

# Salvador Dalí

(Spanish, 1904 – 1989)

**Salvador Dalí**, 1st Marqués de Dalí de Púbol -- so entitled by King Juan Carlos I of Spain in 1982 -- was a prominent Spanish Catalan modern artist born in Figueres, Spain. He is considered to be *the* Grand Master of figural Surrealism and was part of the original Paris surrealist group headed by poet André Breton, the “Pope of Surrealism.” (The Grand Master of non-figural Surrealism is Joan Miró, Dalí’s fellow Catalanian.)

Dalí was a skilled draftsman, best known for the striking and bizarre images in his surrealist, (rather than later realist), work. His painterly skills are often attributed to the influence of Renaissance masters, and he was a great admirer of exactitude in drawing and painting à la Vermeer -- something of a paradox, given Surrealism’s embrace of fantastical imagery. His best-known work, *The Persistence of Memory* (MOMA, NYC) was completed in 1931. Dalí’s expansive artistic repertoire included painting, film, writing, sculpture, printmaking, interiors, furniture, happenings, objects of art, costumes, and photography, in league with a wide range of artists -- even including collaborations with Alfred Hitchcock and Walt Disney!

Dalí attributed his "love of everything that is gilded and excessive, my passion for luxury and my love of oriental clothes" to an "Arab lineage," claiming that his ancestors were descended from the Moors. Dalí was highly imaginative and purposefully erratic; he cultivated indulging in unusual and grandiose behavior. His eccentric manner and attention-grabbing public actions sometimes drew more attention than his artwork, to the dismay of those who held his work in high esteem, and to the irritation of his critics. While many art-world savants may claim that it was Andy Warhol who made being famous famous, Dalí had commingled celebrity-seeking with high art, long before. He also rivals and predicts Warhol’s multi-media “The Factory” with all its pursuits -- in that analog era before computers.

**“Witches with Broom,”** (“*Les sorcières au balai*”) # 38/145, *Faust Suite*

From the German edition, 1968/69, # 300 Prestel (k), published by Argillet, printed by Robbe, Germany apart from the book in a special art folio with the 11 original book etchings (and the 10 vignettes, excluded) on Japanese paper, hand-painted with watercolor, and this one sprayed, each signed by the artist and numbered.

This delicate, sensual depiction – in etching, drypoint, and hand-painted gold spray – is from the section in Goethe’s book called “The Night of Walpurgis.” Faust’s evil guide Mephistopheles takes him up on a rocky hike to the place where witches and warlocks gather. To his wonderment, they are flying about on brooms, sticks, goats, pigs – or on nothing, whatsoever. Dalí clearly romanticizes his witches; here they are attractive, nymph-like females with gorgeous flowing hair. The spraying and spattering are old Surrealist tricks, pre-Pollock! – that celebrate randomness and the unconscious in art.\* The paint can never exactly hit the same places

throughout the edition because the exact handling by the artist and physics of paint mid-air cannot be replicated twice, down to the molecular level. Thus, each exemplar is unique unto itself – a metaphor for Surrealism’s concept since the 1920’s of random phenomenology *qua* extemporaneous composing, as if inspired by an over-soul.

(Compare the random spraying with the famous Surrealist game “*Le corps exquis*,” in which a piece of paper is folded into a slender set of pleats. Each pleat is painted or drawn upon by one member of an assembled group in succession. As one draws his section on one pleat only, the paper’s tight folds hide all the others. He then passes this compressed “fan” on to the next participant, making sure that only the next blank pleat is showing. Upon opening the completely drawn page, the group is confronted by their group work: usually but not always rather ‘totem pole’ in fashion *with charmed associations to those in the group at this time in their lives!*)

As for the spray, where it has fallen creates a sense of happy coincidence aligned to the “physics” of the moment, plus one’s unconscious in league with the universe! While each exemplar may be generally organized with paint *like* the others, small differences make each unique, phenomenological, and for the Surrealist, *patterned* by chance’s design.

