Press release

MEDIA DALÍ

Shanghai, 4 November 2015
Temporary exhibition *Media Dalí* in Shanghai

1. Presentation

The Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation and K11 Art Foundation are pleased to inform you that today, 4 November, the temporary exhibition *Media Dalí* just opened in Shanghai Chi K11 Art Space, located at Art Mall’s B3 in Shanghai. In the event, speeches were assured by Mrs. Montse Aguer, curator of the exhibition and Director of the Centre for Dalinian Studies of the Dalí Foundation, Mrs. Hsu Fenlan, co-curator, Mr. Joan M. Sevillano, Executive Manager of the Dalí Foundation, Adrian Cheng, Founder and Honorary Chairman of K11 Art Foundation, and Manuel Valencia Alonso, Spanish Ambassador in China. The event was also attended by Spanish Consul General in Shanghai, Rodrigo Aguirre de Cárcer, and Inma González Puy, Director of the Cervantes Institute in China, as well as an important representation of the provincial government of China.

It will be on show until 15 February 2016. It’s the first time the Dalí Foundation brings a Research exhibition to Shanghai, particularly about the relation of Dalí with the media. In 2001 a retrospective was held at Shanghai Art Museum, with the title *Dalí: a genius of the XX century*.

So as to improve the Dalí Foundation’s presence in Asia, a website in Chinese has just been launched by the Foundation, totally adapted for the Chinese audience: [http://www.salvadordalimuseum.cn/](http://www.salvadordalimuseum.cn/) The main objective is to become a reference on Dalí by providing first-hand contents on him and his wife Gala, our three museums, as well as the Foundation’s mission and activities, an institution created by Dalí himself.

2. Concept and contents

The show *Media Dalí* consists of 250 pieces: 12 paintings and 2 original drawings by Salvador Dalí, 205 magazines, period newspapers and advertisements, and 30 objects coming from the artist’s workshop.

Salvador Dalí’s collaborations in the field of magazines and the written press were wide and diverse, and were partially analysed in the innovative exhibition “Dalí. Mass culture” in 2004. This is why we believe it’s an interesting subject for the exhibition in Shanghai. The main reason why is that Dalí does not only write articles, but also designs covers and ads, and illustrates both his own and other authors' writings. Furthermore, he uses the press in his works, both as a medium (collage) and as a source of inspiration: a cover, an image or a text published in the press can be transformed into another image, another reading and thus become a work by Dalí. All this activity leads Dalí, at different moments of his career, to design pages and even a whole publication called *Dalí News*. 
Dalí begins his collaboration with the press in 1919, publishing articles on the great masters in Art history (Goya, El Greco, Dürer, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Velázquez) in Studium, the magazine published by the high school of Figueres, the town where he was born. In 1927-1929 he writes articles defining his aesthetics, which dictate the evolution of his career, and publishes them in periodicals like L’Amic de les Arts, La Gaceta Literaria or La Nau and La Publicitat. At the same time, we find illustrations by Dalí both in the texts written by him and by others. And beside the aforementioned examples, we must outline his participation, alongside Sebastià Gasch and Lluís Montanyà, in the writing and preparation of the Manifest groc (1928) and his great formal and conceptual contribution to the last issue of L’Amic de les Arts (1929).

In the 30s Dalí enters the surrealist group and from the beginning becomes its main agitator, almost its leader, to such an extent that in one interview he even states: “I am surrealism”. Thus Dalí has a key role in the magazines published by the Surrealists like Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution - in which he publishes very important articles such as “L’âme pourri, à Gala Éluard” (July 1930); “Rêverie” (December 1931) or “Objets psycho-atmosphériques-anamorphiques” (May 1933)- or Minotaure, for which he designs the 15 June 1936 issue’s cover, draws illustrations and writes key texts of his work and career such as, for instance, “Interprétation Paranoïaque-critique de l’image obsédante, L’Angélus”de Millet” (1933), “Le Phénomène de l’extase” (also 1933) or “Le Surréalisme spectral de l’éternel féminin préraphaélite” (1936). We must also outline his participation in Cahiers d’Art, with writings like “Les Pantoufles de Picasso” in 1935 or “Honneur à l’objet” in 1936. In this decade Dalí begins to travel to the USA and soon starts to collaborate with the American press. Good examples of this collaboration are the two covers he did for the magazine The American Weekly -“Social Life by Dalí” (9 January, 1938) and “Industrial Life by Dalí” (16 January 1938)- and the series of seven articles published in the same magazine with overt titles such as “Written by a Madman – Illustrated by a “Super-Realist” (16 December 1934), “New York as seen by the Super-Realist artist, M. Dalí” (24 February 1935), “How Super-Realist Dalí Saw Broadway” (17 March 1935), “The American City night-and-day by Dalí” (31 March 1935), “American Country Life interpreted by M. Dalí” (24 April 1935), “Gangsterism and Goofy visions of New York” (19 May 1935) or “Crazy movie scenario by M. Dalí, the Super Realist” (7 July 1935).

