



Kidorama

200 Years of Children's Fashion

Musée Mode & Kant & Dentelle Museum

Visitor's
guide

08.07.22 —
05.03.23

Musée Mode & Kant & Dentelle Museum

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Rue de la Violette 12 Violetstraat
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fashionandlacemuseum.brussels

INTRODUCTION
for adults

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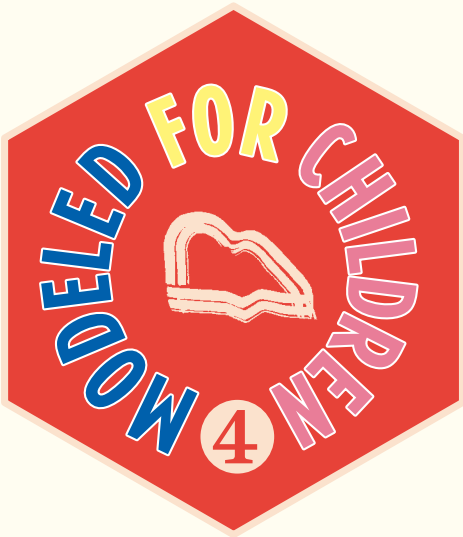
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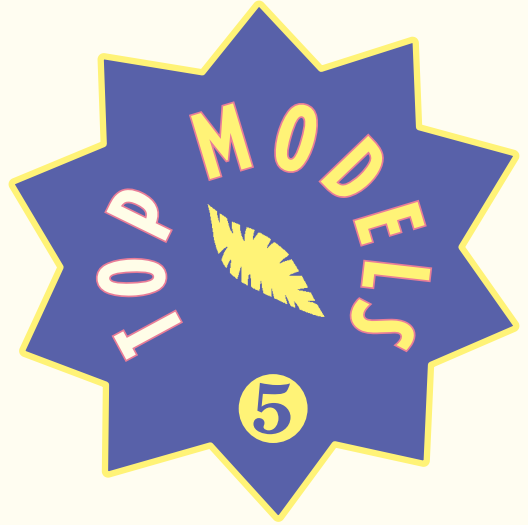
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COLOPHON

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Today, in 2022, children's fashions are a booming business. Despite the crisis, this is a flourishing market with an ever more diverse offering and new labels introduced every year.

The exhibition *Kidorama. 200 Years of Children's Fashion* seeks to survey current children's fashion through an historical lens and within a thematic and chronological framework. What are its major characteristics?

Do styles proceed in a continuous cycle or are they, on the contrary, defined by divergence? The exhibition focuses on clothes for children aged 0 to 12, thus coming to an end when adolescence begins, and extends from the early 19th century to the present day.

Adults and children alike are invited to reflect on such societal subjects as the construction of gender

identity and the development of unisex/mixed-gender styles, or the importance of eco-responsibility in the fashion industry. Other themes examine the specificities of children's fashion and its evolution from 1820 to 2020: from the imitation of adult fashion to the development of styles created expressly for children, and to the luxury industry's growing interest for this sector over the past decade. As fashion is first and foremost a social phenomenon, it brings to light the place and personality of children within society. Just as each child develops their own personality, so children's fashion is multifaceted. These broad issues are illustrated not only by the Fashion & Lace Museum's own significant collection but also by pieces on loan from other prestigious institutions. Belgian children's fashion occupies a special place on the international scene. It is

INTRODUCTION
for adults

therefore natural that the exhibition highlights Belgian designers through the museum's recently acquired contemporary pieces.

The texts and games in the exhibition are intended for children. The booklet, however, is made for adults and provides additional background on the themes and items presented. The two are meant to complement each other.

INTRODUCTION for adults

This timeline compares what children and adults wore at a series of specific dates. Children are dressed like small adults with various adaptations suited to their age and activities.

Their clothes were copied directly from adult fashions, which were presented in fashion plates and advertisements, just as they are on the internet today. They were not specifically designed for them: children's fashion simply didn't exist.

When choosing clothes for their children, parents have always tended to abide by the image they have of their family, conveying their tastes, values, and the aspirations they harbour for their offspring. At times, they would dress them exactly like themselves, making the child a miniature image of the parent.



1

Ensemble

1800-20

Spencer and trousers
– linen

Inv. C1988.29.12

Ensemble

c. 1785

Tailcoat – silk cannele;
breeches – silk taffeta

Inv. C2000.12.04-05

Coloured plate

«*Modes de Paris*»

n°557 in *Petit Courier
des Dames*

25 May 1828

Fashion & Lace Museum

Between the late 18th and early 19th centuries, boys belonging to the bourgeoisie began wearing suits from the age of 3-4. In appearance, they seemed to mimic the cut of those their fathers wore, but in fact adaptations were made to accommodate children's movements and provide more comfort. The jacket was shorter and without godets (the two back panels). The breeches worn by men were replaced by trousers slit at the ankle and buttoned by a system known as "full-front", borrowed from sailors' uniforms. This extremely fashionable English-

inspired suit – also known as a skeleton suit – would eventually inspire the fashion for men's trousers.

2

Dress

1830-35

Silk pongee and
embroidered organdie

Inv. C1987.06.02

Worn with:

Pantalettes

c. 1785

Embroidered cotton toile
and machine lace

Inv. CX2019.24.01

Dress

c. 1830

Silk taffeta

Inv. C2005.03.03

Coloured plate

in *Le conseiller
des Grâces*

1826

Fashion & Lace Museum

In the years 1820 to 1830, women's bodices featured leg of mutton sleeves, a wide collar, and a pronounced waist. Skirts were given full, round shapes with layers of petticoats worn underneath. The dresses that women belonging to the bourgeoisie wore and changed throughout the day revealed their wealth and social status. They were heavily trimmed and embellished with

shimmering fabrics and bold colours. Up until around ten years old, little girls wore dresses appropriate for their age and while adult skirts grazed the floor, theirs' would be cut at mid-calf to allow more freedom of movement as seen on fashion plates showing little girls playing or taking walks. Up until the 1860s, they wore "pantalettes" under their skirts for modesty purposes.

3

Dress

1877-82

Wool twill, silk satin,
Valenciennes lace

Inv. 1995.55.01

Given by Madame Ponsart

Dress

c. 1870

Silk taffeta

Inv. C2000.12.04-05

Coloured plate

«*Toilettes de promenade*»

in *Le journal des dames
et des demoiselles*

1 October 1877

Fashion & Lace Museum

From the second half of the 19th century until the end of the First World War, children were bound by the same codes and social duties as their parents,

and this included their clothing. High society was the role model for most of the population and fashion publications and newspapers amply spread images of the elite. The fashion for tartan, for instance, took off when Queen Victoria redecorated Balmoral Castle in Scotland (c. 1850) using the pattern, which she also began wearing. In 1870, during the railroad boom, travel dresses with bustles became popular. The skirt's full volume was swept up and attached at the back, while the dress continued to exhibit a wealth of luxurious details. Little girls' skirts remained shorter, and by this time, pantalettes had disappeared.

