



The FLOATEE Awards

FLOAT offers a photo submission contest prior to the convention, affectionately known as the “FLOATEES”. FLOATEEs (which stands for FLOAT Event Excellence) are awarded based on the following criteria:

1. You must be a registered delegate at FLOAT 2026 in order to be eligible for a FLOATEE Award.
2. You must have completed the work shown in the photograph(s) within the time frame of April 1, 2024 until December 31, 2025. No photos from outside of that timeline are eligible for submission.
3. A fee of \$3 to \$7 is required for every entry you submit in a given category. Proceeds from the money raised from the FLOATEE entry fees will go into the FLOAT Scholarship Fund.
4. Photos may be submitted in the following categories (count reflects number of photos allowed per entry):

Arch Design - One Photo
Backdrop or Wall Design - One Photo
Ceiling Decor - One Photo
Column Design - One Photo
Dance Floor Design - One Photo
Deco-Twisting Design - One Photo
Delivery Piece - One Photo
Distortion Design - One Photo
Entrance Decor - One Photo
Foil Design - One Photo
Helium Design - One Photo
Lighting Effects - One Photo
Linking Decor - One Photo
Mixed Media Design - One Photo
Mosaic Design - One Photo
Mural Design - One Photo
Organic Decor - One Photo
Photo Op Design - One Photo
Sculpture - Linking - One Photo
Sculpture - Non-Round - One Photo
Sculpture - Round - One Photo
Table Centerpiece - One Photo

Baby Shower or Gender Reveal - Up to Five Photos
Corporate Decor - Up to Five Photos
Milestone Event - Up to Five Photos
Non-Profit Event - Up to Five Photos
Parade or Festival Decor - Up to Five Photos
Teen Event - Up to Five Photos
Themed Event - Holiday - Up to Five Photos
Themed Event - Other - Up to Five Photos
Wedding or Bridal - Up to Five Photos
Overall - Under \$10K - Up to Five Photos
Overall - Over \$10K - Up to Five Photos



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“Arch Design” is defined as the concept of a balloon arch. There is no stipulation as to whether or not the arch must be classic, linking or organic in nature. However, it **MUST** be (a) a free-standing, self supported design (in other words, **NOT** a suspended garland) and (b) must be designed for people to walk or pass through.

“Baby Shower or Gender Reveal” is defined as any balloon decor element(s) that is/are used to celebrate either the birth of or impending birth of a child.

“Backdrop or Wall” is defined as a primarily two-dimensional balloon decor element that is intended to be used behind an area or stage within an event in which people or other decor elements are placed in front of them.

“Ceiling Decor” is defined by any balloon decoration element that is specifically intended to decorate a ceiling. This can be rigged in nature or helium filled, depending on how it was constructed.

“Column Design” is defined as a free-standing decor piece that involves a singular foundational element. There is no stipulation as to whether or not the column must be on a frame or is classic, linking or organic in nature, but the design **MUST** be self supported.

“Corporate Decor” is defined as any balloon decor used to decorate for a function hosted by a for-profit company. This can include but is not limited to meetings, sale promotions, conventions, marketing efforts and employee related events. All photos in this category must be from events that your company was hired to provide for another company; you cannot submit photos of work you did to promote yourself or for your own company.

“Dance Floor Decor” is defined by any set of balloon decorations that is specifically used to decorate a designated dance floor area at an event.

“Deco-Twisting Decor” is defined as any decor element that incorporates both round and non-round latex balloons. Please note that linking balloons are not considered non-round for the sake of this competition.

“Delivery Piece” is defined as a balloon decor item that is intended to be given to someone as a gift. It should also appear to be easily transported by a non-industry person.

“Distortion Design” is defined as any decor element that uses uninflated balloons manipulated in any way by being either internally or externally shaped or molded without actually inflating that said balloon with direct air or gases.



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“Entrance Decor” is defined as any set of balloon decorations used to decorate the entrance to a particular event space. This can be one decor element or multiple pieces used to create an entrance effect, but like the Arch Design competition, the concept must be created with the intention for people to pass through and experience the decor.

