

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

How clothes for kids could mean big profits for fashion houses

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Balmain Kids, spring/summer 2017

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MUSCAT, Oman Fashion has the opportunity to make big profits off small clothes with the increasing popularity of children's luxury wear, according to the CEO of Pitti Immagine.

Speaking at Cond Nast's International Luxury Conference, the executive spoke about the current revolution of luxury children's wear that is currently sweeping through the fashion world. This movement is helped along by social media, which has empowered people's desires to show off their stylish children.

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"Once upon a time the luxury children's market was sluggish, but now it is marching ahead at a steady pace, even surprising the men's and women's wear markets," said Raffaello Napoleone, CEO of **Pitti Immagine** and chairman of Yoox Net-A-Porter Group.

"For years, children's wear seemed to ignore change and made the same clothing. There was good taste but no real sense of fashion," he said. "This is finally changing."

Kids clothes

While high fashion has almost always focused on men's and women's wear, Mr. Napoleone spoke about an underrepresented but valuable luxury category: children's wear.

It may seem an unlikely combination, given that children grow fast and the clothing cannot be bought to last, but the sector is steadily growing in popularity and luxury brands have the opportunity to take advantage of this market.

Heretofore, they have not done so. Most high-fashion children's wear is similar, not changing drastically season by season the way adult fashion does.



Lanvin children's wear

Generally, brands have not put as much effort into the design of children's wear as they should, with the exception of Christian Dior's 1967 children's collection.

This is a golden opportunity given the numbers. Mr. Napoleone notes that the luxury children's market has increased from 122 billion euros in 2010 to 135 billion euros, or almost \$144 billion at current exchange, in 2015.

Part of the growing appeal comes from social media, as parents have more opportunities to record and share their children's looks while wearing luxury items. This is particularly notable given the "mini-me" trend of parents dressing their children up in pint-sized version of their own luxury clothing and taking photos together.

"The mini-me phenomenon has been extraordinary for luxury children's wear," Mr. Napoleone said.

Mini-me

The mini-me trend has not escaped the notice of luxury brands before now. Some of the biggest houses in fashion, including Balmain, have fully embraced it as a marketing tool.

The label's creative director Olivier Rousteing announced the Balmain Kids line on his personal Instagram last January and cited his friend Kim Kardashian West's daughter North as a muse. 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 player due to factors such as parents having children at an older and more financially stable age ([see story](#)).



Baby Dior, spring/summer 2017

The emphasis on children's luxury wear has extended into other parts of brands' marketing tactics as well. Dior, one of the labels Mr. Napoleone mentions as embracing luxury children's wear early, recently created an Instagram account entirely devoted to children's fashion.

The account debuted with a GIF showing a Baby Dior hatbox with scattered flower petals, confetti and grapes moving across the screen. The caption tells followers that "The elegance of mothers and fathers is an inheritance transmitted to their offspring" ([see story](#)).

Ultimately, Mr. Napoleone urges all fashion brands to begin thinking about their children's lines as more than just a quick cash grab, but treat them with the same level of care as they would for adults. The payoff may very well be worth it.

"Of course we think that the children's wear market is huge because it's really starting now to show an opportunity for growth," Mr. Napoleone said.

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