

# STYLE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2009

**F**rom the outside, eureka! eureka! eureka! looks like a hipster's idea of heaven. Mannequins topped with large, feathered rooster masks are decked out in bright purple sneakers, baggy neon houndstooth pants and statement necklaces made out of deflated balloons.

With her Karen O-ish bowl cut fringe and avant-garde outfits, store owner Sandy Wu (吳哲先) looks like the ultimate scenester herself. But in reality, the soft-spoken, churchgoing Wu (a bright orange cross behind the cash register attests to her beliefs) sees eureka! eureka! as a big dress-up box for grown-ups.

"I loved playing dress-up when I was a little girl and I still have that same feeling when I get ready each morning and go through my closet," says Wu. She plans her outfits each evening, mixing and matching different items until she gets the combination just right, but then often changes her mind in the morning. The looks that do make the cut are regularly posted on eureka! eureka! eureka!'s blog ([www.wretch.cc/blog/eureka117](http://www.wretch.cc/blog/eureka117)).

Wu studied foreign languages at university, but began working at clothing design labels and stores after graduating. She eventually made her way to the boutique that used to occupy eureka! eureka! eureka!'s storefront. When her boss decided to sell the business two years ago, Wu took it over.

In addition to Taiwanese indie designers Pet Shop Girls, Back to British, Deeplay and Play Rough, Wu also flies out of the country twice a month to look for new merchandise. She frequently visits Bangkok's flea markets, where she hunts for secondhand items.

Eureka! eureka! eureka!'s racks display an obvious 1980s influence, from the neon colors and geometric prints on leggings and dresses to black T-shirts with highly detailed silk-screened renditions of wolves against the night sky. "I think people back then were very individualistic and braver about what they wore. I feel that people nowadays tend to follow trends blindly. But the 1980s were all about knowing what you want, and using clothing to express yourself," says Wu.

The store is located near Shida night market, but far away enough from the trendy shops on Longquan Street (龍泉街) to make eureka! eureka! eureka! seem as if it is in a world apart. Its neighbors include a NT\$100 haircut place and a blue truck that seems to be perpetually

*The owner of eureka!  
eureka! eureka! sees  
her clothing store as a  
big dress-up box*

BY CATHERINE SHU  
STAFF REPORTER

# Not too cool for school



**STORE NOTES:**

**WHAT:** Eureka! eureka! eureka!  
**WHERE:** 2, Ln 117, Shida Rd, Taipei City (台北市師大路117巷2號)  
**OPEN:** 4pm to 11pm  
**TELEPHONE:** (02) 2368-9967  
**ON THE NET:** [www.wretch.cc/blog/eureka117](http://www.wretch.cc/blog/eureka117)

parked across the street, giving the store's name a special resonance.

"We're kind of out of the way, so when people find us, we want them to feel like they've made a discovery," says Wu. "Hopefully they'll feel like they've stumbled upon a secret place that no one else knows about and it's their own special stash of treasure, like when we were little and tucked things away in hiding places."

Wu's childlike love of dress-up and serendipitous surprises is part of her marketing strategy. The inside of the eureka! eureka! eureka! is dominated by a worn leather couch with cozy crochet afghans and cushions. Sale items are piled in a shopping cart for customers to hunt through, and colorful vintage clip-on earrings, badges and other jewelry are displayed in brightly lit glass cases alongside race car toys and plastic dinosaurs. Entire outfits of artfully mismatched leggings, tees and hooded sweatshirts dangle from the ceiling, while magazines featuring street-style photos, including *Nylon*, *Tune* and *Fruits*, are stacked next to a comfortable armchair. Many of her customers are university students and prices target that demographic — most dresses and tunics are NT\$1,280, a pair of black high-heeled duck boots are NT\$1,980, T-shirts are NT\$890 and vintage leather jackets ring in at NT\$3,280.

"I want to share my attitude towards life, not just through clothing, but also through the music, posters and toys I like," says Wu, who collects toys from the 1980s and counts Swedish indie-pop group Hello Saferide among her favorite bands. "I want people to feel like they can share their own interests with me, so we can strike up a conversation."

Eureka! eureka! eureka!'s logo is a unicorn based on a drawing Wu made of a vinyl figure her grandmother gave her when she was a little girl; the same image is also tattooed on Wu's ankle. "A store's logo is very important and this image is very special to me, but it doesn't have any particular meaning," says Wu.

Even though she believes clothing is a form of self-expression, Wu believes people should also not take it too seriously — especially when they shop at eureka! eureka! eureka!.

"People think of our store as having a very specific style, but I don't think you need to wear our clothes any one way. You can find really unique pieces in a chain store and we also sell basics here. It's not about copying a particular trend, but of the message you send to the world through what you wear," says Wu. "You have to trust your own taste, but also not be afraid to try new things."



Top left: Owner Sandy Wu arranges a leather jacket on a mannequin in eureka! eureka! eureka!, which sells a combination of items from Taiwanese indie designers and secondhand goods from other countries, such as Thailand. The store's styling takes its cues from the 1980s and features riots of colors, textures and patterns in each outfit.

PHOTOS: CATHERINE SHU, TAIPEI TIMES

