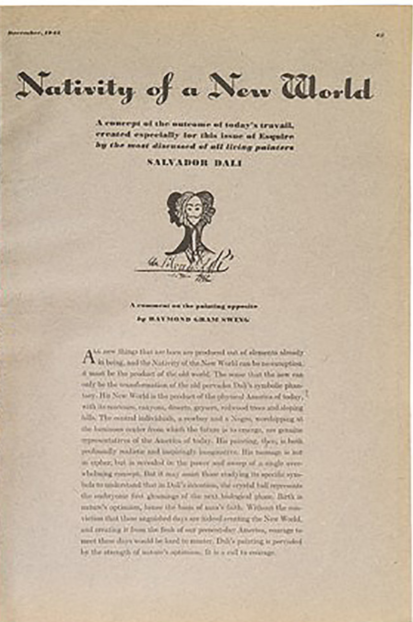

December, 1942

Nativity of a New World

A concept of the outcome of today's travail, created especially for this issue of Esquire by the most discussed of all living painters

SALVADOR DALI

A comment on the painting opposite

by RAYMOND GRAM SWING

All new things that are born are produced out of elements already in being, and the Nativity of the New World can be no exception. It must be the product of the old world. The sense that the new can only be the transformation of the old pervades Dali's symbolic phantasy. His New World is the product of the physical America of today, with its mesas, canyons, deserts, geysers, redwood trees and sloping hills. The central individuals, a cowboy and a Negro, worshipping at the luminous cradle from which the future is to emerge, are genuine representatives of the America of today. His painting, then, is both profoundly realistic and inspiringly imaginative. His message is not in cypher, but is revealed in the power and sweep of a single overwhelming concept. But it may assist those studying its specific symbols to understand that in Dali's intention, the crystal ball represents the embryonic first glimmerings of the next biological phase. Birth is nature's optimism, hence the basis of man's faith. Without the conviction that these anguished days are indeed creating the New World, and creating it from the flesh of our present-day America, courage to meet these days would be hard to muster. Dali's painting is pervaded by the strength of nature's optimism. It is a call to courage.

81 Raymond Gram Swing, "Nativity of a New World," in *Esquire*, December 1942.

Surrealistic Socialite: Dalí's Portrait Exhibition at the Knoedler Galleries in 1943

Martin Schieder

In December 1942, the men's magazine *Esquire* published Salvador Dalí's painting *Nativity of a New World*, which was created the same year, on a foldout double-page color spread (fig. 81). In his article, journalist Raymond Gram Swing presented the work as a symbol of contemporary America: "His New World is the product of the physical America of today, with its contours, canyons … redwood trees, and sloping hills. The central individuals, a cowboy and a Negro … are genuine representatives of the American of today." He emphatically interpreted the painting as "a call to courage."[1] In point of fact, the painting can be read as a symbol of Dalí's own success in the United States. Even before he and his wife Gala went into exile in the United States in August 1940, Dalí had regularly exhibited at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York in the 1930s, and in 1939 at the New York World's Fair with his Dream of Venus pavilion, as well as creating a sensation with spectacular events such as his window display for the Bonwit Teller luxury department store on Fifth Avenue. In 1942, MoMA dedicated a large-scale solo exhibition to the artist, which subsequently toured the United States to great interest. *Time* magazine described his autobiography *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, published the same year, as "a wild jungle of fantasy … narcissist and sadist confessions."[2] Dali was "BIG news," with the press reporting extensively on the glamorous and publicity-seeking lifestyle that Gala and Salvador maintained on both the East and West Coasts, where they resided in luxurious hotels, giving them access to

1 Many thanks to Vera Bornkessel and Franziska Fleckenstein for their inspiration and support. R. G. Swing, "Nativity of a New World," *Esquire. The Magazine for Men*, December 1942, pp. 41–42, p. 42.

2 "Art: Not So Secret Life," *Time*, December 28, 1942.

82 Salvador Dalí, *Portrait of Princess Gourielli (Helena Rubinstein)*, 1943, oil on canvas, 88.9 × 66 cm. Private collection.

83 Salvador Dalí, *Portrait of Dorothy Spreckels Munn*, 1942, oil on canvas, 78.7 × 63.8 cm, frame: 104.1 × 87.6 × 5.1 cm. San Francisco, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, gift of Mrs. Charles A. Munn.

super-rich, art-collecting American socialites.[3] Consequently, Dalí and his wife were to focus their business strategy entirely on this audience. They availed themselves of the experience of the exclusive Zodiaque network of patrons who had supported them in Paris since 1932. Several members of this *tourbillon mondain*, which included Charles de Noailles, Caresse Crosby, and the Marquise Cuevas de Vera, had helped the artist couple in their early career in the United States by securing key social connections.[4]

Nativity of a New World was one of the works displayed in the Dalí exhibition held from April 14 to May 5, 1943, in the galleries of M.

3 Herbert Cerwin, "Dali's Del Monte Party Is Attracting National Interest," *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, Monterey California, August 29, 1941, p. 14.

4 Marijke Peyser-Verhaar, "Salvador Dalí et le mécénat du Zodiaque," *Cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne*, no. 121 (2012), pp. 58–71, p. 67.

84 Salvador Dalí, *Mrs. Harrison Williams (Mona Bismarck)*, 1943, oil on canvas, 92 × 62 cm. Private collection.

Knoedler and Company in Manhattan.[5] The show's real attraction, however, was a top-class selection of portraits that Dalí had executed in the late 1930s and early 1940s of members of American high society, as well as exiled personalities whom the artist had known in Europe. It is immediately noticeable that it was almost exclusively women who sat for these social portraits—daughters, wives, and widows of industrialists and bankers; singers and fashion icons; glamorous women from the international jet set; and self-made women. They included Princess Artchil Gourielli (alias Helena Rubinstein) (fig. 82), who had built up an empire of beauty products and was known for her love of jewelry; and

5 A letter from Gala to Otto Spaeth indicates that the painting was lent specifically to the exhibition at Knoedler's; see Gala Dalí (Pebble Beach, California) to Otto Spaeth (Dayton, Ohio), February 15, 1943. Eloise and Otto Spaeth Papers, 1937–1983. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/gala-dali-pebblebeach-calif-letter-to-otto-spaeth-dayton-ohio-11073, accessed February 24, 2019.

85 Salvador Dalí, *His Excellency Don Juan Cardenas, Spanish Ambassador*, 1943, oil on canvas, 61.3 × 50.8 cm. Private collection.

Dorothy Spreckels, heiress to the Spreckels Sugar Company (fig. 83), whose public breakup with her husband created enormous buzz in the San Francisco tabloid press. Viewers could admire the portrait of Mrs. Harrison Williams (alias Mona Bismarck) (fig. 84), voted the Best-Dressed Woman in the World; that of Claire Dux, a singer of German descent and third wife of a Chicago meat processing industry tycoon; that of Mrs. Harold McCormick, initially a nurse then the third wife, and finally widow, of Harold Fowler McCormick, a harvesting machine millionaire; and that of Lady Louis Mountbatten, an English aristocrat who dedicated her life to the pursuit of pleasure, running between parties, dress shops, and men.[6] Also on display was the portrait of Mrs. Ortiz de Linares, wife of the Bolivian ambassador to France, and that of the wife of film director Luther Greene. For his few portraits of men, Dalí chose the impresario the Marquis de Cuevas, a patron of his theater projects, and Juan Cárdenas, the Spanish ambassador to the United States (fig. 85).

