

mask







MASK

SYD HERNANDEZ



### Masks.

These artifacts have been used for millions of years to transform and disguise human features. Rituals that call for the use of masks have been known to be an attempt to momentarily shed away the wearer's humanity. The wearer might be possessed by who or what the mask represents. In other cultures, masks were reserved for rulers with statuses equivalent to divine beings.

*Pro-wrestling acts as a preservation of these traditions.*



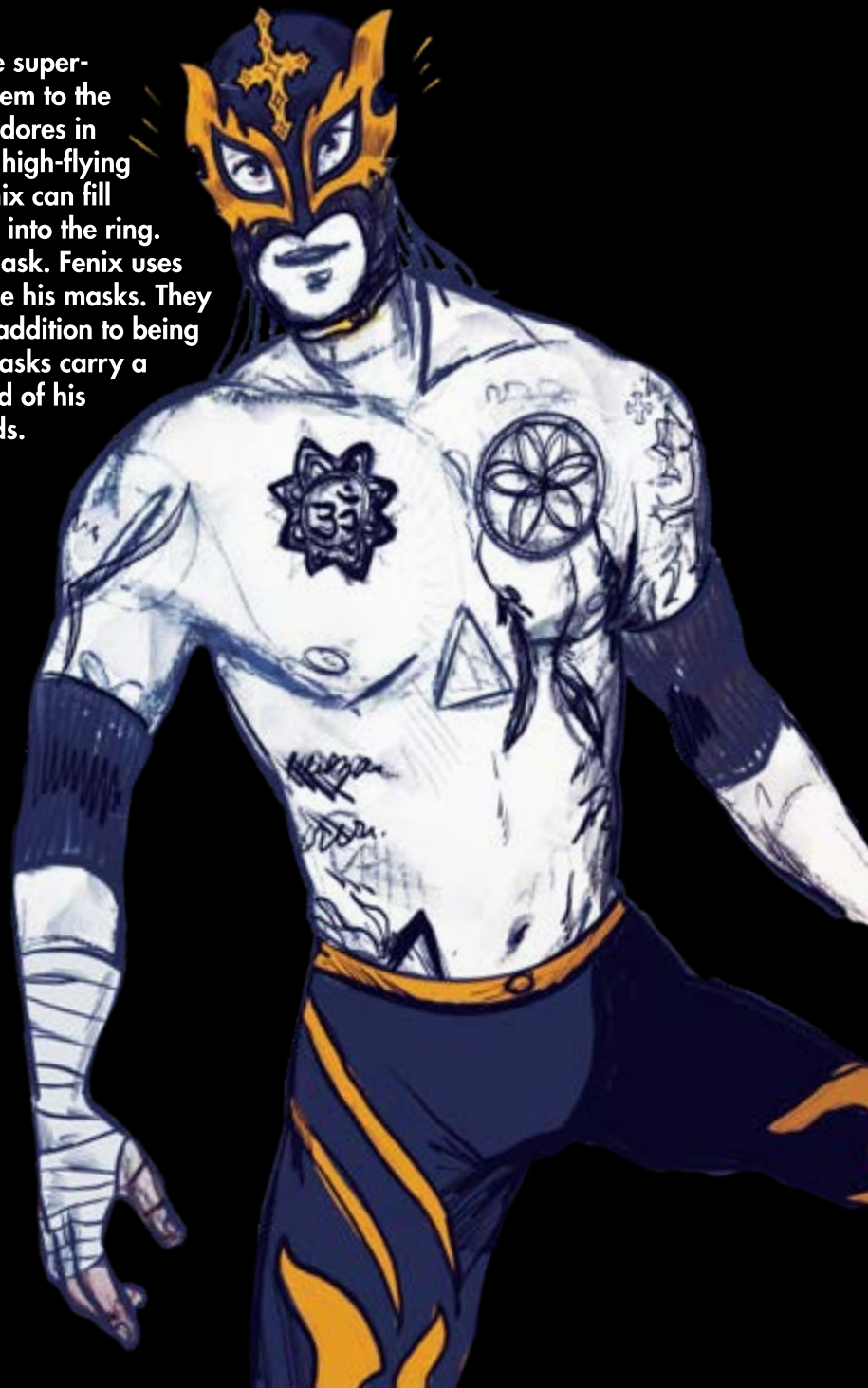
# Why Wear a Mask?

