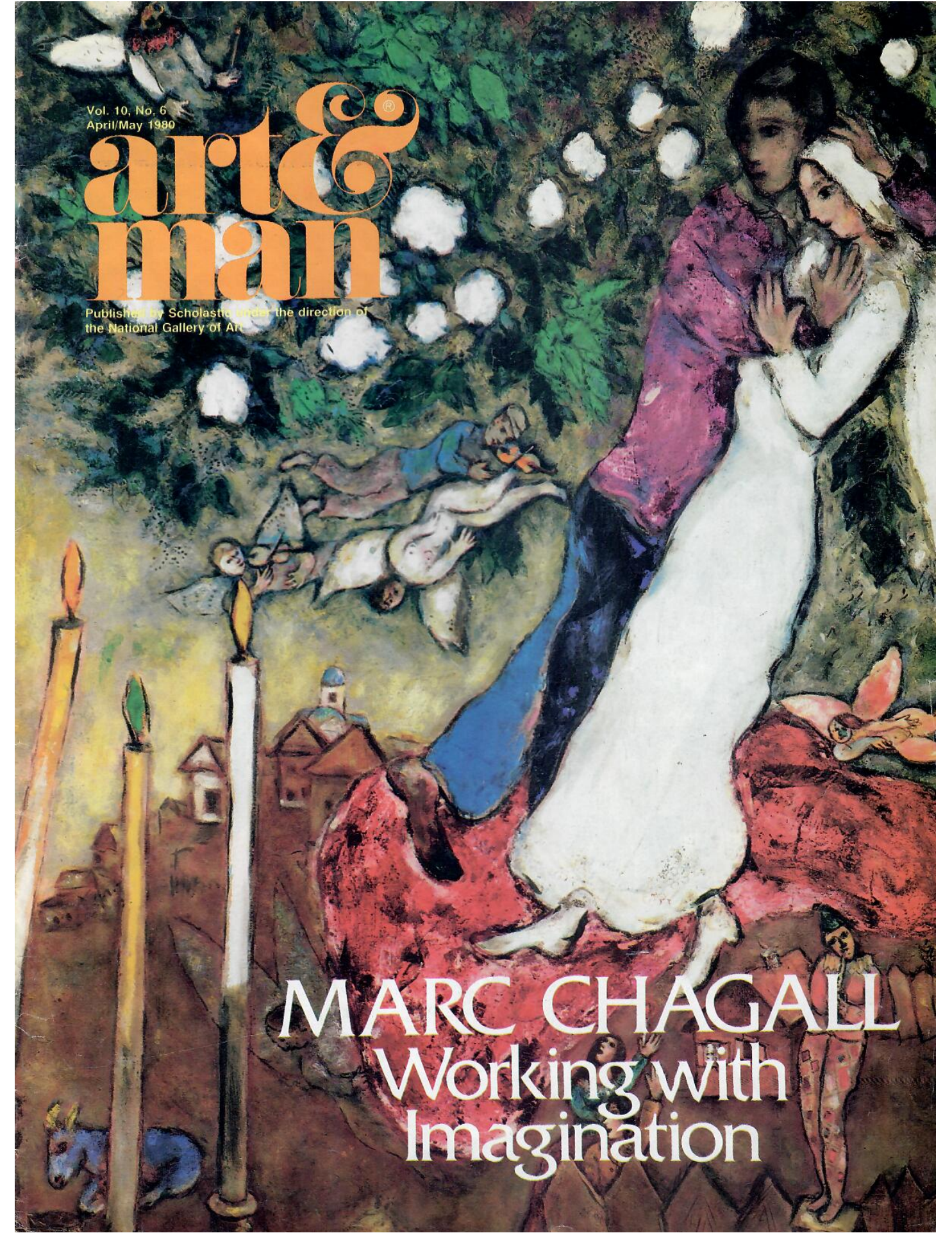


Vol. 10, No. 6
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art & man

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MARC CHAGALL
Working with
Imagination



2 The photo of Marc Chagall, at the right, shows the artist as he “really” looks. What kind of dream produced this strange self-portrait?

A floating bride and groom, a sky made of flowers, a blue cow and tiny flying clowns and musicians — what could all these strange images possibly mean? Where did they come from and what makes them “work” together to create the fantastic vision you just saw on our cover?

Magic, mystery, dreams and the unconscious all describe the works of one artist, Marc Chagall. One of the handful of artists who changed the direction of 20th-century art, Chagall rejected one reality to create his own world of fantasy. Called “glimpses into the other side of consciousness,” Chagall’s paintings disregard all traditional ideas of time, space, perspective, anatomy and laws of gravity to send cows, fiddlers, clocks, and villages spinning into a haunting universe never seen before.

Marc Chagall was born in 1887 in a small village in Russia. Son of a grocery clerk, one of nine children living in the poor Jewish section of an isolated provincial town, Chagall very early rejected the hostile outer

world of reality and escaped into his own inner world of imagination. He took refuge in the elaborate festivals and legends of his Jewish culture. Most of the images Chagall was to paint during the rest of his life came from these early memories.

Chagall’s family thoroughly disapproved of his decision to go to art school, but he insisted and finally went to St. Petersburg, then Paris, which was at that time the art capital of the world. Painters like Monet, Cezanne and Van Gogh had already begun an artistic revolution. In 1910, the year of Chagall’s arrival in Paris, even more radical works were being created by artists such as Picasso and Matisse. Sigmund Freud’s ideas about dreams and the subconscious were also becoming popular and the young Russian related to all these influences.

