





Cosplay is best described as the act of dressing up as a character or concept. Cosplay is like Halloween but its everyday instead of one day a year. Cosplay quickly grew in popularity and became a subculture that is found everywhere. People who do it regularly are called 'cosplayers'.

Cosplayers tend to go above and beyond copying their character's outfits. They might even 'role-play' as characters, copying their mannerisms and gestures.







Where did cosplay start?

Cosplay started circa 16th century when it became popular to attend Masquerade balls where people would have to wear costumes that were part of the running theme of the ball/party they were at

During the rise of the trend, cosplay was seen as a very event based thing, very much like Halloween, where they would dress according to the theme of the event.

Circa 1939 a pair of fans attented a Sci-Fi convention as their favourite characters. From this begining the trend grew and it became populat to attend conventions in cosplay.



16th century: started with masquerade balls and costumed public festivities

1940: Cosplay started to catch on as a trend during the 2nd Worldcon where an unofficial masquerade was held and many people in different costumes





1936: 1st World Science Fiction Convention, the start of cosplay becoming the subculture that it is today.

1972: major conventions began in and they have featured cosplay throughout.





TIMELINE



1975: Costuming at this time was known as kasou in Japan when conventions and cosplaying became popular 1990s: The new term did not catch on immediately, however.

It was after exposure on television and in magazines, that the term and practice of cosplaying became common knowledge in Japan

1984: Cosplay became a term/ subculture that was named and started by Nobuyuki Takahashi, founder of Studio Hard, who attended the 42nd Worldcon in Los Angeles and was impressed by the masquerade. From there he coined the term kosupure which translates to Cosplay which was a combination of costume and play 2000-present: Cosplay has become a big trend that now extends past going to conventions but as become a lifestyle and form of fashion that many people of varying ages enjoy.



where did the term Cospla come from?

As shown in the timeline in the previous spread, the term cosplay was coined by Nobuyuki Takahashi. He decided to call it this because of how amazed he was by the attendees during a convention he had attended. He had liked how they were attempting to create costumes inspired by shows they were fans of. Due to this he decided to give it a name which was Kospure which is the japanese translation of Costume play (Cosplay). From there the term took about a year or two before it was adopted by the community who then turned it into a subculture that would continue to grow bigger which each passing year.



Who are considered cosplayers?

So who are cosplayers? How does one become a cosplayer? Can anyone who wears a costume be considered a cosplayer?

A cosplayer is someone who aims to portray a character as "accurately" as possible by copying how a character looks and even acts. A cosplayer is defined as someone who not only enjoys cosplay but does it quite often, therefore becoming part of the cosplay community/subculture. Therefore not everyone can really be considered by wearing a costume during times like halloween or just for a costume party. The great thing about getting into cosplay is that its very open to people of all genders, orientations, and expressions.

You'll even find cosplayers 'cross-dressing' or 'genderswapping' where they dress up as a character of the opposite sex.

Another reason why people get into cosplay and become cosplayers is because to some its not a mere game of dress-up.

The costumes they choose bring out something in them that's not usually visible. Some cosplayers say that being dressed as a different character makes them feel confident, encourages them to socialise if their introverts and even helps them feel like themselves.

Even after they take off the makeup, wigs and costumes the buzz of being to a convention tends to linger in the minds and hearts of cosplayers. The feeling of belonging to a community or the feeling of confidence tends to linger can sometimes bleed into their daily lives which can help them especially if they are dealing with difficult things in their life like stress.

What's interesting about being a cosplayer is that you always find someone who may seem like they would never be part of this subculture because of what they do in their daily lives. From lawyers to students, many people of different occupation and age are always ready to join in on the fun and celebrate their love of a character at conventions where they can interact with many others who are like them.











UNDERSTANDING COSPLAY Theres always more to cosplay and cosplayers, it's

more than just dressing up as your favourite character and has become a lifestyle, hobby and even job for some people.

Cosplay doesn't have just one type of fashion, it has different types of styles and that means that it's very open to everyone to try new styles and experiment with what they would feel comfortable with.

Can cosplay be considered a hobby or job?

