

DALÍ

21 NOVEMBER 2012 – 25 MARCH 2013

Over thirty years after the major retrospective exhibition dedicated to the painter in the early days of the Centre Pompidou, Dalí – the artist who proclaimed himself as “divine” and a “genius” – is once again in the media spotlight. Dalí is both a key figure in the history of modern art and one of the most popular. He is also one of the most controversial artists, often denounced for his showing-off and his provocative political positions.

Creator of an unprecedented dreamlike universe, Dalí is mainly known for his surrealist paintings of the 1930s and for his television appearances. The inventor of the famous “paranoiac-critical” method also echoed his era’s scientific discoveries, which impelled him to constantly push back the limits of his

experiences on our relationship with space, matter and reality. The imaginative, curious and prodigal artist used himself as a subject of study, notably under the prism of Freudian psychoanalysis. He built his own character and set the scene for his own performance. His actions in the public sphere, whether calculated or improvised, now reveal him as one of the precursors of showmanship.

The Dalí exhibition brings together over 120 paintings, as well as drawings, objects, sketches, films and archival documents. It is laid out in chronological-thematic sections: the dialogue between the artist’s eye and brain and those of the spectator; Dalí, a pioneer in showmanship, creator of ephemeral works and media manipulator; the questioning of the artist’s figure in the face of tradition.

**Centre
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ULTRA-LOCAL AND UNIVERSAL

Figueres, the city where Salvador Dalí was born, is the alpha and the omega of the construction of his myth. The life and death of the artist forever merge under the sky of Emporda, a region with a mountain backdrop which seems to have been drawn by Leonardo da Vinci. Figueres, the Republican free-thinker, impregnated with utopian socialism and federalism, Figueres, the cradle of Sardana, is a border region through which avant-garde, liberal ideas seeped into Catalonia. Dalí set out to transform the region's natural landscape into a mental and universal landscape. In 1921, at the age of 18, Dalí painted himself in front of a coastal Emporda landscape; in the background is the Cala de Sa Sabolla bathed in light and, in the middle distance, the peninsula of Sortell close to which the family home was located. In the foreground of this **Self-portrait with the neck of Raphael**, the head breaks out of the landscape under a more subdued light. His neck, which is deformed beyond the bounds of human standards, becomes a phallus-like organ. This neck is also the attribute of genius and the divine being that Dalí strives to embody in this confrontation with the Italian master Raphael. As suggested by the title of the painting, Dalí painted himself with a neck like the one painted by Raphael is his **Self-portrait** dated 1506.

FROM THE RESIDENCIA DE ESTUDIANTES TO THE PATHS OF SURREALISM

At the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid, where he lived from 1922, Dalí became friends with the poet Federico García Lorca and the filmmaker Luis Buñuel. Permeable to modernist currents – cubism and purism – as well as more academic currents (then called the “return to order”), Dalí's paintings progressively shifted towards a “new objectivity”, in the form of poetry without sensation. A new world of dreamlike nature came into being, based on an osmosis between devices derived from the mechanised universe and a gruesome biology of headless bodies and dismembered parts where tissues have the transparency of jellyfish, and where organs are strewn about, with their blood vessels

showing like in the **Écorchés** collection. As from 1928, influences from the paintings of Joan Miró and Yves Tanguy, as well as works by Jean Arp, became increasingly obvious. Biomorphic beings, punctuated with attributes having sexual connotations such as breasts and navel, are putrescent, eaten by vermin and floating in space, upheld by their death energy. The iconography of the **putrefactos** (“putrefied”, or “rotten”), which was meant to be the subject of a book in 1925 with the literary collaboration of García Lorca found its accomplishment in Dalí's collaboration with Luis Buñuel for the film **Un chien andalou**, 1929.

SURREALISM AND THE PARANOIAC-CRITICAL METHOD

The fulfilment of Dalí's sexuality after he met Gala (1929) occurred at the same time as the major turning point in his career: his meeting with the surrealists.

