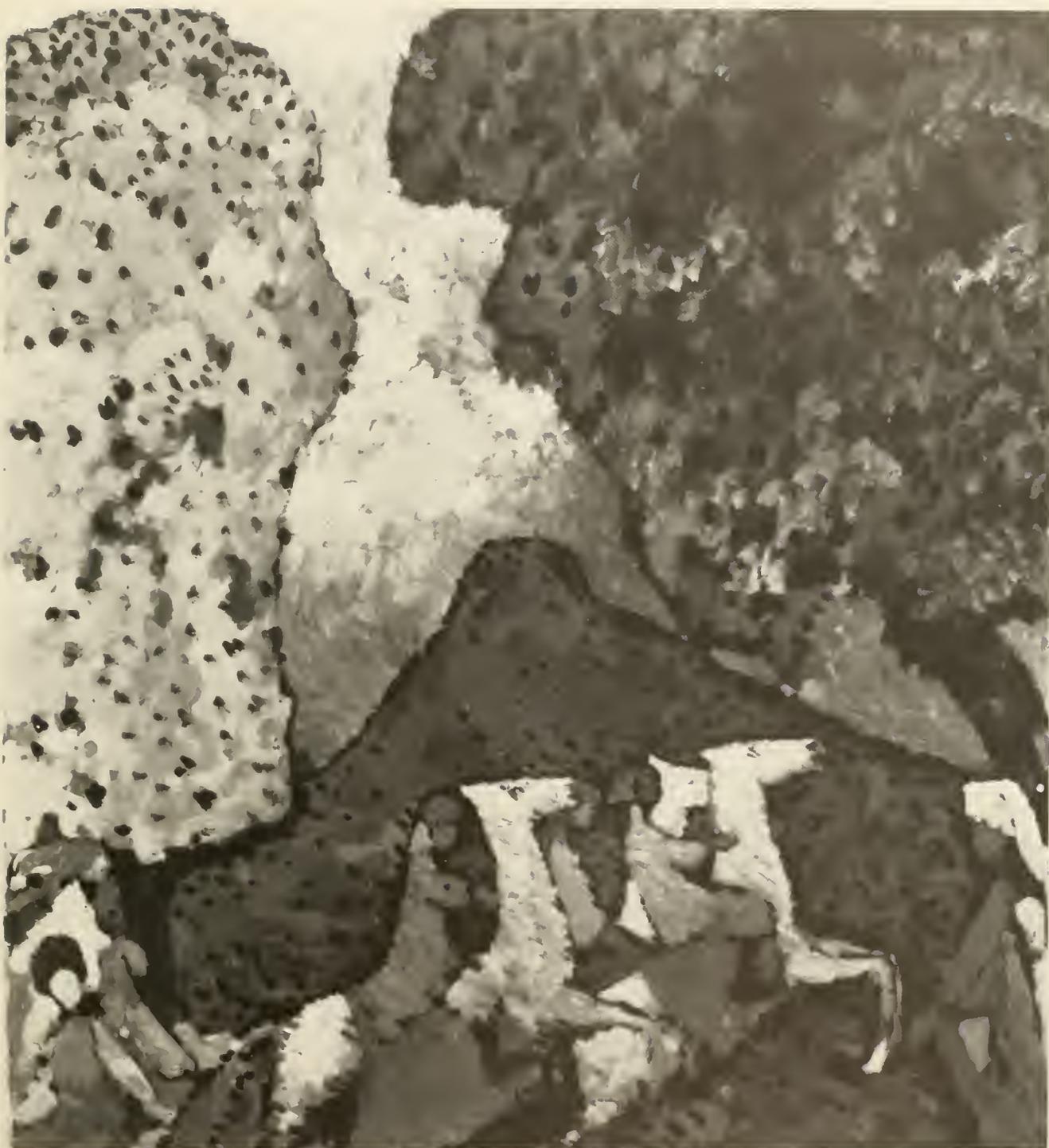
During the first decades of the twentieth century, the direction of painting moved irrevocably toward abstraction. The sources of such essential shifts in the history of art as the transition from representational to abstract art can be traced to the extraordinary originality and determination of certain individuals. Vasily Kandinsky, a towering artistic presence throughout the first half of this century was one of these individuals. Like Picasso, Braque, Mondrian, Malevich, Kupka and Delaunay, he was an innovator. Kandinsky's work spanned more than four decades, from about 1897 to 1944. The scope of his creative production extended from prints, drawings, water-colours and paintings to poetry, stage compositions and theoretical writings. Moreover, he played an active role as a teacher and as an organiser of exhibitions, publications and artists' associations.

Vasily Kandinsky was born in Moscow in 1866. When he decided to pursue a career in art in 1896, Kandinsky was almost thirty years old and had already studied economics, ethnography and law (in which he obtained a degree). Like many other Russian artists, Kandinsky chose to study painting in Munich rather than in Paris, a city he had visited twice, or somewhere in Russia. As a well-educated, upper-class Russian, he was, of course, familiar with French and German culture. From 1896 until 1914 Kandinsky lived outside Russia yet maintained close ties with his homeland through correspondence and periodic trips and by exhibiting his work there. He spent most of the period from 1914 to 1921 in Russia, residing principally in Moscow. As a result of world political events and because of his own heritage and personality, Kandinsky became an international figure who travelled widely and took up residence in many cities and towns. During his life Kandinsky was successively a citizen of Russia, Germany and France. Likewise, he assimilated diverse spiritual, intellectual and cultural currents that transcend national distinctions.

Kandinsky's oeuvre can conveniently be divided into four periods without serious oversimplification: the Munich years, 1896-1914; the Russian interlude, 1914-1921; the Bauhaus period, 1922-1933; and, finally, the Paris years, 1934-1944. In Munich Kandinsky studied with Anton Ažbè from 1897 to 1899 and, subsequently, with Franz von Stuck. His early sketches and drawings consisted of figure studies, designs for the decorative arts, scenes of knights and riders, romantic fairy-tale subjects and other rather fanciful reminiscences of Russia. After 1902 his

graphic production – primarily colour woodcuts – acquired both a technical proficiency and a stylistic cohesiveness. At the turn of the century, Munich was the centre of *Jugendstil*, a German variant of the pervasive *Art Nouveau* style. Thus, Kandinsky's prints of this period derive not only from the work of Russian artists and book designers but also depend upon *Jugendstil* influence. Both "Lady with Fan" and "Singer" (cat. nos. 1 and 2) demonstrate an essential reliance upon line and flatness as design elements. Emphasis upon linearity and the vital, expressive function of line persists throughout Kandinsky's work. Between 1903 to 1909 Kandinsky travelled extensively in Germany, Italy, France, The Netherlands and Switzerland as well as Tunisia. Small oil studies such as "Amsterdam – View from the Window" (cat. no. 3) not only record what the artist saw on his journeys but also how he reacted to his new surroundings. Painted from nature, often with the palette knife, the oil studies are characterized by light, high-keyed colours which reflect an awareness of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. Kandinsky's travels included a year's sojourn in Paris from June 1906 until June 1907, a time when paintings by Gauguin, van Gogh, the *Nabis*, Matisse and other Fauves were exhibited there. Consequently, in Kandinsky's pictures, colour assumed a new brilliance and vibrancy and was no longer restricted by descriptive function.

After 1908 Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter, formerly his student, and now his colleague and devoted companion, divided their time between Munich and Murnau, a Bavarian village where they were often joined by the Russian artists Alexej Jawlensky and Marianne von Werefkin. The landscape of southern Germany dominated Kandinsky's paintings and specific motifs such as the landscape with tower recur in his work from this time (cat. no. 4). He did not focus on specific objects within the environment but emphasized a total synthesis of colour, line and form. Strident hues of red and green, intense violet and bright yellow create dissonant and complex harmonies. Kandinsky's landscapes are never static but seem set in motion: they possess a non-naturalistic, non-material energy. The painting "Blue Mountain" of 1908-9, in the Guggenheim Museum collection (fig. 1), exemplifies Kandinsky's assimilation of Russian, German and French art. It resembles a stained-glass window or a tapestry in the depth and resplendent richness of its colours. Space has been compressed into several distinctly planar zones which reinforce the upward thrust of the composi-



Blue Mountain. 1908-9

Oil on canvas, 41 ¾ x 38 in. (106 x 96.6 cm)
Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York

tion. Increasingly, Kandinsky attenuated the forms in his paintings so that they ultimately lost their identity as representational images. Pictorial elements were reduced to dark lines and flat, coloured shapes.

Kandinsky's shift away from landscape painting toward abstraction was paralleled by a change in the character of his titles. In 1909 he painted his first "Improvisation", the following year the first "Composition" and in 1911 the "Impressions." These titles, to which numbers were assigned, were impersonal, non-specific, abstract categories derived from musical terminology. In his book *Über das Geistige in der Kunst (Concerning the Spiritual in Art)*, which appeared at the end of 1911, Kandinsky defined each category: for example, "Improvisations" are "largely unconscious, spontaneous expression of inner character, non-material nature" and "Impressions" are "direct impression of nature, expressed in purely pictorial form". He considered his "Compositions" to be the most important of these works and thus described them as consciously created expressions of "a slowly formed inner feeling, tested and worked over repeatedly and almost pedantically". Kandinsky formulated *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* during the first decade of the century and completed the manuscript in 1910. It presented the artist's thoughtful, intellectual deliberations on the outer world and the inner soul and expounded on the spiritual foundations of art and the nature of artistic creation. Kandinsky analyzed colours and forms, the role of the object in art and the question of abstraction. He was still unwilling to abandon objects altogether because of his belief in the expressive function of art as communication. Like the Symbolists he emphasized the effect of colour and discussed the associative properties of specific colours and the analogies between certain hues and the sounds of musical instruments. In this treatise he specifically mentioned the literature of Maeterlinck, the music of Wagner, Mussorgsky, Scriabin and Schönberg as well as such artists as Cézanne, Matisse and Picasso. In addition, he referred to the Theosophical Society and the writings of Mme Blavatsky. Occultism in general and theosophy in particular appear to have influenced Kandinsky's thinking about abstraction.

In 1911 Kandinsky and Franz Marc began to prepare the *Blaue Reiter* almanac, which was published in the spring of 1912. This anthology contained Kandinsky's essays *On the Question of Form*, *On Stage Composition* and his libretto for the *Yellow Sound*, an abstract stage composition. Moreover, the copious

reproductions, as well as the essays by other authors on German and Russian music and French art, document the range of Kandinsky's interests. The illustrations included paintings by Cézanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, Rousseau, Delaunay, Matisse and Picasso; graphics by Kirchner, Nolde, Klee and Arp; several Bavarian glass paintings; Russian folk art and primitive art from Alaska, Mexico, Malaya and Easter Island. Both *Concerning the Spiritual* and the *Blaue Reiter* almanac reveal the wide diversity of Kandinsky's intellectual and artistic awareness. Many currents – from Symbolism and *Art Nouveau* to primitive and non-western art – come together in Kandinsky's work. Even antithetical elements are reconciled; opposing forces are prevented from contradicting each other.

By 1911-12 Kandinsky's nonmimetic intent had become increasingly apparent and his paintings no longer represent objects in nature. In his canvas "No. 160b (Improvisation 28 [?])", the motifs have been obscured to an even greater degree than in the preparatory watercolour, where the cannon and mountain at the upper left and the citadel and sun at the upper right are more legible (cat. nos. 6 and 7). The images have been abstracted from nature to such an extent that they cannot easily be identified and "read". It is with difficulty and often over a period of time that images become legible to the viewer. Kandinsky frequently made preparatory drawings or watercolours which provide points of reference for deciphering the images in his paintings. The motifs which recur in these studies and final pictures can be interrelated and interpreted in terms of subject matter. Thus, Kandinsky's work remains hermetic and self referential.

At least twenty drawings, watercolours and oil sketches preceded both "Painting with White Border" of May 1913 (fig. 2, Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum) and "Composition VII" of November 1913 (Collection Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow). They allow us to trace the gradual evolution of the apocalyptic imagery in each painting and, thus, reveal insights into the artist's creative process. In "Painting with White Border", as in "No. 160b", black lines provide a structural armature to which patches of colour and areas of white are conjoined so they function within a complex spatial continuum. Images are hidden, their outlines blurred, the distinctions between figure and ground are made ambiguous. Kandinsky sought not to paint images of the external world but events of an inner character, an inner and



Painting with White Border. May 1913

Oil on canvas, 55 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 78 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (140.3 x 200.3 cm)
Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York

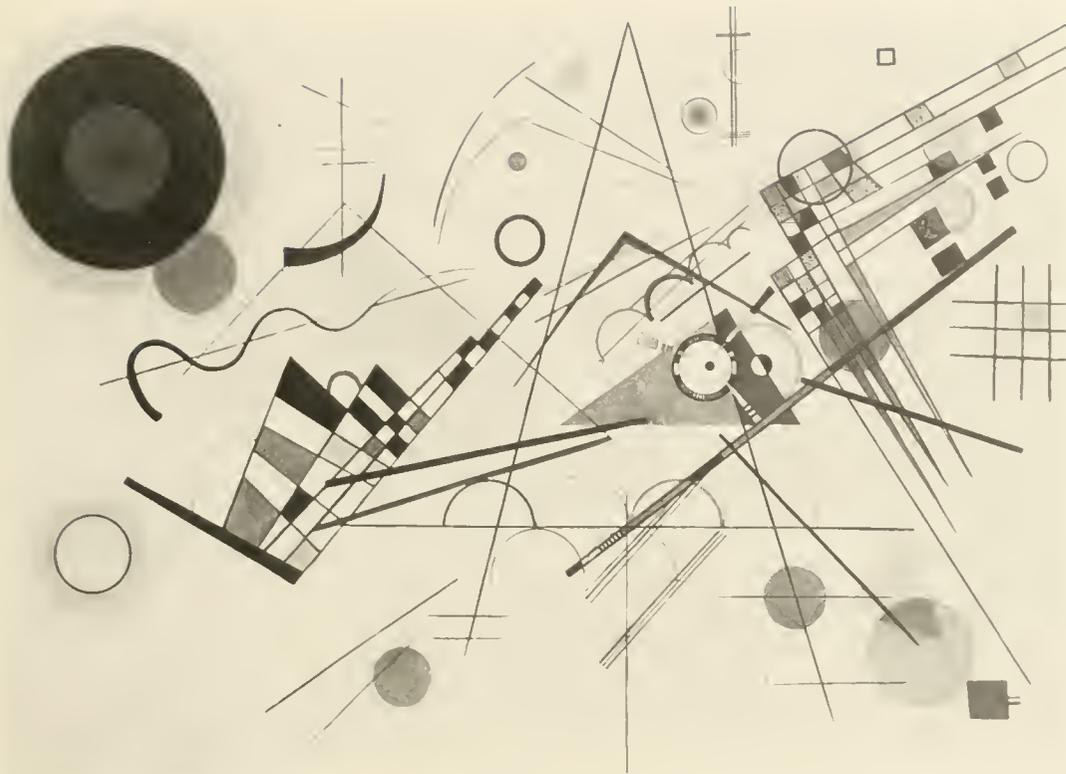
truer reality. In many cases, prior to the execution of an oil painting, Kandinsky arrived at a carefully formulated composition. Thus, his "Improvisation" 7, 18, 24, 26, 27, 30, 31 and 32, among others, were not unconscious, spontaneous expressions as defined in the artist's writings. "Light Picture" (cat. no. 8) an oil on canvas, is nearly identical to but three times larger than a watercolour study for it (Collection Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg). The essential black lines in the Guggenheim picture appear to be translations of India ink into oil paint. The brilliantly translucent colours of the forms have been applied thinly and blended delicately into the white and yellow paint of the background, so that the canvas captures the feeling of the watercolour. "Light Picture" and "Black Lines" (also Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum), both completed in December 1913, were singled out by Kandinsky as non-objective pictures: not abstractions from objects but essentially and totally abstract works. Neither painting is reliant upon perception or observation of nature; each is characterized by the boldness of the lines articulating the surface and by the freedom of floating shapes on that surface. They break free from the restrictions of objective origins.

World War I constituted a major break in both Kandinsky's personal life and his artistic development: it forced him to leave Germany and return to Russia and it brought about his separation from Gabriele Münter, his companion for over a decade. Because of the war the *Blaue Reiter* group of artists in Munich dispersed; they pursued their separate directions and several died in combat. During the war years Kandinsky's work changed radically. He did not execute any oils in either 1915 or 1918 and he painted only a limited number of canvases during the seven-year period he remained in Russia. He did, however, produce numerous drawings, watercolours, dry-points and other prints. Moreover, Kandinsky reverted to a more representational mode: for example, he painted fanciful "bagatelles", landscapes and views of Moscow. Many watercolours of 1915-18 are reminiscent of his work done in Munich (such as cat. nos. 9 and 11), although the latter of these examples incorporates fanciful, more ornamental details and places a new emphasis on geometric shapes.

The innovations of the Russian avant-garde – the formulation of both Suprematism and Constructivism – occurred during Kandinsky's Russian period. After his return to Russia, Kandinsky encountered for the first time the abstract, geometric Suprematist painting

of Kazimir Malevich and the Constructivist sculpture of Vladimir Tatlin. During this sojourn he probably met Malevich and Tatlin, as well as Naum Gabo, Antoine Pevsner, Alexandr Rodchenko, Liubov Popova and Olga Rozanova, among others. Kandinsky's activities as a teacher, administrator and organiser of pedagogical programs undoubtedly consumed much of his time and energy. He took an active role in the Peoples' Commissariat for Enlightenment (Narkompros), helped to establish the Institute of Artistic Culture (Inkhuk) and founded the Russian Academy of Artistic Sciences (RAKhN). Our knowledge of Kandinsky's artistic development in this period remains fragmentary and difficult to analyze because of his restricted production and because much of his work was left in the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, one detects a sense of ambivalence in his Russian oeuvre: retrospection as well as tentative experimentation. A predilection for oval forms and structural organization, and a reliance upon borders to define perimeters are dominant (cat. nos. 10 and 12). Colour zones have become larger, forms more carefully delineated, shapes are simplified and increasingly contained as ovals, circles or triangles. While the placement of a receding rectangle on a unified square field in "Red Oval" (cat. no. 12) has been related to Suprematist compositions, the oar at the lower left is familiar from Kandinsky's early work, as are the motifs of boat and waves. The boat motif recurs in altered guise in "Gray Spot" of 1922 (cat. no. 13).

By 1920 political conditions in Russia impeded the freedom of artistic creativity. At the end of 1921 Kandinsky and his young Russian wife Nina, whom he had married in 1917, left their homeland for Berlin where they lived briefly. By the summer of 1922 he was living in Weimar and teaching at the Bauhaus. Walter Gropius had founded this school of applied arts in 1919, and Johannes Itten, Lyonel Feininger, Oskar Schlemmer and Paul Klee had already joined the faculty when Kandinsky began to teach there. These artists developed innovative theoretical courses, lead practical workshops and instruction in crafts and sought to reunite all artistic disciplines. At Weimar painting per se was not taught; rather, colour, proportion, rhythm, composition and design were emphasized. In addition to fulfilling the demands of a challenging teaching position, Kandinsky wrote extensively during the Bauhaus period. His treatise *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche* (*Point and Line to Plane*), for which he had first made notes in 1914, was published in 1926 and represents the culmination of his



Composition 8. July 1923

Oil on canvas, 55 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 79 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (140 x 201 cm)
Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York

Accompanied Contrast. March 1935

Oil with sand on canvas, 38 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 63 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (97.1 x 162.1 cm)
Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York



theoretical deliberations. At the Bauhaus, Kandinsky painted approximately three hundred oils as well as an astonishing number of watercolours. It had long been his custom to systematically record his paintings in a Handlist (*Hauskatalog*) and, after 1922, he catalogued the watercolours as well. These Handlists, make clear the artist's title for each work and often the exact date it was executed.

