

fashion

Collector's items

John Rocha reveals all to Laia Farran Graves about the ideas and inspiration behind his childrenswear range at Debenhams

John Rocha is well known for his unique classic style and experimental use of textures, designs and techniques. Born in Hong Kong and of Chinese and Portuguese descent, it was in autumn/winter 2000 when he launched the Rocha JohnRocha collections for Debenhams, which included menswear, womenswear, childrenswear, accessories and home. And in 2007 he opened a store in 15a Dover Street, a listed building in the heart of Mayfair. We find out what keeps him so inspired, with his latest childrenswear collection now out...

February 2012 | *miss* resident 33

Why did you choose to come to London to study?

Growing up in Hong Kong, I always had a huge interest in fashion, and London was THE place to be as far as I was concerned.

Over the years you have developed a very unique style

that is organic and focuses on texture. Can you tell us where that comes from?

The elements that inform all my work are texture, form and detail - I am fascinated with the interplay of texture and structure.

You design childrenswear for Debenhams under the Designers at Debenhams range.

Tell us about it...

When we launched the Rocha John Rocha collections in Debenhams back in 2000, we were the first designer to launch with five ranges - Men, Women, Children, Home and Accessories. For me the opportunity to create garments for children was really exciting. I had made some things for my own children when they were young, and so to bring my



Clockwise, from top left: Large check shirt, £14-£18; Sparkling cord trousers, £18-£22; Bear long sleeve shirt, £10-£14; Baby woodland print corduroy pinafore, £22-£24

ideas to a broader audience was wonderful.

Do you enjoy designing the range?

Yes, I really enjoy it. Each range is a little different - with babies we can tell stories and create characters; with toddlers it's a little more sophisticated, a little trendier. When it comes to older girls it's all about prettiness and specialness, while older boys are all about looking cool and little more urban.

How practical are your children's clothes?

We aim for the collections to be practical of course, and they also have to be comfortable - this is

essential in childrenswear.

I love using denim, cotton twills and canvases for boys, and cotton jersey and voiles for girls.

What part does colour play in the children's range?

Colour is so very important for kids' wear. Whether it is finding just the right shade of shell pink for a baby's T-shirt or just the right degree of vibrancy for a toddler boy's orange hoody, colour is one of the key ingredients in successful design.

What are your influences when designing?

My aim in all my work is to create beautiful things - and this influences and informs all I do. I also find great inspiration in my

travels from Iceland to China, and in the arts.

You have a boutique in Mayfair, do you like the area?

It has always been a favourite of mine. There are so many gorgeous places to shop and eat, including The Petit Café next door to the shop on Stafford Street, where I sometimes have a coffee and a cigar sitting out on the pavement.

Find John Rocha's latest childrenswear range at Debenhams.com, and his Mayfair store can be found at 15a Dover Street, W1S 4LR, 020 7495 2233