4

Ensemble

1908

Blouse – silk velvet and Valenciennes lace; breeches – silk velvet

Loaned by the Art & History Museum

Prince Albert

in 1908

Photo

Palais Royal Archives

Photo

“Princess Elisabeth and her children in 1908”
in *Le Soir Illustré*

1934

On loan from a Private collection

Around 1900, little boys began wearing the first short trousers. They varied from mid-thigh to mid-calf length, depending on the age of the child, and had a lasting popularity as they remained part of their wardrobe until the 1960s. Here, Léopold, the future King of Belgium, is shown wearing a luxury version in 1908.

The more common and everyday short trousers would, however, resemble those of their fathers' three-piece suit and were often worn with braces, shirt and jacket.

5

Dress

Attributed to Jeanne Lanvin

1909-11

Embroidered cotton velvet, Valenciennes lace, silk satin

Inv. C2009.03.15

Afternoon dress

Feuille morte

Jeanne Lanvin

Summer 1914

Shot silk taffeta, silk tulle, silk satin

Loaned by Patrimoine Lanvin

Coloured plate

«Vive Saint-Cyr!»
n° 72 in *Gazette du Bon Ton*

July 1914

Fashion & Lace Museum

In 1910, women's fashion began to lighten up, a trend that would become the norm by the 1920s: bodies were freed from corsets and dresses worn shorter. Couturiers, who were at the vanguard of these changes, began to dictate fashions that would spread throughout the population.

While Jeanne Lanvin is often mistakenly considered the first couturier to make children's clothes (Jacques Doucet, for instance, began before her), she nonetheless was the first to turn children's wear into a commercial activity. She began her career by designing and sewing clothes for her own daughter. These were such a success that in 1908 she launched her first children's collection. In her newly opened couture house, the children's department (mainly for little girls) was as important as the



women's section. Jeanne Lanvin's genius lay in her ability to capitalize on the mother-daughter likeness that was so in vogue at the time and created matching outfits for all occasions. She even chose a logo that depicts herself with her daughter. In both children's and adult's fashions, the 1920s was a time of disruption and it wasn't until the 1930s that clothing styles became more sensible, and children were dressed in clothes better suited to their needs. These would remain standard until the 1960s. In the intervening decades, the gap between children and adult styles widened, as we will see later.

6

Dress

c. 1974-79

Wool jersey and wool twill

Inv. C2015.79.02

Given by Madame Sarah Cordier

Ensemble Créations Mathilde

c. 1970

Jacket – wool jersey and

rabbit fur; skirt

– wool twill

Inv. C2012.72.08-09

Given by Madame Martine Kuhn

Advertisement «Club Gwendacril»

in *Marie-Claire*

September 1972

Fashion & Lace Museum

7

Ensemble St Michael

1960-70

Tunic, trousers and belt

– synthetic jersey

Inv. C2002.75.08E.01-03

Given by Madame Laing

Reconstitution:

contemporary under-sweater

Ensemble LM

1965-70

Coat and trousers

– wool jersey

Inv. C2017.91.06E.01-02

Given by Madame Marie-Claude

Van Grunderbeek

Advertisement «La mode c'est le jersey»

In leaflet *Priba*

October 1969

Archives of the City of Brussels

Fashion in the 1970s was

marked by unfettered

freedom in the choice of

cuts, colours, patterns,

styles, genders and so on.

It was a time of anything

goes. Adults began

dressing like teenagers

or even children. Mothers

envied their daughters'

youth and, under that

influence, skirts shrank

to mini-length and

trousers entered their

everyday wardrobes.

It was a sartorial

illustration of the social

and economic evolutions

reshaping society.

Until the 1960s, fashion

was set by an elite

composed of the

aristocracy, bourgeoisie

and couturiers. Relayed

by fashion magazines, it

was then copied by the

rest of the population.

From this time on, it

would be driven by

youth and by the street.

8

Ensemble

Baby Dior

by John Galliano

Autumn/Winter 2000-01

Blouson – printed

shearling; cardigan

– cashmere knit; trousers

– printed cotton/

synthetic twill

Loaned by Palais Galliera – musée de

la mode de la Ville de Paris

Posters «Spice Girls»

in *Star Club*

c. 1995

Loaned by Emmanuel Bailleux

The 1980s, with the rise of

consumerism, opened an

era of fast, ever-changing

fashions. These were the

glory days of couture

houses and ready-to-

wear brands along with

high street retailers that

offered cheaper knockoffs

and launched children's ranges that were updated every season. Between 1980 and 2000, while jeans were ubiquitous in any man or woman's wardrobe, children's clothes were increasingly gendered. The difference between adult and children's fashions was less distinct: kids could now dress like mini adults, little girls would wear low-waist jeans and cropped, body-baring tops.

9

Ensemble

Thom Browne

Autumn/Winter 2022-23
Cardigan – cotton knit;
shirt – cotton toile;
skirt – cotton twill; tie
– wool flannel

Loaned by Archives Thom Browne

Ensemble

Thom Browne

Spring/Summer 2022
Cardigan – cotton knit ;
shirt – cotton toile ; tie
– wool flannel

Autumn/Winter 2021-22
Skirt – cotton twill

Loaned by Archives Thom Browne

Video campaign

“Another Day in the City”

Thom Browne

2021

Courtesy of Thom Browne

Video Spring-Summer 2018 show (extract)

Thom Browne

2017

Courtesy of Thom Browne

It is possible that contemporary children's fashions are now at a crossroads. Their ubiquitous presence in a hyper-connected society sheds light on key societal issues such as over-consumption and gender models. When Thom Browne presented his personal vision of the traditional grey suit, he followed in the footsteps of designers in the likes of Rudi Gernreich and Jacques Estérel in the 1970s of Jean-Paul Gaultier in the 1980s. The skirts he makes for men and boys from the age of two on disrupts established codes and stereotypes.



MINI-ME

The “mini-me” phenomenon, in which parents and children wear identical clothing, represents the peak of parental projection and parent-child identification and has become a recurring trope in the trend cycle.

While its first, intermittent appearances in the 1920s consisted of silhouettes that echoed, rather than copied, one another, sartorial mimicry intensified from the 1950s onwards. Although mother and daughter duos were the most common, it wasn't unusual to see entire families wearing matching outfits. The picture thus painted suggested the embodiment of a perfect and ideal family, where children reflect both their parent's success and their own future success. Since the mid-1980s, families are smaller and parents tend to over-invest in their children's education. This societal phenomenon, which touches both on schooling and materialism, has not gone unnoticed by couture houses, which, in addition to expanding their children's lines, seek to capitalise on this parental investment by creating “mini-me” collections. Celebrities and influencers are particularly keen on these matching looks that generate high buzz on social networks.

10

Ensemble

1958

Bodice and skirt
– printed cotton toile

Inv. C2011.74.09E.01-02

Given by Madame
Martine De Meyer-Pire

Dress

1958

Printed cotton toile

Inv. C2011.74.10

Given by Madame
Martine De Meyer-Pire

11

Sweat-shirts

Sonia Rykiel

Autumn/Winter 1988-89
Cotton/acrylic fleece with
embroidery

Loaned by Patrimoine Sonia Rykiel

12

Ensemble

Buissonnière

Autumn/Winter 2021-22

Pullover – nylon/wool
knit; skirt – polyester
crêpe

Inv. C2022.30.01E.01-02

Given by Buissonnière

Dress

Buissonnière

Autumn/Winter 2021-22

Polyester crêpe

Inv. C2022.30.02

Given by Buissonnière

Buissonnière, a brand
founded in 1985 in the
city of Wavre (Belgium),
is a purveyor to the

Belgian court. To this day it remains a family business that continues to make quality clothes in simple fabrics and cuts for everyday and special occasions. Creating matching styles for the entire family has always been part of its signature and success.

ready-to-wear collections. For her Autumn/Winter 2021 collection, created at the height of the pandemic, she reworked her archetypal pieces and presented them in everyday scenes. She also launched her *Miniature* collection, sold exclusively online, as an “extension of items made for adults”.

