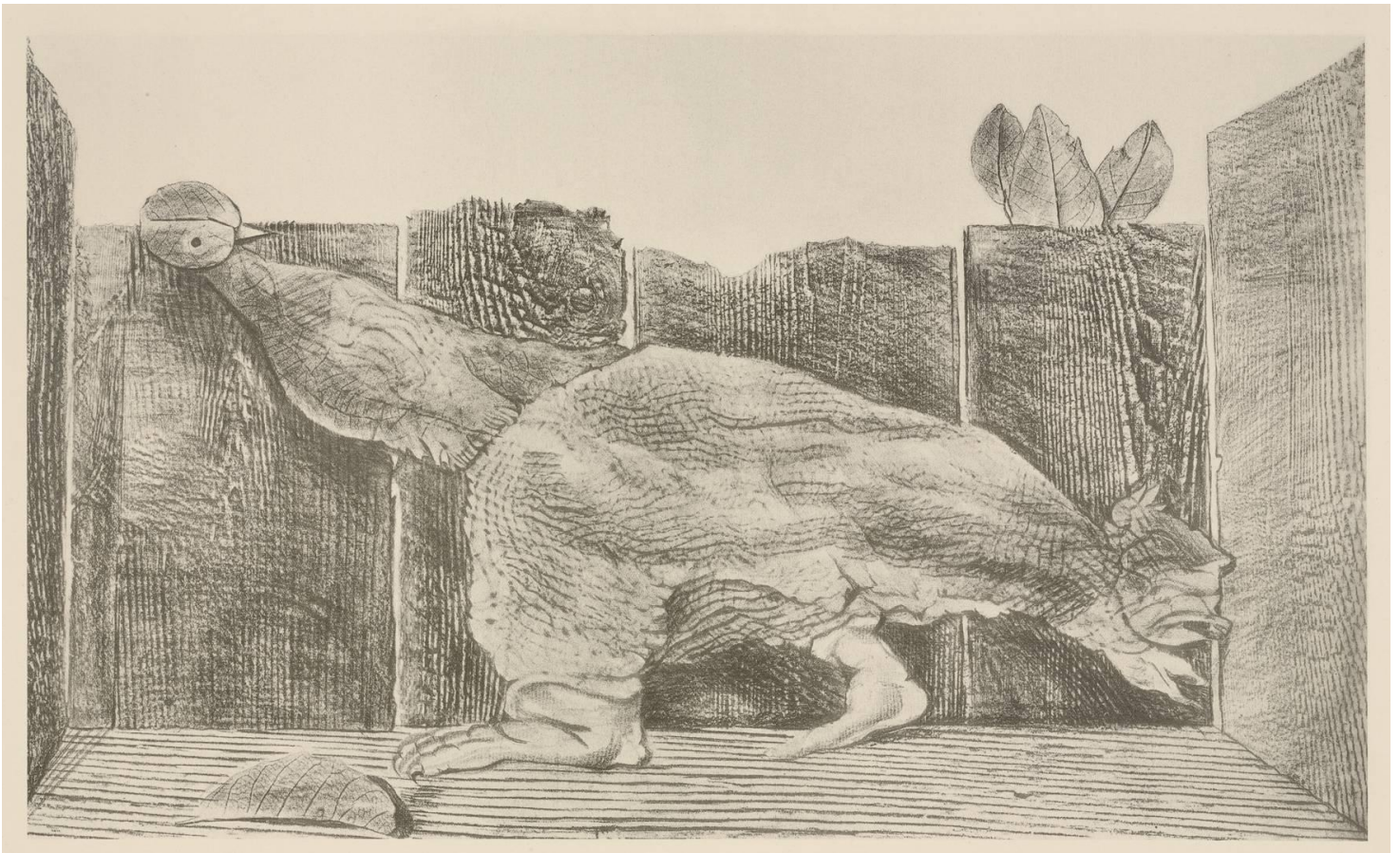


Mondays with MoMA



MoMA

Step 1 Look closely

Questions

1. What do you notice about the animal depicted?
2. Do you think the animal is real or imagined? Why?
3. What different kinds of textures do you notice?
4. What do the textures remind you of?

Step 2 Learn more

This work is called *In the Stable of the Sphinx (Dans l'écurie du sphinx)* by [Surrealist](#) artist Max Ernst. It is part of a series called *Natural History (Histoire naturelle)*. Ernst created all the images in this series by placing paper atop various materials—wood floorboards, lengths of twine, leaves, wire mesh, crumpled paper, crusts of bread—and rubbing the surface with a pencil or crayon. Inspired by the resulting textures, he added details to transform them into fantastical landscapes, objects, and creatures. Ernst called his process frottage (French for “rubbing”) allowing his unconscious mind to guide the creation of the image.

To see the other animals created by frottage or rubbings in the series *Natural History*, visit mo.ma/39a80JU.

Step 3 Activity: Create a fantastical animal with rubbings

Watch Max Ernst create frottage images: youtu.be/CHdU4JfY-bU

Materials: paper and pencil, colored pencil, or crayons.

1. Find objects around you that have interesting textures. Inside, you can find wood or tile floors, various fabrics, and/or kitchen tools, like a strainer. If you go outside, you can find interesting textures in leaves, twigs, or even sidewalks.
2. Put a piece of paper over a textured object you want to use. Using the side of your pencil tip or crayon, create a rubbing. Let your hand move freely over the surface.
3. Look closely at the shape of the rubbing you created and see if you can find the form of an animal – it does not have to be a real animal!
4. You can trace around your shape with your pencil or crayon. Add details either by drawing them on or by making more rubbings. See how many different textures you can incorporate into your image. Add color if you like.

Step 4 Share!

Share your artwork with a friend or classmate and ask them to guess what surface you used for the rubbing. Or, you can email it to us at MoMA: schoolprograms@moma.org



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Image: Max Ernst. *In the Stable of the Sphinx (Dans l'écurie du sphinx)* from *Natural History (Histoire naturelle)* c. 1925, published 1926. One from a portfolio of 34 collotypes after frottage. Galerie Jeanne Bucher, Paris. Gift of James Thrall Soby. © 2020 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris