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# Color as a Medium of Re-Enchantment: Everyday Aesthetics and Spiritual Experience in Kandinsky's Theory of Color

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the philosophical role of color in shaping social and spiritual experience, particularly through the aesthetics of everyday life and the abstract art of Wassily Kandinsky. The urgency of this inquiry lies in the need to recover the spiritual dimension of modern life, which has been increasingly diminished by materialistic worldviews. The research employs a qualitative-descriptive approach within a philosophical analytic framework, integrating aesthetic theory, philosophy of religion, and art theory. The data consists of close readings of Kandinsky's primary text, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, alongside secondary literature on aesthetics and the art-religion relationship. The main findings reveal that color possesses psychological and spiritual resonance, making it a universal language that transcends material form. In everyday life, color restores hidden beauty and meaning, while in Kandinsky's art, color functions as a medium of spiritual expression that challenges the disenchantment of the modern world. The study's implications contribute to the discourse in the philosophy of art and religion, offering a new framework for revitalizing aesthetic and spiritual experience in contemporary life. This study's originality lies in its rare integration of re-enchantment, everyday aesthetics, and Kandinsky's color theory, collectively highlighting the active role of color in shaping spiritual and social experience beyond the realm of high art.
**Keywords:** Philosophy of Color, Kandinsky, Abstract Art, Everyday Aesthetics, Spirituality, Re-Enchantment.

## Introduction

Modernity is marked by extraordinary advances in science and technology, yet it also produces complex psychological and spiritual consequences (Naas, 2016). In many societies, particularly in Europe and North America, a long-standing tension has existed between religion and science, grounded in the assumption that the growth of scientific rationality inevitably leads to the decline of religion's role in social life (Dolan, 2002). This view, commonly known as

scientism, treats reality as a system that can be fully explained through material and quantitative laws. As a result, non-material dimensions of human existence—such as love, courage, beauty, and imagination—are often reduced to mere biological epiphenomena or evolutionary responses. Within this paradigm, subjective experience loses its depth, and human life becomes narrowly framed in terms of function and utility (McGrath, 2020).

This condition reflects what Max Weber (1978) described as the *disenchantment of the world*, namely the erosion of spiritual meaning from the world as a consequence of modern rationalization. The gap between science's capacity to explain how things occur and its inability to answer why they occur or what they mean generates an existential void. Technology may satisfy basic human needs, but it frequently fails to respond to the longing for meaning and spiritual depth. This situation has fueled an urgent call for *re-enchantment*, understood as an effort to restore wonder and value to a world alienated by materialism. In this context, the phenomenon of cultural change toward extreme rationalism (Change) and the emergence of an existential spiritual crisis (Emergency) function as two primary lenses that underscore the philosophical urgency of this issue.

Global data further reinforce the urgency of this phenomenon. The Pew Research Center (in Rosdalina, 2025) reports that although Christians and Muslims remain the largest religious groups worldwide, the number of people who are religiously unaffiliated has grown rapidly, reaching 1.9 billion—an increase of 270 million in just one decade. Moreover, between 2007 and 2020, 43 of the 49 countries surveyed, including many high-income nations, experienced significant declines in religiosity (Inglehart, 2020). This trend contrasts sharply with the period from 1981 to 2007, during which most countries showed increasing levels of religiosity (Norris & Inglehart, 2004). The United States, long considered an exception to secularization theory, now records one of the fastest rates of religious decline in the world. These developments suggest that economic and digital modernity ultimately erodes the spiritual and institutional foundations of society, leaving a vacuum that new forms of spirituality have not yet fully filled.

Previous studies have explored the relationship between science and religion, largely focusing on conflict or reconciliation between the two from historical and contemporary perspectives (Dennett, 2006; Gould, 2022; Plantinga, 2011). However, this body of literature remains centered primarily on theological or ethical discourse and provides limited space for aesthetics as an alternative spiritual medium. Such studies tend to separate art from spirituality or treat art merely as an illustrative tool for particular religious beliefs, rather than as an independent domain with transformative potential.

A second body of literature addresses classical aesthetics and Western

philosophy of art, particularly Kantian aesthetics, which emphasizes the principle of "purposiveness without purpose" and disinterested contemplation. This tradition situates art within an exclusive realm detached from everyday experience and lived practice. The narrative gains further support from the concept of high art, which has dominated modern aesthetic institutions. Although influential in the history of aesthetic philosophy, this perspective obscures the role of art as an affective experience deeply intertwined with everyday human existence (Danto, 1981; Goodman, 1976; Wolterstorff, 2015). Consequently, philosophical discourse has often excluded everyday aesthetic experience from broader theoretical consideration.

