

 SCHOLASTIC

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# art

## René Magritte

Working With Surrealism



COVER: René Magritte (1898-1967), *The Son of Man (Le Fils de l'Homme)*, 1964. Oil on canvas, 45.67x38in. Private collection. Image: Banque d'Images, ADAGP/Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

SCHOLASTIC  
**art**

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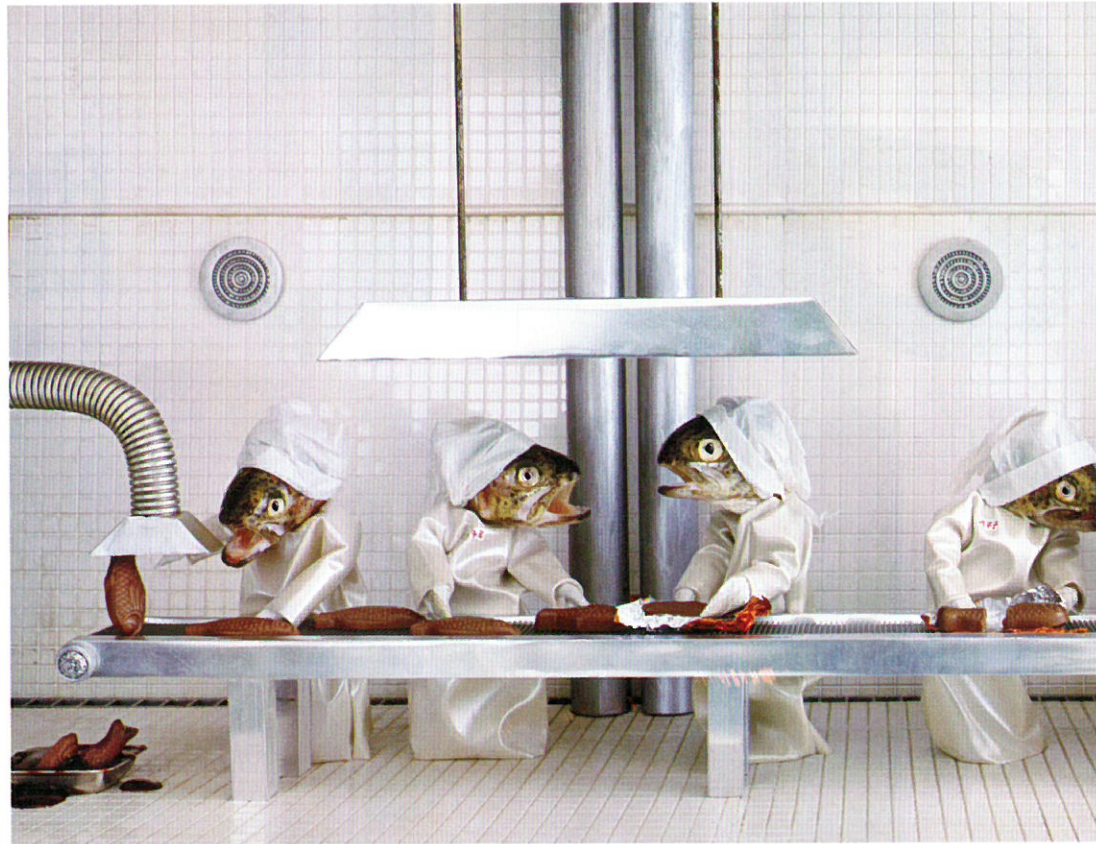
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Museum of  
Modern Art's  
Magritte Show

**DEBATE:** Dalí  
Sculpture

**HOW-TO VIDEO:**  
Compose  
a Surreal  
Collage



## PARTS VADER

**U**sing old computer circuit boards, typewriter keys, and other discarded metal and mechanical parts, American artist Gabriel Dishaw builds amazingly detailed sculptures.

The artist created a series of Star Wars-themed figures like the Darth Vader on the left. The piece may look like it comes from a galaxy far, far away, but it is helping to save our planet here at home. By finding a new purpose for trash, Dishaw prevents these items from ending up in a landfill.

**Gabriel Dishaw used found materials to recreate Darth Vader.**

Gabriel Dishaw, *Darth Vader Upcycled #1*, 2013. Recycled material from computer parts, adding machines and typewriters, 11 3/4x9 1/4x10 1/2in.

# CATCH OF THE DAY

**C**ontemporary French artist Anne-Catherine Becker-Echivard creates humorous, surreal scenes using real fish. First, she builds a miniature set and props. Then she goes to the fish market to select her models. She dresses them up and poses them in humorous scenes like this one of fish working in a chocolate factory. Finally, she photographs her work.

