

FRUiTS

TOKYO STREET STYLE **PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHOICHI AOKI**

From 21 December 2002



Photograph by Shoichi Aoki, *FRUiTS*, April 2000.

Pink hair, kimono and platform shoes — discover fantastic fashion from the streets of Tokyo. Shoichi Aoki's extraordinary photographs chronicle a 'fashion revolution in Tokyo's suburbs' from the mid 1990s to now. They capture the colour and energy of a radical subculture which inspires fashion designers worldwide. This exhibition presents a vibrant collection of photographs and clothing from the amazing world celebrated in Shoichi Aoki's magazine *FRUiTS*.

FRUiTS Tokyo street style is exhibited in the Asian Gallery, which is dedicated to a program of exhibitions about Asian cultures both historical and contemporary.

These notes outline the content of the exhibition and give background information about Shoichi Aoki and *FRUiTS*. Also included is a map of Harajuku, not seen in the exhibition, and projects aimed at students from Stage 1 to tertiary level. These projects may be photocopied for classroom use or restructured to suit individual classes or levels. For a preview of the exhibition, visit the exhibition website www.phm.gov.au/exhibits/exib_new/fruits/.

Curriculum links

FRUiTS: Tokyo street style links directly to the following curriculum outcomes but is expected to be popular with students of all ages and interests. With clear and simple themes, there is great opportunity for expansion through hands-on activities, creative responses and, for older students, projects and research relating to fashion, society and culture, photography and design.

>> Primary

- Human Society and Its Environment
- Creative Arts
- LOTE — Japanese language studies

>> Secondary

- Society and Culture
- Design and Technology
- Textile Design
- LOTE — Japanese language studies

>> Tertiary

- Fashion
- Society and Culture
- Design
- Asian studies
- Photography
- Japanese Language and Culture



Drawing by Maki, a *FRUiTS* reader, published in *FRUiTS* December 2000.

About the exhibition

In addition to over 70 photographs by Shoichi Aoki, the exhibition includes a variety of objects. Moving through the exhibition in a clockwise direction you will see:

- examples of Shoichi Aoki's *FRUiTS* magazine
- clothing by Japanese labels Takuya Angel and Baby, the stars shine bright
- examples of Shoichi Aoki's *STREET* magazine
- Tokyo street-style outfits worn by people featured in *FRUiTS* magazine
- clothing and accessories by designers popular in Harajuku: Vivienne Westwood, Martin Margiela, 20471120 and Christopher Nemeth
- Japanese designer label T-shirts
- a limited-edition Astro Boy doll by Ohya.

Two short videos in the exhibition explore different aspects of Tokyo street style. One includes a brief interview with Shoichi Aoki. A CD-ROM allows you to flick through the pages of several issues of *FRUiTS* magazine.

Also on display outside the exhibition are a selection of tin toys made in Japan between 1950 and 1969.

FRUITS: TOKYO STREET STYLE

Shoichi Aoki's photographs document a revolutionary Japanese fashion movement that emerged on the streets of Harajuku, Tokyo, in the mid 1990s. Unlike most fashion movements it was led not by designers but by young people, wearing an extreme mix of traditional Japanese dress, handmade and secondhand clothing, and designer fashion.

In June 1997 Shoichi Aoki established a monthly magazine, which he still publishes, to 'report on the cutting edge of youth fashion' in Harajuku. He named the magazine *FRUITS* to reflect the colour and freshness of the movement. The photographs in this exhibition were taken between 1997 and 2002 and were originally published in *FRUITS*.



FRUITS issue 43, December 2000.

Here 'fashion' is more about the art of 'putting things on' than about the art of making clothes.

Shoichi Aoki

SHOICHI AOKI

Shoichi Aoki is photographer, editor and publisher of *FRUITS*. Born in Tokyo in 1955, he worked as a computer programmer in the 1970s before leaving Japan for Europe, determined never to take another company job. After returning to Tokyo, Shoichi Aoki and Noriko Kojima started the magazine *STREET*. Launched in 1985, *STREET* introduced European avant-garde street fashion to Japan and is still in publication.

