

Initial Abstract Theories and their Relevance in Contemporary Art



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Introduction

My thesis topic is 'Initial Abstract Theories and their Relevance in Contemporary Art'. The theories I have chosen to examine are those of the Russian artist, Wassily Kandinsky. By analyzing his well-known essay 'On the Spiritual in Art,' paying particular attention to his notion of the internal values of art, I hope to discover if there is any notion of spirituality within art today.

When abstraction began to emerge in the early 1900s it came as a shock to the art world. It was initially perceived as a joke, seen as confusing and nonsensical. Questions arose at the time as to what this kind of art was trying to do, how do we decipher it and how do we critique it? How do we gain an understanding as to whether a work of abstraction is good or bad? Today, the viewer may still ask many of these questions in an attempt to appreciate and understand what is unknown to them. Throughout history we have been conditioned to appreciate and admire the artistic skills of recreating the representational. Artists chose, or were commissioned to depict everyday life such as scenery, events, portraits and still life's. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century many changes were brought forward that would forever alter the way art was created. Exciting developments in the fields of science and technology brought with them new materials, methods and challenges for the artist to deal with. The likes of the camera for instance, posed a threat to painters at the time as it could perfectly capture representation at the click of a button, thus diminishing the need to capture it through the medium of paint. The catastrophic events of World War One and the emergence of new theories of life, religion and philosophy exposed by those such as Charles Darwin, Lucien Freud and Frederich Nietzsche, caused a jilted view of reality. These were all contributing factors that led artists at the time to look away from the outside world and into a new world, perhaps a sanctuary, which was the artists' inner self. Wassily Kandinsky in 'On the Spiritual in Art', reflected this notion "When religion, science and morality are shaken, when the external supports threaten to collapse, then man's

gaze turns away from the external towards himself” (Lindsay and Vergo p145).

For me, the beauty of abstraction lies in the joy that we may never completely understand it and that it can be interpreted to a greater or lesser extent than what was originally envisaged by its creator. Reflecting the innermost minds of many artists, this beauty lies in its individualism, thus proposing the problem of a universal understanding within abstraction and indeed all art. Although the question of this universal understanding may not be necessary due to individualism, I hope that by investigating some of the initial theories within ‘On the Spiritual in Art’ that I may bring a general understanding to some of the hows and whys of this often misconstrued form of art. More importantly, my aim is to find out as to whether there is any notion of spirituality within contemporary abstract art. In order to comprehend abstract art we must first begin by looking at how it has developed. In my first chapter, through my literature review, I have located the origins of abstraction in the late 1800’s. I will show how abstraction emerged into the early twentieth century, exploding into an array of movements abundant in a wealth of new discoveries and ideas that are still admired today.

My second chapter is my methodology; here I describe my approach to my research question through various forms of information. In my third chapter I have carried out an intrinsic case study on Kandinsky’s ‘On the Spiritual in Art’, here I have attempted to define spirituality and give an understanding as to what Kandinsky believed constituted towards a spiritual art. It is nearly a century since Kandinsky wrote ‘On the Spiritual in Art’. The art critic Donald Kuspit noted how, at the turn of another new century and beyond, art faces the same problem as it did in the early twentieth century, how to express what Kandinsky called inner necessity. He states that he believes that “the spiritual crisis of the contemporary artist is greater than Kandinsky’s” (Kuspit, 2004, p.3). This is down to the fact that materialism has infested contemporary society. In my final chapter, chapter four, I will conduct a case study on two contemporary

artists who may convey spiritual notions in their work. My conclusion will sum up my findings, addressing the research question.

CHAPTER ONE

A Brief History of Abstraction

1.1 Introduction

Abstract art has persisted through the previous century and into the world of contemporary art. We can look at abstraction as present in all art due to the fact that art is the result of what the individual artist sees. As an image or scene is captured at a particular moment of time, a number of elements may be omitted or changed, thus, the created image becomes abstracted from reality (Moszynska, 2004). What we have come to understand as abstraction in art had its beginnings in the late 1800s. During this time the Impressionists had shocked the art world with their attempts to give an impression of their subject matter rather than to represent it. At this time, the then recent invention of photography imposed upon artists the challenge to convey imagery that could not be accomplished by the camera. With a strong interest in the effects of light and movement on subject matter, the Impressionists depicted everyday scenery and events. Abandoning the confines of the studio, they painted outdoors at different times of the day in order to capture natural light in its various stages. Focusing on the overall visual effect rather than details, their work was characterized by short, thick brush strokes along with the juxtaposition of pure colour that enabled them to create bold shadows in order to accentuate the true effects of light. It was the Impressionist painter Paul Cézanne who has often been credited with the title the father of modern painting. Through a desire to break reality down into basic forms and taking into consideration the instability of the artists' view point, Cézanne had begun to push painting further towards abstraction.

1.2 Fauvism, Expressionism and Cubism

The early 1900s produced a flourish of activity. Fauvism was one of the many movements that emerged during this time; its works took influence from primitive art particularly that of African sculpture. The leading artist of the group, Henri Matisse painted with a strong emphasis on colour, using it in a non-realistic method thus, relieving it from its usual associative objects in order to portray expression in a crude manner through simplified imagery. Matisse based his colours on feeling and experience as he aimed to “reach that state of condensation of sensations which constitutes a picture” (Honour and Flemming, 2005, p776).

Anxious and frustrated with the changes in the modern world, artists in Germany also sought to show expression in their work and like the Fauves, they saw primitive art as emotional and spiritual (Honour and Flemming, 2005). The first organized Expressionist group formed in Dresden under the name Die Brücke. Although their work contained representation in varying degrees it was the later Der Blaue Reiter group that “created some of the first completely abstract” works of art (Honour and Flemming, 2005, p.778).

Exploring the Fauves’ interest in primitive art and also inspired by Cézanne were the artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque who had become pioneers of the Cubist movement. Cubism concerned itself predominantly with form and restricted the use of colour by adhering to neutral tones that focused on shadow and light (Read, 2006). Cubism gave the viewer a three-dimensional effect upon a two-dimensional surface through its sharp opposing break down of forms (Stangos, 2006). Developing further into what was termed Synthetic Cubism; it implemented the use of collage that overlapped forming different textures. Here, the subject matter remained important for the artist, becoming more about “exploring the tension between apparent abstraction and the suggested representation” (Moszynska, 2004, p.13). The colour aspect of cubism was developed by what the writer Apollinaire termed Orphism,

in which structures were created by the artists themselves and not drawn from the visuals around them, this, according to Apollinaire was 'pure art' (Moszynska, 2004, p.14). Artists such as Robert Delaunay studied the scientific colour theories of Michel-Eugène Chevreul and with this knowledge they created a new, abstract imagery that depicted the illusory effects of contrasting colours, leading the artists' interests towards the optical effects of movement (Moszynska, 2004).

