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# **SOCIAL MISFITS: PORTRAITS OF JAPAN**

A photo series and collection of interviews exploring what it means to stand outside the norms of Japanese society. Japan is often described as a country of harmony, order, and tradition — yet within that structure are individuals who choose a different paths or choose to express themselves in ways that resist social norms.



## Luna

This first story introduces Luna, a young creative from Japan whose tattoos represent the phases of her life. Luna is photographed in Hommachi, Osaka's economic district, surrounded by a stream of white shirts. Her bare, tattooed arms stand in contrast, drawing glances from passersby.

Tattoos are gaining acceptance in Japan, particularly in urban areas and among younger generations, but a persistent societal stigma, often tied to their association with the Yakuza (Japanese organized crime), remains. While tattoos are becoming an increasingly common sight in cities like Tokyo, traditional establishments such as onsen (hot springs), swimming pools, and certain gyms still prohibit them or require they be covered out of respect for social norms.

We spoke to Luna about her life in Japan, her hopes for the future, and why she covers her tattoos at work.











## Junya

We spoke to Junya about his experience living in Japan, and how he uses dance as a release. This story introduces Junya, who spoke to us about his life in Japan and how dance has become both a release and a form of resistance. For him, dance is a way to surrender, to heal, and to push back against the conformity around him. In his words, it is a practice of vulnerability and connection.











## Maya

This story introduces Maya, who spoke to us about what drives her to learn new languages, live abroad and her goals for the future. While working in Japan she felt that she was living for society rather than for herself, and her time abroad introduced her to new people and experiences.







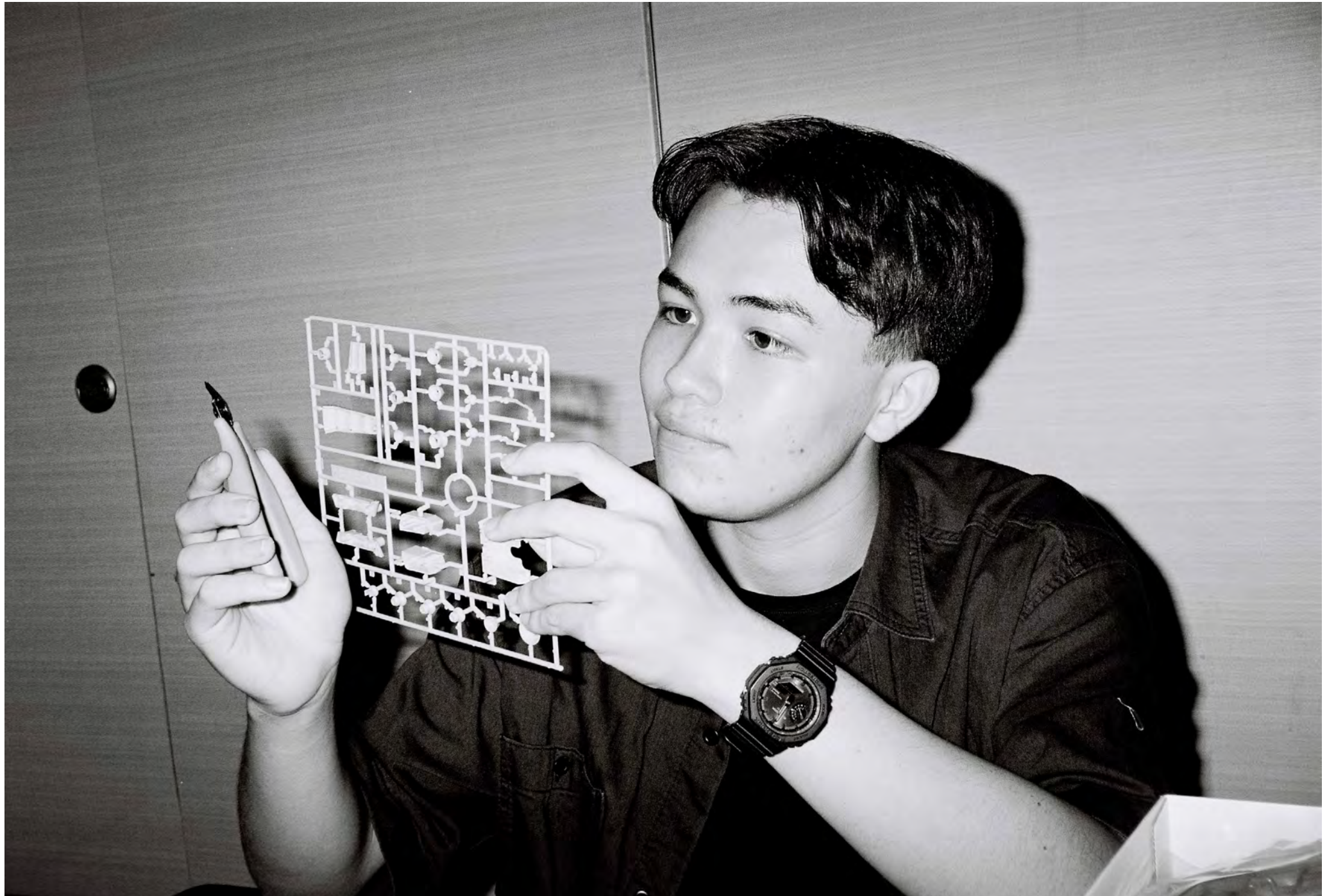


## Naoise

We spoke to Naoise about growing up in Yamanashi and living in Japan, and how model making has become a space for fun and self-expression. For him, building models is about customising, painting, and making something his own. He describes it as detailed, hands-on, and playful — a process that reflects his belief that “fun is life,” and that creativity is something to be enjoyed and lived with.









## Rina

We spoke to Rina about growing up in Japan and how she navigates a society shaped by rules, expectations, and constant activity. This story introduces Rina, who shared her thoughts on fitting in, overstimulation, and the tension between comfort and freedom. For her, music, language, and talking with others are simple but essential ways of staying connected and present.







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**THANK YOU**

**For any inquiries or to see an extended portfolio,  
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