

Botticelli
Past
and
Present

Edited by
Ana Debenedetti and Caroline Elam

UCLPRESS

Botticelli Past and Present

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 **UCL**PRESS

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Jonathan K. Nelson is Associate Professor of Art History at Syracuse University, Florence. In 2004 he co-authored a major monograph on Filippino Lippi, the subject of his PhD dissertation at the Institute of Fine Arts; the same year he co-curated an exhibition devoted to Botticelli and Filippino at the Palazzo Strozzi, Florence. He has also co-curated two exhibitions at the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence: *Venus and Cupid. Michelangelo and the New Ideal of Beauty* (2002) and *Robert Mapplethorpe: Perfection in Form* (2009). Other books include *Leonardo e la reinvenzione della figura femminile: Leda, Lisa e Maria* (2007) and, with Richard J. Zeckhauser, *The Patron's Payoff: Economic Frameworks for Conspicuous Commissions in Renaissance Italy* (2008). On the I Tatti website he curated two online exhibitions: *Berensons and Harvard: Bernard and Mary as Students* (2012), and *Yashiro and Berenson: Art History between Japan and Italy* (2015). Current book projects include a monograph on Filippino (Reaktion Books) and a volume on *Representing Infirmity in Early Modern Italy* (Routledge, as contributor and co-editor).

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Part 4

Botticelli now

Introduction

Stefan Weppelmann

Twentieth-century hermeneutics have discussed models that perpetuate themselves over a long period of time. I refer to the works of Aby Warburg, Wilhelm Worringer, Meyer Schapiro or Leo Steinberg, but I would particularly like to recall the influential study *The Shape of Time, Remarks on the History of Things* by George Kubler.¹ In view of current developments in the historiography of art I also want to mention Alexander Nagel's study *Medieval Modern, Art out of Time* in which the author projects the Middle Ages onto modernity and vice versa.²

Such new approaches promotes an alternative model which operates with the categories of either *prime object*, or series or mutation. The focus has thus shifted from the individual style and topographical context to questions of the function of an object, its iconological layering and common blueprints.

The results from this shift are narratives which spread like rhizomes, to use the apt expression of Deleuze and Guattari.³ They do not evolve in a linear and thus apparently progressive manner, but instead diffuse, resembling a system of bamboo shoots. Yet this new approach to art – specifically to everything that can be called a visual formula (*Bildformular*) – is by no means a privilege of theorists of culture. In particular the artists themselves are often conscious of their own connection with the *prime object*, or rather *prime thoughts* when (re) producing today's world.

While chronology was an underlying principle for designing the exhibition *Botticelli Reimagined*, the universal availability of Sandro di Mariano's works shaped its concept. The above-mentioned tradition was both its curatorial leitmotiv and its methodological tenet. The three studies that conclude this volume of conference proceedings address that theoretical base. Georges Didi-Huberman refers to Aby Warburg's early notion of the Nymph or Maenad as a prototype. This figure plays, as we know, a major role in Botticelli's works. Yet Didi-Huberman extends his view beyond Warburg's observations when he discusses the syntax of both fluidity and eroticism, intrinsically associated with the nymph.

He demonstrates how one can find a series of poetical references to the interconnection between nymph-like behaviour and fluidity in Warburg's work, and shows how these references coincide with a proper revival of the *Ninfa ariosa* in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art and literature. He then focuses on the psychomorphic role of air and water – in particular the sea – as fluid substances with sexual connotations, the *flux sexuel*. He thereby analyses the mutual exchange between word and image, extending his view into the sphere of twentieth- and twenty-first-century photography, film and video arts. He thus constructs a cross-media 'logic of fluidity' for which Botticelli's inventions gain the status of *prime objects*.

Didi-Huberman's observations create a fitting context for Riccardo Venturi's analysis of Salvador Dalí's Pavilion for the New York World Exhibition [World's Fair] in 1939. There, too, the erotically charged motive of the water nymph takes centre stage, again with reference to Botticelli's Venus. Through analysing the various stages of the design and development process of Dalí's surreal *Fun House*, Venturi shows how for the eroticisation of the body – namely the body of the emblematic figure of Venus – the artist creates a new meaning: the metamorphic interpenetration of both female forms and marine creatures. In this way Botticelli's Venus with the head of a fish appears as a vision in Dalí's imagination. Yet such kinds of hybrids are only *prima facie* original inventions. Bearing Didi-Huberman's essay in mind as a complement to Venturi's, it becomes clear that Dalí is perfectly in conformity with the tradition in which the male imagination associates the sea and its creatures, psychomorphologically, with the female body.

Dalí's reference to Botticelli is hardly surprising if we keep in mind that in the 1930s the surrealist painter made repeated references to Renaissance artists, including Raphael, Leonardo and Michelangelo. His further goal, according to Venturi, was the overcoming of a presumed distance between the Renaissance and modernity. Dalí presumably also wanted to identify surrealist tendencies in Renaissance art – in other words to assign a much longer tradition to surrealist imagery, shaped by the subconscious, the grotesque and the absurd. The formulas Botticelli invented for *The Birth of Venus* and the *Primavera* are thus gaining the status of a dream vision which modernity begins to analyse. Above all, however, Venturi demonstrates convincingly, with the example of Botticelli, how images represent constructed realities. Hence while Dalí stressed the surreal notes of Botticelli's inventions, the Italian government used the same images – thanks to their classical subjects and thus their implicit *italianità* – as political propaganda. Venturi thus points to the concurrence between Dalí's reception of Venus and the contemporary

show *Italian Masters* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which featured the original *The Birth of Venus* (fig. 1.0). This show had previously toured through the United States as a form of political propaganda.

After Venturi's discussion of this episode from the 1930s, Gabriel Montua analyses more recent sociocultural adaptations of Botticelli's works. He quotes several cases to highlight how in feminist debates about femininity and gender Botticelli's works, namely his *Venus* and the *Primavera*, are used as a kind of counterexample: they serve as ciphers for artistic and social conventions and for a typical male, Western system of power. Moreover, Montua's analysis of contemporary modes of reception of Botticelli's art even implies that his main pieces have become a kind of synonym for Western social norms and structures. Botticelli's masterpieces thus seem predestined for critical commentary on Western societies. Only the fact that the artist has apparently gained such status can explain the (at times curious) geopolitical statements by both Western and non-Western artists about these iconic images of the Renaissance.

All three essays lead to the conclusion that the reception of Botticelli in both the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries was based on two major yet alternative systems of reference. These systems allowed the painter to gain the unusual iconic status to which *Botticelli Reimagined* referred: firstly, the tradition of the ideal, erotically charged female figure with inherent, surreal, psychomorphic elements; secondly the politico-propagandistic constructions that use Botticelli's paintings – first and foremost the *Venus* and the *Primavera* (fig. 1.30) – in a black and white manner to highlight geopolitical imbalances.

As an answer to anyone who looks for a dialectical connection between these two systems, the conclusion from all three essays is that the iconology described by Didi-Huberman and Venturi – that is, the typically Western, male sexualisation of the female and the fluid – contains a certain potential for a political utilisation of Botticelli. Botticelli's works do, quintessentially, contain Western, paternalistic constructions of the standard (the ideal form of female beauty, the role of the female as object and decoration, the sexualisation of femininity etc.). Some contemporary artistic expressions can thus be seen, as Montua demonstrates, as personal interpretations of the tensions inherent in these systems. They are thus still dependent on the 'shape of time' (George Kubler), namely the ramification of time-dependent permutations of the *prime object*.

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to express their gratitude to Claudia Wedepohl, who kindly translated this introduction.

Notes

- 1 George Kubler, *The Shape of Time, Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962).
- 2 Alexander Nagel, *Medieval Modern, Art out of Time* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012).
- 3 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980).

13. Into the abyss. On Salvador Dalí's *Dream of Venus*

Riccardo Venturi

The *Dream of Venus* (1939, fig. 4.12), the most uncanny environment the Catalan artist Salvador Dalí (1904–89) ever conceived, is one of the most accomplished examples of surrealist architecture.¹ Through looking at the role played by the art historical references Dalí makes to works such as Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (fig.1.0), this essay will address the artist's unresolved relationships with modernism.

