



PRESS RELEASE

June 2009

Festival's Salvador Dali Exclusive - *UK first on the riverbank*

The Henley Festival, running from July 8th – July 12th 2009 is delighted to announce that, in an exclusive partnership with Dali Universe, it will bring 2 large bronze sculptures by Salvador Dali to England for the 5 day Festival. The over life-size (2.5m) 'Surrealist Piano' will be seen in this country for the very first time, while the monumental (approx 4m high) 'Woman Aflame' (*Femme en Flamme*), rarely exhibited, will be new to many people.

Arguably the greatest of the surrealist artists, Salvador Dali is being featured at the Henley Festival this year to mark the 20th anniversary of his death. Says the Festival's Artistic Director, Stewart Collins, "The Festival had already gone to press when we were given the opportunity to present this extraordinary and iconic work but as you can probably imagine, it was not a difficult decision to make. We had to say yes. As it happens the visual arts programme this year is particularly strong anyway, but this really seals it.

Everyone is familiar with the Dali style and I am proud that we will be showing his work at a festival that has always tried to embrace the strange and surreal."

Surrealist Piano, a 2.5 metre high bronze sculpture of a grand piano crowned by a golden ballerina, certainly fits the themes of The Henley Festival. Quintessentially Surrealist in demonstrates Dali's subversion of the "real" by replacing the legs of the piano with female legs, transforming an ordinary object into the extraordinary. The piano was one of Dalí's favourite images and itself seems to be dancing to accompany the ethereal figure for which it plays.

14 Friday Street, Henley-on-Thames
Oxfordshire RG9 1AH

The Woman Aflame sculpture, conceived in 1980, stands nearly four metres tall and combines three important *Dalinian* motifs. Fire engulfs the woman's body, which is supported between the shoulder blades by a crutch, a symbol of reality and an anchor in the ground of the real world. Her belly and leg are cut into by half open drawers, symbolising the natural curiosity of children to investigate enclosed spaces in order to discover what is there, and to exorcise the fear that the unknown may do harm.

In addition to these 2 sculptures, visitors to the Festival may also enjoy – and perhaps buy - smaller, rare examples of Dali's artworks, including sculptures and prints in the Festival Gallery. *Surrealist Piano* and *Woman Aflame* are also available.

Henley Festival 2009 runs from 8th-12th July. For more information on how to view these sculptures, visit www.henley-festival.co.uk or contact the box office on 01491 843404.

Generous sponsors of this year's Festival include: Invesco Perpetual, Westcoast, Laurent-Perrier champagne, Lavazza, Hotel du Vin, Southern Electric.

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Note to Editors:

Henley Festival Trust

As in previous years, all net proceeds from The Henley Festival 2009 will go direct to parent charity The Henley Festival Trust, to finance Henley Festival's charitable and community activities. Examples of this valuable, and much appreciated work include providing: visual arts workshops at the Chiltern Centre for Disabled Children, music therapy for brain-injured attendees at Headway day centre in Henley-on-Thames, music and arts workshops in local schools, and instruments for promising young musicians.

Dali Universe

Dali Universe in London houses the largest collection of sculptural works by Salvador Dali in the world and is permanently situated in heart of the South Bank within County Hall.

www.thedaliuniverse.com.

Salvador Dali worked in many mediums producing many artworks that have become instantly recognisable and iconic - the melted clocks, the Mae West lips sofa, the intricate fantastical landscapes with brilliant touches of trickery and illusionism - figures and details seemingly merging into one another.

Dali, of course, was also a master in the art of self-promotion. His grasp of the commercial possibilities that lay open to him, and his passion for making money, made him something of a forerunner to the likes of Damien Hirst. With his jet-black signature moustache Dali became an instantly recognizable figure - a Celebrity Artist - making appearances on U.S. television, and working with the likes of the Marx Brothers, Alfred Hitchcock, Walt Disney, and Coco Chanel.

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