

Drawing Is Seeing

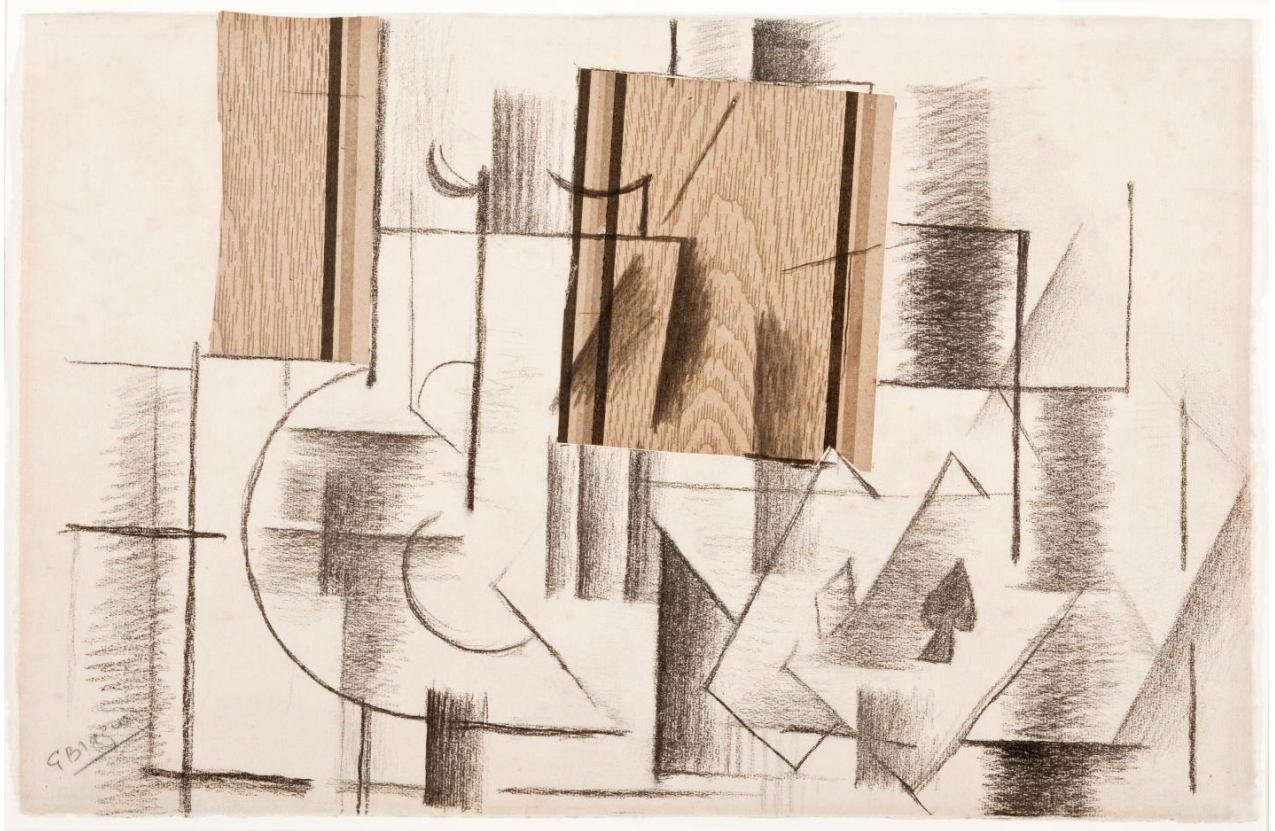
FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS, DRAWING IS A PROCESS more than a medium. Traditionally defined in terms of graphite or ink on paper with the aim of producing an image, drawing has become a metaphor for experimentation and innovation that defies any strict definition. The results of drawing can be as loose as a sketch or as fixed as a mechanical rendering. A drawing can be created with a stylus on an iPad or with a performer's body tracing a line through space. It can be assembled from found imagery or executed on canvas.

The roots of these relatively recent expansive and liberating notions of drawing extend back to surrealism, and drawing was central to surrealism from its very beginnings. LACMA's special exhibition *Drawing Surrealism* (October 21, 2012 – January 6, 2013) focuses on how drawing, previously considered a minor medium, became a predominant means of expression and innovation among artists associated with surrealism, and in turn has had longstanding repercussions in the history of art.

Drawing reaches back further, of course. It represents the most primal and elemental form of expression: drawing was the first means of expression for prehistoric humans and continues to be the first means of expression for children. With surrealism, drawing, long recognized as the medium of exploration and innovation for its use in studies and preparatory sketches, was set free from its associations with other media, notably painting, and valued for its intrinsic qualities of immediacy and spontaneity.

Drawing Surrealism is the first large-scale exhibition to explore the significance of drawing and works on paper to surrealist innovation. Although launched initially as a literary movement with the publication of André Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism* in 1924, surrealism quickly became a cultural phenomenon in which the visual arts were central to envisioning the world of dreams and the unconscious. Automatic drawings, exquisite corpses, frottage, decalcomania, and collage, for example, are just a few of the drawing-based processes invented or reinvented by surrealists as means to tap into the subconscious realm.