The New York World's Fair & the *Dream of Venus* project

Realised for the 1939 New York World's Fair, the idea of the *Dream of Venus* started with the New York gallerist Julien Levy, the first to show surrealism in New York. Levy's idea was that a surrealist pavilion would make the French movement more popular in America. Ultimately, however, despite the huge public success of the Museum of Modern Art's *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* exhibition in 1936, Levy was persuaded not to use the word 'surrealism' for the pavilion. The name 'Laffland' (a neologism or a crasis/syneresis between 'laugh' and 'land') was initially suggested, as Levy saw the Fair as an opportunity to bring together French avant-garde art and American popular culture, surrealism and amusement, fine art and more commercial visual forms of attraction, glamour and spectacle.² He envisioned the pavilion as a prefabricated funhouse, far from a museum display: it was to be a sensual stimulation befitting the surrealist imaginary. A gallery of surrealist paintings was to have been coupled with a 'Dream Corridor', an 'Audible Staircase', rocking floors, pneumatic walls and so forth. The first sketch of the pavilion was outlined by the architect Ian Woodner (or Wooden Silverman) as a large eye shape 'whose iris would frame changing color projections'.³ Inside this eye, reflecting its surrounding, a remarkable detail in the cornea would be visible: Botticelli's Venus shell. In this Venus would be replaced by two figures, one black, one white – perhaps a pagan Adam and Eve who, ejected from the Garden of Eden, sail away in a shell-shaped ship.

Levy's idea of a collective show with surrealist waxworks, a female automaton and a *cabinet de curiosités* referred back to the previous *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* held in Paris (17 January 1938). There Dalí had exhibited a mannequin, a lobster telephone and a *Rainy*

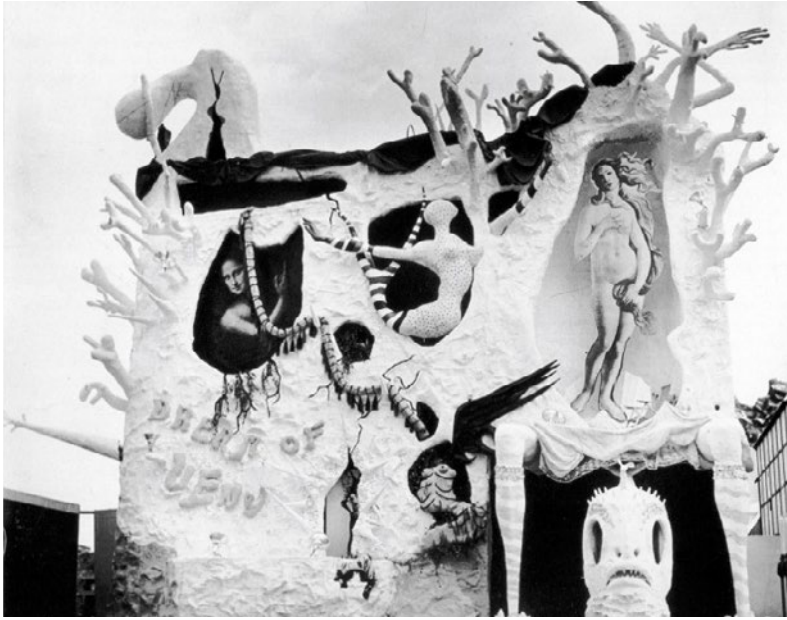


Fig.4.12 Facade of Salvador Dalí's *Dream of Venus* pavilion, 1939, The Dalí Museum in St. Petersburg, Fla. Dalí Museum/Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí via Agency Press. © Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, DACS 2018.

Taxi. However, despite its originality and its visually shocking *mise-en-scène*, this project was dropped between the autumn of 1938 and early 1939 for lack of funds. The commission was assigned to a single artist, Salvador Dalí, as the star of the new artistic movement – the one who could ‘condense the immaterial into being’, as Levy wrote in his memoir.⁴ As originally conceived, his surrealist house would have had to be built in an impossibly tight time frame, with just ‘a day to sketch the interior and eight days to design the façade’.⁵

In the meantime, Dalí arrived in New York in February for his solo exhibition at Levy’s gallery (21 March–15 April 1939). The display was anticipated by his collaboration with the Fifth Avenue department store Bonwit Teller, orchestrated by Levy, who had previously contacted Saks Fifth Avenue. After the *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, several surrealist artists had realised a series of windows for Bonwit Teller. (Artists such as James Rosenquist, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg were to collaborate on windows in the decades before the store was closed in 1979. It was demolished the following year to make way for the Trump Tower.)⁶

According to Levy's memoir, the window installation offered Dalí a chance to paint in three dimensions. But the commission ended badly. On 16 March, when Dalí realised that the store – in response to shoppers' complaints – had replaced his mannequins, he rushed through the store and, 'in an attempt to push the bathtub out the window and into the street', as Dalí reported in his *Secret Life*, both he and it crashed through the window and hit the pavement outside. As a result, he was almost 'decapitated by the Niagara of descending glass' and was arrested just two days before the opening of his show at the Levy Gallery.⁷ Whether spontaneous or staged, this episode or publicity stunt received wide press coverage and provided the best *entrée en scène* that Dalí could have imagined. More than in his earlier 1934 exhibition at Levy's gallery, the artist's intentions were assertively affirmed in the explicit cover image for the 1939 show (fig. 4.13). It displayed the Fair's official icons – the Trylon and the Perisphere, which pointed toward the future, toward the 'World of Tomorrow' – destroyed by the arms of Helicline, the spiral ramp that partially encircled the Perisphere. Moreover, the Perisphere and the Trylon were put at the centre of the exhibition space; as reported at that time, 'the Perisphere is cracked in spots like an egg about to hatch and is surmounted by Beauty in the form of a cast of the Venus de Milo, while the Trylon is inscribed with such vaguely apposite names as Freud, Dalí, Caligula, and again, Dalí'.⁸

This violent animation of architectural elements was not only a clear sexual provocation, but also a critique of the educational goals promoted by the Fair, with its official discourse and rhetorical display of triumphant American capitalist power.⁹ The radical innovation was clear. One only had to look at other pavilions, such as the bombastic and monumental Italian pavilion. Designed by the architect Michele Busiri Vici in a typical fascist Roman modern style, its classical female statue – a metaphor of Rome offset before a waterfall 60 m in height – utterly lacked the sensuality of Dalí's Venus.

When Dalí signed the contract on 10 April 1939, the pavilion was tentatively named 'Bottoms of the Sea' – in reference, according to Dalí, to 'the bottoms of man's minds, and everybody knew that there were no ends to *them*'.¹⁰ Dissatisfied with this literal title, he and Levy started to think of more catchy names, including *Dalí's Dream Dive*, *Dalí's Visible Women*, *Dalí's Kala Pani* (a Hindu mythological reference to the ocean's murky waters), *Dalí's Fish, Flesh and Fowl*, *Dalí's Nude Aquarium*, *Dalínian Dearies*; *Dalí Trance Forms*, *Nude Drench*, *See! Sea! Si! Dalí!*, *No Nudes are Good Nudes*, *The Fair's Sex*, *Eros is Eros*; *20M Legs Under the Sea*, *Swimmim' Women*, *Beauties of Disorder*, *Sea Nymphs and Maniacs*, *Sea Bottoms Up*,

