



ART, CREATIVITY, AND SOCIAL MEDIA A Critical Review of Salvador Dalí's Universe on Instagram

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KEYWORDS

*Arts and culture
Communications
Creativity
Social media
Instagram
Salvador Dalí
Heritage*

ABSTRACT

This study examines the extent to which the life and work of the celebrated Spanish artist Salvador Dalí are represented on social media, with a particular focus on the visual platform Instagram. The study places particular emphasis on the profile of the brilliant Catalan author as an exemplar of inspiration and creativity in the context of the digital society of the present day. This study aims to identify which profiles and content have been created on social networks about the Catalan artist, with a particular focus on educational, institutional and creative content, particularly scientific, academic and informative content, and those that reinterpret his work by contemporary artists.

Received: 29 / 04 / 2024

Accepted: 22 / 06 / 2024

1. Introduction and context

The advent of social media has transformed the production, sharing and consumption of cultural and audiovisual content in the digital age. In the contemporary digital society, social media or networks have become the primary alternative for entertainment and education and instruction.

This change has affected all areas of life, including the communication and preservation of architectural heritage. Indeed, the presence of social networks as part of a communication strategy is now a necessity for most companies and institutions. The challenge for these organisations now centres on knowing how to be and communicate online (Viñarás-Abad and Cabezuelo-Lorenzo, 2012:87).

Furthermore, the advent of the Internet and social networks has facilitated the ability to establish contact between users separated by thousands of kilometres in a matter of seconds. Indeed, the quantity of information, data and knowledge generated has increased exponentially, given that social networks have transformed the way we communicate, interact and share information in the digital era. We are witnessing the emergence of a new way of consuming media and a different technology. We are currently witnessing the advent of interactive marketing, which is characterised by the advent of Web 2.0 and the imminent arrival of Web 3.0. This new era is defined by the indissoluble pair of creativity and technology (Jiménez-Marín et al., 2012, p.551).

It is also important to note that social networks are not solely used for personal matters. Many professionals utilise them as professional reputation tools to gain visibility on the network and increase recognition or prestige, or to have more clients and followers, which in turn leads to more business opportunities. In this way, social networks can be an opportunity for leisure, training and cultural, artistic and even scientific dissemination (Sidorenko-Bautista et al., 2021, p. 143).

The digital transformation of art has opened up new creative frontiers and democratised access to art in all its forms. The advent of social networks such as Instagram has facilitated the democratisation of access to art, providing a platform for the promotion, collaboration and appreciation of art in the digital age. This transformation continues to evolve and challenge established conventions, promoting diversity, inclusion and innovation in the art world.

Prior to the proliferation of platforms such as Instagram, art appreciation was limited to museums, galleries and specialised publications. However, with the advent of social media, art has become accessible to a global and diverse audience, radically transforming the viewer's experience and the artists' creative process. One of the greatest contributions of social media to the art world has been the democratisation of access. Now, anyone with an internet connection can explore a vast array of artistic works from the comfort of their own home. This unprecedented accessibility has expanded the reach of art, allowing emerging and established artists to reach audiences that might not otherwise have had access to their work. This is evidenced by the fact that during the coronavirus pandemic, many artists were able to reach new audiences through social media (Barceló et al., 2020; González et al., 2021). Furthermore, social networks have broken down the physical and socio-economic barriers that have traditionally limited participation in the art world, thus fostering diversity and inclusion in the artistic community.

The virality of social media has also transformed the way in which all types of content are promoted and consumed (Cabezuelo-Lorenzo, 2013), including art in all its manifestations. Platforms such as Instagram allow artworks to be shared instantly with millions of users around the world, providing unprecedented exposure for artists and their creations. This capacity for dissemination has led to the emergence of novel art forms that are specifically tailored to the digital environment, such as memes and computer-generated artworks, which challenge traditional conventions and explore the distinctive potential of the digital medium.

Furthermore, social networks have facilitated collaboration and interaction between artists, critics and fans, creating a global online community where ideas, inspirations and feedback can be shared. This instantaneous and continuous connection between participants in the art world has enriched the creative process and encouraged experimentation and innovation. Furthermore, the immediate feedback provided by followers on social media allows artists to adjust and improve their work in real time, resulting in a higher quality and relevance of the artworks produced. This work is situated within the broader field of organisational communication, advertising and audiovisual studies, adopting a multidisciplinary approach. It builds upon the insights of Elías-Zambrano and Jiménez-Marín (2020) on the subject of media and cultural hybridisation.