Since the artist uses real fish, her materials are temporary. When she's finished capturing them on film, she doesn't toss her subjects in the trash. She eats them!



**Real fish make chocolate fish in this surreal scene.**

Anne-Catherine Becker-Echivard (b. 1971), *Modern Times*, 2003. Trout, aluminum and aluminum rods, latex, candies, and gypsum plaster, 1x2m. ©Anne-Catherine Becker-Echivard.

**After decades of uncertainty, experts finally believe that this is a real Van Gogh.**

Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), *Sunset at Montmajour*, 1888. Oil painting, 93.3x73.3cm. Image: Peter Dejong/AP Photo.

## New Van Gogh Revealed!



**A** new discovery about an old painting is exciting art lovers everywhere. For years, historians believed *Sunset at Montmajour*, left, painted in 1888, was a fake Van Gogh. A Norwegian businessman purchased the work in 1908 believing it to be real, only to have experts tell him it wasn't. Embarrassed, he hid the painting in his attic until his death in 1970. Then art collectors bought the work and brought it to the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. Experts X-rayed the painting, analyzed the chemical composition of the paint, and carefully reviewed the artist's letters from the time. They confirmed that the painting is a real Van Gogh. Find out more about this story at [www.scholastic.com/art](http://www.scholastic.com/art).

# René Magritte: Man of Many Hats

This artist dreamed up impossible ideas and painted them into reality



René Magritte in 1938, shown next to one of his paintings.

René Magritte photographed with his painting *Le Barbare (The Barbarian)*, 1938. Photo: Banque d'Images, ADAGP/Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

**E**nvision a world where apples defy gravity, a human eye is a window to the sky, and trains travel through time. Impossible as these scenes are in the real world, René Magritte (reh-NAY ma-GREET), brought them to life on canvas.

## An Early Interest in Art

Magritte, shown above next to one of his paintings, was born in Belgium in 1898. René took his first art lesson at age 12. He painted so well that his family believed he was a prodigy. When René was just 13, his father even entered one of the boy's paintings in an international art show.

## How does Magritte create a mystery about the identity of the man in this painting?

René Magritte, *The Son of Man (Le Fils de l'Homme)*, 1964. Oil on canvas, 45.67x35in. Private collection. Image: Banque d'Images, ADAGP/Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

In 1916, Magritte enrolled at an advanced art school, where he learned to paint in many different styles. The young artist found his passion in the oddity of **Surrealism**. Surrealists developed their ideas from the strange things that happen in dreams. They **juxtapose** unrelated objects, placing them side by side. These images seem both real and unreal—*sur-real*.

## Inventing Mysteries

Magritte couldn't support himself and his wife just by painting, so he also worked as a graphic designer. Like other businessmen of the time, he dressed in a suit and hat, called a bowler hat. Seeing so many other men dressed like him on the street inspired Magritte. The man wearing a bowler hat became a **motif**, or subject, that appears often in the artist's work. In fact, Magritte created at least 21 different paintings featuring the businessman!

Magritte's first painting of the man in the bowler hat was a **self-portrait**. Many historians believe that the artist referred to himself whenever he used this motif, but Magritte often left this unclear. In the 1964 work *The Son of Man*, below, a bright





Why is it important that Magritte varied the image of the man in the bowler hat?

René Magritte, *Golconda*, 1953. Oil on canvas, 80.7x100.6cm. Menil Collection, Houston. Image: Banque d'Images, ADAGP/Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



green apple hovers unnaturally just in front of the figure's face. It hides the man's facial features. The figure could be anyone, including the artist himself. In this surreal composition, Magritte invites viewers to wonder what the apple is hiding and why.

The bowler hat motif appears again in Magritte's 1966 work *Decalcomania* (DEE-CAL-co-man-ia), below. The image is **bisected**, with the man on the left and a curtain on the right. By shaping the **negative space** like a figure, Magritte adds a veil of mystery to a simple painting.

