

Fractal Mysticism: Continuing Dalí's Legacy in the Digital Age
An Interview with Louis Markoya

Miguel Escribano

A former protégé of Salvador Dalí from 1971 to 1976, Louis Markoya is a painter inspired by fractals and mathematics. For over 35 years, he worked with developing technology in the field of semiconductor lithography, consulting on projects for IBM, AT&T, and Intel, and he holds over 30 U.S. patents. His interest in lenticular prints developed while assisting Dalí on 3D projects that included stereoscopic paintings and holograms.

Miguel Escribano: You worked with Dalí for six years in the 1970s, mostly in New York. Your earliest collaborations involved optical effects—stereoscopic and lenticular work. Tell us more about Dalí's interest in creating 3D effects.

Louis Markoya: He was more than interested; he was obsessed. First was the Rowlux stuff. He had just finished the *Tristan and Isolde* Rowlux lithograph. He had had that material for years, but when he found out that I came from Connecticut, where the Rowland company that made the material was based, I got to be the “ambassador.” I got batches of the material and brought it back to the St. Regis. I had to try to invent ways to make it appear to have more depth than it really had. Dalí had painted a couple of paintings on the surface, but I started painting on some that were translucent, on the back as well as the front, trying to show different effects. I ordered some Fresnel lenses from Edmond Scientific, and once we put it on the plastic, we saw this great effect of depth.

ME: Dalí became fascinated with optics with his discovery of Impressionism as a child, but then he moved beyond that to embrace technical advances better suited to the modern world, such as photography, documentary and comic film.

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LM: When he was doing the stereo[sopic] paintings, he was out of his mind that the photographer couldn't get a black and white print on canvas. It still had to be transferred using tracing paper and pinhole techniques. "It's the modern world," he said. "Why can't I have that printed on the canvas and use that as an underpainting?" He was really upset that he couldn't use the stereo photography to start him out so all the perspectives would be perfect.

ME: The large dimensions of many of Dalí's religious paintings envelope the viewer. That offers another kind of optical effect. Spain has fantastic Baroque churches, where the religious message was paramount, but much of the effect was achieved through imposing size—something Dalí co-opted for his religious paintings. Dalí has always borrowed religious imagery, even in his surrealist paintings, to represent psychoanalytical concepts.

LM: Sure, the *Profanation of the Host* and things like that.

ME: One source for the *Profanation of the Host* is a painting by Paolo Uccello that Dalí knew from a tiny, black and white reproduction in the collection of Gowans art books he had as a child.

LM: My thoughts on Dalí and religion are all based on Dalí being an opportunist. If he could use Catholicism to promote himself, that's great. Whatever would be for the good of Dalí was what he believed in.

ME: Yet, concerning art, he was consistent. His respect for Raphael, for example, was genuine and goes back to the 1920s.

LM: Yes, absolutely.

ME: Dalí's sister, Anna Maria, wrote that he was so overwhelmed by a huge El Greco when they visited the Escorial that he fell over backwards.

LM: Probably the same reaction that I had when I went to work with Dalí [in Figueres] in 1974. I started at the Prado in Madrid, and I saw *Las Meninas* set up with mirrors. It looked like you could walk in among the people. I'm sure Dalí had seen that too. It was more than enveloping: it was like you were there.

ME: You have mentioned elsewhere going with Dalí to buy his book, *The Tragic Myth of Millet's 'Angelus,'* at Rockefeller Center. There are huge murals there by Josep Maria Sert, a friend of Dalí's in the 1930s. Did Dalí discuss those?

LM: He didn't. Dalí was very reluctant to speak about other artists. One time, when we left from setting up one of the shows at Knoedler, just down 5th Ave. there was a gallery that had a really extensive Ernst Fuchs show. It was a nice show and one of the few times I heard Dalí say another modern artist was okay. Not more than that, but okay.

ME: You guessed he thought Fuchs was better than okay?

