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The Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Travelling Exhibition Program

Come What May

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
The Interpretive Guide

The Art Gallery of Alberta is pleased to present your community with a selection from its Travelling Exhibition Program. This is one of several exhibitions distributed by The Art Gallery of Alberta as part of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. This Interpretive Guide has been specifically designed to complement the exhibition you are now hosting. The suggested topics for discussion and accompanying activities can act as a guide to increase your viewers' enjoyment and to assist you in developing programs to complement the exhibition. Questions and activities have been included at both elementary and advanced levels for younger and older visitors.

At the Elementary School Level the Alberta Art Curriculum includes four components to provide students with a variety of experiences. These are:

Reflection: Responses to visual forms in nature, designed objects and artworks
Depiction: Development of imagery based on notions of realism
Composition: Organization of images and their qualities in the creation of visual art
Expression: Use of art materials as a vehicle for expressing statements

The Secondary Level focuses on three major components of visual learning. These are:

Drawings: Examining the ways we record visual information and discoveries
Encounters: Meeting and responding to visual imagery
Composition: Analyzing the ways images are put together to create meaning

The activities in the Interpretive Guide address one or more of the above components and are generally suited for adaptation to a range of grade levels. As well, this guide contains coloured images of the artworks in the exhibition which can be used for review and discussion at any time. Please be aware that copyright restrictions apply to unauthorized use or reproduction of artists' images.

The Travelling Exhibition Program, funded by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, is designed to bring you closer to Alberta's artists and collections. We welcome your comments and suggestions and invite you to contact:

Shane Golby, Manager/Curator
Travelling Exhibition Program
Ph: 780.428.3830; **Fax:** 780.445.0130
Email: shane.golby@your**aga**.ca

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

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Come What May

The past few years have unquestionably been very difficult. Devastating climatic conditions; economic recession; social and political turmoil; and a devastating global pandemic have all taken their toll leaving many wondering what the future will hold. While some assert that life will return to 'normal', others are not so sure. Will life return to what it was or does this time presage the development of different systems of government, economic structures, ways of social interaction and ways of actual living? What does the future hold in store?

For thousands of years many artists have either reflected on current situations in their work or created alternate worlds which comment on the present or, through their own fantastical narratives, hint at how the future will unfold. The TREX exhibition Come What May features the work of three artists who, through a focus on fantasy and imagination in their creative endeavors, reflect on the world as they find it or create new worlds which envision a different course for the human race.

Despite the chaos of these present times, Edmonton artists Brandon Bilhete and Byron McBride are optomistic concerning what the future may bring. Though he populates his works with demons and scenes of destruction, Bilhete's focus is on angels and saints overcoming obstacles. While his works do not present answers to the pressing questions of the present age, they do demonstrate his belief that there is 'light at the end of the tunnel'. Mcbride, meanwhile, reflects upon the sense of isolation everyone has experienced over the past two years and the increasing impact media and other forms of technology have on our lives. Choosing to put a positive spin on these situations, McBride posits a future where people will shed the things they do not need;

enjoy their spaces and selective social groups; and focus on actual rather than manufactured happiness. Finally, as described by Calgary artist Gary McMillan, we are all on a continual journey into the future and, as an artist, he is always looking for new imaginary places to observe in order to think about how the world may transform itself. Like Brandon Bilhete, however, McMillan does not attempt to foretell the future. Rather, his paintings are rife with ambiguity, reflecting present uncertainties. While McMillan wants his paintings to have a positive impact, the images are also slightly 'off-kilter', leaving the viewer questioning what is actually going on. As expressed by the artist:

All my painted creatures form a microcosm of uncertainty resting within the familiar. That is exactly what the future is. Questions always.

It is an aspect of human nature to want to know the future, especially in times of difficulty and uncertainty. This second decade of the 21st century definitely qualifies as such a time with many wondering when, or if, the pandemic will end and what effect these years will have on society. The exhibition Come What May features the work of artists who contemplate the present and ponder the questions which it presents.

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Trinity 1, 2022
Mixed media on panel
24 inches x 36 inches
Collection of the artist

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Trinity 2, 2022
Mixed media on panel
24 inches x 36 inches
Collection of the artist

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Trinity 3, 2022
Mixed media on panel
24 inches x 36 inches
Collection of the artist

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Overcome, 2022
Mixed media on panel
20 inches x 24 inches
Collection of the artist

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Looking for Love, 2022
Mixed media on panel
20 inches x 24 inches
Collection of the artist

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Untitled, 2022
Mixed media on skate board
8 inches x 31 1/4 inches
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
Home Delivery, 2021
Acrylic on panel
51 cm x 41 cm
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
The Reporting, 2021
Acrylic on panel
62 cm x 46 cm
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
In the Waterlilies (WiFi Palace), 2021
Acrylic on panel
62 cm x 46 cm
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
Work from Home, 2021
Acrylic on panel
51 cm x 41 cm
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
Sunset in the Park, 2022
Acrylic on panel
90 cm x 60 cm
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
Reclamation, 2022
Conté on paper
65 cm x 50 cm
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Bloostig, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
16 inches x 20 inches
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Kiwakawii, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
16 inches x 20 inches
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Paerox, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
16 inches x 20 inches
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Piroffa, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
16 inches x 20 inches
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Samadaj, 2021
acrylic on masonite
12 inches x 16 inches
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Shimish, 2021
acrylic on masonite
16 inches x 20 inches
Collection of the artist

Total Works:

18 framed 2D works

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Trinity 1, 2022
Mixed media on panel
Collection of the artist

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Trinity 2, 2022
Mixed media on panel
Collection of the artist

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Trinity 3, 2022
Mixed media on panel
Collection of the artist

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Overcome, 2022
Mixed media on panel
Collection of the artist

Visual Inventory - Images

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Looking for Love, 2022
Mixed media on panel
Collection of the artist

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Untitled, 2022
Mixed media on skateboard
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
Home Delivery, 2021
Acrylic on panel
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
In the Waterlilies (WiFi Palace), 2021
Acrylic on panel
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
Sunset in the Park, 2022
Acrylic on panel
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
The Reporting, 2021
Acrylic on panel
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
Reclamation, 2022
Conté on paper
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride
Work from Home, 2021
Acrylic on panel
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Samadaj, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Bloostig, 2021
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Gary McMillan
Piroffa, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Kiwakawii, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Paerox, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan
Shimish, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the artist

Talking Art

Byron McBride
In the Waterlilies (WiFi Palace), 2021
Acrylic on panel
Collection of the artist

CONTENTS:

Art Curriculum Connections

Elementary Art Program
LEVEL ONE (Grades 1 and 2)

REFLECTION
Component 1 ANALYSIS: Students will notice commonalities within classes of natural objects or forms.

Concepts
A. Natural forms have common physical attributes according to the class in which they belong.
C. Natural forms have different surface qualities in colour, texture and tone.
D. Natural forms display patterns and make patterns.

Component 3 APPRECIATION: Students will interpret artworks literally.

Concepts
C. An artwork tells something about its subject matter and the artist who made it.
D. Colour variation is built on three basic colours.
E. Tints and shades of colours or hues affect the contrast of a composition.
F. All aspects of an artwork contribute to the story it tells.

DEPICTION
Component 4 MAIN FORMS AND PROPORTIONS: Students will learn the shapes of things as well as develop decorative styles.

Concepts
A. All shapes can be reduced to basic shapes.
B. Shapes can be depicted as organic or geometric.
D. Animals and plants can be represented in terms of their proportions.

Component 5 ACTIONS AND VIEWPOINTS: Students will increase the range of actions and viewpoints depicted.

Concepts
A. Movement of figures and objects can be shown in different ways.
C. Forms can be overlapping to show depth or distance.

Component 6 QUALITIES AND DETAILS: Students will represent surface qualities of objects and forms.

Concepts
A. Texture is a surface quality that can be captured by rubbings or markings.
B. Textures form patterns.
C. Primary colours can be mixed to produce new hues.
D. Colour can be lightened to make tints or darkened to make shades.
E. Images are stronger when contrasts of light and dark are used.

F. Details enrich forms.

COMPOSITION
Component 7 EMPHASIS: Students will create emphasis based on personal choices.

Concepts
A. An active, interesting part of a theme can become the main part of a composition.
C. Contrast subject matter with the ground for emphasis.

Component 8 UNITY: Students will create unity through density and rhythm.

Concepts
A. Families of shapes, and shapes inside or beside shapes, create harmony.
B. Overlapping forms help to unify a composition.
C. Repetition of qualities such as colour, texture and tone produce rhythm and balance.

EXPRESSION
Component 10 (i) PURPOSE 1: Students will record or document activities, people and discoveries.
                    PURPOSE 2: Students will illustrate or tell a story.

Concepts
A. A narrative can be retold or interpreted visually.
B. An original story can be created visually.

                    PURPOSE 4: Students will express a feeling or a message.

Concepts
A. Feelings and moods can be interpreted visually.
B. Specific messages, beliefs and interests can be interpreted visually, or symbolized.

                    PURPOSE 5: Students will create an original composition, object or space based on supplied motivation.

Concepts
A. Outside stimulation from sources such as music, literature, photographs, film, creative movement, drama, television and computers can be interpreted visually.

Component 10 (ii) SUBJECT MATTER: Students will develop themes, with an emphasis on personal concerns, based on:

A. Plants and animals
B. Environment and places
C. Manufactured or human-made things
D. Fantasy
E. People

Art Curriculum Connections

LEVEL TWO (Grades 3 and 4)

REFLECTION
Component 1 ANALYSIS; Students will make distinctions within classes of natural objects or forms.

Concepts

A. Each class of natural forms has distinguishing characteristics.
B. Natural forms are related functionally to their environment.
D. Environments are altered by natural forces.
E. Change in natural forms occurs over time.

Component 3 APPRECIATION: Students will interpret artworks by examining their context and less visible characteristics.

Concepts

A. Contextual information (geographical, historical, biographical, cultural) may be needed to understand works of art.
B. Artistic style is largely the product of an age.
D. Our associations influence the way we experience a work of art.
F. Art serves societal as well as personal needs.

DEPICTION
Component 4 MAIN FORMS AND PROPORTIONS: Students will perfect forms and develop more realistic treatments.

Concepts

A. Shapes can suggest movement or stability.
C. Images can be portrayed in varying degrees of realism.
D. Internal as well as external proportions can be depicted.
E. Landscapes can show middle ground, background and foreground.
F. Size variations among objects give the illusion of depth.

Component 6 QUALITIES AND DETAILS; Students will refine surface qualities of objects and forms.

Concepts

A. Texture can be represented from a range of different studio techniques.
B. Colour can be made to appear dull or bright.
C. Gradations of tone are useful to show depth or the effect of light on objects.
D. By increasing details in the foreground the illusion of depth and reality can be enhanced.

Art Curriculum Connections

COMPOSITION
Component 7 EMPHASIS: Students will create emphasis by the treatment of forms and qualities.

Concepts

A. The centre of interest can be made prominent by contrasting its size, shape, colour or texture from the other parts of the composition.
C. Details, accents and outlines will enhance the dominant area or thing.

Component 8 UNITY: Students will create unity by interrelating the parts of a composition.

Concepts

A. The parts can be arranged so that movement in the picture space leads the eye around and not out of the picture area.
C. Every major area of a composition should be interesting in itself.

EXPRESSION
Component 10 (i) PURPOSE 1: Students will record or document activities, people and discoveries.

Concepts

A. Everyday activities can be documented visually.
C. Family groups and people relationships can be recorded visually.
D. Knowledge gained from study or experimentation can be recorded visually.

PURPOSE 2: Students will illustrate or tell a story

PURPOSE 4: Students will express a feeling or a message

PURPOSE 5: Students will create an original composition, object or space based on supplied motivation

Component 10 (ii) SUBJECT MATTER: Students will develop themes, with an emphasis on social concerns.

Art Curriculum Connections

LEVEL THREE (Grades 5 and 6)
Component 3 APPRECIATION: Students will interpret artworks for their symbolic meaning.

Concepts

A. Artistic style affects the emotional impact of an artwork.
B. An artwork can be analyzed for the meaning of its visible components and their inter-relationships.
C. Artworks contain symbolic representations of a subject or theme.
D. Artworks can be appreciated at many different levels, literal and symbolic.

DEPICTION
Component 4 MAIN FORMS AND PROPORTIONS: Students will modify forms by abstraction, distortion and other transformations.

Concepts

A. The direction of shapes determines the static or dynamic quality of the work.
B. Shapes can be enhanced with complexities, embedded or extended forms.
C. The metamorphosis and transformation of shapes can be depicted, one shape becomes another.
E. Shapes can be abstracted or reduced to their essence.
F. Shapes can be distorted for special reasons.

Component 6 QUALITIES AND DETAILS; Students will employ surface qualities for specific effects.

Concepts

A. Colour harmonies affect the mood and feeling of the viewer.
B. Tonal interchanges enhance a work.
C. Distinguishing characteristics of things can be portrayed vividly or subtly.

COMPOSITION
Component 8 UNITY: Students will create unity by integrating the parts of a composition into the whole.

Concepts

B. Foreground to background movement keeps the interest within a composition.
C. Transitions of colour, texture or tone relate the parts of a composition to a unified whole.
D. Attention should be given to well-distributed negative space, as well as to the balance of positive forms.
E. Interesting negative space complements and binds the positive areas into an harmonious whole.

EXPRESSION
Component 10 (i) PURPOSE 1: Students will record or document activities, people and discoveries.

Concepts

E/ National and international events can be recorded visually.

PURPOSE 2: Students will illustrate or tell a story.

PURPOSE 4: Students will express a feeling or a message.

PURPOSE 5: Students will create an original composition, object or space based on supplied motivation.

Component 10 (ii) SUBJECT MATTER: Students will develop themes, with an emphasis on global awareness, based on:

B: Environments and places
C. Manufactured or human-made things
D. Fantasy
E. People

Cross Curriculum Connections

This exhibition is an excellent source for using art as a means of investigating topics addressed in other subject areas. The theme of the exhibition, and the works within it, are especially relevant as a spring-board for addressing aspects of the Science, Language Arts and Social Studies program of studies. The following is an overview of cross-curricular connections which may be addressed through viewing and discussing the exhibition.

K-9 LANGUAGE ARTS

K-Grade 2

- draw, record or tell about own ideas and experiences
- talk about and explain the meaning of own pictures and print
- experiment with sounds, colours, print and pictures to express ideas and feelings
- use words and pictures to add sensory detail

1.1 Discover and Explore

- Students will listen, read, write, view and represent to explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences

2.1

- Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts

2.2 Students will

- listen and view attentively
- relate aspects of oral, print and other media texts to personal feelings and experiences

2.3 Understand Forms, Elements, Techniques

Students will
- discuss ways that visual images convey meaning in print and other media texts

LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE 6

Students will
- observe and discuss aspects of human nature revealed in oral, print and other media texts

LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE 7-9

Students will
- discuss how techniques, such as colour, shape, composition, suspense are used to communicate meaning and enhance effects in oral, print and other media texts

- explore surprising and playful uses of language and visuals in popular culture....explain ways in which imagery and figurative language, such as similes and metaphors, convey meaning and create a dominant impression, mood and tone
- experiment with figurative language, illustrations and video effects to create visual images, provide emphasis, or express emotion

ENGLISH GRADES 10-12

Viewing
 - Appreciation and understanding of a visual message requires an understanding of purpose
- elements in and structure of the image strongly influence the total effect of the communication
- discuss emotions, facts and opinions expressed visually
- recognize that visual messages may employ imagery, mood, irony, satire, tone, symbolism, humour
- appreciate that visual media make use of stylistic devices and relate this knowledge to the use of stylistic devices in literature

ELEMENTARY SCIENCE

1–5 Students will identify and evaluate methods for creating colour and for applying colours to different materials.
i. Identify colours in a variety of natural and manufactured objects
ii. Compare and contrast colours, using terms such as lighter than, darker than, more blue, brighter than
iii. Order a group of coloured objects, based on a given colour criterion
iv. Predict and describe changes in colour that result from the mixing of primary colours and from mixing a primary colour with white or with black

Artist Biographies/Statements

Brandon Mario Bilhete

Artist Biography

I was staring at the piled off-blue carpet of my office floor at the financial software conglomerate that I worked at, when I realized that I had to immerse myself in my artistic proclivities or else be snuffed out by the dull drone of small talk and endless reams of spreadsheets. My subsequent 7 year long career as a composite visual artist has been punctuated by various gallery and found-space exhibits, as well as the international collection of my work. I have volunteered extensively as an art educator at various schools and after-class programs, I have also held a position as an art preparator at the Art Gallery of Alberta, preceded by that as the Art Rental and Sales assistant. Both afforded me invaluable knowledge in the technical aspects of art preservation, cataloguing, installation, as well as the creation of exhibits from inception to completion. Currently I am exploring the world of digital 3D mediums as well as traditional and digital collage art-pieces.