13

Ensemble

Marine Serre

Autumn/Winter 2021-22

Dress – printed recycled cotton twill; under-sweater – printed polyamide/elastane jersey; trousers – printed recycled cotton twill

Inv. C2022.41.01E.01-05

Given by Marine Serre

Ensemble

Marine Serre

Autumn/Winter 2021-22

Miniature

Jacket – printed recycled cotton twill; under-sweater – printed polyamide/elastane jersey; trousers – printed recycled cotton twill

Inv. C2022.42.01E.01-03

Given by Marine Serre

French designer Marine Serre trained at La Cambre (Brussels) and is famous for her commitment to sustainability and her use of recycled and upcycled materials in her luxury



While now it seems perfectly natural for a little girl to wear trousers, this wasn't always the case. Conversely, not so long ago, little boys wore dresses on a daily basis.

To be a girl or a boy is to have a specific sexual identity or gender. Each gender is generally associated with a particular style of clothes and colours, as well as toys, professions, and so on. These change with the times and the customs of society. Many people still believe that pink is only for girls. There are also identical clothes for girls and boys, this is known as "unisex" fashion and it is most often based on men's styles. Going further, there is also the notion of gender identity: which means *feeling like* a girl or a boy. A growing number of people and designers believe that everyone has the right to dress as they like, whatever their gender.



DRESSES FOR BOYS?

In the 19th century, from 0 to 5 years old, all children wore dresses. As this age group had no social existence, they were considered a part of the maternal female sphere and most often wore dresses for the sake of convenience and hygiene. In old photos, children are seen wearing dresses and bows in their long hair with no outward sign to identify their gender. The dresses were often white and particularly elaborate. Their embroidery, lace and openwork were made by the mothers themselves and tended to follow current women's fashions.

From the 1920s on, dresses for boys would progressively disappear, though they would remain standard for babies until they could walk up to the Second World War. Throughout the 20th century, as the notion of infancy narrowed, children's wear, and the dress in particular, took on a new function: it began to denote a child's gender. Babies are now frequently dressed "like a girl" or "like a boy" straight from birth.

Little boys no longer wear skirts or dresses, except for a few special, mainly religious occasions. Some designers do however challenge these cultural customs by creating skirts for boys.

14

Dress

1870-95

Silk taffeta with appliqués

Given by Madame De Keyser

Inv. C1992.67.19

15

Dress

1900-10

Cotton and broderie anglaise

Inv. C1985.01.16

16

Dress

1900-10

Embroidered cotton ottoman

Inv. C2011.74.03

Given by Madame Martine De Meyer-Pire

These three dresses were probably all worn by boys. A comparison of documented dresses with those published in fashion reviews show that the ornamentation and cut of boys' dresses often differ from those of girls. Here, the back-buttoning, dropped waist, square neckline, and trimmings suggest that they were designed for male children.

BLUE FOR GIRLS?

From the 19th century until the 1930s, white was the preferred colour for the children of the bourgeoisie. There are several reasons for this choice of colour.

Until the 1950s, when washing machines became widespread, white fabrics could be boiled with no fear of greying. This is why they were popular for children's wear and work uniforms such as aprons. Fresh white textiles were a sign of both cleanliness and wealth: a family that cared for its linens was a family of means. White was also the preferred ground for many needlework techniques such as embroidery and lace, which adorned fine clothing. As white was also considered the colour of innocence and purity, it was long the preferred colour for infants up to school age.

From the ages of five or six on, there were no differences in the colours worn by one or the other sex in the 19th century. Children's fashions simply followed those of adults. However, it is worth noting that girls would be dressed in blue, in reference to the Virgin Mary, and boys in pink, as it was derived from red, a symbol of strength. It wasn't until the late 19th century that baby layettes would adopt pastel shades. After the First World War, the layette's colour began to identify gender. The switch from homemade to ready-made clothes brought about new standards in colours and motifs. Little by little,

blue became the colour for boys, and pink for girls. Boundaries however remained vague, particularly in the 1960s-70s with the rise of the gender equality movement. This was a period of great diversity and bold colours. Around 1985, the development of prenatal ultrasound scanning meant that future parents could know their baby's sex. This further finalised the gendering process and colour diktat. In contemporary Western society, blue is the favourite colour for both girls and boys. While any colour is acceptable for girls, a cultural and social resistance persists for boys. It is, however, increasingly challenged.

17

Ensemble

1930-40

Shirt and shorts – linen

Inv. C2001.09.27

18

Dress

1900-10

Cotton twill

Inv. C1992.53.26

Given by Madame Lefebvre

19

Dress

Noukie's

2009

Embroidered cotton toile and broderie anglaise

Loaned by Noukie's

As our home laundering habits have changed,



white is now considered too difficult to keep clean and many parents avoid dressing their offspring in this colour. It is however still preferred for very special occasions such as weddings.

20

Ensemble

1964

Dress and bloomers
– cotton lawn and machine-made lace

Inv. C2013.59.03

Given by Puttaert-Spiess

This ensemble, specifically dated 1964, was given to a little girl. It shows that colours were not then systematically associated with a particular gender.

21

Ensemble

1958

Smock and bloomers
– wool twill and cotton piqué

Inv. C2003.07.12

This ensemble, featuring red pin stripes, a removable white collar, and braces sewn to the bloomers was worn by a little boy and is typical of 1950s-60s baby outfits.

22

Dress

Ralph Lauren

Spring 2012

Cotton toile and cotton piqué

Loaned by Ralph Lauren

Founded by Ralph Lauren in 1967, the label with the polo player logo pioneered casual chic American styles. For this shirtdress, such classic details as flounces and a Peter Pan collar are modernized by a denim-like fabric.

23

T-shirt

Jacquemus

Autumn/Winter 2021-22

Pink 2

Printed cotton jersey

Inv. C2022.29.01

For his first children's wear capsule, French designer Simon Porte Jacquemus chose to create basic unisex items such as sweatshirts, T-shirts and bucket hats.

His *Pink 2* collection is made for both girls and boys and comes in a palette of bright pinks. In the ad campaign, little boys and girls are shown wearing children's and adult-sized items to emphasise the contrast.

24

Ensemble

1930-40

Playsuit, belt and shirt
– cotton toile

Inv. C2001.09.17E.01-03

The fashion magazines of the 1930s called this model a "jardinière". A possible ancestor of the playsuit, it was worn by boys when playing outdoors. Today, in addition to its colour, the embroidery and mother-of-pearl details may surprise for a male garment, but it was very common for children of the 1930s bourgeoisie.

