

# *Unreal*



Jock Macdonald  
*The Black Quartet*, 1946  
ink, watercolour on paper

Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund

## **TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE WINTER 2011**

**Vancouver**  
Artgallery

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# Vancouver Art Gallery Teacher's Guide for School Programs

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The exhibition *Unreal* presents a series of diverse artworks that deal with dreams, fantasy and the unconscious. The artists in this exhibition have used imaginative processes and unexpected materials to explore this state that exists somewhere between dreams and reality. At first glance, most of the images appear to present standard views of our everyday world. On closer examination, we find that this is a world slightly off kilter—we find a world full of bizarre, absurd and magical things. The exhibition includes over 120 works, primarily from the Vancouver Art Gallery's permanent collection, by sixty-five contemporary artists.

## DEAR TEACHER:

This guide will assist you in preparing for your tour of the exhibition *Unreal*. It also provides follow-up activities to facilitate discussion after your Gallery visit. Engaging in the suggested activities before and after your visit will reinforce ideas generated by the tour and build continuity between the Gallery experience and your ongoing work in the classroom. Most activities require few materials and can be adapted easily to the age, grade level and needs of your students. Underlined words in this guide are defined in the Vocabulary section.

The tour of *Unreal* has three main goals:

- To introduce a body of work that explores dreams, fantasy and the unconscious,
- To explore artists' use of inventive processes and unusual materials,
- To consider individual artworks within the context of the marvellous, the fantastical and the strange.

## THE EXHIBITION: *Unreal*

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The exhibition *Unreal* presents an in-depth survey of work that exposes a world existing beneath the surface of conscious reality. Artists are delving into the domain of the psychological—the space where dreams and fantasy reside. They are, for the most part, deliberately setting out to disrupt our expectations and expose that which is marvellous, fantastical or strange.

In *Unreal*, we find our rational world transformed into images that are ridiculous, absurd, and ... sometimes simply funny. As the conscious mind is pushed aside, reality is often transformed beyond the recognizable, into varying degrees of abstraction. The depths of the mind are traversed through dreams that can verge on nightmares. We find works created through uninterrupted stream-of-consciousness and automatic or semi-automatic processes, giving free rein to spontaneous (rather than pre-considered) marks and gestures, free-flowing ideas and random associations.

*“All that is needed is an unshackled imagination,”* David Gascoyne wrote of Surrealism in 1939. Sigmund Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis exposed the unconscious as a source of repressed or hidden memory and desire, far from conscious and rational thought, but which exerted a profound and lasting influence on our behaviour. Freud’s ideas were a powerful influence on early twentieth-century Surrealism, which aimed to unleash repressed creative forces and liberate the human imagination from the constraints of the conscious mind. The contemporary artists represented in *Unreal* continue to draw from and expand upon these early explorations.

While all of the artists in this exhibition owe a great debt to the explorations of the Surrealists, a few of the artists are directly connected. Alfred Pellán was one of the first artists to bring Surrealist ideas back from Europe into Canada. His use of colour and symbolism revealed his focus to be much more about subconscious interpretations of his subjects than any realistic representation. Jock Macdonald, an important figure in the development of abstraction in Canada, experimented with colour and form to suggest an inner—rather than literal—landscape. Jason McLean’s stream-of-consciousness writings and semi-automatic drawings merge, leaving us with free associations that seem to spring directly from his unconscious mind.

Some artists consciously choose to leave worldly constraints behind, entering a space of fantasy and magical thinking—bill bissett removes conventional rules from both his written and his visual works, while employing automatic processes. Luanne Martineau creates weird, fantastical creatures—but uses materials that are soft and comforting. Carole Itter uses collage and assemblage—processes first introduced by Surrealist artists—to create sometimes jarring associations between ordinary but unrelated objects and materials. Jerry Pethick works with ideas that are sophisticated and complex—but interrupts these thoughts by creating his artworks out of cheap and tacky materials.

*Unreal* is organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery and curated by Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator/Associate Director.

