

Film as
Metaphor
Fèlix Fanés



The mechanical eye¹

During the 1920s and 1930s, the German philosopher Siegfried Krakauer classified mass-produced culture as 'superficial', while his colleague Walter Benjamin described those who viewed it as 'distracted'.² These adjectives were not used in an entirely negative sense, but rather described a new type of cultural consumption aimed at an audience that had made the transition from individual to collective. For Dalí, the surface, even epidermal, nature of the new media, and the type of audience they created, provided a foundation for an original aesthetics that he termed 'anti-art'. 'I am superficial,' he wrote in 1927, 'and the outside of things is what delights me, for in the last analysis the outside of thing is the objective.'³ The connection between mass production and objectivity is one of the bases of Dalí's thinking at that time. From among the various forms of technical reproduction available, he chose film as a model for illustrating the new requirements of modern visuality. Rather than an instrument at the service of a straightforward realism, he saw the cine camera as an objective device guaranteeing a direct approach to a complex and fragmentary reality.

Dalí's first critical reference to film is found in a letter of November 1926 addressed to the critic Sebastià Gasch. The latter had compared Dalí's painting to jazz. 'I found your article in *La Gasetta de les Arts* extremely interesting', wrote Dalí, 'because it relates my painting to one of my strongest predilections: jazz – this marvellously



anti-artistic music'. And he continued, "Artistic" is a horrible word which serves only to identify things completely devoid of art. Artistic diversion, artistic photography, artistic advertising. Horror! Horror! We are all in agreement about the purely industrial object, dancing and poetry, the quintessence of Buster Keaton's hat.'⁴

Initially, Dalí took the same interest in film as he did in the other products of mass society. Films fulfilled a similar function to that of industrial objects and dancing: they were manifestations of the banality of the modern world that the painter contrasted with the older forms of culture that still existed, despite the economic and political transformations that rendered them outmoded. In his essay 'Sant Sebastià' (Saint Sebastian), Dalí unambiguously contrasted the existence of 'transcendental artists' with the reality of a world in which everything is seen 'sharply' and 'with clarity', populated by ocean liners, mannequins, dancers of the *black-bottom*, *Charleston* and blues, the 'nickel-plated headlamps of an Issota Fraschini' automobile, Fox newsreels, along with Josephine Baker, Tom Mix, Adolphe Menjou and Buster Keaton.⁵

Despite the parallel between the concept of anti-art and a nihilism rooted in Dadaism, Dalí allied his enthusiasm for standardised objects to the magazine *L'Esprit nouveau*. He observed that 'Le Corbusier ... tried, on a thousand occasions ... to make us see the simple and moving beauty of the miraculous mechanical and industrial world

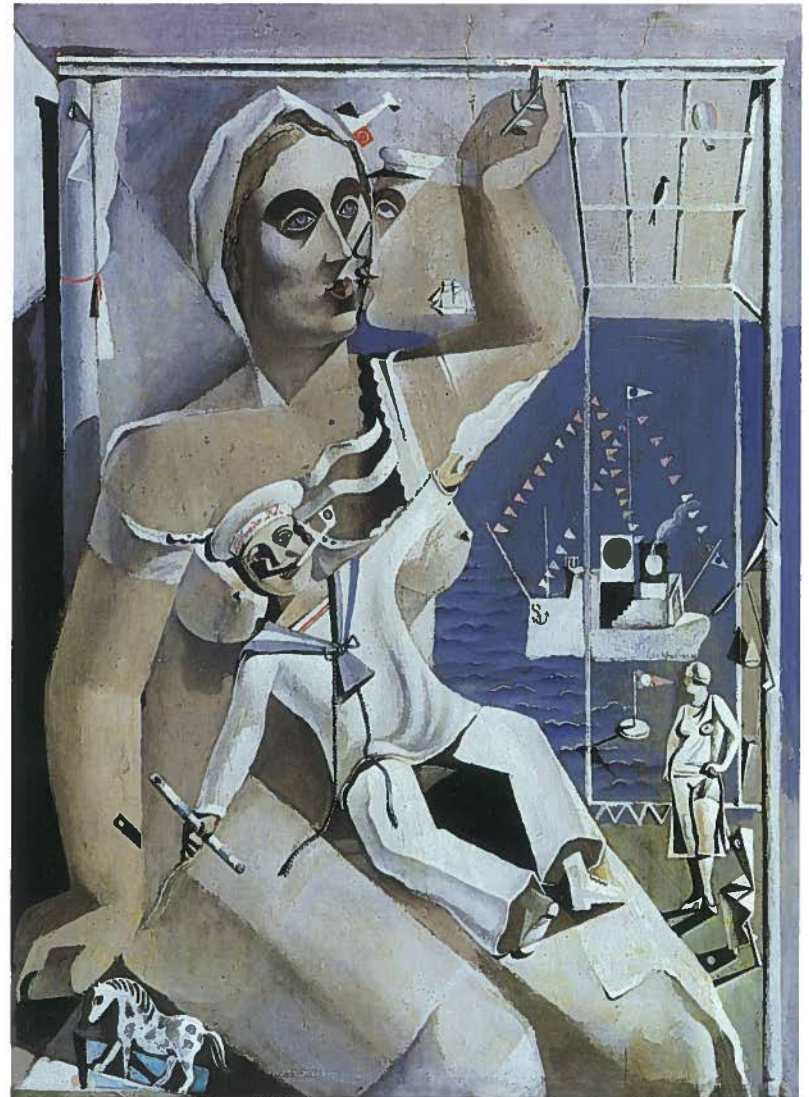
that, newly born, is perfect and pure as a flower'.⁶ From the pages of this magazine, Dalí adopted the hymn to the machine and praise for the industrial object as the fruit of a process of improvement that Le Corbusier had applied to architecture when he had proposed the mass-produced construction of houses in the same way as cars. However, Dalí did not confine himself to the special iconography allied to *L'Esprit nouveau* (objects in the case of Le Corbusier and Amedée Ozenfant; machines and robotic beings in that of Fernand Léger). Rather, he applied a mechanical and objective vision to established genres such as portraiture and still life. His automation is found in the way he chose to look at things, by making use of the 'anaesthetised look of the clearest eye, without eyelashes, of Zeiss' (i.e. the lens of a photographic or cine camera) rather than in any pictorial subject matter.⁷ This meant a direct system of representation, devoid of intellectualism or any temptation to subjectivity or mystic transcendence. Like *L'Esprit nouveau*, he identified modernity with tradition (a living form of tradition, at least). But instead of choosing the classical world of Greece, he settled on the work of Jan Vermeer, in whom he discovered a form of painting close to the instrumental vision of the camera.

