

THE Salvador Dali COLLECTORS QUARTERLY®

FOR THE DALI AFICIONADO AND SERIOUS COLLECTOR

Paternity Claim Sparks Surreal Wait for Salvador Dali DNA Test

Excerpted from *MSN National Nine News* and *CMS News Reports*

A 52-year-old Spanish woman is awaiting DNA test results to find out whether she is the daughter of Salvador Dali. Pilar Abel said she believed Dali to be her father, though she was still awaiting results of a DNA test she did in Paris several months ago.



Pilar Abel

Abel's lawyer is trying to obtain results from Dali collaborator Robert Descharnes, who conserves DNA samples from the painter. Descharnes' son Nicolas said that the doctor who performed the paternity tests told him the result was negative and "there is no family relationship between this woman and Dalí." Nicolas also noted that Robert Descharnes was "very skeptical" regarding the alleged Dali relationship with Pilar Abel's mother.

Abel believes her mother met Dali in Cadaques where Dali had a summer residence in early summer 1955, when the Spanish artist was 51 years old. Abel's mother was then working for a Barcelona family which was holidaying in the area. Pilar Abel was born in Figueres five months after her mother married the man who is officially her father. But Abel claims that since she was a child, she always had doubts about who her real father was, as her own paternal grandmother confessed to her that she was really the daughter of "a great painter." When Abel confronted her mother about whether this were true, her mother told her only that she did not "want stones thrown on the tomb," and it was neither confirmed nor denied.

Abel's jobs have included reading tarot cards on a local Spanish television show where she is billed as "Jasmine the Fortune Teller." In 2005, she brought suit for 725,000 Euros against Spanish novelist Javier Cercas, claiming that a fortune teller character in his novel *Soldiers of Salamis* was based on her and defamed her. She lost the suit, the judge in the case informing her that "if you feel compelled to identify with fictional characters, that's your problem." 

(See a related story regarding this hotly debated Dali controversy in this issue of The SDCQ on page 2.)



"Jasmine the Fortune Teller," aka Pilar Abel. Dali's secret love child? Only her double helix knows for sure...

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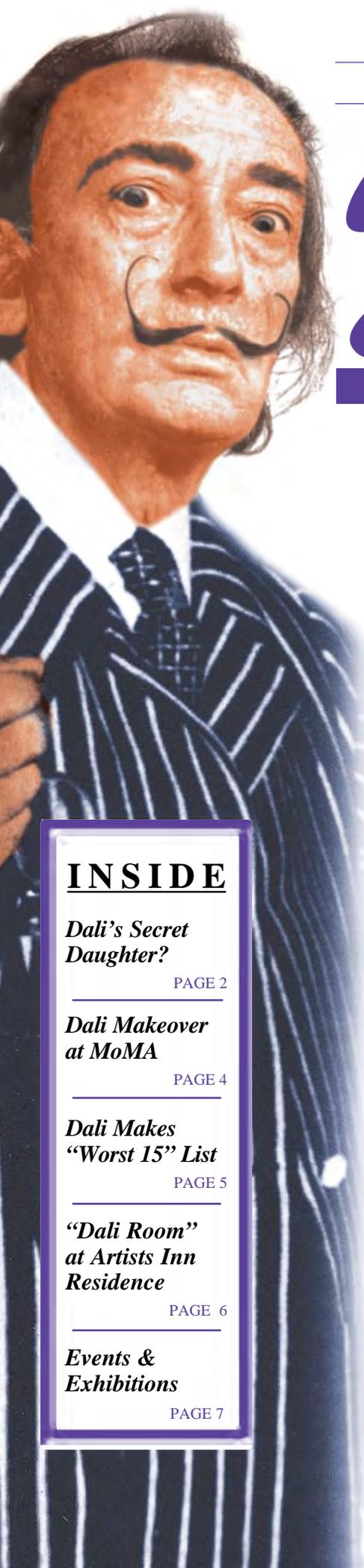
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Is this Woman Salvador Dali's Secret Daughter?

Excerpted from *The (London) Evening Standard & Daily Mail*, August 8, 2008, by Glenys Roberts

Today, the tiny village of Port Lligat, near Cadaques on Spain's north-eastern coast, is a favourite holiday destination, and Salvador Dali's house there has become a museum. But when its most famous resident was alive, it was the object of a veritable pilgrimage. If you were lucky you would be invited in to look around, as I was. You might even be asked to pose for him. There was always an aura of danger in Dali's presence - but there was rarely any physical contact with him. The etiolated painter was only middle-aged when I met him, and in full physical health.