25

Dress

1920-30

Embroidered silk ottoman

Inv. C2022.01.06

Given by famille Huberlant

ONE FASHION FOR ALL

Many contemporary designers now advocate for unisex fashions, creating outfits that can be worn by both boys and girls. These unisex looks often feature masculine colours and styles that are now a part of girls' everyday wardrobe. It is actually a mixed-gender fashion, consisting mainly of trousers and neutral colours. Tomorrow's fashion will probably be different, and designers are beginning to introduce skirts or pink clothes for boys.

26

Ensemble

Cos I Said So

Autumn/Winter 2021-22

Tom's Diner

Sweatshirt – printed cotton jersey;
trousers – cotton twill

Loaned by Cos I Said So

The label founded in 2016 in Antwerp by Sofie Ysewijn, Cos I Said So, is part of the slow fashion movement. Over the last few years, it has adopted a genderless stance with clothes designed to be comfortable, easy to slip on and in unisex colours. The label does not develop a specific "girl" or "boy" collection.

27

Ensemble

JBC

2021

Sweatshirt – printed cotton/synthetic blend jersey; pants – cotton twill

Inv. C2022.51.01-03

Given by JBC

Since 1985, Belgian label JBC makes clothes for the entire family and for a wide audience. When it introduced a non-gendered back-to-school collection in 2021, JBC embraced a growing trend in both fashion and society and confirmed the spread of the phenomenon. The brand does nonetheless continue to offer a full line of classic school uniforms.



In the 19th century, clothes specially designed for children's comfort became widespread. The sailor suit, inspired by military uniforms, was loose, easy to slip on and easy to clean. The smocked dress had tiny front tucks that expand when pulled on. These two styles are exceptional in that they have become permanent fixtures of children's wear. Both have evolved over the years, reflecting changing trends in their materials, fabrics and motifs, to gradually become classics. Today they paint a picture of a well-dressed and well-behaved child.



THE SAILOR SUIT

In a European context of growing nationalism, Queen Victoria perpetuated the tradition of dressing her children in traditional and military costumes to glorify her armies. In 1846, Franz Xaver Winterhalter painted a portrait of her eldest son Albert (future King Edward VII) in a sailor suit, an outfit he wore on the royal yacht in homage to the Royal Navy uniform. Published by the press and fashion reviews the world over, the sailor suit became an instant fashion trend adopted by the aristocracy and bourgeoisie before reaching a wider population. The outfit indeed ideally addressed the comfort and hygiene needs of youngsters. Children did not need help dressing themselves in the trousers and smock and the white cotton twill used for the ensemble was easy to clean. In addition, the collar and cuffs were removable.

The simultaneous spread of department stores and ready-made clothing may also explain the sailor suit's great success and longevity. Easy to manufacture, it was one of the first items of clothing to benefit from standardized sizes and cuts, which were already common for military uniforms, and which were then transposed to children's wear.

The sailor suit was not only a wardrobe staple for boys aged 6 to 15 years old, it was also worn by girls in its female version with a skirt. It would become the uniform of the well-behaved model child, and even more so in more formal interpretations in the early 20th century.

28

Ensemble

1900-25

Blouson and knickerbockers – cotton tickin

Inv. C2001.70.03-05

Anonymous gift

Worn with :

Removable collar

1900-10

Cotton toile

Inv. 2001.71.05

Given by Madame Roggemans

This is our collections' oldest model. It shows a variation of the traditional sailor suit with vertical navy-blue stripes, typical of early 20th century suits.

29

Ensemble

Rowe

1925-30

Smock and skirt – cotton twill

Inv. C2003.63.24-04-14

Given by Madame Delva

This classic version of a girls' sailor suit – with a skirt instead of trousers – was made by London sailor-suit specialist Rowe. A “made in England” label was prestigious and a sign of quality, though sailor suits were also made in Belgium, as seen in the next model.

30

Ensemble Romdenne

1920-40

Smock – cotton toile;
trousers – cotton twill

Inv. C2009.61.18E01-02

Given by Monsieur F. de Pierpont

31

Dress

1960-70

Synthetic jersey with
appliqués

Loaned by Madame Valeria Pesci

32

Ensemble Tom & Boy

Autumn/Winter 2022-23

Pullover and trousers
– cotton jersey

Loaned by Tom & Boy

Iberian designers have been at the cutting edge of children's fashion since the 2010s. For its latest collection, genderless label Tom & Boy, founded in 2021, was inspired by the fantasy world of the sailor-adventurer and specifically the hero of Rudyard Kipling's famous book, *Captains Courageous*, published in 1897. Here, the sailor suit is modernized with the use of a thick cotton jersey that references sweatsuits.



THE SMOCKED DRESS

Before the invention of stretch yarns, smocking was an essential element of children's wear. They consist of stitches, in more or less elaborate patterns, that form myriad little tucks allowing the garment to expand when putting it on. This is why they are usually placed at the chest. Hand-made smock embroidery was also used to ornament clothing in the 19th century. Its use on dress bodices in the 1930s put one particular model on the map for all time: Peter Pan collar, small puffed sleeves and often with a belt tied in a bow at the back. This style has remained unchanged to the present day, and, with only variations of colours and patterns that follow the trends, contemporary dresses continue to abide by its original "chic" allure.

33

Dress

1890-1900

Smocked cotton toile and embroidery

Loaned by MoMu – Fashion Museum
Antwerp

34

Ensemble

1930-39

Smock and playsuit
– smocked wool twill

Inv. C2001.09.15-16

This ensemble was worn by a little boy. The ability of smocking to stretch made it a favourite for babies' and toddlers' outfits of both sexes.

35

Dress

c. 1970

Smocked printed
cotton toile

Inv. C2011.74.18 – Given by Madame
Martine De Meyer-Pire

36

Dress

Liberty of London

c. 1980-81

Smocked printed
cotton toile

Inv. C2016.90.01

Given by Madame Martine Kuhn

In 1884, Arthur Liberty, a fabric merchant, created a fine and delicate cotton toile with characteristic

floral patterns: Liberty fabrics were born. Close to the Arts & Crafts movement and sensitive to the notion of comfort in clothing, he created his own styles for his shop. A number of fashion historians believe that it was Liberty himself who set the now classic model of the smocked dress.

37

Dress

Bonpoint

Winter 2021-22

Smocked cotton poplin

Loaned by Bonpoint

French label Bonpoint has specialised in smocked frocks since its launch in 1975. Smocked by hand to this day, they have become synonymous with Parisian elegance for little girls.



During the 1950s and 60s, fashion designed specifically for children became more common. For the first time and on a large scale, specialised labels and designers created clothing suited to the age and tastes of children. New styles appeared, such as dungarees for children, or rompers for babies. Made in more comfortable materials, they were decorated with colourful animal or geometric motifs. This big change was due to the importance of the family unit and the place of the child within it. At the same time, technical progress made it possible to produce more clothes in less time and at lower costs. This ongoing expansion gave birth to the clothing stores we know today. They in turn gave a wider public access to the latest fashions.

Now children increasingly choose their own clothes, and to draw their attention, they often feature their favourite heroes.

Babies' layettes and first shoes – which touch on the same issues as those of children's fashion – are also presented in this section.



FOR TINY TOTS

The needs of infants, from newborns to the age of two, with regards to hygiene and comfort have led to the creation of very specific items of clothing carrying names that are difficult to understand for those who have never been parents. Without delving into a full-scale history of the layette, this section rather shows that it covers the same issues as those of children's clothing: an expression of gender, a pursuit of comfort, and parental projection.

