Surrealism

a 20th-century avant-garde movement
What is Surrealism?

Surrealism is an avant-garde (meaning new, unusual, or experimental) art movement that reflects on the dreams, or the subconscious mind of the artist. The images usually reflect scenes, shapes, or characters that do not really exist in reality.
When did Surrealism start?

Surrealism was started by French writer André Breton in the 1920s.

Here he is on the right! →

He was interested in things like dreams, fantasies, and thoughts in our minds that we don’t even realize we have!
André Breton explained Surrealism in his Surrealist "Manifesto", where he described Surrealism as "the real working of the mind," controlled "by the unconscioness."

A Manifesto is a public, published statement of beliefs or information about a certain topic. Like a book.

A few years after he published the manifesto, artists began to paint in the style he described.

Artists and writers were working together to try to think of new and different ways to make art!
Where in the world did Surrealism start?

André Breton was from France.

Other famous, early Surrealists were from countries, including Belgium, Spain, and even Egypt.
There are 2 main categories of Surrealism.

**Surrealist Automatism**

- *Constellation: The Morning Star*
  - Joan Miró
  - 1939

**Veristic Surrealism**

- *Three Sphinxes of Bikini*
  - Salvador Dali
  - 1947

What do you think are the differences between the two?

...Let’s first dive into Surrealist Automatism!
Category 1: Surrealist Automatism

Automatism refers to creating art *without conscious thought*, using material from the *unconscious mind* as part of the creative process...

Automatic drawing requires the artists to draw freely on a blank paper *without worrying about composition, proportions, or even content!*

*Can you describe what you see in these images?*
YOUR TURN! Let’s practice Automatism!

Instructions for an optional craft:

1. Grab some materials:
   
   You will need a **piece of paper**, something to **draw with**, a **timer**, and a **blindfold**, or something you can cover your eyes with. (If you can’t find anything, just close your eyes!)

2. Set your timer for **1 minute**.

3. Have your paper and drawing utensil ready to go. Then, have someone cover your eyes with the blindfold.

4. Have them start the timer, or count to 60 in their head.

5. Draw with your eyes covered or closed for 30 seconds. Draw **whatever comes to your mind**!

6. Enjoy your work of art!
One of the most famous Veristic Surrealists is Salvador Dali, who is known for his wild behavior, and even wilder art.

He often used strange images from dreams in his paintings, like melting clocks, elephants, eggs, ants, snails

What objects can you identify in Dali’s work?
Category 2: Veristic Surrealism


Here is his interpretation of the caterpillar! →

The movie Alice in Wonderland is surreal itself, taking place in a magical, surreal, dream world!

Advice from a Caterpillar
Salvador Dali
1969
Category 2: Veristic Surrealism

Veristic Surrealism often combines things you wouldn’t expect to see together. This strategy is called **juxtaposition**.

René Magritte, another famous Veristic Surrealist, was well-known for his use of juxtaposition. These are some of his works:

What are the things the artist juxtaposed in these pictures?
YOUR TURN! Let's practice Juxtaposition!

Instructions for an optional craft:

1. **Grab some materials:**
   
   You will need a **piece of paper** and something to **draw with**. You might want multiple colors!

2. **Make a list of 3-5 objects** that don’t normally go together.
   
   For example: an ice cream cone, a bike, and a fish!

3. **Draw these objects together** in an interesting way to create a Surrealist creature or scene using juxtaposition!
The AD&A Museum at UCSB has some Surrealist artworks in its collection, too!

Check them out!

Expose: Gravity’s Dream
Chitra Ganesh
2008

Untitled
Maria Amelia Villegas
1977

Have you ever visited the AD&A, or another museum? If so, do you remember if you saw any Surrealist artworks when you visited?

Surrealist pieces aren’t always paintings or drawings... this one is a sculpture made out of metal!