

Fine Art Activities

La persistencia de la memoria, Salvador Dalí



Salvador Dalí was born in Spain in 1904. He began painting as a child and, by the age of 25, he was already a well-known artist. His most famous works are his surrealist paintings. The most recognizable of these is *La persistencia de la memoria*. Surrealist artists often depict common or easily recognizable objects in strange or unusual settings. Sometimes they change the way these objects look, giving them a dream-like or unreal appearance. Many of Dalí's paintings ask the viewer to question the difference between reality and dreams.

1. a. At first glance, *La persistencia de la memoria* might look totally unrealistic to you. Study the painting and list at least three things that are portrayed realistically. What about these things makes them seem real?

- b. What do you see in the painting that appears dream-like or strange? List at least three things you think are unrealistic in the painting. What about these things makes them seem unreal?

2. What do you think Dalí was trying to say about time and memory in *La persistencia de la memoria*? Explain your answer using details from the painting.

The Persistence of Memory (1931), Salvador Dalí. Oil on canvas, 9 1/2" x 13" (24.1 cm x 33 cm). Museum of Modern Art, New York (162.1934). Given anonymously. © 2007 Salvador Dalí, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA /Art Resource, NY.

Fine Art Activities

Village Festival with Aristocratic Couple, David Teniers the Younger



David Teniers was born in Antwerp, Belgium in 1610. His father, David Teniers the Elder, was his first painting teacher, and he grew to surpass him in fame and success as an artist. He is known for his depictions of Flemish life, from daily peasant chores, to village feasts and gatherings, to paintings of aristocracy.

Study David Teniers the Younger's *Village Festival with Aristocratic Couple* and complete the following activities.

1. How does Teniers use color and light to show the important parts of the paintings?

2. If you were to paint a scene that showed a celebration of wealthy aristocrats in modern times, how would it differ from this painting? What setting would you choose? What might be happening in the painting?

Village Festival with Aristocratic Couple (1652), David Teniers. Oil on canvas, 31 1/2" x 43". Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

Fine Art Activities

Las meninas, Diego Velázquez



Diego Velázquez was the court painter of the King of Spain from 1623 until his death in 1660. He is considered by many to be one of the greatest European painters. He is best known for his lifelike, almost photographic portraits of the royal family and other members of the King’s court. Velázquez also is celebrated for his use of light and shadow to create realistic effects and to express meaning. *Las meninas* is one of his most widely recognized works. The painting depicts the young princess of Spain surrounded by her staff, or **meninas**.

1. a. Study *Las meninas* and put a check next to those things you see in the painting.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A court jester | <input type="checkbox"/> A painter’s palette |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A paintbrush | <input type="checkbox"/> A couple reflected in a mirror |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A nun | <input type="checkbox"/> A woman in a doorway |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two children | <input type="checkbox"/> A child’s toy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three people talking in the background | <input type="checkbox"/> A man in a doorway |

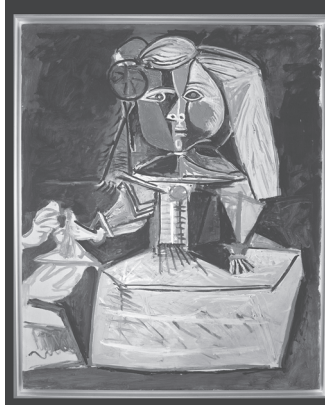
b. Who or what do you think is the focal point or primary subject of this painting? Explain your answer.

2. Scan the darkened walls to the right and to the rear of the **meninas**. Remember that Velázquez often played with light and darkness to create meaning. What did Velázquez choose to illuminate and what did he leave in shadow? What meaning might these choices have? Use complete sentences in your answer.

Las meninas (1656), Diego Rodríguez Velázquez. Oil on canvas, 109" x 125". Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain. Photograph by Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

Fine Art Activities

Las meninas (Infanta Margarita), Pablo Picasso



Pablo Picasso was born in Málaga, Spain in 1881. From the time he began painting seriously until his death, almost 75 years later, he was one of the world's most influential and widely known artists. He is credited with the development of many artistic movements, including cubism. Cubism reflects the artist's interpretation of a subject rather than an accurate rendition of the subject as it appears in reality. Geometrical shapes and a limited use of color are characteristic of this style. This version of Spanish painter Diego Velázquez's masterpiece, *Las meninas*, is called *Las meninas (Infanta Margarita)*. The painting exhibits Picasso's interest in reinterpreting old works in the cubist style.

1. What colors does Picasso use in his painting? What shapes form the **Infanta**? Use the chart below to list the colors and shapes you recognize in Picasso's painting.

Colors	Shapes

2. In this version of *Las meninas*, Picasso has painted the **Infanta** reaching with her right hand for her own paintbrush. This action reveals some information about her personality. Write a short paragraph explaining what you think the **Infanta** might be like.

Las meninas (Infanta Margarita) (1957), Pablo Picasso. Oil on canvas, 194 cm x 260 cm. Gift of the artist, 1968, Museo Picasso, Barcelona (MPB 70.433)/© 2007 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/Bridgeman Art Library.

Fine Art Activities Answer Key

PERSISTENCIA DE LA MEMORIA, SALVADOR DALÍ, p. 86

- 1a. Answers may vary. The colors, light, and shading of the background rock formation, as well as the sea- and skylscapes, are realistic and evoke dawn or dusk. The perspective and scaling of the watches also are realistic.
- b. Answers will vary. Students may note the melting face-like form in the center of the painting, the melting watches, the bare tree branch growing out of the platform, the ants on the pocket watch, etc.
2. Answers will vary. The painting points to the distortion of memory as time passes (symbolized by the melting watches), to the imposed reality of time (watches again), and to the decay of the past (ants and flies on watches), etc.

VILLAGE FESTIVAL WITH ARISTOCRATIC COUPLE, DAVID TENIERS THE YOUNGER, p. 87

1. Answers will vary. Teniers encourages the viewer to focus on human activity by casting sunlight on the dancing couple, the people eating, and the small cluster of people in the background.
2. Answers will vary. My painting would take place in a great hall, instead of outside. The food would be more elaborate, and the guests would be dressed in expensive clothes and jewelry.

LAS MENINAS, DIEGO VELÁZQUEZ, p. 88

- 1a. Marked items should be:
A paintbrush; A nun; Two children; A painter's palette; A couple reflected in a mirror; A man in a doorway
- b. Answers may vary. The light and the postures of all the figures points to the Infanta.
2. Answers will vary. The walls and the paintings on the walls are darkened, the reflection of the king and queen are illuminated, emphasizing their importance, etc.

LAS MENINAS (INFANTA MARGARITA), PABLO PICASSO, p. 89

1. Answers will vary. Picasso used the brightest colors on the Infanta's dress and on her face, emphasizing her importance, while the background and the "shading" on the Infanta are dull.
2. Answers will vary. Some students may point to the strength of this gesture, etc.