



MEADOWS MUSEUM
SMU · DALLAS

**TWO EXHIBITIONS AT THE MEADOWS MUSEUM
GIVE NEW INSIGHTS INTO SALVADOR DALÍ**

***Dalí: Poetics of the Small, 1929–1936* Is the First Exhibition to Focus
on the Surrealist Master’s Small-Scale Paintings**

DALLAS (SMU) — September 5, 2018 — This fall, the Meadows Museum, SMU, will present a major exhibition of works by Salvador Dalí (1904–1989), exploring an overlooked or lesser-known aspect of the artist’s oeuvre. With *Dalí: Poetics of the Small, 1929–1936*, the Meadows is organizing the first in-depth exploration of the artist’s small-scale paintings—some measuring just over a foot, and others as small as 3 by 2 inches. A major part of the artist’s output during the early part of his Surrealist period (1929–1936), these small works reflect Dalí’s precise style of painting. Organized by the Meadows as part of its mission to present Spanish art in America, *Dalí: Poetics of the Small* will be on view at the Meadows Museum—the only venue for this exhibition—from September 9 through December 9, 2018.

Also at the Meadows this fall, *Dalí’s Aliyah: A Moment in Jewish History* will feature a rare, complete set of the lithographs created by the artist to celebrate 1968 as the 20th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. These works reveal a different aspect of Dalí’s artistic practice, with images that are large in scale and painted in a loose, expressionistic style that is the opposite of the precise technique displayed in the small-scale Surrealist works. *Dalí’s Aliyah: A Moment in Jewish History* will be on view at the Meadows Museum from September 9, 2018, through January 13, 2019.

“Despite Salvador Dalí’s global reputation, there is much still to learn about his artistic development and output,” said Mark Roglán, the Linda P. and William A. Custard Director of the Meadows Museum. “In producing so many small-scale paintings, it is clear that the artist saw their size as important, recognizing that within a constrained frame the viewer’s eyes are drawn to details differently. By contrast, the large-format lithographs Dalí created for his *Aliyah* commission demonstrate an understanding of a different set of traditional artist’s skills, using art to capture and present history and the people involved in shaping it. We are excited to provide visitors with a chance to reconsider one of the 20th century’s most important and engaging artists.”

Dalí: Poetics of the Small, 1929–1936 (September 9–December 9, 2018)

Salvador Dalí's deep admiration for the refined and precise works of the Dutch master painters of the 17th century and, in particular, for the paintings of Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675), has long been acknowledged. Dalí was similarly known for his notorious attention to detail, a precision that is evident in the small-scale, jewel-like paintings presented in *Dalí: Poetics of the Small, 1929–1936*. Painted at the height of his career—when nearly half of the works he produced were cabinet-size paintings—these works have never been systematically studied or exhibited as a cohesive group.

This exhibition will include nearly two-dozen of Dalí's small-scale paintings, including at least one from each year during his highly productive period between 1929 and 1936. Among them are important works such as *The Accommodations of Desire* (1929, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), *Phantom Cart* (1933, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, Figueres), and *The Weaning of Furniture-Nutrition* (1934, The Dalí Museum, St. Petersburg, Florida). Diminutive in scale, these paintings reflect Dalí's distinctive Surrealist style, with familiar but distorted figures often set against a dramatic or barren landscape.

Plans for the exhibition began after the Meadows acquired Dalí's small-scale painting *The Fish Man* (*L'homme poisson*, 1930) in 2014, and asked the conservation department at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, to conduct technical analysis of the work. Despite much art historical study of Dalí's life and body of work, very few such technical analyses had been made of his small-scale paintings. The results of that research—which revealed extensive underdrawing and changes to the composition before it was completed—encouraged the Meadows to begin exploring the subject of Dalí's cabinet paintings in more depth.

