



FUNDACIÓ  
GALA-SALVADOR DALÍ

Press release

## Opening of the temporary exhibition

### *Dalí. Stereoscopic images. Painting in three dimensions*

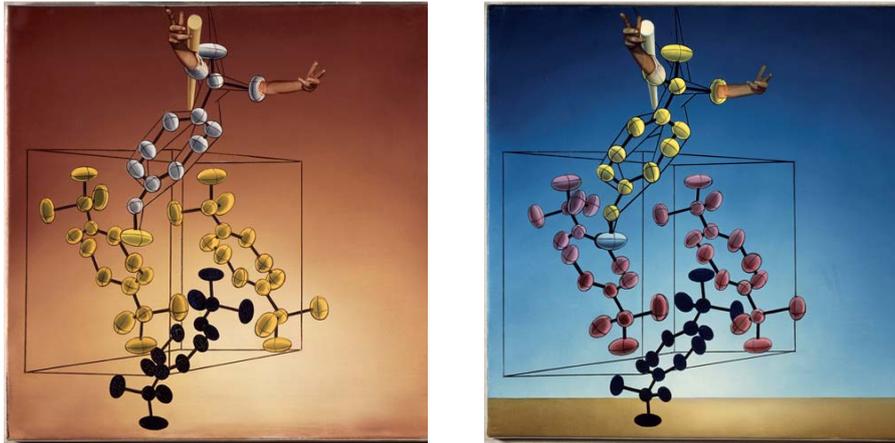
**The Dalí Foundation highlights the artist's later work related to optical illusions**

**Figueres, 15 December 2016.** The Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí is pleased to announce that today at 10 o'clock in the morning a new temporary exhibition at the Dalí Theatre-Museum in Figueres was officially inaugurated. The exhibition is entitled *Dalí. Stereoscopic images. Painting in three dimensions* and it will remain open throughout year 2017. This is the fourth temporary exhibition held this year. Six pairs of stereoscopic works will be on display accompanied by equipment to observe the three-dimensional effects.

#### Concept and content

Salvador Dalí was an artist with boundless curiosity who was constantly in search of the latest technical developments in order to apply these to his creations. From the mid-1960s and throughout the 1970s, his interest focused above all on virtual images and depth. This moment coincided with the preparation and subsequent inauguration of the Theatre-Museum and the painter indeed dedicated some of the museum's spaces to optical illusions: anamorphosis, stereoscopy and holography. At the end of the route around the museum, the Optical Illusions Room, number 19, recreates the result of the painter's studies in this field. From today we are holding a temporary exhibition (room 22) to display the museum's stereoscopic works in a different, more up-to-date way, while at the same time attempting to maintain a certain Dalinian *artisanal* spirit.

In room number 22 we present six pairs of stereoscopic oil paintings: *Dalí from behind painting Gala from behind immortalized by six virtual corneas momentarily reflected in six real mirrors*, c. 1972-73; *Gala's foot*, c. 1975-76; *Untitled. According to 'Las Meninas' by Velázquez*, c. 1975-76; *The structure of DNA*, c. 1975-76; *Dalí's hand drawing back the Golden Fleece in the form of a cloud to show Gala, completely nude, the dawn, very, very far away behind the sun*, 1977-78; *Dalí lifting the skin of the Mediterranean Sea to show Gala the birth of Venus*, 1978.



*The structure of DNA*. Stereoscopic work. c. 1975-76  
Oil on canvas  
60 x 60 cm (each painting)  
© Salvador Dalí. Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / VEGAP, Figueres, 2016

Technical innovations in the field of optics interested the painter very much, as did the discoveries made in the field of biology related to the world of mathematics. It is therefore no surprise that at the end of 1964 Dalí began to study rhinoceros horns and the logarithmic curves derived from them. He also studied the structure of flies' eyes, which led him to confirm that, thanks to this research, he had discovered 'totally stereoscopic' three-dimensional painting.

The results of this research can be seen in the diptychs Dalí painted in the 1970s. The catalyst for this line of investigation was the work of Gerrit Dou (1613-1675). At an exhibition in Paris between 1970 and 1971 that included work by the Dutch painter, Dalí discovered that Dou had made duplicates of his paintings. According to Antoni Pitxot, former director of the Theatre-Museum, Dalí was convinced that these were not just copies but that it was essential to view the pictures together. Studying them more closely, Dalí confirmed that they were not exactly the same, and that there were small differences between them.

At some point Dalí bought two pieces by Dou: *The doctor's visit* (1650-1655) and *The spinner* (1660-1665), also known as *Portrait of Rembrandt's mother*. The painter decided to exhibit them in the Masterpieces Room of the Dalí Theatre-Museum. In one issue of the magazine *Setmanari Artística Mar Empordanesa* (1976), Dalí mentioned these pieces and wondered whether one of them, *The spinner*, was a replica or a stereoscopic trial, paired with the one in the Hermitage collection. In fact, the artist was quite insistent on this theme when explaining the content of the museum, telling the *Setmanari* that, in the Masterpieces Room, we find '2 Gerard Dou 2 probable stereoscopic experiences'.

After studying Dou's work and stereoscopic techniques Dalí came to the conclusion that the Dutch painter had used special lenses and mirrors to create a single stereoscopic painting (probably with the help of Van Leeuwenhoek, one of the early developers of modern microscopy), and was thus the inventor of this technique.

**But what is stereoscopy?** It is the result of the vision of two flat images of the same object, taken from different perspectives. When each eye sees one of the images, the brain adds them together and this produces a sensation of depth. Based on this principle, Dalí created pairs of paintings of almost identical images, but seen from different focal points in order to produce three-dimensional effects when viewed. To achieve a perfect relief effect, Dalí slightly shifted the centre of each image in relation to the viewer's eyes; these pairs of paintings are therefore never identical copies. In fact, the colours of the images also change, sometimes very obviously. The resulting composition formed in our brains becomes an image in three dimensions, such as those that have been popularised today by virtual games and projections.



*Dalí lifting the skin of the Mediterranean Sea to show Gala the birth of Venus.*

Stereoscopic work. 1978

Oil on canvas

100.5 x 100.5 cm (each painting)

© Salvador Dalí. Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / VEGAP, Figueres, 2016

At the Theatre-Museum, in room 19, there is a permanent display of photographs of some of Dalí's stereoscopic works, staged with mirrors that allow the three-dimensional effect to be observed. In order to see the relief, one must simply bring one's face close to the glass, at the centre of the edge of the two mirrors. In contrast, in room number 22, where we present this temporary exhibition, some devices have been installed next to each pair of stereoscopic works in order to see the three-dimensionality. These devices consist of special glasses and a mobile telephone screen, like those typically used in virtual reality projects. We have adapted the mechanisms that Dalí proposed in the 1970s to view his stereoscopic works to the 21st century.

According to Antoni Pitxot, when Dalí was preparing these stereoscopic paintings, one of the aspects that most fascinated him was the possibility of escaping the order and the limitations imposed by the rules of optical experiments and, thus, be able to recreate new illusions. With this temporary exhibition, the Dalí Foundation also hopes to achieve this objective.

The exhibition is curated by Montse Aguer, director of the Dalí Museums, and coordinated by Carme Ruiz, from the CED.

## Staging

The staging of the exhibition was designed by Pep Canaleta from 3carme33 and the graphic design is by Alex Gifreu. The image projected onto the devices has been created by DocDoc Films.

### **Further information:**

Press Office

Imma Parada

Tel. (+34) 972 677 518

[comunicacio@fundaciodalí.org](mailto:comunicacio@fundaciodalí.org)

<https://www.salvador-dali.org>