Goethe’s version of the legendary tale is but one in an ages-old Teutonic/Frankish/Germanic oral and written tradition, comparable to that of Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* and of Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Dalí must have been delighted over the rough-and-tumble of man’s passing on oral poetry over the ages, and then on to authors like Goethe and others, who finally penned their own versions. Which is the authentic version? – the *real* one? – a surrealist’s delightful conundrum over random’s mysteries and its perplexing possibilities.

\* In the 1930s, it was the Surrealists who first experimented with splatter painting, dripping, and pouring paints directly onto canvas. Fleeing Hitler in occupied France, they would later pass these ideas onto the New York School -- Manhattan being the Surrealists newly adopted home.

“**Marguerite**,” Prestel # 298, 47/145 (other details, *ibid.*) Also known as ‘Gretchen’ in the Faustian lore, Marguerite is the anti-hero’s lover. Before Goethe’s time, in earlier versions of the tale, Faust is finally damned for his deal with the devil Mephistopheles. In Goethe’s version and others of later times, Faust is finally saved to heaven for never having turned his entire heart and soul over to the ‘dark side’ -- and, more importantly, because of Marguerite’s entreaties to the Lord in her über incarnation as the Eternal Feminine. Note Dalí’s intense etching of oval lines to surround the heroine, as if making her the center of his universe. Note also his elaborate scrolling on her crown, the sensitive treatment of her starry eyes, and the pervasive application of blue and gold pigment (read: *royal*), done by the hand of the artist -- one of Dalí’s most sensitive and romantic female portraits ever executed by him in etching.

“**Faust lisant**,” (“Faust Reading”), Prestel # 312, XXVIII/C (m), special edition of 100 on Japanese paper of this vignette. (10 vignettes, plus 11 etchings were originally included in the main book edition, from which this exemplar is apart.) This special edition of 100 (m) of “Faust Reading” appeared in the *Magiciens* portfolio, along with “*Le spectre de la rose*,”

“*L'illusionniste*,” and one vignette from the *Vénus aux fourrures* series. (*Les magiciens* includes texts by Goethe.)

“Faust Reading” is a key icon to the origin of the Faust story. Faust was a famous scholar, whose life of study and intellectual pursuit began to bore and torment him. In seeking pleasures of the flesh, power, and this world, Faust is catapulted into his bargain with Mephistopheles -- a complete turnaround in goals, temperament, and values.

Apart from all of the Faust lore and theater, there was an historical Faust (died 1540), who traveled widely performing magic, referring to the devil as his crony, and garnering a reputation for evil. The *Faustbuch*, a collection of tales purportedly by Faust, told of such reputed wizards as Merlin and Albertus Magnus. It was widely translated, and the English version inspired Christopher Marlowe’s “Tragicall History of D. Faustus” (1604), which emphasized Faust’s eternal damnation. Magic manuals bearing Faust’s name did a brisk business, and his classic *Magia naturalis et innaturalis* was known to Goethe, who, like Gotthold Lessing, saw Faust’s pursuit of worldly knowledge and power as noble. In Goethe’s *Faust*, the anti-hero is redeemed, as mentioned earlier. Inspired by Goethe, many artists took up the story, including Hector Berlioz in the dramatic cantata “The Damnation of Faust” and by Charles Gounod in his opera *Faust*.

“**Nu**,” # 21/50, *Les Amours de Cassandre Suite*

Published by P. Argillet and printed at Robbe (1968), # 250 Prestel (c) and one of only four in sanguine in the main edition, 1/299 – 299/299, with text by Ronsard on Japanese paper.

This image is a *tour de force* of arabesques – those curved, curled, and s-shaped lines inspired by mid-Eastern tiles, textiles, and mosaics. This influence first inspired the Gothic Flamboyant and came to dynamic pictorial use in the Baroque-Rococo periods. With the French Revolution and its beheading of royalty, such giddy decorations all but vanished, replaced instead by the straight and sober lines of Neo-Classicism, yet combated by Romanticism’s earthiness and love of untamed landscapes and flora. Dalí’s graceful execution starts with an adoring air, then as one spies the faint (apple) tree at upper left, his model becomes something of an Eve, whose scant veils reveal her derrière – apparently Dalí’s preferred apparatus if you scan his work over the decades!

