

Balloon Jam Reports!

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Cincinnati-

No talking. No loud noises. Be quiet. The ultimate rule of the library was about to be broken.

On March 30, David Baker brought balloons, including free jam packs and color charts from Betallic and Qualatex, into the North Central Branch Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, and the sounds of squeaking and twisting filled the air.

The library knows David, and is very supportive of his balloon work. But today wasn't just David- this was a community project. Part balloon jam, part twister workshop, this two-hour event was open to the public, and culminated with the construction of a six and a half-foot tall blue balloon dog!

The huge balloon dog sculpture, based on a Mark Verge design, was put together using Betallatex 660 balloons. People kept showing up to help out, and by the end, 25 people had come together to make the Big Blue Dog Balloon Jam a success!

Thanks to David Baker for putting together such an awesome event, and sharing the story with us! Thanks also to the North Central Branch Library for their support of balloon art, and to Qualatex and Betallatex for their support of the art and balloon artists everywhere!



Nashville-

TJam on the Road passed through Nashville on June 10, 2010, as the sixth stop on a 40-city tour. Unfortunately, I began that day performing two shows in a library in another town. By the time my second show had finished, and everything was repacked into the van, I had already missed Robbie Furman's morning DecoTwisting class, and by the time I showed up at the location, Alberto Nava's class would already be underway.

When I pulled off of the interstate, I realized that TJam was booked at the hotel that shares a parking lot with the restaurant that I twist at on Sundays. I went into the lobby of the hotel to find the conference room, and was told that the event was being held in the tiny building beside the swimming pool outside. I walked over to the pool house, looking for any sign of festivity. I was tired from the shows that morning, I had already missed half of the event, and it was being held in this little nondescript building on the outskirts of town. My expectations were low. Then I saw a little 8 ½ x 11 sign taped to the door that said "TJam on the Road". And it was like seeing a friendly face in strange town.

I opened the door, and every pessimistic thought blew away. There is something magical about balloon jams and conventions. Thanks to the internet, you can see photos of your favorite balloon people, talk to them daily, watch their videos, and see all of their new sculptures. But none of this compares to meeting them in person. Just hanging out with your balloon heroes at lunch time, eating pizza and talking, noticing how many odd balloons are mixed in with their pocket change when they're standing in front of the soda machine. I even get a little giddy walking through the parking lot of conventions,