



The invisible made visible: Activating ways of seeing

Curriculum springboard

Visual Arts
Stages 4–6
Years 7–12



Beams festival. H Yip

Outcomes:

A student:

- makes artworks informed by their understanding of the function of and relationships between artist – artwork – world – audience (Conceptual Framework 5.2)
- makes artworks informed by an understanding of how the frames affect meaning (Frames 5.3)

[Visual Arts Years 7-10 Syllabus](#)

Other outcomes:

[Photographic & Digital Media](#)

[Years 7-10](#)

[Syllabus:](#)

5.2, 5.3

[Visual Arts](#)

[Stage 6](#)

[Syllabus:](#)

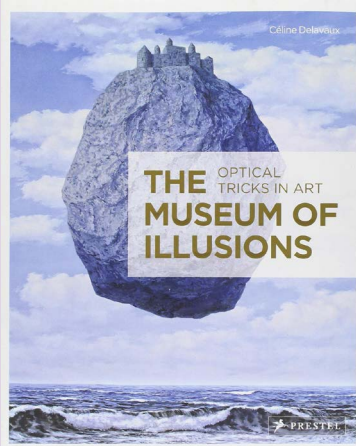
P2, P3

[Photography,](#)

Review:

The museum of illusions: optical tricks in art

DELAVAUX, Céline
Prestel (Munich), 2013
ISBN 9783791347776 [701]



As material reflections of how artists interpret their world, artworks possess the power to conjure illusions and alternate perceptions of reality. Dissecting the enigmatic concept of illusionism, this publication reveals the limitless potential of trompe l'oeil and other optical tricks exploited by artists throughout art history from classical frescoes to street art. Informed by concise critiques that contextualise the practice of an array of historical and contemporary artists in respect to their individual beliefs and broader cultural sphere, students and teachers can investigate how the visible and invisible can be blurred to represent, invent or question a particular way of seeing the world. Approaches such as

Teaching and learning opportunities:

- Play with the visual metaphor of reflections, using mirrors or other reflective surfaces to distort the appearance of reality. Tilt, wet, cling wrap or obscure the surface to warp the reflected subject. Draw, photograph and/or paint the distorted images to create a series of abstractions. Alternately, position an object or person directly on a mirror and manipulate the symmetry and truth of the scene. Refer to Richard Estes, William Scrots, Erhard Schön, Salvador Dalí's *Swans reflecting elephants*, 1937, and Caravaggio's *Narcissus*, 1597-99.
- Draw or photograph a place from a bird's eye, worm's eye and eye level perspective. Appropriate M.C. Escher's work, *Another world*, 1947, and collage or digitally insert these perspectives into the windows of the room. Students can also photograph one another from each angle and collage themselves interacting with the space within the artwork.
- Slice and weave two or more images together to create multiple perspectives within one composition. Experiment with multiple perspectives of a selected subject, images of a subject changing over time, contrasting subjects or one subject interpreted through different media.
- Create a folded concertina and attach two distinct, sliced images across the alternating panels to create a composite illusion.
- Photograph a subject through magnifying lenses, textured glass or glass objects to distort its appearance then translate the image into a painting, drawing or print. Refer to M.C. Escher's reflected self-portraits and Philippe Halsman's portraits of Salvador Dalí.
- Create double, multiple or reflexive self-portraits that blur the relationship between the artist, artwork and audience, referring to Rene Magritte's *Forbidden reproduction* (Portrait of Edward James), 1937, Philippe Halsman's *Jean Cocteau, New York*, 1949, Jan Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini portrait*, 1434, and the work of [Emily Portmann](#). Shoot multiple exposures using a tripod and film or digital photography combined with layer merging.
- Construct an installation based on shadow play, collecting and assembling objects that together create the silhouette of an image or scene when a spotlight or projector light is shone onto them. Refer to the collaborative works of [Tim Noble and Sue Webster](#).
- Photograph an existing environment or space and digitally insert doors, windows, portals, cracks or other openings to reveal alternate realities. Students can explore concepts such as past or future scenarios and real or imagined narratives, referring to [The Truman Show](#). Extending this idea, images of these illusions can be digitally projected onto the real space and documented. Refer to the use of trompe l'oeil by contemporary artists such as [Edgar Müller](#) and [Craig Walsh](#).
- Dissolve boundaries between the figure and environment, foreground and background and artwork and artist through acts of urban camouflage. Refer to the strategies of body art, wearables and performance in the practice of [Emma Hack](#), [Kimiko Yoshida](#), Liu Bolin and Aya Tsukioka

Professional resources:

- [VADEA NSW on Twitter](#)
- [Resource reviews](#)

Resources:

Books:

