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***Kandinsky's Universe: Geometric Abstraction in the 20th Century***

**February 15 – May 18, 2025**

Museum Barberini, Potsdam

**Press Conference: Thursday, February 13, 2025, 11:00 a.m.**

**with:**

- Ortrud Westheider, Director, Museum Barberini
- Sterre Barentsen, Curator of the Exhibition, Museum Barberini

**Contents of Press Kit:**

- Press Release
- Exhibition Sections
- Facts and Figures
- Digital Resources, Events, and Outreach
- Exhibition Catalogue
- Press Images
- Exhibition Preview 2025
- Press Information: The New *Barberini Studio*

Following the press conference, curator Sterre Barentsen will lead a tour of the exhibition.

WiFi in the museum:

Barberini\_Gast, no password

Image downloads:

[museum-barberini.de/en/presse](https://www.museum-barberini.de/en/presse)

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## ***Kandinsky's Universe: Geometric Abstraction in the 20th Century***

February 15 – May 18, 2025, Museum Barberini, Potsdam

**In the early twentieth century, a profound change occurred in painting: artists no longer sought to represent the visible world, but instead embraced a new, universal pictorial language that reduced artistic expression to the interaction of colors, lines, and forms. In Europe and the United States, this radically modern approach gave rise to multifaceted currents of geometric abstraction that tested the limits of painting—from Suprematism and Constructivism, to the Bauhaus and British postwar abstraction, to Hard Edge painting and Op Art.**

***Kandinsky's Universe: Geometric Abstraction in the 20th Century* is the first exhibition in Europe to tell the story of geometric abstraction not by presenting a series of national movements, but by tracing the lines of connection between them. Twelve works by Wassily Kandinsky—a key figure in abstraction who influenced generations of artists with theoretical writings such as *Point and Line to Plane*—serve as a thread running through the exhibition. A total of 125 paintings, sculptures, and installations by seventy artists show how geometric abstraction challenged the imagination of viewers again and again. The artists represented include Josef Albers, Sonia Delaunay, Barbara Hepworth, El Lissitzky, Kasimir Malevich, Agnes Martin, Piet Mondrian, Bridget Riley, Frank Stella, and Victor Vasarely.**

Loans for the show come from the Courtauld Gallery, London, the Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk (Denmark), the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva, and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice. The exhibition also includes works from important American collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York as well as the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

### **Wassily Kandinsky: A Pioneer of Abstraction**

Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) was one of the first painters to explore abstraction. By tracing the stations of his life and the different phases of his abstract oeuvre, the eight chapters of the exhibition *Kandinsky's Universe* survey the most important stages of geometric abstraction.

Sterre Barentsen, curator of the exhibition:

“The development of the exhibition from the artistic phases of Wassily Kandinsky's career was genuinely illuminating. The title *Kandinsky's Universe* is an apt description of our concept: it refers first of all to the incredibly diverse artistic environment in which Kandinsky

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worked and which he decisively influenced throughout his life. Again and again, his biography intersects with the major upheavals of the first half of the twentieth century. As a result, his impact was wide-ranging—whether on Russian Suprematism, the German Bauhaus, or the French group Abstraction-Création. After Kandinsky's death in 1944, European exiles brought his ideas to the United States, where Hard Edge painting and Optical Art emerged. But all of these currents also shared an intense interest in the use of painterly means to represent space. Artists were fascinated by the scientific and technological discoveries of their day, and they wanted their art to express new experiences of space and time. In this respect, too, Kandinsky was a pioneer.”

### **Beginnings in Munich and Moscow**

**Wassily Kandinsky** was born in Moscow and was initially trained as a legal scholar. In 1896, he began studying art in Munich and from 1908 on showed his first Expressionist works, characterized by bold colors and simplified forms. In the period that followed, he founded the artists' group *Der Blaue Reiter* (The Blue Rider) and increasingly turned his back on the direct representation of visible reality. In 1911 he published his groundbreaking theoretical work *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, which continued to influence the art world into the 1970s. In it, Kandinsky took insights from the neurosciences related to music, dance, physics, and biology and combined them with spiritual ideas such as theosophy, which had strongly informed his oeuvre. His aim was to prove that colors and geometric shapes inherently possessed—and stood in a reciprocal relationship with—universal qualities.

