

FEBRUARY 2026/VOL 02

VISIONS

*Fashion,
Art, and
Identity*

Don't forget the blue paint.

**Josei Deserves Better:
Where Are Our
Stories?**

*What To
Watch
When the
World
Feels
Heavy*

Lily Ichijoin



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Editor's Note:

Holding Space for Love in Uncertain Times

Happy February, everyone! Welcome back to the second issue of **VISIONS**. This month, as I navigate a **season of love and unrest**, I invite you to pause, feel deeply, and reconnect through anime, fashion, and stories that celebrate diverse experiences and perspectives. February reminds us that **love takes many forms—not just romantic love, but also the love we give ourselves, our communities, and our passions**. In this issue, I explore romance anime, the quiet power of Josei, and must-watch series that highlight journeys of self-discovery, resilience, and connection.

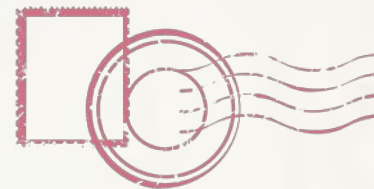
Living in today's political climate can make everyday life feel especially heavy. It's easy to go through the motions and act as if everything is "normal" when it isn't. Taking time to reduce anxiety, nurture your nervous system, and care for yourself isn't indulgent—it's essential.

I hope this issue offers a moment of comfort, inspiration, or guidance—a space to pause, reflect, and reconnect without ignoring the realities of the world around us. Wishing you a thoughtful, restorative Valentine's Day—and a gentle reminder that caring for yourself is, in its own way, **an act of love and courage**.

Note: This editorial is based on the character **Lily Ichijoin** from *Love Through A Prism*. All content and creative choices are inspired by the show or manga, the characters, and my own personal vision.



Meet Josei: Work, Love, and Everything In Between



What the heck is a Josei?”
Simply put, it’s a series aimed at adult women—basically Shojo’s cool older sister with way more life experience... and the total opposite of Seinen. Unfortunately, this genre suffers from a noticeable lack of series.

Themes include:
realistic romance, workplace drama, personal struggles, female empowerment, sexuality, friendships and periods of transition.

Target Audience:
created for an adult female audience, typically those over the age of eighteen.

The Romance We’re Still Not Animating

The lack of animated adult romance series targeted at women is hard to ignore. Ever finished a romance anime only to realize it only has one season, followed by barely any media attention afterward? I’m talking minimal volumes, limited merchandise, and—more often than not—a dedicated fan base with nowhere to go. This isn’t surprising when women are already **marginalized within the anime community**: an industry that largely caters to **male-centric interests**, leans heavily on sexualization, stereotypes, and fan service, and consistently overlooks female-driven content and markets.

While there are animated series targeted at adult audiences, a closer look by genre shows that Seinen continues to receive significantly more support and visibility from the animation industry. Josei, on the other hand, is often left with the scraps. In researching why this disparity exists, there isn’t one definitive answer; however, much of the reasoning points to a persistent belief that women are simply less inclined to watch anime. As a result, the market deems it **unprofitable** when compared to its counterpart. To make matters worse, many Josei series are frequently **misclassified** under other genres, creating further confusion and making them even harder for viewers to find.

You could argue that anime has evolved significantly over the past decade. Once considered **niche** or “**weird**,” it has since entered the mainstream and is now widely accepted as part of popular culture. This shift has led some to claim that women are only engaging with anime now because it has become “**cool**,” but that argument misses the point. **Women have always been part of the anime audience.**

What has changed is visibility. **The rise of social media and accessible online platforms has given women more space to openly discuss, share, and celebrate the media they love.** In turn, this has encouraged many to actively seek out Josei stories and has even allowed older or overlooked series to regain attention and momentum. **Anime was never meant to exist within a single demographic**; it is a medium shaped by many voices, experiences, and audiences—and it is strongest when there is room for **all of them.**

No Boyfriend, No Problem: Where Women Turn When Animation Falls Short

Why have one boyfriend when you can have five? Well, that's exactly what Love and Deepspace brings to the table, and of course, it speaks to those who enjoy consuming Josei-style content through other means. I mean, it won Best Mobile Game at the Gamescom Awards in 2025, putting it on the map as the first Otome mobile game to ever do so. We yearn for story lines that are romantic, enticing, and won't hurt us. This game that has taken the gaming industry by storm. **Infold saw a market that was under served and decided to take a gamble on it.** Yet, why do people still act as if women don't game? Over the past year, the immersive game has gained significant popularity and traction due to its high-level visuals and overall game play. In fact, it's fun, innovative, and ultimately serves as an escape for fans of interactive storytelling.