He undertook all sorts of transgressions in meticulous paintings where every detail counts: invisible father, blasphemed mother, masturbation, melting objects...

“Paranoia uses the outside world to convey the obsessive idea, with the disturbing characteristic of making the reality of this idea valid for others”, writes Dalí. “The reality of the outside world serves as an illustration and proof, and is used to support the reality of our mind.” Based on this observation, he creates the paranoiac-critical method. Through inversion, it prevents one from becoming the victim of delirium; on the contrary, it promotes delirium with the broadest possible audience. Dalí gives an example of this when he turns into an art historian and attempts to scientifically verify his delirious interpretation of Millet's **Angelus**. He sees the woman in Millet's painting as a praying mantis, getting ready to devour the male, the man whose sexual organs are hidden by a hat, like a victim waiting for death. Dalí thus creates double images, where forms give rise to multiple visions and interpretations. This gives birth to a world of ambiguities where certainties disappear.

MYTHS AND HISTORY

"History doesn't concern me. It frightens me as much as grasshoppers" (1973). With his friends from the Residencia de Estudiantes (Buñuel and García Lorca), and later on as part of the Surrealist group, the artist claimed to be "in the service of the revolution". But which one? The Communist revolution? Yet, the **Enigma of William Tell** (1933) turns Lenin into a monster, much to the discontent of Breton. Or the national-socialist revolution, as assumed by the horror-struck Breton who wanted to expel Dalí in 1934? Or the Franco revolution? During the Spanish civil war, Dalí supported the unprecedented catholic reaction instilled by the Caudillo. Yet, despite his fascination for the absolute power of dictators, Dalí used to let young hippies into his house at Portlligat and, throughout his life, embraced the artistic myth of liberation, expressed for example when he wrote **L'artiste ne dépend pas de l'Histoire** in the **Arts** magazine in 1952 or in his pamphlet entitled **My Cultural Revolution** in May 1968.

THEATRE

"I am a theatrical painter", said Dalí when he was asked why he chose the old theatre of Figueres to set up his own museum. Dalí was certainly theatrical through his own figure, but also in his permanent yearning to go beyond painting. In 1927, Dalí's friendship with Luis Buñuel made him open up to cinema, seeing in this art form a spirituality in the visible world which went far beyond spiritualist endeavours. With Luis Buñuel, Dalí co-wrote the script of **Un chien andalou**, whose success in Paris in 1929 gave him credentials to enter the Surrealist circle. The ban of their second film entitled **L'Âge d'or**, – a scandalous and blasphemous film – orchestrated the beginning of an irreconcilable conflict between them. From unproduced film scripts and ballets (**Tristan fou**) to censored shop-window displays for the Bonwit Teller department store, Dalí was continuously disappointed and frustrated by the entertainment industry, for which he had a non-reciprocal fascination. The fulfilment of Dalí's theatrical inclination was the design of the Teatre-Museu in Figueres at the beginning of the 1960s, followed by its creation.

The museum includes the **Mae West Room**, a reconstruction of which is presented here as an evocation.

SCIENCE, MYSTICISM AND THEORY

"I am like Leonardo, I want to know everything. Creating relations between things is my constant preoccupation." Deeply affected by Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Dalí managed to base his painting and experiments (holograms) on an improbable convergence between the "hardest" science and the strongest irrationality, mysticism, and between the most progressive knowledge and the catholic reaction. The expression "Nuclear Mysticism" will be repeated over and over! Painting melting clocks enabled him to give shape to Einstein's space-time continuum as well as anticipate the repetitive twisted structure of DNA. "It is very important for an artist to have a developed sense of the cosmos. I am more important as a cosmic genius than as a painter."

