View of Cadaqués with Shadow of Mount Pani, 1917

During this period Dalí was experimenting with Impressionism, a 19th Century art movement that sought to capture the immediacy of the visual moment by painting the effects of light on the surfaces of objects. The work is painted on rough burlap, which gives the Bay of Cadaqués scene, with its blocky houses and shimmering sea, an assertive texture.

At the invitation of Dalí's father's friend Jose Pepito Pichot, Dalí offered to visit the Pichot family estate just outside of Figueres. The Pichots were an extended family whose many members included proficient musicians and artists. Dalí's father believed an association with this artistic and musically talented family would be very beneficial to his son. In the Pichot dining room, the walls were lined with impressionist paintings, some by Ramon Pichot, an established Impressionist painter and a close friend of Pablo Picasso (1881-1976).

One day while looking at Ramon's works Dalí decided to become a painter. Dalí later said, "Impressionist painting attracted me at the time because it was considered anti-establishment and a revolutionary aesthetic theory.

Girl with Curls, 1926

This work foreshadows Dalí's Surrealist style, for it presents a mysterious tableaux painted with hallucinatory clarity. While the blend of realism and distortion in Girl with Curls offers a glimpse of the Surrealist style Dalí would become famous for, it was painted three years before he joined the movement. Several ambiguous elements in the composition make it feel more like a dream than a representation of reality. First, judging by the scale of the building next to the girl, she appears to be too large for the landscape in which she stands. Secondly, the girl's face is hidden from view, creating a sense of mystery and not providing any psychological details that her features could provide. And lastly, while the landscape is painted in a fairly realistic manner, the curves of the girl's body are highly exaggerated – looking like she stepped out of a dream. This girl originated in childhood fantasies about a fictional Russian girl whom he nicknamed "Galuchka." He saw this girl in one of the images in an optical theater/stereoscopic box in the house of his childhood teacher, Señor Trayter. These images "were to stir [Dalí] for the rest of his life". She became his dream girl onto whom he could project all of his desires.

Dalí pays homage to neoclassicism and its Catalan variant Noucentisme proposed by the writer Eugenio D'Ors in this alluring painting. Here he represents the unusual the view of a young girl seen from behind and located in an Ampurdán landscape treated in an Italianate style. The representation of a figure viewed from behind is a pretext for painting the expansive landscape imbued with psychological tension, with its high sky and dramatic crescent moon, as we are invited to look over her shoulder and therefore identify with her point of view. Though her sculptural pose (or "contrapposto") and the treatment of the landscape point to classical motifs, the device of looking over her shoulder derives from Romantic painting, and her exaggeratedly curving hips introduce the erotic into what is otherwise a restrained subject. Dalí later explained how this figure was transformed from the adolescent girl Dullita into the literary figure of Gradiva and eventually reborn as his wife Gala.

Gradiva was a mythic, literary phantasm, who was notable for how her foot was elegantly raised when walking, the subject of a popular novel analyzed by Freud at the beginning of the 1900s, but only translated into French in 1931. At this time Dalí adopted this subject, making it part of his personal mythology and imbuing this figure with subjective symbolism. Indeed, Gradiva became one of the artist's central concerns during the 1930s

Eggs on the Plate without the Plate, 1932

This painting was initially inspired by what Dalí called an “intra-uterine memory.” Of this experience, Dalí states, “all enchantment for me was in my eyes and the most splendid…vision [while in the womb] was that of a pair of eggs fried in a pan without a pan...” Dalí claims that he could conjure this intrauterine memory whenever he wished by applying pressure with his fingers to his eyes, stimulating his phosphenes to create bright visual images. In this painting Dalí reproduces the colors that remind him of his mother’s womb: “the intra-uterine paradise was the color of hell…red, orange, yellow, and bluish, the color of flames...”

The egg suspended on a string represents an embryo attached by the umbilical cord in the fiery orange world, while the shape also suggests a limp phallus. The dripping watch hanging on the lichen covered wall, whose shape mimics the embryonic yoke, is a “soft watch” variant which already had become a Dalí nian trademark (representing the fluidness and irrelevance of time in the artist’s dreamy Port Lligat). A second inspiration for the painting was Dalí’s desire to pay tribute to Gala. He was reluctant to paint her likeness and instead focused on one of her celebrated attributes – her gaze.

The muse to many Surrealists during the 1920s, part of Gala’s power was her unblinking gaze, described by husband Paul Éluard as, “so intense it could pierce walls.” In this work, Dalí makes a surreal metaphoric leap by painting the eggs on the plate with a shimmer he likens to his muse’s piercing gaze. The painting’s severe architecture reveals Dalí’s preoccupation with the contrast between geometric architecture and fluid life forms. It may also foreshadow Dalí’s later preoccupation with the architect of Spain’s San Lorenzo de El Escorial Juan de Herrera (1530-1597) and with Ramon Llull (1232-1315), a Catalan mystic obsessed with numerology and inventing a unified system of knowledge. Juan de Herrera was also the author of Discourse on Cubic Form

The Weaning of Furniture-Nutrition, 1934

The provocatively titled The Weaning of Furniture-Nutrition is a surreal meditation on the word “weaning.” The woman is Dalí’s childhood nurse, Llucia, who “weaned” the young Dalí from his mother. Dalí has metaphorically “weaned” Llucia out of her familiar environment, for she is no longer a nurse in his childhood Figueres. Instead, Dalí has posed her as a “net mender” in Port Lligat. In this fishing village, the women mend the torn fishing nets.

