Student name: Group:

Art movement.....Surrealism, XX, c.
Timeframe.....1924 - 1945
Topic Focus.....The higher reality and the dream

Teaching material: The instructor will provide video materials for educational purposes. ~15'

Warm up: What did artists look for in the dream and how did they represent it in art (10').

Background information: In 1924, André Breton was ready to publish the Surrealist Manifesto. This manifesto gave a nod to its predecessor, Dadaism, and set out his own philosophy, based on Freudian ideas. "If the depths of our minds conceal strange forces capable of augmenting or conquering those of the surface, it is our greatest interest to capture them; first to capture them and then to submit them, if the occasion arises, to the control of reason," Breton wrote.

The phrase "control of reason" separated Dadaism from Surrealism. Breton concluded his manifesto by giving the reader two definitions of Surrealism, first as a word: "Pure psychic automatism by which it is intended to express, verbally or in writing, the true function of thought. Thought dictated in the absence of any control exercised by reason, and outside any aesthetic or moral concern", and then as a philosophy: "Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain hitherto neglected forms of association, in the omnipotence of the dream and in the disinterested play of thought. It leads to the permanent destruction of all other psychic mechanisms and to their substitution in the solution of the main problems of life."

Main activity: Exploring the representations and plastic transcriptions of the dream.

Whereas Dadaism was a political and social art of rage and social protest, Surrealism was concerned with art as a means of expression of the unseen or as an instrument of self-discovery, not as an end in itself. Surrealism thus set itself a task and a purpose, and this mission was to heal the torn fabric of society through private introspection.

In the 1924 Manifesto, Breton wrote: "I believe in the future resolution of these two states - outwardly so contradictory - which are dream and reality, into a kind of absolute reality, a surreality, so to speak, I propose its conquest, certain that I myself will not attain it, but too indifferent to my death not to calculate the joys of such a possession." The question was how to find this "higher reality", how to reach the unconscious part of the mind, always guarded by the disciplined waking mind. Often, with the help of drugs or alcohol, surrealist poets and writers played at bringing the unconscious mind to the surface. They tried to write "automatically" to free themselves from the constraints of tradition in art and drew exquisite corpses, or composite drawings to create new thoughts for the resulting figures that could not be imagined in ordinary circumstances. There is much in surrealism that is a manifestation of Sigmund Freud's exercise in free association.

Group activity: Analyse Dalí's work "The Persistence of Memory".

Related reading: Max Ernst wrote "What is Surrealism?" in 1934, rejecting the naïve and clichéd assertion that artists copy their dreams in their works. Representing a dream plastically does not mean simply copying it. André Breton published in 1929 the second Surrealist Manifesto (Seconde manifeste du surréalisme. *La Révolution surréaliste*) in which he set out the terms of the group's revolutionary commitment and made an unappealable general plea to the Surrealist *order*.

1. Notes on the artistic movement of SURREALISM. General background

3. Key words on the subject. The higher reality and the dream

2. Notes on the subject of The higher reality and the dream. Individual activity

4. Summary of group activities. General conclusions.