SELF-REFERENCE AND GREAT MACHINES

"In the heat of the antirealist chaos, at the peak of the Action Painting period, what strength is that of Velasquez!" (1960). Deep down inside him and in the contradictions of his tormented personality, Dalí found his inspiration in pictorial tradition. Yet, the artist's recurrent explorations of the works of the past (**Las Meninas** by Velasquez, Millet's **Angelus**, Vermeer's **Lacemaker**, Caravaggio's **Narcissus**, Böcklin's **Isle of the Dead** or **Oedipus and the Sphinx** by Ingres) are not a quest for formal solutions, but rather a form of introspection. The figure of the "master" finds in Dalí's stance as a constant agitator a surprising evolution into the era of the media and television in particular. Too often considered as minor parts of Dalí's career, performances and happenings acted as a workshop open to the world.

TIME LINE

"At the age of six I wanted to be a cook. At seven I wanted to be Napoleon. And my ambition has been growing steadily ever since."

S. Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, Paris, Gallimard, 1942, p. 2

- 1904.** Salvador Felipe Jacinto Dalí was born on 11 May 1904, the son of a notary, Salvador Dalí y Cusi, and Felipa Domènech. The couple had just lost their first son.
- 1908.** Birth of his sister Anna Maria.
- 1916.** Discovery of impressionism.
- 1922.** Dalí goes to study painting, sculpture and engraving at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid. He moves into the Residencia de Estudiantes where he becomes friends with Luis Buñuel, Federico García Lorca and others. He produces cubist paintings.
- 1925.** First solo exhibition at Galeries Dalmau in Barcelona.
- 1926.** Influenced by the works of Picasso. Expelled from the art school.
- 1929.** Dalí goes to Paris to co-produce the film **Un chien andalou** with Luis Buñuel and joins the Surrealist group. He meets Gala, who becomes his companion, adviser and muse. First sole exhibition in Paris at Galerie Goemans. Disapproving the works exhibited and his relationship with a married woman, Dalí's father repudiates him.
- 1930.** Dalí and Luis Buñuel produce *L'Âge d'or*. Dalí invents his paranoiac-critical method.
- 1932.** Doctor Jacques Lacan becomes interested in Dalí's theories on paranoia. First sole exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York.
- 1934.** Civil marriage with Gala.
- 1936.** Start of the Spanish Civil War and death of Federico García Lorca. Dalí takes part in the exhibition "Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism" at the MoMA in New York.
- 1938.** An International Exhibition of Surrealism is held at the Galerie Beaux-Arts in Paris. Meeting with Sigmund Freud. Dalí works on ballet projects.
- 1939.** He designs the **Dream of Venus** pavilion for the New York World's Fair. Deterioration of his relationship with André Breton.
- 1940.** The Dalí couple flees the war and settles in the United States where Dalí stands out as a public figure. He turns to classicism and realism for inspiration. Retrospective exhibition of Dalí's work at the MoMA in New York.
- 1942.** *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* is published.
- 1945.** On 6 August, the first atom bomb is dropped on Hiroshima. This marks the beginning of Dalí's "nuclear" (or "atomic") period. He works with film producers such as Alfred Hitchcock and Walt Disney.
- 1948.** Dalí's great European comeback.
- 1949.** He starts a series of religious paintings with levitating figures.
- 1954.** With Robert Descharnes, he undertakes the production of the film **Histoire prodigieuse de la Dentellière et du Rhinocéros**.
- 1955.** He produces a paranoiac-critical interpretation of Vermeer's **Lacemaker**. He anticipates new trends, such as Neo-Realism and Pop Art.
- 1960.** With Philippe Halsman, he produces the performative documentary **Chaos & Creation**.
- 1964.** Publication of **Diary of a Genius**.
- 1967.** Dalí's attention is drawn to American hyperrealism, psychedelic art and kitsch.
- 1968.** He participates in the exhibition "Surrealism, Dada and their Legacies" at the MoMA in New York.
- 1971.** Retrospective exhibition of Dalí's work at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. Inauguration of a Dalí museum in Cleveland. Dalí explores the techniques of holography and stereoscopy.
- 1974.** Opening of the Teatre-Museu in Figueres.
- 1975.** Dalí is admitted to the Académie des Beaux-Arts de l'Institut de France.
- 1979.** Retrospective exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, the biggest exhibition ever dedicated to the artist. Dalí once again turns to Velasquez and Michelangelo.
- 1982.** He becomes a widower in 1982. His last paintings are inspired by the mathematical theory of catastrophes.
- 1989.** Dalí dies on 23 January at the age of 85.