2. Objectives, Method and Hypotheses

The impact of the multifaceted Catalan artist Salvador Dalí (Figueras, 1904-Figueras, 1989) and his wife Gala Dalí, whose maiden name was Elena Ivanovna Diákonova (Kazan, 1894 Portlligat, 1982), on the art world is difficult to quantify, although it can be attempted to be explained with numbers. Both form part of the Dalinian universe, and it is impossible to study one without the other (Cabezuelo-Lorenzo and López-Martín, 2023, p.299). In this work, however, he opts for a critical review of his influence in today's society and to ascertain how it manifests itself through social networks. In August 1929, Dalí met Elena Ivanovna Diakonova, a Russian immigrant 11 years his senior, in Paris. She was the wife of the French poet Paul Éluard, but she subsequently left her husband for Dalí. They were married twice: first, in Paris in 1934, and subsequently in a Catholic ceremony at the Sanctuary of the Angels in Girona in 1958. In a statement (Corral, 2019), the Empordà painter revealed the following: "I love Gala more than I love my father, my mother, Picasso and even more than money".

In this work, therefore, rather than discussing Gala and Salvador Dalí, the objective, as stated in the title, is to examine the concept of a "Dalinian universe." This approach is necessary because the combination of the two geniuses is the only one capable of explaining the extraordinary success of the Dalí phenomenon beyond the figure of Salvador Dalí himself. It is also important to understand that it is impossible to fully comprehend the figure of Dalí without considering the role of Gala.

The object of study is the corpus of official and unofficial accounts dedicated to Salvador Dalí, which have become a digital oasis where followers can immerse themselves in the artist's creative universe. However, this immersion is not quantitative but qualitative. Consequently, a critical analysis of the content of these social networks is conducted, which is then complemented by a review of bibliographical sources, previous works and other studies that have already been published on the subject. This review also serves to provide a critical analysis of the existing literature.

A total of twelve profiles have been selected for the review. Only one is the official profile of the Fundació-Museu Gala-Salvador Dalí in Figueras (Girona, Catalonia, Spain). The remaining profiles are in Spanish, English and Korean on the Instagram network. The following table presents the data as of March 2024.

Table 1. Profiles of Gala and Salvador Dalí on Instagram chosen as a sample.

Only official profile
https://www.instagram.com/museudali/
Unofficial profiles of Salvador Dalí
https://www.instagram.com/salvadordali_arty/
https://www.instagram.com/salvador_dali_i_domenech/
https://www.instagram.com/salvador_dali_oficial/
https://www.instagram.com/salvador._dali/
https://www.instagram.com/.salvadordalioficial
https://www.instagram.com/salvador_dali_3d/
https://www.instagram.com/superlatiu/
Unofficial profiles of Gala Dalí
https://www.instagram.com/_gala_dali_/
https://www.instagram.com/gala.dali_/
https://www.instagram.com/_gala.dali/
https://www.instagram.com/gala._.dali/

Source: Authors' own elaboration as of 09/March/2024 from public Instagram data.

This work commences with the assertion that Salvador Dalí's presence on social networks, particularly on Instagram, offers a fascinating window for the inspiration and creation of contemporary content creators. As a sub-thesis, it is proposed that the world of surrealism marked a significant turning point in our culture and continues to be present today, particularly through the lens of social networks.

It is therefore considered that although Salvador Dalí was a twentieth-century figure, like many other artists, he has left his creative imprint on the twenty-first century, thus being a true influencer, as stated in numerous publications, including that of González-Torres (2018, p. 101):

Neither Facebook, Twitter, nor Instagram users, nor bloggers, YouTubers, or influencers are included in this category. Pablo Ruiz Picasso, Salvador Dalí and Frida Kahlo were not aware of the multiple functions of networked technologies. Nevertheless, their lives, combined with their potential as creative artists and imbued with unprecedented media spectacle, constitute a remarkable source of iconic influence. Indeed, the numerous photographs in which the three of them appeared were a singular antecedent for the fact that today, decades later and through social networks, contemporary users attempt to construct their own virtual subjectivities under the protection of those photographs.

In this way, numerous accounts about the Catalan artist serve not only as a tribute to Dalí's legacy but also as a bridge between the past and the present, connecting the surrealist genius of the twentieth century with the digital audience of the twenty-first century. Despite the fact that social networks seek novelty and innovation, this work aims to demonstrate that contemporary art, now a classic of art, paradoxically enough, is a recurrent resource in the world of digital communication for leisure, entertainment, or even other purposes.

