



ENNY

ANIME NYC 2025 ZINE



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On the Cover: (left to right) STARDUST MEGU, ALLTHEPOTSNPANS, HHAETHERE and RJ HOOKS

Photography: ELLIE FORTE **Art Direction:** RADIYA AHETO

The Ultimate **Anime NYC** Survival Guide

BY ELLIE FORTE

New York's largest anime convention — Anime NYC — is opening its doors for another year at the Javits Center. This year it upgraded itself from a three-day convention – taking over the Jacob Javits for four days. Prior to its debut in 2017, many New York anime fans attended events like Sakura Matsuri or hosted small meetups. Anime NYC was the answer to the large demand for an anime convention in New York City. Inaugurated in 2017 by LeftField Media, the convention has grown exponentially. Hosting over 100,000 convention-goers in 2024, Anime NYC has since become a hotspot for celebrations of anime and Japanese culture. Anime NYC, like many conventions, can be quite overwhelming for any first-timers. EnVi has you covered with this ultimate Anime NYC convention survival guide!



✖ PLANNING FOR THE CONVENTION

As an attendee, planning for a convention as large as Anime NYC is just as important as attending the convention itself. Planning includes purchasing badges, figuring out transportation, and more. If attendees are coming from outside of the state — or even outside of the city — travel and accommodations should be planned as early as five months prior to the show.

Purchasing Tickets

To purchase tickets for the convention, fans can either purchase directly from Anime NYC's website. However, many large conventions will have strict deadlines that require fans to purchase badges before a certain date to ensure their badges are shipped in time. While the deadline for shipped badges passed on June 30th, fans still can pick up their badges from will call or partner locations in New York.

Transportation

After securing a badge, it's time to figure out transportation. New Yorkers (specifically in New York City) can access the Javits Center through the MTA. It is easiest to commute to Times Square 42nd St and then transfer to the 7 train. This takes patrons very close to the convention center. On the weekend however, the 7 train will not run to 34th-St Hudson Yards. As an alternative, travelers can take the M34-SBS or walk to the Javits Center. It is important to note however, that safety during transit is incredibly important and prop weapons should be sheathed or hidden as much as possible while commuting.

Bags should be prepared prior to the convention. Carrying items like portable chargers, masks, hand sanitizer, cash, and foldable or electric hand fans are essential. Additionally, because outside food and drink are not permitted inside Anime NYC, eating a balanced morning meal can greatly help offset food costs during the show.



(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

✖ CONVENTION ETIQUETTE

Whether you are new to conventions or have gone to conventions for years, following convention etiquette ensures a safe and positive experience for everyone. Respect is of utmost importance in a convention, not only for yourself but for others around you.

1 **Respect Convention Staff**

Convention staff are there to aid convention-goers who need support or have a question. Always kindly approach team members.

2 **Do Not Touch Others Without Consent**

Before touching, ask. While it may be exciting to see a cosplayer dressed as a character you may like, it is important to understand that cosplay is not consent. Ask before you attempt to hug or touch another person.

3 **Do Not Lean on Tables in the Artist Alley or Booths**

Standing can get tiring at the convention, however leaning on tables in the Artist Alley or on the show floor can damage merchandise or art. The best practice is to keep at least 3-4 inches of distance between yourself and the table before purchasing any items.

4 **Want A Picture? Ask!**

Whether they are a guest, cosplayer, or content creator that you like, it is key to always ask before snapping a picture of someone or posting it. To ensure you respect boundaries, it is always best to kindly grab the attention of the person you want a picture of and ask. If they say no, respect that they said no.

5 **Be Mindful of Surroundings**

Conventions are a shared space, so being mindful of your surroundings will help keep yourself and others safe. If an area is crowded, you should not swing items, props, or make extremely big movements (i.e. martial arts). You could unintentionally hit someone!



(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

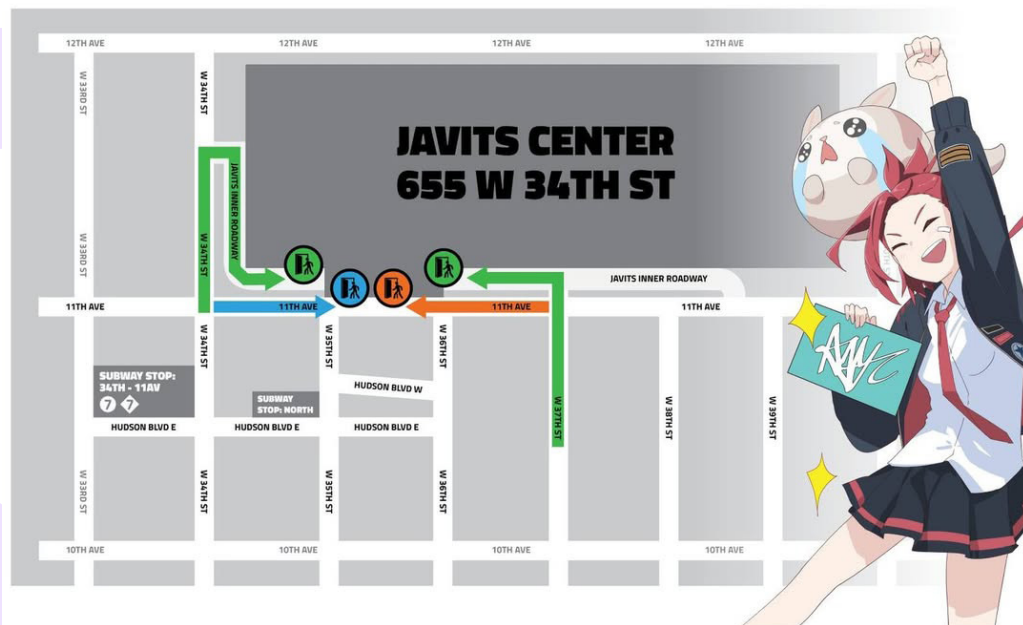
✖ PANELS AND THE SHOW FLOOR: NAVIGATION MADE EASY

The Javits Center is quite big and can be tough to navigate for a first-time attendee. Conventions like Anime NYC can have upward of 100,000 attendees, which makes it even more necessary to stay aware. The Javits Center in particular, has changed quite a bit since its expansion in the last few years.

First, when entering any space, it is important to plan and survey the layout of the show floor. It is possible that phone signals may drop during the convention as well. This may lead to difficulties in navigation. However, by utilizing the official maps provided by the convention and staff, Artist Alleys, food courts, and booths are easier to find. To make navigation smoother, plan which panels, cosplay meetups, and signings you want to attend accordingly.

ANIME NYC ENTRANCE PLAN

- GREEN ENTRANCE: Fan Entrance and Fan Badge Will Call:** The general admission and fan Will Call entrance will be accessible from 34th Street or 11th Ave at 37th Street. It is located one level down from the Crystal Palace in the inner roadway on the south side of the Javits Center.
- BLUE ENTRANCE: Dedicated ANYC+ & Professional Entrance:** ANYC+, Pro, Press, Exhibitor, Artist Alley, Panelist, and Content Creator badge holders, enter through this location.
- ORANGE ENTRANCE: Accessibility Entrance Only** This is a dedicated entrance only for those with ADA needs. Proceed straight to check in at the ADA services desk to receive your credentials and the information you'll need to navigate the show.



Anime NYC has published the official schedule for all events on their website as well as official convention hours.

✕ PHOTOGRAPHERS AND COSPLAYERS

Going to a convention for the first time as a photographer or cosplayer can be exciting. It is key for first-time photographers to plan their days in advance to prevent being overwhelmed by the scale of Anime NYC.

Photographers like Stefanie Candelario prepare weeks ahead of multi-day conventions. She is best known for her full-body photos of cosplayers at conventions across the northeast. In 2023, EnVi got the chance to chat with the veteran photographer on Zoom. During this call, she delved into why it is important for new photographers to be intentional about the type of pictures they take. "It's always important to know what your limit is... because you don't want to have to overexert yourself," she said.

"It's always important to know what your limit is... because you don't want to have to overexert yourself,"

For many beginner photographers, the best course of action is to experiment, explore, and give yourself grace when you don't get all the photos you want. What makes cosplay photography so different from other genres like concerts, weddings, or studios is that "you're actually face-to-face – close with the person right next to you." Candelario explains that Anime NYC, specifically, is very crowded, so being able to navigate these spaces poses a challenge for cosplay photographers.

Cosplayers, on the other hand, face different hurdles and experiences than

their photographer counterparts. In 2023 EnVi talked to cosplay content creator Rodney "RJ" Hooks about his experiences within the cosplay community over Zoom. His cosplay journey started in 2020 when people were stuck in their homes during the start of the pandemic. Since his entry into the community, he continues to display his prowess as a multi-faceted artist both online and offline.

