

Exhibition: **Dalí & Don Quixote**

31 May –28 August

Curators: Consuelo Ciscar and Enrique Sabater

Organized by: Institut Valencia d'Art Modern

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The exhibition *Dalí & Don Quixote* brings together 115 works, including drawings, engravings and sculptures that Salvador Dalí made for this classic of world literature. On the 400th anniversary of the publication of Cervantes' novel, IVAM wishes to pay special tribute to these two spirits that incarnate freedom in its purest state and for which both ended up paying a high price. We also would like this exhibition to contribute to renewed interest in and knowledge of these two outstanding representatives of our culture that portray human aspirations and dreams and their clash with reality. The catalogue published on the occasion of the show reproduces the works on display and includes texts by Víctor Fernández, Josep Salvador, Consuelo Ciscar and Enrique Sabater.

Dalí succeeded in projecting a kind of alter ego onto Don Quixote, this other legendary figure of our culture, born of Cervantes's pen, that allows us to explore the sources and sound the depths of Dalí's work and life. This show, which tangentially comprehends several decades in the creative career of

Salvador Dalí, illustrates “an artist’s approach to a universal work in order to release into it his own obsessions and personal iconography”. This approach to Cervantes’ character is fed by his sympathy for the hero whom Dalí baptized “the champion of liberties”. The phrase is eloquent and expresses the artist’s admiration for the renowned knight.

The work of Salvador Dalí (1904 – 1989) encompasses many and different facets: painter, sculptor, agitator and member of the Surrealist movement, writer, engraver and illustrator. This last activity, in particular, seduced the genius from the Catalan Ampurda from very early on and he achieved a direct and fluid style in it, thanks to his technical mastery and his vast imagination.

He held his first exhibition at the Figueres Teatro Municipal (Municipal Theater), a space which would become legendary for the artist and which years later he would make into his Teatro Museu (Theater Museum). In Madrid, he studied at the Escuela de Bellas Artes (School of Fine Arts) and lived at the Residencia de Estudiantes (Students’ Residence). There he established new friendships that would be decisive in his life and career: García Lorca, Buñuel, and Pepín Bello... Outstanding lecturers also passed through the Residencia, such as Eugeni d’Ors, Paul Claudel, Louis Aragon and Paul Eluard.

In 1932, a group of recognized artists, with Picasso at the head, along with René Crevel and André Breton, proposed to publisher Albert Skira that Salvador Dalí illustrate *Les chants de Maldoror*, by the Count de Lautréamont, with engravings. From his first trip to the United States, wrapped in the aura of that publication, he writes and illustrates *Vida secreta de Salvador Dalí* (The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí), which exposes the man, the real person and creator. It is an anthological piece and a guide to Dalí’s work, where his symbolic meta-languages and multi-dimensionality are expressed in a simple and direct manner, with descriptive meticulousness.

In addition to his enormous popularity, Salvador Dalí has been the center of attention in the realm of the arts, literature and film. However, because of its complexities and the numerous questions it awakens, his work has needed and still needs serious analysis to uncover the specific and unknown aspects that comprise it. The Surrealist painter is known for his invention of the paranoiac-critical method in his work and for his peculiar iconography, which came to reflect the profound influence of the classics (Velázquez, the Italian Renaissance). In this way, Dalí was a lover of order and at the same time modern and rebellious. His stance, at the very heart of Surrealism, was personal and provocative. He achieved and embodied a unique paradox: painting in a realistic manner according to irrational thought, following the dictates of imagination. From this both rational and irrational base emerges the artist’s versatility. His painting, drawings and engravings have made a profound mark on twentieth century art.