## ARTISTS' BACKGROUND

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The following background information highlights some of the artists whose work we may explore in the school tour.

### **bill bissett (born 1939)**

bill bissett—who deliberately chooses not to capitalize his name—was born in Halifax as William Frederick Bissett. Although he attended Dalhousie and the University of British Columbia, he dropped out of both schools, choosing to live as an artist and writer without the constraints of academia. He moved to British Columbia in 1958 and became an important part of the art scene in Vancouver in the '60s, embodying the idealism of the “hippie” times. He now divides his time between Vancouver and Toronto. Although he has published more than sixty books, produced a plethora of paintings and drawings and received much respect from the artistic community, mainstream honours have for the most part eluded him; many feel that this can be attributed to his alternative lifestyle and anti-establishment views.

His work has crossed the boundaries between art forms. He has written and performed poetry, appeared in a band as vocalist and lyricist, painted, chanted and danced. The unconventional spelling of his name is only one aspect of bissett's self-defined spelling rules. He condemns correct spelling and grammar as oppressive. He wrote “peopul” for “people” and “uv” for “of” long before text messaging popularized simplified phonetic spelling. He arranges each poem to have visual form on the page, so that it exists as more than just a collection of words with sounds, meaning and rhythm.

His painting *th first three fools*, which is exhibited in *Unreal*, is made out of acrylic and wallpaper on plywood. The immediacy and spontaneity of his work is frequently said to express the wonder and magic of a child's world, layered with humour as well as serious political commentary.

### **Carole Itter (born 1939)**

Born in Vancouver, Carole Itter attended the Vancouver School of Art, then spent a considerable period travelling before returning to Vancouver in the '60s to become a strong part of the local art community. She has collaborated extensively on interdisciplinary works with her partner, the writer and musician Al Neil. She is deeply committed to an experimental art practice, constantly changing and reinventing herself as an artist. Her opposition to consumer culture is a continuous thread that appears throughout her work.

Itter's work takes many different forms—she is a writer, performer, sculptor and filmmaker. She has made large-scale assemblages out of found and recycled materials, using objects from her everyday surroundings to create works with emotional resonance. She collaborated with Daphne Marlatt on *Opening Doors*, a collection of East End oral histories, which are now found in the BC Provincial Archives.

Two pieces from her *Chicken Box series* appear in *Unreal*. These mixed-media pieces are very representative of her way of working with found objects and materials, using collage and assemblage to create vivid, energetic and innovative constructions.

### **Jock Macdonald (1897–1960)**

Born in Scotland, Macdonald studied at the Edinburgh College of Art, taught art in London, then moved to Canada to teach at the Vancouver School of Decorative & Applied Arts. He was a contemporary of the Group of Seven and worked closely with Lawren Harris and Frederick Varley. After moving to Toronto to teach at the Ontario College of Art, he became a founding member of Painters Eleven—a group committed to creating and promoting abstract art. Apart from a trip to France, where he spent several months painting, he lived the rest of his life in Toronto. He received many honours during his lifetime including the Queen's Coronation Medal in 1953.

Macdonald worked as a commercial artist, printmaker and illustrator. He was at the forefront of the development of abstract art in Canada and became known for his experiments with colour and form as well as for using automatic processes to create his paintings.

In *The Black Quartet* (see front cover), he created an imaginative landscape full of whimsical form and colour. In 1940 he wrote: “*The artist no longer strives to imitate the exact appearance of nature but, rather, to express the spirit therein.*” Here he seeks to capture an inner or psychological landscape, bearing no resemblance to any real-world place.

### **Luanne Martineau (born 1970)**

Martineau was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, studied art at both the Nova Scotia and Alberta Colleges of Art & Design and completed her MFA at UBC in 1995. She lives in Victoria, where she is a university professor. She has curated art exhibitions across Canada and has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants.

