



Notes on the development and realization of children's catwalk shows at Pitti Immagine Bimbo

Introduction

A catwalk show is a creative and communicative event, but it is still also an economic activity and, for this reason, the limits placed on it are not those of aesthetic expression or the manifestation of thoughts. At a fashion fair, the catwalk show is aimed at a number of different entities and has to take into account all interested parties for which it may have some importance and that are protected for social and economic reasons.

Children's catwalk shows must consider values that need to be protected in relation to childhood and adolescence from all the various viewpoints in which commercial communication can become important:

- the organizers of the catwalk show;
- the direct and indirect targets of the presentation and communication of the event;
- the fair context and the collective character even of single brand catwalk shows in relation to the other exhibitors and the fair business as a whole.

A catwalk show held at a fashion show for children and adolescents must take into account the fair's subject and theme, even when expressed in forms based on the adult world, considering the end use of the product as well as the values and meanings associated with the same.

Notes on criteria and information

The criteria for structuring the catwalk shows and the information regarding the running of the same provided herein are intended to develop, in line with current demands, the criteria that, in the past, were automatically applied within the framework of certain general principles. The explicit description of these ordinary methods and general rules aims to simplify their identification and application by exhibitors in cooperation with the fair organizers: the experimental application of the criteria and rules described herein is based on dialogue and common assessment.

1)

A catwalk show is a fair event that should be developed, held and communicated inside and outside the fair taking into account the fair context and, in particular:

- the subject and theme of the fair;
- the meaning that the catwalk show and its communication has always had, not just for the brand but also for the image and utility of the fair for the other exhibitors and the organizers;
- the main character of the fair directed towards buyers and the presentation of the products.

2)

A catwalk show that is also indirectly or occasionally used for communication outside the fair must comply with all the criteria and rules of advertising and, in particular, those regarding childhood and adolescence, both as the targets or objects of the communication process, as well as the actors of the same. The organization of a catwalk show involves accepting the rules of advertising self-regulation for all forms of communication external to the fair using any method of communication.

The fair is reserved for exhibitors but the catwalk shows also represent an opportunity for public communication, through newspapers and television.

3)

The use of minors and adolescents in catwalk shows should comply with all the procedures set down by law which shall not, however, exonerate exhibitors from specifically assessing the need to protect the individual interests and social values of childhood and adolescence.

We are repeating things that are already well known, but it is important to put them down on paper. For example, we need to make certain that all the children are duly registered with agencies and that the same comply with existing regulations (often it is the parents who try to skip some of the formalities, possibly in the field of taxation...); that the working hours are not too long; that the environments used are suitably heated or cooled, that the lighting and audio system levels are suitable for children... Consult with the directors, the layout personnel, the agency staff and the organizers and review all the various elements together: remember that, for a child, whether their parents are present or not, participation in a fashion show is a type of employment that is permitted in derogation of the general laws in Italy which prohibit child labor, mainly due to the strong element of entertainment and play involved. However, employment permitted in derogation of the law demands a certain level of self-control...

Conclusions

All of the above demonstrates the need to use a form of self-control. This will make it possible to start building a collective socio-communicative ambient in which members have to acknowledge the repercussions of their actions. In other words, when we are on the catwalk we are no longer in our individual stands: if we believe that the fair is also a vehicle of communication and should be used as such, then that vehicle is also involved in the content and has to avoid being used as a way of exceeding the ordinary limits of advertising communication.