While the model’s upper body remains fully nude with deliquescent form and ravishing rivers of hair, as if shone upon by heaven, the lower body is scrimmed, perhaps in keeping with the biblical story that, once fallen, Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness before the Almighty. Note the veil’s dramatic curving, as if wind-swept tightly around her hip, and the Michelangelesque lines in the veil that whip past the eye in rhythmic order.

Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585) was the greatest poet of Renaissance France, and his verse influenced French poetry into the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Ronsard was born of blue-blooded aristocracy, and served François I’s sons briefly at royal court, and then his betrothed daughter,

whom he accompanied on her voyage to marry the Scottish king. With the *Amours* of 1552, Ronsard attempted to prove his ability to rival yet another great poet, Petrarch. Indeed, the *Amours*, addressed to Cassandra (identified as a Cassandra Salviati), so seek to capture the traits of the Italian's famous love poems to Laura that the real existence of such a woman named Cassandra at that time is considered rather incidental.

The legendary Cassandra of Homer's *Iliad* was a daughter of Hecuba and King Priam, the rulers of Troy during the Trojan War. According to the Homeric tradition, Cassandra was a beautiful young woman blessed with the gift of prophecy by Apollo, who was infatuated with her. Unfortunately, she shunned Apollo at the last minute, and he added a twist to her gift: Cassandra was doomed to tell the future, but never to be believed! King Priam did not know what to do with her, so he tried to keep Cassandra locked up and out of the way of the warriors of Troy. When Troy finally fell to the Greek invaders, Cassandra's prophecies proved true.

Cassandra is often misinterpreted as a madwoman or crazy doomsday prophetess. Shakespeare presented her as a madwoman ranting and raving along the walls of Troy in his play "Troilus and Cressida." More importantly, her own people and family in Troy mistook her as a raving lunatic. She has always been shown in paintings with her long hair flying around her shoulders in what has been considered lunatic fashion, scantily clad. Here, she faces forward, her rear to us, as if aligned to the future. But there is so much more to Cassandra than her maddened predictions and pitiable treatment. Cassandra was a great, intelligent heroine who was cursed by the gods for not playing by their rules. She is a tragic figure, not a madwoman.

Her name, Cassandra, has two distinct meanings. The poet-scholar Robert Graves translates it from Greek to mean "she who entangles men," which is ironic since, although she was stunningly beautiful, her 'madness' repelled most men and her prophecies foretold of their deaths. Today, we call a "cassandra" someone whose true words are ignored or catastrophizing. Then again, Cassandra's doom was to predict what others refused to believe, as in Surrealism!

→ "**Les perroquets,**" ("The Parrots"), # ?/C, *Tauromachie surréaliste Suite*, (Surrealist Bullfight Suite)

→ Published by P. Argillet and printed at Maeght, Paris, 1966-67, Prestel (b), numbered I/C – C/C, ? the suite comprises seven heliogravures reworked in drypoint, and hand-colored with stencils. This fabled suite takes up the subject of bullfighting, which Dalí and Picasso each loved so much that we have numerous photos of them at *las corridas*, celebrities radiant and beloved in the bleachers. We mention Picasso because the *Surrealist Bullfight Suite*'s etching plates begin with exact replicas of Picasso's original sugar-lift aquatints of the same subject. Dalí's original *remarques* colorize and "dement" Picasso's rather toned-down, classic, black-and-white sugar-lifts, whose formalism is indeed exquisite, akin to Asian ink painting with its tasteful restraint, belying *sprezzatura*. Alas, Dalí seems to mock Picassoesque formalism, twisting the knife, as it were, by criticizing the older master as being blind to the subconscious socio-sexual underpinnings and 'uncivilized' hypocrisy of the *corrida*. "Why paint it so aesthetically, Pablo?"

