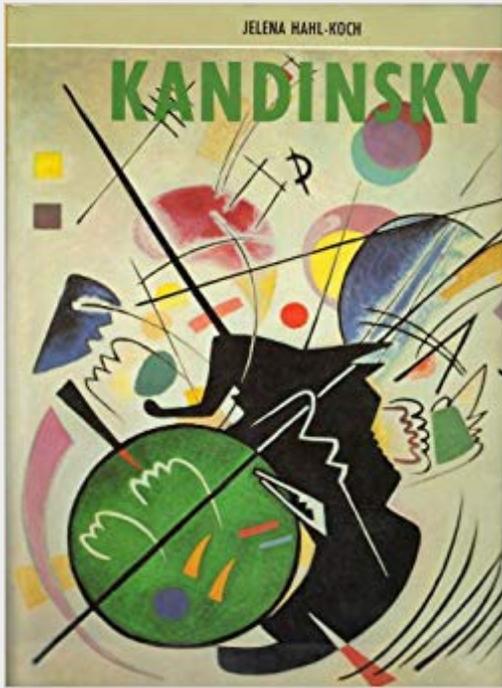


## Kandinsky by Jelena Hahl-Koch



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Kandinsky's rich, trail-blazing work and complex personality have compelled attention ever since the controversy surrounding his first abstract paintings of 1911, when the press labelled him a "bluffer" and a "madman." In his native Russia, the Communists ostracized him as a "formalist," while the Nazis exhibited his work as "Degenerate Art." Member of the Blaue Reiter and the Bauhaus, close ally of Franz Marc and Paul Klee, Kandinsky influenced virtually the entire spectrum of modern art; but for decades much of his *oeuvre* languished unseen in museum depots and private hands in the former Soviet Union. The opening up of the old USSR in 1989 brought in its wake the first-ever Kandinsky retrospective in his homeland, drawing on the untapped resources of Moscow's and St. Petersburg's museums and on many provincial and private collections. Works unseen for decades and presumed lost, and others totally unknown, were brought to light. Perceptions of Kandinsky were transformed overnight. This is the first monograph on Kandinsky to take into account the latest findings from Russia and Eastern Europe. Many works never before reproduced, from the East and from private collections in the West, are included. Kandinsky's own words, including extracts from hitherto unpublished manuscripts, are used as commentary on his paintings: for the artist was also an excellent writer, who remains the best interpreter of his own art. The most up-to-date studies are incorporated to shed light on vehemently disputed areas of Kandinsky's life and thought-- such as the exact nature and extent of his debt to Madame Blavatsky's occultism and the influence of his ideas on his abstract aesthetic. Abstract art as it is today is largely the product of Vasily Kandinsky's endeavors. Now, almost fifty years after his death, we at last have the chance to gain a true perspective on the breadth and profundity of this pioneer of modernist painting.



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