



**Playtime Paris**  
**2 – 4 July 2016**



**Playtime Paris in numbers**

Playtime Paris is the international exhibition for childrenswear, maternitywear, nursery furniture and accessories. The 20th edition of Playtime Paris (and its' 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday) took place as usual in the event space of the Parc Floral near the Château de Vincennes, in Eastern Paris.

This was the show for the Spring/Summer 2017 season; the Autumn/Winter 2017 edition will be held at the same location from 28-30 January 2017. The continuing strong growth of the childrenswear industry worldwide has encouraged Playtime to spread its wings and now successful editions take place twice a year in Tokyo and in New York, attracting global exhibitors.

500 collections from all over the world exhibited; an increase of 30 on the same event last year. 59 exhibitors (approximately 15% of the total) were from the UK, of which 30 benefited from TAP grants from UK Trade and Investment through UKFT.

5,782 international buyers and press visited the show. 56.9% were international (i.e. outside France) 43.1% of visitors were from France, 7.1% from Asia and 3.7% from the USA.

Visitor numbers were consistent throughout the three days. As expected they were slightly down (-7.6%) on the July 2015 event, this was due to many factors: security fears, the impact of strikes and demonstrations in

Paris, the price and availability of hotel rooms in Paris due to the European Cup events and the fact that many retailers had experienced poor sales and were still holding stock from previous seasons. The fact that the show coincided with the last weekend of Eid al Fitr meant that buyers from the Middle East were very few in number and 4<sup>th</sup> July did reduce the number of US visitors.

The main markets from which visitors came were:

Europe:

1. Belgium
2. United Kingdom
3. Netherlands
4. Spain
5. Germany

Outside Europe:

1. South Korea
2. USA
3. Japan
4. Russia

Exhibitors by product:

71% Fashion, 20% Gifts, 9% Maternity

## **Business**

As usual, top department stores and key retailers from all over the world were well represented, including Selfridges, Galeries Lafayette, Farfetch, Le Bon Marché, Bonton, Smallable, The Conran Shop and several Japanese buying teams. On the evening of Day 1, the organisers organised a lavish cocktail party to celebrate their 10<sup>th</sup> birthday in the grounds of the Parc Floral. This was eagerly attended by over 1,000 visitors (buyers, press and exhibitors).

The general feeling amongst exhibitors was that although footfall was a little lighter, good buyers were there and they were writing orders.

One new UK exhibitor commented: *“This was my first show and I was hoping for good feed-back from buyers and press. I was delighted by the amazing buyers who came to view the collection, including the team from Isetan who spent a long time with me – I am really looking forward to working with them in the future!”*

The special benefit to UK exhibitors showing at Playtime is that they are seen alongside their international competitors and this gives them credibility with buyers from the UK who visit the show and are in the mood for finding interesting new collections.

## **Playtime Paris – the show**

The Playtime Paris show team is very helpful and the show is well organised. It is a magnet for good quality and directional childrenswear, babywear, maternitywear and other associated products. The layout is clear, the signage simple but easy to read. There is no longer a printed catalogue but information on exhibitors, together with show plans, is available through the new Playtime Paris app and on the exhibition website.

The exhibition is spread through a series of single-storey buildings in the Parc Floral. The older buildings (kidswear and nursery accessories/gifts) lack air-conditioning and can get very hot, while the newer buildings (housing the maternitywear collections) benefit from air conditioning. The show is well served with two restaurants on site and this season the numbers of shuttle buses for visitors arriving at the nearby metro station was considerably increased, which was very popular with buyers.

Design now forms a significant part of the Playtime Paris show. Freelance designers have a section to themselves, selling artwork for printed textiles, gifts and apparel – each has a small table on which to display artwork. There are also several Trend areas, curated by trend forecasting agencies and featuring the work of

exhibitors, as part of their forecasts for the coming season. These are exceptionally well put together and are very popular with buyers every season.

The July event attracts larger numbers of swimwear, beachwear and t-shirt collections; the January event brings in more furs and leather (natural and faux), heavier knitwear, skiwear, outerwear and hats. Both editions have largely moved away from very formal children's and babywear and in their place we see more nursery furniture and decorative items, gift sets for baby and mother to be and jewellery (maternity, baby and children's).

### **Brits at Playtime Paris**

The 59 companies from the UK (see [here](#) for full list) showed merchandise ranging from sustainable casualwear to neon swimwear and from leather baby shoes to cute nursery collections. They ranged from 'regulars' such as The Bonnie Mob, Kite, Loud Apparel, Tootsa Maginty and Hucklebones, to newcomers to the show The Good Karma Shop, Tiba and Marl, Girls Talk to Boys, Little Lulu's, Little Cloud and Wildfire Tepees.

Every season UKFT asks exhibitors to contribute to the Playtime [film loop](#), featuring only collections from the UK and an excellent variety of merchandise was submitted. This remains on [www.ukft.org](http://www.ukft.org) from one season to the next, as an aide-memoire for buyers.

### **Special background to this event**

The show took place just one week after the EU Referendum but transport and accommodation had been booked by then, so the result could not really be considered a factor in numbers at the Playtime show. British exhibitors, along with many others, were in a state of shock about the outcome and the UKFT Export team discussed the consequences of the 'Leave' vote with the majority of them.

Many exhibitors import (at the very least) fabric and components from Europe, China or India and the exchange rate of sterling against the major international currencies, combined with the uncertainty that large changes in exchange rates provoke in buyers, were the principal causes for concern amongst most of the UK exhibitors during the show. The thought of the reintroduction of import duties and the possible need for expensive export documentation for temporary importation of collections for exhibitions in EU countries was a major talking point and one which was dreaded universally by the exhibitors.

The weakness of Sterling against the major international currencies was making UK collections appear cheaper but enthusiasm for that amongst buyers did not counteract their extreme concern about the future of buying from the UK as well as worry about how the outcome of the Brexit negotiations will affect the UK's ability to continue to trade internationally.

Some prudent exhibitors, having paid well in advance for their stands, were congratulating themselves on saving at least 20% on the historical Euro/Sterling exchange rate; others were bemoaning an increase of over 20% on their stand cost because they had chosen to pay later.

### **Getting accepted into Playtime Paris**

UKFT has worked with the Playtime organisers since the show started and found them to be exceptionally helpful and encouraging to potential exhibitors but this is a very successful niche event and they are able to be extremely selective in their choice of new collections.

Potential exhibitors must first visit the show to demonstrate their commitment and interest and as an essential part of their research. They should then approach the organisers in a considered but enthusiastic manner well in advance of the next event. UKFT can give advice and tips.

## **Grants for showing at Playtime Paris**

Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) grants are payable as a reimbursement after the show and are available through UKFT – please email [Laurian.davies@ukft.org](mailto:Laurian.davies@ukft.org) for the application forms. New exhibitors should apply for a grant at the same time as applying for space at the show. The number of grants is usually less than the number of companies which would like one, so it is important to apply as soon as you know that you would like to exhibit.