A third category of scholarship focuses on the work of Wassily Kandinsky and his contribution to aesthetic thought and spirituality. In *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, Kandinsky argues that color is not merely a visual element but possesses spiritual resonance capable of awakening what he calls the inner need of human beings. He even positions color as a form of universal language that vibrates the soul and connects humans to a metaphysical dimension (Brooks-Immel, 2017; Kandinsky, 2009; Tressoldi et al., 2015; White, 2019). Nevertheless, although Kandinsky's color theory has received extensive attention in art history and abstract theory, relatively little scholarship has explicitly connected it to the concept of *re-enchantment* or to the aesthetics of everyday life.

Taken together, these three strands of literature reveal a persistent conceptual gap. No integrative approach has yet bridged everyday aesthetics, spirituality, and color theory in response to the contemporary crisis of meaning. Color often appears merely as a symbol or a design element, rather than as an active agent capable of shaping spiritual and social experience in a holistic manner. This gap calls for a new approach that restores the role of color not only in art but also in everyday life as a transformative medium.

This study seeks to address that gap by analyzing the philosophical role of color in shaping spiritual and social experience across two primary contexts: everyday aesthetics and the abstract art of Wassily Kandinsky. The central aim of this research is to demonstrate how color—often marginalized in traditional philosophical inquiry—possesses a transcendental capacity to connect the material and immaterial dimensions of human life. Specifically, the study examines color as a medium of *re-enchantment*, that is, as a means of restoring meaning, value, and wonder to a reality fragmented by extreme rationalism and utilitarianism.

The main argument advanced in this study holds that color, through its psychological and spiritual resonance, functions as a catalyst in the process of *re-enchantment*. Aesthetic encounters with color—whether through functional everyday objects or abstract works of art—can awaken an inner need that exceeds rational explanation. In this sense, color operates not as a passive visual attribute

but as an active agent capable of mediating the modern spiritual crisis through transcendent aesthetic experience. *Re-enchantment*, in this framework, involves not merely a shift in intellectual perception but an existential transformation made possible by deep sensory engagement with color. This approach offers an original contribution to the philosophy of art and religion by integrating affective, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions within a unified framework of philosophical reflection (Kandinsky, 2009).

## Methods

The unit of analysis in this study is the philosophical role of color in shaping social and spiritual experience, particularly within the contexts of everyday aesthetics and the abstract art of Wassily Kandinsky. The analysis focuses on two primary domains: first, the manifestation of color as an aesthetic element that influences perception, emotion, and meaning in everyday life; and second, the conception of color in Kandinsky's works and thought as a form of spiritual expression that transcends the formal boundaries of modern art. The study selects this unit of analysis because color, in both contexts, carries philosophical potential to bridge the material and spiritual worlds, which lies at the core of the phenomenon of *disenchantment* in the modern world.

This research adopts a qualitative-descriptive design employing philosophical analysis as its primary method (Djunatan et al., 2024; Maxwell, 2009). This approach enables the exploration of conceptual meanings embedded in texts while also allowing for an examination of complex relationships among philosophical ideas. The method is particularly appropriate for investigating non-empirical dimensions such as value, meaning, spirituality, and aesthetic experience, which cannot be reduced to numerical or statistical measures. Through this approach, the study constructs a coherent philosophical argument based on textual interpretation of relevant primary and secondary sources. The choice of a philosophical method also responds to the need to critically examine dominant assumptions in modern aesthetics and contemporary materialism.

The data sources for this study consist of texts, both primary and secondary, that articulate ideas about art, color, and spirituality. The principal primary source is the work of Wassily Kandinsky, especially *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (Kandinsky, 2009), which serves as a foundational text for modern abstract color theory. Secondary sources include literature on the philosophy of art (Danto, 1981; Goodman, 1976; Wolterstorff, 2015), everyday aesthetics (Berleant, 1992), spirituality and religion (Eliade, 1987; Plantinga, 1977), and critiques of scientism and *disenchantment* (Graham, 2007; Saler, 2012; Weber, 2020) The study selects these sources based on their thematic relevance and their contributions to the philosophical framework developed in this research.

The study collects data through intensive library research. This process

involves critical reading and systematic annotation of relevant texts, with particular attention to conceptual definitions, argumentative structures, philosophical illustrations, and interconceptual relationships. The researcher evaluates each citation contextually to ensure fidelity to its original meaning. In addition, the researcher constructs thematic matrices to organize key ideas from each text, facilitating the identification of significant patterns and recurring themes. In this way, data collection functions not merely as a documentary process but as an interpretive activity from the outset.

The study conducts data analysis using an interpretive-thematic approach that is exploratory and critical in nature. The analytical stages include: (1) identifying key concepts related to color, spirituality, and aesthetics; (2) categorizing data according to themes such as "color as spiritual language," "everyday aesthetics," and "critique of scientism"; (3) comparing perspectives across sources; (4) offering philosophical interpretations of the role of color in shaping experiences of *re-enchantment*; and (5) synthesizing arguments to address the research questions. The analysis incorporates the CCTE framework (Change, Controversy, Trend, Emergency) to assess the relevance of these ideas in relation to cultural change, debates in the philosophy of art and religion, contemporary spiritual trends, and the crisis of meaning produced by the dominance of materialism. Through this analytical strategy, the study constructs arguments that are not only descriptive but also normative and critically engaged with the conditions of the present age.

