

YEAR 8

SURREALISM-MODERNISM

Surrealism Key Knowledge

1. Surrealism is a twentieth-century literary, philosophical and artistic movement that explored the workings of the mind, championing the irrational, the poetic and the revolutionary. It aims to revolutionise human experience.

2. Surrealism balances a rational vision of life with one that asserts the power of the unconscious and dreams.

3. The movement’s artists find magic and strange beauty in the unexpected and the uncanny, the disregarded and the unconventional. At the core of their work is the willingness to challenge imposed values and norms, and a search for freedom.

4. Many surrealist artists have used automatic drawing or writing to unlock ideas and images from their unconscious minds. Others have wanted to depict dream worlds or hidden psychological tensions. Surrealist artists have also drawn inspiration from mysticism, ancient cultures and Indigenous art and knowledge as a way of imagining alternative realities.

5. The word ‘surrealist’ (suggesting ‘beyond reality’) was coined by the French avant-garde poet Guillaume Apollinaire in the preface to a play performed in 1917. But it was André Breton, leader of a new grouping of poets and artists in Paris, who, in his Surrealist Manifesto (1924), defined surrealism as:

pure psychic automatism, by which one proposes to express, either verbally, in writing, or by any other manner, the real functioning of thought. Dictation of thought in the absence of all control exercised by reason, outside of all aesthetic and moral preoccupation.

Modernism Key Knowledge

1. Modernism refers to a global movement in society and culture that from the early decades of the twentieth century sought a new alignment with the experience and values of modern industrial life. Building on late nineteenth-century precedents, artists around the world used new imagery, materials and techniques to create artworks that they felt better reflected the realities and hopes of modern societies.

2. Although many different styles are encompassed by the term, there are certain underlying principles that define modernist art: A rejection of history and conservative values (such as realistic depiction of subjects); innovation and experimentation with form (the shapes, colours and lines that make up the work) with a tendency to abstraction; and an emphasis on materials, techniques and processes.

3. Modernism has also been driven by various social and political agendas. These were often utopian, and modernism was in general associated with ideal visions of human life and society and a belief in progress.


Artist Profile – Frida Kahlo

Born: 6 July, 1907
Died: 13 July, 1954 (aged 47)

Kahlo was a Mexican painter known for her many portraits, self-portraits, and works inspired by the nature and artefacts of Mexico. Inspired by the country’s popular culture, she employed a naïve folk art style to explore questions of identity, post colonialism, gender, class, and race in Mexican society. Her paintings often had strong autobiographical elements and mixed realism with fantasy. In addition to belonging to the post-revolutionary Mexicayotl movement, which sought to define a Mexican identity, Kahlo has been described as a surrealist or magical realist. She is known for painting about her experience of chronic pain.

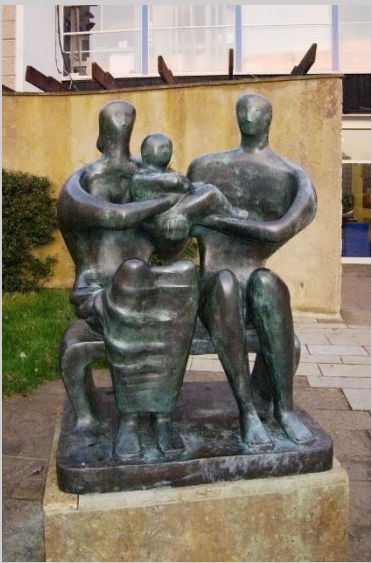
Key vocabulary	
Surreal	Having the qualities of surrealism; bizarre. "a surreal mix of fact and fantasy"
Automatic Drawing	In art, automatic drawing or automatism refers to creating art without conscious thought, accessing material from the unconscious mind as part of the creative process.
Mexicayotl	A word meaning “Essence of the Mexican” is a movement reviving the indigenous religion, philosophy and traditions of ancient Mexico (Aztec religion and Aztec philosophy) among the Mexican people.
Invention	The action of inventing something, typically a process or device.
Disability	A physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities.
Caricature	A caricature is a rendered image showing the features of its subject in a simplified or exaggerated way through sketching, pencil strokes, or through other artistic drawings. In literature, a caricature is a distorted representation of a person in a way that exaggerates some characteristics and oversimplifies others.
Symbolism	An artistic and poetic movement or style using symbolic images and indirect suggestion to express mystical ideas, emotions, and states of mind. It originated in late 19th-century France and Belgium, with important figures including Mallarmé, Maeterlinck, Verlaine, Rimbaud, and Redon.
Glyph	A hieroglyphic character or symbol.
Sculpture	The art of making two- or three-dimensional representative or abstract forms, especially by carving stone or wood or by casting metal or plaster.
Chac-Mool	A form of pre-Columbian Mesoamerican sculpture depicting a reclining figure with its head facing 90 degrees from the front, supporting itself on its elbows and supporting a bowl or a disk upon its stomach. These figures possibly symbolised slain warriors carrying offerings to the gods; the bowl upon the chest was used to hold sacrificial offerings, including pulque, tamales, tortillas, tobacco, turkeys, feathers and incense.
The Blitz	The Blitz was a German bombing campaign against the United Kingdom in 1940 and 1941, during the Second World War.
Direct Carving	Direct carving is an approach to making carved sculpture where the actual process of carving suggests the final form rather than a carefully worked out preliminary model. Direct carving is an approach to making carved sculpture where the actual process of carving suggests the final form rather than a carefully worked out preliminary model.

Frida Kahlo



Frida Kahlo – Self Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird, 1940

Henry Moore



Henry Moore – Family Group in Bronze, 1950

Artist Profile – Henry Moore

Born: 30 July, 1898
Died: 31 August, 1986 (aged 88)

Moore was an English artist. He is best known for his semi-abstract monumental bronze sculptures which are located around the world as public works of art. As well as sculpture, Moore produced many drawings, including a series depicting Londoners sheltering from the Blitz during the Second World War, along with other graphic works on paper. His forms are usually abstractions of the human figure, typically depicting mother-and-child or reclining figures. Moore’s works are usually suggestive of the female body, apart from a phase in the 1950s when he sculpted family groups. His forms are generally pierced or contain hollow spaces. Many interpreters liken the undulating form of his reclining figures to the landscape and hills of his Yorkshire birthplace.

Moore became well known through his carved marble and larger-scale abstract cast bronze sculptures, and was instrumental in introducing a particular form of modernism to the United Kingdom. His ability in later life to fulfil large-scale commissions made him exceptionally wealthy. Despite this, he lived frugally; most of the money he earned went towards endowing the Henry Moore Foundation, which continues to support education and promotion of the arts.