Yet, so the story went, Dali had such a horror of women's anatomy, he had slept only once with Gala, the wife he loved. Despite this they were married for 48 years, a union ending only in Gala's death in 1982. And though he was intrigued by the male figure, he did not have much success with men, either. Art critic Brian Sewell revealed that Dali once asked him to curl up like a foetus and masturbate. Sewell agreed - but later said Dali himself declined to participate and would only take photographs. And a repressed younger Dali could never bring himself to respond to the homosexual advances of his gay poet schoolmate, Federico Garcia Lorca.

In short, Dali was a voyeur, not a legendary lover and so he would have remained in history - except that now, nearly 20 years after the master's death, a 52-year-old Spanish woman is claiming to be his secret love-child. According to Pilar Abel, her mother worked as a maid in the mid-50s for a family who spent summers in Cadaques and was one of the lucky few invited back to the Dali house. So confident is Abel of her origins that she has demanded Dali's body be exhumed from its tomb in Figueras so DNA samples can be taken.

The news would be a huge surprise to Dali's friends, who long deemed the painter physically incapable of having sex. And Gala would be turning in her grave. She had so little interest in children she had abandoned her young daughter by her first husband so she could begin an affair with

Dali. Then, shortly after they were married, Gala had a hysterectomy. Children, it seemed, were never in the cards. But that did not stop Gala sleeping around - and she usually did it with Dali's blessing. She even went back to her first husband for a fling. Dali was also, the story goes, keen on procuring sailors for his wife - and watching them all perform from a distance. It was all too much for some of his distinguished contemporaries including George Orwell, who advised that the only way to look at Dali was to see him as two characters - one an admittedly good draughtsman, the other a disgusting human being. Though friends of the couple believe Dali was a virgin when they met and they had virtually no sex life, he and Gala were inseparable.

Dali visited America in 1934 where he created an immediate sensation under Gala's tutelage, which encouraged him to become increasingly eccentric. At one lecture he later gave in London, the painter arrived leading a pair of Russian wolfhounds and sporting a full deep-sea diving outfit - including a helmet which had to be hastily unscrewed when he started gasping for breath.

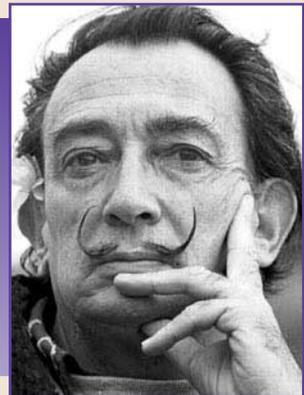
After nine years in America, Dali and Gala moved back to Spain to the little town of Port Lligat, just a few miles from where he was born. There he designed the phallic swimming pool, a shape Dali favoured according to friends in an attempt to overcompensate for his own deficiencies. Many speculate it was because Dali was not well endowed that led to his phobia of sexual liaisons. Around this time



Pilar Abel

"The beginnings of my sentimental relationship with Gala were marked by a permanent character of diseased abnormality, and by very distinct and pronounced psychopathological symptoms."

Pilar Abel says that a Dali lifelong friend she met in Paris last year was so taken by her resemblance to "her father" that he said she needed only the moustache to make it complete.



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Dali also became a passionate Roman Catholic. And in 1958 he married Gala again, in a Catholic ceremony. He even obtained special dispensation from the Pope to do so, because of Gala's previous marriage. His putative daughter Pilar Abel would have been around two years old at this time. This is all most interesting. Perhaps Dali's resurgent Catholicism is connected to the infidelity which is claimed to have produced Pilar Abel. Could his guilt over an affair have driven him to renew his vows with Gala?

For Dali to have been caught out by fatherhood would have been quite a shock, particularly as at the time he was obsessed by the concepts of chastity and virginity. We know this because of his prolific paintings of rhinoceroses, which he, bizarrely, saw as symbolising the Virgin Mary. As well as being intellectually obsessed with purity (the artist seems to have had a phobic aversion to the act of 'breeding'), Dali was simply too self-obsessed to even consider having children. Life in Port Lligat revolved around Dali - despite his apparently laissez faire attitudes - certainly not a new baby. In his introverted, solipsistic world, women often passed through. And not one of Dali's female companions was in the least maternal. He was never confronted with the messy world of childrearing.

