

Teacher's Manual

***Surrealist Art
in NOMA's Collection***



New Orleans Museum of Art

Introduction to the Teacher's Manual

This learning resource is intended for teachers of students in Grades 1-12 and may be adapted for specific grade levels. We hope that you will use the manual and accompanying images to help your students gain an in-depth knowledge of the New Orleans Museum of Art's collection of Surrealist Art.

Cover: *The Art of Conversation* (1950)
René Magritte (1898-1967)
oil on canvas, 20¼ x 23¼”
New Orleans Museum of Art

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in NOMA's Collection*

Teacher's Manual

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INTRODUCTION TO SURREALISM

Surrealism is one of the preeminent art movements of the 20th century. The movement was proclaimed by André Breton in his *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924. Like all art movements, Surrealism is a product of its historic period, yet it is not limited to the 1920s and 1930s. Art historians argue over the approximate date of the movement's completion. To many, Surrealism ended after World War II, when other modern art movements became popular. The death of André Breton in 1966 marks the end of the movement for others. While others contend that the movement continues to this day and is reflected in the work of contemporary artists. According to Breton in his *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924, Surrealism is defined as follows:

Surrealism. *Noun, masc.* Pure Psychic automatism by which one tries to express verbally, in writing, or by any other method, the actual process of thinking. Thought-dictation without any control exercised by reason, beyond any aesthetic or ethical consideration.

Encyclopedia. Philosophy. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain heretofore neglected forms of associations, in the omnipotence of the dream, in the free-wheeling play of thought. It wants to bring about the ultimate destruction of all other psychic mechanisms and put itself in their place in order to solve the primary problems of life.¹

Surrealism stems directly from the effects of modern age warfare. Europe was left devastated and disillusioned after years of fighting in World War I. The effects of the war were visible everywhere in Europe as populations became stagnant, economies plummeted, buildings remained in ruins and many survivors suffered from depression. The general population had a feeling of utter destruction at the hands of man. There was a great void left in European cities that were battered and destroyed by the atrocities of war.

Emerging from this chaos, however, new artistic, political and scientific ideas developed in Europe. One example of this new growth of creative activity was the emergence of Dada, which in turn, brought about the birth of Surrealism. Dada was created by a group of writers and artists and began as a series of cabaret acts in Zurich, Switzerland in 1916. The term "Dada" was chosen to signify general disgust with the turbulent times. It is a nonsense word with different meanings in different languages. In French Dada means a child's hobbyhorse, in Russian it means "yes, yes," and in Rumanian, it means "no, no." While Dada artists produced a great variety of images and performances that may at first appear to have nothing in common, they are similar in that they all attempt to provoke chaos and disgust in their viewers.

Dadaists sought to break with all previous artistic movements and to create an anti-aesthetic style. The Dadaists perceived this "anti-art," filled with irony and mockery of the conventions

¹ Breton, André, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969); quoted in Uwe M. Schneede, *Surrealism*, trans. Maria Pelikan (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc, 1973), 21.

and rational thinking of the modern world as the appropriate manner to represent post war Europe. The death and destruction surrounding the Dadaists after the war was viewed as an outcome of the western world's rationale. The Dadaists wanted to deny any connection with the system of beliefs that man was a "rational" being. Max Ernst, a Dada and Surrealist artist said of the Dada movement:

*Dada was first of all a mental attitude . . . our aim was total subversion. A ghastly and senseless war had cheated us out of five years of our lives. We had seen all that had been held up to us as good, beautiful and true topple into an abyss of ridicule and shame. The work I produced in those days was not meant to please but to make people scream.*²

While Zurich is considered the birthplace of Dada, the movement soon spread to other hubs of cultural activity and international influence -- Paris, Cologne, Berlin and New York City. After World War I, Paris remained a haven of artistic growth. Like the US, Paris experienced the "roaring twenties." The city became a meeting ground for writers, poets, sculptors and painters where new ideas could be developed and exchanged. Coco Chanel began a new line of fashion.

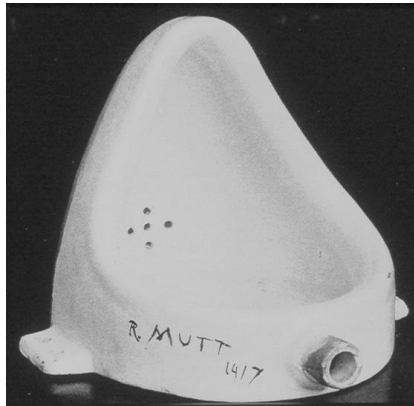


Image 1: *Fountain*, Marcel Duchamp

he challenged the limits of representation as well as the viewer's conception of art.

Pablo Picasso, a new Parisian resident, received international acclaim for his innovative art style of Cubism. And, countless other artists from photographers to sculptors flooded into the city. Some of the greatest Dada artists like Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, and Kurt Schwitters either moved to Paris or began exhibiting their work within the city during this time. Many of the images created by these artists alienated the viewer in a manner similar to the first Dadaist cabaret series. The artists placed objects in settings with which they are not normally associated. Furthermore, objects that are not normally considered appropriate subject matter for art were cast as such. Duchamp, for example, presented a urinal on a pedestal, called it *Fountain*, and signed the work "R. Mutt, 1917." In this way

Perhaps Dada's most important contribution to art history, however, is that it spawned the Surrealist movement. Many of the Dada artists who moved to Paris adopted the ideas of André Breton, the literary founder of Surrealism. Breton expressed similar ideas to those of Dada in his first *Surrealist Manifesto* of 1924. He too ridiculed conventional artistic traditions and western confidence in reason and order. Breton first envisioned Surrealism as a literary group and it was not until a few years after its conceptions that it came to encompass the visual arts. Like Dadaist's images, Surrealist works share similar theories, but vary greatly in style. Thus Surrealism encompasses the realistically rendered dreamscapes of Salvador Dali as well as the biomorphic characters of Joan Miró.

Breton proclaimed in the *Surrealist Manifesto* that the ideal art form was created through the unconscious mind. Automatic writing, and later, painting, was encouraged in order to free the

² Schneede, 11.

mind from the restrictions placed by modern day society. Freudian psychoanalysis, which became popular during this time, was one source of inspiration for Breton and other Surrealists. Freud was a major proponent of exploring the unconscious mind and dream imagery in order to uncover human desire and break down taboos surrounding human sexuality. In some respects Surrealist images can be considered visual renditions of Freudian analyses. The desires of the unconscious mind of the artist may manifest themselves in displaced images of women, the human form, birds, or insects. These estranged fragments float in dream like spaces and are often disturbingly violent whether they are rendered in paint, photography or film.

The role of women within Surrealism became that of the object of desire. Female Surrealist artists struggled to define a space for themselves within a movement which presented women as the muse of art rather than as its creator. Because of this, female Surrealists have been largely ignored by art historical discourse. It is only within the last few decades with the growth of feminist theory that important female Surrealists such as Dorthea Tanning and Meret Oppenheim have received their overdue acceptance and acclaim.

