



## Interview

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Jordi Artigas, coordinator of the Gala Dalí Castle in Púbol and Salvador Dalí House in Portlligat (Catalonia, Spain), has a degree in Art History from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and a postgraduate degree in Museum Management from the University of Girona. Specialized in museology and contemporary art, he joined the Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation in 1992. As Project Coordinator of the organization, he has participated in various museographic initiatives for the Theatre-Museum Dalí in Figueres and in the museumization and opening to the public of two prominent Dalí house-museums: the Gala Dalí Castle in Púbol and Salvador Dalí House in Portlligat. Since 1996, he has been the coordinator of both house-museums.

**–What role does the castle in Púbol play in the most intimate and personal life of Gala and Dalí? Can this castle be considered the artist's last creative and personal refuge?**

–This castle is a shelter for Gala, which will eventually become her mausoleum. Thus, it is nothing less than a tribute to the role Gala played in the life of Dalí as an artist, his persona, and his character. It is a bright sign that characterises their relationship – both personal and professional.

The Castle of Púbol is an example of how Gala inspired Dalí to make new creative discoveries. In this case, the interior decoration and restoration of a medieval building with an aristocratic garden was a new challenge that (as usual) Gala made to Dalí and helped him achieve.

The Castle of Púbol is also Salvador Dalí's last studio, where he painted from 1982 to 1984. This last home for Gala eventually became a refuge for Dalí as well, where he overcame the grief of his beloved's death.

**–What is the profile of Castle's visitors? Do they mainly have an artistic background?**

–The geographical origins of the visitors are very diverse – but Catalans, French, and people from the rest of Spain stand out above all. It must be said that this year, 2023, more than 300 Andorrans have already visited the Castle of Púbol.

The public has very diverse profiles and interests, but it is true that the vast majority are interested in art and history – both around Salvador Dalí and the medieval predecessors of the Castle of Púbol.

Pre-pandemic data (2019) shows that 60.5% of visitors to Castle of



J.A.

## Jordi Artigas

Coordinator of the Gala Dalí Castle in Púbol

«Dalí's unrealistic style fits very well into the contemporary audiovisual language»

Púbol had a university degree.

**–Is the figure of Dalí's wife Gala, buried in the Castle, an additional attraction for Russian tourism?**

–Gala complements Dalí as a person and as an artist. Her Russian origin obviously attracts visitors of the same nationality. The Castle of Púbol is full of aesthetic details that transport us to Russian particularity, such as the icons that accompanied Gala or the Orthodox domes in the painting «The Way to Pubol». The castle has a strong element of nostalgia for its origins, lost to Gala.

But the art of Dalí is international. Firstly, because that was his life trajectory. Secondly, because his approach, both iconic and substantive, is absolutely universal. The exhibitions that the Dalí Foundation has been organising around the world since 1992 demonstrate and capture the great interest in Dalí on every continent: Chile, Australia, Turkey, Korea and many others. In 2020 we presented an exhibition at the Manege in Moscow, and in 2021 we organized an event dedicated to Gala at the Fabergé Museum in Saint Petersburg.

**–How many people visit annually the three main places directly related to the great artist's life, referred to as «Dalí's Triangle»?**

–In 2019, the Castle of Púbol welcomed more than 80,000 visitors. Added to those in Figueres and Portlligat, they reached the million milestone. Last year, they exceeded 800,000, in a clear post-pandemic recovery. Of the three places, the Castle in the Baix Empordà is the most contemplative and silent – two attributes much appreciated by our visitors.

**–Why can Dalí's art be considered timeless? Is it an art that always lives on, like the immortal flowers with which the Castle of Púbol is so lavishly decorated?**

–The fact that Dalí was ahead of his time in many respects means that many of his concepts are still relevant today. We are talking about the determination to rediscover the Renaissance tendency and bring scientific and artistic research closer together, the anticipation of using the mass media to disseminate current ideas and escape from academic circles, the ability to attract and express the figurative and the visual, the constant return to the origins as a solid basis for projecting art into the world, a demand for the freedom of the observer's imagination, and the interrogation of the fundamental problems of all times and peoples, etc.

Moreover, his need to engage in a wide variety of fields – from advertising to literature and philosophical reflection – as well as his foresight and criticism without prejudice, makes him appealing to new generations. To all of this should be added communication





skills and the ability to find tools to reach the widest possible audience - from artistic resources to technological tools.

**-Do you have many young visitors? Does the Foundation co-operate with educational institutions in Spain and other countries?**

-Both inside and outside museums, we can observe the interest of young people in Dalí. They are attracted to the audiovisual and technological world that Dalí actively used to reach the public. Dalí's chosen unrealistic figurative style fits very well into the contemporary audiovisual language.

In fact, 25% of our visitors are between the ages of 19 and 40. Not to mention the many school children who are accompanied by teachers during free visits or guided by museum staff or education officers. We collaborate with educational centres, researchers and universities in the region, as well as with anyone who requests it.

**-What image or object in the Castle of Púbol attracts the most interest from visitors?**

-The garden, with its «menacing» elephants, and Gala's bathroom are the most popular areas; one

of the most curious objects in the bathroom are the Moebius loop-shaped taps. During the guided tours, our visitors highlight the paintings on the ceiling of the Saló dels Escuts and the radiator cap painted by Dalí, as well as the crown of forks that Dalí modelled for Gala.

**-What would you recommend to people who have never been to the Castle?**

-Get to know in depth an extraordinary person like Gala, who played a fundamental role in Dalí's creative development. Enjoy the scenographic space created by Dalí with the sole purpose of creating Gala's sanctuary. Experience the feeling of being present in Dalí's last studio. Walk through the garden created by Dalí to surprise Gala.

**-What are the Foundation's cultural projects for the nearest future?**

-Among other projects, the Dalí Foundation is immersed in an exhibition project on Christ, an emblematic oil painting from the mystical nuclear age, which will be on view at the Dalí Museum Theatre in Figueres from November 2023 to April 2024. At the same time, we are working on a new temporary exhibition at The Castle of Púbol. ≡



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