

The Tate Modern Gallery

Before entering the Tate Modern Gallery, study the building.

1) With which materials was it constructed?

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2) What was the building before being an art gallery? When was the present gallery opened? Which architectural practice designed the rehabilitation?

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3) Find the name of the original building's designer. What other famous English curious feature had he also designed?

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4) What is the difference between the Tate Britain and the Tate Modern? What kind of art do each of the two museums exhibit?

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Now enter the building main space.

5) How do you feel about this place?

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6) According to what you know about the building's history, try to find what this hall formerly was.

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Go to the seventh floor.

Go towards the windows on the northern façade and look at the view.

7) What famous monuments can you see from here?

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European art during the interwar years...

Surrealism is a movement launched in Paris in 1924 by the French poet André Breton, with the publication of his *Manifeste du Surréalisme (Manifesto of Surrealism)*. The surrealists wanted to reveal the power of the unconscious in literature as well as in art. They put forward the importance of the dream and the imagination in order to reveal the depth and truth of the human identity. Automatic writing and visionary pictures provide some odd pieces of work where the notion of **uncomfortable strangeness** is exposed. This notion was introduced by the German psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud in the early 20th century. Freud put forward a deep layer of the human mind, where our memories and most basic instincts are stored. The famous *Interpretation of Dreams* by Freud is a central reference. The surrealist group considers art as dreams: it reveals the contents of the human's unconscious. You can see in these dream-like works.

The surrealists were also politically committed artists: many of them joined the Communist Party and took part in social and political revolution. They claimed revolution in art as in politics. The taste of provocation, the will to protest against the post-WWI society is strong and powerful.

Artists, poets, novelists met in Paris but they also travelled in many European countries. They include André Breton, Paul Eluard, André Masson, Louis Aragon, Elsa Triolet, Max Ernst, Giorgio de Chirico, Salvador Dali ...

Giorgio de Chirico, *The Uncertainty of the Poet*, 1913

- 1) Describe the details you can see on the painting: outlines, objects and material space. What do they represent ?

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- 2) Look at the colours and light effects: describe them and explain what they suggest to you. Notice the dimensions of this painting. How do you feel in front of it ?

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Salvador Dali's painting, *Lobster Telephone*, 1936

- 1) Describe this piece of work. What is this kind of art called? Why is it surprising? Why is it provocative and mysterious ?

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- 2) What kind of feelings does it arouse in you ?

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Salvador Dali, *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1937

According to Greek mythology, Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection in a pool. Full of vanity, he tried to embrace his watery image but fell down and drowned. Gods immortalised him as a narcissus flower.

- 1) How does Dali show this metamorphosis? From what does the narcissus flower grow? What effect does it provoke ?

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- 2) Look at the paintings luminosity, colours and other visual effects: what sort of emotions do they trigger ? How do the surrealists call this ?

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1950-1960: After WWII, the consumer society emerges

Andy Warhol was a provocative artist who chose to work on the symbols of post Second World War society and the model it offered to the rest of the world. His paintings refer to famous signs depicted as norms and habits: media, idols, products are painted in an endless repetition.

Study the Brillo and Campbell’s canvas, and then observe two paintings immortalising two mythic idols.

Andy Warhol, Marilyn Diptych, 1962.

This piece of art was realised four months after Marilyn’s death, in August 1962. Warhol made more than twenty silk screen paintings of the model and movie star. They are all based on the same publicity photograph from her film *Niagara*, shot in 1953.

1) Describe the painting. What do you notice ?

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2) Analyse the contrast of vivid colours with black and white and the effect of fading in the panel on the right.

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Andy Warhol, Double Elvis, 1964

1) What does the duplication suggest considering the idol was often on the first page of the fan magazines ?

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2) What are the different themes of this painting ?

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