

Rene Magritte

Rene Magritte was a Surrealist painter who was born in Belgium in 1898. He wanted people to look at ordinary things in different ways. He sometimes painted objects in places where they didn't usually belong, like in *Time Transfixed* in which a train is coming out of a fireplace. Other times, Magritte confused the foreground (the things at the front of the painting) with the background, like in *Blank Signature*, *The Large Family*, and *The Seducer*.

Magritte did not enjoy school, and he knew he wanted to paint, so he went to the Academie des Beaux-Arts in Brussels to study art. During this time, he worked to find his own style. He tried cubism and futurism but neither would become his style. Instead, he painted in the Surrealist style.

He got married in 1922 and designed wallpaper and posters in order to make enough money to live. Magritte was not a huge success right away. In 1927 he had a one-man show that did very poorly. Critics did not like his artwork.

He moved to Paris to work with other Surrealists. After three years in Paris he disliked the other Surrealists so much that he moved back to Brussels and burned everything that reminded him of the Surrealists. He continued to paint in the Surrealist style and as the Surrealists became more popular, so did Magritte.

He experimented with other styles during his life, including Impressionism and a style he called Vache which poked fun of Fauvism. Magritte, still unhappy about the time he spent in Paris, disliked the French and wanted to annoy them by making fun of their art. He returned to Surrealism at the end of his life. Magritte died in 1967.

Magritte is well-known for including men in bowler hats in his paintings. He often wore a bowler hat himself and, though you usually can't see the men's faces, these paintings are commonly thought of as self-portraits.

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