

# The Dreaming

Aboriginal Art of Australia

# Australia

The first people of Australia arrived on the continent at least 44,000 years ago, making aboriginal culture the oldest continuous culture on earth. Europeans didn't get there until 1606.















# The Dreaming

**Dreaming** (also **The Dreaming**, **The Dreamings** and **Dreamtime**) is a term devised by early anthropologists to refer to [Australian Aboriginal beliefs](#). The Dreaming is used to represent Aboriginal concepts of Everywhen during which the land was inhabited by ancestral figures, often of heroic proportions or with supernatural abilities. These figures were often distinct from Gods as they did not control the material world and were not [worshipped](#), but only [revered](#). The concept of the dreamtime has subsequently become widely adopted beyond its original Australian context and is now part of global popular culture.

# Everywhen

The Dreaming embraces time past, present and future, a substantively different concept from as “timeless” or having taken place at the so-called “dawn of time”.

“When a baby is conceived, it might be in an important Rain Dreaming place, then they call that child Rain Dreaming. The child came into being in that Rain Dreaming site”. “The Dreaming is, however, more than just an explanation of cultural norms, and where we came from. The Dreaming is a complete guide to life and living - it is an encyclopedia of the world. It is not just stories - it is art, songs, dance; it is written into the land itself.

"Through the Dreaming we are taught knowledge of plants and animals, to us many of the flowering plants are treated as signs of animals available to hunt, fish about to appear, fruits about to ripen; the movement of the stars foretells the changing of weather, the birth of animals, the time for ceremony and gatherings.

"The Dreaming completely surrounds us, we are shown proof of it everyday. It's not some old book written thousands of years ago, it is the living world itself. The Dreaming belongs to every Aboriginal person - it isn't the sacred property of a few priests/rabbis/imams, it is the property of everyone - every ceremony, every right, every tradition, every bit of knowledge is destined to be known to an individual sometime within their lifetime.

# Songlines

Songlines connect places and Creation events, and the ceremonies associated with those places. [Oral history](#) about places and the journeys are carried in song cycles, and each Aboriginal person has obligations to their birthplace. The songs become the basis of the ceremonies that are enacted in those specific places along the Songlines. A songline has been called a "dreaming track", as it marks a route across the land or sky followed by one of the creator-beings or ancestors in the Dreaming.

A knowledgeable person is able to navigate across the land by repeating the words of the song, which describe the location of landmarks, [waterholes](#), and other natural phenomena. In some cases, the paths of the creator-beings are said to be evident from their marks on the land, such as large depressions are said to be their footprints.

By singing the songs in the appropriate sequence, Aboriginal people could navigate vast distances, often travelling through the deserts of Australia's interior. The continent of Australia contains an extensive system of songlines, some of which are of a few km, while others cross hundreds of km through lands of [many different Aboriginal peoples](#) — peoples who may speak markedly different languages and have different cultural traditions.

Since a songline can span the lands of several different language groups, different parts of the song are said to be in those different languages. **Languages are not a barrier because the melodic contour of the song describes the nature of the land over which the song passes. The rhythm is what is crucial to understanding the song.** Listening to the song of the land is the same as walking on this songline and observing the land.

























