



**SCANDALOUS
LOLITA!**

**SHOCK
ROCKERS!**

H A R A J U K U

H I S T O R Y

**GARISH
GYARU!**

**DARING
DANCERS!**

**DELINQUENT
GIRLS!**



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INTRODUCTION

HARAJUKU FASHION HAS BECOME OF SYMBOL OF JAPANESE ECCENTRICITY, ATTRACTING THOUSANDS OF TOURISTS EACH YEAR TO GAWK AT GYARU'S OR PLAY DRESS UP AS A LOLITA. HARAJUKU FASHION IS KNOWN INTERNATIONALLY, AS SEEN IN GWEN STAFANI'S HIT SONG HARAJUKU GIRLS. HOWEVER THESE DEPECTIONS OF HARAJUKU FASHION ONLY BRUSH THE SURFACE.

THOUGH THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HAVE TRIED TO SHAKE THE "WERID JAPAN" IMAGE, HARAJUKU YOUTH HAVE EMBRACED ITS STRANGENESS AND IT HAS BECOME THE BIRTHPLACE OF MANY WEIRD AND WONDERFUL SUBCULTURES. STARTING IN 1977, EVERY SUNDAY HARAJUKU WOULD HAVE PEDESTRIAN-ONLY ZONES ALLOWING YOUTHS TO GATHER FREELY, HANG OUT, DANCE AND LISTEN TO BANDS. THIS ENABLED HARAJUKU TO BECOME A VIBRANT HUB FOR JAPANESE YOUTH CULTURE.



IN THIS MAGAZINE, YOU WILL READ ABOUT THE HISTORY OF HARAJUKU FASHION SUBCULTURES AND THE SOCIAL ISSUES AND CHANGE THEY BROUGHT TO JAPANESE SOCIETY, WHETHER INTENTIONAL OR NOT!



SUKEBAN

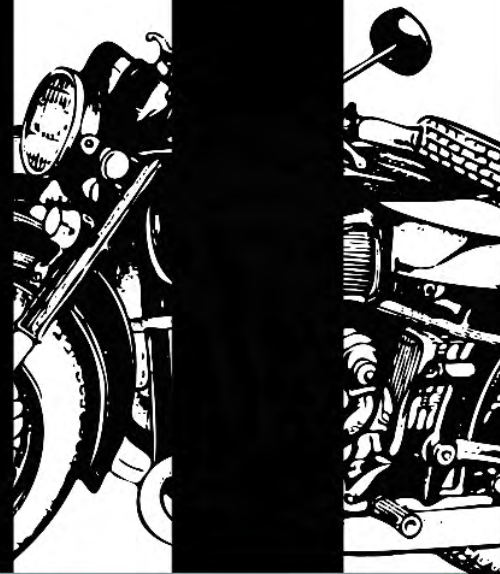
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1960'S ■ PRESENT



**DON'T GET CAUGHT
WITH YOUR YAKUZA
BOYFRIEND**



YAKUZA WHO?



JAPANESE TEENS WERE NOT LEFT OUT IN THE SEXUAL LIBERATION OF THE 1960S. SUKEBAN OR “DELINQUENT GIRLS” WERE GIRL GANGS THAT AT THEIR PEAK OUTNUMBERED SOME FACTIONS OF THE YAKUZA. THOUGH THE SUKEBAN IS OFTEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE YAKUZA, THE YAKUZA LOOKED DOWN ON WOMEN AS SIMPLY BEING CHILD-BEARERS. THUS, THE SUKEBAN FORMED GANGS AND BECAME THE ORIGINAL GIRL BOSSES.

SUKEBAN STYLE TAKES INSPIRATION FROM BRITISH PUNK AND AMERICAN SKATE AND MOTORCYCLE CULTURE. THEY OFTEN SPORTED MODIFIED SAILOR OUTFITS, LEATHER JACKETS AND JUMPSUITS. SUKEBAN ACCESSORISED THEIR OUTFITS WITH WEAPONS AND OFTEN PARTICIPATED IN CRIME SUCH AS THEFT AND FIGHTING WITH RIVAL GANGS.

