New York-based designer Thom Browne is tapping Northern Irish actor Jude Hill to star in his second campaign for his children's wear collection that launched in the summer of 2021. Browne perfected the shrinking of the men's suit when he launched his namesake label in 2001, out of a West Village shop.

According to a company spokesman, Browne was impressed with the 11-year-old's performance playing the character of director Kenneth Branagh as a young boy in the semi-autobiographical film, which chronicles the life of a working-class family and their young son's childhood during the tumult of the late 1960s in the Northern Ireland capital.

"Thom always works with people who put the best into what they do, and Jude was no exception," said the source.

The designer dressed Hill for the infamous Oscars 2022, which nominated the film Belfast, the first time the young star attended the awards show. The campaign was captured by Cass Bird, who, according to Vogue, is "known in the fashion world for her uniquely intimate, humorous, and complicit portraits of the famous and the beautiful," photographed the young star decked out in dog-print suiting alongside another child model in a black-and-white cinematic setting with hints of Dali.

The children encounter a giant-sized version of Hector, Browne's wire-haired dachshund (and basis for a hit handbag for the brand) dog, which appears alongside the designer's legs dressed in the famous grey shorts and knee-socks which dominate the label. With Bird's photography and Browne's creative direction, the execution is collage-like and skirts with surrealism thanks to 'floating' lips and ears combined with ironic proportions.

Browne has collaborated with his heroes and cultural icons such as LeBron James, Olympic skier Lindsey Vonn, Lionel Messi, and Grammy award-winning reggae singer and songwriter Koffee. Sports as a theme, primarily via an American pastime lens, have played a significant role in the designer's oeuvre.

The children's line is available at Ssense and Farfetch. The brand has steadily expanded since Italian-based
textiles giant Ermenegildo Zegna acquired an 85% stake in Thom Browne Inc. in 2018. Zegna, the first Italian luxury fashion house listed on the NYSE just released its first financial report as a public company.

CEO Gildo Zegna said Thom Browne “maintains strong momentum”.

Thom Browne sales at €263.3 million, were up 64% compared to 2019 and 47% over 2020. But the strength in its top line was partly offset, “as expected, by an increase in costs driven by higher volumes and growth-related expenses, including costs for expanding the direct-to-consumer store network and investments to improve central administrative functions and processes” according to FashionNetwork.com.

By Roxanne Robinson

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