Emu Track  
/ Spear



Rainbow  
/ Cloud



Possum  
Track



Rain



Star / Sun



Waterhole  
/ Campsite



Fire / Smoke  
Water



Kangaroo  
Track

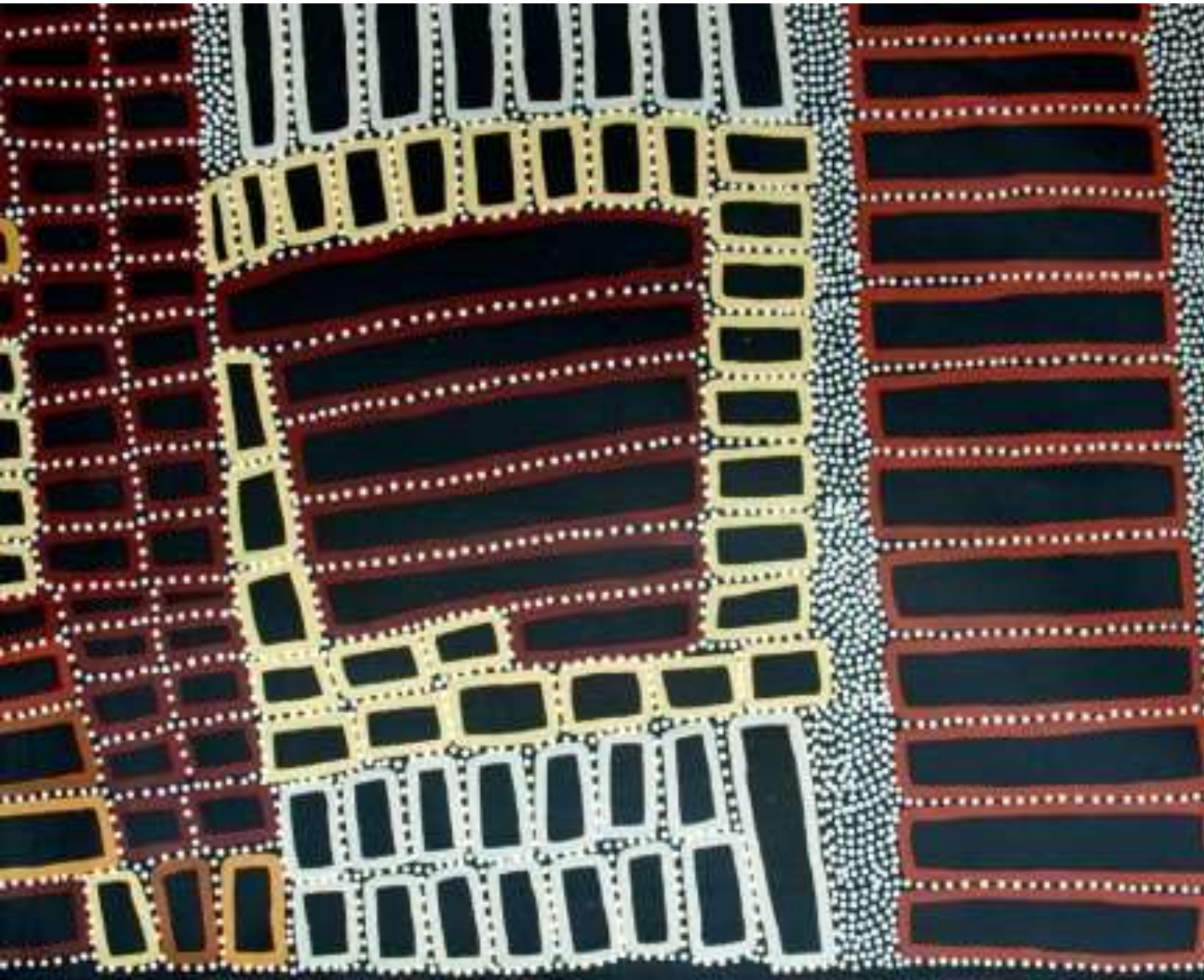


Human  
Track



Man  
/ Woman









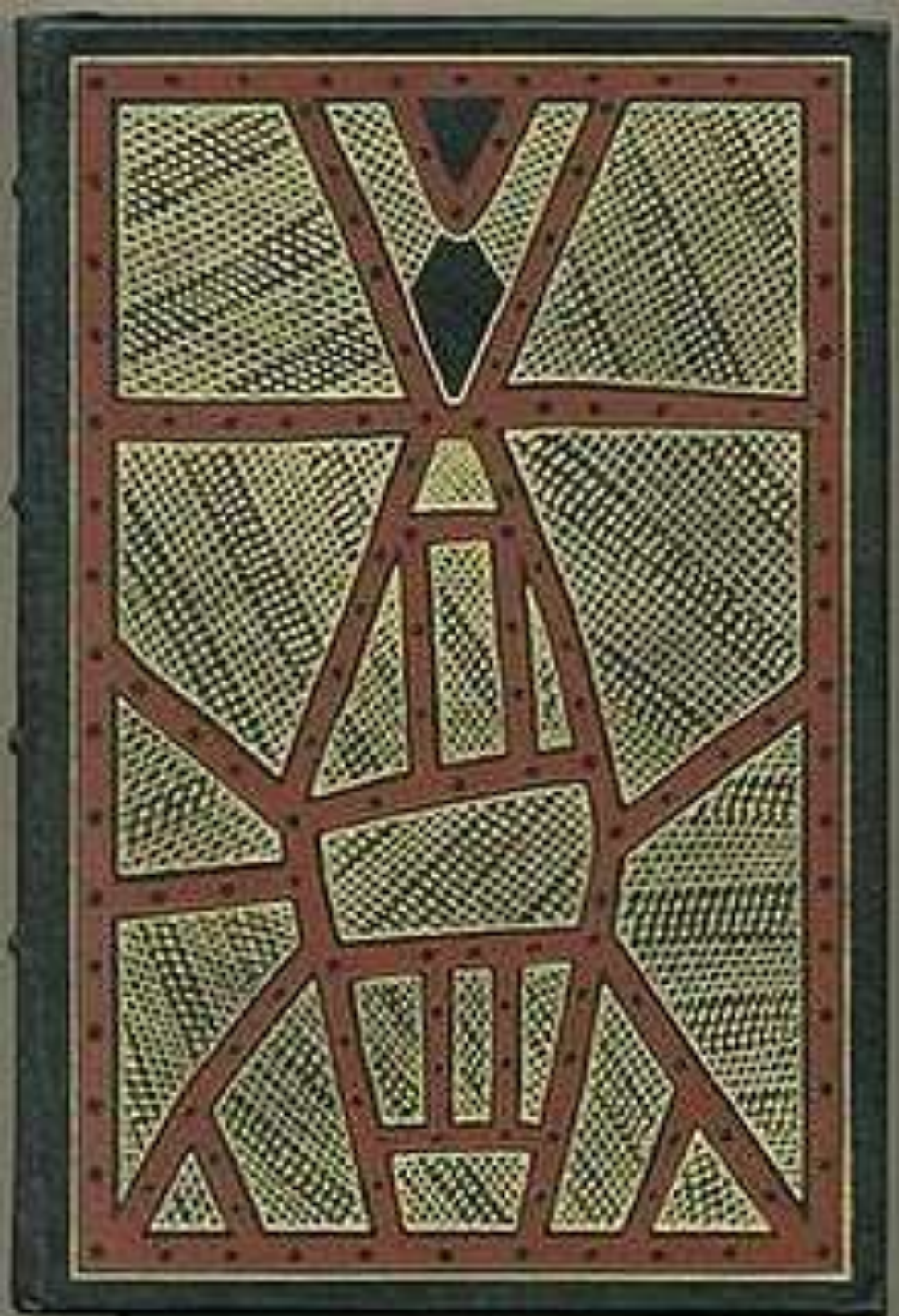


















































# Songline References

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZGu7z2-XEU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYziHh98AC8>
- <https://japingkaaboriginalart.com/articles/songlines-important-aboriginal-art/>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52T\\_rnZk378](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52T_rnZk378)



# Vassily Kandinski (1866-1944)





Wassily Kandinsky was a Russian painter and art theorist. Kandinsky is generally credited as the pioneer of abstract art. Born in Moscow, Kandinsky spent his childhood in Odessa, where he graduated at Grekov Odessa Art school. He spent time in Munich and Moscow before moving to France, where he spent the rest of his life.



# Synesthesia

**Synesthesia** is a condition in which one sense (for example, hearing) is simultaneously perceived as if by one or more additional senses such as sight. Another form of **synesthesia** joins objects such as letters, shapes, numbers or people's names with a sensory perception such as smell, color or flavor.



# Hissing paint box

The correlation between sound and color was a lifelong preoccupation for the artist. He recalled hearing a strange hissing noise when mixing colors in his paint box as a child, and later became an accomplished cello player, which he said represented one of the deepest blues of all instruments.

