



Focus on  
**COLOUR**  
Activity Sheet

*'Today we are  
searching for things  
in nature that are hidden  
behind the veil of appearance...  
we look for and paint this inner,  
spiritual side of nature'*

Franz Marc

**Franz Marc**

**RED WOMAN**



# ACTIVITIES

## Discussion

- Did the artist intend to depict a realistic scene with recognisable images or was he aiming for something else?
- Which parts of the painting are more abstract and less realistic?
- What words can you think of to describe the mood of the painting?
- Do you associate meanings with any colours or shapes? Where do these come from?
- 'When it comes to setting the mood in a work of art - colour is the most important part.' Do you agree with this statement? Why / why not?

## Making Comparisons

- Compare this painting with other Marc paintings on display – what are the similarities? Simon Lake, Fine Art Curator for Leicester Arts and Museums thinks this painting showed Marc: '*Leaning towards abstraction but still rooted in reality*' He has almost crossed over from figurative to abstract work but not quite. Do you see this journey in his other works?

## Follow Up

- Choose a colour and paint it in a range of shades and tones. Then write on the feelings that you think each shade expresses
- Try out Marc's style. Paint a natural scene where the animals are recognisable but there is a blending of nature, emotion and colour to express the feelings of the animals
- Use the internet to find some work by Paul Gauguin and see if you can recognise his influence on Marc.
- Follow this link to read up on the Psychology of Colour [www.colormatters.com/entercolormatters](http://www.colormatters.com/entercolormatters)

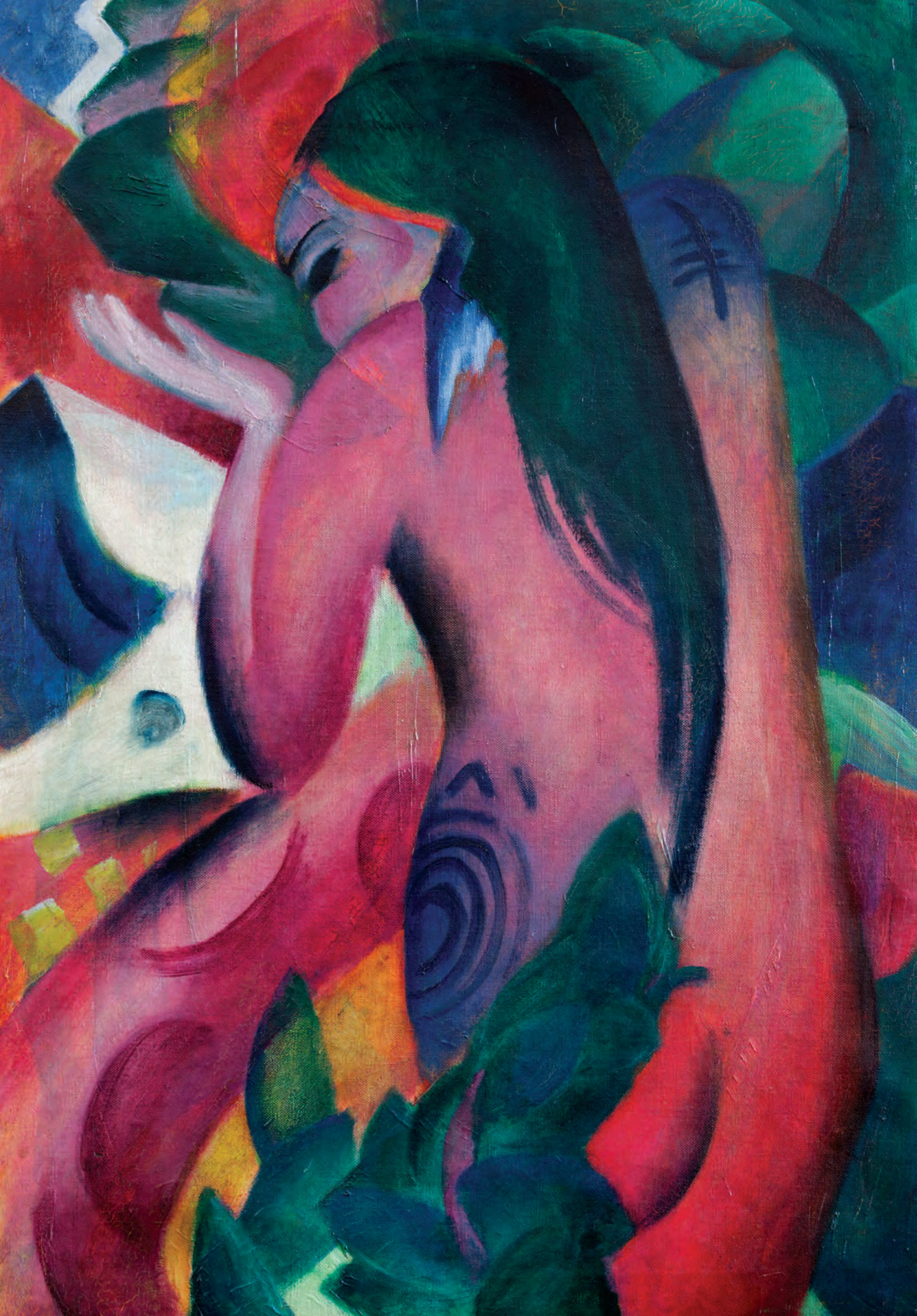


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## About The Artist

Franz Marc and the painter Wassily Kandinsky founded the Blue Rider (Blaue Reiter) artist's group in 1911; it was a key part of the Expressionist movement. The name comes from a painting by Kandinsky created in 1903, and from Marc's enthusiasm for horses and Kandinsky's love of the colour blue. For Kandinsky, blue is the colour of spirituality.

Within the group, artistic approaches varied but the artists shared a desire to express spiritual truths through their art. They believed in a connection between visual art and music, the symbolic associations of colour and an intuitive approach to painting.

Marc was interested exploring humanity in harmony with nature, and in showing the inner emotions of creatures. He tried to paint nature from an animal's viewpoint - at first painting them naturalistically and then using brilliant, joyous colours that bore no resemblance to the animals' natural colours. Marc was looking for a way of expressing an inner mystical structure of the world, and through the influence of Kandinsky and Delaunay his work was moving towards abstraction.

Franz Marc was tragically killed at Verdun in the First World War at the age of 36. His name had been on a list of notable artists to be withdrawn from battle but he was killed before the order was carried out. Between the foundation of the Blue Rider and his death in 1916 Marc had produced an immense amount of work in just a few years.

## About The Artwork

Red Woman is a rare figure study among his animal-inspired works and reflects the idea of an inter-relationship between humans and nature. The woman is composed of patterned shapes which interact with the background. The background is simplified with a hint of foliage and perhaps swirling water. Her black/green hair is almost joined to a clump of leaves. Even though the figure is almost hiding it also both dominates the picture and harmoniously merges with the semi-abstract wildness of the natural setting.

Marc believed that colours had significance: blue was spiritual, yellow was gentle, happy and sensual, red is has warmth but is also brutal and heavy. The Red Woman's power comes from the colours rather than from the form and his later work moved towards compositions built solely on colour.