Shoichi Aoki believes that fashion is an important form of communication; he is interested in the ways people express themselves through dress, rather than the individual garments they wear. For most of the photographs in *FRUITS* he has recorded the subject's name and age, as well as a short description of their outfit, current obsessions and 'point of fashion' or motivations.



Shoichi Aoki, 2002.

Fashion tends to be seen as a lower form of art. But in fact, in the beginning when people started to adorn the body or paint on the body wasn't fashion, more than its functionality, born to express the difference between the self and others as a form of identification?

If we think that consciousness of the difference between ourself and others marks the beginning of humanity, then fashion is probably the first art form to which humans gave birth. This made me interested in fashion. Here 'fashion' is more about the art of 'putting things on' than about the art of making clothes.

Shoichi Aoki

FRUITS STYLES

The diverse styles in *FRUITS* are continually evolving and often unique. Some popular looks are *wamono*, a mix of Japanese and western styles; *cyber*, a 'futuristic' combination of bright colours and plastics; *decora*, in which toys and plastic jewellery are worn so that their clinking sound adds a 'musical' dimension to the outfit; and punk.

Clothing based on cartoon characters such as Sailor Moon is also fashionable. Called *cosplay* (costume play) the style refers not only to dressing as a specific character but also as a generic 'type', for example a waitress or nurse. Overtly cute or *kawaii* outfits, most often in shades of pink, have a strong presence in Harajuku as do frilly doll-like 'Lolita' looks. 'Elegant Gothic Lolita', a blacker version of Lolita style, is inspired by the elaborate outfits of Japanese 'visual rock' bands. Rap, hip hop and skate styles are also popular.



Top to bottom: Lolita, cyber and *decora* styles. Photographs by Shoichi Aoki from *FRUITS* May 1998, June 1999, September 2001.

FASHION IN JAPAN

Elaborate clothing, including the exaggerated beauty of geisha dress and the complexity of samurai armour, has a long history in Japan. Pattern, colour and layers of garments were used to indicate wealth and social status. Western clothing was introduced in the Meiji period (1868–1912) and has been prevalent since World War II.

According to Shoichi Aoki “the average Japanese person’s perception of their own traditional kimono culture was of an avant-garde and unconventional medium — adventurous, bright and colourful ... Western modes of dressing seemed, by contrast, drab and limiting.”*

In the 1970s and 80s designers Issey Miyake, Rei Kawakubo (Comme des Garçons) and Yohji Yamamoto created an international fashion sensation with innovative garments that drew on Japanese and western traditions. When Harajuku street style emerged in the mid 1990s one of its extraordinary features was the combination of traditional dress — *kimono*, *obi* sashes and *geta* sandals — with designer fashion and alternative streetwear such as punk.

* Shoichi Aoki, *FRUITS*, Phaidon Press, 2001



Ryuko was photographed by Shoichi Aoki for *FRUITS*, April 1998, wearing a handmade skirt, shoes by Yohji Yamamoto and a bag by Issey Miyake.

Because western clothing has a short history in Japan, there is a strong tendency for people to dress in the same style as each other. Essentially this tendency has not changed. In Japan, having a different style is a kind of risk. Even the designer brand boom of the 1980s did not change that. People only took suggestions from the designers — in the same manner as everyone else.

Therefore the fashion movement that came about in Harajuku was a revolution. This kind of fashion was not ‘suggested’ by designers, but rather, the fashion of the young inspired the designers. On the streets of Harajuku, there was no risk in having a different style. In fact it was considered worthwhile.

