

Salvador Dalí at the crossroads of the knowledge (Univ Lausanne)

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Salvador Dalí at the crossroads of the knowledge

International conference organized at the University of Lausanne,
Switzerland (2-4 December 2004)

CALL FOR PAPERS

Did Dalí aspire to the status of "homo universalis" after Leonardo da Vinci's example? The eccentricity of the man often concealed the cognitive magnitude of his thought, a thought that the artist had been working out all through his life. To better appreciate Dalí's imaginary, which originates from a multitude of disciplines, we should first comprehend the cultural and scientific context of his time.

His passion for knowledge was inspired by a father with an opulent library enriched by a multitude of reviews in different languages.

Then, Dalí's familiarity with intellectual circles certainly consolidated it. Such circumstances as the European cultural dynamism embodied in the *Residencia de Estudiantes* of Madrid, the openminded attitude of the Catalan avant-garde and the numerous ideas of the surrealists together with a fecund interaction with scientists of the time (like René Thom, or some Nobel winners like Gabor and Watson), certainly nourished Dalí's enthusiasm for knowledge. Moreover, Dalí depicts himself as a bulimic reader who devours the most disparate books and reviews, tearing apart the pages that interest him. At last, his paranoiac-critical method, elaborated round the 30s, inextricably combines rationality and irrationality: Dalí confers a leading role to knowledge, considering it the privileged object of delirium and the thinking model which consolidates the theoretical foundation of his method.

For the centenary anniversary of the birth of the Catalan artist, this conference proposes to sketch the dalinian sphere of knowledge. How did the cultural substratum influence Dalí's work? How did the painter attain to what we may define as his knowledge? And, how did the cognitive object, after having been subjected to an interpretative method, become itself a deciphering instrument? In this context, it is essential to take into consideration Dalí's writings. These texts, which

are so difficult to classify and whose importance is often ignored, abound in references and reveal their acquaintance with many cultural domains.

Through this conference we would like to invite experts from all cultural fields to present their reflections and ideas concerning Dalí and his knowledge, so to have a vast range of approaches which come from a multidisciplinary background and which could open up new and innovative perspectives. Many subjects may be studied :

- Philosophical culture. From Plato to Nietzsche, from Kant to Gestaltism, from Heraclite to Kolnai, from Chinese thinking to the thought of the Catalan philosopher Pujols, Dalí's knowledge involves both tradition and the most recent theories of his time.
- Scientific (and parascientific) culture. Beyond psychoanalysis which was considered a science, Dalí shows an interest for all sorts of scientific knowledge: the psychology of art, the most recent discoveries concerning physics, quantum mechanics, mathematics, biochemistry, genetics, holography, the morphogenesis, cybernetics and stereoscopy.
- Artistic culture. This one is related to creations and theories of painting, photography, architecture, cinema, sculpture and decorative arts.
- Religious culture. Dalí is fascinated by texts which reveal a scientific theology and by mystical writings.
- Literary culture. This culture treats both European avant-gardes like Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism, and others like romantic and decadent aesthetics.

The languages of the conference are English and French . You may send your abstract (with the title and a summary one half page in length) before February 2 9th 2004 to one of the following addresses:

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The programme of the conference will be decided in March and the evaluation of proposals will be communicated at a late date.

For information please contact Astrid Ruffa: Astrid.Ruffa@frmod.unil.ch

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