BY LIZZY FLANAGAN / @LIZZYXLUCHA

There's a common misconception that masked wrestlers don masks because their faces are unattractive. Unfortunately, this belief is so prevalent that it's often cited or joked about on wrestling TV! In reality, this idea is not only lightyears away from the truth, but is also a gross misconstruing of Lucha Libre tradition.

Masks are not worn to hide ugly faces (I'd actually wager that most masked luchadores are very good looking!); rather, masks often carry on the legacies of bloodlines and make luchadores truer, heightened versions of themselves. Much like Peter Parker finds courage through pulling his Spider-Man mask over his head, luchadors are able to transform into larger-than-life characters by lacing up their masks.

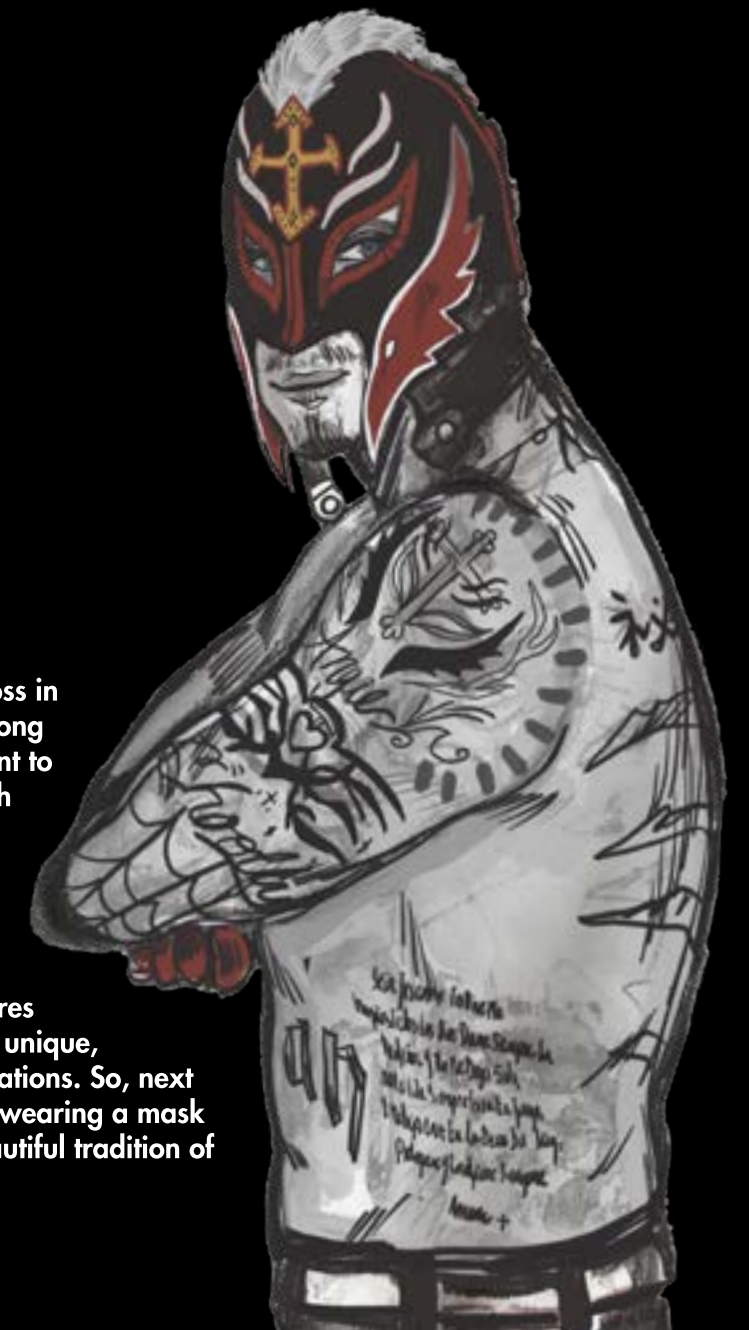
Rey Fenix is one of the best examples of the super-hero aura masked luchadores carry with them to the ring. He's one of the most spectacular luchadores in the world, internationally renowned for his high-flying stunts. In addition to his physical talent, Fenix can fill stadiums with his charisma just by stepping into the ring. Part of this effect is undoubtedly from his mask. Fenix uses brightly colored, shimmery material to make his masks. They draw fans' eyes like honey draws bees. In addition to being beautiful works of craftsmanship, Fenix's masks carry a lot of symbolic significance; they are a blend of his character and a tribute to lucha libre legends.