Artist Statement

My work explores the dynamic and complicated relationship between popular culture and fine art. I reproduce familiar characters and reintroduce them in a new, juxtaposed light. Touching on subjects of addiction, depression and lost innocence, I use the perceived lightness of classic cartoon characters and angelic creatures to contrast and accentuate these heavier themes. Growing up in the inner city, my style is heavily influenced by graffiti and street art. My canvas is a culmination of the images I see today and the images that I saw while growing up. While generally working on various pieces concurrently, I use a variety of mixed media presented in multiple layers. The goal is to engage the viewer, bring the urban landscape to the gallery space and showcase how everyone is a product of their environment.

Byron McBride

Artist Biography

Growing up with dyslexia, Byron had a unique perspective on life that eventually led him to Art. Unable to fully participate in a world of letters and numbers, drawing - and later painting - would allow him to understand the world and partake of it. Inspired by the works of Escher, the Group of Seven, Durer, and Michelangelo, Byron would develop a distinctive style before attending the University of Alberta Art and Design program. Since graduating, Byron has gone on to create everything from portraits to murals to stage sets for plays. More recently, Byron's work has become concerned with the stories that his paintings tell. Though his work has always had a strong narrative, the idea of the connectivity of Art and stories has become a major theme in his paintings.

Artist Statement

The basis of a good work of Art is one that engages the viewer so completely that they desire to make it their own. Not necessarily to possess it, but to understand it as fully as the Artist

themselves. When the viewer looks at a piece and cannot help but construct a story around what they are looking at, the Artist has truly affected the audience and given them an experience. That is the goal for my work: to tell the viewer a story they had no idea they knew.

Gary McMillan

Artist Biography

Gary McMillan is a Canadian artist who has been actively painting and exhibiting since 1980. He works in a wide range of painting media and has explored many genres including landscape, still life, portraiture, figure and abstraction. This wide experience has led him to combine subject matter and various techniques in order to create kaleidoscopic painted concoctions full of mischievous fun and whimsy.

" I started drawing as a child and never looked back. I tried to draw everything I saw and did the same when I became serious about painting as a teen. In the end, I could never satisfy myself with any one style or subject matter. I would cycle from one to the other. I still do that now and again; to paint a landscape or a stand-alone portrait. It's like going back to my roots and a way to keep improving my skill in an incisive way. In my work of the last ten years, I feel like I finally came to maturity. I feel sometimes like I am wielding a brush like an orchestra conductor – a landscape bass here with a treble note of exotic animals thrown in over there, followed by a reverberation of abstraction. In this way I can paint all of the things I like and also develop ideas about history, culture and the environment."

Gary studied science and then fine art at the University of Calgary in the early 1980s. He rounded out his art education with a Diploma With Distinction at the Alberta College of Art in 1991. He has since shown in a variety of galleries in Western Canada with many solo and group shows to his credit. He currently exhibits with Masters Gallery in Calgary.

"The world is a lot stranger than you think. You can also think of a much stranger world than you can see." That is what I just told myself as I began to write this. It is also a maxim I have put into practice as an artist since about 2010. But why only since then, you ask? What about all the other fifty or so years before that? Well, the truth is, I am a rather pragmatic fellow, and making a whole lot of large cumbersome paintings of bizarre images that seemed to have little chance of going anywhere around where I lived seemed crazy. So for years I enjoyed painting traditional landscapes and portraits; and for many years I didn't paint anything at all. Then in 2010 I had the thought that going a little crazy wasn't crazy at all. In fact, it would be crazy not to paint the most fun, bizarre, engaging and exciting images I could come up with. I had done that during my stint in art school at the Alberta College of Art from 1989 to 1991. I had gone there as a mature student just for the fun of it and made a lot of "out there" stuff. But then I had gone back to being pragmatic when I left. That is, until 2010. That's when I took the lid off the well to my artist's imagination.

It is an interesting process to do such a thing. Strange things come out and as soon as they are seen, they get lassoed and put in a corral with all the other varmints. Then they all get a looking at and the best ones get turned into paintings and the rest of them are turned out to

pasture. (Please excuse the cowboy metaphor, but I live in Calgary, home of the Stampede.) Of course, once I get a painting I ask myself, "but what does it mean, what's it about." That's when I just make more of them until I have a whole herd of paintings milling about. When I ask the same question then, I get a better answer. A herd of anything has its own meaning because it takes up a lot of space, and can trample you if you get in the way. But mostly, when you have a bunch of paintings that are similar in some way, a conversation of grunts and snorts begins between the herd and the wrangler. As the wrangler, I start thinking about how the images relate to the world in terms of history, culture or the realm of ideas. Connections are made and meaning is formed. That's when, and more importantly why, I will write about the paintings. It is all about the creation of meaning. Things come first and meaning comes later.

Artist Statement

Paintings Specific for TREX

There are arguably two ways one can experience a world which is unfamiliar; either travel to a strange place or travel to a strange time. Although some of us have the experience of moving away to somewhere exotic all of us, without exception, can always rely on the second option. Namely, every one of us is on a continual journey into the future.

An assimilation of the nonsensical into a growing body of the sensible is what is called learning. This is the process by which a sentient being moves through time. A cognitive structure of reality is created through experience which allows one to feel safe. It is quite normal to project past experience onto unfamiliar experience in order to understand it. It is disorienting when this isn't easy, and it is highly distressing when it isn't possible.

Though the future doesn't normally come in huge terrifying leaps, it is certainly fun to imagine a plunge into deep time, to be set down in an alien world of the future. As an artist, I am always looking for new imaginary places to observe in order to think about how the world may transform itself. I like to think of the viewer looking at my work in the same way, willing to venture into these places of mine, where there are natural forms and situations that are unfamiliar. In my paintings, the color of everything is strange but beautiful, and the way the presented natural forms fit into the local ecology is a mystery. The places are safe so that even as the viewer is a little uncertain, they are wonderstruck and are eager to probe deeper into unknown territory.

Many people think of the future in terms of technology. In my paintings, I am imagining technology which has transformed itself out of existence, which has become embedded into the biology of living things. Perhaps it is a utopia built upon forgotten knowledge. Perhaps it is simply nature asserting its slow change and assimilating all of the past into a seamless organic web. In any case, I hope you enjoy my visions of an alternate world which may be unfolding, or which has already come into being… far, far away.

Artist Biographies/Statements

General Statement

I create paintings in series, with each body of work exploring a particular set of themes. It may take a couple of years or as little as a few weeks before I am ready to move on to a different constellation of ideas. A major set of work usually provides the stimulus for the next body of paintings. Occasionally, I may follow a whim and produce a group of paintings that seem to bear no immediate relation to preceding work. Yet my preoccupations with the human form, history and landscape link all of my work together into a recognizable if varied oeuvre.

I love the look of old master's paintings, and yet they aren't often about anything interesting to me. How they 'look' is usually the content that appeals to me. I try to make my own paintings visually exciting to look at and so I don't hesitate to dip into all styles and genres, but to keep my interest, a good painting needs to go beyond just pleasing the eye. Lots of images can be attractive and interesting, but it is worthwhile to only explore those which arise from that deep well of the unconscious imagination. In that way, the unfamiliar is strangely recognizable and engenders a spirit of uneasy but beautiful surprise.

Visually, I'm drawn to color and contrast. I often imagine images with shimmering jewel tones interspersed with patches of inky black, grey and snowy white. Thematically, I'm inspired by the figure and by ideas of play and mischief. The contrast between the nice and the not so nice informs much of my work, but rather than presenting a harsh vision of the world, I prefer nuanced misdirection and humor when dealing with unpleasantness. My choice of what I wish to show and how explicitly I show it constitute, in the end, seemingly benign settings of bright tonality and reassuring levity in which ideas can take shape.

Instagram: @garymcmillanart

Brandon Mario Bilhete

Brandon Bilhete was born and raised in north Edmonton and has lived in the city all his life. Raised in an artistic environment – his father is a dancer while his mother was an artist - Bilhete has always been interested in art and states that his parents tell stories of him drawing in his crib. Bilhete's interest in art continued throughout all his schooling and he indicates that...

…the only thing that saved me from being bullied (in school) was drawing. I was bad at everything in school except drawing; I'd draw things for people, and the bigger kids would protect me.

While Bilhete enjoyed art, his experiences in High School art classes were not positive and so, after High School, he went a different direction in pursuing a career. At the age of 26, however, he decided to return to school and attended Edmonton Digital Arts College where he focused on digital illustration. Around the same time, he received employment with the Art Gallery of Alberta and began to immerse himself in Edmonton's art community and concentrate more fully on his art practice.

Bilhete's art practice focuses on figurative work with a heavy emphasis on illustration. Bilhete considers himself a 'mixed-media guy' and uses ink, collage, aerosol paint and graffiti to create his pieces. As an artist he hopes to make viewers 'feel something': to really look at his work and feel some sort of emotion, no matter what that may be.

Bilhete is very interested in graffiti and street art and integrates this aesthetic into his drawings and collage works. As expressed by the artist

I grew up in the inner city and saw alot of graffiti work and so was influenced by it and I like to bring that along with me.

He also enjoys blurring the lines between what is beautiful and what is 'ugly' and likes the contrast between the pristene nature of the gallery world compared to street art.

In his work Bilhete also makes use of alot of religious imagery. This interest is both personal and derives from his studies in art history. He grew up a devout Catholic and so was surrounded by Christian images and finds something both macabre and beautiufl about them. He also relates that as he grew older and became interested in art, he discovered that many of the European masters he admires invesitgated religious imagery in their own work. Finally, through his interests in the occult and esoteric mystery schools, he became fascinated in how stories were hidden and told symbolically. More than being an aesthetic element, however, the graffiti and symbols Bilhete uses in his work also serve a formal function, keeping the viewer's eye moving throughout a piece and hopefully holding their attention beyond a passing glance.

Bilhete's collage and mixed media works in the exhibition Come What May make use of religious imagery and graffiti to comment on contemporary concerns. Recognizing the current bleakness

caused by the COVID pandemic and the present state of world affairs, Bilhete populates his 'canvases' with demons and destruction. Despite the 'chaos' displayed, however, the focus of each piece is on the angels or saints as evidenced by their size and placement. Also, while the artist uses an overall dark colour pallette, the scattered flowers and bright colours splashed across the 'canvas' provide contrast and illuminate the darkness. As expressed by Bilhete, while he acknowledges contemporary troubles, the angels and saints are shown overcoming obstacles and the scenes are all about there being 'light at the end of the tunnel'.

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Overcome, 2022
Mixed media on panel
Collection of the artist

Byron McBride

Byron McBride was born and raised in Edmonton and became interested in art while a young child. As he relates, he was diagnosed with dyslexia in elementary school which made school quite difficult and so he spent much of his time drawing and doodling. Drawing, for McBride, was an escape, a means of therapy, and a way of reconciling what he could take in and understand. Despite this interest, however, he did not begin practicing art until after he finished high school. He began his artistic practice by taking some art classes at the University of Alberta Faculty of Extension and then entered the Fine Arts Department at the University and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in 2000.

Prior to attending University McBride focused on drawing and working with tone. At this time he was interested in architectural drawings. His university studies introduced him to painting and working with colour which, as he expresses,..

...pushed my work forward. I didn't feel my drawings were 'finished' whereas colour allows me to 'bring an idea home'.

For McBride, painting allowed for more naturalistic expressions and led him to working with more naturalistic landscapes.

Since graduating from University, McBride has been constantly working on his art practice and building his repertoire. After his formal studies he began to look at artists such as Francisco Goya and Jacques Louis David and he began to try and capture or express emotions in a space and create environments which tell a story. This has allowed him to bring in figurative elements to his work and his aim at present is to make the spaces he creates look lived in and loved;

...to make the space look like a real space and not just something I've made up.

Through his art work Byron McBride wants the viewer to tell or make their own story. As he describes his practice:

I'm providing the building blocks and want the viewers to create their own stories. (In my work) it's not just my story; it becomes the viewers as well and I've embraced this.

For his works in the exhibition Come What May McBride is concerned with the sense of isolation people have had during the COVID 19 pandemic and how people have been forced to interact and what that will mean going forward; re-evaluating how we interact and what we interact with. Seeing things in an optimistic light, McBride states that 'we' are looking towards new ways of doing things and opportunities to rebuild and not go back to the old 'normal'. As stated by the artist:

The pandemic definitely shook things up and we have an actual opportunity to do things differently.

McBride chooses to believe that, in the future, the world will be a happier place and people will shed the things they do not need; enjoy their spaces and selective social groups; and focus on actual rather than manufactured happiness.

Byron McBride
Home Delivery, 2021
Acrylic on panel
Collection of the artist

Gary McMillan

Gary McMillan was born in Germany but was raised and currently lives in Calgary. He was not raised in an art environment so finding his way in the art world was 'instinctive'. While he relates that he never saw 'real' art growing up, he did see photos of drawings and paintings and was *...wonderstruck by how real things could be rendered into realistic images*. McMillan's love of art began with these images and in high school he focused on art, math and science. In his high school art studies he focused on realism but was also interested in whimsy and sometimes added whimsical aspects to his work.

After high school McMillan went to university, initially planning to study science. Finding himself 'bogged down in the humanities', however, he switched to Fine Arts. This move also proved disappointing, however, as he was not interested in the modernist approach to art making and did not bond with his instructors so he ended up dropping out of this program as well. While McMillan describes his university experience as a 'double fail', he also states that it taught him to follow his own independent course and allowed him to remain true to his artistic vision. Later he attended the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary (ACAD) as a mature student 'just for fun'. At ACAD he majored in painting and print making and did all sorts of things which really opened up his imagination and he graduated with honors.

After school McMillan returned to painting landscapes but his interest in this slowly faded and he quit painting for a while. In 2010, however, he returned to painting and decided to give his imagination free rein. As he states

A painting has to be 'charming enough' or intriguing for me to finish it. I have to be challenged by what I'm painting. There has to be some narrative/story or questioning that I'm 'poking at'.

Upon moving away from strict landscape painting, McMillan spent a few years painting large collage-type works on canvas featuring landscapes, figures, flowers and food. These paintings were grounded in real world objects and eventually he wanted to push the whimsy further and so started creating images 'out of thin air', an interest he has continued to the present. As described by the artist:

I am painting a lot of whimsical science fiction type images (at present). *They are like speculative alternate worlds. They allow me to explore intellectual interests in a rather vague and unguided way. I also like to come up with new arrangements of colour and composition which are not constrained by the limits of pure observation.*

As described by McMillan, the world is built on uncertainties and as humans we are always trying to find solutions. In his paintings there is always a sense of ambiguity in the works which reflects this. While his paintings present 'fun creatures', there is a deeper level to them and the viewer is always questioning what these 'creatures' are up to.

