

## Classroom Activity

### *Imagining the Subconscious through Collage*

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<b>Enduring Understanding</b>	Artists often use artmaking to communicate messages about their interior life and personal thoughts.
<b>Grades</b>	K–12
<b>Time</b>	One to two class periods
<b>Visual Art Concepts</b>	Silhouette, drawing, collage, juxtaposition, deconstruction and reconstruction
<b>Materials</b>	Black drawing paper, graphite pencils or white drawing pencils, overhead projector or flashlights, glue, scissors, and collage materials such as art reproductions, newspaper, photographs, magazines, or wrapping, patterned, or decorative paper.
<b>Talking about Art</b>	<p>View and discuss Lola Alvarez Bravo's <i>Sirenas del aire (Mermaids of the Air)</i>, c. 1935-36, printed c. 1958.</p> <p>What do you see? What action is taking place? Who are the main characters and what might they be saying? What are they using to communicate this message? Have you seen this device before? Where and when? Does it give us a clue as to when this photograph was made?</p> <p>Like the typewriter, art, too, is a medium for communicating messages. What message do you think the artist, Lola Alvarez Bravo, might have been trying to communicate in 1935 through this photograph? What communication devices do you use today? If you replaced the typewriter in this image with your device of choice, how would it change the intended message?</p> <p>Elaborate on this message by writing a caption for this photograph in the form of a tagline, a dialogue, or a story that explains what <i>you</i> think is happening. Retitle <i>Sirenas del aire (Mermaids of the Air)</i> with a title of your choice.</p> <p>This photograph is a photomontage, meaning it is a composite photograph made from more than one image. What steps do you think Bravo took to create this artwork? Where might she have sourced her images?</p>

The 21<sup>st</sup> century version of this process is often calling "photoshopping," but both are essentially multi-media collage. A collage is simply an artwork comprised of different shapes, texts, or images layered on top of each other. The term "collage" derives from *colle*, the French word for "glue." The process made its appearance as a formal art medium with the surrealist movement.

### **Making Art**

Use collage as a device for communicating a message about you by creating a multi-media silhouette portrait. Prior to the birth of photography, silhouette profiles cut from black card were the easiest and most inexpensive way of recording a person's appearance. Using your silhouette and favorite images, this metacognitive self-portrait will record your personality and intrapersonal thoughts.

Divide students into groups of three. One student will serve as the portrait sitter, one will handle lighting, and the third will draw the outline of the sitter's head. Consider using your classroom overhead projector or flashlights and white drawing pencil or graphite pencil on large black paper.

Cut the profile out of the black paper. Distribute pieces of large white paper for the collage surface and ask students to brainstorm a list of favorite colors, shapes, animals, images, and places on the back of the white paper. Use this list as inspiration for selecting images from magazines, newspapers, or artwork reproductions. Create a composition using these images and the silhouette cut-out to create a visual landscape of intrapersonal thoughts and interests. Layer the silhouette and images with decorative, patterned, or wrapping papers.

### **Reflection**

Write a short description about yourself to accompany your meta-cognitive self-portrait. Display portraits in the classroom for a "gallery walk" and ask students to match the description with the appropriate collage.

## Classroom Activity

### *Image & Identity: Painted Self-Portraits*

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**Enduring Understanding** Artists make many choices about how to represent themselves in a self-portrait. Carefully planned facial expression, body gesture, costume, and accessories can tell us more about the artist's personality or identity and can evoke a certain mood, emotion, or experience.

**Grades** 3–12

**Time** One to two class periods

**Visual Art Concepts** Portraiture, contour drawing, painting, color

**Materials** Pencils, mirrors, tempera paint such as Alphacolor Biggie Cakes, brushes, watercolor paper, cups of water, and paper towels.  
Optional: dry-erase markers, tracing paper, graphite, and hairdryers

**Talking about Art** A portrait is a picture of a person, where the figure is the focal point of the composition. Artists capture portraits in many media, such as drawing, painting, and photography.

View and discuss Frida Kahlo's *Las Dos Fridas*, 1939. What is similar about these two figures? How are they different? Do you think they represent two separate people or one person? What do you see that makes you say that? Craft an argument using visual characteristics to support your point.

