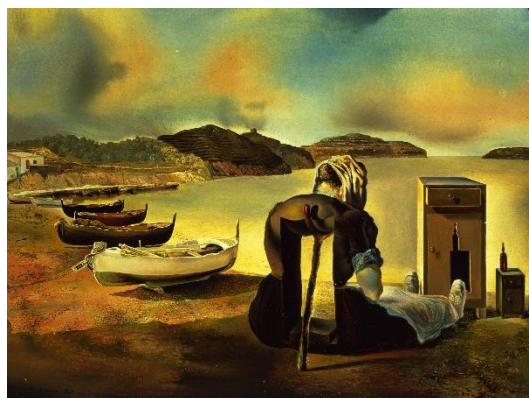
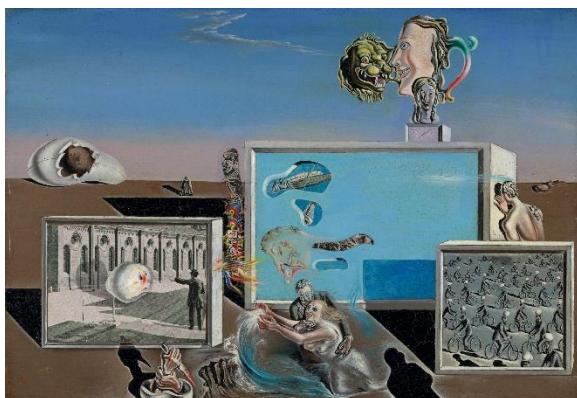




THE FREUDIAN UNIVERSE OF DALÍ

From 20 October 2026 to 24 January 2027

Curator: Jaime Brihuela

The relationship between the work of Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) and the writings of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is among the key aspects that articulate the Catalan painter's visual aesthetic. The circumstances of Dalí's childhood and adolescence created a favorable environment for this connection, which became little less than an obsession and culminated in a meeting between the two in London in 1938.

The Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza is presenting an exhibition that proposes a reinterpretation of Dalí's entire career with this relationship as its guiding thread, covering every facet of his biography, from the complex family universe evident in his early years to his later creations, with the aim of revealing the Freudian imprint on his life and work.

From the moment he read *The Interpretation of Dreams* in the early 1920s at the Residencia de Estudiantes in Madrid, Freud became a constant reference for Dalí. In contrast, for Freud, Dalí was simply a young Spanish artist whom he met briefly at a gathering with the Austrian writer Stefan Zweig and the British poet Edward James, although he was impressed by his painting and his fanatical character. In Freud's writings, Dalí encountered a justification that allowed him to transform his fantasies, complexes, obsessions, traumas and unfulfilled desires into poetic, visual or written expressions. From that starting point, he began to create a system of visual signs and symbols that shaped his inner world and which, through repetition, eventually configured a type of metalanguage.

Organised in collaboration with the Community of Madrid and the Madrid City Council, and sponsored by Natixis, the exhibition brings together some 130 works, including paintings, drawings, sculptures and videos, from European and North American museums and

Images: Salvador Dalí. *Illumined Pleasures*, 1929. The Museum of Modern Art, Nueva York. The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection, 1967 © 2026 Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence; *The Weaning of Furniture Nutrition*, 1934. The Dalí Museum, St. Petersburg, Florida, donación de A. Reynolds y Eleanor Morse, 2007 © The Dalí Museum, St. Petersburg, Florida © Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí / VEGAP, Madrid, 2026.

More information: Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza. **Press Office:** Tel. +34 913600236 / +34 914203944. prensa@museothyssen.org <https://www.museothyssen.org/en/private-area/press/dossiers/freudian-universe-dali>



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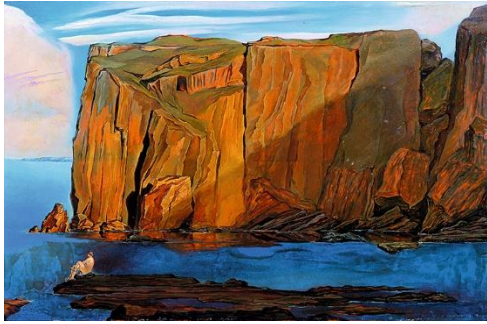


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Salvador Dalí, *Cliffs*, 1926. Private collection.

institutions. It is structured into six chronological sections centred on key chapters in Dalí's life. Each one includes works by the artist related to Freudian thought and juxtaposed with paintings and drawings by other artists, such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Gino Severini, Jean Arp, Kurt Schwitters, Federico García Lorca and Yves Tanguy, as well as Santiago Ramón y Cajal and Sigmund Freud himself.

“In the first stage of my life, my hero was Sigmund Freud. My painting expressed the anguish and neurotic visions I had at that time.”

1. Family Environment, Figueres and Cadaqués

The first section looks at Dalí's complex family background. His mother died when he was 17; his authoritarian father quickly married his sister-in-law, who thus became his stepmother-aunt; he shared experiences with his sister - *Portrait of Ana María* (1924) and *Figure at a Table* (1925) - that went beyond the fraternal; and he had a brother, also named Salvador, who had died before the artist was born. These were formative years for Dalí's art, during which his first complexes and traumas manifested themselves, later shaping much of his visual language and writings. Besides his family, the sea, the beaches and the rocks of Cap de Creus near Cadaqués also left a powerful mark on him during these years, their forms present in many of his works, such as *Cliffs* (1926).