While we can seek comfort in games like this, it doesn't change the fact that the anime industry does not see value—and therefore a viable market—in Josei, arguing that these themes are better suited to other forms of media. This reasoning assumes that female audiences don't gravitate toward animated series, citing busy lives and the many roles they juggle. Yet the larger issue lies within the industry itself: **it continues to overlook this demographic, failing not only to produce Josei content but also to market it effectively.**

GAME OVER
♥♥♥♥♥

Beyond the Screen:

How Josei and Shojo Shape Our Style

The use of fashion as a storytelling tool is nothing new to this genre; in fact, it's what makes it that much more **appealing and interesting**. Many of the Josei characters we love are frequently portrayed in **professional attire** or within **workplace settings**, reflecting our **everyday environments** and drawing direct influence from the style trends of their respective decades. Popular examples include *NANA*, *Paradise Kiss*, and *Princess Jellyfish*, which reflect real-world aesthetics, allowing them to feel that much more genuine. These stories are grounded in **reality**, featuring **complex** characters meant to feel **authentic** and **relatable** to the audience.

They say that the **best form of flattery is imitation**, and this can be seen through the media we consume and its **direct correlation** to the **cultivation of personal style**. When we love a series so much, we often want to pay homage to it in some way—whether that be **creating works of art**, **buying merchandise**, or even **cosplaying**. Our favorite series didn't just grow up alongside us; they shaped aspects of our lives, taught us to stay true to ourselves, and express that authenticity.

Characters Who Inspire: Fashion, Art, and Identity

Nana Osaki and Nana Komatsu – *NANA*

In *NANA*, fashion is a key storytelling tool, used to convey characters' emotions and life experiences. With nods to Japanese subcultures of the time and iconic designers like Vivienne Westwood, **Hachi's style** evolves throughout the series, reflecting the changes and challenges in her life. Her fashion becomes an outward expression of her **search for identity and stability**—an attempt to fit in, **to mold herself into who she believes she's supposed to be**, seeking acceptance through appearance.

In contrast, **Nana Osaki's** style is bold, punk-inspired, and firmly rooted in her identity. She uses fashion as a **power tool**. By controlling what she wears, she controls how close people are allowed to get, keeping her inner struggles hidden behind a carefully constructed exterior.

Koibuchi Kuranosuke – *Princess Jellyfish*

Koibuchi embodies doing what you love without worrying about societal expectations. He uses fashion freely as a form of self-expression and as a rebellion against his affluent family and their political pressures. His love for fashion stems from his mother, a strong, beautiful woman who adored style. He believes all women are beautiful, and his heart remains true to his passion, making him a beautifully written character who uses fashion as a powerful form of identity.

Kaoruko Waguri- *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity*

Kaoruko's personal style shines through her clothing, colors, and hairstyle, reflecting her emotions and experiences without words. Mature, feminine, and elegantly put-together, her wardrobe exudes quiet beauty and timelessness, with pieces that can be mixed, matched, and recreated in multiple ways. It's not about dressing to impress, but about feeling good and looking your best—because that's when confidence truly shines.

Characters Who Inspire:

Akane Ennoshita - *My Love Story with Yamada-kun at Lv999*



Akane embodies college student fashion—comfortable, cute, stylish, yet with a hint of mature flair. She is often seen **wearing heels**, which play a significant role in her characterization. Heels are **traditionally empowering**, and in Akane's story—especially after navigating a major breakup—they symbolize her **resilience, empowerment, and femininity**. Even in casual outfits, she pairs them with sophistication, signaling a different stage of life compared to other characters.

Style Breakdown - Look A:

This outfit leans into Akane's casual side while still showcasing her signature Josei-style maturity. The look consists of a denim jacket, a purple top with lace details, and plum shorts, paired with brown heels featuring gold accents. This is a recreation of her outfit from *Season 1, Episode 3, "I Wanna Have an Offline Meeting."*



Style Breakdown - Look B:

This outfit showcases Akane's more mature, woman-like style. The look consists of a khaki blazer, black turtleneck, and a grey pleated skirt, paired with black tights and dark brown heels with gold accents. Its versatility allows it to be styled either more casually or in a chic way. This recreation is inspired by *Season 1, Episode 13, "In the Morning When I Wake Up."*



Characters Who Inspire:

Momiji Sohma - *Fruits Basket*

Momiji is a reminder to us all that fashion has **no gender** and can be worn freely as a form of self-expression rather than limitation. His style draws from elements of **Lolita** fashion and other traditionally **feminine silhouettes**. He simply wears what feels most comfortable and what he feels suits him best.