Though he himself is new to the convention scene as a whole, Hooks provided key insights on conventions and Anime NYC. "A big one for me was over-stimulation... I think it's something that we all forget about," he said. Conventions can be an overwhelming experience, especially for a beginner cosplayer. Cosplaying in your room is quite different from attending a convention with thousands of people. Easing into it by going out to a friend's house or wearing a cosplay in public can certainly familiarize beginner cosplayers to become familiar with wearing their cosplays outside.

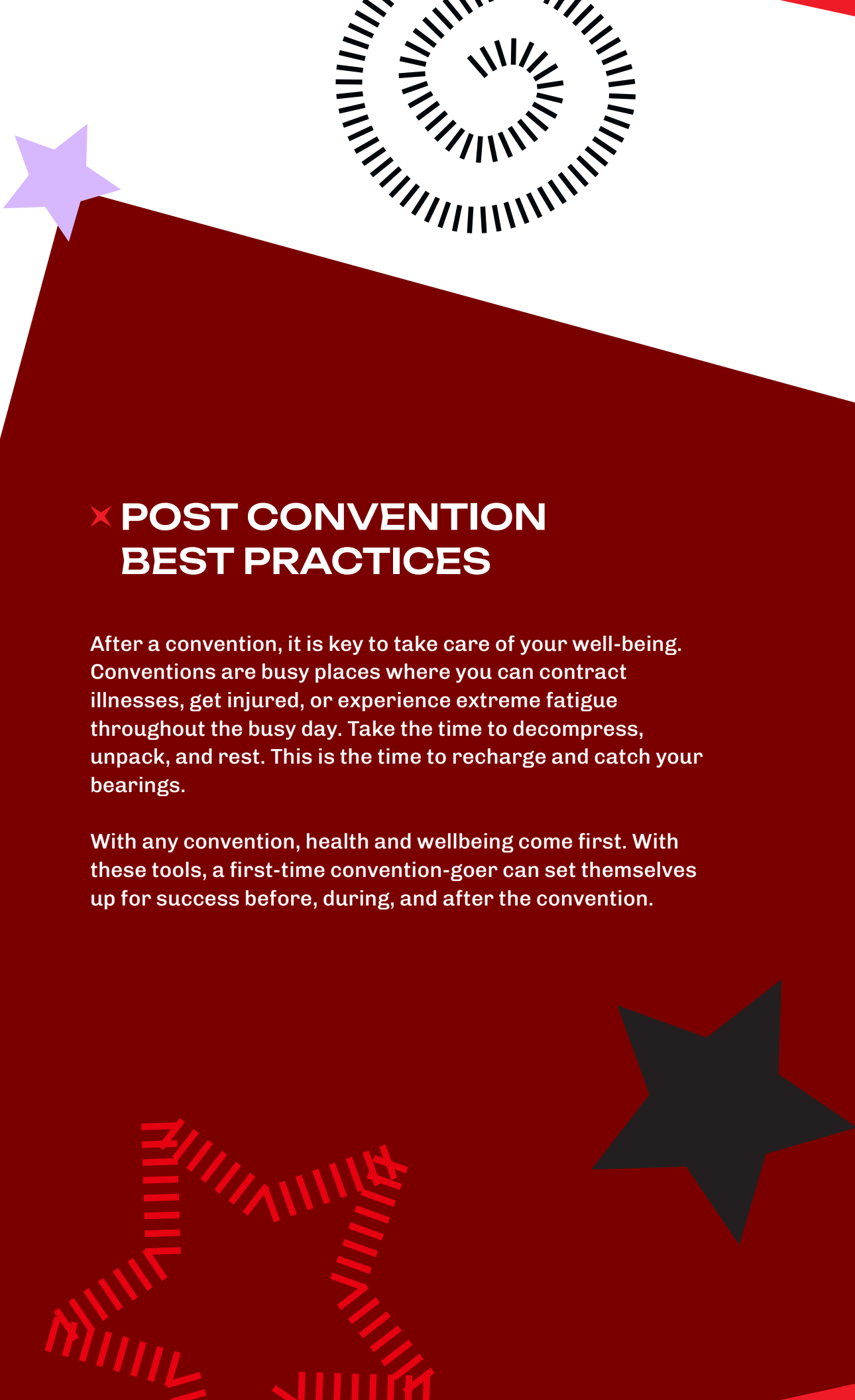
Spending time in cosplays, testing, and preparing can set a cosplayer up for success during a convention. In the same vein, you may want to look for comfortability over accuracy. Convention days are often hours long and can be

very taxing on the body. While Hooks recommended going to more local conventions before a bigger one, many of these tips can help a beginner survive their first day.

Hooks then went into detail about boundaries and dove into the many ways cosplayers can set boundaries for themselves throughout the day. "It's very important to remind yourself that you are there for yourself and you're not there for other people – you wanna remind yourself that your safety and health come first."

"You wanna remind yourself that your safety and health come first."

Focusing on the well-being of a convention-goer, he mentioned the importance of communicating these boundaries to other convention-goers and upholding respect for yourself (as well as others) during the day.



✖ POST CONVENTION BEST PRACTICES

After a convention, it is key to take care of your well-being. Conventions are busy places where you can contract illnesses, get injured, or experience extreme fatigue throughout the busy day. Take the time to decompress, unpack, and rest. This is the time to recharge and catch your bearings.

With any convention, health and wellbeing come first. With these tools, a first-time convention-goer can set themselves up for success before, during, and after the convention.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 24: FANS TRAVERSE THROUGH THE JACOB JAVITS CENTER ON AUGUST 24, 2025 AT ANIME NYC.
(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

Anime NYC Builds a New Chapter in Move to 4-Day Convention

BY ELLIE FORTE & RADIYA AHETO



Expanding its offering from three days of programming to four, Anime NYC is entering a new chapter. This year the convention built off of what has continued to make them successful — from cosplayers, robust programming, to vendors and artists. And in the event that you missed all the fun, *EnVi* was on the ground to give you the scoop on 2025's Anime NYC.

✖ THE RECAP:

At this point, it's clear that Anime NYC is the convention to be sustaining in-person anime culture across the East Coast. Not only is the convention key in connecting fans across the world to anime, but it is also bringing in anime heavy hitters. This year, the convention welcomed a number of Japanese talents like SPY x FAMILY voice actors Kenichiro Matsuda and Emiri Kato (who voice Bond Forger and Becky Blackwell). Aside from Japanese talent, the convention hosted a variety of artists and vendors to its halls. Through its four-day run, Anime NYC saw historic crowds, with the lively Javits Center filled to the brim with over 148,000 fans. Of course, with change comes its ups and downs as the convention continues to navigate exponential growth through the years.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 24: FANS FILL THE HALLS OF THE JACOB JAVITS CENTER ON AUGUST 24, 2025 AT ANIME NYC.
(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)



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(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

✦ THE GOOD

Anime NYC has become home to a thriving culture of fans. Gone are the days of scrappy meetups and small conventions being the only avenue to engage with anime culture. Anime NYC is diverse with inclusive programming featuring creators of color, disabled, and queer talent. Putting the culture of New York on the forefront, the convention included local talent like New York City rap group If The Shoe Fits, and BIPOC collectives like Plus Ultra Entertainment. Focused on giving a holistic experience to fans across interests like cosplay, gaming, manga, and film/TV, Anime NYC has made the push to diversify its programming. For cosplayers in need of immersive sets, Destination Cosplay and Candiiland had dedicated areas. If fans wanted to engage only with Gaming, they were able to with organizers like Play NYC and a host of indie studios offering gaming experiences to fans. If that wasn't enough, fans could also meet their favorite voice actors at panels while getting first of its kind previews to the hottest animes out. With these panels, came dedicated ASL interpreters giving hard of hearing fans the opportunity to partake in these one of a kind showcases.



