

GIRL MEETS MANGA **A Manga Biography from Tokyo (1985–1992)**

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MAK – Press and PR

presse@MAK.at

Press Release

Vienna, 1.4.2025

With the exhibition *GIRL MEETS MANGA*, the MAK is exploring the special role played by manga in young women's search for identity. Since the mid-20th century manga—Japanese comics—have become a significant phenomenon in contemporary Japanese culture and their importance is growing all over the world. Mio Wakita-Elis, Curator of the MAK Asia Collection, has shared her own personal biography and perspectives in this show that is on display in the MAK Works on Paper Room. She grants insights into her life as a teenage girl in the metropolitan area of Tokyo in the 1980s and early 1990s—a time when manga reached the height of their popularity and had a significant influence on the lives of many young people.

In addition to the personal story of Mio Wakita-Elis, the exhibition shines a spotlight on manga's status in Japanese society at that time. Manga were far more than mere entertainment—they were part of everyday life and reflected the developments in postmodern Japanese society. With the aid of select examples like *The Rose of Versailles*, a series by the famous manga author and illustrator IKEDA Riyoko, the show demonstrates the connections between manga and important social issues like feminism, consumerism, and globalization. It shows how these comics intervened in social debates and had an impact on people's consciousness.

Despite a sense of freedom and limitless opportunities, young girls at this time were often stuck between the conflicting priorities of traditional gender roles and progress. Manga offered them a sense of direction and support. With their spellbinding stories and inspiring protagonists, they were inspiring, thought-provoking, and a call to resist. In this way manga provided valuable guidelines or alternatives that gave specific impulses for the girls' personality development.

A broad selection of over ten manga series is included in the exhibition. Five thematic chapters—Pop Culture or Dumbing Down of the Masses? Manga in Japan (1985–1992), Crossing Gender 1: Manga Genres, Crossing Gender 2: Being a Girl, Beyond the Ordinary: Personal Horizons and Anti-Cutie—

illustrate the close connection between Japanese comics and social issues and the real-life concerns of their readers. In addition to the manga themselves, the display features newspaper articles, visual and audio media, and everyday objects that demonstrate manga's role in daily life at the time.

The exhibition is based on a two-tier narrative concept: on the one hand, there are classic exhibition texts, on the other personal comments and anecdotes. This makes it possible for visitors to experience this piece of history both from a cultural and sociohistorical (macrohistorical) perspective and from a personal (microhistorical) point of view.

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The epilogue ties this history in with our globalized present: in short audio recordings, Viennese women describe how manga have had an impact on their own biographies. Visitors will also be able to browse various manga volumes in a dedicated reading corner.

With this unique approach and a Japanese perspective, the exhibition *GIRL MEETS MANGA* proves that manga are much more than mere entertainment. They are a fictitious avenue for experimenting with and finding one's identity and were an important companion for teens and young adults in the late 20th century far beyond the borders of Japan.

Press photos are available for download at [MAK.at/en/press](https://mak.at/en/press).



Press Conference

Tuesday, 1.4.2025, 10 am

Opening

Tuesday, 1.4.2025, 7 pm

Free admission for the exhibition opening

Exhibition Venue

MAK Works on Paper Room

MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna

Exhibition Dates

2.4.–17.8.2025

Opening Hours

Tue 10 am–9 pm, Wed to Sun 10 am–6 pm

Curator

Mio Wakita-Elis, Curator, MAK Asia Collection

Supporting Program

Details at [MAK.at/en](https://mak.at/en)

MAK Admission

€ 16.50/15.50*; reduced € 13.50/12.50*; every Tuesday 6–9 pm:
admission € 8/7.50*

Free admission for children and teens under 19

* Online ticket price

MAK Press and PR

Judith Anna Schwarz-Jungmann (Head)

T +43 1 71136-213, judith.schwarz-jungmann@MAK.at

Sandra Hell-Ghignone

T +43 1 71136-212, sandra.hell-ghignone@MAK.at

Yasmin Yazdian

T +43 1 71136-210, yasmin.yazdian@MAK.at