The most memorable part of Fenix's mask is probably the wings that extend from his eyes off the sides of his head. These symbolize the wings of a Phoenix, Rey Fenix's namesake. The Phoenix is a brilliant creature for a luchador to model themselves after; watching Fenix rise out of darkness and defeat villains of any size never fails to amaze and inspire fans. Of course, the stunts he pulls are outstanding on their own, but the motif of the Phoenix adds a really beautiful, artistic element to everything Fenix does.

Another notable feature of Rey Fenix's mask is the cross in the center of his forehead. The symbol of the cross, along with the title Rey — which translates to king — was lent to him by Lucha Libre legend, Rey Mysterio. Mantels such as titles or symbols are often passed between generations in Lucha Libre; they are just further examples of the rich culture and tradition that are woven into luchadores' masks.

Rey Fenix is just one of thousands of masked luchadores in the world of Lucha Libre. Each mask is wonderfully unique, and reveals a luchador's values, bloodline, and inspirations. So, next time you hear someone quip that a luchador must be wearing a mask to hide their appearance, educate them about the beautiful tradition of Lucha Libre!







**POW!**

## MACH.10

Well originally it was my trainer who told me to wear a mask. But I was very happy to at the time as I grew up loving superhero shows and comic books so the character was right up my alley.

When I first started wrestling under the mask it helped me break out of my shell and made me comfortable in the ring performing in front of people as it I'm not the most outgoing person in real life.