- *Dalí's world* by Fundacion Gala-Salvador Dalí, 2014
- *Yayoi Kusama: I who have arrived in heaven* by Akira Tatehata, 2014
- *The world atlas of street arts and graffiti* by Rafael Schacter, 2013
- *100 ideas that changed art 2012* by Michael Bird, 2012
- *3D Street Art* by Birgit Krols, 2011
- *Fractured figure, Volume 1* by Jeffrey Deitch, 2008
- *The magic mirror of M.C. Escher* by Bruno Ernst, 2007

Films:

- *The Truman Show* by Peter Weir, 1999



The invisible made visible: Activating ways of seeing continued

Curriculum springboard

Visual Arts
Stage 2
Year 3 and Year 4



Beams festival. H Yip

Video & Digital Imaging Stage 6 CEC Syllabus:

M2, M3

Content:

- Challenging the boundaries between the artist, artwork, world and audience
- Constructing meaning through a symbolic visual language (Structural frame)
- Re-interpreting and questioning traditional perspectives (Postmodern frame)

realism, surrealism, hyperrealism and anthropomorphism are discussed across painting, drawing, printmaking, photography, video, sculpture, installation, architecture, performance and body art, alongside high quality plates of key works by each artist. Significantly, the author examines how artists dissolve boundaries between the artwork and audience, appearance and disappearance, solid and void, and the everyday and fantastical, providing opportunities for students to investigate challenging paradoxes and playfully experiment with a range of both thought-and vision-provoking scenarios. H. Yip ([Scan 34.1](#))

USER LEVEL: Stage 4 Stage 5 Stage 6 Professional

KLA: CA

SYLLABUS: Visual Arts Stage 4-6; Photographic & Digital Media Stage 5; Photography, Video & Digital Imaging CEC Stage 6

SCIS 1631587 \$49.99

No supplementary videos available.

- Experiment with the postmodern strategy of appropriation and re-interpret specific artworks or traditional genres through roleplay, masquerade or assemblage. Refer to the work of Cindy Sherman, [Bernard Pras](#) and [Vik Muniz](#).
- Design a composite image where the whole is symbolically composed of individual images or elements within themselves, referring to the work of Giuseppe Arcimboldo and composite animals depicted in art of the Mughal School and Hindu mythology.
- Recreate an everyday object at an exaggerated scale using paper or mixed media to sculpt it in minute detail, referring to [Thomas Demand](#) and Claes Oldenburg. Install and document it to play on audiences' perception of reality versus illusion.
- Represent a dream, combining real objects, people or artworks with the surreal and fantastical. Refer to Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, Sigmund Freud and [Mathilde Roussel](#).
- Generate large-scale visual impact through creating a temporary site-specific, collaborative installation using simple repeated geometric motifs, objects or elements such as paper shapes and recycled packaging. Plastic mirrors and even fluorescent or white dot stickers used in conjunction with black UV lights could also transform familiar spaces into surreal environments. Document the installation via photography, stop motion animation and/or film. Refer to the work of [Yayoi Kusama](#) and [Felice Varini](#).
- Challenge the stability and façade of the two-dimensional picture plane, by introducing three-dimensional illusions or interventions that play with surface. Students can depict a subject appearing to escape an image, paint an image of the reverse of a canvas or even cut into and sculpt a canvas. Refer Pere Borrell del Caso's *Escaping criticism*, 1874, Cornelis Gijsbrechts' *The reverse of a framed painting*, 1670, and the works of [Titus Kaphar](#).
- Provoke audiences to question reality by creating impressions of solid objects that have turned transparent or permeable. For example, an object such as a sign or box can be covered in trompe l'oeil so that it appears to blend into its environment. Refer to Cayetano Ferrer's series [Western imports](#) 2007-8, and [City of Chicago](#), 2004-6. Solid objects or sculptures can also be made to appear to disappear into walls, ceilings, floors or furniture by being cut into two and placed on either side of the surface. Alternately, the object could enter as one form and escape as another. Refer to the work of [Maurizio Cattelan](#).
- Manipulate viewers' sense of gravity by creating the illusion of suspended figures or objects. Trampolines, underwater photography, fishing line, digital editing and displaying images upside down can be creatively used to fabricate impossible worlds. Refer to Philippe Halsman's *Dali atomicus*, 1948, and work of [Sam Taylor-Johnson](#).

- [Wasteland](#) by Lucy Walker, 2010

Artist's Websites:

- [Banksy](#)
- [Maurizio Cattelan](#)
- [Thomas Demand MoMA exhibition](#)
- [Cayetano Ferrer](#)
- [Emma Hack](#)
- [Titus Kaphar](#)
- [Yayoi Kusama](#)
- [Edgar Müller](#)
- [Vik Muniz](#)
- [Emily Portmann](#)
- [Bernard Pras](#)
- [Mathilde Roussel](#)
- [Sam Taylor-Johnson](#)
- [Felice Varini](#)
- [Craig Walsh](#)
- [Tim Noble and Sue Webster](#)
- [Li Wei](#)
- [Kimiko Yoshida](#)