## Results and Discussion

### Color in Everyday Aesthetics as a Manifestation of Spirituality

Color functions as a central element in the construction of everyday aesthetic experience, and its role extends far beyond the realm of formal or so-called high art. In the context of space and architecture, color shapes emotional atmospheres that attach to homes, offices, public buildings, and places of worship. The colors of building facades, interior spaces, and lighting influence perceptions of comfort, openness, calmness, and warmth. Warm yellow tones, for example, can create a welcoming atmosphere, while blue or gray often conveys a sense of formality, reflection, or spirituality. In spatial environments, color not only reinforces structural functions but also operates as an affective medium that engages the psychology of occupants (Kandinsky, 2009).

Within the culinary dimension, the color of food plays a decisive role in shaping initial perceptions of quality and palatability. Color does not function merely as a visual attribute but as an integral component of a holistic sensory experience. The combination of colors in a dish, variations in the hues of ingredients, and the overall presentation evoke appetite, expectation, and

pleasure even before taste is physically experienced. This relationship between aesthetics and flavor demonstrates that the act of eating cannot be separated from the symbolic and emotional values constructed through color.

Gardening aesthetics likewise highlights the prominent role of color. The arrangement of plants according to color gradation, contrast, or visual harmony generates inner satisfaction and psychological tranquility. Specific combinations of flower and leaf colors produce landscapes that evoke calmness, vitality, or joy. Gardens thus function not merely as visual spaces but also as contemplative environments that offer a subtle form of spirituality through the presence of natural colors.

In the sphere of public visual culture, color appears across media that are often commercial or communicative in nature, such as murals, billboards, magazines, and websites. Designers use color to create immediate impressions, elicit emotional responses, and shape public perception of conveyed messages or values. Although these visual expressions often operate in secular or practical contexts, the deployment of color contributes to the collective aesthetic landscape and shapes the symbolic and spiritual atmosphere of urban life.

In clothing culture, color plays a dual role as both an aesthetic and symbolic element. Across various local traditions, people choose colors not only for their visual appeal but also for the spiritual meanings, social status, or customary values they signify. For instance, in some forms of farmers' attire, the combination of red and green frequently symbolizes balance in life, a relationship with nature, or hope for fertility. In this sense, color in clothing functions not merely as decoration but as a bearer of meaning embedded in communal values and identity structures.

As a conceptual foundation for understanding the spiritual significance of color, Kandinsky's theory provides a framework for interpreting how color resonates beyond the visual domain. Table 1 summarizes the physical characteristics, psychological–spiritual associations, and musical parallels of various colors according to Kandinsky. Although this framework originates in abstract art discourse, it can be adapted to interpret the role of color in everyday life as a form of experience that is simultaneously aesthetic and spiritual.

**Table 1. Psychological and Spiritual Meanings of Color According to Kandinsky**

| Color | Physical Characteristics & Movement | Psychological & Spiritual Associations | Musical Parallels |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yellow | Warm, approaching the viewer, spreading | Worldly energy, aggression, | Bright, brilliant (in contrast to black) |

|  | outward from the center | disturbance, limited inner meaning |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Blue | Cool, receding from the viewer, moving inward toward the center | Depth, heavenly calm, reflective spirituality | Flute, cello, bass, organ |
| Green | Stable mixture of yellow and blue | Calming, balanced, potentially monotonous without variation | Middle register of the violin; rhythms of nature |
| White | Motionless; total silence | Purity, eternity, unlimited potential | Musical pause that opens space |
| Black | Total silence, without possibility | Death, absolute end, loss of meaning | Pause before the birth of a new melody |
| Gray | Mixture of black and white; motionless | Ambiguity, doubt, nihilism | Mixture of green and red |
| Red | Intense, radiating from within | Power, passion, victory, vital drive | Trumpet, deep red drums |
| Orange | Red cooled by yellow | Self-confidence, vitality, social strength | Old violin, *angelus* sound |
| Violet | Red cooled by blue | Melancholy, sacred spirituality, withdrawal from humanity | English horn, bassoon tones (Chinese ritual) |

Each color possesses a distinctive psychological and spiritual resonance, as mapped by Kandinsky, and these meanings apply not only within the realm of abstract art but also emerge implicitly in everyday life. Yellow, for example, is associated with worldly energy, aggression, and expansion. In daily contexts, people commonly use this color in spaces that encourage activity and communication, such as dining areas, shops, or public facilities designed to feel warm and open. Spiritually, yellow can stimulate joy and hope, although excessive intensity may also generate tension.

By contrast, Kandinsky (2009) understands blue as a calming color that draws inward and represents spiritual depth. In domestic settings, designers often use blue in bedrooms or reflective spaces because of its cooling and contemplative qualities. In everyday life, blue carries associations with peace and connection to something greater than the self, such as the sky and the sea—two entities long linked to transcendence.