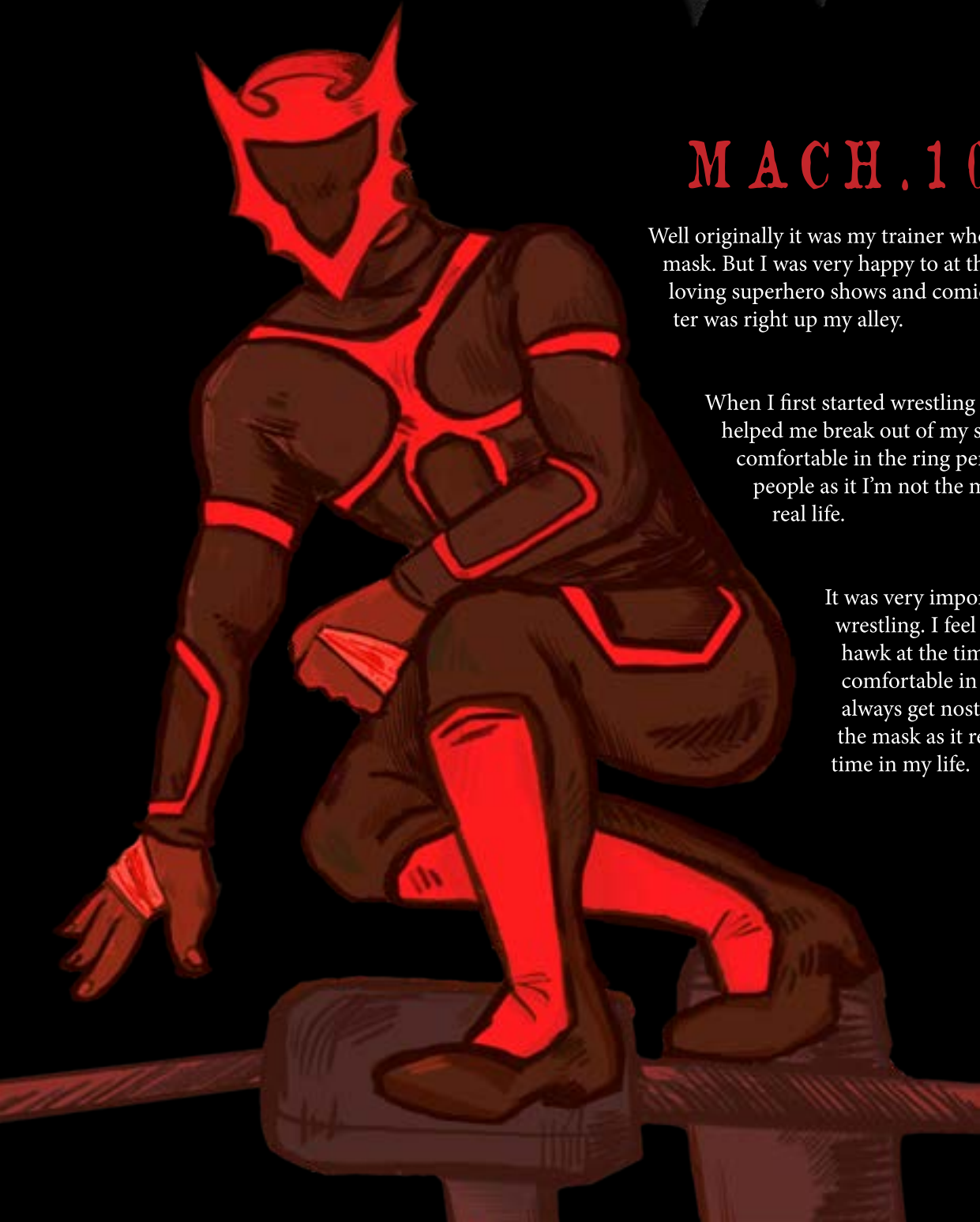
It was very important for my start in pro wrestling. I feel like I needed Dangerhawk at the time as I became more comfortable in my own skin and I'll always get nostalgic whenever I see the mask as it represents a really fun time in my life.



## RAZERYWYNG

I wore a mask because that's the type of wrestler I was instructed to be when I was debuting. I didn't exactly have a choice at first, but then once it came time for me to decide if I wanted to remove the mask, I decided it gave me the freedom to be whoever I needed to be in order to tell the story I was trying to tell. It gave me freedom. So I kept it.

The mask is comfort. It's license to be weird, and goofy, and intense, and not have to worry about bringing that around with me when I'm not wearing the mask.





# EDITH SURREAL

I wear a mask because it's part of the culture of the wrestling school I trained at and promotion where I debuted. Chikara and The Wrestle Factory are inspired by the traditions of Mexican Lucha Libre, including masks.



My mask served as a creative tool. I can use it to evolve my character. It forces me to use my entire body to tell a story, rather than just facial expressions. If you watch *The Mandalorian*, his face is completely obscured, so he has to rely on body language to communicate nonverbally. It's like that.

My mask is my identity. It's what separates the woman from the character. When I put it on, I become Edith Surreal.

When it's off, I'm not her anymore.





# The Carver of Cutter's Alley

I wear a mask because no one cared who I was before it.

