

Surrealism Worksheet

Name: _____

Class: _____

1. What did Surrealism try to tap into? _____
2. What two styles of art emerged after the war? _____
3. Who is the leader of the Surrealism movement? _____
4. Surrealism divided into two sub-categories. What were they? _____

5. What type of Surrealism artist was Salvador Dali? _____
6. What are the five common themes that are often found in Surrealism artworks? _____

7. Besides the themes listed in question 6, what are some other characteristics of Surrealism art? _____

8. Who was the famous psychiatrist that studied the unconscious mind? _____
9. Describe what is happening in the artwork below. How does it relate to Surrealism?



10. In the area below draw an image of a person in the style of Surrealism. It must relate to one of the five common themes. Below your image, describe how your artwork is Surrealistic.



List three ways your artwork fits into the style of Surrealism? _____

What is Surrealism?

An AWESOME ART ARTICLE by TheColorThief

Think back to the most bizarre dream you've ever had. Chances are that you forgot it within moments of waking up, but if you'd been able to write it down, what would it be?

Did you grow a mermaid tail? Was a giant rabid duck attacking you? Or did you, and your pet cat, go into outer space to battle alien squids, just to find out that you're one of them? When we dream, we - allow our brain to play out our deepest desires or fears in an unreal, but safe, environment. Our conscious mind controls our thoughts, but our unconscious mind allows our thoughts to be free without boundaries. It is this subconscious state of dreaming that the Surrealism movement was interested in exploring.

HISTORY OF SURREALISM

World War 1 (1914 – 1918) had a significant impact on the Western World. Prior to the war, Western civilization was concerned with growth and advancement, and was relatively peaceful. When the war first began, it shattered this ideology, particularly in France. During this time, much of the art that was produced reflected the reality brought upon by war – images of poverty, war, triumph, battle, death, and destruction. In short: art, like life at the time, was very serious and often restrictive.



1917 Alfred Theodore Joseph Bastien
Canadian Gunners in the Mud

Towards the end of the war the world began to change. Philosophers, politicians, artists, and musicians were questioning traditional viewpoints and making unorthodox choices. During this time two styles of art emerged whose simple goal were to ignore reality; these styles of art were called Dada and Surrealism. While both styles share some similarities, focusing on humor and whimsy, Dada was political and often aggressive, where Surrealism was simply an escape from reality – a focus on the subconscious and what lay beyond.

WHAT IS THE SUBCONSCIOUS?



Painting inspired by *False Mirror* by Rene Magritte

Sigmund Freud could answer that. Freud was an Austrian neurologist who believed that when we are unconscious, our minds travel down pathways that are very important, but often overlooked – dreams. When we dream, we are unconscious but our brains are still very active. Some people believe that dreams are simply a product of random brain activity, but others, like Sigmund Freud, saw more significance. Freud believed that our dreams displayed insights into our true desires, emotions, and fears, and that every dream had a deeper meaning. Surrealism is an exploration of these deeper meanings, whether they are ugly, beautiful, terrifying, or inspiring.

TYPES OF SURREALISM



Automatist Artist Joan Miro
l'Homme a la Bougie

Surrealism officially began in the 1920s in Paris through the works of writers, especially the poet André Breton, who is known today as the “Pope of Surrealism”. Surrealists divided into two categories: Automatists and Veristic. Automatist Surrealists based their work on feeling, and did not worry about planning

or meaning. They wanted their brains to speak directly to their hands, not worrying over color, composition, or even subject matter. As a result, the artworks of Automatists are often abstract or very disjointed, and are not meant to be analyzed or interpreted – there is no deeper meaning; they simply are what they are.

Alternatively, Veristic Surrealists created recognizable images and wanted their work to have meaning. These artists based their work around metaphor and dreams; they would often hide secret messages in their imagery. For example, in *The Persistence of Memory*, Salvador Dalí associated crawling ants with approaching death, as you can see on the clock in the bottom left in his painting. Each of Dalí's paintings is a message – although sometimes he was the only one that understood them. The rest of this article will be focused on the artwork of Veristic artists, which we will just refer to as Surrealists.



Veristic artist Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory*

CHARACTERISTICS OF SURREALISM ART

Surrealistic art is a visual exploration of the unconscious human mind through imagery inspired by dreams (or nightmares!). Sometimes the focus of these artworks might be subtly unrealistic, and other times it is blatantly impossible. Most artworks have a fantasy or dreamlike quality and incorporate subjects in unfamiliar places, sometimes featuring impossible creatures and impossible scenery.



Example of Surrealism

There are five common themes in surrealist artwork: juxtaposition, scale, repetition, metamorphosis, and impossible actions. Often these themes are used together, and sometimes it is difficult to tell what category an image would fall into.



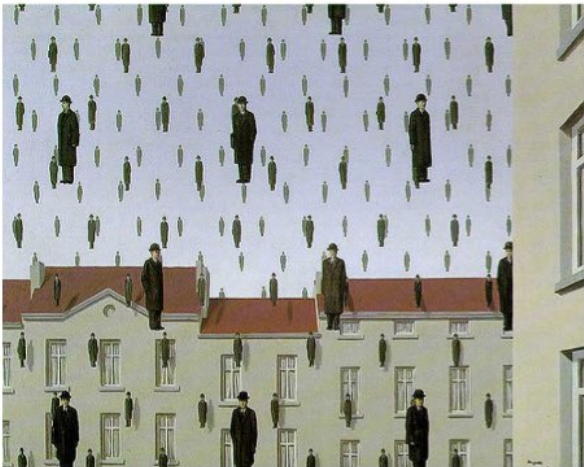
Example of Juxtaposition. *Lobster Telephone* by Salvador Dalí

1. Juxtaposition is shown by combining elements that would not normally be seen together, or by placing them in an unfamiliar location. For example, *Lobster Phone* by Salvador Dalí is a sculpture of a phone with a lobster for a handle – two items that would not normally be paired together.

2. **Scale** is often represented by making one or more elements in an artwork drastically larger or smaller than it should be. For example, if you made a hand that was as large as a tree, that would be an example of scale in Surrealism.



3. Artists like René Magritte often used **repetition** in their paintings, taking one element and repeating it to an impossible degree. *Golconda*, shown below, features a landscape of falling men, which is clearly surrealism.



Example of Repetition, *Golconda* by René Magritte

4. **Metamorphosis** is when one element changes into another. A cat that is part fish, for example, is a great example of metamorphosis.



Example of Metamorphosis

5. Lastly, Surrealism often challenges what we consider “normal” by showing events or actions that would be impossible in the real world. For example, a man who was able to take his face off would be an **impossible action**.



Example of Impossible Action

Even though Surrealism artwork may show many different ideas or themes, there is one fact that all Surrealistic artworks share: they would not be possible in reality, only in our subconscious minds.



Example of Surrealism

The Surrealist art movement became wildly popular in Europe, and eventually spread to America, where it is still widely seen today. By being brave enough to explore what cannot be seen, Surrealists brought attention to the idea of the subconscious mind having meaning. Because of Surrealism, artists now incorporate many impossible themes into their artwork, often using art as metaphor or to send a message, or simply to bring humor to the world.