



Gibson as Toko from the video game *Super Gaidelic Hour*.



Omi Gibson

COSPLAYER

'I'm really shy,' confesses Omi Gibson. You wouldn't know it from her edgy and often sexy cosplay, which shows she's just as comfortable playing the seductress as she is the psychotic villain.

Gibson, who now models in her native Tokyo, began cosplaying as a little girl, way before she had any idea what cosplay actually was. She was seven or eight years old and smitten with the 1985 Hong Kong horror spoof *Mr Vampire*. She decided to dress up like the movie's *jiangshi* – hopping vampires or zombies from Chinese folklore. 'I think my parents thought I was a pretty strange kid,' she recalls. But that doesn't mean there was resistance against her developing hobby – in fact, 'Now my mum totally wants to try cosplay... When a T-shirt featuring my cosplay went on sale, mum was totally jealous.'

It wasn't until she was thirteen or fourteen that Gibson first attended an event in full cosplay regalia. At a con sponsored by the Japanese gaming magazine *Famitsu*, she dressed as Gillian Seed,

the hard-boiled detective from the *Blade Runner*-inspired game *Snatcher*. Since then, she's been able to switch smoothly between dressing as femmes fatales and as macho males. Gibson often engages in 'crossplay', which is when a cosplayer dresses as someone of a different gender. (A similar twist is 'gender-bending' cosplay, in which a cosplayer flips a character's gender to match their own, modifying the character's appearance and costume along the way.)

Gibson originally worked as an assistant to manga artist Tsukasa Kotobuki, honing her drawing skills and developing a good eye for style and presentation, as well as a strong work ethic. 'It was tough being a manga assistant,' she recalls. 'You wouldn't sleep for two or three days right before the publishing deadline.' She's since traded drawing characters with pencil and paper for bringing them to life with fabric and photos: 'What's appealing about cosplay is that I can show a side of myself that I don't usually.'



Gibson as Cyborg Ninja from the *Metal Gear Solid* series.



Gibson as a Militaires sans Frontières soldier from the *Metal Gear Solid* series.



Gibson as Raiden from the *Metal Gear Solid* series.



Gibson as The Boss from the *Metal Gear Solid* series.