The Surrealists experimented with photography and film. *Un Chien Andalou*, a film by director Luis Buñuel co-written with Salvador Dalí in 1929 is the most famous example of Surrealist films. Prior to the 1920s, photography had been considered a lesser art form and was relegated to practical purposes only. With the photographic experimentation by such great Surrealists as Man Ray, the medium gained acceptance as a true form of artistic expression. Within painting, other techniques such as frottage and decalcomania were also explored. These two methods, invented

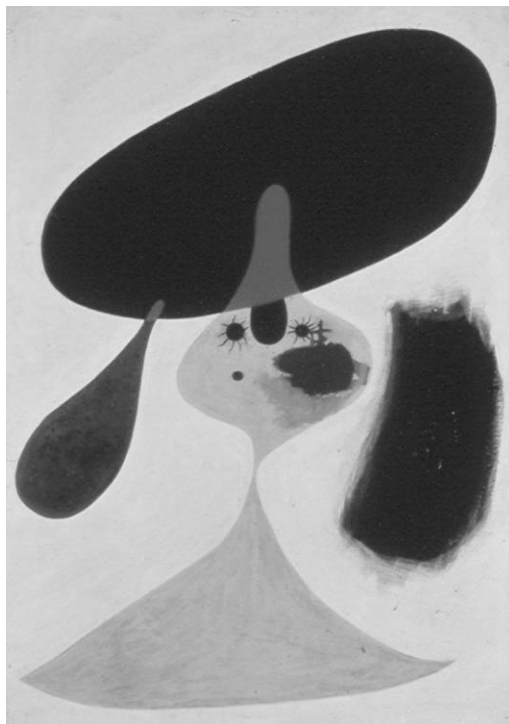


Image 7: *Portrait of a Young Girl*, Joan Miró

by Max Ernst, were thought to be techniques by which artists could express their unconscious minds. In frottage the artist builds up certain materials on canvas such as sand and grit and then scrapes away the paint to create a textural surface within a two dimensional space. In decalcomania, the artist applies paint to a surface, sandwiches the paint in-between the surface and another, and then peels it apart. The outcome of the pressed paint becomes the painting. With the two methods, the artist uses the chance happening to then create a work. The artist will take the frottage or decalcomania technique and then add to the design. Due to the properties of the materials used for frottage and decalcomania, artists are not able to entirely control the outcome of their work. Many Surrealist artists, in an attempt to reach the sublime unconscious or spontaneous mind, would attempt to give up control over their work purposefully. One painting created by Joan Miró, a Spanish Surrealist, was said to have been inspired by a fallen blob of jelly. In other cases, artists collaborated so that no one person could dictate the direction that an individual piece would follow.

Finally, it should be noted that Surrealism drew its influence not only from Dada and Freudian psychoanalysis, but from non-western artistic traditions. At this time, art from Africa and Oceania was flooding into European galleries and becoming popular around the continent. The Surrealists saw this non-western art as primal and magical, devoid of the rationalization that typified their own culture. Because of this Surrealists became fascinated with it and attempted to incorporate the aesthetics of this art into their work.

Throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, Surrealism enjoyed widespread acclaim culminating in the International Surrealist Exhibition held in London in 1936. Surrealist theory embraced the irrational in human thought and behavior and its practice in the visual arts resulted in several different styles of art. Thus the biomorphic forms of Jean (Hans) Arp and Joan Miró and the realistic visions of Salvador Dalí are considered Surrealist images as they incorporate Surrealist ideas such as incongruous juxtaposition, dream imagery and/or automatic or accidental art practices. Many beliefs of the Surrealists continue to influence artists today.

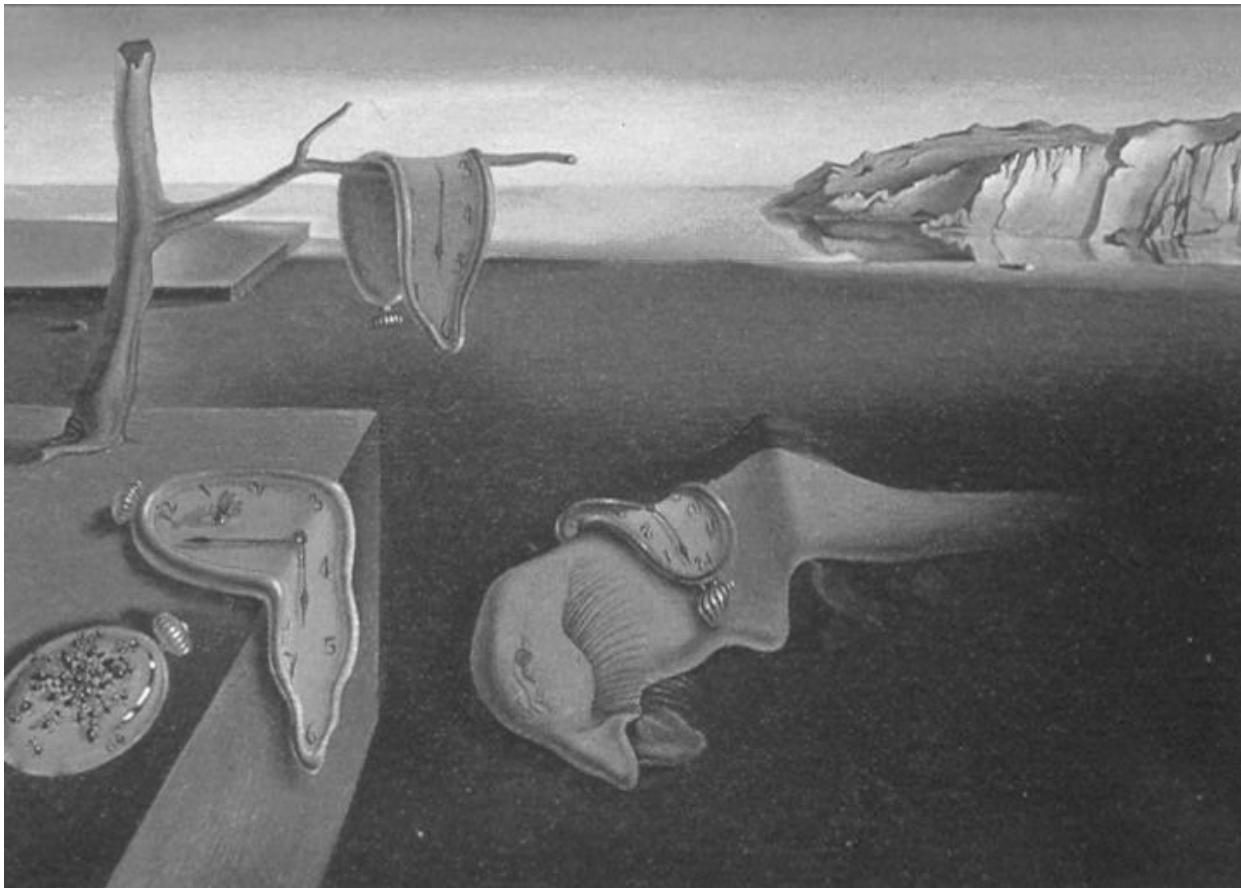


Image 2: *The Persistence of Memory*, Salvador Dalí

BIOGRAPHIES OF SURREALIST ARTISTS

André Breton (1896-1966)

Breton, an avant-garde writer, is considered the founder and theorist of the Surrealist movement. At first he worked in the Dada circles, collaborating with Philippe Soupault in automatic writing. He then developed the theoretical basis of Surrealism and wrote three manifestos in 1924, 1930, 1934. Breton helped to found several reviews: *Littérature* (1919), *Minotaure* (1933), and *VVV* (1944). His Surrealist writings include *Nadja* (1928), and *What is Surrealism?* (1934).