THOUGH THEIR ACTIONS SEEMED EXTREME, SUKEBAN REBELLED FOR FREEDOM FROM THE SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS OF THEM. THE SUKEBAN HAD NO DESIRE TO BE AN EXCELLENT STUDENT/DAUGHTER AND THEN A DUTIFUL HOUSEWIFE; INSTEAD, THEY SMOKE, DRANK AND SNUCK AROUND WITH THEIR YAKUZA BOYFRIENDS. SOME SUKEBAN CONTINUED WITH GANG LIFE INTO ADULthood WHILE OTHERS WENT ON TO LIVE ORDINARY, CRIME-FREE LIVES. NONETHELESS, THEIR EXTREME EXPRESSION OF YOUTH AND FREEDOM HIGHLIGHTS THE OPPRESSIVE AND RESTRICTIVE EXPECTATIONS PLACED ON WOMEN.

THE TERM SUKEBAN IS STILL USED IN JAPAN TO THIS DAY; HOWEVER, LIKE MANY FASHION SUBCULTURES, THE SUKEBAN HAS BEEN TURNED INTO A SEXUALISED STEREOTYPE OFTEN SEEN IN MANGA AND ANIME.



Takenoko-zoku

竹の子族



Mid
1970's
- Mid
1980's

Are you really going out like that?



Fluorescent Adolescents

Takenoko-zoku, which translates to Bamboo Shoot Tribe, were groups of teenagers who danced in the pedestrian streets of Harajuku. The Takenoko-zoku were often groups of girls with one boy leading.

They dressed in colourful, shapeless costumes often combining elements of Chinese and Japanese traditional fashion.

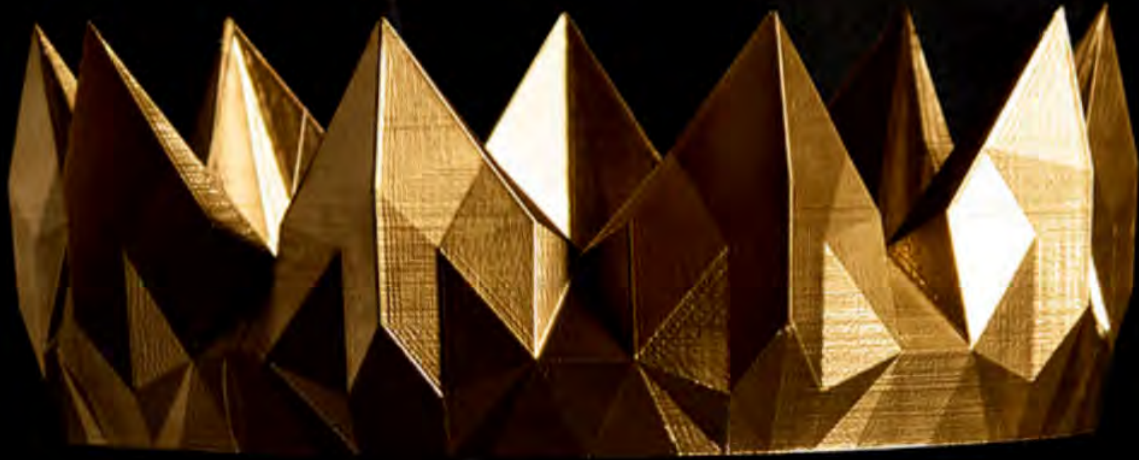
Unlike the other Harajuku fashion subjects, these teens would only wear their outfits during the dance performances and change for the train.

This subculture did not last as long as the other subcultures in Harajuku, dying out in the mid-'80s. However, since 2019 there has been a small revival called KEKENOKO.

Though short-lived, the importance of the Takeno-zoku should not be overlooked as they paved the way for the colourful, vibrant style Harajuku is now known and was an inspiration for other subcultures such as Gyarū.

**READ ON TO SEE
THE SHOCKING
GYARU GIRLS!**





Visual Kei
ヴィジュアル系
Visual Kei
ヴィジュアル系
Visual Kei
ヴィジュアル系
Visual Kei
ヴィジュアル系

1980's
- Present



PSYCHEDELIC VIOLENCE CRIME OF VISUAL SHOCK

PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT



Gender bender public offender



VISUAL KEI IS A MUSIC SUBCULTURE WHERE FASHION IS ALMOST (IF NOT MORE) IMPORTANT THAN MUSIC. THE TERM WAS MADE FAMOUS BY THE BAND XJAPAN IN THE 1980S WITH THE PHRASE "PHYSCHEDLIC VIOLENCE CRIME OF VISUAL SHOCK".

