

Dalí, Salvador (1904-1989), Spanish painter, writer, and member of the surrealist movement. He was born in Figueras, Catalonia, and educated at the School of Fine Arts, Madrid. After 1929 he espoused [surrealism](#), although the leaders of the movement later denounced Dalí as overly commercial. Dalí's paintings from this period depict dream imagery and everyday objects in unexpected forms, such as the famous limp watches in *The Persistence of Memory* (1931, Museum of Modern Art, New York City). Dalí moved to the United States in 1940, where he remained until 1948. His later paintings, often on religious themes, are more classical in style. They include *Crucifixion* (1954, Metropolitan Museum, New York City) and *The Sacrament of the Last Supper* (1955, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.).

Dalí's paintings are characterized by meticulous draftsmanship and realistic detail, with brilliant colors heightened by transparent glazes. Dalí designed and produced surrealist films, illustrated books, handcrafted jewelry, and created theatrical sets and costumes. Among his writings are ballet scenarios and several books, including *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (1942) and *Journal d'un génie* (1964; *Diary of a Genius*, 1965).

As an art student in Madrid and Barcelona, Dalí assimilated a vast number of artistic styles and displayed unusual technical facility as a painter.

In the late 1920s, two events brought about the development of his mature artistic style:

To bring up images from his subconscious mind, Dalí began to induce hallucinatory states in himself by a process he described as "paranoiac critical." Once Dalí hit on this method, his painting style matured with extraordinary rapidity, and from 1929 to 1937 he produced the paintings that made him the world's best-known Surrealist artist.

He depicted a dream world in which commonplace objects are juxtaposed, deformed, or otherwise metamorphosed in a bizarre and irrational fashion. Dalí portrayed these objects in meticulous, almost painfully realistic detail and usually placed them within bleak, sunlit landscapes that were reminiscent of his Catalan homeland.

Perhaps the most famous of these enigmatic images is "The Persistence of Memory" (1931), in which limp, melting watches rest in an eerily calm landscape.

In the late 1930s, Dalí switched to painting in a more academic style under the influence of the Renaissance painter Raphael, and as a consequence he was expelled from the Surrealist movement. Thereafter, he spent much of his time designing theatre sets, interiors of fashionable shops, and jewelry, as well as exhibiting his genius for flamboyant self-promotional stunts in the United States, where he lived from 1940 to 1955.