**MOCA’s Surrealist Challenge**

Open to K-12 students

Teacher Packet

**Turn the Page: The First Ten Years of Hi-Fructose**

May 22-December 31, 2016

**About the Turn the Page: The First Ten Years of Hi-Fructose:**

The Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) features some of the foremost contemporary artists through a ten year retrospective of the art magazine, Hi-Fructose. This exhibition is a unique opportunity to bring artwork by 51 artists from the pages of magazines and computer screens to the walls of a contemporary art museum. *Turn the Page: The First Ten Years of Hi-Fructose* is a collaborative initiative by two like-minded organizations – MOCA in Virginia Beach, Virginia, and Hi-Fructose The New Contemporary Art Magazine in San Francisco, California. Both are committed to creating an awareness of contemporary art that is informative, imaginative and relevant. This multi-faceted exhibition will feature artists working in a variety of media including sculpture, installation, painting, ceramics, and photography as well as interactive community outreach and satellite exhibitions.

**About the Surrealist Challenge**

Many of the artists showing in *Turn the Page: The First Ten Year of Hi-Fructose* are inspired by the Surrealist art movement. Building on this, MOCA is hosting a Surrealist Challenge. Open to grades K-12 students, we encourage students to create their own Surrealist inspired artwork. Teachers can use this packet to teach about Surrealism, some of the artists in the exhibition inspired by Surrealism, and help students brainstorm ideas for their Surrealist inspired work of art! There are many ways you can use this packet. It can be used as a template for a unit of study, a warm-up activity for students, or a homework assignment, just to name a few. The five activities are designed to promote brainstorming and exploration. **The final work of art can use ideas pulled from these brainstorming activities.** All artworks that meet the requirements below will be shown at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art.

**All works must be 9x12 inches and matted 12x16 inches**

**Artwork drop-off dates:** November 5-8, 2016, 10am-5pm

**Exhibition dates:** November 20-December 31, 2016

**Opening reception:** Sunday, November 20, 2016, 2-4pm

**Artwork pick-up:** January 3-13, 2017, 10am-5pm

For more information go to www.virginiamoca.org/surrealist-challenge or contact Rebecca Davidson at Rebecca@VirginiaMOCA.org.
The Surrealist movement began in the 1910s with literature. Writers tried to tap into the subconscious through exercises like automatic writing. Automatic writing bypasses conscious, intentional thought. You write as though you were in a dream state. This urge to look into the subconscious was influenced by the theories of Sigmund Freud. The Surrealist Manifesto, written by André Breton in 1924, helped to bring legitimacy to the movement.

Surrealist visual artists adopted automatic writing as a way to boost creativity. Just as Surrealist writers did automatic writing exercises, Surrealist artists did free-association drawings and exquisite corpse. Free drawing consists of creating a continuous curving line and seeing what symbols or shapes develop. Exquisite corpse is a collaborative drawing where one person begins the drawing, folds the paper over to hide what they have drawn, then passes it to another person. This continues until the paper is filled, at which time it is unfolded and the drawing revealed. The earlier art movement, Dada, had an influence on Surrealism. In fact, some artists migrated from Dada to Surrealism, such as Max Ernst. Some well-known Surrealist artists include, Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí, Man Ray, René Magritte.

Surrealism continues to have a lasting effect on art. For example, Chris Berens, Fulvio di Piazza, Greg "Craola" Simkins, Jennybird Alcantara, and Camille Rose Garcia talk about the influence of Surrealism on their work. Some of them are part of a contemporary art movement called Pop Surrealism. Pop Surrealism is a broad term to describe pop-culture-infused art. Many Pop Surrealists combine pop culture with techniques inspired by past art movements, such as Surrealism. When you see Turn the Page: The First Ten Years of Hi-Fructose at MOCA you will see how surrealism influences Contemporary art.

RESOURCES:
The Metropolitan Museum of Art Essay on Surrealism
André Breton's First Surrealist Manifesto
Article about the influence of Sigmund Freud on Surrealism
Article about the origins of Pop Surrealism
Hi-Fructose Magazine
Virginia MOCA
Salvador Dalí

Lobster Telephone, 1936

© Tate, London 2016
Man Ray
*Indestructible Object*, 1923
© Tate, London 2016
Fulvio Di Piazza was born in Siracusa, Italy, studied at the Urbino Art Academy, and currently resides in Palermo, Italy. Di Piazza has gained international acclaim for his surreal dark dystopian oil paintings. They show spiraling volcanic smoke, floating islands in the sky, and detailed forests. These fantastical scenes often show large floating heads or animals in the center of the composition.

Di Piazza’s work shows influence by Jeremy Rifkin, a political and economic theorist and author of Entropy. In Entropy, Rifkin states that whenever "...order is created anywhere on earth or in the universe; it is done at the expense of causing greater disorder in the surrounding environment."

Fulvio Di Piazza explores man’s relationship with nature in his work. The idea that people are so driven to progress, that they don’t consider the effects progress might have on the environment.

