CHAPTER - 2

World Abstract Art:
A Chronological Survey
One day Wassily Kandinsky in his studio experienced a strange 'indescribably beautiful painting infused with an inner glow' the painting was resonant with a quite music. The tones of the colour and the sounds of their chords could be heard. It was an amazing experience for him. This is how a pure non-representational saga began. The chronology of pure-abstract painting, thus, starts with the Russian Kandinsky in 1910, the famous water-colour by him was held to be the earliest example of modern non-representational painting. This way kandinsky is known as the father of Abstract Art.

The movement towards abstraction in our own days differs from similar trends in earlier period by being far more extreme and much more violently antinaturalistic. But the roots of the present artistic revolution may be traced at least as far back as the mid nineteenth century.
In 19th century a number of paintings had already broached the realism of the abstract, even if only in a limited way. After Turner and the haunting ink drawing of the poet Victor Hugo, it was the artists of the Art Nouveau movement (in 1893, Henry Van de Velde and in 1900 Heman Obrist and his pupil Hans Schmithals) who perhaps came closest to realising an abstract art.1

The French poets, Theophile Gautier and Charles Baudelaire, began to consider words as much for their value as pure sounds as for their intrinsic meaning, and in their poems they strove to achieve the purity of music, the most abstract of all arts. Inspired by the poets, artists such as James Abbott, Mc Neill, Whistler spoke of their works as harmonies or nocturnes, and consciously attempted to equate colours with music.2

Between the year 1908 and 1910 the concern with the problems of non-representational art became even more acute. In 1908 Francis Picabia started a series of abstract drawings and a year later he even painted a series of pictures with circular motifs, but then abandoned these researches. The Lithuanian composer and painter M.K. Ciurlionis also contributed to the discovery of abstract painting in the years 1905-11. In his painting the traces of unknown plants and landscapes flow into each other like the motifs of a piano sonata. Czech Kupka had also been occupied with two basic elements since
1903, in particular movement and colour. In doing this he found a factual motif unnecessary and a hindrance. Although he sometimes joined the Key board motifs with a water surface or with a female silhouettle, nevertheless around 1909-10 he stepped forward into the realms of pure forms.

There were other occasional explorers in the area of the non-representational, like the Americans Weber, Walkowitz and Dove, the Belgian Lacasse and others. But it was Kupka and Kandinsky who were the first to be fully conscious of the far reaching importance of their discoveries. Perhaps they did not create the first abstract paintings and are not the first discoverers of Abstract Art, but - and this is important- they built the foundations and developed them.³

Kandinsky and Kupka, and later Malevich and Mondrian developed abstraction by hard but successful experiments which were eventually strengthened by theory. These are the four great founders and real investigators of abstract painting.

TWO MAIN TRADITIONS OF ABSTRACT ART

Abstract art during the past sixty years maybe divided historically into two main currents, both of which emerged from Impressionism. The first and more important current finds its sources in the art and theories of Cezanne and Seurat, passes through the widening stream of Cubism and finds its delta in the various
geometrical and constructionist movements which developed in Russia and Holland during the war and have since spread throughout the world. This current may be described as intellectual, structural, architectural, geometrical, rectilinear and classical in its austerity and dependence upon logic and calculation.

The second current has its principal source in the art and theories of Gauguin and his circle, flows through the Fauvism of Matiss to the Abstract expressionism of the pre-war paintings of Kandinsky. After running under ground for a few years it reappeared vigorously among the masters of abstract art associated with surrealism.

This tradition, by contrast with the first, is intimitional and emotional rather than geometrical in its forms; curvilinear rather than rectilinear, decorative rather than structural, and romantic rather than classical in its exaltation of mystical, the spontaneous and the irrational. Often of course, these two currents intermingle and they may both appear in one man.

In the pre-abstractionist trends two main aspects were seen that is a gradual abolition of the representational elements and the crystallisation of purely visual elements. For the impressionists - the specialists of fleeting impressions and of pure eye the search for the transitory effects and beauty of light was more important than the object. On the other hand a rhythmic, visual vibration of pure colour
resulted which guaranteed the visual unity.

