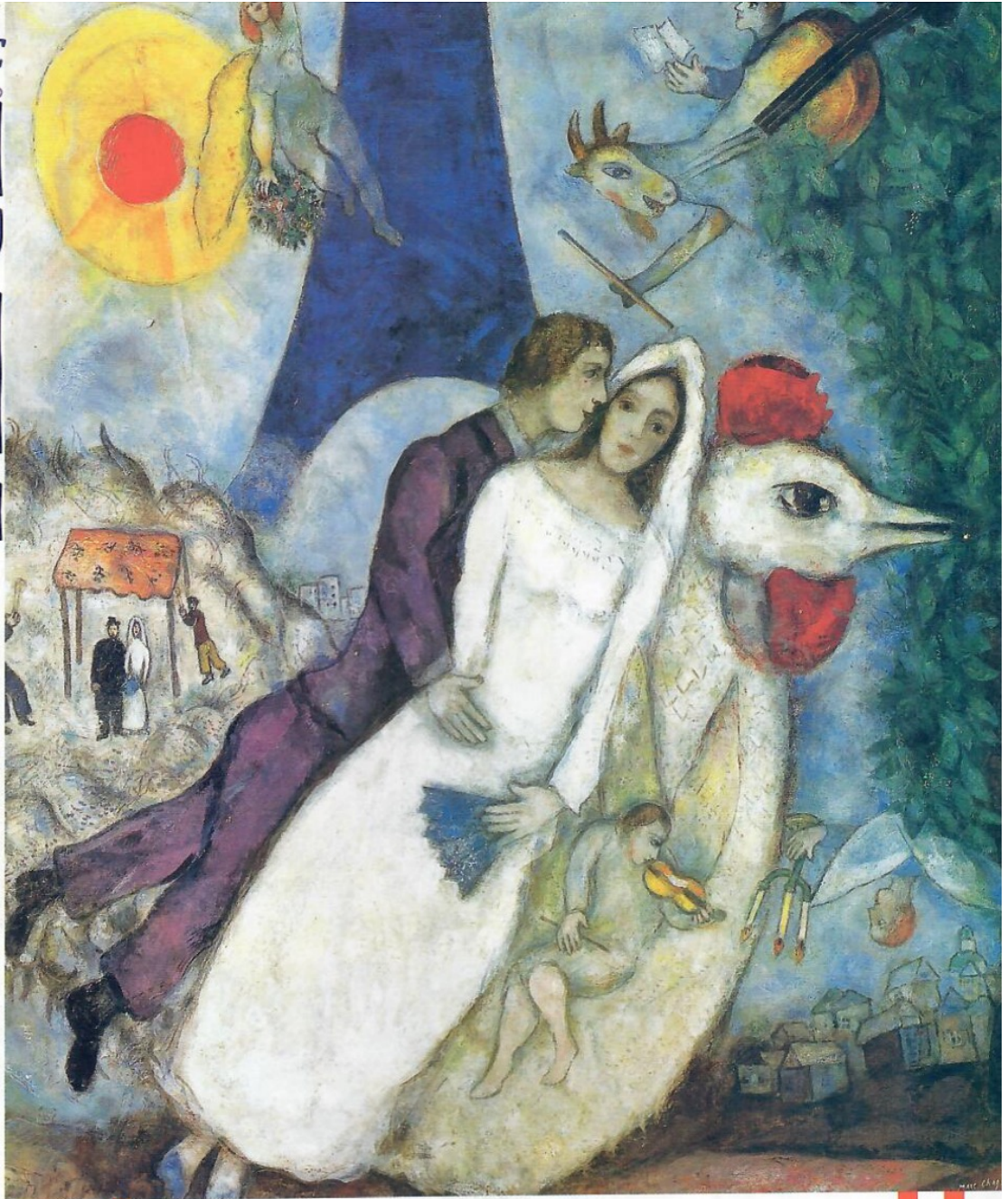


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Working
With
Fantasy

Marc Chagall

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SCHOLASTIC



COVER: Marc Chagall (1887-1985). *The Bride and Groom of the Eiffel Tower*, 59" x 53 3/4", 1938-39. Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. © 1998 Artists Rights Society, New York—ADAGP, Paris