Luis Buñuel (1900-1983)

Known by his association with the French Surrealists of the 1930s, Buñuel created fantastic, seemingly unconnected, and bizarre Surrealist films. Following in the Surrealist tradition, his films explored dream imagery and unconscious desires. Buñuel collaborated with Salvador Dalí twice to make the quintessential Surrealist films, *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) and *L'Age d'Or* (1930). Buñuel would later explore controversial topics such as social injustice, religious excess, and eroticism in his films.

Joseph Cornell (1903-1972)

Cornell was as enigmatic as his works of art. He was an American sculptor known for his disjointed collages of objects and images in small, wooden boxes. Although he had no formal art training, he explored New York City's museums, theaters, and second-hand bookstores, and during the 1920s began collecting old books, engravings, and other objects from earlier eras. His incongruous juxtaposition of objects was influenced by Surrealist poetry. Cornell's selection of objects had an extremely personal quality. He would use similar objects repeatedly such as a clay pipe, a cordial glass, spheres, postcards and drawings made by his disabled brother.

Salvador Dalí (1904-1989)

A Spanish painter and writer, Dalí is probably one of the most well-known members of the Surrealist movement. His reputation as an eccentric preceded him and his ego was probably as big as the fantastic images he created. Dalí was heavily influenced by the writings of Sigmund Freud. His paintings depict dream imagery and everyday objects in unexpected forms, such as the famous limp watches in *The Persistence of Memory* (1931). Dalí's paintings are characterized by meticulous draftsmanship with realistic detail. Dalí designed and produced Surrealist films, illustrated books, hand-crafted jewelry, and created theatrical sets and costumes.

Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968)

Duchamp was a French artist who grew up in a family of artists. Three of his five siblings, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, Jacques Villon, and Suzanne Valadon also became professional artists. Duchamp's work had a major impact on the direction of 20th-century art. He worked in Cubist style, and helped develop Dada and Surrealism. Duchamp influenced later movements like Pop art and kinetic sculpture. His controversial work *Nude Descending a Staircase* was included in New York City's groundbreaking Armory Show in 1913, the first major showing of modern art in the United States. He soon presented unaltered, everyday objects as sculpture,

radically changing the course of modern art. His “ready-mades” questioned the aesthetics of art and demanded who decides what is art. His work *Fountain* which was an upturned urinal, signed R. Mutt 1917, was a groundbreaking work. In 1923 Duchamp announced that he was through with art and returned to Paris. He dedicated the rest of his life to chess, only rarely completing works of art.

Max Ernst (1891-1976)

Ernst was an important artist for both Dada and Surrealism. He experimented in a variety of media. Attracted by the Dadaists' revolt against convention, Ernst helped create the Cologne movement of Dada. When he moved to Paris, he turned to Surrealism, painting pictures in which human-like forms and fantastic creatures inhabit precisely detailed Renaissance landscapes. Ernst was interested in automatism, creating art from a chance happening. In 1925 he invented frottage and would develop decalcomania. After the invasion of France in World War II, Ernst was interred three times in Nazi war camps before he escaped to the United States. He immigrated to the United States in 1941 with the help of the heiress Peggy Guggenheim, who became his third wife in 1942. He would later marry the American Surrealist Dorothea Tanning and move to Sedona, Arizona. Ernst returned to France in 1953.

René Magritte (1898-1961)

Magritte was a Belgian Surrealist whose paintings seem fairly realistic at first glance, as they are depicted with extreme detail. However, upon closer inspection, the juxtaposed images, incongruous scenes and plays on words, question reasoning. Magritte was interested in what lies beyond surface appearances. He altered conventional images, created new images and mixed the messages between word and meaning and titles and paintings. In *The Art of Conversation* Magritte has carefully rendered a stone structure in a landscape setting. The structure spells out the work *rêve* which in French means “dream.” This word connotes an airy quality as well as something ethereal, since a dream is created with the imagination. Magritte makes the dream solid as stone and has placed it in an auspicious setting, untouched by the human imagination.

Joan Miró (1893-1983)

Miró was a Spanish painter whose Surrealist works look like dream-inspired hallucinatory renditions. In 1920 he moved to Paris where, under the influence of Surrealist poets and writers, his art evolved into the globular biomorphic forms for which he is most known. Miró drew on memory, fantasy, and the irrational to create works of art that are visual analogues of Surrealist poetry. His forms are painted in a limited range of bright colors, especially blue, red, yellow, green, and black. Although generally apolitical, he was unable to control his feelings after the atrocities in his homeland during the Spanish Civil War. Miró completed a series of *tableaux sauvage* or wild paintings such as *Persons in the Presence of a Metamorphosis* in which amoebic figures watch another figure disintegrate into biomorphic parts.

Meret Oppenheim (1913?-1985)

One of the few women in the Surrealist movement, the Swiss artist Oppenheim used images in a way that made no logical sense. In her most famous work Oppenheim created *Object (Breakfast in Fur)* (1936), which was a fur-lined cup, saucer and teaspoon. It created a sensation because it was a presentation of two objects: the fur and the cup with its saucer, which are completely unconnected.

Man Ray (1890-1976)

An American painter and photographer, Man Ray was born Emanuel Rudnitsky. After meeting Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia in New York, he helped to found the New York City Dada group in 1917. With Marcel Duchamp, he helped to found the New York City Dada group in 1917. After moving to Paris in 1921, Ray became a leading figure in the artistic avant-garde. He developed "rayographs," which were abstract images made by placing objects on light-sensitive surfaces. Ray became involved in Surrealism, photographing the movements leaders. He also made art films, including *L'Étoile de Mer* (1928). Man Ray is most remembered for his photographs of the Parisian avant-garde as well as fashion photography.

Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948)

A German artist, Schwitters was a member of the Dada movement and is best known for the collages and sculptures he assembled from found objects and trash that he termed *Merz*. This term was developed from a collage that contained the words *Kommerz und Privatsbank*. Discarded train tickets, newspapers, broken artist's palettes, and other such objects were incorporated into Schwitters' works. He was interested in the juxtaposed objects' color, texture, and surprise value.

