

## ***DALÍ: ILLUSTRATING THE SURREAL AT*** **MEMPHIS BROOKS MUSEUM OF ART**

*Visionary illustrations on view through May 11, 2014*

**Memphis, TN (March 10, 2014)** – Forty-nine rare and masterful book illustrations from celebrated, often controversial artist Salvador Dalí are on display through late spring at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art. Consisting of works loaned by the Salvador Dalí Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida, and site curated by Dr. Stanton Thomas, the Brooks' Curator of European and Decorative Art, *Dalí: Illustrating the Surreal* is on view through Sunday, May 11, 2014.

Though probably best known for his Surrealist oil paintings, Salvador Dalí (1904–1989) was also a remarkably skilled illustrator and printmaker. Dalí chose to bring to life literary masterpieces that reflect his fascination with dreams, transformation, and the world of the subconscious. The exhibition features visionary, sometimes almost psychedelic, illustrations for four books. The earliest among these are Dalí's images for Miguel de Cervantes' masterwork *Don Quixote* (1957). Doubtlessly the book's imagery—such as its delusional hero charging at windmills as if they were enemies—appealed to the artist's love of fantasy and caprice.

Dalí's next venture was his illustrations for Hans Christian Anderson's *Fairy Tales* (1967). These beautiful and poignant stories, which are often filled with strange symbolism and acts of violence, offered the artist a chance to explore a world of witchcraft, magic, and transformation. No less extraordinary are Dalí's illustrations for Lewis Carroll's fanciful *Alice in Wonderland* (1969). Although a classic of children's literature, it is easy to imagine how the artist loved the book's bizarre characters and dream-like atmosphere—which seem to belong more to a Surrealist tale than to a Victorian children's story. The exhibition also includes perhaps the most famous of Dalí's illustrated books, *Les dîners de Gala* (1973). He filled this volume with recipes that several different restaurants in Paris contributed to a 'gala' dinner party hosted by the Shah and Empress of Iran in celebration of the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great in 1971, and accompanied them with his own disconcerting images of Surrealist dishes ready for the dining table.

During the run of *Dalí: Illustrating the Surreal*, the Brooks is engaging the community via a series of programs, films, and tours, including a guided tour with Kathleen Doyle,

assistant professor at Rhodes College, at 2 pm on Saturday, March 22; a Dalí Community Day on Saturday, April 26; a family guided tour on Sunday, May 4; and a two-part surrealist film series featuring screenings of Jean-Luc Godard's *Weekend* and Louis Malle's *Black Moon* on Sunday, April 6 and Saturday, April 12, respectively. The exhibition space includes an interactive gallery where museum goers can use props ranging from plastic lobsters to ants to arrange a Surrealist dining table, create Surrealist-inspired automatic drawings, and more. The Brooks' free app includes an audio tour of *Dalí: Illustrating the Surreal*, which can be downloaded on smartphones or accessed via iPod touch devices available for checkout at Visitor Services.

**About the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art:** The Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, located at 1934 Poplar Avenue in historic Overton Park, is one of the leading art museums in the American South. Over 9,000 works make up the Brooks' permanent collection including works from ancient Greece, Rome, and the Ancient Americas; Renaissance masterpieces from Italy; English portraiture; American painting and decorative arts; contemporary art; and a survey of African art. For more information on the Brooks, and all other exhibitions and programs, call (901) 544-6200 or visit [www.brooksmuseum.org](http://www.brooksmuseum.org).

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