A heliogravure is a graphic whose original color-separations are made using a flash projector on coated, photosensitive intaglio plates veiled with bitumen. Filters are used to block out one color at a time from a transparency of the original design placed in the projector. Dalí loved heliogravure and believed it comported with the idea of random, inasmuch as light, not the artist's hand, made the composition from a 'distance' -- photons, not 'technique!'

For a sugar-lift aquatint, the artist first paints a raw plate with a solution of sugar and acid. The plate is then varnished and left in water until the sugar melts, lifting the varnish up and off those pinhole-sized parts of the plate from which the sugar grains bubble out. A network of fine granular holes are then bitten into the plate in an acid bath, later allowing (black) ink to be absorbed into that network of holes to create continuous tone, as in normal aquatint, except all-over spotted by the white paper showing through, as well. While normal aquatint creates velvety greys for the most part, sugar-lift creates black-and-white contrasts within continuous tone strokes.

For Dalí, the art of the bullfight may have been another brilliant example of how received reality can be totally "surreal," truth being stranger than fiction. The bloody gore and its celebration by the people are certainly rooted in some sub-conscious catharsis, deep-seated bloodlust, rivalrous fear of dominance or emasculation, gladiatorial release, etc. How could Picasso skim over this?

At least three or four of the suite's seven images cast their themes into the past, from Medieval to Baroque epochs. In "The Parrots," Dalí en-masks the toreadors with the medieval headgear that was thought to keep the plague at bay for those having to see or care for the sick. Their beaks are parrot- or vulture-like, allusions respectively to those who mimic or follow the leads of others, and to the scavenger birds of death. (Alas, these hats seem to blend in quite festively with the toreadors' already exotic costume!) Then again, one of the toreadors' profiles is trunked like an elephant's, and this phallic symbolism is reinforced by the female-breasted matador on the left, who reaches his/her hand to grab the "goods." At center, a dunce in aqua and yellow garb, reminiscent of Picasso's *Harlequin* series (1904 – 1907), does a handstand, leaving his groin a-splay to be kissed by a second woman in profile, whose right hand is inserted into the bull's mouth, and whom Dalí has adapted from Picasso's original icon of the toreador cape. She is kneeling, hair flowing down with a ribbon, and her naked bottom is exposed at the feet of the 'elephant man!' Dalí drives the allusion, literally into the ground, by placing a snake on the sand, whose one end is another hand, rhyming with the one just mentioned, and its other end, rather penile.

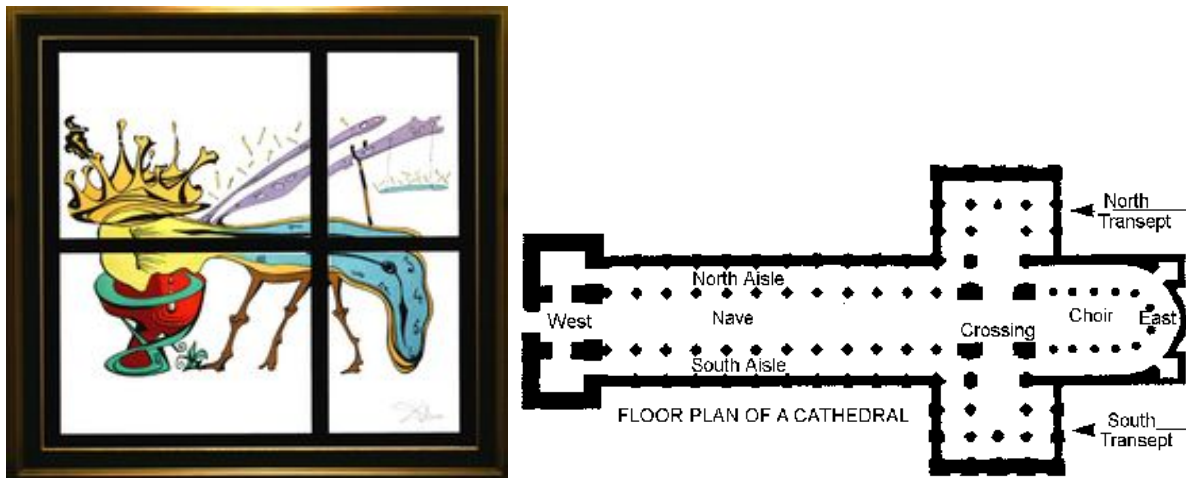
The hand/penis motif of the snake, of course, rhymes with the depiction above it of the female at left reaching for the male's elephant trunk. In turn, we are tempted to exclaim "hand-job," which is, after all, the work of the toreador with his long blade! The concept of sexual thrill in the climaxing moment of one's violence against a victim is suggested, as is the overall equation of the bull's murder as an act of sexual ejaculation, like the blood splashing from the *picas* plunged into the animal's neck.