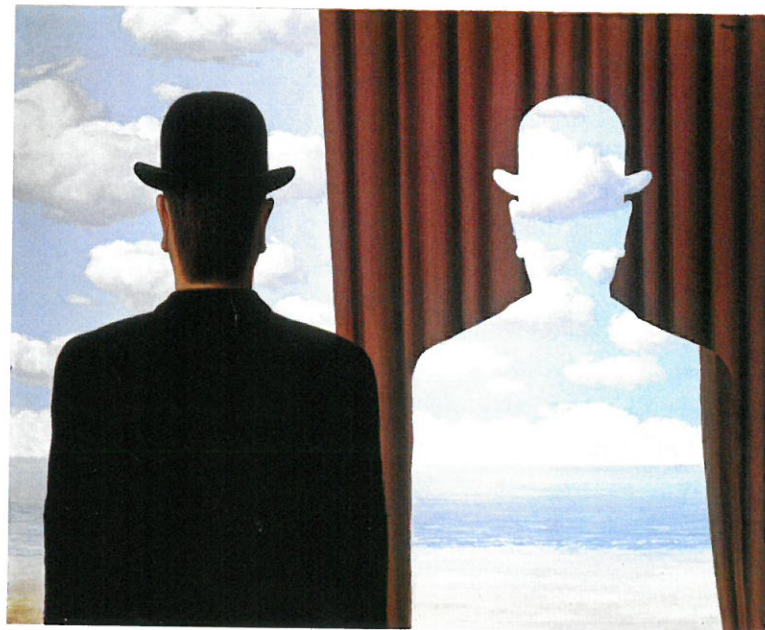
What is the role of negative space in the painting below?

René Magritte, *Decalcomania*, 1966. Oil on canvas, 81x100cm. Private collection. Image: Herscovici/Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

### An Idea Develops

In his 1953 work *Golconda* (gol-KON-duh), above, Magritte uses **repetition**, painting the man in the bowler hat dozens of times. Arranged in layers of varied **scale**, the smaller men are in the **background** and the larger men are in the **foreground**, which makes them seem closer to the viewer.

Magritte painted in a realistic style, including many specific details like the architecture of the building, the shadows on the wall, even the buttons on the men's coats. The men seem identical, but closer inspection reveals **variation** among them. Some have their hands in their pockets. Others carry briefcases. Without variation, the repeated figure might make the painting boring. But subtle differences encourage viewers to look more closely.



# Driven by Dreams

**When Magritte puts ordinary objects into unfamiliar situations, they become extraordinary**

**W**hen you dream, your subconscious mind puts different parts of your life side-by-side. For example, your science teacher might dance the tango with your aunt on the school soccer field. Magritte and other Surrealist artists played with this concept. They found that juxtaposing ordinary but unrelated objects could be as disorienting and powerful as waking up from a strange dream.

## Inspiration in Paris

Magritte knew that he needed to move to Paris, the heart of the Surrealist movement, to get noticed. He arrived in 1927 and soon met important Surrealists like Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, and Joan Miró. These artists were interested in the way the mind works, so they read up on the latest theories of psychology. They were especially interested in dreams.

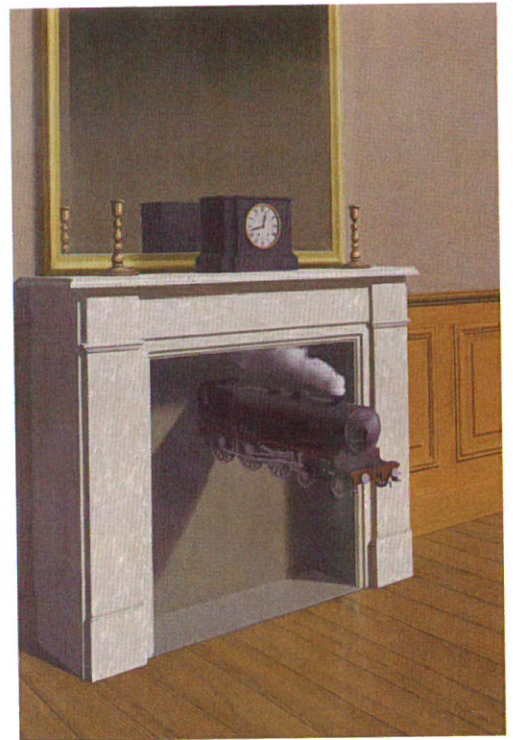
Magritte and Miró became good friends, meeting for lunch every Thursday. During these lively meals, the artists discussed the meaning and purpose of art. Since we already know what the world looks like, why represent it literally on the canvas? If our dreaming minds can create strange worlds, perhaps artists should try to do the same in waking life.

**Why do you think Magritte chose to replace the subject's ribcage with a birdcage in this portrait?**

René Magritte, *The Therapist*, 1937. Oil on canvas, 36 1/4x25 9/16in. Private Collection. Image: Banque d'Images, ADAGP/Art Resource, New York. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

