

Travels in Time

Surrealism

Rewritten January 2022 by Jennifer Karch, Verona, Italy



The inventions of stories has always been important to people.

These inventions often help people to “explain the unexplained”. Throughout history, artists have depicted invented scenes in different ways. In the Middle Ages, for instance.

Hieronimus Bosch, c. 1500. The Garden of Earthly Delights



Pisanello, St. George and the Dragon, Sant'Anastasia Verona

Throughout history, artists have depicted invented scenes in different ways. In the Middle Ages, for instance, European artists carved grotesque creatures in stone and painted pictures of dragons, even though these creatures did not exist.



by putting real things in invented, dreamlike settings.
by Dora Maar.

[Realist-photography-takes-over-the-tate-modern-in-london-](#)
ke

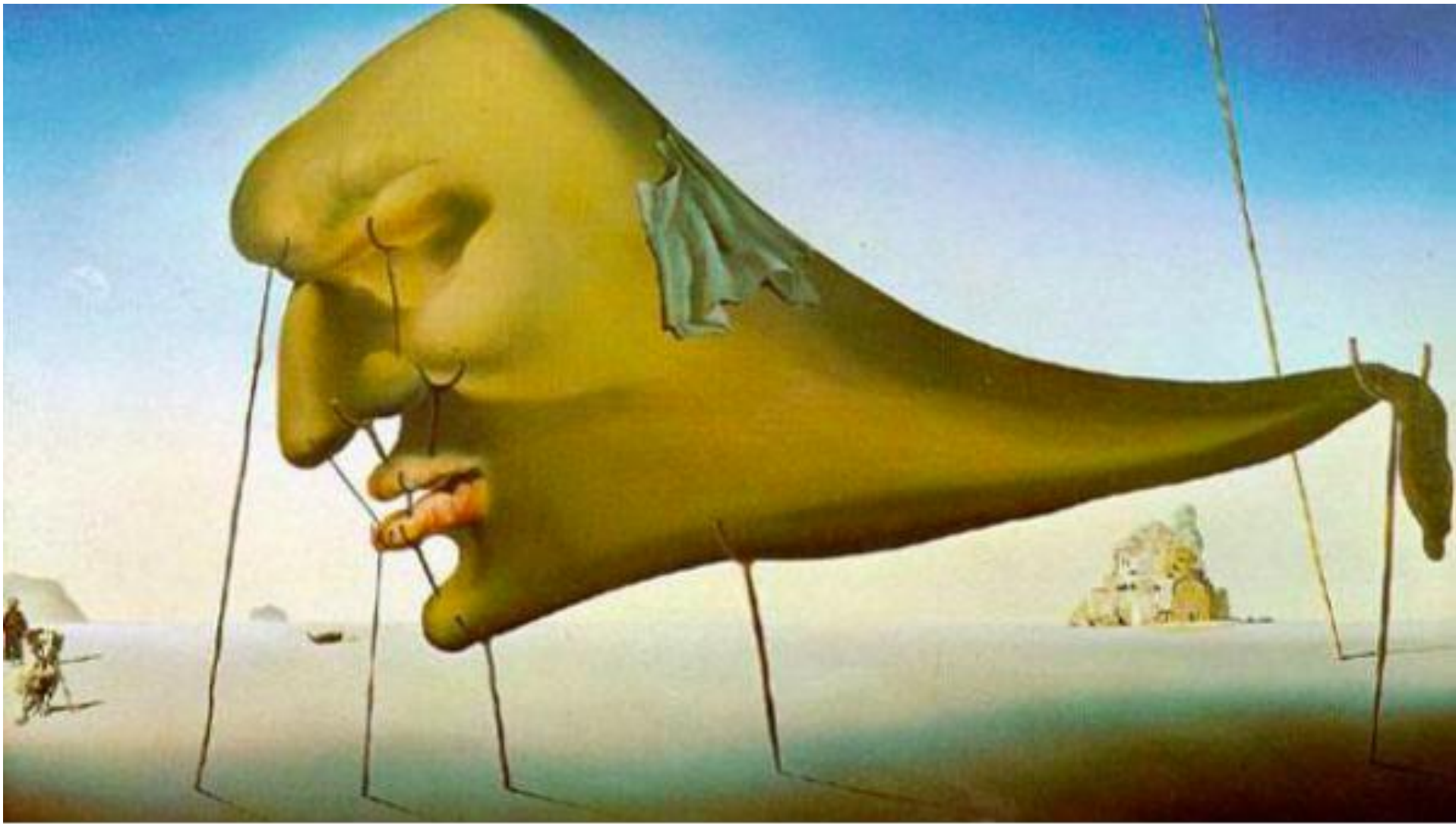


Bosch's worlds were sometimes based on dreams and invented fantasy creatures in imaginative worlds. Such artists, who lived in the second half of the 1400's, transformed people into creatures and gave humanlike qualities to objects.

