

Olivia Shepard

[Ocs7qe@virginia.edu](mailto:Ocs7qe@virginia.edu)

Spring 2022 Minigrant Proposal

## Cosplay and Edits as New Media Art and Self-Portraiture

When most think of studio art, they envision Michelangelo's *David* or Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. These canonized, western pieces are culturally legitimized and institutionalized in the museum space. However, there are many forms of art that are neglected, even ridiculed, by society, and surely far from being considered a legitimate art form -- one of those being the practice of cosplay and edits.

Cosplay and Edits fall under a large umbrella category of digital fan art practices, one of many art practices born through and for the digital age. Cosplaying is roughly defined as costuming an established character from one's favorite media/fandom, an original character (OC), or established characters from fandom that the cosplayer has tweaked or "bent" (as the fans would say) in some form or fashion (e.g., gender bend, race bend, nationality bend, etc.). Edits are the practice of creating a costume, wearing it, photographing or filming oneself in it, and adding visual/animated effects to the photos to make them appear more life-like using Photoshop, Lightroom, or After Effects. Cosplay and edits are often practices of self-portraiture that allow the creator to explore and embody their favorite fandom, fantasy world, or genre.

Edits are a thriving art practice on popular social media platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, and Tumblr. It provides a positive creative space for the works of women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other disadvantaged groups. One cosplayer I am very inspired by is [@Snitchery](#), as well creators from #pottergram, the Harry Potter Cosplay/Edits Community on Instagram (see [@joyceylon.tea](#) and [@magic.her.way](#)).

I have been wanting to cosplay and create edits to explore the ways these online fan art practices can become viewed as a legitimate form of collage/animation and New Media; however, I lack the resources to do so. For these reasons, I would like to ask the Miller Arts Scholars program to fund a short series of cosplay edits I'd like to create.

This series will comprise of around 4-5 edits of me cosplaying different fantasy creatures from fandoms I am interested in (e.g., a Tiefling from *Dungeons and Dragons*, a student at Hogwarts inspired from *Harry Potter*, a fairy inspired by Grimm Brother fairytales, a vampire from *Twilight*, etc.). I will gather clothing materials and assemble costumes through the avenues cosplayers often do, such as through Etsy.com and local thrift stores. I will then use special effects makeup supplies such as face paint, liquid latex, and fantasy prosthetic pieces to aid in the fantasy. I will set up a photoshoot space and take these portraits using the green screen room and photography equipment available in the Robertson Media Center in Clemson Library. Lastly, I will edit these photos in Photoshop/After Effects to add a mythological background (if necessary) and any sort of fantasy/magic into the photos (e.g., fairy dust, magic from a wand, fire from my hands, etc.). Attached to the bottom of this proposal are two examples of me creating these types of cosplay/edits in the

past. I aim to make them of even nicer quality with the help of the program's funding.

As a New Media art student studying graphic design, digital collaging, and animation, I believe working on this project will allow me to explore my art skills through an emerging and under-appreciated art form. It could also allow me to hone my skills and perhaps be commissioned to create edits for others in the future. Overall, this topic and practice is of high interest to me, and I would be more than grateful if the program were to grant me a mini grant this spring to create this type of art. Thank you for your time in reading this.

Here is the estimated timeline I have for completing this series:

Timeline:

- Now-mid march: sketch poses to have finalized concept/idea for the 4-5 edits
- Mid-march to end of march: order/purchase supplies to create edits
- April: Create edits (costume assembling, photographing, editing)
- May: post edits and add to portfolio

Here is my estimated budget:

Budget:

- Mehron [Special Effects Makeup Kit](#) -- \$99
- Athena [Face paint kit](#) -- \$25
- Costume for edits -- ~75\$ per costume\*\* x 4 -- \$300
- [After Effects/Photoshop special effects](#) -- \$75 (1 month subscription to actionfx.com plus Pond5.com individual purchases ranging from \$5-\$15 each)

Final Cost:

- \$499.00

\*\*estimated from a shopping cart I compiled consisting of a shirt, skirt, socks, shoes, and sweater vest

Based on my research, these supplies will allow me to create the highest quality edits, incorporating the ideas of both cosplay/edits and New Media art.

Anything over this budget I will purchase with my own money.

Examples of my own cosplay/edits:

