

A National
 Gallery of
 Victoria
 Education
 Resource

Salvador
 Dalí, whose
 intuitive
 sensibility
 was acutely
 attuned
 to new
 trends and
 advances
 in every
 sphere of
 life...

Salvador Dalí (designer)
 Spanish 1904–89, worked in
 United States 1940–48
**The Condé Nast Publications
 Inc., New York** (publisher)
 United States est. 1909
Advertisement for Bryans Hosiery
 1946
 page 69 in *Vogue*, 15 April 1946
 colour photo-offset lithograph
 31.2 x 23.4 cm (sheet)
 National Gallery of Victoria,
 Melbourne Shaw Research Library
 Works by Salvador Dalí: © Salvador
 Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí,
 VISCOPY, 2009

Dalí and design

Introduction



Salvador Dalí, whose intuitive sensibility was acutely attuned to new trends and advances in every sphere of life, would have found it impossible as an artist to confine himself to only one medium. He was instinctively drawn to the dazzling creative possibilities inherent in modern design.

While living in the United States in the 1940s his increasing fame attracted commercial assignments in many fields of design. He enthusiastically applied his ideas to both the high and low ends of the commercial spectrum, including advertising, jewellery design, covers for *Vogue* magazine and other American life-style publications, textile designs for curtains, rugs and neckties for the mass market, and collaborations with Elsa Schiaparelli in haute couture.

Dalí was invited to create advertisements for lipstick, perfume, Johnson paints and waxes, and notably Bryans Hosiery, which was fashioned from nylon, the newly invented and highly acclaimed synthetic 'wonder' fabric. Using collage as a medium, he created fifteen designs, many featuring the sinuous, seductive lines of elegant stocking legs disconnected from their bodies. Transported from the blandness of the everyday to a Surrealist adventure, the silken legs, appropriated from risqué postcards of music-hall belles, float above a landscape of fragmented images inspired by the classical past, a theme Dalí was championing in his art of the time.

Ironically, although the intention of the Surrealists was to shock the mainstream world, the advertising industry capitalised on the transformative power of their creative imaginations – ordinary household objects placed in tantalising Surrealist fantasies became glamorous, exotic and irresistible.

Alberto Giacometti, René Magritte and Dora Maar also applied a Surrealist lens to their work in advertising.

While some members of the arts community, particularly André Breton, the founder of the Surrealist movement, believed that engagement with the commercial world sullied artistic purity, there can be no doubt that Dalí's explorations in this area were extensions of the creative genius that drove his art. His forays into television advertisements in the 1960s and 1970s, when he personally endorsed Lanvin chocolates, Braniff Airlines and Alka-Seltzer, must have infuriated his critics.

Introduction

A National
 Gallery of
 Victoria
 Education
 Resource

Book
 illustration
 was another
 natural
 outlet for
 Dalí's unique
 imaginative
 powers ...



Other significant design projects completed both before and after his time in the United States include Dalí's iconic shocking-pink sofa in the shape of lips (1936–37) and the much-imitated ruby lips brooch (1949), both inspired by the glamorous American film star Mae West.

The world-famous Chupa Chups logo, based on a concept sketch designed by Dalí to advertise the Catalan lollipop invented in 1958, ensures his continuing presence in the commercial world of today.

It should also be noted that the tentacles of Dalí's polymorphous talent reached out to serious literary and theatrical projects. He engaged with ballet, including writing the narrative and designing the costumes and sets for *Bacchanale*, choreographed by Léonide Massine. The revolutionary production, which featured a huge backdrop of a swan, ballet dancers on crutches and the lead dancer Nini Theilade in the role of Venus wearing a flesh-coloured bodystocking, suggesting she was completely nude, was a scandalous success. After a record-breaking season at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, the production toured the United States between 1939 and 1940.

Book illustration was another natural outlet for Dalí's unique imaginative powers and skilled draughtsmanship. He was commissioned by his friend Dr Giuseppe Albaretto to create illustrations for the Bible as a means of encouraging him to re-enter the Catholic church. His *Biblia Sacra* encompasses 105 paintings based on passages from the Latin Vulgate Bible. The original illustrations were completed between 1963 and 1964, with a combination of gouache, watercolour, ink and pastel, and published in 1969 by Rizzoli Editions, Milan, Italy. Each illustration is accompanied by verses from the Old and New Testament of the Bible.

As a complete contrast, Dalí also illustrated *Alice in Wonderland* (Maecenas Press-Random House, New York, 1969), applying his unique visual interpretation to Lewis Carroll's two famous novels *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871). It is easy to imagine how the anthropomorphic creatures and nonsensical genre of the great literary classics would have appealed to Dalí, who, like Carroll, possessed a keen intellect and a bizarre perspective on the world, which led him, through his art, to challenge existing perceptions of reality.