***La Tauromaquia*** by Picasso is a series of 26 aquatint etchings illustrating one of the most important themes of Spanish culture, the art of the bullfight. Picasso created this body of work in

1957 as an homage to the eponymous 17<sup>th</sup>-century book written by the famous matador José Delgado. Dalí's use of Picasso's imagery may be a mark of the Spaniards' cordiality with one another: its layering suggests Picasso as aesthetic "first," and Dalí as a wild "second" – in the hierarchy of Modern art's cardinally ranked talents, which the two often toyed with or vented about.

**“Le Vitrail”** (“Painted Window”), 1969, hand-colored etching, image size 32 x 24 cm./paper size 39 x 29 cm. Published by and printed at Pierre Argillet, Paris. Edition: 1/250 - 250/250 on *Arches* cotton; I/C - C/C on Japanese mulberry paper. Executed by Dalí after a **window painted by the artist**. Each exemplar, signed by the artist and numbered. (Note: the beautiful hand-coloring is not visible in the computer image of the DRFA exemplar that follows further below.)

At various times in his career, most notably in the decoration of personal residences, including his own, and of eponymous museums, Dalí would branch out from painting and original printmaking into multimedia: furniture, sculpture, installation art, monuments, architecture, etc. The following two images represent the master's forays into stained-glass windows.

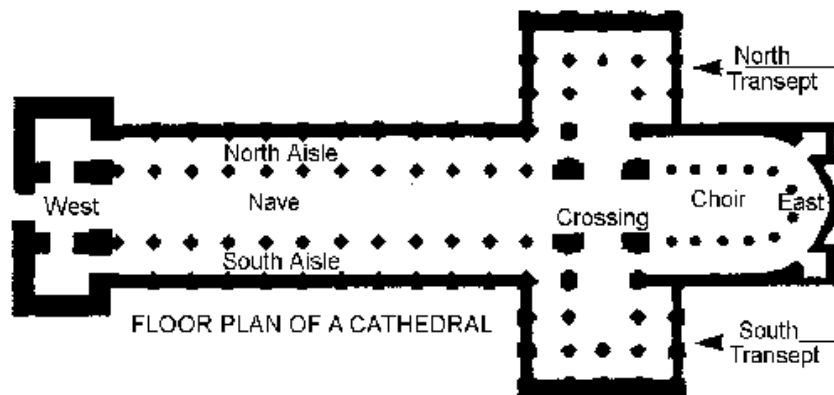


**Dalí, “Rejuvenation of Time,” 1974, stained-glass window, designed for the artist’s Teatro-Museo at his residence in Figueres, Spain.**

Since ‘Time’ is the 4th dimension, Dalí conceived of this window in four parts. Not only does the asymmetry of the panels’ dimensions suggest the bending of light by matter in space, plus the compression of time *at* the speed of light, it also rotates to a *horizontal* orientation to become Dalí’s obsessive, Christian-cross motif -- as in ‘time-*horizon*,’ ‘event-*horizon*,’ the warping of time, torquing of the cross, etc. (Please remember that Einstein, Picasso, Dalí were contemporaries, and knew of one another’s work.)

