

Applied Arts 2026 Illustration Awards

Category: [Illustration](#)

Deadline: January 30, 2026

Website: graphiccompetitions.com



Applied Arts' 2026 Illustration Awards is an international illustration competition showcasing outstanding creative work across editorial illustration, advertising illustration, book illustration, packaging, character design, and motion-based illustration for film, television, and online platforms. The awards program welcomes illustrators and animators at every career stage, from established professionals to emerging talent and passionate enthusiasts, offering a respected opportunity to gain visibility within the global illustration and design community. With nearly 50 categories spanning published, unpublished, commissioned, and personal projects, the competition highlights the breadth of contemporary visual storytelling and celebrates excellence in both still illustration and animation.

The competition recognizes illustration and motion work created within the eligible timeframe (January 2025 to January 2026), encouraging a wide range of submissions such as single images, illustration series, and animated pieces. Successful entries are selected for inclusion in the Applied Arts Awards Annual, a widely circulated print publication that archives the year's strongest creative work across photography, illustration, and design. In addition to print recognition, winners are also featured in the Applied Arts online Winners Gallery and Awards Archive, helping illustrators and animation artists build professional credibility, expand their audience, and strengthen their portfolio presence.

Applied Arts' 2026 Illustration Awards is designed as a high-profile platform for creative recognition, industry exposure, and professional advancement in the competitive fields of illustration, animation, and visual communication. The awards emphasize originality, craft, and concept, while reinforcing a standard of authentic authorship by excluding generative AI submissions. By combining trusted editorial curation, category diversity, and long-term online and print visibility, the Applied Arts Illustration Awards continues to position itself as a leading benchmark for illustrators seeking meaningful recognition and discoverability in North America and beyond.

Entry fee: Illustration Single: \$40 / Series: \$65; Motion (Short): \$100 / Motion (Long): \$115; Young Blood Single: \$30 / Series: \$55.

Eligibility

Open internationally to professionals and enthusiasts (including commissioned, published, unpublished, and personal work), with eligible work created between January 2025 and January 2026; current students may only enter the Student Awards (not this competition), and generative AI submissions are not accepted.

Prize

Winners receive publication in the Applied Arts Awards Annual (Summer 2026) (mailed to each winner), permanent featuring in the Online Winners Gallery, a Digital Winners' Badge, an Official Certificate, and broader industry recognition; optional paid add-ons include extra certificates, additional annual copies at a discounted rate, and an engraved Lucite AACE trophy.