6 See Janet P. Morgan, *Edwina Mountbatten: A Life of Her Own* (London: Harper Collins, 1991).

"Drawings and Paintings by Dalí," as the Knoedler exhibition was titled, illustrates fundamental aspects of the business relationship between artists, art dealers, and clients in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s at the very high end of the market.[7] Within the context of the broader research project that is the focus of this publication, which investigates the networks, agents, and mechanisms of the market for surrealist art in the United States, this essay explores the perspective of one artist in particular and, specifically, the ways in which Dalí aligned his artistic work, business strategy, and public relations with the conditions of the American market. Why did Dalí choose to present his society portraits at a gallery famed for selling old masters, which did not, at the time, include any avant-garde art in its program? And how could Dalí, with his surrealist imagery, satisfy the need of wealthy clients and style icons for social representation and the "publicness of the private," to use Roland Barthes's phrase? To illustrate these points and answer these questions, it is necessary to reconstruct the ways in which Dalí developed his successful business model of painting "surrealistic" society portraits by drawing on sociological, media-historical, and fashion world perspectives.

Avida Dollars!

Since no photographs of the exhibition at the Knoedler Galleries appear to have survived, it is difficult to comment on the display, not least because press reports contain few details about the exhibition itself. The most important primary source of information is the exhibition catalogue, which was published in a print run of 3,000 copies and features full-page black-and-white reproductions of all the exhibits. Thanks to a working maquette for the show's design that has recently appeared on the art market, we know that Dalí meticulously designed the catalogue himself. Working on the reverse side of a catalogue from an El Greco exhibition that had taken place in January–February 1941 at Knoedler's, he designed the catalogue layout by sketching the exhibits in pen and

7 On Dalí's success and popularity in the United States, see Dickran Tashjian, *A Boatload of Madmen. Surrealism and the American Avant-Garde 1920–1950* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1995); Robert S. Lubar, "Salvador Dalí in America: The Rise and Fall of an Arch-Surrealist," in *Surrealism USA*, exh. cat., New York, National Academy Museum/Phoenix Art Museum, ed. Isabelle Dervaux (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany: Hatje Cantz/New York: National Academy Museum, 2004), pp. 20–29; and Sandra Zalman, *Consuming Surrealism in American Culture: Dissident Modernism* (Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2015). So far, only Gabriel Montua has dealt with Dalí's exhibition at Knoedler's; Gabriel Montua, *Dalís 20. Jahrhundert. Die westliche Kunst zwischen Politik, Markt und Medien* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), pp. 226ff. See also Ian Gibson, *Salvador Dalí. Die Biographie* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1998), pp. 442–444; and Torsten Otte, *Salvador Dalí & Andy Warhol. Encounters in New York and Beyond* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2016), pp. 275–284.

pencil, while Gala transcribed in French the foreword dictated by Dalí, titled "Dalí to the Reader."[8] This programmatic essay lists the artist's successes in the United States as if on a business card, and defines his new "classical" understanding of art that drew on old master techniques, which was then taken up and disseminated by the press.

It may initially seem surprising that Dalí decided in favor of the Knoedler Galleries on 15 East Fifty-Seventh Street, having previously exhibited at the Julien Levy Gallery,[9] which specialized in European and American avant-garde art. The Knoedler Galleries' program was geared toward old masters from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries and impressionism, and at that time did not feature any European avant-garde art. In collaboration with the International Art Union, the gallery also sponsored American art and artists, hosting the exhibition "American Watercolors and Pastels" in 1942, "American Landscape Painting" in 1943, and "American Painting: Landscape, Genre, and Still Life of the 19th and 20th Century" a year later. A third focus of the gallery was portrait painting—in 1940 Knoedler's showed "Italian Renaissance Portraits" and, in 1944, a loan exhibition of "American Portraits by American Painters." Old masters from Europe, American art, and portraits: Dalí and his business-savvy wife recognized in this program the opportunity to gain access to a clientele that was both of high social standing and financially extremely powerful. Knoedler's customer list included the blue chips of American collectors, ranging from the Rockefellers to Andrew and Paul Mellon, Henry Clay Frick, and Samuel Kress. Knoedler also had important institutional partners, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Musée du Louvre, and the Tate Gallery. In light of this, the Knoedler Galleries offered the perfect venue to present a selection of Dalí's society portraits—and Dalí's calculation seemed to pay off. "His surrealist portraits are selling like hot cakes," wrote the *San Antonio Light*.[10] In *Life* magazine he was dubbed "America's No. 1 public madman," and next to the reproduction of his portrait of Mona Bismarck one could read, "Society ladies pay as much

8 Salvador Dalí, "Dalí to the Reader," *Dalí, April 14 to May 5, 1943, at the Galleries of M. Knoedler and Company, Inc.* (New York: M. Knoedler, 1943), o.p.; Working maquette for *Dalí, April 14 to May 5, 1943, at the Galleries of M. Knoedler and Company, Inc.*, New York, 1943; https://fineart.ha.com/itm/fine-art-work-on-paper/salvador-dali-spanish-1904-1989-working-maquette-for-dali-april-14-to-may-5-1943-at-the-galleries-of-m-knoedler-a/a/5113-64020.s?ic3=ViewItem-Auction-Archive-ThisAuction-120115, accessed February 24, 2019; "El Greco," Loan Exhibition for the Benefit of the Greek War Relief Association, January 17–February 15, 1941, commemorating the 400th anniversary of the birth of El Greco, at the galleries of M. Knoedler and Company, New York 1941.

9 On January 12, 1935, Dalí had exhibited just two portraits—*Two Portraits of Salvador Dalí: Mrs. Clarence M. Wooley and Edward Wassermann*—at the Julien Levy Gallery for only one day. See Edward Alden Jewell, "Surrealiste Art Marks Week-End. Salvador Dali," in "Lectures on Paranoiac Images, Tells of Mystic Form," New York Times, January 12, 1935, p. 12.

10 Inez Robb, "Dali's Daffy Day," *San Antonio Light*, August 10, 1941, p. 7.

as $25,000 for his portraits showing them garnished with lizards and sprouting foliage instead of hair."[11] From other sources we know that the painter charged $5,000 upwards for his portraits, an exorbitant sum at the time.[12]

The success of the show was not least due to skillful public relations and marketing: it was reported in detail in the leading American mass media as well as art magazines, frequently featuring lavish illustrations (fig. 86). In view of the celebrity of the subjects and their artist, it is not surprising that the interest of the journalistic community focused on the portraits, with very little discussion of the small number of other paintings, such as *Nativity of a New World* (fig. 81) and *Poetry of America* (1943), or the drawings on display. In most cases, writers of feature articles and columns expressed perplexity and amusement at the "portraiture lifted to an unforgettable plane in these carefully charted and meticulously recorded studies of the Upper Crust."[13] The venerable *New York Times* stated that the portraits were possibly "a graphic report rendered at the end of a two-year psychoanalysis," and that Dalí's problem was obviously "that the paintings had also to be portraits."[14] While *Art Digest* mocked the "sweet portrayal" of sugar heiress Dorothy Spreckels,[15] the *New York Sun* condemned the show: "Nothing but plodding, plodding workmanship and an infinity of detail. … The sitters suggest money and that is about all."[16] Even *Vogue* covered the Dalí exhibition, stating that the "new portraits look like a demoniac mixture of Underwood and Underwood photographic realism, Kraft-Ebbing, and superb Italian Renaissance draftsmanship."[17] But a press that nagged, slandered, or expressed outrage precisely met the expectations of both audience and artist, guaranteeing the publicity they had hoped for. The artist and his critics also agreed on one thing: while Dalí's art in Europe was supported only by intellectuals, in the United States everyone would understand it: "[I]n this country, he has wide popular appeal; the people like him, and even if they don't understand his works, the poetry and emotion in the paintings appeals to them."[18] In fact, Dalí's Ameri-

11 Winthrop Sargeant, "Dalí. An excitable Spanish artist, now scorned by his fellow surrealists, has succeeded in making deliberate lunacy a paying proposition," *Life*, September 24, 1945, pp. 63–68, p. 66.

