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Literature About Art: Alice's Adventures That Inspired Salvador Dali

Our Friends · Friday, November 25th, 2022

One of the many great things about art and literature is that they have inspired generations of artists to spark their imaginations. For instance, when you read a book, you naturally tend to create your own interpretation, or in simple words, your own version of the book's mood, characters, and plot. Literature, which has influenced [famous painters](#), helped them retell their version of the story with their brushstrokes.

One such dream world created by Lewis Carol, *The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland*, published in 1865, greatly affected the surrealist artist Salvador Dali. Random House Publishing commissioned this literature in art; Dali showcased great creative control with this painting.

What Inspired Dali

The moment Alice fell down the rabbit hole in *"Alice's Adventures in Wonderland,"* she landed in a world in the 20th century. The [modernity in art](#) astonishes Dali, as we see Alice constantly shrinking and growing.

Throughout the plot, we see Alice drowning in her own tears. Much to everyone's realization, a baby was actually a pig in reality. The clocks in Wonderland are nothing but useless because time remains stagnant throughout.

It was in 1969 that a publisher asked Salvador Dalí to illustrate a limited-edition re-printing of [Lewis Carroll's](#) 1865 fantasy classic. Dali created 13 illustrations—one heliogravure for each of the 12 chapters. He also curated one colored etching for the front page. These illustrations are wonderfully bizarre, as Dali portrays every chapter through a surrealistic lens. These illustrations are now part of a new exhibit at the New Britain Museum of American Art.

Dali's Vision Of The Wonderland

Salvador Dali, one of the contributors to the [Surrealist movement](#), embodied the epitome of the Surrealist ideal. Surrealism is the belief in the superior reality of certain frameworks. When put into simple words, it literally means "above or beyond reality".

In Dali's surreal perception of Wonderland, Alice is only on the periphery. Throughout the different illustrations, she only appears as a spidery black-ink girl, a stick figure. You will find her wearing a long skirt and jumping rope in this literary art example. Dali depicts Alice's confusing

dream by illustrating oddballs surrounding Wonderland, like the caterpillar, queen of hearts, white rabbit, and even the mock turtle.

The illustrations incorporate some of Dali's signature traits, such as melting clocks and butterflies. The pictures used are more abstract than usual. In this literature about art, Dali has opted for thick, inky colors and dark black lines instead, and the lithographs have bleeding watercolor touches to them.

Through the literary art of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" Dali depicts contempt, revolution, absurdity, meaninglessness, and uncertainty of space and time. There is a constant nihilism in everyday reality between literature and art; where the mind does not want to believe in the honest truth. The illustrations help us draw parallels between art and literature through Lewis's imaginative fantasy and Dali's sub-reality-focused surrealist art.

End Note

A glimpse into a children's fantasy like "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" gives us a picture of how the wonderland is only a figment of Alice's imagination. From the bread-winged butterflies to the magical potions, every little element in these literary art examples embodies a similar fictional realm advocated by Dali. With these illustrations, Dali aimed toward demonstrating a sort of subconscious reality that is inexperienced by the conscious mind in the real world.

Photo by Eugenio Mazzone on Unsplash

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