

## ***The Blaue Reiter*** (Taschen), by Hajo Duchting

Daring canvases by the artists known as the Blue Rider advanced the cause of Modernism in Germany. But as shown by art historian Hajo Duchting in his beautifully illustrated overview, much of the impetus for the movement, cut short by World War I, was Russian. At the lead was Wassily Kandinsky, whose folkloric Russian scenes developed along increasingly abstract lines. Influenced by Eastern Orthodox iconography, whose religious depictions represented windows into another world rather than realism, Kandinsky sought the spiritual essence behind physical forms in abstract painting. However, the German setting is unsurprising in light of Munich's status. At the start of the last century the city was a cultural magnet rivaling Paris. (David Luhrssen)