Collage



GEORGES BRAQUE
(France, 1882–1963)

Glass and Playing Cards, 1912

Mixed media/assemblage/collage, *papier collé*, and charcoal on paper
11⁵/₈ x 18¹/₈ in. (29.5 x 46 cm)

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. William Preston Harrison Collection (31.12.2)

© 2012 Georges Braque Estate/ARS/ADAGP, Paris

Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA

BEFORE SURREALISM, ARTISTS GEORGES BRAQUE and Pablo Picasso invented the first mixed-media drawing techniques. Braque's *Glass and Playing Cards* from LACMA's permanent collection combines traditional drawing with modern collage. He created the work by layering different source materials, such as paper and faux wood paneling, on top of each other, in combination with charcoal drawing. The process incorporates drawing's characteristic elements of spontaneity, chance, and visual exploration but with an inventive approach in a new medium. The result depicts ordinary subjects, a glass and playing cards, but avoids the conventional role of art as describing physical appearance. Instead, Braque explored an alternative way of presenting a visual equivalent of the world we see and experience. In what art historians now call the synthetic cubist phase, artists abstracted forms into rectangular shapes and flat planes, building up a composition "synthetically." Here, Braque reduced the appearance of the glass to a series of lines, and the cards to quick notations of shape and suit. The edges of the cards are left open in places, and blurred in others, as a way of both unifying the elements and creating an overall flatness to the image. At this moment in cubism, artists sought ways to acknowledge the two-dimensional nature of the support (sheet of paper or canvas) by creating an image that defiantly rejected the appearance of depth in space. The surrealists adopted collage as a primary visual strategy because of its capacity to disorient the viewer through the unlikely juxtaposition of everyday images. Considered one of the movement's leaders, Max Ernst was the first to intuit the surrealist potential of collage, which relied on found materials from everyday life that could be reassembled to create perplexing surreal scenarios. For some works, his collage sources were printed teaching-aid catalogues that dealt with subjects ranging from anatomy to paleontology. According to Ernst, his collages "transform the banal pages of advertisement into dramas which reveal my most secret desires."¹

Collage Still Lifes

Create a source list of everyday materials that could be included in a still life, including objects, textiles, and foods. Gather and arrange the items into a still life, then sketch it in pencil. Next, sketch the shapes that comprise the still life's composition. Cut out the shapes and rearrange them on another sheet of paper, transforming your drawing into collage. For a colorful or decorative touch, cut the shapes out of construction or patterned paper inspired by the still life.

Automatic Drawing



ANDRÉ MASSON
(France, 1896–1987)

Délire végétal (Vegetal Delirium), c. 1925
Ink on paper, 16¼ x 12 in. (42.5 x 30.5 cm)
Private collection, Paris

© 2012 Andre Masson Estate/ARS/ADAGP, Paris

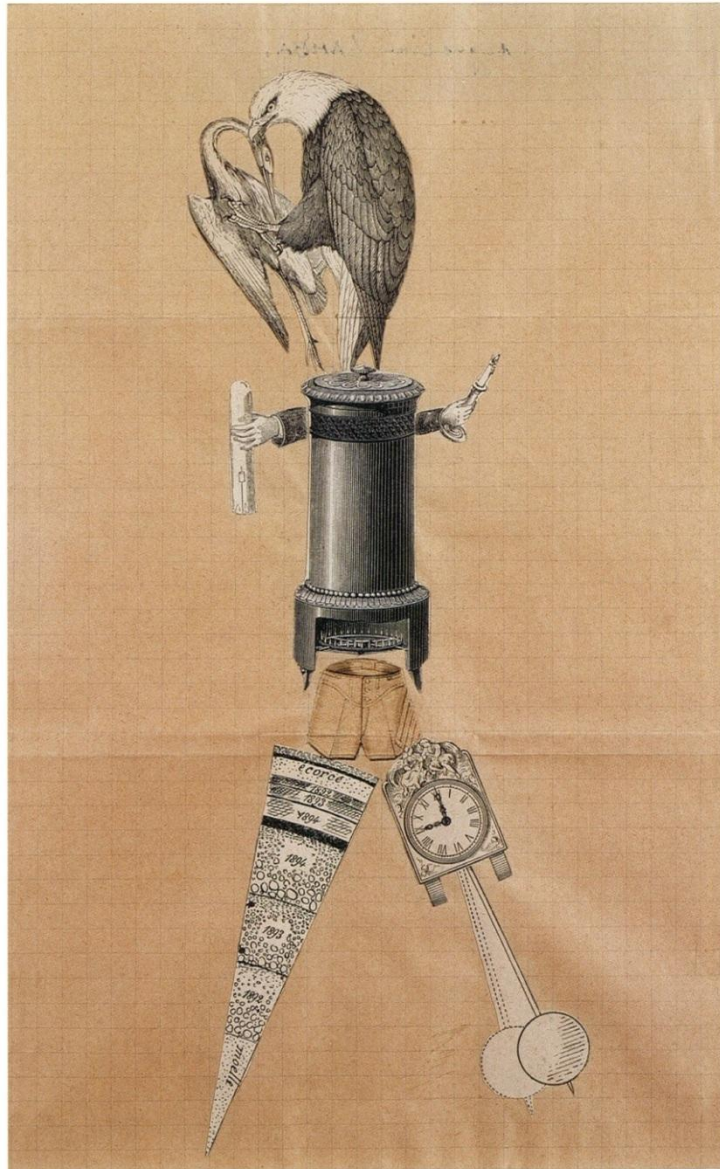
AUTOMATIC DRAWING WAS THE FIRST GRAPHIC process adopted and sanctioned (through publications and André Breton's writings) by surrealism. It derived from Breton's notion of "pure psychic automatism" as the expression of "the real functioning of thought . . . in the absence of any control exercised by reason, beyond all aesthetic or moral preoccupation."² In describing his process of drawing automatically, André Masson claimed: "In the beginning, I drew so feverishly that I didn't see what I was making. In this tornado of sorts, without any precise form, emerged parts that one could relate to the world of the senses."³

Adapting this notion into an art technique generally involved chance and the rapid and aimless meandering of an artist's hand across a piece of paper. The results were as distinct and varied as the artists themselves. For the surrealists, many of whom were writers by vocation, automatic drawing allowed a visual means of expression using the familiar tools of pen and ink.

