# The blind box craze is going too far

**By Brianna Wallen**
**Editor-in-Chief**

Last month, I caved and bought a Bratz Bratziez x Hello Kitty Seriez collection plush blind box from Target.

I loved the dolls and knew I wanted one before they sold out. However, after skimming through my options, I knew I only wanted Sasha, Yasmin or Jade.

I am a very picky person, so if I do not get the one I want, I am going to be disappointed.

I guess it is all for the love of the game? But a $30 plushie keychain, and I cannot even pick which one I want?

There is something about that cycle that makes me question the whole concept. At what point does the excitement of opening a mystery box start to resemble gambling?

I mean, think about it. You are spending money on something without knowing exactly what you are getting. There is a chance you will get the one you have been wanting, but there is also a chance you will end up with something you do not even like. And if you do not get the one you want, what is stopping you from buying another box and trying your luck again?

That is where I think things get interesting. The excitement is not necessarily about the product anymore. It is about the possibility of getting the one you want. You are essentially paying for the experience of finding out whether luck is on your side.

I am also starting to experience a little blind box fatigue. It seems like every time I scroll through TikTok or walk into a store, there is another mystery collection everyone is trying to get their hands on. There is always a new character, a new collaboration or another limited-edition item that makes me feel like I am missing out if I do not buy it.

Blind boxes started out as something cute and fun, but now they have evolved into a whole industry. It seems like everything is becoming a "surprise."

And they were introduced to me as a kid. I mean, it started with Pokémon cards and mystery Shopkins. Then, it molded into plushies, figurines and even collectible blind boxes.

Blind boxes evolved from the toy aisle and even made its way into the beauty section.

I am seeing viral mystery perfume collections right above the actual individually sold perfumes that people can buy.

Keeping the Target theme, I see the viral Crèmerie Frenchy Bears blind box set all over my For You Page. People are buying these mystery scents without knowing which one they will get.

And do not get me started on the Starbucks Bearista glass cold cups, where people are spending around $40 per box trying to get the specific bear they want.

Are we that indecisive? Or are we just looking for a thrill? Maybe it is the excitement of opening something without knowing what is inside. Maybe it is testing our luck and hoping we get the one we have been eyeing.

I can understand the appeal. There is something exciting about opening a package and getting a surprise. But I also think there is a difference between enjoying a little mystery and repeatedly spending money hoping to get something specific.

Especially when people are buying multiple boxes just to find the one they want. At that point, the excitement can quickly turn into an expensive habit.



PHOTO | BRIANNA WALLEN

**Bratz Bratziez x Hello Kitty Seriez Yasmin plush.**

And the crazy part is that brands know exactly what they are doing. The limited collections, viral TikToks and fear of missing out make it even harder to resist buying one before they disappear.

But anyways, enough of my rant. Look at this Bratziez plushie I got.

# Fashion label Coperni permanently closes

**By Valentina Toro**
**Managing Editor**

Fashion has always been about creativity, innovation and pushing boundaries. However, the recent closure of French fashion label Coperni raises questions about whether creativity alone is enough to survive in an industry increasingly influenced by financial interests.

On Nov. 4, Coperni co-founders Sébastien Meyer and Arnaud Vaillant announced that the brand's French operating company would cease operations after months of unsuccessful negotiations with its majority shareholder and distributor, Tomorrow Ltd.

The announcement came as a disappointment for an industry that had watched Coperni transform traditional runway presentations into experimental showcases combining fashion and technology.

In 2022, the brand captured international attention when Bella Hadid appeared on the runway and had a white dress sprayed directly onto her body.

The presentation demonstrated how technology could become part of the design process rather than simply complementing it.

Two years later, Coperni introduced its Air Swipe bag, created using silica aerogel, an extremely lightweight material associated with aerospace technology.

The brand also staged a runway show at Disneyland Paris, bringing another unconventional concept to the fashion industry.

These presentations were more than opportunities to attract attention. They challenged expectations of what fashion could look like and how clothing could be presented to an audience.