Dorthea Tanning (b. 1913)

Tanning, an American painter, sculptor, illustrator and writer, was one of the few female Surrealists. Fulfilling her dream to become a painter, she entered the circle of the New York Surrealist movement after World War II. A chance meeting with Max Ernst in 1942 initiated her desire to paint among the Surrealists. In 1946 she married Ernst. They lived together for eight years in Sedona, Arizona before moving to Paris. From 1942 to 1956 Tanning painted in a Surrealist manner using erotic imagery and the psychosis of nightmares with metamorphic figures. *Guardian Angels* is created with pastel blues and greens and at first glance seems serene. However, after closer inspection, one notices headless, adolescent girls being whisked away by eerie angel-like figures.

Image List

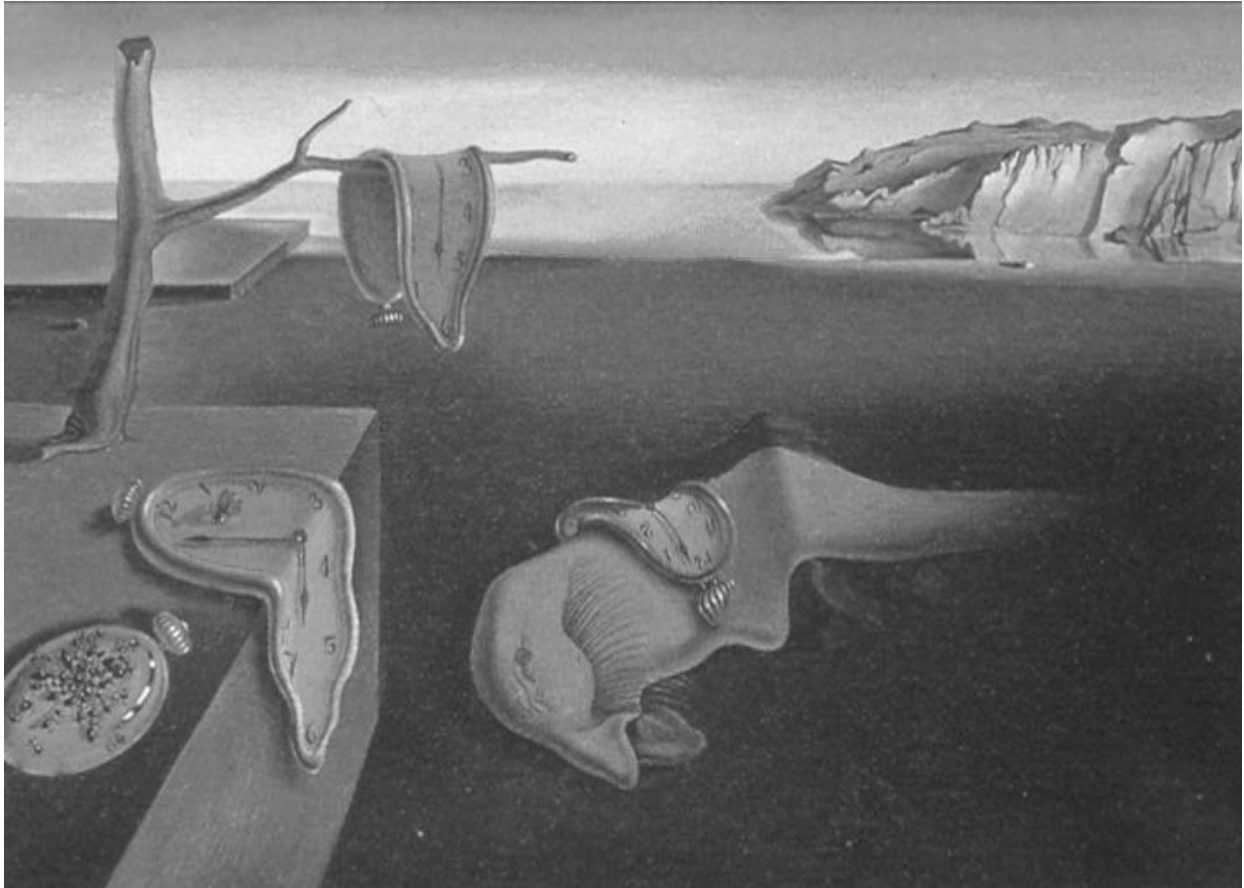
1. Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917. Photograph by Alfred Stieglitz. Philadelphia Museum of Art.



French artist Marcel Duchamp was one of the most influential figures in modern art. As a member of both the Dada and Surrealist groups, Duchamp was particularly interested in word-play combined with visual images. Although he began his career as a painter and created one of the most sensational works of New York's 1913 Armory Show (*Nude Descending a Staircase*, 1912), Duchamp abandoned painting early in his career, opting to create sculptures from found objects.

Fountain, which is actually an upturned urinal signed "R. Mutt" and dated 1917, is the type of object that Duchamp referred to as a "ready-made." Declaring that it was the artist's choice that turned a "ready-made" into a work of art, Duchamp challenged existing ways of thinking about art.

2. Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931.
Oil on canvas, 9 1/2 x 13” Museum of Modern Art, New York



Salvador Dalí's melting timepieces in *The Persistence of Memory* represent the ideal Surrealist image. Whereas Surrealists such as Max Ernst and Joan Miró invented new forms to symbolize the unconscious, Dalí represented his hallucinations with meticulous realism. In this small work, time seems to have come to a standstill. Four watches lie in a barren landscape which also includes a truncated version of the artist himself.

Dalí painted in a method that he termed “paranoic-critical,” which he considered a documentation of Freudian theories applied to his own inner world. He started a painting with the first image that came into his mind and went on from one association to the next, multiplying images of persecution or megalomania like a true paranoiac. Dalí was also an inventive self-promoter and often went to extremes to call attention to himself and to Surrealism. He once gave a lecture at the Sorbonne in Paris with his foot in a pail of milk.

3. René Magritte, *The Treachery of Images*, 1928-29.
Oil on canvas, 45 1/2 x 32" Private collection, New York

René Magritte, a Belgian artist, painted in a realistic style. His images are often realistic to the point of creating an illusion. However, upon careful consideration, Magritte's images are often revealed as incongruous. Magritte often employed word-play and pun to great affect in his work. *The Treachery of Images* is a very realistically painted picture of a standard gentleman's smoking pipe. Beneath the image are painted the words "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" (This is not a pipe.) The artist asserts illusionism in painting. This is not a pipe; it is a painting of a pipe.



4. René Magritte, *The Art of Conversation*, 1950.
Oil on canvas, 20 1/4 x 23 1/4" New Orleans Museum of Art

Magritte's *The Art of Conversation*, from NOMA's collection, is also an illusionistic work. The word "Rêve," French for dream, is monumentally carved from stone, indicating the Surrealist's interest in the dream world. The work is paradoxical in that it presents something as fleeting and immaterial as a dream in the enduring form of stone. This painting is part of a series from this period in which several works of similar subjects were given the same name. Other paintings from the series contain figures which appear dwarfed by the stone word.



5. Max Ernst, *Everyone Here Speaks Latin*, 1943.
Oil on canvas, 18 x 21 1/2" New Orleans Museum of Art

Max Ernst was both a Dada artist and a Surrealist. After establishing the Cologne branch of Dada in 1919, he moved to Paris in 1922 and joined the Surrealist movement two years later. During World War II, Ernst escaped to the United States where he lived from 1941 - 1951. While living in New York from 1941 - 1943, Ernst created paintings to reflect the decaying situation in Europe. Ernst lived from 1946 - 1951 in Sedona, Arizona with his fourth wife, Dorothea Tanning.