Visual characteristics such as setting, costume, posture, and facial expression can tell us more about the sitter, Frida Kahlo. This is a self-portrait, which means Kahlo painted this portrait of herself, making many important decisions about how she would present her identity. What can we tell about her personality by examining her expression, gesture, and posture? What can we tell about her heritage by examining her dress? Notice that the woman on the left wears a Victorian, or European, style dress with delicate details such as lace and ruffles. Compare and contrast this outfit with what her counterpart wears. The juxtaposition of regional dress may reference Kahlo's *mestiza* or mixed heritage, the product of her European father and Mexican mother. What other messages does Kahlo communicate about her life?

## **Making Art**

Have you ever made a portrait, of yourself or with others? What kinds of decisions went into the creation of your portrait? If you were to paint a self-portrait that expresses a particular emotion, which emotion might you choose and why?

Recall an emotional experience, such as happiness, excitement, frustration, or sadness and brainstorm some possibilities for depicting this experience in a portrait. What type of pose or gesture will you take? What facial expression will best express this emotion? What will you reveal about this experience and what will you choose to conceal through these artistic choices?

What additional elements will you include to tell your story? Consider significant colors, such as warm and cool colors, to create mood. Add information about setting such as place and space, to tell the viewer where you are. Costume and accessories can tell us more about you and your personality. You can also include important symbolism from your culture or heritage to tell about both the past and present.

Now that you have brainstormed ways to represent yourself through a self-portrait, use a mirror to help draw your face or bust. Look in the mirror and trace the outer edge of your reflection, either on watercolor paper with pencil or directly on the mirror with a dry-erase marker. Remember to focus on your image, as opposed to the paper, by tracing the contour of your head, hair, and facial features. Examine and sketch the shapes of your eyes, lips, nose, and ears. Try closing one eye to help you focus.

(If you drew your sketch on the mirror with dry-erase marker, lay a sheet of tracing paper on the mirror and trace the sketch onto the tracing paper with pencil. Take the tracing off the mirror and lay it face down on a sheet of watercolor paper. Rub graphite on the back of the tracing paper and the sketch will transfer onto the watercolor paper.)

Load your brush with water and apply it to the dry tempera cakes to activate the paint. Apply a thin wash to the background area of the self-portrait, with the symbolic color that you chose, to create an overall mood or tone for your painting. Use a dry paper towel to blot or lift color off the wash area to create a textured effect.

Next, try mixing paint to create secondary and tertiary colors for your face, facial features, dress, and accessories. Layer colors on top of each other in short quick strokes. Clean brushes thoroughly in between colors, as tempera is rather opaque. Tempera dries quickly, but, if necessary, use a hairdryer to accelerate drying.

## **Reflection**

Write a short autobiography to accompany your self-portrait. Compare and contrast portraiture in the visual arts with the genre of biography in literature, using classroom texts as examples. What are the benefits and challenges of using art versus writing to tell stories about people?

## Classroom Activity

### *Cameraless Photographic Processes*

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<b>Enduring Understanding</b>	Photography is an art and a science. Photographers are artists who use light, instead of brushes or pencils, to create images.
<b>Grades</b>	3–12
<b>Time</b>	Two to three class periods
<b>Visual Art Concepts</b>	Line and shape (organic and geometric), negative and positive space, balance, value, contrast, composition, process, abstract and representational
<b>Materials</b>	Light-sensitive paper such as Sunprints, 2D collage materials, scratch paper, cardboard, and water. Optional: matte gel medium, burnishing tools such as spoons or rolling pins, and baby wipes for clean-up.
<b>Talking about Art</b>	<p>View and discuss Rosa Rolanda's <i>Drawing Photogram</i>, c. late 1920s. Compare and contrast with other artworks in Rolanda's photogram series featured on the CD.</p> <p>Describe the shapes that you see, noting the contrast between geometric and organic. Curvy shapes such as circles and ovals are organic shapes, while shapes with straight lines and angles such as squares and triangles are geometric. Use your finger to outline some of these shapes in the air. Which represent or are inspired by shapes from real life? Which shapes are abstract, or non-representational?</p> <p>How do you think Rolanda might have created this image? Some lines appear to be hand-drawn, such as her face and body, while some shapes, such as the animal seated at the figure's feet, look like outlines of unusual or curious objects.</p> <p>Note the value of these shapes. Value is the degree of light and dark in a composition, line, or shape. The contrast between black and white is most evident between the black background and white lines, but take a look at the pyramidal shape in the center. How would you describe the value of this shape? Opaque or translucent? Luminous or dull?</p> <p>The contrasting values were created with light using a cameraless photographic process. Rolanda's image and the accompanying artworks in her series are called photograms. A photogram is a photographic image of objects that have been placed on light-sensitive paper and then exposed to light. During the exposure period, a negative of the composition develops and areas of the paper that have received no light appear white, while areas that have received light appear black. Grey areas result from light traveling through transparent objects. Take a look at the pyramidal shape again. Do you see the inverted glass that Rolanda used to create this effect?</p>

