



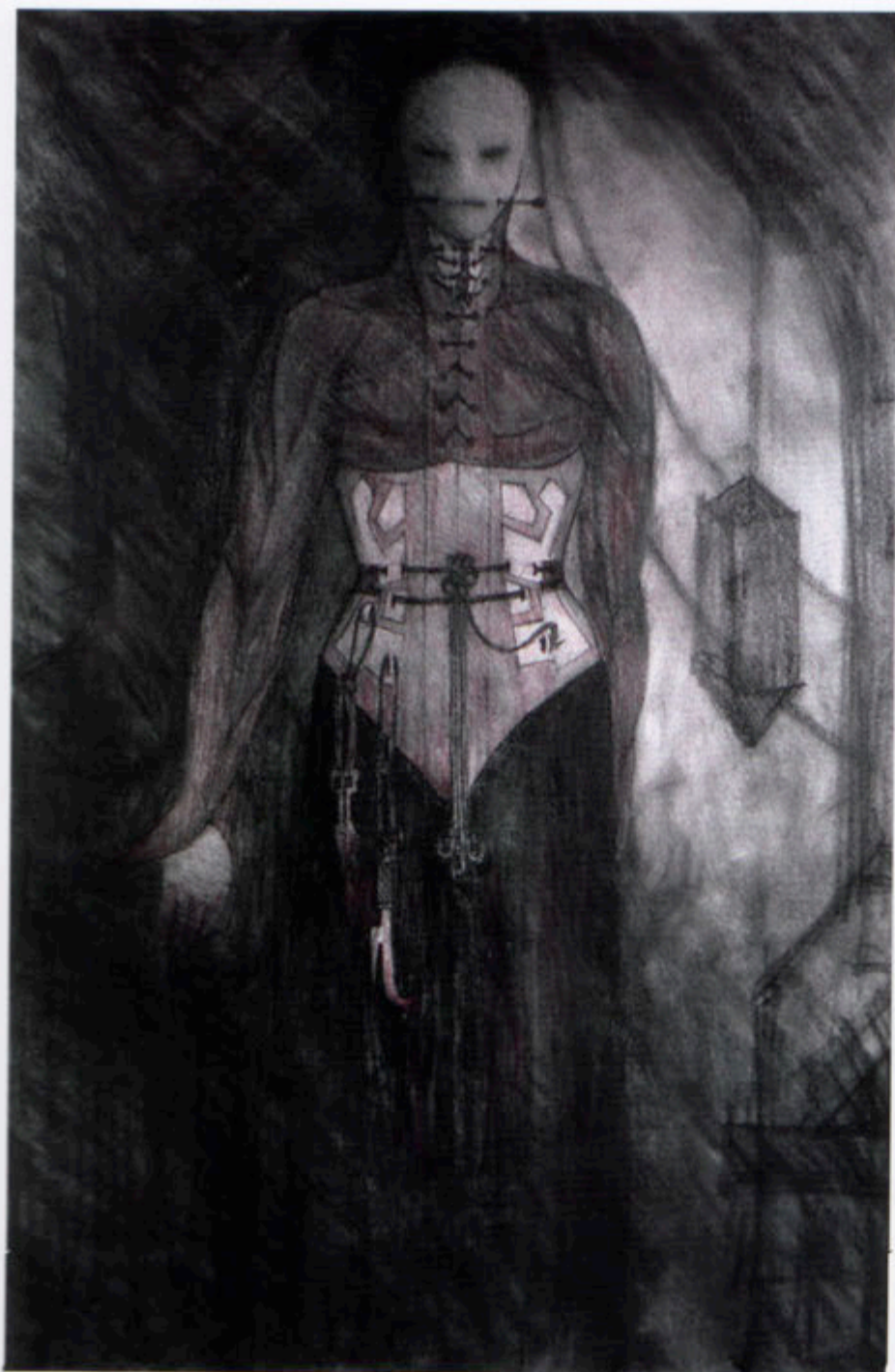
56. Kambriel, "Isabella Coaldress,"
worn by Wednesday Mourning.
Courtesy Kambriel. Photograph: Nadya Lev.