The Art the Surrealist Movement

1919 -

- Was around the **irrational** and the **subconscious**, both depicting **dream-like** images. When the Surrealist Movement began in 1919, the main aspect of creativity was applied through **automatic writing**, which allowed irrational thoughts to be written through lack of reason and logic. The way in which art was later depicted changed when artists began to document dreams through imagery in paintings.
- Think about a recent dream you had. Could you draw it or describe it? Anyone have a great dream they would like to tell?



Sleep, by Salvador Dali, 1937

The Surrealist approach to art depicts the artist's inner thoughts and subconscious, digressing from the negatively charged Dada movement. Art critics have described surrealism as a **"search for the bizarre and marvelous"** (Matthews 129) because of the whimsical and dream-like images found in the paintings.

More Real than Life

Surrealist artworks are based on the idea that **dreams and fantasies** often seem “**more real**” than **real life**. Surrealist artists in the first half of the 20th century were **inventing** their own settings. Some artists carefully arranged their **odd combinations**. Other allowed **chance** or **coincidence** to create such surprises.

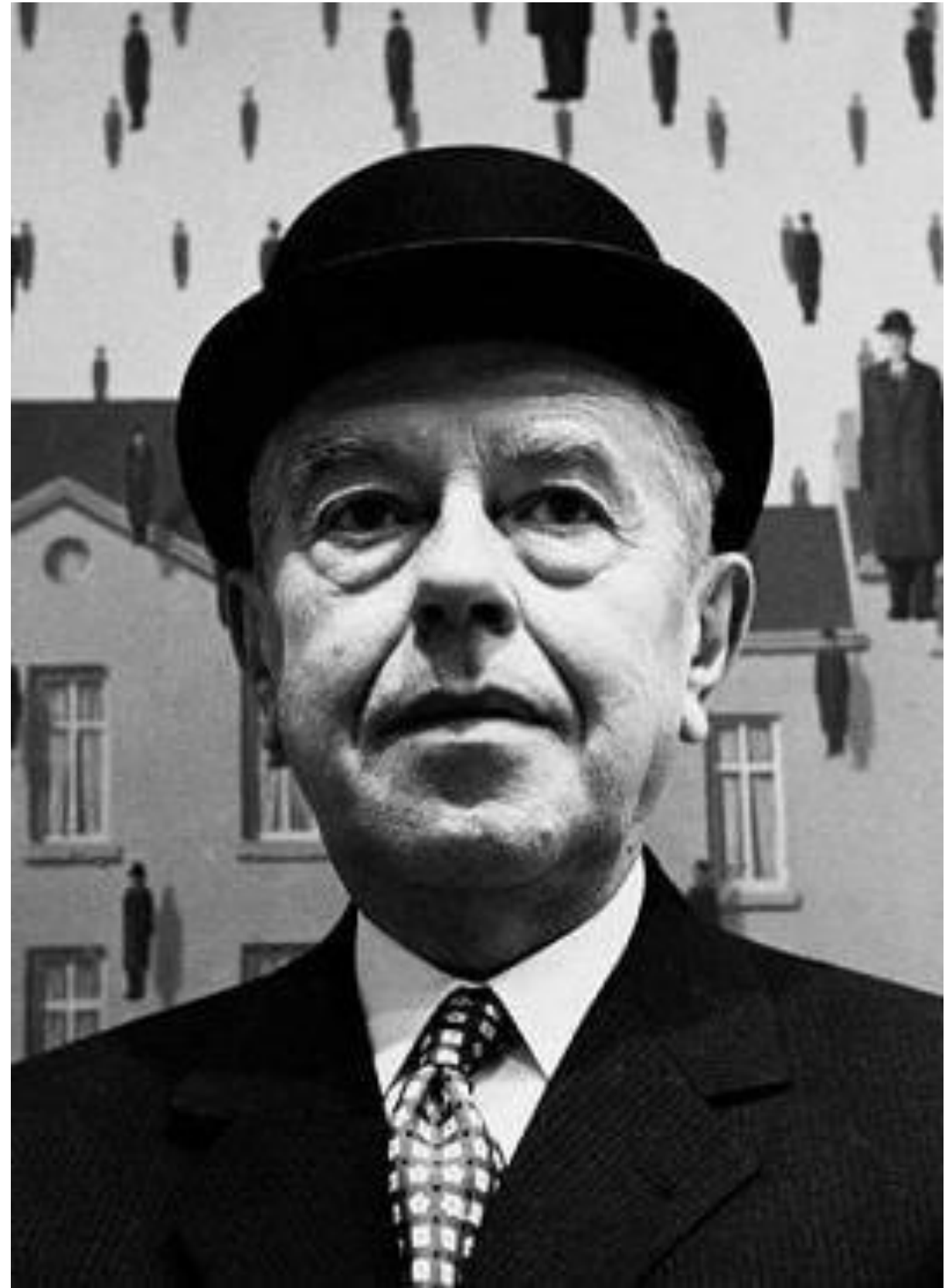
Want to see some strange paintings? Yes? No?