1.3 Futurism, Suprematism and De Stijl

The Italian Futurists further embraced the notion of optics and movement. Their desire was to rid art of old traditions and icons of religious influence and to portray the new dynamism that came about due to advances in machinery at the time. The use of collage and materials by the Cubists freed up the use of painting, which bled into the beginnings of abstract sculpture. The Futurists challenged sculpture by attempting to evoke movement within the object. In 1912, Umberto Boccioni reflected this in his technical manifesto of futurist sculpture:

“What the Futurist sculptor creates is to a certain extent an ideal bridge which joins the exterior plastic infinite to the interior plastic infinite. It is why objects never end; they intersect with innumerable combinations of attraction and innumerable shocks of aversion.”

(<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/60879150/Technical-Manifesto-of-Futurist-Sculpture>)

Suprematism was a contemporaneous movement founded in Russia by Kasimir Malevich who aimed to “set up a genuine world order, a new philosophy in life” (Chipp, 1968, p.346). Again, rejecting religion and the illustration of history, Malevich declared that what we see in the objective world is no longer important, it is the expression of feeling that we must look at (Chipp, 1968, p.341). Suprematist art appeared very minimal, consisting of simple, geometric forms composed to give a sense of depth and dynamism. Believing that art had been burdened by the accumulation of “things”, Suprematism was the re-creation of art into its pure state (Chipp, 1968,p.342). Malevich conveyed this when he painted his black square in 1913, claiming that the square was the feeling and the

white space beyond it was “the void beyond that feeling” (Chipp,1968, p.343). The painting contained no recognizable imagery only “the spirit of non objective sensation” (Chipp, 1968, pp.342-343).

Sharing similar views of a utopian vision was the Dutch De Stijl group that formed in 1917. Like Malevich, they sought to rid art of clutter and reduced things to their basic form and colour. Their essentials became characterized by the use of horizontal and vertical lines accompanied by blocks of primary colour. For its forerunners, Theo Van Doseberg and Piet Mondrian, De Stijl, which was also known as neoplasticism, “was a model for the perfect harmony they believed possible for both man as an individual and society as a whole” (Chipp, 1968, p.314). This movement was not confined to the art of painting and sculpture, it also was influential in design and architecture (Stangos, 2006, pp.144-145).

1.4 Dada and Surrealism

When in 1916, the Cabaret Voltaire was founded by Hugo Ball in Zurich, no one was aware of the impact it would have on art. It was here that the Dada movement was born, its name reflecting the “child’s first sound expressing the primitiveness, the beginning at zero, the new in art” (Stangos, 2006, p.110). Dada became an anarchic movement. Not adhering to any style, it relied on the disorderly political situation that emerged during the First World War. Hugo Ball “saw Dada as a requiem for this society and also the primitive beginnings of a new one” (Stangos, 2006, p.111-112). The Dadaists style of work became very nonsensical and destructive provocation became essential to them. Artists moved away from traditional art mediums using performance, words, photomontage, idea and chance. The most important aspect that arose from this movement was the idea of “the non-superiority of the artist as creator” (Stangos, 2006, p.119). This concept was largely explored by Marcel Duchamp who assigned “aesthetic value to purely functional objects by a simple mental choice rather through any exercise of manual skill” (Stangos, 2006, p.248), thus, in doing so, brought with him the

notion of the ready-made, which deemed the artists hand unnecessary. The Dada movement later moved to Germany where it remained strong, however when it reached New York it had exhausted itself.

Surrealism grew out of the destruction of Dada. Max Ernst and Andre Breton took the Dadaist notion of chance and pushed it more towards automatism. They defined their actions as “pure psychic automatism through which it is intended to express either verbally or in writing, the true functioning of thought” (Stangos, 2006, p.124). Although largely figurative, their work juxtaposed what was real with the impossible of the imagined of the unconscious mind. Their use of automatism played a major part in Abstract Expressionism.

1.5 Abstract Expressionism

By the late 1930s, abstraction began to be accepted, however it was the later movement of the American Abstract Expressionists that brought abstraction to a more worldwide acceptance. Influenced by the Surrealist notion of depicting the unconscious mind, Abstract Expressionism emerged in an existentialist manner during the 1940s. Prior to this, American art concerned itself with Social Realism and Abstraction was a relatively new and little explored area of creation (Moszynska, 2004). The artists forming this group were categorized as either action painters or colour field painters, whose works contrasted greatly in terms of appearance. Probably the most famous of the action painters was Jackson Pollock. Known for his spontaneous action of dripping paint onto large sheets of unstretched canvas whilst it was placed on the floor, his method of work broke many more of the traditional methods of painting than that of previous movements. The act of painting became the subject matter as well as being of primary importance to the artist. The critic Harold Rosenberg stated that, “what was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event” (Honour and Flemming, 2005, p.834). This ‘event’ became the enactment of the artists’ emotions rather than the representation of them. With the tragedies of The Second World War and the preceding catastrophes of Hiroshima and The Cold War, artists

examined the unease and horror of these disasters in their work. The artists, Mark Rothko, Clyfford Still and Barnett Newman were some of the forerunners of colour field painting. Preferring “the simple expression of the complex thought” (Honour and Flemming, 2005, p.837), they also painted large-scale canvasses, however their work was dominated by a more intense use of colour and flat form. In this flat form they sought to destroy any illusion, thus revealing only truth. Barnett Newman acknowledges how they also sought this truth in primitive art:

“The primitive artist, like the new American painter, used an abstract shape, directed by a ‘ritualistic will’ towards ‘metaphysical understanding’. Consequently, the abstract shape was a ‘living thing’, a vehicle for abstract thought complexes, a carrier of the awesome feelings he felt before the unknowable.”

(Moszynska, 2004, p.164)

1.6 Pop Art, Op Art, Minimalism and Conceptualism

Subsequent to the Abstract Expressionist movement, abstract art seemed to separate from the human psyche and became “dominated by a cooler, more impersonal attitude” (Moszynska, 2004, p.173). During the late 1950s, abstraction again became inspired by developments in science and technology becoming “constructed rather than created” (Moszynska, 2004, p.174). It took on an outward view of things, striving to achieve “beauty and absolute truth” (Moszynska, 2004, p.174). These developments brought with them the kinetic sculpture that overpowered the use of painting, rendering it irrelevant at this time. Although abstraction seemed to fade into the background in the late 50s and early 60s due to the success of Pop Art, it still persisted with the Op Art movement which, like the Futurists, desired to express the illusion of movement in their work. Informed by Joseph Albers, a previous lecturer and artist at the German Bauhaus School who taught extensively on the use of colour, and also thought to have been influenced by the illusive state of mind through the 1960s drug culture, Op Art incorporated “syncopated rhythms and geometric patterns” (Stangos, 2006, p.240) along with a deceptive use of colour to provide an art that gave the viewer

strong visual sensations. This was achieved by the British artist Bridget Reilly, who expressed how, in her mathematical approach to her work, she wanted to provide a space where “the minds eye, or rather, the eyes mind could move about” (Heartney, 2008, p.80).

