

# ERIC NAUMANN

Patrick Leonard



*Untitled.* Eric Naumann, 2011. 4x5 colour film and presented as 20in x 24in (50.8cm x 61cm) C-prints.

A fascination with trends in Asian sartorial culture led Erik Naumann to investigate the transplantation of a particular style into unorthodox environment. In 2009 Naumann began a series of studio shots documenting the Rainbow Team, a web-based collective of 16- to 20-year-old Québec girls who dress in the elaborate style of Japanese *Decora* street fashion. The adoption of two unique styles—the anti-sexual and Victorian Gothic Lolita, and the rave-like infantilizing Fruits—by a foreign ethnic entity assumed new shape when Naumann moved his subjects out of the studio and into the drab streets of Montreal's Verdun borough.

The photographs position Reiko, Gio and Kami (the girls' adopted Rainbow team names) at a metro station, elaborating upon the contrast between their clothes and environments. The *Decora* style emerged in response to repressive culture norms and post-war cultural emasculation, and similarly these images reflect the girl's need to expand their personalities and intellectual realms through radical modes of dress. While the girls do not attend school or see each other on a routine basis, their mutual affinity is maintained through an Internet forum that allows them to project a group identity. These photographs document a rare yet increasingly visible subculture, one that reflects globalization through internet culture and demographic changes in Canada itself. These images question the nature of affinity and its communication through self-image, and the mannerisms of disparate, global communities in a world of increasingly digitized lives.

Erik Naumann is a Toronto-raised Bachelor of Fine Arts student at Concordia University. His work has been exhibited in Concordia's VAV Gallery and published in *JPG* and *En Route* magazines. Naumann is one of the winners of the Magenta Flash Forward 2011 emerging photographers competition. A freelance commercial and fashion photographer, he has self-published a magazine *Couple Clothing Beijing*, depicting couple clothing culture in China.