HARAJUKU WAS AN IMPORTANT SPACE FOR VISUAL KEI BANDS OFTEN PERFORMING IN THE PARKS TO GAIN A FOLLOWING.

VISUAL KEI HEAVILY FEATURES IMAGERY THAT IS SHOCKING FOR A LARGELY CONSERVATIVE JAPAN WITH THEIR EXTRAVAGANT OUTFITS, EXPLICIT LYRICS OFTEN WITH SOCIAL COMMENTARY AND SHOCKING SCENES IN MUSIC VIDEOS SUCH AS THE INFAMOUS EYEBALL LICKING SCENE IN BORN'S SONG SPIRAL LIE. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF VISUAL KEI IS THE BLURRING OF GENDER NORMS THROUGH FASHION. MOST VISUAL KEI PERFORMERS ARE MALES WHO WEAR FLAMBOYANT, USUALLY FEMININE OUTFITS AND MAKEUP.

ANDROGYNY IS KEY FOR VISUAL KEI PERFORMERS AND FANS. TRADITIONALLY JAPANESE MEN DRESSING AS WOMEN WAS PRAISED IN KABUKI THEATRE; HOWEVER, SINCE THE CHANGE TO THE SALARYMEN BEING THE JAPANESE HEGEMONIC MASCULINE NORM, MEN ARE EXPECTED TO ACT AND DRESS PROFESSIONALLY TO BE A "REAL MAN".



VISUAL KEI STARS AND FANS CHALLENGE GENDER AND BEHAVIOURAL NORMS THROUGH THEIR DRESS AND PERFORMANCE, CONTRASTING THEIR HEAVY SOUND AND SCREAMING VOCALS WITH ORNATE OUTFITS, METICULOUS MAKEUP, AND HUGE HAIRSTYLES

GYARU VIBES ONLY

ギャル

1990'S -
PRESENT



BEAUTY OR BEAST?



GIRL POWER

GYARU STARTED BEING SPOTTED ON THE STREETS OF HARAJUKU IN THE 1990S, REACHING ITS PEAK IN THE EARLY 2000S. GYARU IS ONE OF THE MOST INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED AND QUINTESSENTIAL "HARAJUKU STYLES".

THE ORIGINAL GYARU GIRLS WERE HIGH SCHOOLERS WHO REBELLED AGAINST THE STANDARD JAPANESE BEAUTY NORMS THEY WERE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW.

THEY WENT TANNING, WORE HEAVY MAKEUP AND MODIFIED THEIR UNIFORMS. LATER, GYARU'S BECAME SYNONYMOUS WITH OLDER WOMEN WHO SHOWED NO INTEREST IN CONFORMING TO THE WORK-LIFE AND MARRIAGES EXPECTED OF THEM.

GYARU'S ALSO FOUGHT AGAINST THE NOTION THAT JAPANESE WOMEN SHOULD BE SUBSERVIENT AND MODEST. GYARU'S OWNED THEIR SEXUALITY, OFTEN SELLING THEIR USED UNIFORMS AND UNDERWEAR AND WEARING REVEALING CLOTHES. GYARU'S WERE ALSO KNOWN AS BEING LOUD AND BRASH IN PERSONALITY. NOW, IT SEEMS THAT THE GYARU HAVE DIED OUT, THEIR EYE-CATCHING LOOKS NOT SEEN ON THE STREETS AS REGULARLY AS IN THEIR PEAK. HOWEVER, THERE A STILL AN ACTIVE GROUP OF GYARU'S STICKING IT TO THE MAN BY STICKING ON THEIR FALSE LASHES.



LOLITA

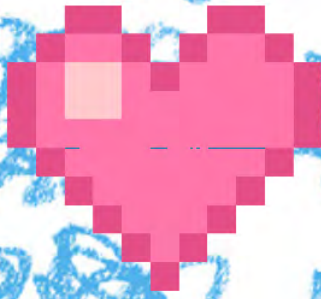
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1980'S -
PRESENT





SUPER CUTE OR SUPER CREEPY?



PLAYFUL OR PREDATORY?

LOLITA'S APPEARED ON THE STREETS OF HARAJUKU IN THE 1980S, HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY VICTORIAN AND LATE BAROQUE AESTHETICS. FOR MANY LOLITA'S, THE MORE DOLL-LIKE THE LOOK, THE BETTER. DUE TO THIS, LOLITA'S OFTEN LOOK CHILD-LIKE OR YOUNGER THAN THEIR AGE.

