

Mondays with MoMA



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Step 1 Look closely

Questions

1. What elements of this sculpture can you identify? What elements do you have questions about?
2. Do you think these elements go together? Why or why not?

Step 2 Learn more

Salvador Dalí believed that connecting unrelated things can open new and unexpected ways of thinking. Dalí explored this idea in painting and sculpture, like this one, called *Retrospective Bust of a Woman*.

The idea for this work began when Dalí discovered an inkwell that featured figures in prayer on it. He embedded the inkwell and pens in a loaf of bread and placed the whole thing onto the portrait bust of a woman. He also placed corn cobs and a strip of images from an early cinematic toy called a zoetrope around the neck of the bust. He painted ants swarming along her face and forehead.

The original sculpture from 1933 has had some of the elements replaced. When this work was first exhibited, Pablo Picasso's dog is said to have eaten the original loaf of bread. Some other elements of the sculpture were reconstructed in 1970.

Step 3 Activity: Write a surrealist dialogue

1. Imagine walking up to this sculpture and having a conversation with it.
 - a. What would you like to say to this figure?
 - b. What questions would you like to ask?
 - c. How do you think this figure would answer? Would the figure be friendly, mean, funny, or serious?
 - d. What advice might this figure have for you?
2. Write up your dialogue.
3. Read your dialogue out loud with a classmate, each person taking on one role. Play with different voices, tones, and moods as you read.

Step 4 Share!

Share your dialogue with a classmate and see if they have any suggestions of things to add to your conversation with the sculpture. Or you can email your dialogue to us at schoolprograms@moma.org.



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Image: Salvador Dalí. *Retrospective Bust of a Woman* 1933 (some elements reconstructed 1970). Painted porcelain, bread, corn, feathers, paint on paper, beads, ink stand, sand, and two pens. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest and gift of Philip Johnson (both by exchange). © 2022 Salvador Dalí, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York