

GALA SALVADOR DALÍ

July 5th to October 14th, 2018

ORGANISED AND PRODUCED BY: Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona, and Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí

CURATOR: Estrella de Diego, professor of Art History (UCM)

With this exhibition, the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya and Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí intend to reveal Gala: muse, artist and a key figure in twentieth-century art.

Companion to Dalí and before that, to the poet Paul Éluard, admired sometimes, sometimes ignored or slighted, Gala is undoubtedly a key figure of the vanguards. Without her, the surrealist playing board is missing a piece. Paintings by Max Ernst, photographs by Man Ray and Cecil Beaton and especially the works by Salvador Dalí are much more than portraits: they make up an autobiographical journey where, as a postmodernism heroine, Gala imagined and created her own image.

Moreover, this exhibition will also allow us to follow Salvador Dalí's evolution as a painter and brings together a significant collection of his works, some 60 in total, including oil paintings and drawings. The exhibition will also present a selection of paintings, drawings and photographs by other artists who were part of the surrealist universe, such as Max Ernst, Picasso, Man Ray, Cecil Beaton and Brassai. An interesting collection of letters, postcards and books will also be on display for the first time, as well as dresses and objects from Gala's personal boudoir. In total, the exhibition will present approximately 180 pieces that reconstruct Gala's complex and fascinating character.

The exhibition will unveil a Gala who camouflaged herself as a muse while forging her own path as an artist: she writes, imagines and creates her own image, in addition to playing an essential role in Dalí's artistic development.

“Who was the real Gala? Who was this woman whom everybody noticed, who awakened the hatred of Breton or Buñuel; unconditional love in Éluard and Dalí; passion in Max Ernst; loyal friendship in Crevel and was Man Ray's model... Was she, above all else, simply an inspiring muse for artists and poets? Or, despite having few signed pieces – only a few surreal objects that are currently lost, certain *cadavres exquis* and the pages of a diary – was she more of a creator? Gala was a creative woman who wrote, read and

designed her own clothes, in addition to her image when Dalí portrays her; she co-authored so many of her second husband's work that towards the end of his life, he began to sign his pieces with both their names – 'Gala-Salvador Dalí'. And we could go further still: if we believe that Dalí is not only the paintings he paints but the image he constructs, to what extent can we say that Gala is part of that maneuver of the "artist as a work of art?" These are some of the questions that Estrella de Diego poses in this exhibition.

Never before has an exhibition dedicated to Gala been proposed at an international level, partly because of the preconceptions regarding her and partly because of the extreme fragility of many of the pieces that are essential to reconstruct her portrait.

The works in this exhibition will come mainly from Dalí Foundation, contributing more than 40 pieces, and from private collections and international museums such as the Dalí Museum in St. Petersburg (Florida); Haggerty Museum of Art, (Milwaukee); Centre d'Art Georges Pompidou (Paris); Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Pinakothek der Moderne (Munich); Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto (Rovereto); Fundación Thyssen-Bornemisza and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid), among others.

Sponsored by:



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