By 1923 Kandinsky's work is characterized by a preponderance of geometric shapes. "In the Black Square" (cat. no. 21), which dates from June of that year, manifests a white trapezoidal "page" of canvas superimposed on a square black background, a composition reminiscent of that of "Red Oval" (cat. no. 12). Suggestions of mountains and trees emerge in "In the Black Square" and also in "Three Sounds" (cat. no. 24). "In the Black Square" consists primarily of circles, semicircles, triangles and lines all of which attest to the artist's reliance upon compass and ruler. Although Kandinsky effectively used the circle in "Multicoloured Circle" (Collection Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Conn.), painted in Moscow in 1921, this shape did not preoccupy him until 1923. For Kandinsky the circle had symbolic, cosmic meaning. He explained in 1929: "If I make such frequent, vehement use of the circle in recent years, the reason (or cause) for this is not the geometric form of the circle, or its countless variations; I love the circle today as I formerly loved the horse, for instance – perhaps even more, since I find more inner potentialities in the circle, which is why it has taken the horse's place." (Grohmann, 1959, p. 188).

By 1923 Kandinsky had formulated a new way to organize pictorial elements. In "Composition 8" of July 1923 (fig. 3, Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum), geometric shapes are strewn over the large canvas: circles, semicircles, triangles, squares, straight lines, curved lines and acute angles are placed without central focus or spatial unity. The pictorial organization of slightly later Bauhaus works emphasizes a strong sense of directionality (cat. nos. 22, 24 and 26) or, in others, the rigid hierarchical arrangement (cat. nos. 27 and 32). In *Point and Line to Plane* Kandinsky elaborated upon the significance of the colour, geometric forms, directionality and placement of compositional elements. He proposed that red, yellow and blue correspond to the square, triangle and circle. Moreover, in the late 1920s the titles of his paintings and watercolours reinforce the meanings of colours: for example, "Pink Sweet" (cat. no. 30), "Sharp-Calm Pink" "Two Sides Red," "Tension

in Red" and "In the Heavy Red." Kandinsky's knowledge and utilization of colour theory enabled him to contrast opposite colours and to create gradations within a single colour (cat. no. 31). Interaction of colours creates secondary hues where colour areas overlap and also produces effects of spatial recession, projection and movement within a picture. A new pictorial space, a smoothly uniform surface texture, a new precision in both colour zones and in linear definition, a new restraint and spareness characterize Kandinsky's Bauhaus pictures.

After the Bauhaus moved from Weimar to Dessau in 1925, Kandinsky shared a double house with his friend and colleague Paul Klee, whom he had first met in Munich in 1911. The close relationship between the two artists is manifest in their reciprocal influence on each other's work. In style, spirit and motif, "Little Game", "Bias" and "Glimmering" (cat. nos. 26, 32 and 33) share affinities with Klee's work. Moreover, Kandinsky's technique of spattering or spraying watercolour onto the paper undoubtedly derives from Klee's innovative use of the process (cat. nos. 25, 26, 28, 29, 31 and 35).

In the mid-to late 1920s Kandinsky's work gained recognition. He took an active role in preparing for his exhibitions, which occurred primarily in Germany but also were held in other European cities and in the United States. In 1926 a major show travelling in Germany and elsewhere marked the artist's sixtieth birthday, in 1929 his watercolours were exhibited at the Galerie Zak in Paris, and the following year his oils were seen there at the Galerie de France. Increasingly, political pressure restricted artistic life in Germany and, ultimately, resulted in the closing of the Bauhaus at Dessau in 1932. Kandinsky joined the short-lived effort to reestablish it in Berlin. After the Bauhaus was finally closed in July 1933, the Kandinskys left Germany for France and at the end of the year they settled in Neuilly-sur-Seine near Paris.

After September 1933 Kandinsky did not paint for several months. His first Paris pictures, which date from early 1934, are a continuation of his last work at Dessau. The hieratic, pictorial organization of "Development Upwards" (cat. no. 36) derives from the bilaterally symmetrical compartmentalization of the picture plane in "Levels" (cat. no. 27). Likewise "Dark Situation" of July 1933 (cat. no 35) foreshadows "Two Green Points" of April 1935 (Collection Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris), and "Accompanied Contrast" of March 1935 (fig.4) (Collection The Solomon R. Guggenheim

Museum) can be interpreted as a reprise of a 1931 watercolour. In "Accompanied Contrast" and other Paris oils, Kandinsky combined sand with the pigment in certain well-defined areas which project slightly from the surface and contrast spatially and colouristically with the smoothly painted background. The Paris pictures introduce a delicacy in their tonalities and a brightness and sweetness in their colours.

Between 1934 and 1944 Kandinsky executed one hundred and forty-four paintings, at least two hundred and eight watercolours and more than one hundred drawings. The Paris work reveals his personal response to prevailing artistic tendencies: the free, organic shapes of Surrealism, on the one hand, and the geometric abstraction of the *Art Concret* and *Abstraction-Création* movements on the other. Thus, he employed a combination of biomorphic and geometric forms as the basis for an abstract style. His synthesis of geometric lines and painterly colours is best exemplified by "Green Accent" and "Gridded" (cat. nos. 38 and 39). In "Yellow Canvas" of July 1938 (cat. no. 41), geometric forms serve as the structure of the composition. By means of emphatically juxtaposed colours as well as its diagonal and curving lines, this geometric structure contrasts with the flat yellow ground at the same time it occupies space. The spatial ambiguities and resultant tensions on the picture plane which characterize this painting occur frequently in Kandinsky's late work.

While the composition of "Various Actions" of August – September 1941 (cat. no. 43) clearly resembles that in "Composition 8" of July 1923, the pictorial vocabulary has expanded beyond the strictly geometric to include curving biomorphic motifs. Undoubtedly influenced by Joan Miró, Jean Arp and other Surrealists, Kandinsky's late work incorporates images of biological derivation, including microscopic organisms and flagellate forms (cat. no. 44 and 45). The repetition of specific coloured shapes imbues his pictures with hermetic meaning, so that his work remains self-contained. A sense of deliberation and self-consciousness dominates his plastic imagination and disciplines his intuitions.

Throughout his career, from his student days in Munich at age thirty until his death in Paris at seventy-eight, Kandinsky was responsive to his artistic environment and receptive to change and innovation. Throughout his development as an artist, Kandinsky's love for music, poetry, dance and theatre remained constant and led him to see clearly the common

sources of all the arts. In the essay "L'Art concret" which he wrote in January 1938, Kandinsky emphasized the correspondences between painting and music as he had almost thirty years earlier in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. Around 1910 he had written abstract stage compositions (such as *The Yellow Sound* for which Thomas von Hartmann composed the music); in 1928 he designed sets for Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and even as late as 1944 he planned to design sets for a ballet in collaboration with von Hartmann. Kandinsky's activity as a teacher began at the Phalanx school in Munich in 1901-03, continued through the Russian period and culminated in his association with the Bauhaus. He wrote and published extensively throughout his life, and his theoretical preoccupations have continuity. Like his painting, Kandinsky's writing expresses his belief in the spiritual. Art derives from inner necessity and "form is the external expression of inner meaning". As Kandinsky wrote in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*: "That is beautiful which is produced by internal necessity, which springs from the soul".

Vivian Endicott Barnett.

1. Lady with a Fan. 1903

Dame mit Fächer

Handlist: No. 2, *Abend, Dame im Reifrockkleid.*

(R. 2) Fourth state

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

71.1958

Colour woodcut on paper, 10 x 6"

(25.4 x 15.2 cm)

Not signed or dated.

Provenance:

Private Collection, Germany; purchased at auction (Munich, Galerie Wolfgang Ketterer, *Moderne Kunst und Jugendstil*, Auktion 4, December 8, 1970, no. 445, repr.) by R. M. Light for The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.



2. Singer. 1903

Sängerin

Handlist: No. 4.

(R. 4) Second state

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

72.2003

Colour woodcut on paper mounted on gray paper, 10⁵/₈ x 7¹/₂" (27 x 19.2cm)

Signed on support in pencil l.l.: *Kandinsky*;
l.r.: *Kandinsky*.

Provenance:

Private collection, Germany and New York;
purchased at auction (Bern, Kornfeld und
Klipstein, *Moderne Kunst des Neunzehnten und
Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, June 15-17, 1972,
no. 449, repr.) by R. M. Light for The Solomon
R. Guggenheim Museum.

"Lady with a Fan" and "Singer" reveal the dominant influence exerted by the *Jugendstil* movement on Kandinsky's early woodcuts. This influence is apparent in flattened and sinuously delineated forms as well as ambiguities created between figure and ground. The way black is deployed contributes to the spatial ambiguity: in both woodcuts black functions simultaneously as background and as part of the figure. In these and other early works, Kandinsky often used white as positive rather than negative space, a characteristic *Jugendstil* device. The romantic sentiment and sombre mood of these prints suggests more traditional influences, such as the Rococo or Biedermeier styles. During his early years in Munich, Kandinsky remained fascinated with romantic themes – fairy-tale scenes, dreamy landscapes, exotic costumes – and made a number of costume studies. Crinolined dresses, like the one worn by the "Lady with a Fan", appear frequently in the early Munich works. Kandinsky's fondness for music is reflected in the theme of "Singer". Between 1902 and 1904 Kandinsky completed over forty-eight woodcuts. In these prints and the majority of his early colour woodcuts, Kandinsky followed the Japanese method of printing: he used two blocks, one for colour and the other for lines. The works were then handprinted with watercolours. "Lady with a Fan" was made with two blocks; in "Singer" an additional colour accent was provided by a third block.



3. Amsterdam – View from the Window. 1904

Amsterdam, Blick aus dem Fenster

Handlist: small oil studies 52, *Amsterdam, aus d. Fenster*.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

46.1055

Oil on board, 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 13" (23.9 x 33.1 cm)

Signed l.r.: *Kandinsky*. Not dated; inscribed on reverse: *Kandinsky.-Amsterdam No 52/1903*.

Provenance:

Hilda Bachrach, Forest Hills, New York, by 1946;
purchased from Bachrach, 1946.

During the first years of this century Kandinsky travelled extensively, visiting Holland in May-June 1904. "Amsterdam – View from the Window" records a specific impression: the view from the American Hotel on the Leidseplein showing the bridge over the Singelgracht. Characteristic of his small oil sketches of the period are the high horizon, the vivid yet realistic colours and the rich texture of the paint itself. Kandinsky was already familiar with the work of Monet and the Neo-Impressionists and in his own painting was experimenting with various related techniques.



**4. Study for "Landscape with Tower"
1908**

Etude pour "Paysage avec une tour"

Not in Handlist

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

38.501

Oil on board, 13 x 17½" (33 x 44.5 cm)

Signed l.r.: *Kandinsky*. Not dated.

Provenance:

Purchased from Gutekunst und Klipstein, Bern,
by Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York, July
1938; Gift, Solomon R. Guggenheim, 1938.



5. Landscape with Factory Chimney. 1910

Landschaft mit Fabrikschornstein

Handlist: 1910, 105 *Peizazh s fabr [ichnoi] truboi* (in Cyrillic alphabet: Landscape with Factory Chimney).

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
41.504

Oil on canvas, 26 x 32¼" (66.2 x 82cm)
Signed and dated l.r.: *Kandinsky / 1910*.

Provenance:

Purchased from Herwarth Walden by Paul Citroën, Berlin and Amsterdam, ca. 1919; purchased from Citroën by Kunstsammlungen zu Weimar, 1923-37; purchased from Gutekunst und Klipstein, Bern, by Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York, July 1939; Gift, Solomon R. Guggenheim, 1941.

Beginning in the summer of 1908, Kandinsky worked together with Gabriele Münter, Marianne von Werefkin and Alexej Jawlensky in the rural setting of Murnau. Landscapes, painted in bright, Fauvist colours and in an expressive, painterly style close to that of Jawlensky, become a dominant theme. For the most part, these landscapes betray a predilection for hilly, jagged terrain wherein the strong diagonal rhythm of the street or hills is balanced by an assertive vertical tower. Colours tend toward various hues of blue, red, green and yellow.

Though often based on the Murnau countryside, works such as "Study for Landscape with Tower" and "Landscape with Factory Chimney" are not merely nature studies, but rather, are evocations of inner emotional or spiritual states. Toward this end, colour and form are increasingly liberated from representational subject matter. By 1910 the patches of pure colour and radically simplified, flattened forms exemplified in "Landscape with Factory Chimney" begin to obscure topographical and spatial distinctions.



**6. Study for "No. 160b?"
(Improvisation 28). [?] 1911-12.**

Not in Handlist

The Hilla von Rebay Foundation

1970.127

Watercolour, India ink and pencil on paper,
15³/₈ x 22¹/₈" (39 x 56.1 cm.)

Signed l.l.: K. Not dated.

Provenance:

Probably purchased from the artist by Michael E. Sadler, Oxford, summer 1912 – June 1936; Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn., by 1947; The Hilla von Rebay Foundation.



7. No. 160b (Improvisation 28). [?] 1912.

Handlist: 1912, 160b.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
37.239

Oil on canvas, 43 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 63 $\frac{7}{8}$ " (111.4 x 162.1 cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: *Kandinsky/1912*; inscribed twice on stretcher, possibly by the artist: *Improvisation No. 28*; signed on stretcher: *Kandinsky*.

Provenance:

Museum Folkwang, Essen, before 1922-36;
Galerie Ferdinand Möller, Berlin, 1936; purchased from Möller by Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York, 1936; Gift, Solomon R. Guggenheim, 1937.

Most of Kandinsky's watercolours from 1910 to 1914 can be related to coeval oil paintings and some are direct preparatory sketches for canvases. The preparatory watercolour for "No. 160b" (cat. no. 6) displays a greater profusion and clarity of detail – such as the mountain and cannon at the upper left and the sun and citadel at the upper right – than found in the oil painting. Certain motifs in the canvas can be interpreted as representational images only by referring to the watercolour: for example, the couple at the far right margin and the whale or serpent below. Kandinsky has divided the composition with two tubular forms and has depicted themes of destruction and war on the left and hopeful, idyllic images on the right.



8. Light Picture. December 1913.

Helles Bild

Handlist: *xii/1913, 188 Svetlaia kartina*
(in Cyrillic alphabet: Light Picture).

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
37.244

Oil on canvas, 30 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (77.8 x 100.2 cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: *Kandinsky 1913*; inscribed
on stretcher: *Kandinsky – Helles Bild No 188*.

Provenance:

Left by Kandinsky with Gabriele Münter, Murnau,
1914; purchased from Münter by Herwarth
Walden, Berlin, 1916 or 1917; acquired from
Walden by F. Kluxen, Münster; Kluxen – at least
1924; Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York by
September 1930; Gift, Solomon R. Guggenheim,
1937.

Both "Light Picture" and "Black Lines", oils in the Guggenheim Museum collection which were painted in December 1913, are, by the artist's own testimony, among the earliest examples in his work of "non-objective art." "Light Picture" is nearly identical to but three times larger than its watercolour study (Collection Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg). Compositional structure, linear configurations, colour areas and most peculiarities of detail correspond in the canvas and watercolour. In each, a dark red spot is located at the centre below a lavender diagonal; farther to the left, yellow surrounds bold zigzag lines, and at the lower left and lower right there is green blue. The oil pigments have been applied thinly and blended delicately into the white and yellow paint of the background. In the Guggenheim picture the scratchy black lines have not been made with India ink and a pen: rather, they are translations of ink into oil paint. The blotted and smeared "ink" at the lower left is actually oil on canvas.



9. Untitled. 1915

Not in Handlist

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R164

Watercolour, India ink and pencil on paper,
8 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (22.6 x 34cm)

Signed and dated l.r.: *K/15*.

Provenance:

Mr. and Mrs. William Dieterle, Los Angeles, -1945;
Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn.;

Estate of Hilla Rebay, 1967-71.



10. Sketch for “Gray Oval Painting”. 1917

Not in Handlist

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
39.246

Watercolour, India ink and pencil on paper,
10 x 11¼" (25.4 x 28.5 cm)

Signed and dated I.I.: *K/17*.

Provenance:

Purchased from Nierendorf Gallery, New York,
May 1939.

A landscape replete with suggestions of trees, hills, grass and a boat atop waves arises from a nebulous black ovoid form in “Sketch for Gray Oval Painting”. A sense of turbulence is expressed as much by the energized lines and brushwork – hatchetlike slashes, squiggles, calligraphic strokes – as by the images of jutting triangular hills and the charged treetop to the left.

In “Gray Oval Painting” Kandinsky uses a border, a pictorial solution he first worked out in “Painting with White Border” of 1913. He continued to explore the formal potentialities of borders through the early 1920s. Often these borders create effects of depth, as in “Gray Oval Painting” where the black area seems to lie deeper than its gray surroundings. Moreover, this device serves to free the pictorial conception from the rectangular format of the support. Many titles from this period include the word “border” or “oval”.



11. Untitled. March 1918

Not in Handlist

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
39.249

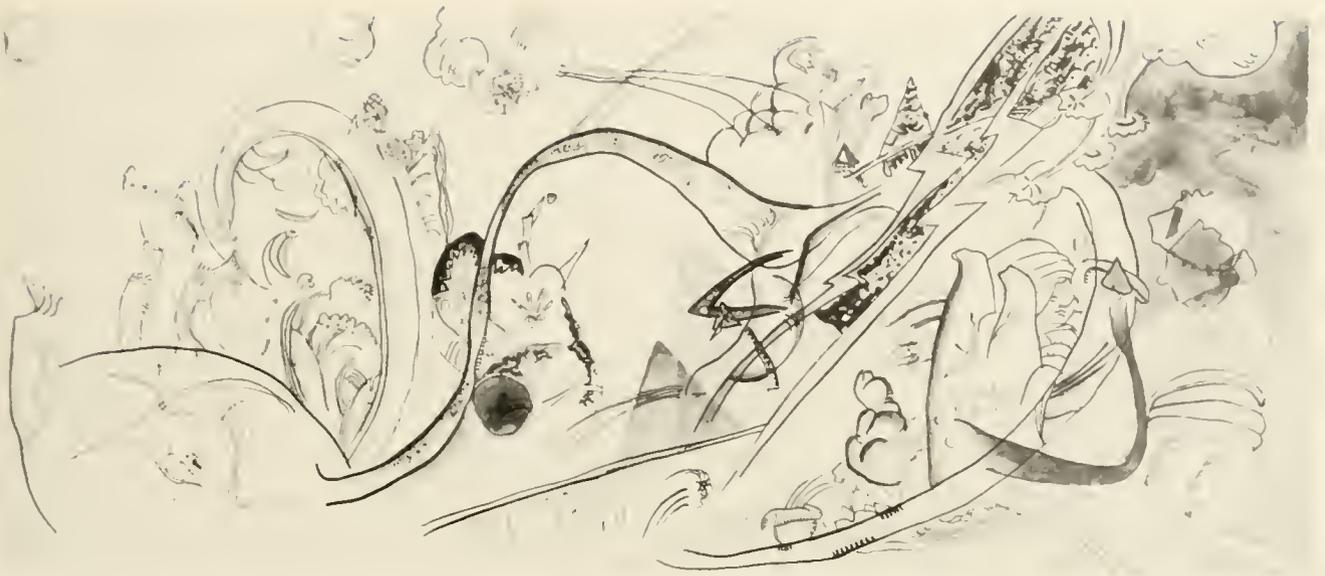
Watercolour, India ink and pencil on paper,
8 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (22.4 x 48.6cm)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/iii 18*.