Depending on which cosplayer you ask some consider cosplay a hobby and some consider it a job. Cosplay isn't exactly a cheap hobby and will require anyone interested in getting into it to be sure to always set aside savings for cosplay and to always have a budget if you want to start one.

When starting cosplay not everyone is able to turn it into their everyday job. Much like being a famous youtuber one would need to build up their platform but even then there is no guarantee that the amount of money earned could maintain a steady lifestyle. So most cosplayers who consider cosplay as a side job and they would need to build a platform and can usually gain sponsorships to help turn it into a fulltime job.

However like most jobs, making cosplay as an everyday fulltime job could become stressful this is most likely why many cosplayers in the cosplay community to see it as a hobby as this can create little stress to make new cosplays as well as allow them to enjoy it and have fun at their own pace.



Where do cosplayers get their inspirations from?

Cosplay inspirations come from a variety of sources such as games, tv shows, movies, and even memes.

Depending on what type of cosplay you are wanting to make will then help cosplayers narrow down their search for inspiration.

Another form of inspiration that cosplayers can use can be fanarts this is because fanarts may feel more fun and interesting to cosplay. Cosplayers may even decide to create crossover cosplays by takening different characters from games or shows and combining the fashion together to create a whole new style of cosplay.

Cosplayer may even choose to use multiple sources of inspiration to create a inspired look for a cosplay and create something new.





The Types of Cosplayers

The cosplay community is filled with different types of cosplay styles, almost too many to name in this book. However these are some of the most popular types of cosplays that you can find around conventions. The types of cosplays can include canon(original), lolita (cute), steampunk and more.

A common form of cosplay, this is when an individual dresses up as a character if that character were the opposite gender. This form of cosplay can also be known as Crossplay.

Humanized: When a cosplayer takes an object or creature and dresses up as a human version of it. This is often done with Pokemon and characters from My Little Pony.

Many have a character they love so much that they have cosplayed every outfit the character has worn. They create cosplays based on a beautiful piece of art and translate that into reality.









combining color palettes and costume pieces to get a new character that retains elements from both of its inspirations. Often done with Deadpool, Disney Princesses, and Star Wars.



a universe where everything is the same as the original but one thing is different. Example: The Disney princesses universe but they go to school at Hogwarts



A variation of cosplay where people dress up as military soldiers based on real life soldiers or from popular military themed video games i.e.Call Of Duty.



Furries and cosplayers are usually classed as different subcultures though there are few that class themselves as cosplayers. They dress in fur suits to look like animals who are anthropomorphic. The distinction between Lolita and Cosplay Lolita is that while Lolita is intended to be a street fashion, Cosplay Lolita is being worn as a costume. This style is more cute in style.

Traps are men who are convincingly dressed as women and women who are convincingly dressed as men and reverse traps are women who dress convincingly like men.

Steampunk is it's own subculture whereas steampunk cosplay is the aesthetics of the steampunk subculture which merges with cosplays to create fun looks for a character.

A canon costume is any cosplay or costume that precisely recreates an outfit worn by a character at a specific point of time within a story. This is the basics of what many cosplayers start with.



Trap/ Reverse Trap







Unlike traditional cosplay, which rests on mimicking every minute detail of a character's look, casual cosplay allows space for people to play with styles, textures, and items of clothing.



Cosplayers sometimes create their own characters that may belong in a game universe or even show universe rather than cosplay an existing character.



Sometimes cosplayers want to make the characters look dapper and this shows how being geeky doesn't mean you can't have a little class and have a little bit of fun while dressed in formal attire.

These are only the tip of the iceberg of the different types of cosplays that exist, there is always more styles that are being invented, and even styles that are created from just mixing two or more existing styles. The possibility of style/fashion for cosplay is endless and ever growing and sometimes like fashion trends a style will die out before a new one takes its place.

Popular



and how they see

Cosplay

As we know films have famous actors and acrtresses but what about the cosplay subculture? Who are these popular cosplayers?

Cosplayers are all unique in each way and many work hard to make each new cosplay unique and try their best to look as accurate as possible. Many cosplayers out their sweat, blood and tears into each new product so it would be natural to be cosplayers that would rise to popularity due to this reason.

