

## Research Article

# Dali and the piano: the symbolic significance of the piano as instrument in the works of Salvador Dali

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### Abstract

A distinctive feature of symbolism, a powerful force in art, is experimental thinking. It contributes to an innovative approach to artistic analysis and the rethinking of established or traditional perspectives of association. Despite the fact that a large number of studies have been devoted to various symbols in Dali's work, some of them have not received much attention. One of these symbols is the piano. It is present in many of the artist's paintings and is part of his childhood memories. The present analysis is based on these memories as well as the arc of his life and related works. Symbols other than the piano are also included so as to give a more complete analysis. The purpose of this study is to assess the significance of the piano as symbol and to show that it is of primary importance as are the more well-known ones such as the soft clock, egg, and elephants. This study is based primarily based on previously published materials on the Dali's life, works and associated symbols. Works on the history of surrealism as well as autobiographical memoirs of the artist himself also form a basis along with analyzes of his paintings. Based on the available facts, assumptions that formed the basis of the meaning of the piano symbol in the artist's paintings were deduced. The choice of sources was based on their reliability and objectivity. Since any research is based on facts and conclusions based on these facts, it is very important to use different sources in order to have the most objective vision of the problem. Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Office, Koha and data mining methods were used to create this article. Namely; identifying patterns (free search), using the revealed patterns to predict unknown values, analysis of exceptions found in patterns. The purpose of data mining (eng. Datamining) was to detect implicit patterns in data sets. The piano in the work of Salvador Dali is as significant as the well-known ones normally associated with Dali's form of surrealism. This is a symbol that comes from early childhood, passes through adolescence and plays a large semantic role in adulthood. Koha pen-source automated library information system for librarians and readers. It would be most beneficial if more interdisciplinary studies concerning the relations between the representation of music or musical symbols and representational art were undertaken. It would be well if there were to be more collaboration between musicians or music scholars and artists or art scholars who command a higher level of knowledge in their respective fields.

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## Introduction

Surrealism (from the French *surréalisme* *superrealism*) is an art movement that emerged in the nineteen twenties. Its distinguishing feature is the irrational realization of thought. The founder of surrealism is considered to be the French poet Andre Breton, according to whom surrealism created a new super-reality from the contradictions between reality

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and dreams (Domarackaya, 2002). The German surrealist artist Max Ernst said that surrealism, as a trend, denies all control by reason, ethics, and morality (Aronskaya, 2022).

The French artist Andre Masson compiled a list of three conditions for surrealism in art.

- Having freed consciousness from the influence of rational connections, one should try to achieve a trance or get as close as possible to it
- Give yourself to the power of internal impulses, uncontrolled by the mind
- Create as quickly as possible, without stopping to comprehend what has been created.

Salvador Dali did not use hypnosis for inspiration, but sleep. He set to work immediately after waking from sleep, sometimes taking a key in his hand, which fell as soon as the artist fell asleep. From the knock of the key on the floor, he woke up and began to work. Thus, Dali created his works at night, believing that the newly awakened brain creates unconsciously. Confirmation of his guesses can be found in the works of Freud, who argued that a dream must be recorded without delay, otherwise consciousness will distort it (Freud, 2007).

Perhaps that is why Dali's work can be underscored by the following definition: initially, everyday images are placed in unconscious chaos (roughly the same thing happens to us in a dream). This is Dali's famous paranoid-critical method (the artist himself gave the name to this phenomenon).

In the artist's work, we come across some images that change from painting to painting. Many art historians, each in his own way, gave various explanations for such images, calling them symbols.

Let's look at some of them

Cypress - a symbol of the measurement of time (like a burning candle)

Soft watches - the relationship between space and time, elusive time, its relativity

Elephants are a symbol of power, but their thin legs are the fragility of any power; the second option is a symbol of the future

Ants are a symbol of decay or decomposition.

Rhino horn - perfect beauty

Leo - male strength and potency

Lobster - a symbol of girlish innocence

Grasshoppers - fear (the artist's personal phobia of grasshoppers)

A crutch is a support, a link between the subconscious and reality

Egg - human life

Drawers - hidden desires

The snail is a symbol of a hard skull and a soft brain

Flies - spiritual decay

(Sasina, 2022)

All these symbols are primarily related to Salvador Dali himself: to his life, thoughts, memories, and circumstances. And although Dali could put personal meaning into his works, everyone who looks is free to see something of his own in them. This is what makes his paintings interesting.

“The fact that at the time of working on my paintings I myself do not understand their meaning does not mean at all that this meaning does not exist in them”.