The influence of the Dalí phenomenon, encompassing both the artist and his wife Gala, on culture, art and creativity is irrefutable. The Dalí family have left their indelible mark on all fields of creation, particularly in painting and sculpture. However, their influence extends to other domains, including advertising and fashion. The latter, as a discipline, is deeply rooted in and linked to consumerism, especially since the development of capitalist society (Jiménez-Marín and Elías-Zambrano, 2019, p. 25). This is partly because of its superficiality and transience, which are also characteristics that are attributed to social networks. In addition to painting and sculpture, the influence of Gala and Salvador Dalí on cinema, as studied by other authors such as Minguet-i-Ballori (2003), Sánchez-Vidal (2004), Tello-Alcaide (2006) and Gale (2008), also deserves special mention. Similarly, the Dalí aesthetic's interconnections with the media, as studied by García-Alberti (2020), and with advertising campaigns (Jiménez-Martín, 2008 and 2009), are worthy of further investigation.

4. Critical Analysis

However, from a social media perspective, Salvador Dalí's presence on Instagram has not only extended the reach of his work but has also had a profound impact on the appreciation of art and creativity in the digital age. The platform allows Dalí to continue challenging established conventions and provoking reflections on the nature of art and the human imagination. The following table presents a ranking of the profiles in question, ordered by the number of followers and publications.

Table 2. Profiles with mentions of Gala and Salvador Dalí on Instagram, ordered by followers.

Only official profile	Publications	Followers	Followed by
https://www.instagram.com/museudali/	1029	50740	333
Unofficial profiles of Salvador Dalí			
https://www.instagram.com/salvadorsdali_arty/	699	182000	8
https://www.instagram.com/salvador_dali_i_domenech/	257	23557	14
https://www.instagram.com/salvador_dali_oficial/	43	13826	8
https://www.instagram.com/salvador._dali/	112	13452	24
https://www.instagram.com/.salvadorsdalioficial	16	7135	7
https://www.instagram.com/salvador_dali_3d/	126	281	100
https://www.instagram.com/superlatiu/	19	13	2
Unofficial profiles of Gala Dalí			
https://www.instagram.com/_gala_dali_/	2	3377	16
https://www.instagram.com/gala.dali_/	66	601	971
https://www.instagram.com/_gala.dali/	29	209	1411
https://www.instagram.com/gala._.dali/	14	127	128

Source: Authors' own elaboration as of 09/March/2024 from public Instagram data.

The data reveal several interesting facts that are worthy of further investigation. The account of the Museu Dalí is the most comprehensive, with a total of 1029 publications. However, it is paradoxically

not the one with the most followers. The account has 50,740 followers, which makes it the second most popular account on the subject of Dalinian studies.

It is curious to note that the account with the largest number of followers is unofficial, with over 18,000 followers. This prompts the question of which content is most appealing to the public and therefore should be prioritised in a communication strategy aimed at generating traffic and followers.

However, it should be noted that the official profile of the Museu Dalí de Figueres has a clean, clear and accessible navigability with well-differentiated sections. These include Events, Press, Your Dalí Museum, Our Exhibitions, EducaDalí (Education), Dalí Quotes and Dalí Listens!

Figure 1: Heading of the Museu Dalí (Figueres) official profile on Instagram with number of posts and followers.



Source: Official Instagram of Museu Dalí de Figueres (Girona, Spain) on 9 March 2024.

Furthermore, the data allows us to infer another lesson: within the Dalinian universe, Gala remains in the background. The "Gala/Dalí binomial is inseparable" (Julián-González, 2005, pp. 53-60), given that they are "image and mirror" (Del-Barrio-Mártil, 2019, p. 26), but it is necessary to differentiate them in network searches. The Instagram accounts that make any mention of the Russian artist and wife of the Catalan genius are few in number and contain little or no original content. The accounts in question bear almost no real relation to the Slavic artist. Such instances can be considered cases of homonymy or of seeking notoriety at the expense of the genuine Gala Dalí, whose personality is worthy of a monographic study, with particular attention to the hitherto unknown aspects of her character, or "hidden life" (De-Diego-Otero, 2003), as well as her own personality in her activities at Púbol Castle (De-Diego-Otero, 2018).

One of the most striking aspects of Dalí's presence on Instagram is the manner in which his work adapts to the visual and fragmented format of the platform, with square images in the requisite proportion of 1x1. This can be observed in image 2 of this work.

However, this adaptation to the digital medium not only fails to preserve the essence of Dalí's work, but also cuts it down, disproportions it, or even half-censors it from the point of view of size. It is true that it revitalises it for a modern, young, contemporary audience that may not have been aware of it.

