



All photos by Stasia Matsumoto



INKIMONO

Emily Lovell speaks with Stasia Matsumoto about the art of kimono

Meet Stasia Matsumoto, a photographer and licensed kimono stylist based in Tokyo. Originally from Poland, Stasia moved to Japan 12 years ago and has since turned her passion for photography and kimono into INKIMONO – an authentic, educational kimono styling and photoshoot experience.

From wearing a vintage furisode for the first time, to completing a professional kimono course, Stasia takes us on her journey to establishing and growing INKIMONO. And if you're wondering what a furisode is, check out Stasia's Kimono 101 next issue, where you'll be introduced to different types of kimono and the accessories that accompany them!

We also get some insights into the INKIMONO experience; from personalised kimono selection and learning about the history and significance of kimono during the dressing process, to the shoot itself, where Stasia captures natural, timeless photos.

Can you tell us a bit about your journey into photography and kimono styling?

My journey into photography and kimono styling wasn't a straight path. Initially, my move to Japan was more of a trial; I was curious to experience life in this country, although I hadn't planned for this adventure to last 12 years!

Photography has always been a passion for me; in short, I exchanged pencil and paint for a camera as my main creative tool. After a few years in Japan, photography became more serious, transitioning from a hobby capturing Tokyo streets to receiving work offers from Kirin Australia and

GirlGaze, among others. My interest in kimono came later and started as a hobby, much like my journey into photography.

What first sparked your interest in kimono and how did this develop into INKIMONO?

In 2016, a Japanese friend asked if I would like to wear her furisode, which she had worn 40 years ago for her Seijinshiki (coming-of-age ceremony). Intrigued, I agreed, and she arranged a professional stylist and hairdresser for me. A photographer friend captured beautiful images of me that day, which remain a cherished memento. This experience opened my eyes to the world of kimono. The 40-year-old furisode looked remarkably beautiful and fresh, evoking a sense of elegance and uniqueness. This sparked a desire in me to learn more about kimono and how to wear it.

I enrolled in a school offering kimono dressing courses, starting with a trial lesson, and that marked the beginning of my journey. The intricate designs and their reflection of Japanese culture and history left a lasting impression on me. After completing the basic dressing course, I pursued a professional kimono course, eventually merging this knowledge with my photography skills. INKIMONO emerged as a creative venture, a platform where I could combine the timeless beauty of kimono with my photography to offer a unique, authentic, and educational kimono experience.

How do you incorporate what you learned in your professional kimono course into your photography shoots to give an authentic experience?

Completing a professional kimono course was pivotal in deepening my >>>



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>>> understanding of the intricate details, cultural nuances and etiquette associated with kimono, which I have integrated into my photography approach. This includes the selection of appropriate kimono styles based on the occasion, understanding the symbolism behind different patterns and colours, and ensuring that the overall presentation aligns with the cultural context.

I also incorporate proper kimono dressing techniques, taking care to showcase the correct way to wear and accessorise these garments, while making sure that each outfit is unique and personalised to my clients' wishes.

Take us through a typical photoshoot and what sort of experience people can expect.

An INKIMONO photoshoot is more than just striking poses in traditional attire. It begins with personalised kimono selection based on the client's preferences and occasion. This could range from traditional to modern or playful, and even specific historical eras. I provide insights into the types of kimono, their formality, seasonality, fabrics, and patterns.

Guiding clients through the dressing process, I share details about the kimono's history and significance. During the shoot, the aim is not only to capture images but emotions, creating a visual story that reflects the beauty and individuality of each person. I often express that I don't photograph kimono on the clients; rather, I capture the clients in a kimono in a natural way, and not as a cosplay.

An INKIMONO photoshoot is an authentic experience celebrating the

artistry, history, and cultural significance of kimono, allowing individuals to step into the enchanting world of Japanese tradition through timeless photographs.

Do you have any favourite types of kimono or colour palettes / patterns?

While choosing favourites is challenging, I find creating casual outfits most enjoyable. I lean towards muted colours and small geometric patterns. Casual kimono allows for pairing with modern items like boots and hats, expanding creative possibilities, which contributes to why they are my favourites.

And finally, what are your plans for INKIMONO for 2024?

I am excited about the continued growth and development of INKIMONO. Some new projects have already begun, such as the English kimono class. Starting small, I hope it grows into Japan's first English kimono school!

Additionally, I aim to organise more social gatherings for kimono enthusiasts, kimono exchange and sale events. Promoting kimono outside of Japan remains a focus, with plans for more kimono photoshoots in Europe. Combining European street aesthetics with kimono creates stunning results, and the creative possibilities are endless. I look forward to these endeavours and sharing the enchanting world of kimono and INKIMONO with an ever-growing audience!

You can follow INKIMONO online www.inkimono.com and @inkimono on Instagram. ●

