



# Plastic Culture: How Japanese Toys Conquered the World

By Woodrow Phoenix

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Plastic toys based on Japanese comics, movies and TV shows from *Astro Boy*, *Godzilla* and *Gatchaman*, to *Power Rangers*, *Sailor Moon* and *Pokemon*, have had a powerful effect on the imaginations and the markets of the West, and have kick-started trends in design and pop culture that have crossed from Japan to the West and back East again.

Lavish full-color photographs of cult, limited-edition, and "designer" toys take us through the postwar period and right up into the present, with a fascinating look at the current vogue for "urban vinyl" and "art" toys. Extensively researched, the book includes interviews with the leading players in today's toy world, including long-established Japanese toymaking giants Kaiyodo and Sanrio, world-famous fine artists and producers of "art" toys Takashi Murakami and Yoshitomo Nara, and cult Hong Kong designers of "urban vinyl" toys Michael Lau and Eric So.

With its blend of incisive analysis and stylish photography, this is a book that will appeal to a wide range of readers: from those interested in the latest trends in contemporary art, to toy collectors young and old, and to anyone with an interest in Japan's influence on contemporary pop culture.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"This might be one of the better toy surveys around. Less hipster and more substantial, I think this might be the smartest book on toys." - iant Robot

#### From the Publisher

Welcome to the world of plastic culture. A world where toys have been freed from the playroom to run rampant across desktops and living spaces, galleries and fashion houses, design showrooms and furniture outlets. How did toys infiltrate the mainstream? Why has Japan had such a powerful effect on the imaginations and the markets of the West?

#### About the Author

WOODROW PHOENIX is an illustrator and designer based in London. He has published a number of comic books and strips, including "The Sumo Family," which appeared weekly in *The Independent on Sunday* in the U.K., and "The Liberty Cat," published in Japan by Kodansha in *Morning* magazine. His critical essays on comics have appeared in catalogs for exhibitions at the ICA in London, and at the University of Sussex.

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