

DALÍ

ULTRALOCAL / ULTRAGLOBAL

29.03 - 28.05.2023

With the collaboration of Chus Martínez, this exhibition presents a selection of six works rediscovering Salvador Dalí's artistic universe in the light of two aspects which appear to be difficult to reconcile at first sight, but which are nevertheless embodied in his work and his character: his cosmopolitanism (notably his international experiences in Paris - where he discovered Surrealism - and the United States, where he collaborated with personalities such as Walt Disney) and his grounding in the singular culture of his native Catalonia and its poetic landscapes.

Indeed, the artist proves that it is precisely his cultural distinctiveness and the demands of his

ULTRALOCAL...

"Port Lligat, symbol of a life of asceticism, of isolation... It was there that I learned to impoverish myself, to limit and file down my thinking in order that it might become effective as an axe. A life that was hard, without metaphor or alcohol, a life marked by the light of eternity".

Salvador Dalí

The exhibition evokes the indissoluble relationship that links the artist to his native land and which impregnates his work: the rocks at Cadaqués and Port Lligat cove inspired the main environment of his artistic universe,

whether the works were created in Spain, France or the United States. We can cite, for example, the rare oil on copper *Nus dans un paysage de Cap de Creus* (*Nudes in a landscape of Cap de Creus*) (1970), which is infused with this eternal and ultra-analytical light, or the striking *Desert Watch* (1975), which represents a Catalan peasant with the traditional barretina in front of an immense giant mermaid-Madonna with a melting clock face. Dalí links local traditions to the vernacular culture of this haven of peace thanks to his hallucinatory imagination.

his roots which made his universalism possible - this ambivalence releasing creativity: "Everything that is contradictory creates life".

Chus Martínez confirms this: "Dalí wants everything from us when we are in front of his work. His way of making art calls for a reinvention and constant revision of the order of ideas, values, beliefs. The challenge consists of giving life to poesis, capable of always remaining open to flexible causality, open to the accidents of life, on the one hand, and on the other hand to the changes that art and society experience over the succession of time that we call history".

ULTRAGLOBAL...

The exhibition also demonstrates the Catalan artist's attachment to Paris and the United States. The French capital was the first city in which he travelled, became acquainted with brilliant minds like Picasso, Breton and Éluard, and where he joined the Surrealist movement. A crucial movement for the evolution of the artist's work, this period is represented here by *Objet scatologique à fonctionnement symbolique* (*Le Soulier de Gala*) (*Scatological object functioning symbolically - Gala's shoe*), a mysterious object consisting of a red shoe, a glass of milk, sugar

lumps, a matchbox and pubic hairs.

The original 1931 copy (now lost) was recognized as the first Surrealist assembly created by the artist.

Dalí regularly visited the United States. Starting in 1934, for 40 years the artist spent every winter in New York, resolutely awaited by the local population which recognized and worshipped him. On the other side of the country, in Hollywood, he met Walt Disney, who hired him to work on the "Destino" short film project, of which a very complete 1945 sketch is presented here.



Nus dans un paysage de Cap de Creus (1970)

© Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala Salvador Dalí, 2023.

Objet scatologique à fonctionnement symbolique (Le Soulier de Gala) (1931-1973)

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Dalí and the epigenesis

Salvador Dalí's work and person embody strong premonitions of situations which make up the present: his obsession for self-generation, his insistence on maintaining ambivalence in the reading and interpretation of gender and sexuality, a non-binary identity, his interest in understanding life processes from art and in the company of science, his interest in investigating and expressing vernacular culture in his artwork and in his life...

Salvador Dalí understands that art, as creation, is the ideal place in which to pose fundamental questions on the origin of life and intelligence. In this respect, if art is creation, it is not just the creation of artwork but also the creation of forces of creation, that is to say epigenesis. Epigenesis is the embryological theory according to which the organs are formed progressively starting from, or arise from, an originally undifferentiated and homogeneous material. To understand creation — from Aristotle to Harvey, Cavendish, Kant and Erasmus, Darwin, including 19th-century biology, with Wolff, Blumenbach and His, and the 20th century — entails placing artistic creation beyond the aesthetic order and establishing a parallel between nature and artist. What constitutes a work of art? The addition of the parts which emerge successively or the superaddition of parts? Is the shape something that exists in the mind and is reflected, is represented on a canvas, is developed starting from a specific object, or does it respond to the power of a pre-existing substance?

In the hands of Salvador Dalí, epigenesis functions according to an Aristotelian model. In an Aristotelian theory of generation, epigenesis implies that the unformed organic substance adopts a shape which is potentially inside it. In this respect, it is important to indicate that an artwork is always at the intersection between a theory of the biological development of shapes and of motifs, and a theory of the vital potentiality of matter to self-organize.

It is the self-organizing capacity of the artwork which gives rise to the motifs, to the worlds which emerge inside it. It is not therefore by chance that Salvador Dalí pays particular attention to vernacular culture and traditions. In them, dreams are happenings that create myths, stories, rites and customs. In popular culture, transmission is a differential occurrence that interprets the past and connects it to the present and the future in a physical manner, maintaining the archaic forms without renouncing or coming into contradiction with scientific explanations or new ways of understanding the world. This is why Salvador Dalí's work deliberately seeks to create a universe which is easy to access, simple, direct and at the same time beautiful, open, naive, attentive to the great archaic myths, closely committed to popular wisdom, to spontaneous ingenuousness... Salvador Dalí's artwork wants to be nature and to be able to create a universe, create the moon, create the oceans, create life, at the same time as wanting to be a people, a community, a longing for home and happiness. In his work, everything is geared toward the creation of conditions for a situation in which we not only understand the work, but the work itself is established as such through our presence and participation. In this respect, as spectators we are essential. However, we should also consider that this "we" can and must be extended to the animals, the forests, the rivers and the seas which, like the

Mediterranean, are a fundamental space in his work. We see the work here, in an exhibition setting, but it is not unreasonable to think that the work could be in the middle of a forest, or rise up before us on a beach at Cadaqués. Salvador Dalí wants everything from us when we are in front of his work; he wants us to let our senses and the feelings of the artwork flow together always.

His way of making art calls for a reinvention and constant revision of the order of ideas, values, beliefs. Artistic practice creates new ideas, like science and technology. Artistic practice creates new forms, like nature, which is the origin of life. The challenge consists of giving life to *poiesis*, capable of always remaining open to flexible causality, open to the accidents of life, on the one hand, and on the other hand to the changes that art and society experience over the succession of time that we call history. Indeed, Salvador Dalí's work is artificial intelligence, a substance that wants autonomy to create experiments which demonstrate that it is possible to create more intelligent life in and from art.

Chus Martínez