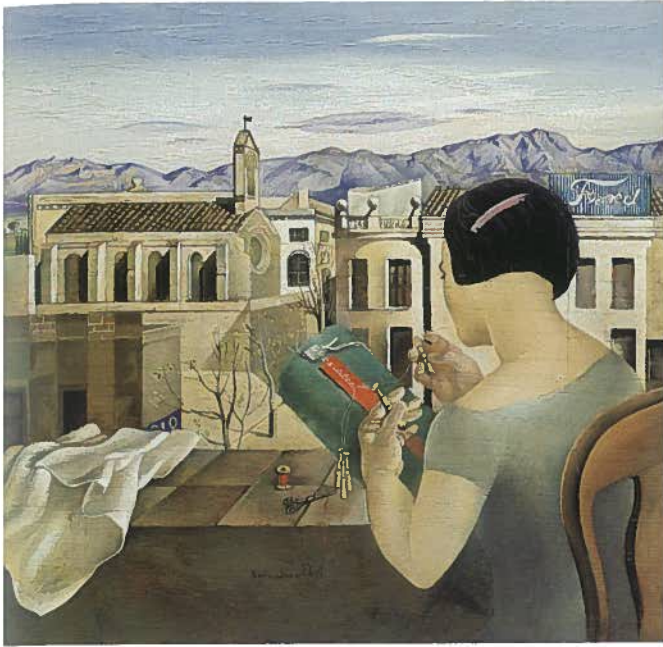
Just as Dalí rejected the laws and forms of idealist art, so he also addressed the need for a new audience, which he contrasted with the old one (bourgeois, cultivated, potbellied) that had sustained the high and refined culture. Unlike a

poem by Paul Valéry or an Impressionist painting – which required some cultural knowledge in order to be understood – the work produced under this new way of seeing was accessible even to ‘children and savages’. Therefore, ‘modern man, half child, half savage, lover of sport, cinema, motoring and dancing’ could also gain pleasure from viewing it.⁸ The result was an art in which ‘there is nothing to understand’, just as there was nothing to understand in a comedy film.⁹

Dalí's painting of this period adhered to these principles, as can be seen in *Girl from Figueres* 1926 (fig. 16), in which these approaches can be detected. The starting point was Vermeer's *The Lacemaker*. The canvas was executed in the sharp, cold, limpid manner advocated by the aesthetics of *L'Esprit nouveau*, and, against the landscape background, a Ford publicity sign can be seen as a tribute to advertising and to the technological modernisation of work emanating from American Fordism and Taylorism.

In his pursuit of objectivist painting, the metaphor of film took on increasing significance for Dalí. Immediately after executing the two important oil paintings *Apparatus and Hand* 1927 (fig. 18) and *Honey Is Sweeter than Blood* 1927 (see fig. 2), Dalí published ‘Film-arte, film anti-artístico’, his first article devoted exclusively to film. In this he identified the essence of his aesthetic project with film by defining the anti-artistic director as a creator who:





ignores art; he shoots in a pure manner, obeying only the technical requirements of his apparatus and the child-like and joyful instinct of his sporting physiology ... [and] limits himself to emotions that are psychological, primary, constant, standardized and thus aims at the suppression of anecdote.¹⁰

For Dalí, the prosthetic vision of film broadened the understanding of the material world beyond the limits of sensory, cognitive equipment. The capacity of cinematographic equipment to objectify is what makes it possible to capture 'the most humble and immediate facts, which were impossible to imagine or to foresee before cinema.'¹¹ In an article published as a continuation and clarification of this one, Dalí stresses the nature of this new poetry that emerges from the prosthetic and dehumanised gaze of the camera:

The everyday, the gesture repeated a hundred times will take on an unusual and unprecedented meaning. Objects will speak to us with greater eloquence than facial contractions. The unnoticed, the usual, the familiar, the automatic action will be transported to a super-reality that goes beyond ballet.¹²

The poetry of facts (the documentary)

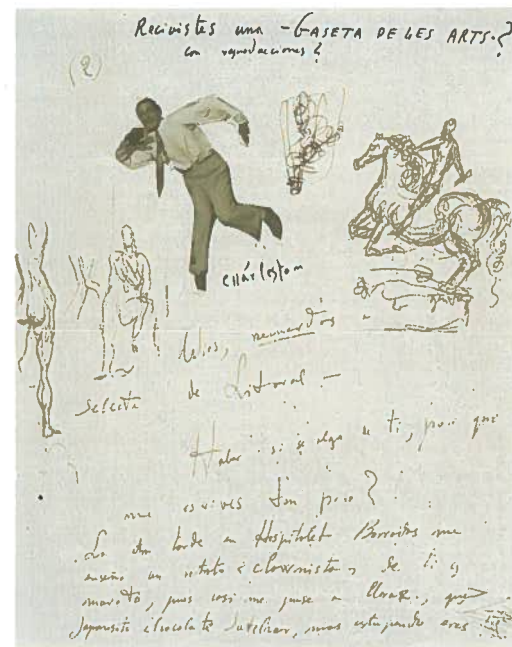
The reference to the super-real cannot pass unnoticed, since it introduces certain nuances to Dalí's anti-artistic poetry and to his understanding of film. Up until this time, the painter had been

mainly interested in the medium's photographic qualities. Now, however, he identified a second level of expression in its language: 'Film ... offers us a ready-made, constant, lavishly limited language. This language is the first miracle; how it is used, the second.'¹³ By this, he was referring to the montage and construction of film in sequence. Having recognised the fragmentary nature of filmic expression, Dalí abandoned the stable forms of photographic immobility in his painting in favour of applying his camera-like eye to a disorderly muddle lacking connection but which can be associated with the unconscious. In *Apparatus and Hand* and *Honey Is Sweeter than Blood* for example, the elements accumulate in space in a manner reminiscent of the sharp, intermittent and, at the same time, rhythmic and dynamic expression of cinematographic montage.