Green, as a mixture of yellow and blue, appears as a balanced and stable color. In gardens or natural spaces, green conveys a sense of calm and safety.

Kandinsky notes that green tends to become *bourgeois* in the sense that it can feel monotonous without movement or variation. Nevertheless, in everyday aesthetics, people widely employ green to create regenerative and restorative atmospheres.

White and black function as opposing poles. White contains unlimited potential, a pure silence that suggests a new beginning, whereas black represents a final silence without hope. In everyday life, white often signifies purity and simplicity, as seen in clothing, minimalist interior design, or spiritual symbols. Black, by contrast, although frequently used in elegant or formal contexts, carries a heavy, final, and sometimes melancholic impression. Together, these colors mark an ambiguity within everyday spiritual experience—between beginning and end, openness and emptiness.

Gray, as a blend of white and black, reflects uncertainty and stagnation. This color commonly appears in urban environments and formal attire, where it creates a flat and emotionally neutral atmosphere. In spiritual terms, gray can symbolize existential ambivalence, an in-between space that lies between light and darkness, life and death, certainty and doubt.

Red appears as a color of extraordinary power and intensity. It conveys passion, vitality, and force. In everyday contexts, people often use red to signal importance or urgency, such as in traffic signs or warning symbols. At the emotional level, red also signifies love, courage, and the drive for life, which makes it a color charged with spiritual significance.

Orange, produced by mixing red and yellow, expresses cheerfulness and confidence. This color frequently appears in celebrations, traditional clothing, or educational environments for children because it stimulates energy and social interaction. In everyday spirituality, orange can symbolize optimism and openness to life.

Finally, Kandinsky positions violet or purple as a melancholic and sacred color. It carries a deeper spiritual tone and often relates to reflection, mourning, or sacrifice. Violet frequently appears in religious contexts, ritual garments, or moments of contemplation. This color represents a quiet tension between the sacred and the human, a silent dialogue that resonates strongly within everyday aesthetics that engage existential dimensions.

In this way, Kandinsky's mapping of color addresses not only the aesthetics of art but also explains how experiences of color in everyday life can serve as gateways to deeper meaning, value, and spirituality. Color functions not merely as a visual accent but as an emotional language that vibrates the hidden inner layers of human experience embedded within routine activities.

## Color as a Spiritual Language in Abstract Art According to Kandinsky

The findings of this study indicate that, for Wassily Kandinsky, color

functions not merely as a visual element in artworks but as an expressive language that resonates directly with the human soul. Within the context of abstract art, Kandinsky revolutionized the understanding of art by asserting that form and color can express spiritual dimensions that figurative representation cannot reach. His seminal work *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911) provides the primary foundation for understanding how color operates as a mode of spiritual communication comparable to music (Kandinsky, 2009).

One of the central conceptual findings concerns the musical metaphor Kandinsky employs to describe the relationship between color and the soul. He states: "Color is the keyboard, the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand that plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul." This metaphor indicates that each color carries a specific frequency of psychological and spiritual vibration, and that harmony emerges only through the artist's aesthetic sensitivity and inner responsiveness. Accordingly, the principle of *inner need* functions as the ethical and aesthetic foundation of every artistic decision—an essential datum that underlies Kandinsky's entire aesthetic framework.

Another significant finding shows that Kandinsky developed a color system that links each color to physical movement, emotional–spiritual resonance, and even musical equivalents. Colors such as yellow and red associate with expansive force, energy, and aggression, whereas blue and violet signify depth, calmness, and reflective spirituality. Kandinsky understands white as silence filled with potential, while black represents the end of all possibility, symbolizing absolute silence or death. He constructs this system not merely as a classificatory scheme but as a framework for transcendental aesthetic experience accessible to anyone who opens themselves to the inner resonance of color.

In his artistic practice, Kandinsky (2009) employs unconventional color combinations to create new forms of harmony. He rejects the idea that harmony in art must conform to the visual compositional rules of representational art and instead insists that it should follow a spiritual rhythm emerging from within the soul. Color combinations that appear technically dissonant according to formal principles can become harmonious if they awaken corresponding spiritual vibrations. This finding identifies a crucial feature of Kandinsky's abstract aesthetics: aesthetic standards operate inwardly rather than formalistically.

In this context, abstract art does not function as an escape from reality but as a path toward a deeper reality—an unseen spiritual reality. Color, as the primary medium, builds a bridge between the material and immaterial worlds. Kandinsky structures color not only to achieve aesthetic effects but also to serve spiritual functions, transforming color into a language capable of replacing words in conveying the deepest existential human experiences.