Europe After the Storm (1940 - 1942), and *Everyone Here Speaks Latin* (1943) reflect war in Europe. The title of the latter may also refer to the artist's situation in a new country, unable to speak the language. In this work, figures in red and blue are scattered throughout a fantastic and somewhat foreboding forest. Embracing the Surrealist's fascination with chance, Ernst worked in a technique called *decalcomania* which involved pressing a sticky painted surface between two layers of canvas or board and then pulling them apart thereby creating a strange spongy surface. Ernst also worked in a method that he created called *frottage*, or texture rubbings.



6. Dorothea Tanning, *Guardian Angels*, 1946.
Oil on canvas, 48 x 36" New Orleans Museum of Art

Dorothea Tanning was born in Illinois and began her artistic training at the Chicago Academy of Arts. She was influenced by the Museum of Modern Art's 1936 exhibition, *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism* as well as by her fortuitous meeting with Max Ernst in 1942. Tanning developed two consecutive styles. The first was Surrealist and lasted until about 1954, and the second style is more abstract.



Guardian Angels is from her Surrealist phase and indicates an interest in childhood and dreams. Tanning specialized in erotic imagery involving adolescent girls. In NOMA's painting, monstrous angels hover over crumpled beds. In their arms are borne the once sleeping children.

7. Joan Miró, *Portrait of a Young Girl*, 1935.
Oil on canvas, 41 3/8 x 29 1/4" New Orleans Museum of Art.

Joan Miró was born near Barcelona, Spain in 1893. In 1919 he began a series of annual visits to Paris. Miró was introduced to the Surrealists in 1924 at which time he radically changed his style from early works inspired by Cubism to a style influenced by Surrealist content and automatic methods of picture-making.

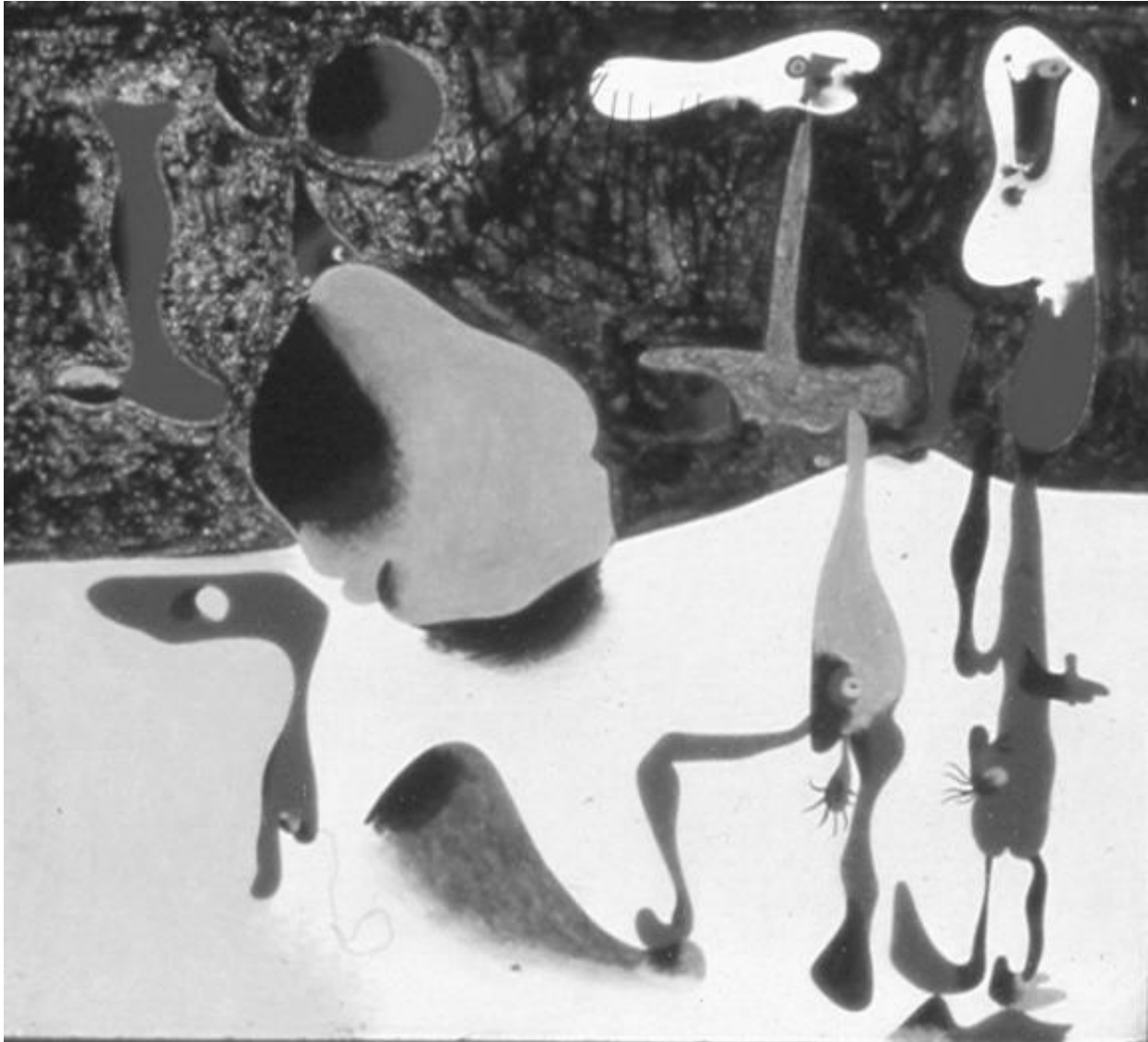


Portrait of a Young Girl is representative of Miró's gradual change from his series of complete organic abstractions of 1925 and 1926 toward a more recognizable surreal fantasy. The artist has reduced a portrait of a pretty, young girl to a few biomorphic shapes. She seems to be wearing a large feathered hat and her eyelashes are accentuated. Miró presents us with a fleeting memory of a young girl. Her form is monumental, yet her memorable features are exaggerated.

8. Joan Miró, *Persons in the Presence of a Metamorphosis*, 1936.
Oil on canvas, 19 3/4 x 22 5/8", New Orleans Museum of Art.

Miró's work prior to the 1930's cannot be considered politically motivated, yet, the rise of fascist dictatorships and the Spanish Civil War of the 1930's compelled the Catalán artist to create a series of twelve paintings which he called *tableau sauvages* (wild paintings) that express his fears and anxieties. From October 1935 - May 1936, Miró worked on this series of which

Persons in the Presence of a Metamorphosis is a part. Like fellow Spaniard Pablo Picasso, who created *Guernica* as a tribute to a small Catalán town destroyed by the Spanish Civil War, Miró also let loose his inner turmoil about his native country on canvas. In this series the artist's whimsical bestiaries of the 1930s are transformed into tortured monsters.