SCHOLASTIC ART

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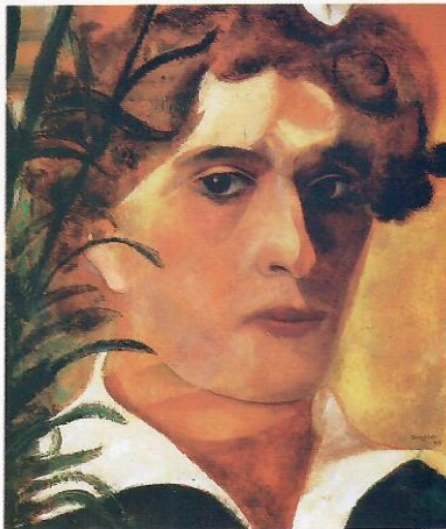
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Creating a Fantasy World

Huge chickens, flying fish, floating couples that look as though they are made of rubber: what do these images mean? Even in a world of special effects, computer simulations, and travel to other planets, many of the visions created by 20th-century artist Marc Chagall still look fantastic.

Chagall was born in 1887 in the small Russian town of Vitebsk. To support their large family, Chagall's father sold fish and his mother ran a grocery store.



Marc Chagall at 27.

Self-Portrait, 1914. Oil on paperboard, 11 3/4" x 10 1/2". The Philadelphia Museum of Art. Louis E. Stern Collection. © 1998 Artists Rights Society, New York—ADAGP, Paris

The village was made up of wooden houses and gardens, through which roamed cows, chickens, and goats. Life centered around family and Jewish tradition. Chagall's house was always filled with people; relatives came and went. Beggars, ragmen, and preachers constantly wandered through the small Jewish communities.

Young Marc learned Hebrew and Bible history, and then went to the local school. Although his very religious parents disapproved, Chagall

went to art school in St. Petersburg in 1907. There he first saw works by painters such as Van Gogh (van GO), Cézanne (say ZAN), Monet (mo NAY), and Gauguin (go GAN). Their revolutionary use of bright colors and simplified shapes to convey emotion and inner feelings appealed to him. In 1910, he went to Paris, at that time the center of the art world. Here he saw the work of young artists like Picasso and Matisse (ma TEECE), who were experimenting with new ways of expression. Influenced by all these ideas, Chagall began painting. He searched for a style that would allow him to visually communicate his fantasies, feelings, and all his

"I am known as the artist who paints



childhood memories.

In 1914, Chagall went back to Russia to get married. He painted *The Birthday* (above) to express his feelings of love and joy. His wife, Bella, holds flowers she bought to celebrate the artist's birthday. The two figures float, lighter than air, over the bright-red furniture and floor. Bella later wrote, "United we soar from the room. We fly out the window over fields full of flowers, over shuttered houses, roofs, yards, churches."

Chagall planned to take Bella back to Paris right after their wedding. But

World War I (1914-1918) and the Russian Revolution (1917) prevented them from leaving. For the next few years, Chagall was Commissioner of Fine Arts in Vitebsk. He then went to Moscow and was involved in Jewish theater. When he returned to Paris in 1923, many of his paintings had been sold and Chagall had become famous.

The artist worked in France until the onset of World War II. In 1941, he moved to New York City. After the war was over, Chagall went to southern France, where he continued to work. He

