

# Salvador Dali

1904-1989

## **Ideas of things to bring to the classroom with you:**

- Salvador Dali presentation CD and script/folder
- Box with different hats – “A Matter of Style” See end of script for this idea IF you have time.
- Book Salvador Dali by Dick Venezia from the series, “Getting to Know the World’s Greatest Artists”

*You can read this book to get a quick overview of Dali’s life and art. You can also read to the class if time allows or just flip through it with them.*

Introduce yourself and tell the children that you are in today for Art in the Classroom. Before we can begin today, can anyone tell me the important points about the artist you spoke about last time in Art in the Classroom?  
Spend a minute or two reviewing and then move on.

When we look at the artwork that I am going to show you today, let's keep in mind the tools that an artist uses.

"Elements of art page"

Line, color, shape, light, texture, space

*Slide 1*

Clues about the personality of today's artist:

- He has said: "Nothing is more important to me ... than me."
- He once arrived at an important event in a Rolls Royce convertible filled with cauliflower.
- He has also said "Every morning when I wake up I experience the exquisite joy – the joy of being Salvador Dali – and I ask myself in rapture 'What wonderful things this Salvador Dali will accomplish today?'"

As you may have guessed, today's artist, Salvador Dali, is going to be different. Expect the unexpected!



*Slide 2*

Salvador Dali was famous for his art, but he was also a very colorful character that often said and did things that created a stir.

Do you like his mustache? He said that he used his moustache as antennas to communicate with aliens.



*Slide 3*

Port of Cadaques

1917

Dali's family lived in Spain and every summer they would vacation in this tiny fishing and resort town. He painted this when he was 13 years old.

**How would you describe the texture of the painting?**

*The texture of this work appears rough, it is because it was painted on burlap. Burlap was readily available in Cadaques because the fishermen of the village used it to keep the wood of their boats moist. Dali cut it from the sacking of the boats and had an infinite supply of canvas at his disposal.*

**What time of day is it?** *Dali used a deep pink to capture the glow of the sun as it sets over his village. The mountain casts its shadow across the bay, appearing to touch the cluster of whitewashed houses on the shore.*

**What is the weather like?**

**If there were people in this painting what would they be doing?**

**What would you do if you were in the painting?**

**Have you seen any paintings like this before?**



*Slide 4*

Still Life: Sandia

1924

**What is this a picture of?** *We can make out the fruit bowl.*

**What objects can you identify?**

**How did Dali use color to show what was important in this painting?**

*used bright colors for fruit, background is more muted.*

**Where would you hang this picture in your house?**

**If you had one word to describe this painting what would it be?**

**If you could add something to this painting, what would it be?**



*Slide 5*

The Basket of Bread  
1926

This work was completed in 1926 at the end of Dalí's formal art training in Madrid. He was twenty-two years old.

**How did Dali use light in this work?** *There is dramatic lighting of the basket against the black background.*

**Does it appear, real, like a photograph?** *This makes the textures of the subject almost palpable, as if we could reach out and touch the items.*

**How would you describe the textures in this painting?** *The hard crust of the loaf and its soft center, the woven basket, the crisp cool cloth under the basket.*

The subject, bread, is a very important part of the everyday life in Dalí's home country, Spain.

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**Does this look like a different style than the other paintings that we have seen so far from Dali?** *All three of the works so far are very different in style.*

This was a time of experimentation in style for Dalí. He tried different styles until he came upon one that is called "Surrealism"

You can try an activity called "A Matter of Style". There is a container of 5 hats in the Visual Aids box. Call up 5 volunteers from the class and try on the different hats, each getting a little sillier. They are all hats, but each different from the other. An artist develops his own style with his work just like the volunteers wear different types of hats.



### Slide 6

These are some examples of Surrealist techniques

Salvador Dalí is *famous* for painting in a style called “surrealism”. Surrealists believed that the unexpected and unbelievable could happen in art. Rules of reality, such as gravity, do not apply. Things are familiar, but they do not make sense. Dalí called his paintings “**hand-painted dream photographs**”. **Surrealism, is an art movement that explored dreams and the unconscious mind through art.**

**Did you ever have a dream when you were in a place you knew or with people you knew, but it was mixed up?** ...things were a little confusing? Surrealists use this idea when they create their art.