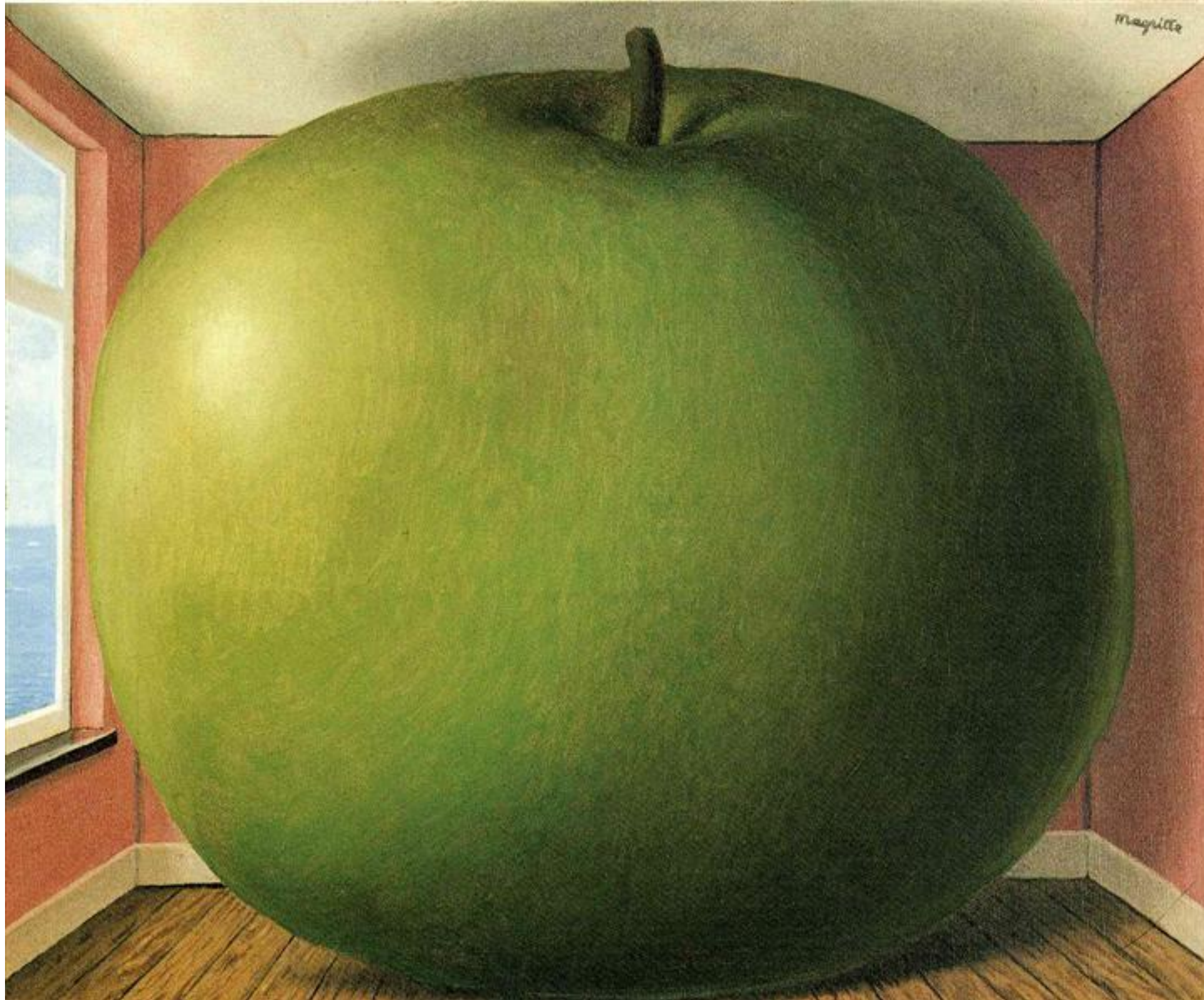


<https://www.artstudio.org/surrealists-melded-reality-with-dreams-ito-create-imaginative-juxtapositions-of-imagery/>

Rene Magritte (Belgium 1898-1967)

After studying at the Brussels Academy of Fine Arts, he designed wallpaper, posters and advertisements. In 1927, he moved to Paris, where he became part of the Surrealist art movement. In his paintings, Magritte changed the scale of everyday objects and caused viewers to question assumptions about the world.





By changing the usual scale of the object in relation to its setting, the artist invented a dreamlike space. Do you get the feeling that something is about to happen?

Rene Magritte, The
Listening room, 1952
Oil on canvas, Kunsthaus, Zurich

- <https://www.renemagritte.org/the-listening-room.jsp/>

What surprises you in The Listening Room? Is the room small or is the apple large?

Visual Tricks - Size of Objects

The paintings of Rene Magritte are like **dreams**. In such artworks, he made **familiar objects** seem **strange**. The objects look **real**, but what the viewer sees **cannot possibly be real**. To play such visual tricks on viewers, Magritte placed objects in **invented places** or depicted objects in **unreal sizes**.