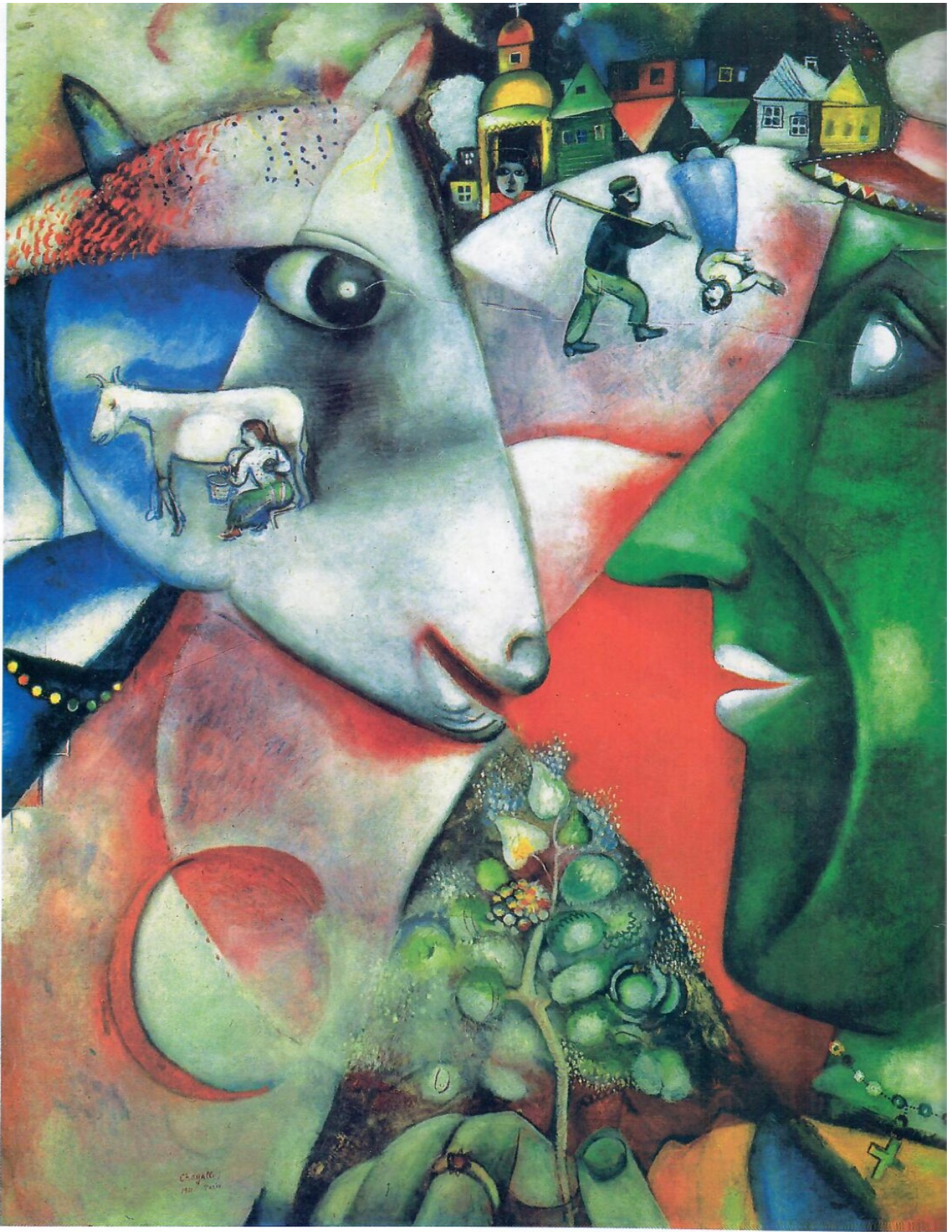
"When I paint, I start at the actual event and then I go towards something else."

—Marc Chagall

The Birthday, 1915. Oil, 31 3/4" x 39 1/4". The Museum of Modern Art, NY, NY. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. © 1998 Artists Rights Society, New York—ADAGP, Paris

did book illustrations, stage designs, murals, stained-glass windows, tapestries, and sculptures. The designs he created were always based on images from his childhood. He said, "My little town may have vanished long ago, but I carry its image always in my heart." Chagall died in 1985, at the age of 97.

“cows that fly.” — Marc Chagall



"My paintings are my memories." — Marc Chagall

4 SCHOLASTIC ART

Memories Transformed

Chagall once said, “Were I not a Jew, I would not have become an artist.” And nearly all the images in his paintings such as rabbinical figures, prayer caps, and fiddlers came from the artist’s early memories of his Russian Jewish village.

When he first began painting, Chagall had many images from his past in his head. But he didn’t know how to communicate them to others. He saw his memories as pieces of a puzzle. Some parts were large and clear, some small and hazy. Somehow, they all fit together in an orderly but fantastic way.

He had seen works by Pablo Picasso and other artists done in a new style called *Cubism*. Rather than painting visible reality, the Cubists showed the artist’s inner response to reality. The Cubists wanted to present an object from all angles. So they broke the object into geometric planes, combining the planes to give a complete picture.

Chagall decided to use geometric shapes to tie together the separate images from his childhood. One of his first important paintings, *I and the Village* (left), began as two intersecting diagonal lines. A green man on the right stares at a white cow on the opposite side. A thin white line runs from the eye of the cow to the eye of the man. In this fantastic picture, just about every **natural law is**

In one of his most famous paintings (left), Chagall uses the color opposites, red and green, to set up a fantastic, dreamlike sensation.

I and the Village, 1911. Oil, 75 1/4" x 59 1/4". The Museum of Modern Art, NY, NY. Mrs. Simon Guggenheim Fund. © Artists Rights Society, New York—ADAGP, Paris



Chagall transformed the fiddler (left), based on a real memory, into a symbol for the creative artist.

Music, 1920. Tempera, 83 3/4" x 41". Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. © 1998. Artists Rights Society, New York—ADAGP, Paris

events—births, weddings, funerals. Chagall sometimes uses fiddlers as symbols of human destiny. The fiddler can also represent the mysterious creative powers of the artist. In this work, his huge figure dominates everything as he plays tunes to which the whole village dances.