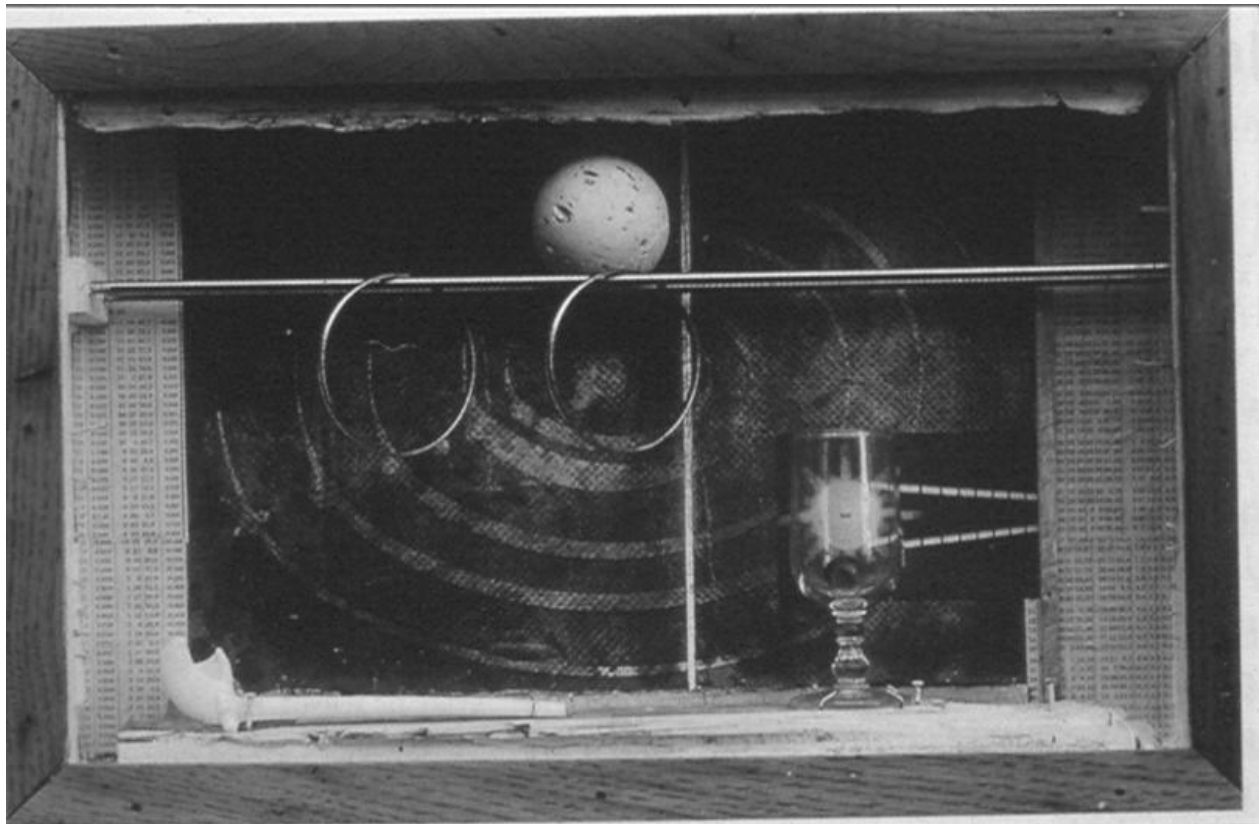


9. Joseph Cornell, *Radar Astronomy*, 1952 - 1956.
Mixed media, 13 x 19 1/4 x 4 1/4" New Orleans Museum of Art.

Joseph Cornell is something of an enigma in 20th century art. He lived with his mother and disabled brother in an ordinary house in Queens, NY. He was inspired by the Surrealist concept of poetry through the juxtaposition of incongruous objects. In his basement workshop the artist collected and catalogued the postage stamps, advertising cards, driftwood, marbles, and all of the found objects from his tours through the city of New York. Perhaps it was his acquaintance with

Duchamp's "ready-mades" that inspired Cornell's free association of objects that led to his collages and assemblages.

Radar Astronomy is an example of one of his themed boxes in which the disparate elements of his assemblages are divorced from their rational functions, yet acquire fantastic significance through association. Here the cordial glass magnifies the sun, indicating its all important power. The metal rings can slide along the bar and may indicate the orbit of the planets as well as the passage of time. The clay pipe is a personal symbol that Cornell often included in his works.



10. Man Ray (Emmanuel Rudnitsky), *Portrait of Bernice Abbott in Front of ManRay Composition*, 1922. Ggelatin silver print, 8 1/8 x 6 3/16", New Orleans Museum of Art.

The American photographer known as Man Ray began his artistic pursuits in New York City, but it was his move to Paris in 1921 that initiated the most creative part of his career. In Paris, Man Ray interacted with the most prominent members of the European avant-garde including Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia, as well as Gertrude Stein and André Breton. Man Ray invented the "rayograph," a type of photography in which objects were place on photo sensitive paper and exposed to light. These abstractions were praised by the Dadaists as "pure Dada

creations” because of their reliance on chance. In his portraits and fashion shots, Man Ray is remembered for his blend of intensity and informality, for his use of patterns and for his abstraction of the body.



This portrait of Bernice Abbott shows the sitter, who was once Man Ray’s assistant and a photographer herself, in front of a Man Ray composition (which is also in the collection of the New Orleans Museum of Art). The structured pattern of Ms. Abbott’s netting contrasts with the spiraling composition of the background, which seems to radiate from the ruffle at her chest.

11. Kurt Schwitters, *Palette with Bloody Knife*, 1939.

Painted board with construction, 20 3/4 x 16 1/2", New Orleans Museum of Art.

Kurt Schwitters, a German artist from Hanover, devised his own personal form of Dada that he called *Merz*. The word is short for *kommerz* (German for commerce) and was first used by Schwitters when the word appeared in one of his Dada inspired collages made from cut up words. Schwitters would later refer to everything that he made in this fashion as *Merz*, including his house, the *Merzbau*, which was decorated with found objects and detritus from the street.

In *Palette with Bloody Knife* Schwitters incorporated a real painter's palette and a painted knife with red stains. This combination of Dada-derived juxtaposition of objects and synthetic Cubist ideas marked Schwitters work throughout his career.



VOCABULARY

Automatism/Automatic Writing - The technique of writing or drawing without thought or conscious or rational control. Relying on the subconscious to produce the work, Automatism was popularized by Surrealist writers and artists.

Avant-garde - A term derived from the French military word meaning "before the group" or "vanguard." Avant-garde denotes those artists or concepts which abandon tradition in search of a strikingly new, experimental, or radical art form for the time.

Cabaret - A nightclub or restaurant that provides entertainment such as singing, dancing and plays. Dada artists performed their poems and performances in cabarets, particularly Caberet Voltaire in Zurich, Switzerland.

Collage - From French meaning "to stick" and created by the Cubists Picasso and Braque. Collage is the art of pasting fragments of non-traditional materials like newspaper, postcards, and chair canning into a composition. The Dada and Surrealist artists placed irrational and incongruous objects together.