Once in America, where he lived without interruption from 1940 to 1948, Dalí makes ads, covers, opinion columns and illustrations which are published in the most influential mass-culture magazines and newspapers, such as Vogue, Town & Country, Life, Script, American Fabrics or Nugget. Some assignments are quite specific: for instance Script wants Dalí to paint a series called “Surrealist Hollywood”, which should reflect his insights on some American cities and his impressions of the atomic age. Using his vivid imagination, Dalí develops visions of a world where atomic energy is controlled and visions of a world where it is out of control. These projects are used by Dalí as a basis and a departure-point for the conceptual and formal design of a newspaper called Dali News, of which he publishes two issues in 1945 and 1947, on
the occasions of two exhibitions of his works in the Bignou Gallery (New York). In this newspaper, Dali is the editor, the publisher, the columnist and the illustrator, and the leading article is a true declaration of principles. Dali creates a newspaper with one subject: himself and his orbit. Furthermore, he makes his position very clear: “And if it is true that I love publicity, for a thousand and one reasons, all respectable, it is an undeniable fact that publicity loves me with a passion more violent than my own”. A great promoter of himself.

In this American period, Dali’s work diversifies, and he is ubiquitous in the magazine world, both through his works and as a figure representing a way of doing and of being outlandish, as he is often described. During these years the image of the artist that he has been building crystallizes. The press considers him the leader of surrealism, the prophet of the subconscious, the world of dreams and imagination, the creator of the paranoiac-critical method, the man capable of thinking the unthinkable. He is associated with his time but, simultaneously, he influences contemporary taste. There are not many reviews which seriously analyse the evolution of his work. Dali has become an icon. In this respect, Alain Juffroy formulates an interesting notion in 1957 for the magazine Nugget: “Despite this irritating mixture of audacity, genius, conformity, and boasting... Dali maintains certain values above the flux; one would laugh less while listening to him if one remembered that each of his pleasantries plunges a sword into the heart of our history.”

Dali is described with an infinite number of adjectives, all deriving from the same field: satirical, strange, provocative, mysterious, bold, eccentric and, of course, genial. The comments on his work also are stereotyped: melting watches, empty spaces, perspectives, dissected women, anatomies, etc., which show loneliness, void, mystery, fantasy. In sum, people talk about Salvador Dalí as an artist who creates worlds that appeal to our subconscious and who always displays a vivid imagination free from the clichés of the past. In the American press of the time, the extravagant actions of any genre are very often considered ‘Dali-isms’.

The activity of Dalí in advertising is especially significant to understanding his complicity with mass culture. The fields where he is most in demand and his name is most used are fashion and its attendants; perfumes, jewels and luxury items in general (including cars). In this sense we must outline his campaign (1944-1947) for the panties Bryans, which are associated with many sensations also related to Dalí’s work and Dalí himself: excitement, provocation. Dali is chosen to impress consumers with his name and a shocking campaign which contributes to selling the product. Further proof of the fetishization of the character: “Building the name. To impress consumers with the name, at least, he commissioned Salvador Dalí to do an exclusive series of illustrations for ads that ran in Harper’s Bazaar, Town & County and Vogue.” Another clear example in this respect is the first issue of the magazine Status, published in October 1965. The cover is described as “painted expressly by Dalí” and there is a subscription insert with the following words: “You’ve seen Salvatore Dali on the cover? So now you think you
know what Status is going to be like? Even Igor Cassini doesn’t know. And he’s the editor & publisher. All anyone knows is, whatever is exciting, different and talked about will be featured in Status. Subscribe. No Status will ever be the same as the last one”.

