

Comic Awards You Should Know About!

Awards are always a useful selection tool for librarians. Though comics are entering the mainstream, acknowledgement by traditional cultural awards is rare, (with the exception of Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartoons). Not every comic book or graphic novel is going to win the Pulitzer Prize, like Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, but the comic book world has recognized that quality can not go unrewarded. There are several awards for comic book and graphic novels in North America. Some are chosen by industry insiders, other by fans. The best known awards seem to be the Eisner Awards, presented annually at the San Diego ComicCon and The Harveys, presented at the Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art's Festival. The Eisner's tend to focus on mainstream comics, while the Harvey's have a reputation for being alternative friendly.

Canada gets its first national awards for comic book artists and industry leaders in 2005. The Shusters will be presented at the Toronto ComicCon in May of 2005.

In Japan, there are many awards presented for manga. However, many of these awards are publisher sponsored, and show bias in awarding titles by the supporting publisher. The two manga awards featured here are presented by a large newspaper and the Japanese Ministry of Culture. Below, we profile some of the major awards for comics and graphic novels.

Shuster Awards: The 2005 Paradise Comics Toronto Comicon sees the inaugural awards ceremony for the Shuster Awards to honour Canadian contributions to the comic world. Named after Joe Shuster, the Canadian born creator of Superman, they'll be awarded in seven categories, including five inductees into the Canadian Comic Book Hall of Fame Awards. Nominated by an awards committee constituted of journalists and experts from across the country, these awards are voted on by the public.

Will Eisner Awards: These awards, named for writer & artist Will Eisner, were created when the Kirby awards were split in two in 1988. The Eisners are presented annually in 25 categories, at the San Diego ComicCon. Entries are made by publishers and creators, and then an expert panel of judges determines what entries will appear on the final ballot. Voting is then completed by Industry professionals (publishers, creators, distributors and retailers). There is a category for best publication for a younger audience. There is also the Will Eisner Spirit of Comics Retailer Award, presented to an individual retailer for the outstanding promotion of comics in the community at large and within the industry. Recent Eisner winners include Brian Michael Bendis, Alan Moore, Greg Rucka, Craig Thompson, Neil Gaiman, and Lynda Barry.



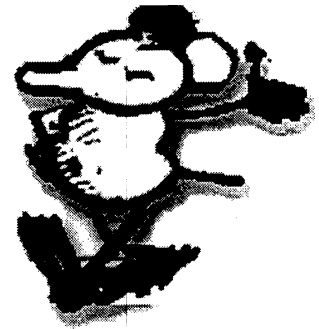
Wizard Fan Awards: The Wizard Fan Awards are awards presented by the publisher of Wizard Magazine and voted on by the fans. Created in 1993, these awards not only honour the creators of comics, but also have categories for fan's favourite heroes and villains. The awards, given in 19 categories, are announced in the magazine, presented at the WizardWorld Chicago conventions. Nominees come from a poll at the website of Wizard Universe, and the ballot is voted on by fans online. Previous winners include Jim Lee, Alex Ross, Brian Michael Bendis, and Scott Williams.



Harvey Kurtzman Awards: Named for one of the original creators of *Mad Magazine*, the Harveys, as they are commonly known, are presented in over twenty categories. The Harveys were created when the Kirby Awards were split in 1988 under the co-sponsorship of Fantagraphics Books, Lone Star Comics (a Texas-based retail chain) and the Eastern Regional Comic Book Retailers Association. Nominations are made by their peer groups of comic book professionals, and the top five nominees in each category are voted on a final ballot. The awards are presented annually at the Museum of Comics and Cartoon Art's (MoCCA) Annual Art Festival Weekend in New York City. The Harveys also have the Jack Kirby Hall of Fame, which inducts members in retroactive, lifetime achievement, and international categories. Recent winners include Chris Ware, Chester Brown, Jaime Hernandez, Alan Moore, and Craig Thompson.



Ignatz Awards: The Ignatz Awards are named for the mouse in George Herriman's classic comic strip *Krazy Kat*. The Ignatz Awards recognize "outstanding achievement in comics and cartooning by small press creators or creator-owned projects published by larger publishers." These awards, created in 1997, are presented annually in 9 categories at the Small Press Expo in Bethesda, Maryland. Nominees are chosen an anonymous panel of five cartoonists (cartoonists may submit their work for consideration.) and then the awards are voted on by attendees at the Expo. Recent Winners include James Kochalka, Craig Thompson, Jason Little, Charles Burns, and Lauren Weinstein.



Osamu Tezuka Awards: Named for the legendary Osamu Tezuka, the creator of *Astro Boy* and generally considered to be the father of Japanese comics. This is the third incarnation of manga awards presented in Tezuka's name. Established in 1997 by the Ashai Newspaper, the Osamu Tezuka Cultural Prizes are presented in four categories to single volume manga published in the previous year. There is an annual ceremony every June where winners receive a statuette of *Astro Boy* and a cash prize. The awards are nominated by the public, and are then voted on by a judging panel. Previous winners include Kiyoko Okazaki, Fumiko Takano, and Takehiko Inoue.



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Media Arts Awards: The Media Arts Awards are presented by the Japanese Ministry of Culture. These cultural awards include digital art, animation and manga. There is a Grand Prize, four Excellence Prize Winners, and an Encouragement Prize presented annually in each field of media arts. They are presented annually at the Media Arts Festival. Artists must submit their work for consideration, and the winners are determined by a panel of judges. Previous winners include Kouno Fumiyo, Igarashi Daisuke, Tobe Keiko, Saibara Rieko, and Natusaka Shin-ichiro.

For more information on these awards, and other Cartoon and Comic Book awards from North America and around the world, a great resource is the *Comic Book Awards Almanac* on the World Wide Web. See our electronic resource list for the URL.