In *The Holy Coachman* (below), Chagall combines Christian and Jewish imagery to create a fantastic scene. The church in back contains both the Jewish Star of David and the Christian cross. The **distorted and exaggerated** figure in a Jewish prayer cap swoops out of an orange chair that seems to hang in the sky above.

This painting (below) was first hung upside down. Chagall liked the effect so much he kept it that way.

The Holy Coachman, 1911-12. Oil, 58 1/4" x 46 1/4". Private collection. © 1998 Artists Rights Society, New York—ADAGP, Paris

reversed. An object’s scale, or relative size, changes not according to the rules of perspective but according to its importance in the artist’s memory. A gigantic priest looks out of a small church. A woman hangs upside down from the skyline. Figures float, forms **dissolve** or are superimposed on each other. **Colors are unnatural.** They are based on emotions not reality.

The figure in *Music* (above) is based on Chagall’s uncle. To relax after work, he would sit on the roof and play the violin. The fiddler was a central figure in Jewish life. He played at all important





Dream Images

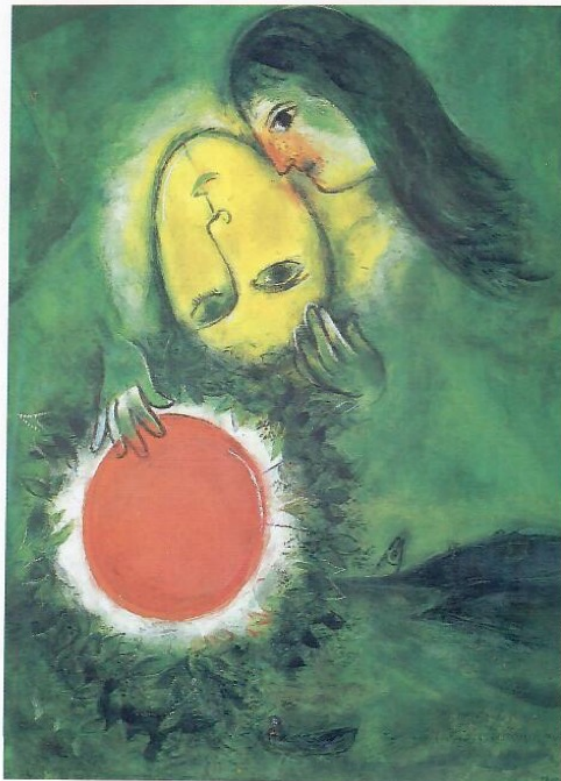
For nearly 80 years, Marc Chagall painted images from his early life. And he presented them freely with no restrictions of time, space, or size. His works of art resemble the linked images usually associated with dreams. Many people believe dreams are made up of symbols—objects that stand for certain qualities, ideas, or unconscious feelings. To create his dreamlike fantasies, Chagall invented his own vocabulary of symbols, using them over and over again.

In Chagall's paintings, animals usually stand for harmony with nature. Chickens and cows mean country life, while animals like cats suggest cities and towns. The fish in a number of the artist's works appear out of respect for his father who sold herring. Pieces of household furniture held special meaning for Chagall. Clocks (above, far right) indicate the passage of time. Lamps stand for peace and domesticity.

The couples who appear in so many of Chagall's works (cover, page 3, right) are symbols of love. A floating figure means that he or she is overwhelmed with joy and happiness. Chagall used the color green to indicate creativity and magic. In many of his self-portraits (such as *I and the Village*, page 4), the artist gives himself a green face. In *The Juggler* (right),

the artist is a man, woman, bird, angel, who continues to create as time passes. The circular shape at the bottom could have a number of meanings—a circus ring, a village, a globe.

Chagall's use of **complementary**—or opposite—colors also heightens the sense of fantasy. Green and its opposite red, dominate the drawing *Green Landscape* (below), while blues and oranges, greens and reds increase *The Juggler's* dreamlike feeling.



Artistic freedom was very important to Chagall. In his paintings, he used several images to symbolize the quality of freedom—flying figures, birds, musical instruments. *Paris Through My Window* (pages 8-9) was done when the artist first arrived in Paris from Russia. Chagall uses the soaring shape of the Eiffel Tower to stand for his new feeling of artistic liberation. Few objects in this work **obey natural laws**. A train chugs by upside down. Two people walk on their sides. A man hangs in the air. The cat has a human face. The scene is lit by patches of **unreal color**. The artist in the lower right has two faces and holds his heart in his hand. He looks in two directions—back toward his Russian town and forward to his new life in Paris.