From Writing to Drawing

Record a fun and fanciful story, allowing the setting, characters, and action to evolve from your imagination. Next, act out your story, using your body to create movement, gesture, and sound. Alter your expressions to describe the story's beginning, climax, and conclusion. Lastly, translate the experience of writing and performing your story into an abstract drawing. Use similar gestures with your hands to create a nonrepresentational drawing that captures your story's essence.

Exquisite Corpse



ANDRÉ BRETON (France, 1896–1966)
JACQUELINE LAMBA (France, 1910–1993)
YVES TANGUY (France, 1900–1955, active United States)
Cadavre exquis (Exquisite Corpse), 1938
Collage, 9⁷/₈ x 6³/₈ in. (25.1 x 16.2 cm)
Collection Sylvio Perlstein-Antwerp
© 2012 André Breton Estate
© 2012 Jacqueline Lamba Estate/ARS/ADAGP, Paris
© 2012 Yves Tanguy/ARS, NY
Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA, by Hervé Lewandowski

IF AUTOMATIC DRAWING ENCAPSULATED THE surrealist notion of tapping into the unconscious, then the game of exquisite corpse, beginning in 1925, embodied the surrealist notions of collaboration and chance. In André Breton and Paul Eluard's *Abridged Dictionary of Surrealism*, the exquisite corpse is defined as a "game of folded paper that consists of having several people compose a phrase or drawing collectively, none of the participants having any idea of the nature of the preceding contribution or contributions."⁴ The earliest examples were drawn with graphite or ink or colored pencil on everyday writing paper. Around 1929 collaborators began using pastel or tempera on black paper, and beginning in the mid-1930s, collage was used. According to Breton, a frequent "player," "What really excited us about these productions was the certainty that, no matter what, they could not possibly have been conjured up by a single brain, and that they possessed to a much greater degree the capacity for 'deviation.'"⁵ The bizarre anthropomorphic creatures generated from games of exquisite corpse also may have provided inspiration for artists' individual works.

To create the 1938 example featured here, *Cadavre exquis* (Exquisite Corpse) by French artists André Breton, Jacqueline Lamba, and Yves Tanguy, the artists met, perhaps in a Paris café or apartment. Each brought art materials, which became game pieces: magazines, newspapers, flyers, any kind of printed ephemera, along with scissors and glue. The artists kept their stashes of images hidden, as surprise is part of the game. They set out a piece of paper like the one shown here, about the size of a sheet of notebook paper. The first artist applied an image cut from paper and fixed it in place, maybe the clock, the cone, and perhaps the shorts shown here. Leaving a tiny part visible at the top as a guide, the artist then passed the folded sheet, with the image mostly hidden, to the next artist. The game repeated as each "player" added a cut image to the developing collective form. The exquisite corpse game ended when the unplanned, unexpected form was revealed. The game championed ideas surrealists valued: chance, collaboration, and unexpected outcomes.

Write, Make, Collaborate

Create an exquisite corpse writing by, first, forming a group of three writers. As a group, select characters, a time, and a place for your story. Let the action of your story develop cooperatively by allowing the first writer to establish the beginning, the second to invent the middle, and the third to cement the end. Tell the story out loud as a group and then record it in writing. Pass the written story to a group of three artists, who will use the text as inspiration for an exquisite corpse drawing. Artists—read the story out loud, then individually imagine another character that might live in this strange world. Fold a single sheet of paper into three sections, then ask each artist to contribute a head, a torso, and legs to spawn a new and inventive creature. Pass the drawing along to another group of writers to use as inspiration for yet another story.

Decalcomania



GEORGES HUGNET
(France, 1906–1974)
Untitled, c. 1935–36

Gouache, image and sheet: 9¾ x 13¾ in. (24.8 x 33.7 cm)
framed: 17⁷/₈ x 20⁵/₈ x 1 in. (44.8 x 52.4 x 2.5 cm)

LACMA, purchased with funds provided by Alice and Nahum Lainer
through the 2006/2007 Drawings Group (M. 2007.28)

© 2012 Georges Hugnet Estate/ARS/ADAGP, Paris
Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA

IN THE MID-1930S, ARTISTS DEVELOPED NEW automatic drawing techniques in attempts to bypass the rational mind in the creative process. Decalco-mania, for example, involved applying gouache to a sheet of paper and/or stencil and then pressing it against another sheet, creating a transfer image that is revealed when the sheets are pulled apart. Originally a decorative technique popular in the nineteenth century, it was repurposed for therapeutic usages and designated the Rorschach test in the 1920s. This test, still used today for the psychological analysis of patients, similarly involves the appearance of random shapes created by inkblots and later interpreted by a doctor. In art and medicine, there was a shared belief that the subconscious realm held valuable information.

An example from surrealism is George Hugnet's *Untitled* from LACMA's permanent collection. Here, the viewer is a critical part of the art experience, invited to envision and interpret what the artist spontaneously created. The title, *Untitled*, provides no clue or, in surrealist thought, offers no evidence of a preexisting form being described. Hugnet applied areas of gouache (an opaque watercolor) in a variety of colors onto one sheet of paper, and while the paint was still wet, pressed a second sheet on top. This transfer created the forms you see – ambiguous colors, shapes, and textures filled with endless interpretations for the viewer.

