

Dalí: The Great Years, 1929–1939

April 16 – June 13, 2026

Di Donna Galleries is pleased to present *Dalí: The Great Years, 1929–1939*, a major exhibition tracing the pivotal decade in which Dalí established both his mature artistic language and enduring public persona. It is the most significant presentation of Dalí's work in New York since the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition in 2008. The exhibition is on view from April 16 through June 13, 2026 at Di Donna's Madison Avenue gallery.

Dalí: The Great Years, 1929–1939 brings together paintings, works on paper, and sculpture drawn from important private and public collections, including the Salvador Dalí Museum, St. Petersburg, Florida; the Art Institute of Chicago; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, alongside archival material that illuminates Dalí's creative evolution during one of the most consequential periods of the twentieth-century. Organized chronologically, the exhibition traces the artist as he emerged as a phenomenon unto himself, with a singular vision and persona intrinsic to his artistic expression.

The years 1929 to 1939 were transformative for Dalí. In this period, he formally aligned himself with the Surrealist movement in Paris while expanding the group's theoretical foundations. In the early 1930s, Dalí developed his signature paranoiac-critical method—a rigorous, self-induced hallucinatory technique in which irrational imagery could be systematically accessed and then rendered with meticulous precision. The result was a body of work of startling originality that collapsed the boundary between the unconscious and the known world. *La Profanation de l'hostie (Profanation of the Host)* (c.1930) is a highly illusionary yet deeply personal work, featuring multiple self-portraits, which confronts religion while addressing the artist's own fears of death and decay.

In this period, Dalí also dramatically expanded Surrealism's reach beyond the painted canvas through his development of the "Surrealist Object." Extending the principles of the movement into three-dimensions, as seen in the *Vénus de Milo aux Tiroirs (Venus de Milo with Drawers)* (1936/64), Dalí placed familiar objects together in an incongruous and outlandish manner to achieve a form with a sole purpose of furthering the human imagination. The decade also saw the artist make forays into design, film, theater, and commercial culture, including collaborations with fashion designers and cultural patrons like Elsa Schiaparelli and Gabrielle Chanel—broadening the place of Surrealism through the infiltration of the uncanny into every register of modern life.

The horrors of the Spanish Civil War, which erupted in 1936, cast a long shadow over the final years of the decade. Dalí's response was characteristically oblique—neither an engaged political witness nor simple evasion, but a displaced, anguished processing of violence and instability through a deepening psychic symbolism. Works from this period reveal Dalí's own interpretation of trauma in their imagery of soft bodies, metamorphic architecture and premonitions of destruction. He fled Spain in 1938, spending four months at La Pausa, Gabrielle Chanel's retreat on the French Riviera, where he painted the body of work that would be presented at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York the following year. By 1939, having definitively split from the Surrealist group and fleeing the conflict in Europe, Dalí relocated to the United States.

DI DONNA

744 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10065
T.+1 212 259 0444
info@didonna.com

Central to both Dalí's life and work in these years was his wife, Gala—born Helena Diakonova—whom Dalí met in 1929. She soon became his lifelong muse, partner and indispensable collaborator. Gala's was also a key architect of the Dalínian persona: the flamboyant public figure, the showman of the unconscious and the self-proclaimed genius who wielded eccentricity as precise strategy

Dalí: The Great Years, 1929–1939 will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue featuring an essay written by Dawn Ades, whose foundational scholarship has shaped the study of Dalí and Surrealism as a whole, in addition to a comprehensive chronology documenting the key events, exhibitions, and publications of Dalí's most defining decade.

Exhibition Dates

April 17 – June 13, 2026

Opening Night

Thursday, April 16 | 6-8PM

Monday – Friday | 10AM to 6PM

Saturday | 11AM to 6PM

Di Donna Galleries

744 Madison Ave, New York
(Between 64th and 65th Street)

Press Contact:

Sarah Goulet

sarah@sarahgoulet.com / +1 303 918 0393