

# THE Salvador Dali

## COLLECTORS NEWSLETTER.®

FOR THE DALI AFICIONADO AND SERIOUS COLLECTOR

\*\*\* Now In Our 20th Year \*\*\*

## Strong Hammer Prices Continue to Astonish at London Dali Auctions

**D**ali art has proved to be hot property at the big auction houses once again early in 2010.

Christie's Art of the Surreal & Impressionist/Modern sales in London Feb. 2-3 were a stunning appetizer to events that would follow a day later at Sotheby's London.

Five Dali pieces sold at Christie's, their sale prices totaling more than \$1.9-million. The most excitement was generated by *Le Triomphe de Tourbillon* which alone sold for more than \$1.4-million.

Sotheby's Impressionist & Modern Art sale Feb. 4 at it's Bond Street location in London is being called "historic," boasting the highest total ever achieved for a London art sale.

A video of the historic event is online at [http://www.sothebys.com/video/privateview/L10002/index\\_postsale\\_2.html](http://www.sothebys.com/video/privateview/L10002/index_postsale_2.html).

Two Dali pieces were among the lots sold Feb. 4 at Sotheby's London. Most notable was *Tête Explosive* which ignited a bidding war, resulting in a selling price over \$270,000 -- more than four times the high estimate.

"Sotheby's auction, conducted on Wednesday evening ... will be remembered as a major turning point in art market history," wrote Souren Melikian in the *International Herald Tribune* Feb. 6.

These outstanding February London auctions speak to the strength of the overall art auction market, building on record sales at both Sotheby's New York and Christie's New York in November, which saw Dali pieces sell for over \$1.8-million and \$4-million respectively.



*Tête Explosive*

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*For a more detailed look at some of the Dali sales from these February London auctions, see AUCTION NEWS, page 8, this issue of the SDCN.*

# Robert Descharnes Awarded Gold Medal as World's Leading Dali Expert

From PR Log, 1/29/2010

The Royal Artistic Circle of Barcelona, Spain issued a proclamation in December awarding French photographer Robert Descharnes, long time associate of Salvador Dalí and expert in his work, its coveted Gold Medal, "For the merit which he displays, the greatest authority in the world in the knowledge and defense of the work of the artist Salvador Dalí i Domench."

The award was accepted on Robert Descharnes' behalf by his son Nicolas at the organization's headquarters in Barcelona on December 27, 2009 and acknowledged in a video addressed to the group by Robert Descharnes who was unable to attend the presentation in person.



Robert Descharnes

Founded in 1881 and accorded Royal status by King Alfonso XIII in 1917, the Royal Artistic Circle of Barcelona is a non-profit organization, promoting and supporting the arts in all their forms. The current Honorary President is H.M. King Juan Carlos I of Spain. In the past the Gold Medal has been awarded mainly to Spaniards so it is an unusual honor for this one to go to a Frenchman, especially as it concerns one of Spain's most acclaimed painters.

In awarding Robert Descharnes this medal they recognized him as the Number One International Expert on Salvador Dalí, a title which leading auction houses Sotheby's and Christie's acknowledge by their actions, since they rely solely on Robert Descharnes and his son Nicolas for the authentication of Salvador Dalí artwork before it is offered at auction.

In accepting the medal on his father's behalf, Nicolas Descharnes detailed the long list of achievements by Robert Descharnes in the documentation and defense of Salvador Dalí's work, including an extensive list of books compiled and published and films produced to make Dalí and his work known and the vast amount of work done by Robert with help from Nicolas in pursuing the crusade given to him by Dalí and Gala in the 1980s to stop the rampant forgery of Dalí's work and signature.


In his videoed acknowledgment of the Gold Medal, Robert mentioned his meetings with Dalí and the King of Spain, Juan Carlos I, who personally asked him to take care of Dalí. He relates many stories about his collaboration with Dalí as his photographer and in assisting him with his paintings, showing the closeness and depth of his long-term relationship with the Spanish Master whom he admired and respected profoundly. During his collaboration with Dalí Robert took over 60,000 photos of the painter and he says this was "not enough."

He is delighted with his good fortune of being able to spend 40 years with the artist, involved in so many different activities with a genius of Dalí's caliber.

Screened for the first time at the award ceremony was a new documentary entitled *The Cinema According to Dalí* by Christopher Jones and Marie-Dominique Montel. Both directors were present to answer questions from the public.



