Paris Through the Window, By Marc Chagall

Today in Art Masterpiece:
We learned about art that is Surreal - - dreamlike images. Your 4th grader got to depict his or her dream-images and then do a watercolor wash for effect. We focused on:
Imagery - - how our minds organize things for us
Color - - where our eyes go and why
Art as Expression - - Mr. Chagall gave us no answers, only lots of questions!
ART MASTERPIECE
4th GRADE
PARIS THROUGH THE WINDOW
Marc Chagall (Cha-gall)

Timing: 1 hour; 1:15-2:15
10-15-min on bio and discussing art
45-50 min on project

Introduce Art –
• The name of the art that we will be discussing today is “Paris Through the Window” by Marc Chagall.
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Terms:
• Surrealism—means what you imagine or dream, combining familiar and recognizable objects to take on new meaning and symbolism. Surrealist painted objects “realistically, but combined them in unusual or nonsensical ways.” Show examples. Surrealist paintings often have a “dream like” quality....they stress “being beyond or above reality.” Remember Renee Magritte and Empire of Lights? That was one of our first examples of surrealism.
• Cubism—Picasso is most famous for this field of art. It was an attempt by painters to paint things in their most basic geometric forms. (Show “I and the Village” which best depicts cubism.)

Artist bio:

• Chagall was a Russian-Jewish artist, associated with several key art movements and was one of the most successful artists of the twentieth century. He created a unique career in virtually every artistic medium, including paintings, book illustrations, stained glass, stage sets, ceramics, tapestries and fine art prints.
• Born in 1887 in Vitebsk (Vi-tesbk), which is a town on the Russian/Polish border. Many of his works reflect childhood memories of where he grew up. Chagall was the oldest of 9 children and his family was poor.
  o He attended a Hebrew elementary school and then went on to public school. He studied violin and took singing lessons in his spare time. He was not a good student overall because he was always “dreaming” but he did excel in geometry and drawing.
  o He did many charcoal drawings from magazines he got from the library. By doing this he convinced his family that he had talent and they sent him to an art school in Vitebsk. In 1906 he went to St. Petersburg Russia to continue his art studies. He began to meet other artists and dealers here. However he was poor and because of anti-semitic laws (which means laws that were discriminatory against Jews) he needed a permit to live in the capital. All of this convinced him to move to Paris, which was considered the artistic and cultural capital of the world in 1910.
  o Chagall painted “Paris Through the Window” in 1914, which was 4 years after he arrived in Paris.
  o He was Director of the Art Academy Vitsyebsk, Russia (now Belarus) and he was Art Director of the moscow Jewish State Theater. He painted several murals in the theater lobby and produced many sets for the theater.
  o 1922 went back to Paris. He lived in the United States to escape the treatment of Jews during WW II but eventually moved back to France and died there in 1985. He was 98 when he died.
• Chagall said that he became a painter because painting "seemed to me like a window though which I could have taken flight toward another world." He had a fondness for painting windows.
• Show some of his other works.

Discuss the Art Piece-

Close-up on the Art
Chagall often painted his memories and his dreams. In a dream some things may seem real, while others may not. In the painting Paris Through the Window, Chagall combines his inner world of memories and the outer world of reality.

• To Chagall the picture was an invented symbol of feelings. What sort of feelings do you have when you look at his painting? (Bright colors, familiar subjects, etc.)
• Which objects in the painting seem magical or made-up?
• Can you guess who the two-headed man might be? Could it be Chagall? If so, why is he facing in two directions?
• Can you find something in the painting that might be a memory from Chagall's past?
• Can you find an object that reminds us of Chagall's new life in France?
• Many of Chagall's paintings celebrate love. Can you find any symbols, or signs, of love in this painting?
• Is this an inside or outside picture?
• Why do you think Chagall put this cat in the painting? The cat has the head of a human and the body of an animal. Chagall believed that since many things in life are like puzzles that cannot be explained, we must have faith. Often his paintings are like fairy tales.
• Chagall's paintings often contain the colors of the rainbow, which are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. How many of the colors do you see in the painting?
• This painting includes many repeated geometric shapes. How many triangles can you identify?

