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**EXPOSICIÓ TEMPORAL
AL TEATRE-MUSEU DALÍ**

#DalíSurrealista

DALÍ: "I AM SURREALISM!"

Landscapes Outside of Time

"I am Surrealism!"¹ This maxim of Salvador Dalí's has become prophetic. Dalí made himself the most famous and admired of the Surrealists, and his iconography has long had a place in the popular imaginary.

Dalí embodies transgression, freedom and rebellion; the power to blur the line between art and everyday reality. In the artistic sphere, Dalí is also known for being the creator of the paranoiac-critical method, an irrational means of apprehending reality, with double or invisible images which invoke the phenomena of perception or interpretation of a reality far more complex than it appears at first glance. He is also characterised by his landscape, a constant and eternal reference in his work that has become universal and a characteristic that allows him to translate his surrealist imagery into visual terms, and to enhance the symbolic function of images in pursuit of a deeper reality.

Surrealism is consubstantial with Salvador Dalí's idiosyncrasy. As he wrote, 'Man is entitled to the enigma and the simulacrum that are founded on these great vital constants: the sexual instinct, the consciousness of death, the physical melancholy caused by time-space'.² He placed this enigma and these simulacra, poetically or objectively, in his Surrealist landscapes, which became a constant reference in his work. The Surrealist landscape is at once real and oneiric, photographic and melancholic, concrete and paranoiac, with incursions into the world of the subconscious. A subconscious, affirmed by Freud and psychoanalysis, which Dalí often depicts with precision, with doses of reality and even of hyperreality, constantly in search of a new dimension. It was a matter of endowing the world of dreams with maximum precision, of objectifying them.

Through the landscape that Dalí reflects in his work we can configure his Surrealism, following André Breton, he defined thus: "Surrealism: Pure psychic automatism, by means of which it is proposed to express, be it through writing, verbally or in any other way, the real functioning of thought; of the dictation of thought in the absence of all control exercised by reason and outside all moral or aesthetic concerns."³

Man with His Head Full of Clouds is the metaphorical work that introduces these **Landscapes Outside of Time**. A man integrated into the landscape, the sky, in this case,

¹ Salvador Dalí, *Diary of a genius*, Hutchinson, London, p. 32.

² Salvador Dalí, *Declaration of the Independence of the Imagination and the Rights of Man to His Own Madness*, 1939 (handbill)

³ Dalí made his own definition of Surrealism which was included in André Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism*, 1924.

a man-landscape symbiosis that offers us an opening to the exterior, metamorphosing the subconscious into a precise and tangible reality, drenched in a special chromatism associated with dreams or hallucinations.

Dalí himself was a man who identified himself with the landscape, which he symbiotised and systematically affirmed. He even declared: "I am convinced that I am the Cap de Creus and that I embody the living nucleus of that landscape. My existential obsession is to assimilate to Cap de Creus, constantly."⁴

His is an arid, mineral landscape with marked horizons, with limpid skies and clouds that seek to resemble those of Andrea Mantegna. A landscape with enigmatic elements, and open to multiple readings. A landscape with references to the history of painting, and to artists such as Johannes Vermeer or Velázquez, and other contemporaries such as Giorgio de Chirico or, on another plane, Yves Tanguy or René Magritte.

Through the 12 paintings in this exhibition, which range from 1926 to 1943, we aim to engage with the "enigmatic elements" and with the landscapes that make his works so singular and have the capacity both to arouse our curiosity and to provoke us as viewers. We shall talk about perspectives and extended shadows, about the concepts visible / invisible, soft / hard, about cypress trees, about fetishist Surrealist objects, about spectres and phantasms, about Freud and psychoanalysis, about perception and knowing how to look. About open readings and multiple significations, which always require for their complete configuration the participation and the gaze of the viewer. We are talking about **forest of apparatus**, about **oneiric landscapes**, **paranoiac landscapes**, **landscapes painted by hand**, **enigmatic landscapes** or **imaginative inventions**. We are talking, when all is said and done, about Dalí's Surrealism.

A Surrealism that the painter never completely abandoned, not even at the beginning of the 40's, when he declared that he wished to become a classical artist and was 'capable of continuing the conquest of the irrational by the simple method of becoming a classic and pursuing that research in *Divina Proportione* interrupted since the Renaissance'.⁵ The new images he created, without abandoning the accompanying thought, are steeped in the principles of the Renaissance. *Poetry of America*, an oil painting which dates from his exile in the United States, is a good example of this influence. In *Poetry of America*, Dalí's Surrealism is tinged with classicism and the geology of Cap de Creus is confused with that of the great American

⁴ Salvador Dalí, André Parinaud, *Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dalí*, William Morrow, New York, 1976, p. 130

⁵ Salvador Dalí, 'The Last Scandal of Salvador Dalí'. Text in the catalogue of the exhibition *Salvador Dalí*, Julien Levy Gallery, New York, 1941.

deserts. And a symbolic tower, a childhood memory, marks the perspective of the composition.

All these landscapes are placed outside of time. These are landscapes that carry us towards dream or even delirium. Salvador Dalí's decided commitment to the championing of the imagination, of the subconscious, allows us to undertake a different reading of his Surrealism; a reading through his landscapes. In this sense, André Breton's claim – It is perhaps with Dalí that for the first time the windows of the mind are opened wide⁶ – helps us to immerse ourselves in Dalí's Surrealism, a movement he officially joined in 1929 and to which he contributed new visions and dynamism.