Martineau has worked with felting, braiding and stitching, making large, soft sculptures that dangle from the ceiling or lie on the floor. Using under-valued and labour-intensive craft-based techniques, she creates large forms that demand serious consideration. The pieces are simultaneously grotesque and cuddly, abstract and concrete.

*Lubber*, her work in *Unreal*, lies sprawled across the floor, intruding into our personal space, at once inviting and repulsing us. She leaves us with these contradictory responses, never nudging us in a particular direction.

### **Jason McLean (born 1971)**

Jason McLean was raised in London, Ontario, and studied art in Vancouver at the Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design, where he graduated in 1997. Since 2008 he has lived and worked in Toronto. Widely exhibited across North America and Europe, his work is in private collections internationally. He has worked as an illustrator for several magazines, including *Adbusters*. In 2004 he was chosen by *Maclean's* magazine as one of ten new artists to watch.

McLean's art practice includes drawing, painting, sculpture, comics, installations, billboard art, sound performance and mail art. His work frequently includes a mix of sights and sounds, fragments of personal histories, pop lyrics and spoken words. He often works on collaborative projects and performances. Perhaps best known for his drawings, he uses a variety of materials including found objects, ranging from baseball mitts to screens to old photographs, over which he draws and paints words and images—in part narrative, in part graffiti, in part design.

*No Comment*, his work in *Unreal*, began as a collaborative project with the Vancouver writer and artist Douglas Coupland. McLean had collected pieces of writing that he found on the streets of his Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. Coupland selected some of these, ranging from scribbled notes to flyers, and McLean created responses that include semi-automatic drawings and stream-of-consciousness writing. Visual and written, found and created imagery merge in the finished works.

### **Alfred Pellán (1906–1988)**

Born in Quebec City, Pellán studied at the École des Beaux-Arts. While still a student, he sold a painting to the National Gallery of Canada and won the government's first fine arts scholarship. This allowed him to go and study in France, where he remained for the next fourteen years. He returned to Canada in 1940 and spent the next decade teaching art, working as an illustrator and designing costumes for theatre. In 1950 he won a major grant, which enabled him to return to live in Paris for three years. By the time he returned to Canada he had developed an international reputation, and his acclaim continued to grow. His work was widely exhibited, many books were written about him and he was the recipient of numerous awards and honours, including the Order of Quebec in 1980.

As Pellán developed as an artist, his work became increasingly abstract. In Paris, exposed to bold new ways of painting, he began to use vivid, intense colours and simplified forms. He was one of the first artists to introduce Surrealist imagery into Canada, and he came to believe that true creativity emerged from the subconscious.

His painting in *Unreal*, *Le Boucheron* (1946), is a caricature-like image showing that he was far more interested in exploring his subconscious experience of his subject than depicting an accurate likeness of his sitter.

### **Jerry Pethick (1935–2003)**

Born in London, Ontario, Pethick studied art at the Chelsea College of Art in London, England, and later became an associate of the Royal College of Art. He spent several years in the 1960s studying holography in the United States. He returned to Canada in 1973, and lived on Hornby Island, where he died in 2003. His work has been widely exhibited in Canada, the United States and Europe.

Pethick is known as a sculptor and multimedia artist. He used a combination of photography, sculpture, drawing, installation, collage and optical effects in his work, looking for ways to challenge viewers' normal perceptions and responses. He studied and referenced complex theories of physics in his artwork and regularly chose materials that diffused or transmitted light—materials that more often than not were cheap, recognizable everyday materials and dollar-store objects.

His work in *Unreal* has the title *Landscape—Portrait of Gabriel Lippmann*. In it, Pethick transforms everyday materials and objects—including glass, light bulbs, metal and mirrors—into an elaborate, multi-layered construction.

## PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS: Nudes in Art

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**While the tour will not be focusing on images containing nudity,** students may see a number of images of the nude body as they walk through this exhibition. It may be helpful to talk with students beforehand about images of the nude in art, and encourage them to examine their own responses to the work and to think about why an artist might choose to include a nude body in a work of art.

