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I Am That: Cosplay

My research focuses on how cosplayers in Taiwan appropriate manga and anime as source material in their own re-creative activities. Is the practice of cosplay and doujinshi merely a mindless idolism, and a meaningless act of copying from the originals? I develop my study of the practice of doujinshi in accordance with Henry Jenkins' research on fan culture. Contrary to the mainstream view that stigmatizes doujinshi practice as plagiarism, Jenkins believes that the values of fan arts, and their studies of texts are no less significant than those produced by the academy. In this thesis, I discuss actual examples of doujinshi in Taiwan and Japan.

I have created two video shorts as a part of this practice-led research, which aims to demonstrate how cosplayers' initiatives become motivation and material for their creations. My practice, inspired by that of cosplayers, appreciates the comic elements in cosplay. Drawing upon theories of mimicry, as articulated above, to interpret cosplay, my artworks become an imminent critique of both cosplay and its critics. The two video shorts are: I am That: Cosplay, a 7'32" experimental video and Into Cosplay, a 7'29" documentary video.