If you could see only these objects, how would you know which was **normal-sized**? Artists sometimes combine objects in ways that we do not expect and that changing an object's scale is one way to create **surprise** in the artwork.



La Golconde, 1953

<https://www.dossierscuola.it/golconda-magritte/?cn-reloaded=1>



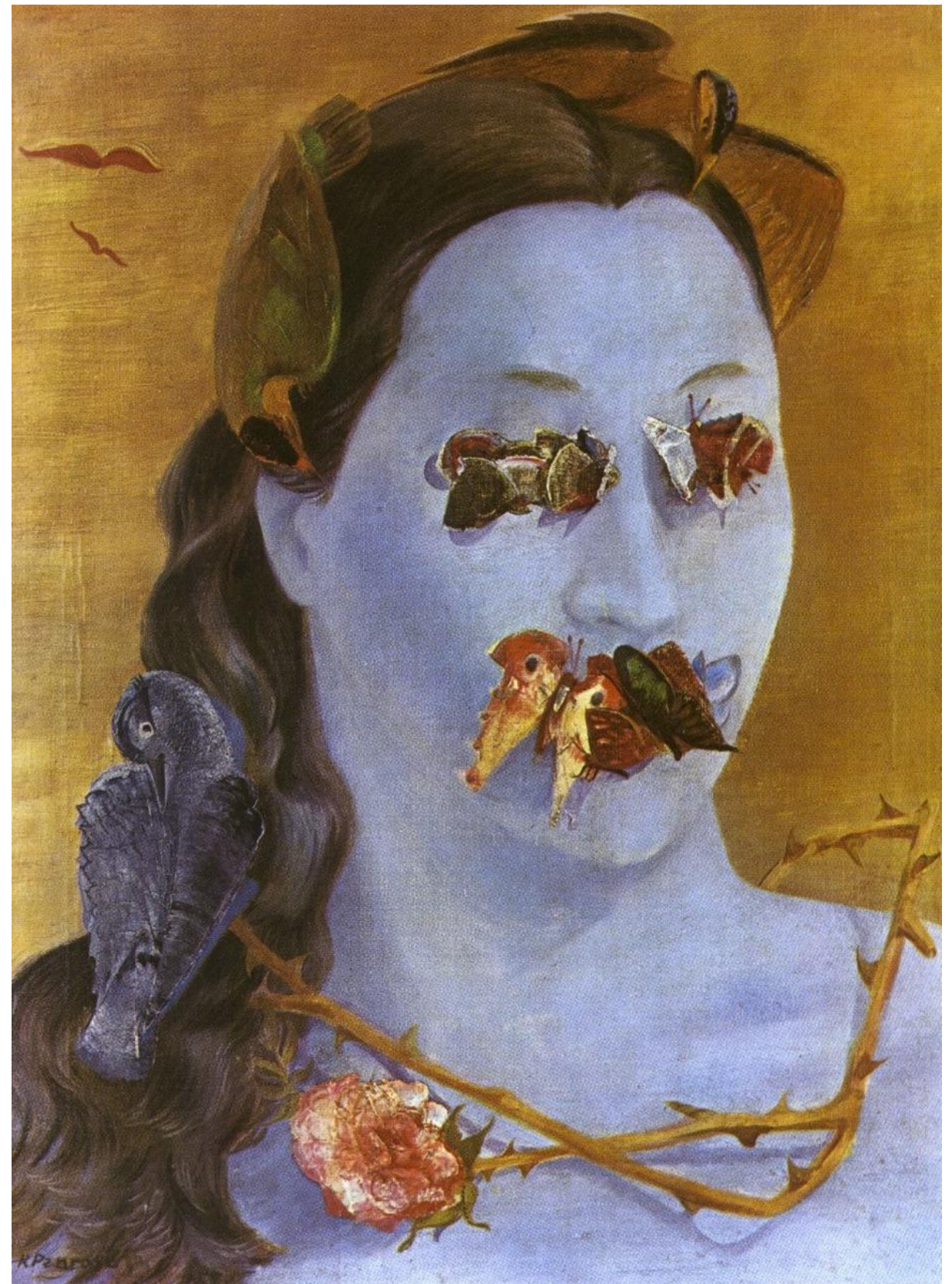
Magritte altered the manner in which images were treated in Surrealist paintings and in this work in which he depicts a smoking pipe with the phrase.... Or ***"This is not a pipe"***. The ambiguity of Magritte's paintings is due to his treatment of ordinary objects displayed in a different manner, similar to Dali's watches (we'll see them soon). Magritte shows a representational approach to art in his works, while Surrealists artists such as Mirò use the automatic style of painting.

The Treachery of Images, 1928

Roland Penrose, English
Surrealist Artist, married to
Lee Miller, American
Photographer
Winged Domino, A Portrait of
Valentine, 1938

A domino is a type of mask, do you see the mask in this work? What mood is suggested in Penrose's work? How does it make you feel? Surrealist Penrose also seemed to play tricks on viewers. In a portrait of his wife, he showed her covered with butterflies and birds. He covered normally recognised features - eyes and lips - with winged creatures.