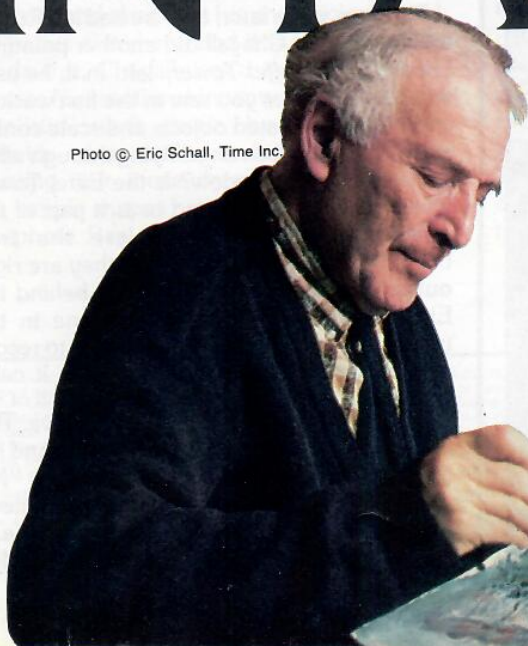
During this period in Paris, Chagall did a strange painting of himself (left). It is based on reality, but the effect is totally fantastic. The curly hair, almond-shaped eyes, and flowing bow tie are the artist’s, but what about the distorted shapes and

bizarre colors? The room and easel are tilted and jumbled, and the colors are clashing and unnatural. The artist has his back to the window, through which we see the real world of Paris. A vision of his faraway Russian village floats in the clouds of his memory. The words Paris and Russia are written in Hebrew at the top of the painting and Chagall’s 7-fingered hand (a ritualistic Jewish symbol) strokes a painting of his homeland.

In the nearly 70 years since he created this self-portrait, Marc Chagall has done hundreds of other paintings, bringing us into an enchanted world. He has carried this world into the fields of sculpture, printmaking, ceramics, murals, tapestries, mosaics, and, most recently, his unique stained glass windows. In this issue, you will see more examples of Marc Chagall’s work. You’ll discover a variety of approaches to fantasy through the work of some famous artists and also that of other students. Finally, you’ll experiment with several new approaches in creating your own fantasy painting.

DREAMS IN PAINT

Photo © Eric Schall, Time Inc.



***Mine alone is the land
that exists in my soul
I enter it without a passport
as I do my own home.***

Marc Chagall

REALITY INTO FANTASY

Every image painted by Marc Chagall, no matter how fantastic it seems, is based on an actual memory or experience. Just how does Chagall use these real people and places to create his dreamlike universe?

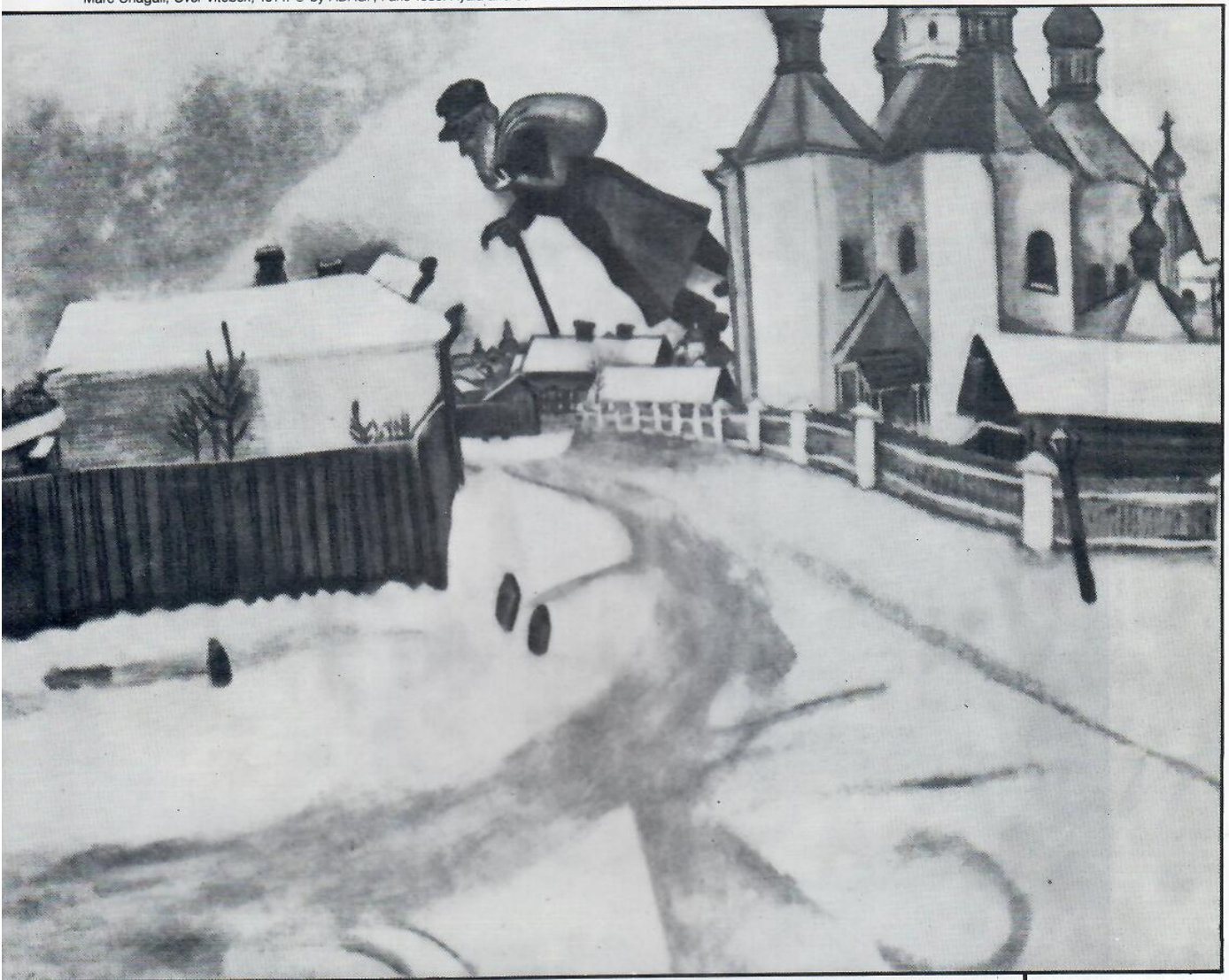
Marc Chagall, *The Lovers of the Eiffel Tower*, 1928.
© by ADAGP, Paris 1980. Andre Rottembourg Collection, Paris.



