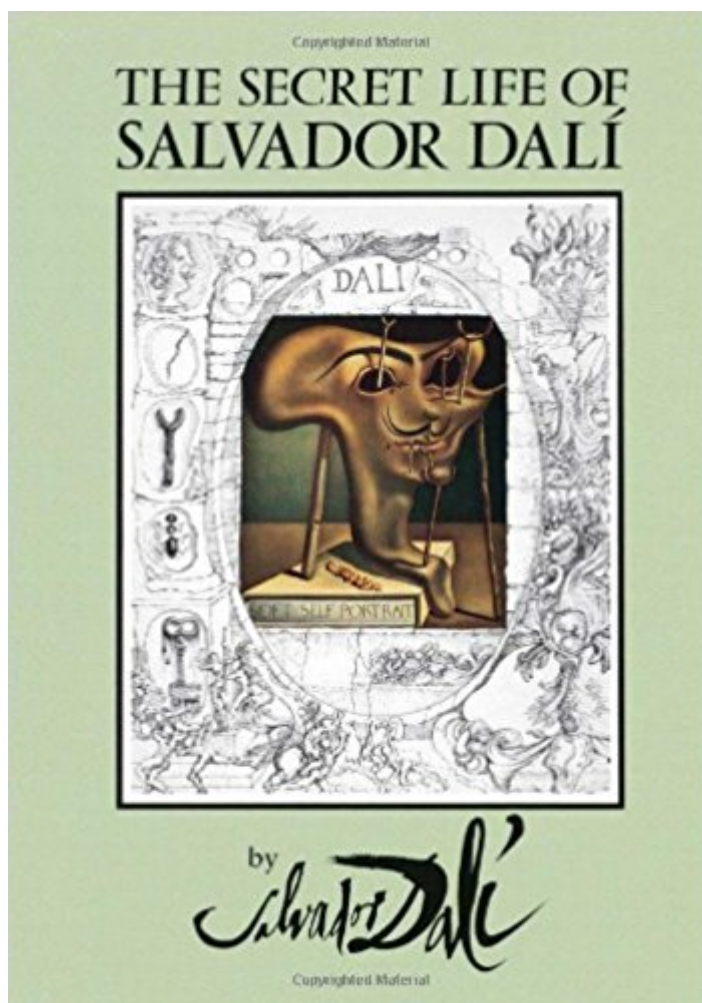


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The Secret Life Of Salvador Dalí- (Dover Fine Art, History Of Art)



Synopsis

Painter, designer, and filmmaker Salvador Dalí (1904–1989) was one of the most colorful and controversial figures in 20th-century art. A pioneer of Surrealism, he was both praised and reviled for the subconscious imagery he projected into his paintings, which he sometimes referred to as "hand-painted dream photographs." This early autobiography, which takes him through his late thirties, is as startling and unpredictable as his art. It is superbly illustrated with over 80 photographs of Dalí and his works, and scores of Dalí drawings and sketches. On its first publication, the reviewer of *Books* observed: "It is impossible not to admire this painter as writer. As a whole, he . . . communicates the snobbishness, self-adoration, comedy, seriousness, fanaticism, in short the concept of life and the total picture of himself he sets out to portray." Dalí's flamboyant self-portrait begins with his earliest recollections and ends at the pinnacle of his earliest successes. His tantalizing chapter titles and headnotes — among them "Intra-Uterine Memories," "Apprenticeship to Glory," "Permanent Expulsion from the School of Fine Arts," "Dandyism and Prison," "I am Disowned by my Family," "My Participation and my Position in the Surrealist Revolution," and "Discovery of the Apparatus for Photographing Thought" — only hint at the compelling revelations to come. Here are fascinating glimpses of the brilliant, ambitious, and relentlessly self-promoting artist who designed theater sets, shop interiors, and jewelry as readily as he made surrealist paintings and films. Here is the mind that could envision and create with great technical virtuosity images of serene Raphaellesque beauty one moment and nightmarish landscapes of soft watches, burning giraffes, and fly-covered carcasses the next. For anyone interested in 20th-century art and one of its most gifted and charismatic figures, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* is must reading.

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Customer Reviews

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Painter, designer, and filmmaker Salvador Dalí (1904–1989) was one of the most colorful and controversial figures in twentieth-century art. A pioneer of Surrealism, he was both praised and reviled for the subconscious imagery he projected into his paintings, which he sometimes referred to as "hand-painted dream photographs." This early autobiography, which takes him through his late thirties, is as startling and unpredictable as his art. It is superbly illustrated with over 80 photographs of Dalí and his works, and scores of Dalí drawings and sketches. On its first publication, the reviewer of *Books* observed: "It is impossible not to admire this painter as writer. As a whole, he . . . communicates the snobbishness, self-adoration, comedy, seriousness, fanaticism, in short the concept of life and the total picture of himself he sets out to portray." Dalí's flamboyant self-portrait begins with his earliest recollections and ends at the pinnacle of his earliest successes. His tantalizing chapter titles and headnotes—among them "Intra-Uterine Memories," "Apprenticeship to Glory," "Permanent Expulsion from the School of Fine Arts," "Dandyism and Prison," "I am Disowned by my Family," "My Participation and my Position in the Surrealist Revolution," and "Discovery of the Apparatus for Photographing Thought"—only hint at the compelling revelations to come. Here are fascinating glimpses of the brilliant, ambitious, and relentlessly self-promoting artist who designed theater sets, shop interiors, and jewelry as readily as he made surrealistic paintings and films. Here is the mind that could envision and create with great technical virtuosity images of serene Raphaellesque beauty one moment and nightmarish landscapes of soft watches, burning giraffes, and fly-covered carcasses the next. For anyone interested in twentieth-century art and one of its most gifted and charismatic figures, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* is essential reading.

