

Exercising the Surrealist Muscle: *Automatic Drawing*



Lesson 1

Author: Adrienne Kitko

Grade Level(s): High School Level Foundations class

Time Span: 1 hour and 10 minute session

Essential Question: How do you define a true form of art?

Provoking Questions:

What does juxtaposition mean?

What is the subconscious mind? And who is Freud?

What is Surrealism?

Who/What influenced the movement?

Who popularized the Surrealist movement?

What is automatic drawing?

Referring to the automatic drawing visual provocations: What do you see? How does this work make you feel? What is the artist trying to communicate? What makes you say that? Does one work seem more “automatic” than the others? Why? Do you think one medium lends itself to automatic drawing better than another medium? Why?

Lesson Objectives:

-The learner will examine visual provocations of automatic drawings for artistic communication and expression.

-The learner will demonstrate an understanding of automatic drawing and become aware of their conscious and unconscious mark making decisions.

-The learner will reflect on the automatic drawing technique and communicate their experience.

Vocabulary and Visual Provocations:

Surrealism

Juxtaposition/Incongruous Combination

Conscious

Subconscious

Psychotherapy

Automatic Drawing/Automatism

Gestural

The Birth of the World, Montroig, late summer-fall 1925, Joan Miró.

Automatic Drawing, (1917-18) (inscribed 1916), Jean (Hans) Arp.

Automatic Drawing, (1924), André Masson.

Materials:

Vocabulary handout, 18" x 24" newsprint paper, oil pastels, pencil.

Direct Instruction:

1. The teacher will explain that they will be focusing on a unit dedicated to the cultural art movement Surrealism and how it influenced the values, beliefs, and perspectives of artists. The teacher will lead with a PowerPoint presentation and will hand out a vocabulary worksheet that will have the slides on the back and will ask that students take notes.

Art Foundations

Name: _____

Surrealism Vocabulary

Surreal - bizarre, not real.

Surrealism - A movement in art and literature that sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind.

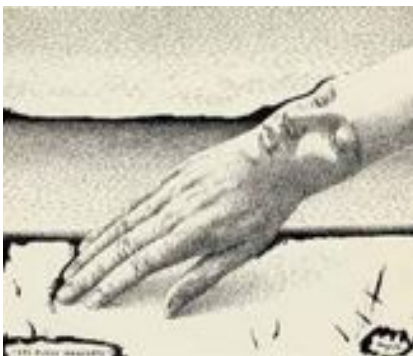
Juxtaposition/Incongruous Combination. - When two contrastingly different things are placed together, side by side, for comparison or contrast.

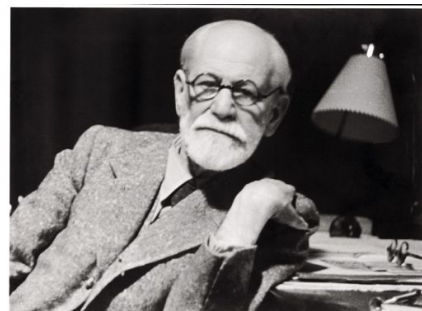
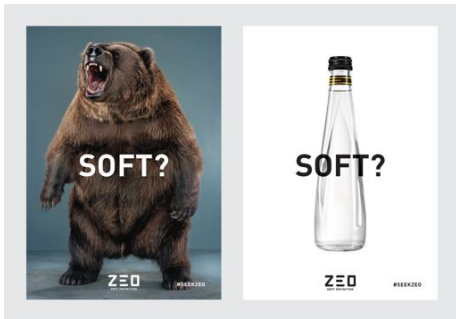
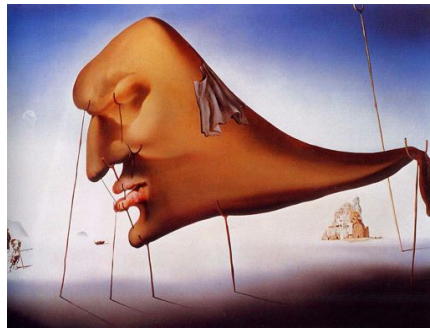
Conscious - the part of the mind in which you are aware of. For example: typing, walking, anything you are doing right now.

