



# MASQUERADE

## CONTESTANT INFORMATION, RULES & ENTRY FORM

**What it is:** Our Special Edition, in-person, on-stage **Costume Competition**, or Cosplay Contest to use another term, showcasing costumes crafted by our attendees and inspired by movies, comic books, TV, anime, video games, fantasy, history, art, and original designs from their imagination. NOT a dance or party, but a show on a stage, it is free for Special Edition attendees to participate in or be in the audience. Most contestants provide recorded music, and some include dramatic or humorous choreography. Some entries will be individuals, others will be groups with a shared theme. The large stage will feature special lighting and sound, and excellent viewing for all the audience provided by giant high-definition overhead screens.

**When & Where:** **8:00 p.m. Saturday, November 27** in Ballroom 20 of the Convention Center. The event will run three hours, and doors will open at 7:15 p.m. for audience seating. As the line may start forming long before then, early arrival is suggested. Unlike the usual San Diego Comic-Cons, tickets for seating will not be required, just a valid Special Edition badge. There will be special reserved seating for Comic-Con special guests, approved press, and companies and organizations giving awards. An overflow viewing room may be included should Ballroom 20 show signs of reaching capacity.

**Photography:** Cameras are permitted at the event, but NO flash photography of the stage is allowed, and any photos or video taken must be for personal, non-profit use *only*. Photographers or press who wish access to the flash-friendly Photo Op Area, where contestants pose after exiting the ballroom stage, should write to the Coordinator at [Masq@comic-con.org](mailto:Masq@comic-con.org) to request a reserved spot, as spaces are very limited. Note that for this convention the Photo Op Area will be in a nearby open-air area rather than in a room.

**How To Enter:** Complete and e-mail an **Entry Form** no later than **November 12<sup>th</sup>**, but reserving a slot early is recommended as the number of contestants will be limited. Photos of the costume you will be wearing are required for evaluation by our 3-person jury to assure meeting the rules criteria for sufficient original crafting, quality, and content. Until photos are approved your entry is only tentatively accepted. Send photos along with your Entry Form or send a form now and photos no later by November 12th. "Work in progress" photos are acceptable if only a small amount of work remains. Group entries must provide photos of all costumes. There will be a **Waiting List** to fill spots arising from cancellations. For safety reasons you must be at least age 12 to participate.

**Covid-19 Measures:** We are allowing fewer contestants than normal into the event so as to assure plenty of space in the backstage rooms to avoid any crowding. All participants will be required to wear approved protective masks at all times as prescribed for the rest of the con, and all Masquerade staff will be wearing masks. The Photo Area is being moved from its usual indoor room to nearby outdoor setting. Your safety is important to us! More Covid-related information can be found on the Comic-Con Special Edition website.

**What if you've a great costume but were unable to buy a badge during the online sale?** If you submit an Entry Form and provide photos of your construction and at least two photos of your finished (or mostly finished) costume(s), and we deem your entry meets the acceptance criteria, we can assist you buying needed attendee badges even though they are sold out. Write to [Masq@comic-con.org](mailto:Masq@comic-con.org) for more information. Note there are a limited number of such badges available, and limited contestant slots.

Please don't wear your contest costume at the con before it is seen in the Masquerade, or it will be ineligible. Why, you ask? Our audiences wait a long time in line to see something very special, not what they've already seen in the halls. This will also protect it from the wear and tear that can happen in crowds, lines, and warm temperatures (San Diego does have warm Thanksgivings sometimes). We've seen great costumes drop out from damage or exhaustion, so keep yours out of sight until Saturday evening so as to be a surprise to the audience, and so that it, and you, will be fresh and looking great!

**Comic-Con Special Edition Masquerade Awards:** Our guest judges assembled from industry professionals and past winners will select winners of the **Comic-Con Masquerade trophies** in the following categories: **Best In Show, Judges' Choice, Best Re-Creation, Best Original Design, Best Workmanship, Most Humorous, Most Beautiful, and Best Young Fan.**

The trophy medallions were custom designed by fantasy artist Sue Dawe and crafted by the company that makes the Emmy® and Golden Globe® awards. **Plus:** Winners in the above Comic-Con categories will receive a **Free Four-Day Badge** to our **2022 San Diego Comic-Con International**. Badges are non-transferable; if a group wins a category, up to five medallions and badges will be given.