Artist Interviews

Each time I plan a painting, I want to entice myself into an imaginary world of paint and images which are unfamiliar, yet still elicit questions with regard to the real world. I want to give my viewers an experience of pleasure and wonder mixed with a vague disquiet that the world we live in can never be comfortably known. I am trying to represent the actual world through a very indirect analogy. Each painting is a distillation of my feelings about personal volition, ecology and the ethics underlying any situation. I want each image to tickle my intellect and satisfy my aesthetic yearning.

According to the artist, existence is beautiful and terrifying, tragic and enchanting all at the same time. His paintings aim to explore these contradictions. For the most part he wants his paintings to have a positive impact and to be life affirming and he wants the viewer to feel a sense of joyous pleasure when looking at the works. At the same time, however, the images are slightly 'off-kilter' and so the viewer is left with a sense of questioning or uncertainty about what is actually going on in the works. As expressed by McMillan concerning his works in the exhibition Come What May:

We are always travelling into the future. Landforms change; biology changes. Evolution is a constant, culturally and in nature. Yet all the inter-relationships persist. What is the overall flavor of the universe? Is it a plant, animal or mineral? Is technology part of nature? What if technology was gone, or subsumed into the natural order? There will always be an ethical dimension to our survival as a sentient species. Even as things change out from under us, we seek comfort and comfortable moral solutions. Are we ever able to read situations correctly, or is there ever a correct answer? All my painted creatures form a microcosm of uncertainty resting with the familiar. That is exactly what the future is. Questions always.

Gary McMillan
Bloostig, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the artist

Insights into Art: Byron McBride talks Art

Home Delivery

A year ago I was approached to participate in a show for TREX Region 2 called *Come What May.* I loved the title so much I was in, based on the name alone! Two other artists and myself were tasked with imagining what life after Covid would look like in our own unique artistic styles. A year ago I didn't think the idea would be too topical; surely Covid would be long over. As we enter the third year of the pandemic, however, it seems more apt than ever. I had too many ideas at first and bled fresh ideas faster than I could start painting them as new events occurred, particularly the rise of the variants. In the end, I worked on one piece at a time, which is very unusual for me, doing whatever aspect of this new life we live struck me as essentially and undeniably altered by the pandemic. The first thing I remember noticing was the unbelievable increase in home delivery. The apartment I was living in at the start of the pandemic was inundated with food deliveries to the point I started only using the back door of the building, so *Home Delivery* started the series. Of course deliveries from Amazon and the like increased wildly too. The sidewalks and roadways were all empty for the better part of the first year of Covid; traffic had reversed direction, with goods coming to us rather than us going to them. All roads led back to us, into our homes and apartments, hence the roads leading into the windows of the apartment building in the painting.

My pieces in this series will all lack people, as there are still so many empty streets and spaces and people are largely still so concerned about being out at this point. That fear seems like a thing that may be around for at least the first half of this decade. This is why I ended up leaving people out of my pieces altogether. We have been isolated and divided physically and ideologically and that has hurt us in ways that will take a long time to heal.

This period has been so bizarre and tumultuous for me personally and has seen my whole life turned on its head repeatedly. I have been fortunate to have had projects like this one to focus and occupy me through it all. This series has drained and renewed me; seen me at highs and lows unexpected. I have put more of myself into these pieces than I meant to or thought I could. I don't know that they are my best works; if not, they have shown me new parts of myself I did not yet know and must now start to delve into. If nothing else, I will come to my best artistically and hopefully personally because of all of this.

The Reporting

The second painting for the TREX Region 2 show *Come What May* that I finished was *The Reporting*. I initially called this piece *The Library* both for the obvious reason that it is in the form of a library, but also because this idea was almost for something else. The hints of archaic 5 1/4 inch floppy discs and the large books are left over from when this idea was to be part of a steampunk-themed city I was working on for another project. Eventually, I realized that the setting was more appropriate for this project and it was slightly reworked into this painting. The reports and updates on Covid took on a religious tone particularly during the first year of the pandemic. The public health figure in each region became synonymous with a priestess or priest of old standing high above the masses and imparting the wisdom the people so desperately craved, some modicum of insight into the unknowable force that had stopped their world from functioning. People would stop what they were doing and gather to listen to the infection and mortality rates, chart the spread of the disease that had immobilized humanity, listen to new

Insights into Art: Byron McBride talks Art continued

directives or advice to avoid the disease. This became the replacement for conversation about the weather: you would ask if the other person had seen the update, had any inside information, or knew anyone who had contracted the infection. The idea of the public health officer consulting ancient tomes in a library like a Byzantine scholar felt so right to me. So much research and processing of data had to occur for each one of these reports, that the reports themselves deserve to be in large, revered books like the ones in this painting.

I ended up leaving the pages in the large book blank, as writing in a painting has a tendency to dominate the viewers attention, even as illegible symbols. Covid is still so much a part of life that it constantly twists conversation back to itself. I hope there won't be anything else in your life that commands your attention and elicits the need for reporting like this virus has.

In the Waterlilies
In the Waterlilies (the WiFi Palace) was the third painting for TREX Region 2 that I finished, but it was the fourth one I started. *Sunset in the Park* came first but had a few issues, then I had some issues, then collectively we both did until it was the last painting I finished. The original title and current subtitle, *the WiFi Palace*, was to ensure people noticed that the palace itself and the walkways before it are in the shape of the WiFi symbol. I didn't want my clever, subtle planning to go unnoticed. In the end, and after a couple people told me they had no idea what the WiFi symbol looked like, I (partially) dropped the obvious name, and focused on the waterlilies that I was more interested in getting right. I spent a while considering redoing the composition to copy Monet's Waterlilies. That point of view didn't serve what I was trying to express, and I didn't want to draw unnecessary comparisons without a strong reason. I did spend a lot longer considering that idea than I would like to have as waterlilies in art make me think of Monet immediately.

In the Waterlilies was originally supposed to have people in boats sailing leisurely about, using the WiFi from the palace on phones and laptops but again, as we have all been so isolated by Covid, the internet has been our connection to the world while we stayed apart. The waterlilies themselves could be thought of as our self-contained universes floating individually in a shared space but kept separate by design: only united by the invisible waves of the Internet washing over us all keeping us informed, connected, entertained, and sane. The shape of the plants worked nicely for the metaphor, with their tiny walls stopping them from overlapping and forcing isolation. The only thing that would have made the metaphor better is if they had domes (like some restaurants used, which I think is brilliant and hope they keep) to contain each individual environment.

I think this is my favorite piece of the bunch, both because it came out so much better than I expected it to and because I didn't have a break down while working on it. *Sunset in the Park*, which I was hoping would become the focal point of my part of the exhibition, was never going to be as good as I expected it to be because of the pressure I was putting on it alone, and an artist does not always deal with that very well, we being our own worst critics. I think this painting might be the one that draws the most attention and focuses the series.

Insights into Art: Byron McBride talks Art continued

WFH

WFH (Work From Home) was a snap decision at a dark point. I couldn't decide on the last painting of the six to submit for *Come What May*. I had a glut of ideas, but many were months old at this point and my enthusiasm had disappeared. We were almost a year deeper into Covid, Omicron had emerged and things felt dire again. Honestly, it was not the best of times for me personally on top of that and the deadline for the show became very real and was approaching quicker than I was comfortable with.

I wanted to feel safe, I wanted my family and friends to be safe, and I needed a win to get back on track mentally, but all I could think of was stone buildings that I wanted to hide away in... which was sort of what people had been doing all this time wasn't it? Working from home to stay safe and isolated. It was a dyslexia induced leap of logic that makes me who I am, and it had been an essential part of the Covid experience. Also, it was so obvious I was a little mad at myself that it hadn't been the first painting but I didn't experience this style of work personally, only through anecdotes from friends and family. Again, no people. The square in the middle was to be full of people, and I nearly made an exception for this painting as I wanted to show an active space, but that was the opposite of what I was trying to show. The reason for wanting that activity was more to change the energy of the painting to what I was experiencing at the time. The serene calm of the painting was frustrating to look at with my life being as chaotic as it was at the time.

The central castle representing the office, the isolated towers peoples' homes where they working safely: all of which were connected by the internet. I wanted the individual towers to look like cells in monastic cloisters as there was something about what I heard about people working from home that made me compare it to the medieval monastic life. Living, working, listening to the reports on Covid (which I had firmly established as a religious experience at this point, helping me to make this connection) and, as most people were not going out much, made life for many people seem like the confined, directed lifestyle of a monk or nun a thousand years ago. I put old roll-top desks in the towers because they reminded me a bit of the desks that monks sat at to copy out books and documents and because my dad used one back in the day. As his health was failing at the time I wanted to add something personal like that. From talking to friends and family who worked from home, that sense of isolation was very real for them. Some became very concerned about going out or being around people, especially crowds, while others were starved for contact. I painted the clouds in small pieces to show the isolation and separation, in contrast to the large clouds of *Home Delivery*: no unity here. This was the most abstract concept for me as I was only isolated during the original lock down in Alberta and during a subsequent illness but drawing on that and imagining what years of that would feel like, it wasn't a stretch to get to this painting.

Insights into Art: Byron McBride talks Art continued

Sunset in the Park

This was the piece I put all my heart into: all the planning, all the energy I could muster over the last year, all my self into....only to watch it unravel and finally become a completely different painting. This was to be the focal point of my part in the exhibition, the piece that would unite the other paintings thematically and tie everything together. I started this painting in the summer of 2021 after a particularity beautiful sunset filled the sky. I hadn't settled on a sky for the painting yet and this sunset, both beautiful and apocalyptic, felt perfect for a piece that was suppose to represent a time of chaos and upheaval. In addition, in Edmonton anyway, we had had so many striking and beautiful sunsets that summer I wanted to commemorate them as they had made the summer so memorable and felt like a part of the pandemic experience.

Within a week I was sick of the painting and stopped painting for the rest of the summer. The composition was off, the original buildings felt wrong, the sky felt like too much...life was too much. In the fall I came back to painting but worked on a couple other projects before I finally came back to *Into the Waterlilies*. I considered replacing the painting in the show entirely as it still felt wrong months later. In the end, my own curiosity saved the painting; I wanted to know what all the blank spaces would look like and pulled the painting back out. I reworked the composition, reduced a lot of it, took out the flowerbeds that were supposed to alternate with sections of water, and put the painting away again for the rest of the year until well after *WFH* was done.

The focus was supposed to be the water-based park but the buildings closed in on what was supposed to be endless, open space even in the reworked composition. I fought the idea for a little while before realizing that that was the point: we were all inside. The outside was still there, endless and vast as always, but as much as it was certainly my mental health break everyday to walk in the river valley, we were collectively still mainly confined inside. That was how it always was: we work, we come home, we go outside when we can but that wasn't how it felt now; Covid was outside, it was risky and unsafe out there. Inside, we were safe. We were almost three years into this mindset, and it was second nature to most people. It was beautiful in nature, but you were more cautious being outside. This painting became that division in our minds, that compromise: nature was there therapeutic and marvelous, but inside was our safety in a way it hadn't been before.

I left the sunset until the very end, not sure how to paint it anymore as the summer was long over. I looked at all the pictures I had taken back in July, considering how I add a sky to this painting that was appropriate and still showed what that sunset looked like. The sunset needed to be heavily reworked and rethought into something I'd never done before to reflect this shift in thinking. I wanted the sky here to be as radically different as the ones in *Home Delivery* and *WFH* had been to each other. One night I finally gave up thinking and started painting. The sky was violent and brilliant. I think I captured what I felt looking at it, or what I felt looking back on it. Sharp clouds, at once beautiful and menacing that circled and swelled the whole evening until disappearing into the darkness of the night. This was 2021 for me: beautiful, terrifying, memorable, unexpected, brilliant. The whole year was best when I simply let it happen

Insights into Art: Byron McBride talks Art continued

without expectations, much like this painting.

Reclamation
Finally *Reclamation*, the last of the six pieces for *Come What May*. I had decided that one piece would be a drawing as I wanted an excuse to work on a finished conté drawing. I saved this piece until last for two reasons: First, I knew I could finish it quickly if I started to run out of time, and secondly, I hoped that it would be a peaceful and cathartic finish to the series. And it was. As 2022 started, I had bled myself dry emotionally and creatively finishing *Sunset in the Park*. One day, while I was trying to figure out the sky for that painting, I pulled out the rag paper I'd bought in April the year before, set it out on my drawing table, and started sketching out this drawing.

This was to be similar in idea to, but opposite from the painting, as it was only telling of the benefits of nature in the pandemic. As I said, I frequently had been walking in the river valley, drawing on nature to calm and balance myself. As soon as I started drawing, the idea of being away from the city and the pandemic filled me with a serenity I hadn't felt for a time. The animals coming into cities as people isolated at the start of Covid, the large old trees around my apartment, and simply because I like the idea of city built deep in a forest on and around the trees inspired me. The paper I chose was bright to bring to mind the light filtering through leaves, tinted as it reaches you. This is a place carpeted in fallen leaves and soft mosses. A place of quiet calm to escape the disquieting news and endless shows we watched to numb ourselves to the surreal events unfolding around us every day. This is our meditation, our baking, our Art, our walks: whatever quiet peaceful activities got us through Covid. This drawing is the reclamation of ourselves. Small walls still surround the houses, but they have large obvious openings, unlike *In the Waterlilies*. Out in nature there aren't arbitrary divisions and walls; you're free to walk and wander as you want. Taking time in nature has always been important but it felt like it became more so during Covid. I let almost one third of the drawing be the foliage of the large trees to ensure that the focus was on nature rather than on the built up town below. The idea of a larger town was appealing artistically but it wasn't the point of this drawing, so I scaled back the size of the town to a few buildings. I spent so much of the year walking through Whyte Avenue and Downtown Edmonton, both of which are areas with beautiful old trees. They constantly inspire me, just as much as the river valley here does, which is why I included only a few large trees rather than full, thick forest. The center of the city is my home; it's where I've lived for years and it's where I feel most comfortable and happy. It has been essential to my experience through the pandemic.

The Art of the Fantastic:
An Art Historical Survey

To become truly immortal a work of art must escape all human limits: logic and common sense will only interfere. But once these barriers are broken, it will enter the realm of childhood visions and dreams.
Giorgio de Chirico

Fantasy has been an integral part of art since its beginnings, but has been a particularly important aspect in the visual and literary arts of Europe and North America since the late 19th century. **Dependent on a state of mind more than any particular style, the one thing all artists of fantasy have in common is the belief that imagination, the 'inner eye', is more important than the outside world**. This 'inner eye', since the dawn of the 20th century, has been used to create works which are either formal and often playful in nature or works which, though their meaning may be ambiguous, make some comment on political and social realities and the artist's world.

Frank C. Paper
Falcon the Hunter, Russian Fairy Book, 1916

Fantasy art is rooted in mythology, folklore and religion and conveys the mystery of unseen forces and the mysteries of life. A mixture of imagination and direct observation of reality, fantasy art has been described as fanciful, unrealistic, fantastic, dreamy, wistful and full of rich imagery. While an important part of art since its beginnings, fantasy art has been particularly important in the art styles of mannerism, magic realism, romantic art, symbolism, surrealism and 'lowbrow' art.

Religious mythology and art about angels, demons, and gods can be found in Greek, Roman and Christian art (as well as the art of other cultures) but western culture did not embrace fantasy art as it is known until after wide-spread literacy and common access to books. Early works of fantasy were usually the result of narrative and illustrations for books or pulp fiction journals. At present fantasy art is extremely popular and artists explore narratives related to science fiction, surrealism, mythology, and imaginative and taboo themes.