He likened painting to composing music in the manner for which he would become noted, writing, "Color 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"



































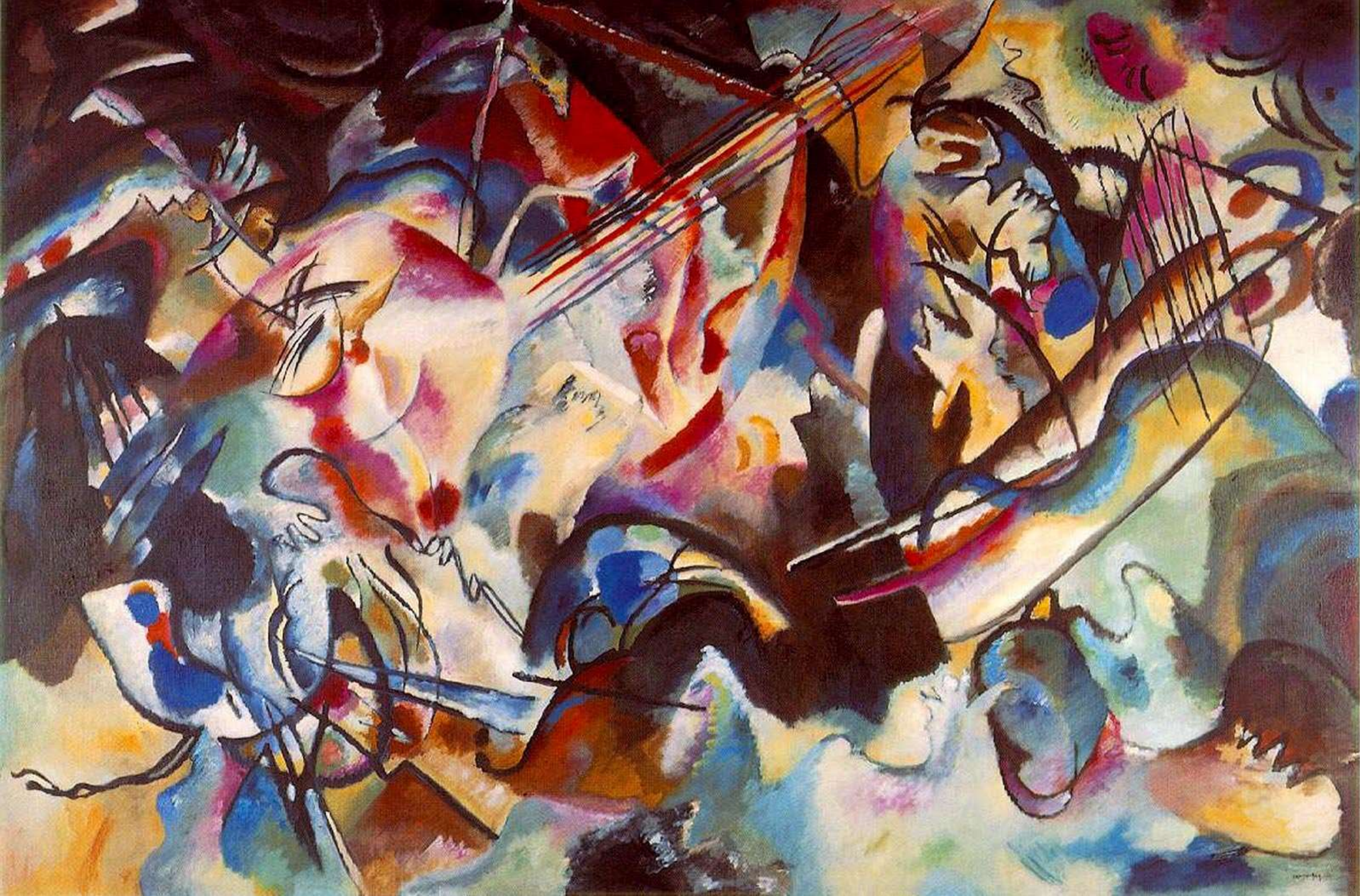




# Composition VI

Kandinsky was working on his *Composition VI* for nearly six months of study and preparation. He had intended the work to evoke a flood, baptism, destruction, and rebirth simultaneously. After outlining the work on a mural-sized wood panel, he became blocked and could not go on. Münter told him that he was trapped in his intellect and not reaching the true subject of the picture. She suggested he simply repeat the word *uberflut* ("deluge" or "flood") and focus on its sound rather than its meaning. Repeating this word like a mantra, Kandinsky painted and completed the monumental work in a three-day span.