There are hundreds of popular creators/ cosplayers who have rose to fame and have decided to make this their full time job and many who have made it their side job. Either way they never fail to always have fun and inspire new cosplayers and fans. However who are these people? What are their thoughts now on cosplay? Has it changed since becoming popular? Is it stressful being a cosplayer?

Many popular cosplayers will have different answers to these questions but it always start out as a passion and rarely turns into one where they do it for the fame and money.

Many of them continue to do it just because they enjoy it and don't really care that they're famous and some who do it as a job sometimes get hired for events like a Disney promo or game event promotion because they can produce a costume and bring a character to life in the best way possible. Yaya Han: A costume designer, cosplay entertainer and author based in Atlanta, GA. she has made close to 400 costumes in the genres of anime/manga, comic books, video games, sci-fi and her own original designs.

Yaya has built a successful business in the cosplay community, creating a popular cosplay accessories line. But, no matter where cosplay has taken her professionally, Yaya strives to stay true to what got her into this field originally—fun and creativity.



Leon Chiro: a personal trainer, photomodel, and former Italian national athlete. He mostly cosplays videogame characters; most components, such as armour, weapons, and accessories, are handmade.

Leon is a major competitor in European cosplay contests and has won numerous cosplay competitions in the main cons in Italy and Europe.

He has always seen cosplay as a way to bring people together and to spread kindness and a way to be yourself.



Liui Aquino: a retail business man, model, and part-time cable TV and commercial actor in Manila, Philippines. More importantly, perhaps, he is also an amazing cosplayer who has transformed his life-long love for anime and games with his experience as a model.

His simple goal was why ge does this, it was to have epic costumes and photos only, and... to showcase his artistic side while having fun, and/or maybe, to be known as one of the Philippines finest cosplayers.



Anna Faith: not only an Instagram model but also an actress. She rose to fame when her picture became look-alike to Elsa of the animated Disney movie Frozen. And after that, she has appeared in many films and is still active nowadays.

She started this out as a hobby, it quickly became a job however she has always done it to have fun and when she started becoming famous for her Elsa cosplay she turned her goals in to not just about having fun to also bring smiles and joy to anyone that loved the characters she portrayed.



Hana and Boazi:

The inseparable cosplayer duo are extremely popular among female fans and are no strangers to the ACG events scene across the world, frequently gracing their presence as guest cosplayers.

Hana especially is known for playing females when the duo cosplay together, sporting long, flowing wigs, false eyelashes and high heels as well as more feminine male characters

Where as Boazi is known for the more masculine cosplays as they fit his type of style better.

To them cosplay is half a hobby and half a job because their work now is closely related to cosplay. Both have said that they are really happy to have jobs that they are passionate about.

Though they did not wish to reveal which schools they attended, Baozi holds a Master in Business Administration, while Hana studied fashion design and are now creating their own line of makeup.







History of the makeup, fashion and the popular styles of makeup

As discussed in the previous chapter the types of popular cosplayers and cosplay types and understanding what cosplay is to people in the community. What about the history of these styles and makeup? Where did it start and come from? Are these styles also seen outside of the cosplay subculture?



When it comes to makeup styles it's similar to the different cosplay styles that are around. It varies from person to person and comes in many different styles such as glamour, special effects, natural or even anime. Its unsure of when these styles were developed because many of the styles can be incorporated into many of today's makeup styles outside of cosplay.

The most common way to describe makeup styles that cosplayers use would be theatre makeup. Mainly due to the similarities of products used by stage performers to ensure makeup stays on all throughout the show or even if they were to use face paint.

Cosplay makeup and the fashion itself is like theatre, where cosplayers see themselves as performers who bring the characters they cosplay to life.

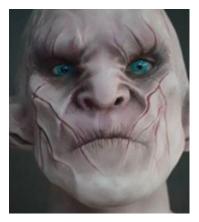
The history of the makeup styles and fashion go as far back as when cosplay started and is ever changing therefore it's hard to put a timestamp when and where they originated from.



Lolita Makeup: became popular around the 1990s and 2000s. This style emphasize the size and shape of the eyes to make them appear larger as well as the use of fake eyelashes enhance this look.

SFX makeup: this style originated from the use of prosthetic makeup on film sets and has made its way into cosplay over time. This style is used to achieve effects such as horns or even fantastical aesthetic for come costumes.

