

HAUNTED ARTISTS

Forensic scientist uses DNA to explore Dali's bizarre genius

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2007/feb/24/artnews.art>

Dali's DNA might even hold clues to the man's creative genius. "He was just a machine of creativity at all levels," said Bruce Hochman, director of the Dali Gallery in San Juan, California. "Not only was he a great painter, he could work in any medium." Dali also designed jewellery, designed sets for Disney, wrote and starred in an opera and was an accomplished draughtsman. One possibility would be to study Dali's DNA for clues to his artistic genius. Perhaps he had a mild form of schizophrenia or bipolar disorder which fuelled his creativity. One piece in particular, a small watercolour called The Snail and the Angel, has a brown stain on it that is supposedly Dali's semen. The authenticity of that painting is not in doubt, but Dr Rieders thinks it would be a good place to start to try out the DNA fingerprint.

http://www.artelino.com/articles/salvador_dali.asp

Salvador Dali was born as the son of a prestigious notary in the small town of Figueras in Northern Spain. His talent as an artist showed at an early age and Salvador Felipe Jacinto Dali received his first drawing lessons when he was ten years old. His art teachers were a then well known Spanish impressionist painter, Ramon Pichot and later an art professor at the Municipal Drawing School. In 1923 his father bought his son his first printing press.

Dali began to study art at the Royal Academy of Art in Madrid. He was expelled twice and never took the final examinations. His opinion was that he was more qualified than those who should have examined him.

In 1928 Dali went to Paris where he met the Spanish painters Pablo Picasso and Joan Miro. He established himself as the principal figure of a group of surrealist artists grouped around Andre Breton, who was something like the theoretical "schoolmaster" of surrealism. Years later Breton turned away from Dali accusing him of support of fascism, excessive self-presentation and financial greediness.

By 1929 Dali had found his personal style that should make him famous – the world of the unconscious that is recalled during our dreams. The surrealist theory is based on the theories of the psychologist Dr. Sigmund Freud. Recurring images of burning giraffes and melting watches became the artist's surrealist trademarks. His great craftsmanship

allowed him to execute his paintings in a nearly photo-realistic style. No wonder that the artist was a great admirer of the Italian Renaissance painter Raphael.

In 1980 Dali was forced to retire due to palsy, a motor disorder, that caused a permanent trembling and weakness of his hands. He was not able to hold a brush any more. The fact that he could not follow his vocation and passion of painting and the news of Gala's death in 1982 left him with deep depressions.

After Gala's death he moved to Pubol, a castle, he had bought and decorated for Gala. In 1984, when he was lying in bed, a fire broke out and he suffered severe burns. Two years later, a pacemaker had to be implanted.

Towards the end of his life, Dali lived in the tower of his own museum where he died on January 23, 1989 from heart failure.

Dali quote : "What is a television apparatus to man, who has only to shut his eyes to see the most inaccessible regions of the seen and the never seen, who has only to imagine in order to pierce through walls and cause all the planetary Baghdads of his dreams to rise from the dust. "

<http://www.philipcoppens.com/dali.html>

Dali is one of few who is able to convince that this other world could also be real. It may be because he did not paint from his imagination or by combining real elements into surreal components; it may be because he never hid the fact that he was an avid drug taker... and before meeting the love of his life, his wife Gala, whom he considered to be his muse, he had also made it known that he considered himself to be "the Great Masturbator".

Dali had a genuine interest in the mind and the occult. His interest in the enigma of the mind brought him into contact with Sigmund Freud. The meetings occurred in 1938, when Freud was ailing in his London residence. Dali would draw numerous portraits of the father of psychiatry. Later, he would design the dream sequence in Alfred Hitchcock's "Spellbound", which heavily delves into psychoanalysis. But he was more like Jung than Freud, open to an archetypal reality. He created a bespoke tarot card deck; authors like Roger Michel Erasmy have no qualms in describing him as a visionary.

Dali quote " "Those who do not want to imitate anything, produce nothing."

It was via such enigmatic statements that Dali came to the attention of Roger Michel Erasmy, who began to explore Dali's strange world of hallucinations – an area where

few had dared to go before. Specifically, Erasmy focused on Dali's later years, when Dali was generally seen as "just mad" – but could have been in information overload? Was the gate from the other realm wide open and was Dali unable to regulate it?

His wife – muse – Gala died on June 10, 1982. Shortly afterwards, **Dali deliberately dehydrated himself, possibly in an attempt to put himself into a state of suspended animation**, as he had read that some micro-organisms could do. Dali's perception as a madman was augmented in 1984, when he apparently tried to commit suicide by setting his bed on fire. In his work, the theme of an enveloping catastrophe came ever more to the forefront. There is the enigmatic "catastrophic writing", written in a booklet on September 16, 1982, while he was at his castle Pubol.

His final "prophetic testament" was dictated to Antonio Pixtot, his most if perhaps only trusted ally at the time, on October 31, 1983. It contained catastrophic revelations, centred around four hallucinations Dali had experienced, apparently after the death of Gala, at the end of 1982. In these hallucinations, the French mathematician René Thom appeared. Though he had only ever met the mathematician once, in his hallucinations, Thom apparently convinced Dali of an upcoming catastrophe. Intriguingly, Dali stated that the centre of this catastrophe, which he linked with the disappearance – or abduction – of Europe, would begin between Salses and Narbonne, not too far from the station of Perpignan, which he had previously identified as the centre of the Universe

In 1958, he wrote in his "Anti-Matter Manifesto": "In the Surrealist period I wanted to create the iconography of the interior world and the world of the marvellous, of my father Freud. Today the exterior world and that of physics, has transcended the one of psychology. My father today is Dr. Heisenberg" –the person who created the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. In seeing the connection between quantum physics and the mind and how it will supersede psychology, he was decades ahead of his and our time. Specifically, he not merely understand, but was able to visualise this in his surreal other world that he created on his canvases.

At best labelled eccentric, at worst a paranoid lunatic, truly, he should be seen for what he painted: a surrealist, a modern-day alchemist, a man with one leg in this reality, and one leg in the other, his waxed moustache strangely suspended between a world where gravity exists, yet does somehow not seem to affect him too much. When once interviewed on an American television show, Dalí referred to himself in the third person, proclaiming "Dalí is immortal and will not die". In fact, Dali died several times. He had died a few years before he was born. He died as a young artist, when Dali broke

with the Surrealist movement, whose members, like Bréton, began to refer to Dali in the past tense, as if he had died. He died when Gala died in 1982. He died of heart failure on January 23, 1989, in Figueres

Dali quotes :::

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

Each morning when I awake, I experience again a supreme pleasure – that of being Salvador Dali.

Have no fear of perfection – you'll never reach it.

I do not paint a portrait to look like the subject, rather does the person grow to look like his portrait.

I don't do drugs. I am drugs.

I have Dalinian thought: the one thing the world will never have enough of is the outrageous.

Let my enemies devour each other.

Liking money like I like it, is nothing less than mysticism. Money is a glory.

Mistakes are almost always of a sacred nature. Never try to correct them. On the contrary: rationalize them, understand them thoroughly. After that, it will be possible for you to sublimate them.

The secret of my influence has always been that it remained secret