Shoichi Aoki

HARAJUKU

Harajuku is situated between two of Tokyo's major commercial centres, Shibuya and Shinjuku. The opening of the Meiji Jingu Shrine in the 1920s first brought visitors to Harajuku, but it was the 1964 Tokyo Olympics that transformed the quiet residential area. The excitement surrounding the games attracted young people to Harajuku, and it is still one of Tokyo's most vibrant and fashionable areas.

Harajuku was the birthplace of several crazes including *takenoko-zoku* — a 1970s fad where brightly dressed people danced to recorded music on the side of the road — and similarly *rock 'n' roller-zoku* and *band-zoku*. The area's Elvis Presley impersonators are infamous. Between 1977 and 1998 a section of road in Harajuku was closed to traffic on Sundays, creating *Hokoten* or 'pedestrian paradise'.



Dancing Elvises in Harajuku.

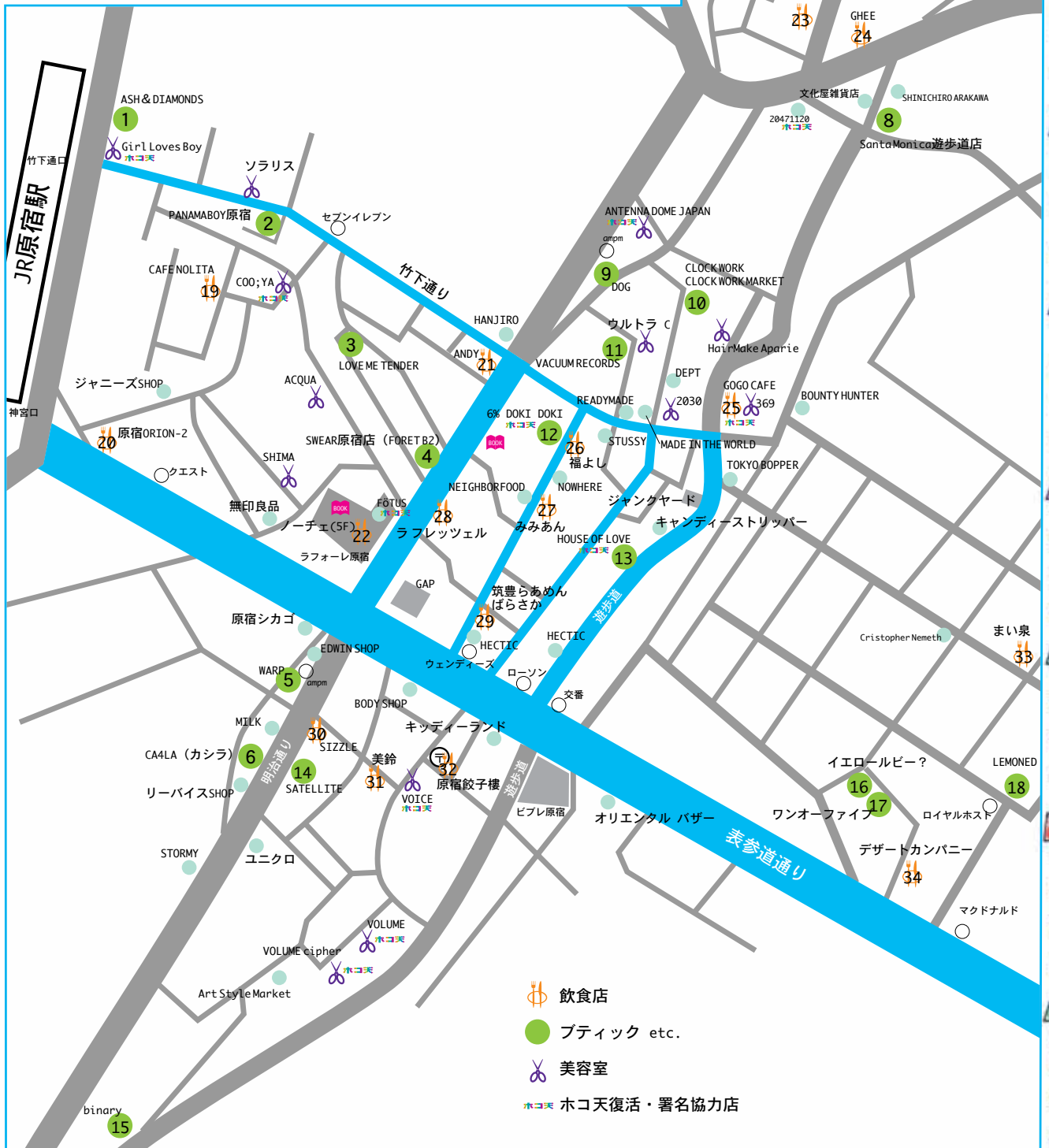
Hokoten

One of the primary reasons this kind of youth culture came out of Harajuku was Hokoten ('pedestrian paradise'). Hokoten happened every Sunday when one kilometre of Harajuku's main road was blocked to cars. This section of road became a public square. The idea of Hokoten is precious because the concept of a public square did not exist in Japan. Many young people dressed in their finery and gathered there. This kind of fashion spread to other days in Harajuku and influenced fashion nationwide.

Hokoten was terminated in 1998 and Harajuku gradually returned to its original state. The momentary avant-garde and creative fashion has mostly disappeared. The photos introduced here are the precious documentation of the fashion movement. Still, publication of FRUITS continues ... I am looking forward to the same kind of explosion happening again.

Shoichi Aoki

原宿マップ



Harajuku map from FRUITS, May 2000.

Student projects and activities

1. FRUITty fashion paper dolls page 10–11

Recommended: early stage 1 — stage 3

Type: individual activity

Instructions

1. Photocopy pages 10–11 for each student.
2. Students draw their own face on the paper doll.