As one approaches the speed of light, time becomes compressed: past, present, and future merge into one. Hereabove, Dalí’s clock vomits into the toilet, as if dying! Nearing the speed of light, we would also see a red-shift on one side of our vision and a blue-shift on the other, as the color

spectrum would be riven -- here adeptly symbolized in Dalí's color scheme. Even the crutches that have held up Dalí's lavender 'wings of time' scatter all aloft, as if in a great 'cosmic' wind. By 'rejuvenating' time, the artist rescues the 4th dimension to earth-time, thereby saving the color spectrum and its successive hues, as if the artist knew the speed of light could not be attained by anything material.



This hand-painted window, now a **hand-painted print** -- **highlighted in mint green and pink** -- was originally conceived with an ecclesiastical theme, namely that of a Gothic cathedral's **north**

**aisle.** The crutches stand in for gothic columns, receding from the nave towards the transept (here, unseen in the white background of Dalí's etching). Dalí even leaves drafting marks in the upper left, to suggest an architect's blueprint. The angel sits on a Cubist-style stone, in Dalian homage to his countryman Picasso, while it contemplates death, symbolized by the barren tree, and new life, symbolized by the Spring foliage, budding from the branchlets atop the figure's head. Another theme -- that of intellect vs. religion, rationalism vs. faith -- is also suggested. We know from his biographies that Dalí was a tortured Catholic -- longing for the redemption of his childhood religion, and yet teased into the distractions of this world: writ large as fame, genius, wealth, imagination, the seven deadly sins, etc. The tone of a Greek philosopher is also implied, as is an allusion to Rodin's "The Thinker," *Musée Rodin*, Paris -- Dalí's adopted city.

An original Rudier casting of "The Thinker" is also at the San Francisco Palace of the Legion of Honor, gift of Alma Spreckels, founder and builder of the museum -- a 2/3-size replica of the *Legion d'Honneur* in Paris. She is also the one who stands atop the column in Union Square, S.F. -- and the one who built the mansion in which Danielle Steele now lives. Thereat, Spreckels invented the idea and term 'garage sale!' She was a declassé de Bretteville, whose family portrait is in the Louvre, and a famous S.F. model who married the sugar magnate Charles Spreckels.

**"The Judgement of Paris,"** 1963/5, *Mythology Suite*, LIII/C, Prestel # 123 ('f'), 50 x 40 cm. P. Argillet, publisher. Printed at Robbe. Sixteen of Dalí's largest-ever etching formats on themes from Classical antiquity, the suite is notable for its rarity and dramatic value increases which persist to this day.



**"The Judgement of Paris"** by  
Marcantonio Raimondi, after Raphael,  
c. 1515-1516



Enough cannot be said about the popularity and importance of the 'Judgement of Paris' to many Old and Modern Masters, including Dali, in the post-Classical period. The subject matter was, of course, everywhere in antiquity -- and has enjoyed long-lasting appeal into Modernist times. The basic story is that Hera (Queen of the Gods), Athena (Goddess of Wisdom), and Aphrodite (Goddess of Love) were to be judged in a beauty contest by the Trojan hero Paris. He chose Aphrodite. Athena, in a rage at not being chosen as the most beautiful of the three, joined the Greeks against Paris' Trojans in the Trojan War to avenge herself against him.

### **'The Judgement of Paris' in the post-Classical period**

The subject became popular in art from the late Middle Ages onward. All three goddesses were usually shown nude, though in ancient art only Aphrodite is ever unclothed, and not always. The opportunity for three female nudes was a large part of the attraction of the subject. It appeared in illuminated manuscripts and was popular in decorative art, including 15th-century Italian inkstands and other works in maiolica (tin-glazed earthenware), and *cassoni* (painted marriage chests). As a subject for easel paintings, it was more common in Northern Europe, although Marcantonio Raimondi's engraving of c. 1515 is probably based on a drawing by Raphael, and -- using a composition derived from a Roman sarcophagus -- was a highly influential treatment, which made Paris' Phrygian cap an attribute in most later versions.