**Sponsored Awards & Prizes:** In addition to the Comic-Con trophies, representatives of select companies, and organizations will be presenting their own generous prizes to winners that they select:

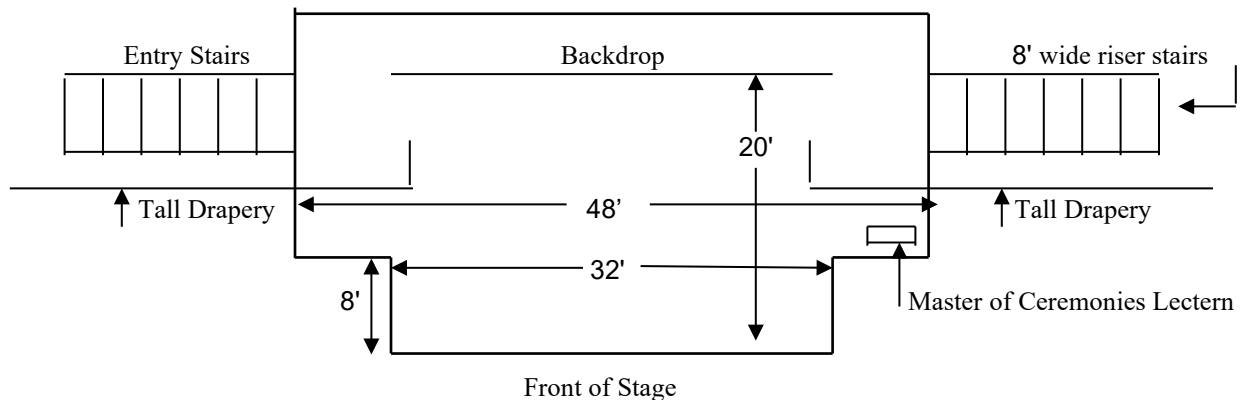
- **Frank And Son Collectible Show**, of the City of Industry, California, “Your one-stop show for ALL your collectible needs” will take a break from their large and popular bi-weekly mini-cons to present to the entry their representatives deem the audience favorite a **\$1,000** cash prize!
- **The Costumer's Guild West**, southern California’s costuming fandom group, will present a one-year membership to their group, as well as one full scholarship and one night's complimentary hotel stay to their weekend conference, **Costume College®**, held the last weekend in July 2022 (winner may choose 2023 instead) at the Warner Center Marriott in Woodland Hills, CA, to the entry their representatives select as showing the most promise. **Costume College** promotes the art of costuming by providing educational lectures and workshops in every aspect of costuming.
- **San Diego Comic Convention** is happy to present a special costuming award given in memory of a long-time committee and Board member Alan Campbell, who passed away and is sorely missed. Alan was a great fan of the Masquerade, at times generously donating his own prize. The Special Edition Alan Campbell Award will be **\$500 cash**, presented to the entry deemed Best Re-Creation of a Comics Character or Characters in the show, as selected by their representative.
- **The Art Directors Guild, IATSE Local 800**. The ADG, which has presented panels at Comic-Con for a dozen years, has among its members art directors, graphic artists, illustrators, matte artists, model makers, production designers, scenic artists, set designers and title artists of the motion picture, theater, and TV industries, is presenting **two awards:** *The Art Directors Guild Cosplay Award for Original Concept Design*, presented to the entry most exemplifying a wholly original concept. The “Idea” is paramount in this category, the implementation and craftwork are secondary to the original notion; and, *The Art Directors Guild Cosplay Award for Best Graphic Design*, presented to the entry whose printed, painted, or sculpted graphics are superior. Each award comes with a **\$500** prize.

More organizations may join this list as the convention nears.

When you arrive at the convention, sign-in at the **Masquerade Desk** upstairs near Ballroom 20 to confirm your arrival and to fill out some show forms. **If you don't sign-in by noon on Saturday, we will have to assume you have canceled and will release your spot to someone from the Waiting List.** Completed show forms must be submitted no later than 12 noon on Saturday, either at the Desk or the Orientation. All contestants and their helpers need **Backstage Passes** for the show, obtainable at the Desk and at the Orientation. **Masquerade Desk** hours are 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM on Friday and Saturday.

**Music / Narration / Sound Effects:** If you are incorporating music, pre-recorded narration, or any other recorded sound with your costume presentation, e-mail an MP3 format file to us by 12 Noon Pacific time **November 15th** (earlier is better) to **Masq@comic-con.org** to allow us time to review it for any needed changes. There will be **NO microphones** given to contestants, so any speech must be on your recording, or printed out for the Master or Mistress of Ceremonies to read. If you are unable to send an audio file let us know and we may be able to accommodate you another way. Also bring a back-up USB in MP3 format of your music with you, just in case. We pay ASCAP/BMI a fee for music performance rights, so we can play copyrighted music without any legal issues. If you want music but can't decide what seems to fit it, let us know and we can provide some. If you prefer to present your costume in dramatic silence, that's fine too.

