

Dali's drawers and their meaning

By Ticiana Dine

Salvador Dalí was a prominent personality not just in fine art but also he made a significant contribution to a whole new form of observing the art and as well to the mode by which we want to understand it. In every work of Dali we can see different interpretative forms based on artistic, psychoanalytic and symbolic background. These forms provide works' analysis in different ways viewing it by a completely different form and context of each other. His works are not only surreal, artistic and psychoanalytic but also have the erotic connotations which are related to his secret life and as well to relationship between Freud and the drawers. This symbol is interpreted in the same way as the psychoanalytic interpretation of Freud and Dali's artistic terms.

"Therefore the surrealists that in appearance had been selected me out as their saint, seemed to me some crazy people 100 percent. This young Spaniard, with fanatic's staring eyes and his inevitable mastery had prepossessed me to reconsider my opinion. We are talking about someone with serious psychological problems." Sigmund Freud

Although Dalí would state that Sigmund Freud is my guru, Freud himself could never fully understand it. It not that Dalí would not been expressed as needed to Freud, because Dali propagated a theory that he wanted to be a revolutionary one to be rise in a range to that of psychoanalysis at the time. On the other side Dalí was propagating a theory which was discrete because got something from the science, the art, the paranoia, the dreams and psychoanalysis. This theory that was raising and holding forth by Dalí himself, who was emphasizing and practicing it, was not complete.

Dalí was seeking the interpretation of images in an irrational context, in another perspective, because we are in an oneiric situation where images are unrelated to each other even though intertwined to draw a certain context. Freud was a doctor who faced hundreds of different cases of paranoia, phobias, obsessions from different patients, he could not be involved in the symbolic interpretations and in an interpretative world where the confusing images are there as a dream and awaiting for a symbolic interpretation.

Dali was doing the role of a doctor in his works by analyzing them as Freud did with his patients. Dalí was always at a crossroads because he interlaced science and the subjective, he made a mess of symbolic mysticism with the paranoia. To the question if Dali was influenced by Freud we may answer yes, is particularly true, partly yes, Dali, had been equally fascinated by Freud as his contemporaries.

Freud's drawers are part of human being's desire who wants to have sex with another human.

The drawers into the Dalí's works appear not only in the body but even in the face, as the expression or the reflection of Freud's theories, of the libido, which is an instinct that never dies even if the reason of the taboo holds control on it forever. But a different logic can knock down the former one by seeing the drawers as a spiritual need than a sexual need.



Because Freud understands this need, for example if his patient dreams of drawers, or a woman who has undergone a hallucinatory period and dreams drawers, then Freud during the psychoanalysis underscores even this part because he sees there's a need of his patient that has triggered why not the hallucinating imbalance as well.

Stressing Dalí's fascination over the interpretation of Freud's dreams (which basically have a surreal background) Dalí felt that this was the exactly path where to work on that, because in that way he would be more un-encoded by society. Therefore why do not we take for granted the first logic to view Dalí from a different perspective beyond the surreal which was then the art? Seeing all of Dalí's works to understand that those (drawers) are related to psychoanalysis because the drawers themselves symbolize some parts of our psyche that can be emptied and filled again and again. In the drawers that Dalí brings out of surface all preserved human complexes. Dalí says: "Freud's theory is like an allegory that illustrates and helps to explain the numerous narcissistic smells associated with drawers". It is said that Dalí got a friend, who was a boy that always wore clothing with lots of pockets. It is said that thereupon Dalí was a passionate lover of drawers.

As the first theory which is related to theories of psychoanalysis in interpretative terms, as well as the second theory relates to what is said about the artist friend of his strange attire with lots of pockets, they have essentially a symbolic interpretation which coincides somewhat with the oneiric one. It is exactly here that we have a field to make a multiple interpretation.

The human bodies that can be opened by drawers are constantly seen into works and objects of Dalí. They symbolize memory, subconscious and refer to "the idea of drawers", a legacy of Freud's concept of reading. They express the mystery of hidden secrets. Many children snoop into every

drawer, cabinet and everything closed inside the house¹.