The subject was painted many times: 22 are claimed by Lucas Cranach the Elder, alone! -- and it was especially attractive to Northern Mannerist painters. Rubens painted several compositions of the subject at different points in his career. Watteau and Angelica Kauffman were among the artists who painted the subject in the 18th century. 'The Judgement of Paris' was painted frequently by academic artists of the 19th century, and less often by their more progressive contemporaries such as Renoir and Cézanne. Later artists who have painted the subject include André Lhote, Enriquer Simonet (*El Juicio de Paris*, 1904), and Salvador Dalí.

→ **"Pegasus,"** *The Mythology Suite*, etc.

Pegasus is one of the best known creatures in Greek mythology. He is a winged, divine stallion, usually depicted as pure white in color. He was sired by Poseidon, in his role as horse-god, and foaled by the Gorgon Medusa. Greco-Roman poets write about his ascent to heaven after his birth and of his obeisance to Zeus, King of the gods, who instructed him to bring lightning and thunder from Olympus. Friend of the Muses, Pegasus is the creator of Hippocrene, the Muses' fountain on Mt. Helicon. He was captured by the Greek hero Bellerophon near the fountain Peirene with the help of Athena and Poseidon. Pegasus allows the hero to ride him to defeat a monster, the Chimera, before realizing many other exploits. His rider, however, falls off his back trying to reach Mount Olympus. Zeus would thereafter transform Bellerophon into the constellation *Pegasus*.

The symbolism of Pegasus varies with time. Icon of wisdom and especially of fame from the Middle Ages until the Renaissance, he became a symbol of the poet and the source of inspiration for poetry, particularly in the 19th century. Pegasus is the subject of a very rich iconography, especially through ancient Greek pottery and paintings and sculptures of the Renaissance. Personification of water, solar myth, or shaman mount, Pegasus has been seen by Carl Jung and his followers as profoundly symbolic esoterica in relation to the spiritual energy that allows access to the realm of the gods at Mount Olympus.



“Pegasus,” as horse of The Muses, Poznań Opera House, Poland (Max Littmann, 1910)

The poet Hesiod presents a folk etymology of the name *Pegasus* as derived from  $\pi\eta\gamma\acute{\eta}$  *pēgē* "spring, well" -- "the *pegai* of Okeanos -- where he was born."

Another proposed etymology of the name is Luwian *pihassas*, meaning "lightning," and *Pih Assassi*, a local Luwian-Hittite name in southern Cilicia of a weather god represented with thunder and lightning. The proponents of this etymology adduce Pegasus' role, reported as early as Hesiod, as the *bringer* of thunderbolts to Zeus.

According to legend, everywhere the winged horse struck his hoof on the earth, a spring burst forth. One of these springs was upon the Muses' Mount Helicon, the *Hippocrene* or "horse spring." Hesiod relates how Pegasus was peacefully drinking from a spring when the hero Bellerophon captured him.

Dalí's inspired treatment of his own "Pegasus" is grounded in this mythology. Note the artist's expansive use of 'royal' blue, as a symbol of both water and clouds -- each denoting the springs borne of Pegasus' foot-stomps and of the airy atmosphere in which he flew. Further note the extensive use of the noisy, rotogravure technique, perhaps a metaphor for lightning and thunder!

It is best to remember that great Modernist artists like Picasso and Dalí were treated to classic educations more in line with the ancients and students in the Renaissance -- not to mention those in old Europe and New England -- than the curricula of students today. Greek and Latin were staples of the classroom, and the classics were widely taught and *memorized*.