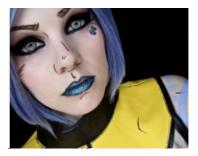






Genderbent: Like the cosplay style this makeup is to allow cosplayers of the opposite gender to look like the other by using makeup to define features with the use of different products like contour, foundation, etc. In order to achieve the look.

Pop art/ Comic : This style of makeup was inspired from pop art and comic book designs. The use of this style of makeup to make themselves look like just hopped out a comic book.







Anime eyes: This style is more focused on the eye area where a cosplayer would try their best to mimic the look of how a characters eye looks, like the shape and folds of the eye as this ties the whole look together for many cosplays

Face and Body paint: This style is usually for more alien or non human characters. Usually when cosplayers use this look its for when they intend to do a photoshoot or for at least half the day during a convention as this style is messy and would limit what you can and can't touch.





Harujuku Fashion

Cosplay has become a popular subculture all over the world and is diverse in style. It has become extremely popular in places like Japan where it is a form of fashion and is part of the different styles.

It isn't just about the dressing up as a character now, many cosplayers have also embraced the different fashion styles that have circled the cosplay community and have used those styles in their everyday lives especially since one can't go around dressed as a character everyday. So they adopt the different fashion styles that are shown throughtout the different source material used for cosplay called Harujuku fashion which is a mix of differents styles which include cosplay as well as other styles like lolita, visual kei, etc.

Visual Kei: The visual kei (visual style) movement trickled down from visual kei bands to the fans who loved them. The style features dark, almost Gothic styles of makeup and elaborate hairstyles – like a Japanese manga character come to life. While visual kei can be attributed to bands, it doesn't describe a particular genre of music, since it involves their visual style and appearance rather than sound. This fashion statement reached the peak of popularity in the early 2000s. The bright and happy version of visual kei is known as oshare kei.

Sweet Lolita: Sweet Lolita fashion features pale, feminine colors and a girly twist on traditional Victorian clothing. Pastel bows, ribbons and frills are her signature. The style is almost childlike, and focuses on the fantasy aspects of Lolita fashion. Sweet Lolita went on to influence the more modern Larme style.



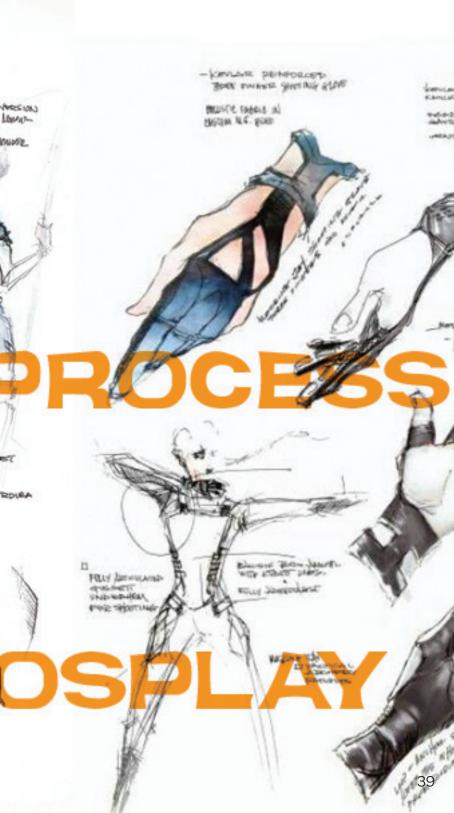
Goth Lolita: This style was born from Lolita fashion. Like Lolita, the clothing is influenced by classical Victorian era fashion. It features dark, Gothic makeup and a macabre twist on traditional Lolita elements like bows, clips and jewelry. The style became popular in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and still exists among many Japanese youth today.



Kogal: The 'ko' in kogal is a shortened form of kōkōsei, or high school. The look is a play on school uniforms, and includes especially short skirts and cutesy accessories. The style reached the peak of popularity in 1995, and a few years later was replaced by the dark-skinned ganguro look.