The Art of the Fantastic:
An Art Historical Survey continued

Hieronymus Bosch, 1450-1516
The Garden of Delights, The Prado, Madrid

The first 'fantastic' artist is generally said to be Hieronymus Bosch. Bosch (1450-1516) was a Netherlandish painter who used fantastic imagery to illustrate moral and religious concepts and narratives. Bosch was a stern moralist who intended his pictures to be visual sermons, every detail packed with didactic meaning. His richest work, known as *The Garden of Delights*, is so full of weird and seemingly irrational imagery, however, that it has proved difficult to interpret and much of it remains unsolved.

A second artist whose works have been labeled 'fantastic' is the Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527-1593). Arcimboldo's 'bizarre' portraits, where the subject is composed of arrangements of fruits and vegetables, were re-discovered by the Surrealists of the early 20th century and had a profound influence on many of the artists in this group.

Giuseppe Arcimboldo, 1527-1593
Vertumnus, a portrait of Rudolf II
Skokloster Castle, Sweden

Other than the paintings of Bosch, Arcimboldo, and a very few other artists, the idea of fantasy in art, where the artists imagination played a central role in the composition and illustration of a narrative, received very little if any expression in the art produced in Europe during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. Major exceptions to this were the British artists John Henry Fuseli (1741-1825) William Blake (1757-1827) and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882). All three artists were influenced by the Romantic movement in the visual and literary arts but they brought to their work an imaginative force very different from the norm. Most artists at the time, whether following classical or

William Blake, 1757-1827
The Great Red Dragon and the Woman
Clothed with Sun, 1805

The Art of the Fantastic: An Art Historical Survey continued

Romantic styles, focused on events and people in the 'real' world. William Blake, on the other hand, embraced the imagination as 'the body of God' and created figures and vibrant compositions which often had little to do with the visible world and bore little resemblance to classical or High Renaissance styles and, according to art historians, Blake's mystical imagining was the earliest modern manifestation of fantasy in art.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1828-1882
The Girlhood of Mary Virgin, 1849

John Henry Fuseli, 1741-1825
Nightmare, 1781
Detroit Institute of Art

While the expression of 'fantasy' was an aspect of the Romantic movement, as seen in the works of Blake and Fuseli, it was not until the late 19th century that this side of Romanticism came to the fore with the birth of the **Symbolist** art movement.

Symbolism was a movement of French and Belgian origin in poetry and other arts. **The term Symbolism means the systematic use of symbols or pictorial conventions to express an allegorical meaning. An outgrowth of Romanticism, symbolism was largely a reaction against naturalism and realism in the arts which attempted to capture reality and to elevate the humble and ordinary over the ideal**. Symbolist artists became disatisfied with the Impressionist style and its relatively passive registration of optical sensation and believed that art should aim to capture more absolute truths which could only be accessed by indirect methods. In 1886 Jean Moréas published the Symbolist Manifesto in which he announced that symbolism was hostile to 'plain meanings, declamations, false sentimentality and matter-of-fact description' and that its goal instead was to to 'clothe the Ideal in a perceptible form':

In this art, scenes from nature, human activities, and all other real world phenomena will not be described for their own sake; here, they are perceptible surfaces created to represent their esoteric affinities with the primordial Ideals.
Symbolism - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism_(arts)

The Art of the Fantastic: An Art Historical Survey continued

Gustave Moreau, 1826-1898
Oedipus and the Sphinx

Symbolist artists turned away from social action and from the triumphs of science and technology and instead sought refuge in a dreamworld of beauty and elaborate and stylish artifice. As expressed by the Belgian poet Èmile Verhaeren:

I fly into a fury with myself...I love things that are absurd, useless, impossible, frantic, excessive, and intense, because they provoke me, because I feel them like thorns in my flesh.
Modern Art, Third Edition, pg. 35

In this quest, 'idealist' painters of the 1860s, such as Gustave Moreau, came back into favour. Moreau and fellow artists Puvis de Chavannes and Odilon Redon had been out of tune with the dominant Realist and Impressionist modes until the climate of art began to shift once more toward a painting of ideas rather than outward appearances.

Symbolist painters were a diverse group and the movement covered a huge geographical area including all of Europe, Russia, Mexico and the United States. While the artists involved followed no cohesive style, they all mined mythology and dream imagery for a visual language of the soul. These symbols, however, are not the familiar emblems of mainstream iconography but intensely personal, private, obscure and ambiguous. As a movement in art, Symbolism had a significant influence on Expressionism and Surrealism, two movements which descend directly from Symbolism proper.

Odilon Redon
Crying Spider, 1881

The Art of the Fantastic: An Art Historical Survey continued

The allure of the enigmatic, the shock appeal of the bizarre, and the disquieting character of hallucinatory visions in art sanctioned and inspired the work of the Dada and Surrealist artists of the early twentieth century.

The Dada movement developed during and after World War 1. Essentially a protest movement launched by Marcel Duchamp and other artists against the horrors of the industrial age which had led to WWI, Dada also embraced a sweeping summons to create a blank slate for art and presented serious creative options to artists. **The only law respected by Dadaists was that of chance and the only reality, that of their imaginations.** The emergence of explicit fantastic content in art after 1914 was also influenced by Freud's theories of psychoanalysis and the unconscious. Both Freud's ideas and the horror of WWI impelled artists to answer social violence with a violence internalized in imagery and technique and also produced a revolutionary attitude towards traditional aesthetics.

Marc Chagall, 1887-1885)
The Fiddle Player, 1912

Among artists whose work was extremely influential to the development of both Dada and specifically Surrealism were Henri Rousseau, Marc Chagall, and Georgio de Chirico. The French artist Henri Rousseau (1844-1910) is credited with introducing the idea of magic into art while the Russian painter and print-maker Marc Chagall (1887-1885), as described by André Breton, leader of the Surrealists, used metaphor '...not merely as a formal device but as a system of values' (Modern Art, pg. 165)

Henri Rousseau, 1844-1910
The Dream, 1910
Museum of Modern Art, New York

The Art of the Fantastic: An Art Historical Survey continued

Giorgio de Chirico, 1888-1978
The Red Tower, 1913

Perhaps the most important of these pre-surrealist artists was the Greek-Italian painter Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978). de Chirico created a fantastic world of authentic, troubling dream imagery which was supplementary to our familiar universe and captured the irremediable anxiety of the time. (Modern Art, Third Edition, pg. 165) Influenced by such antecedents as melancholy and romantic landscapes, de Chirico reintroduced anecdote, sentiment and descriptive techniques into his art. More importantly, a decade and more before the surrealists, he made painting an occasion for actualizing the dream process with baffling, illogical imagery and for exploring the 'troubling connection that exists between perspective and metaphysicis'. (Modern Art, Third Edition, pg. 166)

Although the dream is a very strange phenomenon and an inexplicable mystery, far more inexplicable is the mystery and aspect our minds confer on certain objects and aspects of life.
Giorgio de Chirico

Giorgio de Chirico, 1888-1978
The Song of Love, 1914
Museum of Modern Art
New York

In 1924, influenced by ideas first espoused by the Dada movement, and inspired by aspects of the fantastic and grotesque expressed in the works of artists such as Hieronymus Bosch, Fransisco Goya, Odilon Redon, Marc Chagall and Giorgio de Chirico, a group of Parisian artists founded Dada's successor, SURREALISM. Surrealism became the most widely disseminated and controversial aesthetic between the first and second world wars, seeking to expose the frontiers of experience and to broaden the logical and matter-of-fact view of reality by fusing it with instinctual, subconscious, and dream experience to achieve a 'super reality.'

The Art of the Fantastic: An Art Historical Survey continued

In 1924 the poet André Breton issued his First Surrealist Manifeso in which he adopted the basic premises of psychoanalysis and believed quite literally in the objective reality of the dream. **For Breton and his followers automatism, a technique first developed by the Dadaists, hallucinatory and irrational thought associations, and recollected dream images offered a means of liberating the psyche from its enslavement to reason**. The surrealists came to define their aim as 'pure psychic automatism...intended to express...the true process of thought...free from the exercise of reason and from any aesthetic or moral purpose.'
(H.W. Janson, History of Art, Second Edition, pg. 662)

While Surrealism descended from Dada, the surrealist artists differed from Dada in that the surrealists advocated the idea that ordinary and depicted expressions were vital whereas Dadaists rejected categories and labels. For the surrealists, however, the arrangement of elements must be open to the full range of imagination. Sigmund Freud's work with free association, dream analysis, and the unconscious was of great importance to the surrealists in developing methods to liberate imagination. **A second important idea was that 'one could combine, inside the same frame, elements not normally found together to produce illogical and startling effects'**. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrealism) The importance of dream images and strange juxtapositions of objects was eloquently expressed by André Breton in his definition of surrealism:

Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dreams, in the disinterested play of thought. (Modern Art, Third Edition, pg. 179)

Surrealism is destructive, but it destroys only what it considers to be shackles limiting our vision.
Salvador Dali

Salvador Dali, 1904-1989
The Persistence of Memory, 1931

The Art of the Fantastic: An Art Historical Survey continued

In 1924 the Spanish artist Salvador Dali (1904-1989) became a full-fledged member of the Surrealist movement. Along with the Belgian artist René Magritte (1898-1967), Dali made illusionistic techniques the dominant form of Surrealist painting. Both Dali and Magritte were experts in using illogical juxtapositions in conjunction with photo-realist painting techniques in order to give the illusion of objective reality to constructs of fantasy whose disturbing impressions were heightened by the contrast between the realistic treatment and the unreal subject matter. At their best, Dali's paintings encapsulated the anxieties, the obsessive eroticism, and the magic of vivid dream imagery. Magritte's intended goal, on the other hand, was to challenge observer's preconditioned perceptions of reality and force viewers to become hypersensitive to their surroundings.

René Magritte, 1898-1967
The Son of Man, 1964

René Magritte, 1898-1967
Time Transfixed

Enthusiasm for surrrealism diminished after the 1930s but the movement persisted in a minor sense after WWII. Its significance in 20th century aesthetics lies chiefly in its resurrection of the marvelous and exotic at a time when interest in these was in abeyance. Also, the surrealist ideas concerning the unconscious, automatism and dream imagery were embraced by American artists and movements such as Abstract Expressionism grew directly out of the meeting of American aritsts with European Surrealists self-exiled during World War II. Aspects of Dadaistic humor, revealed in the works of such artists as Robert Rauschenberg, also show the connections and, up until the emergence of Pop Art, Surrealism can be seen to have been the single most important influence on the sudden growth in American arts.

The Art of the Fantastic: An Art Historical Survey continued

Nigel Henderson
Wig Stall, Petticoat Lane, 1952
Collection of the Henderson Estate

While surrealism is most often associated with the visual arts of painting and drawing, many surrealist artists have embraced the possibilities to be found in photography for creating 'fantastical' and dream images.

Surrealism can best be described as an abstraction of reality. It is the stuff of dreams, nightmares, illusion, mystery, delusions and fantasy. Unlike artists associated with the Dada movement, Surrealist artists were not interested in escaping from reality; rather they sought a deeper, more heightened form of it. Photography, which was often thought to be concerned with the mere depiction of surfaces or with copying reality, allowed surrealist photographers to take 'reality' and photography's apparent objectivity, and transform these attributes to powerfully represent dreams, nightmares, and other aspects of the human psyche.

Surrealist photography takes many forms, most of which make great use of techniques of manipulation. One technique is that of photomontage. Photomontage is the process of combining multiple photographs into one image. This technique was one used early on in the history of photography and is a process that can easily be done in the present using layers in Photoshop or through cutting and pasting multiple images and then re-photographing or scanning to create a unified image.

Shane Golby
The Fruit of the Tree, 2011
Photomontage
Collection of the artist

The Art of the Fantastic: An Art Historical Survey continued

A second technique concerns the use of photograms. Photograms are negative-less prints done without the use of a camera. They are achieved by placing objects onto a piece of light sensitve paper and exposing the paper to light. The density and opacity, as well as the placement and layering of the objects will all bear on the outcome of the final image. Areas of the paper that have received no light appear white while those exposed through transparent or semi-transparent objects appear grey.

Some of the first known photographic images made were photograms. William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877) called these images photogenic drawings, which he made by placing leaves and other materials onto sensitized paper then leaving them outdoors on a sunny day to expose.

One type of photogram is that of **cyanotypes**. This process, characterized by blue prints, was brought to photography by Anna Atkins who is regarded as the first female photographer. From 1843 she produced *British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions,* the first book in history illustrated with photographs.

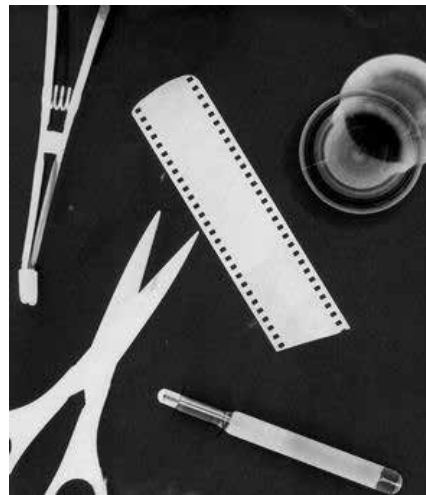Anna Atkins (1799-1871)
Algae, 1843

image by Man Ray

One of the most important Surrealist artists to make use of the photogram technique was Man Ray (1890-1976). His technique, which he called 'rayographs', included capitalizing on the stark and unexpected effects of negative imaging, unusual juxtapositions of identifiable objects within a single image, and moving objects as they were exposed.

The Art of the Fantastic: An Art Historical Survey continued

A third photographic technique used by Surrealist photographers is that of Double Exposure. This technique involves simply exposing the film negative twice in the camera without advancing the film forward. The first image taken will always fade back, due to exposure, as the negative is exposed for the second image. Neither image will be completely solid so the result is a faded ethereal double image. Digital cameras do not have the ability to double expose an image, but the results can be achieved by combining two digital images in Photoshop using layers.

Image by Henry Fox Talbot, 1800s
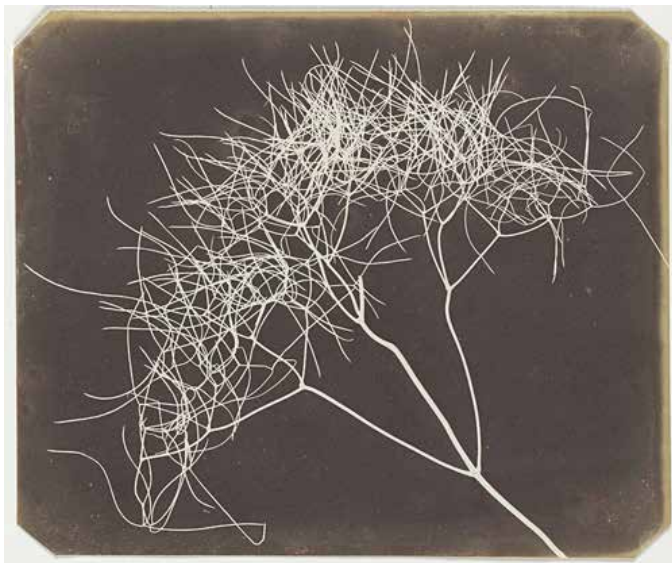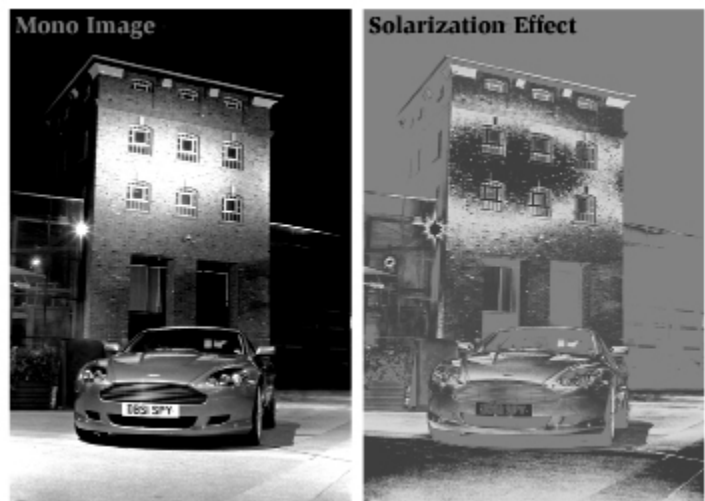
Solarisation, or the Sabattier effect, is another very popular method used by photographers. This is a phenomenon in photography in which the image recorded on a negative or on a photographic print is wholly or partially reversed in tone. Dark areas appear light or light areas appear dark. The solarization effect was already known to Jacques Louis Daguerre, 'inventor' of photography in 1839, and is one of the earliest known effects in photography.