In this process of radicalisation, Dalí also distanced himself from the great names of film, such as Chaplin, and replaced them with others such as the unclassifiable Harry Langdon (fig.25): 'one of the purest flowers of the cinema and even of our civilization.'¹⁴ A middle-of-the-road vaudeville actor whom Mack Sennett wanted to launch as a new star of comic film, Langdon failed to win a mass audience. His director, Frank Capra, described him as someone endowed with the 'intransigence of inanimate objects',¹⁵ thus underlining the mechanical nature of a character driven by blind determination. In his aspiration to comply with the rules of society, the childish,

17
Letter to Lorca dated 18/20 January
1927
Ink and collage on paper
21.1 x 16.5 cm
Fundación Federico García Lorca,
Madrid

Opposite:
18
Apparatus and Hand 1927
Oil on panel 62.2 x 47.6 cm
Salvador Dalí Museum,
St Petersburg, Florida



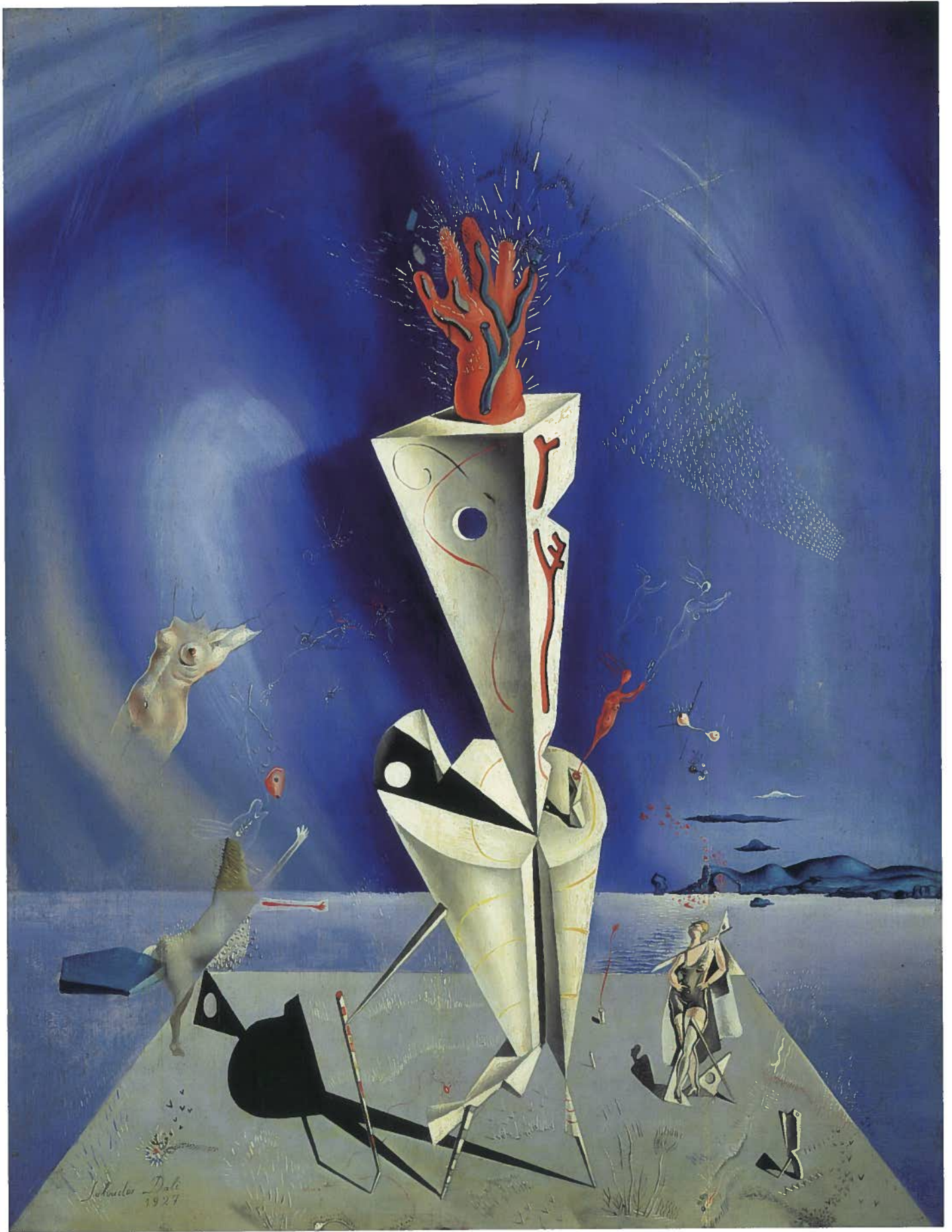
almost Beckettian Langdon ended up by becoming a diminutive but effective incarnation of social disorder. By championing this comic actor, admired by certain writers associated with Surrealism, Dalí moved a little nearer to André Breton's group.¹⁶

Breton himself had identified photography with automatic writing,¹⁷ and Dalí was able to take advantage of this shared enthusiasm for objectivity to make the transition to Surrealist poetry with only a slight adjustment of his system of metaphor. In fact, Dalí's anti-art position coincided with Breton's intentions in its lack of aesthetic purpose and in its desire to record reality faithfully and objectively. Dalí also began to talk of the 'assassination of painting' (in the same way as Joan Miró), and to make paintings that were more object-like than objective, such as *Feminine Nude* 1928 (fig. 20), in which a real piece of cork casts a painted shadow to represent a woman's torso. Towards the end of 1928 and throughout 1929, Dalí identified his new conception of reality with what he called 'facts'.

