



# Cosplay for All

A How-to Programming Guide for Beginners

# Quick quick... what is cosplay?

## cosplay

### noun

cos·play | \ 'kăz-,plā

### Definition of *cosplay*

The activity or practice of dressing up as a character from a work of fiction (such as a comic book, video game, or television show). Sometimes people are miscast in life. They may appear to be dentists or clerks, but deep down they are actually fierce swordsmen or goddesses with devastating sex appeal. These true selves can emerge in the world of *cosplay*, the practice of impersonating characters from anime, manga, Japanese video games, and other realms of fiction. - *Mother Jones*, November/December 2007

# Example Project: DIY Wands (30 min)

Time needed: 1 hour

## Supplies:

- Bamboo chopsticks/skewers (points cut off) or ¼" dowling cut to 10" lengths
- Hot glue guns and glue sticks
- Beads, small stones, small shells, fake gems, etc.
- Acrylic paint: brown, gold, silver, purple, red, black, white, etc.

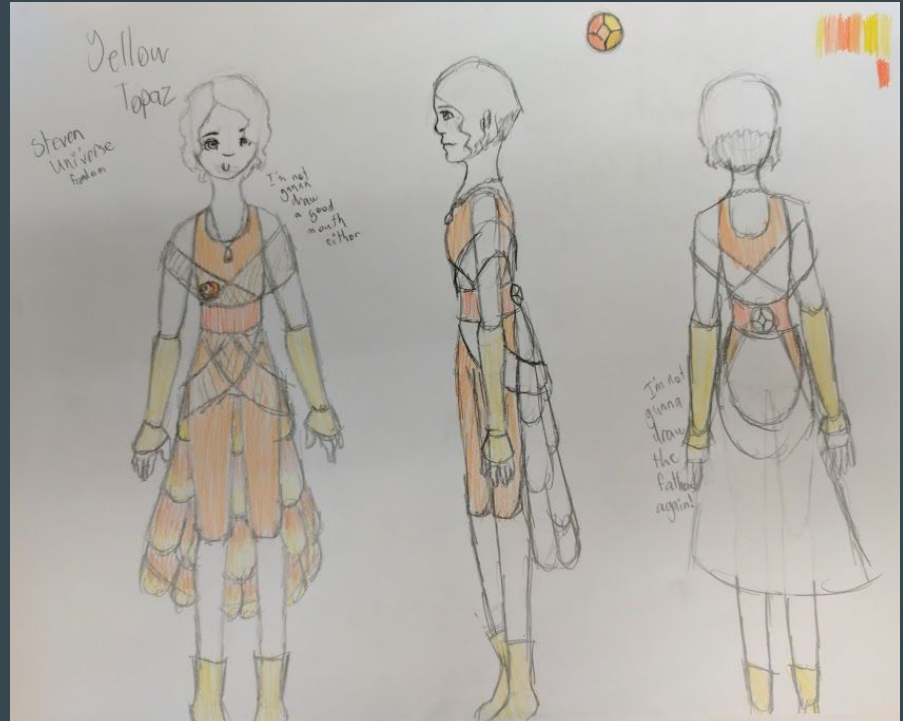
## Steps:

- Coat wooden wand base with hot glue until it resembles a wand
- Add embellishments
- Paint
- Wizard duel



# Cosplay Design & Sewing Lab

- Hosted at three different libraries, presented three different ways.
- Focused on design-thinking.
- Participants start with a reference image, learn a little about garment construction/reading patterns, and then move into the planning and construction states.







Patterns





Construction



# Cosplay Contests

- No crafting supplies needed
- Contestants supply their own costume... but how much?
- Categories & time limits
- Prizes
- Photography



# Guest Speakers



Twin Fools  
@twinfoolscosplay



Nova Vandorwolf  
@FDPNovaVandorwolf



Shiro Cosmetics  
[www.shirocosmetics.com](http://www.shirocosmetics.com)



# Guest Speakers



Cosplay repair station

<https://cosplayrepair.wordpress.com/>



Cosplay judge

or sewing/cosplay/crafting enthusiast

# Guest Speakers



Volunteers present an intro to  
cosplay & con-etiquette



Roundtable / Meet-up

# So Your Community Wants a Cosplay Program

- How do you know if there's interest?
  - That wonderful coincidence when people specifically ask for cosplay-related programming.
  - If no one is requesting specifically, it's time to talk to your patrons.
    - Do your patrons love comics? Anime? Books about costuming & sewing? Crafting things? You may have... cosplayers!





# Pitching to Stakeholders

- What are the values of running a cosplay program?
  - Can be run as a “maker” program
  - Teaches a variety of skills:
    - Sewing
    - Crafting
    - Budgeting
    - Photography
    - Research skills
    - Sneaky STEM skills
      - Critical thinking / Problem-solving
      - Reinforces math skills, measuring 2D to 3D



# Example Project: Masks (30 min.)

## Craft Foam Mask

Time needed: 1-2 hours

### Supplies:

- Aluminum foil
- Packing tape
- Permanent marker
- Craft foam sheets
- Hot glue or contact cement
- Embellishments

### Steps:

- Using the aluminum foil, make a mold of the top half of your face and reinforce with packing tape.
- Using the permanent marker, draw the outline of your mask.
- Cut out the mask shape and make sure that it still fits your face well and adjust if necessary
- Using scissors, make cuts into the mask until it lies flat. You are creating a pattern template.
- Once you have pieces that will lay flat, transfer to craft foam and cut out.
- Using hot glue or contact cement (more difficult) glue the craft foam seams together to recreate the curves of the original foil mask. Adjust if necessary.
- Paint, decorate, add embellishments.

