

German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)

## DIJ History and Humanities Study Group



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### Transcultural Potentials of Japanese Fan Work: First Field Results

Examining the interaction of fans with cultural texts, fan studies contribute to the analysis of power structures in the mediatised world. So far, fan studies mainly focus on Anglophone fan cultures. Therefore, fan practices in East Asia, such as *dōjinshi* (self-published magazines that are usually exchanged at specialized events), remain in the periphery of the academic discourse. Academic work on the transcultural potential of fan cultures as conducted by scholars such as Bertha Chin, Lori Morimoto and Sandra Annett suggests that creative fan work is a global phenomenon worthy of further examination.

My research suggests that while transcultural patterns and tropes are visible in Japanese fan work, there are also points of friction that prevent barriers of distribution and availability of Japanese *dōjinshi* from being surmounted. *Dōjinshi* artists continue to resist the digitalization and free dissemination of their works on the internet, which is the main medium for the exchange of narrative fan work in the Anglophone sphere.

In this presentation, I give an overview of the field study that I conducted through participant observation at fan events, and qualitative content analysis of semi-structured interviews with fan artists. I focus on fan work based on a variety of Anglophone source materials. Most of them involve American comic book superheroes. I will also address concerns about the citing of subcultural sources in academic research.

**Katharina Hülsmann** studied Modern Japanese Studies and Modern English Literature at Heinrich-Heine-University in Düsseldorf and at Ferris University (Yokohama). In 2014 she began her PhD project “Japanese *Dōjinshi* of the Marvel Cinematic Universe”. She examines Japanese *dōjinshi* as an example for creative participation in popular culture. She teaches at the Department of Modern Japanese Studies at Heinrich-Heine-University and co-edited “Japanische Populärkultur und Gender” [*Japanese Popular Culture and Gender*] an essay collection in 2016.

The DIJ History and Humanities Study Group is a forum open to scholars working on Japan in any field of the humanities. It is organized by Torsten Weber and Ronald Saladin. All are welcome to attend, but prior registration ([saladin@dijtokyo.org](mailto:saladin@dijtokyo.org)) is greatly appreciated.

**German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)**

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