



MASQUERADE CONTESTANT INFORMATION, RULES AND ENTRY FORM

WHAT IT IS:

WonderCon's 19th annual 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 as the name might imply, it's an exhibition on an elevated stage, and is free for WonderCon attendees to participate in or just be in the audience. Most contestants provide recorded music to add mood to their presentations, 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 video screens.

WHEN & WHERE:

Saturday, March 30, at 8:30 p.m. in the Anaheim Convention Center's ACC North 200 Ballroom. The event will run approximately 2 1/2 hours and doors will open at 8:00 p.m. for audience seating. As the line will start forming sooner, early arrival is suggested. There will be special seating for WonderCon special guests, approved press, disabled, and organizations giving awards.

HOW TO ENTER:

Submit an Entry Form to Masq@comic-con.org no later than March 15. Reserving a slot early is recommended as entries will be limited. Photos of the costume you will be wearing are required for review to assure it meets the rules criteria for sufficient original crafting, quality, and content. Until photos of your entry are approved, it is only tentatively accepted. Send photos with your Entry Form or send a form now and photos no later than March 15. "Work in progress" photos are acceptable if only a small amount of work remains. Group entries must provide photos of all costumes. You may also bring photos and submit an entry at the Masquerade Desk on Friday **if there are available slots**. A WonderCon badge valid for Saturday is required.

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Cameras are permitted, 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 Photo Area, where contestants pose after exiting the performance stage, should write to Masq@comic-con.org to request a reserved spot.

IMPORTANT:

When you arrive at WonderCon, check-in at the lobby Masquerade Desk to confirm arrival and fill out your show forms. Desk hours are 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. If you don't check in by 10:30 a.m. Saturday we may assume you have canceled and release your spot to someone on the Waiting List. Please return completed forms by 11:00 a.m. Saturday at the Desk or Contestant Orientation. All contestants and their helpers need **Backstage Passes**, obtainable at the Desk and the Orientation.

TROPHIES:

The panel of guest judges will select winners of WonderCon trophies in categories of **Best In Show, Judges' Choice, Best Re-Creation, Best Original Design, Best Workmanship, Most Humorous, Most Beautiful, and Best Young Fan**. Those winners will also receive **free three-day badges** for WonderCon 2025! Badges are non-transferable; if a group wins a trophy, up to ten badges will be given.

SPONSORED AWARDS & PRIZES:

In addition to the WonderCon trophies, select companies and organizations will be presenting their own awards. More are expected to join this list:

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 bi-weekly mini-cons to present to the entry their representatives deem the audience favorite a generous **\$500** cash award.

The Costumer's Guild West, the southern California costuming fandom group, will present a one-year membership to their CGW group, as well as one full scholarship and one night's complimentary hotel stay to their annual weekend conference, Costume College®, held July 18–22, 2024 (winner may choose 2025 or 2026), at the Sheraton Gateway Los Angeles Hotel, to the entry they deem shows the most promise. Costume College promotes the art of costuming by providing educational lectures and workshops in every aspect of costuming.

The San Diego Comic-Con Alan Campbell Award:

The San Diego Comic Convention Board of Directors is donating a **\$500** cash award given in memory of long-time Committee and Board member Alan Campbell, who passed away and is sorely missed. Alan was a great fan of the Masquerade, generously donating his own prizes. This award is for the best re-creation from comics or related popular arts, as selected by one of the guest judges.

ALSO IMPORTANT:

We strongly suggest attending the Masquerade Contestant Orientation from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Saturday in Room 201ABC, where we'll discuss your technical needs and answer questions. You need not bring your costume at that time, although you may bring and store it there for the day if you like. This room will contain a practice stage with similar dimensions to the real Masquerade stage, and will be available all day. Please don't wear your contest costume at the convention before it is seen in the Masquerade, or it will be ineligible for trophies. Why, you ask? Our audiences wait a long time in line to see something very special, not what they've already passed by in the halls a few times. This will also protect your costume from the wear and tear that can occur wearing it all day, even worse if the weather is warm. We have 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! Of course, you can wear it afterwards!

MUSIC:

If you are incorporating music, pre-recorded narration, or any other recorded sound with your presentation, email an MP3-format file to Masq@comic-con.org by March 15 (earlier is better) 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 of Ceremonies to read. We pay ASCAP/BMI a fee for music performance rights, so we can play any copyrighted music without any legal issues. If you want music but can't decide what fits, let us know and we can provide some. If you prefer to present your costume in dramatic silence, that's fine too.

STAGE:

The stage will be 32' wide by 24' deep, elevated 36" from the floor. Going up to stage level will require climbing steps. Normal entry will be stage left (when you are facing the audience, your left is stage left), with exit on stage right. Groups may enter and exit from both sides. The lighting will be dimmed between presentations but will not go completely black for safety reasons. Curtains at stage left and right will conceal the stair entry areas. The Master of Ceremonies will be at far stage right, and the judges will be seated at the center-front of the audience. Special accommodations for the disabled are possible if we are informed of the specific needs in advance. Because the stage is elevated and often we have contestants in vision-impairing masks, sometimes on stilts or with large simulated weapons, contestants must be at least age 12 to participate in the show.