## Tulle Masquerade Mask

Time needed: 1 hour (plus drying time)

### Supplies:

- Tulle
- Plastic wrap or wax paper
- Fabric paint or colored hot glue
- Template/mask design
- Ribbon

### Steps:

- Set your design on the table
- Cover with plastic wrap or wax paper and secure with tape
- Place tulle over design
- Trace design with fabric paint
- Let dry overnight
- Trim edges of tulle
- Attach ribbons to secure mask in place

# Pitching to Stakeholders

- What are the values of running a cosplay program?
  - Community engagement
    - Cosplayers meet other cosplayers
    - Program can highlight your collection
    - Community members may help lead/present
  - Embrace pop culture
  - Cultural sensitivity / awareness
    - Learn about cosplaying as a character of a different race or culture - what's okay?





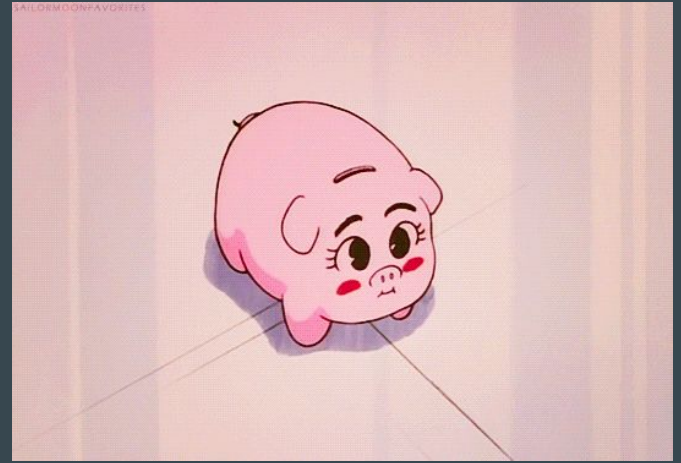
# Capacity

- Is running a cosplay program something you're comfortable with doing yourself?
- If you need a guest speaker, consider these options:
  - Community members
    - Do you have any patrons / volunteers who are avid cosplayers?
  - Professional cosplayers
    - Check in with local conventions to see who is attending, leading sessions, and if they have any recommendations.
    - Emerald City Comic-Con is very librarian-friendly!
  - Local sewing / craft stores
    - Pattern companies are producing cosplay patterns. You can also sometimes find fabric marketed for cosplay (\$\$\$).



# Finding Funding

- Cosplay programs can be very expensive or very inexpensive.
  - Small-scale options: make a prop/accessory, doesn't involve major purchases.
  - Larger scale options: costuming, you may need to buy or borrow sewing machines.
- Have participants bring their own materials.
  - A session and space to just work (bonus if you can supply machines/materials).
- Purchase items that can be reused.
  - Patterns that can be traced by participants and used again.
- No funding? Take your programming a different direction:
  - Cosplay discussions/presentations, pattern-drafting, photography how-to, etc.
- Take a look at your organization's goals to see where you program fits.



# Designing Your Cosplay Program

- Who is your target audience?
  - Consider age, skill level, interest, etc.
- Time available
  - Making stuff takes time... and equipment!
  - Is this program a one-time thing or a series?
- What resources do you have?
  - Funding
  - Crafting supplies
  - Equipment
  - Staff / volunteers
  - Expertise





# Additional Tutorials & Resources:

Plague Doctor Mask (craft foam): <https://makezine.com/2016/08/19/make-this-amazing-plague-doctors-mask/>

Batgirl Cowl (cardboard): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAWbHuJMEgg>

Tulle Masquerade Mask: <https://www.instructables.com/id/Masquerade-Mask-DIY/>

501st Legion: <https://www.501st.com/>

Rebel Legion: <http://www.rebellegion.com/>

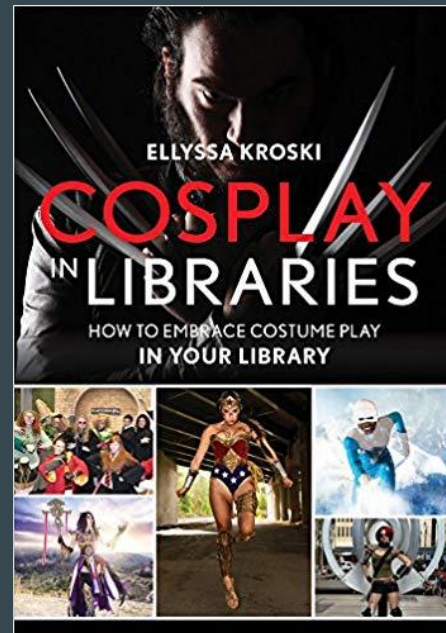
What is peace bonding?

Any prop weapons are inspected for safety and then clearly marked by staff as safe.

Brightly colored tape/tags/zip ties can not be removed by participants during the event.

# Resources

- **Cosplay in Libraries: How to Embrace Costume Play in Your Library** by Ellyssa Kroski
- **The Costume Making Guide: Creating Armor and Props for Cosplay** by Svetlana Quindt
- **Epic Cosplay Costumes: A Step-by-Step Guide to Making and Sewing Your Own Costume Designs** by Kristie Good
- **The Hero's Closet: Sewing for Cosplay and Costuming** by Gillian Conahan
- **Make: Props and Costume Armor** by Shawn Thorsson



# Questions?



# Contact Information

Siri Hiltz, Washington State Library  
[siri.hiltz@sos.wa.gov](mailto:siri.hiltz@sos.wa.gov)



Bonnie Svitavsky, Puyallup Public Library  
[bsvitavsky@ci.puyallup.wa.us](mailto:bsvitavsky@ci.puyallup.wa.us)