Image 2: Instagram grid with the last six publications of the Museu Dalí.



Source: Official Instagram of Museu Dalí de Figueres (Girona, Spain) on 9 March 2024.

The most surrealist resurrection possible is that of the new life Salvador Dalí has in the social networks today in the 21st century. This new life seems to guarantee his relevance in the contemporary cultural landscape of today's digital society. Indeed, the surrealist images and quotations about the Dalinian universe are presented in a digitised manner, rendering them more vivid and captivating than a standard book of plates or any art history manual. This digital format allows them to capture the viewer's attention amidst the constant flow of content through feeds and hashtags.

In addition to sharing his work in a static format, Dalí's Instagram accounts frequently offer a contemporary perspective on historical figures and events. This is achieved through the use of videos, which provide a current or contemporary look at a life from the past. The younger users of Instagram thus initiate a creative process through the use of historical photographs, videos and anecdotes.

These multimedia resources provide a renewed perspective, although they do not introduce any new information. They confirm Dalí's validity and originality as a creative mind, allowing followers of social networks, as in this case Instagram, to immerse themselves in his surrealist universe in a significantly more technological, digital way than ever before. This direct engagement with Dalí's legacy in a digital context enhances the viewer's experience and fosters an emotional connection with the artist and his work among younger audiences who may be less familiar with the artist's life and work or who have not yet had the opportunity to view his works in a museum.

Another significant aspect of Dalí's presence on Instagram is his influence on the online artistic and creative community. He has undoubtedly served as an inspiration for new creators, particularly those engaged in the creation of digital content for social networks. The twelve accounts dedicated to Dalí listed above serve as meeting points for amateurs, artists, or the curious, but are not particularly useful for academics seeking to gain a deeper understanding of the Dalinian universe through the lens of serious and reliable scientific knowledge.

The aforementioned accounts share an interest in surrealism and the artist's work, although this interest is superficial. It is important to note that social networks are virtual meeting spaces that encourage the exchange of ideas, collaboration, and inspiration, thereby enriching the creative experience of all those involved. However, this is contingent on the users not being experts in Dalí's work, as experts may be disappointed by the lack of depth and accuracy in the content shared.

From a more constructive perspective, it can be observed that the accessibility of Instagram will facilitate the expansion and growth of this community, enabling it to reach people all over the world who share a passion for Dalí's art and surrealism. Without the existence of social networks such as Instagram, these individuals may not have had the opportunity to engage with the artist's work due to geographical, economic or social limitations. In such instances, the Internet and the networks would have been their only form of access to culture.

It can therefore be posited that Salvador Dalí's presence on Instagram serves as an exemplar of the potential for art and creativity to flourish in the digital domain, disseminating art in a manner that is not necessarily comprehensive but rather designed to attract followers, the curious, and new art enthusiasts. The continued engagement of Dalí's legacy on a platform such as Instagram ensures that his surrealist genius lives on and continues to inspire future generations. Dalí's presence on Instagram

is not merely a digital reproduction of his work; it is an open window into his creative universe, where the past and the present engage in a constantly evolving dialogue.

It is possible to conclude this section by stating that Salvador Dalí represents, as González-Torres (2018:105) estimates, the "contemporary-surrealist configuration of the showman who lives fascinated by the power of creating a new visual reality and strongly inspired by the technology that makes it possible". Consequently, it can be argued that today, without a doubt, he would be an artist interested in social networks, above all in the most visual ones such as Instagram, but perhaps also in Tik-Tok and its frenetic videos. It is important to note that Dalí had already collaborated with various artists on music videos in Barcelona during the 1970s. This was the video "He is my man," by the singer Maruja Garrido, released in 1971.

4. Discussion and Critical Review: Dalí's Legacy in the Digital Society

By initiating a discourse on the subject of Dalí's oeuvre, it is possible to consider it as a source of inspiration and creativity in the context of the digital society of the present day. Dalí's surrealism continues to serve as an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artists and creators across the globe. His capacity to capture the irrational and the dreamlike in images has stimulated the imagination of generations of artists, who find in his work a stimulus to explore new forms of artistic expression in the present era through their passion for social networks. Dalí's presence on Instagram provides a constant flow of surreal images and inspirational quotes, thus fuelling the creativity of his followers and encouraging them to explore uncharted territory in their own artistic practices. This has led to the phenomenon of Dalí becoming a tourist attraction for many areas of Spain (De-San-Eugenio-Vela and Jiménez-Morales, 2010). This aligns with the commercial sense and vision of art that both Gala and Salvador Dalí always had. The couple were adept at generating economic profit from their artistic endeavours and their personal lives, which they transformed into an audiovisual spectacle.

