

10. WHERE TO ROCK AND RAMEN

Japanese culture is exploding across Europe, with French manga (oui,oui) the latest break-out craze, says Sarah Neish

> **TIME WAS WHEN** you could choose your friends by whether they read *The Beano* or *The Dandy*, but today's comic fans are just as likely to be devouring iconic manga hit *Astro Boy* while sipping matcha tea and wearing a kimono.

Europe is on the cusp of a cultural revolution with a distinctly Far Eastern flavour. From packed ramen joints and skyrocketing sales of Japanese whisky threatening a global shortage to the Pokémon Go juggernaut, it's clear that J-Culture, as it's known, has become big business. And France is leading the charge.

Last year, an unprecedented 12.4m manga comics were sold on French soil, music to the ears of Manga Café

(mangacafe.fr) in Paris, and the growing legion of similar venues, where fans can binge-read more than 12,000 comics, guzzle unlimited drinks and play Japanese arcade games for €3 per hour. "France is realising that manga isn't just for kids – in fact, it often features adult themes, like how to survive an earthquake or nuclear attack," says Tokyo-based Justin Egli, who blogs on J-Culture at Ikimasho.net.

This fascination has also birthed a new wave of homegrown talent, who, according to Laurent Duvault, of publishing group Média Participations, have "ingested manga and made something completely new from it."

Take Emmanuel Nhieu, who launched his *Burning Tattoo* series last year. "I don't just get my inspiration from Japan," he



COOL RULES

11. HOW TO BLUFF YOUR WAY THROUGH EARLY 2017

Want to start the new year on top of all the latest trends? Don't worry – we've got you totally covered...

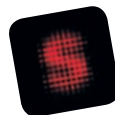


Vans are the new Stan Smiths

What? Black and white checked vans.

As seen On Frank Ocean at the White House, countless FROW celebs and Mr Porter shoe buyer David Morris – nuff said.

Why? There's nothing you can't wear them with, whether it's a pair of rolled-up jeans, a pencil skirt or suit.



Shudder is the new Netflix

What? Horror-only streaming service.

As seen From behind the sofa.

Why? More than 200 chilling choices, 80% of which you can't stream from anywhere else. "Netflix is like the Walmart and we're the boutique," says co-curator Colin Geddes.





says. "But from TV, video games and films from Western culture, like those by George Romero and Eli Roth."

Unsurprisingly, big commercial players have leapt on board too. Amazon has remodelled its latest Kindle Paperwhite to make reading manga easier on the device – pages now turn 33% faster to suit the cartoon format. Then there's Eureka Entertainment who, following a battle to acquire the licensing rights from Sony, finally re-release the anime classic *Metropolis*, by Osamu Tezuka – the 'Godfather of Manga' – to a European audience this month. "The influence this film has had on the visual arts over the past 15 years is immense and now seems the

A page from *Burning Tattoo* manga comic-book series

perfect time to celebrate it," says producer Jon Robertson.

So what's the big draw? "Japan is seen as exotic – the neon, the food, the skyscrapers, the megacities. It's such a fast-paced society, it just draws you in," explains Egli. It's a view shared by the 50,000-plus visitors to London's annual HYPER JAPAN event (hyperjapan.co.uk). With its *kawaii* (cute) fashion stalls, live Japanese pop music and flowing sake cocktails, it could easily be a buzzing Tokyo night market, but for its East End location.

The next big J-Culture trend? "Robot pets," says Egli. "I'm kidding, but, actually, in Japan, the more ludicrous the idea, the more likely it is to take off..."



Pastry is the new Prada



What? Prada for under €3.

As seen In the new, Prada-owned Pasticceria Marchesi in Milan's Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II.

Why? Tucking into handmade pastries among frescoes? Now that's the kind of high fashion we can stomach.



Totes are the new tattoos



What? Forget skin, this year's coolest ink will be found on accessories.

As seen In British tattoo artist Saira Hunjan's collaboration with Tods' bags. "It's another way to celebrate the art."

Why? Street cred minus the pain or permanence? Sold.

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