

Have a Ball!

with Distorted Self-Portraits

One of M.C. Escher's most renowned images is a self-portrait first printed as a lithograph in 1935 entitled "Hand with Reflecting Globe." The subject matter is the artist's hand, but Escher and the room surrounding him are completely visible in the mirrored surface.

Observing and reproducing the distortion caused by a concave reflection is the topic of this lesson plan, as students make Escher-inspired self-portraits on a completely round “canvas” — a vinyl bouncy ball.

Elementary ages can be challenged to create a continuous painting — with no beginning or end — then “Have a Ball!” playing with their own artwork.

Grade Levels 3-12

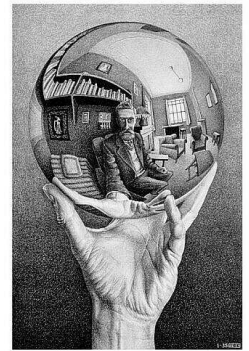
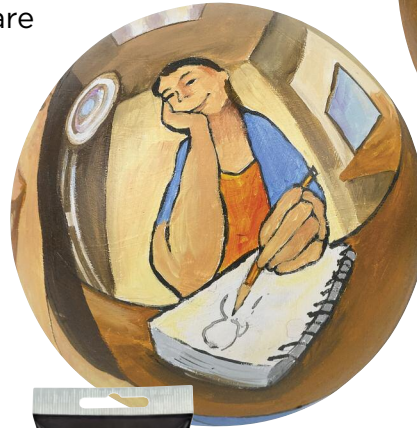
Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 25 students. Adjust them as needed.

Preparation

1. View M.C. Escher's self-portrait, available from Blick® Art Materials as part of a set of 10 images from Huffman Art® Posters. It is also available in Taschen's "[M.C. Escher - The Graphic Work](#)" (70033-1018).
2. Visit [Termespheres.com](#) to view the artwork of Dick Termes, a contemporary artist who creates amazing paintings on spheres.
3. Collect one 10" to 12" vinyl bouncy ball for each student in any color or pattern. Do not use beach balls or inflatables. Students will also need a round, standard size (not mini) reflective glass holiday ornament; silver is most visible.

Process

1. Place the vinyl ball in a sturdy bowl or cup to keep it steady while painting. Use a wide foam brush to coat the ball with gesso. Allow it to dry and apply a second coat. Apply a third coat if necessary, although keep in mind that if some of the pattern or color remains, it will be completely covered by the paint.



*"Hand with Reflecting Globe" from
Huffman Art® Poster Set #143
M.C. Escher part 1
(F72202-1001)*



Materials

Blick® Studio Acrylic,
4-oz or 8-oz tubes,
assorted colors
(01637-); share at
least 8 colors among
class

Blickrylic® Gesso, 1-qt
(00711-1017); share
three among class

Blick® Studio Drawing Pencils, HB (22220-2110); one per student

Vinyl bouncy balls

Round, reflective glass holiday ornaments

Blick® White Sulphite
Drawing Paper, 9" x 12",
60-lb, 100-sheet
package (10209-1003);
three sheets per student

Dynasty® Fine Ruby
Synthetic Brushes,
canister of 72 assorted
sizes and shapes (05198-
0729);
share among class

Foam Brush,
2" (05114-1002);
one per student

Blick® Premium
Cardstock, 18" x 24",
assorted colors (11408-);
share one sheet among
12 students

Process, continued

2. While the gesso dries, create preliminary sketches based on reflections viewed in the ornament. Sketch at least three different viewpoints with varied feature distortion.

As an option, many photo-editing programs for computers have a fish-eye or bubble filter, which can be used to alter digital photos.

3. Transfer the sketches onto the ball with a pencil, arranging them so that the surface will be well-covered and viewable from all sides. Inventing ways to seam the images together into one piece will require a little imagination; lines may be drawn or paint could be used.
3. Paint the ball with acrylic paint. Blick® Studio Acrylic colors dry with a very durable and flexible finish that will withstand a lot of impact.



Step 1: Cover a vinyl ball with two coats of gesso.

Options

1. Challenge elementary ages to fill the entire sphere with a continuous painting of any subject they choose. Working on a surface without defined edges, a top or a bottom will require out-of-the-box thinking!
2. To display the finished artwork, make a stand with a 3"W x 12"L piece of posterboard or heavy construction paper; use tape or glue to secure the ends into a ring shape.
3. As another display option, wrap a 36" piece of [Beadalon® Supplemax™ Illusion Cord](#) (60637-1008) around the ball, securing it on the top and bottom with small pieces of invisible tape. Hang the ball from the ceiling or a light fixture — it will appear as if it is floating!



Step 2: Create sketches based on reflections viewed in a round, shiny glass ornament. Transfer the sketches to the vinyl ball.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions.

K-4 Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses.

5-8 Students generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work.

9-12 Students create artworks that use organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems.

Content Standard #5 Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.

K-4 Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks.

5-8 Students compare multiple purposes for creating works of art.

9-12 Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes and justify their analyses of purposes in particular works.



Step 3: Paint images around the entire sphere. When dry, have a ball!