Coinciding with Op Art and deriving from abstract expressionism, the Washington colour painters produced work known as Post-painterly Abstraction. Artists such as Kenneth Noland and Morris Louis seemed to move towards “a physical openness of design” and “linear quality” (Moszynska, 2004, p.197). Through the experimental use of raw canvas and the newly developed acrylic paint, they explored the aesthetics of pure colour “without any subjective or symbolic reference” (Moszynska, 2004, p.197). This resulted in a body of work that became quite minimal in appearance, thus, pushing forth to the 1970s where minimalism flourished. This movement dealt with three-dimensional objects and their relation to the surrounding space in which they occupied. Through the use of industrial materials such as wood, plexiglass and concrete, artists such as Donald Judd and Carl Andre sought to “deflect art towards an alternative course of more precise, measured and systematic methodologies” (Stangos, 2006, p.245). One may reflect on Duchamp’s earlier readymade when the artist Robert Morris implied the importance of “the detachment of arts energy from the craft of tedious production” (Stangos, 2006, p.248). The use of actual space and the placement of what Judd termed ‘specific objects’ within, manipulated the viewers’ approach and perception of the objects. Artists were not concerned with the immediate perception of the object, but more with a gradual one. As the viewer made their way around the objects, it became obvious that the simplicity of these objects did not measure up with the simplicity of the experience (Moszynska, 2004).

The preceding post-minimalist trend went on to free the use of the industrial materials’ sharp-edged appearance to a more organic form. Relieving art of its self-expression, these progressions led further to that of Conceptual art, transforming the notion of ‘art for arts sake’ and enforcing the use of ‘art as idea’ (Stangos, 2006, p.257). Availing of

newspapers, books and advertisements, the use of the word and language became the primary form of this movement; however it also encompassed performance art, body art, photography and narrative resulting in a largely ephemeral body of work that conveyed the ideas existing in the mind of the artist (Stangos, 2006). Its actions reflect that of the earlier Dada movement and of Marcel Duchamp's declaration that the idea and intentions of the artist were more important than what he or she created. Through his 'ready-mades,' Duchamp had suggested that an activity or object could be art (Stangos, 2006, p.257). Concurring with this, Donald Judd proclaimed that 'if the artist says it is art, then it is art' (Stangos, 2006, p.261).

1.7 Conclusion

At present, although this is difficult to define, art has been influenced by postmodern perspectives. Abstract art today brings with it a form of hybrid imagery, representation and abstraction, combined along with the juxtaposition of materials. Postmodernism "has undermined any remaining belief in purity or accessibility to the spiritual through abstraction" (Heartney, 2008, p.67). If this is true, then what is the impetus behind today's abstraction? To address this question, I will focus on Wassily Kandinsky's essay, 'On the Spiritual in Art'. By analyzing this essay, I hope to discover whether Kandinsky's theories of Spirituality can be located within contemporary art.

Chapter Two

Methodology

My thesis topic is 'Initial Abstract Theories and their Relevance in Contemporary Art'. Through my research, I wish to find out if there is any notion of spirituality within contemporary abstract art. In order to gain an understanding of initial theories and how they may be relevant to contemporary abstract art, I have chosen to focus my research of art in the early twentieth century, to the theme of spirituality in abstraction through the means of painting:

"Painting is an art, and art in general is not a mere purposeless creating of things that dissipate themselves in a void, but a power that has a purpose and must serve the development and refinement of the human soul."

(Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.212)

My investigations into contemporary art however, will not be confined to the medium of painting as there have been many developments in technology and mediums throughout the last century, and today the artist is not afraid to use any means in their art which would best suit its expression. Kandinsky mentioned in 'On the Spiritual in Art' that through abstraction "the difficulty of art will increase but the wealth of forms available as means of expression will qualitatively and quantitatively increase with it" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.170). Chapter one will give a brief chronological history of how abstraction developed throughout the twentieth century. Certain movements will be omitted as it is a vast area to analyze, however, the focus will remain on certain movements in the previous century that will be referred to further on in this thesis. The objective of this chapter will be to give the reader a brief understanding of how abstraction developed during the twentieth century. This information has been compiled by qualitative research through textual analysis.

In chapter Three, I will analyze my research thematically through the theme of spirituality in art. Firstly I will define spirituality in order to label the spiritual approach to which Kandinsky had towards art. This will

be followed by an intrinsic case study on Wassily Kandinsky's essay 'On the Spiritual in Art'. I have chosen this essay by Kandinsky as I strongly relate to his ideas within my own art practice. In order to triangulate the research findings, Kandinsky's ideas will be compared and contrasted with other artists of the twentieth century. These will include artists such as, Cézanne, Matisse and Picasso. I will also bring Abstract Expressionist artists, Mark Rothko and Jackson Pollock into these comparisons. I have done this to create a mid-point platform from early twentieth century theories of the spiritual in art to contemporary ideas and practices. Peter Selz compares Kandinsky to the philosopher Henri Bergson, who according to Selz believed "intellect is man's tool for rational action" (Selz, 1957, p.128). He proceeds to quote Bergson:

"art, whether it be painting or sculpture, poetry or music, has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventional and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself." (Selz, 1957, p.128)

I have chosen to compare and contrast the works of my chosen artists theoretically. Kandinsky mentions a wealth of ideas in his essay 'On the Spiritual in Art'. Following his theme of spirituality, I will discuss examples of external and internal means of creating art through the use of colour and form in painting. I will not discuss Kandinsky's descriptions of the physical and psychological effects of colour, or the effects of colour on form, as his theories were based on his own experiences and I wish to approach things in a more universal manner. I have also not included Kandinsky's ideas of the relationship between music and painting as I cannot accommodate all of this information within this thesis alone.

I will approach chapter four with my knowledge of how Kandinsky believed that there is a spiritual in art. I will address the concluding statement in chapter one. This being a discussion of whether postmodernism has diminished any notion of spirituality in contemporary art. I will introduce my chapter with a brief description of postmodernism. From there, I will carry out case studies on two contemporary artists who

have spiritual notions within their work. These artists are James Turrell and Ann Hamilton. I chose these artists because, on researching their work, I gained an understanding of how, through their work, they could invoke notions of spirituality. It was important to me that I could access this through researching their work. I will briefly describe the way in which each artist approaches his or her work. The focus will then turn to a single work by each artist and investigate how they think about their work and what they wish to express within it. In doing so I will note any spiritual notions in their works that may be linked back to Kandinsky's belief of a spiritual in art. Finally, I will conclude with a summary of my findings, addressing the research question. I will also address any interesting notions that may have arisen within my research that could be further investigated at a later stage.

Chapter Three

The Theories of Wassily Kandinsky

“On the Spiritual in Art”

3.1 Introduction

Wassily Kandinsky was a major figure regarding the founding of abstract art. The art historian Herbert Read described him as, “more than a painter-he was a philosopher and a visionary” (Read, 2006, p.165).

3.2 Defining the Spiritual

To gain an understanding of the theme of spirituality within abstract art, we must first ask two questions:

- 1) What is spirituality?
- 2) What was Kandinsky’s approach to spirituality?