Portrait of Valentine Penrose nee Boue, Surrealist poet and Roland Penrose's first wife. He painted this portrait when their marriage was over and he thought they would not see each other again. Published in Scrapbook by Roland Penrose, 1981, page 113, La Poligrafa, Barcelona.





How did Surrealist artists shock their viewers?

Meret Oppenheim, Object (Lunch in Fur), 1936

https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/meret-oppenheim-object-paris-1936//

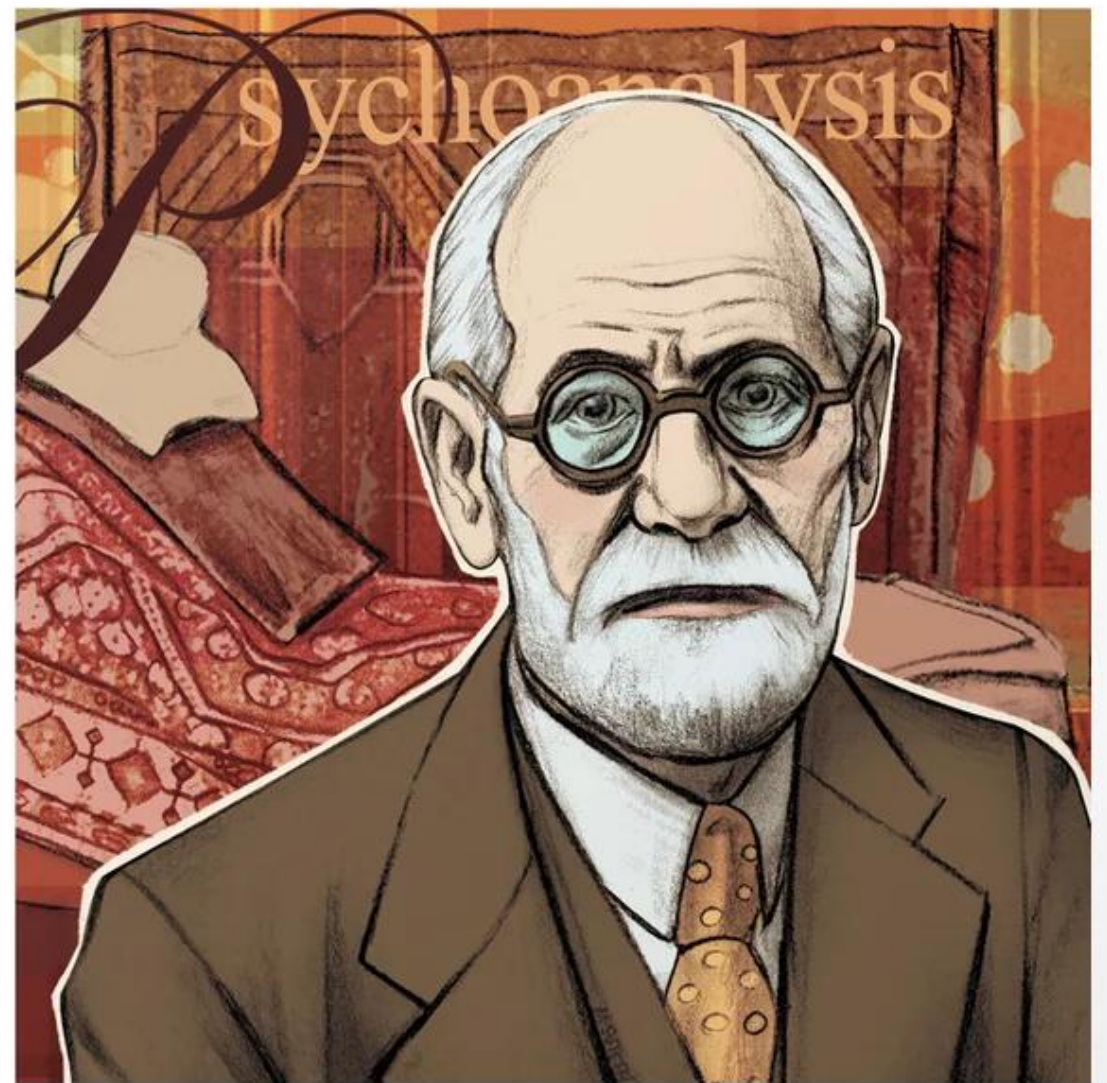


Other Surrealist artists were inspired to invent new methods by combining materials in unusual ways. For instance, for this artwork, Meret covered a cup, saucer and spoon with fur! Would you drink from this cup???

Sigmund Freud

1856-1939

The movement, which developed from the meaninglessness of Dada art, saw young European artists express their disillusionment with the life following WW1. Surrealist artists and writers, who derived many of their theories from those of Freud, the psychoanalyst and psychiatrist who is best known for his theories of the unconscious mind and the defence mechanism of repression and for creating the clinical practice of psychoanalysis for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient, technically referred to as an “analysand” and a psychoanalyst. He had a theory of the interpretation of dreams as sources of insight into unconscious desires.