Throughout the entire 19th century, babies were swaddled for their first few months, then dressed in copies of the female wardrobe (chemises, corsets, petticoats, and so on). It wasn't until the early 20th century, as swaddling was phased out, that babies were clothed in more practical items. In the 1920s, rompers, a one-piece top and bottom, gave babies more freedom of movement, as its name implies. The development of specialised babies' clothes continued during the second half of the 20th century. In the 1960s, the sleepsuit (an all-in-one with long legs that include the feet) was invented, and, in the 1980s, the infant bodysuit (T-shirt extending below the waist with snap buttons to close it over the crotch). These innovations shared the common feature of being all-in-one pieces.

38

All-in-one

1940-60

Cotton knit

Inv. C2001.09.02.01

39

Rompers

1950-60

Nylon jersey

Inv. CX2019.38

40

Ensemble

Dujardin

1950-60

Smock and rompers

– cotton toile and
appliqués

Inv. C2002.62.17

Given by Madame de Henau

41

Sleepsuit

Noukie's

2007

Cotton/polyester velvet
and appliqués

Loaned by Noukie's

Founded in 1996 by Katia and Simon-Pierre Gilliot-De Paepe, Noukie's first creations were toys and plushies. In 2002, it launched a ready-to-wear line of comfortable, practical clothes for children up to the age of eight. The brand remains a reference in Belgium for infants' clothing and baby gifts.

42

Sleepsuit *Baby Dior*

2010

Embroidered cotton jersey

Inv. C2017.77.07

Given by Madame d'Huart

In 1967, Marc Bohan — at the time creative director of Maison Christian Dior — opened the first Baby Dior boutique in Paris and Princess Grace of Monaco was its first customer. It gave friends and family the opportunity of offering an exceptional gift for the birth of a child.

43

Sleepsuit *Petit Bateau*

2010

printed cotton

/polyester velvet

On loan from a private collection

In 2011, Petit Bateau sparked controversy when it launched bodysuits decorated with extremely gendered adjectives. The words “pretty, stubborn, funny, sweet, coquette, trendy, cute, elegant, beautiful, in love” were printed on the little girl’s version, and “brave, strong, proud, valiant, robust, canny, clever, determined, mischievous, cool” on

those made for boys. From the moment they leave the maternity ward, babies are conditioned by their gender and its stereotypes.

44

Bodysuit *Sourpuss*

2011

Printed cotton jersey

Loaned by Madame Valeria Pesci

This bodysuit has a characteristic lap neck — inspired by the T-shirts of American soldiers — that makes it easier to put on and take off.

45

Sleepsuit *Ba*Ba*

c. 2014

printed cotton jersey

On loan from a private collection



FIRST STEPS

To this day, choosing children's shoes represents an important investment for parents. Though worn for a short period, they are nonetheless vital for an infant's wellbeing and process of learning to walk. Footwear made for specific conditions, such as rubber boots or plastic beach sandals, are also an important part of children's wardrobes due to their many leisure activities. These practical shoes however have been found alongside shoes and slippers whose function is purely aesthetic since the 19th century. Today, babies can wear shoes identical to those of their parents – but with a more supple sole – from day one.

46

Shoe

1890-1920

Leather

Loaned by MoMu

– Fashion Museum Antwerp

In the 19th century, children wore two kinds of shoes throughout the year: buttoned or lace-up ankle boots for winter, and for summer, light open shoes with a strap, predecessors of today's Mary Janes.

47

Slippers

1890-1910

Quilted silk satin

Inv. C1992.67.18

Given by Madame De Keyser

48

Shoes

1930-40

Leather

Inv. C2001.09.06

49

Ankle boots

1940-45

Leather, felt, wood

Inv. C2001.09.04.1-2

These ankle boots were made during the Second World War using existing materials: wooden soles with nailed leather washers to avoid slipping, recycled leather, felt, and

blanket fabric for the lining. Their perfect state of preservation seems to indicate that they have never been worn.

50

Ankle boots Premier pas

1950-60

Leather

C2016.79.04

Given by Madame de Viron

In the 1950s, manufacturers began taking an interest in the specific morphological needs of infants' feet and launched brands specialising in shoes for babies' "first steps", English for "Premier Pas". Innovations followed, including eliminating the heel seam or extending the sole up to the heel to better support the foot.

51

Ankle boots Tretorn

1950-60

Rubber

Inv. C2001.09.05

52

Mary Janes Start-Rite

1980-85

Leather

Inv. C2016.56.04.1-2

Given by Madame Kuhn

With their open cut and straps, Mary Janes are direct descendants of 19th century shoes and are inextricably linked with childhood (in French they are known as "babies"). They were nonetheless also worn by women, beginning in the 1920s, and then on a larger scale in the 1960s under the influence of that era's youth, and remain common to this day.

53

Roller skates

c. 1985

Suede, leather, resin, knit, printed cotton toile

On loan from a private collection

54

Ankle boots Aster

2010

Leather and rubber

On loan from a private collection

55

Shoes T.U.K.

c. 2010

Suede and rubber

Loaned by Madame Valeria Pesci

56

Sneakers Converse

c. 2010

printed cotton toile and rubber

Loaned by Madame Valeria Pesci

57

Sandals Méduse

c. 2019

Plastic

Loaned by Madame

Sophie Couret Donders

58

Sneakers OFF-WHITE

2021

Leather, plastic, rubber

Inv. C2022.08.01.1-2



ONLY FOR CHILDREN?

59

Smock

1960-70

Embroidered cotton toile

Inv. C2015.61.15

Given by Madame Delfosse

In the 1960s, the smock (or pinafore) remained a necessary item for children to protect their clothes from ink stains and messy games.

Though practical in nature, it was not immune to fashion trends. This model, for instance, has a short, straight, slightly flared cut akin to the women's dresses of the period and features a trendy pattern of the times: gingham checks. Made in duplicate for two brothers, this smock bears the name "Vincent" embroidered above the right pocket.

60

Jumpsuit

Chacok

1980-81

Printed cotton

Inv. C2008.09.01

61

Ensemble

Sonia Rykiel

Autumn/Winter 1984-85

Sweatshirt and trousers – padded and printed cotton jersey

Loaned by Patrimoine Sonia Rykiel

Two years before officially launching her children's line and inspired by her then pregnant daughter, Nathalie, Sonia Rykiel had little girls walk her Autumn-Winter 1984 collection show. This Belgian-made ensemble was part of that presentation. Sonia Rykiel was among the 1980s designers who were tired of bland pastel layettes and transposed her signature stripes, terry velvet and black to children's wear.

62

Ensemble

Dujardin

c. 1990

Pullover – merino wool/acrylic knit; trousers – cotton/polyester corduroy; balaclava – acrylic/wool knit

Loaned by famille Jacobs-Verleysen

In 1938, Madame Teurlings acquired a shop bearing the name "Dujardin" on the Avenue Louise in Brussels and transformed it into what would become the "Belgian mecca of children's ready-to-wear". From the 1950s to the 1980s, Dujardin acquired an international reputation and marked several generations of Brussels residents with its offering of classic, quality products made in Belgium. As competition became more intense, the brand gradually lost its clientele, and closed its doors in 2004.