### **Hilarious**

A good place to begin is in simply informing students that some of the works of art they will see when they visit the Gallery will contain images of nude bodies. People who visit the Gallery have all kinds of different responses to artworks showing nudes. Some of them laugh, others feel embarrassed or uncomfortable. All of these responses are normal. But why? Why is the body so humorous and/or embarrassing? Ask the students whether they fall into hysterical laughter when they are in the shower or bath. Probably not. Part of the shock of seeing a nude figure in a museum is just that: we are accustomed to seeing our nude bodies only in private. To see one in public is a shock.

### **What are you wearing?**

Another way to approach this topic is to think about clothing instead of nudity. What do clothes tell us about a person? Clothing can send messages about:

- historical time and place,
- age and culture,
- wealth and style,
- profession,
- current stereotypes and expectations.

Some artists and art historians suggest that the nude figure is set free from all of this “distracting” information that is provided by what we wear, and becomes just a human being, from any time, place or background.

# PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: The Artists

## (all grades)

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### Objective:

Students read, research and share information about some of the artists represented in *Unreal*.

### Materials:

- ❑ writing materials
- ❑ the internet. Some useful websites:
  - [www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com)
  - [www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)
  - [www.ccca.ca/artists/\[name of artist\]](http://www.ccca.ca/artists/[name of artist])
- ❑ Artist Information Sheets and Student Worksheet (following pages)

### Process:

1. Divide the students into seven groups. Cut up Artist Information Sheet 1 or 2 (choose the appropriate level) and give each group one of the artists.
2. Give each student a copy of the Student Worksheet and ask them to transfer the information about their artist to the appropriate box.
3. Ask students to figure out what they need to know to complete the section on their artist, and search the internet, either at home or at school. Older students can find more in-depth information.
4. Ask each group to find/copy/sketch a piece of work by each artist on a separate piece of paper. Do not label with the artist's name or any other information.
5. Have each group present the information on their artist while the rest of the class adds the information to the worksheet.
6. After the presentations, lay out the image by each artist, and see if the class—based on the information they have just been given—can guess which image is by which artist.

### Conclusion:

Discuss:

- What were some of the most interesting things that students learned or discovered?
- Which artists and/or kinds of artwork made students curious about seeing the actual work in the exhibition?
- What artists, ways of working and/or ideas would the students like to find out more about?

# Artist Information Sheet 1: Higher Grades

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## bill bissett

- Born in 1939 in Halifax, lives alternately in Vancouver and Toronto
- Real name William Frederick Bissett; chooses not to capitalize his name
- Work includes poetry, performance, dancing, sound and painting
- Humour, a sense of spontaneity and political ideas important in his work

## Carole Itter

- Born in 1939 in Vancouver, where she still lives
- Has often collaborated with Al Neil, her artist/musician partner
- Is a writer, performer, sculptor and filmmaker
- Often makes large sculptural works out of found or recycled materials

## Jock Macdonald

- Born in 1897 in Scotland, lived in Vancouver, died in 1960 in Toronto
- Founding member of Painters Eleven; taught at several art schools
- Interested in abstraction, not in representing real world
- Used automatic processes in his painting, experimented with form and colour

## Jason McLean

- Born in 1971, raised in London, Ontario, lives in Toronto
- Does a lot of collaborative work
- Works with drawing, painting, sculpture, comics, sound, billboard and mail art
- *No Comment* used found writing and stream-of-consciousness responses

## Luanne Martineau

- Born in 1970 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, lives in Victoria
- Is a university professor and art curator
- Makes soft sculptures using craft materials and techniques such as wool, felting, braiding and stitching
- Her work is both cuddly and grotesque, abstract and concrete

## Alfred Pellan

- Born and died in Quebec City, 1906–1988, lived and studied in Paris
- Precocious student, sold his first painting to the National Gallery of Canada as a teenager
- One of the first Canadian artists to use Surrealist ideas in paintings
- Very well known for increasingly abstract paintings with bold, intense colours