Paint-blot Drawings

Create your own decalcomania drawing by squeezing small dots of different colored nontoxic paint, such as acrylic, tempera, or gouache, onto a sheet of sturdy paper. Fold the paper in half, using your fingers to gently manipulate the paint. Experiment by tempering the pressure with which you fold and massage, allowing the paints to mix and interact in different ways. Open the sheet to reveal your paint-blot drawing, then ask a few peers to title the work according to what they see.

Drawing after Surrealism

ARTISTIC INNOVATIONS RESULTING FROM THE EXPANSIVE inventiveness of surrealist drawing are evident in the work of later artists who adapted surrealist techniques and approaches to their own ends, often with very different results. The open-ended approach of automatic drawing and surrealist use of materials, ranging from sand to smoke to photographic paper to paint, brought about innovations in work by later artists. The exquisite corpse “game” invited into the artistic process previously undervalued elements of collaboration, play, and naïveté. Surrealist collage allowed for the reuse of preexisting imagery in drawing that eventually contributed to the collage-based practices critical of mass culture. Even conventional modes of drawing – decried as too academic or illustrational by some – were transformed by surrealists, paving the way for the psychological revelations in the work of later artists.

Drawing today is in many ways indebted to the expansive and innovative approach to artistic creation and the primacy of the art form encouraged by surrealism. For contemporary artists, drawing is a process more than a medium; it functions as a metaphor for experimentation and innovation that defies any strict material definition. Artists today are not limited to “making lines and marks on paper,”⁶ the Oxford English Dictionary definition of drawing. Instead, drawing is an attitude, an approach motivated by experimentation and innovation that can go where no other pictorial practice can. Drawing is visual art’s very own avant-garde.

Works Cited

- 1 Leslie Jones, “Tracing Dreams: Surrealist Drawing 1915–1950” in *Drawing Surrealism* (Los Angeles: LACMA, 2012), pp. 40–46.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 25–30.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 31–33.
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 “drawing, v.,” in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2012. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 1 November 2012 <http://www.oed.com/>.

Essay text was adapted from Leslie Jones’s “Tracing Dreams: Surrealist Drawing 1915–1950” from the exhibition catalogue *Drawing Surrealism* (Los Angeles: LACMA, 2012). Descriptions of the art objects were written by Susan Hoffmann. These curriculum materials were prepared by Jennifer Reid and Holly Gillette and designed by Jenifer Shell. © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA. All rights reserved.

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Observational Drawing

IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE, DRAWING SERVED a strictly preparatory purpose. Painters used drawing to practice and perfect their ideas, creating countless sketches of minute details, figural forms, and background settings before reaching a desired composition for their paintings. Although painted with oil on copper, this work by Dutch artist Ambrosius Bosschaert exemplifies drawing's importance to Renaissance-era artistic practice in that it is an imagined image—a composite of observational and scientific studies of life.

Bosschaert painted this still life nearly four hundred years ago in Holland. The subject is a bouquet of flowers that bursts forth from a small glass vase in a profusion of color and texture. The vase sits on a ledge—perhaps of a balcony or window—overlooking a meandering river, a small island, and a distant city. Alongside the vase on the ledge are two seashells, a flower out of water, and a small insect.

Bosschaert's flower paintings typically consist of bouquets that could not have existed in real life, because the flowers he chose to depict did not all bloom during the same season. In this arrangement, he combined studies of tulips, irises, roses, carnations, daffodils, and various nibbling creatures. Still-life paintings such as this one provided excellent opportunities for artists to showcase their abilities to mimic textures and surfaces in great detail and with realistic effects, which they practiced first in drawing, and then perfected in painting. Bosschaert was a leader in Dutch flower paintings, and many scholars consider this painting to be his masterpiece.

Drawing from Life

Take a walk around the school, neighborhood, or community. Collect samples of nature, such as flowers, plants, leaves, petals, sticks, and insects or bugs. In teams of three, gather your source materials and arrange a still life in the classroom. Try different combinations before you reach a desired composition. Then, talk as a group about what you see and record some of the details that you notice. What details did you see that your partners did not? Choose a spot around the still life to sit and sketch. When finished, compare and contrast sketches and the different perspectives that you recorded.

For more information on drawing and its importance to artistic practice, see the introductory essay included on the curriculum CD.

For a lesson plan inspired by observational drawing, see the classroom activity *Life Drawing: Science Illustration* included in the curriculum folder.



AMBROSIUS BOSSCHAERT (Holland, 1573–1621)
Bouquet of Flowers on a Ledge, 1619–20
Oil on copper, 15½ x 14 x 2 in. (39.4 x 35.6 x 5.1 cm)
LACMA, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edward W. Carter (M.2003.108.7)
Photo © 2010 Museum Associates/LACMA