Spiritually can be defined as:

- 1) Relating to the spirit or soul and not to physical nature or matter, intangible.
- 2) Of, relating to or characteristic of sacred things, the church, religion. (“Spirituality” Collins English Dictionary, 3rd ed. 1991)

Furthermore, in his article “Concerning the Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art and Science”, Mike King acknowledges how it can be difficult to define spirituality as it “involves definitions that can be universally understood” (King, 1998). However he proceeds in his article by narrowing the notion of spirituality down to three groups. These, he states are:

“The religious spirituality such as of Christianity, Islam or Buddhism, the occult, an esoteric preoccupation with such matters as the paranormal, reincarnation, clairvoyance and disembodied beings and finally the transcendent as dealing with a shift in personal identity from the physical and temporal to the infinite and eternal, with mystical union or “nirvana”.

(King, 1998, p.22)

In discussing spirituality, Kandinsky speaks of the Theosophical Society that was founded in New York by Mme. H.P Blavatsky in 1875. The objective of this society “is to demonstrate that the oneness of all life is a fact in nature, to form a nucleus of a universal brotherhood and to help promote better understanding among all people and recognition of the essential unity of life” (www.theosociety.org). The study of religion, philosophy and science of the past and present is also a key to the practice of Theosophy (www.theosociety.org). According to Kandinsky, “the spiritual life, to which art also belongs...is a complex but definite movement forward and upward...this progress is the progress of knowledge” (Lindsay and Vergo 1994, p.160). These progressions are made, having gone through “a period of materialistic trials...the soul emerges, refined by struggle and suffering” (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.128). Thus, Kandinsky’s approach to spirituality can be defined, according to Mike King, as falling into the ““occult”” and ““transcendental”” categories. He states that Theosophy “in establishing a “brotherhood” is capable of understanding and disseminating occult knowledge” however, it also consists of “transcendental elements” (King, 1998, p.22).

3.3 External Necessity

Through the use of many analogies, Kandinsky noted how the creation and perception of art can be put into two categories, these, he described as internal necessity and external necessity. In order to define spiritual life further, Kandinsky states that it can be “accurately represented by a diagram of a large acute triangle, divided into unequal parts, with the most acute and smallest division at the top” (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.133), the larger sections at the bottom. In short, those at the bottom of the triangle, due to an over awareness of the material or external, have not attained spirituality as they have not yet gained knowledge and opened their eyes and ears to the voice of the soul. However, those at the top have attained this spirituality through experiences and struggles through means that are internal.

During the time in which Kandinsky wrote 'On the Spiritual in Art' (1911), he noted how today's spectator "seeks in a work of art is either the pure imitation of nature, serving practical ends, or an imitation of nature that comprises a specific interpretation" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.129). This condition of art he called, "l'art pour l'art". Explaining that "this annihilation of those inner sounds that are the life of the colours, this dissipation of the artists powers, is ""art for arts sake."" This is, according to Kandinsky, an external view of art that he believed is not valid for the future, but only for the past (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994). The phrase 'art for art's sake' was championed by critic Clement Greenberg who, in his essay 'Modern and Postmodern', defined it as "aspiration to quality, to aesthetic value and excellence for its own sake, as end in itself" (www.sharecom.ca/greenberg/postmodernism.html). Greenberg is well known for his associations with the American Abstract Expressionist movement, however he also made many criticisms on the work of Kandinsky. According to Kenneth Berry in his essay 'Personal View on Greenberg and Kandinsky' Greenberg seemed "unable to see anything in Kandinsky's paintings other than ""dry, careful, spic-and-span diagrams."" (Berry, 1995, p.95). He continues, stating that Greenberg "is unable to recognize the inner meaning, spiritual significance, or coherence of these images of art" (Berry, 1995, p.96). It is evident here that both Greenberg and Kandinsky have very different opinions on the purpose of art, the latter believing it "to have no purpose beyond the aesthetic" (Berry, 1995, p.96). While in contrast, Kandinsky believed that art must "purposefully touch the human soul." (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.160). This he defined as inner Necessity.

3.4 Internal Necessity

Writing 'On the Spiritual in Art', Kandinsky states, internal necessity arises from three mystical sources, these being:

- 1) "Every artist, as creator, must express what is peculiar to himself.
- 2) Every artist, as child of his time, must express what is peculiar to his own time.
- 3) Every artist, as servant to art, must express what is peculiar to art in general" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.173).

Putting this internal necessity into practice, Kandinsky continues by stating that colour in combination with drawing "will give rise to that great pictorial counterpoint, by means of which painting also will attain the level of composition and thus place itself in the service of the divine, as a totally pure art" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.173). This notion of pure art may have been similar to that of Guillaume Apollinaire's view on Orphism as mentioned earlier in chapter one. Continuing further, Kandinsky acknowledges Cézanne's ability to access the internal in the world of the external, "Cézanne, the seeker after new laws of form...He can raise "still life" to a level where externally "dead" objects come internally alive, he expresses them in terms of colour, thus creating an inner painterly note" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.151). See fig.1. Furthermore, Herbert Read notes how Cézanne "felt he could not "realize" his vision without an organization of lines and colours that gave stability and clarity to the image transferred to the canvas" (Read, 2006, p.16). Similarly, Pavel Machotka acknowledges in his paper, 'Cézanne's Landscapes and the Function of Vision,' that Cézanne had enabled artists of the twentieth century "to alter visually perceived reality in the service of a coherent canvas or an abstract order" (Machotka, 1983, p.177). Kandinsky was aware that, in his work, Cézanne implemented the juxtaposition of linear and colouristic forms in order to create harmony. It is this principal of contrast, according to Kandinsky, that "is the most important principal in art at all times" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.194).

3.5 Kandinsky on Form

Throughout 'On the Spiritual in Art', Kandinsky states his belief that there is a necessary relationship between colour and form. Peter Selz acknowledged this in his paper on Kandinsky's aesthetic theories by discussing how Kandinsky believed that colour and form were the two basic means through which the artist could achieve a spiritual harmony in his composition (Selz, 1957). Kandinsky speaks of form, as being, "in the narrower sense, nothing more than the delimitation of one surface from another" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.165). This he states is its "external description, however everything external, necessarily conceals within itself the internal. Form, therefore is the expression of inner content, its internal description" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.165). He proceeds to state that the harmony of forms is down to internal necessity. On seeking the internal, in the world of the external, Kandinsky mentions Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse as artists who strive to achieve this, Picasso, through the use of form and Matisse, through the use of colour. According to Kandinsky, Picasso is "led always by the need for self expression" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.152). Picasso himself stated there was no intention of inventing Cubism, "we simply wanted to express what was in us" (Chipp, 1968, p.271). Kandinsky continues to note that through his work, Picasso:

"seeks to achieve the constructive element through numerical relations. In his latest works (1911), he arrives at the destruction of the material object by a logical path, not by dissolving it, but by breaking it up into its individual parts and scattering these parts in a constructive fashion across the canvas."
(Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.152)

I have already described the development of Cubism in chapter one, also see fig 2. At a later stage in 'On the Spiritual in Art', Kandinsky acknowledges how Cubism "shows how natural forms must be forcibly subordinated to constructive ends" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.209). This construction, he notes, contains the spirit of its time through its harmony. Picasso seemed to share Kandinsky's view of the object having an inner value. He spoke of how he believed that there is no abstract art,

as there is always something used as a starting point and that afterwards, all traces of reality can be removed leaving the idea of the object behind, "It is what started the artist off, excited his ideas and stirred up his emotions. Ideas and emotions will in the end be prisoners in his work...they form an integral part of it" (Chipp, 1968, p.270).