## Jerry Pethick

- Born in 1935 in London, Ontario, died in 2003 on Hornby Island
- Studied and lived for a long period in England and the United States
- Referenced complex ideas about physics and light in his artworks
- Used cheap everyday objects and materials in his multimedia works

## Artist Information Sheet 2: Lower Grades

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### bill bissett

- Real name is William Frederick Bissett but he writes: bill bissett
- Writes poems, dances and paints
- His work is often funny and strange

### Carole Itter

- Often makes artworks with her partner, Al Neil
- She writes, and makes sculptures and films
- Makes large artworks using things she finds and recycles

### Jock Macdonald

- Taught at art schools in England, Vancouver and Toronto
- Made abstract paintings with bright colours and strange shapes
- Liked to paint without thinking or planning what the work would look like

### Jason McLean

- Often works with other artists to make his art
- Makes drawings, paintings, sculptures and comics
- Has made artworks using things or pieces of writing he finds in the street

### Luanne Martineau

- Is an art professor at the University of Victoria
- Makes sculptures using wool, felting and braiding
- Her work is soft and cuddly but also weird and strange

### Alfred Pellan

- Sold his first painting to the National Gallery of Canada when he was a teenager
- One of the first Canadian artists to use dream-like ideas in his paintings
- Used bright colours and abstract shapes

### Jerry Pethick

- Studied art in England and the United States, lived on Hornby Island
- Thought a lot about science and difficult ideas
- Used cheap dollar-store things to make art

## Student Worksheet

	Personal Information	Type of Art	Known for	An Artwork
Luanne Martineau				
Jerry Pethick				
Alfred Pellan				
bill bissett				
Jason McLean				
Jock Macdonald				
Carole Itter				

## PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: An Unshackled Imagination (all grades)

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### Objective:

Students discuss dream imagery and make a collage out of random magazine cutouts.

### Discussion:

The English poet and writer David Gascoyne wrote:

*"All that is needed to produce a Surrealist picture is an unshackled imagination and a few materials: paper or cardboard, pencil, scissors, paste, and an illustrated magazine, a catalogue or a newspaper. The marvellous is within everyone's reach."*

- Surrealist artists, influenced by the new theories of psychoanalysis being developed by Sigmund Freud, saw the imagination as a fertile place that could release their art from the constraints of the rational, conscious mind.
- Juxtaposition of unlikely images, in the form of collage, became one of the innovations that Surrealists—and generations of artists since—used to make art.
- Dreams, exposing the unconscious mind, became significant subjects in art.

### Materials:

- ❑ sheets of paper, markers, glue, scissors
- ❑ variety of magazines

### Process:

1. Ask students to consider their dreams. What kind of images can they remember? Are their dreams of real places, events and people, or are they strange and other-worldly? What unlikely things happen in their dreams? Are the events in their dreams usually fun? funny? bizarre? frightening? etc.
2. Tell students they are going to make images of dream-like scenes using collage to help create unlikely connections and random juxtapositions; refer to above discussion points.
3. Have each student cut out five images from various magazines. Ask them to choose a variety of images—these might include a soccer player, a shoe, a plate of food, a tree, a bicycle.
4. Divide students into groups of five. Have each student keep one image and give each of their group members one image. Now each student will have five random images—one original and four from other group members.
5. Ask each student to create a collage by arranging their five images on a sheet of paper, and using markers to complete, connect and relate the different parts of the composition. They need to think about how they will link these random images together to create a unified composition—even though it doesn't have to make literal sense. Ask them to think back to the discussion of dreams. Their artwork might appear strange, bizarre, marvellous, absurd or fantastic. But will it contain some sort of a narrative? How will the objects relate to one another?
6. Have them glue the pieces together to complete the work, and add text or words if desired.
7. Display the artworks.

**Conclusion:**

**Discuss:**

- What do students notice about the artworks?
- Do they look like real or recognizable spaces or places? How?
- Are there distinct narratives or stories being told?
- Do they appear dream-like or nightmarish? How?
- How is this way of making art different from the way they usually work or are expected to work?