Montse Aguer
Director of the Dalí Museums
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Chief Curator

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⁶ Translated from: "C'est peut-être, avec Dali, la première fois que s'ouvrent toutes les grandes fenêtres mentales". André Breton, [Foreword], *Dalí*, Galerie Goemans, Paris, 1929.

FOREST OF APPARATUS



Study for *Honey is Sweeter than Blood*

1926

Oil on wood panel

37.8 x 46.2 cm

P185

Study for *Honey is Sweeter than Blood* (P185) is one of the fundamental works in Salvador Dalí's development as an artist. The poetic title is inspired by a saying of Lidia of Cadaqués, a woman he defined as paranoiac. In the artist's career it signified an opening up to new aesthetic paths and the appearance of the first Surrealist references, as seen in the other paintings from 1927-28, such as *Apparatus and Hand* (P195) and *Futile Efforts* (P199).

Dalí painted this study in 1926, a year in which he received a number of simultaneous influences. First there was Italian metaphysical painting, as represented by Giorgio de Chirico; secondly, the influence of the poet Federico García Lorca and his friends at the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid, united not only by a close friendship but also by their shared aesthetic ideals; and, lastly, Pablo Picasso, whom the painter visited in his Paris studio in March. This encounter led Dalí to embrace the radically innovative style of the Malaga-born painter. The combination of influences is essential to understanding this stylistic turn taken.

At the same time, the importance of this work is enhanced by its being a study for the lost painting *Honey is Sweeter than Blood* (P194). In this study we can discern the same iconic elements as in the finished work: the apparatus, the severed head, the blood, the stinking ass ... all elements that point us towards this 'new aesthetic' of the painter's, with its explicit references to Surrealism. Dalí announced this formally in the writings he published in the magazine *L'Amic de les Arts* such as 'Saint Sebastian',⁷ a crucial expression of his aims, or 'My girlfriend and the beach',⁸ and also remarked on

⁷ Salvador Dalí, 'Saint Sebastian' (1927). In *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí*, edition and translation by Haim Finkelstein, The Dalí Museum, St. Petersburg, FL, 2017, pp. 19-24.

⁸ Salvador Dalí, 'Two Pieces in Prose. My girlfriend and the beach' (1927) In *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí*, op. cit., pp. 24-25.

it to his friend, the poet García Lorca, in their exchange of correspondence at this time.⁹



Fragments of Study for *Honey is Sweeter than Blood*

⁹ Dalí's correspondence with Federico García Lorca can be found in a number of publications, including: Salvador Dalí, *Poesía. Salvador Dalí escribe a Federico García Lorca. Presentación, notas y cronología*, Ministerio de Cultura, Madrid, 1987, edited by Rafael Santos Torroella.

ENIGMATICS LANDSCAPES



The Sense of Speed

1931

Oil on canvas

33 x 24 cm

P386

This small oil painting relates to Arnold Böcklin's *Island of the Dead* of 1880,¹⁰ an important work for the Surrealists, as well as to works by Giorgio de Chirico, with their elongated shadows and perspectives that configuring sombre landscapes. In this case, moreover, there is a clock embedded into a shoe which calls to mind the station clocks present in many of the Italian artist's paintings. In Dalí's case, the clock and the relativity of the passage of time are the theme of his most iconic painting, *The Persistence of Memory* (P265), also known informally referred to as 'the soft watches'.

In addition to the famous watch, we also have a shoe, an object with fetishists erotic connotations which, like an echo, is repeated as many as three times. The shoe is the central element in *Object Functioning Symbolically* (OE1) also made in 1931, a later version of which can be seen in the Palace of the Wind in the Dalí Theatre-Museum in Figueres. As Dalí wrote, in his autobiography *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*: 'All my life I have been preoccupied with shoes, which I have utilized in several surrealist objects and pictures, to the point of making a kind of divinity of them. [...] The shoe, in fact, appears to me to be the object most charged with realistic virtues as opposed to musical objects which I have always tried to represent as demolished, crushed, soft—cellos of rotten meat, etc.'¹¹ Interestingly, on the reverse of the canvas we find the inscription 'Landscape with shoe', as if the painting was to be identified by this name.¹²

¹⁰ This oil painting is in the collection of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
<<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/435683>> [Consulted: 11/06/2020]]

¹¹ Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, Dial Press, New York, p. 123

¹² On the back of this work is an inscription in ink on a piece of tape which reads: "Paysage avec une chaussure. Salv...". This inscription has been made by someone other than the artist. On the basis of this datum we can surmise that this work was shown for the first time in the Newer Super-Realism exhibition

The other powerful element in this picture is the cypress tree, with its cast shadow, and the second cypress, which is only visible in the form of the shadow that extends to mark the hour on the sundial.

Finally, it should be noted that the signature, on the bottom right, is *Olive Salvador Dalí 1931*. Olive was one of the affectionate nicknames with which the painter used to address Gala. *The Sense of Speed* is one of the first works that Dalí signed uniting his name to Gala's.



Object Functioning Symbolically
1931

at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, in November 1931, with the title *Paysage avec chaussure*.