## **Making Art**

Creating photographs without a camera is easier than you think! Ask students to collect an assortment of objects from home, the classroom, or even school grounds. Consider objects or materials of varying sizes with interesting outlines or shapes. The best cameraless photographs utilize objects or materials with holes or gaps in space, such as keys, netting, or plants. These types of materials produce shapes and lines that emphasize negative and positive space. To help students collect objects of appropriate size, determine the scale of the light-sensitive paper in advance (Sunprints come in various dimensions) so that students can limit themselves to objects that will fit within the frame of the paper.

Spread the accumulated source materials out on a desk. Give each student a piece of scratch paper of equal dimension to the Sunprint paper. Arrange objects on the scratch paper to create a composition. Consider compositional balance of positive and negative space and the differing values that they will create.

For best results, close all classroom blinds before you distribute the Sunprint paper (even ambient light will start the exposure process). Carefully arrange objects on the Sunprint paper (blue-side facing up) by removing objects from the scratch paper and placing them one-by-one on the final photographic surface.

Place each Sunprint paper (with its accompanying materials) on a piece of cardboard and leave in the sun for two to five minutes or until the blue background has turned nearly white. Exposure times will vary depending on sunlight, but be sure not to overexpose! Take the print inside, remove all objects from the surface, rinse gently under water or in a small tub for one minute, and allow the print to dry.

Build on your print to create a photographic collage by incorporating other image transfer techniques. For example, photocopy an image or print an image on a laser printer and cut out a selection for reproduction. Apply matte gel medium to the front of the image, adhere the wet image (face down) onto a prepared surface, and burnish the back of the image by rubbing it firmly with a spoon or rolling pin. Dry (with a blow dryer to expedite the drying process) and rub the remaining paper off with water using your fingers until the image is revealed.

## **Reflection**

Visit [www.sunprints.org/activities](http://www.sunprints.org/activities) for suggested ways to connect this artistic process with science experiments. Measure the effectiveness of different sunscreens, take pictures of magnetic fields using iron filings, or chart the sun's progress through the sky using the Sunprint paper. For older students, consider extending the lesson by creating a makeshift pinhole camera (visit [www.kodak.com](http://www.kodak.com) and search "pinhole camera") using film and ordinary household materials.

Compare the results of your scientific and photographic experiments with the original photogram. Discuss the nexus of art and science by studying the work of famous artist/scientists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Louis Daguerre.