LM: Yeah, I guessed that. There were some of Fuchs' important paintings there—beautiful, intense, fantastic stuff, so I know Dalí liked them. If Dalí said it was OK, it was a lot more than OK. I knew that because I worked my ass off to try to please him, and it never was good enough. He was not very easy to get a compliment out of, for anybody or anything.

ME: There are few people he respected enough to defer to: Marcel Duchamp, Leonor Fini...

LM: The relationship I thought was very funny was with Warhol. They feigned liking each other—a very fake admiration. They would have a dueling war of who had the best entourage. Since Dalí was crazy about transvestites, Warhol would show up with the biggest crowd of transvestites he could gather. They respected each other, but neither really understood why the other was so famous or popular. Warhol invited Dalí and me to see [David] Bowie at Radio City. To be invited by Warhol and go with Dalí to see Ziggy Stardust was really an incredible experience. Warhol asked me to work for him; he said Dalí was old hat. I apologized and said no. I had no appreciation for Warhol's work, and I thought, I'm working with the preeminent genius of modern art, why would I do anything else? I had a signed Polaroid taken of me by Warhol, but when he asked me to work with him, I tore the picture up and threw it in the garbage. Dalí liked that.

ME: You spent so much time with Dalí that you started to speak with a Spanish accent, but all your communication was in English. His English.

LM: Yeah, his English, which I started catching on to because I was around him enough. Dalí was a very infectious person. I recognized, one time—I was having a radio interview for one of my shows—that I was speaking with a Spanish accent, and they called me out on it. I started becoming a dandy like Dalí—coming into New York with walking sticks, capes, and velvet jackets. It never ended with him if he liked the jacket I had, or if he liked the cape I had. I ended up having to give him a couple of my canes. We would often go out for walks, and he had to have the better cane, but he had a habit of leaving them places, and I would get sent to go get his



Fig. 1. Louis Markoya and Salvador Dalí at the St. Regis Hotel, New York, c. 1973, Image courtesy of Louis Markoya

cane. Anybody that knew it was Dalí's cane had already stolen it, so then he'd be mad at me for not returning with the cane.

ME: Returning to the “religious” experience of immersion in huge paintings, I’m yet to experience that epiphany with Abstract Expressionism, Pollock, Rothko...

LM: I understand. I loved Dalí so much that I took all the ratings as gospel—saying Pollock is diarrhea, and all the modern abstract expressionists were terrible.

ME: Dalí made conflicting statements about Abstract Expressionism. His painting, *Painting of Gala looking at the Mediterranean Sea which from a distance of 20 meters is transformed into a portrait of Abraham Lincoln*, was subtitled “Homage to Rothko,” and he praised Willem de Kooning, whom he had known since the 1930s in New York. Could his appreciation of de Kooning over Pollock have had to do with personal rather than aesthetic reasons?

LM: It's possible. Anything like that, I look for where Dalí does better by this—how and why a relationship with de Kooning makes him look better, because to me, Dalí is one of the ultimate opportunists. Dalí's not going to change his mind about that type of painting. It could be as simple as some influential person with a lot of money, or a lot of contacts having liked de Kooning.

ME: It could be something as petty as annoying somebody who had criticized de Kooning?

LM: It's very possible. For Dalí to use or say something doesn't mean he had to believe it.

ME: Each summer, Dalí would return to a simpler life at Portlligat.

LM: It was a much more relaxed attitude in Portlligat. He still wanted to be the Maestro, getting all the attention, but now he was dressed down. But all he had to do was go to the museum in Figueres and he'd be back to the New York Dalí.

ME: Fish and insects had real significance for Dalí, beginning with those early years in Cadaqués. The melting-pot of friends at the Residencia in Madrid led to their own kind of Surrealism in which the poetic use of elements from different scientific disciplines was typical. Pepín Bello contributed terms from medicine, Buñuel from entomology. Fish were important in paintings in which Dalí's profile was intertwined with that of Lorca. Birds, in paintings of 1927-28. Ants and butterflies later, flies in the *Hallucinogenic Toreador*. Small creatures are important in the poetry of Lorca and Dalí, even before Dalí introduced the grasshopper or praying mantis. There are elements of Dalí's art in the period you were with him—a poetry of scientific elements, of the intramolecular—that show that Lorca was still a presence in his work.

