



FUNDACIÓ
GALA-SALVADOR DALÍ

Press release

Salvador Dalí, Gala, Ricardo Sans, **the 2017 exhibition in Púbol Castle**

The exhibition was inaugurated by the President of the Government of Catalonia, Mr. Carles Puigdemont

1. Presentation

The Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí is pleased to inform you that today at 4:30 p.m. the new temporary exhibition at Púbol Castle was inaugurated. Attending on behalf of the Foundation was the Director of the Dalí Museums, Montse Aguer. Also participating as an invited guest was Mr. Carles Puigdemont, President of the Government of Catalonia. The guided visit around the installation was led by Rosa M. Maurell and Cuca Costa, Coordinators at the Centre for Dalinian Studies and Curators of this display, under the scientific direction of Montse Aguer.

The exhibition has the collaboration of Fundació Bancària "La Caixa" and, on its behalf, Advisor to the Directorate-General, Higiní Clotas and Quim Macià, CaixaBank Director of Institutions of the Territorial Directorate of Catalonia, and Isabel Salgado, Director of the Art Exhibitions Department also attended the ceremony, together with the Dalí Foundation's Managing Director, Joan Manuel Sevillano.

This year's temporary exhibition in Púbol is dedicated to the photographic relationship between Salvador Dalí and Ricardo Sans from 1949 until 1956. 90 pictures are shown as well as different documents.

2. Background

The Dalí Foundation recently bought the photographic fonds of Ricardo Sans to his family, which consists of more than 900 pictures related to Dalí and Gala. The Foundation will also manage the corresponding rights. This acquisition enriches the Dalí Foundation Archives which now keeps over 13,500 images. This richly varied collection of photographs covers different periods of the artist's life and includes work by such internationally renowned figures as Man Ray, Brassai, Cecil Beaton, Eric Schaal, Philippe Halsman and Horst P. Horst as well as by photographers whose significance is more local, including Juan Gyenes, Francesc Català-Roca and Ricardo Sans, among others.

3. Exhibition concept and contents

The exhibition we are presenting this year at the Castle of Púbol, *Salvador Dalí, Gala, Ricardo Sans* shows an extensive selection from the relatively little-known Ricardo Sans fonds. We have divided it into four sections or areas, in chronological order, presided over by a screen on which a selection of the photographs in this collection will be projected. Two letters are shown, together with three books and two press clippings related to the photographer and the painter.

We enhance awareness of a photographer and a fonds that allow us once again to analyse in greater depth the life and work of the painter and Gala, and in this case, moreover, from a proximity to and a confidence in the vision of one who captured fleeting private moments that has become permanent and universal.

It should also be noted that Dalí personally conserved a total of 164 photographs by Ricardo Sans, of which nine were selected by Gala and placed in the cabinet room at Portlligat. The American publisher Fleur Cowles asked Dalí for pictures by Ricardo Sans, portraits of Dalí and his surroundings the firm would use in its books.



Salvador Dalí painting the *Christ of Saint John of the Cross*, at his workshop in Portlligat, 1951

Ricardo Sans, © Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres, 2017



Salvador Dalí behind his boat named *Gala*, 1951

Ricardo Sans, © Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres, 2017

4. Who was Ricardo Sans?

Ricardo Sans Condeminas (Barcelona, 1911-1972) studied law and worked in a Barcelona law firm until the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War interrupted his career. He had a keen interest in all things electrical, and during the war he and a partner started a business selling radios, which he repaired. He also acted as a law teacher at the Mediterranean Merchant Navy School in Barcelona. At the end of the war he married Mercedes Camps Mas-Bagà, and devoted himself to electronics, HiFi, radio and television. His other great enthusiasms were in the arts, notably music – he was a passionate Wagnerian – and photography. He used to say that he took photographs because he didn't know how to paint. He admired the portraits taken by Armenian-Canadian photographer Yousuf Karsh.

In 1939 he bought a Leica and began to approach photography in a more 'professional' manner, as he was to do so throughout his life.

Of particular note are his shots of celebrated musicians of the time such as his friends the violinist Francisco Costa and the baritone Raimundo Torres, the Singapore violinist Goh Soon Tioe and the composer Eduard Toldrà, and the photographs he took of the last concert by Pau Casals and Fritz Kreisler in the Palau de la Música in 1936. In 1947 he won 3rd prize in the annual competition of the A.F.C. Catalan photographic association, and sat on the jury of the Ciudad de Barcelona awards in 1952.

The Ricardo Sans photographic fonds comprises over 20,000 photographs.

Friendship with Dalí

Dalí and Ricardo Sans were introduced to one another by mutual friends, Gonçal Serraclara and José Luis Beltran, in 1949. On this visit Sans made his first Dalí photo-essay and took the colour photograph for the jacket of the Spanish edition of the book *50 Secrets of Magic Craftsmanship* published in 1951.