“Foil Design” is defined as any decor element that is predominantly made from foil balloons. It does not have to be made completely for foil balloons, but it needs to be at least 75% made from foils.

“Helium Design” is defined as an easily portable helium-based balloon decor element where individual helium-filled balloons are tied to ribbons or other connective products and attached to a weight. Please note that the California balloon law does not apply to this competition.

“Lighting Effects” is defined as any balloon decor element where either external or internal lighting effects are used to enhance the look of the balloon decor. Lighting effects involved in this competition must be provided by the designer and not simply an off-shoot of a lighting company also hired for the event the photo was taken at. Lighted marquee style lettering and other items of this nature are not eligible for this competition; the focus should be on the balloons, not another aspect of the decor.

“Linking Decor” is defined as any balloon decor element where the majority of balloons used are of linking style balloons.

“Milestone Event” is defined as any balloon decor used to celebrate a birthday, anniversary, graduation, retirement, funeral and celebration of life. It may also be extended to specific cultural and religious events such as a first communion or bris. Birthdays and celebrations specific to rights of passage for teens such as sweet sixteens, quinceaneras and mitzvahs are NOT eligible for this competition; those are eligible for the Teen Event category.

“Mixed Media” is defined as any balloon decor that incorporates added elements such as feathers, foil sheets, confetti, tassels, foam core, etc into the design work. Visual effects such as lighting are not eligible for this category. Mosaic designs are also not eligible for this category as they have their own.

“Mosaic Design” is defined as any balloon decor that uses a “shadow box” style concept to create shapes that are filled with balloons. Murals, walls and other intricate concepts are not eligible for this category.

“Mural Design” is defined as a primarily two-dimensional balloon decor element that includes a



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“Mural Design” is defined as a primarily two-dimensional balloon decor element that includes a design, pictorial or graphic element that is intended to represent an image, icon, logo, expression or concept. It should be noted that in order to succeed in this category, the intended subject of the mural design should be clearly grasped by the viewer without explanation. Mosaic designs are not eligible for this category. Mural designs may NOT also be entered in the “Backdrop or Wall” category.

“Non-Profit Event Decor” is defined as any balloon decor used to decorate an event pertaining to a school, church or charitable organization. You are, however, welcome to include any decor you provided as a donation to any charitable cause or contribution.

“Organic Decor” is defined as any decor element that disregards the standard classic style of uniformity in size, style and placement of the balloons. It can appear in any form, whether it be garland, arch, wall or otherwise.

“Parade or Festival Decor” is defined as any balloon decor used to decorate any element of an outdoor parade or festival event. Unlike in the “Corporate Decor” category, you may submit photos of work you did to promote your own company.

“Photo Op Decor” is defined as any balloon decor element specifically created to be a location where people take and pose for photos. This can be but is not limited to a backdrop, photo frame or created scene with sculptures.

“Sculpture Design (Linking)” is defined as any sculpturally focused balloon decor element that used mostly linking balloons in it’s creation. Balloons such as 32Is are not considered linking balloons in this category; they are considered non-rounds.

“Sculpture Design (Non-Round)” is defined as any sculpturally focused balloon decor element that used mostly non-round latex balloons in it’s creation. 260s, 350s/60s, 646s/660s, 32Is, hearts, bear heads, Mickey Mouse heads and the like are eligible for this category. Linking balloons are not considered non-round balloons in this category.

“Sculpture Design (Round Balloon)” is defined as any sculpturally focused balloon decor element that primarily uses round balloons in it’s creation. Linking balloons are not considered round balloons in this category.

“Table Centerpiece” is defined as a table top decor element that is specifically used to decorate a dining table and follows the “14 Inch Rule”; this implies that design elements between the table surface and 14 inches above that surface do not block the view of people



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sitting across from one another at the table.

“Teen Event Decor” is defined as any balloon decor used to decorate a Sweet 16 party, Quinceanera, Mitzvah celebration, prom proposal or any other culturally or religious specific event that is directed as a right of passage celebration or centered around some between the ages of 13 and 17 years of age.

