



To the Next Level

Level Kids delivers a top-tier experience for children's retail using sensory elements to create a memorable journey.

*By Jennifer Acevedo,
Editor-in-Chief*

Middle East retail powerhouse Chalhoub Group (Dubai, U.A.E.) opened the doors to its multi-story Level Kids this past May. An extension of the well-known Level master brand, the new venture, intended primarily for children and their parents, elevates experiential luxury children's retail to new heights.

The roughly 108,000-square-foot space, located in Dubai's City Walk retail and entertainment development, offers 200 brands across its three levels. Each floor is part of an overarching narrative which visually progresses as guests navigate the space.



“The store narrative, from a design point of view, is called the ‘World of Wonderment,’” said Linton Crockford-Moore, group creative director at Chalhoub Group, during an exclusive, on-site tour. “The concept behind Level Kids is about creating a wondrous journey, and a meaningful, memorable [one].”

The store’s first level, called the “Crystal-line Waters,” speaks to an undersea adventure. A stylized submarine – complete with a telescope that visitors can look through to experience a virtual new world – is backed by a 10-meter digital screen that introduces

guests to an array of proprietary sea creatures. These creatures reoccur throughout the design, and are prominently showcased on the store’s windows facing its mall entry.

“You’ll see swarms of fish on the pillars and digital screen, and illuminated jellyfish in another area – all references to being underwater,” said Crockford-Moore.

The second floor takes guests from the sea to land, and specifically to the world of the “Flowering Desert.” Among bursts of color, guests will find magical, whispering trees and enchanted vines. Also found in the



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COURTESY OF CITY WALK, DUBAI, U.A.E.

Dubai’s City Walk Adds Dimension

Level Kids is one of many multinational luxury retailers that call Dubai, U.A.E.’s City Walk retail and entertainment center home. Climate-controlled, indoor boulevards are lined by Armani Exchange, Calvin Klein, Karl Lagerfeld and Swarovski, among many others. The recently opened phase two, which launched at the beginning of 2016, adds dimension to the environment and confirms that this is more than another high-end Dubai, U.A.E., shopping mall.

Within the development, you’ll find all levels of dining, an IMAX theater, Mattel Play! Town, and by the year’s end, condominium apartments, a hotel, fitness center and mosque.

Outdoor storefronts face a streetscape meticulously modeled after London, right down to the familiar red telephone booths and Royal Mail post boxes. Brands like J.Crew, Coach and Tory Burch, are reflective of today’s Dubai – modern, elegant and thoughtful.

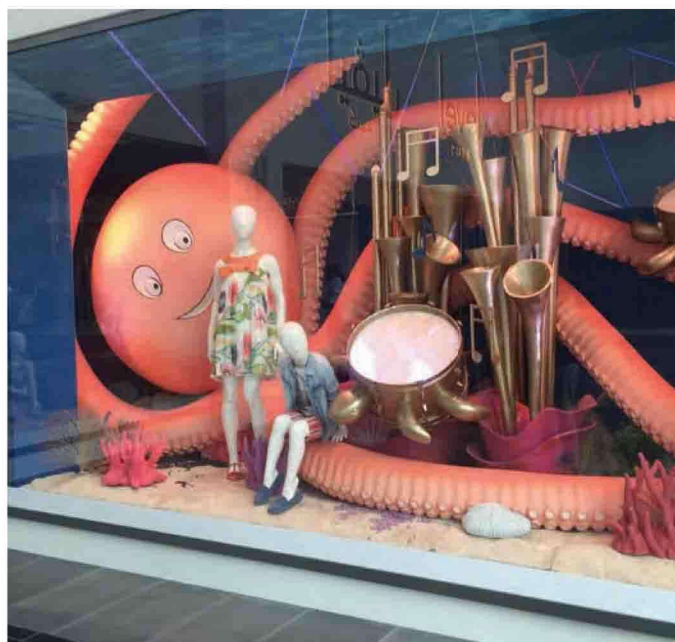


desert is the “Shoe Safari,” a landscape populated by a reflective stylized giraffe mother and her baby, as well as a customer favorite, the “cheeky” monkeys.

“We didn’t want to talk down to children [and] we didn’t want to create a store that was childish,” said Crockford-Moore of the approach. “We wanted to incorporate a strong design thread that would bring together the mother and the child.”

The third floor houses the “Enchanted Sky” – a seemingly weightless room created to spark notions of freedom, adventure and discovery. Design cues evoke images of the sky, while guests are treated to visions of giant flying swans overhead. This floor is also home to the “Little Wonders” area, where Level Kids holds its many activities, including book readings, arts and crafts get-togethers, and yoga and ballet classes (each in its own studio), along with a birthday room.

A seamless blend of digital and analog is apparent throughout the store. In addition, Level Kids offers a range of children’s hardline and softline goods, but equally as important, it provides age-specific activities on each level – something that makes it a destination as much a place to shop as it is to explore and experience. This concept was born out of the recognition that luxury retail for children had not yet evolved to the level of in-store experi-



ABOVE AND LEFT
Level Kids’ mall entrance windows feature a variety of seascapes complete with proprietary characters like Otto the Octopus and others.

ence that customers’ desire.

“We felt that children’s [retail] had yet to flourish into real retail expression,” explained Crockford-Moore. “Great retailing today is about combining ‘retail-tainment,’ brand storytelling and engaging experiences together. Level Kids [captivates] all ages and has been designed to trigger the inner child in all our hearts.” ▀

Stay tuned for news on euro a go go 2017, presented by VMSD, March 4-12, at EuroShop. Visit euroagogo.net for more information.

PROJECT SUPPLIERS

RETAILER
Level Kids, Dubai, U.A.E.

DESIGN
Fitch, London
Elemental Design, London

ARCHITECTURE
Fitch, London

3-D/CREATIVE
Chalhoub Group, Dubai, U.A.E.