Style Breakdown

The look is a combination of *Season 1, Episode 12, "White Day,"* and the 2002 *Fruits Basket* calendar. Creating this look for Momiji was one of my most **challenging** recreations. Momiji's style often incorporates **soft color palettes, hats, bows, accessories, and cute motifs**. His fashion begins as distinctly **androgynous** and gradually leans into a more traditionally masculine expression as the series progresses.



I took a few creative liberties—most notably opting for pants instead of his original shorts—while still preserving the exaggerated collar of the blouse. I kept a statement bow with a **fun print** and **vibrant colors**, paired with a colorful beanie to maintain his **playful essence**. I also added loafers, as he is seen wearing them throughout the series. The color palette remains **cohesive** and **intentional** rather than **overbearing**, allowing the overall look to feel **mature yet whimsical**, balancing softness with a subtle sense of growth in Momiji's style.



Characters Who Inspire:

Nanami Momozono – *Kamisama Kiss*

Nanami showcases a wide variety of outfits throughout the two-season run of *Kamisama Kiss*. While the manga premiered in 2008 and the anime aired in 2012, Nanami's fashion offers a **nostalgic look** at the evolution of **Shojo and Josei style**. Her wardrobe leans teen-friendly but is grounded in **basics** and heavy accessorizing, leaving a versatile canvas for personal interpretation. Many of her outfits focus on **classic silhouettes** and **patterns**—**plaids, solids, and denims**—that can easily inspire contemporary recreations.



Style Breakdown

I tried recreating one of her more casual outfits from *Season 1, Episode 10 "The God Goes to a Mixer"*. While I didn't have the exact pieces, I adapted the look to my style—switching her Mary Jane shoes for loafers and using ankle socks instead of knee-highs. The outfit still worked beautifully, demonstrating how it can be personalized while staying true to its character inspiration.



The Fragrant Flower That Blooms with Dignity

A high school romance with complex, well-written characters, *The Flower That Blooms* explores personal growth, new emotions, and self-discovery. The story is raw and heartfelt, highlighting communication, friendship, and overcoming insecurities.

Crunchyroll Rating: 9.4/10

The Ice Guy and His Cool Female Colleague

A sweet and relatable office romance featuring charming character dynamics.

Rating: 4.6/5 on Crunchyroll

Wotakoi: Love Is Hard for Otaku

A refreshing take on the childhood-friends-to-lovers trope, exploring romance in adulthood. The series balances full-time jobs with hobbies while navigating the unique challenges of adult relationships.

Rating: 7.5/10 on Crunchyroll

Love Through a Prism

An early-1900s-inspired love story for art lovers. It follows two artists navigating hardship, love, and life transitions, offering both historical aesthetics and emotional depth.

Crunchyroll Rating: 8.3/10 on Netflix

What To Watch When the World Feels Heavy

A curated list of romance stories and dreamlike realms to lose yourself in when the weight of the world becomes too much

Skip and Loafer

A coming-of-age story about transitioning into adulthood. This series is heartfelt, reflective, and includes a supportive trans character.

Rating: 4.8/5 on Crunchyroll

Kakuriyo: Bed and Breakfast for Spirits

A supernatural romance with a historical setting, presented as a slow-burn story over two seasons. Perfect for viewers who enjoy mystical worlds and heartfelt romance.

Rating: 4.7/5 on Crunchyroll

Frieren: Beyond Journey's End

The series draws viewers into another dimension—one that offers a soft escape from reality while inviting deep reflection on love, loss, and what it means to truly cherish others.

Rating: 4.9/5 on Crunchyroll

Spice and Wolf

A medieval adventure and romance that's fun, exciting, and intellectually engaging. The witty banter between the protagonists makes this series a clever escapism experience for fans of both romance and adventure.

Rating: 4.8/5 on Crunchyroll

The Many Faces Of An Artist

"I've chosen to follow my dreams again so I can be true to myself."



Lily dehipin

Get the Look: Lily Ichijoin

A World Recolored

I had so much fun creating Lily's outfit—it's cute, chic, and leans a bit toward academia while staying playful. Even though her style is inspired by early 1900s fashion, I wanted to give it a modern twist so it feels wearable and relevant today. To bring this look to life, I took inspiration from reusing pieces from my last editorial, showing how a few key items can be styled in fresh ways. I also took some creative liberties with the outfit, opting out of certain accessories from her original look when they weren't ready available. By mixing period-inspired silhouettes with modern styling and making intentional choices about what to wear, Lily's look feels authentic to her story while remaining relevant and wearable today.



The skirt is similar to what she wears, but not an exact match—still keeping the same silhouette and essence, which is what makes recreating it fun.