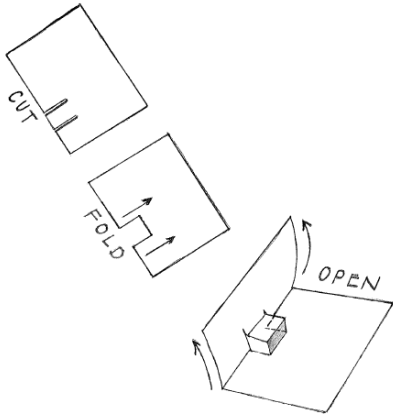
## Classroom Activity

### *Surrealism & Writing: Pop-Up Bookmaking*

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<b>Enduring Understanding</b>	The visual and literary arts inform each other. The writer's pencil and the painter's brush are conduits for the artistic imagination.
<b>Grades</b>	6–12
<b>Time</b>	One to two class periods
<b>Visual Art Concepts</b>	Composition (foreground, middle ground, background), bookmaking, paper sculpting techniques (folding, scoring, cutting), positive and negative space, three-dimensionality
<b>Materials</b>	Cardstock, paper, staplers and staples, scissors, and glue or tape. Optional: pencils, rulers, hole punches, colored pencils or decorative paper
<b>Talking about Art</b>	<p>View and discuss Helen Lundeberg's <i>Double Portrait of the Artist in Time</i>, 1935. Compare and contrast with Lundeberg's <i>Self-Portrait (with Landscape)</i>, 1944, and other artworks by Lundeberg featured on the CD.</p> <p>Describe the setting (place and time) of each painting. Who are the main characters, what are they doing, and where are they situated within the artwork?</p> <p>The placement of people, lines, or shapes within an artwork is called composition. Artists often divide a composition according to a figure /ground relationship, meaning objects or subjects occupy space within the foreground, middle ground, or background of a vantage point. Things that appear closest to the viewer, such as the young girl seated in Lundeberg's painting, occupy the foreground. The space furthest from the viewer is the background and the middle ground exists between the foreground and background. Take a closer look at <i>Double Portrait of the Artist in Time</i>, turn to a partner, and explain how the figures interact with each other in space. Is this a realistic viewpoint? Why or why not?</p> <p>The result of Lundeberg's play on space is a disorienting illusion of perspective, depth, and scale. If you could rearrange the elements of the painting, such as the young girl, the table and clock, the shadow, and framed painting, within the foreground, middle ground, and background, how would it change your perception of what's happening in this scene?</p>

## Making Art



Pop-up books are simple, yet complex spatial illusions that are fun and relatively easy to create. The basic concept of the pop-up is diagramed at left. Practice making this basic unit by folding a piece of scratch paper in half. On the folded edge, cut two parallel slits into the paper to create a tab. (Score your lines with pencil and a ruler, if you need help.) Invert the tab by folding it down and loosening it. Open the paper like a book and push the tab in with your finger so that the tab "pops up" from the center fold. Manipulate this basic unit to create more complex shapes by testing out some of the following techniques:

- Cut deeper into the folded edge or make more shallow cuts to create shapes of differing depths. Be careful not to cut too deep so as not to weaken the form.
- Use push-pins to invert the "pop-up" tab with precision.
- Play with positive and negative space by cutting shapes out of the tab. Think of the tab as positive space and the shapes that you cut out as negative space.
- Hole-punch the tab to create patterns and shapes.
- Decorate the edge of the tab with colored pencils or decorative paper to add color and design.
- Save and repurpose your scraps.

Now that you have tested out various techniques, choose a motif, or theme, for your pop-up book. Use language arts vocabulary words to create a word association game, a literary device popular with surrealists and their fascination with unveiling the subconscious. For instance, use terms from a lesson on the ecosystem, such as savanna, desert, tundra, and forest to draft a list of related colors (warm versus cool), shapes (organic versus geometric), textures (smooth, rough, sandy), etc. Use these words as inspiration for creating your pop-up cover!

When finished, create a simple book by folding a piece of cardstock as book cover, inserting folded copy paper as book pages, and staple on the folded edge as binding. The dimensions of the book should match the dimensions of the pop-up card. Attach your pop-up card to the cover of the book with glue or tape.

## Reflection

Many surrealists, including Lundeberg, incorporated writing into their practice. This often took the form of automatism, or automatic writing and drawing. Automatism to the artist is what improvisation is to the jazz musician – the spontaneous and uncontrolled creation of images and/or words, straight from the artist's imagination to the page.

Use your book to practice automatism techniques, to create an exquisite corpse drawing with a friend (another popular surrealist game), or as a place to brainstorm ideas for classroom writing prompts.



# Surrealism and Women Artists

## Selected Resources

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### Related Curriculum Materials

*Evenings for Educators* resources include an illustrated essay, color images or overhead transparencies, classroom activities, and related resources. Printed curriculum is available for purchase through LACMA's Education Department or browse selected curricula online at [www.lacma.org](http://www.lacma.org) (Programs /Education/Evenings for Educators).

*Artists' Perspectives: Envisioning the World*  
April 2009

*Dali and Surrealism*  
December 2007

*Image and Text: Magritte and his Impact*  
February 2007

*Mirror Image to Masquerade: Photographic Portraits*  
November 2006

### Online Resources

#### "Surrealism" on the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

##### The Metropolitan Museum of Art

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/surr/hd\\_surr.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/surr/hd_surr.htm)

Learn more about the movement in the context of art history through interactive timelines, thematic essays, maps, and images.