Next to the impressionist fleeting moments is the search for geometrical and other intellectual basic supports of Cezanne's opinion "Everything in nature models itself like balls, cones and cylinders. One has to learn to paint on the basis of these simple forms..." [4]

While Ganguin's interpretation was intuitional, emotional and romantic 'The impression, however, which results from the simple distribution of colour light and shadow, is the music of the painting'. He thought of the creative energies. [5]

H. Matisse spoke of the 'condensation of feeling' and wanted to achieve 'through simplifications of ideas and structural forms ...an inner equilibrium' of composition. [6]

For futurist 'objects in motion multiply themselves ceaselessly, they deform because they follow each other like vibrations moving forward in space ... this simultaneously results in a change, in the decomposition of objects, in a scattering and melting of details'. It was a need for expression or the will to bring an intellectual spiritual pre-occupation into the realm of the visible, which guided these painters. [7]

Braque, rather laconically, formulated the difference between expressionist and Cubist way of seeing; 'The senses distort, but the
mind forms'. The cubists started not so much from a study of nature, but from the artificial, geometrical existence of a painted rectangle. The amorphous, broken up parts of objects are articulated in a crystalline structure. It was out of this structure that the formation of cubist painting, with its dependence on the environment and its rhythmic surfaces soon developed.

**BLUE RIDER**

In 1912 the painters of the group called Der Blue Reiter of Munich expressionists in Germany was second only to the cubists of Paris in importance among pre-war abstract movements, contradicted the cubist rationalism. Kandinsky, the leader, Marc and Klee were the nucleous of the group. They wished to transpose the drama of sound composition, which they experienced, into colour forms. Their way of painting carried a metaphysical message.

Kandinsky who brought about new direction further in his later work is associated with many new developments. Throughout his life he occupied himself with new ideas specially in abstract art. He had written an essay on the theoretical possibilities of non-representational way of painting in 1910, which was published in 1912 as *on the spiritual in Art*, the guiding principles of which were followed by the young painters as a revelation and a sign post into fresh areas of art.
His first abstraction period was known as expressive - lyrical or hot trend. He started his career in painting at Munich at the age of 30. He longed to express in painting the great synaesthetic emotions of ecstasy and frenzy such as frustration, meanness, crazy richness, lavishness, thunderstorms, the humming of mosquitoes etc.

RAYONISM

Parallel to Blue Rider in Germany as abstract expressionism, formed Rayonism Lutchism in Russia during the Year 1911-12 by Michael Larionov as the most purely abstract movement in Europe. Rayonism was an offshoot of Cubism, and also related to Italian Futurism in its emphasis on dynamic, linear light rays. Rayonism started with the disintegration of forms - figures or landscapes - into radiating rays of light. The ideas, involving and art that was synthesis of what one may call ‘the fourth dimension’, were of the greatest significance in their influence on Malevich and the development of superematism. Rayonism though shortly lived but produced some of very significant work.

ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

Abstract Expressionism is associated with Kandinsky, Dada and Surrealists' theories of automatism and lately around 1940's with some American artists, notably Jackson Pollock who was inspired partly by the painter Andre Masson and Joan Miro. He applied the automatic
techniques to paintings, and the process was christened *Action painting* by the critics.

The definition for Abstract Expressionism is a loose one because many of the works of painters often exhibited together as abstract expressionists are far from similar in manner or intent. The technique of Abstract Expressionism is generally based on free and automatic *action painting*. Nothing interposes itself between the gesture of painting and the artist. The painter allows the brush and color to give expression (of an abstract kind) to his feeling and emotions. Sometimes the idea and statement to be revealed is conceived before painting, but as often as not the spontaneous gesture and *engagement* before the canvas generates its own energies and conclusions.

In this way painting itself becomes the theme. Unlike the paintings of the Cubists who took the subject and revitalized it by new ways of seeing, the abstract expressionist generally begins without a preconceived image - the strokes and textures and colors became the subject. Sire Herbert Read speaks of "... another kind of image, not an associated pictorial image, but a sensational image an image of an indeterminate shape and imprecise colours, which perhaps comes from a deeper layer of the unconscious, with no immediate perceptual associations from the external world."

**ORPHISM**
Orphism is associated with the works of Delaunay and Frank Kupka, started in Paris. Picasso and Braque approached very near geometrical abstract design in their cubist manner, but during these years Delaunay and Kupka went further to print the first pure abstractions in Western Europe.

