



Art Lesson 14: Stay in Shape



Grade: 2nd

Summary: An acrylic or tempera painting of primary colored rectangles and squares

Artist: **Piet Mondrian (1872 - 1944)**

Objective: Learn to only use 3 colors in a painting

Technical Level: Intermediate

Time: 45 – 60 minutes

Meet the Artist: **Piet Mondrian** was a Dutch painter who is regarded as one of the greatest artists of the 20th century. He is most known for being one of the pioneers of 20th century **abstract art**.

Mondrian was introduced to art a very young age as his father and his uncle were both artists. In 1892, he entered the Academy for Fine Art in Amsterdam as a qualified teacher. While teaching at the academy he also worked on his painting. At the time most of the artwork were of landscapes of Holland. He was influenced by pointillist (painting with dots) at the time. He changed his artistic style to an increasingly abstract style, until he reached a point where his paintings were reduced to simple geometric elements. In 1911 Mondrian discovered **Cubism**, which eventually guided him towards **abstract art**. His paintings began to be dominated by geometric shapes. He eventually developed a painting style he called **neo-plasticism**.

After the end of World War 1 he returned to Paris and that is where he painted one of his most famous paintings, **Composition with Red, Yellow and Blue ©1921**. The painting is composed of rectangles with primary colors (red, yellow and blue) on a grid of black lines. In the years that followed, he continued to eliminate, what he called “non-essentials” from his paintings. He limited his work to geometric shapes. His painting **Broadway Boogie-Woogie ©1943** was highly influential in the school of abstract geometric painting. The piece is made of a number of colored squares that appear to shimmer and leap from the canvas.

Cubism: an early 20th century style and movement in art, especially painting, in which perspective with a single viewpoint was abandoned and use was made of simple geometric shapes, interlocking planes, and later collage.

Abstract Art: art that does not attempt to represent anything real. It seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, forms, colors and textures. Abstract art can look like different things to different people.

Neo-plasticism: a style of abstract painting developed by Piet Mondrian. The style only uses vertical and horizontal lines, rectangular shapes in black, gray and primary colors.

Fun Facts:

- Mondrian loved to listen to Jazz music, especially when he was painting.
- He would work for so long on his paintings he would get blisters on his fingers and make himself physically sick.
- In the 1960's a designer named Yves Saint Laurent created “Mondrian” style dresses in his style that were so popular there were tons of knock-offs.

Discussion Point: Observe Piet Mondrian’s paintings. What do you see? What are the main colors you see? Do you think the paintings are anything specific? Do you like them? Before starting the art lesson show the students how to use a ruler. Hold it down with one hand and line a maker, lining it up against the edge of the ruler. The lines do NOT need to be perfect, just make sure you have enough lines to create squares and rectangles on your art project.



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Art Supplies:

- 8 x 11 cardstock or watercolor paper
- Black Permanent markers
- Rulers
- Tempera or Acrylic paint (red, blue and yellow)
- Masking tape
- Paint brushes (Small)
- Cups for water
- Acrylic or Tempera paint (red, brown and green)
- Small cups for water
- Paper plates or palettes for paint

Art Prep: Cut the cardstock or watercolor paper down to an 8 ½ x 8 ½ square for each student. Use four small pieces of tape and attach the paper to the student's workspace or desk. The paper should look like a diamond.

Art Directions:

1. Write your name on one of the pieces of tape.
2. Hold the ruler vertical towards the left edge of the paper and have the students draw a line. Have them draw six more vertical lines on the paper.
3. Hold the ruler horizontal at the top of the paper and have the students draw a line. Have the students draw six more lines. Some of the horizontal lines should cross through the vertical lines, this will create different sized rectangles and squares. The shapes created from the lines will be unique for every student.
4. Stop and take a minute to look at the drawing. They should have 16 – 20 shapes. Consider adding a few more lines to create more shapes. Let the students add a few more lines if they want more shapes.
5. Take the permanent black marker and go over the pencil lines with the ruler.
6. Give the students one paintbrush and red paint. Paint 4 -5 squares or rectangles. DO NOT have two shapes touch on the sides. Only on corners (like checkers).
7. Give the students one paintbrush and yellow paint and have them paint a few (4 -5) boxes yellow.
8. Last, give the students blue paint and have the students paint 4 – 5 blue shapes.
9. Stop and look at your painting. Are there some red, blue, yellow and even white shapes? Does any one color stand out more than the others?
10. If need be let the students add a few more red, yellow or blue boxes.
11. Only if time permits after the painting dries, consider letting the students touch up the black lines.
12. Remove the tape from the painting. Turn the painting over and place the tape with the student's name on the back of the paper.