12 "Close up of the Dali Technique; or, What Sitters Get for Their Money," *ARTnews*, vol. 42 (April 15, 1943), p. 11: "In the long run it is his technique that brings dollars to Dalí. The sitter who meets his price (reputedly in five figures) gets solid craftsmanship along with a fascinating exposé of his libido."

13 H.B., "Done the Dalí Way," *Art Digest*, April 15, 1943, p. 7.

14 Edward Alden Jewell, "News and Notes of Art," *New York Times*, April 14, 1943, p. 28.

15 H.B., "Done the Dalí Way" (note 13), p. 7.

16 H. McB [Henry McBride], "Attractions in the Galleries," *New York Sun*, April 16, 1943, p. 28.

17 "People Are Talking About," *Vogue*, vol. 101, no. 10 (May 15, 1943), p. 51.

18 Emilie Keyes, "Artist Salvador Dali Would Rather Paint His Wife Than Any Of Hollywood's Fairest," *Palm Beach Post*, April 21, 1942, p. 5.

Portraits by Dalí

Whatever else Salvador Dali's paintings may be, they are always news. His first exhibition of portraits, which opens on Wednesday at the Knoedler Galleries, seems certain to start the usual controversy. Hitherto the combination of smooth surfaces, a miniature-like technique, striking drawing and supposedly surrealist subject matter has led to endless discussion. In the portraits the sitters naturally have been given prominence at the expense of the crutches and other strangely assorted objects so meticulously arranged in the earlier paintings, but some of the materials introduced in the earlier work remain in the portraits and the slick technique has been retained.

Five examples of Dali's new claim on attention, mostly portraits of people prominent in the world of society and fashion, are reproduced herewith. —H. D.

Mrs. Luther Greene.

Lady Louis Mountbatten.

Mrs. Harrison Williams.

Mrs. Dorothy Spreckles.

Mrs. Charles Swift.

86 H. D., "Portraits by Dalí," press review of the "Dalí" exhibition at the Galleries of M. Knoedler and Company, New York, 1943, in *The New York Times Magazine*, April 11, 1943.

can oeuvre, with its academic style in the manner of the old masters, offered a lithesome approach to an audience unfamiliar with the aesthetic and intellectual ideologies of the Parisian avant-gardes. And even though his pictorial symbolism was complex, bizarre, and occasionally "shocking," the dream world of Salvador Dalí could be easily explained as "Freudian" and decoded as "personal symbology." The harshest criticism, however, came from his adversary André Breton, who in his famous anagram "Avida Dollars" denounced Dalí's capitalist appearance in the United States, making a distinction between this Dalí and "the early Dalí, who disappeared in around 1935 to make way for the personality better known as Avida Dollars, fashionable portraitist recently converted to the Catholic faith and 'to the artistic ideals of the Renaissance.'"[19] When the exhibition opened at Knoedler's, Breton had long since broken with Dalí due to his commercial motivation and proximity to fascism, and had banished him from the surrealist movement. Reacting to Dalí's success in the United States, his former companions now turned against him as an "anti-surrealist." After seeing Dalí's last exhibition at the Julien Levy Gallery, Nicolas Calas launched an attack on him in *View* both politically, as "the painter of Franco's ambassador" and a "stinking Don Quixote" and for his classical style, with which he joined the "counterrevolution": "How easy to protest in the name of Pure Art: You attack Dalí, after having praised him, because he no longer believes in revolutionary values! He has rediscovered Spain, penitence, Catholicism; he adores form and tries to draw as well as Ingres."[20] So it was not without a certain irony that in the United States, Dalí was received by the press as *the* surrealist artist, while at the same time the Breton circle endeavored to isolate him in the strictest terms.

American faces

For his society portraits, Dalí developed an image type that could be adapted and varied depending on the model: while he rendered the faces of his models almost photographically, he looked to contemporary fashion for the costumes. His models fit into the settings of his surreal landscapes in terms of their color scheme, which he stated was inspired by "the calm classicism of the Californian landscape."[21] In addition, the portraits received special momentum through the use of mythologi-

19 André Breton, *Anthology of Black Humor* [1940] (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997), p. 323.
20 Nicolas Calas, "Anti-Surrealist Dalí. I Say His Flies Are Ersatz," *View*, vol. 1, no. 6 (June 1941), pp. 1 and 3. See Julia Pine, "Anti-Surrealist Cross-Word Puzzles: Breton, Dalí and Print in Wartime America," *Journal of Surrealism and the Americas*, no. 1 (2007), pp. 1–29.
21 Dalí, "Dalí to the Reader" (note 8).

cal stereotypes, which lent them a quasi-historical legitimacy. Dorothy Spreckels rides like a Nereid on a dolphin—an allusion to the name of her neoclassical estate La Dolphine in Newmar, California, acquired in 1940—as Apollo rises out of the water in the background (fig. 83). Helena Rubinstein, like her mythological alter ego Andromeda, is "chained" to rocks, draped in the jewels for which she was so famous (fig. 82). Lady Mountbatten's head, sprouting green snakes, mutates into a seductive Medusa. With this eye-catching symbolism, Dalí valorized his clients and stylized them to become timeless artistic figures.[22] In this way, he positioned himself in the tradition of society portraitists such as Titian, Nattier, Gainsborough, and Ingres. To increase recognition value even further, he repeatedly inserted citations from art history into the compositions. In the portrait of Juan Cárdenas, Franco's official representative in the United States, the observer could discover a scene from Velázquez's *The Surrender of Breda* (*ca.* 1635). With its depiction of El Escorial in the background, this painting also introduced an explosively contemporary historical note revealing Dalí's connection with the Franco regime (fig. 85).[23] And in the portrait *Marquis George de Cuevas*, a burial chamber and cypress tree evoke Arnold Böcklin's *Isle of the Dead* (1880–86). For the portrait of Isabel Tas-Welz, from 1945, Dalí appropriated Piero della Francesca's double portrait of the Duke and Duchess of Urbino in the Uffizi (*ca.* 1465), explaining that the sitter intended to hang her portrait next to a Tintoretto in her home in Vienna.[24] This rhetorical cue betrays Dalí's desire to present himself as a master within art history by utilizing classical iconography and old master techniques—"my whole ambition," he claimed, "is to rediscover the tradition of the old master."[25] By adopting Renaissance glazing techniques, he demonstrated his technical virtuosity. To underscore Dalí's new image as a "classicist," for which Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci served as references, *ARTnews* published an article titled "Closeup of the Dali Technique, or, What Sitters Get for Their Money," which stated that Dalí was "greatly improving modern standards of craftsmanship" and illustrated his skills with detailed photographs of two portraits.[26]

22 Ibid.: "My aim was to establish a rapport of fatality between each of the different personalities and their backgrounds, in a manner which, far from any direct symbolism, constitutes the sum of the mediumistic and iconographic volume that each person represented was capable of releasing in my mind."

23 See Pine, "Anti-Surrealist Cross-Word Puzzles" (note 20), pp. 16–17; William Jeffett, "The Artist and the Dictator: Salvador Dalí and Francisco Franco," in Michael R. Taylor, ed., *The Dalí Renaissance: New Perspectives on His Life and Art After 1940* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 128–152; Montua, *Dalís 20* (note 7), pp. 233–236.

24 [Salvador Dalí], "Exposition of the Latest Portraits by Dalí," *Dali News: Monarch of the Dailies*, vol. I, no. 1 (November 20, 1945).

