

Salvador Dali (1904-1989)

Source: *The Mad, Mad, Mad World of Salvador Dali* by Prestel (book in the red bag)

Dali was born near Barcelona, Spain. When Salvador was just a young boy of eight years, he made an art studio in his house up in the attic. He liked to read art history books instead of children's books. As a teenager, he was already exhibiting his paintings in art shows. He became one of the most famous artists of the twentieth century.

Things that he remembered from his childhood were often the subject of Dali's paintings. He often examined dreams that he remembered from when he was sleeping. From these dreams he found new ideas for his paintings.

There is an interesting story behind the painting that you are going to see today, "Persistence of Memory". Dali wasn't feeling well so he didn't go out with his wife and friends to a movie. He ate some soft cheese, which gave him an idea to put melting clocks as the main part of a painting that he had been working on. This became his most famous painting. The painting shows us that time never stands still.

Dali always had very special ideas that no one had ever had before. These ideas often got the attention of newspapers and the public. His wife Gala helped him with this. He made a lot of money from his paintings, and they lived a very luxurious and famous life.

His art was part of a movement called Surrealism.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you first look at this painting, what do you see?
2. What is very strange about these objects?
3. Why do you think the artist painted these objects like this?
4. Describe the colors that are used the most. What other colors seem important in the painting?
5. What are the background colors? What would happen to the painting if the background was as bright as the colors in the foreground (main part of painting)?
6. What are the other things in the painting besides the watches? How did Dali create texture in the painting? (like you could actually feel the objects)
7. Describe the insects that are on the stopwatch.
8. What are they trying to do to that stopwatch?
9. The artist seemed to be having fun with making ordinary things like watches do strange things. Which one is your favorite? Why?
10. Let's think about the meaning of the painting. Does time seem to stop or freeze for you sometimes?
Do some days never seem to end?
Have you ever said, "Where did the day go?" because it went so fast?

Maybe the artist wanted you to think about the importance of "time".
11. The style of painting that Salvador Dali did was surrealism. Real things were made to seem very different from what they ordinarily were like.

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES
"Persistence of Memory"
Salvador Dali
Grade Two

1. Surrealism

Materials: white art paper, or some other color of construction paper, crayons, colored pencils

Students are instructed to take some object and draw it in an unusual way.
Example: a square basketball, a clock as a snowball, numbers coming out of a volcano.

2. Melting Clocks

Materials: colored construction paper, black marker/crayon, black construction paper

Have students draw unusual shape clocks onto construction paper--maybe 3 or 4. It's easiest to put the numbers on the clocks before cutting them out. Start with the 12, 6, 3, and 9 before filling in with the other numbers. Then, glue clocks onto black paper, but for fun, don't glue down flat. Instead bend parts of the clock up off of the page.