**Table 2. Psychological and Spiritual Analysis of Color According to Kandinsky**

| Color | Physical Characteristics & Movement | Psychological & Spiritual Associations | Musical Parallels |
|---|---|---|---|
| Yellow | Warm, approaching the viewer, spreading outward from the center | Worldly energy, aggression, disturbance, lack of deep meaning, madness | Bright, brilliant (against black) |
| Blue | Cool, receding from the viewer, moving inward toward the center | Heavenly calm, rest, profound depth, almost inhuman sadness | Flute (light blue), cello (dark blue), double bass (darker), organ (deep) |
| Green | Balanced mixture of yellow and blue; motionless | Most calming, but potentially boring, "bourgeois" (self-satisfied, static, narrow) | Calm middle register of the violin; period of natural rest (summer) |
| White | Often considered not a color; without boundaries | Silence full of possibility, nothingness before birth, ice-age world, purity | Musical pause that interrupts melody |
| Black | Total silence, without possibility | Silence of death, something burned out, motionless like a corpse | Final pause in music before a new melody |
| Gray | Mixture of black and white; motionless | Silent and static; lacking potential activity such as spirituality | Mixture of green and red |
| Red | Unlimited warmth, determined intensity, radiating from within | Power, passion, determination, victory | Trumpet (bright red), drums (dark red) |
| Orange | Red intensified by yellow; approaching the viewer | Confidence in one's own strength | *Angelus* sound, old violin |
| Violet | Red cooled by blue | Sadness, frailty, | English horn, low |

| | |
|---|---|
| withdrawal from humanity | woodwind tones (bassoon); sign of mourning in China |

The table summarizes the philosophical meanings of color according to Kandinsky by integrating physical characteristics, psychological–spiritual resonance, and musical parallels. Yellow associates with worldly energy and restlessness, whereas blue symbolizes heavenly calm and inner depth. Green reflects balance but risks stagnation if not dynamically combined. White and black represent two poles of silence: the former as potential beginning, the latter as absolute end. Gray symbolizes existential uncertainty and the absence of strong spiritual meaning. Red, orange, and violet respectively convey vital intensity, self-confidence, and melancholic spirituality. The musical parallels Kandinsky assigns reinforce his claim that color carries emotional and spiritual vibrations comparable to sound, positioning color as a universal language capable of awakening *inner need* in both art and everyday life.

These findings affirm that Kandinsky did not merely create artworks but also constructed a visual philosophical system that places color at the center of modern spiritual experience (Kandinsky, 2009). His abstract art functions as a concrete instrument of *re-enchantment* because it offers a new way to experience meaning and connectedness—not through doctrine, but through sensory experience transformed into inner awareness. This perspective establishes Kandinsky's color theory as philosophical data that extend beyond the art world into the analysis of contemporary culture and spirituality.

## Color as a Catalyst of *Re-enchantment* in Social and Spiritual Contexts

This study also finds that color plays a central role as a catalyst in the process of *re-enchantment* amid the condition of *disenchantment of the world* that characterizes modern life. In contexts where worldviews shaped by scientism and materialism have eroded spiritual values and existential meaning, color emerges as a medium capable of reactivating inner resonances that have long been neglected. Kandinsky's theory, which emphasizes the inherent spiritual power of color, provides a philosophical foundation for understanding how color can operate directly on the deepest dimensions of the human soul without relying on symbolic representation or explicitly religious narratives (Kandinsky, 2009).

The data indicate that color, both in art and in everyday life, can evoke spiritual vibrations that exceed rational explanation. Kandinsky describes this experience as the fulfillment of *inner need*, namely the existential drive to connect with something transcendent. This phenomenon appears in everyday contexts such as architecture, food, clothing, and public spaces, where particular colors create emotional atmospheres that calm, energize, or channel sadness in ways

that resist logical explanation yet are deeply felt. For example, natural color combinations in urban gardens or domestic interiors can generate peaceful experiences that lead individuals toward an awareness of beauty and meaning beneath routine activities (Kandinsky, 2009; Ringbom, 2022).

Within the context of abstract art, the findings identify color as a primary means for explicitly accessing spirituality. Analysis of Kandinsky's works and theoretical writings shows that he releases color from representational functions and allows it to address the soul directly. Compositions dominated by deep blue tones, for instance, tend to evoke feelings of heavenly calm or profound contemplation, whereas bright yellow generates emotional tension or intense vitality. These findings confirm that *re-enchantment* in art does not require religious symbols or narratives but can occur through sensory experiences that artists intentionally structure to elicit spiritual resonance (White, 2019).

Furthermore, the data reveal that the process of *re-enchantment* through color does not operate in a single mode but unfolds across two complementary spectra. First, color in everyday life functions implicitly by restoring meaning through aesthetic engagement in ordinary activities such as cooking, dressing, caring for the home, or interacting in public spaces. Second, color in abstract art functions explicitly as a deliberate contemplative medium that enables audiences to experience spiritual intensity directly through visual resonance. Together, these modes demonstrate that color acts as a transformative medium across contexts—both profane and sacred—in restoring meaning and a sense of wonder toward the world (Kandinsky, 2009).

