

# Art Masterpiece: Persistence of Memory, 1931 by Salvador Dali

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Keywords: Surrealism (see below)

Grade: 6th

Month: April

Lesson: Surreal Drawing

## Definitions of Surrealistic terms:

- **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.

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- 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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? (Clocks and square structures in barren wasteland. Dead tree coming out of the square structure.)
- Do you see examples of Scale Change? (large, soft clocks)
- Why do you think the artist titled it Persistence of Memory?
- \*\*What do you think soft clocks are a symbol of?
- How does this painting make you feel?

## \*\*The Persistence of Memory, 1931

Salvador Dali got the idea for this painting after an evening meal when he found himself looking at the remains of runny Camembert cheese. His painting consists of drooping forms of clocks as well as the 'soft self-portrait' melting on rocks underneath it, which he added to a barren landscape. In contrast to these elements of softness are the large rocks and strange blocks in the painting. All that is man-made or human has been conquered by time. In this dream-like artwork, time that is measured by mechanical clocks is not important, as all things human are temporary. When compared with the permanence of the landscape, mechanical measurement of time has no importance. The live ants crawling on the solid clock have been said to suggest our inevitable death. We are all conquered by time. (Rephrased from: Bradbury, K. Essential Dali. Bath, U.K.: Parragon, 1999, p. 70)

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**Activity:** Surreal Drawing

**Materials Needed:** One sheet (9" X 12") white construction paper, colored pencils, crayons, fine tip markers, color copies, glue, and scissors

**Process:**

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

1. Have the students write their name and room number on the back of the white construction paper.
2. Tell the children they will be making their own Surrealist picture. Challenge them to demonstrate at least two of the surrealist methods (dislocation, scale change, juxtaposition, replacement or levitation) in their artwork.
3. Have them select an image(s) from the color copies.
4. Next, use imagination to draw a picture using the magazine picture in some way that is surprising, unexpected, or impossible. For example, a picture of a bowl of cereal glued to the paper may become the boat upon which a family of hand-drawn or crayon-colored mice sails across a strange ocean. Or, a picture of a woman's face could be used in a drawing as the face of an animal such as a lion, dog or bear. Cut-outs of coins could be glued on a drawing to represent flowers.
5. Make sure they try to incorporate at least one of the mentioned surrealist elements. The more they can incorporate the better.

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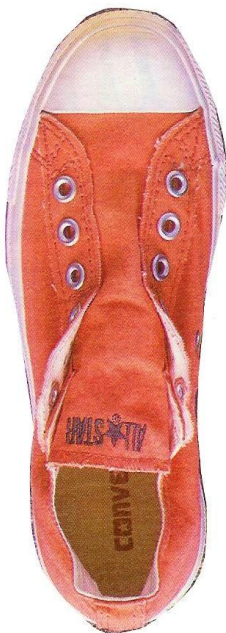
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## A collage of 14 cutouts featuring various human eyes and two baby faces, arranged in a grid-like pattern. The cutouts include: a baby's face (top left); a close-up of a brown eye (top center); a close-up of a pair of dark eyes (top right); a close-up of a green eye (middle left); a close-up of a pair of light blue eyes (middle center); a close-up of a pair of dark eyes on a textured, pinkish background (middle right); a close-up of a blue and yellow eye (bottom left); a close-up of a dark eye (bottom center); a close-up of a pair of dark eyes (bottom right); a close-up of a pair of light blue eyes (bottom left); a close-up of a pair of light blue eyes (bottom center); a close-up of a pair of dark eyes (bottom right); a close-up of a pair of dark eyes (bottom left); and a close-up of a pair of dark eyes (bottom right).



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