

Jennifer Furr
7/24/16
Study of Contemporary Creative Art Practices
Surrealism

[https://www.pinterest.com/jenniferfurr/uf-artistic-development-contemporary-creative-art-/](https://www.pinterest.com/jenniferfurr/uf-artistic-development-contemporary-creative-art/)

<http://jenniferfurr.weebly.com/artistic-development-resource-packet.html>

Salvador Dali. Renee Magritte. These are the names that usually come to mind when I heard the word surrealism. However, I have discovered through this week's research project that there are numerous contemporary artists involved in the genre of surrealistic art, and use varied media in their visionary creations.

Visions, dreams, nightmares even. These are the things that surrealistic art embodies. Surrealism reminds me a lot of techno music. Sometimes there are just no words. Sometimes there is a feeling evoked that you can't quite put a finger on. Sometimes you know exactly what emotion the art brings forth, and sometimes you just want to run from the nightmarish quality of it.

Andre Breton, better known as the "father of surrealism", said that surrealism is psychic automatism, or that your subconscious mind takes over the art-making process (Wikipedia, 2016). Magritte, on the other hand, was more interested in consciously creating poetic imagery. Dali was also quite intentional with his work, relying heavily on the use of symbolism in his surrealistic masterpieces.

How do the classic surrealist artists, the founders, compare to today's contemporary surrealistic painters, sculptors, and photographers? It would seem that today's surrealism has continued in quite that same fashion that it was originally intended. Take for example, Vladimir

Kush, a Russian contemporary surrealist. I was recently introduced to his works by my 18-year-old niece, and I would say they definitely continue on in the tradition of Dali.

Kush opened up his first gallery in Hawaii in 2001, and now has 4 galleries in the United States, with hopes to open more. Kush said that the goal of the artist should be to reflect the world in the mirror of the metaphor (Kush, 2016). He says that our mind changes with subconscious art, created by the metaphors. I would say that Breton would be proud of his philosophy, as he also believed the subconscious mind was responsible for surrealistic art.

Sarah Eisenlohr, another contemporary surrealist, relies heavily on symbolism, like Dali. She creates fictional places in her collages that represent the changes that humans have made to the earth. Her collages often show symbols of her religion and faith, as well. Eisenlohr explained this, saying, “I consider the figures’ desire for shelter, warmth, and something stronger than themselves as symbols of serenity that I seek through spirituality, while the use of sublime in my work points to a relationship with the divine” (Cahill, 2014, para 6).

One contemporary artist that reminds me of Magritte’s surrealistic style of creating poetic imagery is 16-year-old Dimitra Milan. Milan speaks of painting her dreams, saying, “I hope that when people see my artwork, they see beauty. I hope that they see themselves. I hope they have some kind of deep, internal response in their heart—not just a cognitive response” (Gragert, 2016, para 28). Milan’s description of her painting process was also interesting, when she spoke of incorporating new artistic techniques along with old master style techniques, but doing it all on a subconscious level (Gragert, 2016).

Michael Cheval was a contemporary artist that I considered a surrealist painter, but his biography stated otherwise. Cheval says that his paintings have a surrealistic direction, but the genre he paints in is called “absurdity”. According to Cheval, “Absurdity is an inverted side or

reality, a reverse side of logic. It does not emerge from the dreams of surrealists, or the work of subconsciousness. It is a game of imagination” (Cheval, 2016, para 1). This reminds me a lot of Magritte also, especially his “This is not a _____” series.

Rafal Olbinski was another surrealist contemporary painter that I found myself saving repeated images of. Olbinski has a rather impressive resume, I must say. In his home country of Poland, the president awarded him with the highest art award they have, a gold medal, called the “Gloria Artist”. He has been awarded other impressive titles, ribbons, and medals across the globe, as well as having created posters for opera houses globally, and covers for Time Magazine, Newsweek, and the New Yorker. Of course, the most interesting thing to me about his work, is that it deals with layers of meaning in each painting. “He does not paint the landscape of scientific reality, but rather maps the interiors of the mind. Like Dali and Magritte before him, Olbinski’s work has a poetic resonance – he depicts the mind as a theater of dreams, with new attractions around every corner” (Falk, 2016, para 15).

Marcelo Monreal is a Brazilian collage artist who, like Dali, focuses on symbolism in his surrealistic art. Monreal dissects photos of celebrities’ faces, and intersperses the skulls with flowers. Monreal says that people don’t tell us who they really are and keeps parts of themselves hidden from us (Barnes, 2015). It is his intention to show us rare moments where we see beauty beyond appearance. Whatever that means. When referring to celebrities and models, anyhow.

Igor Morski is a Polish graphic designer, illustrator, and set designer. He currently focuses on photo manipulation and drawing. In 2013, Morski created a surrealist series called ‘Nature’ that blends the human shape into elements of nature and wildlife. Morski’s art is called a “reality beyond realism” with the article author stating that “in true surrealist tradition, Morski

also draws a parallel between the human mind and the concrete nature, suggesting the unconscious as a form of reality as valid as any other” (Saïoc, 2013, para 2).

In conclusion, for the most part, I think the artists I chose for this contemporary surrealism board were fascinating. The human mind, psychology, neuroscience, any kind of study of the mind or brain is interesting to me, so I guess that is why this type of art appeals to me, because of the depth of meaning in most pieces, and trying to figure them out. Some of the artists were very successful, and some of them were very full of themselves. Some of them had very good press agents and/or journalists promoting them. Either way, I enjoyed learning about them.

References:

Barnes, S. (2015). Marcelo Monreal's surreal collages replace our insides with beautiful blooms.

Beautiful Decay. Retrieved from <http://beautifuldecay.com/2015/04/07/marcelo-monreals-surreal-collages-replace-insides-beautiful-blooms/>

Cheval, M. (2016). Michael Cheval bio. Retrieved from <http://chevalfineart.com/info/bio/>

Falk, P. (2016). Rafal Olbinski. *Patinae*. Retrieved from <http://chevalfineart.com/info/bio/>

Gragert, A. (2016). Interview: 16-year-old artist Dimitri Milan paints her wildest dreams.

Retrieved from <http://www.mymodernmet.com/profiles/blogs/dimitra-milan-paintings>

Kush, V. (2010). Artist's Biography. Retrieved from <http://vladimirkush.com/biography>

Saioc, A. (2013). It's Simply Human Nature by Igor Morski. The Global Panorama.

<http://theglobalpanorama.com/its-simply-human-nature-by-igor-morski/>

Wikipedia. (2016). Surrealist Automatism. Retrieved from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrealist_automatism

