

Les Dinners de Gala By Salvador Dali



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Les Dinners de Gala By Salvador Dali (1973)

Les Dinners de Gala (Gala's Dinners) was published in 1973 and instantly became a Salvador Dalí collectable. This unique cookbook was published as a collaboration between Dalí and a secret chef. The "secret chef" turned out to be chefs from the top French restaurants of the day—including Lasserre, La Tour d'Argent, Maxim's and Le Buffet de la Gare de Lyon. These chefs created the book's recipes, and Dalí, of course, took the glory. Their goal was to produce magnificent meals fit for a royal feast.

Dalí was not only a brilliant artist, but also had a self-proclaimed refined taste for food and wine. Dalí's introduction to the book states that since he was a little boy he wanted to be a master-chef. With a lifelong interest in the culinary and gastronomical arts, Dalí was known to have experimented with various foodstuffs as aphrodisiacs—much like Giovanni Casanova (1725-1798) the Italian *bon vivant* with a

notoriously keen taste for pleasure and extravagant foods. Dalí would eat and interact with various foods that he believed kept him in good health. He was famously rumored to have bathed in sardine oil and to have taken afternoon naps with live lobsters in his bed. At the age of 68, as a well-established artist,

Dalí created this book about his life-long gastronomic adventures.

Dalí conceived and produced *Les Dinners de Gala* as a dedication to his wife

Gala, who is stylized on the golden cover. With 136 recipes in twelve chapters, this collection of eccentric formulas includes an entire chapter on aphrodisiacs, the correct use of *atteletes* (meat jewelry) and sketches of limbless dwarves eating eggs. Fifty-five feature recipes are illustrated in color. Dalí opens with a Dante-esque warning, "*Les Dinners de Gala* is uniquely devoted to the pleasures of taste. Do not look for dietetic formulas here."

**"One can choose not to eat,
one cannot accept to eat poorly."**

— Salvador Dalí



Chapter 9: L'atavisme Désoxyribonucléique (Atavism-Vegetables), 1971, 22x29½ in.

In the humorous article “Dalí’s Cookbook: A Gastronomical Inquisition,” Brad Richason wrote “Dalí adds to the adventure of the book with some linguistic looseness—fictitious Dalinian words like ‘hors-texte’ and ‘gastro esthetics.’ In explaining his ‘gastro esthetics,’ the artist noted, ‘In fact I only like to eat what has a clear intelligible form. If I hate that detestable degrading vegetable called spinach, it is because it is shapeless, like Liberty.’”

Richason continued, “Informed by Dalí’s distinctive style, the tome presents a heady blend of hallucinatory illustrations set against surprisingly appetizing recipes. *Les Diners de Gala* was a *tour d’force* of book publishing. Long out of print, the volume is a coveted collector’s item because of the outlandish recipes that capture the flavor of Dalí and Gala’s unlimited imagination, dining preferences and the extraordinarily lavish way Dalí illustrated this most exceptional of cookbooks. The flamboyant book is a veritable stroke of genius—its gold cover emblematic of how practically everything Dalí touched turned to gold.”

“At the age of six I wanted to be a cook. At seven I wanted to be Napoleon. And my ambition has been growing steadily ever since.”

— Salvador Dalí

In conjunction with the release of the book Dalí also produced a twelve lithograph suite titled *Les Diners De Gala* (printed in 1971). This portfolio, complete with a distinctive engraving in the lower margin of each work titled *Spoon with Crutches*, is a Surrealist twist on some of Dalí’s favorite meals. These lithographs are the outcome of Dalí’s experimentation with mixed media and are regarded as his most unique prints.

With an edition size of 590 and 50 artist proofs, the portfolio on exhibition is AP (artist proof) 37 of 50.

Paul Chimera, Dalí historian and Dalí Museum founder notes that “Food was a favorite theme in much of

Dalí’s work, his paintings, prints and other works are filled with images of bread, fish, lobsters, sea urchins, grapes, meats and more. It was therefore perfectly logical and perhaps long overdue that Dalí should produce a book and a print suite dedicated expressly to gastronomy—a colorful world in which Dalí’s creative genius was cooked to perfection.”

Selected excerpts from salvadordali.com, Kismet*Kitchen 20012/2013 and *Dalí’s Cookbook: A Gastronomical Inquisition* by Brad Richason, Dalí Society at dali.com and Paul Chimera, Dalí historian and Museum founder.

Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) Biography

Salvador Felipe Jacinto Dalí i Domenech (1904-1989) was born in the agricultural town of Figueres, Spain. The son of a prosperous lawyer and notary, Dalí spent his childhood in Figueres and at the family's summer home in the coastal fishing village of Cadaques, Spain where his parents built his first studio. When he was five years old, Dalí was taken to his brother's grave (who died of gastroenteritis the previous year) and told by his parents that he was his brother's reincarnation, a concept which he came to believe. Dalí said of his brother, "We resembled each other like two drops of water, but we had different reflections. He was probably a first version of myself but conceived too much in the absolute." As an adult, Dalí made his home with his wife Gala in nearby Port Lligat, Spain.