25 Dalí, "Dalí to the Reader" (note 8).

26 "Close up of the Dali Technique," ARTnews (note 12), p. 11.

Furthermore, the portraits were intended to appeal to a clientele who collected old masters acquired from Knoedler, to be displayed in the American pastiches of their Renaissance palazzi or their baroque *hôtels particuliers*. In keeping with this, Dalí presented his paintings in "Antique frames courtesy of Knoedler Galleries."[27]

Nevertheless, the question arises as to why the Spanish painter achieved such success with his portraits in the United States. Why did he choose a classical genre of pictures and an eclectic style so vehemently rejected by his former surrealist friends? When *Art Digest* stated that Knoedler had "the faces of America's first families" on display, the magazine summed up Dalí's intention perfectly.[28] In his recent book *American Faces: A Cultural History of Portraiture and Identity*, Richard H. Saunders investigates the cultural-historical tradition and identity-establishing significance of the society portrait in America. Interestingly, its roots can be traced, in part, back to the grand portrait tradition of the so-called Gilded Age of the late nineteenth century, when America's oil barons, steel magnates, and railway tycoons amassed colossal fortunes and filled their domiciles with art and luxury. Saunders describes the sociological criteria for these *American Faces*, which Dalí's portraits of the American social elite amply fulfill. The primary task of a society portrait is that it "involves the reinforcement of the sitters' own self-image in which the outer representation matches the inner dreams and visions."[29] Portraits were also intended to make visible the client's affiliation with a specific social group, whereby "wealth, fashion, status, and likeness" were paramount.[30] Within American society, whose self-image was already based on success and prosperity in an elementary form at that time, these four aspects represented the parameters of social and individual identity. Dalí understood how to meet this need, on one hand by staging his models' exterior in an eye-catching manner, and on the other, by lending historicity and an individual aura to the subjects depicted by means of surrealist symbolism. Even if the faces take on an almost photographic quality, likeness retreats behind the representation of social status, which is articulated through carefully selected poses and spectacular settings. Dalí's artistic approach of the early 1930s, in which he revealed the subconscious minds of his models, took a back seat in his American portraits in favor of social representation.[31]

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27 Salvador Dalí, "Dalí to the Reader," *Dalí, April 14 to May 5, 1943* (note 8).

28 H.B., "Done the Dali Way" (note 13), p. 7.

29 Richard H. Saunders, *American Faces: A Cultural History of Portraiture and Identity* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2016), p. 6.

30 Ibid., p. 4.

31 See "Surrealist Art is Puzzle No More," *New York Times*, January 10, 1935, p. 21: "'In my painting I aim to portray the subconscious as realistically as other artists depict the objective world,' Mr. Dali explained yesterday at the Julien Levy Gallery … where his two latest portraits are to be shown privately for three days."

Saunders also points out that society portraits are generally "not commissions for a private home, but they were created for public exhibition."[32] Indeed, the establishment and institutionalization of a national portrait culture had been systematically pursued in the United States since at least the turn of the twentieth century. In 1912, the National Association of Portrait Painters was founded as an "American movement for the sake of the art of portraiture by American artists," with annual exhibitions touring the country.[33] In 1942, one year before Dalí's exhibition at the Knoedler Galleries, the Portrait Incorporation was created by fifty leading painters of social portraits who joined forces to regularly exhibit their work in the Portrait Painters' Clearing House at 460 Park Avenue, New York.[34] Dalí pursued a similar strategy with his society portraits, which did not disappear into their owners' private rooms after their completion, but instead circulated in exhibitions, charity events, and not least in the media, which was mutually beneficial to Dalí and his sitters. Numerous newspaper and magazine reports and advertisements for private and public portrait exhibitions regularly mention Dalí's name. On May 24, 1941, the *Chicago Tribune* reported on the opening of the Dalí exhibition at the Chicago Arts Club, which included not only the portraits of Mrs. Harold McCormick and Lady Mountbatten, but also the gouache of the famous "walk-in" portrait of Mae West. Less was said about the aesthetic experience than the social event: "The tea given yesterday at the Arts club to open the last three exhibitions of the season was scheduled to start at 4 o'clock, but at least an hour earlier there were 100 women assembled in the galleries. Not the pictures, but Dali … was the main attraction."[35] The Knoedler Galleries thus proved to be a perfect stage for the simultaneous appearance of ten portraits in which portraiture and the *image* of the socialite merged together, as had been the case in the Paris Salons of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

At the same time, the artist succeeded in generating commissions for further portraits and encouraging the art-going public to acquire other works from him, as the following example illustrates. In 1942 the businessman Albert Reynolds Morse and his wife Eleanor visited the traveling Dalí retrospective at the Cleveland Museum of Art organized by MoMA, and became fascinated with the artist's work. During the exhibition at Knoedler's, they met Dalí personally for the first time, and purchased the watercolor *The Madonna of the Birds* (1943) for $675—a

32 Saunders, *American Faces* (note 29), p. xiii.

33 *American Art Annual*, no. 10 (1912), p. 148.

34 Publication issues include *Portraits of business executives and professional men at work and at play* (1942); *As others see us: Paintings and drawings* (1942?); and *Woman's crowning glory* (194?).

35 India Moffet, "Dalí Attracts Record Crowd to Arts Club," *Chicago Tribune*, May 24, 1941, p. 13.

florid pastiche of a Raphael Madonna. In fact, all thirteen drawings shown at Knoedler's were sold during the exhibition for prices ranging between $200 and $800, as indicated in Knoedler's sales ledgers.[36]

Charity

In analyzing Dalí's target clientele, in addition to the factors of status awareness, social communication, and aesthetic preferences, we must also take into account a further psychographic aspect that had a specific influence on his clients' purchasing behavior. After the end of the Great Depression and America's entry into World War II in December 1941, the country was caught up in a wave of charity and patriotism. The media provided detailed and empathetic information about countless charity events, fundraisers, and social functions. These events were chiefly instigated by prominent, wealthy women. Following Dalí's exhibition at Knoedler's, Helena Rubinstein, for example, hosted a garden party in the Victory Garden of her fourteen-story penthouse to benefit farm workers being recruited by the War Manpower Commission: there, guests could admire her new portrait by the artist, who was present, as well as his three large wall paintings.[37] On July 19, 1940, a Midwestern newspaper carried the article "Women Join In Program To Aid War-Stricken People," which mentioned the dancer Polly Peabody, who had helped to launch Dalí in the United States and founded "the first ambulance units to go over during the lightning war." Also mentioned is Mona Bismarck, who "admits that she cannot knit but says she has plenty of time and money to give to war relief." In her commentary, Patricia Coffin points out the connection between war, charity, and upward social mobility: "Wartime is the golden time for the social climber. She sets foot in the doors which were barred to her before. She mixes with the cream of society because she will work for their cause."[38] The credo of the then-popular society reporter reads like a blueprint for Dalí—the artist, his society portraits, and his clients appeared together a number of times at charity events. This configuration provided an opportunity for publicity and a platform for encountering the same audience as at exhibitions, with the combined themes of cultural patronage and social philanthropy. Dalí and Gala

36 M. Knoedler & Co., Sales Book 14, January 1937–1948 December, The Getty Research Institute, Special collections; http://hdl.handle.net/10020/2012m54b74, accessed February 24, 2019.

37 See David Lardner, "Madame Rubinstein's 'Farm in the Sky' included chickens and rabbits," *New Yorker*, May 22, 1943. In 1942 Rubinstein commissioned Dalí to paint three murals to decorate the dining room of her thirty-six-room triplex on Park Avenue.