Dalí takes the “weaning” metaphor one step further. As a child, Dalí associated his night table and bottle with his nurse and saw them as an intrinsic part of her being. So in this work he “weaned” them physically out of her body, suggesting that his nurse and these inanimate objects were two parts of the same identity, the furniture fitting in a rectangular hole carved in her back. Their removal creates a void that requires a crutch, Dalí’s symbol of death and impotence. In this painting, the crutch takes on a new meaning and becomes a symbol of solemnity rather than a prop of any kind

Archeological Reminiscence of Millet's Angelus, 1933-35

The artist visualized the Angelus couple from the painting by Jean-François Millet. As a result of his memories, Dalí paints the figures as ancient towers on the moonlit Ampurdan plain, an atmosphere charged with an eerie, prehistoric quality. In his essay on Millet's work, Dalí uses a postcard to illustrate how the bowing figures reminded him of the monoliths (menhirs) he saw in parts of Catalonia. Dalí paints the female slightly taller than the male, with her features resembling a praying mantis. In his analysis of the painting's latent meaning, Dalí felt that the female was not only the dominant partner, but also posed a sexual threat to the male, associating her with a female praying mantis.

This alludes to Dalí's assertion that Millet's painting represents sexual repression, male fear and impotence, and in his work Dalí has updated the popular 19th century Symbolist tradition of the femme fatale into a Surrealist context, extending the message of the implicit dangers of female sensuality

Lobster Phone, 1935-38

Lobster Telephone 1938
The Lobster Telephone is one of Dali's most sardonic and unsettling creations. The simple placement of two unrelated objects together - a lobster on a traditional phone receiver - turns the everyday device into something surreal, making it strange but fascinating. This working phone was one of ten created for Edward James, an important Dali patron. The idea for the outlandish object came one evening when Dali. James, and friends were dining: they were tossing aside their lobster shells when one landed on a phone.

One can imagine Dali leaping up from the dinner table and exclaiming. "Eureka!" This surreal object also can be seen as Dali's salute to Vincent van Gogh, the 19th century painter, who came to symbolize the mad artist by cutting off part of his ear to prove his love to a woman. Dali liked to think of himself as the mad artist of the 20th century. Proclaiming. The only difference between a madman and myself is that I am not mad!™ Here. Dali has created an object that, like all Surrealist objects, must be activated in the mind's eye. Imagine answering a phone by placing a real lobster's claw against your ear. It could easily snip your ear off. In this way.

Dalí produces a fittingly modern and surreal tribute to van Gogh and to mad artists everywhere. Dali's comments only serve to reinforce the absurdity of the object: "I do not understand why, when I ask for a grilled lobster in a restaurant. I am never served a cooked telephone. I do not understand why champagne is always chilled, and why, on the other hand, telephones, which are habitually so frightfully warm and disagreeably sticky to the touch, are not also put in silver buckets with crushed ice around them.

Enchanted Beach with Three Fluid Graces, 1938

Enchanted Beach offers an example of Dalí's imaginative interpretation of the classical theme of the Three Graces. In art, the symbols of ideal beauty and the handmaidens of Venus. The figure on the right is developed from a detail from an equestrian study by Leonardo da Vinci; Dalí creates a face formed by a distant landscape that is visible through a hole in the rock.

The visage of the middle female's face is formed by the horse and figures. The bowed head of the third figure on the left is formed by one of the black rocks in the landscape. The features of a skull can also be found in this area, with the two boulders forming black eye sockets and the gripping fingers forming the skull's teeth.

This painting illustrates the increasing influence of Renaissance and Baroque painters on Dalí. The interplay of perspective and the balance of the elements show an evolving control over his paranoiac-critical illusions

Old age, Adolescence, Infancy (The Three Ages), 1940

Dalí uses double images derived from his paranoiac-critical method to create the allegorical faces of Old Age, Adolescence, and Infancy. It is through this process Dalí developed these complex, double images used to undermine the irrational world of the image by making it more believable than the viewer’s real world. In the Three Ages, glimpses of Port Lligat are seen through the apertures where illusions of faces now appear. These openings were suggested to Dalí by arches of local ruins.

On the left, the bowed head of the woman from Millet's Angelus makes up the eye of Old Age; the hole in the brick wall forms her head's outline, and the rest of the figure forms the nose and mouth. The nose and mouth of Adolescence, the figure in the center, is created from the head and scarf of Dalí’s nurse sitting on the ground with her back to us. The eyes emerge from the isolated houses seen in the hills across the Bay of Cadaqués. On the right, a fisherwoman repairing a net makes the barely formed face of Infancy

Slave Market with the Disappearing Bust of Voltaire, 1940

The Slave Market is an excellent example of Dalí's skill at creating paranoiac-critical hallucinations for his audience to share. For this particularly successful double-image, Dalí's visualization of this apparition is created by incorporating the celebrated bust by the French sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon, The Bust of Voltaire in 1778. In the composition, the arrangement of two Dutch women in the marketplace re-creates The Bust of Voltaire. The top of Voltaire's head is outlined by the opening in the ruined wall; the women's heads become his eyes, their collars become his upper cheeks and nose, the dark part of their clothing becomes the shadows cast by his nose and cheeks, and the white sleeves of the right-hand figure forms Voltaire's chin.

The fruit dishes also create dual illusions: the apple in the center bowl appears to be the rear of the figure in the background; the pear in the dish on the right dissolves into the hill in the distance. Voltaire was a skeptical French philosopher from the 18th century whose writings Dalí read as a young man. The Surrealists enjoyed ridiculing the famous philosopher by pointing out that he frequently contradicted himself, yet they liked one of his best known works, Candide, because it attacked the philosophical optimism of previous years. Its conclusion, "Let us cultivate our garden," instead of speculating on unanswerable problems, expressed Voltaire's practical philosophy of common sense.