High-definition cameras will be providing close-up views for the giant projection screens. Following your stage appearance, you'll be escorted to the Photo Area to pose for a few minutes, 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!

LARGE OR HEAVY ITEMS:

Experienced performers know the rule: "Surprise the audience, but never surprise the backstage crew." We love elaborate costumes and presentations, but tell us ahead of time, and try to plan to transport items yourself or with your helpers. Our backstage crew is happy to assist you but are not intended to be your primary means of carrying heavy things. You may bring your costume into Convention Center Room 201 anytime after 10:00 a.m. Saturday to store it safely there if you like.

LOADING DOCK & DISABLED INFORMATION:

The stage we expect to use will be on the second floor. If the convention center stairs, escalator, or passenger elevator won't be adequate for you, a freight elevator will handle those giant robots, dragons, unwieldy set pieces and so on. Please notify us early if you think you'll need the loading dock freight elevator, or if you would need a wheelchair lift in order to get up to stage level.

IMPORTANT CHECK-IN TIME:

When arriving for the show that evening, backstage check-in time starts at 6:00 p.m., but NO LATER than 7:00 p.m., and you must be stage-ready by 7:15 p.m. to allow for reference photos and for the judges to take close-up looks of your work. If you do not check in by 7:00 p.m., we will assume something happened that caused you to cancel and we'll have to remove you from the show, because many aspects are coordinated in advance! We have an emergency costume repair kit available with various glues, glue guns, tapes, sewing supplies, spirit gum, wire, staplers, 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 WonderCon and they can be returned afterwards. A photo or artwork will do. Some entries supply folders showing close-up photos of details, the construction process, and even fabric samples. It is certainly not a requirement, but in addition to helping the judges, this can make for a fun keepsake of your entry, and some contestants have used their booklets to help get professional costuming employment.

THE 2024 WONDERCON 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. You need not have made it yourself, perhaps a friend or relative did, but it cannot be simply a purchased costume.
- 2) **Eligibility:** If your costume participated in our past **virtual** Comic-Con@Home, or WonderCon@Home Masquerades in 2020 or 2021, it is eligible to compete in this Masquerade as well. However, competing costumes should not be worn at the convention 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, please. You may of course wear your costume around the convention 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, fire** 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 objects 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. Minimum age is 12 years. Minors may not perform combat simulations as this is an elevated stage without a barrier at the front of it.
- 5) Category Definitions: **Re-Creation:** A costume copied from a pre-existing design, such as from a movie, comic book, famous artwork, video game, cartoon, etc. **Original Design:** 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. A costume can fit into more than one category (for example, a unique or historical interpretation of an otherwise recognizable costume). In such a case, the judges will decide how to interpret it.
- 6) Contestants agree to report in with staff in the Masquerade backstage rooms no later than **7:00 p.m.**, (6:00 p.m. is best) and to allow video recording and photography of their costumes for non-profit promotional purposes, and to act in a safe and responsible manner.
- 7) 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 number of entries.
- 8) 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 contestants and helpers and staff all rushing around, some wearing sight-limiting masks, or carrying large props, tools, or scissors, it is not an appropriate venue for small children.
- 9) You are not required to wear your costume yourself; someone else can present it in the show, such as a friend or relative. But if it 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 blatantly advertises an actual product, service, website, or political cause. This show is a celebration of costumes!
- 10) Winner selection is at the discretion of the guest judges, not WonderCon staff. WonderCon is not responsible for awards offered by outside organizations, companies or individuals ... but we are thankful for them!

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 and storytelling too. It's about creativity and celebrating the art of costuming. The event is designed to be fun, so don't be so concerned about winning that you forget to enjoy that you're bringing smiles to thousands of people. The Masquerade staff are volunteers, donating 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, Asst. Coordinators

MORE INFORMATION: WWW.COMIC-CON.ORG/WC/



MASQUERADE ENTRY FORM

(Use Adobe Acrobat or similar program to complete this form. Save the edited form to your computer, then attach your edited file to an email. If you encounter problems, email Masq@comic-con.org. Or, if you can't get this form to work, you may create a facsimile of it with all the required information on it. All personal information you supply will be held confidential and not shared with anyone)

ENTRY DEADLINE: MARCH 15, 2024

CONTESTANT NAME (OR REPRESENTATIVE OF A GROUP ENTRY) _____
TODAY'S DATE

COSTUME ENTRY TITLE

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY STATE _____
ZIP

COUNTRY

PHONE NUMBER WITH AREA CODE _____
EMAIL ADDRESS

COMIC-CON MEMBER ID (NOT PASSWORD)

Costume Design is: Original Re-Creation; source: _____

Number Appearing in Group: _____ Mark age(s) if any are Young Fans (12-17) _____

If a group, please list first and last names for all members. Or use this area for additional descriptions and comments:

Email completed entry form soon to reserve a spot, and send evaluation photos no later than March 15, 2024.

Group entries should provide photos of all costumes. We will notify you if your entry is accepted, declined, or on the Waiting List. If you do not receive confirmation of your mail within a couple of days, you may email Masq@comic-con.org. Please do not contact the Convention Center with venue questions, refer them to us.

RESET ALL FIELDS

CLICK HERE TO EMAIL TO MASQ@COMIC-CON.ORG