

EVENT PRESS RELEASE

Anastasia Forde

POP Solutions

856-669-4129

Anastasia@pop.solutions

Release Date:

June 26th 2025



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Designer Toy Art Festival is Philadelphia's First-Ever Large-Scale Event for Independent Creators, Art Toys, and Culture, August 1-10

Philadelphia, PA – This summer, **Assembly Required* brings the cutting edge of independent toy art and creative culture to Philadelphia with *the Designer Toy Art Festival*. The event starts with a gallery and online exhibition **August 1st** and leads to the main event **August 8th-10th** at the historic **23rd Street Armory**.

Originally launched in Asheville, NC, by artist and curator **Matthew J. Casale**, **Assembly Required* is one of the nation's only events exclusively dedicated to celebrating independent designer toys, bootlegs, customs, and pop-surrealist collectibles. With its 2025 expansion into Philadelphia, the all-ages show brings together more than 100 independent artists, vendors, and independent toy brands from around the country for a one-of-a-kind gathering that fuses street art, pop-culture, sculptural toys, and figural storytelling.

"This space was built by artists who needed each other — and needed a platform," said **Assembly Required* founder Matthew J. Casale. A University of the Arts alum and a 16-year Philadelphia resident before moving to NC, Matthew observed that, *"Philadelphia is the perfect city for this expansion because it has a rich legacy of creativity, rebellion, and community-building. These artists deserve a stage, and *Assembly Required is where they get it."*

For the first time, the event has evolved to become the **Designer Toy Art Festival** — a multi-day event produced and curated with partners at **GoHero**, pioneers in collectible toy design, and **POP Solutions**, an award-winning creative brand development company. The showcase will feature amazing original creations, limited-edition exclusives, live entertainment, and collaborative opportunities for artists looking to take their work to the next level.

*“Independent creators are the heartbeat of tomorrow’s brands,” said **Steve Forde**, founder of GoHero, POP Solutions, and co-founder of LBO Collective. “We’ve seen firsthand how powerful art toys can be in shaping culture. This event is designed to be a launchpad for the next generation of world-class creators.”*

This unique experience also features live DJ’ing, food, cosplay, and satellite entertainment designed to celebrate independent creatives. For many, designer toys are more than collectibles — they’re tools for cultural storytelling and identity.

*"Art toys are a powerful way for more creatives to tell personal stories—often the ones overlooked or left out by mainstream media," said **Acori Honzo**, acclaimed Philadelphia artist and co-founder of LBO Collective. "This festival gives artists from all walks of life a chance to speak through their craft and connect directly with the community."*

As Philadelphia continues to rise as a national hub for art, design, and maker culture, **Assembly Required* provides an opportunity for local businesses and institutions to rally behind the creative community.

*“Supporting the arts in Philly isn’t optional — it’s essential,” said **Casey Parker**, owner of the iconic José Pistola’s and longtime advocate for local talent. “This kind of festival brings people together, drives business, and shows the world what Philly is made of.”*

Whether you're a seasoned collector, a curious newcomer, or just looking for something fresh and inspiring, **Assembly Required – Designer Toy Art Festival* offers an unforgettable experience of creativity, connection, and culture.

Event Details:

Dates: August 1–10, 2025

Cost: Free and ticketed – See website for event details

Location: 23rd Street Armory, 22 S 23rd St, Philadelphia, PA 19103

Website: www.toyartfest.com

For press inquiries, artist interviews, or media credentials, please contact:

Anastasia@pop.solutions