One friend was French-born Isabelle Dufresne, better known as Ultra Violet, who became Andy Warhol's first superstar muse. There was also exotic party girl Amanda Lear, who you could not help but bump into on the Sixties scene. Later she became better known for going out with David Bowie, but it was Dali who made her famous after meeting her in a French nightclub. He was transfixed by her ambiguous sexuality. Lear was a mannish blonde, who said she was born in Hong Kong and was the daughter of a British naval officer. One of her friends claims Lear was born a man and Dali paid for her sex-change surgery.

Lear, though, claims Dali was so taken by her, he managed to overcome his reticence about the sexual act. She said they would perform 'the sewing machine' - Dali's graphic description of coupling - while his wife went out to the theatre with her young boyfriends. According to Lear, they also conducted a spiritual 'marriage' ceremony together on a mountain top. When she later married someone else, Dali was so upset he sent her a funeral wreath. It is interesting to note that Dali complimented Lear by saying she was not like other women who were 'simply made to produce embryos'. Was this a sign he had been caught out by one of those fecund women - perhaps Pilar's mother whom he had met a few years earlier? Or was he just referring to Lear's supposed indeterminate gender?

According to one observer of life in Port Lligat at this time, there were countless women who flitted around Dali - and countless boys. Indeed, the artist regarded other people as mere playthings and would discard them as soon as he had done with them. Dali's technique was simple. He was charismatic and used flattery to ensnare young people. Sometimes he would help them further themselves - he got one young man from San Francisco a part in the musical *Hair* in return for a perverse sexual favour. This man says he believes Dali had full sex only two or three times in his life - but was one of those then enough to conceive a daughter?

Undoubtedly women were happy to be flattered by him - then he would ask them to take off their clothes. They usually did it, too, hoping he would do a drawing of them and give it to them in return for disrobing. Instead, a male 'model' would usually appear from the depths of the house. Before the girl knew what was happening she would be having sex with a complete stranger. Dali, of course, would watch, eagerly.

But throughout these perverse dalliances, there was only one woman who stayed the course - Gala, the wife who had turned him from a struggling eccentric into a legend. Visitors witnessed some dramatic arguments, especially as she grew older. Once, when Gala announced her intention to run away to America with a young lover, Dali kicked her out of bed and she broke a rib. Gala retaliated by beating Dali around the head with a walking stick. By 1980, the 87-year-old Gala, who was becoming increasingly dotty, was dosing him with various 'medicines' which provoked tremors like Parkinson's disease. Eventually, his health deteriorated so much he could no longer draw.

When his wife did die, Dali suffered a dramatic emotional blow - just as he had after the death of his



Pilar Abel

"One day it will have to be officially admitted that what we have christened reality is an even greater illusion than the world of dreams."



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DALÍ

Painting & Film

Dali Gets a Makeover at MoMA

Excerpted from *The Wall Street Journal*, July 26, 2008, by Richard B. Woodward

(A wrap-up piece on the Dali: Painting & Film exhibit, which ended its year-long, four-venue run at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, closing September 15.)

Dalí: Painting & Film asks us to take seriously again the creator of melted watches, lobster telephones, and other surrealist icons. The glib provocateur with his madman schtick and eye on our wallet, the self-promoter we thought had outlived his relevance, is presented here as our contemporary. Playing down his many unlikable personal traits -- the weakness for dictators (Hitler as well as Franco) and the greed that has led to his freely licensed images becoming synonymous with kitsch -- the organizers don't airbrush Dalí's once scandalous art. Instead, they try to find a younger, updated context for his restless productivity.

If the curators are to be believed, Dalí was not an insufferable snob who spent his final years in a Spanish castle with his monstrous wife, Gala. No, he was a populist who ignored high-low distinctions, a media manipulator who foresaw and then embraced the age of Warhol. In this revision of Dalí's career, film was crucial to his evolution as a painter. The camera's merciless glass eye and the film editor's narrative fecundity opened up a dreamlike world of permanent metamorphosis and helped the juvenile rebel to dissolve traditional art categories. "I am superficial," he wrote in 1927, "and the outside of things is what delights me, for in the last analysis the outside of things is the objective."

