

International Costumer

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November - December 2018



Our Art, Our History

Photos courtesy of Jamie Butler

President's Message

By Marianne Pease

It's autumn now, the most glorious time of the year when the leaves start turning (for most of us) and Halloween brought out all the friends, family, and acquaintances with last minute requests for custom costumes!

First of all, I'd like to give a short update on the status of the Archives gallery. As you know, it's been down for quite some time and getting it modernized is quite the project. Our tech team working on it are still working! They have a virtual server set up and are testing proof-of-concept software at the moment. While things are progressing slowly, progress is happening!

I'd also like to welcome the *twelve* new members who have joined the NoVA chapter. The recruitment blitz through Facebook and Meetup brought out a lot of new faces, and a lot of enthusiasm. Interest in the chapter has also grown this month and as NoVA plans and holds a variety of events in the future, I anticipate seeing the chapter become a driving force within the local costuming community here. I believe that all of our chapters have the ability to grow and open their doors to the wider costuming community too by reaching out to existing groups, participating in their events, holding ICG events of our own, and above all - let people know we exist!



Korean Gumiho with Photography by Tony Kazmierski

Join us on Slack - if you need an invitation, please don't hesitate to email me at icg-president@costume.org.

Join us on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/315077302329938/>

Don't forget to tag us when you're posting your costumes on Instagram or elsewhere, and follow the tags too!
#internationalcostumersguild #icgcostume #costumecon

From the Editor

By Vicky Assarattanakul

The year is already drawing to a close. It feels like we just welcomed 2018, and now we are looking toward the holiday season and a new year. This year has been packed with costuming events and excitement. From DragonCon to flooding to solving technical issues, our members have seen quite a year!

Although summer tends to be the height of convention season, there are still a lot of events in the Midwest throughout late autumn. In October, I had the opportunity to attend Archon in St. Louis and see members of the St. Louis Costumers Guild. The convention is well-known for its masquerade, and this year there was a fabulous costuming programming track. Members of MACS make the five-hour drive down each year because of how much we enjoy the convention and the company.

Locally, we also have a large Steampunk convention, Teslacon, in November. This convention is a bit unique in that it is an "immersion" convention. Many of the attendees create a character and spend the weekend roleplaying to their liking. That is, of course, not required, but most attendees are dressed up in costume. There are



Vicky Assarattanakul, Catie Cherwin, and Shelly Kumar at Archon 42. Photo by Mike Evans.

typically a handful of costume-related panels, and even maker's workshops. Steampunk is a genre that lends itself to creativity, and I am always blown away by what people do with their costumes.

As you are doing your online shopping this holiday season, please consider using the ICG's Amazon smile link to make purchases. It does not cost you anything additional, and Amazon donates a portion of the sale to our organization. The link is:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1656188>

Costume-Con 38

By Manu Hénault

New rates are coming for Costume-Con 38 on January 1st, 2019. You have up to December 31st, 2018 to register at the current rate. The holiday season is coming and offering a membership can be a good idea if you are still looking for something original to give.

Here is the list with the upcoming rates (all prices are in Canadian Dollars):

- >> Attending Membership \$115 (Currently \$85)
- >> Supporting Membership \$30 (Still the same)
- >> Youth (14-17 at the time of the convention) \$55 (Currently \$50)
- >> Child (6-13 at the convention) \$10 (Will remain the same)
- >> Upgrade from Supporting to Youth \$25 (Currently \$20)
- >> Upgrade from Supporting to Attending \$80 (Currently \$55)

You may register at <http://costumecon38.org/en/registration/>

Costume-Con 38 will be held from March 13th to March 16th, 2020 at the Hotel Bonaventure located in downtown Montreal. The hotel is easily accessible by car, train, metro and bus. The hotel rooms as well as the facilities are also wheelchair

accessible. More info on the hotel at <http://hotelbonaventure.com>

Montreal has many museum about art, history and culture and a lot of them are easily accessible by bus or metro. You can also visit the city for its architecture and many other attractions. You can find more info here: <https://www.mtl.org/en/what-to-do>

Also, did we mention that Costume-Con 38 is taking place during the Sugar shack season as well as during St-Patrick Day's weekend? ;-)

Visit us at www.costumecon38.org or follow us on Facebook (#CC38MTL), Instagram (@costumecon38) or Twitter (@38costume).