Flying fish, the color green, and ticking clocks all had symbolic meanings for artist Marc Chagall.

Above: *Time Is a River Without Banks*, 1930-39. Oil, 39 3/8" x 31 7/8". The Museum of Modern Art, NY, NY. © 1998 Artists Rights Society, New York—ADAGP, Paris

Right: *The Juggler*, 1943. Oil, 41 1/2" x 31". The Art Institute of Chicago. Gift of Mrs. Gilbert W. Chapman. © 1998 Artists Rights Society, New York—ADAGP, Paris

Left: *Green Landscape*, 1949. Gouache and ink, 30 1/4" x 22". Private collection. © 1998 Artists Rights Society, New York—ADAGP, Paris

"I start with something actual, go on toward something more



abstract, and finally arrive at the symbol.” — Marc Chagall





SCHOLASTIC
ART

MASTERPIECE
OF THE
MONTH #3

Paris Through My Window

by Marc Chagall

"My pictures are painted
collections of inner images which
possess me."—Marc Chagall

Marc Chagall (1887-1985). *Paris Through My Window*, 1913. Oil. 53 1/2" x 55 1/2".
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY, NY. Gift of Solomon R. Guggenheim.
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ART SPOTLIGHT

Extraordinary Objects

How do everyday
objects become
fantasies?



Romare Bearden (1911-1988). *One Night Stand*, 1974. Collage with acrylic. 44" x 50". Private Collection.

Fragmented Harmonies

Modern artist Romare Bearden is best known for his photo collages depicting African-American life. Works like *One Night Stand* (left) are based on real scenes. It is the materials and techniques the artist uses that give these scenes a fantastic quality.

This collage depicting jazz musicians is made from scraps of paper and photo fragments. Photos of varying sizes, taken from many points of view are **juxtaposed**, or placed next to each other. The **distortions** and **exaggerations** resulting from the **scale changes**—a large eye overwhelms a small face, a musical instrument becomes a mouth—give this work a haunting quality. The **overlapping shapes** and the contrast between areas of **visual activity and flat, gray rest areas** parallel the rhythms of the music. The different sounds are suggested by the **changing angles of vision**.

"It's wild what you dream about. If I can remember my dreams, I try to use them in my work."
— Romare Bearden

Colossal Coffee Cups

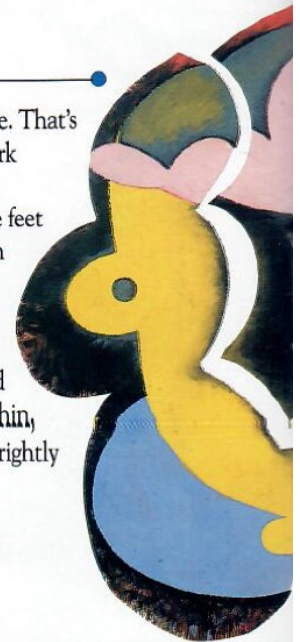
Contemporary American artist Elizabeth Murray says, "I did *Just in Time* the summer Bob and I fell in love. That's what the title is about. The shapes are tight, but I went wild with the bright, beautiful color." How is this work similar to Chagall's painting *Birthday* on page 3? What emotion do you think both artists wished to express?

Much of the fantastic impact of Murray's works comes from their vast **scale**—this painting is nearly nine feet tall. It towers over the viewer, jutting out from the wall like a sculpture. Murray bases many of her pieces on everyday objects—tables, chairs, beds, pillows. She **flattens, simplifies, exaggerates, and distorts** their shapes. One of her favorite objects is the coffee cup. In many works, she uses the cup as a kind of self-portrait.

"I want to explode something ordinary into a new state."
— Elizabeth Murray

Usually Murray breaks her canvases apart. In this case, she has joined together the shapes of two different cups. They are separated only by a thin, jagged line of **negative space**. Like Chagall's figures, these two curved, brightly colored shapes float above the viewer, joined together as one.

Elizabeth Murray, b. 1940, *Just in Time*, 1981. Oil on two canvases, 106" x 97". Philadelphia Museum of Art. The Edward and Althea Budd Fund, Adele Haas Turner and Beatrice Pastorius Turner Fund and funds contributed by Marion Stroud Swingle and Lorine E. Vogt. Photo © Graydon Wood, 1995.





