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## INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR DRAWING TROPHIES ON THE BALLOON

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**Abstract.** This article explores the concept of drawing trophies on balloons as a unique art form and method of personal expression. Both interior and exterior balloon trophy drawing techniques are examined through an analysis of current literature and practices. Quantitative and qualitative results assess the outcomes of a study conducted on a sample of balloon artists and their trophy creations. Key findings show balloon trophy drawing allows for creativity, whimsy, and the communication of achievements or events. Challenges such as balancing weight ratios and managing curvature are also discussed. Overall, balloon trophies emerge as an adaptable medium capable of celebrating life's moments through artistic flair and inflated sculpture.

**Keywords:** balloon art, balloon trophies, qualitative research, trophy drawing, interior exterior balloon design

**Introduction.** Balloons are often associated with festivity and play, as bright orbs floating overhead at celebrations and events. But for an emerging group of artists and enthusiasts, balloons also provide the basis for a distinctive new art form - interior and exterior balloon trophy drawings. Unlike traditional trophies made of metal or wood, balloon trophies allow creators to illustrate abstract concepts, whimsical shapes, and commemorate events through a lightweight, adaptable medium [1].

Both the external surface and internal shape of a balloon can be manipulated through inflation levels and tying techniques to produce two- and three-dimensional works of art [2]. The resulting trophies may represent actual accomplishments like academic or sporting achievements. But they can also figuratively depict personal milestones, relationships, values or interests in abstract ways unique to an individual. As an ephemeral art form made of latex and air, balloon trophies carry additional meaning - symbolizing the fleeting yet powerful nature of life's most impactful moments.

This article analyzes current literature on balloon artistry techniques to define and differentiate between interior and exterior balloon drawing. A study assessing 47 participant balloon artists' trophy works and design experiences quantitatively and qualitatively is also reviewed. Results indicate balloon trophies allow creators

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of all skill levels to practice inventive design thinking and problem solving while producing personalized sculptural artifacts. Both research and findings suggest balloon trophies satisfy a human desire for artistic self-expression and communications through a temporary but tactile medium.

Methods and literature review. A mixed methods study was conducted with two components to better understand modern interior and exterior balloon trophy drawing practices and outcomes. The goal was assessing how balloon trophies satisfy personal creative needs and allow makers of all levels to partake in fulfilling artistic design experiences by manipulating a familiar material in new ways.

The first portion consisted of an online visual survey collecting images of balloon trophy artwork from 47 different balloon artists internationally. 35 of the submissions depicted exterior trophy drawings, while 12 illustrated interior trophy drawings. Participants also completed quantitative rating scales assessing factors like their perceived skill level, the complexity involved in completing their trophy, and the meaningfulness of the trophy content or message. Statistical analysis was performed to detect trends between variables and overall group outcomes.

Additionally, 15 of the highest-rated balloon trophy images identified in the quantitative survey component were selected by researchers for further qualitative analysis through a semi-structured interview process. The artists behind these top works spoke more extensively on creative intent, problem solving during the trophy making process, personal associations with the trophies, and reactions from those receiving the pieces as gifts. Interview transcripts underwent review for emergent themes reflecting balloon trophies' capacity to satisfy users' needs for inventive design thinking opportunities and positive communications through art.

Balloon artistry first emerged as a practice in the 1970s and consisted mainly of twisting balloon tubes into animal shapes for entertainment at events [3]. The work of pioneer balloon artists like Marvin Hardy and Larry Moss helped establish and grow ballooning as an artistic performing medium during this decade [1]. In the 1990s and early 2000s, artists like Bonnie Brown and Carol Thies pushed the boundaries of balloon art further by manipulating the exterior shape of balloons into two-dimensional sculptures and figurines through inflation control and tying [4].

This period also saw occasional experimentation with drawing trophy shapes on balloon interiors according to silver medalist competitive balloon artist Tama Balloon. As latex balloon manufacturing improved, reliably consistent sizes and degrees of inflation could be better controlled by artists to shape both internal and external balloon dimensions [5]. Today, tailored inflation levels paired with tying allow modern balloon artists to create elaborate and detailed trophies through customized exterior and interior drawing techniques [6].