38 Patricia Coffin, "Women Join In Program To Aid War-Stricken People," *Sheboygan Press* (Sheboygan, Wisconsin), July 12, 1940, p. 6.

SALVADOR DALI, the world famous surrealist, talks over plans with Mrs. Dorothy Spreckels Dupuy for his forthcoming costume party, "A Night in an Enchanted Forest," to be held in the Bali room of Hotel Del Monte Tuesday night, September 2, for the benefit of the Museum of Modern Art's fund for European artists who want to come to America.

Will You Be a Dream or An Animal For Senor Dali's Del Monte Party?

Since Senor Salvador Dali emerged from his "thought compression chamber" the other morning, looked at life behind his mirrored spectacles, and decided that it might be a good idea after all to give a party in the Bali room, certain Monterey Peninsula people in both artistic and social circles—or both—are in quite a dither of excitement.

With Salvador Dali given a free rein at Hotel Del Monte, preparations for his party are booming and he evidently thinks of a new idea hourly without having to resort to his thought compressing machine.

The latest is an order for 5000 gunny sacks. These all have to be filled with newspapers.

Hotel Del Monte wants tons of newspapers, and is sending out an SOS for help. Please bring any old newspapers you may have to the Mechanical department.

They've got from now until Tuesday, September 2, to decide whether they'll spend Dali's "Surrealist Night in An Enchanted Forest" as the materialization of a favorite dream, a primitive animal, or a little creature of the forest.

Among those who are giving the matter considerable thought and who are already deciding who they'd like to have seated at their table, are Mr. and Mrs. S. F. B. Morse ("You couldn't pay me to stay away from THIS party," said Mrs. Morse); Dr. and Mrs. Charles Crocker, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Tevis, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Mack, Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Stanton, Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Eyre, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Bunn, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Veit, Mr. and Mrs. Ashton Stanley, Mrs. Francis McComas, Mr. and Mrs. Robinson Jeffers, Mr. and Mrs. Howard E. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Winslow, Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Haldorn, Mrs. Daulton Mann, Mrs. Frances Elkins, Mrs. Henry Van Dyke, and many others who have been intensely interested in meeting Dali from the beginning.

Mrs. Lent Hooker (Nancy Morse) of Atherton called Del Monte on the telephone to say she's bringing down a large party of friends for this affair. Mrs. Dorothy Spreckels Dupuy has signified definitely that she will bring a group down.

Among Pebble Beach residents who have planned house parties over the Labor Day week end and who will bring their guests over to the Dali party are Mr. and Mrs. Harton Singer Jr., Mr. and Mrs. George Coleman Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Hornby, who will have the newly - wedded Raymond Hornby Jr.s with them among others; Mr. and Mrs. M. S. Slocum, Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler Farish, and Mr. and Mrs. Walter M. Drury.

Douglas School News

The Douglas Camps closed their

pated with great eagerness, and those who have gone once are ready to go again the following year. The country they ride through is probably one of the

87 Salvador Dalí and Dorothy Spreckels at the Surrealistic Night in an Enchanted Forest event, photographed in *The Monterey Peninsula Herald*, August 21, 1941.

speculated on this market potential when they authorized viewings of the society portraits for an exclusive circle of culturally interested and socially engaged women from the American money aristocracy. For example, the legendary performative event A Surrealistic Night in an Enchanted Forest, held on September 2, 1941, at the Hotel Del Monte in Pebble Beach, California (fig. 87), was intended to generate funds for MoMA to help French and Spanish refugee artists. Clark Gable, Bob Hope, and Bing Crosby flew in from Hollywood, while Alfred Hitchcock arrived from New York along with a few millionaires in tow. The artist couple's strategic goal to introduce themselves into high society on the West Coast through their fundraising party appears to have succeeded. The local press and a photographer reported that Dorothy Spreckels had been waiting for the artist's arrival for three days before the ball. The fashionable Spreckels no doubt used this meeting to commission Dalí for her portrait—the painter was photographed by the press posing in front of the already finished portrait on February

12, 1942.[39] It was therefore no accident that Dalí chose not Julien Levy—who was probably no longer interested in working with the "reactionary" artist—but the Knoedler Galleries, for the simple reason that the gallery's reputation was largely built on major charitable events at which wealthy American art collectors and socially conscious philanthropists circles met. Other exhibitions held at the gallery include the "London-Paris" show organized to benefit the British War Relief Society (1940) in partnership with the Durand-Ruel Gallery, and the presentation of the J. P. Morgan Collection held in support of the Citizens Committee for the Army and Navy (1943).

The Best-Dressed Woman

Already in the Gilded Age, a system of public self-staging of American high society women had been established by means of portrait paintings. Even at that time, the boundaries between art and fashion, between pictorial reality and social reality, became blurred in press reports. In 1894, for example, more than 600 portraits of women from private collections were displayed in the "Portraits of Women Loan Exhibition" at the National Academy of Design in New York.[40] A visitors' parlor game consisted of comparing the society portraits with the living models who were also present, whereby the aesthetic value of the image was of less interest than the social status of the person portrayed. As reported by the *New York Times*:

> "Besides this happy competition between art and society there was a merry little rivalry between the portraits and the women who viewed them. As is the case at most such affairs, there were a large number of people present who were more anxious to see who was there in real life than who was there 'in oils and water colors.' As a society man said, 'It was as much an exhibition of woman as of women's portraits.'"[41]

Almost fifty years later, press coverage of Dalí's society portraits followed precisely the same lines of argumentation. Whenever the artist, his models, and their portraits appeared together at dinners, parties, or

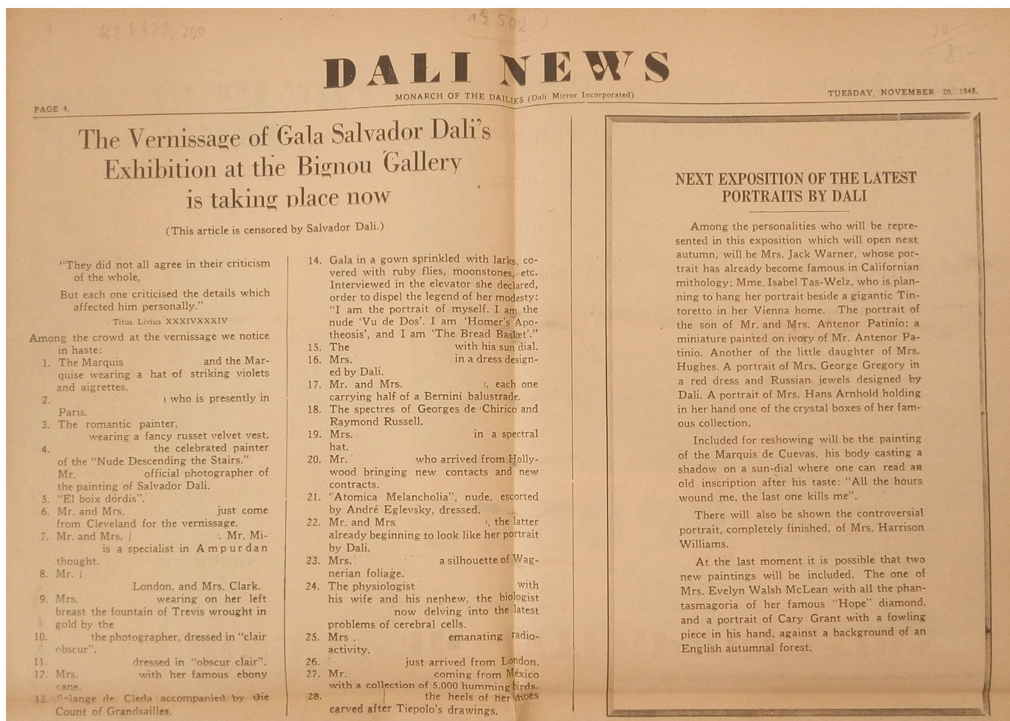
39 See Barbara Briggs-Anderson, Salvador Dali's "A Surrealistic Night in an Enchanted Forest" (Cork: BookBaby, 2012); and Evelyn Zaches Londahal, "Will You Be a Dream or an Animal For Senor Dali's Del Monte Party?" *Monterey Peninsula Herald*, August 21, 1941, p. 8; http://sfhcbasc.blogspot.de/2015/12/salvador-dali-in-san-francisco-1941-1942.html, accessed February 24, 2019.