LM: I totally agree, but in the case of the butterflies, he had a commercial interest because he saw a lot of success and people being attracted to the butterfly pictures. He'd have me cutting butterflies out of books for hours and hours and days and days, just to find the right ones. A lot of the watercolors have these collaged butterflies from books, and he found that they sold well.

ME: But he wasn't oblivious to a connection to Lorca, who used "butterfly collectors" in his "Ode to Salvador Dalí."

LM: No, he wasn't oblivious.

ME: Was Dalí a very different person in private who switched to the persona Dalí when it suited?

LM: My take was that the persona Dalí was the vast majority of the person Dalí. Even when we were alone, on different sides of the table, or sitting next to each other, Dalí was pretty much Dalí. The only time I saw him relax was at home in Portlligat. He wasn't in a suit, and he had to really be on all the time he had that suit on. He drew crowds, and there were always people around that wanted to know or see him, or who had schemes to make money. I got put into a lot of strange situations because I was his gofer. Once, he had a meeting with a businessman who was convinced he had to do a project with Dalí. I don't know where Peter Moore was. This was just Dalí on a Sunday night in the St. Regis bar. And Dalí says yes, he'll do a project—it's \$100,000. So, the man writes a check for \$100,000 and Dalí puts it in his pocket. Dalí drew a picture in a book I had of a China cup. He says, go get me a China cup. It's 8:00 o'clock on Sunday night. It's raining. It's New York, I've come from Connecticut on a train, and I don't know New York. There's nowhere, no Internet, nothing. I have to start walking the streets to find a China cup. I had the idea to go into Chinese restaurants and ask them for a cup. The first one threw me out. The second one found me a halfway decent cup. Dalí puts it on the table and says, "This is your project." "What do you mean? What's that? That's my project?" Dalí wraps it in a linen napkin, makes a commotion, stands up, twirls it around his head and smashes it on the table. Everybody stopped dead, watching Dalí, and he tells the man, "Here's your project. It's a puzzle. When you get the puzzle right, you can also use it as a cup." And he walks off with \$100,000.

ME: The "ecstatic" and the "orgasmic" were part of Dalí's vocabulary in the period you were with him. Concepts like the "paranoiac" or the "hysterical" from his surrealist period were ingrained in him.

LM: Yes, those would come up. He would say his *Marilyn-Mao* was "ecstatic" with a great flourish. There were a lot of things like that. If he found them favorable, they could be "ecstatic." I don't know that it would be called ecstatic, but he would keep, in his pocket, the original Venus pencil case that the *Hallucinogenic Toreador* was based on. He drew in pencil on that case, and if you were special enough, he would show you. There were things he felt were very important, and he could wax poetically about them. Those, to me, were his moments of ecstasy, when he was describing something that he felt strongly about.

ME: What made the Venus of Milo special could have gone back to his childhood. It was on the cover of a *Masterpieces of Sculpture* book that he probably had among his Gowans books.

LM: I think he really cherished continuity—bringing things forward and using them again, repeating it and doing it more cleverly. This was part of the game of being Dalí.

ME: He didn't always reveal his sources.

LM: He wanted to be the originator of everything—even things that were obvious, things taken directly from *Scientific American*, just ripped off the cover and used. He would not want to say where he got it.

ME: In 1973, Dalí revisited locations of his childhood around Figueres, places that were still important to him, while he was planning the Theatre-Museum.

LM: Absolutely. He talked to me about Toledo, the home of El Greco. Dalí told me to go there, and that was a place he visited in his youth.

ME: Did you visit Toledo in 1974?

LM: Yes. I flew into Madrid, and I went to the Prado first, then Toledo. El Greco's home was there, with several paintings by him.

ME: El Greco is an interesting case. He didn't feature much in Dalí's writings on artists, but he was important to him personally from excursions with Buñuel and others. It was El Greco that overwhelmed Dalí when he first visited the Escorial, and that provided the model for a defining statement of his Nuclear Mysticism, *Assumpta Corpuscularia Lapislazulina*.