### **Comic-Con Ballroom 20 Stage Diagram – Top View**



The presentation area of the stage is 32' wide by 20' deep, elevated 48" from the ballroom floor. Going up to stage level will require traveling up seven wide 7" high stairs. The ballroom doorways are 9' high by 6' wide. Nearby rooms will contain dressing rooms, and there will be contestant-only bathrooms if you need a sink and large mirror for make-up needs. Standard entry will be stage-right, with the exit stage-left, behind the M.C. lectern. Groups may enter and exit from both sides. Special accommodations for the disabled are possible if we are informed of the needs in advance. Please do not contact the facility with questions.

High-definition cameras will be providing close-up views for the giant projection screens, so if theatrical make-up is appropriate to your costume, consider it. Following your stage appearance, you'll be escorted down a corridor outdoors to the **Photo Area** to pose for photographers, and you'll need to remain in the backstage areas until all the award presentations conclude, since you may win an award and be called back on stage to receive it! On Sunday is a **Masquerade Review** showing a playback of the show.

**Large or Heavy Items:** Please notify us of any especially large items or set pieces. Freight elevators, storage space and loading dock access are available but must be arranged in advance. Experienced costumers know the rule: "Surprise the audience, but never surprise the backstage crew." We love elaborate costumes and presentations, but please inform us if your item is bulky or heavy, and assure you are able to carry it yourself or with helpers that you bring (we can help your helpers buy badges too). Our backstage crew is VERY happy to assist you but are not intended to be your primary means of carrying heavy things. We have a storage room for costumes, props and set pieces at the con, so you can bring them in before Saturday.

We strongly suggest attending the **Masquerade Orientation** from **10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** on Saturday, in Room 31, where we'll discuss your technical needs and answer questions. You need not bring your costume, although you can bring it and store it there if you like. This room will contain a practice stage available all day. The Ballroom 20 stage is in use for other events during the daytime, but the practice stage will have similar dimensions.

**Important Check-In Time:** When you are arriving Saturday evening, contestants should **check-in** with the Room 32 staff between **4:30 and 5:30 p.m.** but **NO LATER than 6:30 p.m.** and you must be **stage-ready by 6:45 p.m.** to allow for photos and the judges to get a close look at your costume. If you are late, we may have to pull you from the show. Private dressing areas will be assigned when you arrive, worktables, clothing racks and mirrors will be on hand, and we'll have an emergency costume repair kit available with various glues, glue guns, tapes, sewing supplies, spirit gum, wire, and more.

**Reference Materials:** If your costume is a **Re-Creation**, we strongly suggest providing the judges with **reference images** of what it is based on for comparison purposes. You may submit reference items at the con, and they can be returned afterwards. Some simply provide a photo or two, but some supply elaborate booklets detailing the features, close-up photos of construction and even fabric samples that show their entire process. In addition to helping the judges, these can also be a handy resume' item for those aiming for a career in costuming, or just a fun memory book of your experience.



**Projected Background Images:** As has been done the past few years, we install special projection equipment for the Masquerade so that contestants can accompany their stage presentation with a background image to suggest an environment. If you would like to have a specific image or landscape on the projection curtain behind you, such as an alien world, palace throne room, Gotham City skyline, Jedi temple, Parisian theater marquee, elven forest, or some interesting abstract design to set a mood, you may provide one.

Your background image should be a **JPG or PNG** file no larger than 2048 x 2048 pixels, but don't choose a small image or it will be poor quality when projected large. Avoid very dark images, or ones that may detract from your costume. E-mail your image file to [Masq@comic-con.org](mailto:Masq@comic-con.org) by **November 15th** to give us time to check it for suitability.

If you don't supply a background projection image, that's perfectly fine, not all contestants do. We'll select something that will show off your costume well. Please note that **NO copyrighted/proprietary characters should be in your projected image**, so if you supply an image please keep it to scenery, sets, historical images, non-character artwork, or abstract patterns. Or just leave it to us to choose something.