In 1971, The Scientific American magazine, used the Slave Market to illustrate the perceptual "switching effect," in which each element of a double image can be seen alternatively, but never both at once. In his autobiography, The Secret Life, Dalí compares the perception of these double images with camouflage; "The invisible image of Voltaire may be compared in every respect to the mimesis of the leaf-insect rendered invisible by the resemblance and the confusion established between the Figure and the Background."

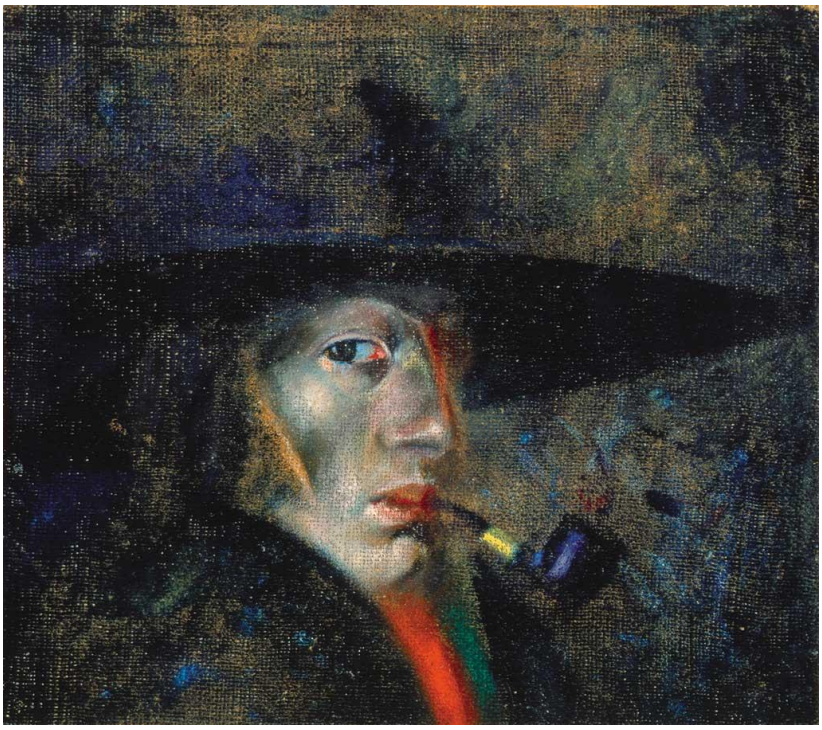
Daddy Longlegs of the Evening-Hope!, 1940

Daddy Longlegs of the Evening - Hope! (*Araignée du soir, espoir*) - 1940. (Including: soft aeroplane, vomited by a cannon, ants, victory born of a broken wing, violoncello in white mastic, and an angel who weeps).

Dalí and his wife, Gala, stayed in the United States from 1940 to 1948 due to the war in Europe which drove him and his fellow Surrealists into exile. This was the first painting Dalí completed after coming to America. The victory referred to in the title is the classical sculpture of the winged Nike of Samothrace who emerges shrouded while rising from the limp airplane. The cannon from the deflated plane is reminiscent of Giorgio de Chirico's *The Philosopher Conquest of 1914*.

An anguished head occupies the center, but here it has become a soft structure infused with sunset colors. The head is metamorphosed into an elastic female figure whose breasts are mimicked by two inkwells (erotic symbols in Dalí's iconography) which suggest the signing of treaties (and Dalí's father's role as a notary). Ants eat away at the figure's mouth as they do in countless other paintings, indicating the insidious destruction swallowing Europe. The viscous cello and bow suggest that all of Europe's highest precepts were helpless to prevent the destruction of culture at the hands of a fascist regime.

The painting's title refers to an old French peasant legend: a spider seen in the evening is a symbol of good luck.



Self-Portrait (Figueres), 1921

This self-portrait was painted during the most tumultuous time in Dalí's life. Dalí's mother, Felipa Doménech i Ferrés (1874-1921) died of cancer on February 8, 1921. Yet shortly after, Dalí was accepted to the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid, which he began attending in the fall of 1922. The young artist has represented himself as a young dandy, wearing a large floppy black hat, a black cape, a bold red scarf, and sporting a pipe, creating an unusual appearance that gained him some notoriety among the other students at the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid. That Dalí chose to use these props for this early self-portrait indicates that at the age of seventeen, he was already consciously building an eccentric public personality.

Dalí's eccentricity developed even earlier in an attempt to establish his own distinct identity. Dalí's identity crisis was the result of having a brother who died nine months before his own birth and who was also named Salvador Dalí. The artist felt that his parents wanted him to be the replacement for the dead brother. Yet Dalí's eccentricities helped him achieve a separate unique identity.

Notable is the artist's use of chiaroscuro, a technique where strong dark and light areas are contrasted to produce form.

Cadaqués, 1923

Figueres is located inland from the Costa Brava in an area called the Empordà at the foot of the Pyrenees near the French border. The landscape in this region was to be a major influence and inspiration to Dalí throughout his artistic career. The seemingly endless plain that surrounds Figueres, the distant horizon, the white beaches of Rosas, and the rugged cliffs of the Albares Mountains recur in every period of Dalí's work.

In the summers of Dalí's youth, the family often retreated to their residence in the nearby coastal town. This is an expansive view of Cadaqués from the rock terraces above the Dalí family home. The dynamic composition of this work about his homeland uses a traditional form to establish the subject's tranquillity. The balloon rising above the landscape and the tiny white sailboat on the expansive bay below create a feeling of lightness and space.

If these seven young women appear similar to one another, it is because Dalí used his sister, Anna Maria (1908–1990), as the model for all of them. She was Dalí's only sibling and was his primary model in the years before he met his future wife, Gala, in 1929.