The drawers can be seen in artistic terms as decorative elements. In practical and life aspect it can be seen as objects which serve to the people to arrange their facilities. In oneiric terms they relate to the human psyche, to the instincts or to the dark side. All these deviations or interpretative forms lead to an abstract field to see by a different form the creativity of Dalí.

Perhaps for this reason though many articles related to the creativity of the artist have different connotations where mainly emphasize the psychological aspect. For this reason cannot converge to a point all of researchers connected in the surreal context of Dalí because the surrealism as a movement tried to be out of objective reality but, always within artistic context. While the creativity of Dalí had overtones which exceeded expectations or what was proposed in the surrealist manifestos, or what had been touched by his contemporaries.

Since Dalí's theories related to Freud's psychoanalytical theories, to surrealistic theories and to automatism were sensational theories of time and the irrational theory of self-stimulation were a fairly large impact on Dalí's works are filled with many concerns inside, if you get to analyzing them it would be symbolically a psychoanalytic analysis, not just so intertwined with detail and workmanship but without equal.

Dalí makes an association in connection with Freud's interpretation of images with images which he claims are oneiric parts but, would be enough for us to dwell on in the terms of degradation of these symbols and to understand very well that we have an attitude in conformity with the explanation that Freud makes in his book on the interpretation of dreams.

All long objects like sticks, poles, trees, umbrellas (are analogous with erection), all long sharp tools as knives, daggers and spears serve to show the male genital organ.² Although as a symbol that is used and not well understood is the nails line.

Boxes, tin items, coffers, shelves, stoves have to do with female sexual area. Above, we have explained that for Dalí in painting and creating sculptures the presence of the drawers was an inspiration from the psychoanalysis of Freud.

¹<http://daliparis.com/en/salvador-dali/dalinian-symbols>

²Taken from the book "The Interpretation of Dreams" by Sigmund Freud, chapter VII, The Psychology of the Dream Activities, p. 246

Therein we will dwell on this second research is related to the sexual sphere where we can see a



Мадонна Порт-Лыгата, 1950. Холст, масло.

literary diversion that I would say is more than scientific where Dalí makes the appearance of drawers arising from bodies and heads of sculptures and images painted by him but also it seems that Dalí is dislodging them from their place by placing them into the nature, the sea, to the bodies of people, where they do not already look like anymore as drawers but as open windows which allow us to see beyond the impedimental body of the subject.

It seems already that the sexual element which found connections with drawer as a symbol goes in another dimension than that oneiric Freudian as a sexual need. These transparent windows seem to be exigency or not physical but spiritual un-fulfillment.

To have a tangible example let's look at some of Dalí's works, this seems to be that there is a presence of religious spirit than a Freudian one. At first paintings above is precisely emphasized this attitude in which is presented the wife of Dalí showing that such regular window indicates the deification of the female image, the birth of a child, the child himself points out that one day he will be a man to give life a new creature in the future.

We can see the other items like the bread, clay pot, arches above as aureole, angels, shell, coats on both above sides of the picture, the table below, the fish, the white rose, the un-breaking egg which hangs above the picture as to settle the balance of the work, the hands of his wife in the form of a prayer.



Моя жена, обнаженная, смотрит на собственное тело, ставшее богиней, через панношки вольеры, моря и архитектуру, 1945. Дерево, масло.

The book in the baby's hand and the blue apple, the document on the table; all of them recall religious symbols. The apple recalls the sin, the shell recalls the birth (as the birth of Venus from the sea), the egg recalls the human birth (his position within the mother womb in the form of an egg), the angels recall the divine creatures, coats recall the outfits of Jesus in Jerusalem at the time, the bows above the portrait recall the table of Gal – bows are architectural elements used in churches but even the form of aureole remains in iconography an distinctive characteristic of saints.

Here are catching the eye the elements that orient toward a interpretation and a symbolic religious diffraction as true as we were inconsistent with that what we are "counting" as so many familiar elements to all of us, where are not oneiric parts,

hallucinatory images due to paranoid self-induction, they aren't oneiric, they are placed there by a sharp logic.

