

Amy Ione

## *Klee and Kandinsky*

### *Polyphonic Painting, Chromatic Chords and Synaesthesia*

As an artist I admittedly scrutinize all of the theories related to the arts closely. I do this for a number of reasons. The obvious one is that I have a deeply felt personal relationship with the subject matter. Less obvious is my experience in general. My early research was motivated by a desire to discover the historical circumstances that led to the difficulty in fitting visual art (as I knew it in my studio) into the discussions I encountered. Generally, it seemed that the dominant framework trivialized what I considered the most important aspects of the creative process. Over time I concluded that developing an interdisciplinary approach offered the best option for expanding views, although it is not an easy task. Establishing areas of commonality across a range of disciplines must somehow accommodate the ways in which each has developed a research agenda that seems to serve its core needs. In consciousness studies, for example, we have a field that relies heavily on scientific research and humanistic methodologies when building the philosophical models scholars use to structure theories. This methodology is not only removed from the nuts and bolts of art, it is also easily manipulated in discourse on art due to the ease with which we can fit aspects of art (*e.g.*, aesthetics) into the philosophical framework.<sup>1</sup> Clearly this approach fits nicely with philosophically defined concepts such as meaning, emotion, and other elusive modes. In addition, using the well-honed categories aids in bracketing themes such as metaphor, interpretation, subjectivity, language and history. Nonetheless, in reading through the studies, I repeatedly conclude that the voices of practitioners need to be included to a greater degree.

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[1] Consciousness studies are generally framed in terms of science and the humanities, assuming that the arts are simply a limb of the humanities. This point of view draws significantly from C.P. Snow's *Two Cultures* presentation. Some of the problems with including art in Snow's scheme are developed by Victoria in 'Towards a Third Culture: Being in Between' (2000) and my upcoming book *Visualizing Innovation*.

It is with these thoughts in mind that this paper turns to the practices of two artists, Paul Klee and Vassily Kandinsky. These men, who appear quite similar at first glance, brought differing approaches and philosophical dispositions to their studios, writings, and teaching pursuits. Case studies that delineate their differences allow us to, albeit briefly, engage with diverging viewpoints even while we seek confluence. Thus the summaries below, while not at all representative of the totality of art, do nonetheless allow some engagement with nuanced information. Also, in an effort to relate these two men to my overall research concerns, a truncated survey of neuroscientific/consciousness themes related to the work of the artists discussed is included to round out the discussion.

### **Klee and Kandinsky**

All of us can recall the sense of exhilaration that often accompanies encountering an artistic masterpiece we previously knew only from secondary sources. If our first hearing of Beethoven's Fifth or our first visual exchange with a Cézanne painting came after developing an acquaintance with the work through descriptive accounts, we were likely reminded of the degree to which explanations suffer when compared with the artwork itself. Regardless of how skilfully our metaphors express the rhythm, tonality, colour, and texture, exposure to the authentic creation suggests the contrived representation is aptly termed a shadow or pale imitation. Invariably a translation fails to capture the way visual art connects with us in space and music pulsates in time. Even a non-verbal syntax, like the relatively recent phenomenon of musical notation, reminds us that a symbolic text can convey a compositional arrangement, but in this form the sensory vitality of the music is rigidified and silenced.

Equally fascinating are the many artists who agree that their creations defy explanation, leaving the impression that successful work is somewhat magical from their perspective as well. Projects in which an artist successfully merges sensory modalities are perhaps more intense and harder to explain in discrete terms. The variables we must address are particularly evident when we look at the work and stories of those who choose to experiment in this way. For example, Vassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) and Paul Klee (1879–1940), both painters and trained musicians, were drawn to the ways one can manipulate abstract possibilities in both art and music. Yet, although each effectively brought musicality to his painted work, when looking at the motivations of these two colleagues we find significant points of divergence.

