



Mondrian Exhibition

Dementia inclusive in-home resource

Introduction

Welcome to our Mondrian focused, dementia inclusive in-home resource designed as an aid for carers and health professionals. This year, the National Gallery of Ireland has the honour of hosting the first exhibition of works by the Dutch painter Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) in Ireland. We hope you have the opportunity to see the exhibition before it finishes on the 14 February.

We have put this resource together to help participants comprehend and enjoy of the works through discussion and practice based exercises. This document can be used as a pre-visit resource or for those of you who won't have the opportunity to see the show. To further explore the works, you can book a discussion and practical session with a member of the Gallery's education team via Zoom. See **page 13** for more details.

For this resource, we focused on three key artworks in the exhibition. These works demonstrate Mondrian's evolution as an artist. You may be surprised to learn that his early work was naturalistic and featured landscapes in his native Netherlands before he progressed to producing his famous, grid like abstract paintings in the 1920s.

Using this Resource

For a full and comprehensive guide to leading a session using our resources, we would recommend that you look at our general, in-home resource on our website.

<https://www.nationalgallery.ie/what-we-do/education-department/access-programme/dementia-home-activity>



Ten things to know about Piet Mondrian

1. **Piet Mondrian** (1872 -1944) was a Dutch painter who is regarded today as one of the greatest and most influential artists of the 20th century.
2. He is renowned for his **abstract**, grid-like paintings with squares and rectangles displaying the primary colours, blue, red and yellow.
3. **1872** was the year of his birth. He was born in Amersvoort in the Netherlands.
4. He went to **art school**. He enrolled at the Academy for Fine Art in Amsterdam in 1892.
5. His early work was **naturalistic** and consisted of pastoral scenes, windmills, fields, and rivers.
6. He moved to **Paris** in 1912 and was inspired by the work of artists such as Pablo Picasso and George Braque .
7. Mondrian was one of the founders of **De Stijl** or The Style. This was an art movement that promoted abstract art. Abstract art does not represent the real world. Instead, the colours, lines and shapes you see in these artworks are inspired by concepts.
8. In 1919, after spending the 1st World War years in the Netherlands, Mondrian returned to Paris. It was at this time Mondrian began producing his famous **grid-based paintings**.
9. In 1940 Mondrian left Europe for **New York**.
10. Mondrian died of pneumonia on the 1st of February **1944**.



The Royal Wax Candle Factory (1895)



About the painting:

- This painting is an oil on **canvas** on **cardboard**.
- It was painted By Mondrian in **1895**.
- The factory stood on
the Boerenwetering canal in **Amsterdam**.
- **The chimneys** indicate that this is a collection of industrial buildings.
- Mondrian made **drawings** of the complex when he lived across from it.
- This view is built up of blocks of grey and brown.

Points of discussion

- What do you think of the style of the painting? Mondrian uses a limited palette of greys and browns. Perhaps he is trying to relay the grim conditions of industrial work at this time?
- Most cities and towns have industrial buildings and they have been depicted in the works of many artists. Even though these buildings are not meant to be beautiful, how do you feel about these buildings appearing in artworks?
- It's interesting that Mondrian doesn't include any people in this painting. Is this effective? Do you think workers coming and going from the factory would add to the painting?

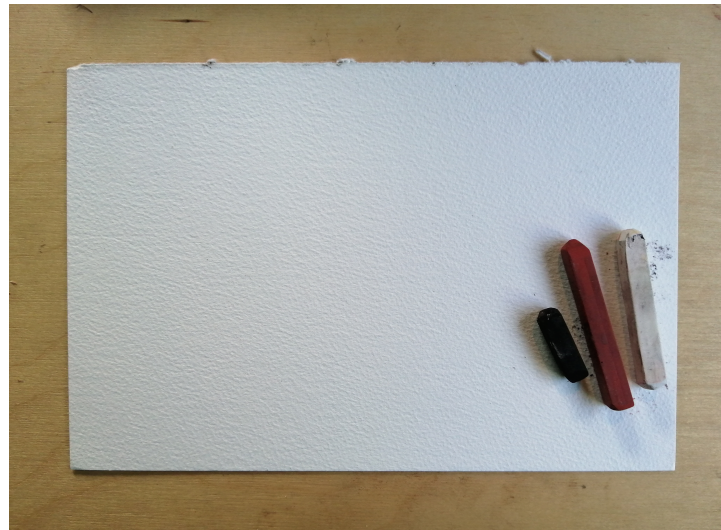
Activity - Drawing Exercise

Drawing an industrial building with limited colours.

Materials needed: Brown and black chalk, a white sheet of paper.