63

Ensemble

Kid Cool

1993

Dungarees – cotton twill; pullover – cotton jersey; shirt – wool flannel

Loaned by Art & History Museum

Borrowed from workwear and outfitted with practical adjustable straps and a bib sewn to the trousers, dungarees first appeared in children's wardrobes in the 1950s and would quickly become essential. Founded in the 1980s, Belgian brand Kid

Cool's meteoric rise to success continued until the late 1990s.

64

Dress

W.&L.T.

c. 1997-2000

Printed synthetic jersey and synthetic fur

Inv. C2022.09.01

Member of the Antwerp Six, Walter Van

Beirendonck founded his label Wild and Lethal Trash (W<) in 1993.

His colourful, fantastical and offbeat creativity along with his pet themes display all the hallmarks of a child's world, and they would often walk his shows with grown-up models. At the time, he collaborated with the brand Oilily to design a children's line and now also regularly designs products for the Zulupapuwa label of mass-market brand JBC.

65

Tunic Dress

Jean-Charles de Castelbajac for Okaidi

Spring/Summer 2007

Printed cotton toile

Inv. C2021.51.04

Given by Madame Lydia Kamitsis

Reconstitution:
contemporary leggings

Jean-Charles de Castelbajac has often drawn his inspiration for his adult collections from the world of childhood. He is also directly involved in children's designs, notably through his recurring collaborations with Okaidi. In 2007 he modernised a toile de Jouy fabric by adding humorous speech bubbles. The Okaidi x JCDC collections have allowed the designer's creations to be sold at accessible prices.

66

Oilskin

Petit Bateau

2010-15

Coated polyester toile

Loaned by Madame Valeria Pesci

After having created the first short underpants in white cotton jersey in 1918, Pierre Valton officially founded the Petit Bateau brand in 1920. Inspired by the oilskin coats worn by Breton fishermen, the *ciré* is now one of the label's iconic pieces, alongside its famous briefs. With its characteristic bright yellow colour, large hood, and pin-striped lining, it is now available for all ages, including adults.

67

Beach outfit *Ba*Ba*

Summer 2016

Printed cotton jersey

Loaned by Monsieur Laurent Stevens

Ba*Ba Kidswear is a Ghent-based Belgian label founded in 2010. In tune with the concerns of today's parents, it creates comfortable clothes printed with bold and playful motifs that are made in Europe and mostly in organic cotton.

68

T-shirt dress

Anne Kurris

2017

Printed viscose/cotton jersey

Inv. C2022.33.01

Given by Anne Kurris

After having worked as graphic artist for Dries van Noten, Anne Kurris was the artistic director for the fashion magazine *BAM!* when she founded her children's wear label in 1998. With their distinctive bright colours and strong and simple animal graphics, her designs rapidly propelled Belgian children's wear to the forefront of the international scene. After 20 years of existence,



Anne Kurrís's label ceased its activities in 2019.

69

Ensemble

Tape-à-l'œil

c. 2017

T-shirt – cotton jersey and appliqués;
trousers – cotton twill and appliqués

Loaned by Madame Frédérique Bury

Following in the footsteps of designers and top-end labels, high-street retailers began developing children's wear in the 1970s. Specialised brands (Catimini, Tape-à-l'œil, Okaidi, etc.,) flooded the market with playful, comfortable pieces that tapped into the zeitgeist and were low priced, making them accessible for every budget. These clothes, now worn by everyone, have for the most part become standard school uniforms.

70

Sweat-shirt

FILA Kids

x Milk on the rocks

2021

Cotton/polyester jersey

Loaned by Milk on the rocks

For her Milk on the Rocks NYC label, Julie Kang has never ceased to propose the playful, edgy, pop-inspired creations that have become her trademark. Here, the whimsical garment concept goes one step further with this interactive sweatshirt that allows kids to generate instant photos.

71

Ensemble

Bo(y)smans

Winter 2021

Jacket, trousers and bucket hat – polyester velvet

Inv. C2022.28.02E.01-03

After launching her label CRLNBSMNS for little girls in 2015, Caroline Bosmans extended her avant-garde creations to boys under the Bo(y)smans label in 2019. The Belgian designer breathes new life into children's wear with deliberately provocative creations whose colours or cuts never go unnoticed. Her designs make fun of the image of the well-behaved child and break away from the minimalist trends of recent years to better capture the aspirations of 21st century youngsters.

MY ROLE MODELS

While children became more involved in the choice of their clothing in the 1960s, their decision-making power would never cease to grow, becoming the norm in the 1980s. Children would choose their clothes almost entirely by themselves from an increasingly young age, heralding in the “little emperor” phenomenon. Opposing their parents, they would favour the tastes of their role models or school friends with an eye to inclusion. Major brands quickly caught on to this new shift in power. They produced an ever-increasing number of licensed clothes to take advantage of popular fictional heroes or celebrities. To prevent their children from turning into walking advertisements, parents often yield to these purchases only for the less public sleepwear.

72

Sweat-shirt
Snoopy

1980-89

Printed cotton jersey

Inv. C2016.69.01

Given by Madame Delfosse

73

Sweat-shirt
Lacoste x Peanuts

Autumn/Winter 2021-22

Printed cotton jersey

Loaned by Lacoste Héritage

To this day, many brands count on adults' nostalgia and capture their attention with the heroes of their own idealised childhood.



In the world of fashion, luxury labels produce original clothing created by prominent designers. Although these more singular, higher priced garments are worn by fewer people, they are considered trendsetting and yield great influence.

Some of these designers of clothing for grown-ups began creating clothes for their children or the children of their friends. Their designs would have the same shapes, colours, patterns, and materials that made the brand a success for adults. But contrary to specialised labels, they were often less adapted to the needs of children. Today, almost every luxury brand offers a children's line, providing parents with the possibility of distinguishing themselves.



74

Blouson

Paco Rabanne

1968-69

Leather and ponyskin

Loaned by Patrimoine Paco Rabanne

Reconstitution:

contemporary trousers

Made with rivets, rings, and leather pieces, this children's blouson is representative of Paco Rabanne's mastery and transposes, in a miniature version, his legendary futurist metallic dresses that earned the designer his "metallurgist" moniker in 1966.

75

Dress

Gaultier Junior

c. 2010

Wool twill

Inv. C2021.51.01

Given by Madame Lydia Kamitsis

In 2009 Jean-Paul Gaultier launched a Junior line composed of pieces featuring his signature styles including the striped sailor shirt, tartan fabrics, and full-front trousers. In 2014, he launched his Junior Gaultier Couture collection.

76

Dress

Lanvin Petite

Summer 2012

Washed wool tulle

Loaned by Patrimoine Lanvin

In 2012, under the creative direction of Alber Elbaz, Lanvin returned to its roots with a collection transposing the house's DNA for little girls. The fabrics used for the line, such as organza, satin and tulle, echo the creations that Jeanne Lanvin made for her daughter Marguerite.

77

Dress

Pierre Cardin

c. 1968

Tanned leather

Inv. C2020.270.01

Pierre Cardin launched his first children's collection in 1966 and opened a boutique carrying the line in 1968. This step was a part of his far-reaching licensing and expansion strategy. His children's styles followed women's fashion trends to the letter. This dress's aesthetic and geometric construction are characteristic of his *Space Age* period.