For Dalí this perspective was more than an art style or a philosophy; it was his way of life. Dalí expressed surrealism in everything he said and did. He was not just unconventional and dramatic; he was fantastic, shocking, and outrageous! He was an artist who loved to stir up controversy.

Surrealists had a way of taking completely unlike objects or images and putting them together in the same piece of art. Let's look for use of these techniques when we look at the rest of Dalí's work.

Remember, rules of reality do not apply!



*Slide 7*

The Persistence of Memory

1931

The story is that one night, Dalí backed out of going to the movies with his wife, Gala, and friends; he said that he had a headache. He sat for a long time at the dinner table, staring at the melting Camembert cheese. Before he went to bed, he took one last look at a landscape he was working on – and suddenly added melting watches.

**Would you see this scene in real life?**

**What is the texture?** *Slick, shiny, dull, smooth, rough?*

**Did Dalí use any lighting effects?** *The background is light, the foreground is darker.*

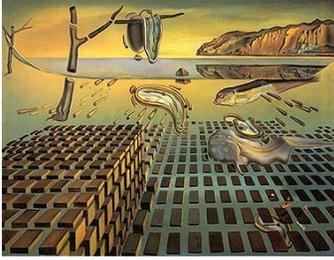
**What is your initial reaction to it?**

**Describe the brushwork.**

**Would you want to walk through this landscape?**

**What is on the gold watch?** *Ants. Dalí used ants in many of his works.*

**Can you give me some examples of Surrealist techniques in this work? How is this like a dream and how might it differ from reality?**



*Slide 8*

The Disintegration of the Persistence of Memory  
1954

Dali painted this piece in 1954, 20 years after the original version – Persistence of Memory.

The atomic bomb had been invented and here Dali is expressing his thoughts on it.

**What do you think he is trying to say?**

The landscape of his earlier work has been shattered by the effects of the atomic bomb. All of the elements in the painting are separating from each other.

Things are breaking apart as a result of the bomb and cover the barren landscape. The soft watch from the 1931 canvas is not just draped over a branch in the dead olive tree, it is ripping apart.

**Is there an order to the fall out?** *In spite of this painting's bleak ideas, Dali presents the atomic breakdown in a pattern, indicating the underlying order in nature.*

**What do all the rectangles remind you of?**

**Why aren't the tree's pieces falling down?**

**Why do you think the ocean being pulled up from the upper corner?**



*Slide 9*

Let's compare the two works.

**What is the same?**

**What is different?**



*Slide 10*

1934

“Ghost of Vermeer of Delft Which Can be Used as a Table”

**What is unusual about this painting?**

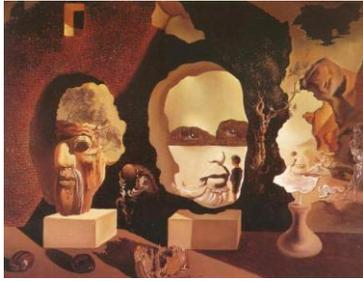
Vermeer is a painter from hundreds of years ago (17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch painter), whom Dalí admired. Vermeer was known for creating a painting that looked real, like a photograph of today. He portrayed life as it was. Instead of creating a record of the everyday as Vermeer did, Dalí created a record of the impossible. He turned a person into a thing by making Vermeer into a piece of furniture -a table.

**What does Dalí use to make the transformation from leg to table?**

*The bottle and glass.*

**If you could walk into this painting, what would you do?**

**If you could ask Dalí one question about this painting, what would it be?**



*Slide11*

Old Age, Adolescence, Infancy (The Three Ages)

1940

**Has anyone heard the famous riddle: What creature walks on four legs in the morning, two legs in the afternoon and three legs at night?**

The answer: *Human beings - who crawl as babies (in the morning of their lives), who walk as adults, and who use canes as the days of their lives come to a close.* Dali was probably thinking of that riddle when he made this painting.

**Can you see the faces hidden in the painting?**

**Which face is Old Age? Adolescence? Infancy?**

On the left, the bowed head of the woman makes up the eye of Old Age; the dark 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 Dali'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 Cadaques.

On the right, a fisherwoman repairing a net composes the barely-formed face of Infancy. Her head makes up the eye of the infant's face (the left side as we look at it).