# PRE- or POST-VISIT ACTIVITY: Un-automatic Thinking & Automatic Art Making (all grades)

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## Objective:

Students interrupt their normal working practices and consider alternative art making processes.

## Discussion:

Many contemporary artists find ways to challenge conventional ways of thinking about or making art:

- The artist bill bissett chooses not to abide by established spelling and grammatical rules, which he finds oppressive and limiting.
- Jason McLean, Alfred Pellan and other artists have used various processes—which have been called automatic, semi-automatic, stream-of-consciousness, spontaneous, free-associating—to free their imagination from the limitations and confines of conscious, rational thought.

## Materials:

- ❑ paper and pencils
- ❑ paint or markers
- ❑ different types of music, e.g. Beatles, Beethoven and rap

## Process:

### Rethinking the written word:

1. bill bissett, a Vancouver poet and artist, developed his own spelling and grammar rules as a way of interrupting accepted ways of seeing things. He believes that conventional rules of language are restricting and oppressive, and that they discourage creative thinking. He wrote the following poem:

*yu cud get sum toilet papr  
nd a newspapr both 4  
a dollr fittee*

*now yu cant yu gotta  
make a chois*

- Discuss the correct spelling, sentence structure, punctuation and visual effect of the words on the page—all important considerations for bill bissett when writing his poetry.
2. It is noteworthy that bissett was writing in this way long before cell phones and texting were in use. What seems normal to students today is actually very new—but bissett was doing the same, for different reasons, long before it became everyday practice.  
Why do students use unconventional spelling? How does this differ from bissett's reasons?
  3. Ask students to write a poem using alternative spelling and sentence construction. They could write about this particular issue—formal versus informal language—or another chosen subject. Ask them to consider how the poem looks visually on the page. Is there a pattern or form they want the poem to take?
  4. Lay out the poems so that students can read one another's work.

5. Discuss what changes for students when they are disregarding accepted rules for writing. Is the writing more creative? At what point, if any, does meaning become obscured?

#### **Drawing Automatically:**

1. Tell students they will make three quick “blind” drawings. The idea isn’t to make a perfectly accurate copy of what they see, but to allow their hand to lead without the critical brain interfering in the process.
2. Have students take out an exercise book and partially open it away from them so that they can’t see inside it. Place an unlined sheet of paper inside the notebook.
3. Set up the first subject at the front of the classroom: e.g., a vase of flowers.
4. Have students make their drawings with a pencil, on the piece of paper tucked in the notebook, keeping their eyes on their subject—without looking at what they are drawing. Give them 3 minutes.
5. Repeat two times with different subjects (e.g., your portrait, the view out the window), using a new sheet of paper each time.
6. Have students look at the drawings. What do they notice? Were they surprised at the results? Are the drawings accurate? Does it matter? What is interesting about the drawings and the process? How is it different from the way they usually see and draw?

#### **Musical Painting:**

1. Give each student a sheet of paper and some paint or markers. Play a piece of music; e.g., a Beatles song. Have them paint/draw to the music for 5 minutes.
2. Give each student a fresh sheet of paper. Put on a completely different type of music, e.g. Beethoven, and repeat exercise.
3. Repeat with a rap or pop piece—something current the students will know.
4. Ask students to lay out all three examples on their desks. Have them walk around and look. Can they guess which works were made to which piece of music? Is there any consistency? What are the differences? similarities?
5. Discuss how students responded to the different music in their drawing. What do they think were the major triggers or reasons for the differences?

# PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: Making the Real Unreal (all grades)

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## Objective:

Students visually interrupt a familiar scene and consider ways of transforming it into something marvellous, fantastical or strange

## Discussion:

Many artists have taken familiar scenes, or scenes that at first appear familiar, and then somehow turned them around. Sometimes a sense of wonder enters the scene, or perhaps a sense of menace, or humour or playfulness. Things turn strange as ordinary objects, intentionally misplaced and rearranged, acquire new meanings and purpose. By putting two things together that do not belong, the usefulness of the object is destroyed, an incongruence or discomfort ensues and new meanings arise.