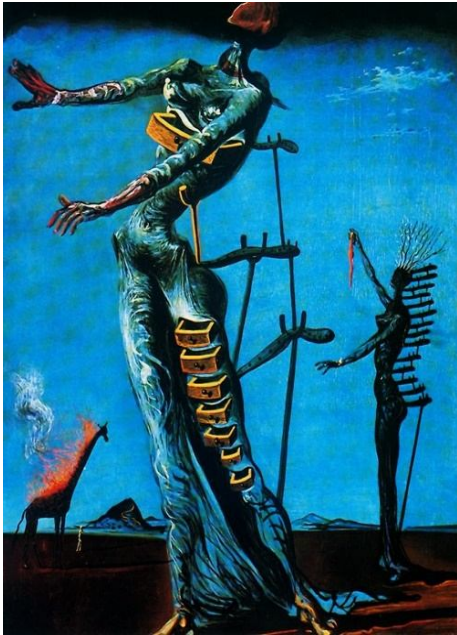
Perhaps they create the female emptiness where woman often feels empty. If we see it from the religious aspect we may consider the female image as sacred, fertile where her soul and her body resemble a religious building. If we see it from Freudian aspect, we may notice the arches which represent more the connection or their position to the columns, phallic symbol.

Where buildings rises by converging two male and female elements, which can be seen as sexual, physical and spiritual fulfillment between two opposite sexes. This is because on the side of female image we may see on the left side of the figure, a male portrait. Another symbol is the sheet that shows more privacy and again if we observe in details the work we may see that below the male portrait is a long cord that resembles the mother cord that feeds baby, or as a journey to fetus to achieve not only an erection and sexual fulfillment but also the creation of a new life.

Above we mentioned the drawers and the bows as elements that had a link to creativity of Dalí, the drawers were related to oneiric interpretations of Freud as sexual symbols and the bows as religious architectural elements. The opening of the drawers is often seen into Dalí's works as opening of large squares which could be interpreted as visual windows as well as need and spiritual weaknesses in a more detailed interpretation.

In this work we see the human image turning the back to us as her silhouette on the arches is designed like a religious building. Spiritual image seem to see its design in front of it. These arches seem to be seen even by sexual terms but not in the form of the drawers or climbing the stairs as were seen by Freud in "The Interpretation of Dreams", which is a book written by him. To Dalí seems that these arches that recall some of the broken Gothic architecture and somehow recall some Roman arches testify to sexual pleasure and fulfillment. In this painting we realize that the female body is made up of arches and these arches are not seen as decorative elements to beautify her body image but to propose a different perspective into that of infinite spaces that a woman carries and can seduce and create peace and deification as a religious building.

For this thing the portrait of male appears while of female is hidden. And in fact, here we do not see the male impotence of Dalí just as many writings are based on Dalí inability to sexual fulfillment with his partner. I would say that Dalí makes the connection between drawers and arcs



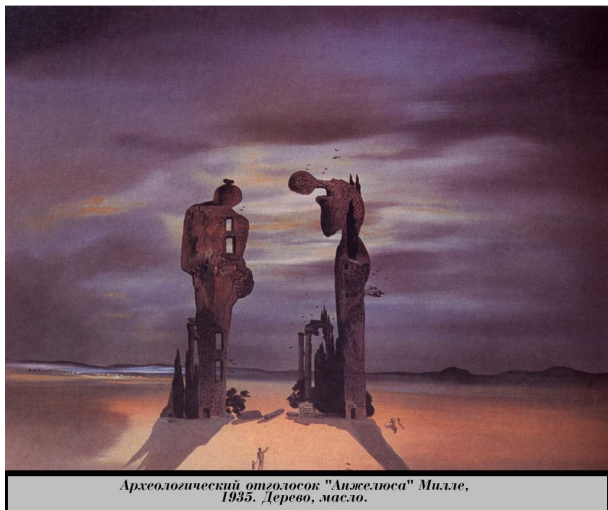
in the same way as Freud makes explanation about drawers or elements that symbolize the male erection. Dalí and Freud can be interpreted in the same way when it comes to some works which combine drawers and other symbols which are always associated with them. According to Dalí the surrealism has been a bridge for the transition between the tangible and non-intelligible, between what is expected to be understood and what is behind that. His works are there not to be named as surrealist one but to be interpreted and understood. The works of Dalí are not surrealist or Dadaist, not as a can which breaks it rules to its residence in a supermarket and suddenly becomes a vase of flowers.