LOLITA FASHION IS OFTEN CHARACTERISED BY THEIR PALE SKIN WITH BRIGHT PINK BLUSH, FRILLY DRESSES WITH PETTICOATS AND VARIOUS CUTE ACCESSORIES.

THE TERM LOLITA ORIGINATES FROM THE 1955 NOVEL BY VLADIMIR NABOKOV, IN WHICH A MIDDLE-AGED MAN BECOMES OBSESSED WITH A 12-YEAR-OLD GIRL.

HARAJUKU LOLITA'S DO NOT RELATE TO THE NOVELS CONNOTATION AND INSTEAD USE THEIR FASHION TO REALLY AGAINST THE STRICT AND HOMOGENOUS GENDER NORMS IN JAPAN.

THE LOLITA SUBCULTURE DOES NOT STOP AT FASHION, FOR MANY LOLITA'S IT'S A LIFE STYLE.

THE ETHOS BEHIND LOLITA'S IS TO BE A IDEAL, ALMOST FICTIONAL WOMEN AND SO THEIR BEHAVIOURS MUST REFLECT THEIR. OUTFITS. MANY LOLITA'S ENSURE TO USE PROPER LANGUAGE, ETIQUETTE AND MANNERS IN THEIR DAILY LIVES THAT THEY BELIEVE IS THE EPITOME OF LADY-LIKE BEHAVIOUS.



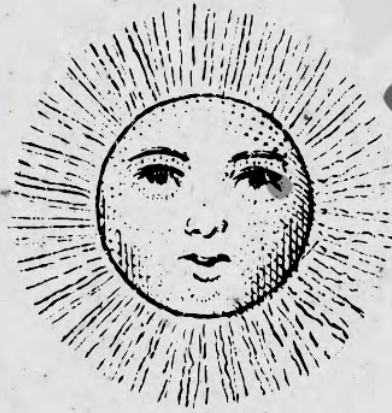
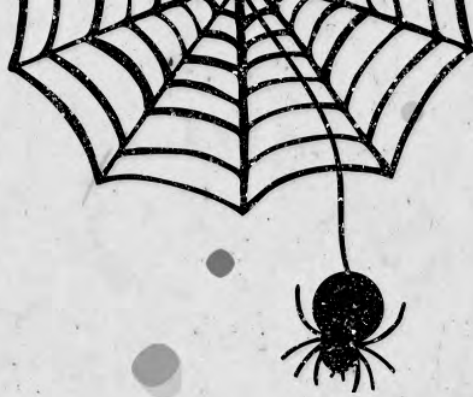
DESPITE LOLITAS TRYING TO CHANGE THE TERM, THE ORIGINAL MEANING STILL LOOMS OVER THEM. JAPAN HAS OFTEN BEEN CRITICIZED FOR OVERSEXUALING OF MINORS OR CHARACTERS MADE TO LOOK UNDERAGE. MORE ON THIS ON PAGE 21