Provenance:

Purchased from Nierendorf Gallery, New York,
May 1939.

Most of the watercolours Kandinsky painted during his stay in Russia (1914-21) date from 1918. Although this was a stylistically varied period, there is a general tendency toward animated use of line and colour. The combination of representational and abstract forms, delicate pastel washes and activated black ink-lines is reminiscent of pictures dated 1914 and 1915. In comparison with "Untitled" of 1915 (cat. no. 9) lines are more fluid and images are at once more naturalistic and more fanciful. These new qualities may derive from the intervening "bagatelles", a group of watercolours Kandinsky painted in the late teens which are characterized by similarly fluid line and representational, often fairy-tale imagery.



12. Red Oval. 1920

Rotes Oval

Handlist: 1920, 227 *Krasnyi oval* (in Cyrillic alphabet: Red Oval).

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
51.1311

Oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 28 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (71.5 x 71.2 cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: K20; inscribed on reverse:
K/No 227/i920.

Provenance:

Ernst Heyer, Bielefeld, ca. 1923; Hella
Nebelung, Düsseldorf, by 1950; purchased
from Nebelung by Otto Stangl, Munich, by
1950; purchased from Stangl, 1951.

"Red Oval" marks a transitional phase in Kandinsky's development between the expressivity of his pre-war style and the geometric discipline of his Bauhaus period. Colour remains saturated and boldly contrasted, but is deployed in a less painterly, flatter and more restrained manner. Vestiges of landscape forms and familiar motifs such as the boat and oar are set against a yellow rectangular form.

"Red Oval" is among the few oils Kandinsky painted when he returned to Russia. Only six oils were painted in the latter half of 1919, and ten, including "Red Oval", in 1920. Because Kandinsky's work became increasingly geometric while he was in Russia, the influence of Suprematism and Constructivism has been argued. In particular, the presence of a receding rectangle in a square field in "Red Oval" has been cited as a possible reference to the work of Malevich.



13. Gray Spot. 1922

Graue Fleck

Handlist: 1922, 41 *Graue Fleck*.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
37.253

Watercolour, gouache, India ink and pencil
on paper, 18³/₈ x 16³/₄" (46.7 x 42.5 cm.)

Signed and dated I.I.: *K/22*; inscribed on
reverse: *No. 41/1922*

Provenance:

Purchased from the artist by Solomon R.
Guggenheim, New York, by 1936; Gift,
Solomon R. Guggenheim, 1937.

A free-form gray shape serves as an interior field for nautical and geometric imagery. The dispersal of weight within the gray shape is balanced by the positioning of the four outer elements. Schematic renderings of boats, masts, water and banners occur frequently in Kandinsky's works of 1922 and 1923. Similar motifs appear in "Small Worlds IV" and "Arc and Point" (cat. nos. 16, 21).



1933

14. Small Worlds I. 1922

Kleine Welten I

(R. 164)

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R270.1

Colour lithograph on paper, 14 x 11"
(35.5 x 28cm)

Signed in pencil l.r.: *Kandinsky*; signed and
dated in stone l.l.: *K/22*.

No. 22 of edition of 230

Provenance:

Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn.; Estate of
Hilla Rebay, 1967-71.



15. Small Worlds III. 1922

Kleine Welten III

(R. 166)

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R270.3

Colour lithograph on paper, 14¼ x 10⅞" (36 x 28cm)

Signed in pencil l.r.: *Kandinsky*; signed and dated in stone l.l.: *K/22*.

No. 22 of edition of 230

Provenance:

Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn.; Estate of Hilla Rebay, 1967-71.



16. Small Worlds IV. 1922

Kleine Welten IV

(R. 167)

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R270.4

Colour lithograph on paper, 14¼ x 11"
(36 x 28cm)

Signed in pencil l.r.: *Kandinsky*; signed and
dated in stone l.l.: K.

No. 22 of edition of 230

Provenance:

Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn.; Estate of
Hilla Rebay, 1967-71.



17. Small Worlds VII. 1922

Kleine Welten VII

(R. 170)

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R270.7

Colour lithograph on paper, 14¼ x 11¼"
(36.1 x 28.2cm)

Signed in pencil l.r.: *Kandinsky*; signed in stone
l.l.: K.

No. 22 of edition of 230

Provenance:

Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn.; Estate of
Hilla Rebay, 1967-71.



18. Small Worlds VIII. 1922

Kleine Welten VIII

(R. 171)

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R270.8

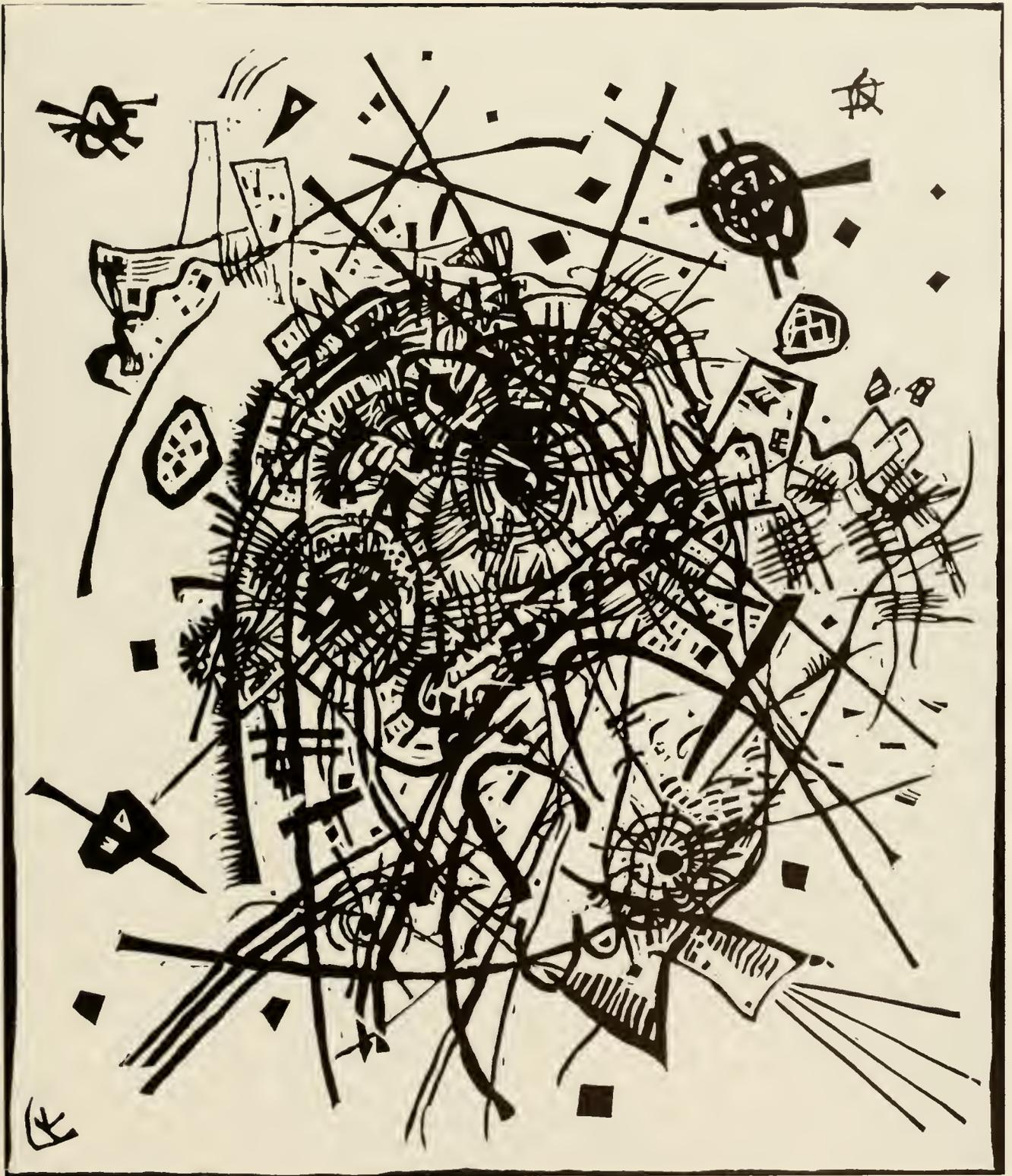
Woodcut on paper, 14¾ x 11" (38 x 27.6cm)

Signed in pencil l.r.: *Kandinsky*; signed in block
l.l.; K

No. 22 of edition of 230.

Provenance:

Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn.; Estate of
Hilla Rebay, 1967-71.



19. Small Worlds XII. 1922

Kleine Welten XII

(R. 175)

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R270.12

Drypoint on paper, 14½ x 11" (36.7 x 28cm)

Signed in pencil l.r.: *Kandinsky*; signed in plate
l.l.: K;

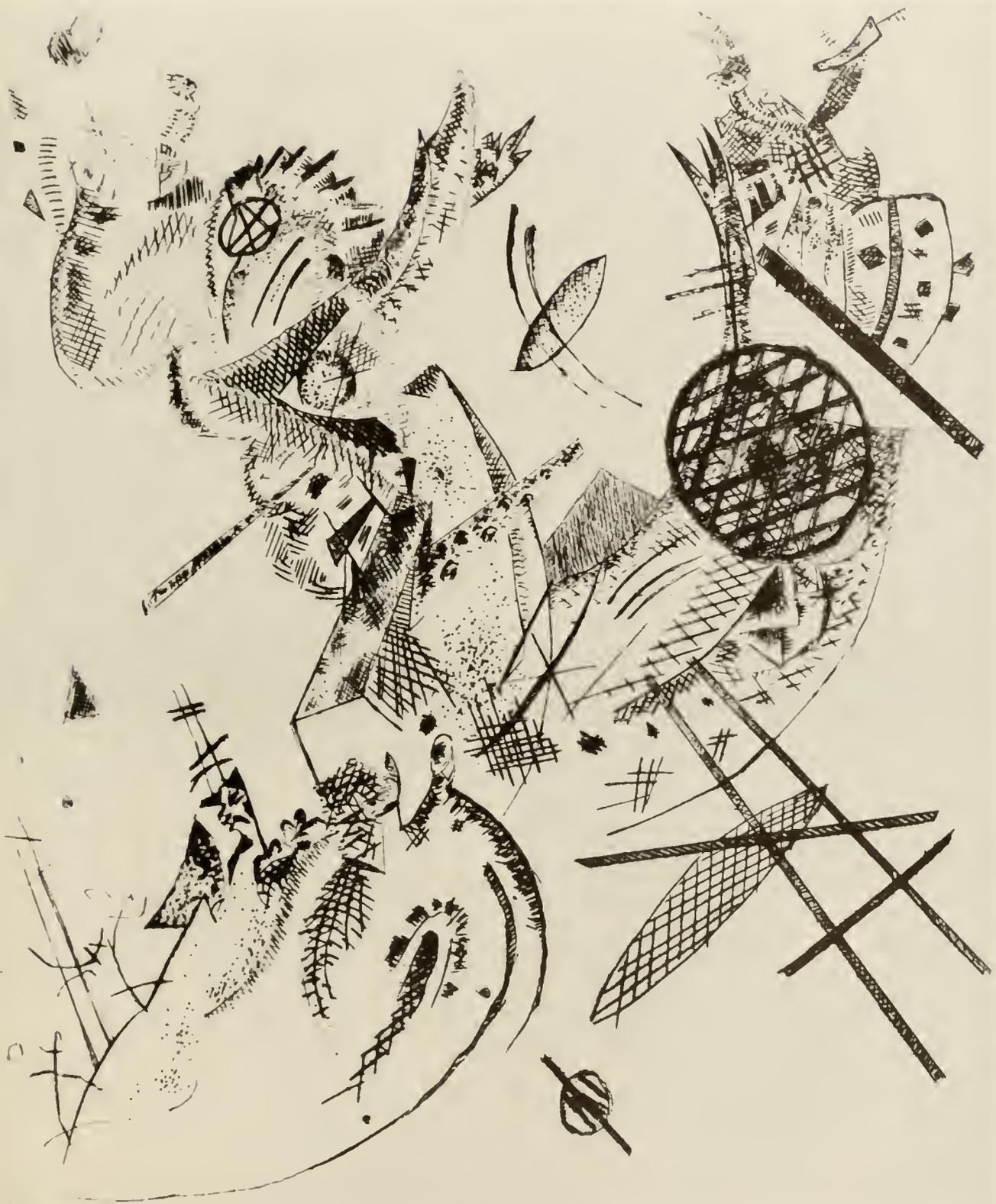
No. 22 of edition of 230

Provenance:

Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn.; Estate of
Hilla Rebay, 1976-71.

In June of 1922 Kandinsky returned to Germany from Russia to teach at the Weimar Bauhaus. Upon his arrival, he began working on the portfolio of prints, "Kleine Welten." This was printed in 1922 at the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar under the artist's supervision and published in Berlin by Propyläen Verlag. The edition consisted of 230 copies. In his foreword to "Kleine Welten," Kandinsky described the series of twelve prints as composed of four woodcuts, four etchings and four lithographs. However, the two "colour woodcuts", according to Hans Konrad Roethel, are actually lithographs which resemble woodcuts.

These prints give visual currency to many concerns central to Kandinsky's major Bauhaus treatise, *Point and Line to Plane*. In particular they document his sensitivity to the different effects that can be realized through each of the graphic techniques. Numbers I, IV, and VII of "Kleine Welten" anticipate the schematization of form, simplification of colour and preference for such motifs as the spear, the checkerboard, the horn and the circle which characterize Kandinsky's work of the twenties. The turbulent movement and sketchy, energized lines of number VIII are retrospective in temperament, while other prints, notably numbers III and XII, are transitional in style. Number III, for example, intermediates between "Red Oval" and "In the Black Square."





catalogue no. 3

Amsterdam – View from the window. 1904

Oil on board, 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 13 in. (23.9 x 33.1 cm)

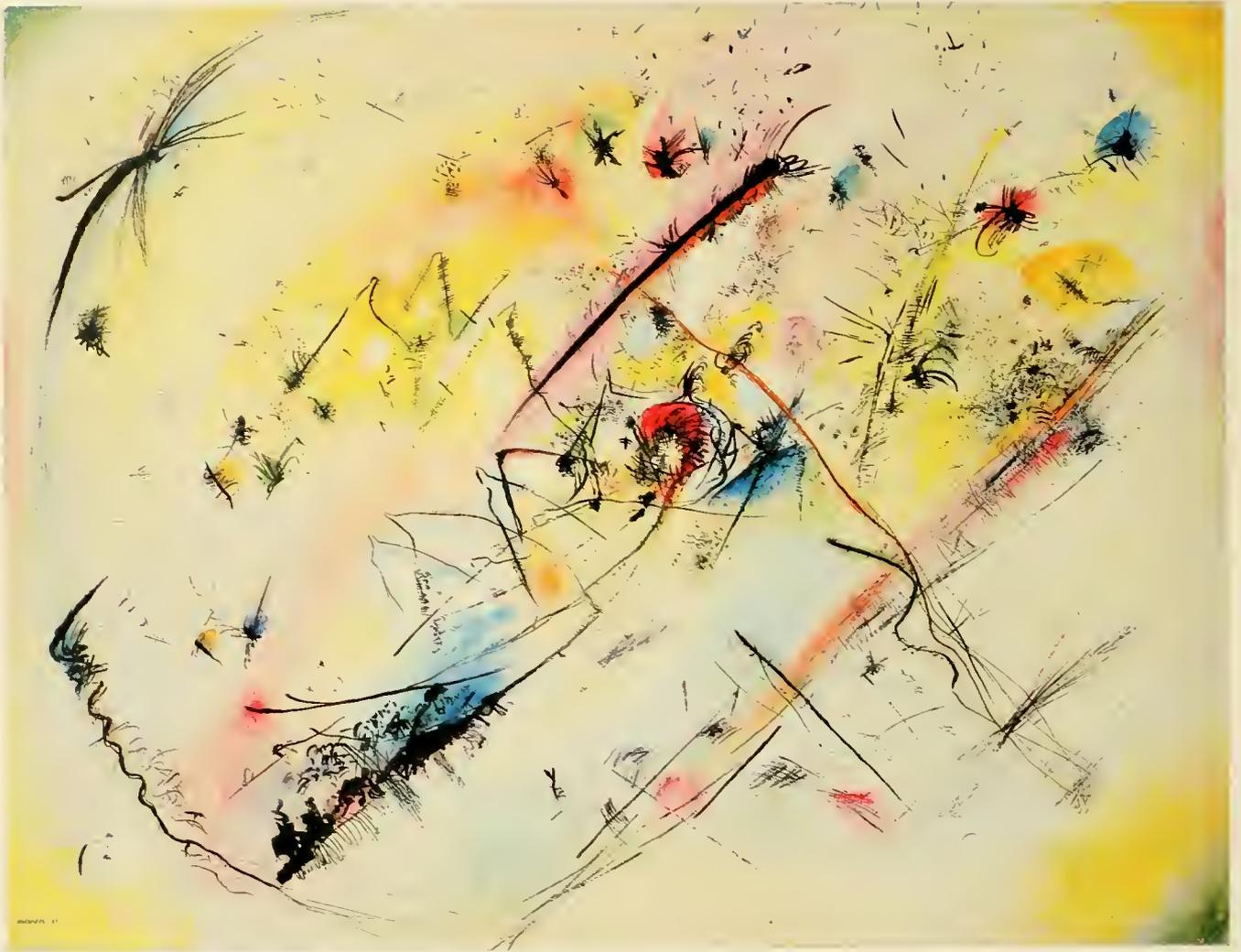
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.