40 See *High Society. Amerikanische Portraits des Gilded Age*, exh. cat., Hamburg, Bucerius Kunst Forum, ed. Barbara Dayer Gallati and Ortrud Westheider (Munich: Hirmer, 2008).

41 "Portraits of Fair Women. Social Leaders of Two Centuries Seen in the Academy," *New York Times*, November 2, 1894.

charity events, society reporters blended portrait and image. When the Arts Club of Chicago exhibited three society portraits by Dalí in May 1941, the focus of interest at the vernissage was not so much on the works of art as on the clients and costumes on display: "Mrs. Dalí was thoroughly Parisian in appearance. Mrs. McCormick's frock was of navy blue sheer and she wore a small corsage of Easter lilies."[42]

Aware of this media presence, Dalí knew how to artfully ratchet up the interplay between his clients, their fashions, and his portraits. As



DALI NEWS

MONARCH OF THE DAILIES (Dali Mirror Incorporated)

PAGE 4. TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1945.

The Vernissage of Gala Salvador Dali's Exhibition at the Bignou Gallery is taking place now

(This article is censored by Salvador Dali.)

"They did not all agree in their criticism of the whole,

But each one criticised the details which affected him personally."

Titus Livius XXXIVXXXIV

Among the crowd at the vernissage we notice in haste:

1. The Marquis and the Marquise wearing a hat of striking violets and aigrettes.
2. who is presently in Paris.
3. The romantic painter, wearing a fancy russet velvet vest.
4. the celebrated painter of the "Nude Descending the Stairs." Mr. official photographer of the painting of Salvador Dali.
5. "El boix dordis".
6. Mr. and Mrs. just come from Cleveland for the vernissage.
7. Mr. and Mrs. . Mr. Mi- is a specialist in Ampurdan thought.
8. Mr. London, and Mrs. Clark.
9. Mrs. wearing on her left breast the fountain of Trevis wrought in gold by the
10. the photographer, dressed in "clair obscur".
11. dressed in "obscur clair".
12. Mrs. with her famous ebony cane.
13. Solange de Cleda accompanied by the Count of Grandsailles.
14. Gala in a gown sprinkled with larks, covered with ruby flies, moonstones, etc. Interviewed in the elevator she declared, order to dispel the legend of her modesty: "I am the portrait of myself. I am the nude 'Vu de Dos'. I am 'Homer's Apotheosis', and I am 'The Bread Basket'."
15. The with his sun dial.
16. Mrs. in a dress designed by Dali.
17. Mr. and Mrs. , each one carrying half of a Bernini balustrade.
18. The spectres of Georges de Chirico and Raymond Russell.
19. Mrs. in a spectral hat.
20. Mr. who arrived from Hollywood bringing new contacts and new contracts.
21. "Atomica Melancholia", nude, escorted by André Eglevsky, dressed.
22. Mr. and Mrs. , the latter already beginning to look like her portrait by Dali.
23. Mrs. a silhouette of Wagnerian foliage.
24. The physiologist with his wife and his nephew, the biologist now delving into the latest problems of cerebral cells.
25. Mrs . emanating radioactivity.
26. just arrived from London.
27. Mr. coming from México with a collection of 5,000 humming birds.
28. the heels of her shoes carved after Tiepolo's drawings.

NEXT EXPOSITION OF THE LATEST PORTRAITS BY DALI

Among the personalities who will be represented in this exposition which will open next autumn, will be Mrs. Jack Warner, whose portrait has already become famous in Californian mithology; Mme. Isabel Tas-Welz, who is planning to hang her portrait beside a gigantic Tintoretto in her Vienna home. The portrait of the son of Mr. and Mrs. Antenor Patinio; a miniature painted on ivory of Mr. Antenor Patinio. Another of the little daughter of Mrs. Hughes. A portrait of Mrs. George Gregory in a red dress and Russian jewels designed by Dali. A portrait of Mrs. Hans Arnhold holding in her hand one of the crystal boxes of her famous collection.

Included for reshowing will be the painting of the Marquis de Cuevas, his body casting a shadow on a sun-dial where one can read an old inscription after his taste: "All the hours wound me, the last one kills me".

There will also be shown the controversial portrait, completely finished, of Mrs. Harrison Williams.

At the last moment it is possible that two new paintings will be included. The one of Mrs. Evelyn Walsh McLean with all the phantasmagoria of her famous "Hope" diamond, and a portrait of Cary Grant with a fowling piece in his hand, against a background of an English autumnal forest.

88 *Dali News. Monarch of the Dailies*, vol. 1, no. 1, November 20, 1945.

part of his 1945 exhibition at the Bignou Gallery, he satirized contemporary society journalism by publishing his own newspaper—*Dali News* (fig. 88), a phonetic pun on "daily news"—in which he listed the Who's Who of the guests at his opening and made fun of the practice of blackening out, or "censoring," certain names to conceal the identity of celebrities to all but readers in the know: "Among the crowd at the vernissage we notice in haste: … 9. Mrs. … wearing on her left breast the fountain of Trevi [*sic*] wrought in gold by the … "; or "16th Mrs. … in a dress designed by Dalí." In addition, Dalí placed his guests in direct

42 India Moffet, "Dalí Attracts Record Crowd to Arts Club," (note 35), p. 13.

relationship with his portraits: "Gala in a gown sprinkled with larks, covered with ruby flies, moonstones, etc. Interviewed in the elevator she declared, in order to dispel the legend of her modesty: 'I am the portrait of myself.'" And then number 22: "Mr. and Mrs. …, the latter already beginning to look like her portrait by Dalí."[43] In this way, the exhibition mutated into a fashion show, as occurred later, in December 1945, with the exhibition "American Women From Romanticism to Surrealism," at which Dalí's portrait of Mona Bismarck was shown once again. The *Herald Tribune*'s critic described the work not only as "the hit of the loan exhibition," but also noted, "Of particular interest to dress designers were the comparisons pointed out between clothes worn in the portraits of the 1890s and modern style tendencies."[44]

This portrait had already been the undisputed highlight at the Knoedler Galleries, as Mona Bismarck was a prominent member of the international jet set.[45] After her marriage in 1926 to Harrison Williams, one of America's wealthiest entrepreneurs and the third of her five husbands, she led a life of unimaginable glamour and luxury. When Williams died in 1953, he is said to have left her an inheritance of $90 million. Her wealth and legendary beauty enabled her to interact with leading figures in the spheres of politics, society, and culture—her acquaintances included Presidents Roosevelt and Eisenhower, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, and Greta Garbo. Bismarck was the first American to be named "Best-Dressed Woman in the World" by the major French fashion houses several years in a row. Since the late 1920s, she had been omnipresent in international fashion magazines and the tabloid press, captured by the most celebrated photographers of her time as a fashion and style icon, posing in her residences on Fifth Avenue in New York, the Hôtel Lambert on the banks of the Seine, her villa in Capri, or her Palm Beach estate—often pictured in front of portraits of herself (fig. 89). Countless stories revolve around her beauty, fashion, and wealth. For example, she is said to have ordered 150 dresses from her favorite designer Cristóbal Balenciaga in one fell swoop.

