

SALVADOR DALI **1904 – 1989**

Salvador Dali was born in Figueres Spain on May 11, 1904. Figueres is close to the French border in the Catalan region of Spain.

His father was a lawyer and was very strict with his son but Dali's mother encouraged her son to pursue his interests. His mother died when he was 16. Her death affected him tremendously. He had one sister, Ana Maria who was three years younger than him. Once his father saw his interest in art he encouraged him and even presented his first art show at the age of 14, in his hometown of Figueras.

In 1922, Dalí moved to Madrid and studied at the San Fernando School of Fine Arts. In his earlier paintings he experimented with Cubism

Dalí was expelled from the academy in 1926 shortly before his final exams when he stated that no one on the faculty was competent enough to examine him. That same year he made his first visit to Paris where he met a fellow Spaniard, Pablo Picasso, whom young Dalí revered. Picasso had already heard favorable things about Dalí from Joan Miró, another Spanish painter. Dalí did a number of works heavily influenced by Picasso and Miró over the next few years as he moved toward developing his own style.

In this same time period Dalí grew a flamboyant moustache, which became iconic of him; it was influenced by the mustache the seventeenth century Spanish master painter Diego Velázquez.

Most of his most famous surrealist art was done between 1929 and 1939. During this time he was obsessed with dreams, imagination and his inner thoughts and through his paintings tried to portray them as their own special kind of reality. He was enthralled with the teachings of Dr. Sigmund Freud, the famous psychoanalyst and writer who studied the meaning of dreams and the subconscious.

Dali used his artistic talents in many other ways during his life, including designing costumes for theatre and ballet, book illustrations, jewelry design and movie making. He even designed the sets and a dream sequence for movie director Alfred Hitchcock.

In 1934 he married his wife, Gala, who became his business manager and chief promoter.

After 1939 and the peak of his surrealist period, he turned more to commercial, business pursuits and promoted himself as the famous, somewhat eccentric, personality he was. He lent his art and personality (and somewhat strange appearance – he claimed he could paint with his mustache) to commercials, endorsing chocolate candies and perfumes.

In promoting his strange personality, Dali also enjoyed staging weird events. Once in London he appeared to give a speech on the subconscious dressed in a full diver's suit,

complete with the bell helmet. Part way into the speech he realized he could no longer breathe, but he couldn't get out by himself and nearly suffocated to death before the audience realized what was happening and helped him get out of the suit.

Between the years 1941 and 1970 Dali was also responsible for creating beautiful pieces of jewelry, 39 in total. The pieces created are intricate and many contain actual moving parts. The most famous piece of jewelry created by Dali is "The Royal Heart". This particular jewel is crafted using gold and is encrusted with forty-six rubies, forty-two diamonds and four emeralds. This remarkable piece of art is highlighted by the fact that the jewel is created in such a way that the center "beats" much like a real heart.

In 1960, Dalí began work on the Dalí Theatre and Museum in his home town of Figueres; it was his largest single project and the main focus of his energy through 1974. He continued to make additions through the mid-1980s. He found time, however, to design the Chupa Chups logo in 1969.

In 1982, King Juan Carlos of Spain bestowed on Dalí the title Marquis of Púbol, for which Dalí later paid him back by giving him a drawing (*Head of Europa*, which would turn out to be Dalí's final drawing) after the king visited him on his deathbed.

His wife Gala died on June 10, 1982. After Gala's death, Dalí lost much of his will to live. He deliberately dehydrated himself—possibly as a suicide attempt, possibly in an attempt to put himself into a state of suspended animation, as he had read that some microorganisms could do. He moved from Figueres to the castle in Púbol which he had bought for Gala and was the site of her death. In 1984, a fire broke out in his bedroom. Luckily Dalí was rescued and returned to Figueres where a group of his friends, patrons, and fellow artists saw to it that he was comfortable living in his Theater-Museum for his final years.

THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY

What is Time?

Precise

Constant pace, relentless

Measure with it

How fast/slow does time go by?

Waiting for your birthday? (relative based on age)

At Great America

In church

On vacation (summer vacation from school)

Waiting for recess

What about time in your sleep?

What happens to time in dreams?

Squeezed or compressed, events mixed up or out of place in time

Expanded, e.g. in slow motion...like movie sequences, as you try to get to something you want or get away from someone chasing you

Think again about dreams – what types of dreams are there and what do they depict?

We have dreams while sleeping and we have daydreams
They come from our imagination and our innermost thoughts. They may deal with our fears, fantasies, and imagination.
Would they make sense to others?
Do you dream in color or black and white?

If you tried to depict your dreams in art what would they be like?
Would they be precise and specific with everything in place?
Would they be hazy, with blurred lines and objects?

Today's artist, Salvador Dali, became famous for his depiction of these innermost thoughts, perhaps expressing his dream and imagination. His artistic style expressing this is called surrealism....surreal means dreamlike.

In 1931, Dalí painted one of his most famous works, *The Persistence of Memory*. Sometimes called *Soft Watches* or *Melting Clocks*, the work introduced the surrealistic image of the soft, melting pocket watch. The soft watches suggest Einstein's theory that time is relative and not fixed. Apparently the idea for clocks functioning symbolically in this way came to Dalí when he was staring at a runny piece of Camembert cheese during a hot day in August

(show the painting).

What do you think this painting is about?
Is Dali trying to tell us something about time? (what time is on the clock)
What do you think the clocks are doing? (looks like melting)
How does the painting make you feel?
Does the landscape look like a real landscape you might see somewhere?
What do you think the object is in the middle of the painting?