

Using Collage to Enrich and Inspire

Scott Hutchison

Collage - A picture or design created by adhering such basically flat elements as newspaper, wallpaper, printed text and illustrations, photographs, cloth, string, etc., to a flat surface. If the result becomes three-dimensional it may also be called a relief sculpture, construction or assemblage. Introduced by the Cubist artists, this process was widely used by artists who followed, and is a familiar technique in contemporary art

"Collage" was originally a French word, derived from the word *coller*, meaning "to paste."

(Source: ArtLex)

Suggested artists that use collage:

Picasso
Kurt Schwitters
Max Ernst
Juan Gris
Raol hausmann
Hans Arp
Joseph Cornell
Lee Krasner
Robert Raushenberg
David Salle



Course objectives: Students transform a collage into a painting or drawing by exploring, incorporating, and combining different techniques. Formal issues, content, and image presentations are discussed along with modern and contemporary artists who work in this genre. Students are encouraged to approach each project with an individual mindset. Projects are meant to be open for interpretation. Collage and the resulting painting/drawing can be as simple or as complex as you make it.

Supplies you will need:

Paint/charcoal

Canvas/paper.

(You may use either or both in this class. Speak to me regarding your mediums.)

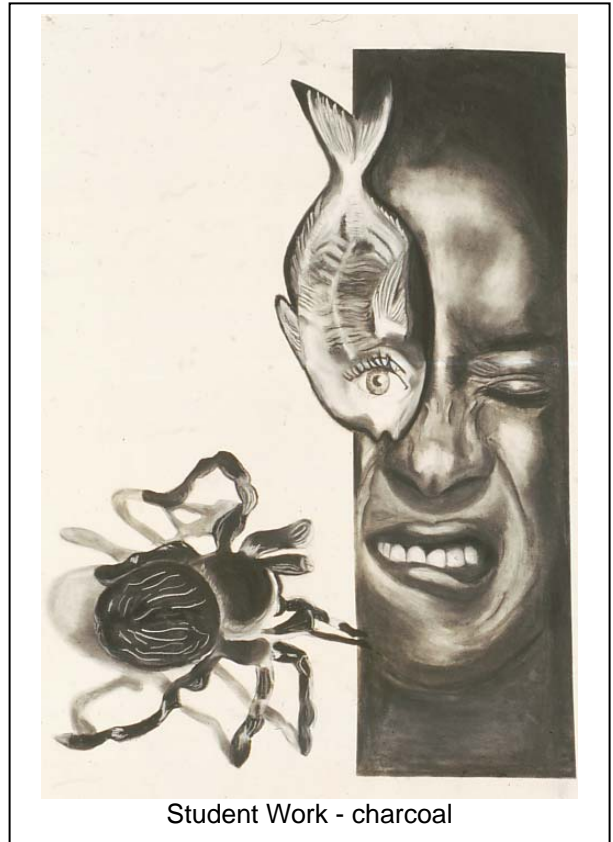
1 sheet Matt board

Glue stick, scotch tape

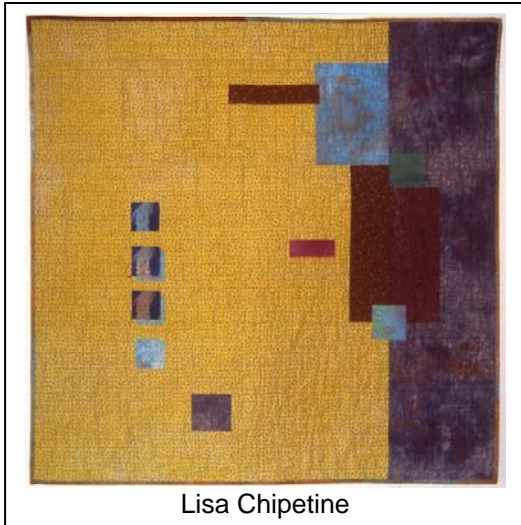
Matte or gloss gel medium.