Eclipse and Vegetable Osmosis
1934
Oil on canvas
65.5 x 53.5 cm
P387

During the 1930s, Dalí often fashioned melancholic, almost desert landscapes in which we can discern the influence of Yves Tanguy's work. In *Eclipse and Vegetable Osmosis* (P387) the horizon with diminutive figures is complemented by a cypress tree and a horse and a long luminous shadow which accentuates the sense of perspective. The cypress is present once again here, as a dark and enigmatic elongated figure, wounded by a spear from which hangs a white cloth, as in other works from 1934.¹³

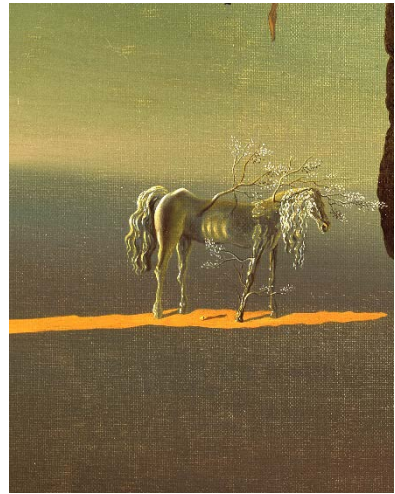
The eclipse, a combination of light and shade, helps to confer a dream-like atmosphere on an apparently concrete reality. A powerful beam of light, which comes from outside the painting, projects a beam of orange light which illuminates the horse, which is metamorphosing into a plant. The metamorphosis of people and animals into plants, stone or furniture is a frequently recurring iconographic element in Dalí's works of this period.

The title refers to another scientific term, osmosis, one of the many technical words Dalí liked to use. This word alludes to the reciprocal passage of fluids of different densities through a semipermeable membrane.

With regard to the geography, Dalí confessed: 'I am home only here, elsewhere. I am camping out. This is not just a matter of sentiment, but of psychic, biological-Surrealist-reality. I feel linked by a veritable umbilical cord to the living totality of this earth. I am part of the rhythm of a cosmic pulsation. My mind is in osmosis with the sea, the trees, the insects, the plants, and I assume a real stability that translates itself into my paintings.'¹⁴

¹³ Works such as *Portrait of a Woman* (P538), *Masochistic Instrument* (P315), *Painting* (P469) and *Dreams on a Beach* (P390).

¹⁴ Salvador Dalí, André Parinaud, *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dalí*, op. cit., p. 131.



Fragments of *Eclipse and Vegetable Osmosis*



Enigmatic Elements in a Landscape

1934

Oil on wood panel

72.8 x 59.5 cm

P371

In this beautiful and mysterious picture Dalí gave form to a landscape, part real and part imaginary, which contains 'enigmatic elements' under a sky of a special and intense luminosity, with clouds of a notable presence. The central figure, seen from the back, is the great master of painting Johannes Vermeer, in front of his easel, just as he depicted himself on his canvas *The Art of Painting* (1666-68).¹⁵ Dalí's interest in Vermeer was a constant all through his career, and of note in *Enigmatic Elements in a Landscape* are the handling of the light, the liveliness of the colour and the almost photographic precision of the details, characteristics that are also manifestly present in the painting of the Dutch artist.

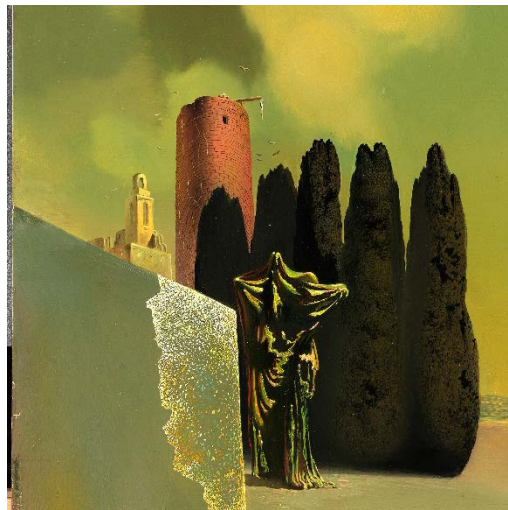
In the lower right section there is a child, Dalí as a boy, in a sailor suit, who is holding a hoop and a bone, a self-portrait which also appears in *The Spectre of Sex-appeal* (P338). Beside him, seated with her back to us, is the figure of a nursemaid. Both are recurrent figures in the Surrealist Dalí, as are the cypress trees, the tower that Dalí called the tower of enigmas, the clouds in the manner of Andrea Mantegna and the structure of the yin and yang.

The cypress tree is another of these 'elements' of the iconography of this period, an allusion to one of the painters fetishized by the Surrealists, Arnold Böcklin, as James Thrall Soby explained in his essay for Dalí's solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York: 'On his first visit to America in 1934, [Dalí] was so moved by the

¹⁵ This work by Johannes Vermeer is in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna <https://www.khm.at/objektdb/detail/2574/> (Consulted: 09/06/2020).