How has Chagall transformed a "real" scene from his window into this fantastic vision?

The painting *Over Vitebsk*, right, looks quite like the actual scene Chagall used to see from his window when he was a boy. The road is covered with snow, the church on the right looms over the silent and solitary cottages. The buildings look solid, although they are tilted a little strangely. The colors are still quite natural. Only one feature is very odd. An old man appears to be dropping right out of the sky. This image, totally out of place and out of scale (because of his placement behind the church, the man appears to be enormous) immediately gives a fantastic and slightly ominous feeling. This old Jewish peddler with a green face, carrying a sack, appears again and again in Chagall's paintings. He is a symbol of the artist himself, who carries his religious faith with him everywhere.

Fourteen years later, after he had left Russia to live in Paris, Chagall did another painting, *Lovers of the Eiffel Tower*, left. In it, he uses two of the devices you saw in the first work—combining unrelated objects and scale confusion. Why is a green angel flying through what appears to be a window? Is the Eiffel Tower located in the background or is it part of the angel's bouquet? Where are the tree branches? They look as though they are right outside the window, but they are *behind* the Eiffel Tower. This painting is done in the unique, fantastic style we have come to recognize as Chagall's. Misty and lyrical, it celebrates the theme that has run through all of his work for the past half century, that of love. The loving couple on the right are the artist and his wife, and the angel is his daughter. "My daughter Vera came in with a bouquet of flowers. At once the fact was changed within in me. A chemical reaction took place. When I work, I



start from the actual event and then I go towards something else.”

Chagall rarely paints from models, but from memory and images in his unconscious mind. He paints one shape and it suggests another. To do this, Chagall uses a style that best expresses his emotional inner world. In the more “realistic” work above, he has used very definite edges and rounded forms. In the painting, left, loose, free brush strokes and flat, simple shapes create a fuzzy, dreamy atmosphere. Real objects have become symbols

—floating figures mean joy, couples stand for love, and the Eiffel tower symbolizes freedom.

Perhaps the most important way in which Chagall conveys a feeling of fantasy is through color. “In Russia I saw everything in white, gray and black. Paris opened my eyes to color.” Chagall uses glowing colors to paint ordinary subjects in bizarre and “unnatural” hues. The red city, green angel, orange Eiffel Tower and purple sky, left, have nothing to do with reality. They express the artist’s emotional state of mind.

Block out the figure of the man in this work. Is it still a “fantasy” painting?

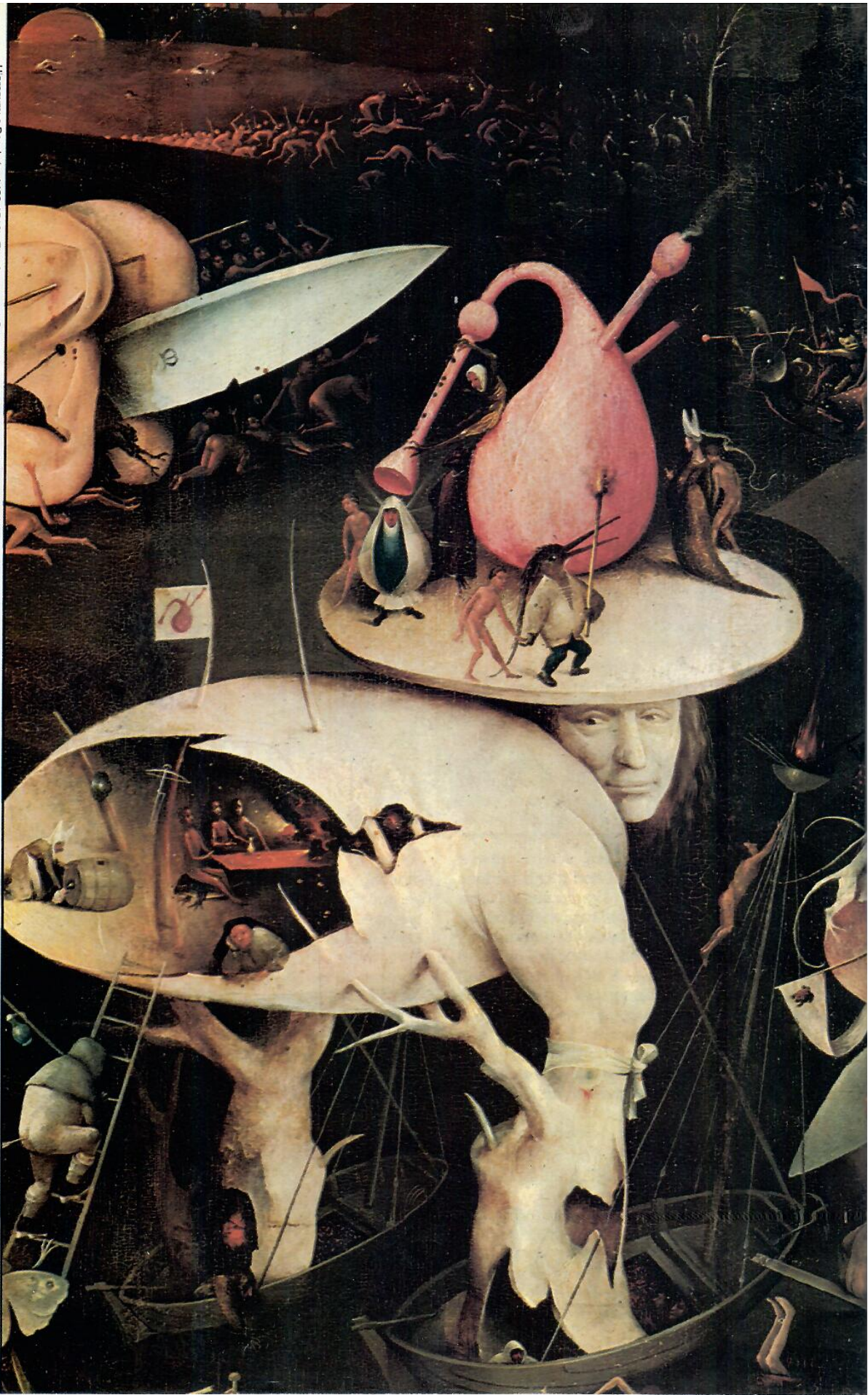
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Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1450-1516). *The Garden of Delights*, c. 1500, detail of right panel. Prado, Madrid.