Explorations & Transformations: Voices in My Head A Reception at the Firehall Gallery

By Guy Brescia

On Saturday evening, October 6th, artists, family, and lifelong friends celebrated the unique artwork and costume design of Lisa Ashton in the Firehall Gallery of the Washington Street Artists' Cooperative in Charles Town, West Virginia.

"People tell me their hardest struggle is just getting an idea in the first place. For me, I make what the Voices in my Head tell me to make."



Back in Time in Sepia. Photo courtesy of Guy Brescia.

Lisa, a local artist and costume designer, and member of the Washington Street Artists' Cooperative, displayed some of her most intriguing and minutely detailed full-size costumes and pieces of art, providing a true visual exploration. Lisa's stage-worn costumes and quilt patterns, spanning a 30 year career, ranged from period authentic (as in her grandmother's day-after-wedding dress) to hip (as in the Harley/biker/wizard adorned denim jacket worn in her youth) to fantastic (see blue beaded "Kali" dress or the falcon hood of the Egyptian god Horus). Her quilt interpretation of van Gough's *Starry Night* as seen through a wood latticed window is another example of her blended approach.

Also on display were examples of her intricate bead art. Lisa sheepishly admits that she has about 900 pounds of glass beads in her house! She explains that she often acquires materials in bulk, but she also acquires unique items in antique shops and flea markets, or as gifts from friends or relatives. Lisa uses many of the materials in her finished works.

"I've actually been beading since I was 10 years old...I'd done hand-woven and loomed bead pieces, beaded embroidery – which is sewing, and bead crochet and netting. In the last few years, I've included



Photo courtesy of Guy Brescia.

quilting techniques as well as 3D sculptural techniques."

"My tools include everything from hot-glue guns to saws."

Lisa has been a Physician's Assistant (PA-C) for more than 30 years and has an adult son and daughter. But, she explains: "I leave my work at work. Home is where my creative life begins. It's how I enter the world, how I live in the world, how I escape the world."

When asked when she finds time for her artistic endeavors, she explains that she uses any free time she encounters: "I carry the smaller ones around and work on (them) during meetings or waiting times. Larger projects, like costumes, often have many different parts, assemblies, and techniques involved. A costume may require making a dress or clothing, then decorating it, making accessories, making or



Elder Days. Photo courtesy of Guy Brescia.

modifying a wig and headpiece, then shoes and jewelry to match.”

The attention to detail in all of her pieces requires the observer to linger and truly inspect each piece for fear that they may have missed some joke or whimsical touch contained therein. Lisa says she often has several pieces in various stages at any given time. “I like mixed methods, and developed ways to make my work more textural.”

Lisa also repurposes materials and does restorations. “I might be restoring an antique quilt or making one out of ‘rescued’ vintage quilt pieces, or I might be...restoring an antique parasol that might need to be re-covered and hardware repaired.”

Many artists, designers, musicians, and other creative professionals can tend to be secretive about their methods and their knowledge. Lisa Ashton is quite different. She considers passing on what she has learned through hard work, trial and error a “sacred duty” – “I LOVE teaching others to quilt or bead, and to pass on what I know. There have been plenty of people who will not allow photos of their work or keep their techniques a secret, but I’m not one.”

Lisa’s art ranges in size from approximately 5’ x 7; for her quilts and wall hangings to jewelry pieces made of stone, beads, macramé, metal and her elaborate glass bead work. Each combines many techniques such as sewing and embroidery to bead glass arrangement, to painting and airbrushing.

Perhaps most interesting of all, many of the pieces on display were labeled “NFS” or Not for Sale! These are her most cherished pieces, many of which are displayed in her

home and provide inspiration for new creations. Many other pieces sold “OTS” – On the Spot!

The method Lisa employs when creating a new piece is often one of evolution, as she often has no idea what the finished work will look like. Her work does portray a truly free and open stream-of-consciousness approach as many different themes, materials, and techniques are employed (see



Photo courtesy of Guy Brescia.



Photo courtesy of Guy Brescia.

her “Garden Hat”). This makes her work a must-see due to its universal appeal.

“Sometimes a beautiful geode or found object will inspire me to build a piece around it; sometimes a particular combination of colors or textures will start the process. For costumes, sometimes it’s a historical period, or an antique photo, or a weird pun. I always put my own “twist” on it, whether funny or poignant or whimsical. The same with my quilts – I made a crazy quilt called “The Seasons According to Me,” with different blocks about coffee, my cat,

my cabin, rainbows and unicorns, guitars, et al.”