Stage 1: Planning and Research

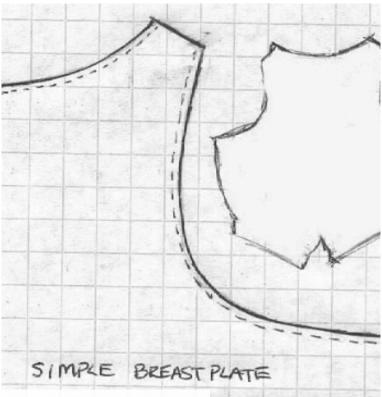
Before starting a cosplay or any project, one has to always start with the basics and that usually starts with planning out everything that you need to do, this helps you to know the type of materials you may need, how difficult it is to execute and most importantly the budget that you would need to start.

A tip that many cosplayers have when it first comes to starting a project is to first narrow down the options of characters you would prefer to cosplay. This allows you to then breakdown the components of each character and allow you make a descision and start on the budget planning and process. This is mainly done for cosplayers who wish to make their own cosplay but this can be applied to buying one online.

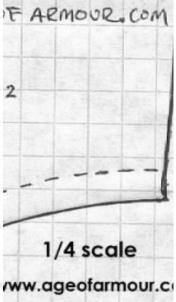
Looking at sketches and character designs usually help to breakdown the character's clothes, props, hairstyles,etc.

Depending on how complicted the design is the budget will vary. When costumes are being bought budgets are a little bit more easier to create compared to making a budget when you are making costumes yourself





Once they design or breakdown how the costume looks they will then begin creating patterns of the costume to furthur breakdown the costume so that planning for amount of materials needed is easier. This will let cosplayers know what materials they will need to spend money on and figure out where they can apply a cheaper material to the costume. However this will take a few trials and errors during the experimental stage.



What are popular materials to use? Where to get them?

So what materials do cosplays like to use? What's the most expensive or cheapest option?

Worbla: A thermal plastic that many cosplayers like to use to create intricate armour pieces or props.

This is considered a pricy material but has be helpful when creating either a smooth, sturdy surface on foam armour or props or useful when it is used on its own to form these pieces.

Its usually heated up and moulded into the desired shape and this makes it easy to keep reusing the same piece of worbla over and over again when you make a mistake.



EVA foam: Like Worbla this is another common material used by cosplayers when it comes to making armour and props however its a little harder to make it look more intricate hence the use of it with either foam clay or worbla to create more detailed pieces

EVA foam usually comes in rolls and varying thickness and is considered a cheaper material than worbla however unlike worbla if a mistake is made you may need to start over again with more foam. It's shape can be manipulated through heat making it comfortable to wear.



Foam Clay: a

wonderful product that has many applications in cosplay. It is lightweight, affordable and completely mouldable making it a go to for a number of projects.

Once it dries it can be sanded, primed and painted as any other high density foam can. It also dries to 1/3 of its original weight which is valuable in cosplay.

It can be used through a variety of ways which include; sculpting, moulds and even filling gaps in eva foam. A cheaper alternative to Worbla but unlike worbla it won't make your foam pieces as sturdy but its a cheaper alternative when it comes to creating intricate details. **Glue:** Every cosplayers best friend, whether you choose to buy a cosplay or make one glue of all types have always come in a pinch to help fix a costume, stick pieces to the costume, etc.

Often when you go to convention its quite normal to see someone bring out superglue, a hotglue gun, etc just to fix part of their costume. This is due to costumes always wanting to fall apart due to the weather, crowds, people bumping into you or even just because the costume felt like it.

Alot of cosplayers will have different types of strong adhesive like contact cement, superglue, hot glue and even school glue. Its very useful, cheap and easy to find and many homes will already have these.





Stage 2: gathering materials and lots of experimenting

After planning out what a cosplayer needs for a costume, and list out their budget it will be time to look for materials. There is a number of places that cosplayers search for their materials, depending on where you live, one may go to a large carft store which provides fabric, foam, glue, and more.

Others will go online and order it through sites like Amazon, shoppee and even aliexpress. However not all materials can be found on these online sites so many will turn to popular prop makers or cosplayer that sell their own line of materials either in physical stores or online stores to get the required material.

