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Fruits



Synopsis

This is a collection of 45 Tokyo street fashion portraits from Japan's premier fanzine. Fruits was established in 1994, by photographer Shoich Aoki, initially as a project to document the growing explosion in street fashion within the suburbs of Tokyo. The magazine has since grown to cult status and is now avidly followed by thousands of Japanese teenagers who also use the magazine as an opportunity to check out the latest styles and trends. The average age of the kids featured in the magazine is between 12 and 18 years and the clothes they wear are a mixture of high fashion - Vivienne Westwood is a keen favourite - and home-made ensembles which, when combined, create a novel, if not hysterical, effect.

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Customer Reviews

I love the work by my fellow photographer Shoichi Aoki. Like me, he shoots the cool trendsetters on the streets of Tokyo. Since he started his magazine FRUITS in the mid-90s he has taken countless of photographs of the coolest street fashion that the world has seen so far. The best of these shots are compiled in this book. Aoki first started documenting street fashion in London in the mid 80's. He has told me that he taught himself how to take photographs from books. At the time Japanese fashion wasn't free at all. Inspired by the free street fashion of London the young Aoki decided he wanted to do something about Japanese staleness. In the early to mid 90's things were beginning to change in Japan. The Harajuku area in Tokyo had its main thoroughfare closed off on Sundays and this was attracting more and more bands and show offs. The 'pedestrian heaven' (hokoten) as it

was called became a laboratory and incubation center for new trends in music and fashion."In Japan," Aoki told me recently, "everybody had always dressed the same. Whatever was popular was worn by everyone. Everybody would wear Comme des Garçons or Ivy or whatever brand was 'in'. But suddenly Harajuku became free. People started to feel that it was cool to coordinate your own clothes. Harajuku fashion became really interesting and fun." He recalls: "You had this small group of trendsetters, perhaps 10 to 20 people. Whenever they came up with something new, others would soon imitate them. But these imitators weren't as cool as the original trendsetters so the trendsetters didn't want to be identified with them." "To differentiate themselves again they came up with new things. It just escalated.

After visiting Japan last year and having spent most of my time in Harajuku (where most of these pix were taken)--all i can say is this book truly captures how young Japanese teens dress.

Hypercolored clothing, crazy extreme mismatching, a gaggle of plastic accessories, technotoys and unnatural hair color is standard-- it's anime character meets candyraver meets barbie in Super Mario land. You may think these teens are the few "extreme" dressers in their society, but you're wrong. I would estimate that 80% of teens in Japan's metro areas dress this way, if not more extreme. In fact, the teens in Fruits are a bit *subtle* compared to what is going on in Japanese fashion today. It's not uncommon to see girls in elaborate french maid outfits with metallic makeup walking out of the train station. Walking everywhere you see these hello kitty psycho sweethearts, riddled with fake blonde hair, white lipstick, and mile-high op-art platforms. I've turned a corner and seen gangs of japanese guys and girls looking like Bob Marley and Lauryn Hill, replete with fake black tan, dreads, ghetto fabulous hip hop gear and all. Scrupulous attention is paid to every part of the body. Only about 5% of Japanese girls i observed did NOT wear some kinda of intricate rainbow patterned/bejeweled nail art. And the best part is seeing all these vividly dressed youths swarming all around you in hordes. Fruits, although on target for year 2001, is almost out of style now, given that Japanese fashion trends change every minute. If you can't get enough of Fruits, then you really need to take a trip to Japan (Tokyo) which I stress is vital for anyone in the fashion, arts, or other trend industry.

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