*January 1935 Museum of Modern Art, New York, opening speech*

Quite often, in his paintings, the artist depicted musical instruments, which in his works acquired explicit sexual overtones and were endowed with completely anthropomorphic properties. So, playing musical instruments was most likely associated for Dali with sex (“A necrophilic source that scored from the piano on the code”, “Atmospheric skull, sodomizing the piano”, etc.). Perhaps the sounds of music were for him a source of pleasure comparable to sexual pleasure, perhaps the shapes, curves, and holes of musical instruments suggested the human body, perhaps playing an

instrument suggested touching its hands and feet, extracting sounds, reminded of a sexual act and a prelude to him. In any case, the artist's favorite themes, such as incest, homosexuality, and necrophilia, are widely used in paintings depicting musical instruments.

A series of such paintings, created from the beginning of the thirties coincides in time with the acquaintance of Gala - Elena Dyakonova - who became his wife (1934), model, and muse.

It was at this time that the style and themes of Salvador Dali's paintings changed a lot, they became more vulgar, with sexual overtones, a perverted perception of everything that was connected with sexual relations, no matter what object. There exists a common opinion among Salvador Dali biographers, that before meeting with Gala, the twenty-five-year-old artist, despite all his interest in sex, was still a virgin and it was she who revealed to him the world of carnal love. The fact of Dali's possible virginity can be explained by another case from his biography. As a teenager, he came across a medical guide to sexually transmitted diseases, accidentally or deliberately left by his father on the piano. Struck by the sight of decomposed genitals, the artist for a long time abandoned the idea of connection with women.

This case provides an explanation for another phenomenon, namely that one of the dominant musical instruments depicted by Dali in paintings with sexual overtones was the piano. Since the artist almost always depicted in his paintings what occupies his own consciousness, or rather the subconscious (recall that he worked immediately after sleep), it can be assumed that he was excited by the pianos. But the artist's first encounter with this instrument took place long before the history of the handbook, namely in childhood. The musical Pichot family, friendly with the Dali family, was distinguished by some extravagance inherent in creative people, and often, having loaded a white piano on a large boat, they could arrange an excellent classical concert right in the middle of the bay of the city of Cadaqués, where both the Pichots and Dali had summer residences. Little Dali witnessed such performances more than once (Dali, 1996).

The combination of water piano and boat itself is not very realistic, in the children's imagination it probably acquired some associations of its own. Just imagine how much effort it takes to transfer a concert grand piano to a boat. Imagine the boat itself under the weight of this huge (especially for a child) cumbersome instrument, imagine the sounds of music that were heard over the river, merging with the river's own noise. It is most probably difficult to determine where the sounds of water end and the sounds of the instrument begin. It may also seem as if the river is singing, and the piano is spewing water out of itself. What we just see in the pictures "Mysterious sources of harmony" and "Necrophilic source, scored from the piano on the code." Below we will analyze another meaning of these sources, namely their sexual overtones, which over time were superimposed on these childhood memories.

The piano is an inanimate object with which we associate the beautiful and the sublime. A giant, a beautiful huge strong instrument, enchanting sounds of music merging with the rich summer nature, the waters of the river bringing coolness and soothing with their murmur, relaxing heat, a slight smell of overripe already slightly rotting fruits, unobtrusively reminiscent of the natural end of all life. Apotheosis - a book of venereal diseases with detailed repulsive drawings of decaying flesh, lying on a powerful king of instruments. As a reminder that you have to pay for every pleasure. And in the middle of it all, a boy with a lot of imagination and talent. A boy who transferred his complexes, fears, thoughts, and dreams into the works of art he created.

### **Problem of Research**

The research was done to establish a link between the significance of Dali's experiences with music and how he both chose to represent and interpret these in his paintings. The study is a part of a bigger exploration into the relationship between the disciplines of music and the representational arts.

### **Method**

#### **Research Model**

This study is based primarily based on previously published materials on the Dali's life, works and associated symbols

## Documents

The specific paintings were chosen because they are directly representative of how Dali was able to transform his musical experiences and memories into representative art. I've chose "Mysterious sources of harmony", "Atmospheric Skull Sodomizing a Grand Piano", "Partial Hallucinations. Six apparitions of Lenin on a Grand Piano", "Skull with lyrical appendage" and "Necrophilic source, scoring from the piano on the code".

## Analysis

The analysis was done by inspecting the contents of the paintings and finding their contextual position in the arc of Dali's creative processes.

## Results

Having presented all the information gathered for this study, one may reach certain conclusions.

### **Mysterious sources of harmony. 1934**

Canvas, oil



**Picture 1.** Mysterious sources of harmony. 1934 (Web 1)

One could characterize the genre of this painting as a landscape, although it bears little resemblance to rich natural landscapes rich with details. This is a dull and dreary landscape made in gloomy and dejected colors. From the front edge to the very horizon stretches a stone plateau, It is as if it exists separately from the whole world and strongly reminiscent of a theater stage. In the foreground, a figure that almost dissolves into the air, with signs of both sexes, a little behind it are two light spots, reminiscent of boulders, or a light haze, or resembling a small elephant and a woman's sandal. In the middle part of the picture, we see a composition of three components: a dazzling white piano stands out as a bright spot, a cypress tree emerges from it, similar to a stalagmite that has grown on the floor of a cold cave, a huge puddle spreads under the source gushing from the piano.