In an interview with William Wright in 1950, the American abstract expressionist painter, Jackson Pollock, gave his opinion that Modern art was nothing but "the expression of contemporary aims of the age that we are living in," (Stiles and Selz, 1996, p.22), he continued, stating "that new needs new techniques...each age finds its own technique" (Stiles and Selz, 1996, p.22). Pollock was famous for breaking conventional art practices by placing his canvas on the floor and using sticks to drip the paint onto its surface. This reflects Kandinsky's idea that the artist must not adhere to the rules of art and that the artist must be free to express themselves by whatever means possible (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, pp.175-176). Pollock also expresses, as he stated, what is peculiar to his time. This we must remember is, according to Kandinsky, a factor contributing to internal necessity. It is evident from Pollock's work that he frees himself completely from any recognizable form, see fig 3. According to Edward Lavine, in his essay 'Mythical Overtones in the work of Jackson Pollock', painting, for Pollock:

"becomes an experience in which the work has demands of its own which exist independently from the personality of the painter. These demands often seem to require the giving up of personal choice in favour of the inner necessity of the work itself. Pollock must place himself in "pure harmony" with his work."
(Lavine and Pollock, 1967, p.366)

Lavine continues his paper by placing Pollock in the realm of "primitive mentality and mythic thinking" (Lavine and Pollock, 1967, p.367). Pollock himself stated that his actions in his paintings are largely unconscious and he feels the need to be in his paintings while creating them (Lavine and Pollock, 1967). Levine interprets Pollock's statement as a primitive "sense of his being "possessed" and his painting becoming a kind of psychic being which can communicate its energy, places the artist in the role of a medium or shaman who lets the spirit come through him" (Lavine

and Pollock, 1967, pp.367-368). It is evident from this, that there is a spiritual affinity within Pollock's work.

3.6 Kandinsky on Colour

In the opening paragraph of section B, Painting, in 'On the Spiritual in Art', Kandinsky stresses his belief that colours have a physical and psychological effect on people, however he admits that these effects, which he continues to describe in detail, are down to his own empirical feeling, this is noted by Lindsay and Vergo in their introduction to the essay. According to Kandinsky, these experiences are more profound in those who are in tune with their spirituality and may be found at the top of the spiritual triangle, which I mentioned briefly at an earlier stage in this chapter. In his essay 'The Aesthetic Theories of Wassily Kandinsky,' Peter Selz notes how "Matisse's free use of colour for its own sake were manifestations of the turning point toward a spiritual in art" (Slez, 1957, p.133). Kandinsky stated that through his pictures, Matisse sought to reproduce the divine through the means that belong to painting, these being colour and form (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994). In his essay, 'Notes of a Painter', Matisse shares similar views to Kandinsky, in that he believes "harmonies and dissonances of colour can produce very pleasurable effects" (Chipp, 1968, p.132). He stressed his belief that the main purpose of colour was to serve pure expression (Chipp, 1968), see fig.4. This form of expression and pleasurable effects were, as Kandinsky described, inner necessity (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994). Matisse states how he "discovers the quality of colours in a purely instinctive way, he was not prompted by any scientific theories on colour, "To paint an autumn landscape I will not try to remember what colours suit this season, I will be inspired only by the sensation that the season gives me" (Chipp, 1968, p.134). Kandinsky also refrained from any scientific theory of colour, preferring to acknowledge Goethe's colour theories as they focused on "the moral effects of colour" rather than that of the scientific (Moszynska, 2004, p.27).

Another American abstract expressionist painter, Mark Rothko, painted primarily with the use of colour, see fig.5, which Peter Fuller describes as “highly nuanced fields of colour often with a pronounced horizontal organization” (Fuller, 1987, p.545) with which Rothko sought “to create the impression that the painting itself was the source from which light, or sometimes living darkness emanated” (Fuller, 1987, p.545). Rothko’s paintings are almost void of form; many have thought his paintings depict nothing (Kosoi, 2005, p.21). Certainly, it was Rothko’s intention to convey a bleak emptiness or feeling of doom, however as he himself stated:

“I am not interested “in the relationship of colour or form or anything else,” I wish to express basic human emotions, the people who have wept before my paintings were having the same sort of religious experience I had when I painted them, if someone were to be moved only by the colour relationships than they missed the point.” (Fuller, 1987,p.546)

Although Rothko may not have had the same feelings towards colour as Kandinsky did, it is evident that he used colour as a means to connect with the internal, this being to express basic human emotion, colours, were his performers (Schama, 2006). Rothko was far removed from external influences, he believed that art had the power to change the world and this is what he wanted to achieve when he was commissioned to create work for The Four Seasons Restaurant in Manhattan. He saw it as a challenge, that of fancy cuisine versus art, his art. By replacing the restaurant walls with his paintings he hoped that something profound would happen to the vain and shallow diners as they ate their meal (Schama, 2006). However, Rothko was never to accomplish this as, after dining at the restaurant himself he was left heart-sunken he stated, “anybody who will eat that kind of food, for that kind of money will never look at a painting of mine” (Schama, 2006).

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has noted the external and internal values of art at the beginning of the twentieth century and how they were still evident during the middle of the twentieth century. Where has this brought the art of today's society? In the next chapter, I will investigate whether external values for the creation of art have diminished any notion of the spiritual, the internal values which touch our souls.

Chapter Four

Contemporary Art and the search for the Spiritual

4.1 Introduction

On concluding chapter one, I considered the statement posed by Eleanor Heartney in her book 'Art and Today' as to whether Postmodernism "has undermined any remaining belief in purity or accessibility to the spiritual through abstraction" (Heartney, 2008, p.67). To answer this, we must ask what Postmodernism is and what does it do, are there any artists working in the postmodern era that convey such notions through their work?

4.2 Postmodernism

Postmodernism is not easy to define, it is very vast and many critics have had their input as to what it means, such as Lyotard, Baudrillard, Barthes, Derrida and Foucault. Deborah Haynes noted how "modern paradigms have progressively succumbed to postmodernist skepticism" since 1950 (Haynes, 1995, p.45). Postmodernism set out to question Modernism's grand narrative and break it down into micro narratives, in doing so it deconstructs reality:

"so that truth is "really" a kind of fiction, reading is always a form of misreading, and, most fundamentally, understanding is always a form of misunderstanding, because it is never direct, is always a form of partial interpretation, and often uses metaphor when it thinks it is being literal."