Transition to art project:

Getting ready:
1. Project Steps:
First, talk with the class about what makes Marc Chagall's art so unique and dream-like. Some good things to say might be:

   - His paintings are colorful!
   - Things are turned upside down
   - People float through the air
   - Animals have human-like faces
   - Objects are on top of or inside of something else
   - He painted what he remembered
   - He painted the night sky, moons, flowers

1. Invite the students to think of themselves in a favorite / familiar room with a window. It can be a room at home or at church, one in your imagination, etc.
Point out that Chagall used a window to open his painting to the outside. Draw a window similar to Chagall's in your drawing as your first step. Show an example.

3. Ask them to think of the objects they might find both inside and outside their window.

4. Ask, "What would be most unexpected, strange, or magical objects that would appear in your room or outside the window? A red and purple unicorn, lollipops floating just below the ceiling, or an upside-down cactus, plant or rosebush outside the window.

   a. Remind them of Chagall's imaginative self-portrait in Paris Through the Window. They, too, might want to include self-portraits.

   b. What about some surreal objects? (draw something that looks real and add something unusual....a dog with a cat's head or add an arm, whatever.

5. Your pictures are not meant to mirror the real world. Objects can look like they're floating or flying. People can be blue, green, or two-headed.

6. Start with a window then sketch the items we just talked about on your drawing as you think of them. Sketch large objects first or you can sketch the items on a separate piece of paper first and only cut out and paste the items you want for your final composition. Show my example.

7. Once your sketch is complete use pastels or crayons to color in your sketches.

8. Remind students to sign and title their pictures when they are finished.

**I and the Village**

He often painted houses and people upside down. This painting is called I and the Village. There is a peasant coming back from the field, a woman standing on her head and a few houses turned upside down. Can you see the woman milking the cow? He placed things wherever he wanted to on the canvas, sometimes putting something inside of or on top of something else.

**The Fiddler**

Surrealism is art that looks like a fantasy or dream. Some people think Marc Chagall's paintings are surrealistic, but he did not think of his paintings as fantasies. The things he painted were real memories of his life arranged in creative ways. One of his favorite memories was of the violinists that played music in the Russian village where he was from. In this painting, a green fiddler sits above the snowy village and a person soars high into the sky.
Marc Chagall, *Time is a River Without Banks*

**Periods in Art** → Samples of Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Impressionism. 

- Cubism/Abstract/Surreal → "I and the Village" → time, sun/moon repetition, upside-down things, happy things, cows, beads.

**Chagall** → Russian Jewish background

- Hasidic Jew 1887, Father → herring packer, 9 children, loved draw
- Convinced mother → local art school → Paris study art.
- France until age 97. WWII in U.S. Arrested Nazi raids, but Amer, intervene in art, family.

**Painting** → Abstract

- Surrealism → Freud → unconscious mind/dreams

1930-39 Painted until something in picture surprised him.

**Texture** → fish.

*Warm/Cool Colors → CONTRAST* → fish/bird/human.

**Symbolism** → Violin (fiddler in many paintings, fakir, uncle).

- fisherman on river
- clock
- young couple
- night of town

30's → approaching storm, Hitler/WW2.

**Project** Collage w/ cut-outs, illustrations, markers, etc.

- to express an emotion or abstract idea

- anger
- happiness
- envy
- greed
- joy
- wonder

- amazement
- evil
- goodness
- sadness
- hope
- laughter

- peace
- fear
- time
- energy
- boredom
- fatigue

- Confusion
- mystery
- hunger
- thirst
- Warmth
- cold
Project

- Cut out images from magazines
- Glue stick on paper to create a dream.

- Glue sticks
- Paper
- Magazines

*(May add crayon/ marker/ pencil if they want to)*
This is a scan of a sleeve filled with magazine clippings to use for Chagall Art Masterpiece projects.