Two conditions are indispensable for the study of art:

1. The inner life of the artist, i.e., his own inner world whence the idea of the work of art is born naturally: this condition is innate.

2. Objective knowledge — an indispensable condition for realizing the idea in the form of a work of art, and a condition that the artist elaborates throughout his own entire experience of life.

The second condition originates in school.

The artistic form indispensable to every artist derives from two kinds of knowledge:

1. The knowledge of certain constant principles of art, of certain rules that correspond to a particular period of time, and the knowledge of the properties and forces of material in general.

2. The personal knowledge which is essential to the artist himself and which, for the most part, is his and his only.

The artist can glean the second kind of knowledge only from himself, because it is vital to the discovery of his own specific forms and via these forms to the discovery of his own personality.

However, the artist acquires the first kind of knowledge not in his inner self, but via sources that lie beyond, above all, in the conditions of his tenure at school.

Therefore, learning particular kinds of knowledge, certain common laws of art, the individual branches of art (painting, sculpture, and so on), and how to master materials and technique should be the task of the school curriculum.

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1. V. Kandinsky: "Tezisy prepodavaniia" (1918-19). The translation is based on the typescript in the archive of the Moscow Institute of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture at RGALI, f. 680, op. 1, ed. khr. 1018 (3), l. 210. Elena Ovsiannikova published most of the typescript in her essay “V. V. Kandinsky: 'Tezisy prepodavaniia' Svobodnykh Gosudarstvennykh masterskikh, 1918, oktiabr,” Iskusstvo (M), No. 3 (1989), pp. 31-33, and Vasilii Rakitin published a German translation of a similar, but more complete, text (dated October 5, 1918, and then in the collection of Artiukhova, one of Kandinsky’s pupils at Svomas) in Ju. Korolev and N. Avtonomova, Wassily Kandinsky. Die erste sovjetische Perspektive, Catalog of exhibition at the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 1989, pp. 83-84. Rakitin included a supplement (from RGALI, f. 680, op. 1, ed. khr. 848, l. 352) that Kandinsky wrote in 1919 and placed after the reference to "Tsveitaev" in the first text and this has been included here. The emphases (italics) are Kandinsky's.
Generally speaking, a specific path has to be trodden in painting, whichever form it takes (figurative or abstract), and a stock of [different kinds of] knowledge assembled – which is acquired through many exercises:

1. Exercises involving nature, both still or moving;
2. Exercises involving the stilllife;
3. Working with your impressions;
4. Working with studies, compositions, and so on.

To learn abstract painting you need special exercises involving abstract forms; these are obligatory not for all students, but only for those who seem especially interested.

The studio supervisor should provide students with the chance to work in complete freedom and should not exert pressure on individual tendencies. Consequently, his duty should consist in furnishing the student with every kind of knowledge that the latter should research by a given deadline, independently of the individual goals of the supervisor.

However, as far as the individual tendencies of a student are concerned, it is essential to begin with all the general methods of studying nature, both living and still. With time certain groups of students with particular tendencies take shape, according to the level of knowledge – hence our specialized teaching and specialized teaching methodology.

Because, until very recently I had been living and working abroad exclusively and students [here] do not know me, I should mention that for three years I directed a school of painting in Munich where I taught students from many countries.

Some of my books have been published in Germany, England, and America.

My paintings are in various city collections in Germany, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, Holland, England, and America.

My autobiography was published in Berlin in 1913 and P. N. Tsvetaev has a copy that you can look at.²

Without fail, every true artist must, and will, find his own essential forms. Consequently:

1. The school can and must help the student attain this goal by means of the common knowledge already manifest in art; as a result, the student will not waste too much time outside school.

² The name "P. N. Tsvetaev" replaces "I. I. Mashkov" which has been crossed out, presumably, by Kandinsky. In her "V. V. Kandinsky: 'Tezisy prepodavaniia' Svobodnykh gosudarstvennykh masterskikh, 1918, oktiabr'" Ovsiannikova interprets the name as "P. K. Tsvetkov" and the mistake is repeated in the reprinting by N. Avtonomova, D. Sarab'ianov, and V. Turchin in their V. V. Kandinsky. Izbrannye trudy po teorii iskusstva (M: Gileia, 2001), 2: 317.