Exacto blade and scissors

Magazines, newspapers, photos, etc..



Project one: Juxtapose



The purpose of the first piece is to juxtapose contrasting imagery. Refer to the hand-outs you were given regarding the “elements of art” and “design principals”. Contrast can be show through shapes, objects, colors, textures, words, scale, or value etc. Keep the collage simple by using 2 – 5 objects in your composition. The viewer should understand that you are juxtaposing/contrasting **one** of the elements. In order to do this, one of the elements must remain dominate. Note: The materials may inherently contrast or give you visual cues to help you begin.

First make a number of collages using popular magazines and other pictures and printed matter as source materials. These “sketches” will vary in size and color based on the source material

Complete 1 or 2 collages in class so we can critique compositional issues and discuss ways in which you approach the larger piece.

By next time you will want 1 - 2 more collages in which to paint or draw.

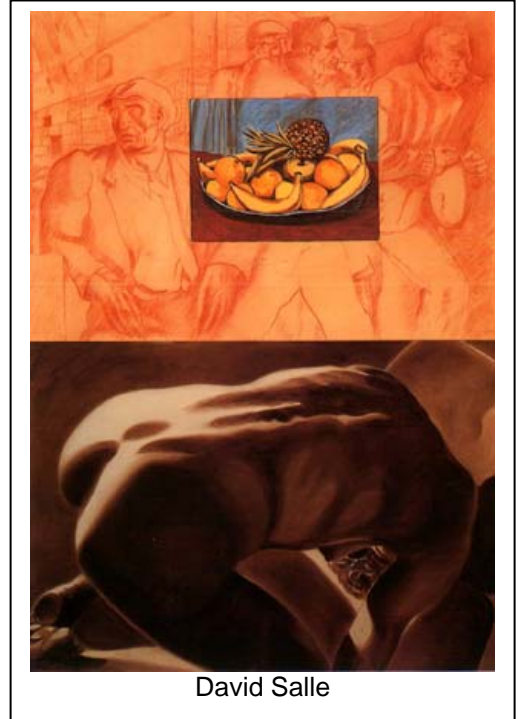
This collage can be objective or non-objective.



Project Two: Layering

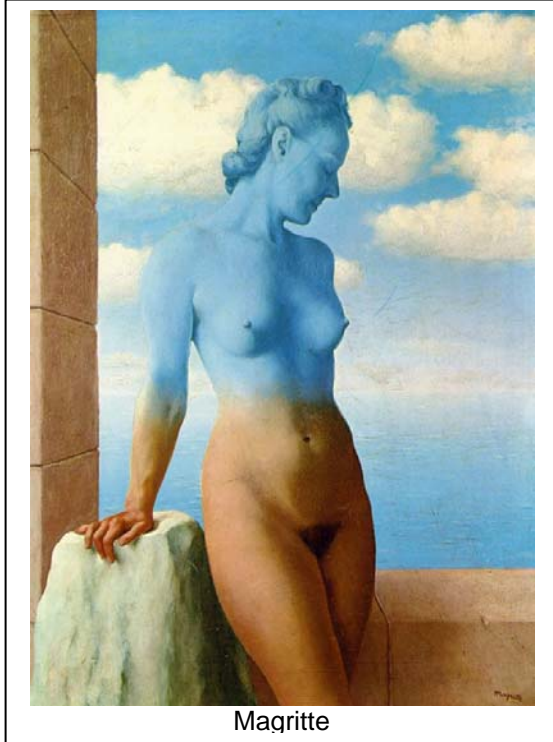
This project brings the collage to the picture plane in which you are drawing or painting. Your approach will be similar to the first. But you will be encouraged to add paper or objects to the larger surface. (Collage onto your final piece) You are encouraged to work back and forth from collage techniques to your medium of choice. (painting or drawing)

The subject matter can be objective or non objective. Like the first project, the piece needs a focal idea/approach. You should ask yourself and then answer the question: What are you trying to say?