LM: I think in the case of El Greco, we're again talking about where size affected him. They're very involving because they're large paintings. The other large paintings that Dalí was obviously aware of and used most were by Meissonier. Those paintings, on the outside, would have nothing to do with Nuclear Mysticism. When you look closely, they have everything to do with it.

ME: Did he suggest you see anything in Cadaqués or Figueres?

LM: No. What really mattered was his museum. I think if it was about El Greco alone, he wouldn't have said to see Toledo. The only artist he felt was important that we talked about was Velázquez. We discussed *Las Meninas* at some length and how it affected him. Just talking about it swelled up his chest with pride. That was the ultimate masterpiece.

ME: Bosch is another artist at the Prado that was important, although Dalí was reluctant to admit it.

LM: He didn't like people thinking that he had some lineage to Bosch. He might even call his paintings masterpieces, but I don't think he liked that people felt that he had some connection to Bosch.

ME: Have you seen the *Great Masturbator* in the left-hand panel of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*?

LM: Oh yeah. Almost identical, huh? The feeling that I got when other people would bring up Bosch was that Dalí did not want that association at all. Bosch is a master, but Dalí didn't want anything to do with it.

ME: Did he treat the surrealist period and working with Breton as something he was proud of, but in his past?

LM: That was his past, but he pictured himself as the one and only surrealist. That was always foremost to him, that he embodied the surrealist movement—that it was him, no matter what anybody thought. Now it's a very different thing. You have newscasters and everybody saying something is "surreal," but at that time, there was still some feeling for the surrealist movement.

ME: Did Dalí talk about Buñuel?

LM: No. To take Dalí back to talking about surrealism or Nuclear Mysticism, that was always me prodding. Even when he was prodded, at times he didn't want to talk about it because it was behind him. Current projects were a lot more on his mind.

ME: Did he ever use his philosophy of surrealism, such as the paranoiac-critical method, to talk about his current art in the 1970s?

LM: He didn't talk about it, but he used it. One of the prime examples was the project I did with him, *Changes in Great Masterpieces*. I had to get as many prints as possible of Vermeers, Raphaels, and Rembrandts, and we just started drawing on them to see what double images we could make. He had some preconceived ideas, so most of the time those were the ones that won. He still used the paranoiac-critical method to do those works, and I would see him find things in the street or in passing, in a magazine or something, where he felt it should be something else. It was all the same influence of critical paranoia as during the surrealist period, and some of the out-

come was the same.

ME: Your collaboration with Dalí came to an end and you began a career in computer technology.

LM: 1976 was the last year I worked with him, and the last actual physical work with him was on the *Lincoln Vision* in his hotel room. In 1977, I was married, and my wife was having a baby, and I decided that I couldn't work in a gun factory anymore. There was real danger involved, so I got a job with an optical company. They were making the first semiconductor lithography tool, and I had a great grasp of spatial relations. When these tools had a lot of complex optics to align, and the technicians struggled with it, I just came in and just knew it. I could just do it, so all the roughest stuff they would leave for me, and I flourished.

ME: While you were advancing in that area, you were moving away from Dalí. It's the period of Gala's decline and death, followed by Dalí's mental and physical decline, and eventual death.

LM: There were two events that took me away from him, and sometimes I regret that it happened. In 1975-76, I was starting to get a lot of local press from working with Dalí. Dalí had a service that would get him all the press that mentioned his name, and my name was coming up before his in articles, so even though they were local to Connecticut, he started getting upset that my name was appearing before his. And, I had my first girlfriend, so I'm having my first sex ever. I thought, how crazy—sex is better than Dalí! So that was that. There have been times when I've regretted that, that I wish I'd stuck with him, but he started coming to New York less, the stays were shorter, he was starting to decline, and Gala was really starting to be upset with him. There was a real mess brewing in that period. Gala had him over-medicated and wouldn't let him take phone calls. She just kept him in bed. He wasn't in the best state by then.