catalogue no. 6

Study for "No. 160b" (Improvisation 28[?]). 1911-12

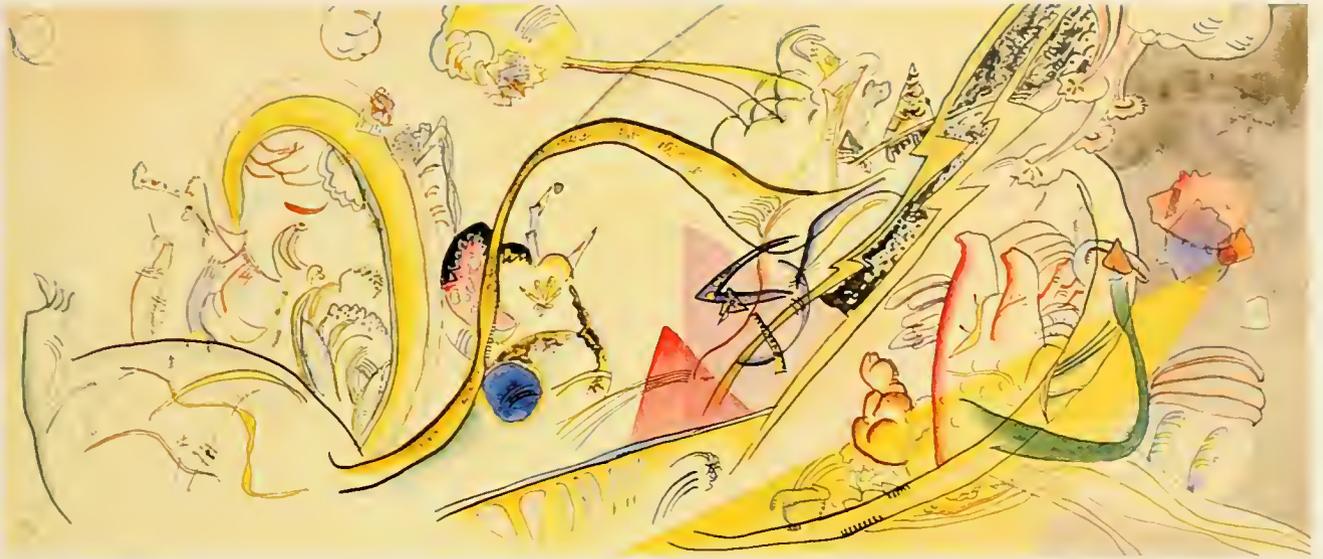
Watercolour, India ink and pencil on paper, 15 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (39 x 56.1cm)
The Hilla von Rebay Foundation.



catalogue no. 8

Light Picture. December 1913

Oil on canvas, 30 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 39 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (77.8 x 100.2 cm)
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.



catalogue no. 11

Untitled. March 1918

Watercolour, India ink and pencil on paper, 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (22.4 x 48.6 cm)
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.



catalogue no. 12

Red Oval. 1920

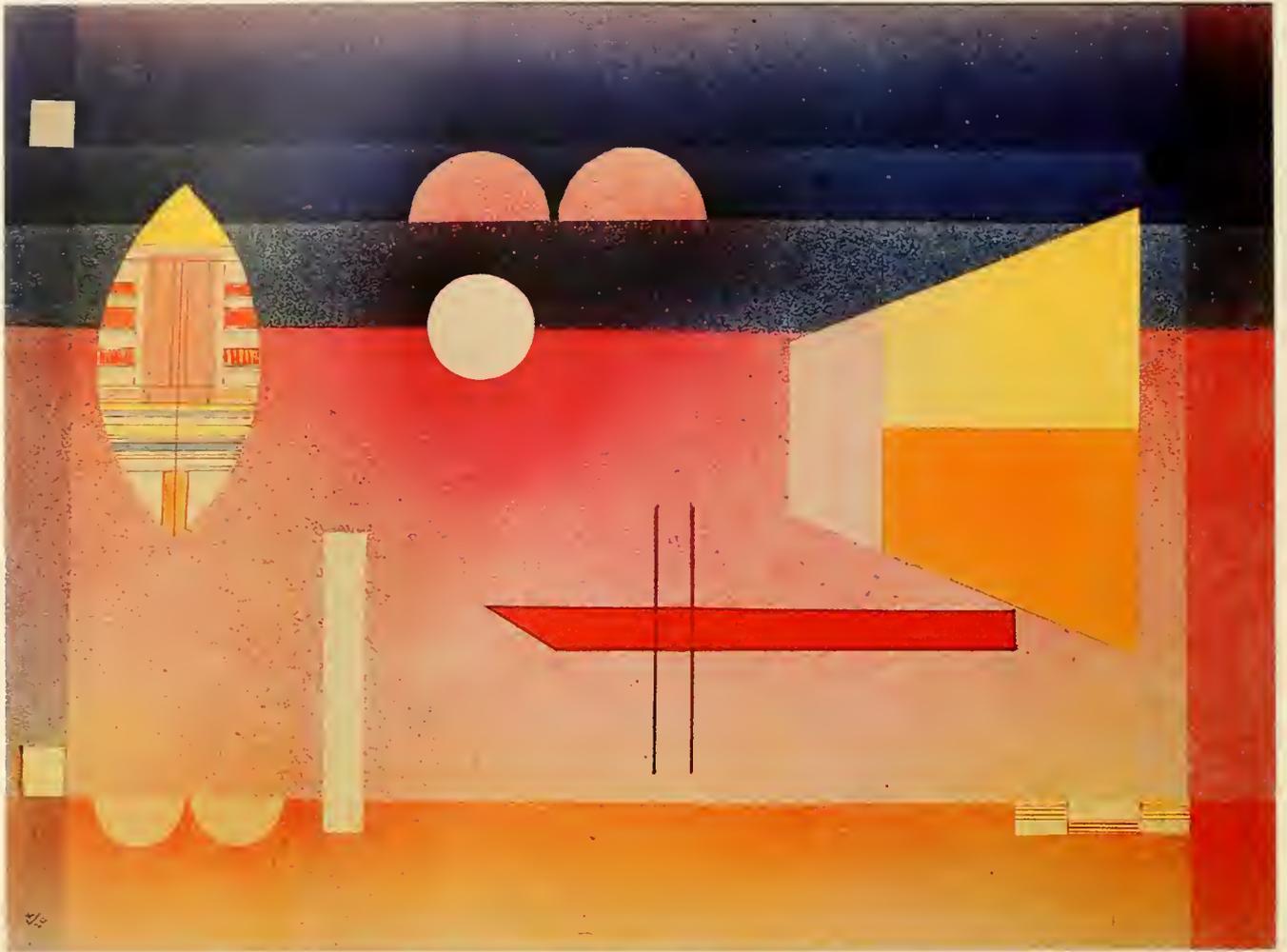
Oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 28 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (71.2 x 71.2 cm)
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.



catalogue no. 21

In the Black Square. June 1923

Oil on canvas, 38 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 36 $\frac{5}{8}$ in (97.5 x 93cm)
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.



catalogue no. 31

Quiet Assertion. December 1929

Watercolour and India ink on paper, 15 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (40.5 x 53.8cm)
The Hilla von Rebay Foundation.

opposite:
catalogue no. 41

Yellow Canvas. July 1938

Oil and enamel on canvas, 45 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 35 in. (116.4 x 88.8cm)
The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.



20. Arc and Point. February 1923

Bogen und Spitze

Handlist: *ii 1923, 58 Bogen und Spitze.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

50.1290

Watercolour, India ink and pencil on paper,
18³/₈ x 16¹/₂" (46.5 x 42cm)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/23*; inscribed on reverse
mount: *No 58/1923/ "Bogen und Spitze."*

Provenance:

Purchased from the artist by Rudolf Ibach,
Barmen, Germany, Dec. 1925 (HL); purchased
from Ibach by his son-in-law Otto Stangl,
Munich; purchased from Stangl, 1950.



21. In the Black Square. June 1923.

Im schwarzem Viereck

Handlist: vi, 1923, 259, *Im schwarzem Viereck*.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
37.254

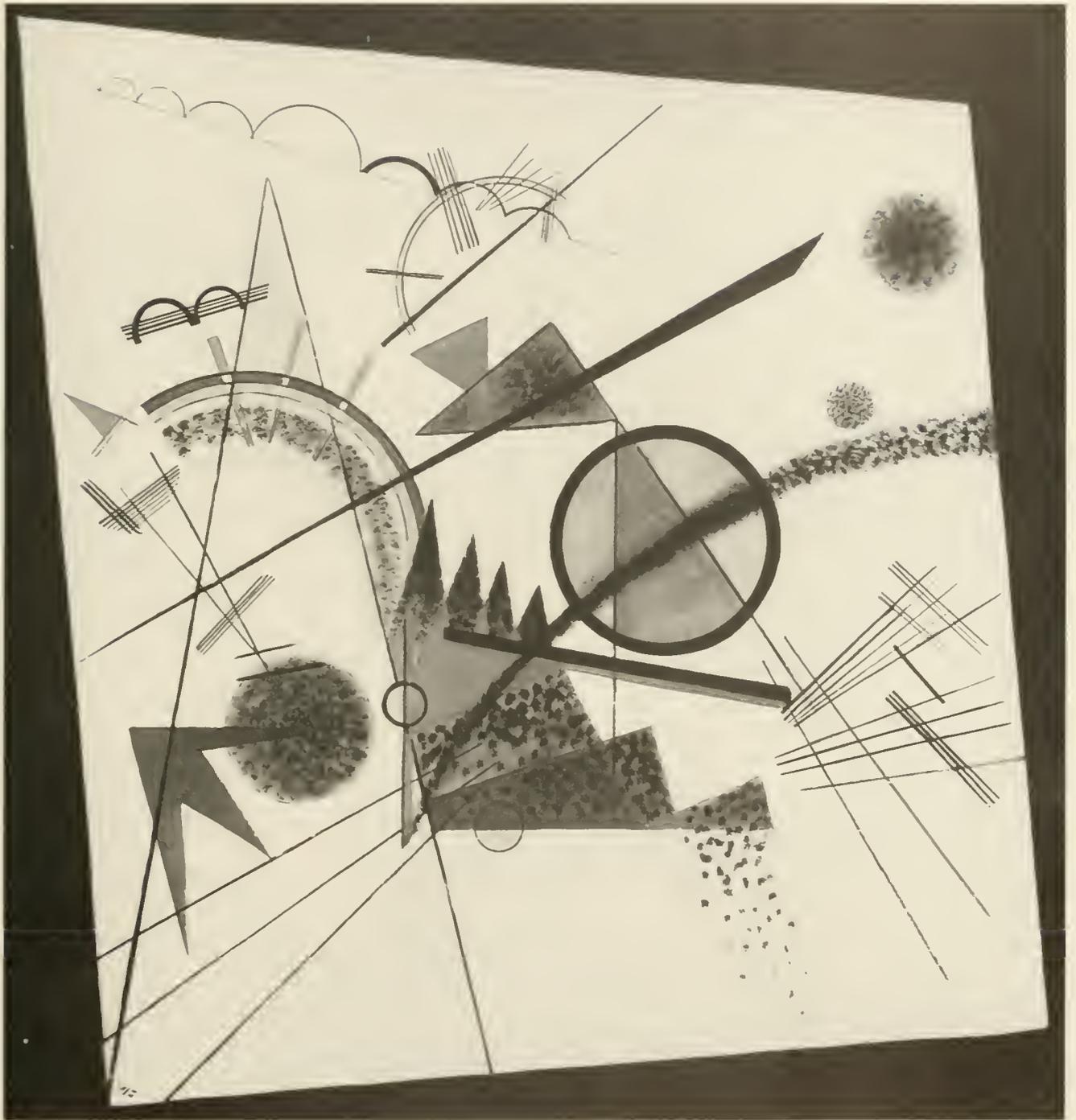
Oil on canvas, 38³/₈ x 36⁵/₈" (97.5 x 93 cm.)

Signed and dated I.I.: K/23; inscribed on
reverse: K/No 259./1923.

Provenance:

Victor Rubin, Berlin, Sept. 1923-Apr. 1936 (HL);
purchased from J. B. Neumann, New York, by
Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York, Apr.
1936; Gift, Solomon R. Guggenheim, 1937.

The motif of the receding rectangle introduced in "Red Oval" is taken up again in "In the Black Square." Whereas Kandinsky made use of painterly and organic elements in the earlier canvas, the Bauhaus work relies exclusively on geometric forms: circles, rectangles, triangles, lines. Tensions result from the dramatic and now clearly delineated opposition between the white trapezoid and black, square format and in the contrasts set up between rough and smooth textures, straight and curved, thick and thin, parallel and intersecting lines. From 1923 to 1925 circles figure prominently in Kandinsky's pictures. His fascination with the circle stems from its formal "synthesis of the greatest oppositions" in equilibrium. Here the six circles function as stable elements, while the influx of diagonal lines animates the white interior field.



22. Blue Picture. January 1924

Blaues Bild

Handlist: *i* 1924, 267, *Blaues Bild*.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
76.2277

Oil on canvas mounted on board,
19⁷/₈ x 19¹/₂" (50.6 x 49.5cm.)

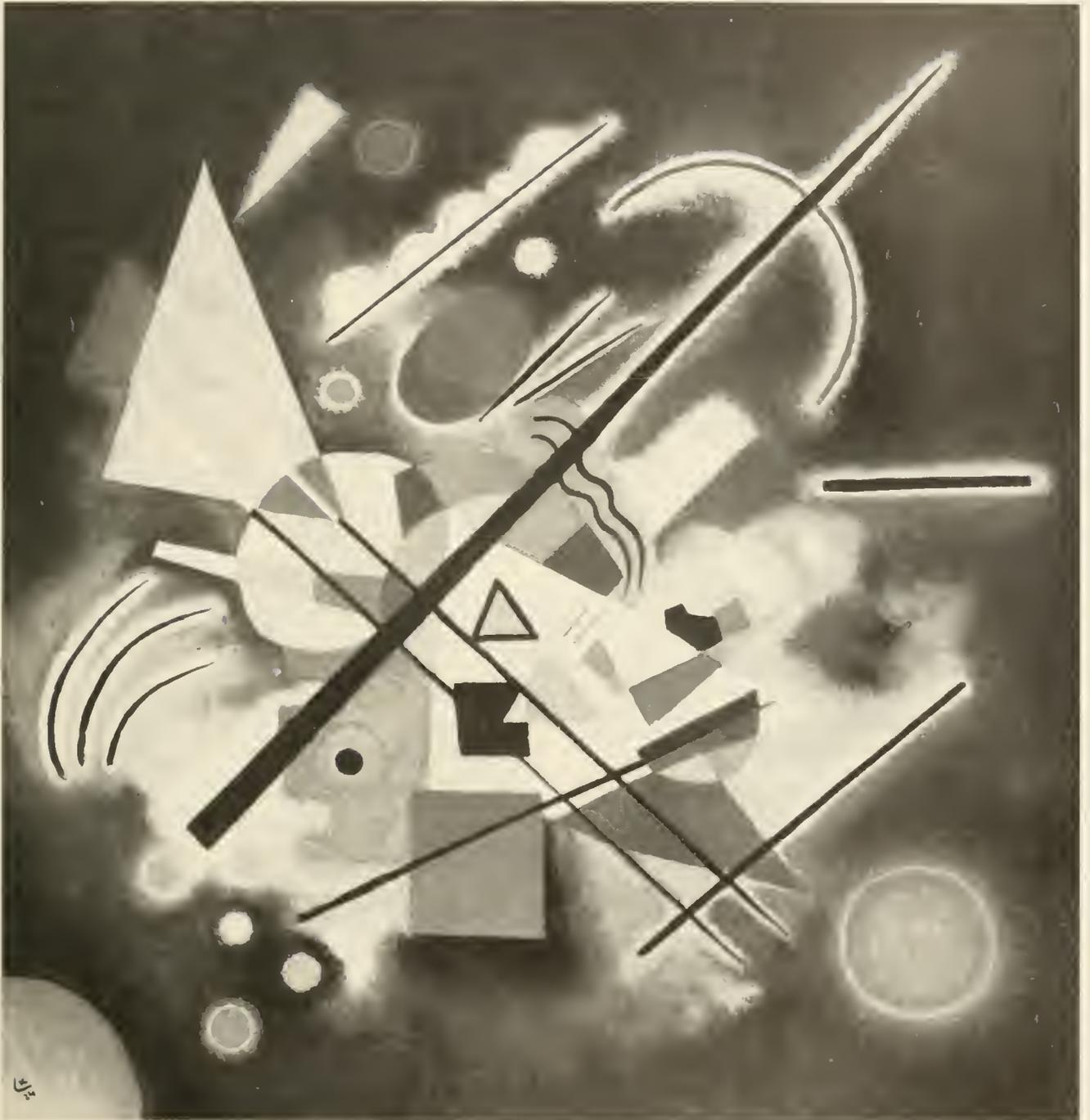
Signed and dated I.I.: *K/24*; inscribed on
reverse, probably not by the artist:
K/No 267/i924.

Provenance:

G. E. Scheyer, Apr. 1924 (HL); Lilienfeld Gallery,
New York; purchased from Lilienfeld by
The New Gallery, Inc., New York; purchased
from New Gallery by Fuller Foundation, Inc.,
Fort Worth, Texas, Dec. 1960; Gift, Fuller
Foundation, Inc., 1976.

A number of works dating to the early Bauhaus period (1922-25) are dominated by a powerful diagonal spear-form. Kandinsky described diagonals positioned in this way as "harmonious", and as producing the effect of "lyric tension". In "Blue Picture" the diagonal thrust of the spear, as Will Grohmann has pointed out, was strengthened by moving the circle of the preliminary watercolour study from the upper left to its present position at the lower right. The use of red in the lower left corner and in the arc which intersects the upper portion of the spear similarly serves to accent the diagonal's ascension.

The background is composed of varying shades of deep royal blue which become a light blue around the central grouping of geometric and linear forms. The lighter hue illuminates and binds more closely these formal elements.



23. Seventeen Segments. October 1924

17 Segmente

Handlist: x *1924*, *164*, *17 Segmente*.

The Hilla von Rebay Foundation
1970.14

Watercolour, gouache, India ink and pencil
on paper, 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{8}$ " (48.6 x 33.4cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/24*; inscribed on
reverse: No 164/ 1924.

Provenance:

Nierendorf (HL); Jon Nicholas Streep, New
York, through 1951; acquired from Streep by
Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn., 1951;
The Hilla von Rebay Foundation.

The seventeen semi-circular fragments referred to in the title are set against an arrangement of rectangles. A shifting of planes or a schism is suggested by the grouping of the four large rectangles which leaves bare a white cross-shaped crevice. The effect of loosened and tumbling forms at the top contrasts to the buildup of elements at the bottom.



24. Three Sounds. August 1926

Drei Klänge

Handlist: viii 1926, 343, *Drei Klänge*.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
41.282

Oil on canvas, 23⁵/₈ x 23¹/₂" (59.9 x 59.6cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: K/26; inscribed on reverse: K/No 343 1926/ "Drei Klänge" /59 x 59.

Provenance:

Purchased from the artist by Anhaltische Gemäldegalerie Dessau, Nov. 1928 (HL) – 1937; purchased from Gutekunst und Klipstein, Bern, by Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York, Feb.1939; Gift, Solomon R. Guggenheim, 1941.

Kandinsky employs the word "sounds" (Klänge) throughout his theoretical writings and, on occasion, in titles of his art works. Generally this term is used in the sense of "inner resonance" or "spiritual vibration". In the present painting, the disposition of images toward the upper left, upper right and lower left corners evokes three different "sounds". Two translucent triangles act as a bridge from the upward-pointing arrows to the upper left corner, just as the diaphanous circle on the right forms a bridge between the central cluster of triangles and the checkerboard. The weightlessness of the small circles which seem to float toward the upper right corner contrasts to the downward pull of the five overlapping semicircles below.