Metropolitan Museum's Böcklin, *Isle of the Dead*, that he returned home to paint *Interior court of the "Isle of the Dead"* and *Fountain of Böcklin*^{16,17}. It should be noted, however, that during 1934 Dalí had presented two paintings in which the influence of the Swiss artist is clear: *West Side of the Isle of the Death (Reconstructed Compulsive Image After Böcklin)* (P391) and *Central Courtyard from The Isle of the Dead (Reconstructive Obsession after Böcklin)* (P340).¹⁸

Another distinguishing feature of the paintings of 1934 is the shrouded figures, such as the one standing in front of the cypress trees.¹⁹ Unlike *The Spectre of Sex-Appeal* (P338), in which we are dealing with spectres, what we have here is a phantasm. In his article 'The New Colours of Spectral Sex-Appeal', published in 1934 in *Minotaure* magazine,²⁰ Dalí makes a precise distinction between the characteristics of the 'spectre' and those of the 'phantasm'. Of the latter, he says: 'Phantasm. Simulacrum of volume.- Obese stability.- Immobility or suspect mobility.- Affective contours.- Metaphysical perimeter- Edible sparks.- Exhibitionistic sagging.- Narcissistic tactility.- Phenomenal silhouette. – Architectural anxiety.'²¹



Fragment of *Enigmatic Elements in a Landscape*

¹⁶ Unidentified works

¹⁷ James Thrall Soby, 'Salvador Dalí', *Salvador Dalí*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1941, p. 21

¹⁸ Both paintings were on show in Exposition Dalí, Galerie Jacques Bonjean, Paris, 20/06-13/07/1934.

¹⁹ This figure also appears in *West Side of the Isle of the Death (Reconstructed Compulsive Image After Böcklin)*, 1934 (P391).

²⁰ Salvador Dalí, 'Les nouvelles couleurs du sex-appeal spectral', *Minotaure*, No. 5, 12/05/1934, Paris, pp. 20-22

²¹ Salvador Dalí, 'The New Colours of Spectral Sex-Appeal' (1934) In *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí*, op. cit., p. 204



Figure and Drapery in a Landscape
1935
Oil on canvas
55.5 x 46 cm
P401

We find ourselves in front of an ethereal landscape in ochre and bluish tones and on this occasion with a low skyline. Presiding over the space is a figure half protected by a white sheet which seems to be screening a tree with dry branches. This figure, probably female, appears with no face or perhaps with the face covered by a mane of hair. In the middle distance a minute figure heads towards the landscape in the background, where we can make out the presence of architectural elements. On this same plane three cypress trees complete the composition. The origin of this sheet can be connected once again to a number of works by Giorgio de Chirico, and specifically in this case to *The Enigma of the Oracle*, from 1910, a painting inspired in its turn by Arnold Böcklin's *Odyssey and Calypso* of 1882.²²

This sheet with the phantasmagoric aspect can be related to certain actions performed by Gala and René Crevel at Portlligat. In one photograph, they pose together, naked and half hidden behind a sheet outside the house. Again, in another photograph, entitled *Dalí drapé*, taken by Man Ray in 1933, the artist hides behind the sheet, also outside the house at Portlligat, with a long object on his head. Dalí converted this pose into an iconographic motif in his work, since these figures, totally or partially covered by a veil, appear in a number of works from this period.

A volumetric angst is manifested in the cloud in the centre of the canvas, which contrasts with the depth of the landscape and the solitude of the figure. In 1934 Dalí

²² This work is in the Kunstmuseum in Basel.

<[http://sammlungonline.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultDetailView/result.i
nline.list.t1.collection_list.\\$TspTitleLink.link&sp=13&sp=Sartist&sp=SfilterDefinition&sp=0&sp=1&sp=1&s
p=SdetailView&sp=121&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=T&sp=0&sp=SdetailList&sp=75&sp=F&sp=Scollection&sp=l
1120](http://sammlungonline.kunstmuseumbasel.ch/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultDetailView/result.i
nline.list.t1.collection_list.$TspTitleLink.link&sp=13&sp=Sartist&sp=SfilterDefinition&sp=0&sp=1&sp=1&s
p=SdetailView&sp=121&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=T&sp=0&sp=SdetailList&sp=75&sp=F&sp=Scollection&sp=l
1120)> [Consulted: 11/06/2020]

published 'The New Colours of Spectral Sex-Appeal' in the magazine *Minotaure*,²³ where he clearly sets out: 'The phantasm is materialized in the "simulacrum of volume". — The simulacrum of volume is the envelope. — The envelope hides, protects, transfigures, stirs up, tempts, gives a misleading notion of volume. — It causes ambivalence with regard to volume and makes the volume become suspect.'²⁴



René Crevel and Gala at Portlligat
1932



Salvador Dalí and René Crevel at Portlligat
c. 1931

²³ Salvador Dalí, 'Les nouvelles couleurs du sex-appeal spectral', *Minotaure*, No. 5, 12/05/1934, Paris, pp. 20-22

²⁴ Salvador Dalí, 'The New Colours of Spectral Sex-Appeal' (1934) In *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí*, op. cit., p. 203.