Giuseppe Archimboldo, (1527-1593).
Summer, 1573. 30" x 25" Musée
national d' Louvre, Paris.
Photo © RMN—G rard Blot

A Renaissance Vegetarian

Every fruit and vegetable in the work on the left has been painted in a highly realistic manner. Each grape, garlic clove, and green pea has been rendered correctly, right down to the smallest detail. The only unusual aspect of this 16th-century still life is the way the objects in the painting are arranged—in the shape of a human head!

The Renaissance artist who painted the fantastic "portrait" above lived more than 400 years ago!

The Italian Renaissance painter Giuseppe Archimboldo painted a number of very conventional portraits and still lifes. But today, we know the artist only through his series of painted heads made up of various kinds of food. In *Summer*, an ear of corn has been **dislocated** from any of the places where the viewer might normally expect to see it. It has been **transformed** into a human ear. As

we look at the work, a peach becomes a cheek, a cucumber turns into a nose, and an artichoke becomes a flower worn in the subject's jacket. Wheat grows out of the collar and the artist has woven his name and date into the figure's clothing.

Archimboldo was hired by the emperor of Austria to design masked balls and festivals for the imperial court. Perhaps as a result of his association with the alchemists and magicians who surrounded the emperor, the artist began doing these fantastic portraits. The features of some of Archimboldo's heads strongly resemble important people who were in the court. It is thought he may have been commissioned to make fun of the emperor's enemies. *Summer* might have been one of the first political cartoons.



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Corey Bond

Bringing Fantasies to Life

Giant chickens, floating fish, and multicolored cows are among Marc Chagall's favorite subjects. He even included a number of fantastic animals in the many book illustrations he created throughout his career.

Like Chagall, 19-year-old Corey Bond has always loved to "tell stories through art." Corey did this inventive and fantastic pop-up book while he was in his senior year at Hempfield High School in Landisville, Pennsylvania. He is currently a freshman at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, where he is majoring in illustration.

How did you first get started in art?

I've always enjoyed drawing nature, especially animals. My art work started out as a hobby. Then, as I got older, I got more serious about it and realized that I wanted to go into art as a career.

Where did you get the idea for this work?

It was an assignment in my commercial art class. We had to incorporate a nursery rhyme into a pop-up book. I got the idea for this piece from an old English rhyme I saw in my sister's book. I chose one about a frog and a toad. There's a toad on the cover, and when you open the book, a frog sitting on a piece of wood seems to pop up at you.

It's an unusual assignment. How did you feel about it?

Half of my class hated it, the other half loved it. At first I was completely lost. I had had no experience in 3-D sculpture and I started to worry. But as soon as my teacher showed us how to create a pop-up book, step-by-step, I got really excited about doing the project.

How did you put it together?

For the book covers, I taped two pieces of illustration board together. I glued purple-colored paper to the outside, then drew the toad on tan-colored paper and put it on the front cover.

Then what did you do?

For the inside, I drew the images of the

"My work is somewhere between fantasy and reality. I would say that I illustrate realistic stories, but in a fantastic style."

frog, grasses, and the lily pad with charcoal pastels, and cut them out. I wanted them to be stiff, so I pasted them onto illustration board. Then I lined the background with purple paper.

After I did that, I had to figure out how to set the images up so they would pop up when the book was opened. I glued the tabs on the bottom of the frog, the grass, and the lily pad to the back inside cover. I attached the backs of those three pieces to the front inside cover with strips of illustration board so the images would stand up.