The Art of the Fantastic: An Art Historical Survey continued

Staged photography has also been important for a number of Surrealist artists. Staged photography can involve a performance enacted before the camera, similar to the arrested dramas of 19th century *tableaux vivants* and *poses plastiques*, or the creation of elaborate arrangements of objects. In the first instance staged photography embraces studio portraiture and other more or less elaborate, peopled scenarios, directed or manipulated by the photographer.

Lucas Samaras, American, born Greece 1936 / *Photo-Transformation*, 1976 / Polaroid print, Image: 7.6 x 7.6 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles - © Lucas Samaras 99.XM.535

The tableau vivant combines the art forms of the stage with those of painting/photography and has been of interest to modern photographers. Tableau as a form of art photography began in the 1970s and 80s. The key characteristics of contemporary photographic tableau is that they are designed and produced for the wall, summoning a confrontational experience on the part of the spectator. To do so scale and size are very important if the pictures are to 'hold the wall'. The larger scale of such works makes the viewer stand back from the picture, thus creating a confrontational experience quite different from the conventional reception of photography which, until the 1970s, was often consumed in books or magazines. Such works must also be pictorial (beautiful) and take into consideration the instrinsic qualities of the camera (chance).

Suzy Lake
Pre-resolution using the Ordinances at Hand, 1984
Photograph on board
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta

Finally, as expressed in the photograph *Wig Stall* by Nigel Henderson, the conventions of documentary photography have been exploited by Surrealist artists. As seen in Henderson's work, chance juxtapositions of real situations or scenes, without any manipulation, can be used in the creation of a surreal art work.

Whatever the method used or effect achieved through photography, however, all surreal photographers share an interest in how the camera can simultaneously record everyday reality and probe beneath its surface to reveal new possibilities of meaning.

Story-telling and Narrative Art:
An Introduction

Story: 1/ narrative, account
2/ report, statement
syn: chronicle

Storyteller n: a teller of stories

Storytelling - adj. or noun

(The Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

According to most historians and psychologists, storytelling is one of the things that define and bind humanity, and human beings are perhaps the only animals that create and tell stories.

Storytelling is the conveying of events in words, images and sounds. Storytelling is a means for sharing and interpreting experiences and stories or narratives have been shared in every culture as a means of entertainment, education, cultural preservation and to instill moral values. Stories mirror human thought as humans think in narrative structures and most often remember facts in story form. Facts themselves can be understood as smaller versions of a larger story; thus storytelling can supplement analytical thinking.

John Everett Millais
The Boyhood of Raleigh, 1870

Stories are also effective educational tools because listeners become engaged and therefore remember. While the listener is engaged they are able to imagine new perspectives, inviting a transformative and empathetic experience. The history of storytelling demonstrates that stories come in a number of varieties: myths, legends, fairy tales, trickster stories, fables, ghost tales, hero stories, epic adventures, and explanatory tales. Crucial elements to all stories, however, are the elements of plot, characters, and narrative point of view.

While stories are most often told through oral traditions or through written forms, they have also been 'told' visually for thousands of years, at least since the time of the ancient Egyptians. Narrative art is art that tells a story, either as a moment in an ongoing story or as a sequence of events unfolding over time. Until the 20th century much of Western art has been narrative in nature, depicting stories from religion, myth and legend, history and literature.

Narratives occur in a space and unfold over time (they are diachronic). Pictures do not naturally lend themselves to telling stories as they are seen all at once (synchronic). As a result, artists choose how to portray the story, represent the space, and how to shape time within the artwork. Narrative art can thus be categorized into various types, also

Story-telling and Narrative Art:
An Introduction continued

known as modes or styles.

1/ Simultaneous Narrative: A simultaneous narrative is one that has very little discernible organization except to viewers acquainted with its purpose. It can focus on geometric or abstract designs as well as the placement or arrangement of items within the artwork. Such narratives concentrate on repeatable patterns and redundant systems with a focus on dualities. The interpretation of a simultaneous narrative is dependent on the reason for its creation or its creator who can interpret it as it was meant to be. Simultaneous narratives are common in cultures that are oral in nature rather than literate as they require human agency in order to be understood as originally intended.

Amphora by Exekias
Achilles kills Penthesilea
Ancient Greece

2/ Monoscenic Narrative: A monoscenic narrative is one that represents a single scene. There is no repetition of characters and there is only one action taking place. Under this definition most art could be considered narrative. However, **it is important to remember that Narrative Art tells a story and so, although only one scene may be represented, the scene must usually involve action or imply events occurring before or after what is portrayed.**

3/ Continuous Narrative: A continuous narrative is one which illustrates many scenes of narrative within a single frame. In this type of narrative, multiple actions and scenes are portrayed in a single visual field without any dividers. The sequence of events is defined through the reuse of the main character or characters and scene or phase changes in the narrative are indicted through the change in movement and state of the repeating characters. The Column of Trajan (right) is an example of a continuous narrative as events flow from one scene to another without any physical indicators such as vertical lines to divide actions or time periods.
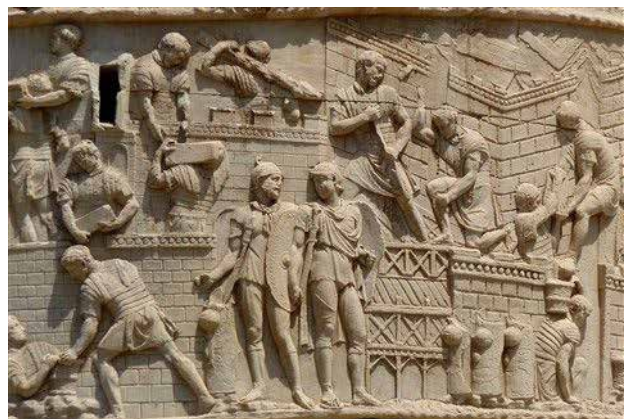
Trajan's Column, detail
Rome, Italy

Story-telling and Narrative Art:
An Introduction continued

4/ Synoptic Narrative: In this type of narrative a single scene is depicted in which character/s are portrayed multiple times to convey that multiple actions are taking place.
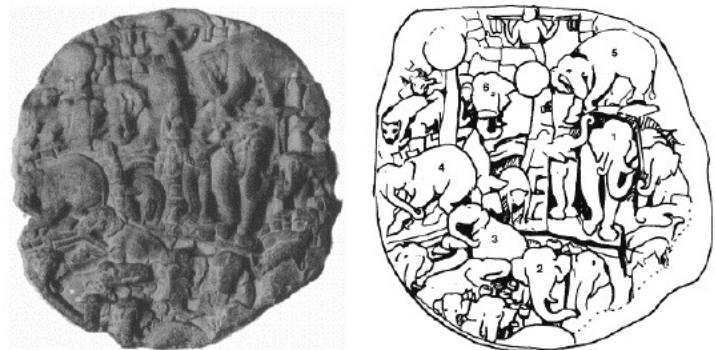
Budda's birth as the elephant Chaddanta

5/ Panoptic Narrative: Such narratives depict multiple scenes and actions without the repetition of characters. Actions may be in a sequence or represent simultaneous actions during an event.

6/ Progressive Narratives: These portray a single scene in which characters do not repeat. However, multiple actions are taking place to convey a passing of time in the narrative.

Rodolphe Toeptter Cryptogram

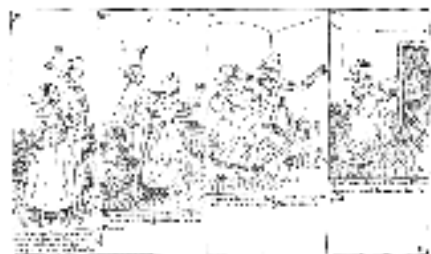**7/ Sequential Narrative:** A sequential narrative is similar to a continuos narrative but focuses on enframement to develop temporal development. Each scene and action is represented within its frame as a unit and each frame is a particular scene during a particular moment in time. This mode of narrative is used in comics and manga.

I**n summary, when an artist creates a narrative art piece he/she has a choice on how he/she wants the composition.** The story can be all in one simultaneous view; in sequential views such as comics; as one moment in the overall story; or shown through the use of symbols such as seen in pictographs. The actual story of the work itself can be about the subject matter; how the art was created; how the story is connected to the artist's cultural context; or be found in the response to the piece by those who view it.

Beginning in the Renaissance 'history painting' - paintings of events from biblical or classical history - acquired the highest status in visual art. By the nineteenth century paintings and sculptures which depicted not only great moments in history but also contemporary and domestic dramas were avidly collected by art patrons and supported by the academic salons.

Story-telling and Narrative Art:
An Introduction continued

In the 1950s and 60s modernist artists rejected narrative art, believing painting should be pure to itself and storytelling was best pursued by writers rather than visual artists. By the late 1960s, however, the modernist insistence on abstraction and the taboo against narrative made telling tales in art irresistible to many artists. POP Art, new realism, and post-modern styles such as video and performance art all provided figurative imagery into which narratives could be read, whether or not they were actually intended by the artists.
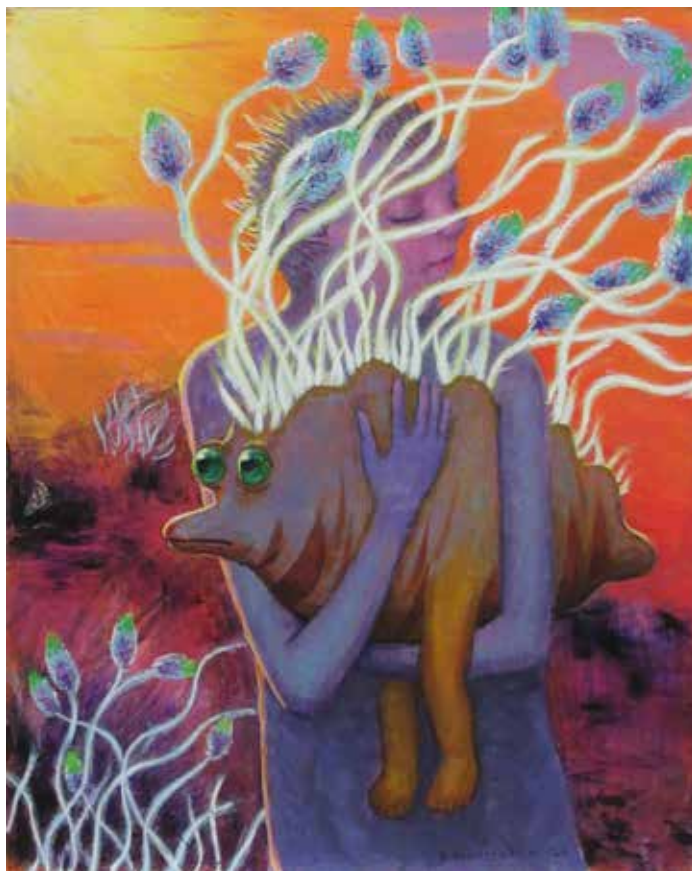
Gary McMillan
Shimish, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the artist

Art Processes - Graffiti

Graffiti are writings or drawings that have been scribbled, scratched, or painted on a wall or other surface, often within public view. Graffiti range from simple written words to complete and complex wall paintings and such work is often considered illicit.

The word 'graffiti' comes from the Italian word *graffiato* (scratched). In art history the word is applied to works of art produced by scratching a design into a surface. The use of the word has evolved to include any graphics applied to surfaces in a manner that constitutes vandalism.

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Trinity 1, 2022
Mixed media on panel
Collection of the artist

Ancient graffito at Kom Ombo
Temple, Egypt

The history or graffiti is extremely long. Inscriptions and figure drawings have been found scrawled on surfaces on ancient Egyptian ruins; on monuments and more domestic walls from classical Rome, such as at the ruins of Pompeii; at the Mayan site of Tikal in Guatemala; in the prisons at the Tower of London in London and basically anywhere there was a surface suitable for such purposes. Such graffiti has helped gain understanding into the social and political lives and languages of past cultures

Graffiti has played an important role in 20th century street art and over the course of the 20th century has seen a steady rise in prominence and artistic recognition. Many important 20th century artists, such as Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring, had their origins in New York City subway graffiti circles.

Graffiti writing is often seen as intertwined with hip hop culture and the many international styles derived from Philadelphia and New York City subway graffiti. Graffiti also became associated with the anti-establishment punk rock movement beginning in the 1970s. This period also saw the emergence of the new stencil graffiti genre which, by 1985, had appeared in cities around the world.

Contemporary graffiti artists have a huge arsenal of various materials and methods for creating their work. Spray paint in aerosol cans has long been the number one medium for

Art Processes - Graffiti continued

graffiti. **Stencil graffiti**, which originated in the early 1980s, is created by cutting out shapes and designs in a stiff material to form an overall design or image. The stencil is then placed on the surface (ie: wall or other surface) and with quick strokes of the aerosol can the image begins to appear.

Tags, Edmonton, Alberta
Photograph by Shane Golby

The most common styles of graffiti have their own names. A **tag** is the most basic writing of an artist's name where the graffiti writer's tag is his or her personalized signature.

Some artists also use self-adhesive **stickers** as a quick way to do catch up pieces.

Stickers and Tags
Tokyo, Japan
Photograph by Shane Golby

Wall, Berlin, Germany
Photograph by Shane Golby

Graffiti continued

Graffiti, as well as having many styles, has many uses. Sometimes graffiti writing is used as a **memorial**, recording a person's presence at a place at a particular moment. This is seen, for example, in some tagging where a graffiti writer's tag is his or her personalized signature. Tags, however, can also contain subtle or cryptic messages and may indicate gang affiliations or mark territory.

Graffiti also often has a reputation as part of a subculture that rebels against authority. Graffiti has become, in some cases, an effective tool of social emancipation or been used in the achievement of a political goal and can be an effective tool in establishing dialog. It can express political or social practices and can form just one tool in an array of resistance techniques.

Finally, graffiti has been used as a means of advertising both legally and illegally and may also be used as an offensive expression.

Many art critics and analysts have begun to see artistic value in some graffiti and to recognize it as a form of public art. In the early 1980s art galleries in New York began to display graffiti as an art form and this recognition has spread throughout the world.

Examples of Graffiti in Art

Keith Haring mural
Barcelona, Spain

Shane Golby
...but hope remains, 2015
(based on Edmonton street graffiti)
Collection of the artist

Art Processes: Collage

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Looking for Love, 2022
Mixed media on panel
Collection of the artist

A technique of art production used by Brandon Bilhete in the exhibition Come What May is that of Collage. **Collage is a technique of art production where the artwork is made from an assemblage of different forms to create a new whole**. The origins of collage can be traced back hundreds of years, but this technique made a dramatic reappearance in the early 20th century as a distinctive part of modern art.

The term *collage* derives from the French 'coller' meaning 'glue'. Such works may include newspaper clippings, ribbons, bits of coloured or handmade papers, portions of other artwork or texts, photographs and other found objects, which are glued to a piece of paper, canvas, wood or other support.

Techniques of collage were first used at the time of the invention of paper in China, around 200 B.C. The technique appeared in medieval Europe during the 13th century when gold leaf, gemstones and other precious metals were applied to religious images, icons, and also to coats of arms. Despite these earlier uses, however, many art historians argue that collage did not emerge until after 1900 with the early stages of modernism.