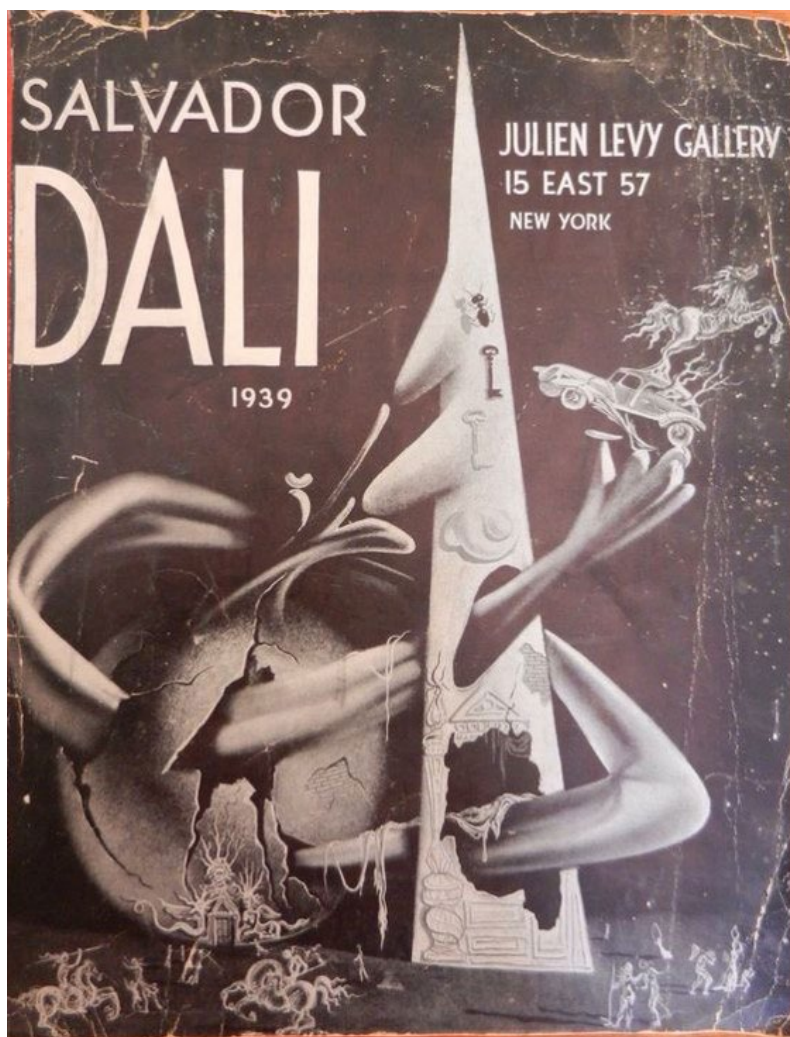


Fig.4.13 Salvador Dalí (1904–89), cover image of his solo show at Julien Levy Gallery, New York 1939. © Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, DACS 2018.

Surrealism: Psychoanatomy, all the way through to *Dalí's Wet Dreams*.¹¹ On 9 May, the pavilion was christened 'Dalí's Dream of Venus'; it was to be renamed in the second season (the Fair closed on 27 October 1940) as '20,000 Legs Under the Sea'.

When the Fair officially opened on 30 April 1939, Dalí's pavilion was far from complete. While there was not the only unfinished pavilion, Dalí and Levy felt the urge to keep the media alerted, as they had with

the Bonwit Teller display. A photograph by George Platt Lynes showed Dalí covering a female crotch with a lobster shell, evoking, in Fèlix Fanés's interpretation, the goddess born from the foam produced when the genitals of the castrated Uranus fell on the waves.¹² This photograph was coupled with another of the same model 'wearing [Dalí's wife] Gala's metal star necklace. Dalí drew over this print in ink, transforming a fairly banal shot into a fantastic mermaid with two fish-tailed feet. Fish tails also sprout from her shoulders and head, as does a unicorn horn'.¹³ As in the invitation card for the pavilion (fig.4.14), where the lower part of the costume is more elaborate, the female body was transformed into an animal figure. Although the photographic documentation we have is not sufficiently detailed to be certain, these pictures may have been displayed on a platform next to the Pavilion entrance. And these manipulated prints that imbricate women and seafood, female genitalia and crustaceans, echo Dalí's manipulation of Leonardo's and Botticelli's female portraits.

Dalí's press agents, probably with his knowledge, issued a short press release headed with a question: *Is Dalí Insane?* It insisted on the artist's preoccupation with the materials of the subconscious, describing him as a 'tourist in the realm of insanity – collecting souvenirs and

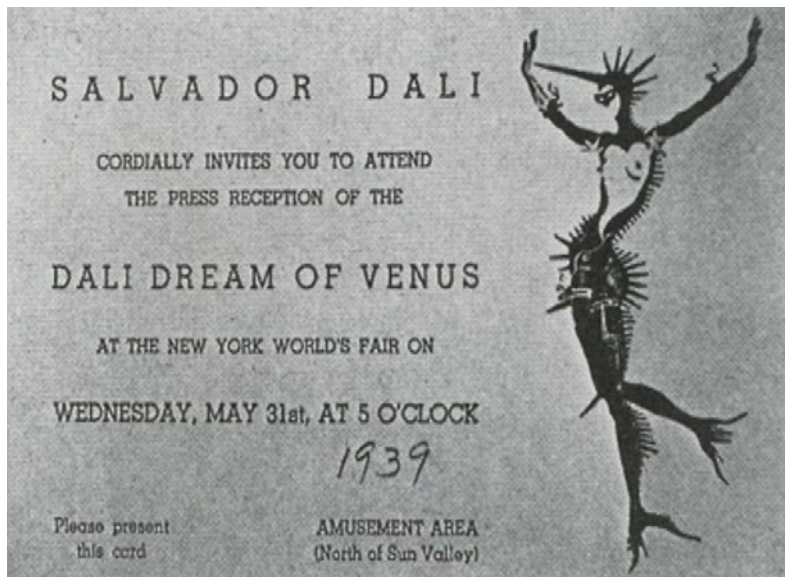


Fig.4.14 *Dream of Venus* invitation card, 1939, reproduced in Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous. Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations*, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001. © Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, DACS 2018.

impressions' with 'his sensitivity and awareness of human dreams, and of the free-play of association within the mind of normal man'. The release also praised the artist's technique, declaring it to be 'comparable to that of the Flemish masters'.

Prior to the opening, a first sketch of the *House of Venus* was published in the June 1939 issue of *Vogue* (fig. 4.15), announcing that 'the more erudite will recognize in the shape of the *cabaña*, and the deep-sea world inside, Dalí's symbolic conception of the maternal complex, the dark, safe dream of an atavistic watery world'.¹⁴ Far from the final result, the version shown in *Vogue* stands in a Dalí-esque Venusberg – a vast and rarefied space with a chain of mountains on the horizon that resembles a theatrical backdrop, a connection also suggested by the plank floor. Yet this pink pavilion has a biomorphic and gelatinous quality that makes it almost a living creature, with a sexualised mermaid passing through the surface of the façade. Also of interest is the large platform, absent from the final version.



Fig. 4.15 'Dalí's Surrealist Dream House at the World's Fair', in *Vogue*, June 1939. © Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, DACS 2018.

In a later, more refined sketch (fig.4.16) – a collage made with pasted paper, closer to the pavilion’s final version – the artist ‘immodestly topped the building with the apotheosis of his own name, framed, in huge, three-dimensional letters’. He thus made it clear that it was as much the *Dream of Dalí* as the *Dream of Venus*.¹⁵ ‘I am not a Surrealist. I am Surrealism’, he stated peremptorily.¹⁶

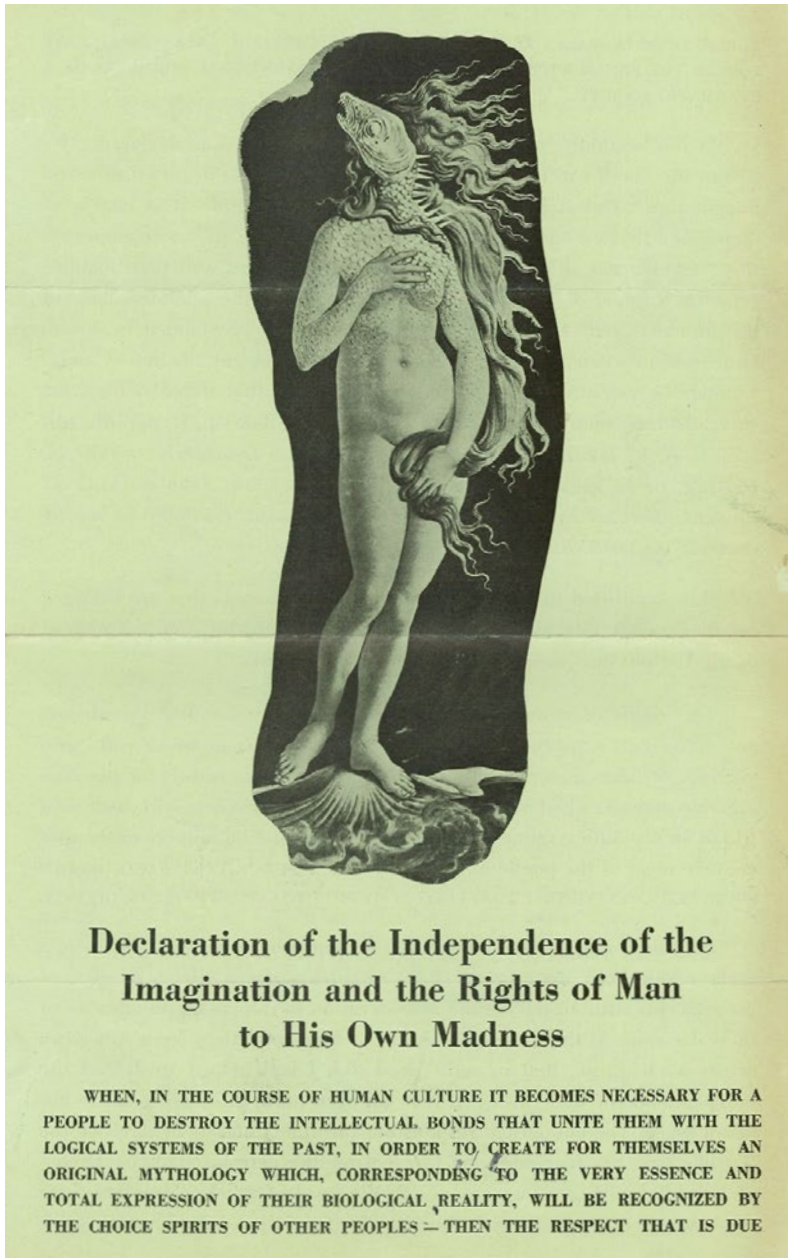
This was less the demise of subjectivity than Dalí’s effort to reaffirm his role in the international art and public scene. As André Parinaud aptly pointed out when introducing Dalí’s *Unspeakable Confessions*, ‘Dalí never says the French *je* (I) without also meaning *jeux* (games), as his *I* implies all the tricks of the eye’.¹⁷ This was particularly true at that moment in the United States, where he was acknowledged as the author of a doubtful portrait of Hitler (*Enigma of Hitler*) – one of the two paintings that remained unsold when it was shown at the Levy gallery in 1939 (the other being *The Endless Enigma*) – and known for his enthusiasm for Harpo Marx.