Collage

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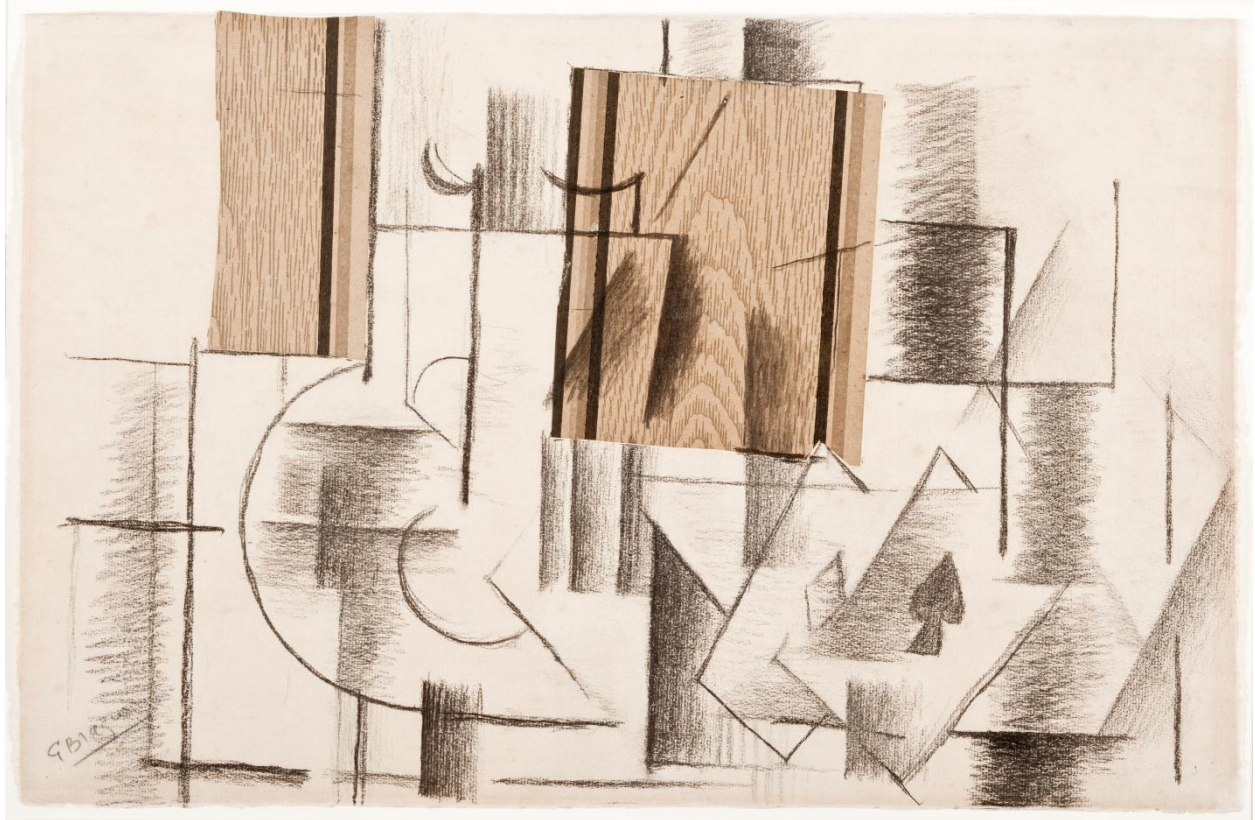
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1 Leslie Jones, “Tracing Dreams: Surrealist Drawing 1915–1950” in *Drawing Surrealism* (Los Angeles: LACMA, 2012), pp. 40–46.

For more information on modern drawing, see the introductory essay included on the curriculum CD.

For a lesson plan inspired by abstract drawing, see the classroom activity *Abstract Still Lifes* included in the curriculum folder.



GEORGES BRAQUE (France, 1882–1963)

Glass and Playing Cards, 1912

Mixed media/assemblage/collage, *papier collé*, and charcoal on paper

11⁵/₈ x 18¹/₈ in. (29.5 x 46 cm)

LACMA, Mr. and Mrs. William Preston Harrison Collection (31.12.2)

© 2012 Georges Braque Estate/ARS/ADAGP, Paris

Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA

Exquisite Corpse

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guide, the artist then passed the folded sheet, with the image mostly hidden, to the next artist. The game repeated as each “player” added a cut image to the developing collective form. The exquisite corpse game ended when the unplanned, unexpected form was revealed. The game championed ideas surrealists valued: chance, collaboration, and unexpected outcomes.