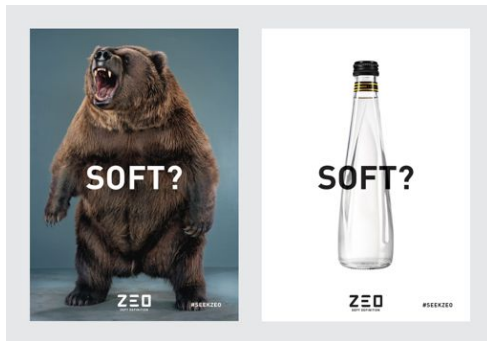
Subconscious - the part of the mind that is the storage room of everything that you are currently unaware of. For example, all of your memories, your skills, all situations you've been through and all images you've ever seen.

Automatic Drawing/Automatism - the idea of simply letting whatever is thought to be drawn, thus allowing the unconscious to be exposed on paper.

Gestural Lines - a movement of the hand that creates a line that is expressive of an idea, opinion, or emotion.

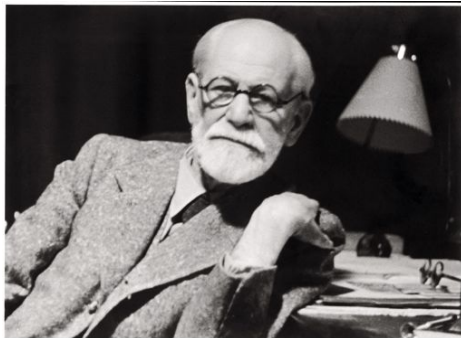






“What does juxtaposition mean?”

When two contrastingly different things are placed together, side by side, for comparison or contrast. Also called incongruous combination.



“What is the subconscious mind? And who is Freud?”

Think of the subconscious mind as the storage room of everything that is currently not in your conscious; all of your memories, your skills, all situations you've been through and all images you've ever seen. Sigmund Freud was an Austrian psychologist that invented talk therapy, also known as psychotherapy, where the patient can talk freely about what was exactly on their mind. Before Freudian psychiatry, the world of dreams was dismissed as insignificant and the unconscious was unimportant and inexistent. Freud discovered the importance of the unconscious and dreams and the Surrealists knew that this must be combined with reality in order to create a truer form of art (Turkel,2009).



“What is Surrealism?”

It can be defined by a cultural art movement founded in Paris in 1924, that sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind, such as irrational juxtaposition of images in a piece of work (Google). It is a playful way to take the viewer on a journey by juxtaposing images or ideas they may never have had.



“Who/What influenced the movement?”

Dada was born in protest against war, and its destructive and exhibitionist activities became more absurd and extreme after the Great War ended. Surrealism grew out of this movement and shared much of the anti-rationalism of Dada, however, Andre Breton, who was a part of the Dada group, wanted to form a movement in which artists could unite to protest war by accessing subconscious thoughts. The original Parisian Surrealists organized group activities as a reprieve from violent political situations, WWI, and to address the unease they felt about the world's uncertainties (theartstory.org).



“Who popularized the Surrealist movement?”

Joan Miro, Andre Breton, Max Ernst, Salvador Dali, Jean Arp, and Andre Mason. André Breton wrote *Le Manifeste du Surréalisme-The Surrealist Manifesto*. In it, he defined Surrealism as "Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express - verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner - the actual functioning of thought." In this, he proposed that artists should seek access to their unconscious mind in order to make art inspired by this realm. (theartstory.org)

“What is automatic drawing?”

Surrealists had to find a way to allow their unconscious and subconscious to manifest themselves in their work, and so a number of techniques were created with that goal. Putting the unconscious on paper would become the main principle of Surrealism, and even throughout the movement's many changes, it would remain the underlying goal. Automatic drawing is the idea of drawing an image without any conscious interference of the process, simply letting whatever is thought to be drawn, thus allowing the unconscious to be exposed on paper (Turkel, 2009). See examples below.

Examples of Automatism:



1



2



3

1) *The Birth of the World*, Montroig, late summer-fall 1925, Joan Miró.

2) *Automatic Drawing*, (1917-18) (inscribed 1916), Jean (Hans) Arp.

3) *Automatic Drawing*, (1924), André Masson.

Questions to ask the class as think, pair, share:

“What do you see? How does this work make you feel? What is the artist trying to communicate? What makes you say that? Does one work seem more “automatic” than the others? Why? Do you think one medium lends itself to automatic drawing better than another medium? Why?”

Project: Automatic Drawing

1. Students will get a large piece of paper, a packet of oil pastels, and find a roomy, comfortable working area.

2. The teacher will demonstrate how this is an ideal relaxing technique and one can move fast and make quick gestural lines or slow, just as long as there is no conscious interference. If a student finds it challenging to put the unconscious on paper, they are encouraged to close their eyes and see what happens!



