

INVESTIGATE! Poetry and Dream

Secondary: Key Stages 3 & 4

WHERE TO GO:
Room 2:
'Surrealism and Beyond'
in the Poetry and Dream wing

WHAT TO DO

In small groups, allow students enough time to have a good look at the work on display in the 'Surrealism and Beyond' room, and for each small group to compile a list of 5 buzzwords to describe Surrealism. Share the buzzwords with the whole group to compile a big list. Discuss what the artworks on display have in common. Is there a shared style, subject, medium, or attitude?

Consider Psychoanalysis. André Breton wrote the Surrealist Manifesto in 1924, inspired Sigmund Freud's writing on the unconscious. Breton thought that dreams released hidden, repressed desires and wanted Surrealism to use dream images for a 'revolution of the mind.' In the same small groups, quickly pick one work from this room to best illustrate the influence of dream imagery. Discuss choices as a whole group. Is there a story behind these works?

WHERE TO GO:
Stay in Room 3:
'Francis Picabia' in the
Poetry and Dream wing

WHAT TO DO

Consider hidden elements and layers of meaning in Picabia's work. He often gave artworks misleading titles, and gave artworks incorrect dates. He liked to ridicule ideas of good taste and artistic skill, and painted a series of images based on mechanical drawings, which he gave sexual titles. The Fig Leaf is painted over one of his suggestive machine drawings. Discuss why an artist might 'hide' something in their work?

Do the hidden elements in Picabia's work, or any artwork they have seen so far, relate to 'dreams' and to 'poetry.'

Do any of the buzzwords apply to the artworks in this room? Allow time for everyone to have a good look at the work on display. Can each of the smaller groups suggest an artwork from the 'Surrealism and Beyond' room to add to this room, and explain why?

WHERE TO GO:
Room 4:
'Natural History' in the
Poetry and Dream wing

WHAT TO DO

These artists have explored the scientific microscopic world of organisms and infinite universes that suggest another world beneath the one we experience daily.

First ask the students to in small groups identify the scale of the worlds depicted in each of the prints in this room compared to themselves.

Now focus on the delicate etchings by the artist Wols. Ask the students to look at the palm of their own hand. Keep looking at smaller and smaller areas until they have studied the finest lines they can see. Now ask them to draw in their sketchbooks or on paper a close up section showing the lines interconnecting. If they look carefully they can make a really detailed study of all the delicate lines that interconnect the stronger lines.

Ask the students how they think these artists have portrayed their imaginative worlds in comparison to the Surrealists in room 2?

WHERE TO GO:
Activity for any room in the
Poetry and Dream wing

WHAT TO DO

Were your students surprised by anything they have seen during this session?

Do they feel that the artwork they have seen relates to their initial understanding of 'poetry' and 'dream.'

Teacher's notes

Introduction

Investigate is an information sheet for teachers which provides a substitute for an artist-led workshop. It provides an introduction to key ideas in the 'Idea and Object' display along with a set of gallery activities which you will easily be able to explain to your students. The emphasis is on focused looking and thoughtful responses to the artworks. For further information students can read captions and information texts in the galleries. Small groups of students can also carry out further research in the Clore Information Room on level 1.

Background

Before starting the session, make sure students know that the permanent Collection at Tate Modern is displayed in four wings that are titled 'Poetry and Dream', 'Material Gestures', 'States of Flux' and 'Idea and Object', and that this is not potted history of modern and contemporary art.

All the activities are designed to promote talking, looking and discussing, either in pairs or as a group. In most of the activities there are no hard and fast answers: the answers are related to interpretation of what is being seen, in combination with imaginative responses.

Materials and group management

Students will need a pencil and sketchbook, or paper and a clipboard.

Although students will make their own notes and drawings in their sketchbooks, encourage discussion in pairs or threes. Before each activity, ensure the group has enough time to look at the artwork. Don't rush this. Bring the group together for speaking and listening after each of the activities.

It will be helpful for you to collect a gallery plan from the Clore Education Centre or from the Information desk on level 1.

Idea and Object: Key Themes

- Rules
- Shape
- Form
- Symmetry
- Communication
- Idea
- Representation

WHERE TO GO
Level 3 concourse:
outside the
Poerty and Dream wing

WHAT TO DO:

Allow students time individually to think of a connection between 'poetry' and 'dream'.

Discuss the connections made, as a group.

- Do these fit with anything your students already know about Surrealism?
 - What do they expect to see in the **Poetry and Dream** suite?