Delaunay said about his approach. "I have dared an architecture of colour, ... in the hope of creating a dynamic poetry which remains wholly in the realm of visual means, without any kind of literary associations and descriptive anecdotes." He called his art of this time simultaneism - simultaneous colour - contrast while Apollinaire called it orphism - an art of pure musical lyricism of colour.

In 1912 he painted a series of window compositions. He constructed these paintings on the principle of light. He explained it: "It was a really new way of creating without analogy with the past or the present."

Czech Kupka was not only the founder of 'geometrical' abstraction but also the most significant as well as the most ingenious abstract painter in France. Probably this was he who painted the first geometrical curvilinear and the first rectilinear pure - abstractions in modern act. Before the first world war, next to the musical and coloured architectural manner, he developed two further techniques, the lyrical technique of the 'created motifs' and the very sober sort
of ‘triangular motifs’. After the war he drew a great deal of inspiration from the world of science and mechanical engineering and the musical world of Jazz.

SUPERMATISM

The first artist to establish a system of absolutely pure geometrical abstract composition was the Russo - Polish painter Kasimir Malevich of Moscow. His geometrical constructions expressed the movement of emotions; “The things and objects of the real world have vanished like smoke. I have created nothing, I have simply experienced spirit, and in it I have gleaned the new, which I have called suprematism. It has expressed itself in me through this black surface (Basic suprematist element. 1913. Drawing), which formed a square, and then a circle. In them I have realised a new world of fresh colours…”

The black square done in lead pencil was the first suprematist picture. By suprematism, Malevich wrote, “I mean the supremacy of pure feeling or perception in the pictorial arts.” “It was no ‘empty square’ which I had exhibited but rather the experience of non-objectivity”.

After 1920 Malevich realised that these pictures were the closing chapters of painting. In the history of abstract art Malevich is a figure of fundamental importance. As a pioneer, a theorist and an artist he influenced not only a large following in Russia but also, the course of abstract art in central Europe. He stands at the heart of the
movement which swept westward from Russia after the war and, mingling with the eastward moving influence of the Dutch Stijl group, transformed the architecture, furniture, typography and commercial art of Germany and much of the rest of Europe.

De STIJL (de stal - the style)

In Webster's New World Dictionary de Stijl is a name of a journal founded in 1917 in Holland (during the war) by Mondrian and Theodore Van Doesburg - also an abstract art movement marked by the use of rectangular forms and by emphasis on primary colour or grays and blacks.

De Stijl, one of the longest lived and most influential groups of modern artists, was marketed by extraordinary collaboration on the part of painters and sculptors on the one hand and architects and practical designers on the other.

In 1917, the influential theoreticians Van Doesburg published a book, The New movement in painting, and Mondrian Published a series of articles in De stijl, including New - plasticism in Paintings, which in 1920, after his return to France, he expanded into his book "Le Neo - Plasticism ", one of the key documents of abstract art.

The years 1920 - 24 saw an astonishing expansion of the influence of de stijl, first in Belgium, then in Germany, France, Eastern Europe and even in Russia where it met the earlier but less practicable
abstract traditions of supererematism and constructivism.

NEW - PLASTICISM

The work and thoughts of Piet Mondrian formed the backbone of the movement, the New - Plasticists or later elementalists gathered around the journal De stijl. Mondrian had a mathematical answer to the question of the substance of things. He reduced all physical and mental actions to a basic law of contradiction, that of the vertical and horizontal. This basic contradiction, which he related to the feminine and masculine principles, exists everywhere. In the rectangle, which became the hallmark of his work, the principle shows itself in its most concentrated form. In addition, Mondrian resorted to six further elements, three colours (Yellow, blue, red) and three non-colours (gray, black and white,) to express the concept of the universal at its most simple. He knew that 'the Universal aspect behind each individual manifestation of nature rests on the equilibrium of objects'.

Finally in 1921, after eight years of non-representational experiments Mondrian achieved a very strict formula consisting of eight basic elements. The change to its textural proportions and the colour - rhythms resulted in further variants of harmony until 1940.

ELEMENTARISM
Oblique compositions, Van Doesburg's architectural projects and group exhibition *De stijl* in Paris in 1924 initiated a further period, that of Elementarism. The Elementarism manifestos and theories (particularly at the Bauhaus since 1921) were the works of its dynamic spokesman, Van Doesburg. His last theoretical contribution, the explanation of *concrete art* rendered artists more conscious of the possibilities of highly artificial and independent visual systems. This was his real contribution to the group Abstraction - Creation.