(Butler, 2002, p.21)

In asking if postmodernism has undermined any remaining spiritual notions within abstract art, it is important to note another perspective, which Deborah Haynes states is best articulated by Cornel West (Haynes, 1995, p.45). According to Haynes, West "insists that one must be clear about whether the term "postmodernism" is used to refer to popular or academic culture, or in a broader cultural sense" (Haynes, 1995, p.45). Haynes continues, stating West indicates that the actual factors contributing to postmodern culture can be found "in the impact of market forces on everyday life" which are:

“the polarization of contemporary culture around issues of ethnicity, race, gender and other differences in identity; and in the general bureaucratization of ideas. The breakdown of categories of high and low art, the commodification of culture, and commercialization of the arts.”

(Haynes, 1995, p.46)

So where does this leave art today? In his article ‘Revising the Spiritual in Art,’ Donald Kuspit states that there “is little that would awaken the capacity for experiencing the spiritual” within contemporary materialistic art (Kuspit, 2004, p.2). He believes that an attempt to find any spiritual significance in contemporary art would be like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Indeed, this seems to prove an uneasy task due to the dominating notion of the commercialization of art. However, I will proceed by discussing two artists who appear to have spiritual intention behind their work, these being the American artists James Turrell and Ann Hamilton.

4.3 Spirituality within Contemporary Art, the Work of James Turrell

The American artist James Turrell’s primary mediums are that of light and space. Through a combination of the two, Turrell intends to create art that “speaks to the viewers without words, impacting the eye, body and mind, and mind with the force of a spiritual awakening” (<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/turrell>). Informed by the scientific investigation of perception and psychology, Turrell’s earlier abstract works, involving the installation of light in specific spaces, “engage viewers visions of light, matter, colour, shape and explores the role of the spectator in the gallery installation/exhibition space” (Gaskins, 2010). Deborah Wye describes such works as conjuring up “human longing, extending from the mystical to the intellectual, from the poetic to the existential” thus bringing the viewer into what she calls a “meditative realm” (Wye, 1990, p.6).

In the early 1970s, Turrell embarked on a large-scale project that took him over twenty years to complete. This project was based at the Roden Crater near Flagstaff in Arizona. His aim was to transform the crater into a viewing space for people so that they may engage with

another world, this being the celestial world above. Turrell created a number of spaces at the crater site, positioned so that they are illuminated by numerous celestial events in the sky, see fig.6, he described it as “a work of art empowered by the movements of the sun, moon and starlight” (Saad-Cook, 1988, p.130). The artist stated that the effects of the light caused by these events “will create certain “atmospheres” in the spaces inside the crater” which would constantly change through the passing of time (Saad-Cook, 1988, p.129). This would enable the viewer to experience “visual and sonic experiences intending to accentuate and focus perception of light and natural phenomena” (Malina, 1991, p.627). Through this Turrell intended “to direct the viewer inwards rather than to present a spectacle,” he continued to explain that, “he wishes to take you and let you see” (Malina, 1991, p.627). Through the use of light in this project, the artist acknowledges the involvement of “sensory synesthesia”. In an interview with art21, Turrell stated how “the perception through vision actually creates the sensation in taste” (<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/turrell/clip1.html>). He describes how one may see, or handle a lemon, and suddenly feel the taste of it in their mouths. He proceeds to describe how the same can be true of sound in influencing the perception of colour. I noted earlier, in chapter three, how Kandinsky believed in the physical and psychological effects of colour. Although I stated my reason for not going into detail on these effects, an in depth discussion of them can be found on pages 158-159 and pages 177-189 in ‘On the Spiritual in Art’ (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994). Turrell’s descriptions of these effects closely mirror Kandinsky’s, thus Kandinsky would have described Turrell as someone who is in tune with his spirituality.

Donald Kuspit noted how Kandinsky believed that abstract painting induced a spiritual experience as on “entering an abstract painting one turned away from “the external aspect of phenomena”” (Kuspit, 2004, p.1). Although Turrell does not use the medium of paint, his project at the Roden Crater effectively brings the cosmos down into the space where

we live, so in a sense it could be seen as an external aspect of phenomena, one outside of our planet. More importantly, it also brings us away from another external aspect of phenomena, that of the materialistic society of today's life, which Kuspit states has "become a plague" (Kuspit, 2004, p. 2). In this way, Turrell's work can evoke inner necessity within the viewer as he aims to access a "wordless thinking that is a pure, primal sort of thinking" (Saad-Cook, 1988, p.130). This is attained through the viewer's own individual perception allowing them to be "co-creator of what they are seeing" (<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/turrell/clip1.html>). By removing the viewer from material, contemporary life, Turrell shows us a sense of reality that is real, rather than the postmodern idea of deconstructed reality. He achieves this in an abstract way, although the Roden Crater itself is representational, the events that occur within the crater are arguably abstract as they are taken out of the context of daily society, thus providing a new and individual experience for the spectator.

4.4 Spirituality within Contemporary Art, the Work of Ann Hamilton

Ann Hamilton's work is influenced by the experiences that she has on entering the architectural spaces within which she works. Her work is installation based and often features the use of specific buildings, fabric material, language and words. An avid reader, much of her work is also influenced by writers and poets such as Ann Carson and Susan Stewart (Coffey, 2001). Hamilton has described how she feels a strong connection "between the thread of sewing and the line of that thread and the thread of writing" (<http://video.pbs.org/video/1237561674>). This brings to mind Kandinsky's thoughts:

"consciously or unconsciously, artists turn gradually toward an emphasis on their materials, examining them spiritually, weighing in the balance the inner worth of those elements out of which their art is best suited to create."

(Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.153)

In recent years, the artist's work has moved away from the use of material and has concerned itself with "haunting presences that are barely detectable, and yet somehow persistent" (Coffey, 2001, p.11).

In 1999, Hamilton was chosen to represent America at the Venice Biennale. The work, a site-specific installation titled 'Myein', was described by Coffey as "a millennial mediation on the national traumas that continue to haunt the civic spaces of public memory" (Coffey, 2001, p.11). Taking the word 'Myein', Hamilton describes its meaning being "to close ones eyes or lips" (Coffey, 2001, p.14). In this piece, Hamilton was addressing the idea of "things that are unspoken in our history" (Coffey, 2001, p.14) and how, through her work, she could explore these absences as they seem to be consistently present but somehow invisible at the same time (Coffey, 2001). In dealing with this conception, she reflects Kandinsky's statement that "concealment wields enormous power in art. The combination of the revealed and the hidden will constitute a further possibility of creating new motifs for formal composition" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994, p.170). Although Kandinsky ascribes this concealment to formal composition in painting, he also notes that a number of modes of expression will arise through abstraction, therefore Hamilton's work, through the form of installation, can describe this notion. The installation was situated at The American Pavilion; this building became both the subject and the object of the work incorporating both the spaces inside and outside of it. Hamilton has expressed that through her installation work she provides:

"material spaces that enfold you in an experience that's about being present in a poetic relationship between you and how you occupy the space and the relationship that you take to the things that surround you."