I believe the industry needs brands like Coperni because fashion should not be limited to producing collections that follow the same trends season after season. Designers should have the freedom to experiment, even when their ideas are unconventional.

However, Coperni's closure highlights a difficult reality.

A brand can generate international recognition, attract celebrities and create memorable collections without being protected from financial instability.

According to Vogue Business, the company's financial difficulties involved a dispute over payments allegedly owed by Tomorrow Ltd.

The distributor's new owner, Progetto 11, disputed responsibility for those payments and maintained that it had offered possible solutions.

Although the two sides disagree about what caused the breakdown, the situation raises broader concerns about the relationship between creative directors and the companies financially supporting their work.

When designers rely on outside businesses to manage distribution and funding, their creative independence may not guarantee control over their brand's future.

For younger designers trying to establish themselves, this situation is especially concerning. Building an audience takes years, and even widespread recognition cannot replace reliable financial support.

That uncertainty could discourage the experimentation that makes fashion exciting.

What makes Coperni's closure particularly disappointing is that the label had established an identity in an industry where originality can be difficult to maintain.

Its designs were not necessarily created for everyone, and some of its runway presentations attracted more attention for their spectacle than for the clothing itself.

Still, experimentation has an important place in fashion, especially when designers are willing to challenge established practices.

The fashion industry cannot expect innovation to continue if the business structures' emerging and independent designers are unable to sustain their work.

Coperni's future remains uncertain, and the closure of its French operating company does not necessarily mean its founders will stop designing.

For now, its departure from the industry serves as a reminder that behind every runway presentation, collection and viral fashion moment is a business that must remain financially stable.

Fashion needs creativity to move forward, but it also needs an industry capable of supporting the designers responsible for bringing those ideas to life.


# SOUTHERN NEWS

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# 'Castlevania' has its pros and cons

**By Noah Nunez**
**General Reporter**

"Castlevania," as a series, has been deader than Dracula after the morning sun vanquished the horrible night, with the last game coming out 15+ years ago.

And in that time, the genre it shares half of the name with, "Metroidvania," has been in a renaissance, with hundreds of incredible games using the framework "Castlevania" established all the way back in the '90s.

For Castlevania to come back now, in the current climate of "Metroidvania", it had not only a lot to prove but a legacy of some of the genre's best to live up to.

So, was newcomer to the franchise, "Evil Empire," able to deliver on that legacy and cement "Castlevania: Belmont's Curse" as one of the franchise's best? Eh, kinda.

Belmont's Curse is not a bad game, far from it, but the thing that rings true throughout the entire experience is that this is a good proof of concept, a good basis to take the "Castlevania" series forward.

The progression is simple, with sub weapons and movement upgrades being tied to bosses, and the weapons used split into seven unique types.

However, this is basically the only form of progression you have, making it so each discovery feels less like stumbling onto an old relic inside Dracula's castle and more like finding the story time room to get the item needed to progress.

It is neat to contextualize all of the movement upgrades under the context of them being given by Dracula's rogues' gallery, but because they are difficult to find, the exploration feels almost nonexistent.

And this design is only made worse by the god-awful map design.

My main fear going in was that "Evil Empire," who developed the roguelike "Metroidvania Dead Cells," would not be able to make a good map following their procedurally generated origins. And yeah, I was right.

The map is simply too big, with too few warp points, leading to the initial exploration of an area being 20+ minutes of exploration with no save points, leading to you dying and having to do it all over again.

This problem is only exacerbated by the simple progression; retreading through these areas never yields anything new. The best you'll get is a cool sword that gets outclassed in a couple of minutes.

The only thing complimenting these backtracks is the visuals.

The color scheme of the game is beautiful, using an incredible CMYK color palette to give everything from the streets of Paris to the heights of Dracula's clock tower a haunting yet beautiful look.

The biggest standout for me was the story, which, similar to other games in the series, can feel rather sudden as the game arbitrarily decides its cutscene time after an hour of uninterrupted exploration.


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