Apparently Klee and Kandinsky first met, briefly, in Franz Stuck's painting class in the Munich Academy in the summer of 1900 (Roskill, 1992). They met again in 1911 and their professional friendship further strengthened after Klee joined the Blue Rider group (founded by Kandinsky and the painter Franz Marc) in 1912. Later the bonds between the two deepened when Klee accepted an appointment at the Bauhaus in 1921 and Kandinsky joined him in 1922. Working side-by-side for many years, both painters articulated their projects in terms of the Bauhaus aspiration to unify all of the arts, a goal they shared even before their

appointments. Indeed some claim that the resemblance between their work in the early 1920s is so close that an untrained eye might well confuse the two (Haftman, 1967). Perhaps more intriguing are the distinct variations between them that clarify on examination, despite the evidence that they often articulated similar principles. According to Roskill, ‘Klee and Kandinsky . . . [were] like a musical partnership . . . even while their “styles” of performance and commentary remained entirely different in cast.’<sup>2</sup> (Roskill, 1992, p. xvi)

In particular, Klee’s approach was based on personally felt impulses and was quite process-oriented. His hope was to ‘one day . . . be able to improvise freely on the keyboard of colours: the rows of watercolours in my paint box’ (Düchting, 1997, p. 17). His urge to work colour as one might sound led to an experimental practice often discussed in terms of his efforts to find innovative ways to group chords and express resonance. Kandinsky, by contrast, aspired to develop a vocabulary that would point toward universals. He saw art as a medium of the mystical and, to him, ‘Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul.’ (Kandinsky, 1986, p. 25) Haftman succinctly summarizes the psychological premises that defined each process, writing, ‘Kandinsky took hold of the world but remained outside it. Klee sank himself in the world.’ (Haftman, 1967).

Delving into their compositions, writings, and histories further supports this contrast. Paul Klee worked from a seed he felt within himself and endeavoured to make something precious to him, and previously invisible to others, visible. To his mind, compositional elements were tools he could use to engage all that he felt intuitively and internally. This was evident when he taught his students that ‘Not form, but forming, not form as final appearance, but form in the process of becoming, as genesis.’ (Haftman, 1967, p. 86). Playful, sardonic, and child-like, his wide-ranging variations delineate how freely he accommodated each work as it was shaped. We see this in the wiry forms in Klee’s early graphic work (e.g., his 1903 *Virgin in a tree*, and the 1914 *Instrument for New Music*), the subtle tonality of his polyphonic images (e.g., *Dynamic-Polyphonic*, 1931), done with coloured chalk on paper), and the many fantasies he presents in a secret language to illustrate the degree to which he continually strived, and succeeded, in his quest to say something novel. Whether using line variations to suggest rhythm or capturing a chromatic tonality, Klee aimed to feel the pulse of his piece and to slowly nurture it along in tune to a tempo we feel through looking at it.

Kandinsky, on the other hand, adopted a top-down approach that was echoed in his frequent use of the word *Gesetzmässigkeit* (loosely translated as law-governed character). His best known book, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, (originally published in 1911 as *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*), and later pieces demonstrate this. The work also illustrates his efforts to present his art in terms of

[2] Vassily Kandinsky’s wife, Nina, noted that although they worked as colleagues for close to thirty years, Kandinsky preserved a certain distance in his relationship with Klee, preferring the formal mode of address *Sie* to the familiar *Du*.

spiritual science.<sup>3</sup> This tract, and his other theoretical expositions, are quite unlike Klee's writings, where we find records of soul-searching and documentation of his experiments (Roskill, 1992). Kandinsky's allegiance to universalism, and his attraction to mysticism, theosophy, and other occult systems was evident in the classroom, his publications, and compositionally. When lecturing his students, Kandinsky, unlike Klee, would proceed quite deliberately. Grouping a few objects together, he would abstract from them a logical structure of lines and particles of colour. Then he would analyse this structure in terms of the pictorial means — point, line, surface, space and so on (Haftman, 1967, p. 82). Basically, to Klee's mind, the kind of structure Kandinsky was seeking to articulate through his logical, calm, and carefully constructed analysis was an intellectualised short-cut that lost sight of personal dynamism. Klee's advice to his students conveys his distaste of an analysis of structure in terms of pictorial means. He said: 'To paint well is simply this: to put the right colour in the right place.' (Kudielka, 2002, p. 32). In the *Fugue in Red*, for example, we see how he stabilizes the beat of the colours on the flat surface, evoking musicality through subtle coloration.