From the perspective of reflection and debate, the work of Dalí exhibited on these profiles prompts reflection and debate on the relationship between art and society. Unfortunately, these discussions do not exist on Instagram and are not amplified. This is because followers interact with Dalí's work or share their interpretations and opinions in comments and posts, which are not conducive to feedback, debate, conversation and bidirectionality. This lack of exchange of ideas impoverishes the experience of the viewer who goes looking for content of interest about Dalí on Instagram. Consequently, the Instagram network does not serve as well as might be expected at first to foster a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the Dalinian universe composed of both Gala and Salvador Dalí and its significance in the contemporary context of social networks. If some authors have criticised Dalí's "onanistic narcissism" (Allepuz-García, 2018, p. 500), one can almost speak in the same terms of some social profiles on Instagram about the Empordà painter.

On a positive note, however, we can speak of a certain democratisation of art, given that Dalí's presence on Instagram has contributed to the dissemination of his art, of the Dalinian universe, by making his work accessible to a global and diverse audience. The Instagram platform enables individuals from diverse backgrounds and levels of artistic experience to gain insight into Dalí's work, even if only briefly, and engage in discourse about its meaning and impact through the use of unofficial profiles. Nevertheless, the official profile is a reliable source of information for those with a genuine interest in the life and work of Gala and Salvador Dalí, as well as for experts in the field.

The accessibility of Instagram democratises the process of art appreciation, allowing knowledge and admiration for Dalí's work to extend beyond traditional art circles and reach new non-expert audiences. This is perhaps why they do not follow the official account but the second, which is less formal and more playful. For many, Instagram represents a gallery of art and literature (Olalla-Ramírez and Mula-Falcón, 2023, p. 526). This is particularly the case for people with little access to culture as a whole.

The avant-garde spirit of Gala and Salvador Dalí continues to serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary artists engaged in innovation and experimentation. On Instagram, the incessant replication of images of their lives and work serves as a constant reminder of the importance of these two individuals in the 20th century and their capacity to challenge established conventions and explore new creative territories. Many contemporary artists are inspired by Dalí's boldness and originality to create works that defy expectations and challenge the boundaries of art in today's digital society, where

Instagram and Tik-Tok have emerged as the most significant social media platforms in recent years. Indeed, for numerous authors, social networks such as Instagram can serve "as a didactic proposal" (Molina-Fajardo, 2022, p. 730), as an "instructional tool inside and outside the classroom in university art courses" (Alves-López, 2017, p. 37), or as a "collaborative learning tool" (Villena-Alarcón and Pérez-Ordóñez, 2020, p. 3237).

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, it can be stated with confidence that the existence of the Dalinian universe, comprising both Gala and Salvador Dalí, is an exemplar of how art and creativity can flourish in the digital age through social networks such as Instagram. The twelve profiles analysed demonstrate that the art shared on social networks is, in fact, yet another means of disseminating culture. However, it is evident that only the official account of the Museu Dalí in Figueres is a reliable, solvent, and valid source for learning about the life and work of Gala and Salvador Dalí, as the most prominent figures in what we have termed the "Dalinian universe."

The presence of Gala and Salvador Dalí on Instagram serves as an exemplar of the transformative potential of social media in the domain of art and creativity. The digital platform enables the continued inspiration, challenge and captivation of audiences worldwide by Gala and Salvador Dalí. Their social media presence not only preserves their memory but also ensures that their influence lives on for generations to come, creating a bridge between the past and the future of surrealist art, which arrived in the 20th century but continues to fascinate a hundred years later.

Dalí's presence on Instagram encourages creativity among young people and stimulates artists and viewers alike, providing a continuous source of inspiration and provocation. His work challenges the established conventions of art and encourages others to explore new creative territories in their own artistic practices.

Consequently, Dalí's presence on Instagram serves to illustrate that art remains a relevant and meaningful phenomenon in the digital age. The advent of social media platforms such as Instagram has enabled art to reach new audiences and continue to serve as a source of inspiration and reflection for people across the globe. This implies that social networks represent an additional means of disseminating and democratising art. Consequently, the accessibility of Dalí's work on Instagram has contributed to the democratisation of art by making it accessible to a global audience that may not have other resources to gain familiarity with the Dalinian universe. This has broadened the reach of art and allowed a wider range of people to participate in the artistic appreciation and dialogue of which Gala and Salvador were truly mythical protagonists in the twentieth century.

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