

**INTERWAR EUROPE
(1919-1939):
SURREALISM: DALI AND
BUNUEL**



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Description

Through an examination of both primary and secondary sources on the subject, including various types of visual media in addition to electronic and written sources, Students here will identify, understand and be able to explain the basics of Surrealism as it developed as a movement in the aftermath of the Great War, how surrealism served as a vehicle for the rejection of bourgeois culture prevalent after the war, and how Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel specifically fit into the surrealist movement in Europe.

Subjects

European History
World History
Art
Art History

Grade Level

11-12

Duration

90 minutes

Tour Links

- Reina Sofia Museum, Madrid
- Plaza de Dali, Madrid
- Thyssen Museum, Madrid
- Museo del Prado, Madrid
- Academie de Paris
- Espace Dali, Paris

Essential Questions

- What was Surrealism?
- How did it develop as a reaction to Bourgeois culture in Interwar Europe?
- Who as Salvador Dali?
- Who was Luis Bunuel?
- Was Surrealism an artistic movement, a revolutionary movement or both?

Academic Summary

Surrealism is destructive, but it destroys only what it considers to be shackles limiting our vision.

Salvador Dali, Declaration, 1929

Our only rule was very simple: No idea or image that might lend itself to a rational explanation of any kind would be accepted. We had to open all doors to the irrational and keep only those images that surprised us, without trying to explain why.

Luis Bunuel discussing the plot for Un Chien Andalou (1929)

Surrealism was a cultural and artistic movement that developed out of the chaos of the Great War. Best known for its use of illogical images and revolutionary “modern” media techniques, artists such as Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel, both Spaniards who met as young men attending school in Madrid (but who did most of their work in Paris), tried to bring what they believed was the absurdity of bourgeois culture to the public. Surrealists such as Dali and Bunuel tried to bridge the gap between dreams and reality, and to present the world with a subconscious view that rejected mainstream societal values found in what they saw was a modern bourgeois culture driven by class division and that had driven Europe into a destructive war that nearly destroyed a generation.

Dali, mainly a painter who also worked in sculpture, and Bunuel, a film maker, collaborated on two famous films, *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) and *L’Age d’Or* (1930). Dali himself even played a starring role in the 1929 film.

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Objectives

1. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the basics of surrealism as a movement that developed in the aftermath of the Great War.
2. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain how and why surrealism sought to provide a vehicle for the rejection of bourgeois culture in the aftermath of the Great War.
3. Students here will identify, understand and be able to explain how Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel fit into the surrealist movement of the interwar period in Europe.

Procedures

I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: How is art a reflection of the society from whence it came? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of documents and readings from the websites listed. (5 min)

II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel (20 min)
- Video – Luis Bunuel: *Un Chien Andalou* (15 min)
- Independent Activity – Students read the articles and sources on Surrealism, Dali and Bunuel, taking notes as appropriate. (20 min)
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of these articles and sources for homework before class.
- Group Activity – Socratic Seminar: Discussion on Surrealism as it developed in the aftermath of the Great War and how surrealists such as Dali and Bunuel sought to use the movement as a vehicle to illustrate the rejection of bourgeois culture and society prevalent after the war. (15 min)

III. Closure

- Assessment / DBQ – Essay: Explain in detail the surrealist movement as it developed after the Great War, how that artistic movement sought to illustrate the rejection of bourgeois culture, and how Dali and Bunuel fit into the surrealist movement.

Extension

On tour: Studio des Ursulines, Paris

While on tour, students can visit the Studio des Ursulines at 10 Rue des Ursulines in the 5th District of Paris (off Rue St. Jacques between the Luxembourg Gardens and the School of Industrial Physics and Chemistry). A small “arthouse” theatre built in 1926 where avant-garde films were shown to “awake and educate the public”, the Studio is still open today. In 1928, the silent film *Un Chien Andalou*, written by Dali and Bunuel and produced by Bunuel, was shown to a Parisian audience that included Pablo Picasso and many of the leading surrealists of the day. Dali and Bunuel’s film stunned the audience, but the reception was very positive, led to financial backing from wealthy investors, and ultimately then led to the creation of Bunuel’s other great film, *L’Age d’Or* in 1930.

Web Links

Lesson Plan Websites

- www.museothyssen.org/microsites/exposiciones/2013/surrealismo/index_en.html
“Surrealism and the Dream” (article) – from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid
- www.godnose.co.uk/downloads/alevel/key%20concepts/Surrealism.pdf
“The Origins of Surrealism and the Cinema” – web article
- www.windsorhs.com/staff/admin/uploads/Beal14/LuisBunuel.ppt
Luis Bunuel PowerPoint from David Beal, art teacher at Windsor High School (CA)
- www.windsorhs.com/staff/admin/uploads/Beal14/SalvadorDali.ppt
Salvador Dali PowerPoint from David Beal, art teacher at Windsor High School (CA)
- www.teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1
Reading Like a Historian: Primary Source Documents (video) – great 2-minute video on how to incorporate primary sources into the Common Core and history classes. From Shilpa Duvor of Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, CA – highly recommended for teachers.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj3d03KaVw8
Luis Bunuel (video) – Interview from a 1986 TV documentary where Bunuel discusses working with Dali on Un Chien Andalou. This video is just under a minute, and is highly recommended for both students and teachers.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIKYF07Y4kA
Luis Bunuel: Un Chien Andalou (1928). Full version of the movie; 16 minutes long.

Background Information

- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrealism
“Surrealism” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrealist_techniques
“Surrealist Techniques” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surrealist_cinema
“Surrealist Cinema” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvador_Dali
“Salvador Dali” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luis_Bunuel
“Luis Bunuel” – Wikipedia article

Other Relevant Passports Lesson Plans

- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/france/interwar-europe-lost-generation-hemingway-sun-also-rises
Interwar Europe – Hemingway: Sun Also Rises
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/germany/interwar-europe-remarque-all-quiet
Interwar Europe (1919-1939) – Remarque: All Quiet on the Western Front
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/germany/weimar-gropius-bauhaus-and-internationalism
Walter Gropius and the Bauhaus: International Art and Architecture in the Weimar Republic
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/switzerland/interwar-europe-dadaism
Interwar Europe (1919-1939) – Dadaism: Rejecting Modernity’s Chaos

Key Terms

- Avant-garde
- Bourgeois culture
- Interwar Europe
- Luis Bunuel
- Salvador Dali
- Surrealism