After the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Kandinsky was forced to leave Germany. He returned to Moscow, where the first works of **Suprematism** and **Constructivism** had already been produced. The artists' groups to which **Kasimir Malevich, Lyubov Popova, Ivan Kliun, and El Lissitzky** belonged envisioned a future in which art and technology, spirit and mind were united. Their abstract pictorial language based on lines and geometric planes became the expression of a utopia of progress. In 1917, most artists in Russia devoted their efforts to the service of the revolution and embraced industrial production; Kandinsky, who was more interested in the psychological effect of art on human beings and was persuaded of its “inner necessity,” became an outsider.

### **From the Bauhaus to France**

In 1922, Kandinsky was called to the **Bauhaus** in Weimar, where the artistic influences from Moscow with their interpretation of squares, circles, triangles, and lines left their mark on his work. Surrounded by Bauhaus masters such as **Josef Albers, László Moholy-Nagy, and Johannes Itten**, his style became more analytical, his forms clearer. In 1926,

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Kandinsky published *Point and Line to Plane*, an analysis of what he viewed as the fundamental building blocks of art and their emotional effect.

Together with his Bauhaus colleagues, Kandinsky also laid the foundation for **Concrete Art**, a movement that developed during World War II among artists including **Max Bill, Verena Loewensberg, and Richard Paul Lohse**. Inspired by mathematics and science, their work is marked by bold colors and logically structured patterns, with no reference to nature.

When the Bauhaus was closed by the Nazi regime in 1933, Kandinsky once again had to leave Germany. He moved to France, where he became a member of the artists' group **Abstraction-Création**, founded in 1931 in Paris. Associated with **Piet Mondrian, Alexander Calder, Sophie Tauber-Arp, and Marlow Moss**, the artists in this group sought to promote nonobjective art, thereby distancing themselves from the figuration of Surrealism. In this milieu, Kandinsky created works that seem playful, but were often inspired by scientific literature and remained indebted to a geometric formal language. Even apart from the death blow dealt to artistic utopias of progress by the rise of totalitarian systems, Kandinsky continued to view art as a space for exploration of the spiritual. In 1944, Wassily Kandinsky died in Neuilly-sur-Seine near Paris.

### **Connections in Exile: London and New York**

World War II marked a caesura in the development of geometric abstraction. With the German occupation of Paris, many artists, art dealers, and critics fled to London before emigrating to the United States. Under the influence of **Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson**, the British capital developed into a new **center of geometric abstraction**. After World War II, the group of so-called **Constructionists** was established in London, inspired by the Constructivists of the prewar years. They employed newly developed synthetic materials such as plastic, acrylic, and fiberglass in combination with wood and aluminum. Works by **Mary Martin, Victor Pasmore, and Kenneth Martin** reflect the optimistic wave of modernization that shaped postwar reconstruction.

In the United States as well, the ideas of European exiles continued to influence the evolution of geometric abstraction in the work of American artists. In the 1960s, **Frank Stella, Ellsworth Kelly, and Carmen Herrera** initiated the movement known as **Hard Edge painting**. Characterized by clear forms, sharp contours, and brilliant colors, it distanced itself from the expressive approach that had dominated the New York art scene in the 1950s. A concurrent and contrasting movement emerged with **Minimalism**, with works by **Donald Judd, Jo Baer, and Agnes Martin** that embraced radical simplicity.

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The artists of **Op Art** (short for Optical Art) played with the limits of visual perception. Echoing Wassily Kandinsky and Kasimir Malevich, who had experimented with floating pictorial elements, **Bridget Riley, Victor Vasarely, Richard Anuszkiewicz, and Julian Stanczak** introduced optical movement into static paintings. This movement linked the discoveries of the Bauhaus on the effects of colors and forms with the fascination for technology, space travel, and the visual experience of television characteristic of the 1960s.

As Ortrud Westheider, Director of the Museum Barberini, observes: "*Kandinsky's Universe* clearly shows how fearless, how radically modern geometric abstraction was at the time—in obvious contradiction to the accusation sometimes leveled against it, that it was cold or 'lacking in content.' In its response to scientific explorations of spacial concepts, it always expressed and stimulated big ideas. As an international language it transcended borders, at a time of political nationalism and intolerance in the Europe of the 1930s and 1940s. The 125 exceptional loans in the exhibition illuminate the overarching narrative running through geometric abstraction in its tremendous variety, and we are delighted to be able to present this new perspective to the Barberini audience."