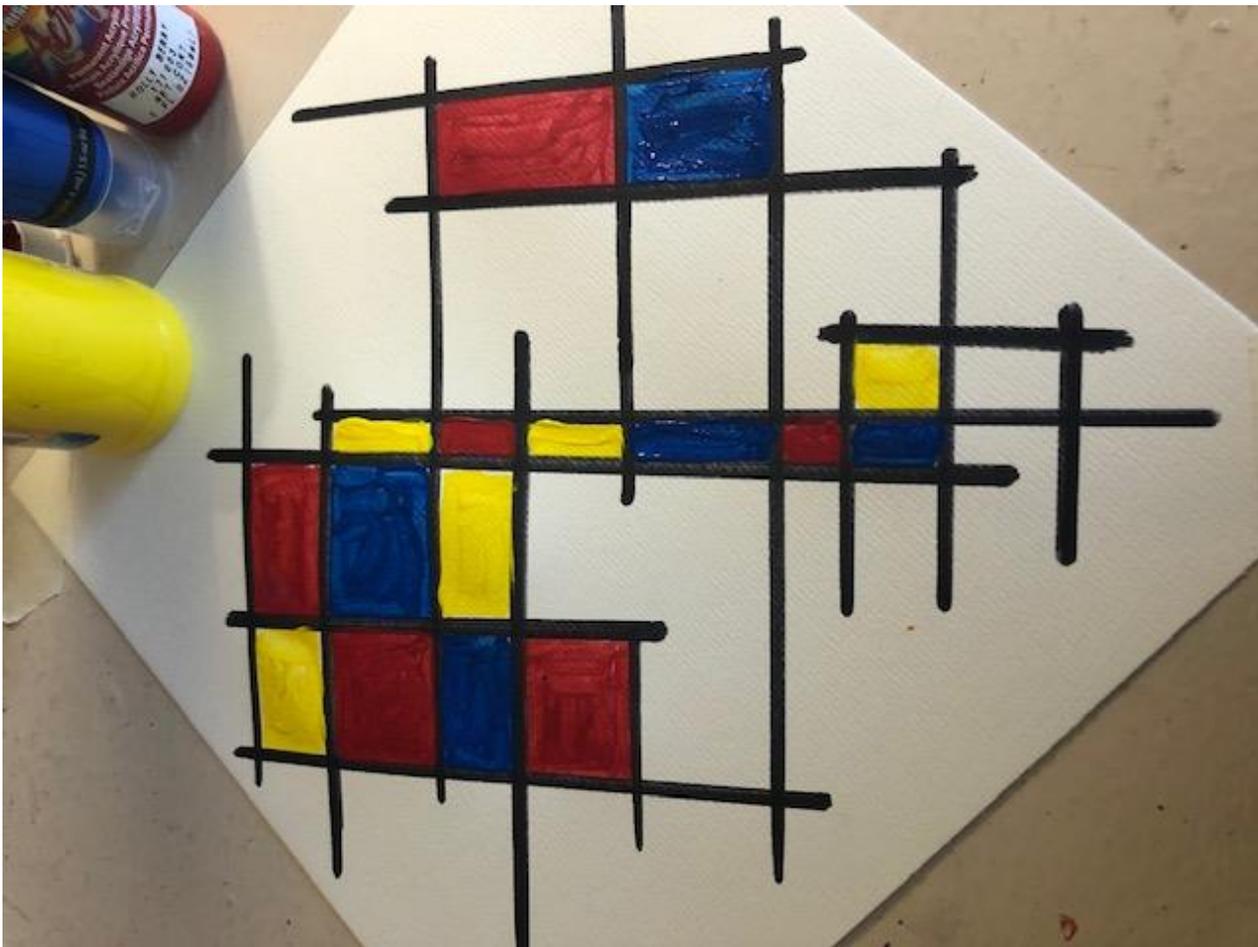
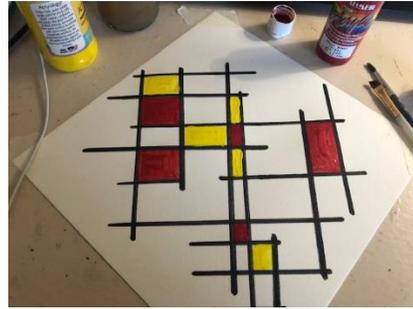
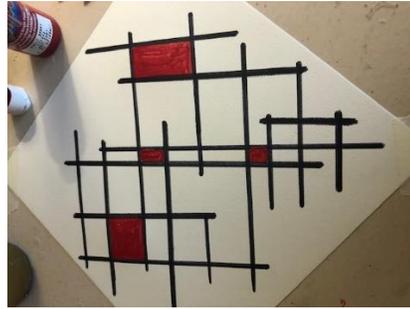
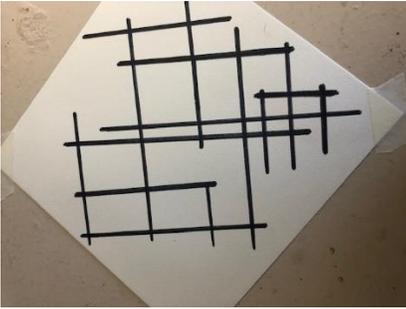
Tips & Art Tricks