(PHOTOS BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

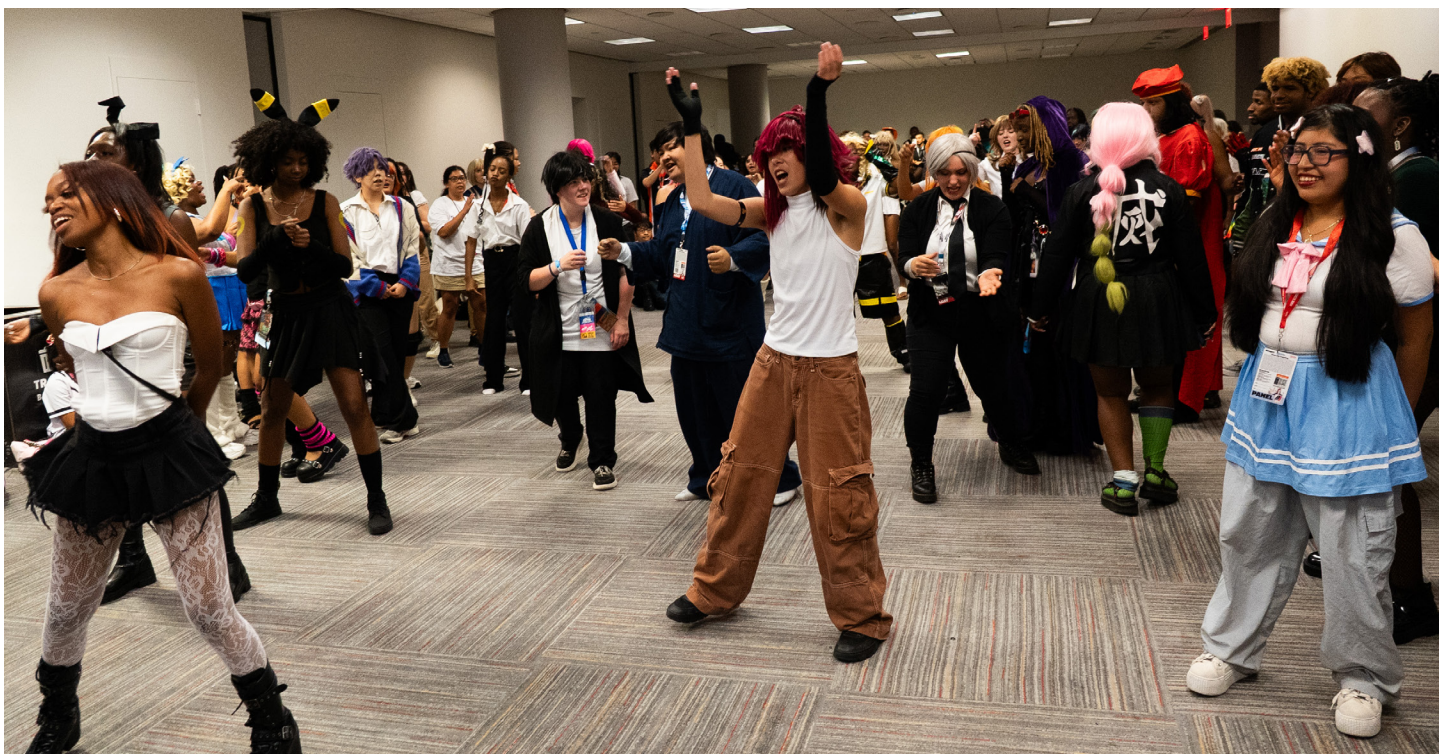
✦ THIS YEAR'S LEARNINGS MAKE FOR NEXT YEAR'S IMPROVEMENTS

Though Anime NYC is growing positively and learning from its previous years, there are some growing pains with the exponential growth of the convention. Crowds were dense, packed full with thousands of fans trying to navigate an already overwhelming showfloor. This is not unique to Anime NYC of course, but as the convention becomes more and more popular through the years it becomes important now more than ever, to create easy to navigate environments through the weekend. This becomes increasingly necessary when high profile guests are set to walk through the convention floor, driving unsafe crowds at booths. Aside from navigation, there was certainly room for improvement across accessible spaces. Dedicated quiet rooms were noticeably loud making it harder for neurodivergent patrons to decompress through the day.

✕ PANELS, PROGRAMMING AND MORE

Not an hour went by without a diverse schedule of programming.

Anime NYC's schedule was jam packed with events from industry mixers, to voice actor meet and greets, to exhibitor and fan panels.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 22: A CONTESTANT DANCES AT THE K-PLANET! DANCE COMPETITION ON AUGUST 22, 2025 AT ANIME NYC.
(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

For any fans looking to dig into Anime NYC for the first time, you'll find that the programming is so robust, you could completely go through the weekend attending just panels alone. The four-day weekend started off strong with a special presentation from Netflix, who offered fans a sneak peak at shows like "Sakamoto Days." The fun kept going for Netflix, who brought out Vinnie Hacker, a social media influencer and the voice of Slur in the show. Anime NYC also partnered with LucasFilm for the first time to chat all things Star Wars, bridging the gap between legacy IP and anime formats.

Aside from larger panels, there was also a strong roster of medium to intimate panels from creators like Stardust Megu who hosted a session on costume craftsmanship when entering competitions. And if there wasn't enough

programming, fans got the chance to catch the highly anticipated Cosplay Masquerade. As a juried competition (participants need to be accepted to compete), Anime NYC's competition was rigorous and highly entertaining.

And though Anime NYC's main focus is Japanese culture, there was a healthy representation of K-pop throughout the weekend with a number of K-pop Random Dance Play events. It should come to no surprise that with the continued success of *KPop Demon Hunters* and K-pop, that fans in the East Coast are looking for spaces to celebrate the musical genre given the lack of a KCON in New York City. On Friday, Hailey House Imnida hosted the K-Planet Dance Competition, and a workshop teaching XLOV's "1&Only."



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 23: COSPLAYERS GRACE THE STAGE AT THE COSPLAY MASQUERADE ON AUGUST 23, 2025 AT ANIME NYC.
(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 22: A CONTESTANT DANCES AT THE K-PLANET! DANCE COMPETITION ON AUGUST 22, 2025 AT ANIME NYC.
(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 23: STARDUST MEGU SPEAKS TO FANS AND FELLOW COSPLAYERS AT HER PANEL ON AUGUST 23, 2025 AT ANIME NYC. (PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 23: MANAKNIGHT POSES FOR ENVI MEDIA WHILE DRESSED AS ASUKA FROM EVANGELION ON AUGUST 23, 2025 AT ANIME NYC. (PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)



Cosplayers are a necessary lifeline to any convention, and this year at Anime NYC, fans brought their A-game.

LEFT: NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 23: STARFIREFE POSES FOR ENVI MEDIA WHILE DRESSED STAFIRE FROM TEEN TITANS ON AUGUST 23, 2025 AT ANIME NYC. (PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 23: COSPLAY.TORY AND COPEHILL077 POSE FOR ENVI MEDIA WHILE DRESSED AS 9S AND 2B FROM NIER AUTOMATA ON AUGUST 23, 2025 AT ANIME NYC. (PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

★ EXHIBITORS, GAMING, AND ARTIST ALLEY

This year marks the second year of PLAY.nyc's partnership with Anime NYC, giving the attendees another outlet for fun during the convention. At Hall 1B, there was a combination of indie, tabletop, and arcade games. Fans saw new and revisiting names such as Ai2U, Cybrlich, and Coolmath Games as well as the headlining game, Starlight Revolver, allowing attendees a chance to see Ironmouse and CDawgVA in a sponsored panel.

Not only were there robust gaming opportunities, but also incredible artists at Anime NYC's artist alley. And this year, heavy hitters within the art community graced the convention's halls. From his outstanding appearance at Anime Expo, internationally acclaimed illustrator, Acky Bright, appeared at Anime NYC as the Guest of Honor. Attendees were able to stop by his booth for raffles, autographs, and watch his live drawings that occurred throughout the convention weekend.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 22: ACKY BRIGHT WITH HIS LIVE DRAWING AT ANIME NYC IN NEW YORK CITY. (PHOTO BY RADIYA AHETO FOR ENVI MEDIA)



(PHOTOS BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

And what is any convention without its exhibitors like HIDIVE, Monsters We Make, and Gachiakuta, who had massive and impressive fabrications and booths throughout the four-day weekend. YouTuber CoryxKenshin also made an appearance onto the showfloor throughout the day, surprising his most passionate fans.

The convention now sets its horizon for 2026, where fans can attend at the Javits center from August 20th through August 23rd. With so many different offerings, it's safe to say that Anime NYC is worth every penny.



Meet **Four** Embodying Their Best Selves at **Anime NYC**

BY ELLIE FORTE



(PHOTOS BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

Cosplayers are to conventions what butter is to bread. Dressed in elaborate costumes, cosplayers are a lifeline to the culture of anime conventions. Both online and offline, these communities have deeply passionate fans who have forever changed the cultural zeitgeist. Cosplay – built off the words costume and play – has been part of anime, comic, and gaming communities for decades. And at Anime NYC, cosplayers are certainly the highlight. This year, *EnVi* sat down with four cosplayers who are embodying their best selves.