1. Imagine an industrial building with chimneys beside by a river.

2. Use the brown chalk to **lightly** draw the outline of the building.
3. Use the black chalk to colour in the chimneys to make them stand out.
4. Draw the reflection of the towers in the water using black chalk.
5. Use the black chalk for the chimney smoke. You can use your finger to smudge the smoke.



Church Tower at Domburg (1911)



About the painting:

- This is a view of the village church in **Domburg**, a coastal village located in the Dutch province of Zeeland.
- Mondrian stayed in the village from late August to late **October 1910**.
- There is a clear change of direction in this work. He is interested in an abstract style; this is apparent in how he paints the sky.
- In this painting, Mondrian is considering how the colours change at different times of day. Here he depicts how a building looks in the evening sunlight. The brick building glows pink.
- The pink church contrasts with vibrant blue and green sky.

- Mondrian completed this work in 1911, having left Domburg

Points of discussion

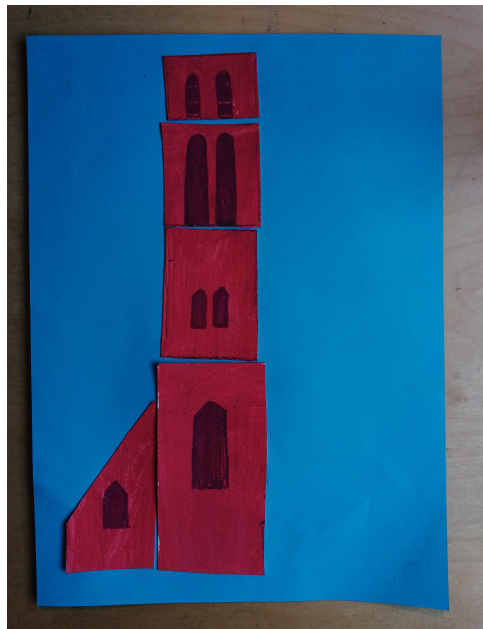
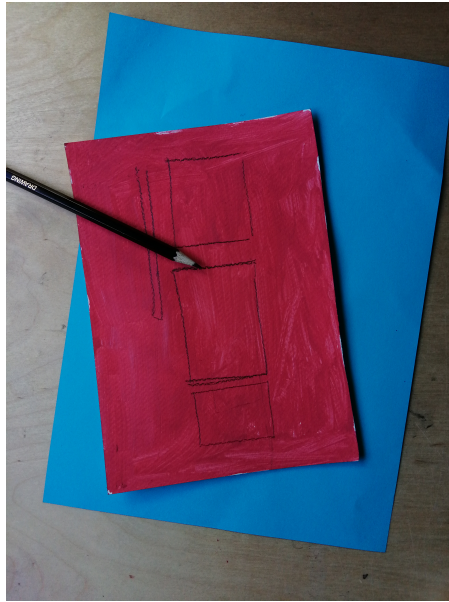
- What do you think of the style of the painting? Mondrian is accurate when depicting the church, but the sky is unusual. How do you feel about that?
- Mondrian puts an emphasis on the depiction of the changing qualities of light. Did you think this when you first saw it?
- How does it compare to the first work you saw?

Activity - Drawing and Collage Exercise

Create a church tower in the style of Mondrian

Materials needed : Dark blue, light blue and pink paper, glue, scissors, a pencil and green markers.

1. Using your pencil, draw some rectangles into your pink sheet of paper and then cut them out using the scissors.
2. Stick the pieces down vertically on the light blue sheet. Draw in your windows with a marker.
3. Cut pieces of dark and light blue paper out in the shape of windows and stick them down. The dark windows on the bottom and light ones on top.
4. Finally, colour the sky with a green marker and leave areas of blue. If you want to do more collage, cut out some shapes using your dark blue paper and stick them down.



Composition with large Red Plane Yellow, Black Gray and Blue (1921)



About the painting:

- Mondrian is most renowned for his abstract work. He began producing **grid-based** paintings like this one in late 1919, and in 1920.
- He had returned to live in **Paris** at this time after spending the war years (1914 -1918) in his native Netherlands.
- Mondrian had a reputation for using white and primary colours. However, often the colours he used were not strictly primary and the white was actually grey.
- In this painting the divisions between colours are not sharply defined and the gridlines do not meet the canvas edges.
- Mondrian later adopted the term Neo-Plasticism (New Art) for his abstractions

