

# q community: ELSKA'S BODIES & VOICES

## ELSKA GOES TO JAPAN TO SHOWCASE THE MEN OF SECOND-CITY YOKOHAMA

Elska, a project dedicated to sharing the bodies and voices of LGBTQ communities around the world, has ventured to Japan's second-largest city, Yokohama, for its latest edition. Inside, readers can get to know a cross-section of ordinary men from this city's LGBTQ community through a combination of intimate photography shot by Elska chief photographer Liam Campbell and honest stories, contributed by each of the issue's dozen participants.

"When we started getting requests to do an issue in Japan, I knew I'd avoid Tokyo, not that I don't love Tokyo, but rather that I get a thrill from focusing on less expected places," says Elska editor and chief photographer Liam Campbell. "Although Yokohama is the second most populous city in Japan, it is a massively overlooked place, and I wanted to try to correct that in some way. I also wanted to show what queer life is like outside the capital, to perhaps give a sense of Japanese attitudes and customs more generally. Plus, I love Japan and hoped this could be just the first of many issues made in the country."

"Unfortunately, making an Elska here was not at all easy," continues Liam. "In fact, it's actually the most difficult city we've ever tackled for Elska. Despite Japan being so renowned for its modernity, this doesn't quite extend to attitudes toward homosexuality, nor to the idea of sharing one's personal life publicly. It was rather difficult to find subjects for this issue, but those we did find were not shy to explain in their stories how hard life here can be. For example, multiple stories touch upon how difficult it is to live up to the norms and expectations of being a 'respectable' and 'honourable' person, and how being gay isn't exactly compatible. Ultimately, because of how difficult it was to make this issue, it feels like quite a triumph that it happened at all."

'Elska Yokohama' is 180 pages and is available from a select group of shops around the world as well as for order online from the Elska website. In addition, the companion zine 'Elska Ekstra