Collage in the modernist sense began with cubist painters Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. According to the Guggenheim Museum's glossary, collage is an artistic concept that entails much more than the idea of gluing something onto something else. The glued-on patches which Braque and Picasso added to their canvases offered a new perspective on painting when the patches 'collided with the surface plane of the painting'. In this perspective, collage was part of a reexamination of the relation between painting and sculpture and Braque and Picasso's works 'gave each medium some of the characteristics of the other'. These chopped-up bits of newspaper also introduced fragments of externally referenced meaning into the collision. This juxtaposition of signfiers, both serious and tongue-in-cheek, was fundamental to the inspiration behind collage.

Visual Learning and Hands-On Activities

Gary McMillan
Samadaj, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the artist

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
What is Visual Learning?

All art has many sides to it. The artist makes the works for people to experience. They in turn can make discoveries about both the work and the artist that help them learn and give them pleasure for a long time.

How we look at an object determines what we come to know about it. We remember information about an object far better when we are able to see (and handle) objects rather than by only reading about them. This investigation through observation (looking) is very important to undertanding how objects fit into our world in the past and in the present and will help viewers reach a **considered response** to what they see. The following is a six-step method to looking at, and understanding, a work of art.

STEP 1: INITIAL, INTUITIVE RESPONSE The first 'gut level' response to a visual presentation. What do you see and what do you think of it?

STEP 2: DESCRIPTION Naming facts - a visual inventory of the elements of design.
Questions to Guide Inquiry:
What colours do you see? What shapes are most noticeable?
What objects are most apparent? Describe the lines in the work.

STEP 3: ANALYSIS Exploring how the parts relate to each other.
Questions to Guide Inquiry:
What proportions can you see? eg. What percentage of the work is background? Foreground? Land? Sky? Why are there these differences? What effect do these differences create? What parts seem closest to you? Farthest away? How does the artist give this impression?

STEP 4: INTERPRETATION Exploring waht the work might mean or be about
Questions to Guide Inquiry:
How does this work make you feel? Why?
What word would best describe the mood of this work?
What is this painting/photograph/sculpture about?
Is the artist trying to tell a story? What might be the story in this work?

STEP 5: INFORMATION Looking beyond the work for information that may further understanding.
Questions to Guide Inquiry:
What is the artist's name? When did he/she live?
What art style and medium does the artist use?
What artist's work is this artist interested in?
What art was being made at the same time as this artist was working?
What was happening in history at the time this artist was working?
What social/political/economic/cultural issues is this artist interested in?

STEP 6: PERSONALIZATION What do I think about this work? (Reaching a considered response).

© Virginia Stephen

Elements of Design Tour

The following pages provide definitions and examples of the elements and principles of art that are used by artists in the images found in the exhibition Come What May. Teacher/facilitator questions for inquiry are in **bold** while possible answers are in regular font.

The elements of art are components of a work of art that can be isolated and defined. They are the building blocks used to create a work of art.

LINE !
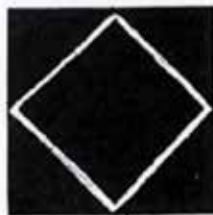
SHAPE!

COLOUR!
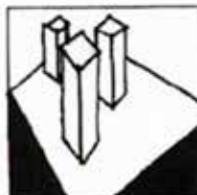
TEXTURE!

SPACE!

Elements of Design Tour

LINE: An element of art that is used to define shape, contours and outlines. It is also used to suggest mass and volume and can be used to indicate direction and movement.

See: *Home Delivery* by Byron McBride

What types of lines are there? How can you describe a line? What are some of the characteristics of a line?
Width: thick, thin, tapering, uneven
Length: long, short, continuous, broken
Feeling: sharp, jagged, graceful, smooth
Focus: sharp, blurry, fuzzy, choppy
Direction: horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curving, perpendicular, oblique, parallel, radial, zigzag

Byron McBride
Home Delivery, 2021
Acrylic on panel
Collection of the artist

Describe the lines you see in this image. Follow the lines in the air with your finger. What quality do the lines have? How do the lines operate in the image?
This image uses curving, irregular/uneven, jagged and geometric lines. These lines create shapes and direct the eye up and around the composition.

Geometric lines are used to create shapes and help direct movement or frame the composition. Vertical lines form the geometric structure in the middle of the composition and also direct the eye up into the top of the painting. Perpendicular and diagonal lines are used to create the base of the structure and the stairs on the left-hand side of the composition. These types of lines also create the impression of individual building blocks in the sturcture and pathways and hint at the kind of material used to create them. Finally, jagged lines create the shapes of the tree branches in the work.

Curving lines are used to create shape and to direct movement. Curving lines, for example, create the shapes of the pathways which direct the eye into the centre geometric structure. These curving lines also direct the eye around the composition and back into space. Finally, uneven curving lines form the outline of the cloud 'behind' the structure.

Elements of Design Tour

SHAPE: **When a line crosses itself or intersects with another line to enclose a space it creates a shape. Shape is two-dimensional. It has height and width but no depth.**

See: *The Reporting* **by Byron McBride**

What kind of shapes can you think of?
Geometric: circles, squares, rectangles and triangles. We see them in architecture and manufactured items.
Organic shapes: a leaf, seashell, flower. We see them in nature with characteristics that are free flowing, informal and irregular.
Static shapes: shapes that appear stable and resting.
Dynamic shapes: Shapes that appear moving and active.
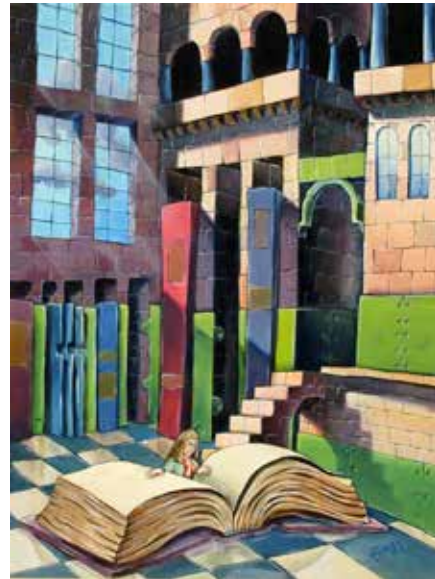
Byron McBride
The Reporting, 2021
Acrylic on panel
Collection of the artist

What shapes do you see in this image?
The composition is composed of geometric shapes - rectangles/circular shapes - and organic shapes, as seen in the human figure.

How do the shapes operate in this image?
Geometric shapes, especially rectilinear and square forms, are repeated throughout the image. These shapes create the individual elements of the room - windows, stairs, arch ways - and this repetition ties the image together. The curving lines of the book, meanwhile, contrast the overall geometry of the scene and thus focus attention on the book and figure in the center of the work.

What quality do the shapes have? Does the quality of the shapes contribute to the meaning or story suggested in the work?
Geometric shapes are those that are man-made. The man-made shapes of the windows, walls and stairs appear static and stable while the organic shapes, such as the pages of the book and the human figure, appear more dynamic. This contrast creates a sense of tension in the work, perhaps mirroring the underlying narrative.

COLOUR: **Colour comes from light that is reflected off objects. Colour has three main characteristics: Hue, or its name (red, blue, etc.) Value: (how light or dark the colour is) and Intensity (how bright or dull the colour is)**

See: *Kiwakawii* by Gary McMillan

What are primary colours? Do you see any? Point to them in the drawing. What secondary colours do you see?
Colour is made of primary colours, red, blue and yellow. Secondary colours are created from primary colours and include green, orange and purple. This image is made up of both primary colours, or tints and tones of primary colours, and secondary colours. Primary colours used are tints of red and blue while the secondary colours of green and orange are also used.

Gary McMillan
Kiwakawii, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the artist

Where is your eye directed to first? Why? Are there any colours that stand out more than others?
The viewer's eye is probably directed first to the pink organic forms in the work. This is because the pink forms take up a large part of the composition and the pink figure is placed directly in the center of the work. The eye is then directed to the 'shocking' orange growths on the pick forms. This is because these growths are very bright and the orange colour clashes with the soft pink of the primary forms.

What are complementary colours? How have they been used to draw attention?
Complementary colours are those across from each other on the colour wheel and are placed next to each other to create the most contrast and to create focus in a work. Red is the complement of green and this makes the pink organic forms stand out against the green background. Orange, meanwhile, is the complement of blue. The use of these two colours helps to create a sense of space in the work. The orange 'flowers' on the cactus form in the foregrond, for example, are placed against the blueish rock and so look in front of the rock. The orange 'flower' form on the ear of the central figure, meanwhile, is placed beside the blue bill of the small creature and so this directs the viewer's eye from the central figure over to the smaller creature.

SPACE: **The area between and around objects. It can also refer to the feeling of depth in a two-dimensional artwork.**

See: *Overcome*
by Brandon Mario Bilhete

What is space? What dimensions does it have?
Space includes the background, middle ground and foreground. It can refer to the distances or areas around, between or within components of a piece. It may have two dimensions (length and width) or three dimensions including height or depth.

Brandon Mario Bilhete
Overcome, 2022
Mixed media on panel
Collection of the artist

What do you see in this work? What is closest to you? Farthest away? How do you know this?
In this work we see a central winged figure, smaller bat-like creatures, and clouds. Generally speaking, the bottom of a painting is usually 'closest' to the viewer and objects/elements placed 'on top' or overlapping other elements are also closer to the viewer. Keeping these ideas in mind, the two bats lower down the picture plane are closer to the viewer as they overlap the human figure. The human figure is then in the center of the work in front of the greyish cloud while other bats are in the background, becoming more indistinct the further back they are placed.

In what other way has the artist created a sense of space?
The artist also uses colour to create a sense of space in this work. The central figure is the brightest part of the composition and so stands out against all other elements and colours in the work. The black bats placed against the reds and yellows, because of this contrast, appear in front of the figure while the bright figure appears in front of the other elements in the work. Finally, the dark bats fade into the dark grey on the right hand side of the composition, creating an impression of deep space.

Elements of Design Tour

TEXTURE: **Texture is the surface quality of an object that can be seen or felt. Texture can also be implied on a two-dimensional surface through mark making and paint handling.**

See: *Bloostig*
by Gary McMillan

What is texture? How do you describe how something feels? What are the two kinds of texture you can think of in artwork?
Texture can be real, like the actual texture of an object. Texture can be rough, smooth, hard, soft, glossy etc. Texture can also be implied. This happens when a two-dimensional piece of art is made to look like a certain texture.

Gary McMillan
Bloostig, 2021
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the artist

Allow your eyes to 'feel' the different area within the work and explain the textures. What kind of texture do you think the artist uses in this work - real or implied? What about the work gives you this idea?
This work mainly uses implied textures. While there are some rougher/raised paint areas in the work, especially in the 'flower' form, acrylic paint is generally very 'smooth' and so the overall painting is quite flat. Because of this, any texture in the work is based on the viewer's idea of what elements would feel like and the mark-making used by the artist in painting the elements. 'Flowers', for example, are soft and smooth to the touch and so the large flower shape would probably be smooth. The landscape, meanwhile, is painted in a very 'scratchy' way and so the ground and the background tree forms would be rougher to the touch. Finally, the humanoid figure is painted in such a way that it looks like it has fur or hairs on its body and so could either be smooth or scratchy to the touch.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
Reading Pictures Program

Grades 4-12/adults

Objectives:

The purposes of this program are to:

1/ Introduce participants to Art and what artists do – this includes examinations of art styles; art elements; the possible aims and meaning(s) in an art work and how to deduce those meanings and aims.
2/ Introduce visitors to the current exhibition – the aim of the exhibition and the kind of exhibition/ artwork found.   - the artist (s) - his/her background(s)
                            - his/her place in art history
3/ Engage participants in a deeper investigation of artworks.

Teacher/Facilitator Introduction to Program:

This program is called **Reading Pictures**. What do you think this might involve?

-generate as many ideas as possible concerning what viewers might think 'Reading Pictures' might involve or what this phrase might mean.

Before we can 'read' art, however, we should have some understanding what we're talking about.

What is Art? If you had to define this term, how would you define it?

Art can be defined as creative expression - and artistic practice is an aspect and expression of a peoples' culture or the artist's identity.

The discipline of Art, or the creation of a piece of art, however, is much more than simple 'creative expression' by an 'artist' or an isolated component of culture.

How many of you would describe yourselves as artists?

You may not believe it, but everyday you engage in some sort of artistic endeavor.

How many of you got up this morning and thought about what you were going to wear today? Why did you choose the clothes you did? Why do you wear your hair that way? How many of you have tattoos or plan to get a tattoo some day? What kind of tattoo would you choose? Why.....? How many of you own digital cameras or have cameras on cell phones? How many of you take pictures and e-mail them to other people?

Art is all around us and we are all involved in artistic endeavors to some degree. The photographs we take, the colour and styles of the clothes we wear, the ways we build and decorate our homes, gardens and public buildings, the style of our cell phones or the vehicles we drive, the images we see and are attracted to in advertising or the text or symbols on our bumper stickers – all of these things (and 9 billion others) utilize artistic principles. They say something about our personal selves and reflect upon and influence the economic, political, cultural, historical and geographic concerns of our society.

Art, therefore, is not just something some people in a society do – it is something that affects and informs everyone within a society.

Today we're going to look at art - paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures – and see what art can tell us about the world we live in – both the past, the present and possibly the future – and what art can tell us about ourselves.

Art is a language like any other and it can be read.

Art can be read in two ways. It can be looked at **intuitively** – what do you see? What do you like or not like? How does it make you feel and why? – or it can be read **formally** by looking at what are called the Elements of Design – the tools artists use or consider when creating a piece of work.

What do you think is meant by the elements of design? What does an artist use to create a work of art?

Today we're going to examine how to read art – we're going to see how art can affect us emotionally... and how an artist can inform us about our world, and ourselves, through what he or she creates.

Tour Program:

–Proceed to one of the works in the exhibition and discuss the following:
a) The nature of the work - what kind of work is it and what exhibition is it a part of?
b) Examine the work itself   – What do visitors see?
                                              – How do you initially feel about what you see? Why do you feel this way? What do you like? What don't you like? Why?
                                  –What is the work made of?
                                  –How would you describe the style? What does this mean?

Reading Pictures Program continued

–What is the compositional structure? How are the shapes and colours etc. arranged? Why are they arranged this way?
–How does the work make them feel? What is the mood of the work? What gives them this idea? Discuss the element(s) of design which are emphasized in the work in question.
–What might the artist be trying to do in the work? What might the artist be saying or what might the work 'mean'?

c) Summarize the information.

• At each work chosen, go through the same or similar process, linking the work to the type of exhibition it is a part of. Also, with each stop, discuss a different Element of Design and develop participants visual learning skills.

At the 1st stop, determine with the participants the most important Element of Design used and focus the discussion on how this element works within the art work. Do the same with each subsequent art work and make sure to cover all the elements of design on the tour.

Stop #1: LINE
Stop #2: SHAPE
Stop #3: COLOUR
Stop #4: TEXTURE
Stop #5: SPACE
Stop #6: ALL TOGETHER – How do the elements work together to create a certain mood or story? What would you say is the mood of this work? Why? What is the story or meaning or meaning of this work? Why?

Work sheet activity – 30 minutes
•Divide participants into groups of two or three to each do this activity. Give them 30 minutes to complete the questions then bring them all together and have each group present one of their pieces to the entire group.

Presentations – 30 minutes
•Each group to present on one of their chosen works.

Visual Learning Activity Worksheet * Photocopy the following worksheet so each participant has their own copy.

Reading Pictures Program continued

Visual Learning Worksheet

Instructions: Choose two very different pieces of artwork in the exhibition and answer the following questions in as much detail as you can.