Overall, the findings in this subsection affirm that color does not operate merely as a decorative or symbolic feature but as an ontological element that connects human beings with the spiritual dimension of reality. Whether in functional everyday spaces or in artistic domains, color serves as a bridge that overcomes the rupture between the material and the spiritual that defines a world shaped by *disenchantment*. Accordingly, color proves to be an effective philosophical medium for reactivating contemporary spiritual experience, positioning it as key data for understanding the dynamics of *re-enchantment* in modern social and cultural contexts.

**Table 3. Comparison of the Functions of Color in *Re-enchantment* in Everyday Life and Abstract Art**

| Dimension | Everyday Life | Kandinsky's Abstract Art |
|---|---|---|
| Aesthetic Function | Integrated with functional objects (homes, food, clothing) | Freed from representational function; focused on visual composition |
| Spiritual Function | Implicitly restores meaning and a sense of | Explicitly expresses *inner need* |

| | wonder | |
|---|---|---|
| Mode of Access | Sensory–behavioral: seen, felt, and encountered daily | Visual–aesthetic: perceived within contemplative artworks |
| Dominant Color Examples | Green (garden calm), white (kitchen simplicity), red (cultural vitality) | Deep blue (spiritual depth), bright yellow (inner agitation) |
| *Re-enchantment* Effect | Revitalizes beauty within routine activities | Engages the transcendent dimension through inner resonance |

The table summarizes the functional differences of color as a catalyst of re-enchantment across two primary domains: everyday life and Kandinsky's abstract art. In everyday contexts, color integrates naturally into functional objects such as homes, food, and clothing. Its aesthetic function attaches to routine activities and produces implicit spiritual effects by evoking peace, warmth, or meaning within the ordinary. By contrast, in Kandinsky's abstract art, color detaches from representational function and operates as a direct vehicle of inner expression. Artists consciously compose each color to elicit specific spiritual resonances within the viewer's soul. Consequently, the pathways of re-enchantment differ: everyday life involves continuous sensory experience, whereas abstract art invites focused aesthetic reflection. These two domains operate in parallel and complement one another, forming a full spectrum of how color can restore wonder and meaning in a disenchanted world.

## Discussion

This study identifies that color plays a significant philosophical role in shaping human spiritual and social experience, both through everyday aesthetics and abstract art. The findings show that color does not function merely as a visual or decorative element, but as a transformative medium capable of awakening *inner need* and opening pathways toward *re-enchantment* amid the *disenchantment* that characterizes modern life. Colors such as deep blue, bright yellow, natural green, and intense red do not merely produce emotional effects; they also mediate existential experiences that reconnect the material and spiritual dimensions of human life. In Kandinsky's abstract art, color operates as a pure spiritual language; in everyday life, color revitalizes meaning through routine human interactions with space, objects, food, and clothing.

These findings can be explained through Kandinsky's theoretical framework on spirituality in art and the concept of *re-enchantment* within a spiritually reduced modernity. Kandinsky argues that color possesses intrinsic vibrations that resonate directly with the human soul. This perspective reinforces the idea that aesthetic experience, although sensory in nature, can transcend biological

dimensions and reach the spiritual realm. The concept of *inner need* explains why certain aesthetic experiences—such as encountering harmonious or contemplative color combinations—can evoke awe, existential reflection, or inner peace. Meanwhile, *re-enchantment*, as a concept emerging from critiques of modern *disenchantment* (Saler, 2020; Weber, 2020), clarifies that contemporary spiritual crises do not require resolution solely through religious institutions, but can also be addressed through symbolic and emotional aesthetic experiences mediated by color.

These findings intersect with, yet also differ from, previous studies. Earlier research often emphasized the relationship between art and religion (Graham, 2017; Plantinga, 2011) or spirituality in cultural expression (Eliade, 1987). However, much of this literature remains focused on traditional religious art forms or treats art and spirituality separately from everyday life. Classical aesthetics, particularly within the Kantian tradition, also tends to isolate art from practical function by emphasizing autonomous aesthetic contemplation. In contrast, this study offers a new approach that integrates high art and everyday aesthetics through the dimension of color, while unifying the analysis of spirituality with ordinary sensory experience. The primary novelty of this research lies in its conceptual integration of Kandinsky's color theory, everyday aesthetics, and the *re-enchantment* framework within a single philosophical analysis.

Historically, these findings suggest that human spiritual experience has never fully disappeared from modernity but has instead transformed in form—from institutional religious expression to more subtle and affective personal aesthetic experiences. Color as a spiritual catalyst in both art and everyday life reveals that modern societies, despite operating within a framework of *disenchantment*, continue to seek transcendent expression through non-conventional channels such as visual art, design, and lived environments. Recent studies support this view by showing that artists use color not only to construct visual form, but also to evoke deep spiritual and emotional responses, enhance awareness, and even produce healing effects in art therapy practices (León Del Río, 2025). Art historical research further demonstrates that artists such as Kandinsky and Rothko employed color not merely as a symbol, but as a medium of spiritual expression capable of profoundly affecting human psychic consciousness (Patron et al., 2024).

Moreover, color also emerges as a key element in expressing cultural and spiritual identity within social groups. Research on traditional Korean clothing shows that color functions not only aesthetically, but also as an expression of spiritual culture embedded in social and cosmological structures (Song et al., 2015). This aligns with findings that color in everyday life reflects emotional attachment, personal identity, and social and spatial belonging (Aguirre &

Bernardo Burrola, 2020). Even in modern and digital contexts, color continues to play a significant role: interior design, landscape architecture, and visual interfaces use color to construct affective spaces that support spiritual awareness and well-being (Mottram, 2017). Studies on differences in color perception between Eastern and Western cultures further confirm that color carries symbolic and transcendent power shaped by cultural heritage and historical experience (Turganbayeva et al., 2014).

Accordingly, the spiritual function of color in modern society does not diminish but rather channels itself through new aesthetic, symbolic, and personal forms. Color becomes a contemporary historical medium for restoring awe, connectedness, and lived meaning within a reality long desacralized by rationalistic worldviews.

Socially, these findings indicate that everyday spaces, objects, and environments can serve as sites of meaning restoration—places where spirituality operates quietly through visual sensation and affective relationships. Numerous studies support this conclusion by demonstrating that physical objects and spaces can trigger meaning-making processes, strengthen identity, and generate emotional and spiritual attachment. Everyday objects, for example, can activate interpretation and collaboration in work contexts and encourage experimental practices that shape diagnostic reasoning and situational understanding (Lee & Amjadi, 2014). When artists relocate ordinary objects into artistic contexts, these objects can acquire symbolic meaning that expands their role as spiritual and reflective triggers (Iosifyan & Wolfe, 2024).

Natural environments also play a crucial role as settings for spiritual experience. Elements such as ancient trees, water, fire, animals, or expansive open spaces frequently trigger transcendent experiences that strengthen well-being and self-awareness (Havik et al., 2015; Waked & Albarmelgy, 2018). In addition, spiritual travel practices in tourism demonstrate that separation from daily routines and direct engagement with unfamiliar places can generate reflective conditions akin to laboratories of spiritual experience (Cheer et al., 2017).

Within built environments, color and spatial design function as tools for creating healing experiences. Research on therapeutic spaces shows that physical spatial characteristics can transform into metaphysical atmospheres that foster a sense of connection with oneself and a broader spiritual environment (Liddicoat, 2019; Yan et al., 2024). Sacred spaces—whether inherently sacred or sanctified through human practice and experience—can generate feelings of transcendence and spiritual restoration (Adelstein, 2018). Moreover, socially inclusive spatial design enriched with aesthetic elements and sensory control demonstrably supports emotional well-being and facilitates spiritual experiences integrated with trauma recovery or affective healing (Marques & McIntosh, 2025; Sani & Isa,

2021).

Research further confirms that places—both sacred and ordinary—can function as loci of spiritual attachment through affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions (Counted et al., 2024). Beyond serving as ecological reminders or archetypal symbols, such places also create conditions for self-actualization and holistic spiritual recovery (Rodrigues, 2022). These findings reinforce the argument that spirituality does not require practice within formal religious institutions, but can be discovered and experienced through everyday interactions with spaces and objects that carry personal and cultural meaning.

Ideologically, the results of this study challenge the dominance of materialistic and rationalistic paradigms in modern aesthetics and epistemology, while opening possibilities for philosophical frameworks that are more inclusive of affective and non-doctrinal spiritual experiences. These findings align with the notion of post-materialist aesthetics, a contemporary framework that emphasizes cultural, social, political, and ethical dimensions of aesthetic experience, replacing the earlier focus on form, technique, and material objects alone (Bychkov, 2015; Zaks, 2021). This approach creates space for spiritual and affective experiences that resist full reduction to rational explanation or formal artistic categories.

Within this context, art and aesthetics no longer function merely as reflections of visual or formal values, but as intersubjective processes that engage the social and spiritual consciousness of modern society. As Duan (2017) argues, contemporary Western aesthetics has undergone a significant shift toward a political turn, linking aesthetics to ethical issues, ideology, and social transformation. Post-Marxist approaches to aesthetics further suggest that art does not simply present beauty, but also operates as an ideology that shapes social consciousness and reflects cultural contradictions (Fan & Liu, 2017). Within this landscape, color as an affective medium can be understood as an ideological instrument that subtly challenges the hegemony of rationalistic perception and knowledge.

Contemporary aesthetic phenomenology also supports affective readings of artistic experience. Guibet Lafaye (2006) demonstrates that postmodern artworks, including minimal and post-minimal art, tend to emphasize subjective experience, bodily presence, and existential awareness arising from direct engagement with the work. This perspective strengthens the finding that color in both art and everyday life functions not merely as a visual phenomenon, but as an existential and spiritual experience.

