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Jewellers delve into the Daliesque with dreamlike pieces

The surrealist artist has inspired a fresh wave of sculptural, nature-themed creations



Sonia Esther Soltani

When much of the world embraced sourdough during the early months of the Covid-19 lockdown, California-based jewellery artist Adam Neeley found inspiration elsewhere: in the surreal, decadent pages of *Les Dîners de Gala*, the idiosyncratic cookbook by Salvador Dalí.

While Neeley and his husband and business partner Zach Rollins cooked their way through elaborate dishes with such whimsical names as Oysters à la Broilati, Quail à l'Impériale and Soufflé Kocisky, the award-winning jeweller had a dream: he found himself at a dinner party with Dalí and his wife Gala before wandering into their garden.

From this vision, combined with a longstanding affinity for vibrant gemstones, a high jewellery collection, Dalí's Garden, was born. Six years in the making, with many pieces requiring hundreds of hours to complete, the collection was unveiled at PAD Paris last month. It evokes a dreamlike landscape of flora and fauna, unfolding as a meditation on metamorphosis; a crimson rose at the height of its radiance, releasing its final breath of beauty.

“I’m fascinated by how Dalí channels the unconscious, transforming the familiar into something unexpected,” Neeley says. “He challenges perception, encouraging the viewer to see beyond what is immediately known. I’m drawn to the balance between imagination and discipline, where vision and craftsmanship work in tandem to create something new.”



Adam Neeley’s Rosa Petula necklace features more than 55 carats of Burmese rubies



Adam Neeley: ‘I’m fascinated by how Dalí channels the unconscious’

Working in titanium — a notoriously challenging material for pavé — the goldsmith developed anodisation techniques using controlled electricity and heat to generate colour within the surface of the metal itself. The resulting pieces unfold like fragments of a subconscious narrative, combining unexpected colour harmonies with fluid, sensual forms.

In the Rosa Petula necklace, more than 55 carats of Burmese rubies are arranged into drifting, petal-like structures, suspended in softly anodised titanium. A total of 635 stones are pavé-set along curved surfaces that mimic the loosening structure of a flower in motion, echoing Dalí’s fascination with transformation and impermanence.

The Spanish artist, who died in 1989, is once again at the centre of cultural and commercial attention. A renewed institutional focus — seen in exhibitions such as *Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art* at London’s V&A Museum, which revisits the fashion designer’s collaboration with Dalí in the 1930s — has coincided with strong auction results. In October 2025, Dalí’s Swirling Sea necklace, an intricate composition of gold, diamonds, pearls and coloured stones, more than doubled its estimate at Sotheby’s in Paris, achieving €736,600.



© Sotheby's

In October 2025, Dalí's Swirling Sea necklace fetched €736,600 at Sotheby's in Paris



© Salvador Dalí, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dalí, DACS. Photograph/V&A/Emil Larsson

A 1938 skeleton dress designed by Elsa Schiaparelli and Dalí, on display as part of *Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art* at the V&A

Last autumn, the Louisa Guinness Gallery in London showcased The Eye of Time brooch as part of the *Surrealist Jewels 101* exhibition. Its owner, Louisa Guinness, points to Dalí's own words: his jewels were not “cold objects that could rest soullessly in steel vaults” but works intended to “please the eye, uplift the spirit, stir the imagination, express convictions”.

Long before the current revival, Paris-based Lydia Courteille had already established herself as one of the few high jewellers to engage deeply with Dalí's surrealist language. Trained as an antiques dealer, she often works across eras: in one pair of cuffs, ancient Egyptian eyes are reimagined in gold, enamel and diamonds to spell out "Gala Mamuse", a tribute to Dalí's muse and wife. Elsewhere, lips, skulls and even lobster motifs echo the artist's iconography, filtered through Courteille's distinctly irreverent, gem-set compositions.

While Courteille's work engages directly with Dalí's iconography, other designers are drawing on a more atmospheric interpretation of his world. Jesse Marlo Lazowski, founder of New York-based Marlo Laz, drew inspiration from Cadaqués, the Catalan coastal village where Dalí lived and worked, for her latest collection, Dreaming of Cadaques. The collection centres on El Sol, a radiant gold sun motif, alongside pieces such as Gala and La Roca, where textured surfaces, vibrant citrines and scattered diamonds evoke the glare of the Mediterranean, Spanish sun and the shimmer of night skies.



Dali inspired cuffs by Lydia Courteille



Caramel Lip ring by Martina Kocianova

"My favourite anecdote from visiting Dalí's home and studio is that he had a mirror perfectly positioned in his house so he would be the first person in Cadaqués, and thus in Spain, to witness the reflection of the sun rising each morning," Lazowski says. "I poured the essence of that concept into the collection: sunrises, new beginnings, seeking the light."

A younger generation, however, is returning more directly to surrealist imagery, often with a more provocative edge. The Slovakia-born, London-based designer Martina Kocianova has developed a series of lip rings that draw explicitly on Dalí's iconic motif, while introducing her own references to psychedelia and altered perception.

Her Red Lip ring, carved from lab-grown ruby and set with garnets, transforms the mouth into a sculptural object that is at once sensual and disconcerting. The band itself takes inspiration from the organic forms of mushrooms, a recurring motif in her work. Currently exhibited at Dover Street Market New York, the piece was previously shown at the Louisa Guinness Gallery as part of its surrealist show.

“Surrealism has always been a big influence in my work — Dalí, and specifically his [\[Mae West\] lips sofa](#), was ingrained in my mind,” Kocianova says. “After making the first lip ring [in 2022], people responded strongly, and the pieces evolved from there.”

Whether Dalí inspires the spirit or the aesthetic of a jewel, it carries something of his rebellious, avant-garde and at times subversive sensibility.