ONEIRICS LANDSCAPES



Singularities
c. 1935
Oil and collage on board
40.5 x 50 cm
P410

A collage work with a great symbolic and iconographic charge, with multiple associations and disconcerting components in a nocturnal setting. Under a starry sky, we see in the foreground a female figure who seems to come from a highly stylized theatrical or ballet scenography, with her coiffure of branches, in front of a hairy sofa. This sofa, just like the armchair in the background, retains the impressions of the people, spectres or phantasms that have used it.²⁵ The soft watch, the rocks of Cap de Creus – Cadaqués, the soft forms and the characters with open drawers, the loaf of bread and the piano are other significant elements of the Dalinian imaginary of the Surrealist period. However, the potent chromatism is not that of the painter's usual palette and helps to give the work a dreamlike nocturnal atmosphere.

The female figure seems to be pointing the way to another setting, another room. In order to get there, we must pass behind a hairy curtain with a zip fastener in the middle, which creates an erotic anthropomorphic illusion. What will we find on the other side? It would very probably be *The Surrealist Woman*, a film that Dalí planned to make with the Marx Brothers in 1937. In the script we read: 'The large couches will be constructed with the marks left by the bodies of their occupants, imitating on a large scale the soft imprints on satin in jewellery boxes.' The text also says: 'One will fall asleep through the zip of a special door of dreams constructed using thick white horsehair.'²⁶ Unfortunately, the film was never made.

²⁵ See the text accompanying the painting *Surrealist Composition with Invisible Figures* (P420)

²⁶ Manuscript by Salvador Dalí, conserved at the Centre Pompidou in Paris. *Dalí. Mass Culture*, Fundació la Caixa, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Barcelona, Figueres, 2004, p. 83.



Surrealist Composition with Invisible Figures
 c. 1936
 Oil on cardboard
 60.9 x 45.8 cm
 P420

In this painting, Dalí reused a piece of cardboard painted ten years earlier, *Rocks of Es Llaner* (P183),²⁷ shown in his second solo exhibition at the Galeries Dalmau in Barcelona,²⁸ of which only a black and white photograph has survived. Both versions reproduced the view from the Dalí family's house on the beach of Es Llaner. If the picture had not been painted over, we would notice that the rocks to the right and left are very close to the shore. In the foreground, a bather – perhaps a Venus – covers her face with her forearm.



Rocks of Es Llaner, 1926

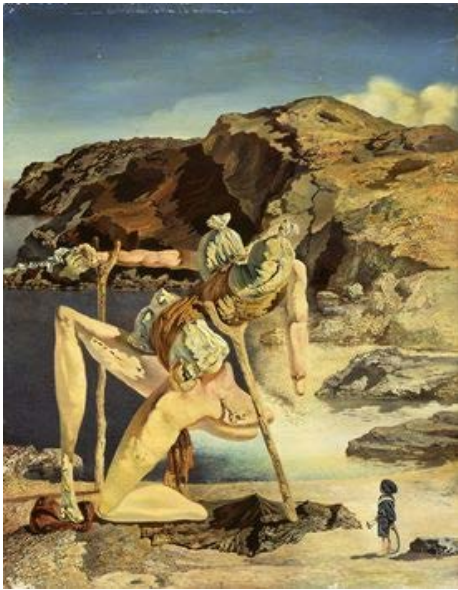
Several years later, Dalí painted the lower half of the piece of cardboard, replacing the rocky landscape and the woman in the lower half of the cardboard with a whitish band suggesting a stage. In this space he placed a ruby heart on a polychrome pedestal, as he had previously done in the oil paintings *The Invisible Man* (P237) and *The First Days of Spring* (P242), both from 1929. This ruby is sometimes associated with a self-portrait. In the central part we see a bed and a chair with absent figures, as in *Singularities* (P199). These impressions can be related to *The Surrealist Woman*, the script that Dalí wrote for the Marx Brothers.²⁹

²⁷ The magazine *L'Amic de les Arts*, of 30 April 1927, reproduces this first version of the work, entitling it *Seascape with a Woman Bathing*.

²⁸ Exposició S. Dalí, Galeries Dalmau, Barcelona, 31/12/1926-14/01/1927, cat. no. 7.

²⁹ See the text accompanying the painting *Singularities* (P410)

LANDSCAPES PAINTED BY HAND



The Spectre of Sex-Appeal
c. 1934
Oil on wood panel
17.9 x 13.9 cm
P338

Dalí first exhibited this small oil painting at the Jacques Bonjean gallery in Paris,³⁰ and subsequently at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York,³¹ but he always kept it in his own private collection. In the introductions of the catalogues of both exhibitions, he wrote: “Snap-shot photographs in color” if subconscious images, surrealist, extravagant, paranoiac hypnagogical, extrapictorial, phenomenal, super-abundant, super-sensitive, etc... of concrete irrationality.’³² These words define very well this period of Dalí’s career, in which he associated the translation of the subconscious onto the canvas by means of very well-defined, almost photographic images.

On the lower right we see an infant Dalí, dressed in a sailor suit, contemplating an enormous monster, at once soft and hard, which symbolised for him sexuality and the fear of sex. Dalí gives a specific definition of a feeling not readily perceptible: the monster of sexuality, as precise as the Cap de Creus, represented here in an almost hyperrealist manner by the rocks and cliffs. A monster which connects directly with the iconography of the illustrations Dalí also made at this time for *Les Chants de Maldoror* by the Comte de Lautréamont.³³ Also of note is the imposing presence of the crutches, a symbol, for Dalí, of both death and resurrection.

