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June 8, 2020

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LIFESTYLE / Fashion

Exploring the Loli-goth look

By Tracey Bond (Stuff.co.nz)

Updated: 2007-08-16 15:08



Culture clash: A new exhibit at Auckland Museum will focus on the development of 'Lolita' street fashion in Japan and how it has influenced New Zealand.

A new exhibition at Auckland Museum will give those into fashion and Japanese subculture a chance to find out more about the origins of the street fashion phenomenon Lolita - a look that has heavily influenced New Zealand youth.

The Gothic Lolita, or Loli-Goth, style is inspired by the Rococo, Romantic and Victorian periods.

The so-called 'Loli-Goth' look began in the seventies, but it didn't start getting media attention until the late nineties, when Japan's economic downturn had experts concluding that it was connected to a longing for childhood security.

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Those who consider themselves part of the culture are quick to point out it has nothing today with the character in Vladimir Nabokov's novel, noting that they're looking 'cute' and 'elegant' rather than overtly sexual.

The Gothic Lolita, or Loli-Goth, style is inspired by the Rococo, Romantic and Victorian periods.

It is based on a particular aspect of the Gothic, represented by historical mourning garb, maidservants' wear, children's dresses, and dolls' clothes.

Bloomers, petticoats, pinafores, ribbons, ruffles, bonnets, lace headdresses, parasols, and Mary Jane shoes are all worn by Loli-goths to create a doll-like appearance.

The 'Loli-pop' exhibition at Auckland Museum reflects the strong association of the Loli-Goth with the doll, with a selection from Hardy Bernal's personal collection of Japanese Lolita dolls.

Also on show are five outfits designed by AUT University Fashion staff members, Angie Finn, Yvonne Stewart, Lize Niemczyk, Gabriella Trussardi, Carmel Donnelly and Kathryn Hardy Bernal, which demonstrate the designers' own take on Gothic and Lolita, inspired by Japanese street style.

The exhibition opens September the 15th and will run until November the 18th in the Tamaki Gallery, Auckland Museum.

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