Hieronymus Bosch: Nightmare Visions

What is going on in this painting? In the upper right, strange creatures appear to be dancing around a large disc. One spidery figure plays a huge bagpipe. A face peers out from under all this — the artist has painted himself in the middle of this incredible scene. How is the inner world of Flemish painter Hieronymus Bosch different from that of Marc Chagall?

This is just a small detail from a large three-paneled painting called *The Garden of*

Delights. When you look at the rest of the detail, you can see that Bosch is hiding behind the head and partial body of a human tree-monster. The rest of the body is egg-shaped and two tree-like legs support it. If you were living in the 16th century when Bosch did this painting, you would probably be able to “read” this strange symbol as you could a word in a book. But today it’s just one of many puzzling images that dot Bosch’s vast landscapes.

Chagall’s self-portrait on page 2 is a blend of memories, fantasies, and feelings. Look at the self-portraits of four other noted artists. What do they reveal about the artists’ inner worlds?

Mirrors of Imagination



M.C. Escher: At the Center of His World

We all exist in two worlds — an inner world of dreams and fantasies and the outer world of our actions. Does this self-portrait suggest those two separate areas? Where do these two worlds touch? Why has artist Maurits Escher put himself at the center?

In this print, Escher’s hand supports a mirror-like sphere. The sphere compresses the artist and his surroundings so that he can balance his entire universe on the tips of his fingers. Suppose he should turn in

another direction? What would happen to the reflection? The background would change, but Escher would still be there at the center of this mirror world.

Swiss-born Escher (1898-1972) had a lifelong fascination with illusion. In his many prints he created mysterious worlds that seemed to stretch to infinity. This self-portrait is related to one theme in his work, the idea of many worlds — interior worlds, outer worlds, reflected worlds, all existing at the same time.

Maurits Cornelis Escher (1898-1972). *Hand with Reflecting Globe*, lithograph, 1935.

Mirrors of Imagination

(Continued from page 7)



Nancy Grossman (b. 1940). *Black*, 1973. Photograph courtesy Cordier & Ekstrom.

Nancy Grossman: A Cage of Leather

In the 60's, sculptor Nancy Grossman began covering wood and plaster heads with leather. She would buckle, stitch, and zipper the pieces of leather so that only part of the face would show.

What does her leather-encased head, crisscrossed by a series of zippers remind you of? Is it some kind of warrior from outer space or a symbol of modern life? Grossman insists that her heads do not represent anything, but are

merely personal fantasies. What kind of feeling does this head give you, covered tightly in leather that encircles the face and skull? If you look carefully, you will see that only the nose is actually exposed. The face and mouth are composed of a kind of leather skin. This head cannot talk, hear, or see. Is it protected or imprisoned, or both? What would happen if the two last zippers on each side were pulled together?



Helen Lundberg (b. 1908). *Double Portrait of the Artist in Time*, 1935. National Collection of the Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC. Museum Purchase.

Helen Lundberg: A Double Portrait in Time

What does the artist suggest about herself in this self-portrait? At the bottom, you see an open-eyed, eager child posed formally as if waiting to have her picture taken. One hand is carefully placed on a small table; the other, in her lap. From this portrait of the artist as a child, a long watchful shadow leads up along the wall to a framed portrait of the artist as an adult. How is the adult different from the child? Is she as posed? Is she as open? Why does she stare at the flower in her hand?

Both the child and adult hold flowers, but notice how differently they hold them. The adult holds hers as if it were a pen. What might those flowers symbolize?

The clock sitting on the table is also a symbol, used by many artists to suggest time. Time connects these two portraits but in a very strange sort of way. Time is reversed — it is the adult, not the posed child, who hangs in a frame upon the wall!