Robert Descharnes with Salvador Dalí at Cape Creus

True to his life's work and loyal to Salvador Dalí long after the painter's death, Robert Descharnes continues to work with his son Nicolas, with New York based Dali graphics expert Frank Hunter, with law enforcement and with Fine Art Registry® to help eradicate the latest wave of Salvador Dalí fakes and forgery. The Gold Medal from the Royal Artistic Circle of Barcelona is a fitting recognition of his devotion and achievements. 

*"In order to acquire  
a growing and lasting  
respect in society, it  
is a good thing, if you  
possess great talent,  
to give, early in your  
youth, a very hard  
kick to the right shin  
of the society  
that you love.  
After that, be a snob."*



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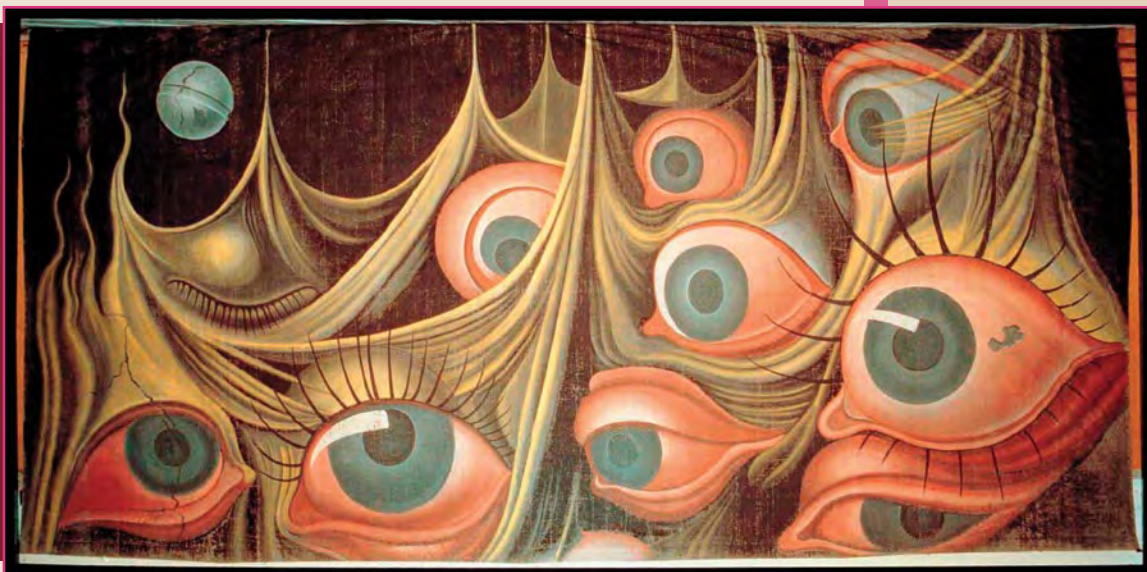


## Still “Spellbinding” after All These Years

The painting *Spellbound* is the result of a unique collaboration between Alfred Hitchcock and Salvador Dalí. Hitchcock's Oscar-winning movie, *Spellbound*, starred two of Hollywood's biggest names, Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck, and was one of the very first films to deal with Freudian psychoanalysis.

The dazzling dream sequence which Hitchcock commissioned from Dalí has long been an integral part of Hollywood history. Dalí, the undisputed master of Surrealism, created a film sequence which vividly captured the illusory nature of the subconscious state, where reality becomes embellished with suppressed thoughts and the hidden workings of the mind. The painting was used as the background to the filming of the *Spellbound* dream sequence.

*Dalí was a natural choice for this film because he was deeply interested in psychoanalysis as a subject, and had not only met with Freud, but had even portrayed him in previous works of art. As Hitchcock himself said “I could have taken De Chirico or Max Ernst, but no one was as imaginative and extravagant as Dalí.”*



*Salvador Dalí's Spellbound*

Dalí used his creative genius to challenge preconceived notions of reality and normality, and effectively expressed a dream world based around the recurring image of an eye, which released the true nature of the character in the film.

This extraordinary artwork is now part of the Stratton Foundation collection; President of the Stratton Foundation, Mr. Beniamino Levi, is an avid art collector and Dalí world expert.

*Spellbound* has been exhibited very few times over the past 50 years. Until 2009 it has been exhibited at the permanent Dalí exhibition in County Hall Gallery, London. From July 31 - August 15, 2009 it was exhibited at the Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, P.R. China.

The painting, which Dalí executed on a large canvas in oil and tempera, is

assembled from two parts, each measuring 5.2 x 5.75 meters. Each half of the canvas is mounted on a wooden frame, allowing the painting to be exhibited either together or separately.



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## Dali Cold Case: “The Rikers Christ Heist”




...Have you seen  
this painting?