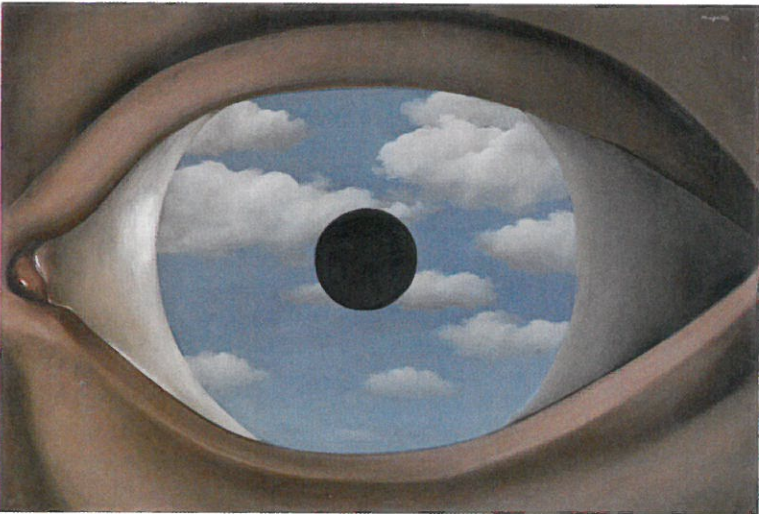
**How does Magritte challenge the way we think about a fireplace and a train?**

René Magritte, *Time Transfixed*, 1938. Oil on canvas, 57 7/8x39 7/8in. Art Institute of Chicago, Joseph Winterbotham Collection, 1970.426. Image: The Bridgeman Art Library. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



## Is this a giant rose or a tiny room? Why do you think so?

René Magritte, *The Tomb of the Wrestlers*, 1960. Oil on canvas, 89x116cm. Private collection, New York. Image: Herscovici/Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



What do you think the title of this painting, *The False Mirror*, means?

René Magritte, *The False Mirror*, 1928. Oil on canvas, 21 1/4x31 7/8 in. Museum of Modern Art, Purchase, 133.1936. Digital Image: The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

## Strange Visions

Magritte developed techniques to mimic the things that happen in dreams. Look at the painting of the fireplace and train, on the top left. The scene is impossible! And yet, you can probably come up with a story to explain where the train came from and where it is going. In our dreams, strange juxtapositions make sense to us. Here Magritte asks you to make sense of them while you're awake.

Can you make sense of *The Therapist* on the bottom left? Magritte **substitutes** a

“My pictures showed objects located in places where we never come across them.”

—René Magritte

birdcage for the ribcage of a man, inviting you to look for similarities between the two. But why does the man wear a hat if he has no head? And how does he sit if there is no chair beneath him? The artist doesn't provide an answer. Dreams, after all, can't always be explained.

In *The Tomb of the Wrestlers*, top right, Magritte uses an unnatural scale to disorient you. This could be a normal-size room filled with a giant rose, or a normal-size rose in a room inside a dollhouse. As in a dream, it is open to interpretation.

## Hidden Meanings

Magritte felt that the titles of his works were just as important as the images themselves. His 1928 *The False Mirror*, bottom right, is a startling painting of an eye. The artist **cropped** the image tightly around the eye and painted the iris to look like the sky. But why? Magritte's title references a *false mirror*. Since we don't know what a false mirror is, there isn't a clear way to understand this image and its title.

Using techniques like juxtaposition, altered scale, and language, Magritte explores the ideas behind Surrealism. He pulls viewers like you into his compositions by using rich imagery, but refuses to provide all the answers. In this way, you are part of the work. Your experience in seeing it changes the meaning of each painting.

# 5 Things to Know About René Magritte



How would this portrait be different if the figures' faces were visible?

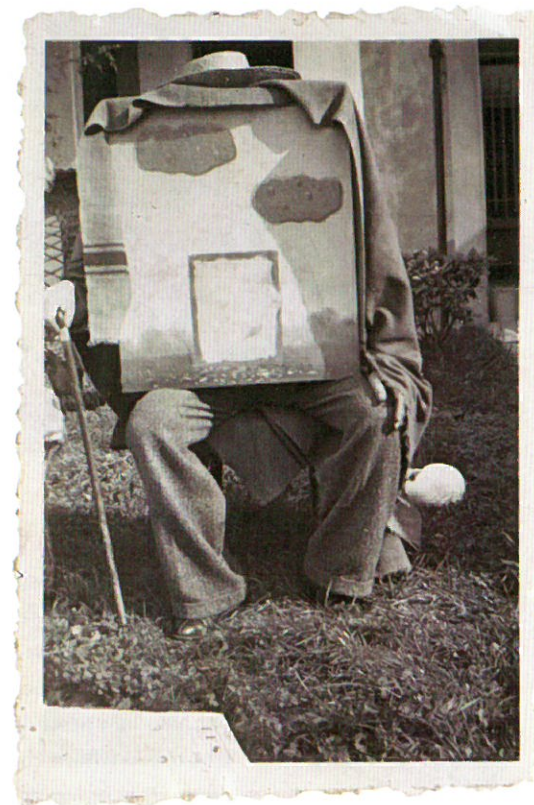
René Magritte, *The Lovers*, 1928. Oil on canvas, 54x73cm. National Gallery, Canberra, Australia. Image: Banque d'Images, ADAGP, Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

