A piece of work in one field can inspire artists in another field to create something new.

Music can inspire a painter to create a visual representation of something he or she has heard.

Likewise, a painting can inspire a musician to create music in which you can almost see different colors and shapes.

Furthermore, lines from a novel or a poem can inspire painters or musicians to create visual or auditory art that gives life to a story.

These interactions between artists can have unexpected results, producing works of art that have strong visual, auditory or emotional influences on people.

Music Drawn on the Canvas

Music has played a key role in the creation of some artwork.

The influence of music on the visual arts can be best seen with the expressionist painter Wassily Kandinsky.

Kandinsky studied law and economics and was successful in his law career.

However, in his early 30's, he had an unusual visual experience while looking at Monet's *Haystacks*.

He also was influenced by the melody of Wagner's *Lohengrin*.

"I saw all my colors before my eyes," he said.

He felt as if wild and powerful lines appeared in front of him.

As a result, he gave up his law career to study painting.
Lesson 8. Appreciate

For Kandinsky, music and color were closely tied together.

In his paintings, for example, yellow is linked with the sound of the trumpet and blue with that of the cello.

In addition, certain shapes in his paintings were associated with particular feelings.

The triangle represents aggressive feelings and the square calm moods.

Each time he stroked the canvas with his brush, he might have intended to turn a series of musical notes into visual forms.

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Melodies Reflecting Colors and Shapes

Musicians have also found inspiration from painters and their works of art.

Modest Mussorgsky was a composer who is famous for his descriptions of colors in his music.

One of his most frequently performed piano works, *Pictures at an Exhibition*, was composed in his efforts to capture what he felt about the paintings of an artist friend named Viktor Hartmann, who died at the early age of 39.

After visiting a memorial exhibition of Hartmann's works, Mussorgsky composed a piano suite in 10 movements to describe each of Hartmann's paintings displayed at the exhibition.

Anyone who listens to the movements can associate the melodies with what they see in Hartmann's paintings.

While Mussorgsky was writing the melodies, he must have wanted to translate the stories in the paintings into his musical language.
Words Living in Melodies and Images

A novel or a play often inspires musicians and painters.

For example, Felix Mendelssohn was inspired after reading Shakespeare’s play, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, at the age of 17 and began to compose a piece of music to capture the magic and fantasy in Shakespeare’s imaginary world.

It became part of his famous work, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

*The Wedding March* is one of the best known pieces from the suite.

Marc Chagall, known for his use of dreamy colors, was also moved by the play and drew a painting with the same title, *Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

The figures in the painting recreate the dreamlike atmosphere of the play.

Although Chagall and Mendelssohn lived in different times, they both translated Shakespeare’s words and sentences into their own artistic languages.

The English word “inspire” originally meant “to breathe in”.  

Air breathed in has to be breathed out in one way or another.

Kandinsky, Mussorgsky, Mendelssohn, and Chagall were great breathers because they turned their intakes into artwork that stimulates us in novel ways.

Maybe, they knew we would interpret their works accordingly, noticing the melodies, colors, shapes, and the words influencing each other.