25. Capriccio. September 1927

Capriccio

Handlist: *ix 1927, 213, Capriccio.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

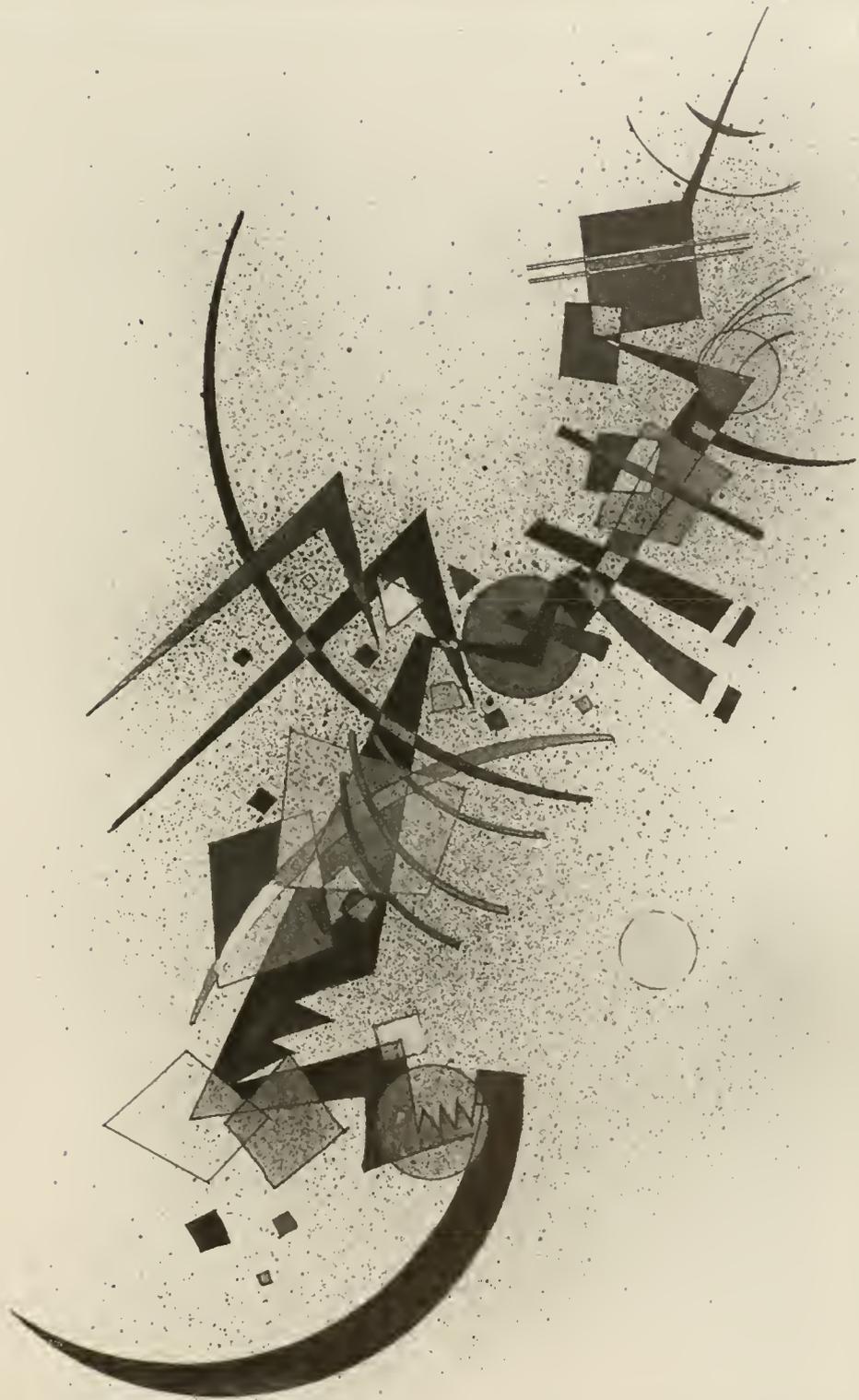
38.298

Watercolour and India ink on paper, 13⁵/₈ x 9³/₄"
(34.5 x 24.6 cm)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/27*; inscribed on
reverse: *No 213 / i927 Capriccio.*

Provenance:

Purchased from the artist through Kandinsky-
Gesellschaft by Heinrich Stinnes, Cologne,
1927-28; purchased at auction (Bern,
Gutekunst und Klipstein, *Moderne Graphik
der Sammlung Heinrich Stinnes*, June 21, 1938,
no.423) by Otto Nebel for The Solomon R.
Guggenheim Museum.



26. Little Game. June 1928

Kleines Spiel

Handlist: *vi 1928, 282, Kleines Spiel.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
48.1172 x 87

Watercolour and India ink on paper, 13³/₈ x 6⁵/₈"
(34 x 17 cm.)

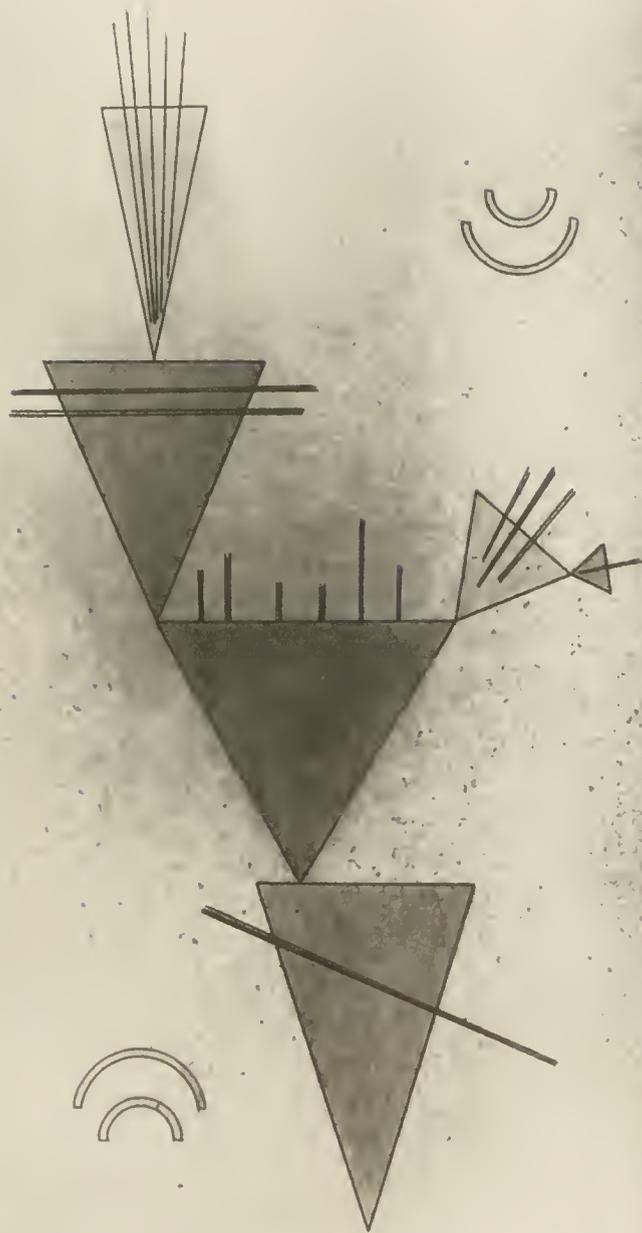
Signed and dated I.I.: *K/28*; inscribed on reverse mount: *No 282/1928/Kleines Spiel.*"

Provenance:

Probst (HL); Nierendorf Gallery, New York, by 1948; Estate of Karl Nierendorf, 1948.

Numerous paintings dating from the late twenties to early thirties have cheerful, even playful titles such as "Capriccio" or "Little Game." The capricious yet masterful balance of forms in the present two works betrays shared concerns. Each relies on the tension created between diagonal compositional movement and stabilizing elements. The predominant thrust of "Capriccio" toward the upper right corner is challenged by devices such as the downward sweep of the large horn at the bottom, the overlapping angles in the centre, and the quiet stability of the isolated circle. Similarly, the placement of linear elements, notably the double-arch motifs in the upper right and lower left areas of "Little Game," tends to lock the stacked triangles in space to produce an effect of animated repose. Kandinsky's pleasure in "mingling serious forms with comical external expression," is embodied in "Little Game's" balancing-act of triangular and linear elements.

Particularly after 1925 the spray process was employed by Klee and others at the Bauhaus. By the late twenties spattered or sprayed watercolour appears frequently in Kandinsky's work. Horn forms, like those in "Capriccio", are common motifs in his paintings and watercolours executed between 1925 and 1927.



27. Levels. March 1929

Étagen

Handlist: *iii 1929, 452, Étagen.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
46.1049

Oil on board, 22¼ x 16" (56.6 x 40.6 cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/29*; inscribed on reverse: *K/No 452/i/1929/l"Étagen"/4i x 56.*

Provenance:

Purchased from the artist by E. Tériade, Paris, ca. 1930; Ilse Shryer, New York, by 1946; purchased from Shryer, 1946.

From the Bauhaus period on, Kandinsky often divided his format both horizontally and vertically into geometric areas. "Levels" is divided by strong central verticals and compartmentalized into twelve distinct areas by horizontals. The forms grouped within these subdivisions resemble hieroglyphics, an effect heightened by the use of a small number of basic shapes – the circle, the horn, the triangle and the rectangle – in different combinations. The calm, meditative quality of "Levels" is consistent with other works of the Dessau period.



28. Supporting Circle. April 1929

Tragende Runde

Handlist: *iv 1929, 346, Tragende Runde.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
38.317

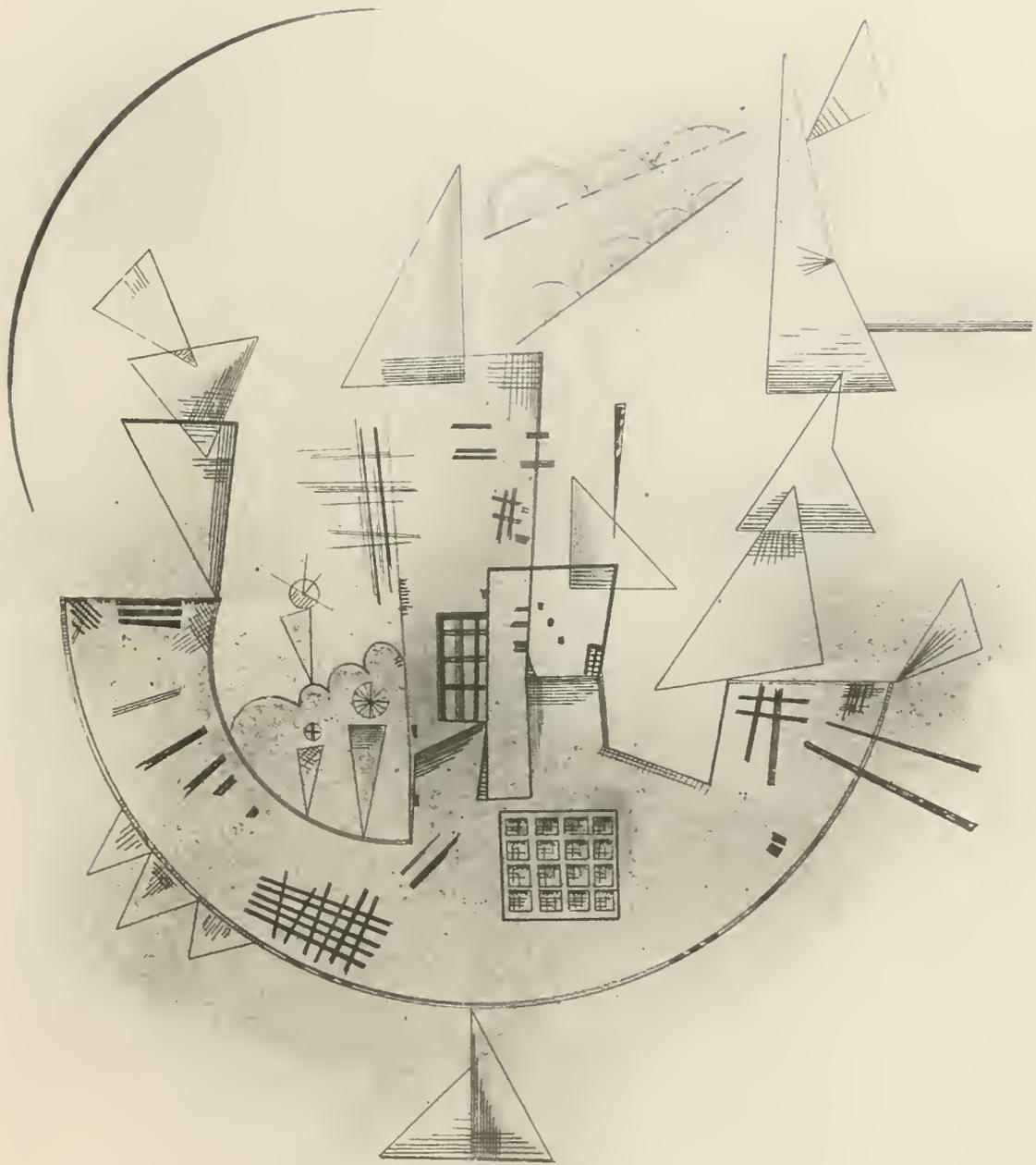
Watercolour, India ink and pencil on paper,
19¾ x 17⅞" (50 x 44.2cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/29*; inscribed on
reverse: *No 346/i929/"Tragende Runde"*.

Provenance:

Purchased from the artist through Kandinsky
Gesellschaft by Heinrich Stinnes, Cologne;
purchased at auction (Bern, Gutekunst und
Klipstein, *Moderne Graphik der Sammlung
Heinrich Stinnes*, June 21, 1938, no. 429) by
Otto Nebel for The Solomon R. Guggenheim
Museum.

Kandinsky's preference for graphic rather than pictorial means of expression during the Dessau period is most notable in works which recall architectural blueprints. "Supporting Circle", with its predominance of linear elements and constructions reminiscent of building façades and scaffolding, suggests an architect's rendering. Even the spattered colour areas are geometrically disposed. Yet this formal severity is relieved by the delicate, extremely tenuous, balance of the semicircular arc upon the tip of a triangle which supports it. Within the circle, the theme of precarious balance is a leitmotiv recurring in the groups of stacked triangles and other charged intersections of pointed and curvilinear forms. For Kandinsky, the point of contact between triangle and circle had profound significance; it was likened to the life-giving touch of the finger of God to the finger of Adam in Michelangelo's Sistine fresco.



29. Cool Discourse. May 1929

Kühle Rede

Handlist: v 1929, 349, *Kühle Rede*.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
38.312

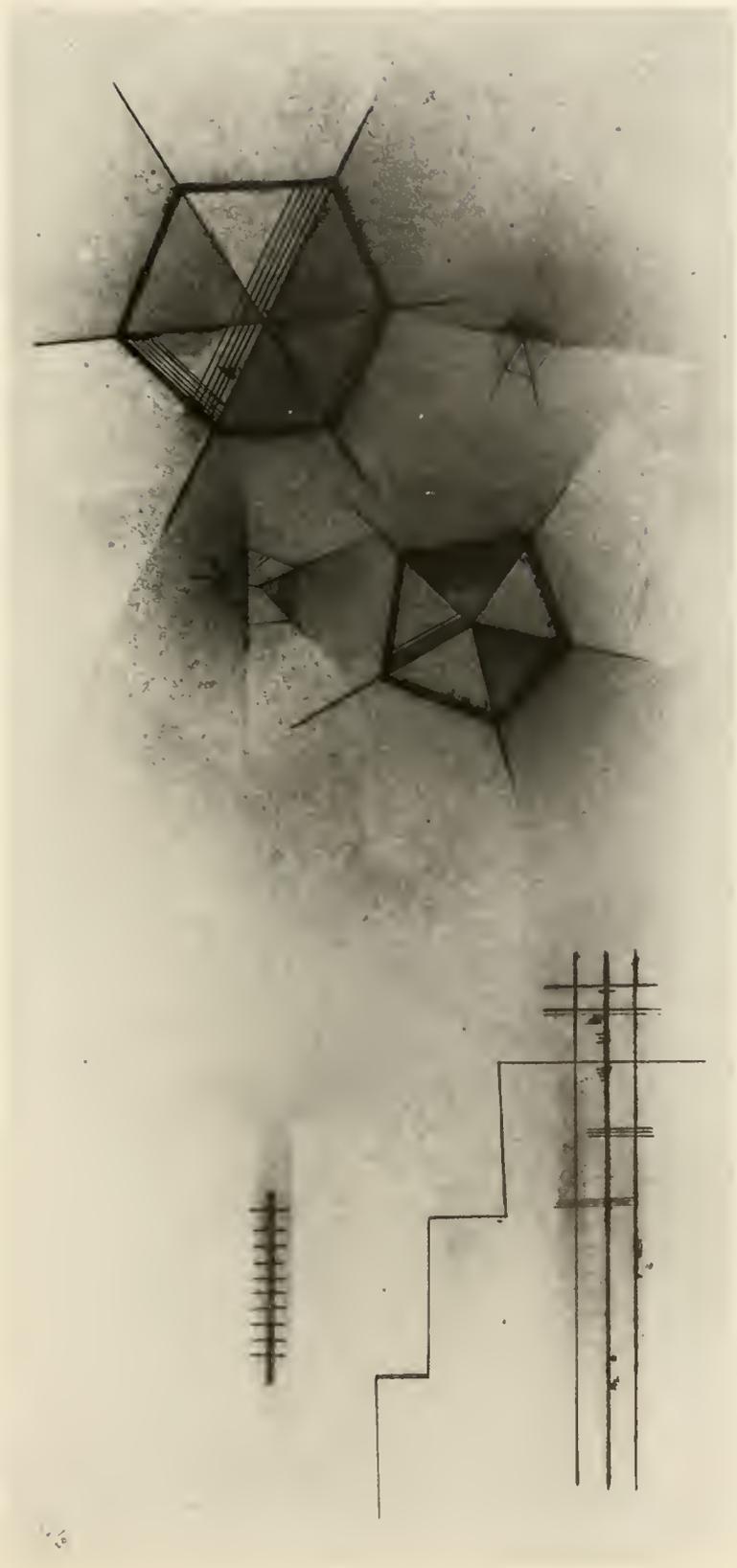
Watercolour, India ink and pencil on paper,
20 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (51 x 24cm)

Signed and dated I.I.: K/29; inscribed on reverse
mount: No 349/1929/ "Kühle Rede."

Provenance:

Purchased from Rudolf Bauer, Berlin,
Dec. 1938.

Kandinsky's discussion of the importance of line to engineering art and technology in *Point and Line to Plane* finds pictorial expression in the linear mast structures at the bottom of "Cool Discourse". Above these structures are four satellite forms. The inventive use of the spatter technique to extend colour areas from the spokelike lines of these satellites, creates a prismatic effect of colour and light.