The young Dalí attended the San Fernando Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid. Early recognition of his talent came with his first solo exhibition in Barcelona, Spain in 1925. He received international acclaim when three of his paintings, including *The Basket of Bread* (1926), were shown in the Third Annual Carnegie International Exhibition in Pittsburgh, PA in 1928. On his first visit to Paris in 1926, he joined the Surrealists, led by former Dadaist André Breton. That same year, Dalí met Gala Eluard when she visited him in Cadaques, Spain with her husband, poet Paul Eluard. She quickly became Dalí's lover, muse, business manager and chief inspiration.

Dalí's painting, *The Persistence of Memory* (1931), featuring his iconic soft watches, is one of the World's best-known Surrealist works. Dalí began moving into a new style of painting, preoccupied with science and religion. The artist's arrival in New York City in 1940 was one of the catalysts in the development of that city as a world art center in the post-War years. While in New York, Dalí rediscovered his Catholic faith which would bolster his creative efforts for the rest of his life. 1940 to 1948 were very important

years for the artist, Dalí moved away from Surrealism and into his classic period, beginning a series of large canvases, focusing on scientific, historical and religious themes. Among the best known of these works are *The Hallucinogenic Toreador* (1968-1970) and *The Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus* (1958-1959), both are in The Museum of Modern Art's collection, as well as *The Sacrament of the Last Supper* (1955) which is in the collection of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. The Museum of Modern Art in New York gave Dalí his first major retrospective exhibition in 1941, followed by the 1942 publication of the artist's autobiography, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*.

In 1974, Dalí opened the Teatro Museo in Figueres, Spain; followed by retrospectives in Paris and London. After the death of his wife, Gala in 1982, Dalí's health began to fail. It deteriorated further after he was burned in a fire in 1984. Much of his time in the 1980s was spent in seclusion in his apartment at Torre Galatea, adjacent to the Teatro Museo. Salvador Dalí died on January 23, 1989 in Figueres, Spain.

As an artist, Salvador Dalí was not limited to a particular style or media. The body of his work, from early impressionist paintings through his transitional surrealist works, and into his classical period, reveals a constantly growing and evolving artist. Dalí worked in all media, leaving behind a wealth of paintings, drawings, graphics, sculptures, films, photographs, performance pieces, jewelry and objects of all descriptions. Whether working from pure inspiration or on a commissioned illustration, Dalí's matchless insight and symbolic complexity are apparent. Above all, Dalí was a superb draftsman. His excellence as a creative artist will always set a standard for the art of the twentieth century.

Official biographical excerpts courtesy of salvadordali.com—Paul Chimera, Dalí historian and Museum founder.

Exhibition Checklist

All works are from the *Les Diners de Gala* portfolio (1971), photolithograph and etched remarque on Japon nacré paper, edition AP 37/50. Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University. Gift of Dr. Paul and Mrs. Beverly Cutler, 1997.

Chapter 1: *Les Caprices Pincés Princières—Plats Exotiques* (Princely Pliers Caprices—Exotic Dishes), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 2: *Les Cannibalismes de L'automne—Oeufs Fruits de Mer* (Autumn cannibalism—Eggs and Seafood), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 3: *Les suprêmes de Malaises Lilliputiens—Entrées* (The Supreme Small Discomfort—First Course), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 4: *Les Entre—Plats Sodomisés—Viandes* (Sodomized meat entrees—Meats), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 5: *Les Spoutniks Astiqués d'asticots Satistiques—Escargots Grenouilles* (Sputniks Polished by Statistical Maggots—Snails and Frogs), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 6: *Les Panaches Panachés—Poissons Crustacés* (Variegated feathers—Fish and Crustaceans), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 7: *Les Charis Monarchiques—Gibiers Volailles* (Monarchical Flesh Tones—Game and Poultry), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 8: *Les Montres Molles ½ Sommeil—Porc* (Soft watches Half Asleep—Pork), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 9: *L'atavisme Désoxyribonucléique* (Atavism—Vegetables), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 10: *Les je Mange GALA—Aphrodisiaques* (I Eat Gala's—Aphrodisiacs), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 11: *Les Pios Nonoches—Entremets Desserts* (Nocturnal Cravings—Sweets and Desserts), 1971, 22 x 29½ in.

Chapter 12: *Les Delices Petits Martyrs—Hors-d'oeuvre* (Little Martyr Delights—Appetizers), 1971, 22 x 29½ inches.

La Cuillère aux Bequilles (The Spoon with Crutches) from the *Les Diners de Gala* portfolio, 1971. Brass presentation plate, edition AP 37/50, 2½ x 9¼ x ¼ in.

Les Diners de Gala (Gala's Dinners), 1973. Salvador Dalí and Captain J. Peter Moore. French language edition published by Felicie, Inc., NY, 322 pages. Printed by Draeger, Paris, France.



This exhibition and catalog are dedicated to the memory of Dr. Paul and Mrs. Beverly Cutler, who donated Salvador Dalí's *Les Diners de Gala* portfolio to the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University in 1997. The Cutlers were friends of the museum for many years, and we are very grateful for their generous support.

Les Diners de Gala by Salvador Dalí is organized and traveled by the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, NY. The inaugural exhibition was presented by the Castellani Art Museum August 18, 2013–March 2, 2014. Please visit castellaniartmuseum.org or contact Michael Beam, Curator of Exhibitions 716-286-8286 for more information.



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