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NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 23: STARDUST MEGU POSES FOR ENVI MEDIA ON AUGUST 23, 2025 AT ANIME NYC.
(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

★ RDUST

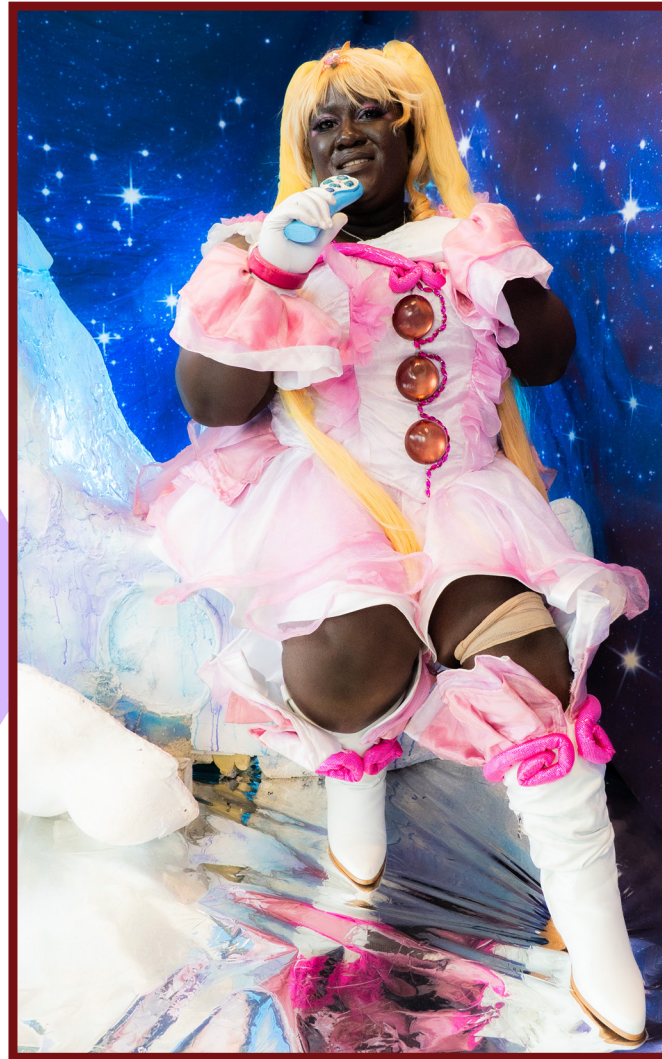
Based in New York City, **STARDUST MEGU** has been at the center of the city's cosplay scene. A crafter and content creator, she's had quite the impressive tenure within the community. Her journey started over fifteen years ago, during a time when cosplay, anime, and "nerd" culture was generally taboo. These were the ol' days of 360p anime videos, printed merch in notebooks, and fan meetups in Central Park. In a conversation with *EnVi*, Megu recalled her start with cosplay.

Dressed in an ornate self-made cosplay of the character Lucia from *Mermaid Melody Pichi Pichi Pichi*, she enthusiastically dove into her journey over the years. "I knew of cosplay for many years since, like, 2002. As I was googling my favorite characters, I stumbled across people dressing up as my favorite characters." Like many Black cosplayers in the early aughts, Stardust Megu didn't see many cosplayers who looked like her. The internet can be arduous for any Black cosplayer – particularly multiply marginalized cosplayers who are Darkskin, LGBTQIA, disabled, or plus-sized. It was her high school friends who eventually convinced her to attend New York Comic Con for the first time as Haruhi Suzumiya from *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*.

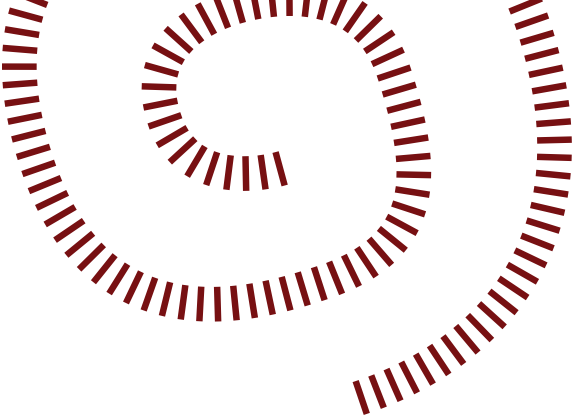


We need to see more Black cosplayers, more plus-sized cosplayers... you can be LGBTQ and still look amazing.

MEGU



(PHOTOS BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

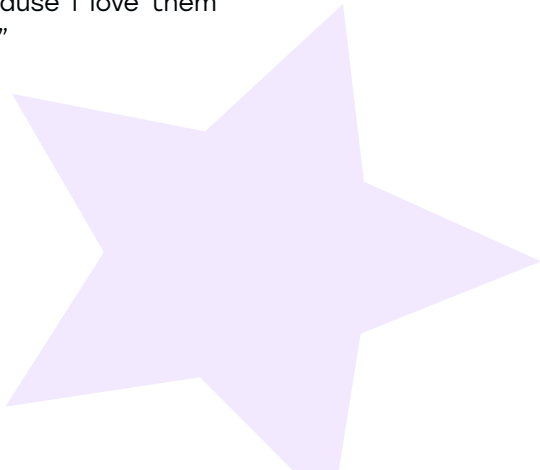


Like a child in a candy store, this experience was foundational. She's since taken time to improve at cosplay by learning how to make cosplays by herself, a major step from her beginner days of buying pre-made costumes. During this conversation, she told *EnVi* that she would "slowly begin making accessories," recommending that entry level cosplayers turn to entry level materials with craft foam, mod podge, and scrap fabrics. Leaning into accessibility, affordability, and care, Megu discussed in great detail the impacts of fast fashion within cosplay. "I feel like people should realize it's okay to re-wear your cosplay." For any cosplayer looking to rehouse their cosplays, Megu mentioned the BIPOC reseller platform Lumikha Cosplay to engage in sustainable practices.

"Cosplay is however you want it," Megu said, and with such an impactful platform, she continues to be a role model within the community. It comes to no surprise that cosplay has had a massive boom following the COVID-19 pandemic. As a masked cosplayer, she tries to "think of others... Because I have family and friends who are immune compromised because I love them and want them to be safe."



And with how key social media has been, creators now (more than ever) are incredibly impactful in shaping the narrative online. Megu made it known that there is room for everyone in the community. "We need to see more Black cosplayers, more plus-sized cosplayers... you can be LGBTQ and still look amazing." Cosplay has become more accessible than it's ever been, and for Stardust Megu – she's going at her own pace. Recounting her journey as a cosplayer, she left parting advice for fans looking to get into the hobby:



**Cosplay is
all about
having fun.**

With an emerging platform, South Korean-American cosplayer **HAEBIN** (hhaethere) proves that anything can be done if you put your mind to it. Despite cosplaying since her early high school days, she's since flourished – putting her all into cosplaying characters across popular Asian media. “I really wanted to feel like a character from a show I loved... and even before that, I would wear like Yuri On Ice jackets to school.” Her lips curled into a smile as she remembered her first cosplay. Sitting in the bustling food court of Anime NYC, she revealed her first cosplay was Mikasa from the hit anime Attack on Titan.

For many cosplayers, the hobby serves as a means to become someone else, to escape, and sometimes, even find their confidence. For Haebin, cosplay has allowed her to explore new sides of herself – shedding her more shy and reserved personality for bold expression. “When I am in a character, I kinda feel like I can forget reality...

**and become
a person
I admire.”**

Conventions like Anime NYC see crowds upwards of 100,000 patrons, giving cosplayers like Haebin the opportunity to get facetime with anime fans and fellow cosplayers. These spaces have allowed her to become more outgoing, challenging her with fresh experiences through the years. Since 2020, she has been tackling not only conventions, but social media as well. And as a Gen Z creator, the digital space is like somewhat of a second home. It still does not make putting oneself out there any easier, though. Despite it all, community has been key for Haebin's journey as a cosplayer. “I've always thought like not many people cosplay... Being at Anime NYC or New York Comic Con, you see like thousands and thousands of people who do this as a hobby... or professionally.”

And when she isn't at a convention, Haebin serves



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NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 23: HAEBIN
POSES FOR ENVI MEDIA ON AUGUST 23, 2025 AT
ANIME NYC. (PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI
MEDIA)



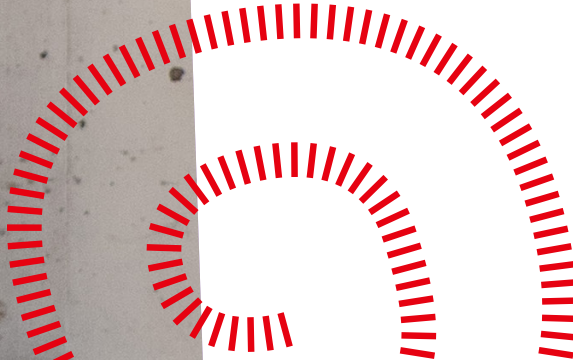
(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)



her followers immersive photography and witty short form content. With this content, comes refreshing experiences in countries like China where cosplay is quite accessible. Leaning into overseas communities, Haebin has taken videos and learnings from platforms like RedNote (also known as Xiaohongshu) to grow as a cosplayer. Since she does not craft, she elevates her work through makeup and wig styling. And though many cosplayers navigate cosplay differently by incorporating elements of their culture, changing up hair, and taking liberties with their costumes, Haebin makes it her mission “to look like the character.”