Salvador Dalí (designer)
 Spanish 1904–89, worked in
 United States 1940–48
**The Condé Nast Publications
 Inc., New York** (publisher)
Advertisement for Bryans Hosiery
 1948
 page 78 in *Vogue*, 1 April 1948
 colour photo-offset lithograph
 31.2 x 23.4 cm (sheet)
 National Gallery of Victoria
 Shaw Research Library
 Works by Salvador Dalí: © Salvador
 Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí,
 VISCOPY, 2009

Salvador Dalí (designer)
 Spanish 1904–89, worked in
 United States 1940–48
**The Condé Nast Publications
 Inc., New York** (publisher)
Advertisement for Bryans Hosiery
 1946
 page 44 in *Vogue*, 15 November
 1946
 colour photo-offset lithograph
 31.2 x 23.4 cm (sheet)
 National Gallery of Victoria,
 Melbourne
 Shaw Research Library
 Works by Salvador Dalí: © Salvador
 Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí,
 VISCOPY, 2009

Salvador DALÍ

Liquid Desire

Dalí and design

Discover More

A National
Gallery of
Victoria
Education
Resource



Salvador Dalí (designer)
Spanish 1904–89, worked in
United States 1940–48
Elsa Schiaparelli (designer)
Italian/French 1890–1973
Schiaparelli, Paris (couture
house)
1927–54
Tear dress, hood 1938 summer,
Circus collection
silk crêpe
88.0 cm (centre back)
National Gallery of Australia,
Canberra
Works by Salvador Dalí: © Salvador
Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí,
VISCOPY, 2009

... Dalí's
use of an
inanimate
object to
convey a
symbolic
meaning.

André Cailliet Fils, Paris
French active (1930s)
Gala wearing the Shoe-hat
created by Elsa Schiaparelli from
a Salvador Dalí design 1938
gelatin silver photograph
23.0 x 28.6 cm
Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí,
Figueres. André Cailliet Fils



The spirit of Surrealism pervaded Paris in the late 1930s, inspiring designers like Elsa Schiaparelli (1890–1973), one of the most prominent figures in fashion, to create dramatic yet elegant haute couture garments that fused the worlds of fashion and art. The flamboyant, free-thinking designer, who had initially studied philosophy at the University of Rome, was renowned for her use of unusual materials and spectacular approach to colour. Yves Saint Laurent, describing her creation of a vivid pink, commented that 'She alone could have given to a pink the nerve of a red ... a neon pink, an unreal pink ... Shocking Pink!', a colour that is still referred to today as Schiaparelli pink. Her salon in the Place Vendôme was frequented by artist friends and influential clients such as Mae West, Marlene Dietrich and Wallis Simpson.

Schiaparelli collaborated with Alberto Giacometti and Jean Cocteau, and her adventurous nature appealed to Dalí, with whom she worked on a number of projects.

Her *Lobster dress*, 1937, a silk organza gown printed with a giant Dalí lobster amid sprigs of parsley, was acquired by Wallis Simpson as part of her trousseau before her marriage to the Duke of Windsor in May 1937. She was photographed wearing the infamous dress by the famous society photographer Cecil Beaton.

The idea for the black felt *Shoe-hat*, one of a series designed by Schiaparelli in conjunction with Dalí, and which included hats in the shapes of lamb chops and inkwells, sprang from a photograph of Dalí with a woman's shoe on his head and another on his shoulder, taken at Portlligat in 1933. The high-heeled shoe, often associated with displaced desire, can be interpreted in this instance as Dalí's use of an inanimate object to convey a symbolic meaning. The hat was featured in the designer's winter collection of 1937 worn with a black dress and jacket embroidered with ruby red lips, a reference to the glamour of Mae West.

The artist and designer continued their creative partnership with two gowns displayed as part of Schiaparelli's *Circus* collection in the summer of 1938. The *Skeleton dress* incorporated raised and stitched padding to represent a withered, gaunt figure with protruding skeletal features, based on a series of drawings by Dalí. By contrast, the *Tear dress and hood*, 1938, 'is a much more subtle creation, yet presents the more ghoulish prospect of a ripped dress in which the torn cloth exposes the raw, bloodied epidermis ... The most novel feature ... are the images of fur that incongruously line the rips of the printed dress, adding a more bestial note to the work' (Roger Leong, *Salvador Dalí: Liquid Desire*, National Gallery of Victoria, 2009, p. 231).

Discover More

A National
 Gallery of
 Victoria
 Education
 Resource



In 1939, as Dalí's fame and notoriety grew, he was commissioned to create a fantastical pavilion ...