Two rocks, like arches, guard an alley of stone blocks stretching into the distance. And above all this, the sunset sky, already blackened above, but still illuminated by the last rays of the setting sun at the very edge.

At first glance, these incompatible items can be combined with a closer analysis. The fountain pouring from the piano can be compared with the ejaculation of an individual who has reached sensual ecstasy (of course, only Dali can be an individual, because the artist's work, especially in those years, was of an exclusively personal nature).

An androgynous character in the foreground on the right, covering his face with his hands in a gesture of despair or shame. Such a gesture is all too familiar to us from Dali's paintings of the previous two years, and is associated, according to Dali, with his habit of masturbation, which he considered a reckless waste of vital energy, but which he could not refuse. Perhaps this habit began to somehow interfere with the intimate relationship between Salvador and Gala, or the disturbing gesture was caused by other problems in intimate life - for example, impending impotence, which Dali himself spoke about (Petryakov, 2008).

*Petryakov Alexander Salvador Dali. Divine and many-sided" St. Petersburg "Piter" 2008*

The figure in the foreground is an unambiguous hermaphrodite. At a certain point, Dali began to portray himself and Gala in the form of a hermaphroditic unit, "Gala-Salvador Dali." Here, perhaps, the conscious or unconscious desire of the artist is reflected to really merge into Gala into a single physical shell. The reason for such a desire could be the realization of the death of one of them at the very time when the other remains alive. "Gala has become the salt of my life, my beacon, my double, she is me" (Benua, 2014)

The figure in the picture is not alone, by the stones in the background we see a barely distinguishable second figure, turned back to us. But nevertheless, the posture and the way a person covers his face with his hand tells us about despair. This man is broken.

The poem by Vladimir Kotovsky perfectly characterizes this picture.

Dangerous to meet  
 On the stone plateau  
 Calm down below  
 But the winds are burning;  
 Star motes  
 Lie down on the coat  
 Excessive brightness  
 Sunsets melt...  
 We quickly got close  
 And a marble piano  
 Created a melody  
 In a merging rhythm;  
 Broken by a triad  
 Aging Grail  
 And wounds in the blood of the eyes,  
 Like a sharp razor...  
 Secrets of eternity  
 Light as the horizon  
 But the crown of the tree  
 Never see the roots!..  
 Us the shadow of intercourse  
 Covered like an umbrella  
 Easy haste  
 Desperation offend!  
 Absorbs the past  
 Like moisture, all words  
 What have been said  
 In the heat and without supervision,  
 But only with gravity  
 The head will pour  
 We can't bear  
 The ambiguity of shame.  
 Under a block of stone

The grain will not sprout,  
 Centuries go by  
 But we do not understand:  
 It's pointless to search  
 Harmony source ...  
 And unlikely in the future  
 Someday we'll be able to.  
 (Kotovskiy, 2008)

The central object of the picture is the piano. It is the origin of the water source itself. It occupies the middle of the composition and is the largest in size, it is the center around which other objects "live". The picture repeats the plot of the painting "Necrophilic source, which scored from the piano on the code." It may be surmised that the source that flows from the piano is a continuation of the same source from another picture, hence, also necrophilic. The source of inspiration for the artist is the remembrance of the beloved dead (allegorically - necrophilia).

Dalí's brother died before his birth, and his mother, not grieving over the first Dalí, gave birth to a second. Salvador then tried to separate himself from his brother in a conscious manner for the remainder of his life. He wanted to prove himself to be a unique individual and not a dead brother. Perhaps this fact explains his attraction to necrophilia in art. "All my eccentric antics, all my absurd ideas are explained by the tragic desire that I have been obsessed with all my life: I always wanted to prove to myself that I exist. That I am me and not my dead brother." (Balandin, 2010)

There are two explanations for this source. First, the waters of the river beating from the piano, a direct reference to childhood, and the very white piano on the water, where the streams of music are identified with the streams of water. Water, passing through the piano, mixes with the sounds of the keys and pours out in a common sound-water mass. Second, the source is like the piano's ejaculation, resulting from sexual or aesthetic ecstasy.

A cypress growing out of a piano is a symbol of the measurement of time and, as a result, sadness, since the awareness of time usually leads to pessimistic thoughts. In this symbol, we also see a connection with the childhood of the artist. Sitting at school, he determined by the shade of the cypresses how much was left until the end of the lessons. In addition, slender tall cypress trees with their outlines resemble candles that melt during burning, that is, they disappear as well as the time for which they burn out.