Fig.4.16 Salvador Dalí, sketch for *Dream of Venus*, 1939, tempera, charcoal, pencil and collage on illustration board, reproduced in Ingrid Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí’s Dream of Venus. The Surrealist Funhouse from the 1939 World’s Fair*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002. © Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, DACS 2018.

Relative to the final version, this sketch is noteworthy for the Venus's elongated fish head. As in René Magritte's *The Collective Invention* (1934), it reverses the fish tail of the classic anatomy of the mermaid, removed from the water and lying lifeless on the foreshore. Dalí liked the idea of a fish head, specifically a shark's, as can be seen in Eric Schaal's startling 1939 photograph that shows both his eccentric public persona and his innate sense of self-promotion and advertising. When permission to put a fish head on Botticelli's Venus was denied, Dalí made a last artistic gesture, a *coup de théâtre*: though he could not attend the opening, he had hundreds of copies of a tract – 'Declaration of the Independence of the Imagination and the Rights of Man to his own Madness' – dropped over Manhattan (fig. 4.17). In this text Dalí protested against 'the storm of obscurantism that is threatening' the United States, claiming that 'it is man's right to love women with ecstatic heads of fish'. Noteworthy in the image is the flaky skin of Venus's torso, as if Dalí had transferred the wavelets of the original painting directly onto the female body. If he had to give up the idea of putting a fish head on Botticelli's Venus and thus altering her human anatomy, he instead employed this motif for the ticket kiosk located between two open legs. The cashier was accessible through the fish's eyes, implying that viewers were penetrating into Venus's womb – or, as Dalí put it in the description he initially gave Levy, '*une chambre inter-uterine*' (an intrauterine room). He then added, in his typical cumbersome French, '*C'est très Hallucinang [sic], – tu verra [sic]*' (It's very hallucinating – you'll see).¹⁸

In the preliminary sketch, the female figure is surrounded by a Nordic marine landscape, a kind of archipelago where the undulating shape of black seagulls and white wavelets meld. The aquatic elements perfectly fit the aesthetic of the Fair, which used water as a spectacular element. As the producer Billy Rose advised Julien Levy and Ian Woodner: 'Anything writ in water will succeed, lagoons, fountains, aquacades, ice coolers, anything you please, but the public is disposed towards water'.¹⁹ The fascination of the liquid element was key to the surrealist aesthetic and to Dalí's work. This had been revealed in his risky and marvellous performance at the International Surrealist Exhibition in London (1 July 1936), at which he delivered the lecture 'Authentic Paranoid Phantasies' wearing a suffocating deep-sea diving suit. The '*Dream of Venus*' was also influenced by the Parisian passageways that Louis Aragon described in aquatic terms (*Le Paysan de Paris*, 1926) – the shop windows like 'human aquariums' of 'primitive life', or, on a more anecdotal level, by André Breton's girlfriend Jacqueline Lamba dancing underwater at the Coliseum, an ex-swimming pool turned into a music hall.²⁰



**Declaration of the Independence of the
Imagination and the Rights of Man
to His Own Madness**

WHEN, IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN CULTURE IT BECOMES NECESSARY FOR A PEOPLE TO DESTROY THE INTELLECTUAL BONDS THAT UNITE THEM WITH THE LOGICAL SYSTEMS OF THE PAST, IN ORDER TO CREATE FOR THEMSELVES AN ORIGINAL MYTHOLOGY WHICH, CORRESPONDING TO THE VERY ESSENCE AND TOTAL EXPRESSION OF THEIR BIOLOGICAL REALITY, WILL BE RECOGNIZED BY THE CHOICE SPIRITS OF OTHER PEOPLES – THEN THE RESPECT THAT IS DUE

Fig.4.17 Salvador Dalí, *Declaration of the Independence of the Imagination and the Rights of Man to His Own Madness*, 1939, ink on paper, 40.3 × 24.35 cm, National Art Library. © Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, DACS 2018.

Despite all the efforts, the preview of the ‘*Dream of Venus*’ scheduled for 31 May, one month after the Fair’s opening, had to be postponed. Today, a telegram dated 30 May looks like a superb surrealist document: ‘Salvador Dalí *Dream of Venus* press reception postponed for few days due to complexity of subconscious. You will be advised of opening date regretfully’. The pavilion finally opened on 15 June, although both Dalí and Gala had left New York the previous day to work on their next project.²¹ Botticelli’s *Venus* was to surface again in Dalí’s mind and work, however. On his next trip to New York, on 2 September 1941, two months before the opening of the Miró-Dalí exhibition at Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) (18 November), he produced *Labyrinth* at the Metropolitan Opera House with the Ballets Russes of Monte Carlo, whose patron, the Marqués de Cuevas, was a friend. Dalí designed not only the sets and costumes, but also the two backdrops. One ‘was based on Botticelli’s *The Birth of Venus*. Dalí appropriated the latter’s foam crested waves and translated the goddess to the sky, where her huge breasts and haunches doubled as clouds. The design was crude beyond description’.²² Thus we can see that the dream of *Venus* was becoming more and more the dream of Dalí.

The *Dream of Venus* Pavilion

How to describe Dalí’s surrealist environment, ‘an assemblage of images, objects, paintings, and sculptures, all erotically animated by semi-nude female performers and housed in a small stucco building that looked like a tangled, bleached mass of beach debris’?²³ A puzzling and disorienting ambience far removed from institutional art spaces, an ambience in which artworks were radically transformed, activated, spectacularised. There was nothing similar at the World Fair, as shown, perhaps, by the fact that the house of *Venus* was hosted far away from the other art. Dalí’s pavilion was in the Amusement Zone of the Fair – where, as *Time* magazine reported, there was ‘more public nudity than any place outside of Bali’, while the other art, including European and American masterpieces, was in the Communications Zone.²⁴ This distinctive placement underscored Dalí’s extravagance and carnivalesque aspect.