Work on the studio at Portlligat was completed in the spring of 1950, and from 1951 on Ricardo Sans documented this new space with Dalí and Gala as models; he also made some wonderful portraits of the artist in his work environment, together with the canvases he was painting at the time, such as [*Christ of Saint John of the Cross*](#), [*The Madonna of Portlligat*](#), [*Galatea of the Spheres*](#), [*The Angel of Portlligat*](#), [*Hypercubic Christ or Crucifixion*](#) and [*Portrait of Gala with Rhinocerontic Symptoms*](#). These works belong to a new stage in Dalí's creative output with the advent of his nuclear mysticism, a combination of religion and science influenced by the atom bomb tests and a return to the classics and the treatise by Luca Pacioli, *De divina proportione*.

5. The exhibition areas

The exhibition is organised into four sections in chronological order: Portraits of Salvador Dalí, 1949-1956; Portraits of Gala, 1951-1953; Portraits of Salvador Dalí and Gala, 1951-1954; and Portlligat, 1950-1956.

In the series of photographs that Sans took every year from 1949 to 1956 we find a Dalí who has ceased to be the media personality he had tended to seek to present. The Dalí we see here is less distant and more personal, more spontaneous, almost always at home and in private, more connected or more relaxed in front of the camera. The photographer has captured Dalí in his day-to-day life, in a series of portraits in which the artist is eating sea urchins. Other pictures in this collection bear witness to the fact that Dalí and Sans sat down to eat together on more than one occasion.

Sans' framing of the portraits gives special importance to the sitter; all of these shots were meticulously set up and always took full advantage of the natural light of Portlligat – and almost all of them were taken outside the house, in daylight. By far the greater part of the Sans fonds is given over to images of Dalí in his home.

In the next section, devoted to portraits of Gala, we sense that Sans always made sure his model was comfortable with having her picture taken. Seen through Sans' lens, it seems clear that she felt good, and in most of these portraits we see her smiling, relaxed and natural, and even posing for him –a far from frequent occurrence. These shots of Gala are perhaps the least known photographs by Sans in the exhibition.

In the third section, devoted to Salvador Dalí and Gala, Sans's photographs of the Dalís almost always capture them in their daily lives, in their comfort zone, an evidently affectionate couple. Most of the portraits in which we see them together show the interior of the house – the library, the dining room, the studio and the bedroom, but there are also some magnificent exteriors of Portlligat. One of the most artistic forms of collaboration between photographer and painter are double exposure photographs of the kind much in favour among the Surrealists. We see this technique in the 1950 photograph of Dalí in the dining-room fireplace.

The last section centres on the setting of almost all of the photographs in the show: the Portlligat house, which continued to be transformed each year on the basis of Dalí's special instructions to his friend, the builder Emili Puignau. In a number of the Sans photos of the Portlligat house which trace its structural evolution, the artist is seen making drawings or notes for the builder; these pictures are of great interest for the insights they offer into Dalí's ideas for the architectural modifications to his home.



Salvador Dalí and Gala at the terrace in Portlligat, 1951

Ricardo Sans, © Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres, 2017



Gala sitting in her bedroom in Portlligat, 1953

Ricardo Sans, © Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres, 2017

There was a considerable amount of correspondence between the two artists, a good example of this being the letter on which Dalí drew Gala's hands and feet, with indications as to how the photographer should frame them. These images were to serve as a model for *Lapis Lazuline Corpuscular Assumpta*.

Some of Sans' photographs have illustrated Dalí monographs, notably *Dalí al desnudo*, *The Case of Salvador Dalí*, *Salvador Dalí y sus enemigos*, *Dalí fotógrafo*, *Dalí en sus fotografías*, and articles in various magazines such as *Look*, *Le Nouveau Femina* and *Blanco y Negro*.

If Portlligat as a setting would be an inspiration for any artist, Sans knew how to capture the light and energy of the place, and thanks to his methodical procedures and good organization we have an exact date for each of the photographs included in this exhibition.

6. Staging

The staging of the exhibition was designed by Pep Canaleta from 3carme33 and the graphic design is by Alex Gifreu.

The showing of the photographs in this room, tinted with the Mediterranean hue of Portlligat, evokes a photo album with its cover and inside pages.

A display case and a screen invade one of the room corners with documents that contextualise the photographs and the protagonists lives: Dalí, Gala and Sans.

7. Catalogue

The exhibition's catalogue includes texts by Montse Aguer, Director of the Dalí Museums, Rosa M. Maurell and Cuca R. Costa, Coordinators of the Centre for Dalinians Studies and Curators of this exhibition. There is also a text by Elisabet Sans, the photographer's granddaughter.

The catalogue has been designed by Alex Gifreu and is sponsored by "la Caixa" Bank.

The exhibition *Salvador Dalí, Gala, Ricardo Sans* will be on show from 15th March, the day the Castle opens its doors for the season, until 7th January 2018.

For further information:

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