

# Consciousness and Blended Reality: The Alice Dali Augmented Reality Experience

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The relationship between perception and reality has always been central in debates on consciousness. Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR, AR) technologies can blur these boundaries and raise new questions and offer new perspectives on our understanding of the mind. Our GPS-pinned open-air art gallery app features paintings by Salvador Dali for Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and original music composed on them. It remains to be seen what new possibilities such technology can bring and how it can change our conceptualisation of reality and ourselves.

**Aim: To investigate alternative states of consciousness associated with music, art and creativity in digitally enhanced environments (AR) through storytelling.**

Our hypothesis is that music art experiences stimulate creative states of consciousness.

## Introduction

Consciousness studies are focused on investigation of three states: being awake, asleep and vegetative state. Recent research showed the influence of psychedelics and meditation on the mind and perception. We are offering a model of music art digitally enhanced storytelling to understand the importance of fantasy worlds for the human psyche.

"As for human mind, it is a neural subsystem of the brain. Its tool is language, while its range and experience are defined by what language is able to access and handle." (Torey, 2014, p.150)

## Methods and Research Questions

- Stories are important for human beings, a reflection of consciousness, they communicate self-awareness, explain the world and our place within it.
- Imagery world and Consciousness: can we expand positive "self-talk" with music art?
- Digitally Enhanced Realities: What happens with perception when AR is used to add an additional layer to the reality creating a blended real and fantasy world?
- Augmented Reality lets interactive digital stories be situated in psychogeographically relevant contexts.



Scan to download the Alice Dali AR App

## Augmented Reality Experience: Alice Dali AR



By bracketing Alice's Wonderland journey with her real-world setting, Lewis Carroll creates a story within a story. In our app, Dali's paintings and their fantastic world are blended with the audience's real surroundings, creating an experience of a "guided extended reality."



## Discussion

Also Available: Synaesthesia Gallery AR, Jack B. Yeats: Psychogeography



"The Singing Horseman" by Jack B. Yeats in AR

With these three AR apps, we are offering a journey to worlds of storytelling through augmented reality where the dream world becomes visible.

"Dali frequently described his works as 'hand-painted dream photographs.' He applied the methods of Surrealism, tapping deep into the non-rational mechanisms of his mind—dreams, the imagination, and the subconscious" (MOMA, New York)

**Further case studies & statistical analysis needed: The impact of multi-sensory design on cross-modal stimulation of the brain and the perception of "presence" in digitally enhanced realities AR/VR**

"For Dali, psychoanalysis was the ultimate tool for gaining access to the hidden side of Man, including himself [...] In most of his paintings, Dali incorporated elements from psychoanalytic symbolism related to himself personally." (Dali Museum, Paris)

## Acknowledgements & Credits

AR: Haunted Planet Studios – [www.hauntedplanet.com](http://www.hauntedplanet.com)  
Piano compositions: Dr Svetlana Rudenko - [www.svetlana-rudenko.com](http://www.svetlana-rudenko.com)  
Narration: Prof. Mads Haahr, Trinity College Dublin  
Dali Images: © Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, VEGAP, 2014.  
Jack B Yeats Images: © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London/IVARO Dublin, 2022.

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