3. Students will start and have 20 minutes to complete. The last 15 minutes is reserved for students to hang up their work, to talk about the automatic drawing process, and give one another feedback.

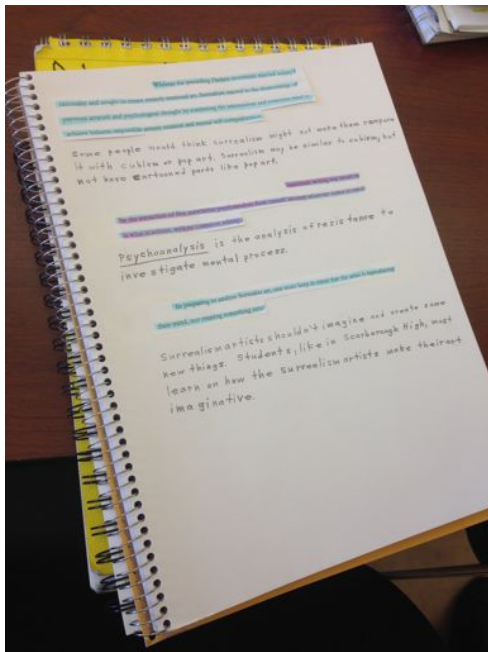
4. During critique students are encouraged to use statements that begin with, “I noticed...I observed...I found it challenging/easy...”





Clean Up:

5. Students will put their name on their paper and can store it away in their class assigned drawer. Oil pastels are to be put back where they belong and their area must be wiped down with a wet paper towel. Also, any materials that fell on the floor must be discarded. (10 minutes)



Homework/Exit Slip: Art Foundations Homework #__: Write a paragraph reflecting on your automatic drawing exercise. What was it like? Did you find it easy or challenging? Why? Where else will you use this technique? Do you feel this product represents a true form of art?

Read “*The Message of Surrealist Art: Automatism, Juxtaposition and Dreams*” by Daniel Gregory Turkel.

- Read pages 2-8.
- Highlight sentences or passages that spark your interest or seem confusing, cut and tape them in your sketchbook.
- On the same page, write a 2-3 sentences explaining your interest or confusion. Come prepared to share with the group your sentences or passages.

Due: next class

Modifications:

Teacher will differentiate lesson by determining source of problems for students who can't acquire basic techniques and then remediate. Remediations can include: using smaller paper, different media that can easier to control: pencils, pen, etc. Also, students can close their eyes if having trouble feeling spontaneous in their drawing.

Assessment:

-Informal group assessment will be used to look for at least 1/3 of the class goes beyond description and references expressive/emotional qualities of the visual provocation.

-A group critique will be used as an embedded assessment tool to get feedback from students about the automatic drawing process.

-The student will write a paragraph reflect on the automatic drawing technique and communicate their experience.

Technology:

Macbook Pro computer that will have a saved Surrealism slideshow.

LCD Projector to project the slideshow on the whiteboard.

Adaptor/dongle for Mac to LCD

Main Learning Results:

A1: Artist's Purpose:-Students explain and compare different purposes of artists and their artwork in the context of time and space.

B3 Making Meaning-Students create artworks that communicate idea, feelings, and meanings and demonstrate skill in the use of media tools, techniques, and processes.

C1: Application of Creative Process: Students apply and analyze creative problem-solving and creative thinking skills to improve or vary their own work and/or the work of others.

Instructional Resources:

<https://www.google.com/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=SURREALISM> -Surrealism definition

<http://www.theartstory.org/movement-surrealism.htm> -Who/what influenced the movement?

<http://danturkel.com/papers/surrealistart.pdf> -Daniel Gregory Turkel, 2009, The Message of Surrealist Art: Automatism, Juxtaposition and Dreams

<http://cdn8.openculture.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/freud-in-30s-audio-and-video.jpg> -Picture of Freud

<http://hatchedlondon.com/blog/2013/10/zeo-is-here/> -Picture of juxtaposition

<http://legomenon.com/salvador-dali-persistence-of-memory-melting-clocks-meaning.html> -Picture of Persistence of Memory

<http://www.dieselpunks.org/profiles/blogs/the-dada-art-movement> -Marchel Duchamp's urinal/fountain

<http://electromundoblog.blogspot.com/2013/05/andre-breton-o-parteiro-insano-da.html> -Manifesto

<http://www.jamesreichbooks.com/> -Andre Breton's Picture

http://www.moma.org/collection/details.php?theme_id=10947 -automatic drawing visual provocations