Among the many goth clothing businesses on the web, several stand out. One of the best classic sites, formerly known as Atrocities, now goes under the name of the designer, Kambriel, creator of "Designs for Femmes Fatales & Decadent Gentlemen." After the relatively aggressive punk scene, she was drawn to the "nocturnal dream-world" of the emerging goth scene. Over time, however, the "poetic," "long and flowing" clothes of the original goths seemed to disappear, and "even the more underground styles" became "harsher" and "more fetishistic." Surrounded by form-fitting PVC garments, she found herself "longing for something softer" and "eerily beautiful." Kambriel designed her first "Gothick" collection in 1994. "For me, gothic is all about finding beauty in the shadows," says Kambriel. "It's about viewing the world through a Tim Burton-esque lens, in which dark humour meets intelligent irony." She recalls that "When I was very young, I strongly wished to live in another time since I felt so out of place in the current world." However, she gradually realized that she wanted "to romanticize the past into a place of pure dreams, conjuring up images of a grand masked ball, in which elegant ladies and gentlemen from various cultures and eras are gathered together for an evening of enchantment and mystery."⁶⁶ Kambriel's work exemplifies the romantic goth aesthetic, which is characterized by soft, fluid fabrics and historically inspired styles. By contrast, Plastik Wrap is a cyber-goth fashion company. The designers, Adriana Fulop and Ryan Webb, create body-conscious futuristic fashion with brightly-colored accents, which is inspired by contemporary music.

The Gothic Lolita style in Japan is another phenomenon entirely. American and European goths are quick to point out that Japanese Gothic Lolitas "do not listen to our music" and are not goths, at least in the sense that this is usually understood (although there is a separate, small goth subculture in Japan). Lolitas agree that they are not goths; they usually listen to visual-kei, a pop rock style in which the musicians wear elaborate costumes. The three black-clad members of the band *Moi dix Mois*, for example, have been described as "looking like a cross between The Cure, Kiss, and The Sisters of Mercy."⁶⁷ The leader of the group, Mana, was formerly the guitarist in the seminal visual-kei band *Malice Mizer*, which was founded in 1992. Mana is often given credit for starting the Elegant Gothic Lolita style and its corollary the Elegant Gothic Aristocrat style in 1999, when he established a fashion brand *Moi-même-Moitié*. Japanese popular culture has long been known for its inventive styles, and there already existed a Lolita style, but as Mana told the British anthropologist Philomena Keet, "I added a dark element to the cuteness of Lolita."⁶⁸ If the original Lolita style was characterized by girlish frills and *Alice-in-Wonderland* puffy skirts, Mana added gothic motifs, such as crosses, and, of course, black.

A typical Elegant Gothic Lolita look might feature a black Victorian-style dress, usually knee-length, ruffled and worn with a crinoline, together with myriad accessories, such as a parasol, bonnet, and Mary-Jane-style platform shoes. The Elegant Gothic Aristocrat might wear a black Victorian-style coat and top hat, as well as black nail polish and jewelry. Whereas western goths are very much into a DIY aesthetic, the Japanese seem to be highly focused on brands. In addition to

60. (facing page) Trevor Brown, "Grave Robber," *Gothic & Lolita Bible*, Spring 2007. Courtesy Trevor Brown.



Harrison, who appreciated the moralistic image of the harpies Fashion and Vanity lacing a corset. To the original caption, *à la mode à la mort* (fashionable to the death), was added another Victorian anti-corset cliché: “Assassin of the Human Race.” “As for the future of Goth style, there is one new look emerging that may become incorporated into the Goth wardrobe,” says Julia Borden. “The Gothic Steam Punk look, originating in Seattle and Portland. Steam Punk is a splinter genre of *Cyberpunk literature that concerns itself with Victoriana. The Steam Punk look is one of the Victorian dandy, the Victorian tradesman, the lady of flight, all filtered*

124. (left) Jane Wildgoose, design for female cenobite costume in *Hellraiser* (New World Films 1987). © Jane Wildgoose, 1986.

125. (top) Jane Wildgoose, Mourning Bride Dress, 1984. Designed, printed, cut, and made by Jane Wildgoose, for a party at James Hodgson’s house, London, 1984. Photograph: Paul Henry. Courtesy Jane Wildgoose.

126. (above) Kambriel, Midnight Bustle Dress, worn by Lilah. Photograph: Nadya Lev. Courtesy Kambriel.

127. (facing page) Steam Punk ensemble with vintage army surplus pieces, worn by Lisette. Photograph courtesy Kat Bret.