Dalí's works are the product of a thought beyond the philosophical thought, are the products of experiences and hidden symbolism that a mind which was well- fed only with surrealist exhibitions will not understand them. Surrealism tried to see beyond reality, to take something from the dreams but, Dalí stayed there at this point, he passed the oneiric, religious and symbolic by touching the elements of a interpretative world as complex as his contemporaries would not be able to understand him, and not only them. Dalí would be expressed in one of his writings: "It was one of the greatest guesses of my life. I was obsessed to interpretation of myself. Not only in my dreams, but of everything that had happened to me. Even if could be appear as accidental." Salvador Dalí

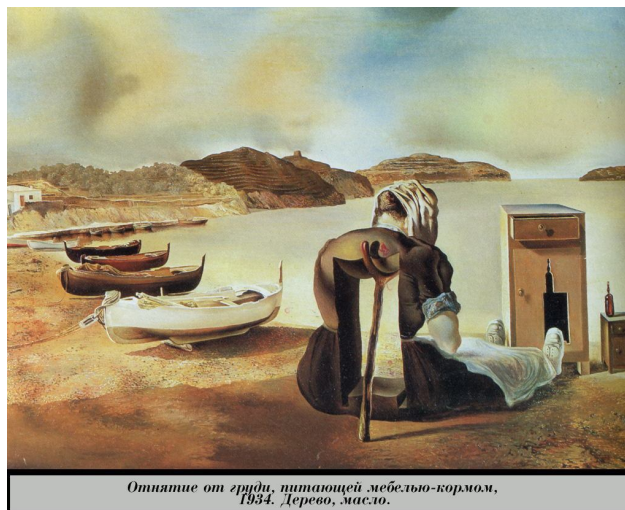
Even if Dalí was inspired by one person to create the drawers in his painterly images, still we cannot avoid the mental impulse or impetus from the writings of Freud on drawers' element and its interpretation.

Dalí didn't take only the role of a surrealist painter or his time but also of a depth analyst to recognize himself by reflecting it through multiple images and symbolism that were in his works. The images are there to be read as a text and not to be seen only through the surreal language of crossing from the objective, real and tangible to the surreal, subjective and untouchables.

Returning once again to the window and frame symbol used by Dalí into his works let see on the examples below:



Археологический откоп: "Анжелоса" Милле, 1935. Дерево, масло.



Отнятие от груди, питающей мебелью-кормом, 1934. Дерево, масло.

In both paintings are present both sexes as male and female, it is not because the sexual reason but as a spiritual support, images are not in an act or action and is not expected to happen but as a life line to recall the law of nature between two beings of the female and the male (we may remember that Dalí was a Catholic believer, and believed in the creation of both sexes to continue the cycle of life).

The final painted image shows again an elderly woman with her head down close to the sea with boats sideways as to show us her need to leave. If only it was not enough, Dalí framed it also placing even a bedside table with drawers where the latter is half open. It's obvious that the drawer and framing as well as the element or multi-used symbol of the crutch, all of them are very analogous to what they present not as just a biological need but also as spiritual one. But here again seems that Dalí is not faithful to oneiric interpretation of Freud.

We have seen a few points where is obvious that Dalí is not chimed with Freudian' ideas so consistently and as loyal as he claims he does even if we want to interpret his works we cannot break away completely from Freudian sexual symbolism (it doesn't mean that Dalí's works can be understood and interpreted only from this perspective). Dalí visually translates his thoughts giving to them a variety of interpretations that coincide more with his artistic and symbolic "philosophy" than with Freudian connotation for which the artist emphasizes in his media statements and in the book written by him about the secret life of the artist.

First: Dalí emphasizes several times that his artworks are somewhat oneiric, they are taken from his dreams by visualizing then in his works. Here again we have a mismatch in terms of interpretation because the interpretation of works of Dalí is beyond the oneiric ones.