The exhibition opens with a moody portrait of his countryman and soon-to-be partner in cinematic crime, the writer-director Luis Buñuel. Painted in 1924, when Dalí was only 20, it demonstrates his lovely touch and prodigious sense of sculptural form. But it is also a poignant reminder of perhaps the most important artistic friendship he ever enjoyed, and how short-lived it was. Five large rooms later, the show comes to a bumpy close with a grandiose portrait of Hollywood mogul Jack Warner and his pet terrier. Dalí gravitated toward the powerful and they to him. Painted in his better-known hallucinatory colors -- the blue sky is as bright as Day-Glo -- it's a toss-up whether man or dog looks more feral.

Along with screenings of several rarely seen works, the show's most valuable addition to the reappraisal of Dalí's reputation are the many original documents on view. Letters in French from Dalí to Buñuel, complete with drawings, reveal how much the painter contributed to both the images and the sequences of their films. Sorting out Dalí's feelings about cinema is tricky, and the organizers have not resolved the contradictions. On the one hand, he believed "the only true means of producing a work of art is painting"; cinema was a "secondary art" because it required other people. On the other, he loved its mass appeal. In his opinion the three "great American surrealists" were Walt Disney, Cecil B. DeMille, and Harpo Marx.

What's missing here is any attempt to trace Dalí's lasting importance to world-wide cinema. If he seems a tame and canonical figure by now, that may be because his once outlawed sex-and-death images have been so thoroughly absorbed by mainstream media. 

"Pop art is part of the healthy trend away from abstract expressionism -- which has become a caricature -- back to the maximum of visual reality. The finest art is always the most photographic."



Hotel Clock Melts Back to Days of Dali

Excerpted from *The Chicago Tribune*, July 22, 2008, by Lisa Anderson

Founded in 1904, the St. Regis in New York has hosted many notable and eccentric guests, but few more so than the gleefully outlandish Dali, who was wont to walk his pet ocelot through its marbled halls on a leash.

"The hotel has always been very colorful, and it's been very colorful not because of the bricks and mortar -- certainly it's wonderfully gilded and there are over 1,000 chandeliers in the building -- but it's really about the colorful people who are our guests," Scott Geraghty, general manager of the hotel said.

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“We’re always happy to host a party. In the case of Dali, he was the party,” Geraghty said of the prolific painter, writer, filmmaker and designer.

Dali frequently entertained guests and potential art patrons in his hotel suite. At 1,100 square feet, the one-bedroom corner suite is intimate and elegantly detailed with moldings and brass heating registers perforated with the St. Regis monogram. In addition to the bedroom, there were two baths and a sitting room overlooking Fifth Ave. No artifacts remain from Dali’s days, and the rooms have been renovated many times since, but the space and the view remain the same.

Dali often also threw large parties in the marbled gallery and salons on the hotel’s second floor, many of them to display and sell his artwork. They were lively affairs, according to accounts Geraghty has heard.

“Salvador Dali would hire models, and he would put them in extremely low-backed dresses and he would paint them,” he said. “They would stroll through the room and their purpose was to be living art. He did strange things.”

While there are no records of guests complaining about Dali’s promenading ocelot, Geraghty said, “I know for sure with the bear they did.” The bear, which Dali paraded around the hotel on a chain, apparently terrified at least one guest when he unexpectedly popped out of an elevator. And then, Geraghty said, there were the flies. “In a lot of his work he utilized flies, real flies,” he said, which sometimes escaped from Dali’s suite and buzzed around The St. Regis’ hushed hallways.

The hotel, Geraghty said, no longer allows pets of any kind, including insects. 



The St. Regis today and as it appeared soon after opening in 1904. As a tie-in with the summer’s Dali: Painting & Film exhibit at MoMA, the St. Regis offered a \$5,000 package that included a night in the famous suite Dali shared with Gala.



Dali Among “World’s Worst Hotel Guests”

Excerpted from *Concierge.com*, August 2008 by Lauren Highland

Concierge has assembled a list of the world’s 15 worst hotel guests ... and guess who came in second, right behind Amy Winehouse. You guessed it -- the moustachioed one himself. Other horrendous hostellers headlining the list include Michael Jackson, Britney Spears, Axl Rose, Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, Keith Moon, Johnny Depp and the 1998 U.S. Men’s Olympic Hockey Team. Here’s the front desk dossier on Dali...



To the staff of Le Meurice hotel in Paris, where he was a frequent guest during his later years, Dali’s obsession with animals was a bit of a nuisance, to say the least. The father of surrealism, who died in 1989 at the age of 84, often brought two pet ocelots along to the pricey landmark, and the wildcats’ tendency to use the walls and floors of the Suite Royal as a scratching post left the room in tatters.