ME: Neither was she.

LM: No, she wasn't in the best state. She was hiring other people to paint so she could still have her boyfriends. Kind of crazy, but when I was there in the house in 1974, when Dalí invited me to come help with the museum, I was really happy that she was not attracted to me because I was afraid of that whole situation. She didn't want me in the house, so that put me in a funny situation because, at the time, Cadaqués was just getting to be known. The Rolling Stones had rented one of the houses in the town, and you couldn't get a room anywhere. Dalí talked to the owner of the laundromat, and I got a key and had to sleep behind the washing machines.

ME: If you're going to sleep behind a washing machine somewhere...

LM: Yes, it was still a nice place. I still remember the walk every morning to go to the house to get the car to the museum. The old road with the olive trees, before it was developed. A beautiful walk. I loved that walk every morning.

ME: Gala was rarely friendly to you.

LM: She was already 80 or so when I started working with Dalí, and she was a domineering figure. She was more frightening than anything. One time, I was having a press conference with Dalí, and she came and sat on my lap, which surprised me and upset Dalí tremendously. He kicked me out of the press conference. My suspicions about her were followed up when, in later years, I would try to call, and she would insist that I couldn't talk to him. I tried to call many times. In 1978-79, I was able to call him, but you get to 1980-81 and Gala's taking all calls, saying that Dalí's in bed and can't get up, that he can't take any calls. She was as nasty as possible about it. I know that he was deeply ingratiated and loved her, but there were times where she would be very nasty, or just yell at him—tell him he was being an idiot. And even if he was being an idiot, he didn't deserve to be called it, especially by her. He put up with a lot. Dalí was often not a good judge of character, and some of that is probably true with Gala. Endless devotion wasn't necessarily the right thing to do.

ME: Perhaps Dalí didn't feel he had the option of leaving Gala.

LM: I would agree with that 100%. I guess Dalí was afraid that Gala was so entrenched with the Jesus Christ Superstar guy that he was going to lose her to him. It's hard to know what the real dynamic there was, but it's interesting to think of her as a praying mantis, and it might explain a lot of his actions: he was that afraid of her. She certainly had that kind of power. Even with him paying all the bills and being the famous one, I saw her treat him like crap. Really terrible. Hit him.

ME: When you returned to art in 2012, you were applying 3D fractal patterns to paintings. You reinterpreted Millet's *Angelus* and Dalí's *Basket of Bread* with fractals.

LM: Dalí always said that, although *Basket of Bread* looked peaceful, it was one of the more explosive paintings that he'd done, that there was potential for explosion in it. All the things that he was trying to display in Nuclear Mysticism were locked up in that common piece of bread. I tried to expand on that and show that the bread was explosive, that the table was fractal. When I started looking at 3D fractals, I con-



Fig. 2. Louis Markoya, *Basket of Bread, Just Under the Crust*, 2013, oil on canvas © Louis Markoya, 2013, Photo courtesy of the artist

vinced myself that fractals would have really intrigued Dalí. I had always thought that I'd go back and do some things that we had worked on together—little projects with the Rowlux and things like that—but to me this was really the thing that Dalí would have latched onto, that I could use now and make my own but know that Dalí would have used this in his own art.

ME: He painted the *Basket of Bread* in 1945, the year of the atomic bombs, so there's also that political dimension to the potential of the energy. Who we are, as physical substance, becomes a political question, as well as a religious one; in the Catholic mass, bread is the body of Christ.

LM: Again, Dalí was an opportunist. That bread wasn't necessarily painted to be the body of Christ, but when somebody was clever enough to put it all together, Dalí would use that to promote the painting or whatever he would have to say about it. I think that's happened in several of his works. Take *The Discovery of America by Christo-*

pher Columbus, where people came up with the fact that the urchin that's in the front of the painting was actually a predestination of the moon landing. When people said that, Dalí said, "Yeah, of course." Because Dalí did so many double images in his surrealist period, people would always come up with double images that weren't really in the painting.

