



Dali: Two paths to choose from

Courtesy of Park West Museum/Foundation
Salvador Dali: Les Chants de Maldoror, Plate 9,
1934, intaglio print, 13.125 x 10.063 inches.

Exhibit illustrates artist's spiritual growth

BY LES CHRISTENSEN

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Special to The Sun

JONESBORO — "Salvador Dalí's Stairway to Heaven" will open at 5 p.m. Thursday at the Bradbury Art Museum in The Fowler Center on the campus of Arkansas State University. An opening reception will be 5 to 6:30 p.m. that evening.

The exhibition presents a comparative study of two of Dalí's most celebrated portfolios, his book illustrations for the Comte de Lautréamont's "Les Chants de Maldoror" (1868-69) and Dante Alighieri's "The Divine Comedy" (c. 1308-20).

THE ART

Les Chants de Maldoror (The Songs of Maldoror) was a favorite literary work among the Surrealists, many of whom found beauty in art and literature devoted to the pursuit of the irrational and unorthodox. A poetic novel of sorts that unfolds in a nonlinear fashion, Les Chants de Maldoror describes the violent and perverse character of a despicable protagonist who has renounced God, humanity and conventional morality.

When Dalí illustrated Les Chants de Maldoror in the early 1930s, he identified as a Surrealist. Like his paintings of the period, his illustrations are filled with images of violence and debauchery.

During his Surrealist period, Dalí and his wife Gala were known to host wild orgiastic parties, hence it is no surprise that he was attracted to the novel's themes.

Dante's *The Divine Comedy* is considered to be one of the most important works in the history of Italian literature. Although it too is a poetic narrative, *The Divine Comedy* is told sequentially, taking its readers along with Dante on a journey through Hell (Inferno), Purgatory and Paradise. Allegorically, it is often interpreted as representing the trajectory of the soul towards God.

By the time Dalí's illustrations for *The Divine Comedy* were published in 1960, Dalí had renounced Surrealism and become a born-again Catholic. In 1951, while working on watercolors that were the basis for his *Divine Comedy* illustrations, Dalí released his "Mystical Manifesto," in which he explains that the purpose of mysticism is to achieve "mystical ecstasy" and "paradisical happiness."

It is thus easy to see how he identified with Dante as the author journeys from hell to heaven in *The Divine Comedy*.

