

# Surrealism- Salvador Dali.

*Burning Giraffe by Salvador Dali 1937, oil paint.*

## 1. Read the following passage and complete questions below:

Salvador Dalí assimilated a vast number of artistic styles and displayed unusual technical skill as a painter. It was not until the late 1920s, however, that two events brought about the development of his mature artistic style: his discovery of Sigmund Freud writings on the significance of subconscious imagery and his affiliation with the Paris Surrealists, a group of artists and writers who sought to establish the “greater reality” of the human subconscious over reason. To bring up images from his subconscious mind, Dalí began to induce hallucinatory states in himself by a process he described as “paranoiac critical.” He depicted a dream world in which commonplace objects are juxtaposed, deformed, or otherwise metamorphosed in a bizarre and irrational fashion. Dalí portrayed those objects in meticulous, almost painfully realistic detail and usually placed them within bleak sunlit landscapes that were reminiscent of his Catalonian homeland.

**Salvador Dali's painting, The Burning Giraffe, epitomises the surrealist style of painting he was renowned for.**

The emergence of psychoanalysis and the work of Sigmund Freud were major influences on the artist, along with the cubist output of Picasso and the work of other surrealists. Those coming to Dali for the first time, most typically through the coloured plates in art books, are often surprised to find that the actual canvases and boards he committed his work to are much smaller than imagined. The Burning Giraffe is one such example. The work dates from 1937 when Dali was 34 years old. It was painted in Spain, with oils on board, prior to Dalí's American sojourn in the early 1940s. The painting measures 35cm X 27cm and is currently housed in the Kunstmuseum in Basel Switzerland. It is full of images that act almost as motifs which recur frequently in Dalí's work.

Questions:

- Looking at The Burning Giraffe by Salvador Dali, list all of the signs and symbols you can see.
- Describe his composition.
- Write a short story (2-3 paragraphs) about what the artwork is about and what is going on in the artwork.
- Describe the use of colour- get your teacher to put a coloured version on the screen.
- Why do you think Dali used two figures and what does each represent?

## 2. Highlight at least 5-6 words you do not know the meaning of and add them to the table below.

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Using the **Subjective** Frame looking at *The Burning Giraffe by Salvador Dali* answer the following questions in **FULL sentences** in your Visual Art Diary.



### ***The Subjective Frame*** ***Personal psychological experience***

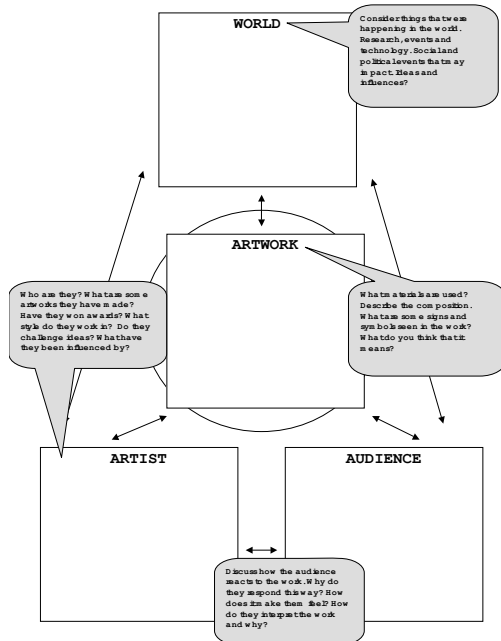
What is my first impression?  
What do I see, describe?  
What is it about?  
What do I feel?  
What am I reminded of?  
Do I like it, why?  
What emotions does the artist want to express?  
In your opinion why did he create it?

### ***Have a go practical element:***

Recall a dream (appropriate for class) which could be described as ‘unreal’, ‘exaggerated’ or ‘illogical’. In your VAPD write down some words or phrases describing the characters and events which made this dream ‘defy reality’. For example, characters flying, objects acting abnormally, unrealistic object, distorted time etc. Draw your DREAM on a FULL page of your VAPD. Make sure there is:

- Surrealism
- Objects that defy reality
- Colour

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK SCAFFOLD



**Task:** Redraw the below scaffold on the conceptual framework: Artist, Artwork, World and Audience in your Visual Art books and fill it in in relation to Salvador Dali and his work *The Burning Giraffe* or *The Persistence of Memory*. You will need to answer the following questions on each category:

**World:** Consider things that were happening in the world at that time. You will need to include his upbringing that influenced his practice and his influences around him, think the mountain in the background of his images.

**Artwork:** Describe what you see, what materials does he use to create his artworks, what do the signs and symbols in his work symbolise? What do you think his artwork is trying to convey (the meaning of it).

**Audience:** Discuss your interpretation of the artwork, how does it influence you as the audience- what questions are you suggested to make or ask? Why do you like it? Or Why do you not like it?- Be Specific

**Artist:** Who is Dali? What are some of the artworks he has created and what style does he work in? Does he challenge ideas in his work, or does he send a message and what is the message he is trying to send?

**Language/vocabulary:** Reality, unrealistic, depiction, landscape, minimal, movement, Surrealism, subversion purpose, influential, prominent, expressionistic, juxtaposition, distorted, exaggerated,

Add at least 5-6 words of your own used to ***describe Surrealism.***