- Giving the students one paint color at a time keeps the art project under control and ensures that the students do not jump ahead.
- If students are not familiar or comfortable with rulers, they can do this project free hand.
- This is an art project that can be done with watercolors, oil pastels, crayons, markers or even collage.
- If you want to change the project (or for a SPLIT class) consider doing only secondary colors (orange, purple and green) in place of primary colors. You can also add grey as another color.
- Encourage the students to embrace the white space and tell them not all the squares need to be painted.
- If you do not have enough paint brushes the children will need to rinse off them off in water and DRY before switching colors.



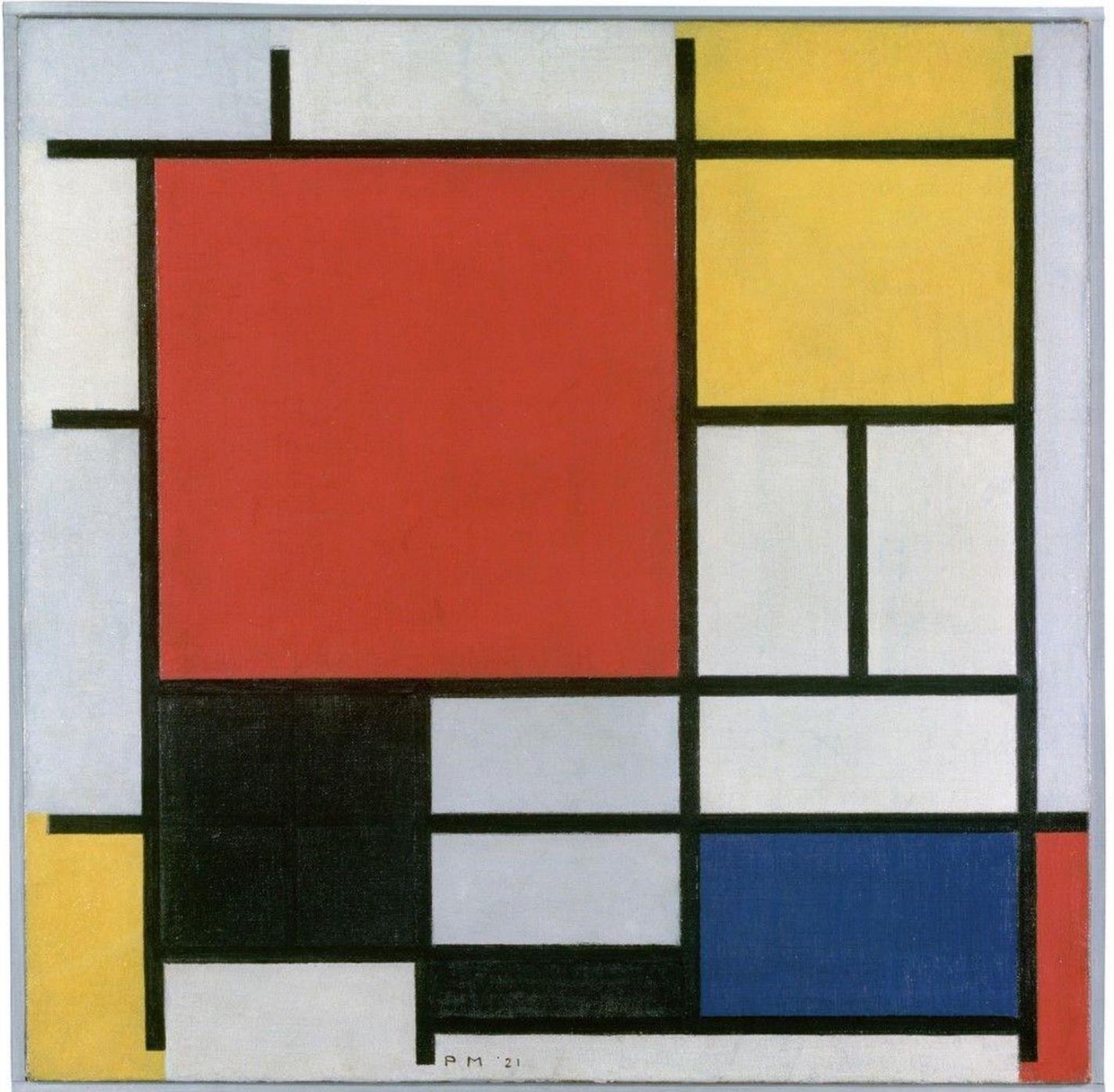
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Student's working on their art projects:





