

WAYS OF PERCEIVING

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WRITING TASK

Colour has been used for thousands of years to represent many aspects of life, to dictate one's wealth and value in the society or even to evoke emotion. Colours influence us on different levels and aspects in our lives.

On one hand, we are influenced socially and culturally (we mourn in black and wear white mostly in the summer) and on the other hand, everybody's reaction is personal, influenced by how one is perceiving certain colours, associating them with specific feelings or even sensorial things such as taste and sound.

My curatorial project is based on how colours influence one's thinking, specifically how the colour blue stands in various artists view, and how they perceive it in their practice. "The first blue colour was produced by ancient Egyptians in 2200 B.C. in an effort to create a permanent pigment that could be applied to a variety of surfaces.", according to *"The History and Meaning Behind the Color Blue in Art"*.

I find this subject really interesting and challenging regarding how one may find colour's meanings that are a lot more different than the majority of conventional thinking.

My interests in the curatorial idea are to see various people and how they relate and feel about the same colour, then how they take it forward and try to build it on in their practices.

Therefore, the main artists I have been researching until now and have been using blue to reflect specific emotions, conditions or attitudes are: Yves Klein, Wassily Kandinsky, Pablo Picasso and Helen Frankenthaler. Every artist has been reflecting on the colour blue for the majority of their practice.

Starting with Yves Klein, who was a French artist and an important figure in post-war European art and founder of the Nouveau Realisme movement, which dedicated most of his practice to the colour blue. For Klein, the colour blue held a significant meaning, representing his spirituality and religious self, the essence of natural elements without boundaries, such as the sky and the sea, and the vast expanse of the universe.

For my curatorial project I chose to place in the Mission Gallery space his work from 1959, "Blue Sponge", which is a sculpture that measures 44.1cm in height, created from sponge, stone and metal. The work stands as part of the vast universe of sea plateaus. I choose to place this work in the circular space inside the gallery. That space gives me the possibility to highlight the work in a compact site where I could play with the atmosphere, such as lights, and managing to play Blue noises. All these things will help the viewer get in a specific state to be able to communicate directly with the artwork.



Figure 1. Yves Klein - Blue Sponge (1959)

As Yves Klein, another famous creator who had a more inwards and spiritual approach of the subject is Pablo Picasso. Picasso, a famous Spanish artist who practiced many aspects of art, such as painting, sculpting, ceramics etc. experienced a tragedy, the death of his friend Carles Casagemas. The artist had a monochromatic phase where he would paint only in blue-green tones, very rarely bringing some warm highlights in his work. This phase was later called the "Blue Period".

In Pablo Picasso's work, blue represents sorrow, depression, sadness, and grief. Besides Klein, who choose blue as a colour that highlights space and its unlimited universe, we see how Picasso took blue as a colour that represents emotions. He was very devastated after knowing the death of his dear friend. He would paint mostly images from all around Spain: prostitutes, beggars and drunks. According to '*Picasso's Blue Period*' (2020) Wikipedia.

For the exhibition display I chose "The Tragedy", one of the known pieces from the "Blue Period". The painting was made in 1903, has the dimensions of 105.3 x 69cm; the technique that he used is oil on wood. I thought of placing this painting in the main hall of the gallery, together with the rest of the art works.



Figure 2. Pablo Picasso - The Tragedy (1903)

On the same wall near Picasso's "The Tragedy", I want to place a Kandinsky work, "Blue" (1927). This masterpiece is oil on board and measures about 49.5 x 36.8 cm.

Wassily Wassilyevich Kandinsky was a Russian painter and theorist. He is generally credited as the pioneer of abstract art. Kandinsky began painting studies at the age of 30. According to the Wikipedia article "Wassily Kandinsky". For Kandinsky, blue is a more of a lyrical motive: it dictates a call to the infinite a pure or supernatural feeling.

'The deeper the blue becomes , the more strongly it calls man towards the infinite, awakening in him a desire for the pure and, finally, for the supernatural.' (Wassily Kandinsky)

During 1910-1914, Kandinsky turned increasingly to abstract art, as his Expressionism fused with Fauvism, Cubism and Orphism, leading him to dispense with figurative elements. Coloured surfaces, distinct from subjective forms and edged in black, became "signs".

"His first abstract watercolour painting dates from around 1910 and proved to be a perfect experimental medium for him. However, it was another year before he succeeded in completely detaching the subject from his oil painting." says the "Wassily Kandinsky: Biography of Russian Colourist & Expressionist Painter".

