

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Balenciaga pulls controversial ad campaign featuring kids amidst uproar

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In the Balenciaga spring/summer 2023 campaign images, children are holding teddy bears that are outfitted with accessories reminiscent of adult bondage fetish wear. Image credit: Balenciaga

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Due to resounding criticism, Spanish fashion brand Balenciaga has pulled its latest ad campaign that featured images of children posing with sexually suggestive merchandise and props.

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In the images, children are holding teddy bears that are outfitted with accessories reminiscent of adult bondage fetish wear. The campaign was met with swift backlash, particularly from online parent communities, and the imagery promptly removed.

"We sincerely apologize for any offense our holiday campaign may have caused," a representative from Balenciaga said in a statement posted on Instagram.

"Our plush bear bags should not have been featured with children in this campaign. We have immediately removed the campaign from all platforms."

The ads were part of the brand's holiday gifting campaign, and featured pieces from the spring/summer 2023 line.

French luxury conglomerate Kering owns [Balenciaga](#).

Unbearable

Balenciaga has a not-yet-available line of bags which resemble plush toy teddy bears. The bags were used to model accessories from the brand's collection, such as a black leather spiked dog harness and oversized chain jewelry.

The bears were adorned, by turns, in black mesh crop tops, leather cuffs on their wrists and ankles, and a choker clasped with a padlock.

In one image, a child is standing on a bed holding one of the bears by the strap of one of these harnesses.

In another image, a different child is standing on a couch holding another bear bag that appears to be wearing a black thong.

The outcry came from all corners of the Internet, with one Twitter user calling the images "creepy and wrong."

One member of the popular parenting platform Mumsnet commented that the pictures were "verging on the depraved."

"(It is) frightening how many adults must have been involved in this," wrote another Twitter user.

Balenciaga has been mired in controversy lately, having recently been forced to sever ties with its brand ambassador, hip hop mogul Ye formerly Kanye West over his anti-Semitic comments.

For this latest, controversy, the brand remains apologetic and plans to take drastic measure to rectify it.

"We take this matter very seriously and are taking legal action against the parties responsible for creating the set and including unapproved items for our Spring 23 campaign photoshoot," Balenciaga said in a statement.

"We strongly condemn abuse of children in any form. We stand for children's safety and well-being."

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