In his article ‘The New Colours of Spectral Sex-Appeal’, published in 1934 in the magazine *Minotaure*,³⁴ Dalí makes a precise distinction between the characteristics

³⁰ Exposition Dalí, Jacques Bonjean, Paris, 20/07-13/07/ 1934, cat. no. 14.

³¹ Dalí, Julien Levy Gallery, New York, 21/11-10/12/1934, cat. no. 5.

³² Salvador Dalí, ‘Paintings by Salvador Dalí’, *Dalí*, Julien Levy Gallery, New York, 1934.

³³ Comte de Lautréamont (Isidore Ducasse), Salvador Dalí (ill.), *Les Chants de Maldoror*, Skira, Paris, 1934.

³⁴ Salvador Dalí, ‘Les nouvelles couleurs du sex-appeal spectral’, op. cit., pp. 20-22.

of the 'spectre' and those of the 'phantasm'. He meticulously described spectre as: "*Spectre*.- Disintegration and destruction of illusory volume.- Extra-flat and extra-thin instability.- Luminous swiftness.- Visceral contours.- Physical perimeter.- Mineral or metallic sparks.- Exhibitionistic erection.- Chemical silhouette.- Explosive dissection.- Stiff and hysterical instantaneity of a *voyeur*.- Fine biological terror."³⁵ And he gives as examples of spectral characters Picasso, Gala, Harpo Marx, Marcel Duchamp and more.³⁶



Fragment of *The Spectre of Sex-Appeal*

³⁵ Salvador Dalí, 'The New Colours of Spectral Sex-Appeal' (1934) In *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí*, op. cit., p. 204

³⁶ As a matter of fact, Dalí questions the spectator to search in their own acquaintances for spectres or phantasms. Salvador Dalí, 'The New Colours of Spectral Sex-Appeal' (1934), op. cit., p. 206

PARANOIAC LANDSCAPE



Phantom Cart
1933
Oil on wood panel
19 x 24.1 cm
P321

This painting, like *Average Pagan Landscape* (P449), had been part of the collection of Edward James, the English poet known as a staunch defender of Surrealism and as a patron of Dalí and René Magritte, among others.

In *Phantom Cart* (P321) our attention is drawn to the cart that, in addition to giving the work its name, crosses the plain of the Empordà³⁷. This landscape, like that of the beach of Roses, features in some of the works created between 1933 and 1936, such as the series the artist dedicated to his cousin Carolineta.³⁸

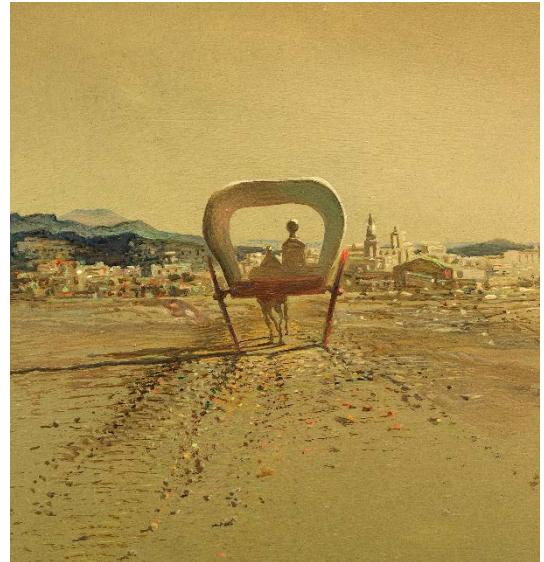
The trap (or cart or buggy) is in the centre of a luminous, arid plain and is on its way to an unknown village. The form of the buggy merges with the silhouette of the village. The figures sitting on the cart fuse with the architecture, creating an optical illusion in which we do not distinguish the figures from the architectural constructions. The wheels of the cart are, at the same time, stakes driven into the ground. Finally, almost hidden, like an optical illusion, we can make out a skull, in the form of an anamorphosis, to the left of the buggy.

Dalí presents us a with visual game, that of double images, which is one of the foundations of the paranoiac-critical method of interpreting reality. The artist defined

³⁷ Other versions of this theme can be found in works such as: *The Phantom Cart*, 1933 (P319) and *Moment of Transition*, 1934 (P320)

³⁸ We find cousin Carolineta in the paintings *Apparition of My Cousin Carolineta on the Beach at Roses (Fluid Premonition)* (P379) and *Apparition of My Cousin Carolineta on the Beach at Roses* (P380), both from c. 1934.

it as follows: 'Spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on the critical and systematic objectification of the delirious associations and interpretations.'³⁹



Fragment of *Phantom Cart*

³⁹ Salvador Dalí, "The Latest Modes of Intellectual Stimulations for the Summer of 1934" (1934). In *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí*, op. cit., p. 254



Average Pagan Landscape
1937
Oil on canvas
38.5 x 46.5 cm
P449

During the Spanish Civil War, Gala and Dalí made several stays in Italy.⁴⁰ The artist painted *Average Pagan Landscape* somewhere in the vicinity of Florence.⁴¹ This change of scene would explain why possible influence has been seen, in the use of an orangey tonality, in the meticulous description of the landscape and in the drawing of the figures, of the Italian painting of the Quattrocento, and specifically of the Sienese master Sassetta.⁴²

In those years, the English collector and patron Edward James, to whom this work belonged, was the couple's travelling companion and one of their closest friends. The characters in this painting are very characteristic of the Dalinian iconography of the time: the figure on the left with the *barretina*,⁴³ the nursemaid and the boy in a sailor suit, on the right, as well as the double image of the girl with the skipping rope, which, in other works, is assimilated to a bell.