Portrait of My Sister, 1923

When this work was first exhibited in Spain, it brought the 19-year-old artist considerable fame and was recognized as being comparable to Picasso's *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*,1906, or his equally great *Woman in White*, 1923. Dalí completed the first version of *Portrait of My Sister* in 1923, and originally represented his sister, Anna Maria, seated in an armchair with her hands crossed in her lap; a small table with books on top occupied the lower right-hand corner. Approximately four years later, Dalí returned to this celebrated canvas and transformed it by adding the second upside-down figure, which radically contrasts with the first and makes the finished painting a double portrait. While there is no documentation that details why Dalí transformed this work so thoroughly, it is believed to be either a reflection of Picasso's profound influence after their first meeting in 1926, or as a symbol of developing tension between the artist and his sister.

Basket of Bread, 1926

This Realist panel demonstrates that by 1926, Dalí's formative years were drawing to a close; Dalí could achieve mastery in whatever style he chose. This painting has another distinction – it was one of the first Dalí paintings to be seen in America. In 1928 it was exhibited at the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, along with two other works. The artist's use of detailed illusionism and dramatic lighting against an almost black background alludes to the influence of the Spanish painter Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664), demonstrated in his work Still Life with Lemons, Oranges and a Rose, 1633. A contemporary of Diego Velázquez (1599-1660), de Zurbarán was renowned for his works' austere piety and quiet beauty. Dalí saw bread as the staple of life of the Catalan people. Bread was the most basic element that united Catalans in their daily lives, and like Vermeer and Zurbarán, he renders it as a sublime symbol.

The painstaking realism of *The Basket of Bread* was a major achievement and marked a turning point in his career. It boosted Dalí's ego and gave him a sense of mastery with traditional painting, freeing him to explore more difficult subject matter and imagery. This simple composition of bread in a straw basket on cloth is set dramatically against a dark background. Dalí followed in the Spanish still-life tradition, where a domestic scene represents spiritual reflection. By saturating the objects in such a mysterious light, he transforms the composition into an object of deep contemplation.

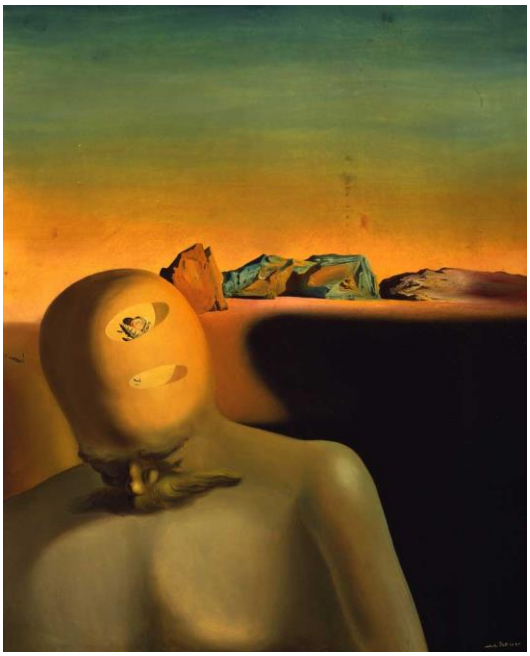
Still Life: Sandía, 1924

While attending the Academy in Madrid, Dalí absorbed the dramatic developments of European avant-garde art, largely through magazines and books. One of the most important publications was the Italian journal *Valori Plastici*, which contained an eclectic range of modern paintings including cubist works. Cubism was an art movement founded by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) and George Braque (1882-1963) in 1907. The essence of the movement was the reduction of objects into geometric forms that could be identified like clues by the spectator. Through these nonrepresentational forms, the Cubists sought to define the permanent properties of objects. Dalí's foray into cubism is reflected in this stylized 1924 Still life: *Sandia*. This painting shows Dalí's inventive response to the fragmentation and abstract planes of Cubism. The Spanish Cubist, Juan Gris (1887-1927) influenced Dalí's color palette of only white, black, sienna and olive green in this early work.

This canvas represents a fruit dish, which includes grapes, pears, a lemon and a watermelon presented on a table and in the immediate foreground of the composition.

Far from a mere student work, Dalí's *Still Life (Sandia)* was exhibited publicly in the Exposición de la Sociedad de Artistas Ibéricos (Madrid), where Dalí presented a number of canvases, including other still lifes. Further, Dalí's contribution to Cubism was mentioned by the critic Juan de la Encina on the front page of the newspaper *La Voz*(Madrid), and this painting was reproduced in the illustrated magazine Nuevo Mundo (Madrid), making it one of Dalí's earliest works visible to the general public.

