

# **Mondays with MoMA**



**MoMA**

## Step 1 Look closely

### Questions

1. What do you notice about this landscape?
2. If you were in this scene, what might you think or say?
3. Why do you think the artist included both day and night in the same scene?

## Step 2 Learn more

René Magritte was one of the most recognizable figures of [Surrealism](#), an art movement that sought to overthrow the rationalism of modern society by accessing the *sur réalisme* (superior reality) of the subconscious.

In his paintings, Magritte often made commonplace, everyday things appear strange by placing them in unfamiliar and unusual scenes. Even though he painted in a very naturalistic and detailed style, his paintings, in his words, “challenge the real world.”

In *The Empire of Light, II*, Magritte juxtaposes a blue daytime sky with a street scene at night. He painted more than twenty versions of this motif.

Look at another example from The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum:  
[www.guggenheim.org/artwork/2594](http://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/2594).

*How are the two versions similar? How are they different?*



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## Step 3 Activity: Juxtaposed scenes

Materials: paper and colored pencils, markers, crayon, oil pastels, or paint

1. Think of two kinds of scenes that are opposite in some way (e.g. the arctic/the desert, summer/winter, inside/outside, urban/rural, etc.)
2. *(Individually)* Divide your paper in two parts, either horizontally or vertically. Draw one scene on one side and the opposite of that scene on the other. Pay special attention to where the two scenes meet and think of how you can transition from one to the next.
3. *(As a group)* Pair up with a classmate or friend. Divide your paper in half. Working at the same time, or one at a time, each person draws one of the two scenes on one half of the paper.

## Step 4 Share!

Share your scene with a classmate. Or you can email it to us at MoMA:  
[schoolprograms@moma.org](mailto:schoolprograms@moma.org)

Image: René Magritte. *The Empire of Light, II*. 1950. Oil on canvas. Gift of D. and J. de Menil. © 2021 C. Herscovici, Brussels / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York