Drawing on post-culturalist approaches that resist the dominance of cultural-historical interpretation in art analysis (Davis et al., 2017), color aesthetics can be understood as a dialectical field between personal experience and broader social–ideological structures. In this framework, artworks or

everyday spaces that employ color spiritually do not merely present "beauty," but also enact resistance against the dominance of technocratic and capitalist epistemologies. This condition suggests that *re-enchantment* through color constitutes a philosophical intervention that opens space for more plural, embodied, and transcendent forms of knowledge.

Nevertheless, reflection on these findings also reveals a critical dysfunction that cannot be ignored. Color as a medium of *re-enchantment*, particularly in art, remains vulnerable to commodification and visual banality within popular culture. Many public spaces instead deploy color for affective manipulation—in advertising, political campaigns, or digital media—thereby reducing aesthetic and spiritual experience to mere visual consumption. Cohen (2017) notes that although color holds profound conceptual, symbolic, and emotional potential in artworks—such as Matisse's use of red or Rothko's color fields—this depth can diminish when color detaches from reflective contexts and becomes absorbed into surface-level aesthetics. In cinema and digital media, color often serves to generate specific moods or harmonious visual effects without strong spiritual grounding or symbolic meaning (Branigan, 2017; Poznin, 2021).

This commodification intensifies through advances in digital technology and artificial intelligence algorithms in visual production. While these technologies optimize color palettes and generate high-level visual harmony, they also risk reducing color to a tool of visual effect rather than a medium of spiritual or existential expression (Yang, 2025; Youquan, 2017). When machines automatically deploy color or when designers apply it solely for commercial aesthetic purposes, its affective and reflective value dulls. Yet, as León Del Río (2025) shows, color in art rooted in identity and inner awareness can produce healing and psychospiritual recovery. Consequently, the loss of historical and cultural context in mass visual culture poses a fundamental challenge to preserving the spiritual integrity of color (Pastoureau, 2019).

Ideologically, this condition demonstrates that although color retains its potential as a spiritual bridge between humans and the world, market forces and surface aesthetics can distort that power. The central challenge, therefore, lies in sustaining the symbolic and emotional depth of color amid the pressures of mass visualization and instant aesthetics that dominate contemporary digital culture.

Accordingly, the findings of this study carry several important implications, particularly in responding to the dysfunction of color as a medium of *re-enchantment* threatened by visual commodification and instant aesthetics. First, at the practical level, society must revitalize aesthetic awareness through visual education that extends beyond technical and commercial training to include philosophical and spiritual dimensions. Such education can cultivate sensitivity to the symbolic and affective meanings of color, enabling the public to become reflective participants rather than passive consumers of everyday aesthetic

experience. Second, architecture and urban design should resist visual homogenization and consciously consider the emotional and spiritual functions of color in creating more contemplative and humane public spaces. Designers can realize this aim by integrating local values, collective affect, and the transcendent qualities of color into urban landscapes.

Third, within arts and cultural education, educators should reintroduce Kandinsky's color theory contextually as a pedagogical tool that connects artistic expression with spiritual depth and existential reflection. In this way, art education moves beyond technical skill acquisition and becomes a transformative medium for confronting cultural meaninglessness. At the policy level, the findings of this study can inform the development of community-based cultural and aesthetic programs—such as thematic public spaces, spiritual murals, or reflective color gardens—that function as sites of *re-enchantment* amid the dominance of instant visual culture. Through these measures, color can be restored not merely as a decorative element, but rehabilitated as a bridge of meaning between the visible world and the felt world—between everyday aesthetics and deeper spiritual seeking.

## Conclusion

This study demonstrates that color plays a significant philosophical role in shaping human spiritual and social experience, both within the context of everyday aesthetics and abstract art. Color functions as a medium of *re-enchantment* that can reactivate meaning, wonder, and spiritual depth amid a modern reality desacralized by materialistic and rationalistic worldviews. The central finding of this research is that color does not operate merely as a visual element, but as a transformative agent that works within affective and existential domains—implicitly through daily routines and explicitly through non-representational artworks such as those developed by Kandinsky.

The primary contribution of this study lies in its conceptual integration of Kandinsky's color theory, everyday aesthetics, and the frameworks of *post-materialist aesthetics* and *re-enchantment*. This research offers a philosophical approach that expands the boundaries of modern aesthetics by opening space for non-doctrinal, embodied, and affective spiritual experience. In addition, the study highlights the importance of interpreting color within social, historical, and ideological contexts as a form of resistance to visual banality and cultural homogenization in contemporary society. In this way, the research enriches the discourse of philosophy of art and aesthetics through a more inclusive and transdisciplinary perspective.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations in its empirical dimension, as it primarily relies on literature-based philosophical analysis. It does not include field studies or direct observation of color perception in lived environments or contemporary artistic practices. Future research should therefore empirically

examine how individuals interpret and experience color within specific social contexts, including through qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews or visual ethnography. Subsequent studies may also investigate the role of color in digital culture more specifically, particularly in relation to the algorithmization of aesthetics and image production through intelligent technologies.

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