## 1 COVERED FACES ▲

Magritte often covered his subjects' faces, as in his 1928 painting *The Lovers*, above. There are several theories about this artistic choice. Many believe this imagery came from a tragic incident in the artist's childhood: When Magritte was 12 years old, his mother drowned herself in a river. When Magritte spoke of her death, he recalled that his mother's nightgown covered her face as her body was pulled from the water. Today, historians believe this was just a story Magritte heard from those who discovered her body, because he was not present when she was found. Despite the apparent link between this life-changing event and works like *The Lovers*, Magritte denied that his mother's death was the inspiration for the covered faces in his work.

## 2 PHOTOGRAPHER ▼

Magritte's photo below should look familiar because it likely served as a study for *The Therapist* (page 6). The artist regularly used photography to compose his paintings. Notice the similarities between the two compositions. As in the painting, the figure is seated holding a cane and wearing a broad-brimmed hat. A blanket and canvas hide his face and torso, while his arms and legs extend from behind. In addition to using photography, Magritte was inspired by film and began making short films of his own in the 1950s.



Why do you think this photograph has a different effect than *The Therapist* on page 6 does?

René Magritte, *Dieu le huitième jour*, 1937. Gelatin silver print, 3 3/8x2 1/4in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ford Motor Company Collection, Gift of Ford Motor Company and John C. Waddell, 1987. 1987.1100.312. Photo: ©The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Licensed by Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



## How has Magritte transformed this mask?

René Magritte, *The Future of Statues*, 1937. Oil paint on plaster, 330x165x203mm. The Tate Modern, London. Purchased 1981. Image: Tate, London/Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

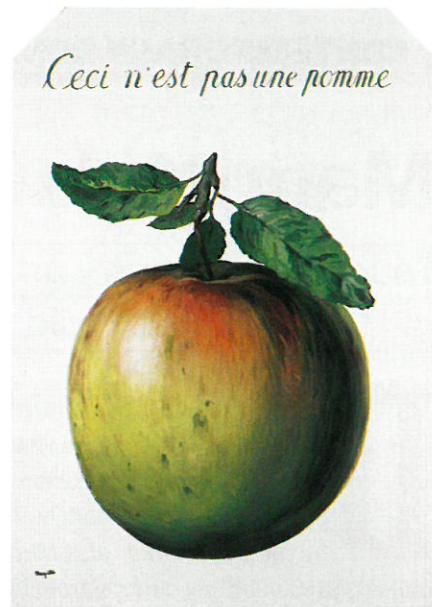


## 3 PAINTED IN 3-D ▲

Between the World Wars, art supplies were often hard to find. Sometimes Magritte couldn't get canvas, so he improvised, finding other surfaces on which to paint, such as bottles and plaster figures. *The Future of Statues* is one of several sculptures Magritte made by painting on a commercial plaster mask. The bright-blue sky and puffy clouds seen here are another recurring theme, or motif, in the artist's work. Magritte utilizes the **three-dimensional** painting surface in a way that isn't possible on flat canvas. The mask's **contours**, or curves, cast natural **shadows** and **highlights**. This creates an ever-changing palette of blues and whites as the light around the sculpture changes.

## 4 WORDSMITH ▶

The French title of this 1964 painting—*Ceci n'est pas une pomme*—means, "This is not an apple." But if it's not an apple, what is it? The artist explains, "We see images and words differently in a picture." Magritte thought it was important to make clear distinctions between the object itself, the name of the object, and the representation of the object. Here, the artist tells us this is not an apple, but rather a painting of an apple.



### Why did Magritte include text in this painting?

René Magritte, *Ceci n'est pas une pomme*, 1964. Oil on unilite, 142x100cm. Private collection. Image: ©Christie's Images/The Bridgeman Art Library. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

### What makes the scene below look like a dream?

René Magritte, *Personal Values*, 1952. Oil on canvas, 31 1/2x39 3/8in. Collection SFMOMA. Purchase through a gift of Phyllis Wattis. Image: Banque d'Images, ADAGP/Art Resource, NY. ©2013 C. Herscovici, London/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.



## 5 MASTER OF PRECISION ▲

Magritte believed realism allows viewers to focus on the subject of a work instead of the techniques used to paint it. His paintings are perfectly smooth, looking almost like the surface of a photograph. Magritte uses an unnatural scale for the objects in the painting above. But he also includes specific details, like the delicate cracks in the ceiling, which add a high level of realism. This technique grounds a strange scene in reality.

