

State of PLAY

With a vivacious, witty take on precious childhood memories, designers embrace the carefree ease of the playground



A popular Instagram refrain is “Don’t grow up—it’s a trap”. Contemporary jewellers are catering for those with Peter Pan-like tendencies with nostalgic pieces that evoke childhood toys, albeit using very grown-up materials.

At **Boochier**, founder Melinda Zeman riffs on spiralling slinkies and Nintendo Game Boy motifs, rendered in solid gold and gemstones. “I find childhood objects inspiring because it’s a magical time when imagination knows no limits and dreams take flight,” she says. Nostalgia offers “a sense of escapism—it helps us revisit cherished memories and emotional connections.”

Nadine Ghosn’s new collaboration with Crayola instantly transports us to childhoods spent furiously colouring in. It began with a bespoke crayon bangle made for the rapper Lil Yachty, crafted in brushed 18-carat gold and turquoise and emblazoned with his name. Now she has launched a whole set; one look at the primary-coloured hardstone nibs and you can almost smell the distinctive waxy scent. As is always the case with Ghosn’s irreverent designs, there’s a deeper meaning behind the whimsy. “These pieces should ignite our

childlike curiosity, purity and creativity; reminding us of our inner child, and the importance of keeping him or her alive,” she says.

Playfully precious jewellery appeals to those who don’t feel connected to classical motifs. There’s nothing traditional about **NeverNot**’s chunky pavé-set suitcases, finished with personalised luggage tags, nor **Van Robot**’s anthropomorphic robots with their wiggling arms and gem-set bellies. The treats hidden inside **Fabergé**’s imperial eggs have evoked childlike glee for more than a century; the house’s newest creation, the Malaika Egg, conceals a five-carat Gemfields Mozambican ruby, a prize fit for royalty.

The Abacus collection by **Ouroboros** uses kite-shaped sapphires as a fidget-spinner, and there’s a beguiling innocence to **Yvonne Leon**’s wonky smiley faces and rainbow elephants. **Karina Choudhrie**’s Mini collection features 12 deep-sea creatures reimagined as a circus troupe, including Jellyfish the juggler, Seahorse the trapeze artist and Starfish the unicyclist.

To the onlooker, these pieces are not “precious”—and that’s the appeal. **Carolina Bucci**’s Downtown collection suggests the childlike excitement of stringing

together friendship bracelets. Yet the supersized beads are crafted from semi-precious stones, enamel or Florentine-finish gold: the result of generations-old craftsmanship. Likewise, **Marie Lichtenberg**’s dice are hewn from brushed gold or carved ebony and set with diamonds. “To roll the dice is, to me, the expression of self-questioning, putting oneself in danger, constantly stepping out of one’s comfort zone,” she says. “The dice doesn’t symbolise chance, but rather, trusting something greater than ourselves.”

Lia Lam wanted to “celebrate and cherish the freedom and uninhibited imagination present in children’s art,” in rings designed to resemble a child’s simplistic outline of a house;

albeit one topped with a five-carat diamond. And **Brent Neale** takes the trend to the next level by recreating children’s drawings: scribbly pictures of pets or family portraits are transferred into gold with a dusting of gemstones. Her new Hopscotch collection is an ode to summers spent playing the game poolside: a patchwork of coloured hardstones studded with diamonds honours the joy of play, preserved forever as a keepsake of bright-eyed, childlike delight.

1. Boochier Slinkie Icon ring
2. Van Sogno Van Robot necklace
3. NeverNot Necklace
4. Lia Lam Ring
5. Ouroboros Abacus pendant
6. Nadine Ghosn Crayola bracelet
7. Karina Bucci Soho Gold Downtown necklace
8. Marie Lichtenberg Dado earring and charm
9. Karina Choudhrie Jellyfish Luxury Pavé charm
10. Fabergé Malaika egg
11. Brent Neale Large Carved Stone Hopscotch bracelet

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