QUESTIONS TO PROMOTE CONVERSATION:
This appears to be some sort of dwelling or structure. What clues are there that this is a dwelling? Does this look like a place you would want to enter? What do you think it would look like inside? How would you enter this place? Who do you think would like in a place like this? The title of this work is Ratspiderbat. Can you find the rats, spiders and bats?

CONNECTING:
Fulvio Di Piazza takes inspiration from books. What kind of book do you think inspired this painting? What books inspire you? If you were going to create a work of art inspired by two or more books, what would you make?

RESOURCES:


Galleria Giovanni Bonelli, Representing Gallery Artist Profile

Interview with Fulvio Di Piazza by Osservatorio delle Arti e Scrittura in Sicilia (subtitles)
The Surrealist art movement began as a literary movement. For this activity students will be inspired by books or stories that they love.

**SUPPLIES:**
- Student packet
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Drawing materials

**STEPS:**
- Have the students brainstorm and sketch several characters from their favorite books or stories.
- Next, have them brainstorm and sketch settings from their favorite books or stories.
- After they have brainstormed character setting ideas have the students combine the settings with the characters. Encourage them to make their combinations unique and unusual. For example, place a mermaid in a tree or on a mountain.
- As they are working on the sketch, have the students figure out how to compose their characters within the new imaginary environment. Have them consider compositional rules such as scale and proportion. While the goal is to have a juxtaposition between character and place, it should not look like the character is just floating in the scene rather than a part of it.
Fulvio Di Piazza

Ratspiderbat, 2013
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Galleria Giovanni Bonelli, Milan
Greg “Craola” Simkins was born and still lives in Torrance, California, a town south of Los Angeles. After receiving his Bachelor’s Degree in Studio Art from California State University, Simkins worked as an illustrator and video game designer.

Simkins paints the worlds we create in our daydreams; where the impossible becomes reality. They are populated by realistically rendered characters in surreal combinations. In these characters you can see the influence of Simkins’ love for animals. He is also inspired by his favorite childhood books such as The Chronicles of Narnia, Watership Down, and The Phantom Tollbooth.

*Killing Time* shows Big Ben, which seems to be falling through the air as it fights a mechanical bird. Ghostly looking creatures watch the fight from the background. Craola was thinking about time while working on this piece, wishing he had the power to stop time, so he can slow down and relax.

**QUESTIONS TO PROMOTE CONVERSATION:**
There seems to be a battle going on in this image. Who is fighting? What do you think they are fighting about? What are the creatures in the background doing? Who seems to be winning the fight? How does the artist personify objects in the artwork?

**CONNECTING:**
Why do you think the artist would want to “kill time”? Have there ever been moments you wish would last forever? Or moments which would end more quickly?

**RESOURCES:**

- Artist’s website
- The Hundreds, “In the Studio and into the World of Artist Greg “Craola” Simkins,” Video Interview, 2015
In this activity, students will be combining collage and illustration.

SUPPLIES:
- Student packet
- Magazines
- Scissors
- Glue/glue sticks
- Drawing materials

STEPS:
- Gather a supply of magazines the students can cut up for images. Have them look through and find two images that they find interesting.

- Next have the students cut out the two images and play with arranging them in an interesting composition. Once they have figured out how they want the two images to relate, they can then glue them to the back of the Surrealist Activity 2 page in the student handout.

- Have the students brainstorm a story which connects the two images. Once they have the idea for their story, either written down or not, they will draw the story showing what is happening between the two images.
Greg Craola Simkins
*Killing Time*, 2014
Acrylic on panel
Collection of Nick Cassavetes
Camille Rose Garcia was born and raised in Los Angeles, California where she still lives and works. As the daughter of a filmmaker father and a muralist/painter mother, Garcia's interest in art began at an early age. She received her Master's in Fine Arts from the University of California, Davis in 1994.

Garcia is known for her dark, fairytale inspired paintings. Growing up near Disneyland imagery and being a part of the Los Angeles counterculture punk movement. Garcia's paintings are a combination of pop culture, social commentary, and sometimes self-reflection.

Music plays a big role in Camille Rose Garcia's life. She makes a point of seeing live music whenever she can. *Ghost of G Sharp Seven* was inspired by one of her favorite singers, Shakey Graves. She drove four hours to see him play one night. It was a magical show for Garcia.

The day after seeing Shakey Graves she started on this painting. For Garcia, this painting is about trying to make moments last.

**QUESTIONS TO PROMOTE CONVERSATIONS:**
What is happening in this painting? What do the colors make you feel? What do you think the white crocodile represents? Where do you think this scene is taking place? What about the painting tells you that?

**CONNECTING:**
Garcia was inspired to create this painting after seeing a band play. Think about the kinds of music you like. What kind of artwork would that music inspire? What symbols would you include to show people what that music is like? What colors would you use?

**RESOURCES:**

Artist’s website


For this activity students will use their favorite song for inspiration.