March 1 marks the seventh anniversary of Rikers Island’s Dali *Christ* Heist. The backstory has passed into Salvador Dali legend. In 1965, Dali sent a painting to then New York Corrections Commissioner Anna M. Kross as an apology for cancelling a talk on art to prisoners at Rikers Island, due to illness. It was one of his familiar *Christ on the Cross* subjects in ink, pencil and gouache, done for Kross in just two hours. Measuring over three by four feet, this large *Christ* painting hung in Rikers’ inmate dining room for 16 years and was then moved to the jail’s lobby and housed in a locked display case.

Seven years ago, corrections officers noticed the painting “didn’t look right” and called police. Long story to short: somebody informed, people got arrested, people went to jail. An inside job? Well of course. A summarization from the *New York Times* 6/18/2003 story...

*“A supervisor cleared the jail under pretense of a midnight fire drill. Two guards were dispatched as watchmen, one to the front desk in the lobby, one to another strategic post. When the coast was clear, the first guard was told to remove the Dali painting from its locked display case in the lobby. The second guard left behind a second-rate copy. The real painting was subsequently hustled out the door and into a waiting car. Although jail officials spotted the blatant forgery the next morning, the original, valued at as much as \$250,000 in some appraisals, has yet to be found.”*

And so it remains seven years later. Though with Dali’s increased popularity and the heist skull-duggery as flavor for its provenance, if the painting ever does surface, it could be worth many times that much. 

## Dali’s Catalonia Perfect for Family Travel

Excerpted from the *AP* by Raf Casert, 1/20/2010

Unbound imagination is supposed to be the realm of tender teenagers like my son. So when even they cannot quite fathom the folly of an aging artist, it must be something to behold. “That is a bit exaggerated, no?” he wondered wide-eyed as he walked through Salvador Dali’s magic kingdom, also known as Theatre-Museum Dali.


Golden eggs on top of a claret-colored wedding cake palace were one thing. Add diamond-studded rings with a beating heart and an oversized statue of a chained opulent woman on top of a classic old car, and the viewer may be baffled. Love it, loathe it, it leaves no one indifferent. Dali truly took surrealism to unmatched heights and became one of the 20th century’s most prominent artists.



*Theatre-Museum Dali*

Dali’s Catalonia packs a peculiar cultural punch that resonates with adults and youngsters alike. Bored kids may tug at parents when they are forced to ponder the power of Romanesque cloisters or yet another Renaissance Virgin and Child. Rarely is beauty for one so intertwined with boredom for the other. But the Dali sites of Catalonia by contrast foster a cultural awakening for both generations.

And where better to start than in Figueres. Lines heading into the Theatre-Museum snake around several corners of the inner city, with shops hawking Dali merchandize. Even before entering the Dali palace, visitors pass a huge golden faceless statue with reliefs and busts protruding from a robed chest. Looking down from the museum’s facade are men in diving gear and graceful figures bearing objects that resemble golden baguettes or fluffy clouds. Sometimes museum-goers can benefit from explanations about what they’re viewing. But how could anyone fully explain an installation called *Face of Mae West Which Can Be Used as an Apartment?*

These Dali treasures make a compelling itinerary for traveling families and offer a chance for the generations to share the wonder. 

*“Drawing is the  
honesty of the art.  
There is no possibility  
of cheating. It is  
either good or bad.”*



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# Dali Painting from Thyssen-Bornemisza on Loan to Dalí Theatre-Museum


Excerpted from *ArtKnowledgeNews.com*, 2/9/2010

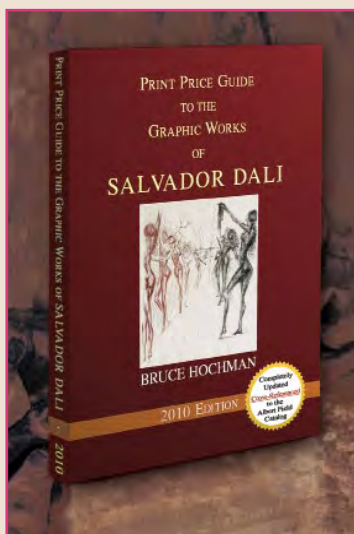
**O**n loan from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid, Dali's *Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bee Around a Pomegranate One Minute Before Awakening* (1944) will be exhibited at the Drawings Room (number 6) of the Dalí Theatre-Museum in Figueres until May 2, 2010.