GOTHIC LOLITA

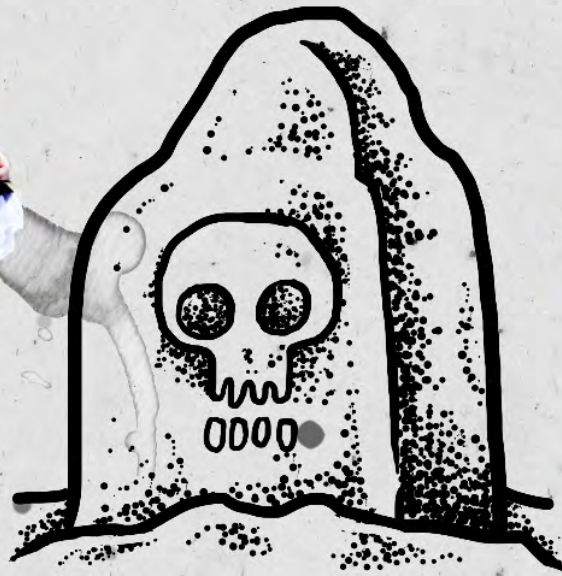
1990'S -
PRESENT

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FAIRY TALES AND FISHNETS



BLACK IS THE HAPPIEST COLOUR



GOTH LOLITA IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR SUBCATEGORIES OF LOLITA, GAINING A FOLLOWING IN THE 1990S. GOTH LOLITAS ARE SIMILAR IN STYLE TO THEIR CUTE SISTERS; HOWEVER, SWAPPING THE PINK FRILLS FOR BLACK ONES. GOTHLOLI OFTEN INCORPORATES OTHER ASPECTS OF CLASSIC GOTH FASHION, SUCH AS FISHNETS AND CORSETS. GOTHLOLI FASHION DRAWS FROM GOTHIC VICTORIAN LITERATURE AS WELL AS MORE MODERN INFLUENCES SUCH AS TIM BURTON MOVIES.

LIKE WITH OTHER FORMS OF LOLITA, IT IS NOT JUST ABOUT STYLE CHOICES BUT ALSO ABOUT COMMUNITY AND LIFESTYLE WITH RULES AND BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS. MANY LOLITA'S OFTEN RELATE THEIR STYLE TO A UNIFORM OR A SUIT OF ARMOUR. LOLITA'S SOUGHT TO CARVE OUT THEIR OWN IDENTITIES FREE FROM THE NORMS DICTATED FOR THEM BY A MALE-DOMINATED SOCIETY. DESPITE THEIR DARKER APPEARANCE, GOTHLOLI'S ARE NOT FREE FROM OVER SEXUALISATION.



**TURN OVER TO BE
ASTOUNDED BY THE
WORLD OF LOLICON!**

WHAT IS LOLICON?

THE ESSENCE OF LOLITA IS TO RECLAIM THE INNOCENCE THEY FEEL THEY HAVE LOST AND BECOME AN IDEAL 'LADY' BY DRESSING PROPER AND MODESTLY TO AVOID UNWANTED SEXUAL ATTENTION. UNFORTUNATELY FOR LOLITA'S, THIS HAS NOT STOPPED THEM FROM BECOMING OBJECTS OF DEVIANT SEXUAL DESIRE, WITH SOME CLAIMING THAT THE LOLITA SUBCULTURE FEEDS INTO THE OBJECTIFICATION OF WOMEN AND POSSIBLY PAEDOPHILIA. THE PHENOMENON IS KNOWN AS LOLICON OR LOLITA COMPLEX. LOLICON IS THE ATTRACTION TO YOUNG OR YOUNG-LOOKING GIRLS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS CUTE EROTICISM. COUNTLESS ANIME AND MANGA ARE CREATED UNDER THIS GENRE. THIS MEDIA REPRESENTATION HAS LED TO THE STIGMA BEING PLACED ON REAL-LIFE LOLITA'S. THIS PLACES LOLITA'S IN A CATCH-22; THEY DRESS CUTE TO AVOID SEXUAL ATTENTION, BUT THEIR CUTENESS TURNS THEM INTO SEX OBJECTS.



GIRL FIGHT!

Harajuku fashion is often grouped into one subculture, but this could not be further from the truth. As shown in this magazine, Harajuku hosts a wide variety of different subcultures, each with its own style, community and ethos.

It would also be naive to assume that each subculture view one another as a homogeneous group. There is often conflict and disagreements within the subcultures. Such as Lolita's often viewing themselves above the "trashy" Gyaruru, viewing them as garish and brash and Gyaruru's viewing the old-fashioned Lolita's as childish.

As with the nature of communities, there is often in-group fighting, especially with the rise of online forms meaning that people can participate in Harajuku across the globe. Members of these forms will often criticise the style and authenticity of other members and disagree over the "true" style.

Despite the expected discrepancies, Harajuku fashion subcultures provide a safe space for rebels and outcasts to join with others like them and express their identities freely.