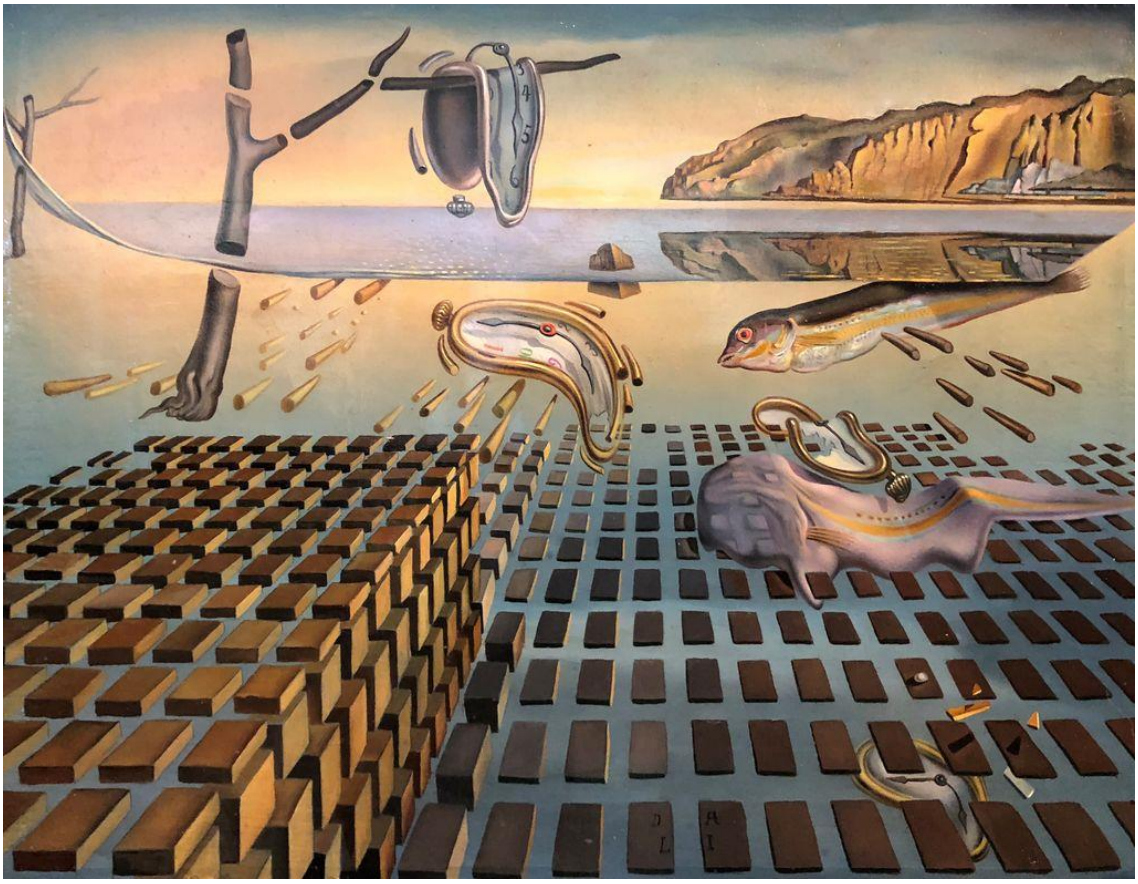
The Average Bureaucrat, 1930



As a Surrealist, Dalí had an aversion to bureaucrats. The surrealists were disgusted by bureaucrats who represented the despised bourgeois. Dalí also shared their aversion to bureaucrats, stemming from his days at the Residencia when he and his friends would depict them as “putrefactes” (“putrescent”), the child-like caricatures Dalí and his friends created to write off people who represented philistine or outmoded ways. Dalí’s father, who had expelled him from the family home, was a notary (responsible for land transactions in their agricultural village), and thus a respected bureaucratic. Dalí’s image of the bureaucrat, which appears often during this period, is both universal and personal, and one of the most enigmatic figures in Dalí's work.

Dalí’s bureaucrat, whose yellow wax-like skin resembles one of DeChirico’s mannequins, is portrayed as a pathetic figure. Two empty cavities are carved into his head, stressing the emptiness of the skull, and instead of brains Dalí places tiny sea shells and pebbles from the local beaches near his home. In addition, the bureaucrat’s ears have been removed, so he is unable to hear complaints.Yet this harsh attack on his father is tempered by a tiny image of filial devotion located just to the left of the bureaucrat’s skull. Two small figures stand in the distance, representing the “Paradise Lost” when Dalí and his father were close during his childhood, an image also found in *The First Days of Spring*.

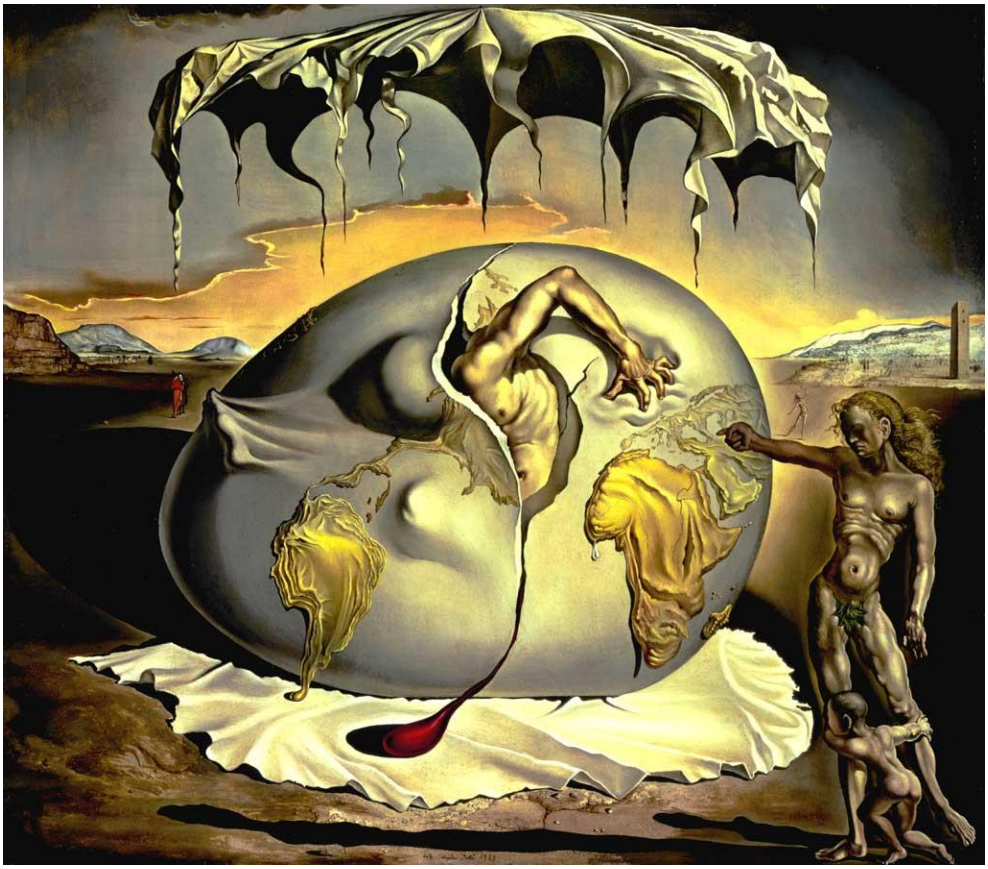
In addition to the figures, shadows play a major role in Dalí’s composition. An ominous shadow dominates the barren landscape of the lower right of the painting. Initially resembling the shadow of Mt. Paní from Dalí’s early work, here the shadow has a different reference. Dalí said that this is the shadow cast by a grand piano, meant to create anxiety in the viewer. This piano shadow refers to Dalí’s childhood memories of the Pitxots’ summer concerts, when their piano was moved onto the rocks of Cadaqués. Such specific childhood memories are transformed into ominous presences in Dalí’s work, developing from real memories into nightmarish devices of anxiety.