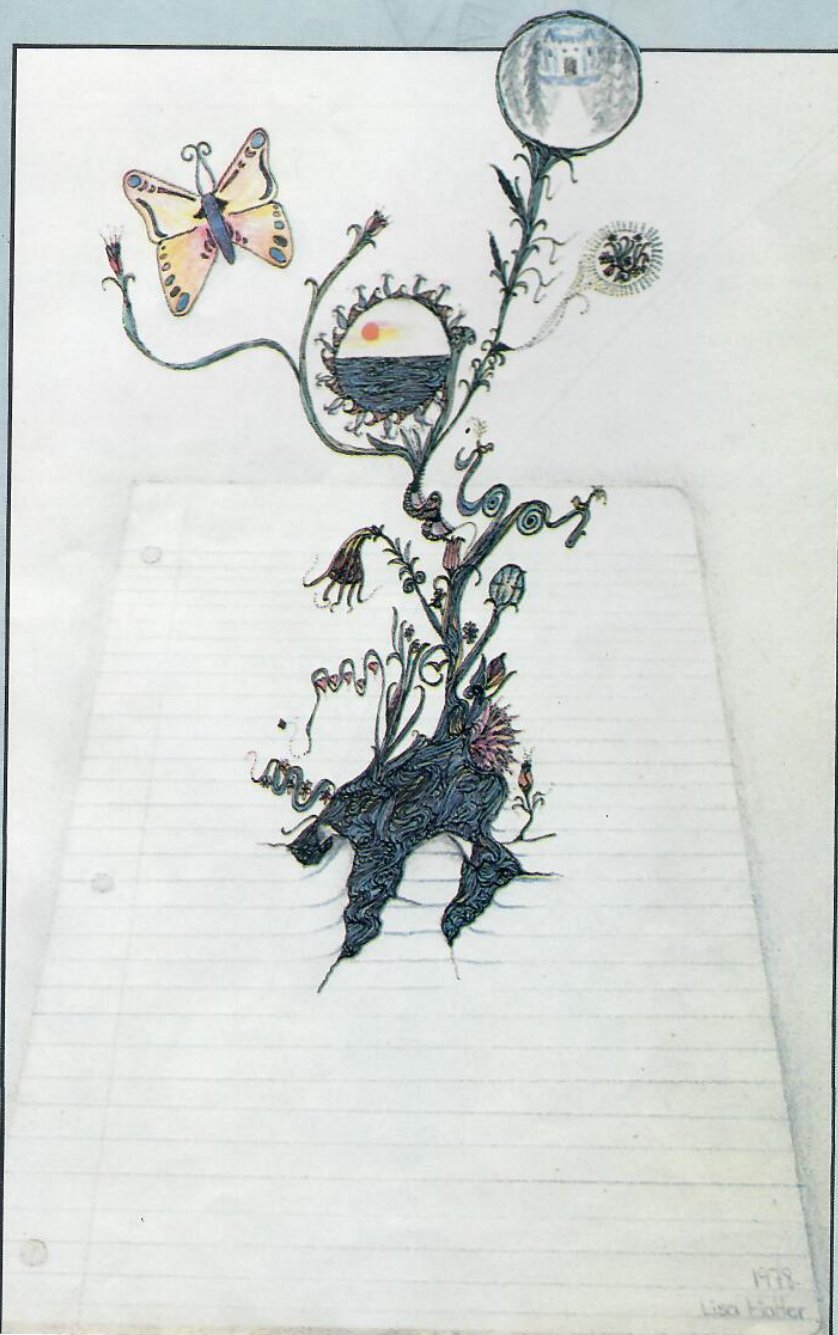
Helen Lundberg was part of a group of West Coast painters who created a new kind of surrealism (dream-like painting) in the 30's. Unlike the nightmarish fantasies of the other surrealists, Lundberg's paintings are very calm. There is no distortion; in fact, everything *seems* perfectly natural. It's only when we look a little further that this painting becomes more dream than reality.

NOTE

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VISIONS ON PAPER

**Fantasy Drawings
By Award Winning
Students**



“You sit down with a blank sheet of paper and sometimes you wish something would grow right out of the paper.”

Lisa Halter, 16

“One day I was playing with a piece of lined paper and I poked a hole through it with a pencil. I got a really strong image in my mind of things growing out of the hole. So I drew the piece of paper using perspective to make it look real. I then created a kind of plant that included smaller images of things that had special meaning to me as an artist.

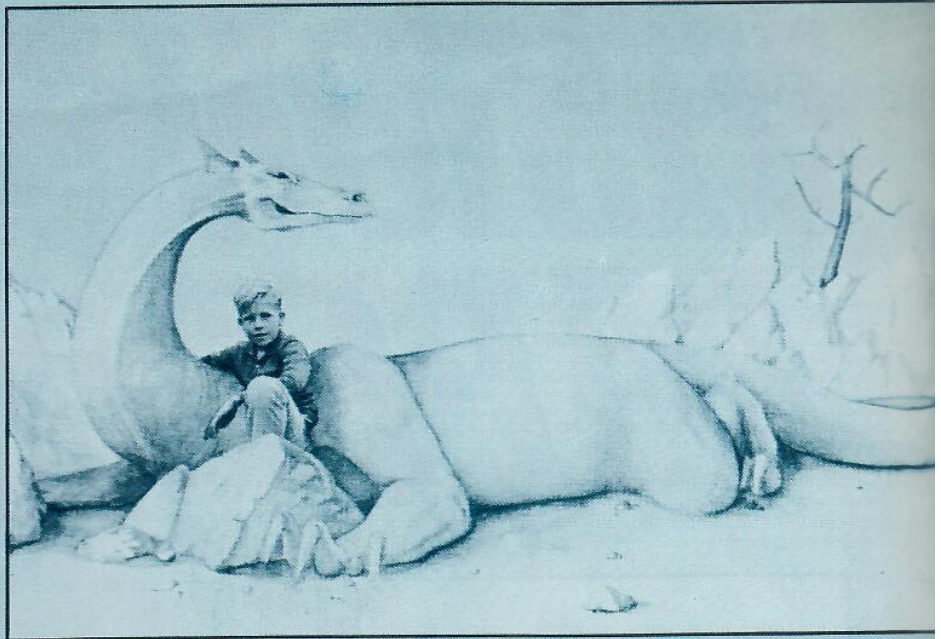
“I don't like to do fantasy on assignments. Sometimes something that I see will give me an idea. I love to dream about strange happenings and other worlds. We're all not living in traffic jams — there are neat things beyond reality.” (When she finishes high school, she plans to attend art school to prepare for a career in graphic design.)

◇
“The Artist” by Lisa Halter, 16
Allendale-Columbia HS,
Rochester, NY

VISIONS ON PAPER

(Continued from page 17)

Chagall created vivid dreams in paint, but pen and pencil can also suggest a fantasy world. On these pages you'll find a variety of strange, exotic creatures. The artists are high school students, a few of the many winners in the 1979 Scholastic Art Awards. Each year close to 150,000 junior and senior high students enter competitions in painting, drawing and prints, sculpture, crafts, and photography. Some of the most remarkable entries are in the area of fantasy and we talked to four of the winners to find out just how they got their ideas.