**ABSTRACT DADAISM**

Abstract Dadaism is a provisional name for the diverse kinds of Dada painting which approached or achieved abstraction. Dadaism itself was primarily a state of mind. It began in Zurich in 1916, partly as a literary movement, and developed stronghold during or after the war in New York, Cologne, Paris and Hanover with outposts in many other cities.

Dada was born of scepticism, disillusion, cynicism and nourished by war, peace and inflation. The dadaists scoffed at all standards and traditions, both conservative and advanced. The program of contempt for art did not, however, prevent the Dadaist painters from appropriating and developing the ideas and techniques of pre-war movements of which in many cases they had been members.
Duchamp and Picabia, active as pioneers of Dada, brought to the movement not merely a spirit of iconoclasm bitter and humorous by turns but also two methods of organic or bio-morphic abstraction and is admirably illustrated by Duchamp's half-Cubists *Bride* of 1912, four years before the Dada explosion occurred. It also anticipates the later, abstract surrealist art of Ernst, Arp, Picasso, Miro etc.

The second method contributed to Dada by Duchamp and Picabia was an abstraction not of organic forms but of mechanical forms. His *very rare picture upon the earth* and *amorous procession*, done just before and after the beginning of Dadaism, are characteristic of Dadaist *Machinism*.

The German - Swiss Klee outside the Dada movement was admired, though originally a member of the *Blue Rider* group in Munich, he influenced both Dadaism and surrealism by the inexhaustible variety of his ingenious fantasies.

**SURREALISM**

Surrealism was like Dadaism, a point of view, a faith almost a way of life. In their rejection of the rational and intellectual in favour of the subconscious world of impulse they looked for sanction to Freud and the psychology of the subconscious. Many of their painting and drawing are the results of automatic technique (like automatic writing, it is done in a state of semi-hypnosis in which conscious
control is presumably abandoned) or of an attempt to recapture the atmosphere of dreams - both related to psychoanalytic method.

Abstract art has no connection with Surrealist. From a strictly Surrealist point of view an abstract design is merely a by product. But a fine link could be traced if we go deep. Surrealist painting may be divided into two kinds. First could be called automatic pictures. Second, the dream pictures. The first suggests a maximum of technical spontaneity, a direct record of an uncensored graphic or pictorial impulse. To this category belongs much of the surrealist work of Masson, Miro, Arp and often Picasso.

The second kind also depends upon spontaneity of imagination but not of technique. Tanguy, Dali and often Ernst, in their effort to make as convincing as possible a fantastic or dreamlike world, used a technique as realistic and deliberate as that of a Flemish or Italian master of the 15th century.

From a formal, plastic point of view the first kind of surrealist painting in its abstract aspects belongs not to the tradition of Cezanne and cubism but to that which comes down from Gauguin through Matisse to Kandinsky and Klee of the Blue Rider group in Munich.

Klee though had no desire to involve himself with Surrealist, achieved along with his more literary and representation at work a
long series of abstract and near abstract fantasies, minor in key and of extreme subtlety and wit.

The art of Masson or Miro at its most characteristic, is flat, two dimensional and linear. Miro's drawing is at times almost meditative, wandering, like a river over a flat plain; his colour possesses an extraordinary freshness; and his forms have the convincing gusto of primitive cave paintings or children's water colours. Of all the surrealists Miro has the most plastic humour.

THE BAUHAUS

The various abstract currents alive in Germany after the war, together with influences from Holland and Russia, were united in the Famous Bauhaus, founded by the architect Walter Gropius in Weimar in 1919. He invited Klee, Feininger and Kandinsky as Professors at Bauhaus, all three of whom remained with it long after it had moved to Dessau in 1926 and passed in spirit from expressionist to geometrical, functionalist and constructivist principles. It was like research laboratory which contributed to the neo geometrical style of functionalism.

The experimental transformation of constructive forms into the production of consumer goods was the task the reformed Bauhaus had set itself. The methods and systems of the Bauhaus teachers. Plus the work of the leading abstract painters such as Mondrian and
Malevich, were collected and published in the 'Bauhaus books'.

After 1933 the National socialists closed this progressive institute. While the Nazis branded the abstract Bauhaus artists as a *Jewish - Bolshevist evil*, the abstractionists, forbidden to paint in their own country, emigrated to be able to preserve their movement.