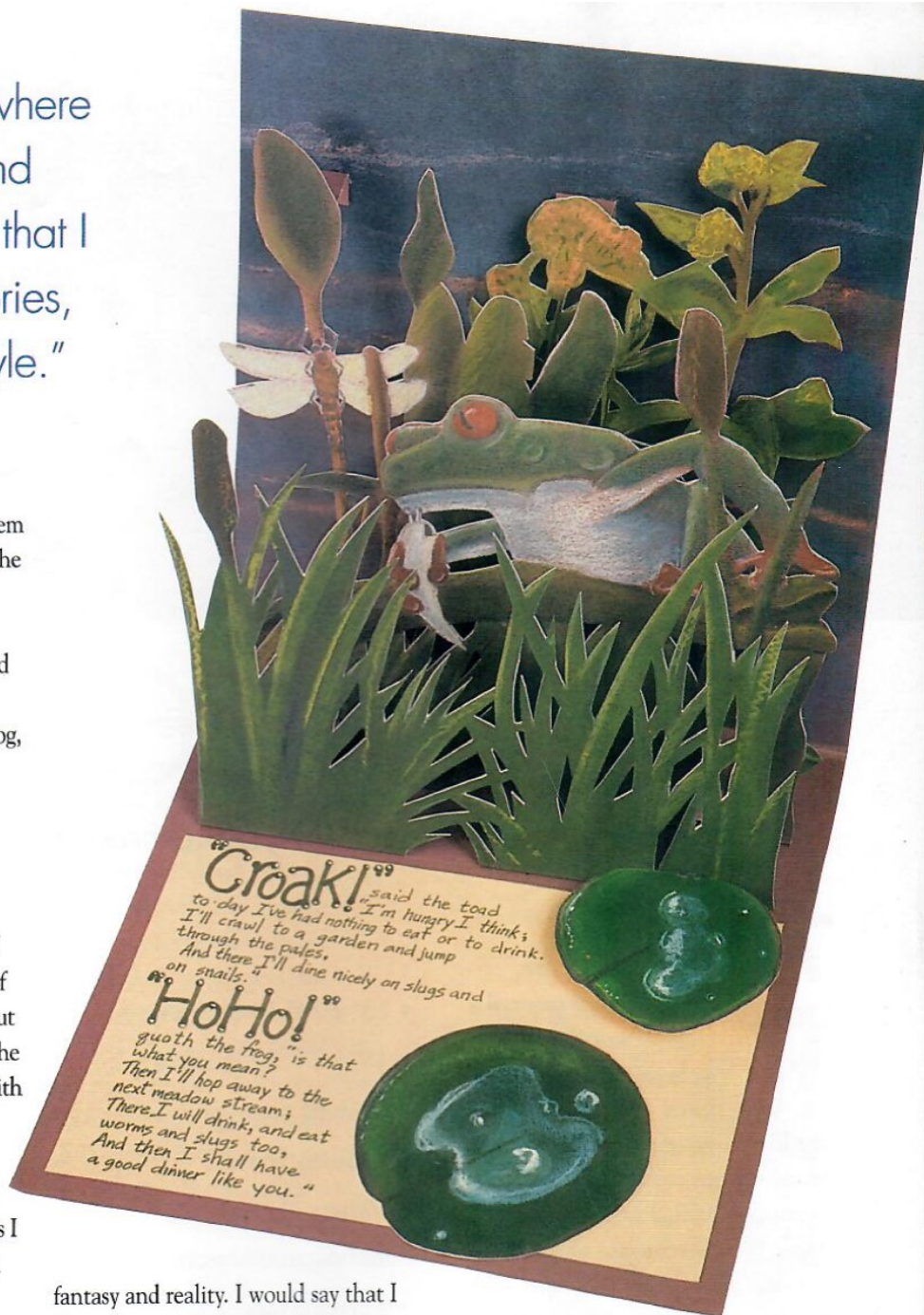
For the text, I cut out a rectangle of tan paper and glued it to the bottom of the book. I wrote the nursery rhyme out in black paint, so it would fit next to the lily pads. Finally, I sprayed the book with fixative so the pastel wouldn't smear.

Was it a difficult project?

It was one of the most difficult projects I had in school. Just to come up with an idea seemed hard. Arranging the text and pictures so that the entire nursery rhyme fit on the inside of the book along with the images was a real challenge. But the most difficult part was getting everything to stand up without falling apart and making sure images weren't covering up parts of the text.

Is any of your work based on fantasy, or do you work more realistically?

I guess my work is somewhere between



fantasy and reality. I would say that I illustrate realistic stories, but in a fantastic style. I work a lot from life, from pictures I take, or from people I get to pose for me. I've done some realistic work, but most of my pieces have some kind of twist or oddity. For example, I did a picture of myself looking down a well. It's a self-portrait, but it's hard to see my face at the top because most of the frame is filled by a huge penny that's falling down the well toward the viewer.

What kind of art career do you see for yourself?

When I graduate, I'd love to start working as an illustrator of book and magazine covers. Eventually, I'd like to sell my work in art galleries.

We select our Artist of the Month from among thousands of young art-award winners. To enter, ask your teacher to write to The Alliance for Young Artists and Writers, 555 Broadway, New York, NY 10012-3999 for entry deadlines and rules books.



Drawing Your Fantasies

Use the objects you see around you to create a dreamlike world.

Throughout his life, Marc Chagall painted a fantasy world that only he was able to see. Even though his works are highly imaginative, they are all based on the very real people and events that filled his childhood. More than the images themselves, it is the way Chagall visually tied all these memories together that makes his works seem so dreamlike.

In this workshop, you'll use some of Chagall's methods to transform the ordinary objects you see around you into a fantastic scene.