Sheep in Dali’s hotel room? Not such a woolly tale... Witness Dali’s Design for the Interior Decoration of a Stable-Library (1942) and The Sheep (1942).

That’s not all: He once demanded a horse be delivered to his room, and on another occasion ordered up a herd of sheep. Upon their arrival (yes, the hotel was that accommodating), Dali shot at the little lambs with a gun containing blanks. He also had the hotel staff catch flies for him in the Tuileries garden, paying them per fly.

But at least Dalí knew he was a difficult guest: He tipped his favorite staff each Christmas with autographed lithographs of his work. 

“My brother and I resembled each other like two drops of water, but we had different reflections. Like myself he had the unmistakable facial morphology of a genius.”



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A Room with a Very Surreal View

The recently opened “Dali Room” at The Artists Inn Residence Bed & Breakfast in Washington D.C.’s Dupont Circle is a delightful tribute to the Spanish master and a sure draw for Dali aficionados sojourning in the nation’s capital. The concept was conceived, designed and furnished by Artists Inn Residence owner Terry Gerace, who commissioned artist Matthew Willey to create and paint the suite’s Dali murals.

The SDCQ caught up with Matthew Willey at his studio in New York for his comments on the project.



“Originally, Terry wasn’t thinking in terms of mural work for the Salvador Dali room. But as fate would have it, Terry is not just an owner of an inn, but also a doctor, and he was volunteering at the same place as one of my dearest friends. They were talking about the inn that he was building and my friend mentioned my name. Terry recognized my name and had actually thought of me for some projects at the inn, but I had moved from D.C. to New York at that point, so he didn’t know where to find me,” Willey told us.

“As we began to talk about the project I could hear that Terry was open to the idea of artistic freedom so I suggested not really having a ‘plan’ but rather spending the first few days in the room just channeling in what the room ‘wanted’ to look like.

“I treated it very much like a panoramic painting rather than a paint treatment to enhance the design of the interior. Although the latter ended up happening naturally. I sat with piles of books about Dali and got to know him. I’d known some of his work before this, but I never read extensively about the man before. Shame on me and any artist that doesn’t! I got more and more fascinated by this amazing human being.

“I was most worried about the daunting task of making it feel like Salvador Dali, the man who had become so much more complex to me in a matter of days, while making it a lovely B&B experience...

“Waking up with certain Salvador Dali paintings looking at you might make some people believe they hadn’t woken up at all but slipped into a strange nightmare.

“But the more I read, the more I wallowed in the love that this man seemed to have for life and the incredible vision that he found a way to communicate to us... Picasso said, ‘It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child.’ I believe that Dali painted like a child effortlessly, his entire career. So my goal became creating a room that carried a bit of that story to the people that came to stay there.”

The Artist Inn Residence Bed & Breakfast is taking reservations for the Dali Room at 202-667-6707. Their website is at www.ArtistsInnResidence.com.

You’ll find Matthew Willey on the web as well at www.MatthewWilley.com.



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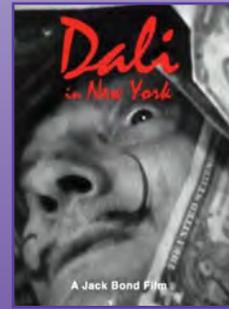
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Dali in New York on DVD

A review from *FilmThreat.com*, August 23, 2008, by Phil Hall

During December 1965, underground filmmaker Jack Bond latched on to Salvador Dali when the Spanish artist breezed into New York to prepare for an exhibition at the Huntington Gallery of Modern Art and a book signing event. The result of their encounter, *Dali in New York*, is an amusing filmed record of the outlandish Surrealist's ability to baffle, bemuse and enchant an allegedly jaded Gotham population. If anything, Dali was the ultimate publicity hog, with zany stunts ranging from transporting a Michelangelo statue through the New York streets (he pauses to give the statue mouth-to-mouth resuscitation) and lying in a coffin packed with \$1-million in cash while ants crawl over him. While his disdain for linear conversation and cerebral debate perplexes too-serious feminist writer Jane Arden, who trails him throughout the film, Dali is clearly at ease with the less-pretentious Art Students League classes who recognize his vibe.

