

# The abstract artwork of piet mondrian

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Piet Mondrian's artwork and Theosophy Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) was a Dutch-American painter who helped develop art in the 20th century. His works reflect his beliefs in the philosophy of Theosophy to which he converted between 1907 and 1910. According to the teachings of theosophy, all conscious beings are in the process of evolving themselves to a higher state of being. Theosophists thus believe in the existence of ascended masters. These superhumans have outgrown the need for a physical body but choose to remain on earth in a physical form to aid in the spiritual progress of other people. ~Theosophy is concerned with revealing the truth behind all religions by explaining the scheme of evolution of souls as well as of other bodies in the universe (Leadbeater, 2004).

The impact of this philosophy is seen in his paintings becoming increasingly abstract. Examples of his painting that reveal his belief in philosophy profoundly are those on neo-plasticism which is geometrical abstract. Neo-plasticism refers to the abstract ideal of universal harmony. His simplified paintings in which there are rectangles in primaries, white, black and gray, seek to reflect a mystical pursuit of the absolute. Some associations can be clearly identified in his paintings. For example, the rectangle signifies purity and an overall simplicity in the painting displays a spiritual ideal. His abstract paintings make use of simple primary colours and shades of black and white; exhibit a sense of aesthetic balance and harmony, and they are characterised by being reductionist, minimalist and by having no jarring elements. The message seems to be to “ Take little – Give back much” and to “ Live simply so more can simply live”.

Broadway Boogie-Woogie is considered by many to be Mondrian's

masterpiece that expresses his theosophical beliefs and ideals perfectly. It shows an intricate lattice made from the primary colours. It consists of larger squares than in his previous paintings and the lines are made from adjoining rectangles rather than solid lines as such. It was a tribute to the grid pattern of Manhattan city as this painting was made early during his stay in New York. Similarly, the Boogie Woogie music, which was popular at the time, can also be seen reflected in this painting as it is colourful and exhibits confidence. However, at the same time, the painting remains abstract and simple. The Broadway Boogie-Woogie retains internal harmony and still reflects a single whole. This feature could be seen as indicating a convergence of theosophy and modernist optimism (Herwitz, 102).

#### Works Cited

Herwitz, Daniel. *Making theory/constructing art: On the authority of the avant-garde*. University of Chicago Press. 1996. Print.

Leadbeater, C. W. *A textbook of theosophy*. IndyPublish. 2004. Print.