

The background of the slide is a light-colored wooden surface with horizontal planks. In the upper left, there are several bright green, serrated leaves. In the upper right, there is a palm frond with long, narrow, pointed leaflets. The text is centered in the lower half of the image.

*All I Have Is My Phone Camera!!*  
Cosplay Photography Edition

Presented by Chris (a.k.a. Alchemist Photographic)

# Topics

- Finding a location at cons
- Composing and framing a photo
- Watching out for lighting
- Posing for portraits
- Working with a phone camera





# Finding a location (1)

- Shade is your friend - look for nice, even lighting (overcast days are also great for this)
- If you can't find shade, find a place where the sun can be placed behind the subject
- Fewer people that can get in your background - less distracting backgrounds = better photos
- Tools for composition - doorways/windows (for framing), stairways/railings/long walls (leading lines), flowers/plants/furniture (to create depth)
- Character fitting - cafes for casual, woods/trees for fantasy




## Finding a location (2)

- Convention spaces e.g. halls and the surrounding areas are usually fair game, no need to worry about permission to use
- Usually surrounding locations e.g. coffee shops are accepting of cosplayers during an event, so buy something and try not to be a nuisance!
- You get a lot more flex using a phone camera to shoot at various locations - make use of it!



# Composition & Framing (1)

- Use negative space to draw attention to subjects
  - Use balance to fix attention being drawn by other prominent objects
  - Search for consistent patterns to use as backgrounds
  - Frame your subject - door frames, windows, planters etc can be used
  - Use focus to draw attention to your subject (portrait mode is your friend!)
  - Provide depth in your photo to draw attention e.g. leading lines
  - Avoid obvious lines passing behind your subject in your image e.g. window frames cutting through heads
- 



# Composition & Framing (2)

- Camera height - perspective matters!
  - Bust level for portraits
  - Waist level for full body
  - Even lower to make people look more imposing
- Try and avoid getting people in the background
- More than 3 colours in the background is what's actually distracting - less is more!

# Example (1) - Negative Space

Example Concept Only -  
Not taken on a phone



@paifecos  
@sakaponin

Photo: @vraitek

# Example (2) - Balance

Example Concept Only -  
Not taken on a phone



@thesparkofrevolution



# Example (3) - Frames

Example Concept Only -  
Not taken on a phone



@nesproxy

# Example (4) - Portrait Mode



@masaharacosplay



@mr\_masamune

# Example (5) - Depth



@boba\_fi



# Posing (1) - General Tips

- Give hands and arms something to do instead of hanging
- Avoid having hands at the same height level
- Mirroring is useful for stronger poses e.g. hands on waist, facing forward
- Watch your posture! Straighten up!
- Use hands and arms to frame or draw attention e.g.
  - Hand on face/hair to draw attention to the face
  - If you're going for aesthetic, hands both handling something like a hair ornament or belt to draw attention to it
- Create a gap between the arm and the body for a more flattering appearance



## Posing (2) - General Tips

- Avoid right angles in legs and arms unless going for a strong look! Keep angles acute!!
- Distribute weight unevenly across the legs
- Relax your hands! Try making a fist then relaxing it without spreading the fingers too much
- Pose the eyes! Looking straight at the camera or off into the distance can affect the look of the image!
- Tilt your head up and move it forward slightly to avoid a double chin
- Turning your body, head or eyes away from the camera can have an effect of soften the image



# Posing (3) - Cosplay Tips

- Avoid pointing props straight at the camera so they don't disappear
- Check loose parts/hair/makeup before getting started are the way you want
  - And check between changing poses, this catches out even the experienced!!!!
- Have reference photos to hand but understand that humans mostly can't contort that way in real life!!

# Example - Posing

Lots of good points here!

- Nice uneven weight distribution on the legs
- Arms are (kinda) busy
- Not right angles
- Arms are different heights
- Hand is relaxed
- Body turned



@cosrai

# Example - Posing with props

Example Concept Only -  
Not taken on a phone

- Props are side on and visible!!
- Arms are at acute angles
- Mirrored pose to project strength



@thesparkofrevolution





# Lighting

- The subject's face ***should*** be the brightest part of the image - except if you have a super bright background!
- Avoid patchy lighting on the face - it's more distracting than you think!
- If it's bright, count down for the shot to avoid squinting eyes!
- Watch for harsh shadows cast by bright light sources
- Shoot at golden hour for softer light and a nicer glow effect
- Overcast days are great for even lighting
- Keep an eye out for light coloured floors and walls which can be used as natural reflectors

# Example - Harsh Lighting



@mr\_masamune

# Example - Soft Lighting



@duality.cosplay



@texdisorder



# Selfies

- Lighting rules still apply
- Try to center yourself in the camera to avoid the widening effect of the wide angle - selfie cameras tend to be wider and make objects look bigger!!!
- Angle higher and further away if possible
- Portrait mode usually works well here too!

# Example - Selfies



@sakaponin  
@yoamiwaii



# Phone Cameras (1) - Pros

- What you see is what you get!
- Fastest path to social media
- Stealth - unlikely to get stopped for doing **professional** photography
- Portrait Mode - Low or fake bokeh (blur), available on most models
  - Worthy mention - Google Camera app ported to other devices
  - <https://www.xda-developers.com/google-camera-port-hub/>



# Phone Cameras (2) - Pros

- Can shoot RAW - uncompressed data (takes more space) but allows for less quality loss when editing
- Photo editing tools are more readily available these days on mobile devices e.g. Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Lightroom, Affinity Photo and Capture One
- Auto-backup to Cloud Storage - never lose your photos!



# Phone Cameras (3) - Limits

- Fixed lens configuration - but now phones have more than 1 lens!
  - Wide - Standard on nearly every phone, just okay
  - Ultrawide - Great for landscapes/massive groups, not for portraits
  - Telephoto - Usually your 2x + mode, great for portraits
- Limited low light support
  - Night Modes - multiple shots to take a picture, need to hold very still
  - Portable lights are an option
- Smaller sensors = less data = lower quality - not necessarily an issue unless you want to blow images up super large





# Phone Cameras (4) - Tools

- Selfie Tripods
  - Small, adds stability, bluetooth triggers, better perspective
- LED video lights
  - Great in low light, use to fill out shadow and brighten face/eyes
  - Can get with USB-C charging and RGB colours

@mr\_masamune



# Phone Only Photos!



@texdisorder

@progenitorphotography




@boba\_fi



@keira\_bella





**Q&A**