To begin: It helps to have an idea or “sketch” before you start the larger piece. In this class the collage is our sketch, so we will start like we did with the first project. Build 2 – 3 collages with the knowledge that some of the elements will be glued to the surface and worked back into.

Project Three: Figuration

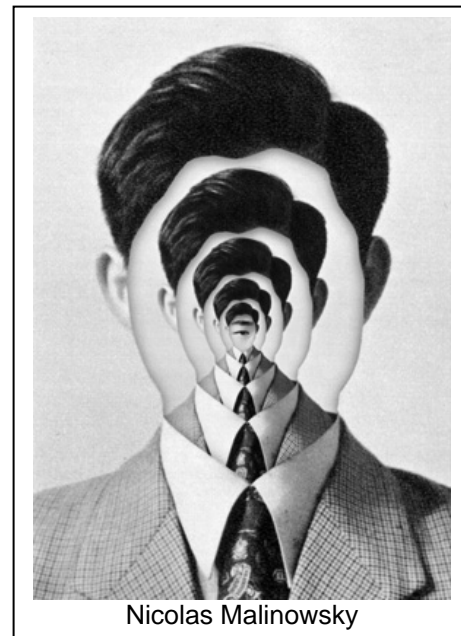


Your focus is to be on one figure. I would prefer you use the head/face region. Your collage should abstract and push your composition in its **design** or **narrative** meaning (concept).

Think about the ideas we have spoken about in class regarding composition, focal point, picture plane, unity, positive/negative relationships and balance.

The abstraction in Magritte's piece on the left is simple. The color from the sky crosses into the figure, but the integrity of the figure is still there. Nicolas Malinowsky's image below uses repetition to distort the figure and create a hypnotic effect. The figure here also remains.

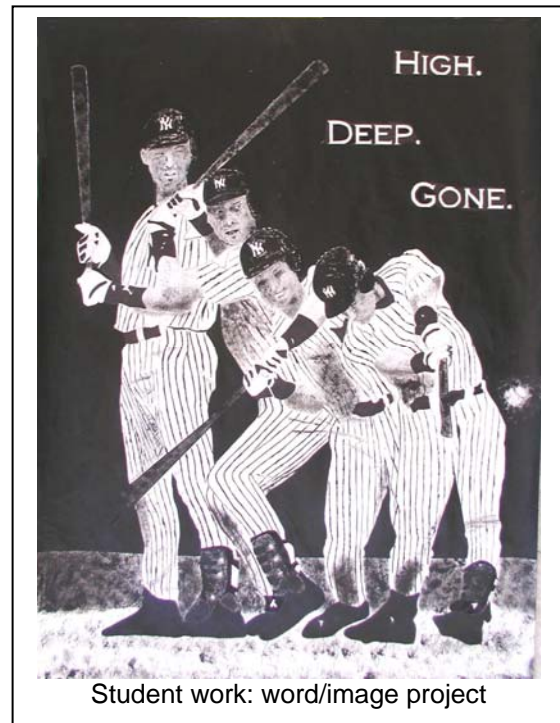
They are both simple ideas and they both exploit one of the elements of art and design (color, repetition) to abstract/alter the scene.



Project Four: Text/Image

Words and numbers may add content to a picture, or they can be used merely for their aesthetic. Like the preceding projects we will start with a collage. Gather images, focusing your attention on letters, numbers and words.

You may begin with an image you would like to juxtapose against a word like the student piece on the right. Or perhaps you wish to layer the text and use it like Robin Savinar's piece below.



As with all of the projects it is important to maintain the integrity of the entire picture plane. Don't let your design look like a **fragment** of a larger composition, or look like **several unconnected ideas**. Consider applying some of the ideas we have covered so far such as: Positive/negative relationships, balance, movement through the composition, the hierarchy of spaces on the page, the interaction of shapes with the edges of the page, repetition and variation. You should always be striving to create a piece that communicates a unified idea or design.