
Swans Reflecting Elephants Salvador Dali



Keywords: Surrealism, Dislocation, Scale Change, Replacement, Levitation, Juxtaposition,
Lesson: Surrealist Sketch /Magazine Composition

Keywords Defined:

- **Dislocation:** Placing an object in unusual or unfamiliar surroundings. (a train coming out of a fireplace)
- **Scale Change:** Changing an objects usual size. (an enormous apple next to a man).
- **Replacement:** Replacing an expected object with an unexpected one. (a car steering wheel that is a clock.)
- **Levitation:** Floating objects, defying gravity. (Islands floating in the air).
- **Juxtaposition:** Joining two images in an impossible combination. (a rock sitting on top of a fragile flower).

Form of Art: Surrealism. "Sur" means beyond, so surrealism means "beyond realism". Surrealism is a major artistic movement where artists attempted to represent the world as seen by the unconscious mind. These artworks were inspired by dreams and imagination and usually contained scenes that were very fantasy-like and unreal. Surrealism depicts bizarre images of objects that may be based in reality but the artist has changed them so they look more dream-like. Some of the methods an artist uses to create surrealist art are mentioned above in the definitions.

Meet The Artist:

- Salvador Dali was born in Spain in 1904 (around the time of the invention of the car).
- Had his first drawing lesson at the age of 10. His father was a wealthy business owner who built Dali his own art studio.
- Dali eventually went to study art in Madrid and had his first art show at 21 years old.
- During the next 7 years he became internationally famous for his surrealist art. His paintings are filled with strange scenes and objects from his imagination or dreams.
- Dali loved attention and was quite a showman. He wore a long curled up mustache. He was notorious for not knowing how to count money. Once he arrived to an event in a limousine filled with cauliflower. He held a lecture in a deep-sea diving suit. The helmet was soundproof. While the audience was laughing, he was suffocating because no one could hear his cries for help. He loved to shock the public and traveled with his pet ocelots.

- Dali died at the age of 85 and will always be one of the 20th century's most famous and unusual artists.

Possible Questions:

- What adjectives would you use to describe this scene?
- Is this a realistic painting? Why or why not? What makes it surreal? (Dreamlike imagery)
- Do you see examples of Dislocation?
- Do you see examples of Scale Change?
- Why do you think the artist titled it *Swans Reflecting Elephants*?
- **What do you think soft clocks are a symbol of?
- How does this painting make you feel?

Activity: Surreal Dream Sketch /Magazine Composition**Materials Needed:**

Drawing paper
Watercolors
Glue

colored pencils
magazines
scissors

Procedure:

Display and discuss print. Briefly discuss the artist's life and times in which he lived.

Suggestion: Prior to class, may want cut out various realistic single object subjects. (if you are pressed for time)

1. Tell the children they will be making their own Surrealist picture. Ask them to demonstrate at least two of the surrealist methods (dislocation, scale change, juxtaposition, replacement or levitation) in their artwork.
2. Using magazine cutouts as a base for their artwork they will be bringing in another medium such as, watercolors, fine tip markers, crayons, for a "surrealistic" background. And make themselves their own dream sketch. Make sure they try to incorporate at least two of the mentioned surrealist elements.
3. Make it a challenge to see if anyone can incorporate them all. Give them the above examples, but ask them to make it theirs by not using the examples given. For example : a watch inside a teacup (tea time), a horse in a sky, a car inside the ocean, etc...
4. Have them give their masterpiece a title, and sign it in a bottom corner. (remember, first names only on the front!)
5. Display their Masterpieces as desired by the teacher.
6. Sign off on the "Lesson Completed" Sheet in the Binder.