“Themed Decor - Holiday” pertains to balloon decorations created for any celebration involving a holiday that would appear on any standard calendar, such as Halloween, Christmas, etc. It may also include specific cultural or religious holidays not necessarily celebrated amongst non-denominational groups. However, “casual” holidays like “National Taco Day” or “Hug a Friend Day” are not eligible for this category and should be entered in the “Themed Decor - Other” category.

“Themed Decor - Other” pertains to balloon decorations created for an event where a central theme is incorporated such as pirates, luau, Wild West, etc. Bachelor and bachelorette parties also fall into this category. “Casual” holidays like those defined in the “Themed Decor - Holidays” category are also eligible.

“Wedding or Bridal Decor” is defined as any balloon decor elements that are used in conjunction with a wedding, wedding reception, rehearsal dinner, engagement party or couples shower pertaining to an upcoming wedding event.

“Overall Decor - Under \$10K” is defined as any balloon decor job where the client paid you less than \$10,000 to provide balloon decorations. If you provided other elements of event decor for an event, those figures should not be included in this entry. If you provide balloon entertainment, those figures or factors are not to be included in the entry.

“Overall Decor - Over \$10K” is defined as any balloon decor job where the client paid you \$10,000 or more to provide balloon decorations. If you provided other elements of event decor for an event, those figures should not be included in this entry. If you provide balloon entertainment, those figures or factors are not to be included in the entry.

5. You may submit the same photo or photos in multiple categories unless specified in the description of said category. In addition, you must pay a fee between \$3 and \$7 for each entry you submit in each category. For example, if you submit the same photo in three different categories, you will need to pay three different charges.

6. All submissions must include photos of balloon decor. Please do not submit photos of other



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work you have completed that do not include balloon decorations in them. In addition, balloon decorations featured in photos must correspond with the category in which it is entered in.

7. In an effort to alleviate incredible amounts of work required to properly categorize the hundreds of submitted photos for this competition, entrants are required to properly name their photos before submitting them. Please use the following style to name your photos before submitting them:

If you are submitting a single photo for an entry:

FLOATEE 2026 - (Your Name) - (Category) (Entry number).jpg

PLEASE NOTE: The term “entry number” is if you plan to enter more than one entry in the same category. If you do not plan to enter more than one entry, then disregard this section.

EXAMPLE:

FLOATEE 2026 - Steven Jones - Arch.jpg

Or

FLOATEE 2026 - Steven Jones - Arch 2.jpg

If you are submitting a series of photos for a multi-photo category:

FLOATEE 2026 - (Your Name) - (Category) (Entry number) (Letter).jpg

EXAMPLE:

FLOATEE 2026 - Steven Jones - Baby 1a.jpg

FLOATEE 2026 - Steven Jones - Baby 1b.jpg

Entries not labeled correctly may be returned to the competitor to be relabeled.

8. All eligible entries are judged by a panel of experts. The entry with the overall highest number of first place selections wins the category. All decisions of the panel are final.



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9. This competition is and has always been for those individuals who like to compete but don't necessarily want to be singled out, especially if they do not win. As such, entries for these competitions are kept privately and only the winning entries and designers are announced publicly. Therefore, open viewing of all entries does not take place.

10. Submitted photos cannot and should not contain any methods of identifying the artist(s) involved. No watermarks or branded logos should be featured on the photos. In addition the artist or business owner or their employees should not be featured in any of the photos.

11. Registration for the 2026 FLOATEEs officially opens on November 17, 2025. Fee scheduling is as follows:

November 17 to December 7 - \$3.00 per entry
December 8 to December 21 - \$5.00 per entry
December 22 to December 31 - \$7.00 per entry

No entries will be accepted on or after January 1, 2026.

Photos should only be submitted to info@floatconvention.com and only after the registration fee(s) have been paid for the FLOATEE competition.

12. Please note that judging is subjective, and varies from competition to competition and from judge to judge. Winners tend to be pieces that stand out from the other entries submitted in some unique way, so please consider this when planning your entries.