Points of discussion

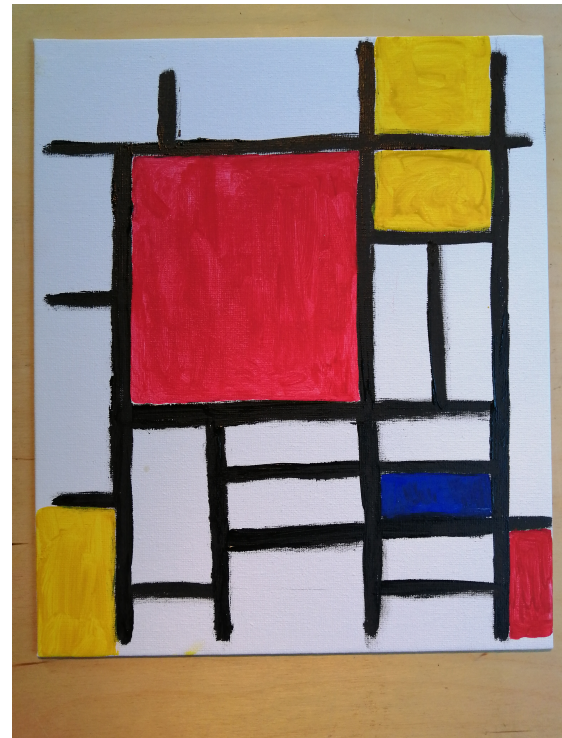
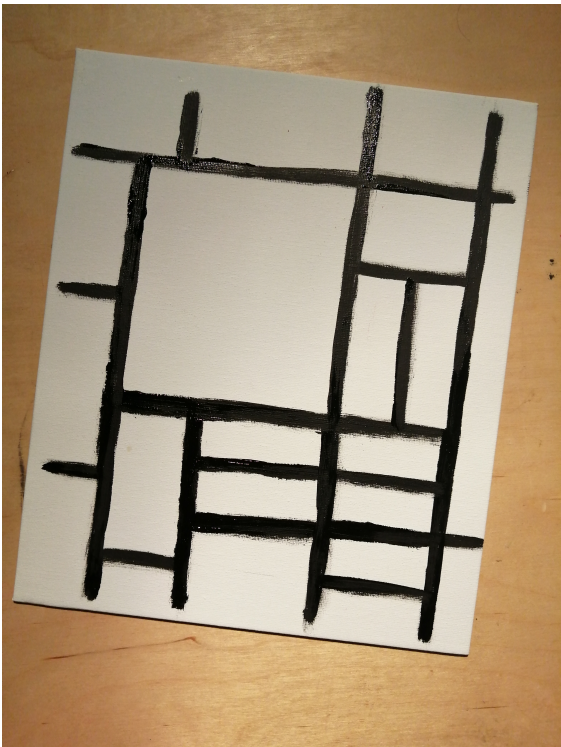
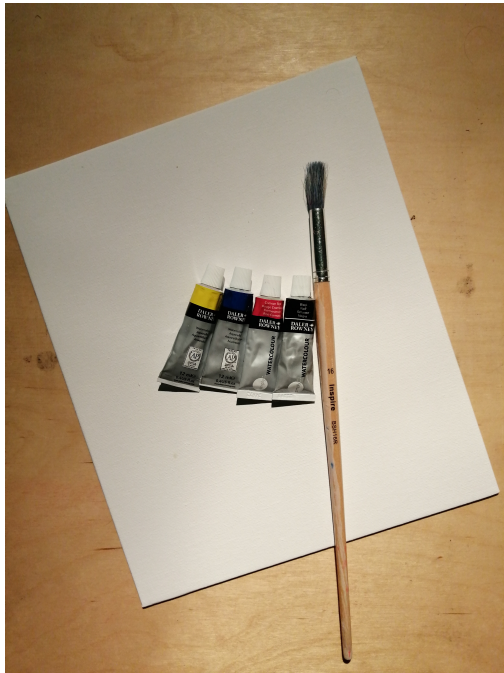
- This is an example of abstract art. It is said that abstract art does not need an explanation. Looking at the work, how does it work make you feel? Does it remind you of anything?
- Apart from the black gridlines, Mondrian uses the primary colours, red yellow and blue. Do you think this is significant?
- Out of the three works we've discussed, which one would you hang over the fireplace?

Activity - Painting Exercise

Paint your own grid-based painting.

Materials needed: Canvas board, paint brush, black, blue, red and yellow paint

1. Paint in heavy black lines in a grid on your canvas board.
2. Use the primary colours to paint the squares and rectangles within the grid.



More Information

If you would like more information about our dementia inclusive services at the National Gallery of Ireland or if you want to arrange a Zoom call, contact Caomhán Mac Con Iomaire in our Education Department

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