Prepared by Ned J. Nesti, Jr., Art Instructor, Morrison (IL) High School. Assisted by Tina M. Bastiani, Northern Illinois University.
Photos by Larry Gregory
Drawings (left to right) by Corey R. L. Valek, Allyson A. West, Marc Phillip Winkelman, Anthony L. Wright, Heather Decker.

Materials

- 18" x 24" 30-lb newsprint
- 18" x 24" 80-lb white sulfite drawing paper
- Drawing board
- Variety of mechanical and organic objects
- Masking tape
- No. 2 pencil
- India ink
- Dip pen holder with #512 nib (fine-point nib)
- Spray bottle.
- 12 color Cray-pas set
- Paper toweling

Step 1

Do some contour drawings of objects in the art department that are associated with art production—scissors, brushes, easel, artist's mannequin, still-life objects. Continue until you have at least 20 drawings. Cut images out, leaving 1/4" edge.

Step 2

Arrange images into a still-life composition on an 18" x 24" sheet of newsprint. Since this is a fantasy drawing, you don't need to follow the rules that usually govern gravity, perspective, and foreshortening. Select one object as the primary focal point. Arrange and rearrange your composition. Objects can float, overlap, be cropped, be fragmented, change in scale, change in proportion, be repeated, be distorted or exaggerated. Do not overcrowd.



Step 3

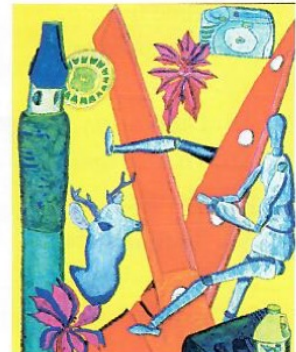
When you are satisfied with your composition, tape the drawings down with small bits of masking tape. Place an 18" x 24" sheet of white paper on top of the arrangement and take it to a window or light table. Trace the composition *lightly*.

Step 4

Practice using fine-tip pen and India ink. Ink over pencil lines. Your lines can be **thick, thin, varying, crosshatched, scratchy, hard, or soft**. When your ink drawing is done, begin to use Cray-pas. You can use **flat color, or blend** your colors to produce modeled tones.

Some Solutions

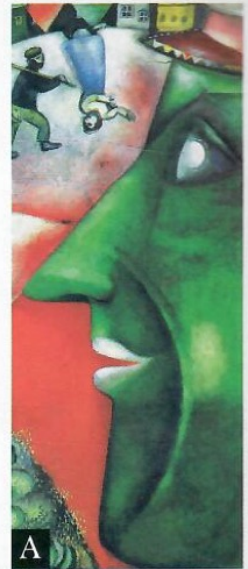
Will your drawing be **vertical or horizontal**? Do your objects belong together, or will they be **unrelated and juxtaposed**? How will you compose your objects; will they be **large or small, entire, cropped**? Will they **overlap, float, or be superimposed**? Can the viewer **see through** any objects? Can one object **transform** itself into another? Will you decide to **repeat** an object throughout the composition? How will you present the objects; against a **flat background, a blended backdrop, or a sky with clouds**? Will your background be **light or dark**? Will your color scheme be **real, emotional or spontaneous**?



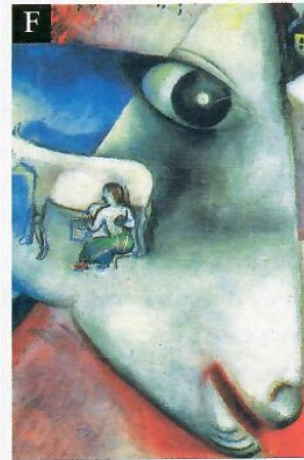
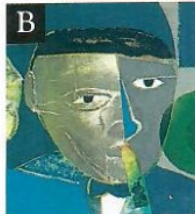
CRITICS CORNER

Fantastic Faces

What other meanings might each of these faces have?



To create an unreal or fantastic effect, artists often use certain visual techniques. Can you match each of these pictures with a related technique, word, or phrase? Beside each phrase below, write the letter of the picture (or pictures) that corresponds.



- 1. Love and joy
- 2. Floating figures
- 3. Creativity
- 4. Self-portrait
- 5. Unnatural colors
- 6. Superimposition
- 7. Country life
- 8. Scale
- 9. Vitebsk
- 10. Distortion
- 11. Summer
- 12. Time flying
- 13. Juxtaposition
- 14. Father
- 15. Dislocation
- 16. Photo fragments
- 17. Herring
- 18. Transformation
- 19. Natural laws reversed

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