Dali keeps contributing to American publications —such as Vogue or Art News, where he writes for more than 10 years— and also to the French (Connaissance des Arts, La Table Ronde or La Parisienne) and Spanish press (El Noticiero Universal, La Vanguardia española or Los Sitios). With the passing of time, Dalí remains interested in this field: in 1971 he prepares a special 50th anniversary issue for the French edition of the magazine Vogue —which he renamed as Vogué— which is dedicated, as Dali himself states, to glorifying his own personality and that of Gala. His last collaborations with the press appear in the newspapers El País —the articles “El buitre de Leonardo y el ‘Ictíneo’” (11 February 1985) and “Monturiol y Bellini, los dos aún en el fondo del mar” (17 February 1985)— and ABC —“Laudatorios” (24 June 1985).

The artist and his work are the centre and the object of covers belonging to the most famous magazines and one of his iconic works, the oil Christ of St John of the Cross, becomes the most reproduced picture. Moreover, Dalí plays with his image, a ubiquitous image constructed from the picture taken by Man Ray and published on the cover of Time in 1936. Some of these covers are permanently exhibited in Dalí’s house in Portlligat, Cadaqués, in a hall/dressing-room where the wardrobes are covered with images of Dalí and Gala (also very important in the mythos that the artist constructs), so we could say that the covers have become works of art which belong to Dalí’s house-biography and their existence will remain in time in the memory of the visitors.

3. Sections

This exhibition intends to reflect all this intense and passionate activity by Dalí in the written press. It follows the order of any magazine: first, the covers, then the articles and ads and finally the global design —the Dali News. We have thus structured the exhibition into sections that give us a thorough idea of the relationship Dalí had with the periodical publications:

1. Covers designed by Dalí
   - Covers reproducing works by Dalí
   - Covers where Dalí appears as a character
2. Illustrated articles
3. Ads
4. Towards total design: Dali News and Vogué
5. Participation in manuscripts and texts in magazines
6. Collages
7. Comic strips where Dalí and his works appear.
As a matter of fact, the photographer Philippe Halsman once summed up Dalí’s presence: “Dalí is a surrealist. The most surrealistic of all his creations, however, is himself.” This is the spirit in which we must understand his intervention in the world of magazines, especially during the 40s, and his appearance in numerous comic strips where he and his work, especially the famous melting watches, are treated with a more or less friendly irony, the sign of having acquired an indisputable fame.

4. Image Gallery
We reproduce hereby images of some of the works on exhibit with their corresponding technical data and contextualisation:

![Napoleon's Nose, Transformed into a Pregnant Woman, Strolling His Shadow with Melancholia amongst Original Ruins, 1945.](image)

This work made its début in society in Dalí’s first solo exhibition at the Bignou Gallery in New York in 1945. As the artist explained in the catalogue, the work was painted on three weeks, working two hours a day. He added that the title fully explains the picture. This is a meticulously painted oil, absolutely structured and with a perfect geometry, an exuberant, scenographic canvas full of nuances and iconographic references: the bust of Napoleon, the double image, the crutches, his eternal landscape, that of the Empordà … and with clear allusions to the architecture of Modernisme, to soft forms and Gaudí — the large building could allude to La Pedrera, his famous apartment building in Barcelona. Dalí liked to recall and recreate the fetish figure of Napoleon, associated with the sense of triumph, authority and creation.
Dalí felt a need to project his ideas beyond the exhibition rooms and channelled much of his creative energy into set design. The period of time during which he was deeply interested in ballet is relatively short, but very intense. Between 1939 and 1944 the painter premiered five theatre projects. A good example is Tristan fou, one of the ballets for which Dalí created not only sets and costumes but also the script, inspired by Tristan and Isolde by Richard Wagner (1813-1883). Tristan fou opened in New York on 15 December 1944. The painter described it as “the first paranoiac ballet based on the eternal myth of love in death”. This painting bears witness to the influence of the symbolist painter Arnold Böcklin (1837-1901) on Surrealism in general and on Dalí in particular. Specifically here, the dense atmosphere, the central part of the work, the cypress trees and the rocky landscape make explicit reference to the Swiss painter’s Isle of the Dead.

From 25 November 1947 to 3 January 1948, the Bignou Gallery in New York hosted a new Dalí exhibition. Among the 'New Paintings by Salvador Dalí’ (the title of the exhibition) were three of the paintings to be see in the present show, all three of which share a common characteristic: the beginning of the nuclear-atomic stage in the artist’s work. The explosion of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945 marks this period. As Dalí explained to André Parinaud in Unconfessable Confessions: 'The atomic
explosion of August 6 1945 shook me seismically. Thenceforth, the atom was my favourite food for thought. Many of the landscapes painted in this period express the great fear inspired in me by the announcement of that explosion. I was applying my paranoiac-critical method to the exploration of that world.

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