1. What is the title of the work and who created it?

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What do you see and what do you think of it? (What is your **initial reaction** to the work?) Why do you feel this way?

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. What colours do you see and how does the use of colour affect the way you 'read' the work? Why do you think the artist chose these colours – or lack of colour – for this presentation?

_____
_____
_____
_____

4. What shapes and objects do you notice most? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. How are the shapes/objects arranged or composed? How does this affect your feelings towards or about the work? What feeling does this composition give to the work?

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. How would you describe the mood of this work? (How does it make you feel?) What do you see that makes you describe the mood in this way?

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. What do you think the artist's purpose was in creating this work? What 'story' might he or she be telling? What aspects of the artwork give you this idea?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8. What do you think about this work after answering the above questions? Has your opinion of the work changed in any way? Why do you feel this way?

_____
_____
_____
_____

9. How might this work relate to your own life experiences? Have you ever been in a similar situation/place and how did being there make you feel?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
Perusing Paintings: An Art-full Scavenger Hunt

In teaching art, game-playing can enhance learning. If students are engaged in learning, through a variety of methods, then it goes beyond game-playing. Through game-playing we are trying to get students to use higher-order thinking skills by getting them to be active participants in learning. *Blooms's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, which follows, is as applicable to teaching art as any other discipline.

1. *knowledge*: recall of facts
2. *comprehension*: participation in a discussion
3. *application*: applying abstract information in practical situations
4. *analysis*: separating an entity into its parts
5. *synthesis*: creating a new whole from many parts, as in developing a complex work of art
6. *evaluation*: making judgements on criteria

A scavenger hunt based on art works is a fun and engaging way to get students of any age to really look at the art works and begin to discern what the artist(s) is/are doing in the works. **The simple template provided, however, would be most suitable for grade 1-3 students.**

Instruction:
Using the exhibition works provided, give students a list of things they should search for that are in the particular works of art. The students could work with a partner or in teams. Include a blank for the name of the artwork, the name of the artist, and the year the work was created. Following the hunt, gather students together in the exhibition area and check the answers and discuss the particular works in more detail.

Sample List:

Scavenger Hunt Item	Title of Artwork	Name of Artist	Year Work Created
someone wearing a hat			
a specific animal			
landscape			
a bright red object			
a night scene			
a house			

*This activity was adapted from *A Survival Kit for the Elementary/Middle School Art Teacher* by Helen D. Hume.

An Art-full Scavenger Hunt Template

Scavenger Hunt Item	Title of Artwork	Name of Artist	Year Work Created

Crayon Engraving Grades K-6

Grades K-6

Objectives:

Students will, through the studio activity, use mixed media to express a uniform composition.

Materials:

–wax crayons
–white drawing paper
–brushes
–paint trays
–sharp etching tools paper clips, pins, compasses, scissors, etc.)
–black tempera paint
–pencils
–water containers
–white cardboard

Methodology:

1. Have students create a drawing on newsprint. This could be something viewed from the exhibition Come What May.

2. Once the "rough" drawing is completed, have students re-draw their image on the white cardboard.

3. Have students use wax crayons to colour in their drawing.
        Make sure students press hard when colouring and that they colour all areas of the drawing. The most brilliant colours are recommended for the richest results.

4. When colouring is completed, have students cover their drawing with an even layer of black tempera paint and allow this to dry.
        More than one coat of paint may be necessary so that the underlying colours are completely covered. However, do not make the paint to thick, as when dry, it may chip during the engraving process. Also, to make the paint adhere to the waxy, crayoned surface, it must, in most cases, be conditioned with liquid soap.
5. Have students draw with a variety of etching tools, guessing at the design underneath, or referring to their preliminary drawing.
        Make sure they do not etch too deeply or they may rip the paper. The aim is to reveal the drawing and colours underneath.

Crayon Etching continued

Three stages in a crayon engraving by a third-grade child. **Left:** The initial line engraving with a nail through the black tempera coating to the crayoned surface underneath including characteristic details and some textural effects. **Center:** The scraping away of black to produce some solid crayon shapes as well as the introduction of oil pastel areas. **Right:** The completion of the oil pastel embellishment. Some children prefer the secondary stage.

Chagall Oil Pastels Drawing - Elementary

credit: Stephanie Corder, AZ Academy, U.S. Virgin Islands, http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/Stephanie-Chagall.htm

Objectives

By studying the art and style of Marc Chagall, students will create a surreal piece of art representing themselves and their surroundings and illustrating Chagall's quote, "Great art picks up where nature ends". Students will show effective use of colour and design principles.

Art Concept: Artists use colour for emotion - Artists use their imagination - Surreal art is fantasy (beyond real).

Vocabulary
Elements: colour, form, shape, value
Principles: balance, contrast
2-dimentsional
culture
historical period
fantasy
surreal

Materials
18x24 inch paper
oil pastels

Procedure

1. Introduce students to the art and style of Chagall, engaging them in discussion about his work, and use of intense colour to create a dreamlike effect.

2. Instruct students to write "Great art picks up where nature ends" around the perimeter of their papers.

3. Using black oil pastel, have students draw a house, then turn their papers and draw themselves holding something they like, turn the papers again and draw trees and /or flowers, have them include a sun or moon with a face.

4. Once their paper is filled they may render their illustrations with oil pastels taking care to use

Chagall Oil Pastel Drawings Continued

lots of intense colour like Chagall.

Resources:

Chagall's painting 'I and the Village' and a variety of his works emphasizing his use of colour and emotion

Book: *Marc Chagall* - presents a biography of Marc Chagall for grades K-5
        Marc Chagall What Colour is Paradise? - Gr. 4-8. This book uses Chagall's biographical paintings to introduce his life story and work.

Marc Chagall
Circus

Wide Awake Dreaming K-6

Background

Carnival of Harlequin is one of Joan Miró's best-known works. Harlequin was a common theater character who was usually the victim of unrequited love and frequently played the guitar. In this painting he is a guitar, with the diamond-patterned shirt associated with the character, along with other traditional features like the mustache, beard, admiral's hat, and pipe. He looks sad, perhaps because of the hole in his stomach, and Miró did have financial constraints at the time—he remembered sharing radishes for dinner with a friend because it was all he had.

It is thought that the title of the Gallery's painting refers to Mardi Gras, the celebration that begins the fasting of Lent. Other than Harlequin, it seems very joyous, with all kinds of hybrid creatures playing, singing, dancing, and celebrating. Some of the forms are anthropomorphized objects—for example, the ladder has an ear and an eye. Miró explained some of the imagery in 1978: "In the canvas certain elements appear that will be repeated later in other works: the ladder, an element of flight and evasion, but also of elevation; animals, and above all, insects, which I have always found very interesting; the dark sphere that appears to the right is a representation of the globe, because in those days I was obsessed with one idea: 'I must conquer the world!;' the cat, who was always by my side as I painted. The black triangle that appears in the window represents the Eiffel Tower. I tried to deepen the magical side of things."

Supplies
Paper
Drawing materials
Image for class display

Joan Miró
(Spanish, 1893–1983)
Le Carnaval d'Arlequin (Carnival of Harlequin), 1924–25
Oil on canvas
26 x 35 5/8 inches (66 x 90.5 cm)
Collection Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Wide Awake Dreaming K-6 continued

Procedure

Joan Miró (pronounced "Zho-ahn Mee-row") said he tried to create without thinking about what he was painting on the canvas. Then he looked at what he had created, thought about it, and completed the painting, making connections between all the elements and creating fantastical creatures that do not exist in the real world.

Ask your students:

•Can you find at least nine "living" creatures in the painting? Can you describe them? What real living things are they most like?
•What might these creatures say to each other?
•Can you describe the shapes Miró uses to build his creatures? The colors?
•What is the setting of the painting—the place it depicts? Are the creatures indoors or outdoors? Explain your answer.
•What are some of the other objects in the painting? Can you find a ladder, a table, a window, a mountain, a sun, a star, a die, a jack-in-the-box, a growing plant, some string, and a globe?
•Are there some things in the painting that you cannot identify? Describe them. Try to decide what these things might represent.

DREAMS AND SHAPES—SURREALISM

At the same time Miró was becoming an artist, scientists were beginning to study and understand dreams. Dreams occur in a part of your mind called the unconscious. When you are awake, the part of your brain that is working the most is called your conscious mind. How are your unconscious mind and your imagination different? How are they the same? What part of his brain do you think Miró was using when he made his paintings?

During the 1920s and 1930s, artists who used dreams and the unconscious as inspiration for their writing, drawing, and painting called themselves the surrealists and described their work as surrealism. The word surreal (meaning "dream-like") comes from the French word "sur" (meaning "above"), which is added to the word real.

Artists talk about two kinds of shapes: biomorphic shapes (also called organic shapes) and geometric shapes. Biomorphic shapes are irregular, curving shapes with no straight lines. Geometric shapes use only straight lines. Perfect circles and ovals are shapes that belong to both categories—they contain curving lines, but are also used in geometry. Have students draw their own shapes and identify them as biomorphic, geometric, or both. Revisit the transparency and see if students can categorize the shapes used by Miró.

Wide Awake Dreaming K-6 continued

Additional Student Activities

•Have your students use the following activity to invent their own dream-like creatures. Wide Awake Dreaming Activity: Make an Imaginary Dreamscape like Miró!
Draw three shapes on drawing paper. Use at least one biomorphic shape and one geometric shape. (Try not to think too much about what you are drawing!) Look at the shapes you drew for at least a minute. Then turn the shapes into an imaginary creature or a creature from your dreams.

These drawings can be displayed in several ways:
•Tack coloured paper on the bottom half of a bulletin board to create a classroom dream space. Cut out the creatures and arrange them in this dream-like setting.
•Ask students to read their descriptions of their creatures. Have them draw and cut out dream-like food, furniture, plants, and other objects, and place these items in the dream space. Students can draw items for other students' creatures or their own creature.
•Display each student's creature with his or her description.
•Shuffle the descriptions and have students try to match them with the creatures.
•Show students the transparency again and tell them that the title of the painting is *Carnival of Harlequin*. Explain that Harlequin is a character who wears a mask, a small hat, and a diamond-covered tunic. Can they find Harlequin in the painting? Can students decide what emotion he is feeling? Why might he be feeling that way? Also explain that although most American children think of a carnival as a place with games and rides, in other parts of the world, including Miró's native Spain, a carnival is a long holiday with partying and costumes that ends on Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. During Lent, Christians give up eating certain foods (originally meat) and make other behavioral changes to remind them of Jesus' suffering. Lent ends on Easter Sunday. Some of your students may celebrate Lent.

http://www.albrightknox.org/education/lesson-plans/lesson:wide-awake-dreaming/
audio available

Mixed Breed Fantasy Animals Grades 3-6

credit: Linda Wood, St. John's Lower School, Houston, Texas, http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/elem/linda-mixbreed.htm

Objectives

Students will create an imaginary animal by combining parts of two or more animals. They will show pattern and textures with coloured pencils and investigate concepts of highlights, shadows using complementary colours, and centre of interest. .

Vocabulary
Bestiary
culture
historical period
fantasy
surreal
complementary colours

Materials
Animal pictures
Newsprint
Black construction paper
Coloured construction paper
Coloured pencils
scissors
glue

Procedure

1. Discuss a little about life in the Middle Ages and present some of the animals shown in the Bestiary.
2. Demonstrate using coloured pencils - show how to do highlights and shadows, demonstrate blending of colours
3. Following discussion and demonstrations, have students look through animal pictures and select at least three animals that appeal to them. Students then to plan some combinations on newsprint - for example, select the head of one animal, the body of another, and the tail section of a third. Plan in what kind of environment your animal will live.
4. Students to select their best plan - then draw their animal on the black construction paper. Instruct students to make their animal almost fill the page so the animal is the main focus of the composition.
5. Students to draw in details of the environment. What kind of plants would be there? What biome does the animal live in?

Mixed Breed Fantasy Animals continued

6. Students to plan colours, using either analoguous or complementary colours - in colouring students should use a variety of pencil pressures to obtain different values and use white and lighter values to show highlights and complementary colours to show shadows.
7. When animals complete, students to colour the background/environment to enhance the animal.
8. Mount on coloured construction paper.

Rochester Beastiary
13th century

Surreal Hands - Junior High

credit: Bunki Kramer, Los Cerros Middle School
http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/Lessons/surhands.htm

Objectives

- Students will compare and contrast various forms of artistic expression and examine the similarities and differences of how various artists work
- Control a variety of materials, tools, techniques and processes while creating works of art - use imagination - create a work of art based on a theme - use coloured pencils to create shading/value gradation
- Students will create a hand drawing that alters reality and shows each finger and palm of hand expressing a fantasy theme.

Vocabulary

Surrealism
fantasy
Contour drawing
Value
Gradation
Complementary Colours
Tone

Materials

9x12 inch drawing paper
pencils, erasers
sharpie ultra fine markers
coloured pencils
pencil sharpener

Procedure

1. Begin by discussing the work of Salvador Dali and Rene Magritte. Discuss the Surreal art movement and show examples of artists works. Focus on the idea of putting items together in totally different relationships.
2. Demonstrate contour drawing of hands - stress careful observation of details
3. Students to draw their open hand and then, once hand is drawn, develop a fantasy drawing where each finger and the palm expresses a fantasy theme
4. Outline with fine point markers and render with coloured pencils

Surreal Still Life or Narrative
Jr. High/High School

Objectives

- Students will view and discuss Surrealism and the Still Life genre in art
- Critique still life work of Rene Magritte, Salvador Dali, and following student examples
- Create their own surreal still life from magazine collage - then render the collage as realistically as they can - adding in shadows/highlights to enhance illusion - using pencil, coloured pencils, or whatever medium they or teacher chooses

Through this project students will:
- understand and apply media, techniques, and processes
- choose and evaluate a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
- understand the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
- reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
- compare two methods of creating story or theme within an image
- combine multiple unrelated images into single composition with subtle message or theme
- experiment with pen and ink techniques
- create a visual language for texture and value

Materials
- images by Rene Magritte, Salvador Dali, student examples, works of Brianna Hughes, Gwen Frank and Jude Griebel from exhibition
- Scrap Mat Board
- 9 x 12 inch heavyweight White Paper
- micro pens
- images from magazines/internet/photographs

Procedure

1/ Begin lesson by discussing - what a still life is
 - Surrealism as an art movement
 - examining the work of Rene Magritte, Salvador Dali, Brianna Hughes/Gwen Frank/Jude Griebel (exhibition), student examples
2/ Outline of project:
- students to find 6 images from magazines/internet that they find interesting - images MUST have a variety of textures (smooth/grainy/rough/sharp etc), a variety of size, and should be chosen so that some can be used vertically and some can be used horizontally in the composition.
- students to choose three of their images to create a surrealistic image
 - rank the images in order of preference
 - what image is the most important to you?
 - How important do you want it to be to the composition?
 - images can be re-sized and manipulated in Photoshop
 - consider what and where the focal point is placed

Surreal Still Life or Narrative continued

- make visually interesting and effective use of positive and negative space
- students to glue composition down to mat board
- students to sketch the composition on 9 x 12 paper that has a 1 inch border drawn onto it
- students to use contour lines only and then fill in shapes with values/textures of drawing - white areas must represent brightest light only - textures chosen must work with the specific object and there must be definite space/value distinction
- Self-evaluation/response sheet (see following page)
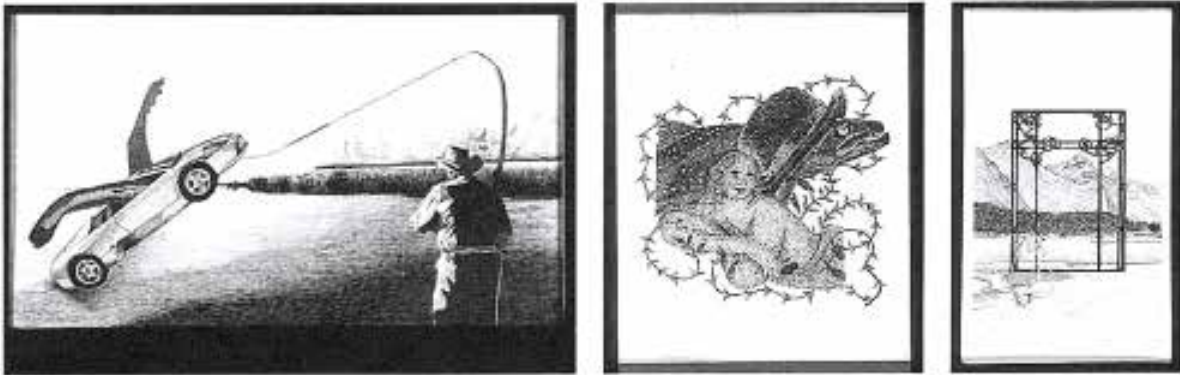
Student Drawing Still Life/Narrative examples

Rene Magritte
Time Transfixed,1938
Oil on canvas
Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago U.S.A.