Write, Make, Collaborate

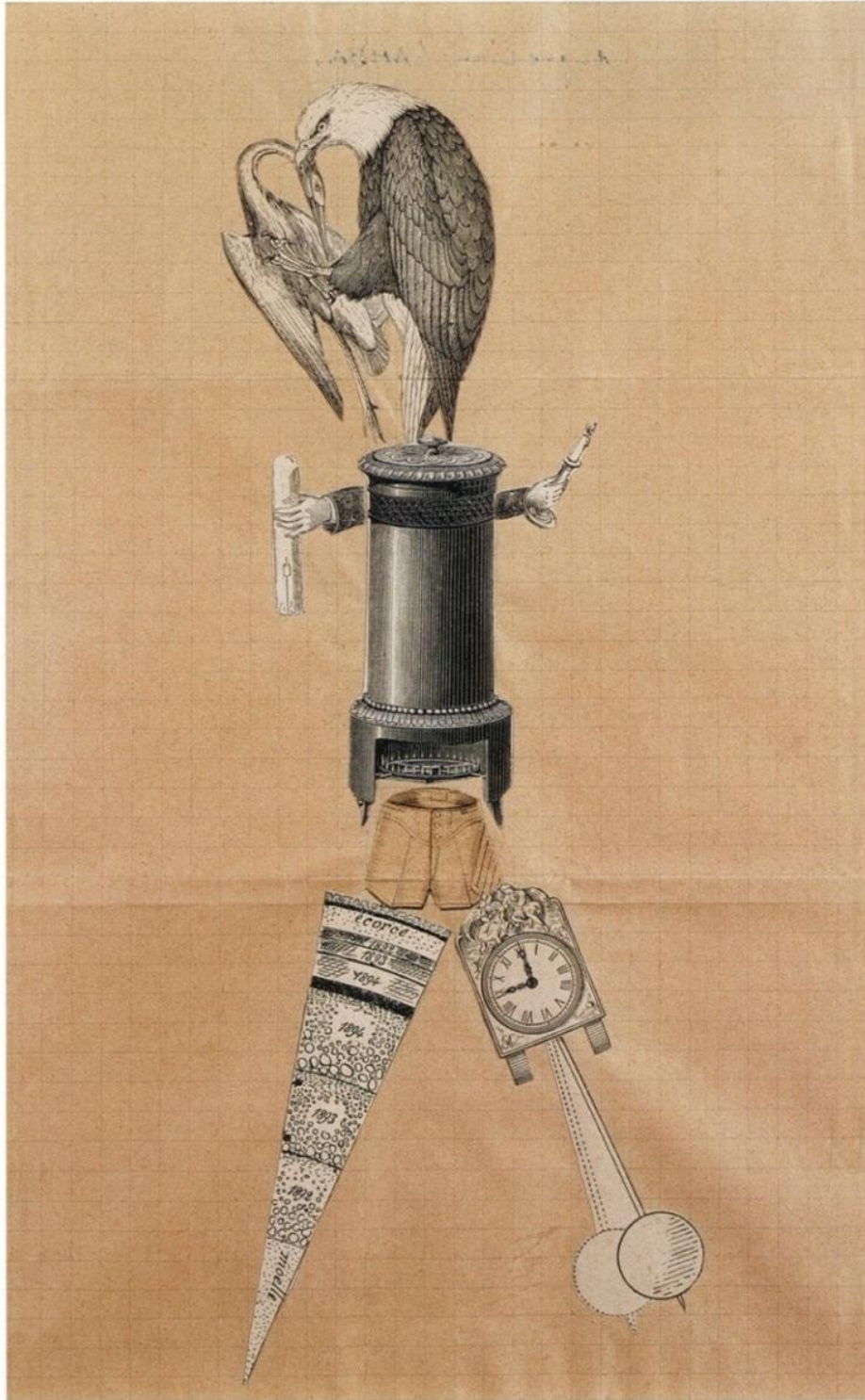
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1 Leslie Jones, “Tracing Dreams: Surrealist Drawing 1915–1950” in *Drawing Surrealism* (Los Angeles: LACMA, 2012), pp. 25–30.

2 Ibid.

For art historical information on surrealism and works by other surrealist artists, see the introductory essay included on the curriculum CD.

For a lesson plan inspired by collaborative drawing, see the classroom activity *Surrealist Drawing Games* included in the curriculum folder.



ANDRÉ BRETON (France, 1896–1966)

JACQUELINE LAMBA (France, 1910–1993)

YVES TANGUY (France, 1900–1955, active United States)

Cadavre exquis (Exquisite Corpse), 1938, Collage, 9⁷/₈ x 6³/₈ in. (25.1 x 16.2 cm)

Collection Sylvio Perlstein-Antwerp © 2012 André Breton Estate

© 2012 Jacqueline Lamba Estate/ARS/ADAGP, Paris, © 2012 Yves Tanguy/ARS, NY

Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA, by Hervé Lewandowski

Decalcomania

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Paint-blot Drawings

Create your own decalcomania drawing by squeezing small dots of different colored nontoxic paint, such as acrylic, tempera, or gouache, onto a sheet of sturdy paper. Fold the paper in half, using your fingers to gently manipulate the paint. Experiment by tempering the pressure with which you fold and massage, allowing the paints to mix and interact in different ways. Open the sheet to reveal your paint-blot drawing, then ask a few peers to title the work according to what they see.

For information on other surrealist drawing techniques, see the introductory essay included on the curriculum CD.

For a lesson plan inspired by experimental drawing, see the classroom activity *Experimental Drawing* included in the curriculum folder.



GEORGES HUGNET (France, 1906–1974)

Untitled, c. 1935–36

Gouache, image and sheet: 9¾ x 13¾ in. (24.8 x 33.7 cm)

framed: 17⁵/₈ x 20⁵/₈ x 1 in. (44.8 x 52.4 x 2.5 cm)

LACMA, purchased with funds provided by Alice and Nahum Lainer
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Photo © 2012 Museum Associates/LACMA

Classroom Activity

Surrealist Drawing Games

Enduring Understanding	Artists invent games to trigger the imagination and to create collaborative, unexpected artworks.
Grades	K–12
Time	One to two class periods
Visual Art Concepts	Form, gesture, scale, narrative, collaboration, exquisite corpse
Materials	Pencils, colored pencils, erasers, oil pastels, wide tip markers, roll of craft or butcher paper, letter size sketching paper, scissors
Talking about Art	View and discuss the printed image of <i>Cadavre exquis</i> (<i>Exquisite Corpse</i> , 1938) by André Breton, Yves Tanguy, and Jacqueline Lamba included in the curriculum folder.

What do you see in this artwork? Look closely, what materials or tools do you think the artists used to create this *Exquisite Corpse*? Turn to a partner and think about the process of creating this artwork. What steps do you think the artists took to create it? What evidence do you see to support your hypothesis?

Drawing was an important medium for the surrealists and they often collaborated, playing drawing games to create imaginative and unexpected works of art. To create this *Exquisite Corpse*, the artists cut imagery from magazines then each, in turn, affixed a random image to the same sheet of paper. Each added to the artwork, folded their contribution over, then passed the work to the next artist. The process is a game of chance and the result is a collaborative work made without knowing what the artist before had added and not knowing how the game would end.

Look closely at the parts that comprise the body. What everyday objects do you see? If this creature could talk, what would it think, what would it say? What would it sound like as it saunters away? Write a short monologue to accompany the artwork.