The Disintegration of the Persistence of Memory, 1952-54

The reappearance of the inspirational rock formation at the Bay of Cullero and the forlorn olive tree links this composition back to the original painting. In contrast to his 1931 *Persistence of Memory*, the 1952-54 *Disintegration* shows the world altered by the nuclear age. The rectangular blocks represent the “atomic power source,” and the form of the head of Dali’s soft self-portrait is depicted in a fluid manner. The addition to the original painting of the missile-like objects flying in the background connects the work more clearly to the atomic bomb, yet the form is actually a rhino horn. Dalí found the rhino horn to be a symbol of absolute perfection, and referred to this phase of his career in the early 1950s as his “rhinocerotic” period.

In *The Secret Life*, Dalí wrote about the original *Persistence of Memory*: "I was about to turn out the light when instantaneously I saw the solution. I saw two soft watches, one of them hanging lamentably on the branch of the olive tree." After seeing the work that Dalí completed in an afternoon, Gala commented, "No one can forget the image once he as seen it."



Geopoliticus Child Watching the Birth of the New Man, 1943

The artist's notes for the painting read: "1. Parachute, paranaissance (sic), protection, cupola, placenta, Catholicism, Egg, earthly distortion, biological ellipse. Geography changes its skin in historic germination." Unlike his work from the 1930s, this painting is perhaps easier to decipher because its symbolism is more canonical, downplaying the enigmatic mystery and visual contradictions of his Freudian surrealist period.

The "new" man pushes his way out of the large egg/globe in the center. He is emerging out of the "new" nation/world power, the United States, Dalí's temporary home at the time. The enlargement of Africa and South America represents the growing importance of the Third World, and the draped cloth represents the placenta (odd mix of reptile/bird and mammal). An androgynous figure points to the emerging "new man," showing the cowering "geopoliticus child" the new historical period he will represent.

Velazquez Painting the Infanta Marguerita with the Lights and Shadows of His Own Glory, 1958

In anticipation of the 300th anniversary of the death of Diego Velázquez (1599-1660; court painter to King Phillip IV), Dalí devotes his eighth masterwork to an interpretation of Velázquez's great painting, *The Infanta* (1660, The Prado, Madrid). This portrait was originally painted to act as a calling card for the young Infanta in order to find an appropriate suitor from another kingdom. Many artists were painting variations on Velázquez's work, as with Picasso's series of Las Meninas paintings. In contrast, Dalí chooses to transform this thoroughly traditional Spanish subject by connecting it with his theory of nuclear-mysticism, employing his divisionistic technique of the 1950's. In Dalí's canvas, a small silhouette of Velázquez stands in a hallway in The Prado, painting a foreshortened black & white Infanta on a vertical panel. This hallway lurches up to the top left, with a pattern of slashing diagonal light flooding the scene from the vertical windows. Amid the light and shadows of the composition, a second Infantaimplodes from colorful fragments, becoming a ghostly specter who fills the entire canvas.

In order to suggest the pattern of the atomic particles, Dalí forms the Infanta's body out of a series of abstract, calligraphic squiggles, as can be seen in this detail of her hand holding a rose. While Dalí was deeply critical of Abstract Expressionism for what he saw as its abandonment of intellectual content, here their gestural line style is used as a pattern out of which Dalí creates representational imagery, similar to the way Seurat used colored dots to create imagery. In a sense, Dalí uses Abstract Expressionism against itself to cancel itself out.

In describing his calligraphic patterning, Dalí says he is employing bits of "anti-matter," linking the gestural brushstroke with modern science. He explains that the flecks of paint are like the tracks of atomic particles as they appear on photographic film. Even the rose in the Infanta's hand resembles a nuclear explosion, so Dalí is consciously intertwining these various strands of information.

One additional Dalínian element is found in the construction of the Infanta's face, located in the upper center of the canvas. It is formed by the overlapping of several rhino horns rushing together, bringing the golden spiral into the composition.

Portrait of My Dead Brother, 1963

This unusual painting refers to one of the key stories in the artist's life, his relationship with his dead brother. While Salvador was named after his father, Salvador Dalí i Cusí, he also shared this name with his brother, Salvador Galo Anselmo Dalí, who died of infectious stomach inflammation in 1903.

Dalí felt his parents wanted him to be a replacement for his dead brother, so he cultivated his eccentric behavior to prove that he was different. Dalí often referred to himself and his dead brother as Castor and Pollux, the Roman twins born of Leda. Dalí felt that although his brother was dead, he was still a specter in his life.

Dalí wrote a brief, elusive description of this work when it was first exhibited. "The Vulture, according to the Egyptians and Freud, represents my mother's portrait. The cherries represent the molecules, the dark cherries create the visage of my dead brother, the sun-lighted cherries create the image of Salvador living thus repeating the great myth of the Dioscures Castor and Pollux."