EVALUATION – RESPONSE

1. What was the most difficult aspect of this project?

2. What problems did you encounter while working on this project?

3. How did you resolve these problems?

4. What area of your image do you feel is most successful? Explain.

5. What area of your image do you feel is least successful? Explain.

6. Is there anything you learned from this project? If so, what?

7. If you did this project again, what would you do differently or what would you like to explore as an extension of the project?

8. Describe the message/theme that you are expressing within your image.

9. How did you arrive at this solution for your image?

10. On a scale of 1-5 with 5 being highest, please rate this project on the following:

- Interesting challenge
- Adequate instruction
- Adequate time to complete
- Proper tools/materials
- Skill building
- Creative possibilities

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Photomontage Gr. 9 -12

The following project is based on photographic techniques used by early Surrealist photographers and the collage work of artist Brandon Bilhete in the exhibition Come What May.

Objectives

Through the following studio activity students will
- develop skills in digital photography
- enhance computuer skills through using Adobe Photoshop programs and scanners/photocopier
- develop visual skills in perception, perspective and proportion
- explore surrealism through juxtaposing 'unrelated' images to construct new meaning in art works
- investigate story-telling and social/political concerns through art work

Shane Golby
Brave New World, 2011
Photomontage (3 images)
Collection of the artist

Materials

- computers/printers/printer paper
- digital cameras
- scanner/photocopier
- scissors
- rulers
- glue sticks
- acrylic/watercolour paints and brushes
- heavy white paper for mounting of photo-images
- magazine images, art reproductions, cartoons, other text sources etc.

Photomontage Project continued

Procedure

1/ Using digital cameras, have students explore their environment to create numerous images of
- people
- places
- things

2/ Students to download and study their gathered images to determine
- the 'story' they wish to tell/the concern they wish to address
- the best image of a setting for that story/concern
- images of people or things which could be used to tell the story/address the concern examined

3/ Students to find in magazines or other paper sources further images/text which would enhance their 'story' - the surreal aspect of these additional images should be considered by the students when making their choices - these to be scanned into computer and, with photoshop, manipulated in colour and cropping to facilitate their use

4/ Students to print their setting image (primary image) at 8 X 10 inches and then print the other images (people or things - secondary images) which will be placed within their chosen setting

* students to consider the size of their secondary images, modifying size **before printing** to consider concepts of space/distance and focus within the finished piece

5/ Students to cut out their secondary images and arrange on their setting, keeping in mind space/distance and focus - students may need to resize and reprint secondary images a few times to correct scale

6/ Once all images are printed, students to glue secondary images on to setting using glue sticks to create a collage image

7/ Students then to photograph, scan or photocopy the collage to create a seamless 8 X 10 inch photomontage image

8/ Using photocopier, students can enlarge the photomontage to create a larger piece.

9/ Students may then mount their photomontage image on heavier paper to create a backing for the piece.

Shane Golby
I'm So High, 2010
Photomontage (3 images)
Collection of the artist

Dream Photographs 7-12

Background :

The group of artists called the Surrealists believed that the unexpected and the unbelievable could happen in art. A clock might melt into a strange, dripping shape. A chair might have the legs of a cat. Stairs could climb yet somehow end beneath themselves. **Surrealism is the art of the unreal, where rules such as gravity do not apply and anything can happen.**

Salvador Dali (1904-1989), the best known Surrealist, was born in Spain and later lived and worked in the United States. He called his surrealist paintings "hand-painted dream photographs" and has amazed others with his outrageous and impossible subjects and ideas. His pictures show strange combinations of objects and figures, often mixing photographs with collage with oil painting. Dali was also a talented jewelry designer, sculptor, and even produced motion pictures.

Salvador Dali
Mae West's Face which May be Used as a Surrealist Apartment.
1934-1935

Objective:

By combining magazine cut-outs with drawing in unexpected ways, young artists can explore the mind set of the Surrelists like Salvador Dali. Many children find their way in Surrealism through humour when they first look into the possibilities of the unreal.

Materials:

Art reproductions
magazines
scissors
glue
mayfair paper

Procedure:

Students will examine works by Surrealist artists Salvador Dali, Andre Breton, Max Ernst, Man Ray, Hans Arp, Joan Miró, Marcel Duchamp and Rene Magritte.

Students will collect images from magazines or other media and arrange ordinary objects in impossible situations. Look for familiar objects or objects that have meaning to create an image with powerful feeling.

For the Surrealists, collage was a way of taking completely unlike objects or images and putting them together in the same piece of art to surprise and even shock—the same way that dreams can do. They liked to use three techniques:

Dream Photographs continued

1) Juxtaposition (putting two different things side by side that don't normally go together);

2) Dislocation (when objects are placed where they shouldn't be); and

3) Transformation (turning something familiar into something unusual and disturbing). The Surrealists thought that making connections between the images might reveal the workings of the unconscious mind. At the very least, they argued, collage would make people think.

Writing and Reflection: Spend some time writing a couple of paragraphs that describe your work. What images did you choose and why? Why did you arrange them the way you did, and did you have a message you wanted to get across? Were you trying to surprise or shock? Did you try to use juxtaposition, dislocation or transformation? Did you cut out images that you ended up not using? Try to be as precise as possible—what you did might seem perfectly clear to you, but you're the artist! To someone else who doesn't know you, your work could be a total mystery.

http://thedali.org/education/documents/lesson_plan

Surrealism Collage and Painting

This lesson is designed for a Drawing and Painting Class. Students create a work in two media. The first is a surreal collage from magazine sources. The second involves drawing from the collage. The drawing aspect of this project is especially related to the drawings and paintings of Brandon Bilhete and Gary McMillan in the exhibition Come What May**.**

Materials:

Art reproductions of work by Salvador Dali, Rene
Magritte, and student examples
magazines
scissors/ x-acto knives
glue/rubber cement
Tag board or posterboard for collage - choice of
size
Quality drawing paper
drawing pencils
India ink and ink pens

Procedure:

1/Students will examine works by Surrealist artists Salvador Dali, Rene Magritte and supplied student examples and works of Brandon Bilhete and Gary McMillan in the exhibition
2/ Students will collect images from magazines or other media and arrange ordinary objects and images in impossible situations to create a Surrealist collage. Size - 9 x 12 inches/ 12 x 18 inches
For the Surrealists, collage was a way of taking completely unlike objects or images and putting them together in the same piece of art to surprise and even shock—the same way that dreams can do. They liked to use three techniques:

  1) Juxtaposition (putting two different things side by side that don't normally go together);
  2) Dislocation (when objects are placed where they shouldn't be); and
  3) Transformation (turning something familiar into something unusual and disturbing). The Surrealists thought that making connections between the images might reveal the workings of the unconscious mind. At the very least, they argued, collage would make people think.
* students to develop a theme for the work that interests them and, before working, review the elements of design
3/ Following completion of collage, discuss pen and ink techniques such as pointillism, scumbling, hatching, and cross-hatching
4/ Students to experiment with the above techniques
5/ Using pencils, students to enlarge all - or a portion - of their collage on good drawing paper
6/ Students then to create their Surrealistic montage in various pen and ink techniques

Surrealism Collage and Painting

7/ Students to mat their finished drawings

8/ A critique of the pen and ink drawings follows when students completed work. Students to discuss how successful they felt the Surrealism was achieved and what they could do to enchance their work.

Credit: Charlot Cassar - http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/high/SurrealPenHS.html
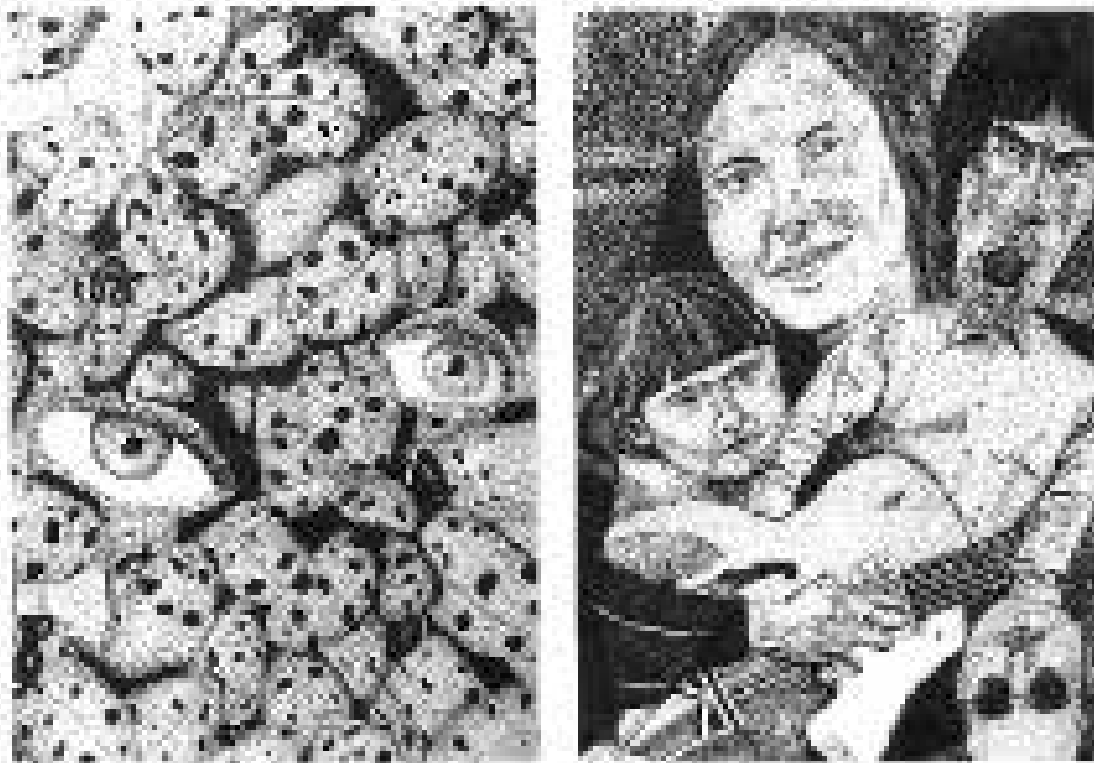
Student Pen and Ink Surreal Collage examples

Glossary and Credits

Byron McBride
The Reporting, 2021
Acrylic on panel
Collection of the artist

Glossary

Abstraction: Is a term applied to 20th century styles in reaction against the traditional European view of art as the imitation of nature. Abstraction stresses the formal or elemental structure of a work and has been expressed in all genres or subjects of visual expression.

automatism a technique first used by Surrealist painters and poets to express the creative force of the unconscious in art.

Collage: A work of art created by gluing bits of paper, fabric, scraps, photographs, or other materials to a flat surface.

Complementary colour: Colours that are directly opposite each other on the colour wheel, for example, blue and orange. These colours when placed next to each other produce the highest contrast.

Composition: The arrangement of lines, colours and forms so as to achieve a unified whole; the resulting state or product is referred to as a composition.

Contemporary artists: Those whose peak of activity can be situated somewhere between the 1970's (the advent of post-modernism) and the present day.

Cool colours: Blues, greens and purples are considered cool colours. In aerial perspective, cool colours are said to move away from you or appear more distant.

dream imagery as seen in the art movement surrealism, ideas concerning the unconscious and incongruous images drawn from dream elements.

Elements of design: The basic components which make up any visual image: line, shape, colour, texture and space.

Exhibition: A public display of art objects including painting, sculpture, prints, installation, etc.

Fantastic art 1940's, a modern atyle of art similar to Surrealism; a combination of Cubism mixed with rich imagination based on childhood memories, folklore, and country life; Chagall is best known for his paintings based on Jewish folktales and theatre scenes with bright colour, fantasy, and abstraction.

Geometric shapes: Any shape or form having more mathematical than organic design. Examples of geometric shapes include: spheres, cones, cubes, squares, triangles.

Gradation: A principle of design that refers to the use of a series of gradual/transitional changes in the use of the elements of art with a given work of art; for example, a transition from lighter to darker colours or a gradation of large shapes to smaller ones.

Mythology: The body of myths (sacred stories) of a particular culture, or of humankind as a whole; the study and interpretation of such myths.

Glossary

photomontage the technique of making a picture by assembling pieces of photographs, often in combination with other types of graphic material.

surrealism (1924-1945) An era of art expressed by fantastic imaginary thoughts and images, often expressing dreams and subconscious thought as part of reality; illogical and unexpected, surprising imaginary art; followed Dada; the most famous Surrealists are Chagall, Magritte, Oppenheim and Dali.

symbolism in art a late 19th-century movement in art that sought to express mystical or abstract ideas through the symbolic use of images.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
Credits

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Art Gallery of Alberta
Participating artists

Hieronymus Bosch - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hieronymus_Bosch
Giuseppe Arcimboldo - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guiseppe_Arcimboldo
History of Art, Second Edition, H.W. Janson, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., and Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1977, pp. 362, 367-368, 624-628, 658-663
Fantastic art - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantastic_art
The History of Fantasy Art - www.arthistoryarchive.com/arthistory/fantasy/
Art History Guide: History of Art Movements and Artists: Fantasy Art - arthistoryguide.blogspot.com/2008/01/fantasy-art.html
Symbolism (arts) - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism_(arts)
Modern Art, Third Edition by Sam Hunter, John Jacobus, Prenitce Hall Inc., Harry N. Abrams, Inc.,1992, pp. 34-53, 163-195
Symbolism - http://www.huntfor.com/arthistory/c19th/symbolism.htm
Surrealism - Oxford Companion to Art, edited by Harold Osborne, Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 1115-1116
Surrealism - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrealism
René Magritte - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ren%C3%A9_Magritte
Giorgio de Chirico - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Chirico
Surrealism and photography - http://www.answers.com/topic/surrealism-and-photography
Surrealism in Photography - http://www.photorails.eu/articles5.html
Enhancing Reality: Surrealism in Photography - http://www.istockphoto.com/article_view.php?ID=75
Surrealism and Photography in England (blog by Guy Lane, 2009) - http://www.foto8.com/new/online/blog/768-surrealism-and-photography-in-england
Photogram - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photogram
Solarisation - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solarisation
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Art in Action, Guy Hubbard, Indiana University, Coronado Publishers Inc., United States, 1987
The Usborne Book of Art Skills, Fiona Watt, 2002, Usborne Publishing Ltd., London, England
Tableau Vivant - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tableau_vivant

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
Credits

This exhibition was developed and managed by the Art Gallery of Alberta for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Funding provided by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

Shane Golby – Curator/Program Manager
                    AFA Travelling Exhibition Program, Region 2
Elicia Weaver–TREX Technician

Front Cover Image:

Gary McMillan, *Paerox* (detail), 2021, Acrylic on masonite, Collection of the artist