# Magritte's Legacy

Four contemporary artists take old techniques to wild new places

**D**esigners, illustrators, and artists today still find inspiration in Magritte's vision. His influence didn't end with his death in 1967; examples of it are everywhere. Even the logo for broadcasting company CBS is inspired by the artist's *The False Mirror* (page 7). Although these four artists don't draw directly from Magritte, they do incorporate some of the Surrealist master's techniques.



**How does Warhol use repetition and variation in this image of himself?**

Andy Warhol (1928-1987), *Self-Portrait*, 1966. Silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on nine canvases, each canvas 22 1/2x22 1/2in, overall 67 5/8x67 5/8in. The Museum of Modern Art, NY. Gift of Philip Johnson. Image: ©The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY. © 2013 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

## Warhol: A Motif Repeated ▲

Artists commonly use repetition and variation, like Magritte did in *Golconda* (page 5). American Pop artist Andy Warhol repeats the same image nine times on nine separate canvases in his 1966 *Self-Portrait*. Unlike Magritte, who painted his canvases by hand, Warhol created each of these portraits using a process called silkscreening. In silkscreening, the artist creates a special stencil that can be used more than once. The result is a set of identical prints. But Warhol also uses variation by selecting a different combination of bright colors for each canvas. He then arranges the canvases in a grid.

**Why do you think Koons chose a common toy as his subject?**

Jeff Koons (b. 1955), *Rabbit*, 1986. Stainless steel, 41x19x12in. The Eli and Edythe L. Broad Collection, Los Angeles. ©Jeff Koons.



## Koons: Not What It Seems ▲

Magritte uses text to remind his viewers that a painting is not an apple in *Ceci n'est pas une pomme* (page 9). American artist Jeff Koons plays with the idea that things are not what they seem by using unexpected materials. This sculpture looks just like an inflatable toy rabbit—but it isn't. Koons's 1986 *Rabbit* is made of rigid stainless steel. Since the sculpture captures all the details of the squishy plastic original, we can easily believe the metal doll might deflate right before our eyes.

## Baldessari: Juxtaposition ►

In his 2009 digital collage, *Brain/Cloud (With Seascape and Palm Tree)*, American conceptual artist John Baldessari reinvents one of Magritte's recurring motifs: fluffy white clouds against serene blue skies. The **focal point** is a palm tree, which stands out against the ocean and sky. But this realistic print looks surreal because the large cloud above the tree resembles a human brain. Magritte encourages viewers to be curious about the unexpected juxtapositions in his paintings. Baldessari does the same, inviting viewers to think about the visual similarities and differences between a cloud and a brain in this digitally altered image.



## Abakanowicz: Scale ▼

Polish artist Magdalena Abakanowicz (Mag-dah-LAY-na ah-bah-kah-NOH-vich) takes repetition to new heights—literally—with her 2005-06 *Agora*. The iron figures in this installation are **monumental**, or larger-than-life. Each of the 106 figures stands nine feet tall. Located in Chicago's Grant Park, the giants are close together, as if walking down a crowded city street. But they seem oddly solitary, not interacting with one another. Like many of the figures in Magritte's work, these figures do not have heads, giving them a strange Surrealist quality.



### WRITE ABOUT ART

Select a work on these pages.  
Write a short essay comparing and contrasting the contemporary work with a work by Magritte on the previous pages. What relationship do you see between the two artworks?

Would you consider this a realistic artwork? Why or why not?

John Baldessari (b. 1931), *Brain/Cloud (With Seascape and Palm Tree)*, 2009. Inkjet on Hahnemühle photo rag 308 gsm paper using archival inks, 29.2x23in. Edition of 145. Courtesy of the artist; Counter Editions, London; and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris.

How might these sculptures affect you differently if they had heads?

Magdalena Abakanowicz (b. 1930), *Agora*, 2005-2006. Iron, 106 figures 285-295x95-100x135-145cm. Permanent installation in Grant Park, Chicago. Photo courtesy of Chicago Park District.

# Is This Dalí for Real?

## Controversy surrounds copies of a famous Surrealist's sculptures

**S**alvador Dalí was a Spanish Surrealist artist working around the same time as René Magritte. Known for its bizarre imagery, one of Dalí's most famous works is a painting of melting clocks. He also made bronze sculptures of the clocks. A few museums and auction houses have recently decided that some of the sculptures cannot be considered legitimate because it's unclear whether Dalí was actually involved in their creation.

The controversy stems from the way bronze sculptures are cast. Bronze casting is a complicated process that can be completed only at a foundry. Most artists, like Dalí, hire foundries to cast their sculptures for them. In the casting process, the foundry makes a mold from the artist's original sculpture. It can produce many bronze copies using that mold. Then the foundry is allowed to cast a limited number of works, called an edition size. Edition sizes vary and are set by the artist.