The source for the brother's face is currently unknown, although it is believed to be from a newspaper photograph. The style in which Dalí painted his brother resembles an enlarged photograph, with the large dots resembling the Ben Day dots used in photogravure. This also recalls the contemporaneous work of Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein, suggesting new interests in Dalí's world.

Nature Morte Vivante (Still Life-Fast Moving), 1956

Emblematic of Dalí's emerging Nuclear Mysticism, this large painting was the sixth in the series of monumental history canvases Dalí initiated in 1948, and it is the first to depart from their strictly religious subjects. Taking five months to prepare and paint, the composition is a post-atomic variation on Dutch artist Floris Van Schooten's (1590-1655) *Table with Food* (1617). Dalí's painting is shattered into individual objects that float and rotate in space, disintegrating yet held in a suspended balance. This process has also been termed corpuscular, describing how Dalí breaks down the composition into smaller particles.

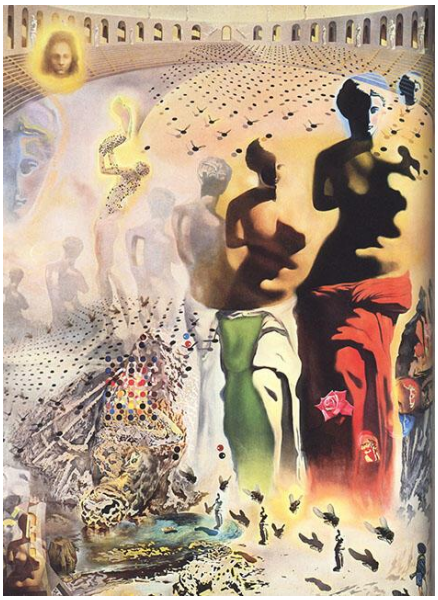
This concept of space-time is illustrated in the halted motion and spatial separation of the objects in the painting. While it may appear chaotic initially because of the multitude of disparate objects, for the overall composition the objects obey a greater mathematical order derived from the golden section. Dalí was fascinated by *The Geometry of Art and Life*, a study of esthetic proportions by the Romanian mathematician, Matila Ghyka. Based on the golden section, these proportions define Dalí's arrangements of objects, in turn providing a greater aesthetic unity to the contained chaos.

Galacidalacidesoxiribunucleicacid (Homage to Crick and Watson), 1963

In this painting Dalí focused on the religious subject of the Resurrection in order to present both his interest in modern science and his awareness of the events of the time. Dalí boasted of the work's title and importance, "It is the longest title in one word. But the theme is even longer: long as the genetical persistence of human memory." The work's title refers to the discovery of the molecular structure of DNA by Crick and Watson in 1953. The DNA molecule, with its spiral shape is the basic form of life. Dalí often spoke of the connection between spirals and life in the early 1950's, before the structure of DNA had even been discovered! The impetus for this work was a tragic flash flood in west Barcelona in September 1962. This flood of the Rio Llobregat killed 450 people, making it one of the worst natural disasters in modern Spanish history. The flooded landscape is depicted in the center of the canvas.

Dalí used the Resurrection theme to offer solace to the Catalan victims by suggesting rebirth. The contrasting forms on the left and right sides of the painting reinforce the cyclical theme of birth/death/rebirth. On the right, the cubic structure resembling a mineral molecule is composed of Arabs, each holding a gun pointed at his neighbor. It is a molecule of self-annihilation. In contrast, on the left side of the canvas is a DNA molecule structure. This form contains the genetic code of life and has a double helix spiral shape.
Thus, the "life" spiral contrasts with the "death" cube. God's resurrection of His Son in the center of the painting is the key to hope which Dalí offered to the Catalan victims.

The Hallucinogenic Toreador, 1969-70



Dalí conceived this painting while in an art supply store in 1968. In the body of Venus, on a box of Venus pencils, he saw the face of the toreador. This double image painting repeats the image of the "Venus de Milo" several times in such a way that the shadows form the features. Start with the green skirt, and make it into a man's necktie. The white skirt becomes his shirt. Travel up the figure. Her abdomen becomes his chin, her waist is his mouth, and her left breast is the nose. The pink arch forms the top of the head with the arena at the top as his hat. The tear in the eye (at the nape of Venus' neck) is shed for the bull. The red skirt on the right Venus is his red cape.

The toreador appears again in the figure outlined in yellow with arms raised in dedication of the bull to Gala. She appears in the upper left hand corner surrounded by yellow. Dalí painted Gala with a frown because she disliked bullfights.

The image of the dying bull emerges from the rocky terrain of Cape Creus that appears just below the cape. A large fly makes up the eye. What might at first appear to be a pool of blood (beneath the dying bull) is really a translucent bay. On this bay a woman floats on a yellow raft. This seeming incongruity symbolizes the "modern tourist invasions of Cape Creus which even the flies of St. Narciso have been unable to halt!" Dalí once remarked that he was not too worried about the profanation of his beloved Cape Creus because its rocks would "eventually vanquish the French tourist, and time would destroy the litter they leave everywhere."

