

# Salvador Dalí: CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

## ART ACTIVITIES:

### **Automatic Technique Collages**

Suggested Images: *Pierrot and Guitar*  
*The Wounded Bird*

Materials: Art paper suitable for glue and paint, pencils or oil pastels, glue, collage materials (such as sand and found objects) and paint (optional).

Automatic technique was a method used by many Surrealists for writing or creating works of art. The automatic process is guided by the unconscious, a technique which contrasts sharply with the more controlled and refined traditional artistic methods.

Activity Description: To begin, select a pencil or pastel crayon and draw a variety of lines over the paper. Encourage the students to allow their pencils to move freely over the page without trying to control the image. Now stop drawing and look at the forms created on the paper. Select some of the forms that are more prominent or interesting to you. Using paint, pencils and collage materials add definition to the forms to create a unified composition.

### **'Paranoic-Critical' and Double Image Drawing**

Suggested Images: *My Wife, Nude, Contemplating Her own Flesh Becoming Stairs,*  
*Three Vertebrae of a Column, Sky and Architecture*  
*The Angelus of Gala*  
*Soft Construction with Boiled Beans: Premonition of Civil War*  
*Apparition of a Face and Fruit Dish on a Beach*  
*Mae West Lips Sofa*

Materials: Drawing paper, pencils and a collection of images everyday objects (such as chairs, clocks, cars, scissors, etc.).

Dalí developed his 'paranoic-critical method' as a technique for visual representation intended to exploit delusional tendencies by creating images that can also suggest alternative realities and images to the unconscious mind. By the late 1930s Dalí had evolved his technique as a way to create double images, pictures that can be read simultaneously as two images.

Activity Description: Select an inanimate object. Study the features of the object carefully and imagine the object transformed into a face, or a human or animal body. Make a drawing that follows the form of the original, but also including the imagined human or animal features.

## **Inkblots**

Suggested Images: *The Angelus of Gala*  
*Soft Construction with Boiled Beans: Premonition of Civil War*  
*Apparition of a Face and Fruit Dish on a Beach*  
*Mae West Lips Sofa*

Materials: Art paper suitable for paint, nib pens and ink or very wet watercolor paint.

Inkblots are unintentional images created when ink is dropped or splattered onto a piece of paper. Often the inkblots remind people of familiar objects or images. At the time the Surrealists were active, psychoanalysts used inkblots in order to gain a better understanding of the unconscious of their patients by asking them to interpret the ink spills.

Activity Description: Using droppers or nib pens, drop a small amount of ink onto the center of the paper. Tip the paper to assist the ink in moving over the paper then fold the paper in half. Unfold the paper and allow the ink to dry. What do you see? As a class look at the inkblots that were created. Ask students to describe what they see in the inkblots.

## **Surrealist Objects**

Suggested Image: *Mae West Lips Sofa*

Materials: Assortment of found objects, glue and paint or Sharpie pens (optional).

Surrealist artists created objects that described the irrational images of dreams. The process through which many of these Surrealist objects were assembled was guided by the unconscious, without consideration of the object's final form.

Activity Description: Look through an assortment of found objects to find one that inspires you. It may be helpful to handle the objects while thinking about what the textures, colors and shapes remind you. Then select several other objects at random, and experiment with assembling them in different ways. When you have achieved an arrangement you find appealing, glue the objects together. You may wish to embellish your object by painting it or writing on the surface using a Sharpie pen.

# Salvador Dalí: CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

## WRITING ACTIVITIES:

### **Exquisite Corpse Drawing and Writing Small Group Activity**

Materials: Unlined paper and pencils.

The Surrealists were a group of artists and writers who often collaborated in their work. They invented games, such as the 'Exquisite Corpse,' in which each participant contributes creatively to the outcome.

**Activity Description:** To play 'Exquisite Corpse,' divide students into groups of four. Each group should use one piece of paper folded into four equal horizontal parts. The first person should draw the head of the creature in the top section, extending the drawing slightly (about half an inch) into the second section. The second player extends the lines from player one to draw a torso in the second section, the third player draws legs, and the last player draws the feet. Each person should draw their section without showing it to the other players. Before passing it on to the next player, fold the paper so that all except a half-inch section of the drawing is covered. After the feet are drawn open the paper to examine the results.

**NOTE:** You can also play this game by writing a sentence or short paragraph. Follow the same rules as above, but instead of drawing, have each person write a short phrase or a few sentences, folding the paper so that only a few words are visible to the next player. After the last person has finished writing, read the results.

### **Dream Writing Activity**

Suggested Images: *Enigma of Desire*  
*Soft Construction with Boiled Beans: Premonition of Civil War*  
*Apparition of a Face and Fruit Dish on a Beach*  
*Disintegration of the Persistence of Memory*

**Activity Description:** Display an image of one of Dalí's paintings. Ask students to copy the following sentence beginning onto their paper: "I had the strangest dream last night...". Instruct the students to imagine that the painting they are looking at is an image from a dream. Complete the sentence above and incorporate it into a paragraph describing their imagined dream scenario.

# Salvador Dalí: CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

## RESEARCH ACTIVITIES:

### **Research Topic: Spain and Catalonia**

Dalí and several other artists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Joan Miró and Pablo Picasso, were originally from the Catalonia region of Spain. Learn more about the geography, history and cultures of Spain and the region of Catalonia. Make a timeline of historical events and a list of important people from Spain and Catalonia.

### **Research Topic: Sigmund Freud**

Dalí and the Surrealists proclaimed the psychologist Sigmund Freud as the father of their movement. His theories on the unconscious and the 1900 publication *The Interpretation of Dreams* inspired their use of automatic technique and dream imagery. Learn more about Sigmund Freud, dream theory and psychoanalysis. How did Freud feel about Dalí after the two met in 1938? What do psychology experts feel about Freud's theories today?

### **Research Topic: Atomic Energy**

After atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 to end the Second World War, Dalí became interested in atomic energy and the destructive power of the atom. Learn about how atomic energy is created. What was the impact following the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

## SPANISH LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES:

### **¡Viva Dalí!**

Activity Description: Pretend you are a journalist or a friend of Salvador Dalí writing an epitaph or eulogy memorializing the artist. Be sure to mention important dates and events in the life of Dalí and describe at least one of his works of art. Remember to write in Spanish!

### **¿Qué tu veas?**

Activity Description: Display an image of one of Dalí's paintings. Instruct students to make a vocabulary list in Spanish of the objects, composition and other features they observe in the painting. Divide students into small groups or pairs and ask them to have a conversation in Spanish about the painting, being sure to use the words from their list.