30. Pink-Sweet. December 1929

Rosa-Süss

Handlist: *xii 1929, 481, Rosa-Süss.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R69

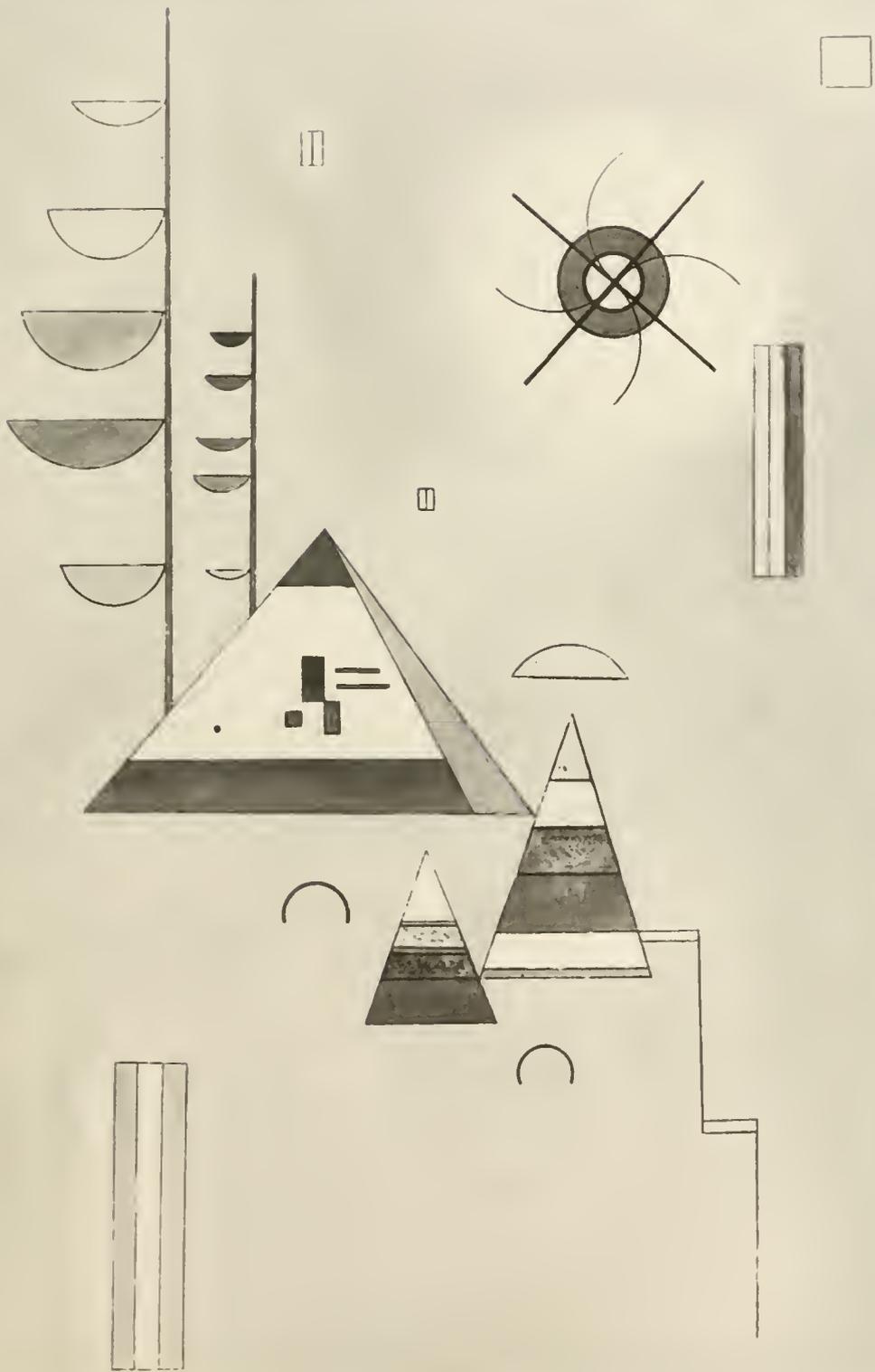
Oil on board, 27¼ x 18⅞" (69.2 x 47.8cm)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/29*; inscribed on
reverse: *K/No 481/i1929/ "Rosa-Süss"/ 49 x 70.*

Provenance:

J. B. Neumann, New York (HL); Nierendorf
Gallery, New York, by 1942; purchased from
Nierendorf by Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms,
Conn., 1944; Estate of Hilla Rebay, 1967-71.

"Pink-Sweet" belongs to a group of similar works of 1929 in which a circular form hovers above leftward-inclined step motif. The stepped progression of totemic and pyramidal structures toward the heavenly aqua blue band across the top of the painting intimates movement toward a higher order. Kandinsky associated the top of his "basic plane" with the heavens; blue was for him the most spiritual of colours. To the right, an asteroidlike shape spins a luminous aura. "Pink Sweet" partakes of the solemnity and mysticism of the late Dessau period.



31. Quiet Assertion. December 1929

Ruhige Behauptung

Handlist: *xii 1929, 366, Ruhige Behauptung.*

The Hilla von Rebay Foundation

1970.33

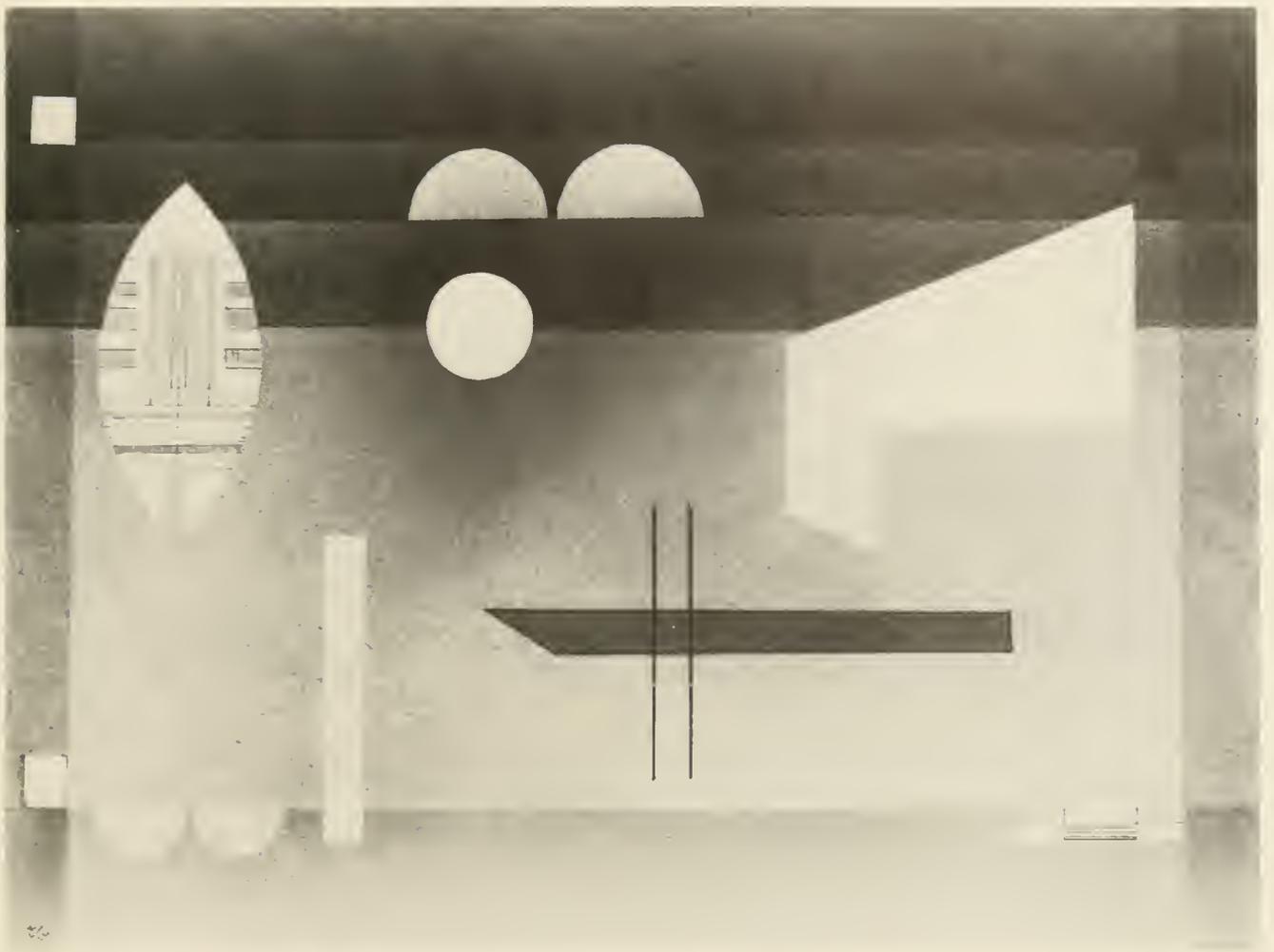
Watercolour and India ink on paper,
15 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (40.5 x 53.8cm)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/29*; inscribed on
reverse: 366.

Provenance:

Probst (HL); J.B. Neumann, New York, by 1937;
Nierendorf Gallery, New York, by 1942;
purchased from Nierendorf by Hilla Rebay,
Greens Farms, Conn., Feb. 1945; The Hilla von
Rebay Foundation.

The title, "Quiet Assertion", alludes to the theme of this work: forms directed toward the right quietly assert themselves against the stable elements to the left. While the pointed tip of the red shape nears confrontation with the upright pale yellow rectangle, the tricolour rhomboid seems propelled along the planar trajectory of the circle and the ovoid form. The hazy, almost atmospheric background and the overlapping of translucent planes contribute to an illusion of depth.



32. Glimmering. July 1931

Flimmern

Handlist: *vii 1931, 435, Flimmern.*

The Hilla von Rebay Foundation
1970.23

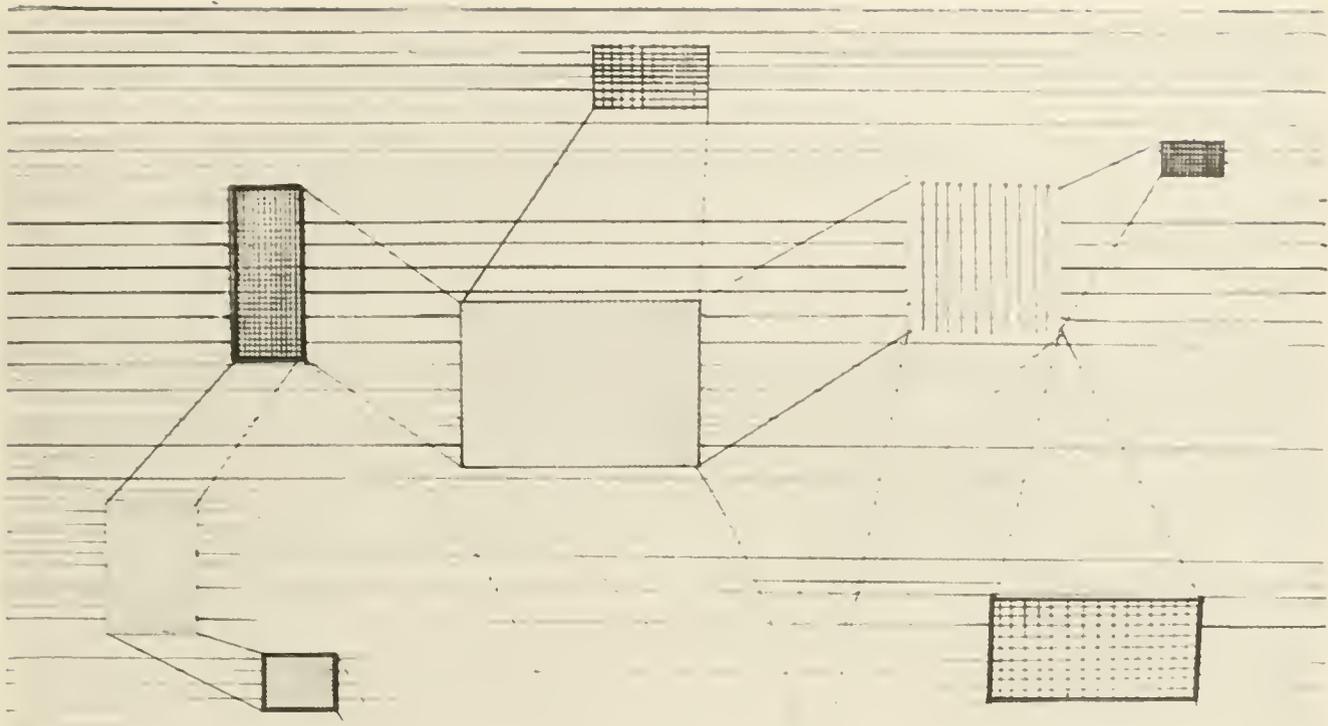
Watercolour and coloured inks on paper,
13½ x 13¾" (34.2 x 34.8cm)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/31*; inscribed on
reverse, probably not by the artist: *435.*

Provenance:

Probst (HL); J.B. Neumann, New York, Feb.
1936; Nierendorf Gallery, New York, by 1942;
Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn., after 1945;
The Hilla von Rebay Foundation.

An interconnecting network of two triangles and nine rectangles is suspended, as if by marionette strings, against red, green and beige parallel bands. The light structure of the composition is complemented by the way the triangles dip gracefully downward. The grid-pattern scheme of "Glimmering" favours a lucid, graphic compositional approach. Such an approach is prominent in Kandinsky's oeuvre during the last years in Dessau, 1929 to 1932, and may reflect his close association with Klee, with whom he shared a double house in Dessau from 1926.



5

33. Burdened. July 1931

Belastet

Handlist: *vii 1931, 439, Belastet (surchargé)*.

The Hilla von Rebay Foundation
1970.58

Watercolour, India ink and pencil on paper,
20¼ x 22⅛" (51.3 x 56.1 cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/31*; inscribed on
reverse, probably not by the artist:
No 439/i93i/"Belastet".

Provenance:

Probst (HL); J. B. Neumann, New York, Feb.
1936; Nierendorf Gallery, New York, by 1942;
purchased from Nierendorf by Hilla Rebay,
Greens Farms, Conn., Nov. 1944; The Hilla von
Rebay Foundation.

The small figure encased by a dome-shaped structure is, as the title implies, burdened by the disposition, weight and size of the surrounding forms. These include the hovering semicircular shapes, the two larger stick figures and the towering treelike form which looms menacingly above.



34. Bias. December 1931

Neigung

Handlist: *xii 1931, 568, Neigung.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
49.1176

Oil and tempera on board, 27½ x 27½"
(70 x 70cm.)

Signed and dated I.I.: *K/31*; inscribed on
reverse: *K/No 568/i93i/"Neigung"/*
70 x 70.

Provenance:

Galka Scheyer; Hildegard Prytek, New York,
1945-48; purchased from Prytek, 1949.

A composition more fluid than rigid is diagonally divided into three areas with wavy edges. In the particular texture of paint on board and its use of colour transparencies, aquatic imagery and curvilinear, often parachutelike motifs, "Bias" boldly anticipates Kandinsky's later Paris style.



35. Dark Situation. July 1933

Trübe Lage

Handlist: *vii 1933, 517, Trübe Lage (Trouble obscur)*.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R145

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper,
18⁵/₈ x 26³/₈" (47.3 x 66.8cm)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/33*; inscribed on reverse
mount: *No 517 /1933/ "Trübe Lage" / "Situation
obscur"*.

Provenance:

J.B. Neumann, New York, Feb. 1936;
Nierendorf Gallery, New York; Hilla Rebay,
Greens Farms, Conn.; Estate of Hilla Rebay,
1967-71.

The two opaque black shapes resemble silhouettes of figures in profile, set against the almost monochromatic background of "Dark Situation". Transparent vertical rectangles stand like screens between the figures, separating and isolating them from one another. This sense of alienation contributes to the sombre mood which permeates the watercolour.

"Dark Situation" might aptly describe the circumstances of Kandinsky's life the month it was painted: following months of pressure from the Nazi Party, in July of 1933 the Bauhaus at Dessau finally closed.



36. Development Upwards. March 1934

Montée gracieuse

Handlist: *iii 1934, 596, Montée gracieuse.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

45.970

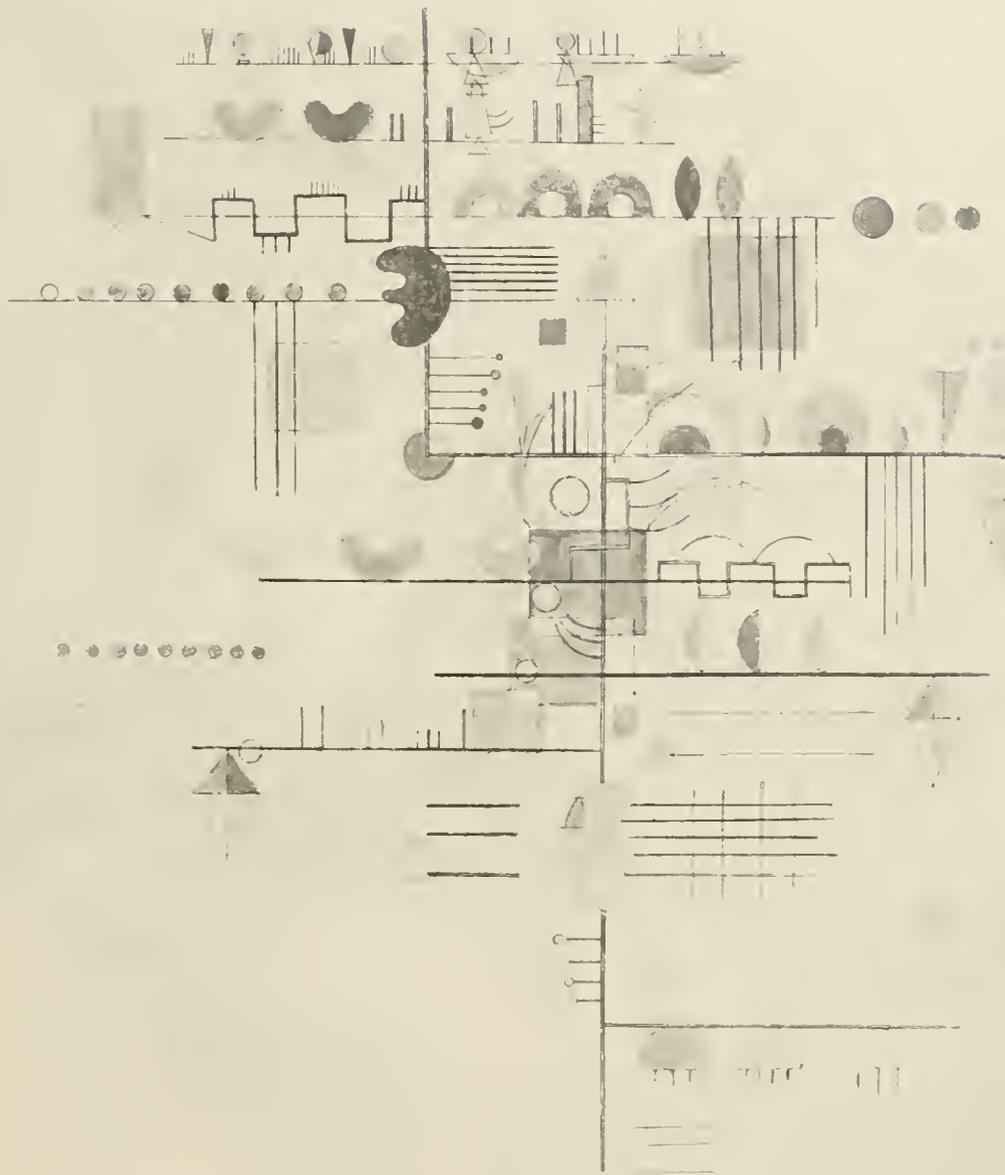
Oil on canvas, 31⁵/₈ x 31³/₄" (80.4 x 80.7 cm)

Signed and dated I.I.: *K/34*; inscribed on reverse: *K/No. 596/i934/ "[De]veloppement en [haut]."*

Provenance:

Purchased from the artist by Karl Nierendorf, New York, Sept. 1938 (HL); purchased from Nierendorf, 1945.