The artists were interested in unlocking their unconscious through their dreams and chance. During the 1920's and 30's, these were some of the artists who were involved in Surrealism:



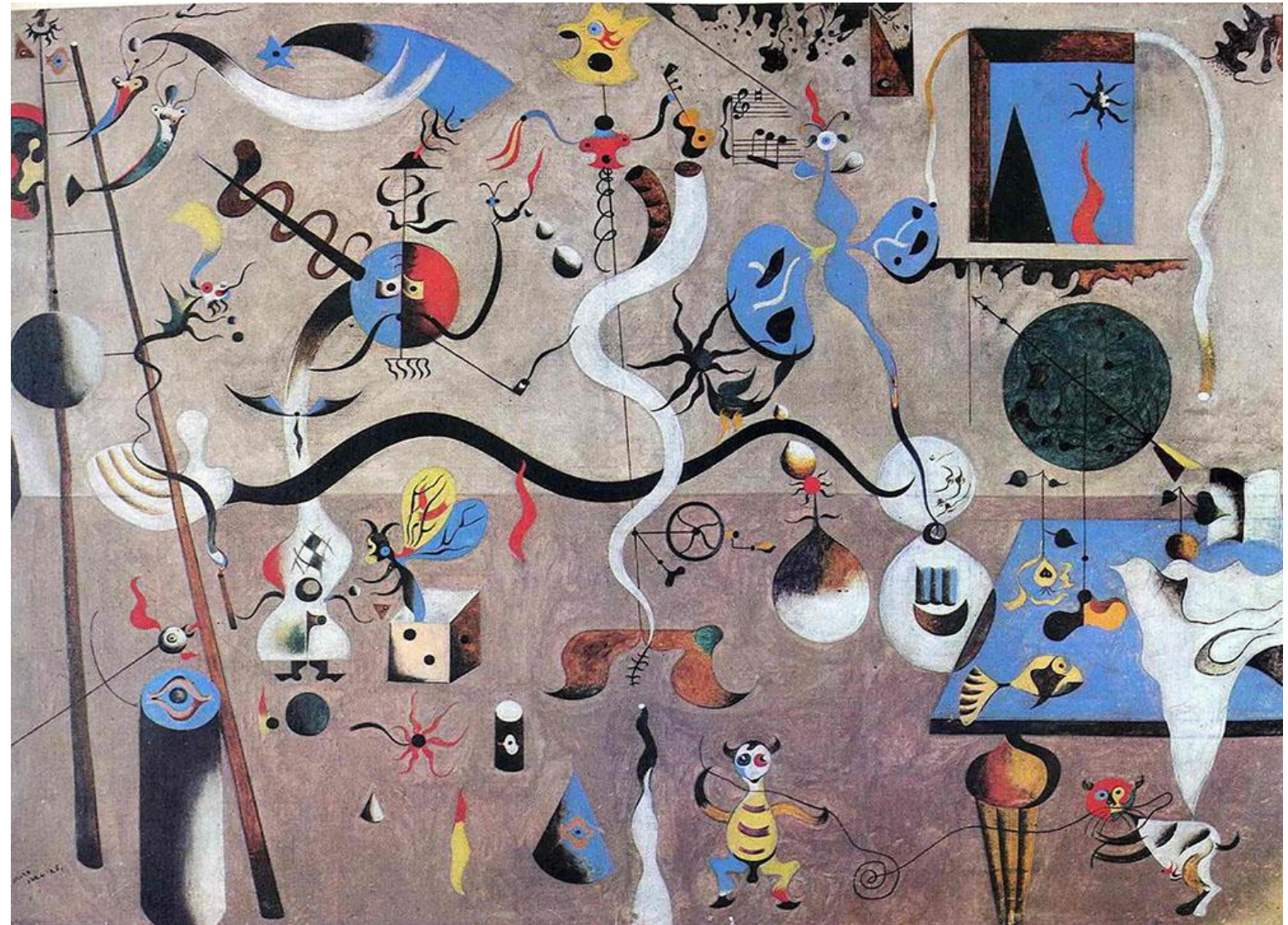
Max Ernst



Joan Mirò

Carnival of Harlequin, 1924

- Mirò painted whimsical and bizarre images in his work using an automatic style of painting. This painting shows a scene of brightly coloured organic forms and shapes in a humorous manner. The creatures or figures appear almost as if they're cartoons, taking up the entire canvas so that the viewer doesn't focus on one aspect of the scene. Some of the spaces appear to be floating in the top corners of the canvas, while others, such as the ones on the left to climb up through the work. The figures are "lively, remarkably vivid and even (his) inanimate objects have an eager vitality" (Arnason, p .295)