Dalí's portrait of her reflects this glamour and style in a spectacular way (fig. 84). The painter collaged a cabinet of curiosities around the figure of Mona Bismarck, as if part of a "Where's Waldo?" game. The subject's elegant shape matches the emerald green of the bizarre setting.

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43 *Dali News. Monarch of the Dailies*, vol. I, no. 1 (November 20, 1945).

44 "Of Mrs. Williams By Dali Causes Stir," *New York Herald Tribune*, December 10, 1945, p. 8.

45 "Author Finds New York Cold But Crowded," *Chicago Tribune*, May 9, 1943, p. 95: "Mrs. Harrison Williams, a noted New York matron, acclaimed for beauty and style in dress, was the central portrait in the show." See James D. Birchfield, *Kentucky Countess: Mona Bismarck in Art & Fashion* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Art Museum, 1997); http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2013/impressionist-surrealist-art-evening-sal-l13003/lot.46.lotnum.html, accessed February 24, 2019.

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89 Cecil Beaton, *Mona Bismarck*, in *Harper's Bazaar*, August 1955. In the background, Dalí's portrait of Bismarck.

In addition to Egyptian architectural fragments and ancient sculptures, the Chimera of Arezzo, the colossal foot of Emperor Constantine in the Capitoline Museum, Bernini's equestrian monument of Emperor Constantine, and a Judith-and-Holofernes scene in the style of Mantegna can be identified. With her flowing, more-revealing-than-concealing drapery and striking *contrapposto*, Bismarck appears like an ancient sculpture, immediately bringing to mind the Venus de Milo. Clearly, Dalí deliberately chose this icon of European cultural history, considered the epitome of feminine beauty, as the model for Bismarck; in *Vogue* in 1939, star photographer and Bismarck's close confidant Cecil Beaton ranked her among "the few exceptionally beautiful women who marked the 1930s."[46] Dalí initially intended to depict his goddess nude, but this was rejected, finally painting her barefoot and in rags. Nevertheless, in terms of their fabric and cut, Dalí's rags bear an unmistakable

46 Cecil Beaton, *Vogue*, February 1, 1939.

resemblance to the haute couture garb preferred by the sitter, evoking an evening dress by Madeleine Vionnet worn by Bismarck in the winter of 1938–39.[47] The "best-dressed woman" was thus "dressed" by Dalí! It was not simply a punch line when a newspaper wrote of the Knoedler exhibition that Mona Bismarck "changed her entire color scheme after seeing her Dali portrait."[48]

The duty of beauty

It is well known that Dalí collaborated closely with fashion magazines and designers to create new art objects and promote the product placement of his works. Fashion, makeup, and advertising offered him the ideal platform for his multimedia art. He designed covers for *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Esquire*, designed fashion accessories, and was commissioned to illustrate advertisements for perfume and nylon stockings. The September 1943 issue of *Vogue* featured a fashion spread titled *Dalí Eyes Fashion for Vogue*, for which the artist had contributed a self-portrait and a fashion illustration. The accompanying commentary elegantly draws a link between fashion in art history and the present: "Like Vermeer, Velasquez [*sic*], and Titian, who recorded exactly the textures and minutiae of the fashions of their time, Dalí paints the fashions of his time… paints them better than the eye can see."[49]

When discussing beauty and cosmetics, lipsticks and jewelry, we must, of course, also mention the portrait of Helena Rubinstein created by Dalí in 1943. On one hand, this portrait marks the moment Dalí conquered American high society, moving in the circles of rich and famous beauties and staging himself as a celebrity; and on the other, Rubinstein was at the time considered the richest woman in the world. On her own, the Polish-born American business magnate had founded a cosmetics label that simply bore her name and shook up the industry with its highly automated production lines and innovative philosophy. She was the world's first self-made female millionaire and a pioneer in a male-dominated economy. Her business was constantly developing new products; in the 1930s, the range of her empire included more than 600 creams, lotions, lipsticks, and so forth. Her beauty salons were designed as spaces where customers could not only learn to discover their own look and taste, but also gain access to aesthetic awareness. Personality, art, and cosmetics defined Rubinstein's overarching business model

47 See https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/C.I.46.4.4a-c/, accessed February 24, 2019.

48 "Casino, Arts Clubs Close for Summer," *Chicago Tribune*, June 13, 1943, part 7, p. 2.

49 "Fashion: Dalí Eyes Fashion for *Vogue*," *Vogue*, vol. 102, no. 5 (September 1, 1943), pp. 90–91.

90 Photographer unknown, *Madame Rubinstein*, in *LIFE*, July 21, 1941.

of the "democratization of beauty."[50] Her breathtaking success and immense wealth would have a magical attraction for Dalí. Never before had he heard someone talk so shamelessly about their own luxury; never before had he met someone who was adorned with so much jewelry. The symbol of this public self-display is a photograph that appeared in *Life* magazine in 1941 showing Rubinstein—like a little girl—playing with her jewels on the floor (fig. 90). Rubinstein's style was reflected in her fashion, jewelry, furnishings, and art collection. In the 1930s, this woman industrialist became a leading figure in the New York art scene. Her apartment at 625 Park Avenue was built on three floors, where she assembled works of art from all cultures and styles. It was an intercultural interplay of Latin American, African, and Oceanic objects, in the immediate vicinity of which were works of the classical periods and European avant-gardes. Through her professional approach to public relations, she styled her hybrid taste as an integral part of her business. In 1937 *Life* magazine ran a feature on living models posing behind frames,

50 *Helena Rubinstein: Beauty is Power*, exh. cat., New York, Jewish Museum, ed. Mason Klein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 17. See also Holly Brubach, "Helena Rubinstein: A Self-Made Woman," October 23, 2014; https://www.wmagazine.com/story/helena-rubinstein-jewish-museum, accessed February 24, 2019.

restaging famous portraits such as Picasso's *Girl in a Chemise* (*Jeune femme à la chemise*) in the window of Helena Rubinstein's salon at 715 Fifth Avenue, drawing crowds and publicity. Rubinstein's narcissistic interest in her own portrait can be explained against this backdrop—while she marketed her products with the slogan "Your cosmetic portrait by Helena Rubinstein," she had herself been portrayed by leading artists and photographers of her time, from Picasso to Andy Warhol. She liked to be photographed in front of her portrait wall, where Dalí's portrait can be seen (fig. 82). Dalí and Rubinstein were two of a kind.

Women's pages

Both Dalí and his clients sought distribution of their portraits through the media. In this way, public awareness of them could be increased, with society portraits functioning as a quasi-proxy for artist and model. Dalí's portraits also fit perfectly into the high-gloss aesthetics of fashion and lifestyle magazines in which the rich and beautiful were staged in elaborate settings by star photographers such as Philippe Halsman or Cecil Beaton. Similar to photographic portraits of celebrities, Dalí's portraits served the need of their models and viewers to convey a "publicness of the private."[51] Whether as original works or in their reproductions in the press, they entered into competition with the image of the person depicted. Dalí's society portraits both were and created new images of celebrities of American society; their social and art-historical codes guided the reading of the portraits. Mona Bismarck illustrates their almost indexical quality—the focus of her portrait is not on the refined costume but, rather, our gaze is directed to her face, brightly illuminated by an aureole. Her face stands out from the dark green setting in its almost photographic realism, and seems almost like a portrait photograph cut out from a fashion magazine and mounted onto the work, as the *Chicago Tribune* remarked: "Her face, fairly photographic, was attached to a stranger figure in a horrible sort of messy cave."[52] Viewers of Dalí's portrait immediately recognized the world's "Best-Dressed Woman" because her face and style were already stored in their visual memory by illustrations in fashion and lifestyle magazines. Mona Bismarck was repeatedly photographed by Cecil Beaton for *Harper's Bazaar* in the aristocratic setting of her luxurious Paris apartment in the Hôtel Lambert, in true regal drapery—wrapped in a burgundy robe

51 Roland Barthes, *Die helle Kammer. Bemerkung zur Photographie* (*La chambre claire*, Paris, 1980) (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985), p. 109. See also Anna Feldhaus, *Salvador Dali & Philippe Halsman. Das gemeinsame Werk* (Heidelberg/Berlin: Kehrer Verlag, 2015), pp. 31ff.