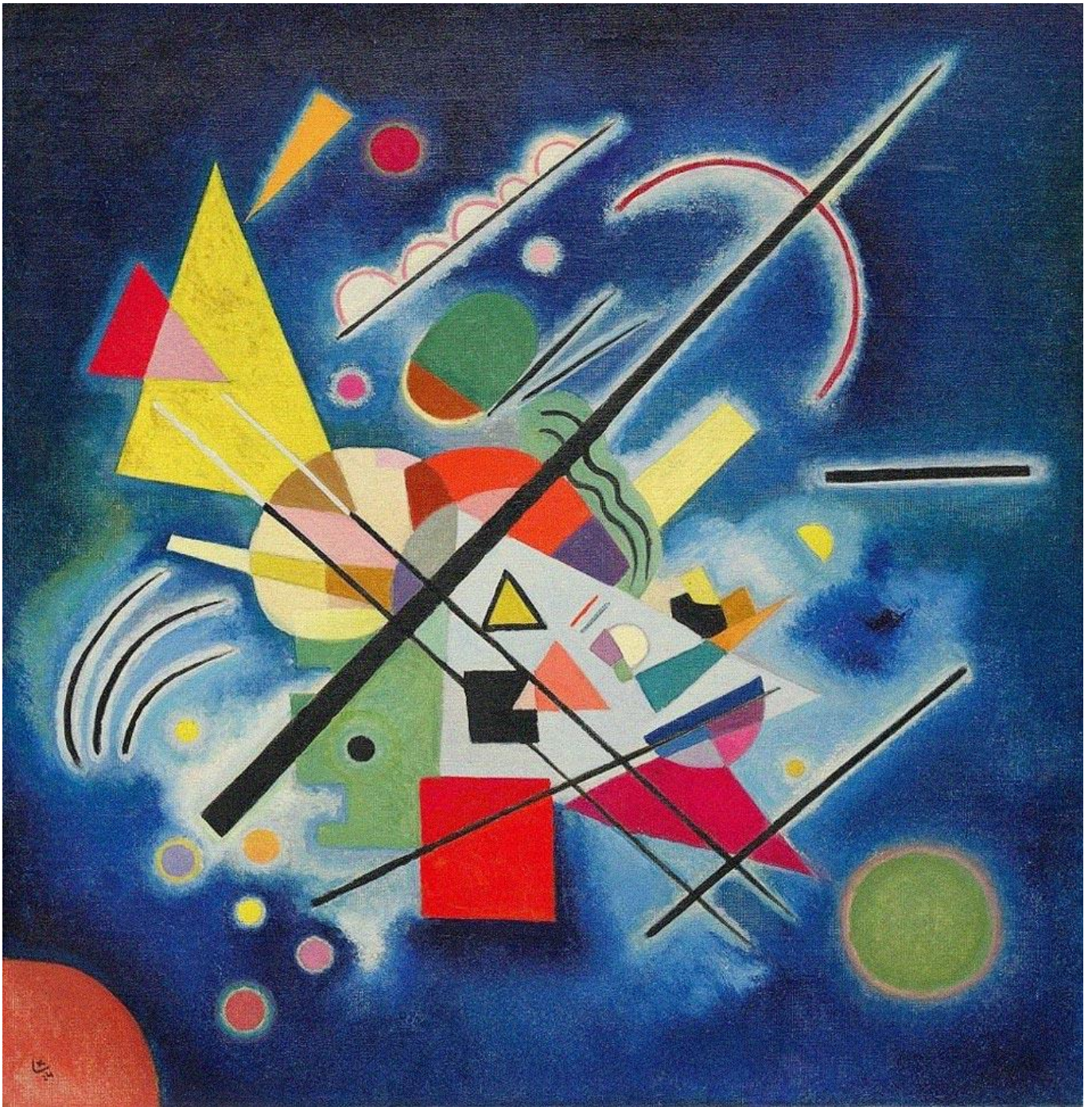


Figure 3. Wassily Kandinsky – Blue (1927)

Abstract Expressionist painter Helen Frankenthaler became active in the New York School of the 1950's, initially influenced by artists like Arshile Gorky, Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock. She gained fame with her invention of the colour-stain technique, applying thin washes of paint to unprimed canvas in her iconic "Mountains and Sea" (1952).

"Mountains and Sea" (1952) is a soak-stain technique artwork of Helen Frankenthaler which is about 220 x 297.8cm. I have chosen to put the work on the wall of the main hall in the Mission Gallery space, together with another work of hers, titled "Blue Current" (1987).

"Mountains and Sea" is considered to be the first canvas Frankenthaler created using her soak-stain technique. She created a lyrical, pastoral abstraction to summon a memory of a place through colour. She conceptualized the process of pouring the paint as a way of translating something internalized within her body into something externalized on the canvas. The painting almost entirely utilizes hues of red, green, and blue, the various hues of blue standing out most profoundly as an abstract, rather than figurative, manifestation of the sea.



Figure 4. Helen Frankenthaler - Mountains and Sea (1952)

Helen Frankenthaler's "Blue Current" from 1987 is an unattested masterpiece, an inspiring panoramic work expanding nearly fifteen feet in width. Pools of lapis lazuli blue flood across the wide expanse of the canvas in torrent-like passages, imbuing the work with an atmospheric character and psychological power that recalls the suggestive marriage of sky and sea.

While William Turner's great watercolours signify landscape because the imagery is horizontal, Frankenthaler negates the purity of such an image by offsetting the richly saturated blue eddies with notes of burnt sienna and areas of blank canvas. Such interruptions amidst a sea of serenity function as clever structural devices that hold Frankenthaler's willful, yet delicate, atmosphere of the picture plane in a state of precarious fragility.