ME: He'd painted another loaf of bread in 1926. The thought behind the painting has evolved, but there's no new element in the 1945 version other than that his technique has developed.

LM: Whether the technique is better or worse, I don't know. His technique was there in the 1926 version. It's gorgeous, so I don't know if it was anything to do with technique. Dalí liked to maintain continuity in his work. He liked to keep track of things and repeat them. I think it's more to do with that than with Nuclear Mysticism or religion.

ME: Perhaps there was added existential fear in linking the potential of energy within a body and the nuclear explosions of 1945.

LM: It's very possible. Everybody should be afraid of a nuclear explosion, so I don't have any problems with him being worried about that. That's one of the hard things to peel back about Dalí: He's very clever and could make up stories off the cuff to make you think that he knew all about this the whole time. He had enough strange references and things he could pull out of art history or whatever... It isn't necessarily what he was thinking at the time, though.

ME: Nuclear Mysticism is what first attracted you and the area you've returned to in recent works.

LM: I see a lot of my work as an evolutionary path from Nuclear Mysticism. Dalí used simple molecular structures, or separating squares, to show the space between matter. It was very clever, it was great to do, but I think that we know a lot more about how matter is now.

ME: Did you have conversations with Dalí about those scientific aspects?

LM: I did. Part of why these conversations came up was, by '72 or '73, I was doing real artwork for him. I really had an interest in Nuclear Mysticism, and it was way in his past. I had conversations with him on trying to feel the space between your molecules, and that was the gist of Nuclear Mysticism—that it brought the possibility of everybody having a mystical experience through that feeling. Some people were

trying to describe it as drugs, but Dalí didn't have anything to do with drugs. It was more about having scientific knowledge, having the mental capacity to contemplate that space between your molecules. It made you one with everything. Dalí didn't really want to be one with everything, but that was still in the background.

ME: Did he even pretend to be religious by then?

LM: Not in the least. Some things I made with him were still influenced by that period. We made works in the Rowlux that were religious artifacts, that looked like they were from when he was doing those things, so he liked them. He liked that I made it, he could sign it, and then he had a Dalí. But there was not even the slightest hint of any religious feeling. I had always taken the Catholicism, Franco, all that, as just opportunism—Dalí trying to make himself look better to some people, or further his career to gain more money.

ME: How well defined was the concept of mysticism in the conversations you had with him? Why mysticism? Why not nuclear something-else?

LM: This was an opportunity for Dalí to tie in supposed feelings about the Catholic Church. He said that science explained several things that aren't explainable by religion. They had their explanations by faith alone, and in Dalí's mind, he felt he could relate it to science and be the person who made it all clear.

ME: What kind of satisfaction did Dalí's achievements give him?

LM: He was happy about them. When he had a show at Knoedler, it would sell out or come close to selling out, so he had everything to feed his ego. He had people fawning over him, always. I think that fueled him. Every Sunday, when the St. Regis closed the cocktail lounge for him to hold court, whoever was rich and famous and the totally bizarre would show up. So, he had a feeling of not just success but of *conquering* from that. He had what he needed to sustain his superiority, his feelings of grandiosity. And I wouldn't say he was wrong in feeling it. He *was* that superior. To me, Dalí is one of the *Übermenschen* that Nietzsche dreamed up. The thing that I think sustained Dalí was that he had this brilliance that is beyond the comprehension of most people, but his ability to paint and to depict things beautifully made him popular even if people couldn't understand it. The people that run the upper echelons of the art world don't like Dalí, but any museum that mounts a Dalí exhibition has attendance records.

ME: What did Dalí learn from you, acknowledged or unacknowledged?

LM: Dalí wouldn't acknowledge that he learned much from me. I think he felt at times—not that he said it—that I could be brilliant and bring to the table things that Dalí thought only Dalí could think. I challenged him on a number of things that I don't think other people did. There was some respect for me, but not anything that he would say publicly. One time, I was asking him about the *Persistence of Memory*, and instead of going with all the nonsense of spacetime and all the stuff that people have associated with the painting, I asked, was it simply because he had a hard time getting a hard-on? He was really stern and said that sometimes I was too smart for my own pants. He said I was going too far. There were times he admired my thought process, or the work that I had done for him, but it would very rarely lead to a compliment.