By connecting all the elements of the picture, we can assume its meaning. This is the regret of lost pleasures, the fear of death, the fear of losing loved ones, the awareness of the transience, the perishability of all living things, and, most importantly, all feelings over time. And this time is inexorably approaching the moment when the source in the piano runs out. The piano is here as a symbol of life - the source and time - cypress. When the cypress candle burns out, the source will dry up. And the solemn music will stop. The piano will become an empty box because, in order to sound, it needs the touch of hands, it needs someone's inspiration to make the source beat. The piano is here as an island of peace and stability in the midst of eternity and chaos, as the last and only refuge for a tired soul.

#### **Atmospheric Skull Sodomizing a Grand Piano. 1934**

Wood, oil



**Picture 2.** Atmospheric Skull Sodomizing a Grand Piano. 1934 (Web 2)

In 1934, Dalí married Gala and this became a new starting point in his work. His style became even more vulgar with explicit sexual overtones. According to Dalí's biographers, he was attracted to unnatural sex scenes from adolescence, he veiled his preferences in the pictures, showing relationships, sex, attraction from a dirty, unpleasant side (Petryakov, 2008).

The presented picture just shows Dalí's desire to see absolutely any household items as sexual partners. In this picture, we see Dalí's repeated attraction to necrophilia - in this case it is a skull - and the desire for violence against someone. The victim in this case is a piano. That is, the skull embodies evil, violence, and death, which dominate something pure and beautiful. The piano is the personification of beauty and music, a spiritual thing that is usually touched with respect and love, an expensive thing that tells about the status of the owner - few can afford to have a piano at home. Those who own one protect it as an expensive majestic and at the same time fragile thing. We do not forget that with the right touch of the hands of a pianist, beautiful music flows from it (remember the source from the piano), the piano can cry and laugh, be sad and sing, be solemn and tender. Thousands of beautiful melodies can be extracted from it, but what does the skull do?

He uses the piano as an insensitive log, he breaks it spiritually and physically. The self-satisfaction of the skull occurs due to violence, and precisely violence against something beautiful, the main idea is to abuse something beautiful and sublime, which is what the piano is for the artist. However, the skull also experiences pain, passing through the closed lid of the piano, trying to break through the strings into the depths, it is deformed, we clearly see a grimace of pain, but the desire to spoil the piano is stronger. People sitting in the background demonstrate complete indifference to what is happening. We do not see their faces, but their backs are bent so indifferently and relaxed that it becomes clear that they are aware of what is happening, but they treat it like a swaying wind or a cry of seagulls. They do not pay attention, perhaps because they see this too often and the desecration of decaying matter (skull) over spirituality (piano) is an ordinary sight for them.

An empty boat on the shore at first glance is associated with salvation - the piano can sail away on it away from here - but we can clearly see that the boat is small, the piano's salvation seems to be near, but at the same time it is impossible, the boat will not withstand it. Or, perhaps, this is a reference to the artist's childhood, all to the same Pichot family, who rolled the piano on a boat, arranging concerts. Although that piano was white, and this one was brown, perhaps the artist showed growing up through color - years passed, the white color of innocence left with childhood, the piano matured.

The size of the boat may then be explained – in this instance the piano that once fit easily onto the boat has now outgrown the boat in every proportion and can no longer fit. Perhaps this is also a reference to childhood, because in

childhood, a mother, like a boat, can take away from all troubles, hide from misfortunes and solve problems, and as you grow up, you understand that parents and, in particular, mother are not omnipotent and cannot save from all misfortunes. The size of their capabilities decreases with age, and they can no longer take away from adult problems. Therefore, even though the boat is nearby (like people close to you), it is at the same time powerless and useless. The color of the picture is interesting - the whole landscape is a yellow-green nauseating hue as if evoking associations with vomiting and two sharp spots - a dazzling white skull and a brown piano. But in this case, the white color of the skull is associated not with purity, but with the emptiness into which the beholder falls.

PS: Critic and Dali's good friend Rafael Santos Torroella claimed that this more than strange plot was caused by the attempts of Federico Garcia Lorca (Spanish poet and playwright) to seduce Dali. In this case, Garcia Lorca and his desires are more than suitable for the role of a skull, while Dali personifies himself with a piano.

### **Partial Hallucinations. Six apparitions of Lenin on a Grand Piano. 1931**

Canvas, oil



**Picture 3.** Partial Hallucinations. Six apparitions of Lenin on a Grand Piano. 1931 (Web 3)

Dali's pro-communist views reached their apogee in 1931 - just at that time the painting "Partial obscuration. Six appearances of Lenin on the piano" was painted. In the future, the paths of Dali and communism diverged. One of the main reasons for this cooling was the fact that the communists banned Freudianism and seized all the books of Sigmund Freud - Dali's main idol - from free access.

However, in 1931, while painting "The Six Appearances of Lenin at the Piano", Salvador Dali had a positive attitude towards communism - and its leader.

Here is how Dali himself described the very "clouding" that served as the basis for the plot of the picture: "In the pre-sunset twilight, a piano keyboard appeared to me in blue light, on which I saw several yellow halos surrounding the face of Lenin." (Dali, 2005).