3. Students decorate and/or colour-in clothing, hair and shoes.
4. Students cut-out paper doll and all accessories.

Notes

As younger students will require assistance with cutting, a small selection of clothing and accessories is advised.

160 gsm paper is recommended as it is durable but can still be used in a regular photocopier. However regular copy paper may still be used.

2. Homemade Harajuku style

Recommended: stages 1–6

Type: class or group project

Instructions

Part 1

1. Class discussion: what is fashion?
2. Class discussion: what does Shoichi Aoki think fashion is?
“Fashion” is more about the art of “putting things on” than about the art of making clothes’. Shoichi Aoki
For example, you may have a simple T-shirt, pair of pants, jacket and shoes. If you add a wild hairstyle, leg-warmers and accessories, you suddenly have a Tokyo ‘street style’ look.

Part 2

3. Gather and prepare scraps of fabric, ribbon etc.
4. Students bring a selection of own clothing from home.

5. Students dress up using own clothing and extra fabric etc to create a ‘street style’ look.

Part 3 (optional)

6. Photograph each student and hang photos on wall to create the class’s own ‘street style’ exhibition.
7. Students write own labels with the following information: name, age and style (or influences).

Notes

For older students the project can be extended in the following ways:

Part 1: in groups, students research a style of fashion and how that ‘look’ evolved.

Part 2: students collect recycled materials in order to create their own ‘street style’ fashion.

Part 3: students photograph each other either in the school setting or local street setting to produce their own exhibition.

3. Fresh FRUITS competition

Open to: design students studying fashion, design or photography at secondary school or tertiary level

Type: individual or group project

Final entry date: Friday 20 June 2003

Students create their own ‘street style’ look and photograph themselves in a street setting.

Finalists will be displayed at the Powerhouse Museum.