In 1939, as Dalí's fame and notoriety grew, he was commissioned to create a fantastical pavilion in the amusement zone section of the New York World's Fair. *Dalí's Dream of Venus*, as it came to be known, paid homage externally to the bizarre and inventive decorative qualities associated with the Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí, whom Dalí so admired, and featured tantalising sirens juxtaposed with reproductions of major works by Botticelli and Leonardo da Vinci.

The interior of the Surrealist pavilion, adorned with hanging open umbrellas, dangling hair, telephone receivers and bats, revealed stagings of Venus's dreams which incorporated some of the artist's most well-known iconography, including soft watches, a lobster (in this case, a 118-metre long creature baking on hot coals) and giraffes.

The extravaganza unfolding inside was described by Fleur Cowles in her book *The Case of Salvador Dalí* (Heinemann, London, 1959):

Seventeen live mermaids, wearing fins, tails, brassieres, and very little else dived and played inside a tank filled with water. These girls were supposed to represent a 'prenatal chateau', but among other things they were busy at highly surrealist activities inside the tank ... Some milked an underwater cow, some played imaginary music on piano keys painted on the body of a rubber woman (who was chained to a grand piano). Some 'liquid ladies' (as *Dalí* called them) were also busy telephoning and typing.

Before emerging from the crazy pavilion, 'visitors passed by an Americanised reprise of Dalí's *Rainy taxi*, a life-sized sculpture/installation featuring a taxi cab fitted with an internal water sprinkler, filled with disturbing mannequins, vegetables and live Burgundian snails, that had stolen the show at the 1938 International Surrealist Exhibition in Paris. This time Dalí used a New York taxi, covered with ivy, whose fetish-hooded driver chauffeured a dummy of Christopher Columbus sporting a *barretina*, the traditional Catalan hat'¹.

Discover More

A National
 Gallery of
 Victoria
 Education
 Resource



The project was fraught with difficulties due to lack of time and the clash of Dalí's creative ideas with those of his more conservative sponsors, particularly William M. Gardner, who refused to agree to the artist's plan to replace the peaceful, delicate face of Botticelli's *Venus* with a giant fish head.

Disgruntled by enforced changes to his overall concept insisted upon by his sponsors, Dalí published one of his wittiest works, a pamphlet titled *Declaration of the Independence of the Imagination and of the Rights of Man to His Own Madness*, in which he stated 'it is man's right to love women with the ecstatic heads of fish'.

He had the pamphlet dumped by plane onto the streets of New York. When the pavilion re-opened in 1940 as *20,000 Legs Under the Sea* featuring ladies frolicking with 'Oscar the Obscene Octopus', it was a crude travesty of Dalí's original. Fortunately, Eric Schaal, a refugee from Nazi Germany who worked with Dalí on a number of photo-documentation projects, had recorded the preparation and completion in 1939 of the original Dream of Venus.

Eric Schaal

German/American 1905–94
Facade of the Dream of Venus
 pavilion 1939 (detail)
 gelatin silver photograph
 20.6 x 22.9 cm
 Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí,
 Figueres (00207 / 1300)
 Eric Schaal © Fundació Gala-
 Salvador Dalí, VISCOPY, 2009

A National
Gallery of
Victoria
Education
Resource

Dalí and design

Dalí under the microscope



Dalí was
a great
innovator
with a
passion for
working
with new
discoveries.

Thinking and creating

- **Study and discuss** the *Shoe-hat* by Dalí and Schiaparelli.
- If it were available today, what outfit and accessories would you suggest wearing with it?
- **Re-design** the hat using a different shoe and incorporating colour(s) and or patterns.
- Discuss what other items could be transformed into hat designs – **consider** everyday household items, aspects of nature, machines, modes of transport, and so on.
- Use the internet to **research the work** of London milliner Philip Treacy, who creates Surreal hats today.
- **Create your own design** for a Surreal hat for a particular occasion.
- Look at a range of advertisements for contemporary fashion items.
Design an advertisement for a billboard or magazine to advertise your hat.
- Read the description on this site of Dalí's *Dream of Venus* pavilion.
Choose an artist you admire and imagine that they have been commissioned to design a 'fun' house for a World Fair. Consider a theme, mood, materials and special effects such as multimedia and music. Communicate your ideas for the design in drawings and collage, or a scale model that you could present to the sponsors of the project.
- Dalí was a great innovator with a passion for working with new discoveries. What changes have taken place since his death in 1989 – consider computers and mobile phones, and so on. What products might Dalí be designing today? **How** might he use the new technologies that have been developed in the last thirty years in his art and design practice?