Working closely with Chinese photographers and makeup artists, she gave *EnVi* the scoop on content creation in Shanghai. For those unfamiliar with cosplay across the states, dedicated studios for cosplay can be quite far and few between, leaving cosplayers with the need to use public spaces for content creation. The same cannot be said about the Shanghai cosplay scene. “I saw cosplayers just like casually... in the subways, in the malls, and a lot of the malls in Shanghai have anime stores... Nobody bats an eye.” With access to a large number of service providers who offer studio shoots, Haebin was able to find studios that offered full service cosplay, hairstyling, makeup, and photography services. “The cosplay studio I went to had over 10 sets in their space; 2-3 designated makeup artists, an in-house wig stylist, and they had an in-house photographer, plus editing.”

As the cosplay community becomes more globalized, pop culture fans are leaning into global creators who are offering high level content. This is a motif throughout Haebin’s persona online – opening up the conversation of accessibility to third spaces for cosplayers to truly express themselves and create.





NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 23: RJ HOOKS POSES FOR ENVI MEDIA DRESSED AS MR. TERRIFIC FROM SUPERMAN ON AUGUST 24, 2025 AT ANIME NYC. (PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

RJ

Cosplay for me is not just dressing up. It's always like I'm doing research, I'm learning history, I'm learning about art techniques

EnVi first got to chat with **RJ HOOKS** in 2023 to discuss convention survival tips – and in 2025, we're exploring his journey as a cosplayer. Sitting in the bustling River Pavilion, RJ Hooks was dressed as Mr. Terrific – and it was quite hard not to get lost in awe. And for those who are unfamiliar with his impressive work, he's best known for cosplaying characters like Nanami Kento, Hakari, and Loid Forger. His journey began during the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time where cosplayers were forced inside.

Cinematic videos, in-depth talking head reels, and fashion all play a role in his continued journey. For anyone scrolling through his rich content across his social media channels, it's quite clear that he possesses great skill that makes him unlike any cosplay creator. Of course, this conversation cannot be had without the inclusion of fashion. It so profoundly dictates what cosplayers wear and how they interpret their cosplays. We engage with characters due to the fashion choices within their source material, and for RJ Hooks, fashion is the backbone to his cosplays.

Reminiscing on his past, RJ noted that he wasn't always fashionable. The fun thing about cosplay, though, is that it has the power to push you out of your comfort zone. "Cosplay for me is not just dressing up. It's always like I'm doing research, I'm learning history, I'm learning about art techniques." Talking to RJ, it becomes incredibly clear just how much care goes into his work. Though many of his cosplays can be seen as simple, there is complexity within every detail. During this process, he meticulously sourced the correct suits, studied poses, and put his all into bringing these characters to life. He didn't always know how to do this, though. He leaned into friends, into YouTube, and self-teaching – something that many emerging cosplayers can lean into.

HOOKS



Mixing his many interests into one formula that works for him, he's since become a beacon within the cosplay community. The cosplay space can certainly be an interesting one for Black cosplayers like RJ Hooks. As Black cosplayers, it becomes quite clear that you can't truly escape the perils of an anti-Black world. Like Stardust Megu, RJ intimately knows what it means to exist as a Black person within this community while being perceived online. 2025 has been a particularly arduous year for cosplayers of color, particularly Black cosplayers. Yet when he looked back on his time within, and the friends he'd made (the budding Black cosplayers who look up to him), he mentioned, "That's what keeps me going. I come to meet people – because most of the time I work in a vacuum. The community is the reason why I get motivated."

Presentation is key, and for RJ, he dished out his start in content creation. And that was with lighting. "My journey was that I basically... got a gift, I got a ring light one day and I just started using it." There's a saying within the photo community: "Gear doesn't matter." And while this may have mixed weight within professional spaces, as a cosplayer there is no need for the latest and greatest gear. You can get started with content creation by simply using what you have. "I literally just did what I could. People always think that they have to have something to get started. You just start. And then you try and figure out how you can get better."

For cosplayers looking to get started with the hobby, he left some parting advice: "Always try to have fun. Once you start cosplaying, you'll notice a lot of people try to focus on getting views. I don't allow that to determine my value. When you actually enjoy something, that's when you'll do your best."



(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)

Lively cosplay streams on twitch, to fabulous cosplay videos of the internet's favorite characters – **GALE** (allthepotsnpans) is the cosplayer that everyone should certainly keep eyes on. With a long catalog of instantly iconic cosplays from Leon Kennedy, to Sephiroth, or even Gojo, his work has landed him in the hearts of many pop-culture fans. On the last day of Anime NYC, he sat down with *EnVi* to chat about his experiences.

"I started because my younger sister loves cosplay, but I didn't really know much about it... I wanted to get closer with her, so I was like – 'You know what? What's your favorite character? Like, I'll cosplay them.'"

Like many cosplayers who were just getting started, Gale was using whatever was in his closet to closet cosplay. He first cosplayed Shigaraki from My Hero Academia. Growing up in Los Angeles, he reminisced on his process of finding cosplays, while putting all the bells and whistles on his costumes. Of course, his first cosplay had some room for growth, but that's become somewhat of a canon event for all budding participants of this hobby.

However, for many cosplayers who got their start during the pandemic or even started taking it more seriously since the start of the pandemic, there's an accessibility to sourcing costumes that simply didn't exist even a decade ago. Standing at Anime NYC, it becomes quite clear that the scene has exploded since the early aughts. "Even compared to when I first started cosplaying, it has become so much more popular and so much more accessible," Gale mused.



ALLTHEPO



DTSNPANS



(PHOTO BY ELLIE FORTE FOR ENVI MEDIA)



And as a cosplayer with a major platform, he makes it known that he doesn't take it for granted. He dives into the sustainability and accessibility of cosplay, a growing issue as cosplay retailers on Amazon, AliExpress, and other retailers churn out fast cosplays that can get to fans quickly. It is no secret that trends are a massive factor into the somewhat fast-fashionification of cosplay, which is a continued sentiment that permeates through the community discourse. But for Gale, he takes this as a journey to engage in cosplay with purpose. "I never throw away my cosplays when I get them, I don't like throwing away my clothes... I kinda have a trade system with my friends."

The River Pavilion at the Javits Center was lively with cosplayers gracing its halls. And as New York City-based cosplayer Gale made his way through the convention hall, countless fans approached him for photos. Dressed as James from Pokémon, his cosplay just felt like the character came to life. It was a start and stop of fans, endlessly excited to get to meet him given his expansive journey throughout the years as a cosplayer.

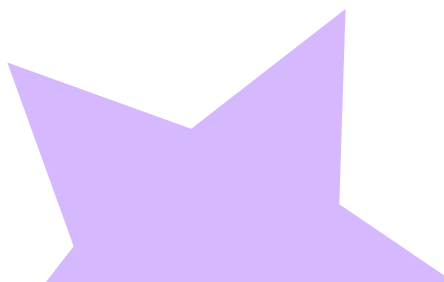
Leaning into the community, he talked intimately about the scene that he's come to influence over the years. "It's underlying everything as a cosplayer... I wouldn't have continued to cosplay if I hadn't made friends at cons." There's nothing like a convention, where people with a shared interest

can come together and share their love for something. Drawing over 148,000 fans, thousands of people are able to come together and learn from each other, meet new people, and find their next best friends. "I'm no different than any other cosplayer here. I'll always chat with everyone... I wanna talk with everyone as much as I can. [It's] super important to me as a content creator."

As we continued to talk, Gale drove home diversity, acceptance, and care towards one another as community members. "I hate that culture that's growing of like, 'oh, to be a cosplayer, it's like a beauty competition...'" The whole point of cosplay is to have fun." To Gale, everyone has a perfect cosplay face. And what we see online is completely flipped in reality when attending in-person events. This even becomes more true at events like cosplay lookalike contests where fans are there to support and engage with their favorite characters. "The biggest thing is to have as much fun as you can with it."

**I'm no different
than any other
cosplayer here.**

Cosplayers, now more than ever, are being elevated to new heights as pop culture fandom continues to grow. And as the community morphs with time, it is necessary for cosplayers to be their true selves. At a time where community is needed, cosplayers are showing exactly why the hobby has become such a staple for people, both online and offline.





GAMING **Bigger and** **Better Than Ever** **at Anime NYC**

BY RADIYA AHETO

With Anime NYC's first year as a four-day convention and its second year as partners with PLAY.nyc, the event proved to connect everyone while exploring new ways to have fun. This year, the EnVi team had the chance to cover Anime NYC to give you the updates on the convention and the contributions they've made for gamers, otakus, and between.