Under the leadership of Claire Barry, the Kimbell's director of conservation, X-radiography and infrared reflectography, as well as pigment analysis and other tests, were conducted on nine of the paintings to be presented in this exhibition. The resulting data provides a better understanding of Dalí's artistic technique and working process during the 1930s, but also highlights an interesting set of contradictions for the artist. In 1948, Dalí published his own book on painting and artistry, *50 Secrets of Magic Craftsmanship*, in which he shares his perspective on what makes for a great work of art. Curiously, it turns out that Dalí largely did not take his own advice. For example, where Dalí's book discourages graphite outlines on a canvas or panel as a precursor to painting, the technical examination of these works shows that he consistently did exactly that. Similarly, the artist's advice on choosing paint types, the mixing of

pigments, or how best to paint elements such as the sky, were all clearly recommendations that he himself diverged from and sometimes even contradicted in his own practice. The details of the Kimbell Conservation Department's analysis are published in the exhibition catalogue in an essay that discusses Dalí's compositional design; the underdrawing, painted cutouts, and pictorial delineation revealed by the study; and the artist's employment of pigments, grounds, and texture.

Dalí: Poetics of the Small, 1929–1936 is co-curated by Roglán and Shelley DeMaria, Meadows Museum Curatorial Assistant. The exhibition catalogue includes full-color reproductions of the works and is illustrated with over 140 additional comparative, historical, and technical images. The accompanying texts present new art historical and technical research, including: an essay addressing the influence of Vermeer's paintings on Dalí's own style by Mark Roglán, Meadows Museum Director; an essay by Shelley DeMaria exploring Dalí's contemporaneous influences such as photography and collage; an essay presenting the results of the technical study of several works by Claire Barry, Kimbell Art Museum Director of Conservation, and Peter Van de Moortel, Assistant Paintings Conservator at the Kimbell Art Museum; and, also by DeMaria, object entries for each work tracing the artist's iconography throughout the eight-year period under examination.

Dalí's Aliyah: A Moment in Jewish History (September 9–January 13, 2019)

In 1966, the publisher Samuel Shore of New York commissioned Salvador Dalí to produce a series of works by 1968, when their completion would celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel. Inspired by the historic challenges and post-World War II renewal of the Jewish people, Dalí created a series of 25 mixed-media paintings on paper that loosely trace major moments in Jewish history—both the tragic and the joyous—culminating in the creation of Israel in 1948. From the paintings, Shorewood Publishers produced a limited edition of 250 sets of 25 lithographs, with each set accompanied by a letter of introduction from David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973), the founding Prime Minister of Israel. The title, *Aliyah*, comes from the Hebrew word “to rise or ascend,” and is commonly used to describe migration to Israel, a process that many Jews see as stepping up to their homeland.

The paintings were shown in 1968 at the Huntington Hartford Gallery of Modern Art in New York, timed with Israel's anniversary celebrations, while the lithographic sets were offered for sale to those who wished to commemorate the anniversary through art. Although the current locations of the original paintings are not known, in 2017 the Meadows Museum acquired a rare, complete set of the 25 lithographs thanks to a gift

from Linda P. and William A. Custard and The Meadows Foundation, in tribute to the Honorable Janet Pollman Kafka, Honorary Consul of Spain, for her twenty years of service to the country. Both Linda P. Custard and Janet Kafka serve on the Museum's Advisory Council, the former in the role of chair. *Aliyah* will be presented during Israel's 70th anniversary year.

About the Meadows Museum

The Meadows Museum is the leading U.S. institution focused on the study and presentation of the art of Spain. In 1962, Dallas businessman and philanthropist Algur H. Meadows donated his private collection of Spanish paintings, as well as funds to start a museum, to Southern Methodist University. The museum opened to the public in 1965, marking the first step in fulfilling Meadows's vision to create "a small Prado for Texas." Today, the Meadows is home to one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Spanish art outside of Spain. The collection spans from the 10th to the 21st centuries and includes medieval objects, Renaissance and Baroque sculptures, and major paintings by Golden Age and modern masters.

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