Salvador Dalí (designer)
Spanish 1904–89, worked
in United States 1940–48

ALEMANY & ERTMAN
Incorporated, New York
(manufacturer), United States
(late 1940s)

Bleeding world, pendant 1953
gold, rubies, pearls, diamonds
5.5 x 7.5 x 1.0 cm

The Salvador Dalí Museum,
St Petersburg, Florida

Worldwide Rights: © Salvador
Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí,
VISCOPY, 2009. In the USA:
© Salvador Dalí Museum Inc.,
St Petersburg, FL, 2009

Dalí under the microscope



Researching and creating

- **Visit** the Elsa Schiaparelli website: <http://www.schiaparelli.com/intro.html>. What aspects suggest that the designer of the site was influenced by Surrealism?
- Imagine you are creating a website for a famous artist, designer or yourself in a Surrealist style – **describe, draw or make a collage** of your ideas.
- Visit the website of the Dalí Theatre Museum (Teatre-Museo Dalí) at Figueres in Catalonia, Spain, which Dalí himself designed. www.salvador-dali.org/museus/figueres/en_index.html
- Make a 'virtual' visit to the *Mae West Room* – **discuss** what techniques Dalí used to create an illusion of her face.
- Use the internet and/or books in a library to research Dalí's *Ruby lips brooch* and *Mae West lips sofa*. **Draw a design** for jewellery or a household object based on a facial feature.
- Use the internet and/or books in a library to research the work of the famous early twentieth-century Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí, including the Sagrada Familia Cathedral, Parc Güell and Casa Batlló in Barcelona. Why might Dalí have regarded him so highly? **What characteristics** might their work have in common?

Salvador Dalí (designer)

Spanish 1904–89, worked in United States 1940–48

Elsa Schiaparelli (designer)

Italian/French 1890–1973

Schiaparelli, Paris (couture house)

1927–54

Tear dress, hood 1938 summer,

Circus collection

silk crêpe

88.0 cm (centre back)

National Gallery of Australia,

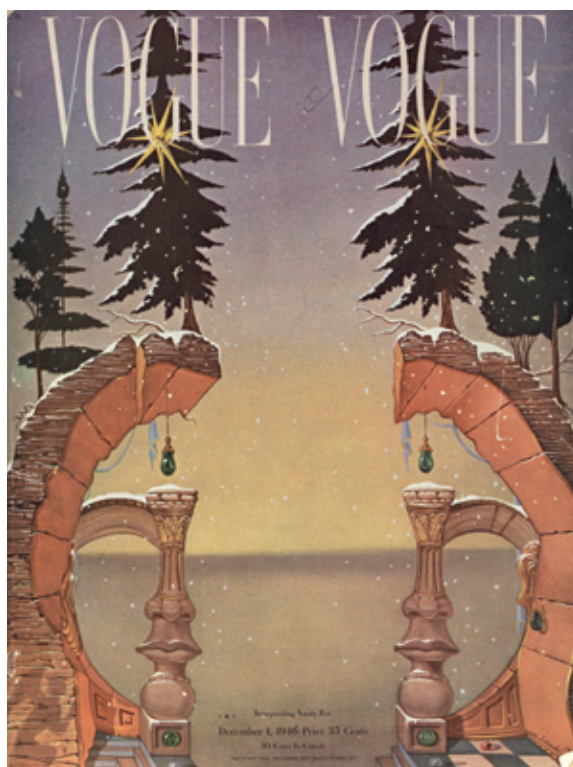
Canberra

Works by Salvador Dalí: © Salvador

Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí,

VISCOPY, 2009

Dalí under the microscope



The Bigger Picture – Thinking Beyond

Art produces ugly things which frequently become beautiful with time.
Fashion, on the other hand, produces beautiful things which always
become ugly with time.

Jean Cocteau (1889–1963), French writer, actor, painter, film director

- What does the quote above suggest about the difference between fashion and art?
Discuss whether or not you agree with Cocteau's argument with reference to Dalí's works and other examples of fashion and art.
- Using the internet, **research** television advertisements that Dalí appeared in.
Discuss which aspects you like or dislike about them.
- Which celebrities today endorse products through advertising?
- **Discuss with reference** to advertisements you know to what extent a celebrity can influence or deter you from buying a product.
- **In what positive or negative ways** can your opinion of a celebrity change if they become involved in an advertising campaign?

Salvador Dalí (designer)

Spanish 1904–89, worked in
United States 1940–48

**The Condé Nast Publications
Inc., New York** (publisher)

*The double Dalí cover making a
face from a fantasy* 1946
cover of *Vogue*, 1 December 1946

colour photo-offset lithograph
31.2 x 23.4 cm (sheet)

National Gallery of Victoria,
Melbourne

Shaw Research Library

Works by Salvador Dalí: © Salvador

Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí,

VISCOPY, 2009