Having set himself the goal of capturing what he saw with his characteristic accuracy in detail, Dali plunged headlong into work - this is how the painting "Six Apparitions of Lenin on the Piano" appeared.

We can assume that the piano in this case equates to Communism. The cult of Lenin rests on this piano. Lenin in this case uses the power, height and strength of the piano to exalt himself. Lenin not only stands on the piano, but also tries to play a victorious piece on this instrument. Looking closely at the notes, we will see that ants are crawling over them - in the works of Dali, the symbol is purely negative, meaning decay, decline and death. From this we can conclude that the communist idea for Dali was inherently rotten.

The room is almost empty, gloomy and wretched, sitting exaggeratedly straight man with a bandage on his sleeve is associated with some kind of guard, that is, it symbolizes power. This will be the world under the conditions of victorious communism - naked, gloomy and entirely consisting of prohibitions. A world that will only be allowed to peep through the partially open door at real life, itself being free, bright and without total censorship. We see this door



to the free world in the background of the painting. Unlike the gloomy dark tones of the room, which occupies almost the entire space, the world outside the door is replete with sky-blue colors, you can directly feel what fresh clean air and warm wind are there. Next to the man - the warden on a chair is a sweet cherry. Densely - red fruit, juicy, beautiful and refined, as if it symbolizes wealth and other benefits that will be available only to the elite in the communist world.

Thus, we can conclude. Piano. The idea of communism is powerful and beautiful, stands strong and sounds musical. Room. The embodiment of communism is terrible and creates a dull miserable world. You can try to give the picture another explanation. Piano. Lenin. Father.

Dali had a difficult relationship with his father, especially after the artist became close to Gala. In 1930, his father kicked El Salvador out of the house and disinherited him. Vladimir Lenin was called the father of workers and peasants by the Soviet ideology. Dali submersed himself in this new ideology. However, he cooled toward it, seeing in them signs of tyranny and deprivation of freedom of choice (recall the prohibition of the books of Sigmund Freud). Thus, in Dali, Lenin was identified with his own father, since both of them became despots. This conclusion became possible thanks to the statements of Dali himself, where he called Lenin his father (Dali S, 2020).

And just like his father, at first he respected, and then mocked. This set of circumstances explains the wretched room that is the empty life of his father, and the bright spots behind the half-open door are the world into which Dali steps into. The piano, in this case, is a work that adorned the life of his father while Dali was present in it, but had absolutely nothing to do with him. The man with the bandage does not touch the piano, he cannot play it, the piano is silent for him. Dali leaves for a free bright world, his father remains next to the piano, rendered useless to him.

According to Dali himself, this is a hypnagogic canvas that captures the state between sleep and reality at the moment of awakening, when a person is visited by hallucinations that are easy to confuse with reality. In this case, cherries, ants and the piano come from Dali's childhood memories, that is, they again lead us to the summer concerts of the Pichots. In addition, the cherry is a recollection of one of the artist's successful childhood paintings, which little Salvador received warm praise from Ramon Pichot, an impressionist artist who predicted a great creative future for Dali.

**Skull with lyrical appendage (Skull with lyrical appendage leaning on a bedside table, which the temperature of a cardinal's nest). 1934**

Wood / oil



**Picture 4.** Skull with lyrical appendage. 1934 (Web 4)

"Skull with Lyrical Appendage" and "Atmospheric Skull Sodomying Piano". These paintings were painted in the same year, they are united by the common elements of the skull and the piano. Both paintings are painted on wood and are small in size. Both paintings, according to art critic Rafael Santos Torroella<sup>2</sup>, were both inspired and influenced by Federico Garcia Lorca the poet and man (Torroella, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Spanish art critic, translator and poet.

In his work, Dali paid attention to his only close friend Lorca. Even Lorca himself once said that it was he who was the prototype of the hero of the film by the Spanish director Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali, called "Andalusian dog" (Andalusian dog is me) (Ospovat, 1965).

The predecessor of these two paintings is the painting "Atmospheric Chair". This picture is also small in size, also painted on wood and is also associated with Lorca, who both loved Dali and attempted to have physical relations with the painter but later regretted the whole affair. Most likely, Dali, who had shunned Lorca after meeting Gala, returned to thoughts of Federico, seeing him in a dream. This became evident in his works. In addition to the above works, Lorca was present in one way or another in many of the artist's works. In 1987, Dali's letters addressed to Lorca were published in Spain. These were letters to a kindred soul as they are full of intense feeling, excitement, ineptitude, and passion. Reading them, it becomes clear that not only Lorca, as previously thought, fell under the influence of Dali, but vice versa, Dali was fascinated by Lorca because of their shared friendly and veiled erotic feelings reflected in the artist's autobiographical art.<sup>3</sup>

Dali's last meeting with Lorca took place in 1935, shortly before the death of the poet, after which Lorca wrote:

"We are twins at heart. And here's your proof. For seven years we have not seen each other, but we find agreement in literally everything, as if we never interrupted our conversations. Salvador Dali is a genius!" (Ospovat, 1965)

The landscape is rather desolate. The colors and shapes are simple and uniform. We see a stony plain, empty and lifeless, not a blade of grass, not a single bright spot. It conveys a sense of indifference and boredom. To the right, something cubic in shape grows out of the plain. Only the presence of a small door suggests that this is a house. This building fits quite organically into the general view, as if the plain gave birth to it itself or as if it is a continuation of a dull landscape. The house suggests the question of whether it is inhabited or not as well as to the character of the possible inhabitant (that may share the characteristics of the house). Perhaps this is the refuge of the skull as it seems to complement the feeling that the plain and the empty, cold and windowless house evokes. Behind, somewhere near the horizon, a bright spot rises a yellow mountain, similar to a piece of expensive and delicious butter.

The piano – pretty, shabby, already elderly, but retaining its former charm, is moving precisely toward the horizon. His intention to end the past is clearly visible in the flight path over the plain. This piano once led a completely different life, it shone, was the soul of society, and rotated in aristocratic circles. His legs - slender, ornately carved, and decorated with intricate carvings, were made by the hands of a professional craftsman whose work produced the same grace found in the legs of the best Parisian beauties. The lacquered cover even now still shines and shimmers under the light, and the keys are just as amazingly white. It's even amazing how he survived so well in this desert. With eyes closed, one can easily imagine him in a ballroom. The chandelier trembles and is reflected in the sides polished to a shine, the keys fly after the hands of the pianist, the ladies, rustling with dresses, lean on the lid, and around there is only fun, laughter, and thousands of splashes of light and champagne. This echo of bygone times carries the piano, which finally decided to break out of the bleak swamp that surrounds it.

The skull is at home in this plain. It is his house, like an empty cube and a faceless landscape. He is like a plebeian who accidentally marries someone of higher rank but never rises in level. This is definitely a misalliance that results in the skull tearing the piano out of its habitat and throwing it on the cold floor of its uncomfortable world. Nevertheless, it seems that the moment has come for the piano to leave. It strives to return where it came from, despite the past which does not loosen its grip. The skull in this case is the personification of all dirty, uncomfortable, shameful things that we acquire during our life and that keep us in places we don't like, with people we don't love, with things we don't like. This is a habit that represents the unwillingness to resist and laziness to change anything. The skull is on the ground, perhaps holding the piano back from taking the plunge (keeps the piano from taking a decisive step), dragging it down like a swamp. Looking closely, we will see that the keys of the piano are pulled by the skull, almost tearing them out of the inside of the instrument. They are stretched out and connect with the teeth of the skull, and it is no longer clear where the piano ends and the skull begins. The skull and the piano are connected by teeth-keys like Siamese twins by the umbilical cord.

And just as in the separation of twins there is a risk of death of one or both, this "umbilical cord" with a common blood circulation symbolizes the possible death when it is cut. But it's not the keys that have elongated and hold the skull, it's the teeth - like a continuation of the skull - that have grown out of the jaw and bit into the inside of the piano. Thus, it becomes clear that it is the skull that holds, the skull that dominates and despite the pain and deformation, it

<sup>3</sup> Salvador Dali. Letters to Federico Garcia Lorca. The translation of Dali's letters was carried out according to a magazine publication - "Poesia", Madrid, 1987, No. 27-28.

continues to bite into the piano, breaking both. Here we see a clear connection with the painting "Atmospheric Skull Sodomizing the Piano" and its main theme - the desire to master more than pain.

As mentioned above, Dali said that everyone can put into his work the meaning that he sees fit. And this statement is most applicable to this picture.

Maybe the skull wants to leave with the piano? Maybe he's trying to climb with him? Or not just does not want to let go, but cannot.

Between the two legs of the piano is a lyre. This is an ancient Greek instrument, an indispensable attribute of the god of light and the patron of the arts, the beautiful Apollo, who was the personification of male beauty in Ancient Greece and Rome. The lyre, because of its outlines and location, is reminiscent of female genitalia while also referencing the indispensable attribute of the ideal of Apollo's male beauty. This is once more a direct reference to the hermaphrodite from the painting "The Mysterious Sources of Harmony" and at the same time a hint of Lorca's homosexual preferences. This is also a direct indication of an unnatural sexual connection between the skull and the piano (the painting of the picture - beginning of the 20th century- was a time when homosexual preferences were considered a perversion and openly condemned, and the existence of hermaphrodites was denied).