SUPPLIES:
- Student packet
- Drawing materials
- MP3 player (optional)
- Headphones (optional)

STEPS:
- Have the students think of their favorite song. If you feel comfortable, let them listen to it on a smart phone or MP3 player. Get them to think about how that song makes them feel and what images pop into their head.

- On the back of the Surrealist Activity 3 have the students sketch everything that comes to mind when they listen or think about that song. Encourage them to include anything and everything they think of while listening.

- Have them add color to their drawing that relate to the song and how help the viewer understand the feeling that song gives them.
Camille Rose Garcia  
*The Ghost of G Sharp Seven*, 2013  
Acrylic and glitter on wood panel  
Courtesy of the Artist and Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles  
Photograph by Karl Puchlik
Todd Schorr was born in New York City but grew up in Oakland, New Jersey. In 1976 Schorr graduated from the Philadelphia College of Art (now the University of the Arts) with a degree from the illustration department.

After graduating Schorr moved to New York City. There he focused on design, creating album cover, posters and magazine covers. Eventually, he left to pursue his own fine art career.

Schorr is considered one of the founders of the Pop Surrealist or “Lowbrow” movement. His paintings show the influence of cartoons, movies, and art history. Schorr creates intricate, often humorous narratives that comment on the human condition. Schorr’s paintings usually depicting people, animals, or fantasy creatures frozen in action, like a comic book.

*The Last Polar Expedition of Commander Peary* was first featured in Schorr’s solo exhibition *Neverlasting Miracles* at the Merry Karnowsky Gallery in 2012. In the show, Schorr explored modern vs primitive behavior. It is a theme Schorr sees taking place in everyday life. He questions how people that are so technologically advanced can devolve to primitive behavior when it comes to our interactions with each other.

**QUESTIONS TO PROMOTE CONVERSATIONS:**

What do you think the background leading up to this particular moment is? At six feet tall and eight feet wide, this is a huge painting – why do you think Schorr chose to paint this scene at such a scale? Which figure in the painting first caught your eye, and why do you think it did?

**CONNECTING:**

Schorr uses sophisticated painting techniques from the fine art world to create his lowbrow paintings – what painting from an old master would you want to re-create in the lowbrow style? What influences from art and pop culture can you pick out from this painting?

**RESOURCES:**

[Artist’s website](#)


[Jonathan LeVine Gallery, Exhibition Profile.](#)
Surrealist Activity 4:
Todd Schorr

For this activity students will fill out a “madlibs” style paragraph. Next they will create an illustration for the paragraph.

SUPPLIES:
- Student packet
- Pencils
- Drawing materials

STEPS:
- Have the students write down a word for each part of speech listed at the bottom of their paper.
- When they are done, they can flip the page over and add their words to the story.
- Once they have filled in the story they can use the rest of that page to create their illustration.

1. Noun:
2. Verb ending with –ing:
3. Noun:
4. Verb ending with –ing:
5. Adjective:
6. Adjective:

Something had gone wrong. The latest update to the (1)______________________ had just been released, but it was (2)______________________ with (3)______________________. Everywhere I looked, people were (4)______________________ – but the (5)______________________ part is, they were talking to each other, face to face. I have to get away from these (6)______________________ people before it messes me up, too.
Jennybird Alcantara was born in New York City and raised in Napa Valley, California. She currently lives in San Francisco, California. She received a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute.

Alcantara creates minutely detailed oil paintings that contain narratives of female-animal-nature hybrids. In Creatures of Saintly Disguise the central figure represent the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. The white flowers behind her are the spirits of nature, left in the wake of her journey. Her many legs represent the indecisiveness of which path she is going to take. Alcantara also explores the symbolism of animals in in her work. In this painting tiger represents a protector, who is leading the central figure. The bear is a scout, watching out for potential danger.

QUESTIONS TO PROMOTE CONVERSATION:
Is this a woman, animal or plant? What do you see that makes you say this? What are the creatures around her doing? Where are they? Where are they going?

CONNECTING:
Alcantara considers herself an explorer in these works. Imagine you are one of the figures in this piece. Where have you been? What is ahead of you? Where are you trying to go?

RESOURCES:

Artist’s website


For this activity the students will do an exquisite corpse drawing, like the one mentioned in the beginning of the packet. Each student will start with a piece of paper and will fill in the top section on that paper. At the end of the activity the student will get their original paper back.

SUPPLIES:
- Student packet
- Pencils
- Drawing materials

STEPS:
- Using a blank piece of paper or the back of activity 5 in the student packet. Fold the paper into three sections.
- At the top of the paper, have the students draw a human head. When they are done, fold the paper over so you can’t see the head. Then have the students hand their paper to the person sitting on the left. That student will draw a torso that looks like a plant. Then, they will fold the paper over again, and pass it to the student on their left. The third student will fill in the bottom section of the paper with legs that look like an animal.
- When all three sections are finished, the paper goes back to the student who started the head. It is up to that student to add color and a background.
Jennybird Aacantara

Creatures of Saintly Disguise, 2012
Oil on wood
Courtesy of AFA Gallery
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