This also ensures that anyone using the material is good because when they know its what someone popular uses they are most likely to trust it more as well as using past experiences to decide what material is best. When it comes to buying materials and sorting out a budget, its always best to buy extra as well as set an extra budget incase you make a mistake. However bigger mistakes can be avoided when experiments are carried out, this is usually done with materials that you would either have at home already or with extremely cheap materials which you know you won't be needing. Costs can also be cut down when part of a costume can be used from old clothes whihc are obviously best found at thirft stores, these help save so much money and time.

Best places to buy a costume or gather materials

With the invention of the internet this has made gathering materials and finding the best shop so much easier and finding cheaper alternatives are also easier to come by. So where are some of the best places to find mateials or buy costumes?

Online stores:

online stores like Shopee, Lazada, Aliexpress and Amazon are the best places to find materials or even costumes, this also works well you can read reviews and gain an idea of what the costume would be like.

They're also the best places to compare prices for materials and costumes making it easier to find things based on the set budget.

amazon

listreet T

ebay

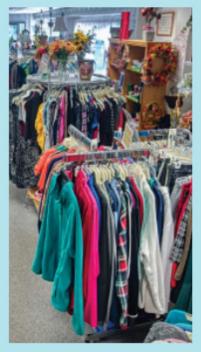
Facebook and

Instagram: If you were to go into facebook groups or look at instagram accs you will find that there are plenty that only sell materials like foam or adhesives but also costumes that are new or even second hand. Prehaps you would want to commission someone instead to make a costume or prop, these people are easily found through facebook groups and Instagram accs that specialise in crafting or costumes or cosplay.



Thrift stores: Not all parts of a costume need to be handmade, sometimes you may find that a costume may require a simple article of clothing such as a hoodie or jacket, keeping to your budget would be easier and modifications can be made without fear of wasting too much money if you were to buy from thrift stores.

Plus you may find an article of clothing which you found to be expensive in store or online to be sold in a thrift store for a lot cheaper.



Craft stores: Craft stores like Spotlight are great for finding a variety of materials, however they will be expensive, depending on what you buy and where you go.

Though they are expensive it does make it easy to find plenty of materials and supplies however your budget would need to be carefully planned out especially if you are to buy more that what you need in fear of making a mistake.



Stage 3: Creating the costume

Once the first 2 stages of creating a costume is done and all experimenting is done, you can start on creating the final pieces. Depending on how intricate or big the final costume is it could take up to 4-5 months to create however there have been cases where a cosplayer has created an intricate costume within 3-7 days, This would be called a con crunch where a last minute costume will be decided on just before a convention and cosplayers will rush to gather their materials and create the pieces.

At this point a budget will be harder to be kept to so its advice especially if this is the first costume you design to start months in advance so that if there are any issues there is time to fix it. When creating cosplay pieces like armour pieces and article of clothes its always best to make them slightly bigger that what you need, this way if its too big you can take it in because if its too small it will be harder to add to the materials, and this ensures that you won't have to buy any more materials or supplies as you've already bought extra.

The main thing is to take it slow, keep refering to the references and the sketches and breakdowns to make sure you are on the right track as well as looking up tutotials on youtube to get a better idea of how things can be done easier.



During the time of creating the costume it also includes looking and styling wigs to suit the character you want to cosplay, like the materials and costume wigs are easy to find through online stores and social media groups. During this stage many cosplayers will also practice the type of makeup they will use for the final result, this is usually called costest and makeup test. This allows the cosplayer to get a better idea of what the final look will be like.



Stage 4: final adjustments and completion

Once the entire costume is assembled you should be able to try it on and decide on any final adjustments such as adding colour to certain areas, adjusting the style of the costume, removing or adding to it or even changing a part of it entirely.

Once the final adjustments are decided on then a cosplayer will begin to make this adjustments and clean up the costume so that it will be ready for a convention, event or photoshoot.

After that a final try on is done to ensure that everything looks ok, its sometimes during this final part that cosplayers may notice that something may be missing or that a part isn't fixed properly and therefore they can make the quick fix and once thats done the cosplay is complete.

The main thing to remember when creating a costume is to not give up half way or leave it too long before completing it as your motivation for it may fade and it will sit in the corner for a long time. Once the cosplay is completed many cosplayers will choose to remake it after a while and this is usually afte they have learnt on what they could improve and find ways to make the process more efficent and find that the newer updated version of their costume may be better than the first one they made.



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