The Ecumenical Council, 1960

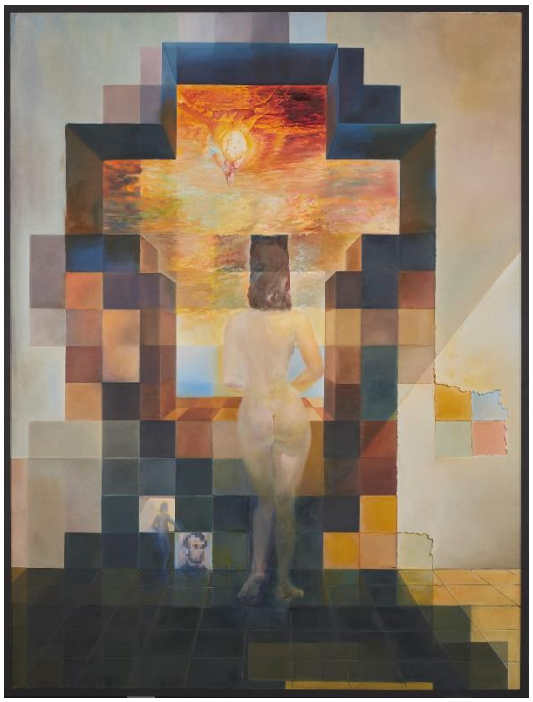
This canvas honors Pope John XXIII for trying to unite the churches through the Ecumenical Council. The coronation of Pope John XXIII is depicted in an omniscient vision. It appears four times with three views in the center, and one in the upper right hand corner which was formed by pressing an octopus onto the canvas. Along the bottom of the canvas, the self-portrait of Dalí recalls a pose assumed by Velazquez, thus another acknowledgment of the Spanish painter. Gala is depicted in the manner of Michelangelo's Moses, but she also represents St. Helena as Dalí has revealed in another work entitled St. Helena of Port Lligat. St. Helena was the mother of Emperor Constantine; her emblem in art is the cross. According to the legend, Constantine had a prophetic dream in which an angel with a cross appeared and told him "under this sign you will be victorious." Perhaps Gala's appearance in this painting as St. Helena is a tribute to her unwavering faith, inspiration, and guidance which led Dalí to victory.

The painter's continuing obsession with molecular particles is demonstrated by the zigzag elements used to depict the robes of Christ, the first figure of the Trinity, on the left. The outstretched hand and arm of God (the central figure) prevent man from seeing this face. The third figure, the Holy Spirit, is represented by the dove and the disappearing figure. A nearly perfect "X" sets up the structure for this work, which is divided into four equal triangles. The "X" division is made apparent by the cross in Christ’s hand. Again a view of the coastline near Dalí’s house can be seen behind Dalí’s self-portrait.

The Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, 1958-59

This work is an ambitious homage to Dalí's Spain. It combines Spanish history, religion, art and myth into a unified whole. It was commissioned for Huntington Hartford's Gallery of Modern Art on Columbus Circle in New York. At this time, some Catalan historians were claiming that Columbus was actually from Catalonia, not Italy, making the discovery all the more relevant for Dalí, who was also from this region of Spain. Dalí's inspiration for this work was *The Surrender of Breda*, another painting by Velazquez. Dalí borrows the spears from that painting and places them on the right hand side of his work. Within these spears, Dalí has painted the image of a crucified Christ, which was based on a drawing by the Spanish mystic Saint John. The banner that Columbus is holding bears the likeness of Dalí's wife, Gala. She appears as a saint, suggesting that she is Dalí's muse, and that she is responsible for his own "discovery of America," where he captured the attention of the world through her encouragement. The flies and the bishop at the bottom left are a reference to a Catalan folk legend (from Girona) about Saint Narciso's crypt. Dali uses this myth to underline his patriotic devotion to his homeland's independence.

Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean Sea which at Twenty Meters Becomes the Portrait of Abraham Lincoln-Homage to Rothko, 1976



Gala Contemplating the Mediterranean Sea… demonstrates a fascination with perception and the mystery of identity. Dalí layers multiple optical scales to create two paintings in one. This painting is based on a photograph that Dalí first saw in the November, 1973 issue of Scientific American. Vol. 229. No.5.. The article, “The Recognition of Faces” by Leon D. Harmon, featured a reproduced low resolution (252 pixels) monochromatic photograph of the face of Abraham Lincoln from an American $5 bill. Harmon’s computer generated “coarse –scale” portrait demonstrated the low quantity of information needed to represent a recognizable individual face. The concept awaked Dalí’s old fascination with paranoia – specifically, how much of the reading of an image is from the viewer as distinct from the thing viewed. By squinting slightly and so flattening the depth of field, the portrait of Lincoln snaps into view displacing the figure of Gala. Once seen, the image appears at each return.

Gala’s figure is framed by the cruciform windows through which the viewer is lead to a crucifixion painted in a heavy impasto. The figure of Jesus on the cross, reminiscent of Dalí’s 1951 painting titled *Christ of St. John of the Cross*, (St. Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow, Scotland), appears in the clouds. The earlier painting by Dalí is inspired by a 16th century drawing by the Carmelite Friar St. John of the Cross (1542-1691) where Christ is viewed from above. The top of Christ’s head glows representing the rising morning sun, a new element Dalí created as he developed this work on canvas. Yet, in spite of the masterful and expressive use of paint, Dalí plays with the ambiguity of medium. The ironic use of paint to recreate the effects of photography on one level is made more resonant by the collage of small printed reproduction of the Harmon photo onto the canvas.

Lincoln continued…

Dalí titles the work Homage to Mark Rothko (1903-1970) – a leading abstract expressionist painter who had committed suicide in 1970. Early in his career, Rothko experimented with automatic drawing and surrealist techniques. He studied the writings of Freud as did Dalí. By the 1940s, Rothko abandoned all references to the figurative and painted using simplified shapes, color gradations, and value relationships. Dalí's multiple blocks of colors in varying progression of hues ending in a dark perimeter is evocative of the meditative "color field" paintings of Rothko.

Dalí spent many years living between Spain and the United States and considered America his second home. Dalí painted this work in his room at the St. Régis Hotel in New York. As well as homage to an American painter, the painting is homage to America itself, created in the nation that gave him refuge during the turmoil of Civil and World War Europe.