"Development Upwards" dates to the first year of Kandinsky's Paris period (1934-44). Compositional elements evolved during the Dessau period are discernable in the Parisian oils; however, they are transformed into a new formal synthesis where delicate pastel colours and tectonic structures predominate. Oriented like rhythmic notations, curvilinear and geometric shapes are supported by light yet stable scaffolding.



37. Double Affirmation. December 1934

Double affirmation

Handlist: *xii 1934, 540, Double affirmation.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R 47

India ink, gouache, watercolour and pencil
on paper, 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 22 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (39 x 57.3 cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/34*; inscribed on
reverse: *540*.

Provenance:

J. B. Neumann, New York, by 1937; Nierendorf
Gallery, New York, by 1941; Hilla Rebay,
Greens Farms, Conn., by 1945; Estate of Hilla
Rebay, 1967-71.

During the Paris years, Kandinsky commonly employed spatial ambiguity to animate his compositions. In "Double Affirmation" the open structure of the two curvilinear shapes effectively promotes tension and confusion between figural and background space.



38. Gridded. May 1935

Grillés

Handlist: v 1935, 558, *Grillés*.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
41.336

Gouache and pencil on black paper,
19 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ " (50 x 32 cm.)

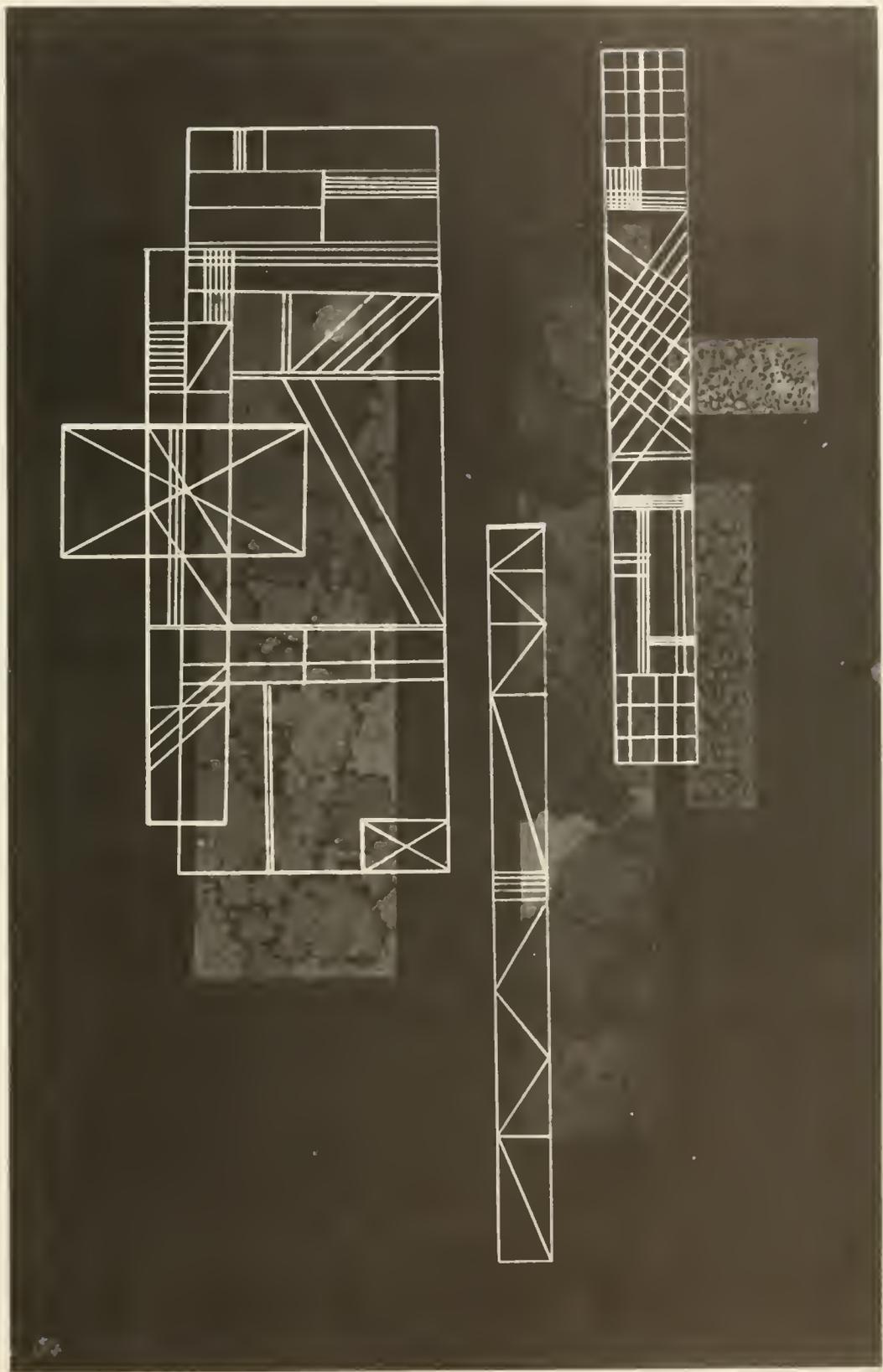
Signed and dated I.I.: K/35; inscribed on reverse
mount: No 558/i935 "*Grilles*" (*Tempera*).

Provenance:

J. B. Neumann, New York, Feb. 1936; Hilla
Rebay, New York, May 1936 (HL); Solomon
R. Guggenheim, New York, by 1937; Gift,
Solomon R. Guggenheim, 1941.

From the mid-thirties to the early forties, Kandinsky executed a number of works in gouache on black paper. Three typical examples are: "Gridded", "Rather Soft" and "Two Hooks". Each exploits the scintillating effect of lucid opaque white and patches of colour against a black background. As in the early *Jugendstil* woodcuts, white functions as positive space and forms emerge from the black void.

In the contrast to the basically geometric orientation of "Gridded" and "Two Hooks", "Rather Soft" stands apart in its combination of protoplasmic and hard-edged shapes. The architectonic structures of "Gridded" hover in space, while the curvilinear hooks at the upper left and lower right of "Two Hooks" seem to anchor the phalanx of rectangular forms, curtailing diagonal movement toward the upper right corner.



39. Green Accent. November 1935

Accent vert

Handlist: *xi 1935, 623, Accent vert.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
37.340

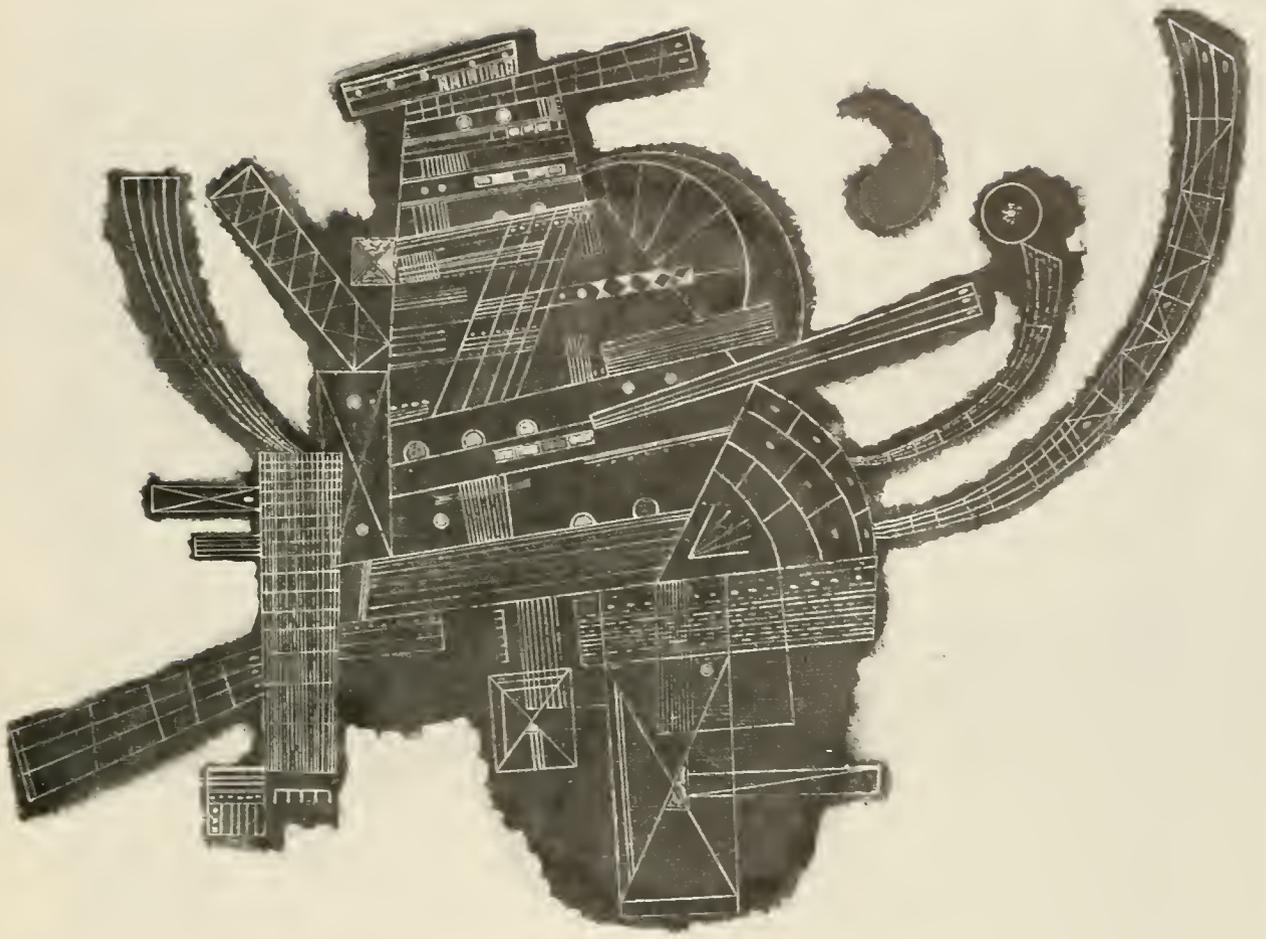
Tempera and oil on canvas, 32 x 39³/₈"
(81.1 x 100.2cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/35*; inscribed on
reverse: *K/No 623/i935/ "Accent Vert"*.

Provenance:

Purchased from the artist by Solomon
R. Guggenheim, New York, July 1936;
Gift, Solomon R. Guggenheim, 1937.

The large dark green form in "Green Accent" synthesizes mechanical and zoomorphic references. The graphically rendered, incised white lines suggest a blueprint for a technological invention, or, alternatively, the skeletal structure of a protoplasmic organism. Kandinsky considered green the "most restful" of colours and described it as having a "passive" effect.



40. Rather Soft. June 1936

Assez mou

Handlist: *vi 1936, 568, Assez mou.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R143

Gouache on black paper, 19 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{5}{8}$ "
(49.2 x 34.5cm.)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/36*; inscribed on reverse
mount: *No 568/i936 "Assez mou"*.

Provenance:

Jeanne Bucher (HL); Hilla Rebay; Greens
Farms, Conn., Estate of Hilla Rebay, 1967-71.



41. Yellow Canvas. July 1938

La Toile jaune

Handlist: *vii 1938, 653, La Toile jaune.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
45.964

Oil and enamel on canvas, 45 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 35"
(116.4 x 88.8cm.)

Signed and dated I.I.: *K/38*; inscribed on
reverse: *K/No 653/i938.*

Provenance:

Purchased from the artist by Karl Nierendorf,
New York, Sept. 1938 (HL); purchased from
Nierendorf, 1945.

"Yellow Canvas" is one of Kandinsky's more whimsical paintings. The use of bright, gay colour is well suited to the playful arrangement of checkerboard patterns. As Rose Carol Washton has observed, a harlequinlike figure, poised on one leg and balancing a tray of boxes on its head, seems to emerge from the inventively manipulated colour and form.



42. Two Hooks. April 1939

Deux accrocs

Handlist: *iv* 1939, 622, *Deux accrocs*.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

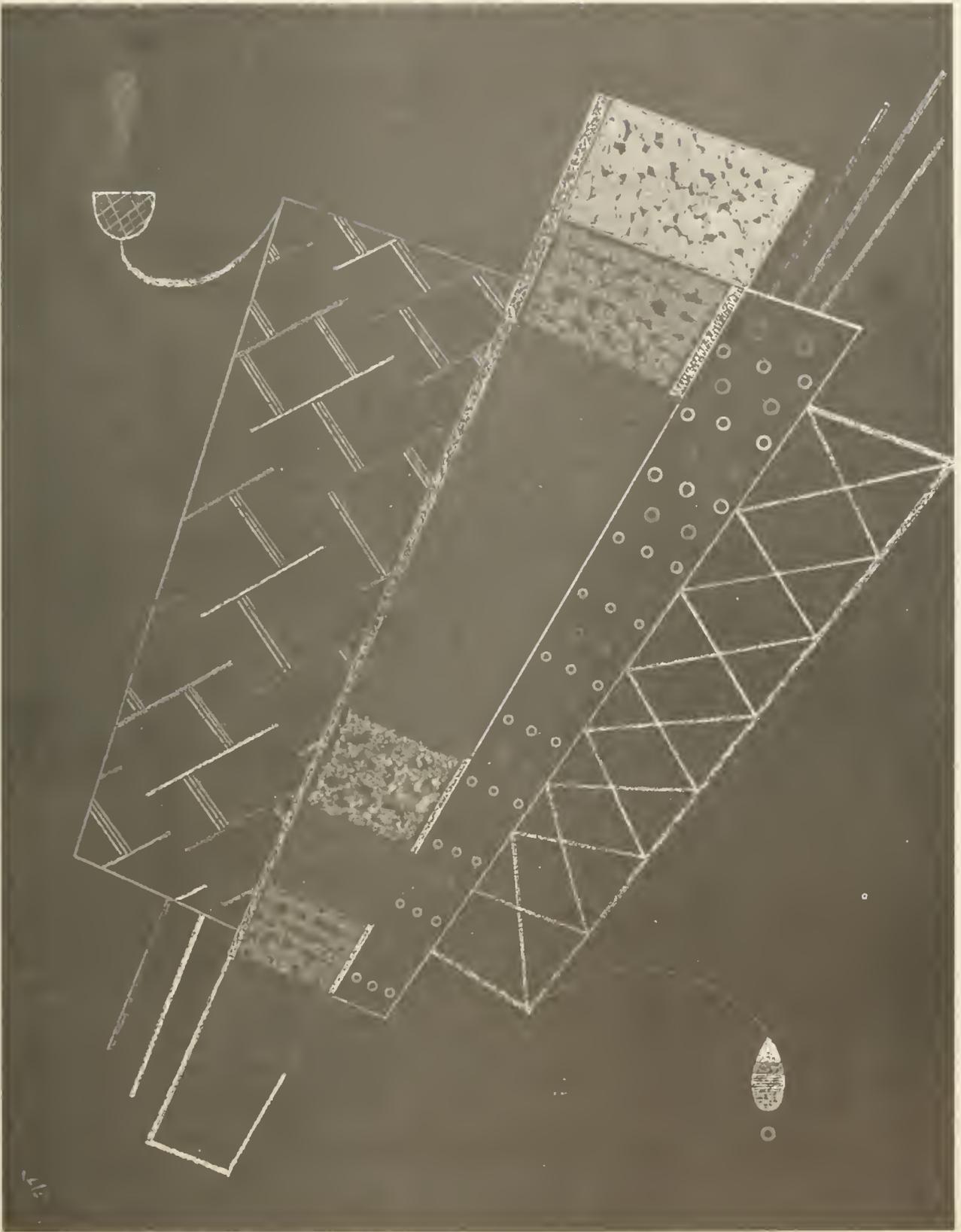
48.1172x99

Gouache on black paper, 19³/₈ x 15³/₈"
(49.3 x 39.1 cm)

Signed and dated l.l.: *K/39*; inscribed on reverse
mount: *No 622/ 1939/ "Deux accrocs"*.

Provenance:

Purchased from the artist by Nierendorf,
June 1939; Estate of Karl Nierendorf, 1948.



**43. Various Actions. August – September
1941**

(Actions variées)

Handlist: *vii-ix 1941, 683, Actions variées.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
47.1159

Oil and enamel on canvas, 35 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 45 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (89.2 x
116.1 cm.)

Signed and dated I.I.: *K/41*; inscribed on
reverse: *K/No 683/1941.*

Provenance

Purchased from the artist by Galerie René
Drouin Paris, May 194? (HL); J. B. Neumann,
New York, by 1947; purchased from Neumann,
1947.

Protoplasmic and geometric forms float in murky green gray space which is enlivened by the syncopated rhythm of brightly coloured triangular and rectangular specks. As the title suggests, movement of the compositional elements is multidirectional. In these late works, Kandinsky's concern with elements associated with the origin of life, articulated earlier in *Point and Line to Plane*, is now given full pictorial expression.



44. **Untitled. (No. 715) 1941**

Handlist: 1941, 715.

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
Hilla Rebay Collection

71.1936 R82

Gouache on gray paper mounted on board,
18 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (47.9 x 31.5cm)

Signed and dated I.I.: *K/4i*; inscribed on reverse
mount: *No 715/i94i*.

Provenance:

Hilla Rebay, Greens Farms, Conn.; Estate of
Hilla Rebay, 1967-71.

The light, pastel tonality and graphic approach of "Untitled (No. 715)" is appropriate to the lyricism of this gouache. Images, both decorative and protoplasmic in appearance, recall air balloons. The theme of floating is repeated in the two latticepatterned motifs which are reminiscent of box kites and the snakelike forms below.



45. Twilight. June 1943

Crépuscule

Handlist: *vi 1943, 720, Crépuscule.*

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
49.1223

Oil on board, 22¾ x 16½" (41.8 x 57.6cm)

Signed and dated I.I.: *K/43*; inscribed on
reverse: *K/No 720/ 1943/58 x 42.*

Provenance:

Purchased from Nina Kandinsky, Paris, 1949.

The darkened palette and sombre mood of "Twilight" represent a departure from the style of Kandinsky's early Paris works. By this time, the anthropomorphic figure, composed of a trunk and head, and the flagellate, snake and parachute forms have become familiar images. Texture gains in importance: here paint is used to create a stoney, primitive ground for the enigmatic figures. Because of the wartime shortage of canvas and paints, many works dating to the last four years of Kandinsky's life are small and painted on board.