PLAY.NYC'S SECOND YEAR IN HALL 1B

The PLAY.nyc convention made its second appearance at Anime NYC this year in the 80,000 square foot gaming hall. This partnership allowed them to present PLAY.nyc to the convention for four days with 100,000 attendees, compared to their usual two-day convention with 4,000 attendees. Hall 1B of the Javits Center featured many indie game creators and their developing games, as well as well-known games and their developers, fostering a hub of bonding.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 24: ATTENDEES SPECTATING AND PLAYING FIGHTING GAMES AT ANIME NYC IN NEW YORK CITY. (PHOTOS BY RADIYA AHETO FOR ENVI MEDIA)



BLUE PROTOCOL: STAR RESONANCE COVER IMAGE

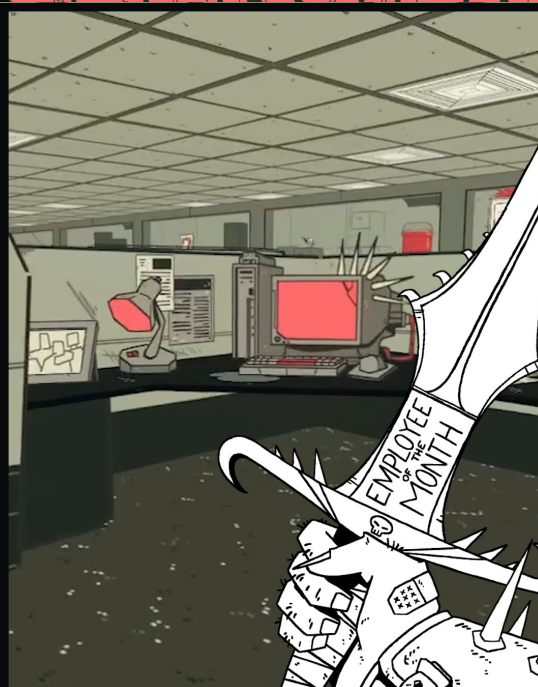
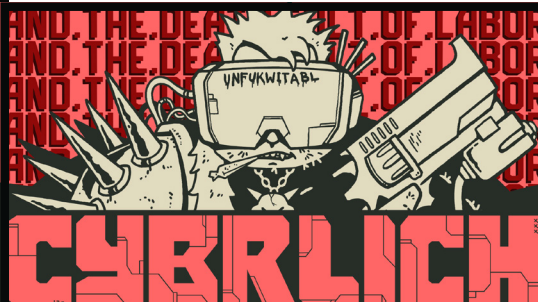
Whether you were there to learn or play some mahjong, compete with your friends in various fighting games, or dance to Dance Dance Revolution, PLAY.nyc was dedicated to finding its target audience this year. There were even tournaments happening during the early portions of each day, ranging from Super Smash Bros., Tekken 8, and Guilty Gear competitions, presented by CiTi Gaming. Moreover, they moved arcade games into PLAY.nyc's area, allowing people to enjoy various games that are often found in Japan.



Bandai Namco's Blue Protocol: Star Resonance playtest took place on the floor of the hall, allowing attendees to register and gain exclusive prizes for participating. The prior title, Blue Protocol, was set to release, but Bandai Namco shut down and cancelled the release after it was playable in Japan. However, they will now release Blue Protocol: Star Resonance as a revamped version of the game.

Playcrafting, the host of this portion of the convention, promotes the idea that indie games are the future of the video game industry. They showcased games that allow playtesting to occur before release, allowing small studios to gain an audience. Indie developers also gain expanded access to new audiences because the gaming hall continues to operate after the standard convention day ends at 7 p.m.. Visitors can explore until 10 pm, hours after the usual end time.

INDIE GAME FEATURE



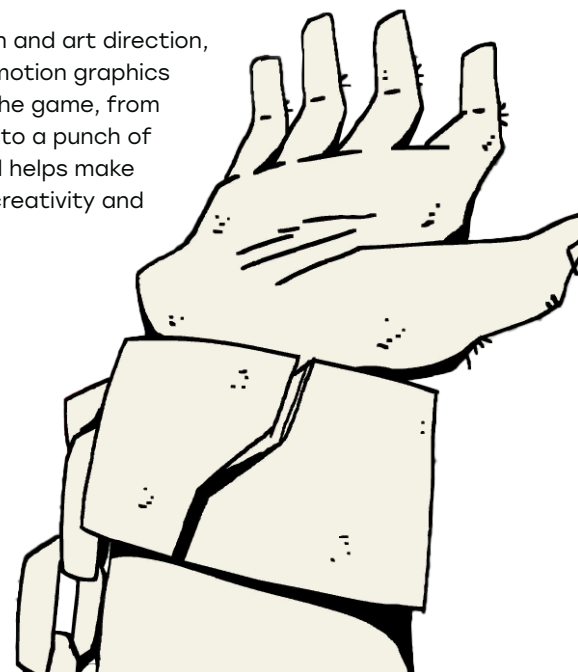
Cybrlich and the Death Cult of Labor

Cybrlich Studios presented their game CYBRILICH and the Death Cult of Labor, an adrenaline-fueled 2.5D FPS and boomer shooter that touches upon subject matter related to working in a corporate world. EnVi spoke to the lead animator and art director, Peter Larson Schmidt, and the lead programmer, Clipper, to gain more insight into their storytelling. The game offers playable content through story modes and waves in arena mode.

The game starts as you are approached with a job interview and presented with two options: sign the contract to work at Lichcorp and stay at your desk forever, or take the employee of the month sword. This is where the fun starts—carving your own path literally and metaphorically. You play a buff, meat-headed barbarian, and instead of going down into a dungeon, you climb up a corporate office tower in a cyberpunk future to take down the evil CEO, an oligarchic technocrat.

The inspiration for making this game, as Clipper explained, came from an interest in dark fantasy, cyberpunk, and satire-related genres. They wanted to combine those concepts to create a fun way to speak on corporate political issues that exist in the real world. Moreover, the game includes references to commonly mentioned sources of frustration and relief, something players may find cathartic.

Due to Schmidt's experience in animation and art direction, the fluid animation relied on rigged and motion graphics with no AI involved. The art direction of the game, from the choice of colors like black and white to a punch of red, supports his vision aesthetically and helps make the game a self-evident declaration of creativity and adventure for attendees passing by.



GAME REPRESENTATION AT ARTIST ALLEY

Anime NYC 2025 presented a larger host of artists and options that gamers could indulge their hard-earned money on. EnVi got to chat with artists representing different genres and mediums, highlighting the quality and diversity of work featured.

Here are some of EnVi's favorite picks from Artist Alley:



MALLIUS

One of the shops we visited during the weekend, and went back a couple of times due to their eye-catching design was Nattie, their shop, Mallius, and their fan art for Final Fantasy XIV. Our favorite pieces from this shop were

the intricately made enamel pins with double chains and glass drops that represented the different playable classes from the game. They even had bags with subtle patterns, incorporating fandom into everyday wear.



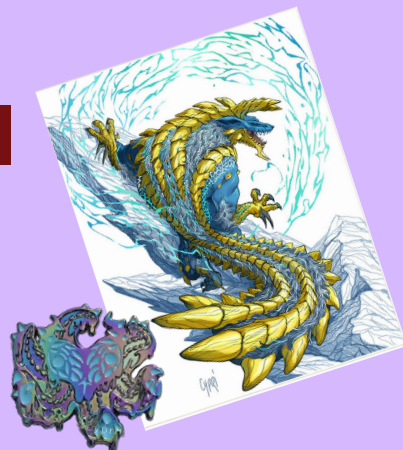
SHARKTEATH & 5TARGOLD

For all the fighting game lovers, we present to you Sharkteath and 5TARGOLD, featuring fan art inspired by franchises such as Guilty Gear, Yakuza, and Ace Attorney. EnVi spoke with the owners of the shop, Leon and Sinn Ros-Sibulkin, where we learned about their decision-making behind some of their sweaters. The Guilty Mart design, for example, takes inspiration from convenience stores with the twist of including all the characters from the Guilty Gear series. They expressed the importance of making their sweaters 100% cotton so they could last longer with multiple washes, ensuring high quality.



CYPRITREE

For the mythological action RPG players, Cypritree had digital laser artworks with bright and eye-catching colors from games such as Monster Hunter, Elden Ring, and Bloodborne, adding a nice touch to any gamer's wall.



CORYXKENSIN MAKES AN APPEARANCE

Gaming YouTuber CoryxKenshin made his comeback online earlier this year after a 17-month hiatus. Back online and in person, he presented his manga series—Monsters We Make—at Anime NYC 2025. Set in a dystopian 2114, Volume One of the series became the fastest-selling independently published Original English-Language series with over 200,000 copies sold within the first week. Shortly after his appearance announcement, Saturday tickets sold out. Fans were able to line up on Saturday to meet Cory, discuss his new project, and ask about what's next for the gamer and now writer.



