

TOP COW TALENT HUNT 2026

IMPORTANT TOPLINE:

1) EVERY TALENT HUNT WE GET COUNTLESS QUESTIONS, WHICH ARE CLEARLY ANSWERED IN THIS DOCUMENT, SO PLEASE READ THIS CAREFULLY. IF YOU EMAIL US AND ASK US A QUESTION CLEARLY FEATURED IN THIS DOCUMENT THE QUESTION WILL BE IGNORED.

2) YES, YOU HAVE TO PRINT OUT THE SUBMISSION AGREEMENT, SIGN IT WITH A WET SIGNATURE (BLUE OR BLACK INK) AND SCAN AND RETURN IT WITH YOUR SUBMISSION. THERE IS NO E-SIGN OPTION.

3) THE CONTEST RUNS FROM JANUARY 6, 2026 UNTIL JULY 7, 2026. THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED MID-SEPTEMBER 2026 AND THAT PERSON WILL BE PAID A FLAT US \$2,000 TO DO A SINGLE 20-PAGE STORY OF TOP COW'S CHOOSING.

4) YOU WILL BE PROVIDED TWO 8-PAGE SCRIPTS TO CHOOSE FROM (OR DO BOTH) ON JANUARY 6, 2026. THESE WILL BE POSTED ON TOPCOW.COM AND IN THE TOP COW TALENT HUNT FACEBOOK GROUP.

5) ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED IN OUR TALENTHUNT@TOPCOW.COM EMAIL ADDRESS BY 11:59 PM PDT ON 7 JULY 2026. DO NOT SEND YOUR SUBMISSION TO ANY OTHER TOP COW EMAIL ADDRESS OR ANY SOCIAL MEDIA MESSENGER. THERE WILL BE NO CONFIRMATION-OF-RECEIPT EMAIL.

6) DO NOT EMAIL AND ASK THE STATUS OF YOUR SUBMISSION. WE GET THOUSANDS OF SUBMISSIONS FOR THESE TALENT HUNTS.

We are looking to hire one artist from anywhere in the world to do paid work for the company in 2027/2028. The goal of Talent Hunt is to find one previously UNPUBLISHED artist and give them a chance to expose their work to the comic industry in the printed and digital formats. The winner will be paid a flat US \$2,000 for the work published once accepted by us. This work must be completed by you within six months from date of receipt of the 20-page script. If you fail to do so Top Cow reserves the right to terminate your engagement and have someone else of our choice finish it. In that event you will be paid ONLY US \$100 for each finished page turned in, approved by us, and published by us.

Some of these conditions and restrictions may seem a bit draconian, but we are unable to conduct this talent hunt otherwise. If you become a nuisance, we will block you, and your submission will not be reviewed. Please be kind and understanding. If anything in these documents bothers you, don't send in a submission.

THE RULES:

This round your submission must be based on the 2025/2026 versions of The Darkness and/or Witchblade inclusive of any characters featured in those two titles, and you can choose either one OR both of the provided 8-page script for those titles. Those are the

ONLY two options to enter. Nothing else provided will be reviewed and will be discarded.

Here's the rub, we're looking for people to draw stories based ONLY on these characters. We don't care how your *Batman* looks and neither should you for this. We have always been a company that proactively creates new and original characters and its current collective universe is spearheaded by *Witchblade*, *The Darkness*, and *Aphrodite IX* from *Artifacts*.

UNPUBLISHED

What does this mean? I'm going to narrow it down specifically that if you've done professional work as an artist (pencils, inks, digital, and/or painting) for any of these companies or any of their affiliates, divisions, licensees, or imprints, you can't participate:

Marvel Comics/Walt Disney Company	Zenescope Entertainment
DC Comics	Viz Media
Image Comics (all imprints)	Aspen Comics
Dark Horse Comics	Random House
IDW	Scholastic
Ignition Press	Vault Storyworks
Black Mask	Aftershock
Scout Comics	Abrams
Dynamite Comics	Heavy Metal
Boom!	Fantagraphics
Valiant Comics	Avatar
Aftershock Comics	

This competition is open to all international participants; I don't have the space to list out all the non-English companies so as a rule of thumb if the company is in the top five based on market share for your country, then you can NOT participate (e.g., Panini, Norma, Star, Glénat, Mediatoon/Dargaud/Urban, Delcourt, Titan). If you have a question about this, you can ask me directly.

ARTISTS

We are looking for an artist who does penciled work, pencil/ink finished art, pencil to color work, digital painting or pencil/ink/ink-wash combo appropriate for black and white publication. If you are an inker or colorist, you can submit your work to Top Cow through regular submission channels or via submissions@topcow.com, but they will NOT be considered for this Talent Hunt. We will accept just pencils as a submission. Note that if you win and don't ink or color your work, we will assign you an inker and colorist and you will not be able to choose who does your pages. You will be consulted, but the decision will be ours.

