

TMA TROUT MUSEUM OF ART

DESIGNER OF THE YEAR CONTEST

Overview

The Trout Museum of Art is excited to announce an annual Designer of the Year contest! This initiative highlights creative talent and aims to enhance the visitor experience at the Trout Museum of Art. The winning designer will be commissioned to design a large-scale vinyl for a wall in the newly built Trout Museum of Art **Store**, which is set to open in October 2025. This art will serve as a centerpiece, attracting visitors and enriching their experience at the museum.

In addition to the wall design, the winner will create a suite of custom merchandise inspired by their artwork. This merchandise will be sold in the museum store, providing the designer with a platform to showcase their creativity to a wider audience. The designer will be recognized as the museum's Designer of the Year for one year, further solidifying their presence in the art community. The winner will receive **\$2,000 in prize money and 20% of the profits** from the sale of their merchandise.

Please read the guidelines carefully for information on eligibility, the design project, and how to apply.

The Museum Store

The Trout Museum of Art Store is a vibrant retail space designed to complement the museum's mission to inspire and connect all people through creative experiences and the visual arts. The store is an extension of the museum experience, inviting visitors to linger and explore. The Trout Museum of Art Store aims to inspire creativity and provide a space for meaningful connections to art and design.

As part of the Designer of the Year Contest, the winning designer's wall will enhance this experience, creating an inviting backdrop that draws visitors into the store from College Avenue and encourages them to explore our diverse range of store offerings. The wall will also be viewable from the street, enhancing the walk along College Avenue in Downtown Appleton.

Please review the full Museum Store Philosophy in full detail on [page 5](#).

Eligibility

- Open to all designers and artists aged 18 and over.
- Designers and artists from any discipline (illustrators, graphic designers, fine artists, muralists, etc.) may apply, including corporate, freelance, or independent.
- Must be able to meet all specified deadlines outlined in this document.
- Must provide a design or graphic suitable for printing and application to the designated wall.
- Must design a suite of merchandise based on their wall artwork for various products.

- The artist should be prepared to collaborate and communicate effectively with the museum's design team throughout the project.

Mural & Wall Dimensions

As part of the **Designer of the Year Contest**, the selected designer will have the opportunity to create a large-scale vinyl* wall design that serves as a captivating centerpiece for the new Trout Museum of Art store.

- The wall is approximately **20 feet wide** and **18 feet tall**. The artwork must be scalable to these dimensions without losing detail or quality.
- The designer or artist has the freedom to explore and express their unique artistic vision for this project.

**There is an opportunity for the mural to be painted or applied in a method other than vinyl. An alternate method must be discussed and agreed upon in collaboration with both the museum and the artist to ensure alignment with the project's vision and objectives.*

Merchandise Adaptation

- As part of the Designer of the Year contest, the winning designer will also be required to adapt their design for use across various merchandise items in the Museum Store that **incorporates the museum's name or logo in some way**. If selected, the designer should consider how their work can be simplified or modified while retaining its essence across these products.
- Merchandise items could include, but are not limited to apparel, prints, cards, stickers, drinkware, totes, and other store items. Specifics and dimensions will be discussed with the designer and the museum design team after selection.
- **Color Variations:** The designer may need to consider alternative color schemes or single-color versions for different merchandise items to enhance visual appeal and ensure adaptability across various materials.
- **Timeline Considerations:** The merchandise process must occur concurrently with the wall timeline. The designer should be prepared to develop and refine merchandise designs during the timeline, leading to a seamless integration of both projects.

How to Apply

- Submit a digital **portfolio of 5-10 projects or works** that showcase your style and creativity. The most important aspect of your submission is demonstrating your unique artistic voice and vision, which will be key in selecting the winner.
- Include a **brief artist statement** (300 words max) describing your style, influences, and how your work would contribute to the museum store.
- **Concept Sketches:** While your artistic style in your digital portfolio is the primary focus, you may also provide optional concept sketches or visualizations for a design and potential merchandise. These can be simple or rough ideas that give us insight into how your design aesthetic might translate into the project or merchandise.

- **We encourage applicants to familiarize themselves with the Trout Museum of Art Store**, its brand, and its products, which can be viewed at troutmuseumart.org/designeroftheyear or by visiting the store in person. This may help designers better understand how their artwork might harmonize with the existing environment and may help in selecting works to include in your digital portfolio.
- **Submit your portfolio and materials via email to info@troutmuseumart.org** with the subject line “Designer of the Year.” You may submit your digital portfolio as a portfolio deck, website link, or share materials via Dropbox or Google Drive.
- No entry fee is required.

Timeline

- **Submission Deadline:** Feb 28
- **Winner Announcement:** By March 10
- **Mural and Merchandise Suite Creation:**
 - **Meet TMA Team:** March
 - **Artist work time with Museum Design Team Check-Ins:** March 15 to Aug 1
 - **Merchandise Manufacturing:** June 1 to August 15
 - **Artwork Installed:** August 16 - September 3
- **Public Launch Date:** October 4
(Launched to new building and Gala celebration donors September 6)
- **Feature Duration:** The artwork will be featured for one year, beginning in Fall 2025.

Collaboration with the Museum

- The winner will work closely with the museum’s design team. This collaboration will involve feedback and adjustments to ensure that the design aligns with the Museum Store, the artist’s style, and that timeline is on track.

Judging Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated based on the following:

- **Creativity and Originality:** How innovative and unique is the designer’s portfolio?
- **Visual Impact:** Does the designer’s work engage the audience and create a strong visual impression?
- **Relevance:** How well does the designer’s style align with the museum store’s brand and mission?
- **Feasibility:** Can the designer submit a design for a vinyl graphic within the time and space constraints?
- **Adaption:** Can the designer’s style be effectively adapted to vinyl and merchandise applications while maintaining artistic integrity?

A jury of museum staff and an annual guest juror from the design industry will judge the submissions.

Winner Benefits & Prizes

- The winner will be awarded the following:

- **Graphic Mural Opportunity:** A contract to design a wall vinyl for the Museum Store that will be printed and applied to the wall. (See reference images for the space at troutmuseumart.org/designeroftheyear)
- **Custom Merchandise Line:** The winner will collaborate with the museum to create a collection of store merchandise (e.g., prints, tote bags, apparel).
- **Cash Prize:** \$2,000 prize money.
- **Profit Share:** The winner will receive 20% of the profits from the sale of their custom-designed merchandise at the store.
- **Feature Duration:** The wall and custom merchandise will be featured in the store for one year.
- **Promotion:** The winner will be promoted as the Trout Museum of Art's Designer of the Year for one year. Their work will be featured on our website, social media, and other online platforms.

Intellectual Property

- The museum will retain the right to use images of the wall and merchandise designs for marketing and promotional purposes.
- Designers retain the copyright to their original work but grant the museum a non-exclusive license for product development and sale.

Additional Terms

- By entering, participants agree to be bound by the contest rules and the decisions of the judges, which are final.
- The museum will cover material, installation, and the merchandise costs.
- If the winner is unable to fulfill their obligations for any reason, they must notify the museum immediately. The museum reserves the right to select an alternate winner.
- The museum reserves the right to terminate the agreement if the winner fails to meet agreed-upon deadlines or quality expectations.

For more information, contact: info@troutmuseumart.org.

See the next section for the Museum Store Philosophy.