78

Ensemble

Balmain Kids

by Olivier Rousteing

Autumn/Winter 2016-17

Jacket – embroidered cotton velvet; pullover – merino wool jacquard knit; trousers – leather

Loaned by Patrimoine Balmain

Named creative director of Balmain in 2011, Olivier Rousteing began adapting his creations for children and teenagers in 2016. His characteristic military-inspired braided jackets, abundant embroidery, rock'n'roll details, and streetwear styles all feature prominently in his children's wear.

79

Ensemble

MM6 Maison Margiela

2021

Coat – quilted nylon taffeta; dress – printed cotton jersey

Inv. C2022.47.01E.01-02

Given by Brave Kid

MM6 was launched in 1997 as the more commercial line of the fashion house Maison Martin Margiela. Inspired by the house's archives, it infuses a more casual feel to the label's iconic pieces. Since 2021, it

includes items for children that exhibit the same attention to a garment's construction, as seen in this T-shirt dress whose hemline echoes the shape of the neckline.

80

Ensemble

OFF-WHITE

Autumn/Winter 2021-22

Blouson – virgin wool/polyamide plainweave and appliqués; sweater – printed virgin wool jacquard; trousers – printed and padded cotton jersey

Inv. C2022.08.02-04

Designer Virgil Abloh extended his OFF-WHITE label's offering so that his millennial fans, now parents, could dress their children the same way. Launched for Autumn/Winter 2021, the children's line reproduced the codes that made the adult range a success: tracksuits and comfortable cuts, varsity jackets, diagonal dashes, and lots of logos.



Exceptional events have always been an occasion to dress up. Until recently, there was a big difference between everyday clothes and those worn for special occasions. To this day, children wear more sophisticated garments for celebrations of all kinds. They tend to be made in more refined materials and decorated with pretty details such as bows, lace, and so on. These items have high material and sentimental value. They are often conserved by families and are therefore more likely to find their way into museum collections. For certain holidays, such as Halloween or Carnival, children dress up in costumes. They can thus embody the characters and heroes they dream to be. They also wear them at home for fun.



rites and symbolism

Across all cultures and religions, rites of passage are a significant part of a child's life. Christening — at birth or within the first few months — and circumcision for young Jewish and Muslim boys, mark a child's entry into the community. Around the age of twelve, the Catholic Holy Communion and the Jewish bar- or bat-mitzvah commemorate the end of childhood. For these ceremonies, children are dressed in special, highly symbolic outfits. They allow parents to invest in sophisticated, high-end clothes and accessories. As they are worn for special occasions, they are also the most photographed.

81

Christening ensemble

c. 1900

Coat — quilted silk satin;
dress — cotton batiste and
Valenciennes lace

Inv. C2008.65.01-04

Given by Madame Hautain
and her sisters

Traditional christening gowns, often worn with a coat, were richly decorated and passed down from generation to generation. This dress, embellished with Valenciennes lace and silk ribbon, is believed to have been made by Maison Séverin in Brussels for the Dachsbeck family.

82

First Communion ensemble

1890-95

Jacket — silk velvet and
embroidered grosgrain;
waistcoat — silk velvet and
silk satin; trousers — silk
velvet

Inv. C1978.10.01-07

83

Holy Communion dress

1962

Dress — machine lace and
silk tulle; alms purse
— rayon satin

Inv. C1990.70.01E.01-04

Given by Madame Huybrechts

During the 19th century and up until the 1960s, girls were often dressed like little brides for the Catholic Holy Communion, while boys would wear mostly black suits. The cut, fabric, and ornaments of these ceremonial garments followed the fashions of the day. After the Second Vatican Council in 1965, these ostentatious outfits were replaced by a simple white alb for both boys and girls. It was, however, good form to change into more sophisticated attire for the family festivities after the ceremony, recalling the outfits of the past.

84

Jabador

c. 2010

Embroidered synthetic velvet

Loaned by Madame Amal Drari

Reconstitution:

contemporary trousers

The jabador is a traditional Moroccan costume habitually worn by little boys for their circumcision and later for religious holidays. This one was handmade in Morocco and was worn for its owner's seventh

birthday, the Eid al-Adha feast, and the last day of the Ramadan fast.

85

Ensemble

for bar-mitzvah

Tefillin bag

(Skara det-tephillin)

Early 20th century

Embroidered silk velvet, jute, cardboard, gold thread, sequins

Tefillin

Early 20th century

Leather and cardboard

Prayer shawl (Talith)

Late 19th century

Embroidered silk twill

On loan from the Dahan-Hirsch Collection

In the Jewish religion, the bar-mitzvah (for boys) and bat-mitzvah (for girls) celebrates a child's religious majority at the age of 12-13.

No specific outfit is required for this ceremony, but many take advantage of the opportunity to wear an outfit more sophisticated than their everyday clothes.

A number of accessories are nonetheless essential to the ritual: a prayer shawl, tefillin, and tefillin bags, which the owners will use for the rest of their lives.



SUNDAY BEST... OUTDATED?

During the 19th and for a large part of the 20th century, Sunday was a day of rest when the entire family went to church. "Sunday best" clothes were worn only on this particular day, and would be special. For children, these garments featured sophisticated cuts and fine fabrics that were meticulously kept and cared for. Even poor families possessed such special clothing, although less luxurious. They were often handed down from one sibling to the next until they were too worn to be used. These outfits were also worn for special occasions.

The term "Sunday best" is now outdated and has a distinct ring of nostalgia. Children however have never ceased to wear more sophisticated clothing for special occasions such as family or end-of-year festivities, weddings, birthdays, and so on.

86

Baby's bonnet

c. 1900

Embroidered silk satin,
silk moiré, glass beads

Inv. C2013.57.18

Given by Madame C. Billen

This ornate bonnet made of silk satin and embroidered with glass beads and diamantes, was worn for visits or outings. It was an opportunity for young parents to display their pride in their offspring as well as their social status through its fine workmanship.

87

Coat

1910-20

Silk satin and appliqués

Inv. C1987.05.03

88

Ensemble

1930-40

Smock and shorts – linen

Inv. C2001.09.19E.01-02

89

Ensemble

1935-39

Coat, waistcoat and short
trousers – wool corduroy
and rabbit fur

Inv. C2001.09.01E.01-03

Like today's special events, travel in the early 20th century was an opportunity to wear one's very best. Made in wool corduroy trimmed with white rabbit fur, this coat, waistcoat and short trouser ensemble was a very sophisticated outfit, particularly for a two-year-old boy.

90

Ceremony ensemble
Grande Maison de Blanc
1958

Blouse – silk taffeta;
trousers – wool twill

Inv. C2002.54.01E.01-02
Given by Madame Isbendjian

This ensemble was worn by a little groomsman for a wedding in 1958.

91

Ceremony ensemble
1955

Dress, belt and bonnet
– viscose taffeta

Inv. C2020.78.01E.01-03
Given by Madame de Beer

This dress and matching bonnet were handmade by the mother and aunt of the little girl who wore them for the wedding of her elder sister in 1955.