**ABSTRACTION - CREATION GROUP**

An international group founded in 1931 in Paris, by Naum Gabo and Antonie Pevsner. Although it possessed no definite program, the group served for a time as the focus of some of the more radical currents in abstract painting. Among the important movements represented in the group were the constructivism of Gabo and Pevsner, the De stijl movement, represented by Piet Mondrian and Surrealism of Jean Arp and his followers.

They strongly opposed the artistic irrationalists and the cultural and political reaction especially in Germany, Central Europe and later in Spain. Their activity and the clear, scientific theory of the *Concreists* produced remarkable results long before the second world war when it was broken up.

**LYRICAL AND ACTION PAINTING**

The first group of American Abstract Artists was founded in 1936 and in 1942 the gallery *Art of this century* was founded, which gave
magnificent support to surrealists and constructivists artists. Mondrian was an adviser there and under its aegis the energetic Jackson Pollock began his enormous symbol - an action paintings.

In America it was the immigrants who helped to ignite the fire of abstraction by their example. Many of young artists applied their skills to abstract painting in 1945-50 through Neo-Cubism and Expressionism. The irrational explosion and the prattle in paint of the Abstract Lyricists increasingly gained the upper hand over the geometrical objective tendency in Paris as well as in New York.

The overturn of this turbulent lyrical kind of abstraction, began between 1936 and 1944. It was Jackson Pollock who started the era of Abstract Expressionism in 1943 with his murals for P. Guggenheim, and discovered the foundations of the so called 'Action Painting' around 1947. Action painting is a very dramatic way of painting full of bold, careless and monumental gestures. Huge canvases on which the paint was spurted dripped and poured were called overall compositions.

The rise of the Lyrical Abstractionists began in America in 1947 and remained unshaken throughout the 50s. Georges Mathieu, the leading figure of the lyrical school gave a comprehensive and pragmatic character to the movement. The original title of this exhibition, on Lyrical Abstraction, painted to a particular concept of
art which originated with Van Gogh, Picasso, and Arp and ended with Bryen, Brauner Hartung, Mathieu etc.

This was a real revolution. Not the painting itself but the act of painting, in which the pent-up emotions wildly break loose in whirling brush strokes of destructive explosiveness, became the symbol of such art. By destroying the discipline of form the painter thought he was destroying all other tyrannies as well. He felt liberated of fear, of the rational shackles of convention and the symbols of repression. Therefore the lyricists influence was of an emotionally vital and therefore expressive kind.

After 1951 most lyrical painters came together under the new labeler of Informal art. The main stress was on the non-means of matter and the not-yet-forms, for example in the openness of the canvas.

A peculiar aspect of lyrical Abstraction appeared in the 'sign-paintings' of Hartung, Tobey, Lapicque, Kline and Morita who wanted to communicate visionary mediations.

The paintings of Magical Abstraction showed different aspects. The signs and hieroglyphics were to make possible a connection with a hidden world of energies. Burri, Baumeister, and some Spaniards liked to work with rough materials, and other liked for unmaterial as Miro, Music, Medek and some Japanese and Chinese painters. There
are three more movements under lyrical tendency. American colour-field painting (Nweman, Rothko), with enormous chromatic surfaces suggestive of the American sense of space. These painters had a strong influence on the later post-painterly abstraction and the so called hard-edge painting.

A further phenomenon which arose out of the non-dogmatic, humanist concept of content within the lyrical tradition is called Genetic Figuration. The figurative which appears in the paintings of this movement is broken parts and signs (de kooning), but also as a whole structure (de stael), did not hinder the lyrical urge to make the nature of things apparent: on contrary. At times this style tended also to the imaginative post-surrealist conceptions.

L' ART INFORMEL AND TECHISM

Parallel to lyrical abstraction of America a new expressive brush gesture emerged in 1940s and 1950s in Paris and from Europe it soon spread through out the world. It represented the departure from the tradition of Cubism and geometric abstraction in the creation of a new form of expression. L' Art informel refers to intuitive, spontaneous, undisciplined art - the essence is creation with no desire for, nor preconceptions of, control, geometric or otherwise. It is painting that begins with the brush and a blank canvas, may go anywhere, and thus generated various other verbal categories; like
Tachism - a French word means stain, spot or blot. The chief exponent of this way of painting is Georges Mathieu.