At Frankenthaler's work we see another view and use of the colour blue, unlike Klein who sees blue as a metaphoric space or Kandinsky's view of a lyrical call of infinite, she wants to find abstract shortcuts for presenting the landscape and nature as it is.



Figure 5. Helen Frankenthaler - *Blue Current* (1987)

To sum up my curatorial idea, I want to add a sound piece to the exhibition to help the viewer enter into a specific state of mind.

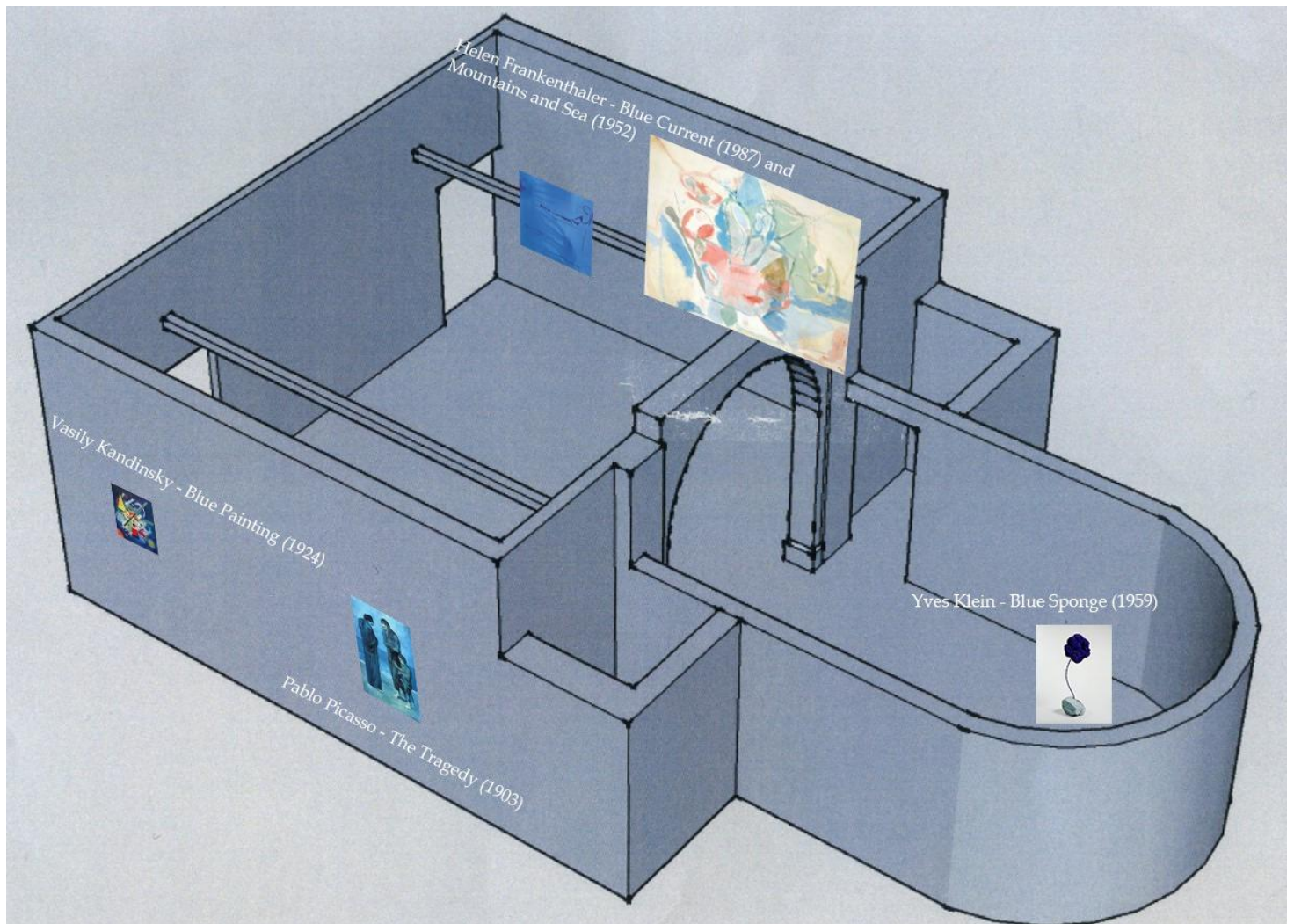
Blue noises are considered to be high-frequency white noises, noises with a spectral density (power per hertz) that are proportional to their frequency. Also known as azure noises, blue noises get their name from optics, as the colour blue is on the higher end of the frequency spectrum for visible light.

The deep blue noises that I want to use for my exhibition are calming, from my point of view, which can help a viewer be more attentive to the works and calmingly meditate upon them. They give the feeling of sea noises.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7LjWtnw8d8&t=23> – Deep Blue Noises.

These artists not only transformed what art looks like, but how its viewers perceive the world, fueling imagination and opening new paths of thought. We might call it a superpower – of artists to create experiences that change you as you walk through them.

Figure 6. Mission Gallery -Exhibition plan



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Figure 6. Mission Gallery – Exhibition Plan