Even in musical terms, the contrasts are striking. Indeed, their musical tastes too show foundational disagreements. Kandinsky's equated his work with Schönberg's twelve-tone music, which made him realize that the concept of tonal harmony was undergoing a radical change, and that dissonance was becoming a means of expression on par with consonance (Maur, 1999). Kandinsky endeavoured to join this view of music with his own move toward abstraction and transcendence. As Kandinsky explains in *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911), it is his view that 'The spiritual life, to which art belongs and of which she is one of the mightiest elements, is a complicated but definite and easily definable movement forward and upwards . . . [The Artist] sees and points the way.' (Kandinsky, 1986, p. 4). Later, in *Point and Line to Plane* (1926) he elaborates on how the artist points the way to others (Kandinsky, 1979). Having asked what is to replace the objects of traditional art, Kandinsky declares it is the task of a science of art to reveal the compositional laws inherent in abstract forms, enabling the artist to discard fidelity to merely 'external' nature. His words carry his view that 'The coming period demands a more exact and objective way to make collective work in the science of art possible.' (Kandinsky, 1979, p. 76).

Klee, on the other hand, was convinced that the modern music of his day, which Kandinsky applauded, was too academic and overly dictated by educational theory. For this reason Klee focused on developing an abstract, visually based language based on historical musical models. His move to create cross-disciplinary harmonies clearly diverged from those of his colleague, who was not seeking innovation so much as fulfilment of his desire to blend the arts into an all-inclusive spiritually felt meshing of sensations. Moreover, Kandinsky's systematisation of a tonal harmony that coincided with his

[3] A compelling overview of Kandinsky's interest in the spiritual and how this influenced his practices is offered by Ringbom in 'Transcending the Visible: The Generation of Abstract Painters' (1987).

elevation of an objective, mystical science outside of nature represented precisely the kinds of academic equation Klee reviled. Klee believed that musical development had already passed its prime, going downhill after Mozart. He acknowledged that he deliberately chose painting over music in the belief that innovative possibilities were emerging in visual abstraction, while music was going in the wrong direction. His animated expressions show he nonetheless adeptly made his choice in a way that combined both modalities. Inserting a musical quality, Klee's artwork is distinct from both the art and music of earlier epochs. Beyond a doubt, it is very much of his time. Indeed, his special way of tuning the visual to the musical articulated how ably he put together projects that aligned with his personal sensitivities more than a communal style. His accomplishments are particularly evident in the overlapping qualities he used to combine qualities of both art forms, perhaps most clearly articulated in the structures he derived to refine his variations of themes, something which he noticed above all in the polyphonic fugue (Düchting, 1997, p. 14).

### **Klee, Kandinsky, and Consciousness**

Equally striking is the way each artist intersects with the cognitive neuroscience and consciousness studies literature. Topics that stand out include the relationship between science and spirituality as well as unresolved issues such as emergence and binding. Perhaps the most pronounced distinction comes through when we compare Kandinsky's urge to depict transcendence with Klee's view that 'For the artist communication with nature remains the most essential condition. The artist is human; himself nature; part of nature within natural space.' (Klee, 1969/1925, p. 7). Clearly Klee's embrace of personal process differs from Kandinsky's aim to build 'a spiritual pyramid which would some day reach to heaven' (Kandinsky, 1986, p. 20). Nuances that distinguish them further clarify the distance between a science of art grounded in the mystical (Kandinsky) and a practice that relies on experimentation (Klee).

Kandinsky's aspiration to give form to universal tenets using the 'scientific method' comes up frequently in consciousness debates. His legacy also offers one example of the weak empirical foundations often used in these arguments. This artist's efforts to formulate 'objective' statements that he saw in terms of a science of art, although systematic, are not scientifically convincing. As Roskill points out, in pressing for the existence of a pictorial logic grounded in scientific laws, while at the same time rejecting the positivistic tenor of latter-day science, Kandinsky's argument slips and slides: it breaks up into opposites and alternatives pursuing logic along a flexibly shifting thread, but also giving space to digressions that seem based on free association between one topic and another (Roskill, 1992, p. 40). Given this, it is difficult to interpret Kandinsky's laws as we would a laboratory science, which in part explains why scientists have often considered the techniques he speaks about as metaphorical at best and (more

often) closer to the metaphysical and mystical.<sup>4</sup> Still, since Kandinsky often talked of his experiences with synaesthesia, we can endeavour to position this aspect of his experience in terms of current scientific research and philosophical debates (Ione & Tyler, 2003; 2004).