Throughout the 57-minute film, Dali is clearly aware of the camera's presence, and at one point he directs Bond's cinematographer on how a sequence should be composed. The film is laced with glimpses of Dali's paintings (which are at a disadvantage in this black-and-white production) while Manitas de Plata performs Flamenco tunes on the soundtrack (another disadvantage, as the distracting music has little connection to Dali's distinctive work). Anyone seeking a serious art documentary will be disappointed, but those who enjoy iconoclastic eccentricity will appreciate Dali's cheerful celebration of the absurd - not to mention the celebration of himself. ☺



Order your copy from the Salvador Dali Gallery online at www.DaliGallery.com. Click the "Home" button and follow the prompts for the "Dali in New York" DVD.

Events and Exhibitions

Dali Castle Museum - Pubol, Spain

Dali & Magazines -- Through December 31

Dali's relationship with the press is the subject of this show. It features 74 magazines and daily newspapers as well as three paper works by Dali. In addition to writing articles, Dali designed front covers of magazines and illustrations for articles by others for magazines such as *Vogue* and *Life*. He also used magazines and newspapers to make collages.

The Sakip Sabanci Museum - Istanbul, Turkey

Salvador Dali: A Surrealist in Istanbul -- Through January 19

In addition to 270 Dali works that include oil paintings, drawings, graphics, manuscripts and photographs, various documents belonging to the famous painter will be displayed in the exhibit. "Dali was an absolute artist without borders, one who always thought and imagined beyond his epoch," notes Montse Aguer Teixidor, director of the Gala-Salvador Dali Foundation's Center for Dalinian Studies and curator of the exhibition.

Arken Museum of Modern Art - Copenhagen, Denmark

Triumph of Desire: Danish & International Surrealism -- Through January 11

In the 1930s Surrealism spread like wildfire across Europe, led by Dalí, Magritte and Miró. Danish Surrealists from Wilhelm Freddie and Richard Mortensen to Heerup and Jorn were influenced by the international wave. This exhibit focuses on the dialogue that emerged between the Danish and international Surrealists in the 1930s.

The Stülerbau - Berlin, Germany

Surreal Worlds -- Exhibit opened July 10 and is on 10-year loan.

The so-called "Scharf-Gersternberg Collection" includes paintings, sculptures and sketches. It features more than 250 Surrealist and pre-Surrealist works, ranging from Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel to Francisco de Goya. Included among the collection's treasures are etchings from late in Goya's career and works by Max Klinger, Max Ernst, Odilon Redon, Paul Klee, Jean Dubuffet and printmaker Piranesi. A film program includes works by Bunuel and others. ☺

"I believe...that an intense light in the place that sleep occurs is favorable to dreams of a heightened visual intensity. Sunlight beating directly on my shut eyelids has produced colored dreams."



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***Dali's Secret Daughter* (continued from p. 3)**

mother. This time he was pushing 80 and lost the will to live. At first, he refused to drink, nearly dying of dehydration. Two years later he all but perished in a bedroom fire which had all the marks of a suicide attempt. He was rescued by his staff and taken to Figueres where in 1988 he was hospitalised with heart failure. He was still so famous, he was visited by the Spanish king. Dali died in hospital a year later while listening to a recording of his favourite music, Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*.

And that would have been that but for the emergence of Pilar Abel. If the DNA tests prove her case - and she does bear a remarkable resemblance to the master - the life of Salvador Dali could have the most unexpected footnote of all. ☺

AUCTION NEWS

Dali items continue to be big surprises at auction. The Salvador Dali Gallery sold *Le Gran Pavon* to one of our clients in 1997 for \$75,000. The stunning hammer price it fetched at a recent Christie's auction was \$259,000.

***Le Gran Pavon* (pictured right)**

Oil on canvas, signed, 1979

Estimated: \$50,000 - \$70,000

Sold: \$259,000 at Christie's New York, May 7, 2008



Deux Figures a la Croix

Pen & ink on paper, signed, 1970

Estimated: \$14,000 - \$18,000

Sold: \$27,400 at Christie's New York, May 7, 2008

Composizione

Ink on paper, signed, 1967

Estimated: \$28,000 - \$31,000

Sold: \$36,700 at Finarte Semenzato, Milano, May 20, 2008

***The Minotaur* (pictured left)**

Bronze sculpture, 1981

Estimated: \$9,300 - \$12,400

Sold: \$17,400 at Christie's Amsterdam, June 5, 2008

Le Mur des Lamentations

Gouache, watercolour, ball-point pen, pen & ink, charcoal & wash, signed, 1968

Estimated: \$59,000 - \$78,700

Sold: \$108,700 at Christie's London, June 25, 2008 ☺