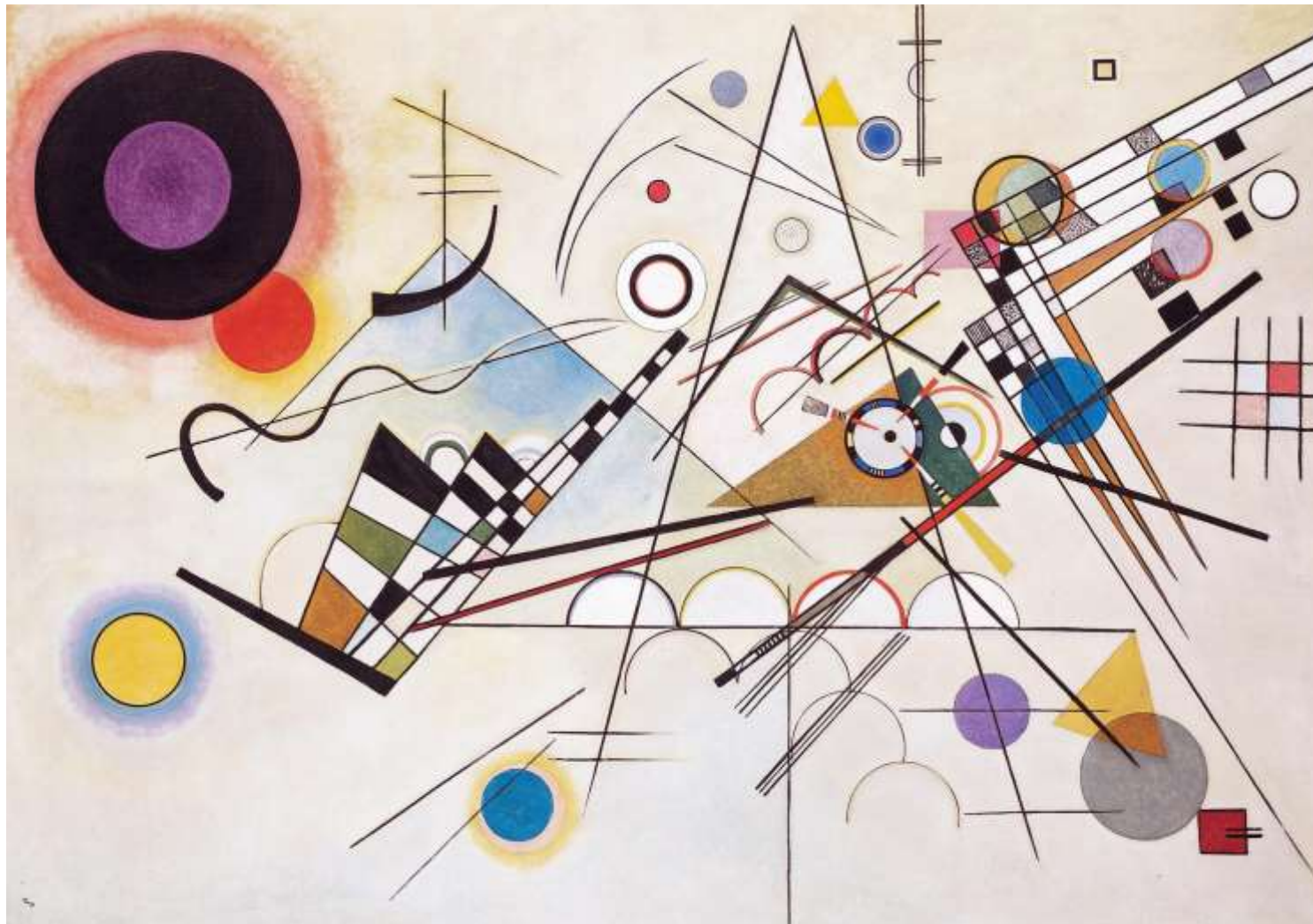








# Composition VIII









# References for Kandinsky

- <https://interlude.hk/music-art-schoenberg-kandinsky/>
- <https://www.wassilykandinsky.net/work-50.php>



# Assignment suggestions

- Explore your own soundtrack for an artwork. Listen to music or sounds that inspire you. Follow the rhythm, movement or beat in your composition.
- Explore dot painting or bark painting styles. Use items other than paintbrushes to make marks on paper or a canvas (sticks, Q-tips, fingers, etc.)
- Create a symbolic map of where you live.
- Explore or create natural pigments and use them in an art piece.
- <https://naturalearthpaint.com/recipes/>