Late in his life, Dalí signed contracts allowing several foundries to produce his work. His business manager sold additional rights after the artist's death in 1989. Today, 10 companies have the right to produce more than 100 different Dalí sculptures. They're still casting new ones



Surrealist artist Salvador Dalí

The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY.



today, but no one knows whether they are respecting the edition sizes that were set by the artist.

Some people argue that new casts of sculptures created 24 years after the artist died can't be considered "real" Dalí sculptures. Others say the new castings are just as valuable as earlier castings of the same work.

What do you think? Should the questionable Dalí sculptures be considered authentic?

**Dalí is best known for imagery of melting clocks.**

Salvador Dalí (1904-1989), *Profile of Time*, conceived in 1977, cast in 1984. Bronze, 51x35x35cm. Espace Dalí Montmartre, Paris. Image: Amit Mendelsohn/Dematix/Corbis. ©Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York 2013.

**YES**

**The sculptures are authentic works by Dalí.**

**NO**

**The sculptures are just copies. They're not as valuable as the original sculptures.**

You decide! Find evidence in the text to support your argument.

**Tell us what you think!**  
www.scholastic.com/art

## STUDENT OF THE MONTH

# Self-Portrait Cubed

This award-winning artist transformed an ordinary portrait into a Surrealist mystery

**T**iffany Liang loves to tell stories. "People have short attention spans," says the artist, 18. "I like finding ways to get them to focus for more than just a few seconds." A freshman at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, her dream is to be a film director someday.

### When did you first get serious about art?

The summer of ninth grade, I attended an art camp taught by professional artists. They liked my work and gave me ideas about how I could make a living as an artist.

### What inspired this award-winning painting?

During art camp we learned how to draw cubes. When I left the camp, I wanted to challenge myself by using cubes to portray a human face.

### Why did you choose clouds as a theme?

Clouds give you a floating feeling. Their simple rounded shapes perfectly balance the hard edges of the cubes.

### What's the focal point?

The eyes. To emphasize them, I didn't break them into cubes. Eyes tell you how a person is feeling. I wanted mine to captivate the viewer.

### How did you create your painting?

First, I sketched my face on a canvas in pencil. Then I drew cubes over the face in pencil and erased the parts that I didn't want to



include inside the cubes. From there, I started painting. I added shadows to form the edges of the cubes and make them 3-D. I used a dry-brush technique to give the clouds an ethereal feeling.

**What was the most difficult part of creating this painting?** Painting the face. I wanted to keep the form and proportions correct, but that's really hard when a face is broken up.

**What did you want viewers to walk away with?** I wanted them to wonder about the girl in the portrait. Because her face is broken up, there's a sense of mystery about her. It's up to the viewer to piece her together and tell her story.

**Do you have advice for aspiring artists like yourself?** If you get frustrated, don't give up. Spend time working at your art. That's the only way you'll get better.

What technique does Tiffany use to make this painting look surreal?

### Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

Tiffany won a Gold Key in painting in the 2013 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. To find out more about this program, visit [artandwriting.org](http://artandwriting.org).



Tiffany Liang

# Compose a Surrealist Collage

Create a striking scene filled with strange juxtapositions

**Y**ou've seen how René Magritte invents bizarre scenes with ordinary objects. Now it's your turn to select images of everyday objects and use Photoshop to develop a Surrealist composition.

## MATERIALS

- computer
- Adobe Photoshop
- old newspapers
- old magazines
- photographs
- scissors
- glue



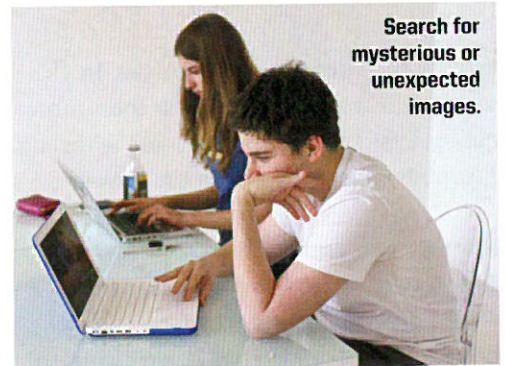
You can look for images in old magazines and newspapers or on the Internet.



In this work, the student selected a background with a horizon line that is far in the distance.

