

# THE REFUGE OF THE VISIBLE WOMAN

“I accept the Castle of Púbol, but with one condition: that you do not come to visit me unless by written invitation.” This condition especially gratified my masochistic feelings and thrilled me; Gala became the impregnable Castle that she had never ceased to be. Intimacy and, above all, familiarities diminish every passion. Rigour of feeling and distance, as demonstrated by the neurotic ceremonial of courtly love, increase passion.’

The Gala Dalí Castle of Púbol is remarkable as the mediaeval building in which Salvador Dalí gave material form to an exuberant creative effort centred on a person — Gala — and a purpose: to provide a suitable place of rest and refuge for his wife. With the passage of time this exceptional enclave was to become the painter’s last studio and the mausoleum of his muse. Of the places that make up the so-called Dalí Triangle, this is the most austere, and the one associated above all with Gala and with the last phase of the artist’s creative output. It is a place of isolation, a melancholy place with the Proustian air of a search for a lost world, with deeply subjective associations.

The Castle’s Dalinian history begins in 1968. That year, with the construction of the Theatre-Museum in Figueres well underway, Dalí initiated the search for a castle not too far from Portlligat, which was to be a gift for Gala. When he saw Púbol, near the Santuari dels Àngels chapel where the couple were married in 1958, the decision was made. Even before the purchase had been finalized, the restoration work began.

In creating the whole aesthetic universe of the castle, Dalí benefitted from the personal involvement of Gala and the technical support of his friend Emili Puignau, a master builder. The first step was to reinforce the existing structure of the building, because Dalí wanted to preserve the visibly deteriorated aspect of the exterior walls as testimony to the passage of time. The next phase was the remodelling of the garden, with Dalí opting for an Italianate layout, which has been overwhelmed by the plants that he and Gala chose for it, and a series of architectural and sculptural interventions such as the sculptures of elephants with crows on the rumps or the fountain shaped like the head of a monkfish that seem to seek to recreate the effect of the famous monsters in the Bomarzo garden near Rome.

Dalí applied his artistic versatility to transforming the interiors of the castle, which he redefined and decorated in great detail on the basis of working drawings now in the fonds of the Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, such as the designs for the fireplaces or the glass table-cum-skylight. He also painted pictures to adorn the interior: the large oil entitled *The Way to Púbol*, the ceiling of the Hall of Shields (‘I took pleasure in decorating the ceilings so that when Gala raises her eyes she will see me always in her sky,’ Dalí said), the false door, the painted radiator covering the real radiator and the other smaller paintings that are to be found throughout the house.

After the death of Gala, who is interred in the Tithe Hall where subjects historically paid their tribute to their feudal lord, Dalí himself lived in the castle until he suffered severe burns as the result of a fire in the room where he slept, which led to his being hospitalized. When Dalí himself was living in the castle he used the dining room as his studio, Gala’s blue room became his bedroom and the attic of the house where outfits from Gala’s wardrobe are now on display costumes from Gala served as a storeroom for works that Dalí was having returned to him from New York and Paris.

## 11<sup>th</sup> C.

**1020**

First reference to the tower/castle at Púbol

**1065**

Gaufréd Bastons, the first known Baron Púbol, cedes the title to the castle to the Count of Barcelona, Ramon Berenguer I

## 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> C.

The Llers i Cervià family

**1198–1210**

Under Arnau III de Llers the barony’s jurisdiction reaches its greatest extent

## 14<sup>th</sup> C.

**1327**

Construction of the castle in their present form begins

**1368**

The Campllong family

Gispert de Campllong purchases the castle for 4,000 Barcelona sous

**1399**

The local people petition the king to remove Gispert on account of his cruelty

Sança (Gispert’s widow). Remodelling of the inner courtyard

## 15<sup>th</sup> C.

**1422**

The Corbera family

**1437**

Bernat de Corbera. Bernat Martorell is commissioned to paint the St. Peter altarpiece

Major renovations evidenced by the Gothic and Renaissance elements of the north façade of the inner courtyard

**1464**

The Montanyans i Requesens-Corbera family  
Catalan Civil War

## 17<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> C.

**1686**

The De Miquel family

The castle is no longer the official residence of the Barons

Carlist Wars. Partial abandonment of the castle

**1798–1809**

Renovations to the south sector. The castle became a summer residence

## 20<sup>th</sup> C.

**1936–1939**

Spanish Civil War. The castle is sacked and used as a barracks and prison

**1968**

Salvador Dalí initiates the purchase of the castle

**1969**

Renovation work under Dalí’s supervision

**1970**

June, 1. S’escriptura el castell a nom de Gala  
Dalí paints the ceilings in the Hall of Shields  
Gala stays at the castle for the first time

**1974**

Construction of the Wagner Fountain

**1982**

June, 10. Death of Gala. The Tithe Hall is converted into a crypt

Dalí takes up residence at Púbol

Joan Carles I bestows on the artist the title of Marquis Dalí of Púbol

**1983**

Dalí paints his last oil, *The Swallowtail*

Dalí works on the remodelling of the Gorgot tower in Figueres

Dalí calls a meeting to constitute the Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí

**1984**

Dalí works on various projects for Púbol

Dalí redesigns Gala’s throne (Hall of Shields)

August, 31. Gala’s room is damaged by fire. Dalí moves to Galatea tower in Figueres

**1996**

Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí

Púbol opens to the public as a House-museum