The specific condition we term synaesthesia occurs when an individual receives a stimulus in one sense modality and experiences a sensation in another. Generally, philosophical interpretations have built on what Aristotle termed ‘*Sensus Communis*’, a theoretical position many continue to reference in some form when seeking to update theories about sensory unity.<sup>5</sup> For example, twenty-five years ago, Lawrence E. Marks begins his book *The Unity of the Senses: Interrelations among the Modalities* with a summary of his theoretical position, writing,

What is ‘the unity of the senses?’ Simply stated, it is the *thesis* that the senses have a lot in common. . . . The unity of the senses is perhaps a *theory*, but even more importantly is a way of looking at sensory functioning: It is a viewpoint that pulls together a host of phenomena. . . . My goal is to assemble all of its parts, to show how the unity of the senses expresses itself in perception, in phenomenology, in psychophysics, in neurophysiology. (Marks, 1978, p. ix) [*italics added*]

More recently, Richard E. Cytowic’s *Synaesthesia: A Union of the Senses* (2002)<sup>6</sup> updates Marks’ theory and also pairs synaesthesia with art. He writes that ‘Both synaesthesia and the artistic experience are ineffable, and both indescribable by language.’ (Cytowic, 2002, p. 319). Furthermore, according to Cytowic, ‘when we say that art speaks to the depths of our souls — it speaks to

- [4] A particularly problematic aspect of his argument is that it is based on the unscientific assumption that artists are seers who glimpse a higher truth and reveal it to others through the pieces that they create. See *Nature Exposed to our Method of Questioning* for an analysis of the problems inherent in this argument (Ione, 2002)
- [5] Aristotle introduced this term in the first part of *On Memory and Reminiscence* and thus we can date the philosophical legacy in the West back to him. He explained the idea saying that ‘Why we cannot exercise the intellect on any object absolutely apart from the continuous, or apply it even to non-temporal things unless in connexion with time, is another question. Now, one must cognize magnitude and motion by means of the same faculty by which one cognizes time (i.e. by that which is also the faculty of memory), and the presentation (involved in such cognition) is an affection of the *sensus communis*; whence this follows, viz. that the cognition of these objects (magnitude, motion time) is effected by the (said *sensus communis*, i.e. the) primary faculty of perception. Accordingly, memory (not merely of sensible, but) even of intellectual objects involves a presentation: hence we may conclude that it belongs to the faculty of intelligence only incidentally, while directly and essentially it belongs to the primary faculty of sense-perception’. This line of thought has been continually updated as the philosophical tradition refined its concepts. For example, Immanuel Kant writes in his *Critique of Judgment*: ‘we must [here] take *sensus communis* to mean the idea of a sense *shared* [by all of us], i.e., a power to judge that in reflecting takes account (*a priori*), in our thought, of everyone else’s way of presenting [something], in order *as it were* to compare our own judgment with human reason in general. . . . Now, we do this as follows: we compare our judgment not so much with the actual as rather with the merely possible judgments of others, and [thus] put ourselves in the position of everyone else. . . .’ (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner Pluhar, p160; Ak. 293–4). Harry T. Hunt again revisits these ideas in *On the Nature of Consciousness* (1995). Hunt, too, expands the theoretical focus, seeing the idea in terms of symbolic cognition, Romantic imagination, aesthetics, and consciousness.
- [6] This revised edition of his 1989 publication with the same title speaks to Marks’ abstraction theory directly.

that greater formless part of ourselves of which we have no awareness' (Cytowic, 2002, p. 306). These broad statements are hardly built upon a scientific foundation. They do, however, equate nicely with Kandinsky's urge to place artistic sensitivity in a transcendent realm that we cannot speak about directly. Ironically, in making these blanket assumptions Cytowic open a space for placing synaesthesia in terms of the all-embracing mysticism Kandinsky elevated. Whether or not this is an explicit intention, views that are founded on theories outside of our awareness are arguably unarguable.<sup>7</sup>

V.S. Ramachandran, one of the most exciting researchers working on synaesthesia (Ramachandran & Hubbard, 2000; 2001), offers some comments that suggest interpreters should assert more care when drawing conclusions about synaesthesia. As he explains, 'you can't use one mystery in science to explain another mystery' (Romano, 2002) and that 'synaesthesia is just metaphor [it] doesn't explain anything because we have no idea how metaphors are represented in the brain. . . research has shown there is a neural basis for synaesthesia and provided an experimental foothold' (Romano, 2002). To my knowledge Ramachandran and other researchers have not yet developed experiments that are refined enough to probe whether a deeper understanding of the artist's brain could point to information that goes beyond establishing a neural basis for synaesthesia.

