

RUNWAY

# Chloé Mendel's Faux Fur Coats Feel Like the Real Thing—And They're Fully Reversible



NOVEMBER 13, 2017 4:54 PM  
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Will 2018 be the year of faux fur? Based on the past few weeks alone, we'd say yes. Gucci recently announced [it's going fur-free](#), and we've seen several new outerwear brands comprised only of faux skins, the latest being [Maison Atia](#) by Chloé Mendel. You might know her father, Gilles, as the creative director of [J.Mendel](#), the 147-year-old couture house known for its fur. But it wasn't her exposure to the fur industry or a sudden urge to go vegan that inspired Chloé to explore the faux stuff; on the contrary, she's using her family heritage and expertise to make faux fur even better, and sees it as "an unexpected luxury"—not a lesser imitation.

"Faux fur is just more in line with my life [right now]," she tells *Vogue*. "Fur isn't for everyone, and it's such an expensive product. I just wanted to make coats that were fun, young, and more inclusive." In other words, you don't have to choose sides. She sources her luxurious, high-quality faux fur from a special mill in Italy, and it's so soft and plush that many shoppers will confuse it for the real thing. According to Mendel, the faux fur itself is just part of the equation; creating beautiful coats really comes down to the finishes. "We use real fur machines to make them," she explained, pointing out her reversible [Colette faux lamb jacket](#). "We added decorative topstitching, which is only done on really high-end furs because it's difficult to do it well. To get the stitches through the fabric in two directions, and to make it straight and perfect—it's not easy. It's really slow and detailed."



The reversible, two-coats-for-the-price-of-one thing was even trickier to pull off, but it sets Maison Atia apart from other faux fur brands. At first glance, you'd never guess the blush ankle-length Làmbe coat could reverse to a wallpaper-floral print with fluffy trim, or that a leopard caban could flip inside out to reveal supple, real-feeling faux leather. "That's where the next level [of finishing] really kicks in," she says. "You can hide a lot of things on the inside of a coat—the seam could be different, or it might be a little crooked." Instead, her New York atelier considers every stitch, and will even place strips of faux leather along the seams of a hoodie, a technique used for traditional shearlings. "These are details you only see from fur experts."

Animal lovers will appreciate Mendel's tagline, too: "Buy a coat, save a puppy." Through her partnership with Paws Chicago, every coat sold will provide a homeless pet with transportation to a no-kill shelter—and the attention it needs to find a good home. You can shop the coats now at maisonatia.com; if you're in New York, they're also stocked at Flying Solo on West Broadway.