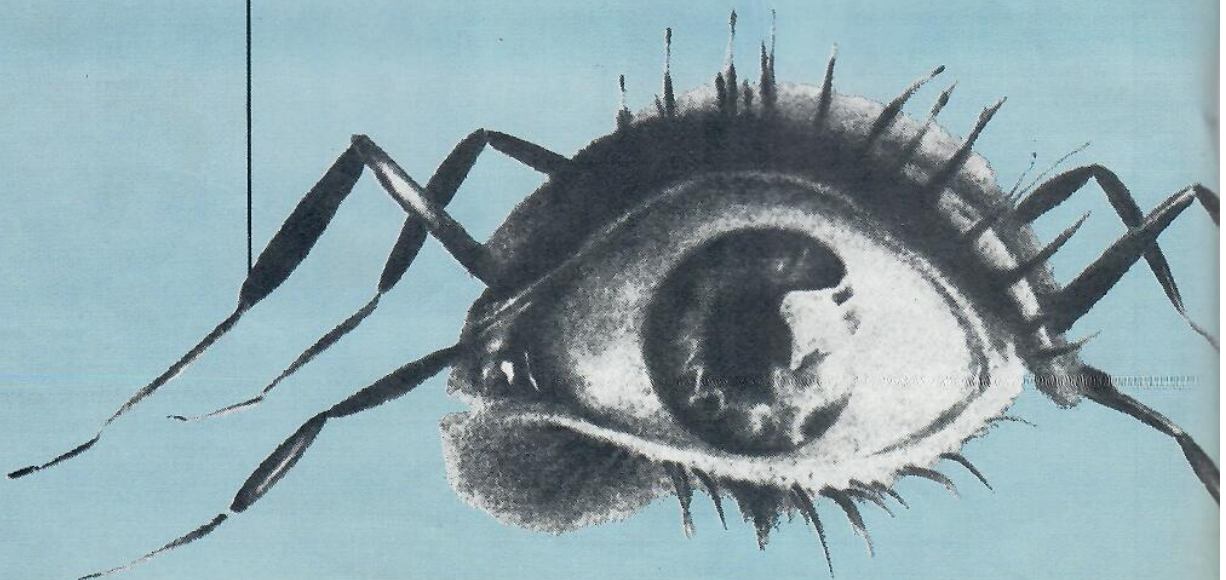
"My Brother, the Dragon" by John Currin, 17 ◇
Rippowam HS, Stamford, Connecticut

"I found this photo of my brother, taken when he was little. I liked the pose, but it looked like he should have his arm around something. At that time I was going through a dragon and monster phase. So I drew a dragon, and the pose suggested a boy with his pet.

"The hardest part was positioning the boy so it looked like he was in the picture—not glued on. I also tinted the photo so it would blend in more —

playing down the fact that it was a photo. But I wanted the dragon to look more like a photo. In shading it, I tried to hide the pencil strokes, so the technique wouldn't show.

"Compared to my other work, fantasy is like playing. There are no boundaries and I like the freedom I have with form and color. Next year I plan to attend a four-year university and major in art. And maybe one day I'll be a free-lance illustrator for books."



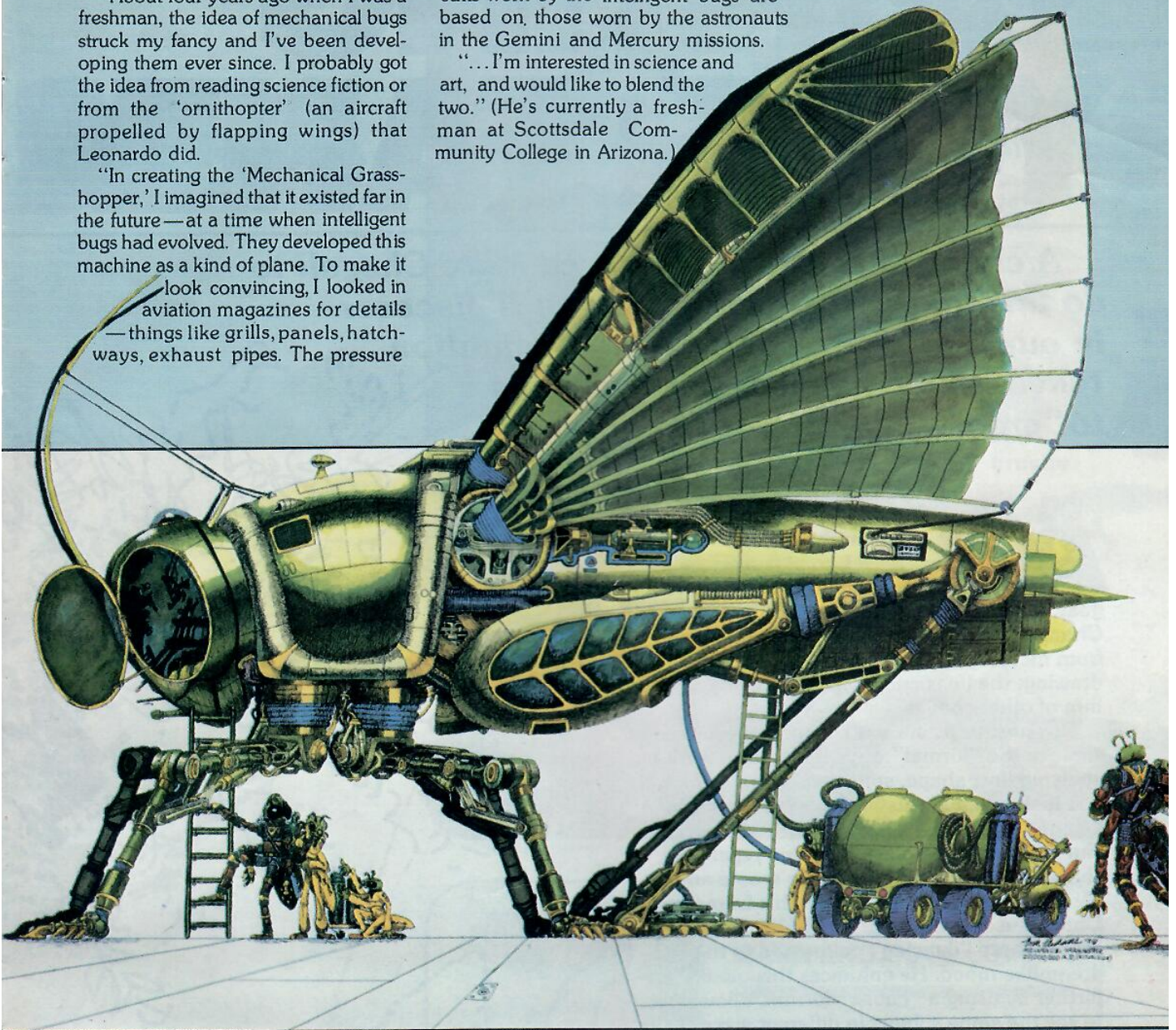
“Mechanical Grasshopper” by Tom Ardans, 19 ◊
Attended Chaparral HS, Scottsdale, Arizona