Indeed it seems likely that artistic experiments might have much to say about binding or brain plasticity given the many who have stated it is possible to develop and/or increase cross-modal awareness through working toward this end in one's studio. For example, Jack Ox is an intermedia artist who has been experimenting for over twenty years with how to combine different media into one. She claims that now it is easy and natural for her to *see* sonic forms (Ox, 1999, p. 7). Kandinsky likewise claimed he saw colours (he refers to 'my colours' when explaining his experience of a Wagner opera).<sup>8</sup> Yet, although he claimed he was a synaesthete, some now say Kandinsky was not a 'natural' so much as one who developed his abilities through associative techniques aimed at enhancing sensory exchange, much like one might develop relative pitch. While we can't test him, pencilled notes in his books that spoke of exercises one could do to enhance the experiences and offer some support of this idea.<sup>9</sup> Even the titles of his works (*e.g.*, *Improvisations, Impressions, and Compositions*) evoke music and accentuate his desire to bring the essence of cross-modal experience to a wider audience.

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- [7] *Nature Exposed to our Method of Questioning* (2002) offers a broad overview of the many implicit assumptions that elevate spirituality in discussions of philosophy, art, and science.
- [8] Kandinsky described the impact of an 1896 performance of Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin* in Moscow, saying: 'The violins, the deep tones of the basses, and especially the wind instruments at that time embodied for me all the power of that pre-nocturnal hour. I saw all my *colours* in my mind; they stood before my eyes. Wild, almost crazy lines were sketched in front of me' (Kandinsky, 1913, p. 364 [italics added]).
- [9] These ideas are further developed in 'Is Kandinsky a Synaesthete?' and 'Synaesthesia: is F-Sharp Colored Violet?' (Ione & Tyler, 2003; 2004).

Klee's techniques, on the other hand, stimulate thoughts about psychophysically designed experiments, along the lines pioneered by J.J. Gibson (Gibson, 1950; 1987). Some may argue that Gibson's work is now somewhat peripheral to research highlighting cognitive operations (Zeki, 2001). A counter argument would be that his interest in the world we see is relevant to visual arts precisely because the artist establishes an environmental relationship with the artwork while constructing it. Klee, who never aspired to call his approach science, talks about his far-reaching experiments with colour and form without attempting to adopt an empirical facade. His words instead suggest he revised his motifs as he constructed them, continually adjusting elements in order to tease out intense visual reactions. The abstract, subtle relationships that resulted, as such, are hard to characterize but do, nonetheless, evoke complex chords, rhythms, and tonal variations.<sup>10</sup> Placing these modalities in terms of higher cognition and symbolic language seems to rigidify the objects he made more than it allows us to recognize their musical vitality. To side-step the degree to which he formed an active relationship with each developing work would be particularly naïve in light of what we know of his teaching method, as discussed above. To be sure, his work appears deceptively simple at first glance. What makes the originals striking is that the imagery is so infused with the delicate rhythms and intricate counterpoint of musical composition that the symbolic language becomes secondary. Our experience of Klee's virtuosity confirms he achieved his goal of playing colour like a 'chromatic keyboard'.<sup>11</sup> Clearly, working on his own terms, Klee became one of the most original technicians and innovators among the earlier abstract expressionist artists of the twentieth century. Reviewing his motifs, moreover, we find that they demonstrate that Klee continually re-examined his personal themes and re-evaluated his forms as he derived his visual elements. His *oeuvre* seems to suggest a mind capable of seemingly limitless invention.

[10] Artists who do representational work demonstrate yet another reason to inject psychophysical research into the mix. For example, it is generally agreed that Edward Degas had a condition called retinopathy. Michael Marmor's *Degas Through His Own Eye* (2002) shows how this artist's visual acuity changed as he matured. Marmor, an ophthalmologist, convincingly refutes Degas' personal conviction that the differences in vision are of no importance to the artist. As he explains, despite Degas' assertion that inner vision determined the nature of an artist's work, his decreasing visual acuity resulted in precisely the kind of crudeness in composition clinically associated with retinopathy. This is particularly evident when we compare the flawless rendering of his early work with the grotesque figures he painted at the end of his life. One mature painting Marmor discusses at length is *Madame Alexis Rouart and Her Children*. Despite many modeling sessions, their faces look deformed in the finished painting. Marmor uses computer simulations to hypothesize that they images might have looked quite correct to the painter.