Orpheus, who descended after Eurydice into the other world, also played the lyre, that since ancient times was considered a symbol of man. The instrument is the body, the strings are the soul. Even in ancient Greece, the sounds of the lyre accompanied the recitation of epic and love poetry, which was called lyric and is still used today to refer to poems about love. Lyra - lyrics - lyrical appendage - skull with lyrical appendage. The piano with the lyre interspersed in it is the soul of the skull, the soul that he cannot let go, without which he cannot live. Lyric addition. The piano lid - what at first glance seems like a play of shadows are actually facial features. The dark passionate eyes undoubtedly belong to Dali, the crack on the lid above them is a lock of his unruly hair. This is Dali. The skull may well be Lorca and Dali the lyrical appendage.

Thanks to this picture, we can say with greater certainty that the piano for Dali is not just a musical instrument, but a personification of his essence

In a second version the skull is trying to soar above the world along with the piano, he does not hold it, but on the contrary, wants to leave with it. In this case, a completely different picture opens before us. A mundane old skull, overgrown with everyday life, strangled by values imposed by society, having lost its former spirit of rebellion, cannot break all stereotypes and challenge society. (Can't he become an open homosexual?) An old bedside table as the personification of philistinism and obsolete traditions, on which he relies, without which he will fall, a crutch that supports the keyboard-dental umbilical cord - all this is a burden, releasing which, the skull may possibly be able to rise but can no longer do without it he has grown accustomed to conventions. He is stiffened.

The picture contains the tragedy of the incompatibility of kindred souls due to the foundations and rules imposed by society, which makes one give up "I" (first person) for the sake of stereotypes. The eternal confrontation between flying and crawling, material and spiritual, art and bureaucracy, desired and imposed, freedom and fear...

**Necrophilic source, scoring from the piano on the code. 1933**

Canvas, oil



**Picture 5.** Necrophilic source, scoring from the piano on the code. 1933 (Web 5)

When looking at this picture, lines from M. Lermontov's poem "Prayer" come to mind: "there is a grace-filled power in the consonance of the words of the living ..." This was written in 1839, almost a hundred years before the creation of this picture. There is a graceful force in the consonance of musical chords that give birth to a fertile source.

In his works, Dalí sought to reproduce such phenomena as the arrhythmia of thought and the freshness of a look at familiar things. By placing well-known objects with which any person has certain stable associations, and by placing them in unusual circumstances, he forces the viewer to see something completely new, and for the viewer's brain to work differently. As has been mentioned more than once, the paintings the artist recounted from his dreams preserve all the details of what he saw. Additionally, we can observe these in relation to the symbolism introduced by Carl Jung<sup>4</sup>. Water is feminine, stone is masculine, egg is the universe, birds are the underworld (Ostanina, 2002).

And just as Jung interpreted dreams with these symbols, we will try to explain the picture.

The desert in the foreground and low hills on the horizon are under the soft light of the setting sun. Such light is referred to in the literature as divine heavenly light. In the center of the canvas is a white piano, glowing either from within or because of this magical light. Right in the middle, the piano is pierced like an arrow by a cypress tree, the top of which is so high in the sky that it caught the golden rays of the sun already hidden from us. Hidden behind a cypress is a snow-white antique sculpture - a bent figure in a Greek tunic.

The keyboard is open and there are scores on it. Under the keys is the end of a pipe from which water flows into a small rectangular pool, similar to the top of a piano. So, again we see the piano, this time white, like the Pichotov piano from childhood memories.

A beautiful majestic white piano that fills the entire foreground and the right corner of the picture, with the keys stretching into the distance like a road. These keys are white and black, like joyful and sad events from life, alternating with each other and together creating a melody of life, where there is grief (black keys) and happiness (white keys) - still more. The cypress that breaks the piano in the middle is a symbol of the measurement of time in Dalí's paintings. This is rooted in childhood, when he calculated how much was left until the end of classes by the shadow cast by these trees. Exactly the same cypress is present in the painting "The Mysterious Sources of Harmony". Exactly the same white piano with a crack on the lid. This crack on the lid of the piano appears in several paintings. In "The Mysterious Sources and The Necrophilic Source," it seems to be a continuation of the pit from which the cypress grows, although it doesn't come into contact with it. In the "Atmospheric Skull" this crack looks like a strand of hair above the eyes of the artist,

<sup>4</sup> Swiss psychiatrist, founder of analytical psychology, author of books on psychoanalysis

looking at us from the lid of the piano. This observation suggests that in the first two paintings the crack is related to Salvador Dali. In general, looking at the “Necrophilic Source,” you always compare it with the “Mysterious Sources of Harmony.” These pictures are the same and different at the same time. In both paintings, the white piano is the main exhibit that attracts attention, but in the “Necrophilic Source” it occupies almost the entire picture, and in the “Mysterious Sources,” although in the middle, it is noticeably smaller in size. Objects that directly interact with it appear next to it. The color of the pianos is also an important factor. In European culture, white is the color of joy, but in Eastern culture it is the color of loss, deep sorrow and mourning. Perhaps the artist used a second color value. Assuming that the artist personifies himself with a piano, as well as in the paintings “Atmospheric Skull Sodomizing a Piano” and “Skull with a Lyrical Appendage”, where he is supposedly a piano, and his friend the poet Lorca is a skull. Then a crack becomes clear - a curl, which associates the piano lid with the forehead of the artist and white becomes the color of mourning for the dead, often reflected in Dali's work. The Cypress in both paintings remains unchanged. This is time, it changes everything around, but itself remains absolutely static and indifferent to what is happening.