Making Art	Group students in teams of three. Using letter-size drawing paper, have students fold the paper into three sections. On the top section, one student will draw a “head,” the middle section a “torso,” and the bottom section the “legs.”
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Give students 5–10 minutes each for drawing, then fold the paper over to conceal the image, and pass to the next artist. Remind students to extend their drawing into the next section so that the next artist knows where to begin his or her drawing. When finished, open the sheet to reveal a strange and disorienting creature.

It is important to note that the body is open to interpretation; the figure can be part human, part animal, and part alien. The body can take the form of a building or an amoeba. Encourage students to think imaginatively. Lastly add color to the background and the figure.

After a few rounds of playing the game, ask each group to select their favorite exquisite corpse. Students will then take the letter size drawing and scale it to “life size” on a roll of craft or butcher paper. The group can decide to alter the original figure slightly, giving the figure gesture or movement. Using markers, oil pastels, and pencils the group will collaboratively add color and detail to the figure. Ask students to think about the division of tasks and how they will work together to execute the life-size work of art. Once completed, cut out the figures and install them in the classroom.

Reflection

Facilitate a gallery walk so that students can view all of the artworks up close. Remember, no touching artworks in the gallery.

What do you see? Discuss the different parts that comprise the bodies. Where did people draw inspiration? Are there similarities? Differences? Which creatures would make interesting cartoon characters? Which look like super heroes, scientific oddities, or story book villains? Have student groups draft and share their character’s story, traits, and action with the class.

Curriculum Connection

Create a collaborative poem describing your character. In the same group of three, have the first student write the first two lines of the poem and pass it to their partner. The second student will continue the poem by adding two more lines, then pass the poem along to the next person to finish. Read the poem aloud to your group then share with the rest of the class.

Compare the process of writing a collaborative poem to drawing a collaborative artwork. Which is easier? Which is more difficult? What did you experience that makes you say that? What would you do differently if you tried again?

Classroom Activity

Life Drawing: Science Illustration

Enduring Understanding	Illustrations are drawings that convey information. A single illustration, whether drawn or painted, can tell us about the nexus of science and art.
Grades	3–12
Time	One to three class periods
Visual Art Concepts	Line, shape, color, representation, perspective, symbolism
Materials	Pencils, colored pencils, pens, paper, scissors, glue, specimens from nature (i.e., plants, flowers, leaves, etc.). Optional: images of nature from newspapers, magazines, or the internet.
Talking About Art	<p>View and discuss the printed image of Ambrosius Bosschaert’s <i>Bouquet of Flowers on a Ledge</i> (1619–1620) included in the curriculum folder.</p> <p>What do you notice about this painting? Look closely at the many details. Can you identify examples of nature? The artist Ambrosius Bosschaert chose these examples with great care and intention, including flowers like the iris, rose, lily, and tulip as well as insects like the butterfly, dragonfly, bee, and spider. List all of the examples of nature that you can find then categorize each according to flowers, plants, insects, and animals. Share your observations with a partner. What details did you notice that your partner did not? What more can you find?</p> <p>The artist captured other natural elements like the stages of development from a bud to a fully-opened flower. How would you describe the style with which he captured these stages of life? Choose one example, such as the rose, then compare and contrast it with a real-world photograph. Does his representation look realistic or imagined? What do you see in the painting that makes you say that? What resources might the artist have used to create a work with such accuracy?</p> <p>During the 1600s when Bosschaert created this painting, drawing served a strictly preparatory purpose. Before he created this painting, he spent a whole year studying and sketching natural specimens from life. He captured visual elements like line, shape, and color then collected his individual sketches and combined them to create this imagined, yet realistic bouquet.</p>

Making Art

Make a list of natural specimens that you can collect from school, home, or the community. Gather the specimens, combine them as a class, then assign each student a different specimen to research. Collect images and information about your specimen from newspapers, magazines, or the internet. Draft a report describing the qualities and functions of your specimen, including all of the information that you found.

Next, create several sketches of your specimen in pencil. Try, as best you can, to capture specific details by paying careful attention to line and shape. Outline the curvature or form of your specimen then refine the edges in pen. Study the colors of your specimen and, on a separate sheet of paper, use colored pencils to layer and blend the unique colors that you see. Return to your sketch, working from the outline in, to add color to your drawing. When finished, cut out your drawing with scissors.

Collect students' cut-out drawings and arrange them to create an imagined, collaborative bouquet. Include a vase and horizon line so that students can add insects and animals to the composition.

Reflection

Display the bouquet in the classroom for two weeks. At the end of each day, ask students to write a one-paragraph journal entry about a new detail that they notice. After many careful observations, reflect on the new things that they found and how the journal entries evolved over time.

Curriculum Connection

Revisit your assigned specimen and think about it from a scientific point of view. What is its natural habitat? What adaptations help it survive in its environment? What is its relationship to humans (i.e., a domesticated species developed by humans, a wild plant/animal that has adapted to city life)? Use your research as a springboard for developing a Science Fair project. Remember to include science illustration in your final display.

Classroom Activity

Abstract Still Lifes

Enduring Understanding Ideas artists represent in pictures are composite images that we don't actually experience, rather they are approximate memories of what they see.

Grades 3–12

Time One class period

Visual Art Concepts Line, contour, shape, form, value, representational and non-representational, positive and negative space, composition, perspective, collage, Cubism

Materials Graphite pencils, colored pencils, oil pastels, letter-size drawing paper, scissors, glue sticks, 12x18" drawing paper, still-life objects (such as fruit, flowers, bottles)

Talking about Art View and discuss the printed image of Georges Braque's *Glass and Playing Cards* (circa 1912) included in the curriculum folder.