The exhibition presents seven decades of geometric abstraction in 125 works by seventy artists. The over forty international lenders include The Courtauld, London, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk (Denmark), the Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva, the Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, the MOMus —Museum of Modern Art – Costakis Collection, Thessaloniki, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the Hamburger Kunsthalle, and the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, as well as numerous private collectors whose works are seldom shown in public.

The exhibition was initiated by Daniel Zamani, curator at the Museum Barberini from 2018 to 2024. Already at the inception of the project, he collaborated with Sterre Barentsen, who took over responsibility for the exhibition as curator. She also oversaw the catalogue, a 288-page volume published by Prestel.

The exhibition was realized with the generous support of the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Genève.

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## ***Kandinsky's Universe: Geometric Abstraction in the 20th Century***

### **Spirit and Technology: Geometric Art in Russia and Eastern Europe**

After the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Kandinsky returned from Munich to Moscow, where the first Constructivist artworks had already emerged. The artists utilized lines and geometric planes to create a universal visual language that expressed modernity and progress.

After 1917, the new state briefly supported avantgarde art forms to promote revolutionary ideals. Kandinsky played a key role in this effort. As the founding director of a state research institute, he investigated the psychological effects of art.

While the Constructivists dedicated their work to industrial production, Kandinsky's insistence on the spiritual dimension of art made him an outsider. In 1922, he returned to Germany. His subsequent works reflect the influence of the geometric visual language developed by his colleagues in Moscow.

### **Straight Lines, Right Angles: The Abstract Rhythms of the De Stijl Group**

In the Netherlands, Piet Mondrian, Theo van Doesburg, and others founded the De Stijl group in 1917. Inspired by spiritual ideas, jazz music, and urban life, they sought to give visual form to rhythms and energies. Their art was characterized by straight lines, right angles, and a palette of primary colors, black, and white. They aimed to express balance and harmony, creating a model for social and architectural transformation.

From its inception, De Stijl had an international outlook; its founding manifesto was published in four languages. Van Doesburg maintained close ties with the Bauhaus and avant-garde artists across Europe. Mondrian's move to Paris and later his exile in London and New York further disseminated the movement's ideas.

Even after the dissolution of De Stijl in 1931, younger artists continued to adopt its principles, further developing them with the use of diagonals, curves, and relief elements.

### **Universal Language of Abstraction: Bauhaus and Concrete Artists**

As a teacher at the Bauhaus, founded in Weimar in 1919, Kandinsky continued to develop his theories alongside other avant-garde artists. He developed a geometric visual language. In his 1926 book *Point and Line to Plane*, he explored the fundamental elements of art and their emotional resonance.

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The Bauhaus curriculum was shaped by a focus on color and form. The emphasis on geometric shapes influenced not only painting but also design and industrial production. Simplicity, functionality, and mass production were regarded as the cornerstones of a modern, democratic society.

During World War II, Max Bill, a former Bauhaus student, initiated the Concrete Art movement in Zurich. This style is characterized by bold colors and logically structured compositions. The term “concrete” underscores, even more strongly than “abstract,” that these works have no connection to the visible world.

### **Flowing Forms: International Abstraction in Paris**

After the forced closure of the Bauhaus by the Nazi regime in 1933, Kandinsky emigrated to France. There, he joined the group Abstraction-Création, an international forum for abstract art. Many artists fled to Paris to escape political persecution.

Under the influence of the Surrealists, Kandinsky began incorporating biomorphic forms into his works. The dominance of the Surrealists, who focused on the unconscious, led to a shift among many members of Abstraction-Création: rigid grid structures gave way to playful compositions and organic shapes.

Kandinsky remained in France until his death in 1944. Despite the turmoil of World War II, he continued to explore the spiritual through his art. Many of his colleagues who fled Europe never returned to Paris. In 1946, the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles was founded to promote abstract art and revitalize the Parisian art scene.

### **Balanced Forces: Constructivist Utopias in British Art**

In the late 1930s, as the threat of war loomed, many artists fled to Great Britain. London became a center for geometric abstraction, with exiled artists such as Mondrian, Moholy-Nagy, and Gabo finding refuge there before emigrating to the United States. Connections to British artists like Hepworth and Nicholson had already been established through the Paris-based group Abstraction-Création.

Even before the bombing of London in 1940, Hepworth and Nicholson moved to the artist colony in St. Ives, Cornwall. There, they continued their work on reliefs and sculptures, adapting geometric abstraction into three-dimensional forms. They were inspired by the colors and shapes of the coastal landscape.