[11] Also striking is the way his small compositions rarely attempt to resolve large issues. The tension between simplicity and complexity further belies their size and makes them difficult to interpret. Ranging from small watercolors to linear, geometric, and mosaic-like motifs in his career, Klee's work eventually culminated in a simplified, flatly painted and broadly drawn series of gouaches and oils done between 1935 and 1940. This style came about when he suffered from a progressive skin and muscular disease. In summary, the translation of motifs taken from nature into free, rhythmical linear structures and tonal values is based on the principle of rhythm: a vision the artist distilled from his knowledge of the rudiments of music.

### Conclusion

Placing these artists into an art and consciousness framework is a tricky proposition and far beyond the scope of this short paper. In concluding, however, it seems imperative to note that the vast range of perspectives on art suggest that the kind of universalism many consciousness thinkers desire must somehow be squared with the pluralistic, cultural activity that has led others to suggest that a theoretical construct might not be an achievable or even a desirable goal. For example, in *But is it art?: An Introduction to Art Theory*, Cynthia Freeland writes ‘My strategy here is to highlight the rich diversity of art, in order to convey the difficulty of coming up with suitable theories.’ (Freeland, 2001, p. xvii). Similarly, in *the Art Question*, Nigel Warburton writes:

The most plausible hypothesis is that ‘art’ is indefinable not just at the exhibited level, but at the relational non-exhibited level, too. There is no simple argument that will lead irresistibly to this conclusion, but the inadequacies of a range of existing definitions, together with the ever-changing nature of art, make this conclusion likely (Warburton, 2002, p. 121).<sup>12</sup>

This is not to say that studies in cognitive neuroscience/consciousness do not add to our understanding of art. I believe they add immensely. Moreover, in my view, including information about brain processing the range of viewpoints is an important step.<sup>13</sup> It aids in formulating questions that have the potential to foster a closer relationship with art (as well as consciousness). Questions we might raise include: Are we interested in Art only as an aesthetic modality in terms defined by the philosophical tradition? When speaking of cognitive operations, do we benefit more from examining the arts individually or in tandem? Is it possible for reductive examinations of cognitive operations to mesh with the experiential and contextual environment in which art is produced/appreciated? Are discussions that adopt axiomatic assumptions about what art IS weighed down by their initial definitions? In other words, there remain many avenues through which we can approach the subject. More succinctly, one approach might assert unequivocally that art IS ‘a higher cognitive process, a fully human kind of symbolic language’.<sup>14</sup> Another, and I see myself in this category, rejects the inference that we know precisely what art is and what we need to explain.<sup>15</sup> As I have explained in earlier publications (Ione, 1999; 2000a,b; 2001; 2003a; 2003b,c;

[12] A good reference for the range of views is *Theories of Art Today* (Carroll, 2000), a collection of articles by contemporary philosophers of art (Dickie, Danto, Davies, Stecker). This publication offers a survey of the major voices in regard to art theory. As a whole this book demonstrates that it seems premature to conclude that there is some agreement on what we mean by art and aesthetics in the contemporary world. The *Art in Theory* series (Harrison & Wood, 1993; Harrison, Wood & Gaiger, 1998; 2001) also offers arguments detailing major themes from 1648–1990.

[13] The two issues on art and the brain published by the *Journal of Consciousness Studies* demonstrate this well. Also of interest from a consciousness perspective are Robert Solso’s *Cognition and the Visual Arts* (1994) and *The Psychology of Art and the Evolution of the Conscious Brain* (2003), Margaret Livingstone’s *Vision and Art: The Psychology of Seeing* (2002), and Semir Zeki’s *Inner Visions: An Exploration of Art and the Brain* (1999).

[14] This comment was included in an anonymous review of an earlier version of this paper.

[15] Footnotes 12 and 13 support the view that there is no consensus on how we should characterize art

Ione & Tyler, 2003), I do not see that the lack of a precise definition precludes establishing points of conjunction that will aid in our understanding of both art and cognitive neuroscience. Instead, looking directly at the work artists do, particularly closely paired contemporaries like Klee and Kandinsky, reveals there is evidence to support the idea that a number of approaches to art exist. This essay does not pretend to comprehensively examine or resolve the theoretical issues related to them. Nor is it a detailed response to the long-standing debates on the question of whether we should view the arts as distinct or harmonious. It does, however, aim to offer information that can aid in building a richer relationship with the complexity of art. Surveying how Paul Klee and Vassily Kandinsky, two trained musicians, related visual art and music also illustrates how foundations might overlap and display conceptual variations nonetheless.<sup>16</sup>

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