The Talent Hunt will run from 1/6/26 through 7/7/26 and all submissions received on or before 11:59 PM on 7/7/26 (Pacific Daylight Time) that have included a signed Top Cow Submissions Agreement form will be reviewed. This signed agreement MUST be included, or your submission will not be looked at.

There are only two stories to choose from to illustrate this year, so all artists will be doing one of the two same 8-page sequences (or both if you choose).

NONE OF THE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE LOOKED AT OR REVIEWED PRIOR TO THE 7/7/26 DEADLINE. So, take the time you've been given and make it the best you can. We'll announce the winners in mid-September 2026. And yes, I'm repeating myself, I want to make sure people get the details that are important.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

You cannot use any generative artificial-intelligence tool or process (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT, DALL-E, Imagen, Stable Diffusion, Adobe Firefly, Leonardo AI, Canva Magic Media, Fotor, Kittl, Nano Banana, ImageFX and/or Midjourney) in any manner in connection with the Talent Hunt or otherwise to produce the artwork or any other element for the Talent Hunt submission.

FEEDBACK

You will NOT receive any review of your work or why it was not chosen. If you come and see me at a comic convention or retail-store signing and bring your work with you, I'll be happy to review it with you in person.

TOP COW TALENT HUNT FACEBOOK GROUP

I have set up a Facebook group here that you can join where Top Cow personnel including myself will check in weekly to check comments, questions, and posts:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/723403334749559/>

Note if you are disruptive, rude, post non-Talent Hunt-related anything including your art for other characters (except in designated posts indicated as specifically for that), you'll be removed from the group without warning.

We will be checking this group and commenting and talking with people regarding this so it is recommended that you join the Facebook group. If you hate Facebook and need to reach us, you can email us at talenthunt@topcow.com.

POSTING OF YOUR SUBMISSION

You are free to post your submission at any time between 1/6/26 through 7/7/26. Strategically, I'm not sure it's a good idea for you to do so, but it won't have any bearing on whom we pick.

SLIGHT REDESIGNS OF CHARACTERS

This time this is not allowed. Any derivation from the modern 2025/2026 versions of Witchblade and/or The Darkness or their supporting cast from these new books will automatically be rejected. So, no classic Witchblade or The Darkness designs and no *Tales of the Witchblade* or *Tales of The Darkness* designs with bearers from other times.

WHY DO WE NEED A SUBMISSIONS AGREEMENT FORM SIGNED BY YOU?

This agreement protects Top Cow from any liabilities involving coincidental similarities to works-in-progress or other submissions. Any submissions received without a signed copy of the Submissions Agreement will be discarded without review.

IMPORTANT OTHER STUFF

All submissions will be accepted via DIGITAL MEANS ONLY. We will NOT accept mailed, couriered, or faxed submissions. You need to scan your work and email it or a download link to talenthunt@topcow.com. 25 MB is the max for Google Attachments so that is the rule of thumb for maximum file size on submissions. You can submit files for review as 300 dpi or as low as 150 dpi, RGB, jpeg. If you send .pdfs you can reduce the file size by selecting [SAVE AS/REDUCED SIZE .pdf] or [SAVE AS OTHER/OPTIMIZED PDF] and reduce the setting of the .pdf to as low as 150 dpi. That email address will NOT answer any questions you may have. When you send your submission to this email address, please include **Top Cow Talent Hunt 2026** in the subject line and don't forget to attach the signed Submissions Agreement Form.

We only have a few people on staff so if you spam us with questions or are overly annoying, we reserve the right to block you and not accept your submission.

We have no obligations and make no commitments other than as expressly set forth herein. If you are chosen, you will not be hired as an employee nor will you be given a long work commitment, this will be a published one shot to start off with that you willingly do on a 100% work-made-for-hire basis. The winner receives a US \$2,000 flat rate for their 20 pages of work.

Given the expected volume of submissions, please do not harass the small Top Cow staff to check on your submission or its standing. NO results will be given or posted until mid-September 2026 so it is STRONGLY ENCOURAGED that you take your time and do the best work you can and submit only when you're ready.

You must be 18 years of age to participate.

We will NOT provide you with any direct reference for this, but there are a lot of resources available online for free.

Good luck!

Matt Hawkins (Top Cow)

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@topcowmatt @topcow

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/TopCow> <https://facebook.com/Selfloathingnarcissist>

Instagram

<http://instagram.com/topcow>

<http://instagram.com/mhawk5222>