

Sexualized Child Models

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Bottom Line at the Top: Enough already!

What won't the advertising industry do to manipulate women into buying a product? First, emaciated young adults that look like prepubescent teens, now, prepubescent children who look like prostitutes. Talk about objectification and sexualizing to get attention.

Many models start their careers at age 14 or 15, since it's easy to drape clothes on curveless teens' coat-hanger bodies. We've come to accept that.

But models are starting younger. Elle Fanning and Kylie Jenner started at 13 and are new stars. JonBenet Ramsey was made up, dressed up and murdered at age 6. She wore lots of make-up but, at least in her photos, wasn't sexualized so much.

Now comes 10 year old French model Thylane Loubry Blondeau. She started modeling at age 4, looking like a kid. That's changed. The images in Vogue Paris this spring, of her body marginally covered with slinky clothing and feet dangling in spike heels, reek of erotica. In another recent picture she appeared topless, covered only by her long hair. (I'd include a picture, but they are undoubtedly copyrighted. Just Google her name.) To whom are they trying to appeal??

Is she the logical extension of a decades-long process of idolizing and sexualizing the pre-pubescent form? Why else put heavy makeup, high heels, low-cut dresses, provocative poses and jaded expressions on children?

We already have neurotic women pursuing bodies they can't genetically achieve without dying, and girls as young as age six with eating disorders. In one report, 42% of first through third grade females

reported that they wanted to be thinner and 20% of elementary students sometimes or frequently starve themselves.

Glorifying exploited and sexualized children only adds to unhealthy body images at early ages.

The Multiservice Eating Disorders Association (MEDA) writes: "Some believe that the media culture that puts ten year olds in adult fashion magazines, brings us three year olds with spray tans and hair extensions on the TLC hit show "Toddlers & Tiaras," markets Skechers Shape-Ups exercise shoes to 6-8 year olds and sells infant onesies with the famous eating disordered words of model Kate Moss, "Nothing Tastes as Good As Skinny Feels," are at least a part of the explanation for the growing body dissatisfaction seen in younger and younger children, while others argue that this is an unfair and overly simplistic view."

Cause and effect between these child photos and eating disorders isn't proven, but are photos like these so necessary for modern existence that we need to take the risk?||