'The term L 'Art, like Abstract Expressionism, is so broad and all - inclusive as to be almost meaningless, but its usefulness is the emphasis it places on opposition to all phases of disciplined, geometric, or concrete art.'

CoBrA

An international expressionist group (Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam) was formed in Netherlands in 1948 when Karel Appel, Cornelis Corneille and George Constant established the experimental Group. Most of the painters associated with the CoBrA group employed some sort of subject of figuration, usually derived from folk art, children's art, prehistoric or primitive art. The most important unifying principle among these divergent artists were their doctrine of complete freedom of abstract expressive forms, with accent on brush gesture.

Around 1960 as the decline of the manifold movements of lyrical Abstraction began to be felt, the trend still acted as a powerful starting point for the counter movements: Pop - art, New Figuration, Systematic painting, Kinetism, New realism and Minimal Art.

During the sixties, however, before the underlying complexity of pop had been fully appreciated, it was abstraction that dominated
within the world of art itself, mainly because its essential sobriety and internal processes of self-purification engaged the attention of the most serious critics and thinkers.

In Europe the new non-objective artists went forward by looking back to the constructivism of the 1930s Abstraction-Creation group, or beyond that to the Bauhaus, De Stijl, and the Russian avant garde. The Americans pursued ever greater reductiveness by translating into geometric form or non-relatedness of the Abstract Expressionists field-like structure.

CONCRETE ART

In 1930 Theo Van Doesburge coined the word "concrete" as a substitute for non-objective. In 1931 Abstraction-Creation group advanced the principles of pure abstraction and of Mondrian's Neo-Plasticism which was also based on pure concept.

The concept of concrete Art was revived in 1947 in the salon Des Réalites Nouvelles, while the gallery of Denise Rene, opened in Paris in 1944, became an international center for the propagation of concrete art.

The French Josef Albers influenced the United States while in Europe Swiss-Max Bill. Concrete Art, a term he began applying to his own work in 1936. It has the advantage over the word abstract, in
that it referred to a particular phase of abstract art, it also serves as a rallying cry in its emphasis on the painting as an entity in itself, as something concrete rather than as something abstracted from nature. According to Bill concrete painting eliminates all naturalistic representation; it avails itself exclusively of the fundamental elements of painting, the colour and form of the surface. Its essence is, then, the complete emancipation of every natural model; pure creation."^14

POST-PAINTERLY COLOUR FIELD ABSTRACTION

A number of exhibitions held in the 1960s drew attention to certain changes that were occurring in American Painting. The critic element Greenberg, acting as consultant, organized a series of one-man exhibitions including Barnett Newman, David Smith, Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, Julea Olitski and Friedel Dzubas - artists who were to be recognized as major forces in the color field painting and primary structures of the 1960s. He entitled an exhibition in 1964 as Post-painterly Abstraction, means, among other things, the blurred, broken, loose definition of colour and contour. Greenberg applied the term painterly to the abstract Expressionism of Pollock, Hofmann, De kooning, Kline and their immediate followers who employed the apparent brush gesture - "the stroke left by the loaded brush or knife that prays out, when the stroke is long enough into streaks, ripples and speaks of paint."^15
The next exhibition to document aspects of the new abstraction came in 1966 and was entitled *systematic painting* by Lawrence Alloway, who organized the show for the Guggenheim Museum. It suggest significant new directions in American abstract painting. It refers to paintings which consist of a single field of colour, or to groups of such paintings. Paintings based on modules are included, with the grid either contained in a rectangle or expanding to take in parts of the surroundings space. It refers who work in much freer manner, but who end up with either a holistic area or a reduced number of colors.

**HARD-EDGE PAINTING**

The term “hard edge” was first used by the California critic Jules Langsner in 1959, and then given its current definition by Lawrence Alloway in 1959-60. According to him “The ‘cone, cylinder, and sphere’ of Cezanne - fame have persisted in much 20th - century painting. Even where these form are not purely represented, abstract artists have tended toward a compilation of separable elements. Form has been treated as discrete entities,” where as “forms are few in hard - edge and the surface immaculate ... The whole picture becomes the unit ; forms extend the length of the painting or are restricted to two or three tones. The result of this sparseness is that the spatial effect of figures on a field is avoided.” The important distinction drawn
here between Hard-Edge and the older geometric tradition is the search for a total unity in which there is generally no foreground or background, no figures on a field." Ellsworth Kelly, Ad Reinhard, Leon Polk Smith, Alexander Liberman, Sidney Wolfson, and Agnes Martin were the principal pioneers.