The oil painting depicts Dalí's wife Gala asleep while sunbathing naked on rocks floating over the sea, possibly at Port Lligat. Dali's familiar Space Elephant walks across the sea's horizon. Near the woman float two drops of water and a small pomegranate. From a larger pomegranate comes a fish that spews a tiger from which comes another tiger, while in front of that second tiger a rifle's bayonet touches Gala's right arm. The bayonet, as a symbol of the stinging bee, may thus represent Gala's abrupt awakening from her otherwise peaceful dream. This is an example of Sigmund Freud's influence on surrealist art and Dali's attempts to explore the world of dreams in a dreamscape.

The bee around the smaller pomegranate is repeated symbolically. The two tigers represent the body of the bee (yellow with black stripes) and the bayonet its stinger. The fish may represent the bee's eyes, because of similarity of the fish's scaly skin with the scaly complex eyes of bees.

The elephant is a distortion of a well-known sculpture by Bernini located in Rome. The smaller pomegranate floating between two droplets of water may symbolize Venus, especially because of the heart-shaped shadow it casts. It may also be used as a Christian symbol of fertility and resurrection. This female symbolism may contrast with the phallic symbolism of the threatening creatures.

In 1962, Dalí said his painting was intended "to express for the first time in images Freud's discovery of the typical dream with a lengthy narrative, the consequence of the instantaneousness of a chance event which causes the sleeper to wake up. Thus, as a bar might fall on the neck of a sleeping person, causing them to wake up and for a long dream to end with the guillotine blade falling on them, the noise of the bee here provokes the sensation of the sting which will awaken Gala." 



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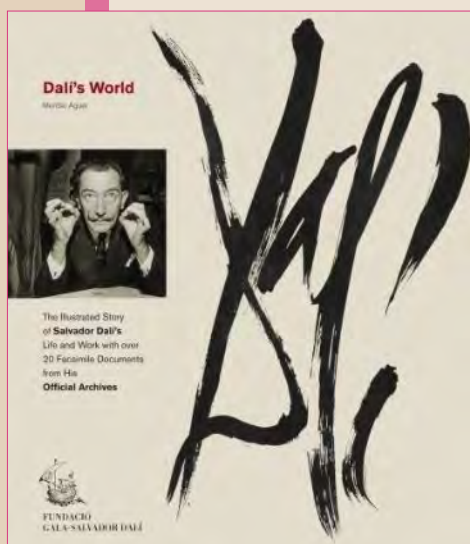
# The Persistence of Salvador Dali

Book Review from *The Nation* by Paul Dorsey, 1/4/2010

*Dali's World: The Treasures of Salvador Dali*, by Montse Aguer  
*The Illustrated Story of Salvador Dali's Life and Work with Over 20 Facsimile Documents from his Official Archives. Hardcover: 88 pages, Goodman Books (October 2009). ISBN: 978-1847960030*

In the 1960s, when Salvador Dali was at the height of his gadabout, ubiquitous celebrity, the art establishment sentenced him to the purgatory of poster shops. But critics are now beginning to acknowledge that his talent deserves better than a college-dorm wall.

Recently Christie's sold a Dali painting for US\$4 million - the auction house's estimate hadn't exceeded US\$3 million. Australia's National Gallery in Melbourne pocketed A\$6 million with its Dali exhibition *Liquid Desire*, which drew 330,000 visitors in less than four months, far more than a Picasso show there three years ago.



*Dali's World* by Montse Aguer

The credit for Dali's revival belongs to the same sentiment that will see a massive exhibition of his late-period work adorn Atlanta's High Museum of Art for the second half of 2010. Dali's late work is the key, and Robert Hughes, the *Time* magazine art critic who led the coup against Dali - charging that he produced nothing of interest after 1939 - will be made to eat his words.

There are legions of Dali admirers who, as much as they love *The Persistence of Memory* with its dripping time, argue that his best work came after 1958 and continued into the 1970s. They even say there is much to love in the paintings he executed almost literally on his deathbed, before old age carried him off in 1989.


This new book, *Dali's World*, whose author Montse Aguer runs the Centre for Dalinian Studies, is the Gala-Salvador Dali Foundation's latest effort to promote Dali. It's beautiful, but not as spectacular as hoped. This 88-page book's charm is in the packaging. There are five foldout pages that form receptacles for a slew of Dali keepsakes, which can be removed and admired individually.

There are more than 20 facsimiles of documents from the foundation archives, some of them dealing with Dali's media-spanning work with Alfred Hitchcock and Walt Disney. Some of these are treasures, like a full, four-page copy of the *Dali News*, the mock newspaper the artist published in the '60s. Others are tedious, like the barely legible letter to Andre Breton and a chaotic edition of *Vogue* magazine he designed. Dali's jotted-down ideas for the movie he was going to make with the Marx Brothers are visually delightful, but they'd be far more interesting if you could read the text without a powerful magnifying glass.