Even before entering the freestanding building, visitors encountered Dalí’s quirky world (fig.4.12): the exterior was, to use Rem Koolhaas’s analysis of Manhattanism, ‘a relentless assemblage of the Strange’.²⁵ On a rocky promontory, a whitish stucco far from the flesh-like pink of the previous sketch had blowpipe-shaped appendages sprouting from its facade: hands and elongated arms, or more organic forms resembling

branches, cactus, corals or maybe weeds. A rampant accretion of tumescent protuberances, of non-structural excrescences reminiscent of Casa Milà by Antoni Gaudí or Pompeii as seen in a nightmare, grew around the vulnerable figure of Venus, protected only by an oval, architectural niche. It was as if Venus was in danger of being subjected to a metamorphosis like that of Daphne, if we follow Spyros Papapetros's reference to the female nymph who

externalizes her presence in a series of *protrusions*. The nymph's petrified posture accumulates an excess of energy, which is externalized as an aerodynamic protuberance jutting out from the flatness of her wooden frame.²⁶

More maliciously, the profusion of soft shapes was a blunt critique of modern architecture, particularly of Le Corbusier's international style. Dalí is known for his trenchant judgement of the French architect, whom he characterised as 'a pitiable creature working in reinforced concrete. Mankind will soon be landing on the moon, and just imagine: that buffoon claimed we'd be taking along sacks of reinforced concrete'.²⁷ Rem Koolhaas, however, saw Le Corbusier and Dalí (both of whom visited New York for the first time in the mid-1930s) as alike in that they made bold and individual attempts to 'reclaim' Manhattan – attempts that were seemingly antithetical, yet also complementary:

Dalí abhors Modernism, Le Corbusier despises Surrealism. But Le Corbusier's persona and method of operation show many parallels with Dalí's PCM [Paranoiac-critical method].²⁸

If some of Dalí's classical references were discreet, such as the copy of the Nike statue on the top of the fish head next to the torso of a nude woman, two were more flagrant. The first was St John the Baptist by Leonardo da Vinci, with a collage of the face of Mona Lisa. At the time of its exhibition, this hermaphrodite figure was taken to be Leonardo's original composition. More prominently, a 7.60m high reproduction of Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* as a photomural or billboard was framed in a niche over the entrance.

This paradoxical display – over-exposed but protected within a niche – is reminiscent of the installation of the painting at the 1940 *Italian Masters* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. There it was among 28 masterpieces including Titian's *Paolo III*, an early Michelangelo marble bas-relief, Raphael's *La Madonna della*

Seggiola, Andrea del Verrocchio's *David*, Gian Lorenzo Bernini's *Bust of Costanza Bonarelli* and Masaccio's *Crucifixion*. As expected, this was an incredibly popular exhibition, with a public attendance of 290,888 visitors and wide press coverage.²⁹ The museum's installation was striking in its theatricality. Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* was isolated, magnified by an empty room 80 metres square, spot lit and curtained off – it had a tremendous impact on viewers. All the theatricality boosted the painting's aura and heightened the feeling of privilege the public felt at seeing a Renaissance masterpiece. As one critic pointed out: '[T]his setting enabled the museum to orchestrate the viewer's encounter with the picture by re-enacting – in keeping with its subject – the origin myth of modernity'.³⁰

While the *Italian Masters* run (26 January–7 April 1940) overlapped with that of the Fair (30 April 1939–31 October 1939; 11 May–27 October 1940), it is likely that Dalí had seen *The Birth of Venus* in previous shows which, much like the MoMA exhibition, promoted a dubious *italianità*. He might have seen the exhibition of Italian art at the Royal Academy's Burlington House in London in 1930 or, more likely, *L'Art Italien de Cimabue à Tiepolo* at the Petit Palais in Paris in 1935. The true object of these exhibitions – what Francis Haskell calls the 'Ephemeral Museum' – was less the exhibited objects themselves than 'the spectacle of cultural power, of high art in the service of politics' (Emily Braun). Both were intended to improve fascism's image internationally.³¹ It did not go unnoticed that the 1940 MoMA show was promoted by the Italian government (the full title was *Italian Masters Lent by the Royal Italian Government*) and conceived on a highly ideological historical line that included the Roman empire, the Renaissance and – as Italy's final accomplishment – Mussolini's Third Rome. However Alfred Barr, the Director of MOMA, biased this ideological and political agenda: in an attempt to convince the Museum Trustees to host a show of Renaissance art in an institution consecrated to modern art, he cautiously hid it under his apolitical vision of the teleology of modernist art.

Returning to the facade of the *Dream of Venus*, it can be said that its indentations paralleled the maternal cavity of the internal space, its hidden nature. Dalí's pavilion was a grotto, an embryo that immersed the spectator in a world remote from the light of modernity. The uterine cavity between the women's legs led into a semi-obscure ambience where visitors' bodies moved in a submarine garden fantasy world. It was replete with real women, sleeping and dreaming; scantily dressed mermaids; and odd Dalínian elements scattered across the tiny space. These ranged from the soft, curved shapes (women-pianos,

a divan in the shape of Greta Garbo's lips, a mummified cow, rubber telephones and typewriters), to the ceiling, covered by opened and closed umbrellas.

In the first two rooms, visitors encountered two glass tanks 11 metres long, one filled with paintings, the other with water. The latter was animated by 17 costumed 'Living Liquid Ladies'. These modern mermaids stayed, three or four at a time, in the tank for 20 minutes – displayed for, and fetishised by, the scrutiny of the masculine gaze. In another chamber a sumptuous couchette, 10m in length and covered in red satin, stood out, along with a dreaming Venus attended by two women. Here was the pulsing heart of the pavilion or, as the press release put it, 'the unexpurgated dream-substance of the goddess Venus'.³² The same year Dalí showed himself lying on an elongated bed, with an umbrella (also present in his painting *The Enigma of Hitler*). Finally, the interior offered another example of art history according to Dalí. It referred not only to a Palladian proscenium in the backdrop, but also to Pompeii, the city overwhelmed and ruined by the eruption of Vesuvius.

Anachronisms: from Surrealism to Renaissance

The *Dream of Venus* is the result of free associations with mass culture, personal memory, psychoanalytic readings and, especially crucial in the context of the *Botticelli Reimagined* exhibition (5 March–3 July 2016, Victoria and Albert Museum), art-historical references. Dalí's interest in this went back to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, an event that had a profound impact on his life, ideas and art. Shocked by the traumatic events of the conflict and what he foresaw as the eventual catastrophe of Western civilisation, Dalí spent the summer of 1937–8 in Italy. There he enjoyed a moment of solitude – 'I wanted to be alone in Italy, overlooking the terraces of cypress and orange trees, the solemn temples of Paestum' – to cultivate the illusion of living in a distant past.³³ Italian Renaissance and Baroque art had never been so vivid: Raphael, Piero di Cosimo and Piero della Francesca, Andrea Palladio and Bramante, Leonardo and even Giorgio De Chirico, though Dalí's and De Chirico's anti-modernisms ultimately differ. As Michael Taylor put it:

Dalí's reaction to the imminent destruction of centuries of European tradition and culture was to abandon his earlier interest in Surrealism in favour of the techniques and iconography of the old masters.

Instead of the 'Oedipal psychosexual dramas that had characterized his Surrealist paintings of the late 1920s and 1930s', the artist was now creating 'complex allegories of war and devastation'.³⁴

Recollections of this Italian journey surfaced profusely in the 1939 Julien Levy Gallery's exhibition catalogue (*Dalí, Dalí*).³⁵ Here Dalí considers Leonardo as the 'authentic innovator of paranoiac painting', a reference to Leonardo's recommendation that his students look for inspiration in 'the indefinite shapes of the spots of dampness and the cracks on the wall' and try to find the precise moment at which the amorphous became a figurative scene. Later Dalí refers to Arcimboldo, Giovanni Battista Bracelli and, especially, to Piero di Cosimo's famous anecdote of finding 'enigmatic and atavistic compositions, fire and the horrible dragon of the oyster' in the 'viscous and mucous and bloody contours of tubercular spit'.³⁶ Dalí was thus historicising and legitimising his use of paranoiac phenomena and hypnagogic images by going back to the cave man, Aristophanes' *The Clouds* and Arcimboldo, Bracelli and Palladio.