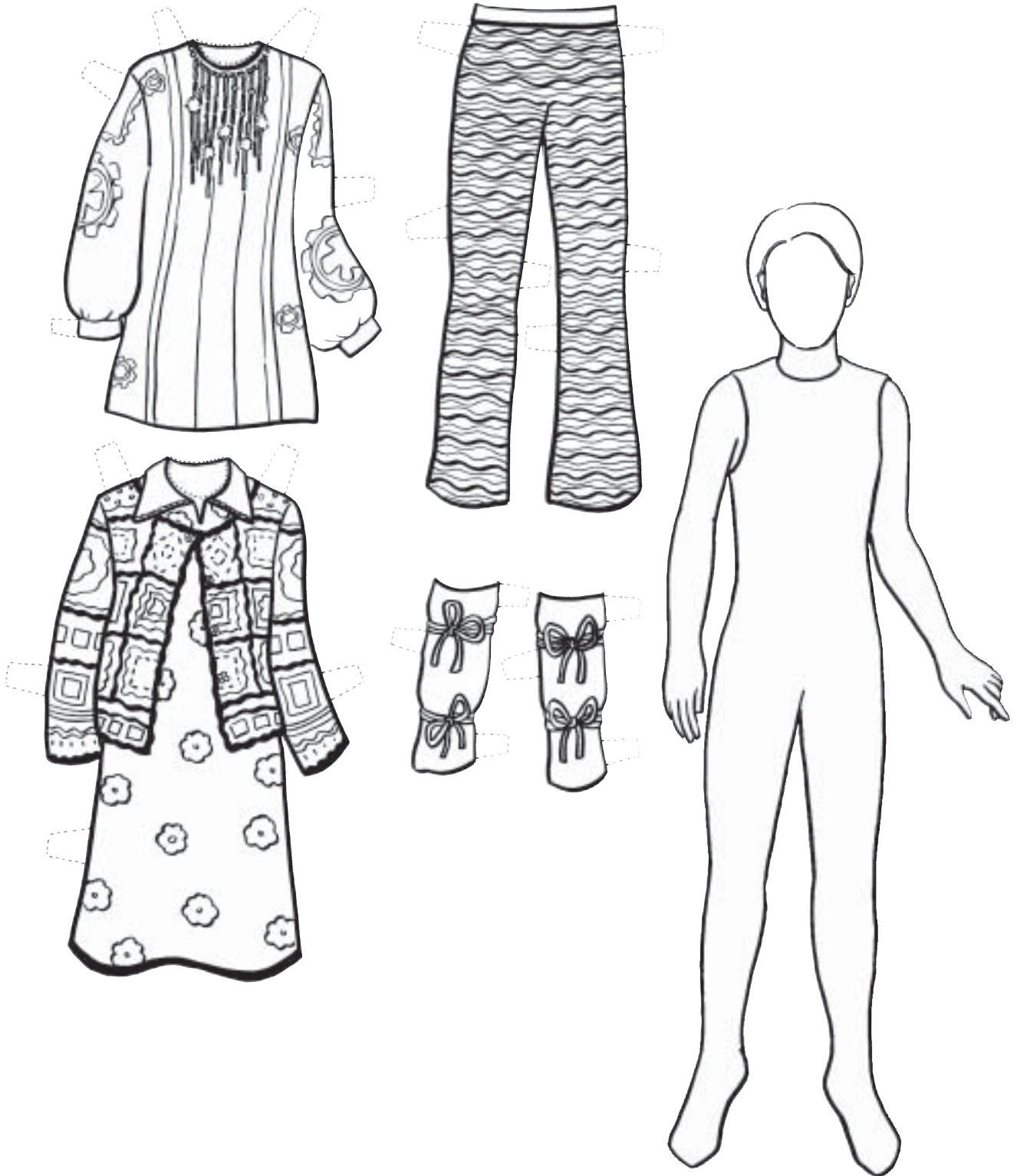
For full details contact:

Rita Bila

Ph: (02) 9217 0380

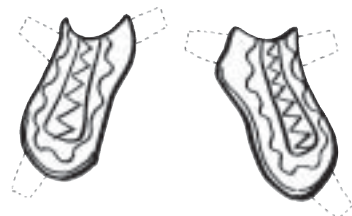
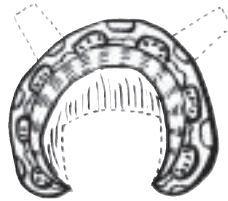
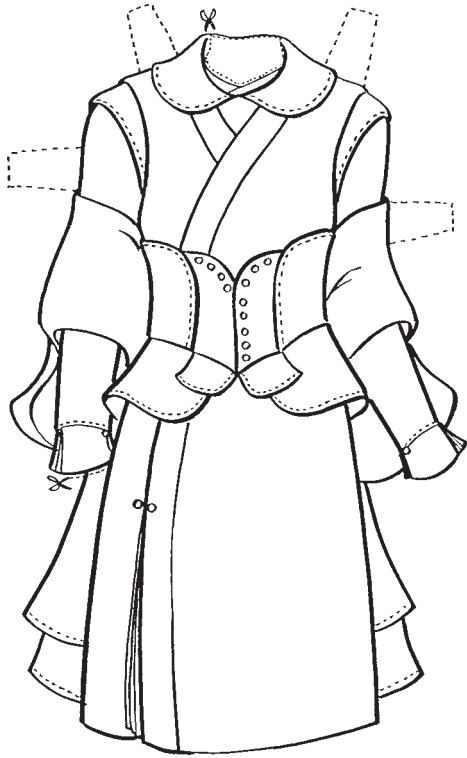
Email: ritab@phm.gov.au

FRUITty fashion paper dolls



FRUITS

TOKYO STREET STYLE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHOICHI AOKI



Further reading and resources

>> Books

Aoki, Shoichi, *FRUITS*, Phaidon, New York, 2001

Baudot, Francois, *Yohji Yamamoto*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1997

Benaim, Laurence, *Issey Miyake*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1997

Buckley, Sandra (ed), *Encyclopedia of contemporary Japanese culture*, Routledge, London and New York

Bullis, Douglas, *Fashion Asia*, Thames and Hudson, New York, 2000

Grand, France, *Comme des Garçons*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1998

Lunn, Stephen, 'Made in Japan', *Australian Magazine*, 16–17 March 2002

Takamura, Zenshu, *Roots of street style*, Books Nippan, Tokyo, 1996

Teunissen, José, *Made in Japan*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 2001

Wilcox, Claire, *Radical fashion*, Harry N Abrams, London, 2001

>> Internet

About the exhibition

- www.phm.gov.au/exhibits/exib_new/fruits/

About FRUITS

- <http://www.fruits-mg.com/pc/english/e/index.html>
- <http://www.slucky.net/lolita/giantrobot.html> (interview with Aoki)

About Harajuku style

- http://www.rebeccamead.com/2002/2002_03_18_art_shopping.htm
- <http://www.insite-tokyo.com/column/douglas/index8.html>
- www.morbidoutlook.com/fashion/articles/2002_07_gothlolita.html

About the designers featured in the exhibition

- <http://www.historyofcostume.com/historyofashion/margiela.html>
- <http://www.babyssb.co.jp>
- www.virtualrunway.com
- www.isseymiyake.com
- www.yohjiyamamoto.co.jp
- <http://www.superlovers.co.jp/english/index.html>
- <http://ip.tosp.co.jp/i.asp?i=ihpTA> (Takuya Angel, in Japanese)
- <http://ja.tezuka.co.jp/ohya/> (Ohya, in Japanese)

Please note

These websites were available and suitable at the time of publication. We advise that teachers should check sites before recommending them to students.

For more information on the exhibition *FRUITS: Toyko street style, photographs by Shoichi Aoki*, visit the Powerhouse Museum's website <http://www.phm.gov.au>

For more information about education support or your booking, contact Education and Visitor Services at the Powerhouse Museum:
Telephone — (02) 9217 0222
Fax — (02) 9217 0441
Email — edserv@phm.gov.au