52 "Author Finds New York Cold But Crowded" (note 45), p. 95.

by the Spanish fashion designer Balenciaga—posing in front of Dalí's portrait (fig. 89). Just in time for the exhibition at the Knoedler Galleries, *Vogue* featured a photograph with the heading, "A glimpse of Dalí sketching Helena Rubinstein in preparation for a portrait."[53] It was part and parcel of Dalí's public relations that he presented himself in these published photographs as a classic portrait painter with his model positioned in front of the easel, or posing with his client next to the finished portrait. Models, paintings, and photography thus entered into an intermedia dialogue of recognition and re-recognition in the reader's imagination. *Time* magazine summed up this transformation process after seeing Dalí's portraits at the Knoedler Galleries:

> "When Surrealist Salvador Dali … has painted portraits in the past, the results have rarely been recognizable as human beings. But last week his first portrait show at Manhattan's Knoedler galleries proved that Dali, when confronted by society ladies, can make faces look as vapidly human as any other slick artist can. Garnished with the carefully strange surrealist fantasy which Salvador Dali affects, some of his canvases could pass for society magazine covers."[54]

But we encounter Dalí's portraits and his models not only in lifestyle and fashion magazines, but also in the society press, in the so-called women's pages, which generally covered issues intended to attract the readership of the stereotypical American housewife of the time: society news, fashion, food, health, interior decorating, and so forth. For example, the *Chicago Tribune Sun* reported on April 26, 1942, that Dalí was staying in Palm Beach, where he had painted the portrait of the Marquis George de Cuevas. We also learn that Dalí had just returned from Hollywood, where he had painted a portrait of Jean Gabin. A little further on the same page is a note about the "21st International Water Color Exhibition" at the Art Institute of Chicago, whose jury included Harold McCormick, a businessman and trustee of the institute whose wife Adah Wilson also sat for a portrait by Dalí. But it does not end there, with an advertisement by Helena Rubinstein for "quick pick-ups for your beauty" placed directly underneath the article.[55]

The association may be coincidental, but the framing of this newspaper page demonstrates how artists and socialites, fashion and advertising, and money and patronage benefited from each other in an intermedia interplay. The following example also illustrates the way in which Dalí

53 "And What's More…," *Vogue*, May 1, 1943, p. 80.
54 "Dali's Ladies," *Time*, no. 41/17 (April 25, 1943), p. 79.
55 Helen Van Hey Smith, "Clewiston, Fla Thriving Town Built by Sugar," *Chicago Tribune*, April 26, 1942, p. 102.

and his art were an integral part of social gatherings: from the moment Dalí painted the portrait of Dorothy Spreckels (fig. 83), she became the protagonist of a separation story that tabloid journalism exploited down to the last detail. Her relationship with oil salesman Andrew McCarthy was on the brink of a breakup; the tabloid press speculated that their encounter with Dalí at the Surrealistic Night was the triggering moment. After that, the events seem to have come thick and fast. The *San Antonio Light* headlined a full-page article with the title "Fled from His Wife Back Home to His-Mother-in-Law!" (fig. 91), which sarcastically questioned "whether Maestro Dali has been the inspiration for a new phase of life in the honey-haired socialite. Sugar heiress Spreckels's husband was disturbed when she bought that hoodoo honeymoon nest, but when the Surrealist Dali did his masterpiece of Dorothy and the Dolphin, Andrew didn't want to live there any more."[56]

Fled from His Wife Back Home to His-Mother-in-Law!

Sugar Heiress Spreckels' Husband Was Disturbed When She Bought That Hoodoo Honeymoon Nest, But When Surrealist Dali Did His Masterpiece of Dorothy and the Dolphin, Andrew Didn't Want to Live There Any More

91 "Fled from His Wife Back Home to His Mother-in-Law!" in *San Antonio Light*, April 5, 1942.

56 "Fled from His Wife Back Home to His-Mother-in-Law!" *San Antonio Light*, April 5, 1942, p. 3. See Fred Dickenson, "The Jinx in a Dream Castle," *Beckley Sunday Register*, April 5, 1942, p. 37: "Apparently husband Andrew McCarthy never learned the significance of the dolphin and fish because he had left the reputedly jinxed mansion before the work of art was unveiled."

92 Ethel Scull in front of her portrait by Andy Warhol, *Ethel Scull 36 Times*, 1963, 200 × 370 cm, in *Ladies' Home Journal*, March 1964.

Hollywood facsimiles

The gossip would not have done Dalí any harm; on the contrary, he understood the agency of his society portraits very well. Their mediation through the press served the primary need of their owners for representation and recognition. By documenting their success, style, and beauty, they conveyed a female American identity based on wealth and charity, culture and fashion, as well as the narcissistic publicizing of the private sphere. By satisfying this need artistically and through media channels, Dalí was able to promote his own economic success and social advancement within American society. The exhibition at the Knoedler Galleries in 1943 was a strategic building block for this. It is therefore not surprising that Dalí painted socialite portraits with surrealist effects

until the end of his life. However, another artist who copied much from him would soon displace him. In March 1964, the *Ladies' Home Journal* published a photograph showing the collector Ethel Scull in front of her portrait, *Ethel Scull 36 Times*, which Andy Warhol had created a year earlier (fig. 92). The New York taxicab fleet owner Robert Scull had offered it to his wife as a birthday gift, although there was little doubt about the actual purpose: "Pop art … turns both creator and collector alike into members of a new pop society. When Warhol sits Ethel Scull … in front of an arcade photo machine and snaps away, the result may be art but it also puts Mrs. Scull on the society page," wrote Peter Benchley at the time.[57] *Ethel Scull 36 Times* was Warhol's first commissioned portrait and was the starting point for his business enterprise of making portraits at the request of wealthy celebrities. With his 1,000 or so iconic celebrity portraits, Warhol became an acclaimed "court portraitist" in the glamorous world of the international jet set. With his Polaroid camera he photographed anything and everything that was famous in showbiz, sport, art, and fashion. He transferred the Big Shot Polaroids into larger-than-life silk screens. Brigitte Bardot, Liza Minnelli, Mick Jagger, Jackie Kennedy, Yves Saint-Laurent, and even Prince Charles and Lady Di did not miss the opportunity to pose for him. Warhol once opined that all portraits should have the same size, and that together they would form a portrait of society. His friend and companion Bob Colacello provides us with a decidedly familiar explanation for Warhol's success: "[Warhol's] portraits transformed aging socialites into Venus de Milos, and their industrialist husbands into Florentine Davids—or at least, into Hollywood facsimiles thereof."[58] Regrettably, Dalí was never portrayed by Warhol.

57 Peter Benchley, "Special Report. The Story of Pop," *Newsweek*, April 25, 1966.

58 Bob Colacello, *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), p. 89. See also *Warhol. Le grand monde d'Andy Warhol*, exh. cat., Paris, Galeries Nationales, ed. Alain Cueff (Paris: Reunion des Musées Nationaux, 2009).