The images of his art are always precise and often large, but also sometimes stretched across the centre binding and thus creased. For a book of his art, there are better options on the market.

Expect to find Dali among the surrealists, and the fact they kicked him out, but no explanation why; Dali as an admiring rival of Picasso, without mention of the younger Spaniard's jealousy; and Dali as a collaborator with Luis Bunuel, without acknowledgement of Dali's subsequent neglect of his old friend.

Finally, *Dali's World* is a slightly newer version of *Treasures of Dali* by the same author. Though it's probably been reworked for a different market, you can't help sensing a mercenary scheming.

That's ironic when the subject is Dali, who could be grotesquely commercial - and this book is well worth the price, regardless - but with his freshly reclaimed share of the art market, the Catalan master deserves a little more dignity, too. 



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# Dali Universe Moving to New Location

One of the world's foremost Salvador Dali collections, Dali Universe, is moving from County Hall on London's South Bank to a new location in London.

Over 500 Dali artworks which were exhibited to great acclaim over a ten year period are moving to a new home which is better situated to please the museum going public.

As of publication time, the Dali Universe has not yet made a public announcement of the location to which the museum is moving, but says the opening of the new space is to be marked by a new exhibition which will have many of the old favourites as well as a new Dali collection of original drawings and paintings on loan from a secret Spanish admirer.

Meanwhile, art lovers who wish to see one of Europe's largest collections of Dali, can visit the Espace Dali exhibition in Montmartre, Paris. More information online at [www.DaliParis.com](http://www.DaliParis.com). 



Inside the former Dali Universe

## EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS



### Olimpo Cultural Center Calle 61 at Calle 62, Merida, Mexico

#### *Dali in Merida: Views of a Dream* -- Through March 23

An exhibition of 93 of Dali's engravings, works from the artistic collection of the La Coruña art museum's foundation, which is co-sponsoring the exhibit with the city of Merida. The show is divided into three sections: *The Divine Comedy*, comprised of 56 pieces that Dali prepared for the Italian Parliament in 1960, all of which were inspired by the writings of Dante Alighieri; *Fables of La Fontaine*, with 12 works prepared in 1974; and *The Capricious Dreams of Pantagruel de Rabelais*, containing 25 fanciful pieces created in 1973.



### National Galleries of Scotland, Dean Gallery 73 Belford Road, Edinburgh, Scotland


#### *Another World* -- July 10, 2010 through January 10, 2011

Comprehensive survey of Surrealist art, bringing together masterpieces by Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, Pablo Picasso, Alberto Giacometti and Joan Miró, will be the centrepiece of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art's 50th anniversary celebrations. The exhibition will include major loans from public and private collections and will offer visitors the chance to see the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art's world-famous collection of Surrealist art in its entirety for the first time. Additional information at [www.NationalGalleries.org](http://www.NationalGalleries.org) or phone 0800 328 1373.



### The High Museum of Art 1280 Peachtree Street, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30309

#### *Dali: The Late Work* -- August 7, 2010 through January 9, 2011

This exhibition will focus on Dalí's art after 1940. Featuring more than 40 paintings and a related group of drawings, prints and other Dalí ephemera, it will explore the artist's enduring fascination with science, optical effects and illusionism, and his surprising connections to artists of the 1960s and 1970s such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Willem de Kooning. Additional info at [www.High.org](http://www.High.org) or phone (404) 733-4444. 

"We are all hungry and thirsty for concrete images. Abstract art will have been good for one thing: to restore its exact virginity to figurative art."



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# AUCTION NEWS



***Tête Explosive (pictured top left)***

*Pen & ink, ink wash, ballpoint & gouache on paper  
Signed, 1952-54*

*Estimated: \$47,910 - \$63,880*

*Sold: \$270,280 at Sotheby's London  
February 4, 2010*

***La Pieuvre (pictured bottom left)***

*Ink brush, ink & wash on paper  
Signed, 1963*

*Estimated: \$23,950 - \$31,940*

*Sold: \$74,810 at Christie's London  
February 3, 2010*



***Le Triomphe de Tourbillon (pictured above)***

*Oil on canvas, 1943*

*Estimated: \$959,400 - \$1,439,100*

*Sold: \$1,409,120 at Christie's London  
February 2, 2010*

***Design for the set of "Romeo and Juliet"***

***Backdrop & Wing Flats (pictured right)***

*Oil on canvas, signed, 1942*

*Estimated: \$239,850 - \$319,800*

*Sold: \$328,190 at Christie's London  
February 2, 2010*



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