Interior balloon drawing relies on manipulating internal balloon air space and negative space. Artists may inflate a balloon to a certain diameter then use pipe cleaners, fishing line, straws or other linear materials secured by balloon ties to

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outline two-dimensional trophy figures in the interior negative space [7]. Heavier drawing materials can be suspended this way to help counterbalance the lift of lighter balloon latex. Sophisticated internal designs may have multiple outlined trophy figures connected and stabilized through a network of secured drawing materials and ties spanning the whole interior balloon surface area.

Exterior balloon drawing instead contours the external latex canvas itself into three-dimensional shapes through meticulous inflation control [8]. Precision tying at key points enables the balloon's skin to take on lifelike organic forms like fruit, animals, or objects with visceral textures and curves [9]. More advanced exterior drawing may incorporate multiple balloons into a single exterior trophy, such as stacking several apple-shaped balloon sculptures into a pyramid figure. Exterior shaping often requires more practice for artists to master appropriate inflation levels, tying points, and weight balancing.

Both interior and exterior balloon trophy drawing allow creators of all levels to engage in rewarding design thinking and problem-solving processes where physics, spatial dynamics, and manual dexterity intersect [10]. Literature establishes balloon trophies as a versatile emerging artistic medium capable of representing commemorative achievements much like traditional trophies due to their ability to take on diverse shapes, incorporate mixed media, and convey unique symbolic meaning [11]. But as an ephemeral art form made of air and latex, balloon trophies also showcase the temporary and fragile nature of life's most meaningful moments and memories [12].

Results. Key quantitative variables analyzed from visual survey data included user skill level, trophy complexity, trophy meaningfulness, perceived trophy quality, and interest in repeating the creation process. Skill level was reported from 1-5, with 1 representing novice/beginner skill, and 5 indicating expert/professional skill. Similarly, complexity was ranked 1-5, with 1 reflecting low complexity, and 5 indicating very high complexity. Trophy meaningfulness was scored 1-5 as well, with higher numbers relating to deeper personal meaning associated with the trophy message or commemorated event.

Of the 47 balloon artists submitting trophy images, 51% self-identified as novices or beginners in regards to overall balloon art skill level. But when assessed specifically on past experience with balloon trophy creation before their submitted work, 73% said they had never attempted any kind of balloon trophy previously across both interior and exterior groups. This establishes balloon trophies as a creative outlet embraced predominantly by novices, despite their relatively recent introduction as an artistic practice historically.

Complexity ratings for submitted exterior balloon trophies averaged 4.2, notably higher than interior trophy drawings' 2.6 average complexity score. This aligns with literature positioning exterior shaping techniques as more technically challenging and requiring greater inflation control precision. However the majority of participants - even at the novice skill level - still rated their exterior trophy accomplishments as highly meaningful personally, with a meaningfulness average

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of 4.0 across all artist proficiency levels. Interior trophy meaningfulness averaged comparably at 4.1, suggesting balloon trophies resonate profoundly despite perceived complexity barriers.

Interest in repeating the balloon trophy creation process was high as well, averaging 4.8 for exterior trophy makers and 4.3 for interior trophy creators. This not only points to the enjoyment derived from balloon trophy design, but also the addictive nature of refining techniques over multiple efforts. 86% of participants additionally indicated they had gifted their trophy to recognize a specific event or person, underscoring balloon trophies' positive communications capacity. Across both groups, intentions to retain their balloon trophy only temporarily before surrendering the piece to natural entropy carried through as an artistic choice for 75% as well. This firmly establishes the ephemeral qualities of balloon art as central to medium's unique appeal and message.

**Analysis & discussion.** Qualitative interview data from 15 top-performing balloon trophy artists in the initial survey study phase provided more nuanced perspectives on the experiential process of balloon trophy making and its outcomes. Four key themes emerged from interview transcripts upon review: creative problem solving opportunities, accessibility for makers of all skill levels, personalization capabilities, and cathartic impermanence.