There is another double image on the left in which we can make out the head of Sigmund Freud in an anthropomorphic rock formation. The father of psychoanalysis and *The Interpretation of Dreams* were to be key elements to understanding the Surrealist Dalí and his manifestation of the subconscious. As is frequent in his paranoiac landscapes, the suggestive volumetric form of the cloud, laden with mystery, presides over the scene.

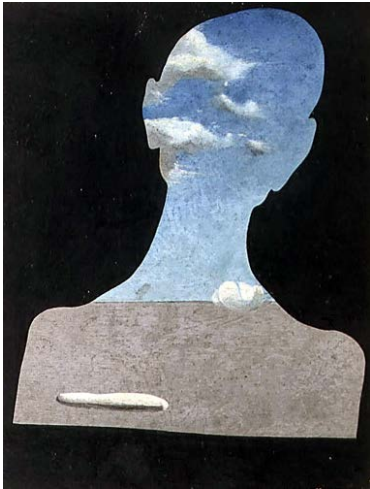
⁴⁰ During the years 1937-1938 Dalí and Gala visited Rome, the Amalfi coast, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Florence, Venice and Sicily. To read more about these trips through Italy, see: Rosa Maria Maurell, Lucia Moni, 'Chronology of Dalí in Italy', catalogue of the exhibition *Dalí. Un artista un genio*, Skira, Milano, 2012. <<https://www.salvador-dali.org/en/research/archives-en-ligne/download-documents/14/chronology-of-dali-in-italy>> [Consulted: 5/06/2020]

⁴¹ Dalí explained, in the catalogue of the exhibition *Dalí*, held in Rotterdam in 1970, that he painted this work in Florence and entitled it *Average Pagan Landscape*. *Dalí*, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1970, plate 57.

⁴² Catalogue of the exhibition *Salvador Dalí 1904-1989*, Verlag Gerd Hatje, Stuttgart, 1989, p. 177.

⁴³ The *barretina* is a traditional Catalan cap.

MAN LANDSCAPE SYMBIOSIS



Man with His Head Full of Clouds
c. 1936
Oil on cardboard
18.1 x 14 cm
P439

This metaphorical work, which leads into the exhibition, possesses a profound symbolic charge. It is presided over by the silhouette of a male figure cut out of a black ground – it may be a self-portrait – which is at the same time a window open to the exterior.

The interior of the male silhouette is divided into two chromatic bands, one of greyish tones which represents the earth and the other, mostly blue, the sky. In this space we can distinguish a few elements: in the foreground, an element of phallic symbolism; in the intermediate zone, the symbol of yin and yang, very much a presence in the Dalinian iconography, and the clouds, in the upper part.

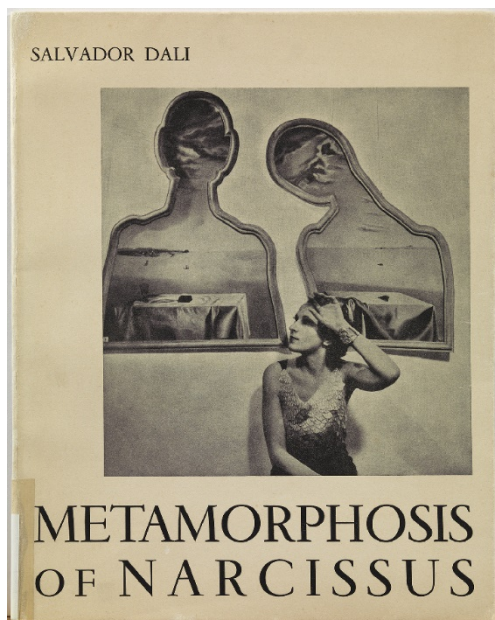
This type of composition, with the profile marked out by means of the background or the support of the work, is a resource adopted in a number of Surrealist compositions, such as the design of the doorway of Marcel Duchamp's *Gradiva* gallery in Paris, in which the silhouette of a couple ushered visitors in to the exhibition rooms, run by André Breton. Probably in memory of his friend Duchamp, Dalí adopted this idea for one of the mirror windows on the third floor of the Theatre-Museum, from which the visitor can look down into the courtyard through the frame formed by the silhouette.⁴⁴

Dalí returned to this composition in other works of this period, such as *A Couple with Their Heads Full of Clouds* (P443), from 1936, another oil painting in which two silhouettes, representing Gala and Dalí, mimic one another in the same positions as the two figures in Jean-François Millet's *The Angelus* (1857-59), a painting of great

⁴⁴ On the presence of Marcel Duchamp in the Dalí Theatre-Museum in Figueres, see Montse Aguer Teixidor and Carme Ruiz González, 'The Dalí Theatre-Museum As a Readymade', catalogue of the exhibition *Dalí / Duchamp*, Royal Academy of Arts, The Dalí Museum, London, St. Petersburg, FL, 2017, p. 206-207.

significance for Dalí and the catalyst of his paranoiac-critical method for the interpreting of reality. *A Couple with Their Heads Full of Clouds* was also adopted as a scene-setting element by Cecil Beaton for his series of portrait photographs of Gala and Dalí, one of which was used by Dalí for the cover of his book *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*.⁴⁵

It is also interesting to note the play on words that Dalí sets up in the original English title, 'A Couple with Their Heads Full of Clouds', in an allusion to the expression 'to have one's head in the clouds', used to a dreamy, fanciful person. The painter, who was fond of semantic games, claimed that in some cases the title itself expresses the complete meaning of the work.