2. The Residencia de Estudiantes. Return to Catalonia, 1922-28

The second section centres on the period when Dalí encountered Surrealism through French publications, read Freud's works and discovered Santiago Ramón y Cajal's drawings of neural tissue. He also forged relationships with many of the leading figures of Spanish modernity, particularly Federico García Lorca and Luis Buñuel, with whom, around 1926, 100 years ago, he would lay the foundations of early Spanish Surrealism. It was at this period that Dalí held his first major exhibitions in Madrid and Barcelona and, after experimenting with various artistic languages, fully established his distinctive visual identity, which already reflected his fears and his obsession with sexual themes. Alongside drawings by Ramón y Cajal and García Lorca and paintings by Severini, Schwitters, Arp, and Tanguy, this room displays works by Dalí that represent part of this imagery, such as *Futile Efforts*, *Little Ashes* (1927-28) and *Unsatisfied Desires* (1928).



Salvador Dalí. *Futile Efforts*. *Little Ashes*, 1927-1928. Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

3. The Young Promise of Surrealism, 1929-31

The third section of the exhibition encompasses the years of Dalí's activity in Paris and features oils such as *The Invisible Man* (1929-33), *Illumined Pleasures* (1929), *The first Days of Spring* (1929) and *William Tell* (1930). In the French capital Dalí was an active member of the Surrealist movement led by André Breton, becoming one of the artists who best understood how to translate its theoretical bases into images. This period, in which he painted his first fully Surrealist works, constructed from elements drawn from the landscapes of the unconscious, also coincides with the time when he met Gala Éluard, who became his muse and companion during the rest of his life.



Salvador Dalí, *The Invisible Man*, 1929-1933
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

4. The Paranoiac-Critical Method, 1932-37

The fourth section brings together some thirty works that allow for an analysis of the development of the Paranoiac-critical method, through which Dalí established the bases for his connection with Freudian psychoanalysis. For Dalí, paranoia was a "state of grace" in which the artist is able to associate forms and objects with meanings that go beyond what they apparently represent, generating double images. Notable works on display in this gallery include *Birth of Liquid Desires* (1931-1932), *Portrait of Gala* (1935), *The Weaning of Furniture Nutrition* (1934), *Paranoiac-Critical Solitude* (1935), and *The Great Paranoid* (1936).

5. Meeting with Freud and Expulsion from the Surrealist Group, 1938-39

The meeting in London with Freud - a key moment in this exhibition - is the focus of the fifth section, which covers the period up to Dalí's expulsion from the Surrealist group in 1939 and his move to the United States. It includes works such as *The Anthropomorphic Cabinet* (1936), *Drawing of Sigmund Freud* (1938), which Dalí executed following their meeting, *Endless Enigma* (1938) and *Spain* (1938). Also on display are three photographs of the *Dream of Venus*, the pavilion he designed in the amusement area of the New York World's Fair, an extremely large and provocative installation that aimed to bring Surrealism closer to American popular culture.

6. After 1940. The Lingering Shadow of Freud



The sixth and final section in the exhibition continues to the end of the artist's life and traces the Freudian vestiges that never truly left his work, despite Dalí's own assertion that his interest in Freud had waned in favour of scientific and religious issues. Echoes of psychoanalysis - the softening of forms, double images - can be seen in works such as *Apotheosis of Homer (Diurnal Dream of Gala)* (ca. 1945) and *Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bee around a Pomegranate a Second before Waking* (ca. 1944),

Salvador Dalí. *The Madonna of Portlligat*, 1949. Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Haupt

as well as in set designs for ballet productions premiered in New York, such as the preliminary sketch Project for “*Labyrinth*” (1941) and the stage curtain measuring almost fifteen metres that he designed for *Mad Tristan* (1944), displayed here in the museum’s Main Hall. Religious ideas and a fascination with the classical world are evident in works such as *The Ascension of Christ, Pieta* (1958), *The Madonna of Portlligat* (1949), and *The Trinity (La Trinidad)* (1960).

EXHIBITION DETAILS

Title: *The Freudian Universe of Dalí.*

Organised by: Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza.

Venue and dates: Madrid, Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, 20 October 2026 to 24 January 2027.

Curator: Jaime Brihuega.

Technical curators: Leticia de Cos and Juan Ángel López-Manzanares.

Number of works: 136.

Publications: Catalogue featuring texts by Jaime Brihuega, William Jeffett, Dawn Ades and Ignacio Gómez de Liaño; teaching guide.

Lecture series: Talks by Ian Gibson, Juan José Lahuerta, Jaime Brihuega, Alyce Mahon and Elliot King, every Wednesday from 28 October to 25 November 2026.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Address: Paseo del Prado, 8. 28014, Madrid. Temporary exhibition galleries, ground floor.

Opening times: Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am to 7 pm; Saturdays, 10 am to 11 pm; closed on Mondays.

Thyssen Nights with Uber: Free entry every Saturday, from 9 pm to 11 pm.

Ticket prices: Combined ticket: Permanent Collection and temporary exhibitions. Standard ticket: €14; Reduced price ticket: €10 for visitors aged 65+, pensioners, and students; Groups (7 or more): €12 per person; Free admission: visitors aged under 18, officially unemployed visitors, visitors with disabilities, Large Families, active teaching staff, and holders of the Youth Card and European Youth Card. Advance tickets available at the ticket office, from the museum’s website, and by phone: +34 91 791 13 70.

PRESS INFORMATION

<https://www.museothyssen.org/en/private-area/press/dossiers/freudian-universe-dali>