Cubism - An art movement beginning in 1909 with Picasso and Braque. Cubism was an attempt to represent on a two-dimensional surface all of the three-dimensional qualities of an object or sitter.

Dada - A term chosen to describe the "non-art" movement. The movement was developed in Zurich in 1916 amidst World War I. It was an attack on the pretentious Western world that had come to the worst example of humankind seen in the atrocities of the War. Nonsense texts, performances and absurd works of art produced the effect of anti-art.

Decalomania - A technique first invented by Oscar Domínguez and utilized by Max Ernst. It was an automatism technique where chance creates the art. Paint is applied to a surface and is then pressed against another surface. The smeared paint is the uncontrolled springboard from which the artist draws his inspiration.

Frottage - Another automatism technique used by Max Ernst. The term is French for "rubbing." It is the technique of reproducing a texture or relief design by laying a piece of paper over a given object. A crayon or pencil is rubbed over the paper and the texture of the object underneath the paper comes through on the paper.

Merz - A nonsense term created by Kurt Schwitters for his version of Dada. The name is derived from the phrase *Kommerz und Privatsbank* which comes from a business letterhead that he had incorporated into a collage art work.

Psychoanalysis - A system of psychotherapy originated and developed by Sigmund Freud which seeks to alleviate mental and nervous disorders by the analysis of factors repressed in the unconscious.

Surrealism - a movement founded by André Breton in 1924. The term is French for transcending the real. The movement absorbed the nonsensical Dada movement and was heavily based on the writings of Sigmund Freud. Surrealist practices are meant to liberate the unconscious through various methods and suspend conscious control.

TIMELINE

<i>Date</i>	<i>Surrealism</i>	<i>World</i>	<i>United States</i>
1901-1910	1900 Freud publishes <i>The Interpretation of Dreams</i> .	1901 Peace of Peking ends Boxer Rebellion in China 1902 Marie and Pierre Curie isolate radioactive element radium 1907 Picasso develops Cubism.	1901 Pres. William McKinley assassinated 1903 Wright Brothers make first flight at Kittyhawk 1909 Indianapolis 500 race track opens
1911-1920	1913 Alfred Stieglitz's Gallery 291 exhibits many European avant-garde artists. Duchamp makes his first "ready-made" in Paris. 1916 The Dada art movement is created in Zurich, Switzerland. 1919 Schwitters creates his first <i>Merz</i> collages 1920 The First International Dada Fair is exhibited at the Dr. Otto Burchard gallery in Berlin	1912 Titanic sinks off the coast of Newfoundland 1914 Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and wife assassinated in Sarajevo 1914 Panama Canal officially opens 1915 British ship Lusitania sunk by German submarine 1920 League of Nations holds its first meeting in Geneva	1913 The Armory Show opens exhibiting a substantial collection of modern art to America. 1914 World War I begins 1917 US declares war on Germany in WWI 1918 World War I ends on July 17

1921-1930	<p>1921 Man Ray invents his “Rayographs.”</p> <p>1924 Breton publishes his first Surrealist manifesto in Paris</p> <p>1925 Ernst develops frottage; Duchamp begins to dedicate his life to chess.</p> <p>1928 Buñuel and Dalí produce the film <i>Un Chien Andalou</i></p>	<p>1922 Mussolini takes power in Italy.</p> <p>1925 Hitler publishes <i>Mein Kampf</i></p> <p>1928 Alexander Fleming discovers penicillin.</p>	<p>1927 Charles A. Lindberg completes the first solo non-stop flight across the Atlantic</p> <p>1928 Amelia Earhart becomes first woman to fly across the Atlantic</p> <p>1929 Stock Market crashes</p>
1931-1940	<p>1931 The first big Surrealist exhibition is shown in the United States</p> <p>1935 Dominguez develops decalcomania; Picasso writes Surrealist poems using automatism</p> <p>1936 International Surrealist Exhibition held in London.</p> <p>1939 Many artists flee Europe for fear of prosecution. Miró returns to Spain. Breton is drafted into the French army. Ernst is interred as an enemy alien.</p>	<p>1936 Spanish Civil War</p> <p>1936 Hitler breaks Treaty of Versailles sending troops to Rhineland</p> <p>1937 George VI crowned King of England</p> <p>1938 Kristallnacht -- Nazis destroy Jewish synagogues throughout Germany and Austria</p>	<p>1931 Empire State Building opens</p> <p>1933 FDR inaugurated as 32nd President</p> <p>1936 Jesse Owens sets a new long jump record of 26’8”</p> <p>1939 Al Capone freed from Alcatraz prison</p>

1941-1950	1941 Breton and Ernst emigrate to the United States	1943 Chiang Kai-Shek becomes President of China	1941 Japan bombs Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
	1942 The exhibition “Artists in Exile” is shown in New York, young American artists join the Surrealist group. Tanning first meets Ernst.	1944 US and Allied forces land at Normandy	1941 US declares war on Germany and Italy in WWII
	1946 Tanning and Ernst marry and live in Sedona, Arizona	1944 Anne Frank sent to Auschwitz	1945 30,000 US Marines land on Iwo Jima
		1945 Yalta Conference takes place with Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin	1946 Jackson Pollock takes the canvas of the easel and onto the floor creating his all over “drip” paintings.
	1950 India becomes a republic, ceasing to be a British dominion		1947 Jackie Robinson becomes the first black to play major league baseball with the Brooklyn Dodgers

1951-1960	1953 Ernst and Tanning move to Paris	<p>1953 Scientists identify DNA</p> <p>1956 The Italian liner Andrea Doria sinks after colliding with the Stockholm</p> <p>1959 Fidel Castro proclaims himself premier after overthrowing Batista</p> <p>1960 Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran</p>	<p>1953 Dr. Salk develops the polio vaccine</p> <p>1955 Rosa Parks arrested for refusing to move to the back of the bus</p> <p>1956 Elvis Presley's first hit record, "Heartbreak Hotel," becomes #1</p> <p>1957 School desegregation law established by Brown v Board of Education</p> <p>1959 Hawaii becomes the 50th US state</p>
1961-1970	<p>1966 Hans Arp and André Breton die. For many, Surrealism is considered over.</p> <p>1967 Magritte dies.</p>	<p>1961 1,400 Cuban exiles land in Bay of Pigs in an attempt to overthrow Castro</p> <p>1961 Construction of the Berlin Wall begins in East Germany</p> <p>1964 South Africa banned from Olympic Games because of Apartheid policies</p>	<p>1963 Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers "I have a dream...: speech at Lincoln Memorial</p> <p>1963 Pres. J. F. Kennedy assassinated in Dallas</p> <p>1967 Thurgood Marshall, first black Supreme Court Justice sworn in</p> <p>1969 Neil Armstrong makes first step on the moon</p>