## STEP 1 Select Your Imagery ▼

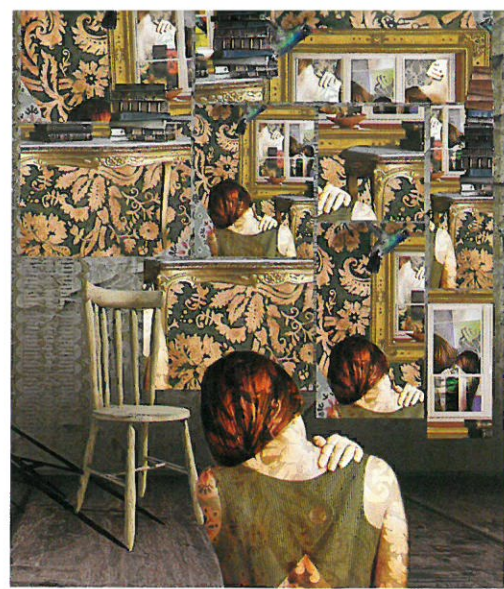
Browse the Internet to find images that interest you. Select a lot of pictures and save them to a folder on your desktop. Don't be afraid to choose mundane objects that can be repeated and varied. Images of doors, chairs, and stairways work well. For example, by repeating a photo or drawing of stairs, you can create a stairway that appears to be endless. If you don't have Photoshop you can cut photos from newspapers and magazines. **TIP: Look for images of figures with hidden faces, or think about ways to cover faces like Magritte did with an apple on page 4.**



Search for mysterious or unexpected images.



Did this student use any motifs that appear in Magritte's work? If so, which ones?



How did this student use repetition and variation?

## STEP 2 Choose a Background ▼

Now search for images of landscapes with dreamlike qualities. If you aren't working on a computer, look for photos in magazines. For ideas, refer to the backdrops used in works by artists like René Magritte, Salvador Dalí, and Giorgio de Chirico. To make your collage personal, look for an image that reminds you of a setting that appears in your own dreams. Images of barren plains, empty rooms, deserts, clouds, and long roads work well. Save between 5 and 10 backdrops in a new folder on your desktop. **TIP: Backgrounds with vanishing points will add more depth to your work.**

## STEP 3 Experiment and Explore ▼

Use Photoshop to arrange your images in surprising ways. Place a background in the bottom layer, then arrange the other images in new layers. Use the lasso tools to cut out images. You can adjust the scale and blur or erase lines. Look for interesting juxtapositions among the elements you've selected. When all the elements are in place, save your file in JPEG format. If you're working on paper, try a variety of compositions before carefully gluing each element in place. **TIP: If you're not happy with the way your collage turned out, try changing the background for a totally new look.**

Prepared by Wook Choi and Justin Rhee, Oogie Art, New York City (www.oogieart.com).

Experiment with a few different compositions.



Find a simple but interesting background.



Zack Lydon designed this crazy-looking creature using Photoshop.



Watch a Video!  
www.scholastic.com/art



**CAREER PROFILE**  
**CHARACTER DESIGNER**

**Salary:** Visual effects designers earn from \$45,000 to \$150,000 per year, depending on location and experience.

**Education:** Most visual effects designers have a bachelor's degree in animation.

**Getting Started:**  
▶ Watch films and advertisements for inspiration. Video games are also a good place to see interactive animation in action.

▶ Practice designing your own characters in your sketchbook, and start building a portfolio.

▶ Get an internship at a company where you'll learn more about the visual effects and animation industry.

# Creating Creatures

## Zack Lydon talks about character design and visual effects

**SCHOLASTIC ART: What is your job?**

**ZACK LYDON:** I'm a designer at Framestore, the visual effects company that developed characters like Dobby from the Harry Potter series and the Geico Gecko. Recently I've been working on an interactive book called *The Creature Department*.

**SA: What medium do you work in?**

**ZL:** I work on the computer almost exclusively, mostly using Photoshop. It's a lot faster than drawing by hand if I need to experiment and make changes.

**SA: How do you develop a character?**

**ZL:** For *The Creature Department*, I started with sections of the book that described the character's personality. For example, Gūgor (shown above) is very strong and, in the book,

his job is to break things. He had to have this severity in his hands, to show that he could crush things. But he also is a very docile, soft-spoken character. I had to understand Gūgor's character before I could design him. I took the author's description as a jumping-off point and then experimented with different shapes and ideas.

**SA: What are the most important skills that you need to do your job?**

**ZL:** I think having a good attitude is probably most important. Anything can be interesting if you just have the right perspective. Once you're interested, the rest is easy.

**SA: Do you have advice for students who want to become character designers?**

**ZL:** Learning how to work hard is probably the most important thing you can do. Discipline and having good work habits are really the foundation for everything.

**SA: What do you love about your job?**

**ZL:** I love the creative freedom I've had so far. I was expecting to be at the bottom of the food chain, doing what other people told me to do. What I've found surprising is that all of the creative directors I've worked with are very open to my ideas.

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