## Materials:

- ❑ calendar showing British Columbia landscapes, or view from classroom window
- ❑ large sheets of white paper, smaller pieces of coloured paper
- ❑ markers, crayons, scissors

## Process:

1. Ask the students to consider the elements they would use to paint a conventional landscape. What would they put in it? What shapes would these be? Which part of the frame would these elements occupy? For example:
  - Triangular mountains would appear halfway up the image.
  - Irregular rounded clouds would be at the top.
  - A long horizontal fence would be toward the bottom right...
2. Examine a familiar landscape image with the class. Discuss how this scene could be transformed by rearranging the image and adding extra components. For example:
  - You could take away a mountain and put a ladder in its place. Replace clouds with foods, buildings with articles of clothing.
  - You could keep the same elements but radically alter the weather. How would that change people's behaviour and clothing in the scene?
  - You could insert characters to create a story or narrative in the space. Where would they be? What would they be doing?
  - You could change the natural elements into buildings, buildings into mountains, streets into rivers...
3. Have students re-create the scene so that the overall composition retains at least some of the same compositional elements but is changed radically in some way.
4. Using pieces of coloured paper, scissors, markers and crayons, each student reconstructs their scene.
5. Display the work.

## Conclusion:

Discuss, keeping in mind that all artworks started with the same space:

- In what ways are the works similar to the original? different?
- Do some still look like real spaces that you could place yourself in?
- What have the artists done to change the familiar space into something that is marvellous, fantastical or strange?

# VOCABULARY

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**abstract:** a style of art that can be thought of in two ways:

- a) the artist begins with a recognizable subject and alters, distorts, manipulates or simplifies elements of it;
- b) the artist creates purely abstract forms that are unrecognizable and have no direct reference to external reality (also called non-representational art).

**assemblage:** a three-dimensional artwork that uses a variety of materials and objects which could be found or created. These are often drawn from the everyday world, juxtaposed in unexpected ways to disrupt expectations and challenge assumptions.

**automatic or semi-automatic processes:** a way to create an artwork without conscious planning. First used by Surrealist artists in an attempt to reduce conscious control and allow free-flowing ideas, these processes result in images that often blur the boundaries between words and images, found and created imagery, process and performance.

**collage:** technique and resulting work of art in which pieces of paper and other materials are arranged and glued to a supporting surface.

**contemporary:** created in the last thirty years. Most contemporary artists are living artists.

**installation:** art that is created from a wide range of materials and installed in a specific environment. An installation may be temporary or permanent. The term came into wide use in the 1970s, and many installation works were conceptual.

**interdisciplinary:** drawing from different artistic disciplines; for example: painting, photography and performance. Many contemporary artists are multi-disciplinary.

**landscape:** artwork in which the subject is a view of the exterior physical world. Traditionally, landscapes have been paintings or drawings depicting natural scenes and are often concerned with light, space and setting.

**performance art:** works in any of a variety of media that are performed before a live audience. The performance itself, rather than a specific object, constitutes the artwork. Documentation is often an important part of the performance.

**Surrealism:** a literary, intellectual and artistic movement that started in 1924 in Paris, led by André Breton and influenced by Sigmund Freud's new discipline of psychoanalysis and theory of the unconscious. Surrealism grew out of dissatisfaction with traditional social values and artistic practices after World War I.

## RESOURCES

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### Print:

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### Online:

[www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com)

Online art encyclopedia, listing international artists, and museums and galleries with collections of their work.

[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com)

Online dictionary and encyclopedia, created collaboratively by laypeople.

[www.cybermuse.gallery.ca](http://www.cybermuse.gallery.ca)

Canadian Art Education and research site featuring artists' images and educational materials.

Additional information can be found by Googling individual artists.

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