#### Surrealist Art

##### Centre Pompidou

<http://www.cnac-gp.fr/education/ressources/ENS-Surrealistart-EN/ENS-Surrealistart-EN.htm>

Explore the origins of surrealism, important surrealist artists, and iconic works.

#### Teacher's Guide to *The Life and Times of Frida Kahlo*

##### Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)

[http://www.pbs.org/weta/fridakahlo/guides/teachers\\_guide.pdf](http://www.pbs.org/weta/fridakahlo/guides/teachers_guide.pdf)

An educational accompaniment to this intimate biography of Kahlo, including standards-based lesson plans and discussion questions.

#### Louise Bourgeois on *Art21*

##### Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/louise-bourgeois>

Documentation of the late Bourgeois' life and work from *Art21*, the television series and chronicler of contemporary art and artists.

#### Feminist Art Base Brooklyn Museum

[http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/easca/feminist\\_art\\_base/index.php](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/easca/feminist_art_base/index.php)

The first online digital archive dedicated solely to feminist art, created by the Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art at the Brooklyn Museum.

#### Educator's Guide for *Lauren Greenfield's Girl Culture*

##### Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona Libraries

<http://www.creativephotography.org/education/educatorsGuides>

A selection of photographs and first-person narratives from the Center for Creative Photography's 2002 exhibition, which examined the social and emotional lives of adolescent girls and their relationships to contemporary media and conceptions of beauty.

## Books for Teachers

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- Bernhard, Ruth. *Ruth Bernhard: The Eternal Body*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2011. A monograph of Bernhard's most celebrated photographs of the female form.
- Chadwick, Whitney. *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1991. A comprehensive review of the lives and works of women who shaped the Surrealist movement.
- Coxon, Ann. *Tate Modern Artists: Louise Bourgeois*. London: Tate Publishing, 2010. A survey of Bourgeois' experimentation with a plethora of media and techniques, from painting and assemblage to sculpture, paper, and beyond. Quotations and interviews with the artist provide insight into her artistic process.
- Ferrer, Elizabeth. *Lola Alvarez Bravo*. Tuscon: Aperture/Center for Creative Photography, 2006. The first English-language monograph documenting the Mexican photographer's career, including previously unpublished works, little-known photomontages, and portraits of friend, Frida Kahlo.
- Fort, Ilene Susan, Tere Arcq, and Terri Geis. *In Wonderland: The Surrealist Adventures of Women Artists in Mexico and the United States*. New York: Prestel Publishing, 2012. Catalogue for the LACMA exhibition, featuring the work of 48 Mexican and United States-based women artists whose contributions to the surrealist movement span more than four decades.\*
- Rapaport, Brooke Kamin (Ed.). *The Sculpture of Louise Nevelson: Constructing a Legend*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. The most extensive study of Nevelson's work, from her origins as a Ukrainian-born Jewish immigrant to the United States, to her groundbreaking works of the 1940s, her influence on the public art revival of the 1960s, and her complex architectural works from the 1980s.

## Books for Students

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- Alarcon, Francisco X. *Poems to Dream Together/Poemas para Sonar Juntos*. New York: Lee & Low Books, 2005. A bilingual collection of short poems about the power of dreams.
- Novesky, Amy. *Me, Frida*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2010. An account of Kahlo's move to San Francisco with husband Diego Rivera, her first time leaving Mexico, and her search for artistic inspiration.\*
- Raimondo, Joyce. *Imagine That!: Activities and Adventures in Surrealism*. New York: Watson-Guption, 2004. An introduction to surrealism highlighting the work of six famous surrealists. Includes easy-to-follow activities on techniques and media such as collage, watercolors, printmaking, sculpture, and more.
- Ryan, Pam Munoz. *The Dreamer*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2010. The story of a young boy, Neftalí, who follows the call of a mysterious voice into the fearsome sea, under the canopy of the lush rain forest, and through the persistent Chilean rain. A combination of magical realism with poetry and illustrations.

\* Books available in the Museum Shop