

Press release

Dalí exhibition at Fabergé Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia

Saint Petersburg, 31st March 2017. The Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí is pleased to announce that today at 7 p.m. a new Dalí temporary exhibition will be opened at Fabergé Museum in Saint Petersburg (Russia). It's devoted to his Surrealist and his Classical production. At 1 p.m. a press conference will be held together with a guided visit to the show. Its curator is Ms. Montse Aguer, director of the Dalí Museums, from the Dalí Foundation, and Thomas Clement Salomon, scientific coordinator of MondoMostre, organiser of the exhibition. The show will be on from 1st April until 2nd July. It was previously seen at Palazzo Blu in Pisa, Italy, from 1st October 2016 until 19th February in a version adapted to the Italian audience.

The press conference is being given by the Managing Director of the Foundation, Joan Manuel Sevillano, Thomas Clement Salomon from MondoMostre, and Vladimir Vorochenko, Head of the Board of The Link of Times, the institution that founded the Fabergé Museum of Saint Petersburg, a Museum of which he is the director. Other assistants were Konstantin Sukhenko, Head of the Committee for Culture of Saint Petersburg, and Christopher Forbes, vice president of Forbes Publishing Company. His collection of Fabergé jewellery motivated the creation of the Fabergé Museum.

The official opening will be attended by Russian authorities and representatives from the Spanish Consulate and Embassy.



Portrait of Salvador Dalí by photographer Ricardo Sans
Ricardo Sans, © Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres, 2017
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Contents of the exhibition Salvador Dalí. Surrealist and Classicist

The exhibition emphasizes the different periods of the artistic career of Salvador Dalí, from Surrealism and Classicism to the importance of the Italian Renaissance in his work. It includes 145 works ranging from 1934 to 1982: 142 from the Dalí Foundation, one from the Tate Modern in London and two works from Russian

private collections. The Foundation loans 22 paintings, 100 photogravures of *The Divine Comedy* and 20 original illustrations for *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*. During the show, the documentary *Dalí, the last masterpiece* will be displayed, a film produced by the Foundation and executed by DocDoc Films that will allow the public to delve into Dalí's life and work.

Surrealism

The exhibition begins with a selection of surrealist oil paintings (1934-1937) that include elements arranged in an enigmatic landscape of the Empordà region. Through his paranoiac-critical method, Dalí represents his obsessions in the landscape, a landscape that evokes childhood memories, ghostly spectrums, characters hidden or revealed. The landscape is a leitmotif in the work of Dalí, an ultra-local element to which Dalí gives a universal value. A good example of which is the painting *Enigmatic Elements in a Landscape*, included in the show.



Enigmatic Elements in a Landscape, 1934

© Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-

Salvador Dalí/VEGAP, Figueres, 2017

Since he was expelled from the Surrealist group at the beginning of the 40s, the Catalan painter adopts a classicist defence for Renaissance. Dalí's intellectual interests continue to expand like those of a Renaissance humanist. It is in this context that the illustrations for *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini* were executed, one of the most influential artists of the Florentine Renaissance whom Dalí liked for his rebel and controversial attitude. The illustrations for *The Divine Comedy* of Dante Alighieri were also produced in this period.

The core of the exhibition focuses on unfamiliar oil paintings, four of which are very unknown: *Untitled. After Michelangelo's "Crouching Boy"*; *Untitled. Moses after Michelangelo's "Tomb of Pope Julius II"*; *Untitled. Christ after Michelangelo's "The Pietà Palestrina"*; *Untitled. Giuliano de 'Medici after Michelangelo's "Tomb of Giuliano de Medici"*. These are part of his latest creations of the 80s, when the artist reinterprets Michelangelo's masterpieces.

By presenting these works for the first time as a stylistic and thematic whole, we are allowed to investigate Dalí's creative process at that particular moment in terms of technique and style, a period that is largely unknown. We see how his concerns are translated into artistic expression. He is basically in a desperate search for immortality. By reworking Michelangelo's pieces, Dalí shows, on the one hand, a

huge respect for tradition and the past and he, on the other hand, warns about the need to overcome them through constant innovation directed towards contemporaneity.

Dalí and Michelangelo



Geological Echo, after Michelangelo's "Pietà"
1982

© Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí/
VEGAP, Figueres, 2017



Untitled. Giuliano de Medici after Michelangelo's "Tomb of Giuliano de Medici", 1982

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VEGAP, Figueres, 2017

The set of paintings inspired by Michelangelo's creations corresponds to the last period of Dalí. They are works created throughout 1982, shortly before and shortly after the death of his wife and muse Gala, which occurred in June that year. Gala's true name was Elena Diakonova Ivanovna. Born in Kazan, she was a woman of great mystery and intuition, able to recognize the artistic and creative genius and associated with many intellectuals and artists. Her influence can be seen in the signature of many of Dalí's works since he signs with both names.

Dalí reinterprets Michelangelo's characters: he takes them out of their original iconographic context and represents them isolated, providing them with their own strength. Dalí gets inspiration from Michelangelo's sculptures and paintings and more precisely from the tension of titanic bodies with a lot of muscular strength and colossal structure.

With these works, the artist invites us to take a unique journey in search of his own self, his philosophical, artistic and humanist DNA.

The study on the technical procedures and working methods of the artist confirms that the execution of this set of paintings was fast. In over a year, Dalí painted about 25 works inspired by Michelangelo's themes, plus 13 others by Velázquez. Antoni Pitxot's, former director of the Dalí Theatre-Museum, opinion is very

accurate, when he describes this particular moment of Dalí in terms of his vitality and creativity: "it's pure expression, pure communication."

The Divine Comedy

This series was commissioned by the Italian Istituto Poligrafico to commemorate the seven hundred years of Dante's birth. Dalí used a mix of techniques, mainly watercolour, gouache and red ink on paper in folio format. Finally, one hundred illustrations were reproduced between 1959 and 1963 through a process of relief photogravure with woodblock screen.



Illustration for *The Divine Comedy*
© Salvador Dalí,
Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí/VEGAP, 2017

The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini

In 1945, Dalí was commissioned by publishing house Doubleday & Company to illustrate a new English edition of *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*. The technique of these illustrations is watercolour and ink on paper. The artist shows great admiration for Cellini and his skill in many artistic fields. Cellini, who was a sculptor, goldsmith and writer embodies the multidisciplinary artist whom Dalí aspired.

Catalogue

The catalogue, published in Russian, has been coordinated by Lucia Moni, from the Centre for Dalinian Studies, and includes texts by Montse Aguer, Director of the Dalí Museums, Irene Civil and Juliette Murphy, from the Conservation and Restoration Department of the Dalí Foundation, and by Thomas Clement Salomon, scientific coordinator of MondoMostre. The articles offer new perspectives on the influence of Classicism in the artist throughout his life. They are illustrated by many unpublished images that correspond to the preparatory material as well as portraits of the artist.

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