The book itself is great. My disappointment is that the book I received is not the one in the photo. I know, I know...book by its cover but the book in the photo has much more bookshelf character.

This really is a treasure. I won't spoil the book. Just read it if you love Salvador Dali, one of the best Spanish painters since Goya!

Dali was an amazing genius who painted like an accomplished adult at 5 years old, and he was an enormously complex and interesting character. His art may ultimately be seen as more important than Picasso's. Read this book it is very amusing and bizarre and gives you insight into a genius.

Salvador Dali is one of my favorite painters ever! This book was okay, just lengthy and wordy.

Genius isn't pretty, if we are to deduce that this revelation of the secret life of Salvador Dali is representative of the inner reality of genius in general. For certain, genuine creation isn't pretty, as anyone who's ever witnessed childbirth might attest: it's accomplished by blood, obscenity, mucous, hysterics, farts, and pain. Out of such undifferentiated chaos does one mold the miracle of his creation. So in **The Secret Life of Salvador Dali** we get the "confession" of a man whose life from earliest childhood is replete with incidents, fantasies, attitudes, and behaviors that can only be considered pathological. But then how much of this memoir is "real" and how much artistic hyperbole is a question open to debate. For Dali consciously mythologizes his life and makes no secret of the fact that much of his "secret life" may not have actually taken place except in his imagination. "The difference," he writes, "between false memories and true ones is the same as for jewels: it is always the false ones that look the most real, the most brilliant." And shortly afterwards he writes of his life that the "all-powerful sway of reverie and myth began to mingle in such a continuous and imperious way with the life of every moment that later it has often become impossible for me to know where reality begins and the imaginary ends." This is Dali's way of winking at the reader--and yet it's an ambiguous wink at best. For what must always be remembered is that for Dali, the imagination is every bit as "real" in its impact, just as material and plastic, as any historical or anecdotal fact of existence--if anything, the hyper-intensity of Dali's imagination gives his reveries even greater reality. And so Dali, by his own estimation the only true surrealist, presents the story of the first half of his life in its entirety: that's to say, the dreams, visions, and fantasies are given equal weight as the people, facts, and circumstances of conventional autobiography. For the former interact with the latter to produce the uninterrupted "surreality" of the individual life. A man, for instance, who dreams that his best friend has murdered him in his sleep and taken his wife to bed cannot possibly--whether conscious of the fact or not--have lunch with that same friend the next afternoon without his perceptions being altered, right down to his autonomic biological responses, in a very concrete way. Perhaps the best way to read **The Secret Life of Salvador Dali** is as a kind of absurdist novel about the life and ideas of an eccentric, legendary painter named Salvador Dali. For,

indeed, this book very often reads like fiction, studded as it is with bizarre episodes worthy of Kafka or Poe. And yet there is also a good deal of Dali's very down-to-earth philosophy of art in this book: his championing of technique, craft, and discipline, and of the renaissance spirit of the great masters who he admires. These attitudes might surprise many who think of Dali solely as the revolutionary and iconoclastic wild man of surrealism. Although he's since become synonymous with surrealism, Dali actually considered himself a traditionalist and what made him a real "revolutionary" and ultimately more surreal than the surrealists was, in his view, the fact that he aligned himself with the most conservative aspects of his artistic craft and his Spanish-European-Catholic roots. In fact, it may come as something of a shock to some to find Dali railing against the dissolution of form, of abstraction, of undisciplined experimentation, of the laziness of modern art. From the opening pages when he bombastically declares with mock seriousness his disgust for the formless mush of spinach and his admiration of the rigorous solidity of shellfish, Dali separates himself from the leveling movements in contemporary art, politics, and society, most of which he consigns to the oblivion of the mulch from which the hierarchic tree of a society of true individuals, of the royalty of spirit, art, and culture will inevitably be reborn. Tradition may be chopped down, trampled, burned to ash...but the roots go deeper than revolution. Tradition never dies. Therefore, Dali sides with tradition. Written when he was barely 38 years old and thus comprising less than half of what would be his allotted life, **The Secret Life** has the feel of a complete autobiography composed from the sober vantage point of the old age Dali cherished and aspired to even as a young man. The text itself is beautifully written/translated--a prose masterpiece of surrealistic metaphor and absurdist hyperbole. An excellent, thought-provoking, and fascinating book from any number of perspectives, **The Secret Life of Salvador Dali** is every bit as unsettling, paradoxical, elusive, contrary, and, ultimately, beautiful, as the paintings for which Dali is so well-known, so misunderstood, and so famous.

Surprise! It very interesting.

Book as described, arrived promptly, am satisfied.

I love artist's biographies. I could only read about 50 pages of this before I had to put it to rest. Unreadable in my opinion. I knew very little about Dali's life prior to reading the small section of this book I was able to get through. Despite my appreciation for his work, I wish I had never purchased this book. Never before in fiction, non fiction, or in real life have I encountered a more inflated ego. Readers beware!!!!!!

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