*It is not necessary for me to insist how absolutely inadmissible appear to me today not only the poem, but any form of literary production that does not respond to the anti-artistic, faithful and objective documentation of the world of facts, from whose hidden meaning we constantly hope for and demand a revelation.*¹⁸

This allusion to facts meant substituting a discursively constructed psychological reality for a world of phenomena, of superficial, external, secondary and often banal manifestations. These manifestations drew their strength from their randomness. Thus what makes a real fact different from a conventional literary fact was their enigmatic, absurd and unexplained nature. Buñuel (fig. 14), who was greatly influenced by Dalí at the time, cited 'Adolphe Menjou's moustache' as an illustration of the 'facts' that make up 'authentic reality', while Dalí referred to the poetry of Benjamin Péret, which he saw 'as a document equally as real as a photo'.¹⁹

In championing facts, Dalí underlined his inclination towards documentary film at the expense of that of the imagination. 'My friends and I', he wrote in mid 1929, 'think highly of the sound film, especially in the documentaries.'²⁰ While they were working on *Un Chien andalou*, Dalí and Buñuel were convinced that the best way of making a film that obeyed the dictates of thought was by using the camera in the most impersonal way. Which is why, during the period that it took to make the film, Dalí spoke so often about documentaries as the equivalent of Surrealist texts. 'One violently anti-artistic tendency is defined in the exacerbated thrust towards the documentary', he wrote in a slightly earlier article, adding: 'We note the rigorous and powerful means that are today at the disposal of the documentary: the phonograph, photography, cinema, literature, the microscope,



etc'.²¹ Dalí did not see a conflict between objective documentary and Surrealist writing. On the contrary, he believed that they shared a common, essentially anti-artistic nature. In each creative process he suggested that

*there is no intervention ... on the part of the least aesthetic, emotive or sentimental purposes, these being the essential characteristics of the artistic phenomenon. The documentary notes in an anti-literary fashion things said to be in the objective world. In a parallel manner, the surrealist text transcribes, with the same rigour and in as much anti-literary sense as the documentary, the REAL and liberated functioning of thought, what actually goes through our mind, all this by means of psychic automatism and other passive states (inspiration).*²²

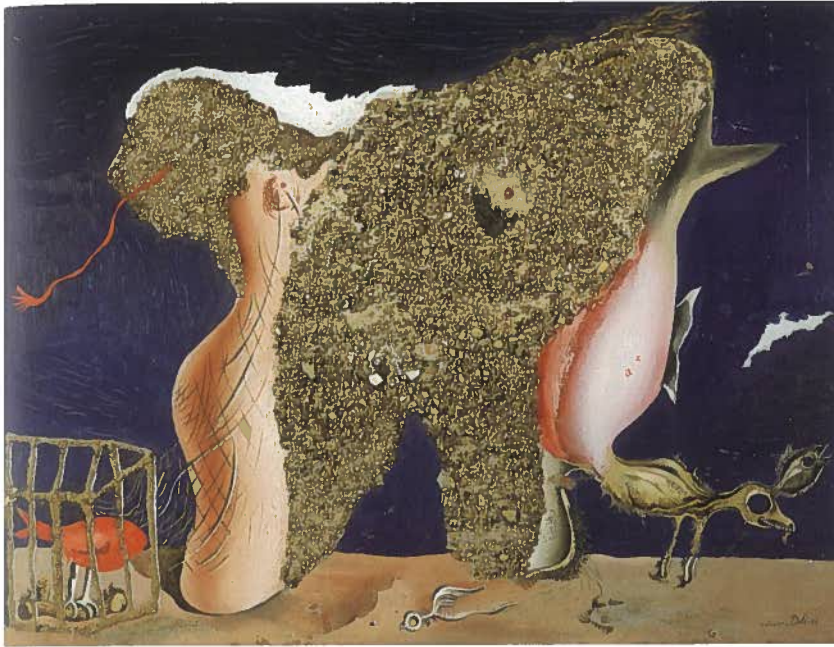
In this sense, *Un Chien andalou* can be seen as marking the point of arrival of the artist's thinking of that time. That the early part is a rerun in images of Dalí's anti-artistic theory is clear from the appearance, after the distressing slitting of the eye, of a reproduction of Vermeer's *The Lacemaker* (deliberately placed in the extreme foreground, which it shares with some sinister surgical instruments). Through it we are invited to explore the honest gaze, the chaste eye of which the Dutch painter was historically the representative and that, in these new historical circumstances, had been replaced by a medium with the technical capability of recording reality, that is to say, film. The slit eye stands as a metaphor for the replacement of man as

artistic subject by the camera; it is also a declaration of a new, technical, objective art, featuring formidable and rigorous prosthetic artefacts whose purpose is not reality itself but the inexplicable facts of that reality. As a result, the film, 'made apart from any aesthetic intention', presents a 'simple noting down, recording of facts',²³ in other words, an exploration of the real world without recourse to artistic or literary justifications.²⁴

Surrealism in Hollywood

Budd Schulberg, in his Hollywood-set novel, *What Makes Sammy Run?* 1941, tries to explain the unexpected tears of an unfeeling character with a reference to Dalí: 'I wondered why I thought of surrealism when I saw him cry and then I remembered the Dalí exhibit of rain falling inside a taxicab. This was no less bizarre, no less grotesque.'²⁵ Presented as a critique of the film industry, Schulberg's novel aspired to reach a wide audience, and the future screenwriter drew his metaphors from a widely shared pool of cultural knowledge. By referring to the 'rainy taxi', he shifted Dalí and his images from the exclusive terrain of the modern art gallery to that of popular culture consumed by all.

In the middle of the 1930s, against the background of a Europe shaken by economic and social crises, Dalí described the cultural situation in terms of 'the cannibal frenzy of moral hunger' of masses ready to 'gnaw' at anything in order to



19
Symbiotic Woman-Animal
 1928
 Oil and sand on canvas
 50.2 x 65.5 cm
 Fundació Gala-Salvador
 Dalí, Figueres

alleviate their appetite for totemic forms. The 'cultural banquet' offered only, 'the cold and insubstantial remains of art and literature' on the one hand and on the other, 'the red-hot analytical elucidations of the particular sciences'. The Surrealists – and Dalí himself – therefore found themselves faced with the challenge of a great 'nutritional responsibility' – that of satisfying the frenzied hunger before the starving masses should succumb to other less desirable foods.²⁶

The metaphor of cannibalism would take on a new dimension in contact with American culture (with which Dalí had begun to familiarise himself during trips to New York from late 1934). The cinema, and Hollywood especially, would occupy an important role. The actress Mae West – considered scandalous because of her shameless sexual language – provided an early example of this appropriation. In 1934 Dalí reworked a photograph from a popular magazine and transformed her face into an apartment (fig.23). This picture continued the exploration of the paranoiac-critical method that Dalí began in 1929. The real disappeared to give way to a second image, which in turn gave rise to a third image, and so on. This negation of objectivism through a paranoid vision was in keeping with other transformations in Dalí's way of thinking towards the end of the 1920s.