The problem-solving nature of balloon trophy creation surfaced repeatedly as both satisfying and rewarding. Participants emphasized how the physics dynamics involved demanded constant troubleshooting and design adjustments from initial concept to finished product. One exterior trophy artist noted: "The overlapping layers looked simple initially but required so much precision. I had to problem solve levels and ratios - how much air goes where to support what - through trial and error with each layer." Rather than frustrations though, most relayed appreciation for the intellectual challenge as a chance to engage with the versatile medium creatively. An interior trophy maker similarly shared: "I hit obstacles where pieces would collapse or shift when I thought I finally had it right. But I just learned from each roadblock, thinking deeper about balance and geometry. It felt great solving each puzzle."

Accessibility emerged as another advantage of balloon trophies for novice makers especially, with 51% of survey participants identifying as beginners. First-time balloon trophy creators talked about finally feeling able to actualize longstanding urges to make art without expectations around perfection or realism. A new interior trophy artist explained: "I don't have talent for lifelike drawing or anything like that. But with balloons, I can think totally outside the box to create meaning in different, dimensional ways." Others focused on how mistake-making remained low stakes yet still yielded finished works full of whimsy and delight. Said one novice exterior trophy designer: "You have flight of creative fancy because if you mess up, you just reshape or add air. It all still looks pretty in the end." Allowing for fun failure makes space for playful expression and bold experiments even at beginner levels.

Veteran balloon artists emphasized the capacity to infuse personal meaning and connection into trophies as well. Precision tying approaches pass on metaphorical significance from maker to recipient according to one professional exterior shape maker: "Every knot has a specific place and purpose like our relationships. When I gift my trophy pieces, the ties represent my care while the shape carries my message." Study participants also suggested custom shaping - whether exaggerated features or collaborative input solicited mid-design - helps reinforce shared memories uniquely. An interior trophy designer building a figural landscape with friends stated: "They'll recognize our in-jokes in little details for years and feel our bond when they see it." Personalized shaping and resonances stand out as driving fulfillment.

Finally, the deliberately temporary nature of balloon materials surfaced as inexorably linking to trophies' commemorative symbolism. Multiple participants described intentionally allowing pieces to decompose as cathartic. One artist spotlighted this deliberate impermanence, saying: "I photograph my best exterior trophy pieces before letting them go when they start to show wear. It feels poetic - appreciating their moment fully knowing it won't last." Others suggested allowing figures to deflate parallels life lessons around letting go. An interior trophy maker releasing their piece at a memorial event reflected: "Watching it slowly sink was peaceful, like a visual reminder that it's alright to release things that brought joy too." Rather than durability, balloon trophies' transient fragility emerged as a feature enabling meaningful ceremonies around change.

Conclusions. Analysis of current practices shows interior and exterior balloon trophy drawing offers creative opportunities, approachable design experiences, personalized resonance and cathartic release across skill levels. Through custom inflation sculpting and shaping, balloon trophies communicate commemorative symbolism and metaphor while stimulating cognitive problem solving and artistic risk taking for makers. Both literature and study data establish balloon trophy creation as a versatile new medium for achieving positive self-expression, social connection, achievement representation and therapeutic impermanence in whimsical form.

The dual quantitative and qualitative research components provide multi-dimensional insights on user experiences from initial concept to completed trophy. Limitations of the sample size and lack of longitudinal data tracking user skill development over time leaves additional areas to be explored further as balloon trophies continue emerging. Follow up opportunities include assessing ties between particular exterior shaping techniques and intended message decoding by recipients and expanding the diversity of participant demographics.

But taken collectively, literature and study evidence clearly conveys balloon trophies' exceptional capacity to fulfill creative cravings through accessible play. Findings position the lighthearted medium as an optimal outlet for beginners and experts alike seeking new design thinking challenges wrapped in good-natured whimsy. For a broad spectrum of artists, balloon trophies uniquely marry festivity

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with sophistication as themed sculptures commemorating both monumental milestones and small delights worth celebrating before they float away.

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