There are several versions of the birth of the winged stallion and his brother Chrysaor in the far distant place at the edge of Earth, Hesiod's "springs of Oceanus," which encircle the inhabited earth, and where Perseus found Medusa. One is that the equines sprang from the blood issuing from Medusa's neck as Perseus was beheading her, similar to the manner in which Athena was born from the head of Zeus. In another version, when Perseus beheaded Medusa, they were born of the Earth, fed by the Gorgon's blood. A variation of this story holds that they were formed from the mingling of Medusa's blood, her pain, and sea foam, implying that Poseidon had involvement in their making. The last version bears resemblance to the birth of Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus.

→ **"Flower Woman at Soft Piano,"** # ?, *Hippies Suite*

Published by P. Argillet, 1969/70, #377 Prestel (b) printed by Robbe, Germany. The (b) → section is one of only two (a) and (b) in the overall edition, numbered I/C –C/C, ? and printed on Japanese paper in black and sanguine. The suite includes 11 etchings.

Surrealism began as an anti-establishment literary movement in 1920s Paris led by poet André Breton, dubbed "Pope of Surrealism." Having published "The Surrealist Manifesto," he recruited and edited the members of Surrealism -- who would later come to include visual artists like Dalí. The manifesto was a pamphlet calling for the toppling or resignation of national leaders and parliaments, businesses, militaries, etc. that had brought on WWI. This "war to end all wars" had left so many young men across Europe dead, maimed, limbless, or paralyzed that they were a common sight on any street corner – "The Lost Generation" as they were coined by Gertrude Stein -- writer, art collector/critic, and expat in France.

(Originally from Oakland, CA, she famously quoth, "There's no there, there" of Oakland -- a literary play on Cubism's repetition of the same cube-form to build up a painting -- 'there, there, there' *qua* 'cube, cube, cube.')

The Surrealists argued that it was just as absurd for royals and the political-industrial machine to entrench the world in a war over a "single shot heard round the world" – the assassination by a Serb of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, cousin of the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Josef seated at Vienna – as it would be to accept as valid their own 'mad' aesthetic. Outmatching the insanity of "fact," they stood for "impulse" and the idea that art/culture embodies

illogicality, nonsense, random, absurdity, and rebellion against mores. “How could the alleged, superior logic and leadership of the establishment lead to such catastrophe,” the Surrealists demanded? One of them even called for the burning down of the Louvre, and another stole the Mona Lisa from same, putting the blame on Picasso, who was falsely arrested and had to clear his good name!

To contrast the fallacy of stability and leadership in society, the Surrealists dedicated themselves to living for art based on one’s subconscious and dream life. They sought out art techniques like painting right after a séance to conjure automatically generated images from “the genius of random.” They wanted their art and lives of spontaneity and absurdity to contrast with those of so-called “authorities,” whom they viewed as rotten, established powers. If one gunshot could terrorize the world, then the Surrealists wanted nothing to do with “the Machine.” They created anti-government, anti-establishment, and nonsense/shock-value literature, poems, pictures, architecture, objects, and happenings meant to topple the ascendancy of bourgeoisie thinking and logic. As such, they are descended from the Dada movement, which had sprung up only a few years earlier, and which shared many of Surrealism’s key members like Marcel Duchamp.

When Dalí became aware of the hippie movement in San Francisco in the 1960s, he was absolutely delighted that a new generation was in revolt and speaking truth to power about the tragedy, waste, and ridiculousness of the Vietnam War, especially the Anglophone paranoia of communism’s “domino theory.” (For God’s sakes, *Picasso* was a Communist!)

In this work, “**Flower Woman at Soft Piano**,” Dalí creates a hallucinogenic sense of synesthesia\* – the feel and flow of the fabric are to touch, as the sound of a piano’s glissando is to the ear. He extends the conflation/torsion by visually ‘twisting’ the right figure so that her breasts are on her back! Finally, the figures are ‘flower children’ frolicking in the California desert, à la ‘Burning Man,’ if you will. (At one time, Dalí and his wife owned a house in Monterey, CA.)

\* LSD is well known for creating sensations of synesthesia: smell a color; taste a shape, see a flavor, hear a painting, etc. Babies, whose five senses have not fully dissociated in infancy, are also said to experience high levels of synesthesia, compared to adults.