Two years later, in the catalogue for his new exhibition at the Levy Gallery, *Felice Jacinto* (actually Dalí himself) makes a bolder claim:

During these chaotic times of confusion, of rout and of growing demoralization [...] Dalí himself [...] finds the unique attitude towards his destiny: TO BECOME CLASSIC! As if he has said to himself: 'Now or never'. In 1941 – the 'year of Spiritual Sterility' – Dalí is striving for restoring the Renaissance tradition of 'Divina proportione'.³⁷

This unattainable artistic programme is restated in 1942 in the conclusion of his autobiography *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, with the triumphant *crescendo* of an avant-garde manifesto:

Enough of disintegration; one must integrate, integrate, integrate. Instead of automatism, style; instead of nihilism, technique; instead of scepticism, faith; instead of promiscuity, rigor; instead of collectivism and uniformization – individualism, differentiation, and hierarchization; instead of experimentation, tradition. Instead of Reaction, or Revolution, RENAISSANCE!.³⁸

Dalí's relationship with the Renaissance tradition of Raphael, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci continued to evolve in the following decade under the aegis of his 'Nuclear Mysticism' (1952). More than just a deterrent to irrationality, classical sources were an imaginary

repository that allowed Dalí to make scientific discoveries, especially those of modern physics, visible, according to David Lomas.³⁹ In *The Decadence of Modern Art* (1950) and *The Cuckolds of Antiquated Modern Art* (1956), Dalí famously attacks abstraction and modern art, in favour of ‘the dazzling perfection of the masters of the Renaissance’.⁴⁰ In his *Diary of a Genius*, where he mentions Raphael, Vermeer, Velasquez and Piero della Francesca, Dalí quotes Georges Mathieu in the entry dated 1 September 1960, observing that he was ‘in deeper communion with the cosmos’ than any Western artist ‘[s]ince Dionysius the Areopagite’.⁴¹

As these passages make manifest, and as Fèlix Fanés remarked, ‘Dalí never avoided the direct quoting of a work or a painter’.⁴² And although the name and work of Sandro Botticelli rarely appears, in *Diary of a Genius* (1964), apropos of one of Botticelli’s *Assumptions*, the artist evokes the vegetation, but not the female figures:

The little crack is burning away. It feels like a mythological worm gnawing away at the corners of my mouth, which reminds me of one of the allegorical figures in Botticelli’s *Primavera*, with its fascinating and obscure vegetation.⁴³

A second reference will require a short detour before we move to our conclusion.

The spectral beauty of the Venus

Conscious of the gulf between his times and the Italian Renaissance, Dalí asked himself ‘How to become anachronistic?’ (*Comment devenir anachronique?*). The question was raised in a short text (*Derniers modes d’excitation intellectuelle pour l’été*) published in the surrealist magazine *Documents* in June 1934. How should we consider this shift from surrealism to the Renaissance, from avant-garde to the old masters, from modernist to academic painting? Dalí’s vehement and outrageous attempt to restore classical painting could be seen as a conservative move that hides his ideological, political (and even religious) views. Such an opinion is found in Nicolas Calas’s malicious attack in the New York-based magazine *View* in 1941 – an internal critique, inasmuch as it came from a surrealist-oriented publication.⁴⁴

More articulate was Clement Greenberg, whose influential ‘Avant-garde and Kitsch’ essay appeared in 1939, the same year as the New York Fair. From his modernist and formalist stance, the decisive question about surrealism was whether or not it provided painting with a ‘new subject

matter [...] a new way of seeing as well as new things to be seen'. For Greenberg the answer was negative: the surrealist image was basically an aberration, an illustration of anecdotes, a disguised academic form of art, 'a new and interesting kind of pictorial literature' that, finally, 'requires no fundamental change in the conventions of paintings as established by the Renaissance'.⁴⁵ This is why the return to the Renaissance proclaimed by Dalí had few or indeed any relevant aesthetic consequences. According to Greenberg's reasoning, Dalí could easily switch from surrealism to Renaissance because the former was deprived of an artistic quality in relation to the latter, because it lacked specificity and originality. By the same token, Greenberg upholds abstract art as the most compelling art practice of his times, taking Western art history as an incontrovertible proof:

Just as naturalism at the time of the Bellinis in Venice was the only tendency which promised a future to painting, in spite of the wonderful sideshows staged by Carpaccio and Crivelli, so abstract art today is the only stream that flows toward an ocean.⁴⁶

In Greenberg's teleological thinking, the role played then by Carpaccio and Crivelli was now played by surrealism. In particular, surrealism is found guilty of entertaining too close an alliance with life and of having '*immediate* feelings about sex' that, in Greenberg's purist vision of cubism and abstract art, 'must first be transposed'.⁴⁷ Instead of making that transposition, Dalí promoted a puerile form of irreverence, 'no more revolutionary than fascism'. 'But of course Dalí,' pithily concludes the critic, 'is not to be taken seriously as anything other than a symptom. He is the Ossian of our day.'⁴⁸

'Immediate feelings about sex': this decisive component of Dalí's aesthetics was more than a plain eroticisation of high modernism, just as his staunchly proclaimed return to the Renaissance – as technique, skill and craftsmanship, as a perfect and unparalleled model – was everything but classical. Julian Levy aptly described his role as part of 'the violent contribution to the menu of modern art Dalí offered with his imaginative snapshots of inter-cranial space, post-Euclidean composition, animalization of machinery, displacement of the orgasm, mobilization of the dream, intercourse of the eyes, the smashing of the mental molecule'.⁴⁹

The pavilion for the New York Fair offers a privileged case in point. Although the facade and the interior were divided, the classical references to Leonardo and Botticelli and the real dancers found common

ground in several ways. Photo documentation shows, for instance, beach chairs in front of Botticelli's *Venus*, with dancers in bathing suits catching the attention of passers-by through real strip-tease shows. Far from the celebration of rational order, a mechanical world built by human progress that the official discourse of the Fair promoted,⁵⁰ Dalí conceived an eclectic platform on which the Renaissance canon of beauty could meet what, at that time, was described as 'a reconstruction of very Freudian subconscious by means of what is known on Broadway as a *girl show*'.⁵¹ If the *Dream of Venus* was a fun-show addressed to the male gaze, it was also an uncanny *mise-en-scène* of man's scopophilic desires.

The *Dream of Venus* was also, reciprocally, the unconfessable dreams of the patrons, and the mirrors in the installation echoed this effect of projection. Attending the 1939 fair as a young man, the modernist art historian and critic Robert Rosenblum describes Dalí's pavilion as 'the seductive invitation to surrealism's forbidden fruits' even if 'for reasons I can't dredge up, I never entered'.⁵² Was what Rosenblum called 'the shock of modernity in art'⁵³ too strong for him? Did it provide an example of the difficult relations between modernism and surrealism, between modern art and the explicit erotic images of Dalí's mind and work?

A rare, intriguing photograph shows the reproduction of Botticelli's *Venus* lying horizontally on the ground, waiting to be installed in the niche over the fish-head entranceway. The image is surrounded by the 'liquid ladies' in their mermaid costumes (fig.4.18):

This peripheral array of figures rehearses the theme of accessories-in-motion – the animated fabrics, which here are replaced by the living priestesses of the ancient goddess.⁵⁴

Dalí copied the old masters for their erotic aspect. He never concealed the fact that this academic training aroused his sexual desires, that the copyist and the 'Great Masturbator' (to quote a Dalí text of the late 1920s) shared the same experience, as in Titian's *Worship of Venus* (1518–19) in the Prado, whose composition is probably at the base of Dalí's *The Lugubrious Game*. As Dalí confessed in the mid-1960s:

I pause erotically at certain works, but I remain impassive. The thing that really draws me to a painting, especially to Ingres' nudes or any other nudes of the same period, is the erotic aspect. In my adolescence, copying these works served as an excuse for certain special practices. In the classics, the erotic and the feeling of death interest me more than so-called artistic perfection.⁵⁵



Fig.4.18 Photograph of female models for *The Dream of Venus* watertank show directed by Salvador Dalí, with a reproduction of Botticelli's *Venus*, 1939. Photographer unknown.

We should pause a moment to consider this 'feeling of death'. It surfaces in the *Dream of Venus* project in the *Declaration of the Independence of the Imagination and the Rights of the Man to His Own Madness* that was air-dropped during the pavilion's inauguration:

Man is entitled to the enigma and the simulacrum that are founded on these great vital constants: the sexual instinct, the consciousness of death, the physical melancholy caused by time-space.

But Dalí's interest in the translation of man's desires into plastic artefacts, of erotic desires into aesthetic forms, of morbid thoughts into a morphological vocabulary, date back to his collaboration with the surrealist magazine *Minotaure*. I am thinking in particular of three of Dalí's articles: 'Concerning the Terrifying and Edible Beauty of Art Nouveau Architecture' (December 1933), 'The New Colours of Spectral Sex-Appeal' (February 1934) and 'The Spectral Surrealism of the Pre-Raphaelite Eternal Feminine' (June 1936).

