

# Hybrid Creatures of the Subconscious

Secondary: (ages 11 – 14)

Visual arts

Students experiment with making images from their subconscious. They use a variety of source material and subject matter as inspiration. Once they have developed an idea, they sketch a hybrid creature that in some way represents a part of them. They paint the creature with their choice of complimentary colours.

**Time allocation** About 6 lesson periods

**Subject content** Explore cultural and artistic context and traditions: surrealism  
Use complementary colours and mix colours

**Creativity and critical thinking** This unit has a **creativity** and **critical thinking** focus:

- Play with unusual ideas when producing a piece of art
- Consider alternative perspectives and make connections to other arts concepts
- Explain the strengths and limitations of a piece of visual arts

**Other skills** Communication

**Key words** Max Ernst; surrealism; complimentary colours; unconscious; psychology; identity; drawing; painting

## Products and processes to assess

Exploring visual arts elements and planning and experimenting with composition enables learners to communicate experiences, feelings, ideas and observations in visual arts works, at their own level of development. At the highest level of achievement, their output is imaginative, showing a high level of personal features as well as appropriate use of complimentary colours. Their work process demonstrates a willingness to explore a variety of ideas and the ability to see connections with other ideas or domains. The final presentation shows good awareness of the areas of personal novelty and of why final choices have been made and an openness to the ideas and feedback of others.

## Teaching and Learning plan

This plan suggests potential steps for implementing the activity. Teachers can introduce as many modifications as they see fit to adapt the activity to their teaching context.

Step	Duration	Teacher and student roles	Subject knowledge	Creativity and critical thinking
1	Lesson period 1	Teacher starts by introducing complimentary colours and mixing colour techniques, showing videos and examples. Teacher then shows examples of surrealist images, and discusses with students what works and what does not work, the colours that were used in each image and how that conveys a certain message. Students will begin to experiment with mixing colours.	<p>Understanding complimentary colours and mixing colour techniques</p> <p>Understanding how colour impacts the overall theme and mood of an image</p> <p>Experimenting with mixing colours</p>	Explaining the strengths and limitations of a piece of visual art
2	Lesson period 2	Teacher introduces “exquisite creature game”, in which students draw the head of the creature at the top of the page, and then pass it to the next student who draws the neck and shoulder areas, then next student does belly button and top of legs, last student does bottom portion down to the feet. Gather back together as a group and discuss what this activity demonstrated, does each part of the drawing give different feelings and ideas? Does it work as a whole drawing?	Developing drawing skills	<p>Playing with unusual ideas when creating a piece of visual art</p> <p>Considering different perspectives</p>
3	Lesson period 3	Teacher shows students’ examples of surrealist images (e.g. Max Ernst). Students start to draw a draft of their creature, creatures must be able to taste, hear, see, feel, smell, and think. Encourage student to let their thoughts flow freely without restriction and to create something as original as possible. Teacher walks around and assists students as necessary.	<p>Introducing examples of surrealist art</p> <p>Developing drawing skills</p>	Playing with unusual and radical visual arts ideas when preparing a piece of visual art
4	Lesson periods 4 and 5	The teacher explains that the painting must also include a mixture of complimentary colours and visually demonstrate glazing paint over already dry areas to build up texture. Students are allowed time to experiment with mixing colours and to choose the complimentary colours they want to use and then start to paint their image on their canvas, teacher walks around and assist as necessary.	<p>Understanding the use of complimentary colours and mix colours</p> <p>Using colour to create texture</p> <p>Painting skills</p>	<p>Making connections to other visual arts concepts</p> <p>Playing with unusual and radical ideas to create visual art that shows expressive qualities and</p>

				personally novel ways to engage subject matter
5	Lesson period 6	Students volunteer to present their image to the class, and discuss what they have created, how they came up with the idea, and why they made colour and other choices. As appropriate, the teacher could take this opportunity to discuss what is unusual, original or radical about each piece and how the activity relates to surrealist art. Alternatively, students could be asked to produce written work reflecting on these questions	Presenting and communicating ideas to the class	Reflecting on chosen expressive choices of a visual arts piece relative to possible alternatives

## Resources and examples for inspiration

### Web and print

- Mixing colour technique videos
- Examples of surrealist images (for example, by Max Ernst)
- Visual of the colour wheel

### Other

- Acrylic paint tubes: red, yellow, blue, ultramarine blue, crimson
- Brushes
- Palettes
- Water Containers
- Sponges
- Tape
- Smocks
- Pill cups
- Masking tape
- Roll of canvas
- Charcoal
- Palette knives
- Drawing boards
- Paper 18x24, and 8.5X11
- Kitchen timer
- Newsprint
- Spray

### Opportunities to adapt, extend, and enrich

- Potential links could be made with psychology (e.g. the concept of subconscious) and philosophy (e.g. the representation of reality)

**Creativity and critical thinking rubric for visual arts**

• Mapping of the different steps of the lesson plan against the OECD rubric to identify the creative and/or critical thinking skills the different parts of the lesson aim to develop

	<b>CREATIVITY</b> Coming up with new ideas and solutions	Steps	<b>CRITICAL THINKING</b> Questioning and evaluating ideas and solutions	Steps
<b>INQUIRING</b>	Make connections to other visual arts concepts and media or to conceptual ideas in other disciplines	4	Identify and question assumptions and conventional rules in a piece of visual art (content, style, technique, colour, composition, etc.)	2,5
<b>IMAGINING</b>	Play with unusual and radical visual arts ideas when preparing or creating a piece of visual art	2,3,4	Consider several perspectives on the content, technique or expression of a piece of visual arts	2,5
<b>DOING</b>	Create visual art that shows expressive qualities or personally novel ways to engage a subject matter	3,3	Explain both strengths and limitations of a piece of visual arts justified by aesthetic, logical and possibly other criteria	1
<b>REFLECTING</b>	Reflect on steps taken in creating a piece of visual art and on its novelty compared to conventions	5	Reflect on the chosen expressive choices of a visual arts piece relative to possible alternatives	5