

# Hyperfeminine Harajuku: Exploring Queer KAWAII Practices in a Tokyo Subcultural District

Megan Rose

Postdoctoral Researcher, Vitalities Lab, University of New South Wales, Sydney  
Visiting Scholar, Interfaculty Initiative for Information Studies at the University of Tokyo

Wednesday, 21 May 2025 (Hybrid)

15:30–17:00

Room 8015

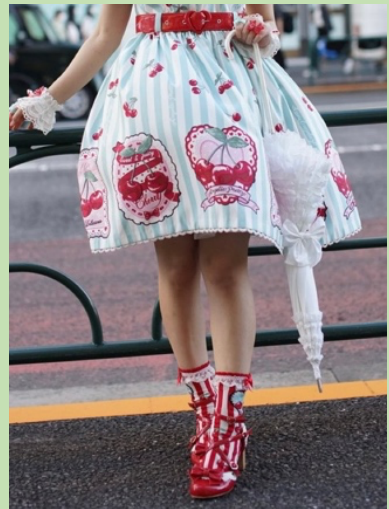
Kanagawa University, Minatomirai Campus

**Abstract:** In this talk I explore the creative practices of Harajuku's subcultures. Harajuku is a town in Tokyo that is a safe space for women, men and gender diverse people as early as the 1970s. Over recent decades, numerous KAWAII fashion subcultures have emerged in this district, each with their own specific conventions, aesthetics, purposes and intents including lolita fashion, *decora* fashion, *yume kawaii*, fairy *kei*, *menhera*. KAWAII is a significant cultural site for marginalized people to find collective safety and creatively work through their experiences and find a place of belonging. In the increasingly fractured social landscape of Tokyo, an eclectic group of artists, photographers, musicians, and designers come together in a constellation of spectacular bodies to play with KAWAII fashion. Their efforts are supported by underground queer feminist movements of Tokyo that protest, disrupt, and agitate through art, talk, and zine collectives in a blaze of shimmering hot pink.



Photos by @tomoike2525 (on X)

The talk considers the differing ways KAWAII is queered by these groups as an expression of dis/affection, in/dependence and a/sexuality. Queering KAWAII refers to a process of estrangement and de-familiarisation of cuteness as a form of hyperfemininity. As part of global queer femme cultures, hyperfemininity contaminates gender binaries, and exaggerates and pushes the parameters of patriarchal femininity as a form of disruption, experimentation, and reflection. Centred on the affective stories, fashion objects and garments and texts that KAWAII fashion practitioners create, this talk explores the social motivations, politics and ideologies of this subcultural movement. The talk traverses themes of marginality, vulnerability, and women and gender diverse people's defiance in facing structural sexism, sexual violence, queerphobia, and ableism.



## To Attend Online (Zoom):

Access the Zoom Meeting via the following Meeting ID and Passcode. **Preregistration is NOT required to attend via Zoom.**

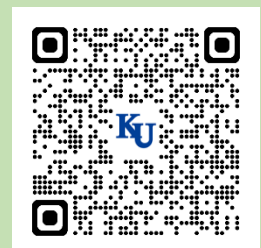
Meeting ID: 985 5806 9693 Passcode: KUMMC

## To Attend in Person:

**Preregistration via the adjacent QR code at least a day in advance** for those coming in person from outside the KU community is greatly appreciated. If you are coming from off campus, **please also register as a Guest at the Information counter** near the entrance before coming up to the room.

ご来場の方：神奈川大学関係者は事前登録不要です。学外の方は前日までに QR コードにて事前登録をお願いします。当日は 1F の Information カウンターで Guest 登録を済ませてから、部屋までお越しください。Zoom でのご参加は事前登録不要です。当日は上記の Zoom ミーティング ID とパスコードでログインしてください。

**Inquiries ・ お問い合わせ:** James Welker [jrwelker@kanagawa-u.ac.jp](mailto:jrwelker@kanagawa-u.ac.jp)



Rose, Preregistration