



MEADOWS MUSEUM  
SMU · DALLAS

## EXPLORATION OF JOHANNES VERMEER'S INFLUENCE ON SALVADOR DALÍ TO OPEN AT MEADOWS MUSEUM THIS FALL

DALLAS (SMU)— September 14, 2022— The Meadows Museum, SMU, will present *Dalí/Vermeer: A Dialogue*, an exhibition tracing the influence of 17th-century Dutch master Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) on Spanish Surrealist Salvador Dalí (1904–1989). For the first time in history, Vermeer's *Woman in Blue Reading a Letter* (c. 1663) will appear side by side with Dalí's reinterpretation of the painting, titled *The Image Disappears* (1938). On view from October 16, 2022, through January 15, 2023, the exhibition represents a unique opportunity for viewers to contemplate these two works in tandem, thanks to loans from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí in Figueres, Spain, which displays Dalí's painting in the Teatro-Museo Dalí.

Dalí first became familiar with Vermeer as a youth through the black-and-white images in a small book he owned featuring the Dutch artist's work. Dalí used these diminutive monochromatic images to make copies of Vermeer's paintings in his own style, long before he was able to travel to Paris and Brussels to see them in person. The Surrealist visual language Dalí developed over his career incorporated myriad references to Vermeer, including quotations of recognizable figures, fashions, and postures from the Dutch painter's oeuvre. Dalí admired Vermeer's precise technique, use of light, and ambiguous subject matter, all qualities evident in *Woman in Blue Reading a Letter*.

“With this exhibition we can, for the very first time, examine a particularly compelling instance of Salvador Dalí's great reverence for Johannes Vermeer,” said the museum's director ad interim and curator, Amanda W. Dotseth. “That one of the Dutch painter's few surviving paintings will be on view in Dallas is remarkable. We are deeply indebted to the Rijksmuseum and to the Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí for their generous loans. This exhibition proves how palpable Vermeer's impact was on the famed Spanish Surrealist.”

In 2016, the Meadows exhibition *Dalí: Poetics of the Small, 1929–1936* shed new light on Dalí's longtime obsession with Vermeer's work. The upcoming exhibition takes a closer look at the nature of artistic imitation by uniting Vermeer's *Woman in Blue Reading a Letter* and Dalí's *The Image Disappears*. Thanks to a side-by-side display of the two paintings, this focused exhibition offers an extraordinarily rare opportunity to observe how Dalí infused his own unique artistic vision into the themes, techniques, and compositions he borrowed from the Dutch painter. Dalí translates *Woman in Blue Reading a Letter* by manipulating and redeploying its basic forms and elements, resulting in one of his signature “double images.” In *The Image Disappears*, one can

still see Vermeer's woman reading a letter, but Dalí trades the luminous blues of Vermeer's palette for muted earth tones, and distorts the figure of the woman in such a way as to simultaneously depict the profile of a man: her head becomes an eye; her upper torso, a nose; her arm and letter, a mustache; and her skirt, a beard. Vermeer's image of a woman thus fades and reemerges as a portrait of another artist Dalí greatly admired: the Spanish baroque painter Diego Velázquez.

This exhibition has been organized by the Meadows Museum and is funded by a generous gift from The Meadows Foundation. Promotional support is provided by the Dallas Tourism Public Improvement District.

### **About the Meadows Museum**

The Meadows Museum is the leading U.S. institution focused on the study and presentation of the art of Spain. In 1962, Dallas businessman and philanthropist Algur H. Meadows donated his private collection of Spanish paintings, as well as funds to start a museum, to Southern Methodist University. The museum opened to the public in 1965, marking the first step in fulfilling Meadows's vision to create "a small Prado for Texas." Today, the Meadows is home to one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of Spanish art outside of Spain. The collection spans from the 10th to the 21st centuries and includes medieval objects, Renaissance and Baroque sculptures, and major paintings by Golden Age and modern masters.

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### **IMAGES:**

<https://smu.box.com/s/olxln0975b2d4gog9iypq1zvrlv1jxfk>