ME: Did you recognize anything in his art that he'd taken from you?

LM: Oh, absolutely. Never mind taking the idea from me, I've done things that were pretty much complete. He'd put a few brush strokes on it and sign it as Dalí. But there was a lot of satisfaction in that. I could convince myself that I was doing stuff that was acceptable to him and, at least in my own mind, exhibited some of the genius he had. One of the interesting things about my relationship with Dalí is that I was more or less—whether I was fooling myself or not—comfortable with him. I felt like I understood him to some degree, and that was why I was able to work with and be around him. I was almost too comfortable. I look back now, and I wish I took notes. Historically, that would have been valuable. It's interesting to me that I thought it was normal. It wasn't extraordinary that I was working with Dalí. I think that now, but I didn't then.

ME: There are series of lithographs and commercial works, where he took money for little or no work.

LM: My sincere feeling is that Dalí was duped into those things. I think that was mostly unscrupulous business managers and other unscrupulous people. Dalí often trusted people that he should have had no business being anywhere near. I have no problem understanding Dalí signing blank papers because people told him it was OK. I think he wasn't wise enough to contemplate the trouble he was getting himself into. If somebody was giving him \$5 or \$10 a sheet, he just thought, this is Dalí making money. I think he was manipulated. I would never think that it was Dalí's idea. I don't think he thought that way. I think that he felt he was famous and wealthy enough that he didn't have to do those things. Not that he was beyond it, but he wouldn't think of things in that manner.

ME: You must see the influence of Dalí everywhere, in art and in the look of



Fig. 3. Louis Markoya, *The Dream*, 2022, oil on canvas © Louis Markoya, 2022, Photo courtesy of the artist

films, advertising, graphic design...

LM: Absolutely. When somebody turns on a faucet and the water turns into a dancing person, that has Dalí written all over it. I've spent a lot of time contemplating what Dalí would have done with film technology if he were around now. It's beyond me to imagine what he would have done.

ME: You have lodged several patents during a successful career in technology. You said that success came because you just understood, you got it. Have you wondered if you owe any of that to what you learned from working with Dalí?

LM: I think maybe it's the same force that drove me to teach myself to paint in order to have a way to relate to Dalí. Dalí never sat down and explained the paranoiac-critical method to me. He didn't teach me anything. It was expected that I had to figure it out myself, and I guess those were problem-solving things... I don't think it was influenced by Dalí but a curiosity and a nature of trying to succeed, to do good.

ME: Whether it came from Dalí or not, creative thinking has been integral to you making advances that have had real effects on people's lives, although they don't know it. You'd like your art, and your work with fractals, and the lenticulars, also to have an effect.

LM: Well, there are times, being an artist, you have to convince yourself that you're

doing something that's important to somebody, and you hope that it's more than yourself. I don't paint because I love it or because I have to. I paint because there's something in me that says there's something of benefit to somebody else other than myself.

ME: You have made works that refer to the science behind the neural effects and healing power of nature. That sounds a long way from Dalí.

LM: I came across a book about how workers were prescribed walks in the woods, things like that. It was very intriguing how it allowed them to feel they had more of a life, that they were not automatons married to the factory. It brought them back to some sort of relationship with the earth and nature. Reading that, I contemplated what meditation might do for different aspects of modern life. I would see that as a difference in my art: I'm considering the viewer where Dalí never would. I think that's how I've evolved yet still have his influence.

ME: What is the best way for you to use your experience with Dalí?

LM: The short answer is, I'm the right person to do the art that I make because I don't think anybody else is going to do it. I don't see anybody else making a picture that describes gravity, and it's still a romantic oil painting. I don't see anybody making a picture of what happens inside your neurons when you fall in love, and with the pool of oxytocin that the fairies are floating in. There are things that I have a view of because of working with Dalí. I'm not speaking with a Spanish accent anymore, but he's still a big part of me.