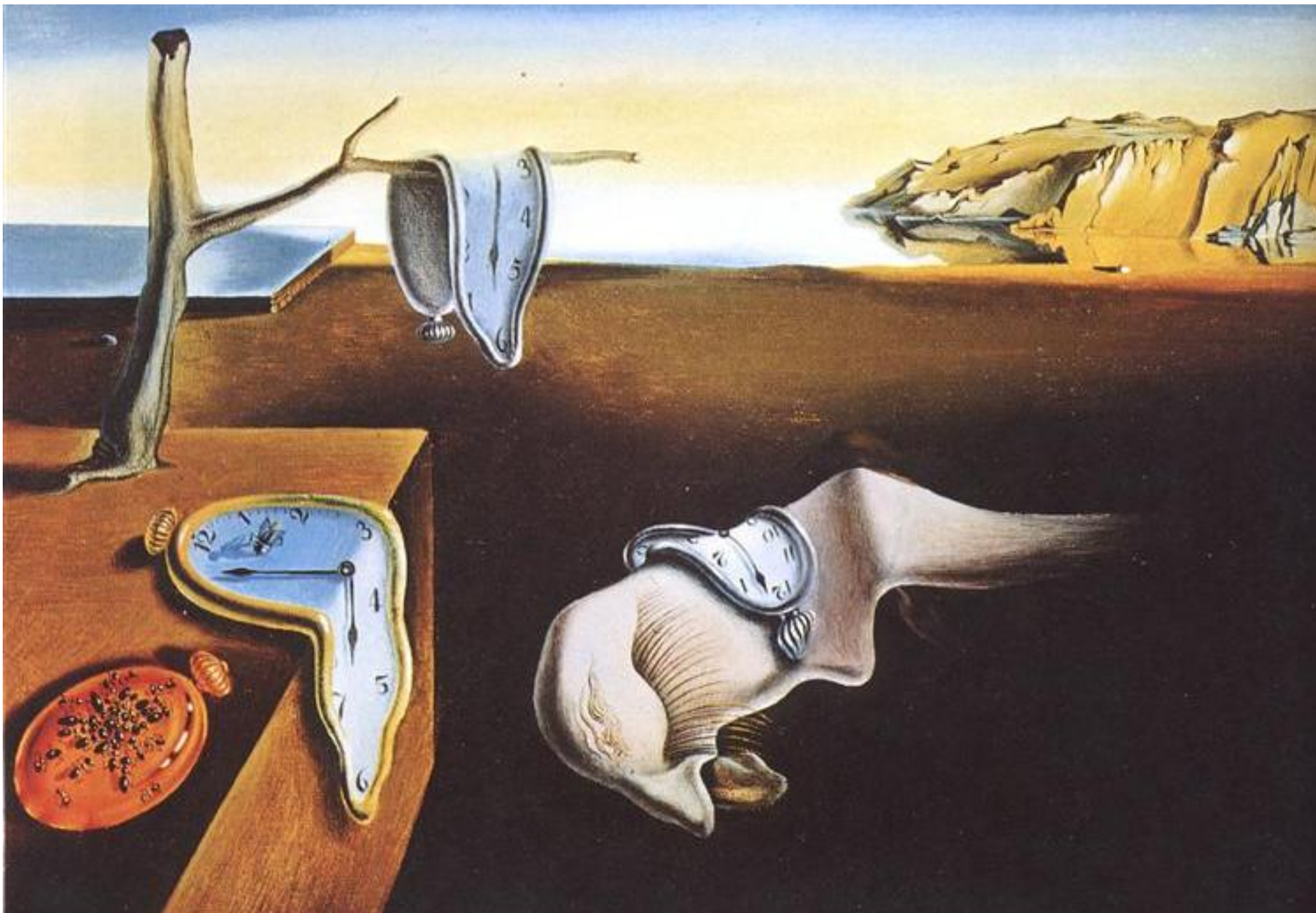




Click on the screen: Video of music



Click on the screen: Video of his work



Salvador Dali, The Persistence of Memory, 1931

<https://www.dalipaintings.com/persistence-of-memory.jsp>

The painting 'The Persistence of Memory' by Salvador Dali is a surrealist work. It features a landscape with a dark, flat foreground, a calm sea, and a pale, hazy sky. On the left, a gnarled, leafless tree stands on a small, rectangular, light-colored platform. A pocket watch is draped over one of its branches, its face sagging under the weight. In the lower-left foreground, another pocket watch lies on the ground, its face distorted and melting. To its left is a small, shallow, reddish-brown bowl filled with dark, round objects, possibly olives or berries. In the lower-right foreground, a large, pale, melting face of a man is shown in profile, with a pocket watch integrated into its forehead. The watch face is also distorted and melting. In the background, a large, craggy cliff face rises from the water, its reflection visible in the calm sea. The overall composition is a dreamlike exploration of the fluidity of time and memory.

