

EVENTS/CAUSES

Fashion brands craft bespoke fezzes for children's charity

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Jimmy Choo tarbouche for Innocence in Danger

By SARAH JONES

Buccellati and Lanvin are among the designers lending their creativity to the Tarbouche Project to raise funds and awareness for child abuse.

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The initiative is the brainchild of artist Mouna Rebeiz, whose painting series "Le Tarbouche" is currently on display at the Saatchi Gallery in London. Ms. Rebeiz handpicked a number of designers to craft a fez in their own style to be auctioned live by Sotheby's as well as online for Innocence in Danger, a charity that works to end violence against children.

"I have been working on the subject of tarbouche in my paintings for about six years now," Ms. Rebeiz said. "The tarbouche is an important emblem and indeed something of an obsession for me, as a painter, an artist and a woman from the Levant. For me, it's about the shape and the colour."

"As I started to prepare for my first London solo show, my friend Hodaya Sellier was also preparing to launch her charity in London," she said. "I had this idea to ask designers and architects to personalize the tarbouche – to help to raise funds for the charity through

an auction.

"I am thrilled by the response from world famous designers, from women architects such as Zaha Hadid and Eva Jiricna and some of my favorite designers. I asked each to reinvent a tarbouche in their own style, and am thrilled with the collection of symbolic and beautiful objects that are the result.

"The tarbouches will be auctioned live by Sotheby's and online by Gavel & Grand in support of Innocence in Danger - a charity close to my heart, and with whom I have collaborated for some time."

Branded benefit

Ms. Rebeiz's "Le Tarbouche" paintings show nude female bodies wearing fezzes, headwear traditionally reserved for men in the Levant and across the Middle East. This creates a contradiction between femininity and a symbol of authority, presenting a message of hope.

The exhibit, Ms. Rebeiz's first solo show in London, opened Feb. 23, and will run until March 3.



Songe de tarbouche by Mouna Rebeiz

To bring further attention to the exhibit and to extend the conversation, Ms. Rebeiz gathered about 40 designers to create their own interpretation of the tarbouche, which are currently being auctioned online by Gavel & Grand and will be sold live via Sotheby's. The proceeds raised will benefit Innocence in Danger, a global organization dedicated to

combating child abuse.

Currently in the United Kingdom, Innocence in Danger is working with Mandate Now to adjust the laws on required reporting of both verified and suspected child abuse. It is also teaching parents and children about keeping kids safe online.

Each tarbouche in the auction represents the brand's heritage and style.

Buccellati's is plain except for a yellow gold brooch in the shape of branch, with blossoms crafted from rubies. This reflects the brand's constant inspiration from nature.

Couturier Elie Saab took a detour from his typical beaded, lush aesthetic, using it instead as a personal art project. A group of fezzes huddle together, staring out at the viewer with their cartoon eyes, a reference to the "evil eye," or talisman against harm.



Elie Saab for The Tarbouche Project

Emilio Pucci's tarbouche is hand beaded illusion tulle in the house's traditional color scheme of yellows, oranges and fuchsia.



Elie Saab for The Tarbouche Project

Roger Vivier muse Ines de la Fressange was inspired by Instagram and clashing styles for her fez, using acrylic paint to decorate it in bright colors.

For Jimmy Choo, creative director Sandra Choi used Swarovski crystals to craft a zebra print design.

A number of brands are promoting their own tarbouches on social media, getting their followers interested in the auction.

Lanvin linked to the Gavel & Grand auction, sharing a photo of its fez, which features a doll dressed in the brand's attire perched atop. The doll is meant to represent childhood and the long for affection a child feels.



Lanvin for The Tarbouche

"The global issue of child abuse materializes in many forms – physical, mental, emotional, spiritual," said Rebecca Miller, CEO of [Miller & Company](#), New York. "Since luxury is often a marriage of art and science, what better way to express support then through a project where the donation of time and talent results in an impactful initial awareness followed by a physical remembrance to be seen and shared?"

"Brands are cautious when taking a strong position on political and religious issues, but children are our and their future," she said. "Brands typically support those initiatives that best align with their core values and will serve to place the brand in a favorable light with their clients."

Each of the auction lots is valued at "priceless," and items may fetch a large sum due to the exclusive nature of the pieces.

"The audience will most likely be those who are passionate about humane treatment in business and in private environments for children," Ms. Miller said. "Depending on the marketing strategies, the event has the opportunity to expose a greater group through social media efforts to this cause."

"The greater the awareness the better the opportunity to increase bids," she said. "As for the priceless aspect, what price does one place for the safety of a child?"

Come together

Luxury brands commonly join together for charity auctions, using their clout to help a cause. Children's charities are particularly popular beneficiaries.

Luxury fashion houses and designers raised money for Operation Bobbi Bear through the auction of one-off teddy bears.

The group of high-profile participants were asked by Vienna-based Life Ball to worked with customizable toy maker Build-A-Bear to create custom teddy bears to benefit Operation Bobbi Bear. Due to the exclusivity of the pieces on auction, enthusiasts may be more inclined to monitor the auction and place a high-priced bid due the items charitable ties during the holiday season ([see story](#)).

Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana continued its support of UNICEF's work with children in need in the Darfur region of Sudan.

For the third year, Dolce & Gabbana and other fashion houses, such as Christian Dior and Chanel, joined UNICEF for the Frimousses de Creatures project to raise funds for the children of the Darfur. Each year the brands work to create a doll that aligns with a specific theme, which is then auctioned off to benefit UNICEF ([see story](#)).

Participating in this auction will help these brands communicate their values.

"Luxury brands recognize their clients are interested in what they support," Ms. Miller said. "It speaks volumes to them on a personal level. They watch where they elect to place their time and money.

"The increased focus on ethical and humane practices plays well into this scenario," she said. "Consider the effort of Tod's CEO Diego Della Valle, who is funding the Colosseum project to promote Italy's image overseas or Ralph Lauren for the conservation of the U.S. flag to preserve a piece of our nation's heritage.

"These brands understand the power of investing in their own image by helping others using a broader cause as a platform. Few, like Stephanie Odegard, have built a global business using these ethical standards to build a business and co-found GoodWeave in support of removing child labor from the carpet industry."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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