Lisa explains: “I want (viewers of my art) to recognize a sense of adventure, and humor and whimsy; a spectrum of colors and interest in history and a sense of atmosphere. Does this world get me excited, or do I feel relaxed? Does it remind me of something, or point me to a new perspective?”

When asked if her artistic style has changed over time, she explains “I would say that I have had some costumes which I call ‘quantum leap costumes,’ and those were the ones which were innovative and which I discovered or developed something important. My catalyst is often pushing the envelope of what is possible or imaginable. Sometimes it’s a technique that I learned after seeing someone else’s work, and I’ve been fortunate to find mentors who were willing to teach me. That was how I learned airbrush painting, silk painting, bead crochet, and T-shirt quilting.”

“I consider myself an artist, whether I’m building a costume, Victorian underwear, a beaded world, a wall quilt, or rebinding an antique book. I want to redefine the meaning of ‘fine art.’”



Lisa at a Czech Bead Warehouse. Photo courtesy of Guy Brescia.

Lisa Ashton’s costume work is on display at the Firehall Gallery through October 2018, and many of her other pieces are on permanent display at the Washington Street Artists’ Cooperative Gallery at 108 N. George Street, Charles Town, WV 25414 (301-724-2090), <http://washingtonartists.org/gallery/> . She can also be reached at lisaashton35@gmail.com .

Come have a glimpse into the world and life of Lisa Ashton, tho’ be thee ware, for here be dragons!

Arda Wigs Review

By Vicky Assarattanakul

I've recently started doing reviews on my personal blog about costuming products. One of my favorite things to do is review wigs. I would like to share with you all, a review from a well-known wig-supplier, Arda Wigs. If you'd like to see the video version of this review, it can be found here: <https://youtu.be/Irx21mJdq0>



First, like most of their wigs, the Aurora Borealis wig comes neatly packaged to minimize tangling. It also comes with a postcard with care instructions.

The wig cap fits Western heads nicely. The wig fibers are thick, good quality, and heat resistant. That does mean this wig could be styled with some low heat. I would check out their website for more tips for styling this wig.

I actually own two of these wigs, so that should give you a bit of a hint as to how much I love it. I own one for “dry” mermaid events/photoshoots and one for “wet” events/photoshoots. That might seem silly, but the wig care involved when you are going underwater gets a bit more intense, so it is helpful to have one that is “dry stuff only.”

At my most recent photoshoot, this wig was mistaken for my real hair. So it certainly looks high enough quality to be human hair.

If you're a costumer who does media recreation, chances are pretty good that you know about Arda's reputation. But if you aren't, or don't – they are truly my favorite supplier. I have been costuming for well over a decade now, and I have seen wig companies rise and fall. To date, I have not found a wig company that matches Arda's quality. Their customer service is also amazing. I had an emergency wig situation once, and they were happy to accommodate a rush request, but forewarning – that is not typically something they offer. If you live in the Chicago area, you can contact them to pick up a wig in person.

I started costuming back when styling a wig was a significant feat. If you wanted to get a wig into a ponytail, you had to pull it up yourself and stub it, and pray you weren't

screwing it up, because wig hair doesn't grow back! Some people still style their wigs this way, and that's great! But Arda does have options for wigs that are already in an up do or easy to style.



The “cosplay” wig line typically runs somewhere from \$30-\$45 USD, and while that might seem expensive compared to options on Amazon or Halloween stores, the quality is worth every cent. Arda also offers a more expensive lacefront wig line. Their customers are not just costumers; they also provide wigs for drag and Lolita fashion.

So there you have it, I'm a huge fan of Arda Wigs, and they are my go-to for my costumes. The Aurora Borealis is my absolute favorite.

The Costume Exhibit at 2018 DragonCon

By A.R. Davenport

Edited by Melina Chestley

Over the last dozen years or more, DragonCon* has been beefing up its costuming fan track. Among the improvements (workmanship judging, tech rehearsals and expanded costuming workshops) is the addition of a costume exhibit room.