What do you see in this artwork? How would you describe the lines? Do the lines combine to form representational shapes from life? Trace them with your finger then trace any abstract forms that you see. Do you recognize any of these abstract shapes?

Modern artists were inspired from life but instead of mimicking real-world objects, they reduced shapes and forms into simple line and value on paper. These artists, called Cubists, often captured multiple perspectives at once, as Braque did in *Glass and Playing Cards*. Look closely, can you spot any household items such as playing cards and a glass? Are they represented from one vantage point or from multiple perspectives?

When you look at objects, a bowl of fruit for example, do you see all sides of the entire bowl at once or do you see small sections at a time? Do you see the entire piece of fruit all at once? Or, do you assemble the 360-degree view in your mind? Look out the window to see the landscape before you. Describe the vantage point to a partner. How would the view look different if you and your partner took a different perspective?

Cubists, such as Braque, acknowledged the limited ability of the human eye to view objects from one angle at a time and represented what they imagined were multiple moments and impressions in one work of art.

Making Art

Create a source list for a still life, including objects and materials such as flowers, bottles, or objects you may find in the classroom. Arrange the objects in a dynamic composition in the center of the classroom and clear enough room around the table for close viewing. Walk around the still life and sketch it from at least five different vantage points, including lower and higher points of view. Use graphite pencils to draw the contour lines, or silhouette, that you see. Focus on drawing what you see, with careful attention to shape, form, and composition. Draw large, trying to fill the entire piece of paper then add color to the objects in your still life with colored pencils and/or oil pastels.

Cut away the negative space that surrounds your still life then cut out or tear each of the still-life objects. Put the shapes in a pile and mix the pieces up. Using your memory of viewing the still life at different angles, assemble the shapes to represent multiple views at once. Cut the shapes further and rearrange them until you have reached a desired composition. Then, glue the shapes onto a larger sheet of drawing paper. Finally, using colored pencil and/or oil pastels draw the table that your collage still life sits on. Draw the table from any vantage point you desire.

Reflection

Think about the process of viewing the still life from multiple angles. How did careful observation influence your drawing? How did your memory of the 360-degree view influence your final collage?

Curriculum Connection

Use your knowledge of geometry to classify parts of Braque's collage. What types of lines (parallel, perpendicular, intersecting) and shapes (arc, right triangle, rhombus) do you see? What types of angles did he create (right, obtuse, acute)? On the classroom board, generate a list of geometric elements that you can find in this work of art. Compare your findings to your own still life collage.

Classroom Activity

Experimental Drawing

Enduring Understanding	Drawing techniques can incorporate spontaneous and playful experimentation.
Grades	5–12
Time	One class period
Visual Art Concepts	Shape, movement, representational and non-representational, positive and negative space, decalomania
Materials	Sumi inks (various colors), sumi ink brushes, paper (various types), black construction paper or poster board
Talking about Art	View and discuss the printed image of Georges Hugnet’s <i>Untitled</i> (1935–36) included in the curriculum folder.

What do you see in this artwork? How would you describe the shapes in the artwork? Use your finger to outline positive shapes then outline negative shapes. Turn the artwork 180 degrees, do any images emerge? How would you describe the feeling that the artwork exudes?

Look closely, what materials or tools do you think the artist used to create *Untitled*? Georges Hugnet used a process called decalomania to create this artwork. First he applied gouache (a type of opaque paint) to a single sheet of paper then laid a second sheet on top, squishing the paint between the two sheets. By applying pressure in various areas, Hugnet was able to manipulate the paint spontaneously. He pulled the sheets apart to reveal an abstract result, devoid of any representation, but when viewed closely, shapes may emerge.

Surrealists like Hugnet experimented with materials, media, and art forms because it challenged the academic approach to artmaking. Think about the materials that you use in school. How can you use them in new and innovative ways to create art?

Making Art

Dip a brush into ink until the bristles fill with ink then flick the ink onto a sheet of paper. Try not to let the bristles of the brush touch the paper allowing small pools of ink to form on the paper. Next, lay another sheet of paper on top of the inked paper and press both sheets together, rubbing in different areas and with varying pressure. Peel the two sheets apart. What do you see? Do any of the shapes reveal representations from life?

Dip another brush into a different color ink and either connect or enhance the shapes that have spontaneously formed. Let your hand move on its own, without thinking about the result. Let your hand move freely in the process.

Make a few paintings, experimenting with ink colors, varying intensities by diluting ink with water. Try different application techniques like flicking and dripping the ink from the brush. You can even pick one pair of symmetrical decalomania paintings, transforming one of the sheets into a representational painting. Add new lines and shapes to one sheet while leaving the other more abstract. Juxtapose the two together and display them on black construction paper or poster board. Name each artwork based on the shapes that emerge.

Reflection

Once the artworks are dry, display them around the classroom. Facilitate a gallery walk so that students can view all of the paintings. Remember, no touching artworks in the gallery.

How are the paintings similar? How are they different? What shapes do you see? What moods do they evoke? How did the process of decalomania differ from how you have previously used paint before? Turn to a partner and discuss what you enjoyed most about the process of decalomania. Ask your partner to title one of your decalomania works based on the different shapes that he/she sees.

Curriculum Connection

Write a dialogue between your two paintings. Did a character emerge in your representational painting? If not, use one of the shapes as inspiration for your character. If your diptych could talk, what would it say? What story or message would it tell? Read your dialogue to a partner then compare the process of making art with that of writing about art. Share your dialogue with the class.

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