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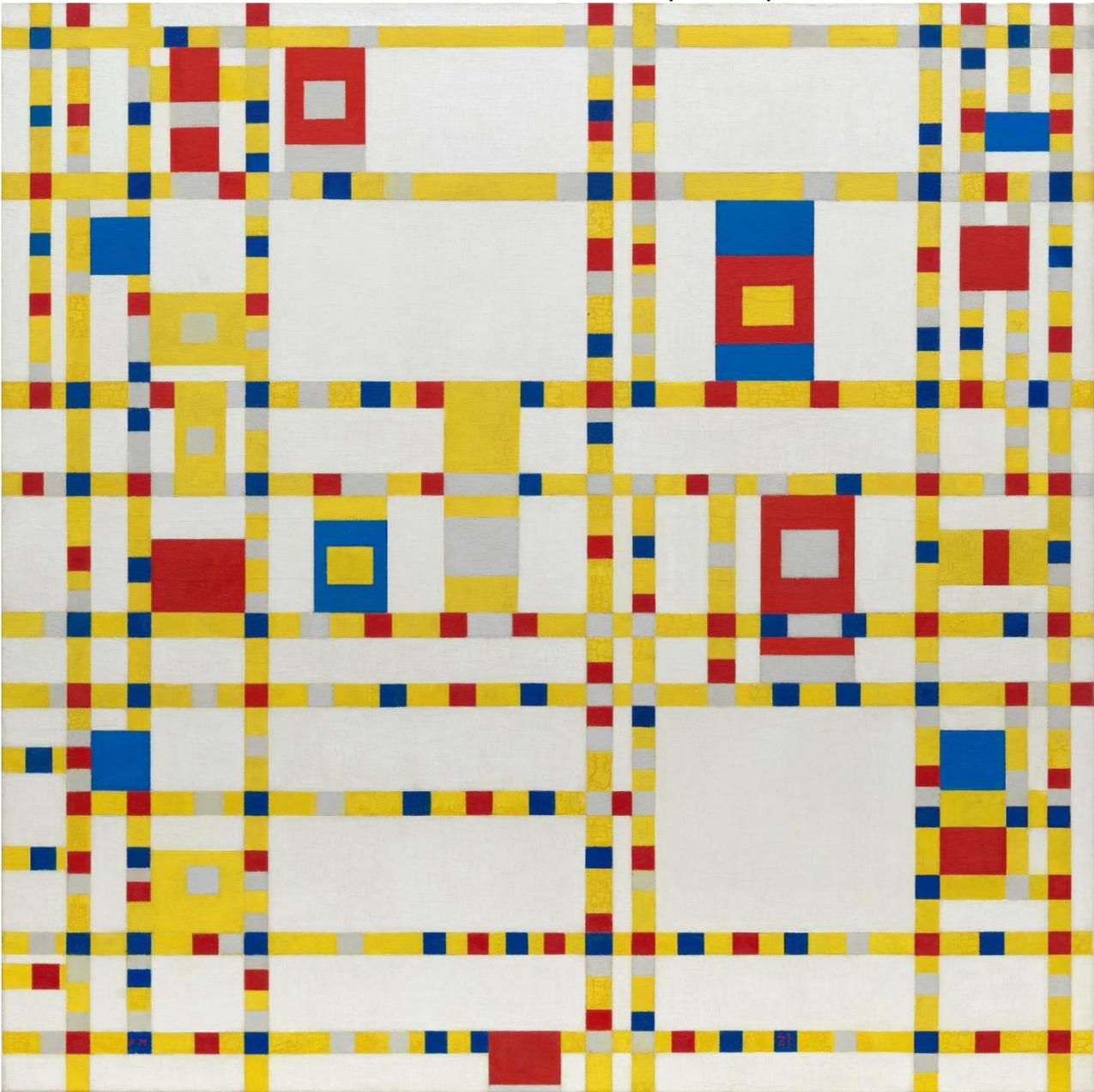


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