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After the war, the Constructionists group formed in London. Their reliefs, which resemble industrial objects of the 1950s, incorporated new synthetic materials. These works reflected the optimism and modernization of postwar reconstruction.

### **The Power of Color: Hard Edge Painting**

In the 1960s, geometric abstraction in the United States turned to monumental formats. Artists focused on basic shapes, sharp contours, and vibrant colors, moving away from the expressive painting that had dominated the American art scene in the 1950s.

In Washington, a group around Kenneth Noland developed special techniques: they poured or dragged diluted paints over large areas of the canvas, experimenting with the psychological effects of colors and their combinations.

New York artists like Al Held and Frank Stella avoided expressive brushwork. In their style, known as Hard Edge, color and form refer only to themselves. They reflected the geometric abstraction of the prewar era but without pursuing utopian ideas. Despite the rejection of narrative elements, often titles, compositions, and color contrasts hint at cultural or personal contexts.

### **The Essence of Form: Transatlantic Minimalism**

Clear lines, industrial materials, and a reduced color palette define Minimalism. In his 1964 text “Specific Objects,” Donald Judd articulated the characteristics of this new style. Throughout the 1970s, numerous artists in the United States and Europe embraced Minimalism.

Rather than focusing on emotion or symbolism, Minimalist works invite viewers to perceive subtle nuances: the interplay of light and shadow on a surface, the texture of materials, or the shifting relationship between object and space as the observer moves.

Minimalism distanced itself from the notion of the artwork’s uniqueness and concealed traces of manual craftsmanship. Some artists even opted for industrial production of their works. Canvases were treated not as image carriers but as objects—nails form three-dimensional structures, grids overlap, and edges are painted.

### **Space Age: Op Art in the Sixties**

Optical Art—Op Art for short—challenges visual perception. Patterns on a two-dimensional surface appear to move or protrude, creating an illusion that turns seeing into an active experience.

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As early as the 1910s and 1920s, artists like Malevich and Kandinsky had experimented with geometric elements that seem to float or appear dynamic. Op Art built on this foundation. It drew on the insights of color and form effects developed at the Bauhaus, translating them for the 1960s aesthetic, which was shaped by technology, space exploration, and the flicker of television screens.

Art that played with optical effects emerged independently in various places. It was only recognized as a distinct style in 1965 with the exhibition *The Responsive Eye* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

#### **Luminous Illusions: The Effect of the Square**

The American Op Artists Richard Anuszkiewicz and Julian Stanczak were students of the former Bauhaus teacher Josef Albers. Albers had emigrated to the United States in 1933, where he began his series *Homage to the Square*. These geometric compositions continued the research on color and form, which he had begun at the Bauhaus alongside Kandinsky—they are considered precursors to Op Art.

Both students adopted Albers' square framework. Like him, they explored how colors can seem opaque or transparent, and appear to advance or recede depending on their combination. However, they introduced brighter colors and stronger contrasts, creating intense effects that push the boundaries of perception.

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<b>Exhibition run:</b>	February 15 – May 18, 2025	
<b>Address:</b>	Museum Barberini, Alter Markt, Humboldtstraße 5–6, 14467 Potsdam	
<b>Opening hours:</b>	M, W–Su 10 a.m.–7 p.m. Kindergartens and schools by appointment M–F (except Tu) from 9 a.m.	
<b>Admission and ticketing:</b>	M, W–F € 16 / € 10, Sa/Su/holidays € 18 / € 10 Free admission for schoolchildren and visitors under 18 Free admission every Thursday from 2 p.m. for visitors under 25	
<b>Curator:</b>	Sterre Barentsen, Museum Barberini Anna Heling, Assistant Curator, Museum Barberini	
<b>Exhibited works:</b>	125	
<b>Exhibited artists</b> (number of works):	Josef Albers (1888–1976)	5
	Edna Andrade (1917–2008)	1
	Richard Anuszkiewicz (1930–2020)	4
	Jo Baer (1929–2025)	1
	Max Bill (1908–1994)	1
	Alexander Calder (1898–1976)	1
	Enrico Castellani (1930–2017)	1
	Ilya Chashnik (1902–1929)	1
	Gene Davis (1920–1985)	1
	Jo Delahaut (1911–1992)	1
	Sonia Delaunay (1885–1979)	1
	Walter Dexel (1890–1973)	2
	Burgoyne Diller (1906–1965)	1
	Theo van Doesburg (1883–1931)	1
	César Domela (1900–1992)	1
	Boris Ender (1893–1960)	1
	John Ernest (1922–1994)	2
	Alexandra Exter (1882–1949)	1
	Wojciech Fangor (1922–2015)	4
	Terry Frost (1915–2003)	1
	Naum Gabo (1890–1977)	1