ENVI'S GAMING COSPLAY PICKS

Once again, fans gathered at River Pavilion 4 for cosplay meet-ups, photoshoots, and content creation, creating unforgettable moments and forming lasting friendships while dressed in their favorite gaming attire.

A new appearance this year, Anime NYC 2025 presented two Riot Games-related meetups, League of Legends and Arcane cosplay events. Having two dedicated cosplay meetups during the same day allowed time to be spread between the skin lines from the game's franchise, as well as characters from the show.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 22: IONIAN COSPLAYERS AT THE LEAGUE OF LEGENDS COSPLAY MEETUP AT ANIME NYC IN NEW YORK CITY. (PHOTOS BY RADIYA AHETO FOR ENVI MEDIA)





The host of the Square Enix meetup last year, Anderson Blitz, hosted this year too, taking over the larger area of the grounds for Final Fantasy, Kingdom Hearts, and Nier: Automata.

Ace Attorney had an official meetup this year, drawing a larger audience of fans and cosplayers following last year's event.

The Yakuza, Like a Dragon franchise came together on Sunday, following the release of Like a Dragon: Pirate Yakuza in Hawaii earlier this year. Many dressed up as well-known characters like Kiryu Kazuma, Majima Goro, and Goromi who couldn't be missed.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 22: VI AND JINX COSPLAYERS AT THE ARCADE COSPLAY MEETUP AT ANIME NYC IN NEW YORK CITY. (PHOTOS BY RADIYA AHETO FOR ENVI MEDIA)

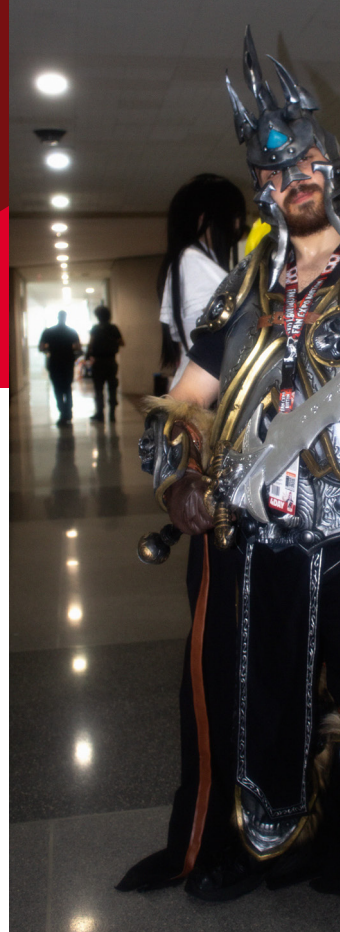
NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 23: COSPLAYERS AT THE SQUARE ENIX FRANCHISE AT ANIME NYC IN NEW YORK CITY. (PHOTOS BY RADIYA AHETO FOR ENVI MEDIA)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 23: COSPLAYERS AT THE ACE ATTORNEY COSPLAY MEETUP AT ANIME NYC IN NEW YORK CITY. (PHOTOS BY RADIYA AHETO FOR ENVI MEDIA)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK
 – AUGUST 24: MAJIMA
 GORO AND KAZUMA KIRYU
 COSPLAYERS AT THE
 YAKUZA COSPLAY MEETUP
 ANIME NYC IN NEW YORK
 CITY (PHOTOS BY RADIYA
 AHETO FOR ENVI MEDIA)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK
 – AUGUST 22: JAMES_
 DIMANGO_, BUBBLETEA.
 GRL, AND CHRISPYC2
 DRESSED UP AS FIVE
 NIGHTS AT FREDDY'S:
 SECURITY BREACH
 COSPLAYERS AT ANIME
 NYC IN NEW YORK CITY
 (PHOTOS BY RADIYA AHETO
 FOR ENVI MEDIA)





Aside from iconic cosplay meetups, EnVi captured moments of the convention floor where cosplays left a showstopping impression on the crowd, including us. They may not have gotten a designated meet-up, but they represent an incredible range of franchises that filled the halls. We spotlight these cosplayers to celebrate their creativity while encouraging others to explore their own!

NEW YORK, NEW YORK –
AUGUST 23: LICH KING
COSPLAYER FROM THE
WORLD OF WARCRAFT
FRANCHISE AT ANIME NYC
IN NEW YORK CITY
(PHOTOS BY RADIYA AHETO
FOR ENVI MEDIA)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK
– AUGUST 22: OLLIE.
COSPLAY, AUZZIEJLEE,
AND HAI_YUN2
DRESSED UP AS 24-HOUR
CINDERELLA COSPLAYERS
AT ANIME NYC IN NEW
YORK CITY (PHOTOS BY
RADIYA AHETO FOR ENVI
MEDIA)

JOINING IN ON THE FUN

Whether you are an anime or game lover, we hope that this overview gave you a glimpse into what you can expect when attending next year! Anime NYC revealed on Instagram that next year's convention will take place August 20-23, 2026. Keep up to date with guest reveals, event announcements, and updates on Anime NYC's Instagram, X, and Facebook.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 21: SHAKIRAS. RAINBOW COSPLAYING DARK MAGICIAN GIRL FROM YU-GI-OH! AT ANIME NYC IN NEW YORK CITY (PHOTOS BY RADIYA AHETO FOR ENVI MEDIA)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – AUGUST 22: MAINMAN_COSPLAYING THE KNIGHT AND HORNET FROM THE HOLLOW KNIGHT SILENT LIBRARY (PHOTOS BY RADIYA AHETO FOR ENVI MEDIA)



Y AND JASCOSPLAY COSPLAYING
ERIES AT ANIME NYC IN NEW YORK CITY



And They Were Roommates: Anime NYC's Must-Read Queer Manga

BY CASS QUINTO

There's only one way to close out the biggest Anime NYC yet, and it's with a lineup of fab manga to devour immediately after.

On the fourth and final day of the convention, Geeks OUT hosted an extra special panel to conclude an exciting weekend: "Finding Your Story: Manga Recommendations for Queer Readers." Moderated by Geeks OUT Programming Coordinator Sara Munson, the panel featured six professionals in manga publishing: Lisa De La Cruz, Erica Friedman, TJ Ferentini, Morgan Perry, Whitney Leopard, and Princess Weekes.

From tender romances to explorations of underrepresented queer identities, this list has a little something for everyone. Read below as *EnVi* takes you through some of the panelists' favorite queer stories!

✧ PANEL HIGHLIGHTS



Pink Heart Jam by Shikke

Recommended By: Lisa De La Cruz

English Publisher: SuBlime

English Publication Date: December 12, 2023

College freshman Haiga is navigating a number of things: adjusting to city life, making friends, and eventually, his sexuality. After coming across Kanae, an attractive upperclassman and talented guitarist, the answer to the last question gets much harder to figure out. Surely, it's just admiration, right?

Sadly, approaching Kanae is harder than expected. That is, until a drunken dare from Haiga's buddies leads to a chance meeting in the most unexpected of places: a box spa in a red-light district, where Kanae happens to work.

"[Haiga] does the one thing they tell you to never do with sex workers," De La Cruz laughed. "He falls in love."

My Summer of You by Nagisa Furuya

Recommended By: Lisa De La Cruz

English Publisher: Kodansha Comics

English Publication Date: June 1, 2021

A friendship blooms with ease between high-school boys Chiharu Saeki and Wataru Toda, who share a love for movies. One day, Chiharu confesses his love for Wataru, but they decide to stay friends – for now. They spend their summer going on the adventure of a lifetime, traveling to places from their favorite movies. As the season goes on, Wataru slowly realizes that maybe, just maybe, Chiharu's confession means more to him than he thought.

Part of the charm, De La Cruz shared, is that the story "features teens that act like teens, doing things like running away just to get over someone. I think it's such a beautiful thing for kids to see themselves reflected in a realistic coming-of-age."



I'm In Love With a Villainess by Inori

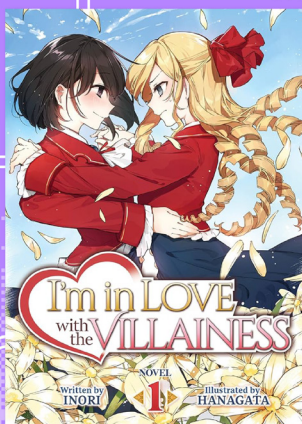
Recommended By: Erica Friedman

English Publisher: Seven Seas Entertainment

English Publication Date: September 23, 2020

Gamer and office worker Rei Oohashi lives an ordinary life: eat, sleep, work, repeat. One morning, her life is thrown for a complete loop when she wakes up as the protagonist of her favorite otome game! While the game is designed for her to choose from the cast of male leads, Rei has her eyes on someone else altogether – Claire François, the main antagonist of the story.

"It's a tremendous story, and it's super duper queer. It's the gayest, genuinely queer series that's probably been written in Japan or America in years," Friedman emphasized. "But it's legitimately talking about queer issues here and in modern Japan, and actually addresses a lot of real, genuine personal experiences through this fantasy story."