“About four years ago when I was a freshman, the idea of mechanical bugs struck my fancy and I’ve been developing them ever since. I probably got the idea from reading science fiction or from the ‘ornithopter’ (an aircraft propelled by flapping wings) that Leonardo did.

“In creating the ‘Mechanical Grasshopper,’ I imagined that it existed far in the future—at a time when intelligent bugs had evolved. They developed this machine as a kind of plane. To make it look convincing, I looked in aviation magazines for details—things like grills, panels, hatchways, exhaust pipes. The pressure

suits worn by the intelligent bugs are based on those worn by the astronauts in the Gemini and Mercury missions.

“...I’m interested in science and art, and would like to blend the two.” (He’s currently a freshman at Scottsdale Community College in Arizona.)



◊ **“Walking Eye,” by James Pollman, Jr., 18**
Harry P. Harding School, Charlotte, North Carolina

“I started out blindly as I usually do. I began drawing an eye, my favorite subject because of its mystery. Then for some reason I thought of the name of the town where my Dad was stationed when he was in the Air Force—Wakkanai, Japan—which sounds like “walking eye.” It gave me the idea to put legs on the eye and create a feeling

of fear about it. I guess it’s my morbid interest in the unknown that prompts me to do this kind of work. By putting together two totally different things, you can create something strange, surreal. There’s always an element of fantasy in my work... I plan to keep my art as a hobby. As a job, I think it would take the fun out of it.”

PAINTING YOUR FANTA

A chance occurrence inspired Marc Chagall to do this fantastic drawing. As you'll discover in our workshop, sometimes imagination takes over and a work of art seems to "grow" naturally, step by step.

As Marc Chagall wiped off his pen, he looked at the marks left on the paper. They reminded him of flowers, and the flowers became a tail, attached to a goat. A small angel pointed up at the flowers. Chagall rarely works "from" his subject, but from memory and imagination. As in this drawing, the lines and shapes he paints remind him of other shapes.

This past year, our workshops have looked at some of the "formal" ways that artists work by studying line, shape, space and composition. If you look again at this month's Masterpiece, Chagall's *I and the Village* in formal terms, you can see that he employs lines and repetitive shapes (circles and triangles) to create an X-shaped composition. Within this framework, Chagall uses lively colors that play against each other. These "dancing" colors add to the dreamlike mood. He enhances this quality even further by using a "cubist" format, allowing us to see the same subject in different ways at the same time. The cow's head, for example, can also be seen as a hill next to the distant village. Chagall also uses "scale confusion" by placing a smaller cow within the large cow's head and a big head in the small house in the upper right. Whether Chagall's paintings are as he says, "an arrangement of images that obsess me" or works that tell a story, the *form* and the *content* in his work are one and the same. In this final *Art & Man* issue of the year, we will experiment with both *form*, warm and cool colors, and the imaginative *content* the application of these colors will suggest.



SIES



MATERIALS
The only materials necessary are

pen and ink
(or markers)

watercolor paints

brushes

heavy paper or
watercolor paper

Photo by Richard Hutchings.



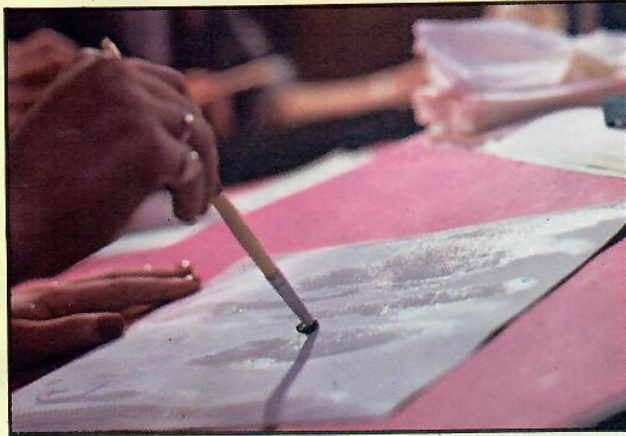
A NOTE ON WARM AND COOL COLORS.

One way that Chagall makes his paintings lively is by placing warm and cool colors next to each other. Warm colors are those associated with hot things—red, orange, and yellow. Warm colors appear to jump out, like flames in a fire. Cool colors are those that seem to be

cold and deep—blue, blue-green, purple. They seem to recede, or look far away, like a blue sky. When you place intense warm and cool colors next to each other, the canvas appears to shimmer. One color comes forward, one goes back and your eye can't decide which to choose.

STARTING OUT

1 Wet paper all over.



2 "Bleed" in alternate warm and cool tones. Do several sheets...



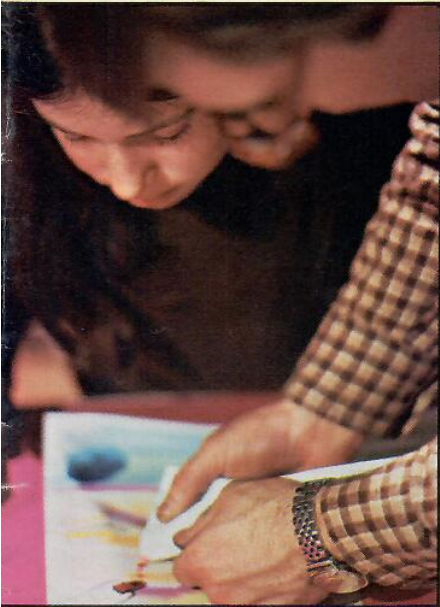
3 Decide whether you want a random or a thematic content. Then start working in the images with pen and ink or watercolor.