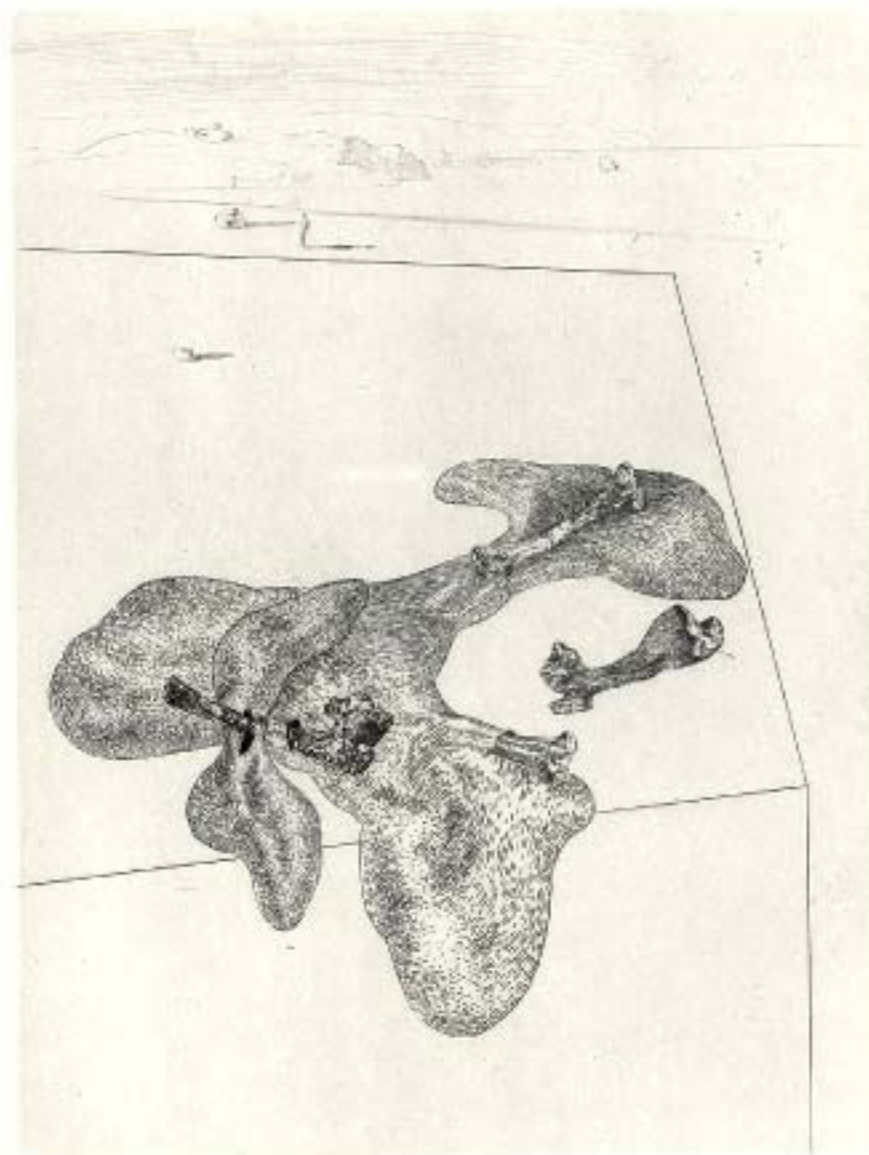
THE EXHIBITION

Following a successful run at The Hilliard University Art Museum at the University of Louisiana at Lafay-

Please see **DALI** | C8



Courtesy of Park West Museum/Foundation
Salvador Dalí: Les Chants de Maldoror, Plate 33, 1934, intaglio print, 13.063 x 10 inches.



Courtesy of Park West Museum/Foundation
Salvador Dalí: The Divine Comedy, Inferno, Cerberus, 1960, wood engraving in color on Rives paper after a watercolor, 10 x 7 inches.



Courtesy of Park West Museum/Foundation
Salvador Dalí: The Divine Comedy, Inferno, Centaur, 1960, wood engraving in color on Rives paper after a watercolor, 10 x 7.25 inches.



Courtesy of Park West Museum/Foundation
Salvador Dalí: The Divine Comedy, Inferno, Giants, 1960, wood engraving in color on Rives paper after a watercolor, 10 x 7.125 inches.



COMING UP

Thursday:
KASU Spring Spectacular.

Saturday:
Martin and Lewis tribute at the Imperial.

Saturday:
Matt Jones performs at Fowler Center.



COMING:

Find out what's cooking on Wednesday's 'Taste' page.

LIVING C2
MILESTONES C3
ARTS C4
CROSSWORD C6
ENTERTAINMENT C7



Salvador Dalí: The Divine Comedy, Paradise, The Mystical Ladder, 1960, wood engraving in color on Rives paper after a watercolor, 9.75 x 7 inches.



Salvador Dalí: The Divine Comedy, Purgatory, Dante Purified, 1960, wood engraving in color on Rives paper after a watercolor, 10 x 7 inches.

DALI

CONTINUED FROM C1

ette, the exhibition will be at Bradbury Art Museum through April 11.

At 6 p.m. March 14 BAM will offer a public tour of the exhibition which will include a guided discussion about prevalent themes and techniques within the exhibition. Interactive activities will be incorporated and suitable for all ages.

Over the course of the next two years, it will tour eight museums throughout the United States including Oglethorpe University Museum of Art, Atlanta; University of Texas at

San Antonio Main Art Gallery; Plains Art Museum, Fargo, N.D.; Fort Wayne Museum of Art, in Indiana; Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art, Shawnee, Okla.; and Biggs Museum of American Art, Dover, Del.

ORGANIZERS

The exhibition is curated by David S. Rubin, a Los Angeles-based curator, art critic and artist who will visit the museum and present a public talk on at 2:30 p.m. April 9.

Rubin has held curatorial positions at Scripps and Pomona Colleges, Santa Monica College, San Francisco Art Insti-

tute, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Albright College, MOCA Cleveland, Phoenix Art Museum, Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans, and San Antonio Museum of Art.

He currently writes for Visual Art Source and his drawings are in the collections of the Ogden Museum of Contemporary Art and the Bradbury Art Museum.

Carole Sorell is founder, president and chief executive officer of Carole Sorell Inc. which organized the exhibition. Previously assistant commissioner of Public Affairs, Department of Cultural Affairs,

New York City, her clients include Fortune 500 companies, museums, arts organizations and foundations.

On loan from the collection of the Park West Museum, Salvador Dalí's Stairway to Heaven is presented with support from the Park West Foundation founded in 2006 by Albert and Mitsie Scaglione and directed by Diane Pandolfi. The Foundation's mission is to support national and international programs for at-risk kids, as well as programs for art education, museums and conservation that positively impact young adults and the

environment, and organizations committed to positive values and leadership.

BAM hours are noon to 5 p.m. Tuesdays-Wednesdays, noon to 7 p.m. Thursdays, noon to 5 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays, 2 to 5 p.m. Sundays, and by appointment. The museum is closed Mondays and will be closed from March 16-25 for spring break. It will reopen March 26.

The exhibition, public event and reception are admission-free and open to the public. For additional information visit bradburyartmuseum.org or contact the museum at 870-972-2567.