



Credit: ARS, NY and DACS, London 2004



Credit: 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko/DACS 2004

Energy painting

This art and language activity introduces the concept of abstract painting along with the vocabulary associated with energy.

You will need

- Art posters or postcards such as works by Pollock, Kandinsky or Rothko (or any abstract painting)
- Paper
- Paint and brushes
- Pencils

Steps

1

Look at a few examples of abstract paintings – such as Pollock, Kandinsky and Rothko – and think about how the artists have used paint, colour, shape and texture. Does the painting remind your pupils of anything? Is it supposed to be something or simply represent it? Look up the dictionary definition of 'abstract'.

2

Ask your pupils to select one of the following as a title for their painting: 'Sunlight', 'Heat', 'Steam', 'Generating power' or 'Electricity'.

3

Ask your pupils to write a list of words that their chosen title brings to mind. Include adjectives (colour and shapes) and emotions. These words will help them describe their painting and help them to paint it. For example, steam-related words like 'misty', 'ghostly', 'hot', 'floating' and 'moving' could inspire the use of droplets of paint.

4

Get your pupils to start painting representations of their lists of words using different colours, shapes and textures to represent the descriptions in an abstract way.

5

When the pupils are happy with their paintings and have allowed them to dry, place them on the wall and arrange them in a sequence that matches the path of energy, e.g. the energy in sunlight is stored in fossil fuels which are burned to heat water to drive the steam turbines that power generators which make electricity.

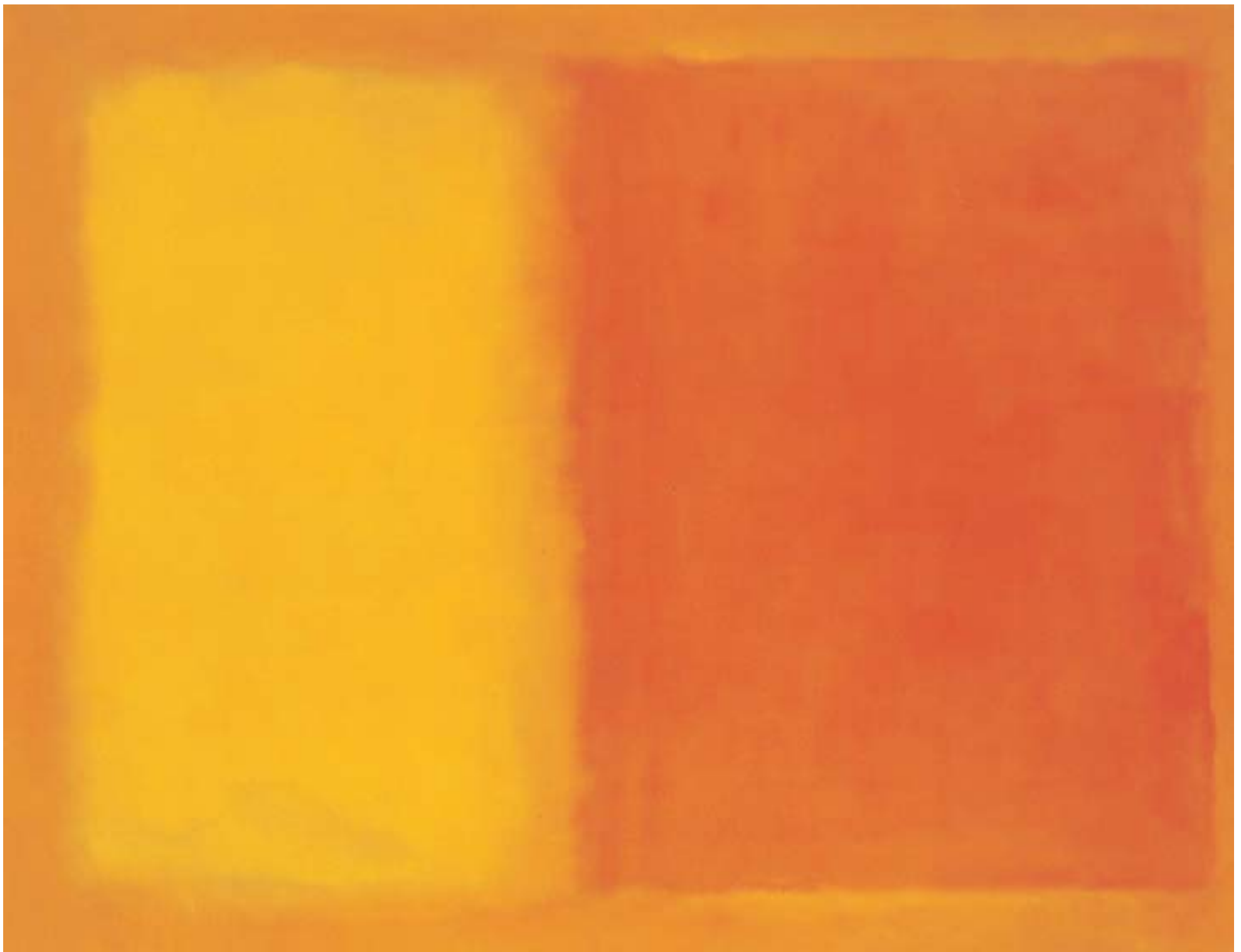
Analysis/ discussion

Is it possible to tell the title of a painting simply by looking at it?

Ask the pupils to describe where their painting fits into the path of energy.



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