



CECILY

Luella flowered dress, \$99, **Eliza Gran**, Acorn, acorntoyshop.com. Chuck Taylor All Star Hi in pink, \$20, **Converse**, converse.com.

KENNEDY

Organic cotton jacket, \$130, bird tee, \$74, skirt, \$112, and hat, \$70, **Mor Mor Rita**, (718) 218-6701. Socks, \$8 for three, **Little Miss Matched**, littlemissmatched.com.

The clothes on these pages could be called old-fashioned, in the best sense. Made with an eye for fabric and quality, they reflect an earlier, less brand-conscious era. Many of the designers decided to start their own businesses after having kids themselves. Eliza Gran, whose factory is in Brooklyn, says that after her first child was born, "I tried to find clothes that looked like the ones I wore when I was little—those early-'70s-style sundresses and Liberty prints." Frustrated by the lack of options, she began designing kids' wear in 2002 and now gets her fabrics (mostly reproductions of vintage and Civil War-era prints) from all over the country. Lauren Gropp Lowry, another Brooklyn-based designer, created boys' clothing company Mr. Tiny three years ago with her sister, who was having trouble finding anything for her twin sons that wasn't navy blue, baby blue, or covered in baseballs and trains. By contrast, Mr. Tiny signature details include rich herringbone patterns and bright colors. "Part of our inspiration was the bold colors of our childhood, like the ones Marimekko is famous for," Lowry explains.

Aside from offering attractive proof that everything old is new again, these togs have style and craftsmanship that reflect the small-scale environment in which they are made. Angela Devine, whose studio is on her property in Livingston, Montana, sews all her pieces herself and digs up most of her natural wool and cotton fabrics in church-basement sales, antiques stores, and rummage sales. ("I feel like a squirrel, collecting this stuff," she says.) The results have a luxurious texture and one-of-a-kind feel. "I like to be able to touch fabrics, to know how they'll wash and wear," says Devine. Stephanie Scarpulla, of Bluebird in San Francisco, has worked with the same seamstress for years: "I know her whole family, and I never have to check production," she says.

Perhaps the most American thing about these clothes is their melting-pot array of influences. "I get inspired by fabrics," says Ellen Masee, founder of Los Angeles-based Entertaining Elephants, who decided on a career change after trying to balance nursing her daughter and waking up at 4 A.M. for her job designing movie sets. "Almost all my colors come from India, and I recently fell in love with these beautiful stripes at Bon Marché in Paris." Lowry gets her textiles from Spain: "We like the European color sensibility; it's a little more sophisticated." Yet a child wearing her clothes—or any of those shown here—never has to feel like anything but a child. And that's something we can all feel good about. 🚲



1

A NEWBORN'S MUSE

These animal pictures might be the second thing to trigger a baby's smile. (You know who's the first.) **Fragility** Somewhat delicate. The cards wear with handling and hang from thin-gauge steel. **Assembly** Moderately easy; requires string for hanging. *Wee Gallery Mobile*, \$24, weegallery.com

2

THE HANDMADE TALE

A group of German designers' decidedly un-Disneylike take on a certain raven-haired princess and her diminutive crew. **Fragility** Delicate. The characters dangle from an intricate weave of willow branches. **Assembly** None. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, \$84, *Matrushka Mobiles*, (718) 522-3760

3

FLOATS LIKE A BUTTERFLY

Does anything lend itself more to the mobile medium than this quintet of flutterers? Included is a description of each butterfly. **Fragility** Sturdy. The images (printed in nontoxic ink) are set on thick art board. **Assembly** None. *Butterflies*, \$38, *Skyflight Mobiles*, warmbiscuit.com

4

COLORFUL CONSTELLATION

The discs that make up this charming abstract balancing act are handmade from post-consumer recycled and recovered plastic. **Fragility** Sturdy. The large components can withstand lots of touching. **Assembly** None. *Piccomo*, \$125, piccolini.online.com

5

PRIMATE PRIMER

Chances are you've seen this Danish-designed classic—all the more reason to get your kids acquainted with the 10-by-6-inch googly-eyed monkey, too. **Fragility** Somewhat delicate. The paper parts can crease. **Assembly** Easy. *Skipper*, \$21, *Frede Fabek for Flensted*, hanneby.com