

Culture | Meet me at the bubble pit

The rise of “kidulting”

Experiences that let adults act like children are booming

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A YOUNG WOMAN slides herself gleefully into a fake bathtub filled with giant plastic “bubbles”. Snack bags of popcorn are handed out inside a room designed to look and sound like the inside of a popcorn machine. Friends snap selfies amid colour-changing lights before heading to the pillow-fight section and pummeling each other with feather-filled cushions.

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actual children now host adult-only evenings. This includes KidZania, a model city in London that was (ironically) designed for children to play at grown-up activities, such as having a job. Enthusiasts say that such spaces heighten creativity, human connection and joy, triggering the pleasure-seeking chemical that Dopamine Land is named after.

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Dopamine Land is just one example of a new cultural trend called “kidulting”, where adults engage in lighthearted activities traditionally designed for children. In Amsterdam, Wondr invites patrons to “dive into a sea of pink marshmallows” and “write on the walls”. The Museum of Ice Cream, a multistorey playground of pools filled with fake sundae toppings, has expanded from New York to several other American cities and Singapore. Bubble Planet, which started in Madrid, will soon have 13 cities in its orbit, including Brussels and Toronto.