The main dealers/exhibitor spaces at DragonCon are all commercial, so a limited number of costumes in the past could only be displayed in the costuming track room. But



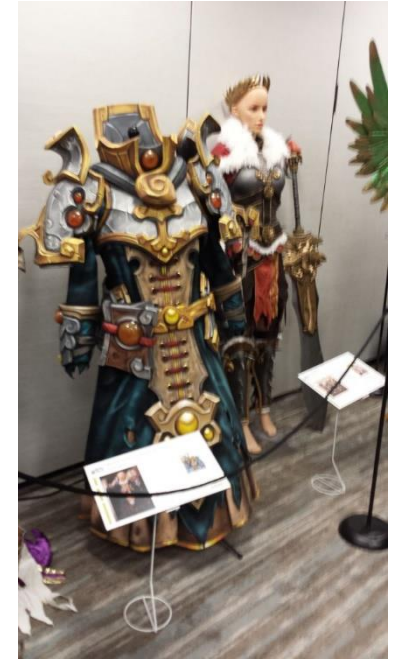
in the past three years, a costume exhibit room has been added to the Costuming fan track in the expanded space for track programming on the 3rd floor of the Hilton (one of the five main convention hotels).



The 2018 exhibit featured a handsome collection of 50+ fan made costumes. The room was about the size of a small panel room, about 40 by 55 ft., and it could be locked after hours. During the con the costume exhibit was open 10-12 hours a day with a person at the door keeping a count of the number of people in the room, keeping it below a comfortable maximum. There was generally a line at the door, but it



moved reasonably quickly. After hours, the room was locked and some of the costumes were alarmed to ensure that nothing went missing.



Each costume was mounted on a mannequin with some smaller pieces and props displayed on tables. And a plaque was displayed next to each costume listing:

- - name and origin of the costume
- - information about its construction
- - information about the costumer
- - photo of the costumer
- - photo of a person wearing the costume.

The costumer must provide these in time for the DragonCon staff to have the plaques printed.



Planning for the costume exhibit begins early, at least 6 months before the convention. Invitations to display a costume are sent to an e-list made up of costume display participants from previous DragonCons, Costume/Cosplay contest winners (DragonCon sponsors multiple different contests over the weekend) and costume track programming participants (panelists, workshop instructors, costume exhibitors). Anyone may also apply to have their costume included in the exhibit by submitting an application with photos and information about the costume to the DragonCon track e-mail address.** Each person is responsible for transporting their costume(s) to/from the convention, as well as set-up and tear-down, though help from the costuming

track staff is available for that.

A visit to the costume display is well worth the time for DragonCon attendees.**

*DragonCon (dragoncon.org) is a large multi-media convention held every Labor Day in downtown Atlanta, Georgia. It has over 85,000 attendees according to CNN, <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2018/09/entertainment/dragon-con-cnnphotos-trnd/> whose Centennial Park headquarters is actually six blocks away from DragonCon's five main hotels and exhibition building. DragonCon is run by a for-profit



corporation and features media guests, along with over 3 dozen fan tracks of programming, staffed by many hundreds of volunteers.

** The costuming track organizers may be contacted through the e-mail form on their webpage, <http://costuming.dragoncon.org/connect/#email>, or through social media, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Live Journal, Reddit, Instagram, and Pinterest. Or e-mailing Dragonconcostuming@gmail.com.

*** Thanks much for the information provided by Sandy Chapman who worked so hard on the costuming display and patiently answered my questions during tear-down.



About the ICG

Membership Benefits

ICG membership benefits include participation in local Chapters and in Special Interest Groups, voting rights, eligibility for grants, online forums, learning and volunteer opportunities, and the International Costumer.

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<http://www.costume.org/>

Join us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/internationalcostumers>

Join the ICG-D Yahoo! group for lively discussions on costuming-related topics:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/icg-d>

Amazon Smile link:

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1656188>

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The ICG Group Exemption Letter (GEL)

The ICG is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. U.S. chapters and SIGs can participate in the GEL to share in the tax-exempt status. For information on how to participate in the GEL, please visit <http://www.costume.org/gel/gel.html>.

The International Costumer

The *International Costumer* newsletter is published bi-monthly by the ICG. The current issue is for members only. Back issues are freely available to the costuming community on the ICG website.

Online Submissions

We welcome short costuming articles, book reviews, event reports, and news items. Submit your copy as rtf, doc, docx or txt files to the International Costumer editor: icg-newsletter@costume.org. All graphics formats are accepted.

Contacting the Editor

Please contact the editor to report problems, or to offer comments and suggestions: icg-newsletter@costume.org.

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