Salvador Dalí, *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1937

⁴⁵ Salvador Dalí, *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, Julien Levy Gallery, New York, 1937.

IMAGINATIVE INVENTIONS



Poetry of America
1943
Oil on canvas
116 x 79 cm
P577

Dalí presented this work at the Knoedler Galleries in New York, in a solo exhibition from 14 April to 5 May 1943. This was a crucial moment, between the publication of *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*⁴⁶ and the composition of his manual for artists, *50 Secrets of Magic Craftsmanship*.⁴⁷ In the prologue to the exhibition catalogue Dalí explains that he is systematising a new series of ‘imaginative inventions directly provoked by the unsuspected poetry of America – from the calm classicism of the Californian landscape to the poignant billboard of the Gilmore Red Lion,⁴⁸ suddenly emerging weakly silhouetted in pale neon tubes under the serene sky of a desert, late afternoon.’⁴⁹

It is interesting to see how Dalí now envisages his Surrealism; a Surrealism with classical elements which has evolved into these ‘imaginative inventions’. In a footnote, he clarifies the point: “These inventions of the imagination are of a sort diametrically opposed to automatism. Surrealism will have served, at least, to furnish experimental proof of the complete sterility and fumbling of automatism built out of all proportion into an absolute System. On the other hand Raphael, who represents the maximum of aesthetic consciousness, gave the exact proportion and degree of automatism desirable in a work of art when, after having affirmed “I paint according

⁴⁶ Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, Dial Press, New York, 1942

⁴⁷ Salvador Dalí, *50 Secrets of Magic Craftsmanship*, Dial Press, New York, 1948.

⁴⁸ Dalí is referring to the illuminated sign of the Gilmore Oil Company petrol stations.

⁴⁹ Salvador Dalí, ‘Dalí to the Reader’, *Dalí*, exhibition catalogue, M. Knoedler and Co., New York, 1943.

to a certain idea”, he advised that at the moment of execution one must always think something else.’⁵⁰

At the time of painting *Poetry of America*, Dalí was in the United States.⁵¹ In the foreground we see two male figures, two American footballers, one white and one black, who stand in front of each other, dressed after the fashion of the Renaissance. According to Dalí, these are two metaphysical mannequins placed in a deserted stadium. The white man drips a fluid which turns into a Coca-Cola bottle. Once again, Dalí is ahead of his time, in that this is the first appearance of this Pop icon in the history of contemporary art. From the soft-drink bottle, by way of a telephone receiver, a black substance flows down and stains a white canvas. The handset, here deformed, calls to mind the telephones Dalí painted at the end of the 1930s.⁵² There the device expresses the failure of communication between the nations which signed the Munich Agreement,⁵³ which was to have prevented the outbreak of World War II. Out of the black man is born the new man, symbolized by the egg.⁵⁴ With this scene Dalí anticipates the racial conflicts of North America. The artist, by no means out of touch with his surroundings, was foreseeing in *Poetry of America* the racial struggles in the United States.

The arch that frames the composition evokes Raphael’s *The Marriage of the Virgin*, from which the posture of the footballer on the right also derives, helping to give him a classical tone. On the tower on the horizon, clearly influenced by de Chirico, hangs the map of Africa.⁵⁵ As Dalí noted in a manuscript text, ‘from the clock of history hangs the old skin of Africa, metamorphosis of the Empordà plain’,⁵⁶ here represented by the desert expanses of the country that took him in during the 1940s.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ He lived there from 1940 until 1948

⁵² These are the paintings *Imperial Violets* (P474), *The Sublime Moment* (P472), *Melancholic Eccentricity* (P473) of 1938, *The Enigma of Hitler* (P475), *Telephone in a Dish with Three Grilled Sardines* (P476) and *Landscapes with Telephones on a Dish* (P478) of 1939.

⁵³ An agreement signed on 30 September 1938 by the heads of the governments of Germany (Hitler), the United Kingdom (Chamberlain), France (Daladier) and Italy (Mussolini), without the involvement of the government in Prague, envisaging the cession the Sudetenland to the Third Reich after an internationally supervised plebiscite; however, before it could be held, the German army occupied the region (1 October 1938). < <https://www.encyclopedia.cat/ec-gec-0044845.xml> > (Consulted: 8/06/2020)

⁵⁴ This egg and the new man to which Dalí makes reference are directly related to the painting “*Geopoliticus*” *Child Watching the Birth of the New Man* (P578), also from 1943.

⁵⁵ The tower also represents a memory from childhood of the tower that presided over the estate of the Pichots, a family of intellectuals and artists, of great significance to Dalí.

⁵⁶ Salvador Dalí, [Estadium desert, 2 maniquins], c. 1943. Archives of the Centre for Dalinian Studies, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres.

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