

ADVERTISING

Dior leverages Versailles' sophistication for children's collection

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Baby Dior spring/summer 2016

By JEN KING

French atelier Christian Dior is transporting even its smallest enthusiasts to a place of luxury and refinement.

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For the Baby Dior spring/summer 2016 collection campaign, the brand heads to the Palace of Versailles outside Paris to explore the flower beds of its gardens and the outdoor Hall of Mirrors. Dior spent ample time and energy on its children's wear campaign, as much as if it were adult ready-to-wear, further highlighting the interest today's consumer has in the category.

"During the past few years, we're seeing an influx of pregnant women and new moms across the runway (Sarah Stage, Coco Rocha), bloggers (Cupcakes and Cashmere, Barefoot Blonde) and celebrities (Jessica Biel and Justin Timberlake, Ashton Kutcher and Mila Kunis) so it's quite timely and effective to reach this new wave of mom's combined with an assortment of influencers whom each have amazing style," said Dalia Strum, professor at the [Fashion Institute of Technology](#) and founder of [Dalia Inc.](#) and [MommysToolbox.com](#), New York.

"This is an ideal time to capitalize on a new market and on developing stronger brand advocacy and relevancy during a different life-stage," she said.

Ms. Strum is not affiliated with Dior, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Dior did not respond by press deadline.

Childlike wonder

Dior drew inspiration for the spring/summer 2016 collection from Versailles, resulting in a graphic wardrobe for children. Pieces include a peplum top, a metallic Jacquard dress, structured cardigans for girls and hoodies, polo shirts and jackets with a graphic spirit for boys.

The videos created for the collection are broken into season, with a separate campaign film produced for spring and a second for summer.

Spring's video was filmed within the garden of Versailles, designed by Le Ntre. The film begins with Dior's logo and a young girl running out from behind a mirror, a primary prop in the 90-second film.



Baby Dior, still for spring 2016

Children are seen hand-in-hand walking the perimeter of a fountain, posing in front of mirrors and popping out from behind shrubs. The use of mirrors allows the children's personalities to show while also exhibiting the properties of Dior's clothing.

Although the clothing featured is sophisticated, the carefree character of each child comes through as they skip, jump, spin and pose as a ballerinas.

Baby Dior spring 2016

The selection of Versailles as the campaign's setting allows Dior to connect its children's wear to its full-size lines. The brand has shot a number of efforts at the Palace, as it was a favorite place of Dior's founder. Likewise, leveraging a locale that is often used for ready-to-wear efforts draws parallels of quality between apparel made for children and adults.

Dior's second video shared to DiorMag and its YouTube channel is specifically for Baby Dior summer 2016. The 90-second campaign was filmed at Japanese garden, a setting that was inspired by the decor of Marie Antoinette's private residence Petit Trianon at the Palace of Versailles.



Baby Dior, still for summer 2016

The video follows the children seen in the spring adaptation as they balance on rocks overlooking a koi pond, pick cherry blossom flowers from branches above, have a tea party, dance and play Patty Cake.

As with the spring version of the campaign, the children exude childlike wonder even though their clothing is well-made and of a high quality. Since children are not likely to be the viewers of the campaign, showing boys and girls playing and having fun, but in designer clothing, may spur adults to make a purchase with the hope of a similar result.

Baby Dior summer 2016

While the campaign shows a variety of clothing options for children, including accessories such as headbands, Mini Dior handbags and footwear, it does not lead the consumer to an ecommerce option or to product details.

Children's game

While developing children's wear may have seemed risky to luxury brands in the past, the market is rife with untapped potential for high-end fashion players, according to a recent report by Fashionbi.

"Kidswear Market: Evolution and Potential" explains how a combination of factors, including parents having children at an older and more financially stable age, an increasing birth rate and baby boomer grandparents with the means to dote on their grandchildren, have helped to boost market growth in the children's wear sector. Over the past couple of years, a number of luxury labels, including Tom Ford and Balmain, have begun designing for younger consumers, appealing to a more brand-conscious generation ([see story](#)).

Retailers has also seen an uptick in consumer interest for high-end children's apparel and accessories with many revamping departments and increasing inventory.

In December 2015, British retailer Harrods is focusing on children's wear with the opening of its Mini Superbrands concept.

The children's clothing concept is found on the fourth floor in the children's wear department and mimics the Superbrands adult space on the retailer's first floor. As with the adult-focused Superbrands, Mini Superbrands will be dedicated to leading luxury labels such as Christian Dior, Gucci and Loro Piana, among many others ([see story](#)).

Dior's focus on children plays into current trends, but the efforts may not spur much more than awareness among consumers.

"These videos are a simple strategy to increase awareness, while I personally think they're missing an opportunity by not showcasing and highlighting their children's apparel line," Ms. Strum said.

"The videos also inspire the desire to plan a vacation, so they could incorporate a larger strategy to highlight another opportunity to connect based on seasonal changes and avoiding discounting," she said. "While each video is capped at a minute and a half, they would be more interesting if there was some additional interactivity, shoppable aspect, etc."