

Surreal Dreams: From Collage to Drawing

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GRADE LEVEL: HS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

“The Surrealist movement was founded in Paris by a small group of writers and artists who sought to channel the unconscious as a means to unlock the power of the imagination. Disdaining rationalism and literary realism, and powerfully influenced by psychoanalysis, the Surrealists believed the conscious mind repressed the power of the imagination, weighting it down with taboos. Influenced also by Karl Marx, they hoped that the psyche had the power to reveal the contradictions in the everyday world and spur on revolution. Their emphasis on the power of the imagination puts them in the tradition of Romanticism, but unlike their forbears, they believed that revelations could be found on the street and in everyday life. The Surrealist impulse to tap the unconscious mind, and their interests in myth and primitivism, went on to shape many later movements, and the style remains influential to this today.” (See link to source in References.)

Rene Magritte painted many intriguing images. He build surprising juxtapositions just like one might see in dreams. He played with scale, placing small items in rooms, allowing the objects to be huge, filling the space. Often these paintings were tiny. The play of scale in these relative relationships makes for a playful and surprising dynamic. He created complex visual puns and his realistic technique challenges viewers to make sense of his world.

CONTENT STANDARDS:

ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

- 1.1 Identify and use the principles of design to discuss, analyze, and write about visual aspects in the environment and in works of art, including their own.
- 1.2 Describe the principles of design as used in works of art, focusing on dominance and subordination.
- 1.3 Analyze and describe how the composition of a work of art is affected by the use of a particular principle of design.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

- 2.1 Solve a visual arts problem that involves the effective use of the elements of art and the principles of design.
- 2.1 Create original works of art of increasing complexity and skill in a variety of media that reflect their feelings and points of view. (Adv.)
- 2.4 Review and refine observational drawing skills.

NATIONAL CORE CONTENT STANDARDS:

Visual Arts/Connecting #VA:Cn10.1

Process Component: Interpret

Anchor Standard: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Grade Hs proficient VA:Cn10.1.HSI

Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas.

Grade Hs accomplished VA:Cn10.1.HSII

Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research, and experimentation to explore unfamiliar subjects through art-making.

Grade Hs advanced VA:Cn10.1.HSIII

Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical, and personal life with art-making approaches to create meaningful works of art or design.

Visual Arts/Creating #VA:Cr1.1

Process Component: Investigate, Plan, Make

Anchor Standard: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Grade Hs proficient VA:Cr1.1.HSI

Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors.

Grade Hs accomplished VA:Cr1.1.HSII

Individually or collaboratively formulate new creative problems based on student's existing artwork.

Visual Arts/Creating #VA:Cr2.1

Process Component: Investigate

Anchor Standard: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Grade Hs proficient VA:Cr2.1.HSI

Engage in making a work of art or design without having a preconceived plan.

Grade Hs accomplished VA:Cr2.1.HSII

Through experimentation, practice, and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.

Visual Arts/Creating #VA:Cr3.1

Process Component: Reflect, Refine, Continue

Anchor Standard: Refine and complete artistic work.

Grade Hs proficient VA:Cr3.1.HSI

Apply relevant criteria from traditional and contemporary cultural contexts to examine, reflect on, and plan revisions for works of art and design in progress.

Grade Hs accomplished VA:Cr3.1.HSII

Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on, re-engage, revise, and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.

Grade Hs advanced VA:Cr3.1.HSIII

Reflect on, re-engage, revise, and refine works of art or design considering relevant traditional and contemporary criteria as well as personal artistic vision.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES/GOALS/ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS:

Students will explore a new method for developing original artistic imagery through experimentation and refine their concept through reflection and critical feedback from their peers. They will learn about Surrealism and the work of artist Rene Magritte and take a Surrealist approach to collecting imagery from magazines to create a collage. Finally they will draw from the collage, creating a very complex image in the spirit of Magritte. They will critically assess their work throughout the process and constantly rework their drawing. Students will write an Artist Statement about their artwork to verbally articulate their visual expression.

VOCABULARY:

Surrealism/surreal, Rene Magritte, collage, juxtapose/juxtaposition, composition, balance, scale, contrast, emphasis, harmony/unity, movement, rhythm, pattern, value/light/dark, texture, detail, critique, Artist Statement

MATERIALS:

magazines, scissors, glue sticks, copy paper, heavy drawing paper (Bristol), drawing pencils, kneaded and white plastic erasers

MOTIVATION:

Students will collect images for a collage that will become the visual resource for an elaborate drawing inspired by the Surrealist art of Rene Magritte.

PROCEDURE:

- Explain the concepts behind Surrealism.
- Share the work of Rene Magritte and other Surrealists.
- Ask students to look for interesting images in magazines, letting the pictures “choose” themselves, not unlike how images appear in dreams. Collect!
- Arrange and rearrange the images to build a uniquely surreal character.
- Build a surprising background using a surreal approach.
- Pay attention to how images fit together. Consider transitions.
- Glue down images on copy paper.
- Make black and white copies to edit out color and provide another resource for drawing.
- Lightly draw large shapes on heavy (Bristol) paper.
- Carefully observe shapes, details, value, and texture from both the collage and black and white copy.
- Draw, making decisions about value and emphasis that will create contrast between the main subject and surrounding scene. At the same time, integrate all images so that the unreal appears believable.
- Continue to assess all parts of drawing and make adjustments as deemed necessary.
- Write an Artist Statement describing the process involved in making the piece and the Surrealist dream narrative that evolved. Review and edit.

ASSESSMENT AND/OR EVALUATION:

Students will evaluate the work of their peers in a written critique. They will study each drawing and write at about strengths and things that could be improved upon (at least one of each) for every student’s work. After reading peer feedback, students will write a critique of their own work.

EXTENSIONS:

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

3.3 Identify and describe trends in the visual arts and discuss how the issues of time, place, and cultural influence are reflected in selected works of art.

AESTHETIC VALUING

4.4 Articulate the process and rationale for refining and reworking one of their own works of art.

Students will take both peer and self-critique feedback into consideration as they rework their drawing. They will then write about the entire process involved including learning about Magritte, collecting images from magazines, making the collage, drawing from the collage, giving and receiving feedback, and taking critical assessment into consideration as they reworked the piece until it reached its final form.

RESOURCES:

There are numerous resources on the Internet that delve into Surrealism and the artists involved in this important movement that continues to influence artists today. There are also many, many books that contain color plates and information about Rene Magritte and his contemporaries. Below is just one basic link to investigate Surrealism.

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-surrealism.htm>

The work of some other Surrealists include:

- Hans Arp
- Max Ernst
- Salvador Dali
- Hannah Hoch
- Joan Miro
- Meret Oppenheim
- Man Ray
- Yves Tanguy

Others involved in the movement:

- Andre Breton
- Sigmund Freud

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT WORK:

See four examples of student work below. They were all done with graphite drawing pencils (HB, 2B, 4B, 6B) on Bristol stock (either smooth or vellum). They used different erasers (pink pearl, white plastic, and kneaded). They had the option to use small tortillons for blending.