My mask gives me the ability to force people to take **notice** and **think**.

My mask is a part of me.





# BIG CALLUX

MY MASK.  
IS THE EMBODIMENT OF EVERYTHING I AM.  
A SYMBOL. OF MY INSIDES.  
DISPLAYED ON MY FACE.

MY MASK.  
ALLOWS CALLUX. TO BE COMFORTABLE.  
IN HIS OWN SKIN. IT GIVES PERMISSION.  
TO LET CALLUX. BE CALLUX.

MY MASK.  
IS EVERYTHING. ALL PIECES OF MYSELF.  
WRAPPED INTO ONE SYMBOL.  
STRAPPED ACROSS MY FACE.





# Dr. Omega

## - What can a mask provide to a wrestler?

The classic kayfabe answer always given by masked wrestlers of the time in magazine interviews of the 1950s-1970s is that it hides their identity so that they can have a normal life outside the ring. In reality, you hear stories of wrestlers in those days wearing a mask to legitimately hide their identity in order to protect their real job or even their athletic amateur status as they competed in other sports and only wrestled in the off-season.

These days, a mask can give a wrestler that extra something to add to their character and make them more interesting and more recognizable. A mask can be part of the trademark of a wrestler. It can make them seem even larger than life, a true superhero come to life. It adds colour, mystery, intrigue, and character. Plus, it gives the wrestler another image that can be merchandised on shirts, buttons, or even replica masks. That stuff sells really well!

## - What goes into making a mask?

Oh golly, so much. If I'm making a mask for another person, I'll first ask them if they plan on wrestling in it, or if it's just an entrance mask to be worn while they make their way to the ring. (Several people just say they want a mask to wear while they're streaming.) Their answer lets me figure out how strong the mask needs to be, and what features we can or can't include to make it ring worthy.

Then I'll ask what ideas they have about the mask, what they want it to look like, what colours they want, the basic form (regular, chinless, full face, etc), what closure they'd like (laces, zipper, chin snap, etc), and if they have any sketches. At that point I may come up with ideas that I think will improve the mask, either visually or functionally, and we'll negotiate what the final product will look like.

Then we can talk about the price. Finally, I get measurements from them and we set a timeline for completion.



As far as making the mask itself, first I have to gather together the materials for both the body (usually spandex) and the plates (the parts that decorate the mask, usually vinyl or leather). I have a lot of this in stock, but sometimes you have to get materials from a fabric store or online. The body of the mask is cut using patterns, two crown pieces and two sides. The fabric is then lined and sewn together on the sewing machine. In a pro grade mask (the only type I make), the seams are taped and sewn for reinforcement. The plates then need to be designed, something I do using Affinity Designer on the iPad, and on the computer in Adobe Illustrator. A lot of people just do this by hand using pencil and paper. Those patterns are then used to cut out the plates from the vinyl. The body of the mask is placed on a mannequin head, and the plates are glued into place, and then sewn down. The whole process can take between eight hours and several days, depending on the complexity of the mask.

That's the process in a nutshell. Of course, there's also the years of learning and practice that has to happen before a professional mask can be made, in the same way an artist needs years of drawing/painting practice before they can produce beautiful art.

*Dr Omega*



## El Santo y Blue Demon Contra Los Monstruos

BY a r i / @OFFPUDDIN

Tie my laces tight and line my eyes up.  
Click my jaw twice to see if it fits right.  
There are four of us at the table.  
The fifth is just barely up the ladder.

There is no real trick to selling this fall  
He tucks his chin off the top rope.  
And he loosens all his favorite teeth.  
They give it to him stiff. Dead featherweight.

If he is the one to break, I buckle.  
Heave me up and pay closer attention  
To know you already put me through it.  
Push harder. Promise it'll look better.

I want you to put your fingers under.

*And now I want you to take the mask off.*









## Special Thanks To Those Involved:

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