In the first article – in which Dalí called for renewing the bond between architecture and the unconscious, tectonics and human anatomy, the body and the built, the 'proximity between the human, the built, and the vegetal' – he sees architecture as having the power to materialise and solidify desires whose nature is to be fluid. Art Nouveau, with the soft flaccidity of its shapes, which Dalí compared to liquefied Camembert cheese, constitutes, in this sense, an astonishing case.⁵⁶ In the vein of the surrealist, the old-fashioned Art Nouveau was for Dalí a 'historical phantasmagoria', as Hal Foster puts it – hovering between the industrial and the outmoded, the modern and the *démodé*.⁵⁷ This is visible, for instance, in Dalí's female portraits such as the tree women he realised in the 1930s, as well as the novel *Hidden Faces* (1944), in which he fantasises about an 'architecture of passion' and buildings with 'stairs of pain, gates of desire, columns of anguish and capitals of jealousy'. Even more impressively, it appears in a double portrait of his wife Gala and her *doppelgänger* as a transparent cathedral structure (*My Wife Nude, Contemplating Her Own Flesh Becoming Stair, Three Vertebrae of a Column, Sky, and Architecture*, 1945). The work has been described by the critic Spyros Papapetros as 'an anti-modernist classicism made up of nothing *but* ornaments' in which 'the body disappears and is replaced by its accessories'.⁵⁸

Dalí's interest in the death drive is more evident in the second text in his discussion of 'spectral sex-appeal'. The 'materialization of the idea of the phantom' is caused by the human libido that 'transforms metaphysical anxiety into concrete fat' – a kind of narcissistic tactility or, more plainly, into a conceptual and physical obesity. The spectre has the capacity of de-substantiating the phantom. Of course, these categories are not so different. Dalí tries to illuminate the distinction between them by asking 'How to distinguish a phantom from a spectre?' even as he mystified it. 'Freud, Chirico, Greta Garbo, La Gioconda [Mona Lisa]

fall on the side of the phantom; 'Picasso, Gala, Harpo Marx, Marcel Duchamp' on that of the spectre. Dalí is particularly interested in spectral representation or, more precisely, in the transition from sex appeal to the spectral – a transition on which the 'new sexual attraction of women' or 'the disarticulation and deformation of the female anatomy' depends.

Seeking a genealogy for this 'dismountable body', this *corps morcelé* (fragmented body), Dalí mentions Botticelli again in the third article. Here Dalí criticises Cézanne's apple as being a platonic idea without gravity – not the forerunner of cubist materiality, but the 'impetus toward the absolute idealism of formal lyricism'. It is not the Impressionists, but the Pre-Raphaelites, generally known for their immaterial silhouettes, who for Dalí are the real forerunners of surrealism, inasmuch they advocate languid, flesh and bones figures. The Pre-Raphaelites 'give us and make radiant for us women who are all at once the most desirable and the most frightening in existence'.⁵⁹

Dalí's vocabulary leaves no doubts that he sees these figures through a surrealist lens: he speaks of terror, anxiety, repugnance like 'that of the soft belly of a butterfly seen between the luminescence of its wings'. If Cézanne's apples 'have volume without weight, a *virtual volume*', Pre-Raphaelite bodies, on the contrary, are made of 'turgescence, disturbing, and imperialist flesh'. They live in 'the blooming of this legendary necrophiliac spring of which Botticelli vaguely spoke'. The anachronistic association with the Renaissance is thus achieved. 'But Botticelli,' Dalí continues, 'was still too close to the live flesh of the myth to achieve this exhausted, magnificent, and prodigiously material glory of the whole psychological and lunar "legend" of the Occident'. Was this necrophiliac spring, this visceral spectral quality, what Dalí was attempting to perform in his *Dream of Venus* and in the presence of Venus on the facade?

The *Dream of Venus* – or should we say the Nightmare of Venus, as if dreamt by Hans Bellmer? – this Dalí-esque mysterious, sexualised deep-sea universe was a space or a grotto of negotiation and conflict between Renaissance, surrealism, and modernity. An outrageous displacement of classical sources, the *Dream of Venus* was also a visual embodiment of Dalí's ideas about the history of art and its role in contemporary art, beyond the then dominant narrative of modernism. As he told his gallerist Levy, the pavilion was an upside-down dream.⁶⁰ In transforming a venerated goddess into a sexy mermaid, insisting on its birth from the castrated genitals of Uranus, Dalí linked religion and sexuality, mysticism and erotic ecstasy, Beaux-arts and libido, metaphysics and entertainment.

But, like most dreams, Dalí's did not last very long. When the Fair closed, the pavilion was demolished (although some fragments

were saved) and it survived mainly in a few pictures and reports of the time. Already by 11 August, during the opening times of the Fair, but presumably without Dalí's permission, the Venus billboard was removed from the facade, deprived of her shell and protecting niche, integrated within an anonymous seascape's squared painting, far from the marine landscape of a previous sketch, and stuck on the right side of the pavilion, next to the popcorn stand, practically invisible (fig.4.19). It was as if the sight of her, her spectral character, interfered with the attention and the desire of passers-by to enter the womb of Venus. Her former position was now filled by photo panels of two female figures displayed in a tree-like structure.⁶¹ Like a Renaissance nymph, Venus had migrated. Dalí's *Dream of Venus* is ultimately a passionate achievement in the *Nachleben* of Botticelli's most iconic female figure.



Fig.4.19 Carl Van Vechten (1880–1964), Dalí's *Dream of Venus*, side view of exterior, 11 August 1939, Museum of the City of New York, Print Archives.

Notes

- 1 Thomas Mical ed., *Surrealism and Architecture* (London-New York: Routledge, 2005).
- 2 Julien Levy, *Memoir of an Art Gallery* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), 210; esp. 'Dream of Venus', 205–23. 'Those who understand surrealisme [sic] are probably fewer than those who feel competent to explain Einstein,' wrote Edward Alden Jewell in the *New York Times* in 1933, as quoted in Keith L. Eggner, "'An Amusing Lack of Logic": Surrealism and Popular Entertainment', *American Art*, vol.7, n.4 (Autumn 1993): 34.
- 3 Lewis Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous. Marcel Duchamp, Salvador Dalí, and Surrealist Exhibition Installations* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001), 108, and see chap.3, 'Surrealism Goes to the Fair: Projects for an American Surrealist Display at the 1939 New York World's Fair', 104–63.
- 4 Levy, *Memoir*, 209.
- 5 Ingrid Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí's Dream of Venus. The Surrealist Funhouse from the 1939 World's Fair* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 72.
- 6 Designed in 1929, the entrance was a 'luxurious mix of limestone, bronze, platinum and hammered aluminium', 'with 12 stories of severe, almost unornamented limestone climbing to a ziggurat of setbacks'; at the top of the facade were two naked dancing women 'brandishing large scarves'. Quoted in Christopher Gray, 'The Store That Slipped Through the Cracks', *The New York Times*, 3 October 2014.
- 7 Salvador Dalí, *La vie secrète de Salvador Dalí: suis-je un génie? (1942); The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, trans. Haakon M. Chevalier (New York: Dial Press: 1942, third ed. London: Vision Press, 1968), 375.
- 8 Robert M. Coates, 'The Art Galleries: Dalí-Despiau-Art Young', in *The New Yorker*, 1 April 1939; in Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí's Dream*, 68.
- 9 It is interesting to remember that 'the steel structures of the Trylon and Perisphere in fact were later melted down to make bombs for WWII', <http://www.italianmodernart.org/celebrating-modernity-dreaming-of-the-future-in-queens-the-new-york-worlds-fairs/>.
- 10 Dalí in Margaret Case Harriman, 'A Dream Walking', *The New Yorker*, 1 July 1939; Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí's Dream*, 74.
- 11 See Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí's Dream*, 82–4.
- 12 See Félix Fanés, 'Mannequins, Mermaids and the Bottoms of the Sea. Salvador Dalí and the New York World's Fair of 1939', in Montse Aguer, Félix Fanés, Sharon-Michi Kusunoki, ed., *Salvador Dalí. Dream of Venus* (North Miami: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002), 93.
- 13 Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous*, 115–16.
- 14 In Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí's Dream*, 102.
- 15 Kachur, *Displaying the Marvelous*, 111.
- 16 Salvador Dalí, *Comment on devient Dalí* (Paris : Editions Robert Laffont, 1973). *The Unspeakable Confessions of Salvador Dalí, as told to André Parinaud*, trans. Harold J. Salemsen (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1976), 188.
- 17 In Dalí, *The Unspeakable Confessions*, 5.
- 18 Levy, *Memoir*, 205–6.
- 19 In Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí's Dream*, 50.
- 20 In Fanés et al., 'Mannequins, mermaids', 109, 113, n.63.
- 21 On 6 June according to Ian Gibson, *The Shameful Life of Salvador Dalí* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 446.
- 22 Gibson, *The Shameful Life*, 469.
- 23 Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí's Dream*, 30.
- 24 In Gibson, *The Shameful Life*, 447.
- 25 Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 1978, repr. 1994), 275; see esp. 'Europeans: Btuer! Dalí and Le Corbusier Conquer New York', 235–84. Koolhaas goes on to say that the Pavilion 'only demonstrates Manhattanism's wisdom in isolating the unspeakable behind the facade of the common. In trading his claim on the whole of Manhattan through words for the building of a specific fragment of actual Dalinian architecture, Dalí risks going from the sublime to the ridiculous'.
- 26 Spyros Papapetros, *On the Animation of the Inorganic. Art, Architecture, and the Extension of Life* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 285, see esp. chap.6, 'Daphne's Legacy. Architecture, Psychoanalysis, and Petrification', 263–314.