"To describe my works in everyday language, to explain them, it is necessary to rise them onto a special level of analysis and satisfactorily with as possible ambitious rigor." (Quoted by Maddox,

op.cit. 64)³

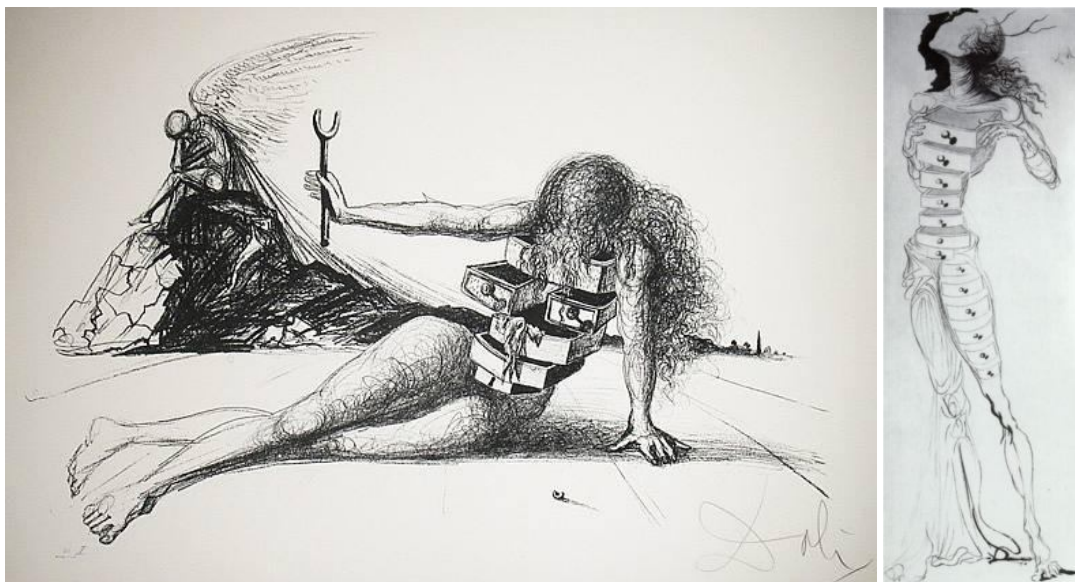
Second, if you rely on the transparency of dreamed images though their reflection till to the details their psychoanalytic explanation does not match. If you are dreaming from half-dreaming to not aware, if we interpret and analyze as a psychoanalyst an oneiric work, then we should not emotionally be involved and how can we interpret ourselves in a situation where the reason and judgment are overshadowed by the oneiric?

Sigmund Freud stresses that we cannot deny that during efforts to reproduce dreams we distort them. Freud continues further by this logic that "between the interpretation and waking thinking it is not that psychic abyss in which the researchers try to do the interpretation of dreams." Freud writes in the book on interpreting dreams these words:

"Descriptive psychology teaches us that as the main condition for the formation of dreams is to be dormant spirit and what we have said could be explained like this: The state of sleep creates the possibility for the formation of dreams that reduces and weakens the endopsychic's censorship. Freud goes on to state that what it is that favors the dream to wit the avoiding and the weakening of the resistance is possible only when we are sleeping."

As a result, if we want to understand Dali's works where we have present the drawers in the naked bodies of male and female, as well as images that are intertwined twigs and drawers as male and female sex symbols and must look them by psychoanalytical and symbolic prism, just as we would interpret a dream based on Freudian theories.

³ The Enigma of Desire: Salvador Dali and the conquest of irrational (1. The "psychopathologic iconography")



The only dissociation between oneiric interpretation of the work and complete understanding of it is to understand that the "origin" of these images is neither oneiric nor paranoid self-induction images, but they are images to which you know very well meaning and here is played under symbolic and artistic connotations as well as Freudian oneiric-sexual interpretation.

References:

Taken from the book "The Interpretation of Dreams" by Sigmund Freud, chapter VII, The Psychology of the Dream Activities, p. 246

These present elements we may see in the Holy Bible

<http://daliparis.com/en/salvador-dali/dalinian-symbols>

http://www.dali-interart.be/pdf/dali_symbols.pdf

The Enigma of Desire: Salvador Dalí and the conquest of irrational by: Zoltan Kovary