## **2021 SAN DIEGO COMIC-CON SPECIAL EDITION MASQUERADE RULES**

- 1) **Costumes must be of original construction or show significant modification of pre-existing materials.** No costumes are allowed that are purchased or otherwise obtained from a commercial source. This is a show of creativity and craftsmanship, not shopping ability. It is expected that some costumes may include as **minor** elements some purchased items. If your entry utilizes many of these, check with the Masquerade Coordinator for approval. As a general rule, at least 75% of what you bring onto the stage must not have been purchased. If it could pass for street clothes, it's not a costume. You need not have made the costume yourself, perhaps a friend or family member did, but it can't be a purchased one.
- 2) If your costume participated in our virtual San Diego Comic-Con@Home or WonderCon@Home Masquerades in 2020 or 2021, it IS eligible to compete in this Masquerade as well. However, competing costumes must NOT be worn at the con prior to the show. If everyone's seen your costume in front of them, there's no point in displaying it on stage, so keep your entry out of sight until Saturday night. You may of course wear your costume around the con afterwards.
- 3) **Maximum time on stage:** 1-2 people: 1 minute 30 seconds. 3-6 people: 2 minutes. 7 or more: 2 minutes 30 seconds. If you would like more time, check with the Coordinator beforehand. Show off your costume well and have fun but remaining on stage too long can lessen the impact of your presentation, but don't be too quick, either!
- 4) No liquids, messy substances, fog, or anything that may pose a danger is allowed on stage. Unsheathing of bladed weapons is not allowed without clearance from the Coordinator. No throwing things into the audience. Nothing is allowed that would get a movie an "R" rating. Violating these rules will disqualify you, and possibly result in escort off the premises. Due to safety concerns, **minors** may not perform combat simulations.
- 5) Category definitions: **Re-Creation:** A costume copied from a pre-existing design, such as from a movie, comic book, famous artwork, history, etc. **Original:** A design original to the maker/wearer. It may be inspired by some work of fantasy, science fiction, mythology, etc., but is not a copy. **Young Fan category:** Ages 12 to 17.
- 6) A costume that has won **Best In Show** or **Best In Master Class** at an in-person Costume-Con, NASFiC, or Worldcon convention is not eligible for an award from the judges but is still eligible for company and organization prizes.
- 7) Contestants agree to report in with staff in the Masquerade backstage rooms no later than **6:30 P.M.**, (5:30 PM or earlier is suggested) and to allow video recording and photography of their costumes for non-profit promotional purposes.
- 8) The Coordinator may reject an entry on the basis of inappropriate or unsafe behavior or content, or because of too many purchased items, or because the construction materials or techniques used do not meet the criteria of quality for the show, or because the event has reached its limit for entries.
- 9) For safety reasons, children under age 12 are not allowed on stage or in the backstage rooms. Minors must have a parent or guardian present with them backstage and parents will be asked to sign a permission form. Please do not bring small children into the backstage areas. With many costumers plus helpers and staff all rushing around, some wearing sight-limiting masks, some carrying large props, tools, or scissors, it is not an appropriately safe environment for small children.
- 10) You are not required to wear your costume yourself; someone else can present it in the show. But if is worn on stage by someone other than you, that person should not be a paid individual, nor may your soundtrack or narration or costume include content that advertises an actual product, service, or website.

**A Final Note:** It's called a Masquerade and not just a costume contest or fashion show because it's not just about costumes, but about characters too, and drama, humor, song and dance and stories. It's about creativity and celebrating the ancient and modern art of costuming. The purpose of the show is for fun, so please don't be so concerned about winning that you forget to enjoy that you're bringing smiles to thousands of people. Our Masquerade staff are volunteers, and we donate our time to the event because we love costuming as much as you do. So, thanks for being a part of the show!

– Martin Jaquish, Masquerade Coordinator. Lori Sartain, Lindsay Harold, Assist. Coordinators.

*This pamphlet and photos ©2021 by San Diego Comic Convention, Inc., a non-profit educational corporation dedicated to creating awareness of and appreciation for comics and related popular art forms, primarily through conventions and other events that celebrate the historic and ongoing contribution of comics to art and culture.*

# San Diego Comic-Con Special Edition Masquerade Contestant Entry Form 2021



*(All personal information you supply will be held confidential and not shared with anyone.)*

CONTESTANT NAME (or representative of group) \_\_\_\_\_

COSTUME TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

Comic-Con Member ID (not the password, just ID) \_\_\_\_\_

Original Design \_\_\_\_ or Re-Creation \_\_\_\_ If re-creation, list source: \_\_\_\_\_

Number appearing in group \_\_\_\_\_ Please mark age(s) if any are Young Fans (age 12-17) \_\_\_\_\_

If a group, list first and last names of other members \_\_\_\_\_

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What day are you expecting to arrive at the convention? \_\_\_\_\_

***To request a contestant spot, complete this form and e-mail it (and any photos) to:***

**Masq@comic-con.org**

*Please use e-mail for Masquerade correspondence as the Comic-Con office receives a large amount of postal mail. However, if you simply must use postal mail instead, then please use:*

**Masquerade Coordinator / Comic-Con International  
P.O. Box 128458  
San Diego, CA 92112-8458  
USA**