EXHIBITION

CHIEF CURATOR

Jean-Hubert Martin

ASSOCIATED CURATORS

Montse Aguer
Jean-Michel Bouhours
Thierry Dufrêne

RESEARCH

Marie Bertran
Murielle Dos Santos
Patrick Palaquer

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PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

Sara Renaud

Exhibition produced by the Centre Pompidou with the Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid



In partnership with the Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres and the Salvador Dalí Museum, Saint Petersburg, Florida



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PUBLICATIONS

CATALOGUE

Dalí, directed by J.-H. Martin,
M. Aguer, J.-M. Bouhours
and T. Dufrêne
384 p., 450 colour ill.
Price: €49,90

ALBUM

Dalí, by Marie Bertran
Bilingual version, French / English
60 p., 60 colour ill.
Price: €10,50

MONOGRAPHIE

Dalí, by J.-M. Bouhours
96 p., 60 colour ill.
Price: €12

APPLICATION iPad

English and French version
Available on App store and Android
Price : €4,49

AROUND THE EXHIBITION

COLLOQUE INTERNATIONAL DALÍ

23 and 24-01 2013, 2 pm to 6:30 pm
Petite Salle

UN DIMANCHE, UNE ŒUVRE

Luis Buñuel / Salvador Dalí,
Un chien andalou, b&w silent film,
1929
By Dominique Païni, Cinema Historian
25-11 2012, 11:30 am, Petite Salle

Salvador Dalí, Guillaume Tell, 1930

By Jean Louis Gaillemain, Art
Historian, Université Paris-Sorbonne
10-02 2013, 11:30 am, Petite Salle

GUIDED TOURS IN FRENCH

In 2012, every Saturdays at 3:30 pm
and Wednesdays at 7 pm
In 2013, every Saturdays and Sundays
at 5:30 pm and Wednesdays at 7 pm

SPECIAL TOURS

- **Lip-reading tour: for hearingimpaired persons**
Saturdays 8-12, 12-01 and 9-02 at 11 am
- **Tour in French sign language: deaf visitors**
Saturdays 8-12, 12-01 and 9-02
at 2:30 pm

- **"Écouter Voir" tour: for visually impaired visitors**
Saturdays 8-12 and 9-02 at 10 am

IMPROMPTU

Family visit
"Objet et moustache en délire"
Sunday 3-02, 3 pm-6 pm

AUDIOGUIDE

Languages: French, English, Spanish,
German and Italian.
Let you guided through
Dalí exhibition.
Also discover almost 70 works from
the Museum's permanent collections,
€5, concessions €4, free for children
under 13.
**Rental of the audioguide at the ticket
counter, level 0.**
**Retrieval at the Espace Audioguide,
level 0.**

INFORMATION

01 44 78 12 33
www.centrepompidou.fr

EXHIBITION OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

from 21-11 2012 to 25-03 2013
Galerie 1, Level 6
Every day except Tuesdays
from 11 am to 9 pm
Ticket counters close at 8 pm
Evening visits on Thursdays, Fridays
and Saturdays until 11 pm
Ticket counters close at 10 pm

ADMISSION

**Access with the ticket "Museum
& Expositions"**

Valid throughout the day at the
Museum, for all exhibitions
and the Panorama, for a single
admission in each space
€13, concessions €10
Free with the annual pass and for
under-18s

Online ticket purchase and printing

(full price only)
www.centrepompidou.fr/billetterie

TWITTER

More information on the exhibition
can be found via Twitter (hashtag
#Dalí) or via <http://www.twitter.com/centrepompidou>

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c-album

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