Chronology

- 1866
December 4
Vasilii Vasilievich Kandinsky born in Moscow to Vasilii, a tea merchant, and Lidia Tikheeva Kandinsky.
- 1869
Travels to Italy with parents.
- 1871
Family moves to Odessa. Parents are divorced.
- 1876
Attends Gymnasium where he learns to play piano and cello. First of yearly trips, made until 1885, to Moscow with father.
- 1886
Studies economics and law at University of Moscow.
- 1889
May 28-June 30
Makes expedition to Vologda province sponsored by Society of Natural Science and Anthropology.
Subsequently publishes two articles on tribal religion and peasant law.
Visits Hermitage in St. Petersburg where he is most impressed by Rembrandt's work.
Travels to Paris to see World's Fair.
- 1891
Sees one of Monet's *Haystacks* at *French Industrial and Art Exhibition* in Moscow.
- 1892
Completes university studies and passes law examination.
Marries cousin Ania Shemiakina.
Second trip to Paris.
- 1893
Writes dissertation "On the Legality of Laborer's Wages".
Appointed teaching assistant at Faculty of Law, University of Moscow.
- 1895
Becomes artistic director of Kušnerev printing firm in Moscow. Designs covers for chocolate boxes.
- 1896
Declines teaching position at University of Dorpat; instead moves to Munich to study painting. Lives at Friedrichstrasse 1 until September 30, 1904.
- 1897
Studies with Anton Ažbè for two years. Meets Alexej Jawlensky and Marianne von Werefkin.
- 1900
Student of Franz von Stuck at Academy in Munich. Meets Ernst Stern, Alexander von Salzmann, Albert Weisgerber and Hans Purrmann.
Participates in *Moscow Association of Artists* annual; shows with them yearly until 1908.
- 1901
April
His "Kritka kritikov" ("A Criticism of Critics") published in *Novosti dnia*, Moscow.
Co-founds *Phalanx* exhibition society in Munich; becomes its president later this year.
August 15-November
First *Phalanx* exhibition. Eleven more are held until 1904.
Phalanx art school established; Kandinsky teaches drawing and painting there.
- 1902
Meets Gabriele Münter, a student in his painting class.
Reviews contemporary art scene in Munich. "Korrespondentsia iz Miunkhena" ("Correspondence from Munich"), for periodical *Mir Iskusstva*, St. Petersburg.
Spring
First participation in Berlin Secession.
Summer
Friendship with Hermann Obrist.
- 1903
April-June
Visits Vienna, Ansbach and Nürnberg with Münter.
Stops teaching; *Phalanx* school closes.
- September-October
Travels to Venice and Vienna en route to Odessa and Moscow. Returns to Germany at end of month.
- 1904
January
Friendship with Alfred Kubin.
Works on theory of colours.
May-June
Visits The Netherlands with Münter.
Participates in Munich Kunstverein exhibition.
Makes craft designs for the *Vereinigung für angewandte Kunst* (Society for Applied Art), Munich.
Late August
Bicycle trip to Partenkirchen through Murnau and Oberammergau.
September
Separates from wife.
October-November
Visits Frankfurt, Kreuznach and Münster with Münter. Stops in Berlin on way to and from Odessa, where he spends one month.
Participates in Salon d'Automne, Paris; exhibits there yearly until 1910.
November 27-December 2
Travels to Paris, visits Cologne and Bonn.
Participates in inaugural exhibition of *Les Tendances Nouvelles*, Paris: beginning of association with this group.
Last *Phalanx* exhibition; by year's end association dissolves.
Kandinsky's *Stikhi bez slov* (*Poetry without Words*) woodcuts, published in Moscow.
Participates in first exhibition of *New Society of Artists*, St. Petersburg, and *Association of South Russian Artists* exhibition, Odessa; shows with latter five times, until 1909.
December 1904-April 1905
Travels in Tunisia with Münter.
- 1905
April-May
Travels through Italy on return trip to Munich.
Participates in Salon des Indépendants, Paris.
Joins *Deutscher Künstlerbund*.
Elected to jury of Salon d'Automne, Paris.
Awarded medal by *XII^e Exposition du Travail*, Paris.
November
Travels through Vienna, Budapest and Lemberg en route to Odessa. Also visits Cologne, Düsseldorf, Bonn, Liège and Brussels.
December 9-22
Travels in Italy.
December 23, 1905-April 1906
Lives at 24 via Montebello, Rapallo.
- 1906
May
Travels through Italy and Switzerland en route to Paris.
June
Lives at 12, rue des Ursulines, Paris. At end of month moves to 4, petite rue des Binelles, Sèvres, where he lives for one year.
Joins *Union Internationale des Beaux-Arts et des Lettres*, Paris.
Fall
Sees major Gauguin retrospective at Grand Palais, Paris.
Awarded Grand Prix of *L'Exposition Internationale de Paris*.
Participates in Galerie Wertheim, Berlin, and Berlin Secession exhibitions and *Exhibition of Signs and Posters*, Moscow.
- 1906-1907
Winter
Participates in *Brücke* exhibition, Dresden.
- 1907
Spring
Large one-man exhibition at *Les Tendances Nouvelles*, Angers.
June
Returns to Munich.
Late June-July
Rest cure at Bad Reichenhall.
August
Spends three weeks in Switzerland with Münter.
September 1907-April 1908
Lives in Berlin.

1908
 May
 Hikes in South Tyrol, stays in Lana.
 June
 Returns to Munich. Visits Starnberger See and Staffelsee.
 Summer
 First sojourn in Murnau: spends summer with Münter, Jawlensky and Werekín at Griesbräu Inn.
 Fall
 Moves to Ainmillerstrasse 36 in Schwabing district of Munich.
 Meets Thomas von Hartmann in Munich.
 Begins writing abstract prose poems, which he continues to write until 1913.
 Buys two Henri Rousseau paintings.

1909
 January
 He co-founds *Neue Künstlervereinigung München* (NKVM) in Munich and is elected its president.
 First Improvisations.
 Münter acquires house in Murnau; she and Kandinsky often stay here until outbreak of World War I.
 Summer
 In Murnau.
 His *Xylographies*, woodcuts, published in Paris by *Les Tendances Nouvelles*.
 October
 His reviews, "Pismo iz Munkhena" ("Letter from Munich"), published in periodical *Apollon*, St. Petersburg; these continue to appear for one year.
 Begins writing abstract stage compositions *Der gelbe Klang*, *Grüner Klang* and *Schwarz und Weiss* (*The Yellow Sound*, *Green Sound* and *Black and White*).
 Meets Arnold Schönberg at Tegernsee.
 Participates in *Second All-Russian Congress of Artists* and Sergei Makovsky's Salon, both in St. Petersburg.
 December 1-15
 First NKVM exhibition, Thannhauser's *Moderne Galerie*, Munich.
 December 17, 1909-February 6, 1910
 Participates in Vladimir Izdebsky's Salon, Odessa, which travels to Kiev, St. Petersburg and Riga during 1910.

1910
 First Compositions.
 Completes manuscript of *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* (*Concerning the Spiritual in Art*).
 Meets Franz Marc and August Macke at Thannhauser's gallery. Invites David and Vladimir Burluk to participate in second NKVM exhibition, Munich.
 Spring and Summer
 Sojourns in Murnau.
 October-December
 Visits Weimar and Berlin en route to Russia where he spends time in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Odessa. Returns to Munich at end of year.
 Winter 1910-1911
 Participates in *Jack of Diamonds* exhibition, Moscow.

1911
 January
 Shows fifty-two works at Izdebsky's second Salon, Odessa. Catalogue includes his essay "Soderzhanie i forma" ("Content and Form").
 Resigns NKVM presidency.
 February 9.
 His essay "Kuda idet 'novoe' iskusstvo" ("Whither the New Art") published in periodical *Odesskie novosti*.
 May 17-19
 Visits Marc in Sindelsdorf; returns in October.
 Summer
 In Murnau.
 Begins plans with Marc for *Blaue Reiter* almanac.
 Divorce from Ania Shemiakina finalized.
 Fall
 Meets Paul Klee and Robert Delaunay. Friendships with Hans Arp, Heinrich Campendonk and Karl Wolfskehl.
 December 2
 Kandinsky, Marc, Münter and Kubin leave NKVM after jury rejects Kandinsky's *Composition V*.
 December 18
 First *Blaue Reiter* exhibition opens at Thannhauser's *Moderne Galerie*, Munich.

December
Über das Geistige in der Kunst published in Munich.
 Russian version of text presented as lecture on Kandinsky's behalf by Nikolai Kulbin at *All-Russian Congress of Artists*, St. Petersburg, at end of month.
 Writes abstract stage composition *Violett* and essay "Über Bühnenkomposition" ("On Stage Composition").

1912
 February
 Second *Blaue Reiter* exhibition opens at Galerie Hans Goltz, Munich.
 Spring
Blaue Reiter almanac and second edition of *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* published in Munich.
 Late June-July
 Stays in Murnau.
 July 7-31
 Participates in *Moderne Bund* exhibition, Zürich.
 August 16-17
 Michael Sadler visits Kandinsky in Murnau.
 October 2-30
 First one-man exhibition in Berlin at Galerie Der Sturm.
 Fall
 Meets Hugo Ball in Munich.
 Third edition of *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* published.
 October 16-December 13
 Travels in Russia, stays in Odessa and Moscow. On return stops in Berlin.
 December 10
 Kurdibowsky presents Kandinsky's art theories in lecture at meeting of *Society of Painters*, St. Petersburg.

1913
 February 17-March 15
 Shows one work, *Improvisation 27 (Garden of Love)*, at Armory Show, New York, which travels to Chicago and Boston. Alfred Stieglitz purchases the painting.
 Kandinsky, Erich Heckel, Klee, Oskar Kokoschka, Kubin and Marc plan to collaborate on Bible illustrations.
 July 7-September 6
 Trip to Moscow via Berlin.
 Fall
 Kandinsky's *Klänge*, prose poems and woodcuts, and "Rückblicke", autobiographical essay published in Munich.
 September 20-December 1
 Participates in Herwarth Walden's *Erster Deutscher Herbstsalon* at Galerie Der Sturm, Berlin.

1914
 January
 Invited to lecture at opening of one-man exhibition at *Kreis für Kunst*, Cologne. Submits manuscript but does not deliver lecture.
 April 9-20
 Visits his mother in Merano, Italy.
 April 23
 English edition of *Über das Geistige in der Kunst* published in London and Boston; Russian edition published in Petrograd.
 Kandinsky's letters to Arthur Jerome Eddy published in Eddy's book *Cubists and Post Impressionists* in Chicago.
 For Edwin A. Campbell, New York, executes four mural panels, two of which are now in Guggenheim Museum Collection.
 Second edition of *Blaue Reiter* almanac published in Munich.
 August 3
 After outbreak of World War I leaves Murnau with Münter for Switzerland.
 August 6-November 16
 Stays in Mariahalde near Boldach on Lake Constance, Switzerland.
 Begins work on manuscript *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche (Point and Line to Plane)*.
 December
 Returns to Russia, travelling through Zürich and across Balkans.

1915
 January-April
 Lives in Moscow after one-week stay in Odessa.
 Executes no oil paintings this year.
 April
 Participates in *Exhibition of Painting, 1915*, Moscow; also shows in Petrograd.

May
 Spends three weeks in Odessa.
 August 19-September 7
 Visits Crimea.
 December 23, 1915-March 1916
 To Stockholm, where he meets Münter for the last time for Christmas; he remains there until March.

1916
 Kandinsky publishes "Konsten utan ämne" ("Non-representational Art") in *Konst 5* and *Om Konstnären* (*On the Artist*) as pamphlet in Stockholm.
 March 17
 Galerie Dada (formerly Galerie Corray), Zürich, opens with exhibition of works by Kandinsky and others.
 Leaves Stockholm for Moscow via Petrograd.
 June
 His poems published in *Cabaret Voltaire*, Zürich.
 Summer
 Remains in Moscow with visits to Odessa and Kiev.
 Meets Nina von Andreevsky late in year.

1917
 February 11
 Marries Nina von Andreevsky; Until December 1921 they live at 1 Dolgy Street, Moscow.
 Trip to Finland.
 April 14, 17
 Hugo Ball reads three poems by Kandinsky and lectures on the artist at Galerie Dada, Zürich.

1918
 Named member of Visual Arts Section (IZO) of Commissariat for Cultural Progress (NARKOMPROS) in Moscow.
 July
 Becomes director of theatre and film sections of Commissariat and the editor of Moscow journal *Izobrazitelnoe iskusstvo*.
 Executes designs for porcelain manufacture in Leningrad.
 October
 Becomes head of a studio at Moscow Svomas (Free State Art Studios), an innovative school where Antoine Pevsner and Kazimir Malevich are teaching.
 Helps organize twenty-two provincial museums.
 Meets Vladimir Tatlin and sees his work.
 Russian edition of "Rückblicke", "*Tekst khudozhnika*", published in Moscow.

1919
 Helps establish Institute of Artistic Culture (Inkhuk) and Museum of Pictorial Culture in Moscow.
 Kandinsky's "O stsenicheskoi kompo zitsii" (*On Stage Composition*) published in *Izobrazitelnoe iskusstvo*, "O velikoi utopii" ("On the Great Utopia") in *Khudozhestvennaia zhizn* and "*Selbstcharakteristik*" (*Self-Characterization*) in *Das Kunstblatt*.

1920
 Meets Naum Gabo and Marc Chagall.
 Named Honorary Professor at University of Moscow.
 One-man exhibition, organized by state, in Moscow.
 Participates in Société Anonyme exhibition, New York.

1921
 September
 Founds Russian Academy of Artistic Sciences (RAKhN), Moscow, and becomes its vice-president.
 Exhibits in Hannover, Cologne and, for the last time, in Moscow.
 Late December
 To Berlin where he meets Lyonel Feininger.

1922
 Paints murals for *Jurytreie* exhibition in Berlin.
 March
 Walter Gropius offers Kandinsky professorship at Weimar Bauhaus.
 June
 Moves to Weimar. First teaches life class, subsequently becomes deputy director of mural painting workshop at Bauhaus.
 September
 Vacations with Feininger at Gropius' mother's house in Timmendorfer Strand on Baltic Sea.
Kleine Welten (*Small Worlds*), portfolio of graphic works, published in Berlin.

1923
 March 23-May 4
 First one-man exhibition in New York at Société Anonyme, of which he becomes vice-president; he forms close association with Katherine Dreier.
 Fall
 Lives in Südstrasse, Weimar.

1924
 March
Blaue Vier (*Blue Four*) – Feininger, Jawlensky, Kandinsky and Klee – is formed by Galka Schever who becomes Kandinsky's representative in United States.
 Vacations in Wennigstedt on North Sea.

1925
 April 1
 Bauhaus at Weimar closes.
 June
 Moves to Dessau where Bauhaus is relocated.
 Summer
 Vacations in Binz auf Rügen.
 Otto Ralfs forms *Kandinsky Gesellschaft* of German art collectors.
 November
 Completes *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche*. "*Abstrakte Kunst*" published in *Der Cicerone*.

1926
Punkt und Linie zu Fläche published in Munich.
 Klee and Kandinsky occupy double house at Moltkestrasse 6 and 7, Dessau. Father dies in Odessa.
 May
 Kandinsky's sixtieth birthday exhibition opens in Braunschweig, travels to Berlin, Dresden, Dessau and other European cities.
 Summer
 Vacations in Bad Müritz on Baltic Sea.
 November
 Participates in *An International Exhibition of Modern Art* organized by Société Anonyme at The Brooklyn Museum.
 December
 Bauhaus periodical *Bauhaus Zeitschrift für Gestaltung* established; Kandinsky is co-editor until 1931.

1927
 Summer
 Vacations in Austria and Switzerland, visiting with Schönbergs at Wörthersee.
 Max Bill visits Bauhaus.

1928
 March
 Kandinskys become German citizens.
 April
 Designs sets for and directs Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, performed at Friedrich-Theater, Dessau.
 Kandinsky's "*Kunstpädagogik*" ("*Teaching of Art*") published in Bauhaus magazine. Meets Rudolf Bauer in Berlin.
 César Domela visits Kandinsky at Bauhaus.
 Summer
 Vacations on French Riviera.

1929
 January
 First one-man exhibition in Paris at Galerie Zak.
 Meets Hilla Rebay in Dessau.
 Marcel Duchamp visits Kandinsky in Dessau.
 Summer
 Vacations in Belgium and visits James Ensor in Ostend.

1930
 January-April
 Invited to collaborate on *Cercle et Carré* periodical; participates in group's exhibition in Paris.
 Meets Jean Hélion and San Lazzaro.
 Summer
 Visits Paris, Cattolica, Verona, Bologna, Urbino, Ravenna and Venice; is particularly impressed by mosaics in Ravenna.
 One-man exhibition in Paris, Saarbrücken, Kreteld, Düsseldorf and Kiel.

1931
 Designs ceramic tiles for Mies van der Rohe music room in architectural exhibition, Berlin.
 Offered teaching position at Art Students League, New York.
 May 26
 Visits Klee in Wörlitz.
 Summer
 Visits Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Greece and Italy on Mediterranean cruise.
 Fall
 "Reflections sur l'art abstrait" published in *Cahiers d'Art*, his first contribution to this magazine.
 His "Paul Klee" published in Bauhaus magazine on occasion of Klee's resignation from faculty.

1932
 August 22
 National Socialist Party decrees dissolution of Dessau Bauhaus, effective October 1.
 October
 Bauhaus moves to outskirts of Berlin and operates as a private institute.
 December 10
 Moves to Bahnstrasse 19, Berlin-Südende, where he lives for the next year.

1933
 July 20
 Bauhaus finally closes.
 Summer
 Vacations at Les Sablettes, near Toulon, France.
 September
 Moves to Hôtel des Saints-Pères, Paris. Visits Georges Braque's studio.
 He is guest of honour in Surrealist group exhibition at Salon des Surindépendants, Paris.
 October-November
 Two brief visits to Berlin.
 December
 Moves to sixth-floor apartment at 135 boulevard de la Seine (now Général Koenig), Neuilly-sur-Seine.

1934
 Meets Piet Mondrian and Joan Miró. Friendships with Pevsner, Arp and Alberto Magnelli.
 June
 Visits Man Ray and Constantin Brancusi. Max Ernst visits him.
 Participates in *Abstraction-Création*, Paris, and *Minotaur*, Brussels, exhibitions.

1935
 February-March
 Participates in *Thèse-Antithèse-Synthèse* exhibition, Lucerne.
 Summer
 Vacations in Italy.
 Exhibits with Max Weber and Klee at J.B. Neumann's New Art Circle New York. First exhibition with Neumann who becomes his representative in eastern United States in July.
 August
 Vacations in Normandy and on French Riviera.

1936
 Participates in *Abstract and Concrete*, Leifvare Gallery, London and *Cubism and Abstract Art*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
 Kandinsky's memoir on Marc published in *Cahiers d'Art*.
 Vacations in Italy.
 Summer
 Kandinsky's works designated *Entartete Kunst* (degenerate art) and many are confiscated by Nazis.
 Included in *Entartete Kunst* exhibition, Munich.
 Vacations in Switzerland, visits Klee in Bern. Goes to Brittany.

1938
 Kandinsky's "L'Art Concret", published in first issue of *XX^e Siècle*.
 Summer
 Vacations on French Riviera.

1939
 Kandinskys becomes French citizens.
 Discusses proposed multi-media ballet with Leonide Massine.

1940
 Summer
 Spends two months in Pyrennees after German invasion of France.
 On return to Neuilly visits with Fernand Léger in Vichy.

1941
 Declines two invitations to come to United States.

1944
 Plans a film comedy and a ballet, for which he would design sets and von Hartmann would compose music.
 Becomes ill but continues to work until June.
 November 7
 Last one-man exhibition during his lifetime opens at Galerie Esquisse, Paris.
 December 13
 Dies in Neuilly from a sclerosis in cerebellum.

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