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Fritz Glarner (1899–1972)	2
Jean Gorin (1899–1981)	1
Camille Graeser (1892–1980)	1
Al Held (1928–2005)	1
Jean Hélion (1904–1987)	2
Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975)	2
Auguste Herbin (1882–1960)	1
Carmen Herrera (1915–2022)	1
Anthony Hill (1930–2020)	2
Paul Huxley (*1938)	1
Johannes Itten (1888–1967)	1
Donald Judd (1928–1994)	1
Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944)	12
Ellsworth Kelly (1923–2015)	1
Ivan Kliun (1873–1943)	2
Katarzyna Kobro (1898–1951)	1
Jean Leppien (1910–1991)	1
Alexander Liberman (1912–1999)	1
El Lissitzky (1890–1941)	3
Verena Loewensberg (1912–1986)	1
Richard Paul Lohse (1902–1988)	2
Kasimir Malevich (1873–1935)	1
Agnes Martin (1912–2004)	1
Kenneth Martin (1905–1984)	2
Mary Martin (1907–1969)	6
László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946)	1
Piet Mondrian (1872–1944)	2
François Morellet (1926–2016)	5
Marlow Moss (1889–1958)	2
Aurélie Nemours (1910–2005)	1
Ben Nicholson (1884–1982)	4
Kenneth Noland (1924–2010)	1
Victor Pasmore (1908–1998)	1
Antoine Pevsner (1884–1962)	2
Lyubov Popova (1889–1924)	3
Paul Reed (1919–2015)	1
Bridget Riley (*1931)	3
Alexander Rodchenko (1891–1956)	1
Miriam Schapiro (1923–2015)	1
Julian Stanczak (1928–2017)	5

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Frank Stella (1936–2024)	3
Sophie Taeuber-Arp (1889–1943)	1
Victor Vasarely (1906–1997)	3
Mary Webb (*1939)	1
Margaret Wenstrup (1930–2008)	1

**Lenders:**

**Forty-three lending institutions from eleven countries:**

ASOM Collection  
 Staatliche Museen zu Berlin: Nationalgalerie, Sammlung Marzona, and Neue Nationalgalerie  
 Josef Albers Museum Quadrat Bottrop  
 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf  
 Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg  
 Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva  
 Kulturstiftung Sachsen-Anhalt, Kunstmuseum Moritzburg Halle (Saale)  
 Hamburger Kunsthalle  
 University of Hertfordshire Art Collection  
 Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk  
 Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź  
 The Courtauld, London  
 Royal Academy of Arts, London  
 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York  
 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York  
 D. Wigmore Fine Art, Inc., New York  
 Sainsbury Centre, University of East Anglia, Norwich  
 The Pier Arts Centre, Stromness, Orkney  
 Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo  
 Philadelphia Museum of Art  
 Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel  
 Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam  
 Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul de Vence  
 Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Siegen  
 MOMus—Museum of Modern Art—Costakis Collection, Thessaloniki  
 Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice  
 National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC  
 Albertina, Vienna—private collection  
 Haus Bill, Zumikon  
 Camille Graeser Stiftung, Zurich

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Kunsthaus Zurich  
Verena Loewensberg Stiftung, Zurich  
Estate of Richard Anuszkiewicz  
Collection of David and Kathryn Birnbaum  
Estate of Carmen Herrera  
Studio Paul Huxley  
Richard Paul Lohse-Stiftung  
Mercedes-Benz Art Collection  
Nahmad Collection  
Neil K. Rector & the Rector Artwork Trust  
Estate of Julian Stanczak  
Triton Collection Foundation  
UK Government Art Collection  
as well as numerous private collectors who wish to  
remain anonymous

**Exhibition area:** ca. 1,250 square meters

**Exhibition design:** Philipp Riklefs, Berlin, and  
BrücknerAping, Bremen

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**Social media:**

#KandinskyBarberini at the #MuseumBarberini on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube

**Digital resources:**

The *Barberini App* is a personal guide before, during, and after the museum visit. It offers audio tours of the exhibitions in German and English for adults and children, as well as an adult-child tour, texts in simplified language, service and event information, and video interviews with experts. Available free of charge in the App Store and at Google Play. [museum-barberini.de/app](https://museum-barberini.de/app)

The *Barberini Prolog* sets the tone for the current exhibition. As a compact multimedia webpage, the Prolog offers an overview of themes and works and can be used to prepare for the museum visit or recommend the show to others. [prolog.museum-barberini.de](https://prolog.museum-barberini.de)

The newly redesigned *360° Tour* on the museum website offers the opportunity to explore the current exhibition (starting late February 2025) and the Hasso Plattner Collection in digital form. In a 3-D model, viewers can enjoy a virtual tour of the entire museum. The large number of 360° photo location points makes it possible to examine each work in detail. In the future, the model will help facilitate an even more realistic experience in digital tours of the exhibition. [museum-barberini.de/en/mediathek](https://museum-barberini.de/en/mediathek)

The *Expert Video* introduces the themes of the exhibition: artists Mary Webb and Paul Huxley, art historians Maria Mileeva from The Courtauld, London, and Jeremy Lewison, former Director of Collections at the Tate, London, exhibition curator Sterre Barentsen, and Ortrud Westheider, Director of the Museum Barberini, discuss Kandinsky and geometric abstraction. [museum-barberini.de/en/mediathek](https://museum-barberini.de/en/mediathek) as well as daily screenings in the Auditorium

In the video series *Close-ups*, the art and outreach team of the Museum Barberini introduce paintings from the

Impressionism collection and offer insight into their creation, visual language, and reception.

[museum-barberini.de/en/mediathek](https://museum-barberini.de/en/mediathek)

The *Online Collection* offers an overview of all the Impressionist works in the Hasso Plattner Collection, along with additional resources such as descriptions of paintings, information on provenance, bibliography, videos, and audios. [sammlung.museum-barberini.de](https://sammlung.museum-barberini.de)

**Program of events:**

The exhibition is accompanied by a wide-ranging program of education and events for all ages and interests.

On March 12, Julia Voss (art critic and curator) and Daniel Birnbaum (curator and director of the London art agency Acute Art), coauthors of *Hilma af Klint and Wassily Kandinsky träumen von der Zukunft* (Hilma af Klint and Wassily Kandinsky: Dreams of the Future) published by S. Fischer Verlag, will speak on Wassily Kandinsky.

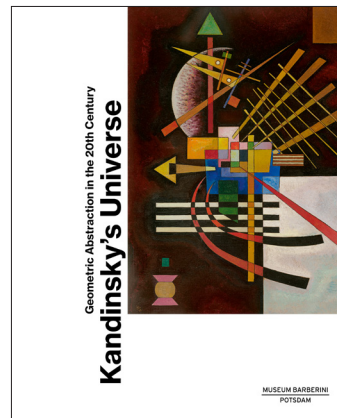
In cooperation with the Nikolaisaal Potsdam, a concert with pianist Francesco Tristano will take place on May 9. This unique performance with piano, live electronics, and visuals is inspired by the pictorial worlds of Wassily Kandinsky. Concurrent with the exhibition, a small selection of films will be screened at the Filmmuseum Potsdam.

For the new *Barberini Studio* program (see additional information below), the museum will cooperate with the Bauhaus-Archiv to offer workshops exploring Kandinsky's time at the Bauhaus.

Also new is the lecture series *Kunst und Wissen* (Art and Knowledge), where researchers from Berlin and Potsdam examine scientific aspects of geometric abstraction, whether astronomy or neuroscience. In addition to a variety of other tours, workshops, lectures, and barrier-free events, our popular yoga sessions will also be offered in the Auditorium.

For the complete program, information on the new *Barberini Studio*, and current updates, visit our website: [museum-barberini.de/bildung](https://museum-barberini.de/bildung)

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## ***Kandinsky's Universe:***

### ***Geometric Abstraction in the 20th Century***

Edited by Ortrud Westheider, Michael Philipp, and Nerina Santorius

With contributions by Sterre Barentsen, Max Boersma, John E. Bowlt, Altair Brandon-Salmon, Anna Heling, David Max Horowitz, Jeremy Lewison, Chen Min Loh, Céline Véronique Marten, Maria Mileeva, Nicoletta Misler