1971-1980

1971 China joins the United Nations.

1971 US Mariner 9 launched, first satellite to orbit Mars

1979 Margaret Thatcher becomes first female British Prime Minister

1974 Richard Nixon resigns from presidency; Gerald Ford becomes 38th President

1979 Mother Teresa awarded Nobel Peace Prize

1977 Apple II, the first personal computer, goes on sale

1980 John Lennon shot and killed in NYC

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES/SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Following are suggestions for classroom activities and research projects. In parenthesis you will find coordinating Benchmarks from the 1997 Louisiana Department of Education's State Standards for Curriculum Development:

GEOGRAPHY/SCIENCE:

- The map of Europe has changed numerous times since the beginning of the 20th century. Research the countries in Europe that were either created or dissolved after World War I, World War II and compare a map from 1900 to a map of present day. (G-1A-E2; G-1C-E6; G-1B-H1, H4; G-1C-H4, H6, M7)
- On a map of Europe, denote the major bodies of water and discuss each type. What are the major rivers that run through Europe? What cities are near these major water ways. Compare those cities and rivers to the Mississippi River major cities in the United States. (G-1B-E1; G-1B-M2, M3)
- Research the various climates, vegetation and resources of different countries like Spain, France, Belgium and Switzerland. Compare and contrast your findings to the climates, vegetation and resources of the United States. (G-1B-E4; G-1C-E2, E4; G-1D-E4; G-1B-H1, H3)
- Compare the populations of Paris and New Orleans from the 1920s? What are their populations today? What are the similarities and differences in both cultures? (G-1B-E2; G-1C-M3, M4; G-1C-H2)
- What new flora and fauna would the exiled artists have encountered in the US after leaving Europe? What new flora and fauna would Ernst and Tanning have encountered when they left New York to live in Sedona, Arizona? (LS-E-A3, LS-E-C1, C2; LS-M-C3, C4, LS-M-D2)

MATHEMATICS:

- Calculate the distance between Barcelona and Paris, Zurich and Paris, New York City and Paris, and New York and New Orleans in both miles and kilometers. What is the shortest distance to travel to these places? Draw a graph to display the distances between all cities. (N-4-E, M, N-6-E, M; M-1-E, M; M-4-E; M-5-M)
- Find the average yearly temperature in degrees Fahrenheit of the five cities listed above and convert the temperature to Celsius. (M-1-E; M-4-E; M-5-M)

- Choose several works in the slide list and discuss the lines and shapes in the paintings. Discuss the ways in which the shapes in a painting affect the overall composition. (G-1-E, H, G-2-M)
- Most of the Surrealist artists traveled extensively and lived in a variety of places. Choose one of the artists from the slide list. Research the various places that he or she lived. What percentage of his/her life was spent in these places? Make a pie chart to diagram the percentages. What percent of your life is spent in school, home, doing activities, and sleeping? (A-3-M, H; A-4-M, D-2-E, D-7-H; P-2-E, M,H)

LANGUAGE ARTS:

- Tristan Tzara was an experimental Dada poet who outlined the process of creating an “accidental poem.” Create a poem according to Tzara’s instructions.
 - To make a dadaist poem
 - Take a newspaper.
 - Take a pair of scissors.
 - Choose an article as long as you are planning to make your poem.
 - Cut out the article.
 - Then cut out each of the words that make up this article and put them in the bag [keep conjunctions and articles with the words].
 - Shake it gently.
 - Then take out the scraps one after the other in the order in which they left the bag.
 - Copy conscientiously.
 - The poem will be like you.
 - And here you are a writer, infinitely original and endowed with a sensibility that is charming though beyond the understanding of the vulgar.
 - Example:
 - when the dogs cross the air in a diamond like the ideas and the appendix of the meminx shows the hour of awakening a program
 (ELA-4-E2, M2, H2; ELA-2-M5, H5)
- Write a story using automatism. Try to write the first thoughts that run through your mind. Write for twenty minutes without stopping. (ELA-2-M5, H5)
- Research and write a report on a Surrealist artist or writer. (ELA-2-E1, M1, H1)
- Based on Max Ernst’s *Everyone Here Speaks Latin*, write a fictional account of the first time he came to the US. Discuss the War in Europe and how he had been interred in a concentration camp. How would he feel in the US not knowing the language. Who would he have known in New York? (ELA-2-E1, M1, H1; ELA-7-E3, M3, H3)
- Write a descriptive interpretation of one of the Surrealist works in the slide list. (ELA-2-E1, M1, H1, H5, ELA -7-E4, M4, H4)

SOCIAL STUDIES:

- Write a brief history of the life of an avant garde artist in Europe during World War II. (H-1D-E1, E3; H-1A-M2; H-1C-M17; H-1C-H10)
- Discuss why the Dada movement was spawned by the effects of World War I. (C-1D-H1; H-1D-E3; H-1A-M2; H-1C-M17)
- How did the governments change in the countries of Europe during and after World War I? World War II? Draw a map of the countries in Europe for each of these periods. Include the capitals, major rivers, mountain ranges, languages, dominant religions and major industries and crops. (G-1A-E3, M2; G-1B-E1, E2, E3, E4; G-1C-H2, H4, H5; C-1A-E6, M2, H2; H-1C-M17; H-1C-H13, H14, H15)
- How did the Jewish population in Germany, France, and Italy change before and after World War II? What other countries had a dramatic shift in Jewish population? Discuss the holocaust in Europe. What other groups were singled out by the Nazis? (G-1C-E3; C-1C-E1, M1; H-1A-M6; H-1C-M17; H-1B-H13; H-1C-H13)
- What was the American involvement in World War I and II? Research your family history to find relatives who were involved in either of the two wars. How did the wars affect the civilians living in the U.S.? What writers or artists were involved in the wars? (C-1C-M2, M3, H1, H2; C-1D-M3; H-1B-M16, M17; H-1C-M17; H-1B-H10, H11, H13; H-1C-H13)
- What are some of the major technological inventions of the 20th century? How had this progress affect society? How did artists express the changes in technology in their writings and art? (H-1D-E2; H-1C-M17)
- Miró's work *Persons in the Presence of a Metamorphosis*, 1936 was a reaction to the Spanish Civil War. Research the Spanish Civil War and write a report. How does Miró's painting represent the war? How did other artists respond to war in their countries? (H-1C-M17; H-1C-H13)

VISUAL ARTS:

- Create a collage that incorporates found objects similar to the works of Schwitters and Cornell. (Benchmark 2 K-12)
- Apply the technique of frottage or decalcomania to a composition. After completing the technique, add to the painting by including designs, figures, or objects. (Benchmark 2, K-12)
- Make a painting in the style of Magritte or Dalí where the painting looks fairly realistic at first glance but has images that are juxtaposed, seemingly not alike or incongruous. (Benchmark 1, K-12)

- Keep a pencil and a pad of paper by your bed. After having a dream, jot down the dream as you best remember it. Transform the dream into a visual image. (Benchmarks 2, 7, K-12)
- Research the art of Marcel Duchamp. What artists were influenced by his work? What movements in 20th century art were motivated by his “ready-mades?” (Benchmarks 3, 4 K-12)
- What art styles developed at the same time as Surrealism in Europe and the US? Make a painting in the style of Surrealism and two other styles that developed at this time. (Benchmarks 1, 4, K-12)

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