I swapped her tie for a scarf since I didn't have one available and wanted to add my own spin by mixing textures and patterns, and I paired it with a similar blazer.



Traded the boots for a pair of cute flats gifted to me by my best friend, keeping the aesthetic playful and personal.

Lily's Edit: *What I Wear, What I Love, What I Resist*

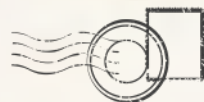
This section acts as a living archive of my current interests, expressed through Lily's voice—art, fashion, and culture that resonate with me in the moment. I share my personal likes, monthly favorites, and thoughts on issues that matter to me, using this platform to bring awareness through creative expression.



Lily, lost in the moment, brings her vision to life with oil pastels, fully immersed in the flow of creativity.

Q: Why did you choose to feature this character or concept in the magazine?

A: Lily is the definition of resilience—overcoming heartbreak, moving to a new country, and facing life's sudden changes without losing herself. The show hit close to home with its political themes. It's a powerful reminder that art is always political, and that creating and sharing your message with the world matters—even if you think it won't make an impact. Showing up is what counts.



Q: What's a scene that made you laugh, cry, or think twice this month?

A: Lily's scene with Kit in the church—where she tells him to leave and he actually does (pretends to be shocked meme) (laughs)—was heartbreaking. It added so much depth to her character and felt completely real, one of those “we've all been there” moments that stick with you.

Q: If your art could talk, what's the first thing it would complain about?

A: If my art could talk, it would groan, “Here she goes again... talking to herself, obsessing over every little thing, and driving everyone crazy” (laughs). And yeah, spending an ungodly amount of time trying to make it ‘perfect.’ Like, calm down, girl—perfection is overrated!

ON REPEAT

Nostalgia meets new favorites.

Reboot — Wonder Girls

ARTPOP — Lady Gaga

Manners — Passion Pit

18 Months — Calvin Harris

Oasis — J Balvin & Bad Bunny

Currently loving:

Star Flower — Chilli Beans

Stateside — PinkPantheress feat. Zara Larsson

Blue Valentine — NMIXX



Q: What would you like your viewers or readers to know about you—or through your work?

A: That's a tough question (laughs)... I guess I'd say I really enjoy expressing myself creatively through different forms of art. Right now, it's my editorial; tomorrow, it could be oil pastels or creating a cosplay. It's a huge part of who I am and shapes my identity as an artist. I've reached a point where I want to live freely—making the most of life regardless of the limitations the world imposes—and truly not caring what people think. Even if no one glances at my work, I know I'm being true to myself, and I think that's what matters most.

ON SCREEN

What I've been watching lately.

Spy×Family — Season 3 (catching up!)

Tamon's B-Side — currently loving this one

Closing thoughts

It's funny, you know? The character I chose for this month is Lily Ichijoin from *Love Through A Prism*. I intentionally chose her because I felt seen and represented through her. Lily's character is a reflection, an embodiment of what it means to have your life change, to learn to adapt, and to never give up on yourself or your dreams. Ironically, the story is set just before the outbreak of World War I, a time when everyday life could be upended overnight. In that sense, Lily's journey mirrors our own world today, where uncertainty and political turbulence can turn life on its head in an instant.

Even though this editorial is a creative expression of myself, I always make it with the intention of addressing real-life matters. I was emotional throughout the creation of this entire piece, as it touches on sensitive topics—but these are things that need to be addressed. I see my role as a creator not only to make work that feels relatable but also to do my part in the community—whether that's raising awareness, encouraging conversation, or standing in solidarity with those around me.

Watching and hearing about Liam Conejo Ramos, the five-year-old detained by ICE, was both infuriating and heartbreaking. It struck me deeply, recalling a childhood moment that felt just as frightening, even if the circumstances were different. It's an experience I would never wish on anyone. That fear stays with you for life—even on your best days. It shapes the way you move through the world, teaching you to hold your loved ones close while still finding a way forward. So yes, it is that deep, and it will always be.

What is happening in Minnesota and across the country right now illustrates the importance of standing up for human rights, calling for change, and acknowledging that every life is valuable. The world is watching, and it's up to us to make the next move. It's not the time to stay neutral. Tomorrow it could be your neighbor, best friend, or coworker—and just because it's not happening to you doesn't mean it's not real. Even when it feels like our hands are tied, we can still spread awareness, build community with those around us, and have a plan for how we can help.

Thank you for taking the time to read, reflect, and make it to the end. Your presence matters, and I hope this piece leaves you thinking, feeling, or inspired in some small way.

With love and honesty,
—solgaze