THE SHAPED CANVAS

Of 1960s the so-termed "shaped canvas", was applied to the smoker series of Wesselmann. He cut the edges of the canvas in curvilinear shapes that reiterate the shapes of the hand and mouth and smoke within the painting. These works do not involve projections or recession in the canvas but simply an organically shaped contour.

OPTICAL PAINTING (OP ART)

What is called Op Art overlaps at one end with light sculpture or construction (in its concern with illusion, perceptions, and the physical and psychological impact of colour), and with light experiments on the spectator: At the other end, it impinges on some, though not by any means all, aspects of color filed painting in its use of brilliant unmodulated color in retinally stimulating combinations, especially in the art of Larry Poons.

There were elements of optical illusion in the paintings of
Mondrian, Van Doesburg, and other painters of De Stijl, although this was not a control factor except in Mondrian’s late paintings. Moholy Nagy and Albers introduced optical experiments into the curriculum of the Bauhaus, both in terms of color and perspective. During the 1960s a new generation of painters as Victor Vasarely and Yaacov Again and others, throughout the world turned to forms of art involving optical illusion or some other specific aspect of perception.

**MINIMAL ART AND PRIMARY STRUCTURES**

In the 1960-70s constructivism gained a new impetus in the so-called Primary structure and minimal or ABC Art. Minimalism represented a significant attitude of the 1960s, even more in United States than in England, but also in Japan, Germany Australia, Canada and other countries. It related closely to a number of significant tendencies of the decade; the paintings involving the shaped canvas; and the paintings with mathematical systems as the basis of their organization. It also had relations to certain aspects of colour field painting that in turn, overlapped with systematic painting. In almost all these different sculptural and pictorial experiments there was usually a strong geometrical base, the use of intense, unmodulated industrial colors, and elemental shapes.
PATTERNS AND DECORATION

As the period of 1970s sees a strong influence of illusionism a new pattern and decoration movement, sometimes called "The decorativeness" began to stir in the early 1970 and coalesced as a major development in the second half of the decade. Pattern painting, albeit based on the same grid as that underlying formalist structures of minimal Art. Patterning's energy source is its refusal to eliminate any possibilities. In a review of P and D, the critic Johan Perreanit declared:

Naked surfaces are being filled in; lifeless redundancy is being replaced by lively fields that engage the eye as well as the mind. The grids of Minimal-type painting are being transformed into nets or lattices for the drawing out of patterns that are sensuous and that have content that goes beyond self-reference and the immediate art context, although including both."

THE NEW ABSTRACTION

With the turn of the 1980s the reaction against the minimalism assumed a new intensity in the form of New Expressionism, and New-Surrealism with a youthful love of bold gesture, heroic scale, mythic content, and rebellious figuration.

The younger American and European painters evinced an aggressive, daring embrace of every possibility - metaphor, allegory
or narrative, surfaces energized by and packed with photographic processes, broken crockery, or even oil paint. Nothing was created afresh. Rather, they are appropriated from some pre-established source and then recontextualized by the artist in his own painting.

The new Abstraction in a quest for symmetry with the concurrent Neo-Expressionist or Neo-Surrealist developments, strongly independent non-representational art became resurgent towards the mid-1980s, has been called, New Abstraction.

"Neo-Abstraction" implies an almost fashion-conscious, sentimental, opportunistic, recycling process utterly at variance with the slow, solitary, out-of-the-limelight circumstance in which most of the abstract artists fond their artistic identity.

Among the artists of abstractions, it may indeed be anything but aloof, self-starving Minimalism - except as a style to deconstruct. David Read a leading member of the group, put it this way:

"The hiatus in attention was extremely healthy for public view, it gives you time to learn how you want to proceed. The situation was worse when abstraction but only abstract art about process and surface - was prominent. There was a pressure to conform. Now the situation seems open again. A lot of reexamination has been going on in abstract painting. People don't know what abstraction should be and so it can be any number of things".

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REFERENCES - 2


15. Ibid, P.488.


17. Ibid, P.616.