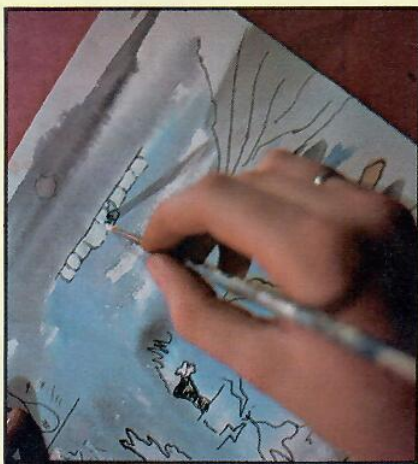
4 "Discover" forms, shapes and spaces in the wash itself. Do they remind you of landscapes, people, perhaps of fantastic creatures?



SOME SOLUTIONS



You can drip the paint into strange shapes...
...or blot out other areas.



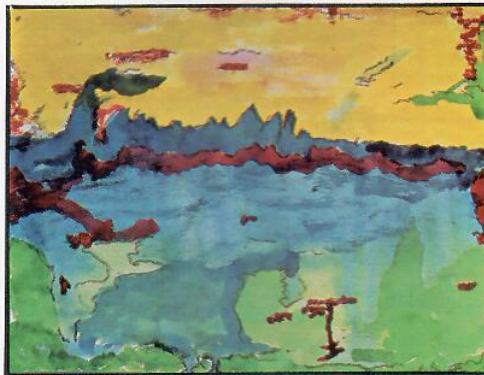
5 Create highlights or spaces or shapes with white tube of watercolor.



Perhaps the negative or empty spaces are most important in your painting. This artist used luminous, dripping colors and linear texture to give the effect of monsters emerging from the sea.



By repeating circular and jagged shapes and using white paint, this artist created weird, alligator-like shapes lurking in an unreal landscape.



Arbitrary color and dark forms against light shapes, give this painting the feeling of a map of some strange planet.



This artist used an accidental blue shape to create the impression of a lake viewed from an imaginative angle. Real objects are placed in impossible situations—a large hand emerges from the lake, while a giant eye looks on. The scale is changed to add to the nightmarish effect. What else can you find?

ARTS ALIVE

Invitation to the Dance

Disco, ballet and tap are three kinds of dancing. But as you can tell from these two photos, there are many other types of dance. Below, *Mummenschanz*, a New York pantomime company performs in a production which uses very unique props — several rolls of toilet paper.

Mummenschanz Mime Company,
photo Jeffrey Richards Associates, NYC.

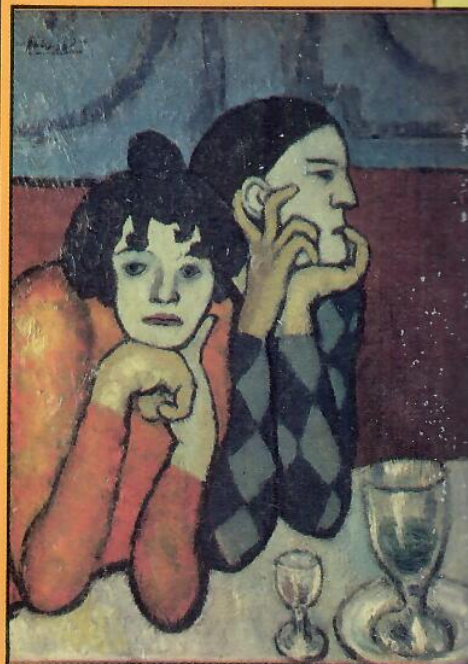


Photo by Dan Esgro.

Below right, two members of the Lewitzky Dance Company of Los Angeles dance in one unusual costume that stretches.

April 14-20 is National Dance Week. From New York to California dozens of American dance companies will be performing and giving classes in various colleges across the country. For further information regarding activities and schedules for National Dance Week, contact the Association of American Dance Companies, 162 West 56th St., New York, NY 10019.

Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), *The Two Saltimbanques*, 1900. The Pushkin Museum, Moscow.



(This work, from a Russian museum, has been deleted from the exhibition.)

Exhibit of the Century

This painting was done by a relatively unknown 19-year-old artist. His name was Pablo Picasso and today many people consider him to be the greatest and most influential artist of the 20th century. He created until the age of 92 and did paintings, sculptures, ceramics, drawings, prints, and stage and costume designs.

The Museum of Modern Art in New York is putting together one of the largest exhibitions ever assembled of Picasso's enormous output. More than 800 major works are coming from museums and collections all over the world. The exhibit opens next month on May 2nd, and runs until September 18. From there many of the works will travel to Paris where a Picasso museum will open in 1981.

You may not be able to see Picasso's works in New York or Paris, but you will be able to see them on television (and next year in the November issue of *Art & Man*). To go along with the exhibition is a one-hour television documentary that will be broadcast on PBS stations. Check your newspaper for the date and time of this broadcast.

Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), *Self-portrait*, 1888. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



"Vincent"

"Vincent" was the way famous Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh signed his works. He has been the subject of several popular books,

movies, and songs (the recent song "Starry Night" was based on one of Van Gogh's most famous masterpieces). Van Gogh will be featured in the first issue of *Art & Man* magazine next fall, but right now he is the subject of a new play.

Vincent is about the famous artist, but the main character in the play is his brother Theo van Gogh. If it hadn't been for Theo, an art dealer who supported Vincent, he might never have painted at all. This month, Leonard Nimoy, famous for his role as Spock in *Star Trek*, will play Theo in *Vincent*, a touring one-man play based on the letters (close to 1,000), that Vincent sent to Theo.

The tour includes San Francisco (April 1-13), Denver (April 15-20), Philadelphia (April 22-27), and Oklahoma City (April 29-30).