

## Eastern Philosophy and Kandinsky

Atta Kim

(Translated from Korean by Joyce Kim)

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From long ago, I was a fan of Kandinsky.

I have practiced Zen Buddhism for a long time. All of my works are the result and a process of Zen meditation practice. My work is my practice and pilgrimage. Zen has the same context as western philosophy's deconstruction, but Zen makes one realize the logic of the world through experience. The reason for my Zen practice is simple. Zen makes me wiser, and it plays an important role in producing new discourse.

My ON-AIR project *Indala Series* is a work that dismantles an important topic in Buddhism—transcendent wisdom. I am also currently working on a project called *The Project—Drawing of Nature*. The canvas itself accepts the physical changes of the environment. The phenomenon of a canvas itself accepting nature's physical changes is the same concept as a microcosm and eastern philosophy's objectivism, which sees all things as not different from the universe. These principles are an important key point of Eastern philosophy.

I view Kandinsky foremost as a great theorist, rather than an artist. Of course, it's not important whether he is a theorist or an artist. The question is, "How did he understand and think about the world?" Now, a century later, we only make inferences and analyze his words and the traces of what he left behind.

I understand Kandinsky as a person who lived his life according to a framework similar to eastern philosophy. In particular, his book, *Punkt und Linie zu Fläche (Point and Line to Plane)*, has the same meaning as eastern philosophy's concept of dependent arising—"everything is one and one is everything"—and the Buddhist concept of emptiness—"emptiness is form and form is emptiness." The inner necessity referenced in his book, *Über das Geistige in der Kunst (Concerning the Spiritual in Art)*, is an emphasis of an individual's inner energy. Inner necessity has a broad relationship with the "psychic energy" of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) and Martin Heidegger's "Being-in-the-world." One person's philosophy and ideology is not made up of one interest or influence. The genes inherited from one's parents, the environment of one's birth, the historical moment, one's education, and the influence from countless important people in one's life all play a part in building a new philosophy or ideology. This is where Kandinsky is. Especially, "the form of an object is always made complete through my inner workings. It is based in all psychological things and it is the foundation for the basis of aesthetics. The idea of tangible objects is irrational and furthermore, an object does not exist and cannot exist. Things that test me allow insight into my inner workings, or in other words, my life." After his 1912 publication, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, I turned to his 1926 publication, *Point and Line to Plane*. If *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* is a philosophical study about art, *Point and Line to Plane* contains his mature philosophical theory. It constructs the most fundamental unit in painting—the point, line, and plane—on a new level similar to Eastern philosophy's concepts of a microcosm and objectivism.

For a long time, when I was deep in the abyss of existentialism, Kandinsky's essay on art was a clear fountain of water that slaked my thirst. In 2011, I wish to re-examine Kandinsky's philosophical fountain through the most fundamental unit, in painting and in life—the point.