The Guy She Was Interested in Wasn't a Guy at All by Sumiko Arai

Recommended By: Erica Friedman

English Publisher: Yen Press

English Publication Date: October 22, 2024

Also affectionately known as “Green Yuri” with its distinct colorway, this barrier-breaking series follows the budding romance between high schoolers Aya and Mitsuki. Aya, a fashionable and popular teenage girl, falls for an employee at her local CD shop. There’s just something about him – he’s mysterious, has great style, and clearly knows his music. Of course, in case the title didn’t already hint at it, that employee is Aya’s classmate Mitsuki, who is in fact not a guy!

For those who have visited Kinokuniya in the past year, you must have seen the Green Yuri takeover at least once. Arai’s hit series had its own shelf, special merch, and will soon be adapted into an anime.

According to Friedman, “[it’s] doing things that we have never seen a Yuri series do before,” soaring into the mainstream as a top romance manga altogether.

Boys Run The Riot by Keito Gaku

Recommended By: TJ Ferentini

English Publisher: Kodansha Comics

English Publication Date: May 25, 2021

High schooler Ryo Watari knows he’s trans, but he has no one to confide in. Not his mom, not best friend-slash-crush, and certainly not someone as intimidating as Jin, the new transfer student in his class. Instead, it’s his love for fashion that brings Ryo closer to his true self. One day, while out shopping for clothes, he and Jin reach for a t-shirt at the same time. As it turns out, they have the same taste in style! To his surprise, Jin’s friendship is exactly what Ryo needed all this time. Together, they start an identity-affirming fashion brand, with the journey ahead full of discovery, growth, and endless connection.

“When I first read this series and pitched it, I told [my team] that we needed to do this right. I was very adamant about having an all-trans localization team,” Ferentini said. “From the translator to myself editing it, even the person who proofread it, everyone who touched this book is trans.”



Is Love The Answer? by Uta Isaki

Recommended By: TJ Ferentini and Morgan Perry

English Publisher: Kodansha Comics

English Publication Date: January 10, 2023



High schooler Chika can't seem to understand "love" the way everyone else does. She has never even had so much as a crush, let alone any desire for physical intimacy. While her friends insist that she just hasn't met "the one," she knows it's something deeper than that. It's only when she starts college that she learns there's a word for what she feels inside – asexual – and she's far from alone.

"I had dated people before who had told me I was difficult to be with, whether it was romantically or sexually. I had no terminology for what it was," Perry shared. "When [Chika] goes 'Am I broken? Am I weird? Am I an alien?' I was like, 'Wow, I have literally thought those things about myself.' I thought I just couldn't be with anybody."

The series also portrays the spectrum of aromanticism and asexuality, including identities like demisexuality which land somewhere in the middle. Ferentini noted the value of including such diverse terms: "Part of my coming out experience involved browsing Tumblr and learning words that I've never learned before and being like, 'Oh, that sounds like me!' I feel like *Is Love the Answer?* beautifully replicates that experience."

On and Off: Work-Life Imbalance by Shinnosuke Kanazawa

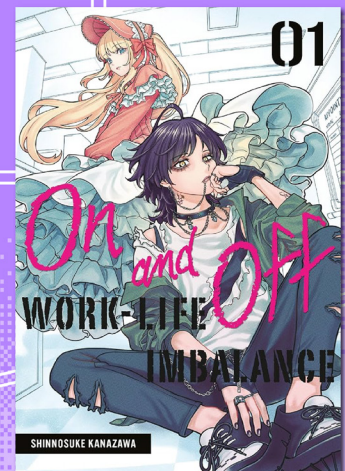
Recommended By: Morgan Perry

English Publisher: Square Enix Manga

English Publication Date: June 3, 2025

Every working adult lives a double life: one on the job, and one during after-hours. Coworkers Sotaro Amata and Akira Hanku can certainly relate, perhaps even more than the average person! Without their office uniforms, the two are completely unrecognizable. Sotaro dons Lolita frills and ribbons, while Akira transforms into a studded punk rocker. What happens when they form a connection outside of work, all without realizing they already know each other?

"When we were looking to acquire different texts around the time that they renewed, this was basically being fought over by everybody. We were all thinking, 'This one's going to be big. This one's important. This one needs to be told,'" Perry shared. "It's for people to know it's okay to express yourselves in any way that you feel comfortable."



I Wanna Be Your Girl by Umi Takase

Recommended By: Whitney Leopard

English Publisher: Random House Graphic

English Publication Date: July 1, 2025

For years, Hime has closely kept her childhood best friend Akira's deepest secret: Akira is trans. Now that they're starting high school, Akira has decided to live and dress as her true self. Hime, who is determined to be Akira's number-one ally, does everything possible to show up for her dear friend. From protecting her against bullies to even dressing like a boy herself, there appears to be nothing Hime wouldn't do. As Akira makes new friends and even develops crushes, it seems like things are looking up for her.

There's just one problem: Hime is in love with Akira.

Along with the ups and downs of Hime navigating her first love, Leopard was especially impressed by the story's true-to-life portrayal of allyship:



“It felt like such an authentic experience to read. It had characters making mistakes, but they weren’t villainized for them. It was just like, ‘This is how you learn to be better.’ It taught such positive lessons that a lot of teenagers here in the U.S., and even a lot of adults can use.”



King's Maker by Kang Jiyoung

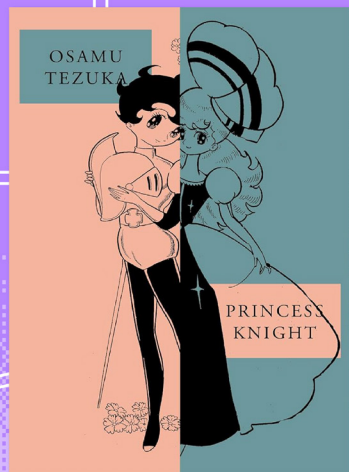
Recommended By: Whitney Leopard

English Publisher: Inklore

English Publication Date: August 26, 2025

Content Warning: This series contains implied pedophilia and violent depictions of death.

After years spent living in hiding, rebellious prince Wolfgang Goldenleonard is forced to move into the royal palace of a crooked kingdom. Though his rough disposition causes him to struggle adjusting to princely life, he catches the attention of Shin Soohyuk – a mysterious and dutiful noble son held captive by the King. Wolfgang needs to learn the ways of a royal, and Soohyuk needs someone to play a leading role in his daring scheme. Together, can they take the kingdom's dark legacy and transform it for good?



Princess Knight by Osamu Tezuka

Recommended By: Princess Weekes

English Publisher: Vertical Comics

English Publication Date: August 12, 2015

Princess Sapphire was accidentally born with two hearts: the blue heart of a boy, and the pink heart of a girl. However, in the kingdom of Silverland where only men can rule, she must maintain a dual identity. By day, she is the crown prince of Silverland, and by night, she is a noble knight fiercely protecting her home from the Duke's wicked schemes. First published in Japan starting in 1953, *Princess Knight* is widely recognized for laying the groundwork of many *shōjo* genre tropes such as the Girl Prince archetype.

Rose of Versailles by Riyoko Ikeda

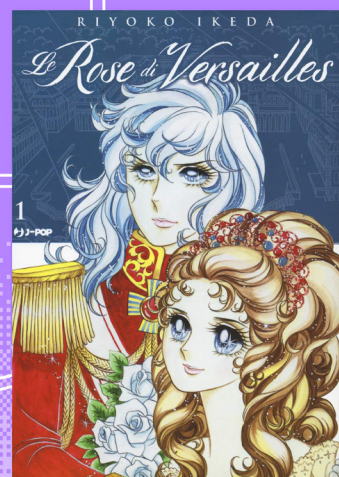
Recommended By: Princess Weekes

English Publisher: UDON Entertainment

English Publication Date: January 21, 2020

Another foundational *shōjo* manga, *Rose of Versailles* follows the story of Oscar François de Jarjayes – a woman raised as a man to succeed her father as leader of the Royal Guard. Set against the backdrop of the French Revolution, Lady Oscar must reckon with the clash between Palace duties and her sympathy towards the common people of France.

“Lord Oscar (Sapphire’s alias) as a character must perform masculinity, and that becomes a really interesting part of the story – how gender is a performance. It also raises other questions like, what does it mean to be a noble? What does it mean to fight for something bigger than yourself?” Weekes reflected. “And also, hot people with swords.”



LGBTQ+ visibility in geek culture doesn't stop at manga! Geeks OUT is a non-profit organization that seeks to empower the queer geek community through events, conventions, advocacy campaigns, and more. Geeks OUT also produces Flame Con, the world's largest LGBTQ+ comics and pop culture convention. To keep up with the organization's work, be sure to check out their Instagram (@geeksout) and official website!