92

Ensemble
Max et Lola

Spring/Summer 2020
Jacket – cotton/
synthetic plainweave;
shirt – cotton/polyester;
bermudas – cotton/
synthetic plainweave
Inv. C2022.06.01E.01-03
Given by Max & Lola

Kaatje Sandra founded Max & Lola in 1987. She was at the time one of the first Belgian designers to create children's wear. The attention she pays to cuts and materials makes her creations – primarily suits, shorts and trousers – quite remarkable. To this day, she has always kept the same cut, changing only the prints and fabrics.

93

Ensemble
CRLNBSMNS

Autumn/Winter 2021-22
Idiot repellent

Dress, belt and cap
– silk taffeta
Inv. C2022.28.01E.01-04



THE STUFF THAT DREAMS ARE MADE OF

Among these exceptional garments, fancy dress is a typology of its own. During the 19th century and the early years of the 20th century, these costumes were worn for masked balls. Today they are more likely to be donned for Carnival or Halloween, which has replaced local traditions. They are an opportunity for children to give free rein to their imagination. Fancy dress is also an important part of children's everyday games. Open to any fantasy, they allow little girls and boys to dress up as their favourite heroes and heroines.

94

Drummer costume

c. 1880

Jacket – wool plainweave and felt; trousers – wool twill; hat – wool plainweave
Inv. C2001.19.07

In the 19th century and up until the First World War, it was not uncommon to give little boys military costumes. A legacy of the very real miniature uniforms worn by young nobles, they allowed children to play at war while encouraging a patriotic sentiment. As for girls, they would dress up as nurses or canteen-workers.

95

Rainbow costume

1936

Rayon velvet and satin
Inv. C1989.69.02
Given by Madame Scoufflaire

96

Batman costume

c. 2015

Bodysuit – coated polyester jersey;
cape – polyester jersey;
mask – resin
On loan from a private collection

97

Good witch costume

c. 2010

Dress – synthetic velvet,
synthetic organza,
appliqués; hat – synthetic
jersey, synthetic tulle,
feather

Loaned by Madame
Bérengère de Laveleye

98

Astronaut costume

Pourquoi Princesse

2021

Jumpsuit – polyester/
cotton twill and
appliqués; helmet – resin

Loaned by Pourquoi Princesse

99

Fireman costume

c. 2014

Jacket and trousers –
cotton/synthetic toile
and appliqués;
helmet – resin

Loaned by Madame
Frédérique Bury



Fashion is one of the planet's most polluting industries. Many people now realise that it is necessary to change the way clothing is made and consumed. This is particularly true of fashion for children who grow quickly and change sizes regularly. Parents increasingly sew their own children's clothes. They also pass on older children's clothes, once outgrown, to younger siblings. Some brands have devised garments that can be turned inside out or stretched so that they can be worn for longer. Others make new styles out of old fabrics or used garments. Recycling, transforming, sewing, and handing down have always been common practices in children's wear, but until recently these were mainly for economical, not ecological, reasons.



100

Ensemble

c. 1933-34

Rompers and waistcoat
– cotton knit

Inv. C2002.64.30-31

Given by Madame Rasquin

This beach set is typical of semi-artisanal productions. Many haberdasheries specialised in these knit outfits that were very fashionable for infants in the 1930s. This model was worn in 1933 by a little boy, then by his sister in the early 1940s.

101

Christening coat

1950

Embroidered taffeta and marabout feather trim

Loaned by Madame Patricia Canino

The importance of transmission should not be overlooked with regards to the reuse of clothing, particularly for special occasions. More than an economical or ecological matter, here patrimonial and memorial aspects come into play. This christening dress was worn in 1950 by Léopold Dehert for his baptism and a second time by his spiritual grandson Roderick in

2019, for a non-religious naming ceremony.

102

Pullover

c. 2018

Synthetic jersey

Loaned by Monsieur

Laurent Stevens

This batwing pullover was made by the father of a little girl from a "See You at Six" pattern. This new generation Belgian haberdashery sells sewing patterns and fabrics to make clothes at home using certified materials. The artisanal make infuses an added value to children's clothes. They are not only of known origin, but also the fruit of a strong emotional investment.

103

Dresses

1952

Smocked cotton poplin

Inv. C2021.178.01

Given by Madame Huard

These two dresses were handmade in 1952 for two sisters, Andrée, six years old, and Louise, nine years old. In 1985, the turquoise dress was lengthened to fit the donor's daughter.

104

Ensemble

Petit pli

2022

Shirt and trousers

– polyester plainweave

C2022.07.01E.01-02

Founded in 2017 by an aeronautical engineer, Petit Pli perpetuates the idea of technical innovation in children's fashion. An ingenious system of pleats coupled with an extremely resistant, water repellent fabric enables the garment to be worn from birth to the age of three. Its longevity has a positive impact on carbon emissions, as buying less makes it possible to produce less.

105

Blouse

1983

Printed cotton toile

Loaned by Madame Veerle Segers

This blouse was made in 1983 by a mother for her daughter out of a shirt she no longer wore. With its typical 1980s cut – so fashionable today – the style was also worn by the seamstress's granddaughter.

106

Ensemble

Aiko

2022

Jacket – upcycled cotton twill; pullover – upcycled cashmere knit; trousers – upcycled cotton twill

Inv. C2022.49.01E01-03

Head of her eponymous women's label, Gioia Seghers founded Aiko "as a matter of course" after the birth of her son. Inspired by the precepts of slow fashion, she practices upcycling, repurposing existing fabrics to create simple styles in limited series, often based on the kimono. Her pieces are inevitably one-of-a-kind as each one is made on demand with recycled materials.

107

Dress

Infantium Victoria

Autumn/Winter 2022-23

Cotton twill and appliqués

Loaned by Infantium Victoria

In 2014, Julia Gaydina and Dinie van den Heuvel launched their label Infantium Victoria. The ethical and sustainable German-Belgian brand specialises in organic and vegan children's ready-to-

wear. This dress combines the principles of upcycling and zero-waste: it reuses T-shirt prototypes and its pattern is designed to produce no fabric offcuts. The brand's prints, inspired by children's drawings, represent the extinction of dinosaurs and draw attention to the impact of humans on the environment.

108

Pinafore

1970-79

Printed cotton/
synthetic toile

Inv. C1997.58.04

Given by Madame G. Scoufflaire

After 1968, with the widespread use of ballpoint pens and the development of ready-to-wear that made clothing more affordable, school smocks were no longer needed and gradually disappeared. They are, however, still worn in kindergartens. This model, which has been mended, features a typical 1970s print.

109

Ensemble

Bonjour Maurice

Autumn/Winter 2021-22

Jacket *Gandhi*

– cotton velvet; T-shirt – printed cotton jersey; Trousers *Charles* – cotton twill

Inv. C2022.31.01-03-04

Given by Bonjour Maurice

Brussels label Bonjour Maurice launched in 2013 with a reversible garment concept. It would later focus on children's autonomy. It proposes styles that are easy to put on and mix and match, without any complicated fastenings or details. These sustainable designs are both genderless and eco-designed. They can even be sent back to the boutique and exchanged for a discount.



The exhibition *Kidorama. 200 Years of Children's Fashion* is coordinated by the Fashion & Lace Museum of the City of Brussels.

This project is an initiative of the Alderman's Office for Culture of the City of Brussels and has been carried out under the supervision of Anne Vandenbulcke, Director General of the Department of Culture, and Denis Laurent, Director of Culture, Museums and Archives.

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