

My Own Personal Values

Inspired by René Magritte's *Personal Values*

Key Concepts

- Symbolism
- Scale
- Composition

Materials

- 8 ½" x 11" piece of cloud paper (or you can use a piece of light blue construction paper and add your own clouds to it)
- Brown and white construction paper
- Images of furniture such as a bed, chair, dresser, or wardrobe, and objects that represent things you like. Or, images of things that are important to you, such as animals, books, sports equipment, favorite toys, as well as things that remind you of your favorite places or people. You can use photos or realistic images you find in magazines and catalogues.
- Scissors
- Glue
- A pencil or black pen

Introduction

- What objects do you see in this painting?
- In your mind's eye, change the size and scale of the objects in this painting. How does that affect your response to the work?
- If you could enter this space, would you be standing inside or outside? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Make an argument for why this painting is true to life. Make an argument for why it is not.
- What might the objects in this work tell us about the artist or about the time and place in which he lived?

Instructions

1. Cut your pieces of brown and white construction paper so that they each measure 2" x 11".
2. Place them on top of each other so they are lined up. Cut the corners off both ends at an angle to make an isosceles trapezoid (the bottom edge should still measure 11" long and the diagonal edges should be equal in length).
3. Glue the brown trapezoid to the bottom of your cloud paper and the white trapezoid to the top. These will become the floor and ceiling of your room.
4. Using a pencil or a black pen, draw a vertical line to connect the inside corners of your floor and ceiling to create three walls in your room.
5. Cut out images from magazines, catalogues, or photos that represent things, people, places, and ideas that are important to you. Be sure to include at least one piece of furniture.
6. Select five or six objects to include in your room.
7. Experiment with the arrangement of your objects until you are happy with the composition.
8. Glue your objects in place.

Relevant Information

René Magritte originally called this painting *The Clear Field* but he changed the title when a friend suggested *Personal Values*. The word "values" can refer to the importance, worth, or usefulness of something, and it can also refer to someone's judgement about what is important in life. Magritte wrote to his art dealer that this painting took him two months to paint. He considered every detail carefully and revised it until it had reached what he called "a state of grace."

Discussion

- How do the different objects in your work reflect what is important to you?
- Is the size and scale of your objects important? If so, why?
- What inspired you to arrange the objects the way you did?
- What title did you give to your artwork? Why did you select that title?