Prestel Verlag, Munich, 2024

Hardcover with dust jacket, 288 pages, 24 x 30 cm

250 color illustrations

ISBN 978-3-7913-7790-2

Book trade € 45 museum shop € 39,90

Advance review copy € 20,00 available February 13, 2025

## **Contents**

### **Essays**

- *Kandinsky's Synthesis: Bridging Art, Science, and Spirituality* (John E. Bowlt and Nicoletta Misler)
- *Circles of Exchange: Geometric Abstraction and the East-Central European Avant-Garde, 1920-1930* (Maria Mileeva)
- *Rhythms of the City: The Influence of the Metropolis on Piet Mondrian's Geometric Abstraction* (Sterre Barentsen)
- *An Art Without Content? Hard Edge Painting, 1958-1968* (Jeremy Lewison)

### **Catalog of Exhibited Works**

- *Spirit and Technology: Geometry in Abstract Art* (Max Boersma)
- *Universal Language of Abstraction: Bauhaus and Concrete Artists* (Max Boersma)
- *Straight Lines, Flowing Forms: International Abstraction in Paris* (Sterre Barentsen)
- *Balanced Forces: Constructivist Utopias in British Art* (Altair Brandon Salmon)
- *The Essence of Form: Hard Edge Painting and Minimalism* (David Max Horowitz)
- *Space Age: Op Art in the Sixties* (Sterre Barentsen)

### **Appendix**

- *Intersecting Realms: Geometric Abstraction Exhibitions and Scientific Breakthroughs* (Compiled by Sterre Barentsen, Anna Heling, Chen Min Loh, and Céline Véronique Marten)



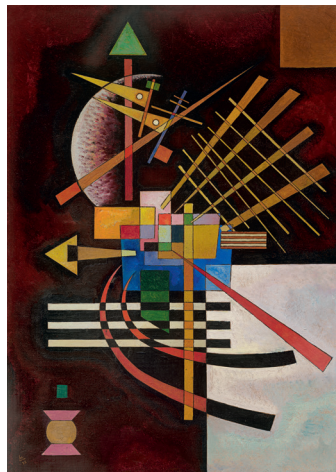
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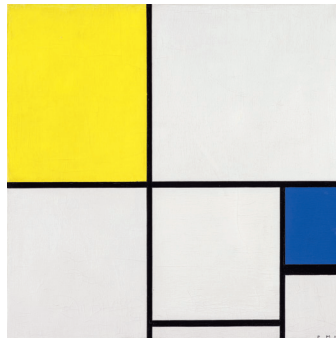
Wassily Kandinsky  
*White Cross*, 1922  
Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice  
(Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York)



Wassily Kandinsky  
*Above and left*, 1925  
Private collection



László Moholy-Nagy  
*Composition Z VIII*, 1924  
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Neue Nationalgalerie



Piet Mondrian  
*Composition with Yellow and Blue*, 1932  
Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, Beyeler Collection;  
Acquired with the generous support of  
Hartmann P. and Cécile Koechlin-Tanner, Riehen



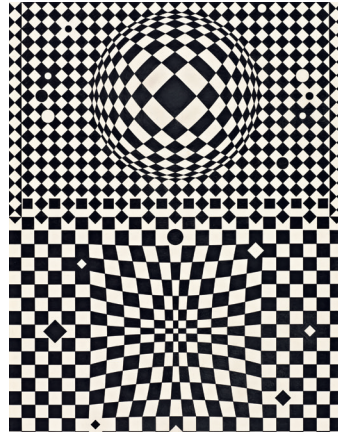
Miriam Schapiro  
*Jigsaw*, 1969  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York;  
Purchase, with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kahn



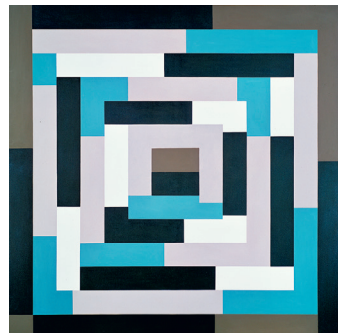
Frank Stella  
*Sacramento Mall Proposal #4*, 1978  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC;  
Gift of the Collectors Committee  
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025



Sophie Taeuber-Arp  
*Twelve Spaces with Planes, Angular Bands,  
and Laid with Circles*, 1939  
Kunsthhaus Zürich; Gift from Hans Arp, 1958



Victor Vasarely  
*Vegaviv II*, 1955  
Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva  
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025



Mary Webb  
*Fritton*, 1971  
Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich  
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2025

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***The Honest Eye: The Impressionist Pissarro***  
**June 14 – September 28, 2025**

With Camille Pissarro, an outsider became a central figure in Impressionism. Born in the Caribbean, he came to France in 1855, where he sensed the antiacademic transformation in painting and attracted likeminded artists. With their revolutionary approach to painting, they founded the Impressionist movement. Pissarro also embraced the Pointillism of the younger generation and was the only artist to participate in all eight Impressionist exhibitions in Paris.