Salvador Dali

The Persistence of Memory

Click on the screen: Video

Dal

The Persistence of Memory

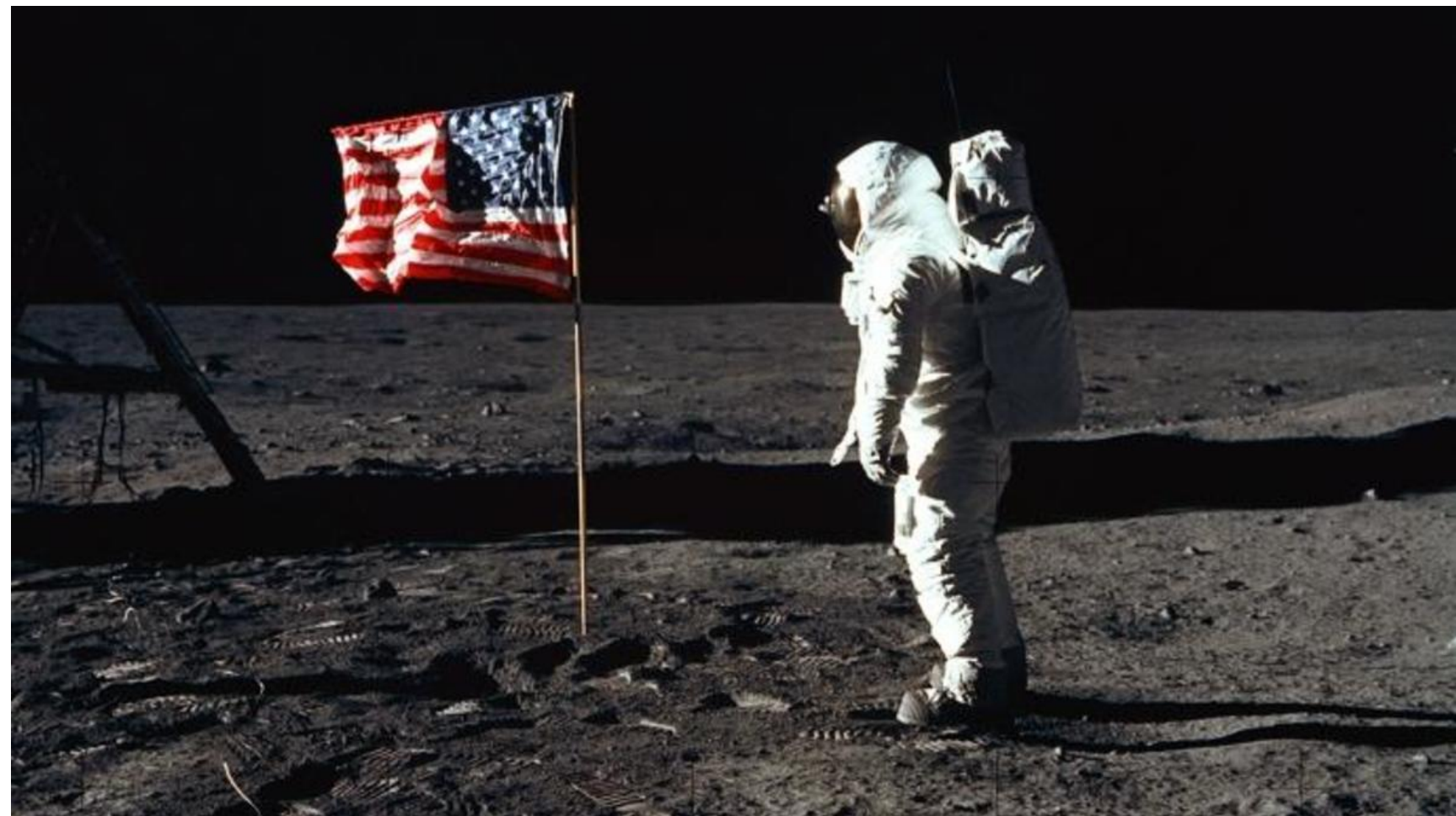
Salvador Dali, a major artist of the Surrealist movement, painting this work in which he depicts the ordinary objects such as watches in a morph like stage. Dalì depicts the watches in this dreamlike landscape in limp shapes as if they were melting. Dalì said that at the shapes were “nothing more than the soft, extravagant, polity, paranoiac-critical Camembert cheese of space and time” (Arnason 305), in reference to the melting forms of the watches.



End of WW2

Artist's left their countries, changed their lives

Remember, during the 1930's as the world moved towards war, artists and scientists dreamed of other, better worlds. By 1952, WWII had ended; within the decade, the United States and Soviet Union began to explore space. As men stepped onto the moon in 1969, the world saw a whole new landscape.



While Academic art was thought to be a process in which the artist was trained to paint in a specific style, the artists of both the **Dada** and **Surrealist** movements created works through an **automatic process**. This process differs greatly from the method in which **Academic** art is created due to the **irrationality** and **spontaneity** by which the **subconscious** is expressed. The artists rejected the “bourgeois art which they (we) regarded as symptomatic of a culture about to crumble with the war” (Remond/Lucarelli 210). These artistic movements challenged the way in which society viewed art due to the radical

movements challenged the way in which society viewed art due to the radical na

The End.

Now test and art work. Did you enjoy these artists?

Finished writing January 9, 2021