Having been enthusiastic about the rationalism of Le Corbusier, Dalí moved on, under the influence of Surrealism, to defend completely opposing attitudes. The large wedge that he drove

into the foundations of the modern edifice, effectively robbing it of its structure, was his tribute to the 'violently anachronistic' Modern Style or Art Nouveau architecture.²⁷ He discovered stimuli for his poetic imagination in the characteristic buildings of Barcelona. The ornamental nature of the work of Antoni Gaudí, Lluís Domènech i Montaner and Josep Puig i Cadafalch not only set their constructions apart from the principles of modern architecture but transformed them into receptacles for dreams and desires, introducing the realm of the unconscious with its associated phantoms, perversions and neuroses. By these means, which provided an opening to the expression of what has been repressed, a potent 'bad taste' emerged from the anti-modern, ornamental magma. Once he had discovered it in the Modern Style, Dalí did not hesitate to elevate it to an aesthetic level. And this has something in common with his gouache of Mae West. The carnal warmth of the actress's inviting, rounded curves are transformed into boarded flooring, the walls and the other rectilinear lines of the apartment, are designed to draw us back to the softness of her form as a place to inhabit – a space that finds in the actress's lips the point of convergence of all her comforting sensuality. In this way, a rigid, geometric architecture is contrasted with another that is tender and formless, an architecture of punishment with another of pleasure. Dalí explained this clearly in an article he wrote that year: 'I am very proud of having predicted in 1928, at the highest peak of



SALVADOR DALÍ

functional and practical anatomy, in the midst of the most scoffing skepticisms, the imminence of Mae West's rounded and salivary muscles, horribly slimy with biological ulterior motives.²⁸ The apartment manufactured from the actress's face thus places Dalí firmly within an aesthetics in which dream, sensuality, the throbbing of life and the erotic occupy their own space. The cinema and Hollywood would also play an important role in this Surrealist aesthetic.

In January 1937, Dalí travelled to the west coast of America, and the time he spent in Los Angeles opened his eyes. 'I am just back from Hollywood', he wrote in June of that year, 'and there I have heard the word surrealism in every mouth.'²⁹ The dream-like nature of the films, the spectral world of mechanical fantasy, the lethargy of the unreal environments, all led him to think that

the cinema can only develop in the direction of the 'wireless imagination' and 'paralysing fantasy' – the very prey and food of the immense 'famine of illusion' of the public and the masses in general. Reduced to idiocy by the material progress of a mechanical civilization, the public and the masses demand urgently the illogical and tumultuous images of their own desires and their own dreams.³⁰

Some months earlier, while he was still in Los Angeles, Dalí had sent a postcard to André Breton saying: 'I'm in Hollywood where I've made contact with the three American surrealists, Harpo

Marx, Disney and Cecil B. DeMille. I believe I've intoxicated them suitably and hope that the possibilities for surrealism here will become a reality.'³¹

The first of these three whom Dalí got to know was Harpo Marx. The painter had become aware of him when he saw the film *Animal Crackers* in 1932, which he recognised as the 'summit of the evolution of comic cinema'.³² The Marx Brothers' film impressed many of the Surrealists (Breton described it as a 'midnight feast of sunshine').³³ Having sent Harpo a harp wrapped in cellophane and covered in small spoons a meeting took place in January 1937 which led to two projects: a portrait of Harpo, of which a couple of drawings survive (fig. 83), and a screenplay written by Dalí himself and known as *The Surrealist Woman* or *Giraffes on Horseback Salad*.³⁴ Dalí admired the purity of Harpo's primitivism. 'Harpo Marx', he wrote, 'is the least modern of contemporary figures'.³⁵

While the reference to Harpo Marx is unsurprising – even the very serious T.S. Eliot succumbed to the charms of those outrageous brothers³⁶ – the inclusion of Walt Disney as an 'American surrealist' is rather more unexpected. Despite feeding the childhood imaginations of many generations, the 'magician of Burbank', as he was known, did not and still does not enjoy a good press among the intellectual elite. The sentimentality of his plots, the idealised nature of his drawings, as well as his liking for merging high culture with popular culture in productions as surprising as *Fantasia* 1940 could all explain this