With around eighty landscapes, city views, still lifes, and figural images from some fifty international collections, the exhibition *The Honest Eye: The Impressionist Pissarro* offers a well-founded survey of the artist's entire oeuvre while at the same time considering the social-utopian ideas that informed his work.

In cooperation with the Denver Art Museum, where the exhibition will be on view October 26, 2025 – February 8, 2026.

***Unicorn: The Mythical Beast in Art***  
**October 25, 2025 – February 1, 2026**

The unicorn has inspired the imagination more than any other animal. Known for centuries in a wide range of cultures, its fascination persists to this day. The mythical beast is a multilayered signifier, charged with associative energy. The unicorn has left its mark on Christian and non-European art, on science, medicine, and a multifaceted world of symbolism. The iconography of the unicorn invites reflection on imagination, empirical knowledge, ambivalence, and projection.

The exhibition presents over 120 works from international lenders including the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, the Keresztény Múzeum, Esztergom, and numerous other collections, above all in Germany and France.

In cooperation with the Musée de Cluny, Paris, where the exhibition will be on view March 16 – June 28, 2026.

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## **New Space for Outreach:**

### **The Museum Barberini expands its educational offerings with the *Barberini Studio***

Tours, lectures, and workshops, activities for school classes and kindergartens, concerts and readings, birthday and office parties: the Museum Barberini offers numerous opportunities to connect with the art in the museum for visitors of all ages, interests, and languages. In the eight years since its opening, the Barberini has launched one of the most extensive outreach programs among museums in Germany. In the past year alone, some 50,000 guests took advantage of this program, ten percent more than the previous year. The Barberini offered 2,800 tours and workshops in 2024, double the number from 2022. In response to the growing demand, the Museum Barberini is now further expanding its outreach with the opening of a new space for education and inspiration, the *Barberini Studio*, directly adjacent to the museum. There, beginning in mid-February, workshops and discussion-based events will feature even more prominently in the Barberini's program.

On Sunday, February 16, during the opening weekend of the exhibition *Kandinsky's Universe*, the museum will host an "Open Studio," where all are invited to experience the new space and participate in activities such as a hands-on introduction to Tape Art and other new techniques. No registration is required.

With the *Barberini Studio*, the museum not only expands its spatial capacities, but also introduces new content through cooperations with partners such as the *HPI School of Design Thinking*, Potsdam, the *Bauhaus Archiv*, Berlin, and the non-profit initiative *KI macht Schule*. Other educational partnerships are also being formed. Workshops on digital drawing, creative coding, and sound collages are only some of the new formats that will be offered. Holiday workshops and project days for school classes, English-language events, and the new series *Kunst und Wissen* (Art and Knowledge) round out the wide-ranging program. The Studio will also host the *Barberini Art Club*, a student association formed in 2024 that brings together interested participants ages 16 to 25 to introduce their ideas, desires, and perspectives to the Barberini in specially conceived workshops.

In addition to the *Studio*, the *Atelier* will continue to operate in the basement level of the museum, offering popular workshops on painting, printmaking, drawing, and other techniques. In the summer, creative opportunities will also be available outdoors in the museum courtyard.

"For us at the Barberini, it's especially important to keep our outreach program accessible, current, and exciting for many different people," explains Ortrud Westheider, Director of the Museum Barberini. "The *Barberini Studio*, located next to the museum, helps us

meet the growing demand for high-level educational opportunities, with flexible-use furnishings and top-tier technical equipment over an area of 125 square meters. Here, we can continue to develop our approach to cultural education, open our doors to new audiences, and deepen our contribution to the understanding of art – which ultimately is also a key to understanding the world.”

For an overview of *Education and Inspiration* at the Museum Barberini, visit:  
[museum-barberini.de/bildung](https://museum-barberini.de/bildung)

For a complete overview of programs and events, visit:  
[museum-barberini.de/de/kalender/formate](https://museum-barberini.de/de/kalender/formate)