**How many people can you find? *Keep looking, they are hidden everywhere.***

**What is the weather like?**

**What do the clouds look like?**

**If you had to put pictures of your family in this painting, where would they go?**

**Does this painting look like something you might see in real life or in a dream?**



*Slide 12*

This is a photo of Dali with his wife Gala. She played an important part in helping him become a well known artist. He has used her as a model in many of his paintings. Dali sold many paintings and became wealthy from his art. He bought a castle for Gala but he was not allowed to visit her there without her permission!



*Slide 13*

Here is a photo of Dali at work.

Dali has said:

“The only difference between myself and a crazy man, is that I am not crazy.”

**What do you think he means by that?** He does not think that he is crazy, but he might appear crazy to an observer? He thinks like a crazy person, but he is not? These kind of confusing statements are very typical of Dali.



*Slide 14*  
Madonna of Port Lligat  
1950

Give the students a minute to look at the work. The name of this painting is Madonna of Port Lligat. *Madonna is another name for Jesus' mother, Mary. Port Lligat is in the village in Spain in which Dali spent so much time.*

**What is in the very center of the painting?** *The figure of the baby*  
**Who do you think Dali intended the baby to represent?** Remind them of the name of the painting. *Baby Jesus*

**What does the woman appear to be doing?** *the woman's hands are poised as if praying.*

In many churches, the Eucharist (an important part of the mass) is called the bread or the body of Christ. **Why do you think Dali included the bread where he did?**

**What is in the background, the foreground?**

**What is unusual about this painting?**

This work is actually 12' x 8'. That would cover more than half the wall in this classroom.

**What problems do you think that a painting that large would present?** They had to hire a truck to transport it because it would not fit on the train on its trip to the boat to be taken to America. Once in New York, it would not fit on any elevator. They had to hoist it up on ropes and through a window into the gallery in which it was to be shown. The dealer himself said, "This painting is magnificent, but I will never be able to sell it, because there is no house big enough for it, and it costs too much to ship around." But he *was* able to sell it. Right now it is on the collection of Lady Beaverbrook of Canada. It is never shown in exhibitions because, in order to get it out, it would be necessary to knock down the door or take out one of the windows in the library where it hangs.



*Slide 15*

Here is a close up of the detail of the painting

**Does the Madonna look familiar?** *The model was Gala, Dalí's wife.*



*Slide 16*

Some other interesting facts about Dali:

- He was notorious for not knowing how to count money.
- He was afraid to expose his bare feet.
- He was afraid that someone would steal his work so he was known to attach his canvases to his body with strings when traveling.
- He was expelled from school for telling 3 teachers that he already knew more than they did.

Let's take these last few minutes to review some of the important points about today's artist.

- **Salvador Dali, from Spain.**
- **Painted in a style called surrealism – like dreams.**
  - **He said and did outrageous things.**
    - **Melting clocks.**

Please visit the following websites for more information of Dali:  
[www.salvadoralimuseum.org](http://www.salvadoralimuseum.org) or [www.dali-gallery.com](http://www.dali-gallery.com)

## A Matter of Style

Here is a fun way to demonstrate how artists develop a style that is all their own.

We are going to do a fun activity. I need 5 volunteers. *Line up 5 students in front of the class.* Every artist develops a style that is special to him. It is a way to express himself.

*Put a baseball cap on child #1, with the bill in the front.*

That is a good look! Child #2 likes it, but he puts his own personality into it and changes it a little.

*Put a baseball cap on child #2, with the bill in the back.*

Wow, that is another way to look at it! Child #3 thinks of another way to wear a hat.

*Put the soccer ball hat on child #3.*

That is nice, too. Child #4 has a different idea.

*Put the "black and white striped hat" on child #4.*

That is an interesting look! Now, child #5 wants to show you his/her style.

*Put the "Straw hat" on child #5.*

Now that's Style!

These are all hats, but each different from the other. An artist has to develop his own style with his work just like our volunteers today wore different hats.

# Today in Art in the Classroom we talked about the Spanish painter Salvador Dali.

He called his paintings “hand-painted **dream** photographs”. He was at the front of an art movement called **Surrealism** that explored dreams and the unconscious mind through art. Surrealism is the art of the unreal where almost anything can happen.

Dali was as famous as his art. He was an artist that loved to shock:

Dali once drove around in a Rolls Royce filled with  
\_\_\_\_\_.

He was afraid that someone would steal his work, so he attached his canvases to him with  
\_\_\_\_\_.

One of his most famous works contains melting  
\_\_\_\_\_.

