



Cosplay as Inspiration for Wearables Research

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Cosplay as a Research Domain

Wearable technology has a decades-long history in research. While it is well received on runways or as items for special events and performance, it is struggling to be integrated into people's lives beyond gadgets or smart wristbands. Cosplay is a cultural phenomenon, which at first may sound very fantasy, but items used in cosplay are minimised to be used and integrated into people's daily life. In this paper, we survey existing literature to understanding the cosplay culture and reflect on how this could shed light on designing wearable technology that could be used on a day-to-day basis.

Cosplay is more than just wearing or being a favourite character. Cosplaying process comprises creating a costume, performing in it, and cherishing it afterwards as a meaningful memory/item. Cosplayers construct

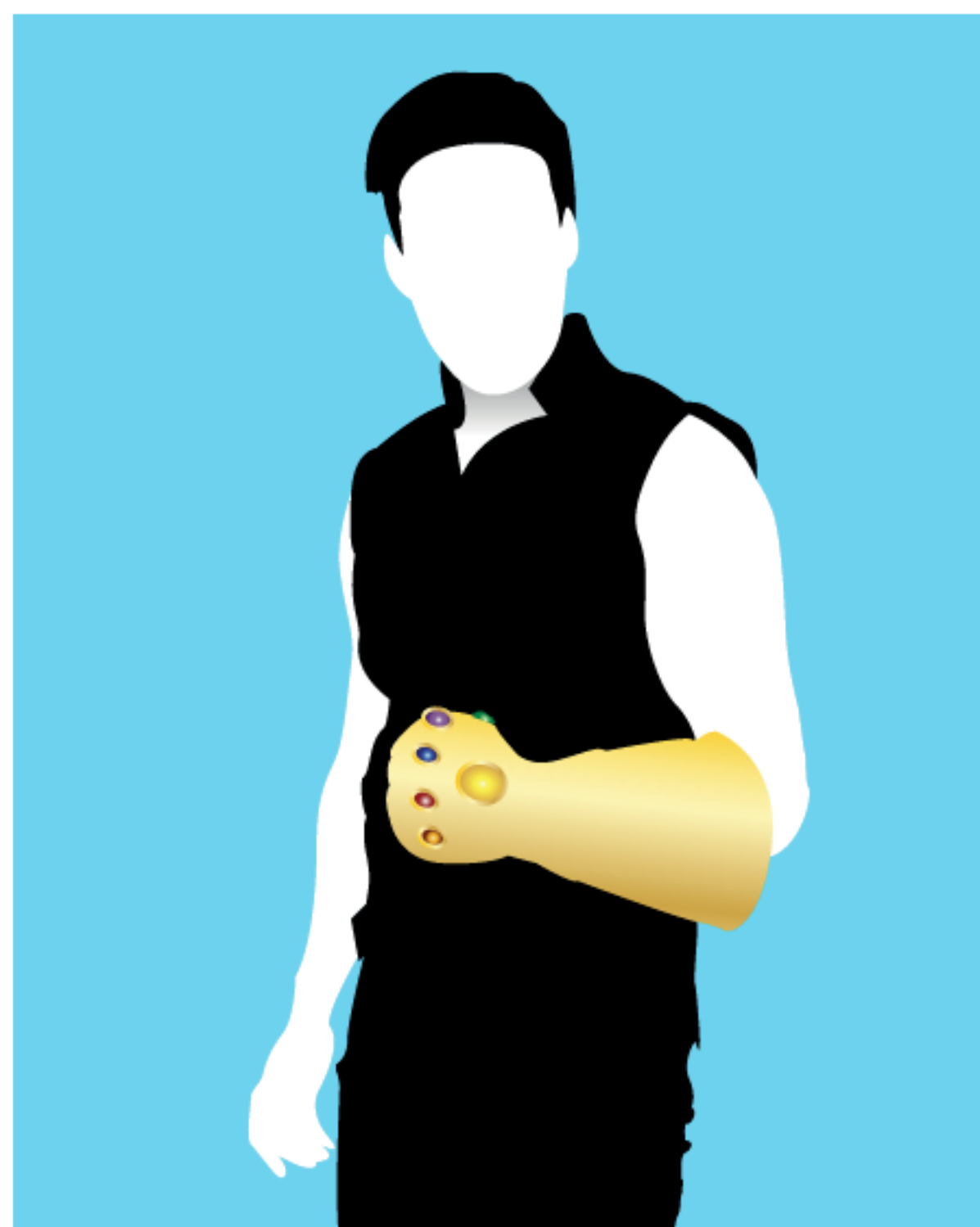
their own identity by associating themselves with fictional characters and embodying them. This also applies to imaginative, alternative and ideal identities. We found that self-expression, group cohesion, and personalisation are relevant aspects emerge within the cosplay culture that could be highlighted more in designing wearable technology.

From Niche to Everyday Wear

The goal of most cosplayers is not to create a look-a-like, but to express their own identity through a costume. Besides full costumes, accessories are used by fans to signify their affiliations. Subtle resemblances are suitable for everyday wear. The [pictures below](#) shows the process of an item adaptation from fiction to cosplay to everyday wear.



The objects of cosplay are fictional characters from films, video games, comic books etc.



Cosplayers create their own costumes that resemble or are inspired by a fictional character.



Accessories are used by fans to signify their affiliations. Subtle resemblances are suitable for everyday wear.