Further in the pictures we see interesting differences. First, let's take a look at the dates. The “Necrophilic Source” was written first. There are calmer and softer colors in the picture. This is a summer sunset (one of those same summer sunsets in Cadacas), and the piano i.e., Dali takes up almost all the free space, “Mysterious Sources,” painted a year later – presents pre-storm gloomy colors, dark and disturbing and the piano (Dali) is noticeably less. It is as if the whole world stopped revolving around him, or he himself moved away from the world. The scores on the keyboard in the first picture indicate that the music has not yet been learned while in the second they are no longer needed, the laws of life, even if not accepted, are still firmly learned. The source in the first picture is located right in the center of the piano. It is the center of its existence. In the second picture, the source is located on the side, and its role ceases to be dominant, At the same time, both pianos are turned sideways to the viewer, that is, the side source in the second picture visually becomes the center for the viewer, ceasing to be the center for the piano. If viewed simultaneously, the piano in the first picture is turned to the viewer with its right side, that is, the pianist's right hand playing the melody. In the second - the left, playing the accompaniment.

It can be assumed that initially, the artist focuses on himself (melody). The environment comes to the fore, close people, that is, the accompaniment without which the melody will not be so bright and rich. The lake is different in both pictures. In the first case, water spills into a pool of almost perfect shape, very similar in shape to the lid of a piano. One could say that the pool is its mirror image. In the second, the water overflowed its banks and flooded the earth around like uncontrollable emotions. Thus, the second source is like a soul overflowing with emotions, splashing them out in abundance in different directions.

It is perhaps possible to understand the hidden meanings of Dali's picture titles by comparing the translations of some words and their meanings in different languages.

Necrophilic source, scoring from the piano on the code.

Nekros (Greek). Dead (English). Nectar - divine drink (Slavic)

Source (English). Sozvuik - Sozvuchiye (consonance) (Slavic). "So" - prefix, meaning union zvuk (sound) - connected sounds.

Piano (English). Pyany (Slavic) – drunk.

Code (English). Accordo (Italian) – consent.

(Timofeev, 2019)

We get "a necrophilic source - a divine drink of consonances",

"Scoring from the piano on a coda - scoring out of drunken consent."

### **Conclusion**

Dali's process is entirely different than that found in the “classics” of surrealism. As the leader of surrealism, Andre Breton, wrote in his “Manifesto of Surrealism”: “Surrealism is pure mental automatism”, but there is nothing automatic in Dali's works. On the contrary, the artist transfers the same images that excite his subconscious from painting to painting. This method, as mentioned above, Dali himself called “paranoid-critical”. His idea is not just to move unconscious visions onto the canvas, but first to comprehend them and only then depict them. There is no chaos in his paintings; a careful detailed study reveals the connection of all images, their repetition in other paintings, a

common idea that unites seemingly incompatible things. In the artist's, certain symbols, such as pianos, crutches, eggs, birds, clocks, ants, elephants, cypresses, skulls, pass from picture to picture, while not changing in their meaning. The hidden meaning becomes their hallmark. Many articles have been written on the topic of symbols in Dali's works. Additionally, the painter himself explained many of the symbols during his lifetime in his books or interviews. It is so that no one doubts the fact that a melted clock is an elusive time, ants are death, a grasshopper is fear, egg - human life, lion - male potency, to name but a few.

This study is dedicated to explaining the piano as a symbol of the beautiful and pure. Perhaps a symbol of childhood because it is in childhood that the mind is pristine and not stained by any conventions. It is majestic in its simple and natural desires as well as beautiful in thoughts. The piano, childhood, and most vivid summer memories seemed to be intertwined in Dali's subconscious to generate an image of almost divine significance. This is definitely an image of a mirage in the desert, an image of lofty feelings and unattainable perfection. That same ideal, that same lost Atlantis, the coveted Eldorado, that same dream that takes everyone who has ever touched it to a better world.

## Recommendations

### Recommendations for Further Research

It would be most beneficial if more interdisciplinary studies concerning the relations between the representation of music or musical symbols and representational art were undertaken. It would be well if there were to be more collaboration between musicians or music scholars and artists or art scholars who command a higher level of knowledge in their respective fields.

### Recommendations for Applicants

The recommendations that can be made for applicants are no different than those already stated for further research. These are to be found in the text.

## Limitations of Study

The limitations of the present study are: It deals with the works of a single artist in a restricted historical period. It is difficult to ascertain certain relationships because of the lack of certain primary sources.

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