(<http://www.charlieroose.com/view/interview/4064>)

Describing the building as Jeffersonian and neoclassical, Hamilton noted how this had become an emblem of an American democratic ideal. Acknowledging that America is "a democratic country that was founded and based on slavery" (<http://video.pbs.org/video/1237561674>), the artist questioned how she could most suitably address this notion. This being a sensitive topic, Hamilton felt that it required a tactile approach, and thought that the best way to convey this through her work was in an abstract manner (<http://video.pbs.org/video/1237561674>).

Hamilton began her work on this project by emptying the building and opening up the skylights so that light could enter the building for the first time in nearly fifteen years. Minor architectural alterations were made so that the work could be embedded within the structure of the building. On entering the building the spectator encounters the quiet, whispering sound of the artist's voice reading Lincoln's second inaugural address, which had been translated into international phonetic code. This form of language was accompanied by text from Charles Reznikoff's testimony, *The United States 1885-1915*, which had also been translated, but in a different manner, this being the physical text of Braille. The Braille text was put on to the walls in each of the four rooms within the building (Coffey, 2001, p.12). Hamilton describes these references of language as being "veiled in such a way that language doesn't become the vehicle through which you arrive at a certain set of information, and so you have to sense your way through this" (Coffey, 2001, p.12). This, she stated, conveys her interests in the hierarchies of people's habits of perception in that "if something can be contained in writing the discursive structure of words, that we trust it will have more legitimacy than other kinds of information or ways of knowing" (Coffey, 2001, p.15). Hamilton wished to change this so that "the felt quality of words is equal but not dominant over other kinds of sensory perceptions" (Coffey, 2001, p.15). We can see here, how Hamilton accesses the viewer's senses through her work. Aware of how we perceive information through sound, sight and touch she attempts to attune the viewer through all of these sensory experiences. In doing so, Hamilton is providing the spectator with an awareness of their senses thus, accessing their souls. Through this, she incites Kandinsky's key notion, that of inner necessity.

A haunting sense of life within the interior of the building is attained through the use of coloured powder. Continually cascading, drifting and falling from the ceiling, catching and rolling over the Braille text, it eventually falls to the ground. According to Coffey, Hamilton achieves a sort of notion that the walls are bleeding (Coffey, 2001), a reflection of the haunting history that she chose to address, see fig.7.

Choosing what she describes as a “shocking pink toxic colour” (Coffey, 2001, p.14), Hamilton stated that she wanted it to be experienced as “pure chroma” (Coffey, 2001, p.14). Her description of colour shows how she has used it as a way to evoke experience and emotion within the spectator while viewing the piece. We may note here, that the use of colour to express emotion was a fundamental belief of Kandinsky’s in providing a spiritual aspect in art. In an interview with Charlie Rose, Hamilton explained that through the use of this fuchsia coloured powder she sought a “kind of turbulence so that as it fell, the way it falls is something that you feel in your stomach, so that your first response to the work is physical” (<<http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/4064>>). She describes this as one of the main aspects of her work, this being the notion of the knowledge we gain through the physical sensations of experience. This attainment of knowledge through these experiences can be seen as a form of enlightenment. Kandinsky has described in ‘On the Spiritual in Art’ how we can attain spirituality through the knowledge learned through life’s struggles (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994). These struggles are in themselves experiences. After experiencing Hamilton’s work through physical and sensual means, it has the potential to touch the viewer’s soul through its subtle manner in paying homage to the tragedies that are embedded in American history.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how spiritual notions exist within contemporary art. By examining how artists James Turrell and Ann Hamilton have approached their work, I have discovered how they sought to engage viewers through their senses. This was an important notion to Kandinsky who believed that spirituality in art is down to an inner necessity which served to purposefully touch the soul. Both artists have achieved this inner necessity through their works, which have been discussed within this chapter, thus showing how contemporary means in abstract art can evoke spiritual values within the viewer.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have described how abstraction had developed through various means and influences during the twentieth century, and remained within art during the postmodern era. When it came about in the early twentieth century, abstraction reflected the individual artists' innermost thoughts, fears and desires. It was these innermost thoughts that became an inner necessity, which Kandinsky believed provided a work of art with meaning in a spiritual sense. Progressing into contemporary society, art became faster inspired by new technology and more notably, by mass production and mass consumerism. This led me to my research question. With the hum drum of today's society and the primary value of art being in most cases its commodity value, which was noted by Donald Kuspit in his article 'Revisiting the Spiritual in Art' (Kuspit, 2004), I questioned if there was any soul put into the work of abstract art today? Does art have any true meaning or is it made simply to earn a fancy price tag and fame? Hal Foster and Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe noted how artists in the late twentieth century made abstract art for the art market and that critics and curators choose to discuss works of art that have gone through the market, as they consider them safe (Foster, H. and Gilbert-Rolfe, J., 2002). Surely this is no real value for art, which, I believe is a form of communication and not a form of commodification.

It is interesting to note that there have been suggestions of a primitive influence within abstraction throughout the early twentieth century. The Cubists took influence from primitive masks, the Dadaists wanted to bring things back to their simplest expressions by creating nonsensical, primitive sounds and the Surrealists and Abstract expressionists sought to access the unconscious mind through automatism, reflecting a sort of shamanistic and ritualistic process. We can think back to primitive times, things were very basic, we fought for survival and we sought to communicate what we saw. Pictures still exist today from cave paintings dating back to prehistoric times. Through basic means, these images expressed a deep inner necessity to communicate

and depict the happenings of the time. Today, due to our current society being one which feeds off of its own excess, we can see how we have become so far removed from our primitive selves. By primitive I mean basic and simple but most importantly real. One can note, that with a number of methods of communication available today, that perhaps we are too spoiled for choice. We rely on so much that is not real, that it can be easy to forget the simple and important real things that get overlooked in the mass consumerist world. The idea of a basic or primitive form of art to convey true spiritual meaning is an area that I would like to research further in the future.

By examining Kandinsky's essay 'On the Spiritual in Art', which dates back nearly one hundred years, I have found, through my research, that the ideas which Kandinsky put forth at that time, do exist within the postmodern era and can be found within contemporary art. They may be overshadowed by the dominance of the commercial aspect placed on much of contemporary art; however, in order to appreciate this overlooked notion of spirituality we must allow ourselves to really partake in the art itself. This takes time, it requests us to slow down and really engage with the art, but we also require a form of art that allows us to engage with it. Donald Kuspit noted the importance of spirituality in life:

"Mystical experience becomes an important way of remaining emotionally healthy in an emotionally unhealthy world. More particularly, it becomes the major means of preserving, securing, and protecting the core self in defiance of an intimidating and debilitating social reality."