*Funeral Parade of
Fake Tan and Petite
Coats*

SL*T

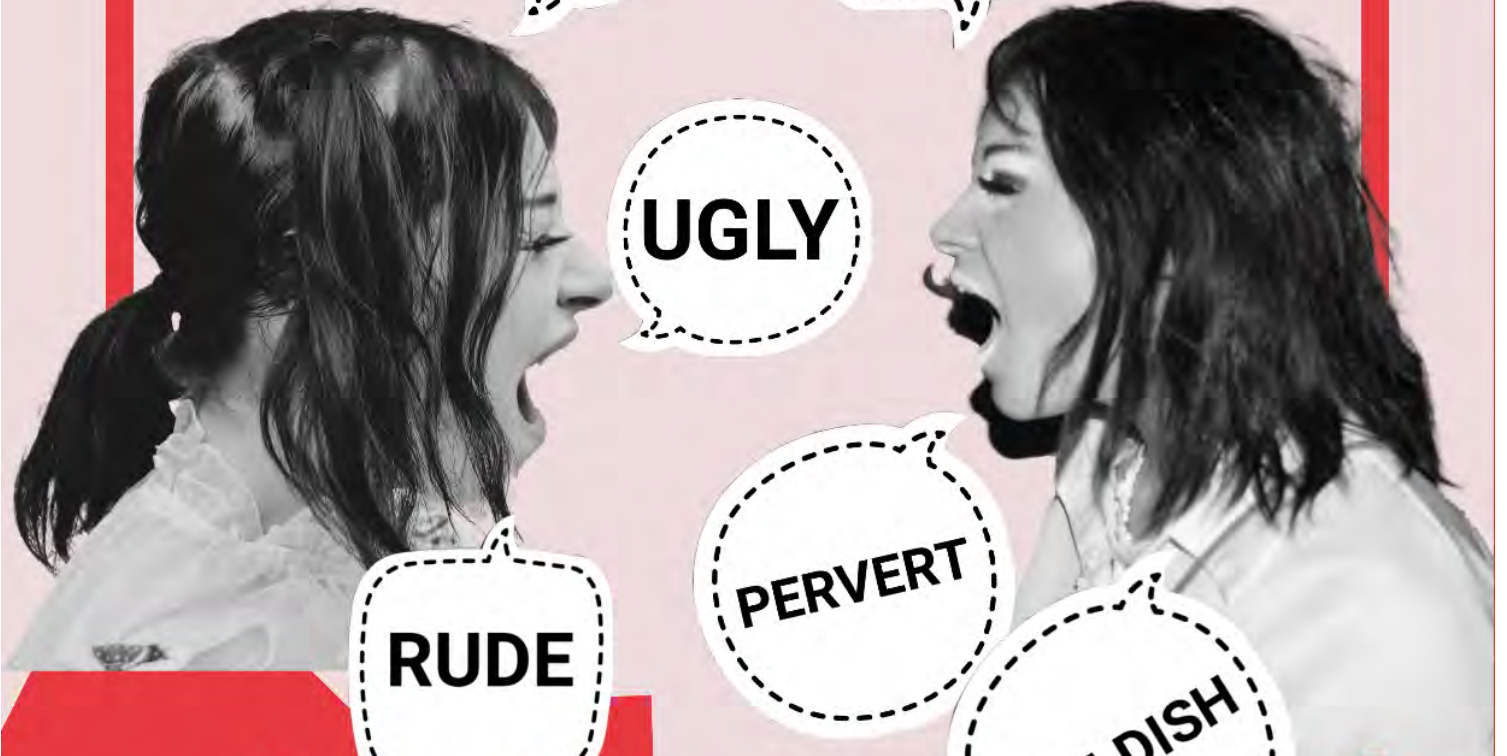
BORING

UGLY

RUDE

PERVERT

CHILDISH



IS THE SCENE DEAD?



WHAT NOW?

Many fear that Harajuku fashion is now dead. Shoichi Aoki, Founder of popular Harajuku fashion magazine FRUiTS, said, "there are no more cool kids to photograph" upon the magazine's closure in 2017.

Aoki is not alone in this opinion, with many articles and forms online lamenting the death of Harajuku as less and less of the subcultures featured in this magazine are being seen on the streets. Several contributing factors could cause this: the Sunday beloved pedestrian streets closed in 1998 and boutiques catering to subculture fashion closed, and fast fashion shops took their place.

Subcultures themselves are also flippant in nature, coming and going with passing trends and participants ageing out and living "normal" lives.

So is Harajuku fashion really dead? My answer is no. Harajuku is still a bustling youth hotspot, and where there is youth, new youth cultures are being created.

Though we can look through a nostalgic lens to forgotten Harajuku subcultures and mourn them fading into obscurity, we must also look to the future in anticipation at what subsequent subcultures Harajuku has to offer.



HARAJUKU IS NOT DEAD; IT'S RE-INVENTING