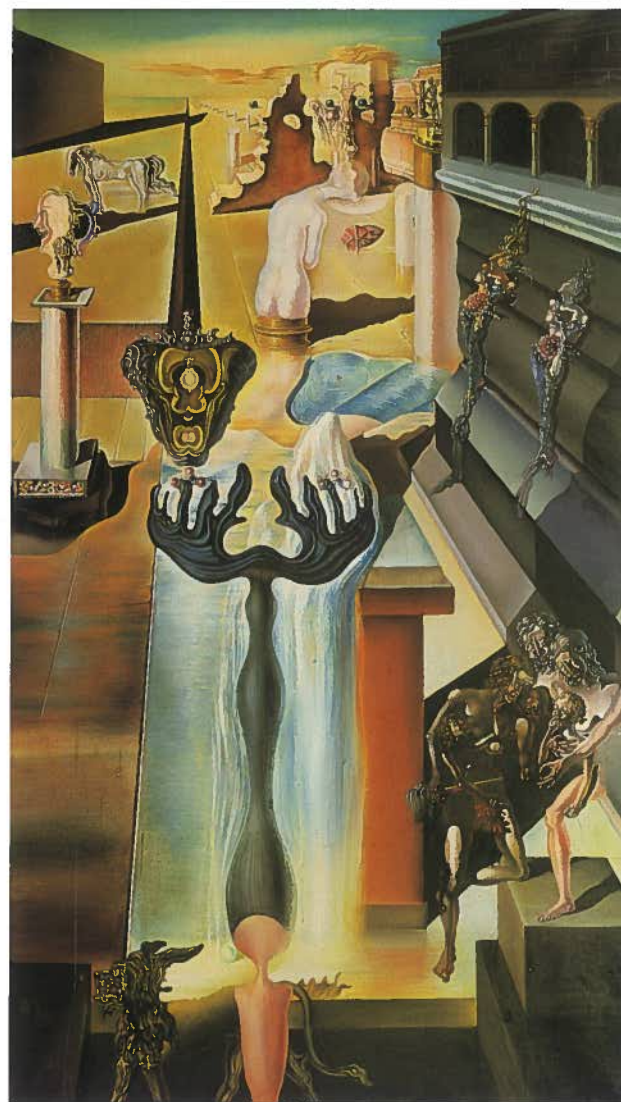
response. There are at least two notable exceptions to this view: the Soviet filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein and Salvador Dalí himself. The creator of *The Battleship Potemkin*, who came to know Disney personally during his stay in Hollywood, wrote several pages on the work of the American filmmaker. 'Disney is an extraordinary filmmaker and an unsurpassed genius at creating audiovisual equivalence with music through the autonomous movement of line and the graphical interpretation of the interior process of the music (even more often with melody than rhythm!)', he wrote. He singled out the short film *Skeleton Dance* 1929 – based on the *Danse Macabre* by Saint-Saëns and the first of Disney's *Silly Symphonies* – as 'a masterpiece of musical movement-equivalence'.³⁷ Dalí, too, considered that the man who had popularised Mickey Mouse was an extraordinary creator and, like Eisenstein, ranked his *Silly Symphonies* above the rest of his work, describing these as a 'stunning and cataclysmic rainbow'.³⁸ As in the case of the Marx Brothers, this admiration would lead to a joint film project, *Destino*, although the final results would take longer to materialise.³⁹

The poetry of bad taste

If it is surprising that Disney should be cited as one of the three 'American surrealists', this is nothing compared with the unexpected reference to DeMille. Considered to be the father of historical cinema, his movies have always been seen

21
The Invisible Man 1930
Oil on canvas 140 x 80 cm
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte
Reina Sofía, Madrid

Right:
22
Phantasmagoria c.1930
Oil on panel 69 x 44 cm
Private collection





as a triumph of high-class papier mâché over expressive naturalism. After directing religious films such as *The Ten Commandments* 1923 and *The King of Kings* 1926 in the 1920s, during the first half of the 1930s he produced three movies – *The Sign of the Cross* 1932, *Cleopatra* 1934 and *The Crusades* 1935 – that established his reputation as a maker of period films. The ornamental excess and the choreographic representation of history, not to mention the pomposity of his characters, have, more than those of any other filmmaker, led his films to be labelled as kitsch.⁴⁰ But where some saw bad taste in massive measure, Dalí perceived a mysterious ‘hallucinatory celluloid’ from which sprang ‘images of delirium, chance and authentic dreams’ (as in the scene in *The Sign of the Cross* when Claudette Colbert immerses herself in a bath of asses’ milk).⁴¹ And, in his introductory notes to the Marx Brothers’ film, he writes: ‘The general idea of the script is to transfer to the contemporary period all the imaginative magnificence, splendour and epic character of Cecil B de Mille’s films on antiquity.’⁴² Dalí did not undertake any projects with DeMille, but it would be a mistake to interpret his admiration for the American director as purely anecdotal. While Dalí was able to find a counterpoint to the immutable and pragmatic logic of modern civilisation in the crazy irrationality of Harpo and the destructive childishness of Disney’s drawings (those of the early period at least),⁴³ in the absurd gigantism of DeMille he appears to have discovered devices

that were useful to him for other purposes – probably in relation to aesthetic confrontation. In his fight against good taste, Dalí no doubt saw the creator of *The Sign of the Cross* as an ally. His empty grandeur, his superfluous ornamentation, his recourse to the great subjects of sacred history, transformed the American director into an interesting survivor of past times. Dalí, who was keen to blaze a trail that would lead him far away from the rigidity of modern taste, found DeMille’s visual world an inexhaustible source of ideas.

As Breton had already suggested in *Nadja*, one of the most significant sources of bad taste is ‘anachronism’, which allows us to view what was once in vogue as something that is now ‘extravagant’, ‘unusual’, ‘impossible’, and therefore once again as something ‘living’.⁴⁴ Indeed the cinema championed by the Surrealists, and from the early 1930s by Dalí, is essentially anachronistic. To the serial films that were so popular around the time of the First World War but completely out of fashion by the end of the 1920s – such as *Les Vampires*, *Fantômas* and *Les Mystères de New York*⁴⁵ – Dalí added his own discoveries: the ‘hysterical’ Italian melodramas of ‘Francesca Bertini, Gustavo Serena, Tullio Carminati and Pina Menicelli’.⁴⁶ These were films representing what he describes as the ‘authentic golden age of cinema’ in an essay in which, significantly, he relegates the once applauded ‘dynamism, playfulness and standard of American cinematography’ to the wretched condition of ‘mythological sorrows’.⁴⁷



This 'anachronistic' attitude placed the Surrealists in general and Dalí in particular in an aesthetic and political position that was at odds with those around them. Aesthetically they were championing objects that were doubly obsolete – in belonging to popular culture and also in being outmoded – which distanced them from some of the immutable principles of the modern canon, such as originality and the necessary subjugation to the history of high culture as being the only acceptable tradition. Politically they were standing against the general flow of progress, striking out very specifically through their choice at the illusory nature of commodities which, as Marx (not Groucho but Karl) had explained, constituted one of the most powerful sources of social bedazzlement. By attacking the delusion of the consumer object, they were taking an ambitious stand against the snares of a phantasmagorical reality. The relationship with the outdated in any case formed part of the Surrealist poetics. It is in this context that Dalí considered writing, in the autumn of 1934, a film featuring the characters of Richard Wagner, Ludwig II of Bavaria and Sacher Masoch.⁴⁸ In fact, these characters would eventually appear in a ballet called *Bacchanal* that was premiered at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York on 9 November 1939.⁴⁹ Ludwig II has the most prominent role. As the programme notes put it:

The "Tannhauser Bacchanale" is shown through the deliriously confused brain of Ludwig II of Bavaria

who 'lived' all of Wagner's myths with such profound hyperaesthesia as to verge on madness. As the real protagonist of the ballet he identifies himself with those legendary heroes, and the plot represents the hallucinations and emotions he was a prey to.⁵⁰

Against a backcloth painted with a large swan, a mountain cave (probably Tannhauser's), some clouds extending outwards like the tentacles of an octopus, the moribund frame of an old fishing boat and various piles of crates, a series of phantasmagorical figures wanders about the stage. These include a Venus, apparently nude, emerging from her shell, a timeless Lola Montez dressed as a skull, a volatile Sacher Masoch and his beaten wife, a group of satyrs from whose heads emerge vine stalks bearing grapes, a group of wild fauns crazily pursuing anything in a skirt, mermaids with codfish tails and crutches, umbrellas with skulls engaged in macabre dances, and so on. And in the midst of this unbridled fantasy was Ludwig II, the mad king of Bavaria, Wagner's patron, the architect of palaces that rivalled the splendour of Versailles, the devotee of extravagant luxury, the Romantic dreamer, the repressed homosexual, probably the most 'anachronistic' of the great European figures of modern times inasmuch as his plan for a 'decorative' monarchy coincided with the profound transformations taking place during the final third of the nineteenth century: industrialisation, the decline of absolute power, and social egalitarianism.



24
Moment of Transition 1934
Oil on canvas 54 x 65 cm
Collection Viktor and Marianne Langen

Notes

- 1
This essay extends my earlier research published in *Dalí: Cultura de masas*, exh. cat., CaixaForum, Barcelona, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, Salvador Dalí Museum, St Petersburg (Florida) and (as *It's All Dalí*), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam 2004–5, as well as *Salvador Dalí: la construcción de la imagen 1925–1930*, Madrid 1999 and trans. as *Salvador Dalí: The Construction of the Image, 1925–1930*, New Haven and London 2007.
- 2
The adjective 'superficial' was used by Krakauer in 'Kult der Zerstreung', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 4 March 1926, republished in Siegfried Krakauer, *The Mass Ornament*, Cambridge, Mass. 1995, pp.323–8. The term 'distracted' comes from Benjamin's 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936), republished in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, New York 1968 and London 1970, pp.219–53.
- 3
Dalí letter to Federico García Lorca, early June 1927, published in *Salvador Dalí escribe a Federico García Lorca, 1925–1936*, ed. R. Santos Torroella, Madrid 1978, p.59; and trans. in Christopher Maurer (ed.), *Sebastian's Arrows: Letter and Mementos of Salvador Dalí and Federico García Lorca*, Chicago 2004, p.73.
- 4
The article by Sebastià Gasch was published under the title 'Salvador Dalí' in *La Gaceta de les Arts* (Barcelona) 1 Nov. 1926. The letter from Dalí to Gasch was published by the critic in his book *L'expansió de l'art català al món*, Barcelona 1953, p.142.
- 5
Dalí, 'Sant Sebastià', *L'Amic de les Arts*, 31 July 1927, trans. as 'San Sebastian', in Haim Finkelstein (ed.), *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí*, Cambridge 1998, pp.22–3.
- 6
Dalí, 'Poesia de l'útil standarditzat', *L'Amic de les Arts*, 31 March 1928, trans. as 'Poetry of the Mass-Produced Utility', *ibid.*, p.57.
- 7
Dalí, 'La fotografia, pura creació de l'esperit', *L'Amic de les arts*, 30 Sept. 1927, trans. as 'Photography: Pure Creation of the Spirit', *ibid.*, p.46.
- 8
Dalí, 'Art català relacionat amb el més recent de la jove intelligència' (Catalan Art in Relation to the Latest from the Young Intelligentsia), *La Publicitat* (Barcelona), 17 Oct. 1928.
- 9
Dalí letter to Sebastià Gasch, 21 Nov. 1927, private collection.
- 10
Dalí, 'Film-arte, film anti-artístico', *La Gaceta Literaria*, 15 Dec. 1927; see full translation republished in this volume from Finkelstein 1998.
- 11
Ibid.
- 12
Dalí, 'Films antiartísticos. La gran duquesa y el camarero. El traje de etiqueta (por Adolf Manjou [sic])' (Anti-Artistic Films. The Great Duchess and the Waiter. Formal Wear (by Adolphe Menjou)), *La Gaceta Literaria*, 1 March 1928, p.188.
- 13
Ibid.
- 14
Dalí, 'Sempre, per damunt de la música, Harry Langdon', *L'Amic de les Arts*, 31 March 1929, p.3, trans. as 'Always, above Music, Harry Langdon', in Finkelstein 1998, p.70.
- 15
Frank Capra, *The Name above the Title*, New York 1971, p.83.
- 16
Robert Desnos wrote: 'There is false laughter, crying with laughter, the outburst of laughter, the concealed laugh, laughing in your face, the crazy laugh. But how can one describe the sorrowful laugh that appears on the lips of the astonishing actor Harry Langdon?' in 'Harry Langdon', *Le Soir*, 30 May 1928, republished in Robert Desnos, *Les Rayons et les ombres. Cinéma*, Paris 1992, p.127.
- 17
André Breton, 'Max Ernst' (1921), in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol.1, Paris 1988, p.245.
- 18
Dalí, 'L'alliberaments dels dits', *L'Amic de les arts*, 31 March 1929, trans. as 'The Liberation of the Fingers', in Finkelstein 1998, p.99.
- 19
Luis Buñuel letter to Pepín Bello, 17 Feb. 1929, published by Augustín Sánchez Vidal, *Dalí, Lorca, Buñuel. El enigma sin fin*, Barcelona 1988, pp.193–8, and letter from Dalí to Luis Montanyà, Jan. 1929, private collection.
- 20
Dalí, 'Documental – Paris – 1929 [VI]', *La Publicitat*, 28 June 1929, trans. as 'Documentary – Paris – 1929' in Finkelstein 1998, p.117.
- 21
Dalí, 'Revista de tendències antiartístiques', *L'Amic de les arts*, 31 March 1929, trans. as 'Review of Antiartistic Tendencies', *ibid.*, pp.103, 104.
- 22
Dalí, 'Documental – Paris – 1929 [I]', *La Publicitat*, 26 April 1929, trans. *ibid.*, pp.105–6.
- 23
Dalí, 'Un Chien andalou', *Mirador*, 24 Oct. 1929, tr., *ibid.*, p.134.
- 24
For a more detailed study of Dalí's development during this period, see Fèlix Fanés, *Salvador Dalí: The Construction of the Image, 1925–1930*, New Haven and London 2007.
- 25
Budd Schulberg, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, New York 1941, p.268.
- 26
Dalí, *La conquête de l'irrationnel*, Paris 1935, trans. as *Conquest of the Irrational*, New York 1935, p.9.