(Kuspit, 2004, p.9)

In relation to contemporary art, Robert Hughes stated:

"We have had a gut full of fast art and fast food, what we need more of is slow art, art that holds time as a vase holds water, art that grows out of modes of perception and making, whose skill and doggedness make you think and feel. Art that isn't merely sensational, that doesn't get its message across in ten seconds, that isn't falsely iconic, that hooks onto something deep in our natures, in a word, art that is the very opposite of mass media."

(Hughes, 2004)

I feel that these statements strongly back up my research question and note the importance of a spiritual in art.

Through my research, I have shown that the initial abstract theories put forth by Kandinsky are relevant in contemporary abstract art. By focusing on the internal and external means for creating art, paying particular attention to the internal means, which Kandinsky described as inner necessity, I have shown how these means are evident within the contemporary works of artists Ann Hamilton and James Turrell. These artists actively sought to create an engaging form of art that can access feelings and emotions within the spectator, thus accessing the internal within the world of the external. An art that achieves this is one which has a profound effect on its viewers, thus, calling forth Kandinsky's belief of inner necessity which constitutes towards a spiritual in art.

List of Illustrations



Fig .1 Paul Cézanne, *Still life with Soup Tureen*.c.1877 Oil on canvas.
Musée d'orsay, Paris

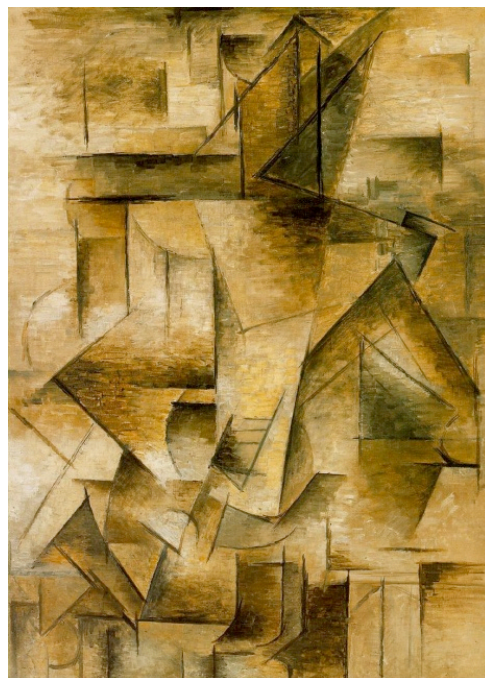


Fig.2 Pablo Picasso, *The Guitar Player*, 1910, oil on canvas. Musée
National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris



Fig.3 Jackson Pollock, *Number 1 (Lavender Mist)*, 1950, oil, aluminium and enamel on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington

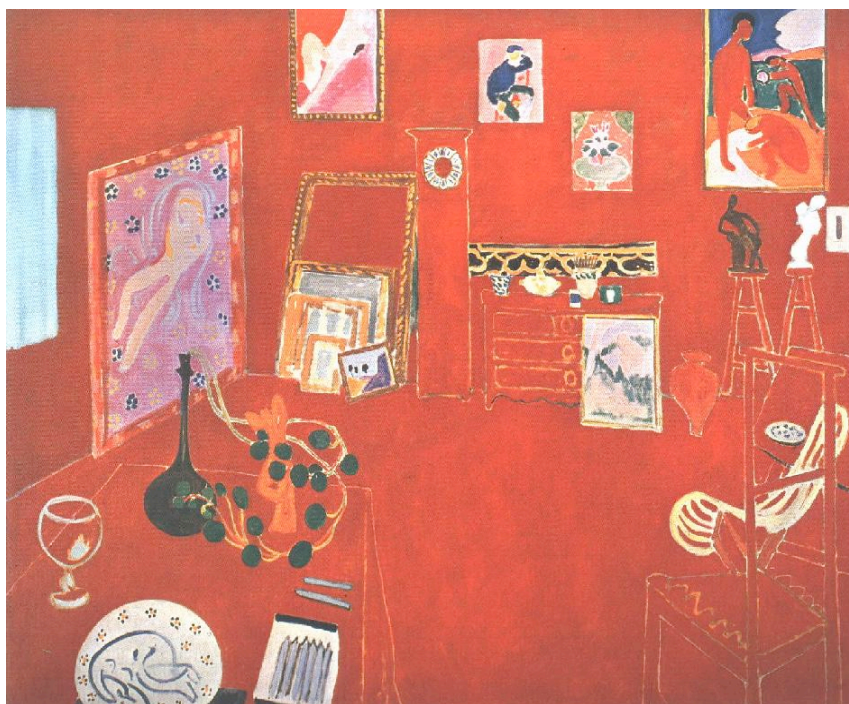


Fig. 4 Henri Matisse, *Red Studio*, 1911, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

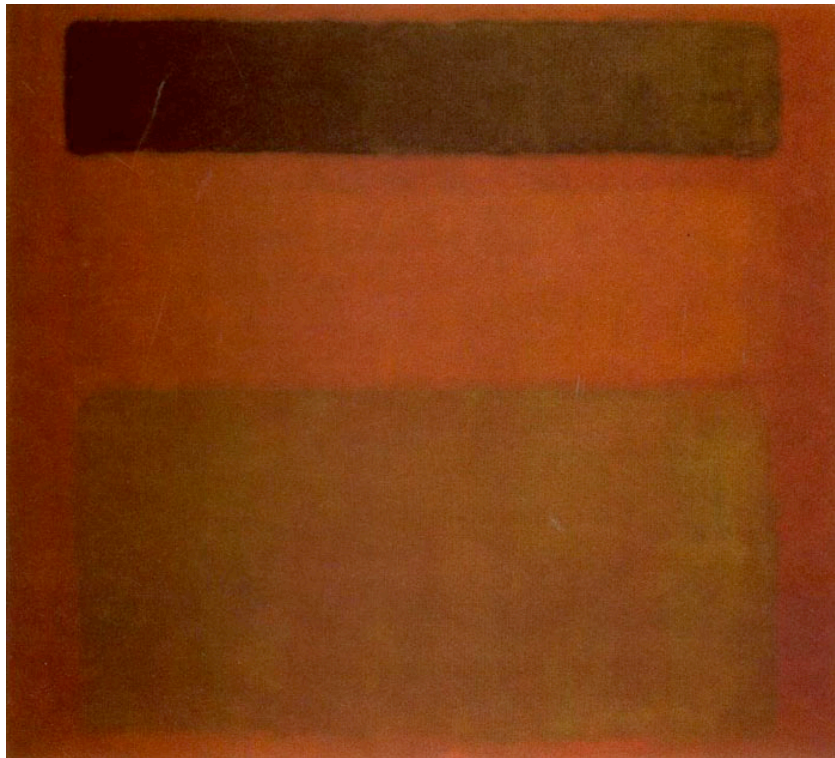


Fig. 5 Mark Rothko, *Red, Brown and Black*, 1958, Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund, the Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 6 James Turrell, *Roden Crater, East portal entryway*, 2000, Flagstaff, Arizona, U.S.A



Fig.7 Ann Hamilton, *Myein*, 1999, the United States Pavilion, 48th Venice Biennale

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