- 27 Alain Bosquet, *Entretiens avec Salvador Dalí* (Paris: Ed. Pierre Belfond, 1966); *Conversations with Dalí*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1969), 16.
- 28 Koolhaas, *Delirious New York*, 246.
- 29 See Alice Goldfarb Marquis, *Alfred H. Barr Jr. Missionary for the Modern* (Chicago-New York: Contemporary Books, 1989), 192–3.
- 30 Stefan Weppelmann, 'Branding Venus: Botticelli as Mirrored in American Art Since 1940', in Mark Evans and Stefan Weppelmann, ed., *Botticelli Reimagined* (London: V&A Publishing, 2016), 126. See Sandra Zalman, 'The Vernacular as Vanguard. Alfred Barr, Salvador Dalí, and the U.S. Reception of Surrealism in the 1930s', in *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas*, n.1 (2007): 44–67.
- 31 Francis Haskell, *The Ephemeral Museum. Old Master Paintings and the Rise of the Art Exhibition* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2000), esp. chap.VII, 'Botticelli in the Service of Fascism', 105–27. Emily Braun, 'Leonardo's Smile', in Claudia Lazzaro and Roger J. Crum, ed., *Donatello among the Blackshirts. History and Modernity in the Visual Culture of Fascist Italy* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 181. See Sergio Cortesini, 'Italian Painters and Fascist Myths across the American Scene', *American Art* 25, n.1 (Spring 2011): 52–73; Raffaele Bedarida, 'Operation Renaissance: Italian Art at MoMA, 1940–1949', *Oxford Art Journal* 35, n.2, (2012): 147–69.
- 32 In Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí's Dream*, 102.
- 33 About Paestum, Dalí added that 'in order to satisfy my megalomaniac happiness and my thirst for solitude, I was lucky and glad enough not to like at all'. Salvador Dalí, *Diary of a genius*, Richard Howard, trans. (New York: Prentice Hall Press, 1965), 68–9.
- 34 Michael R. Taylor, 'The Dalí Renaissance', in Michael R. Taylor, ed., *The Dalí Renaissance. New Perspectives on His Life and Art after 1940. An International Symposium, Philadelphia Museum of Art* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2008), 4–5.
- 35 In *The Collected Writings of Salvador Dalí*, ed. and trans. Haim Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 335–6.
- 36 Giorgio Vasari, 'Piero di Cosimo', in *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, vol.4 (Florence: Sansoni, 1906), 131–44.
- 37 Felice Jacinto (Dalí), 'The Last Scandal of Salvador Dalí', Julien Levy Gallery, New York 1941, in *The Collected Writings*, 337–8.
- 38 *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, 398.
- 39 Dalí 'discovered in Leonardo a fund of imagery that compensated for the relative paucity of such material offered by modern physics and that permitted him to give visual form to his sense of a world in a state of disaggregation'. David Lomas, "'Painting is dead – long live painting!" Notes on Dalí and Leonardo', in Michael R. Taylor, ed., *The Dalí Renaissance. New Perspectives on His Life and Art after 1940. An International Symposium, Philadelphia Museum of Art* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2008), 171.
- 40 In Michael R. Taylor, 'The Dalí Renaissance', *The Dalí Renaissance*, 12.
- 41 Dalí, *Diary of a genius*, 197.
- 42 Fèlix Fanés, *Salvador Dalí. The Construction of the Image 1925–1930* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007), 142. In this work he quotes the example of the *Imperial Monument to the Child-Woman* (1929–34), in which Dalí 'cited Leonardo da Vinci, Jean-François Millet, Ernest Meissonnier, Arnold Böcklin, Modernist sculpture and architecture, himself and so on. The meaning of each of the quotations depended on the relations between them and with the work as a whole.'
- 43 Dalí, *Diary of a genius*, 25–6.
- 44 Nicolas Calas, 'Anti-Surrealist Dalí: I Say His Flies Are Ersatz', *View*, n.6 (June 1941): 1.
- 45 Clement Greenberg, 'Surrealist painting', in Clement Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, 1, *Perceptions and Judgments, 1939–1944*, ed. John O' Brian (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 229.
- 46 Clement Greenberg, 'Review of the Whitney Annual and the Exhibition Romantic Painting in America', in Greenberg, *The Collected Essays*, 171–4.
- 47 Greenberg, 'Review of the Whitney Annual', 172.
- 48 Greenberg, 'Surrealist painting', 229.
- 49 Levy, *Memoir*, 71.
- 50 'Conceived as a victory of industrial progress and of capitalism, it unveiled a new era[...] one of technology converted into private consumer goods. [...] All things considered, a world of home comforts, technological luxuries and new entertainment. In other words, a world of

commodities. The visitors, more than observers, were treated like future consumers (a way of doing things which had begun at the Chicago Exhibition in 1933).’ Fanés, ‘Mannequins, mermaids’, 47.

- 51 ‘Freud + Minsky + Dalí, *The Art Digest* 13, n.18, (1 July 1939): 12, in Fanés, ‘Mannequins, mermaids’, 99. The confusion between the representation and the real woman, image and body is confirmed, on the contrary, by Dalí gallerist Julien Levy: ‘When I was fourteen years old, I was conducted through the Uffizi Galleria in Florence by a plump, pretty woman named Hazel Guggenheim. For a length of time I would not pass beyond Botticelli’s *Birth of Venus*, before which I stood stubbornly spellbound. “Come”, said Hazel, taking my hand impatiently, “would you not rather have a real woman like me, for example, than that painted thing?” “No”, I answered tactlessly and emphatically. “I would rather have that painted thing.”’ Levy, *Memoir*, 9. Dalí thought it was possible to get both at once.
- 52 In Ileen Sheppard and Marc H. Miller, ed., *Remembering the Future. The New York World’s Fair From 1939 to 1964* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), 14.
- 53 In Sheppard and Miller, *Remembering the Future*, 13.
- 54 Papapetros, *On the animation*, 287.
- 55 Bosquet, *Conversations*, 39.
- 56 Papapetros, *On the animation*, 281.
- 57 Hal Foster, *Compulsive Beauty* (Cambridge (Mass.): The MIT Press, 1993), esp. chap.6, ‘Outmoded Space’, 157–91.
- 58 Papapetros, *On the animation*, 280. ‘Dalí’s anus (markedly shadowed in both Gala’s body and the “rear exit” of her temple) transform[s] into a skull – proof that the rectum, as Leo Bersani would say, has indeed the tendency to become a grave. This is the darker side of Gala’s architecturally splendid and beautiful behind.’ 281.
- 59 In Finkelstein, *The Collected Writings*, 311.
- 60 ‘This being upside-down is a familiar mechanism of Dream. But I will explain it for the public by two symbols, one inside the pavilion and the other on the façade.’ In Levy, *Memoir*, 218.
- 61 ‘A contemporary cheesecake Venus replaced it over the entryway’ according to Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí’s Dream*, 157, n.79.

The recent exhibitions dedicated to Botticelli around the world show, more than ever, the significant and continued debate about the artist. *Botticelli Past and Present* engages with this debate. The book comprises four thematic parts, spanning four centuries of Botticelli's artistic fame and reception from the fifteenth century. Each part comprises a number of essays and includes a short introduction which positions them within the wider scholarly literature on Botticelli. The parts are organised chronologically beginning with discussion of the artist and his working practice in his own time, moving onto the progressive rediscovery of his work from the late eighteenth to the turn of the twentieth century, through to his enduring impact on contemporary art and design. Expertly written by researchers and eminent art historians and richly illustrated throughout, the broad range of essays in this book make a valuable contribution to Botticelli studies.

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Sandro Botticelli (1444/5-1510), self-portrait, detail from the *Adoration of the Magi*, c.1475, tempera on wood, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Inv.1890, no.882. © Photo Scala – courtesy of the Ministero Beni e Att. Culturali e del Turismo.

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