- 27
Dalí, 'De la beauté terrifiante et comestible de l'architecture modern style', *Minotaure* (Paris), nos.3-4, 1933, trans. as 'Concerning the Terrifying and Edible Beauty of Art Nouveau Architecture', in Finkelstein 1998, pp.193-200.
- 28
Dalí, 'Les Nouvelles Couleurs du sex-appeal spectral', *Minotaure*, 15 May 1934, trans. as 'The New Colors of Spectral Sex-Appeal', *ibid.* p.206.
- 29
Dalí, 'Surrealism in Hollywood', *Harper's Bazaar*, June 1937, republished in full in this volume.
- 30
Ibid.
- 31
Dalí postcard to André Breton, Feb.-March 1937, Bibliothèque Litéraire Jacques Doucet, Paris.
- 32
Dalí, 'Abrégé d'une histoire critique du cinéma', *Babaouo*, Paris 1932, trans. as 'Short Critical History of Cinema' in Finkelstein 1998 and republished in full in this volume. Five years later, he would refer to *Animal Crackers* as a 'biological, hysterical and cannibal frenzy' in 'Surrealism in Hollywood', also republished in this volume.
- 33
André Breton, 'It's a Bird', *Minotaure*, no.10, winter 1937.
- 34
See the essay 'Surrealism and Hollywood', 1937 by Michael R. Taylor in this volume.
- 35
See 'Surrealism in Hollywood' 1937, republished in this volume.
- 36
What Eliot really found fascinating was Groucho and his use of language; see David E. Chinitz, *T.S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide*, Chicago 2003, pp.188-9.
- 37
Eisenstein mixed criticisms with his praise. The most important of these referred to 'the complete stylistic breach between the impotent childishness of the pictorial simplification of the backgrounds and the surprising perfection of the movement and drawing of the moving characters in the foreground'. S.M. Eisenstein, *La Non-indifférente Nature* (1945-7) (Non-indifferent Nature), vol.2, Paris 1978, pp.342-3.
- 38
Dalí, 'Surrealism in Hollywood'.
- 39
See my essay on *Destino* in this volume.
- 40
Lotte H. Eisner, 'Il kitsch cinematografico' (Kitsch in the Cinema), in Gillo Dorfles, *Il Kitsch. Antologia del cattivo gusto*, Milan 1968, pp.210 et seq.
- 41
Dalí, 'Surrealism in Hollywood'.
- 42
Dalí, *Giraffes on Horseback Salad* 1937, manuscript, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris.
- 43
We should remember that at the time Dalí visited Hollywood (early in 1937), Disney was known mainly for two series of short films: *Mickey Mouse* and *Silly Symphonies*. Other famous characters such as Donald Duck, Pluto and Goofy did not begin their careers until that year (Goofy in 1939). As for the full-length films, the first, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, also dates from 1937.
- 44
André Breton, *Nadja*, Paris 1928, in *Oeuvres complètes*, pp.676, 679.
- 45
As one of the characters in 'Trésor des Jésuites' comments, 'It is in *Les Mystères de New York* and *Les Vampires* that the great reality of this century should be sought.' See André Breton and Louis Aragon, 'Le Trésor des Jésuites', *Variétés* (Brussels), June 1929, pp.47-61. In *Fantômas* Robert Desnos saw 'for the first time, the presence of the marvellous' in twentieth-century culture, see 'Imagerie moderne', *Documents*, vol.1, no.7, Dec. 1929.
- 46
Dalí, 'Short Critical History of Cinema' in this volume.
- 47
Ibid.
- 48
'It is in fact a film project that brings me to New York. The characters are Wagner, Ludwig II of Bavaria and Sacher Masoch. It's a film that appears absolutely normal, extraordinarily sentimental, capable of making everyone cry. But that is only the appearance, the outer form. Without realising, the viewers will be intoxicated by this film whose poison will go on working on them as time goes by. It's a *time bomb*. I'm taking it on just in case: I don't know if I'll be able to do it.' J.C. [Just Cabot], 'Una estona amb Dalí', *Mirador*, 18 Oct. 1934, trans. in Fanés 2007, p.199. Dalí had mentioned Richard Wagner and Ludwig II of Bavaria publicly for the first time in 'Objets psychos-atmosphériques-anamorphiques', *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution*, no.5, 1933, pp.45-8.
- 49
See Robert S. Lubar, 'Surrealism on Stage', in *It's all Dalí*, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam 2005, pp.359-62.
- 50
I have taken this information and reconstructed some of the moments of the production from press cuttings in the archives of the Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres.
- 51
E. Downes, 'Surrealist Ballet', *Boston Transcript*, 18 April 1940.
- 52
Dalí, 'Derniers modes d'excitation intellectuel pour l'été 1934', *Documents* 34, June 1934, Brussels, pp.34-5, trans. as 'The Latest Modes of Intellectual Stimulation for the Summer of 1934', in Finkelstein 1998, pp.253-5.
- 53
Ibid., pp.253-4.
- 54
Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* 1928, trans. as *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne, London 1977, p.183.
- 55
For *pasticcio* and its presence in contemporary art, see Ingeborg Hoestery, *Pastiche: Cultural Memory in Art, Film, Literature*, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2001.