ZHIHAN LIU

TOY & INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE DESIGNER

(646) 271-9588 didiisliuzhihan@gmail.com New York, NY creativedesigner.zhihanliu.art

ABOUT ME

Multidisciplinary designer working across physical toys, original characters, electronic prototypes, and narrative-led play. Experience spans collectible product development, licensed-IP game adaptation, and physical–digital experiences, with hands-on skills in 3D modeling, fabrication, packaging, and interactive storytelling. MFA in Design and Technology from Parsons.

SELECTED EXPERIENCE & CREATIVE PRACTICE

Co-Founder & Lead Toy Designer
Hong Kong
Crystal Citizen 2023–2025

- Developed a blind-box collectible toy line from character concepts and 3D prototypes through packaging design and manufacturer coordination.
- Designed a DIY micro-diorama kit combining collectible figurines, crystals, display components, and assembly instructions, extending the unboxing experience into hands-on assembly and display.

Independent Toy Designer & Interactive Artist
Selected independent and academic projects

Interactive Dollhouse Art Installation 2026
A Home Only without Me

- Independently designed and built an experimental dollhouse-based toy installation, translating dark-fairytale imagery and magical realism into an exploratory physical experience.
- Fabricated miniature environments and developed the electronics and interaction programming, integrating reed-switch triggers with narrative discovery.
- Exhibited at A Space Gallery, Brooklyn; featured in ArtRabbit's coverage of I'm Not an Alien? (June 2026).

AR Puzzle Game × Physical Toy Stage 2025
Bad Children Paradise

- Created an original-IP toy puzzle experience combining a physical miniature stage with an AR narrative game; developed character sketches, 3D models, and 3D-printed figurines.
- Authored branching scripts, storyboards, and decision trees connecting player choices across physical and digital environments.

Museum Interactive Experience Design 2025
Academic collaboration: Parsons Design & Technology × Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Copenhagen

- Designed and exhibited toy mannequins with interchangeable magnetic outfits made from upcycled fabric, translating an exhibition's sustainability theme into hands-on dress-up play for children and other visitors.

Connected Toy Prototype 2026
Toast

- Built a cooking-themed communication prototype using Xiao ESP32, Arduino, and Wi-Fi, combining an upcycled fabric toy with a connected digital experience.
- Extended the design into a birthday-themed interactive doll, enhancing interactivity and integrating built-in Wi-Fi and API-driven features to support a distinct character personality and birthday-themed interactions.

Digital Product Designer
Remote / New York, NY
Awesome Bears / TraderBear 2026–Present

- Designed and prototyped a calendar-first, idle-game-inspired experience that transforms AI requests into schedulable tasks and character activity, helping finance beginners engage as players rather than passive chat users; currently in user testing.
- Redesigned the product's bear as a polar-bear character and developed reusable 3D assets and animation loops in Blender; deployed its rest and working states to the live product.

Freelance Product Designer & Content Creator
New York, NY
Seven Sense Oct 2024–Present

- Design staff- and customer-facing app experiences for an immersive theater, collaborating with developers on interaction flows and implementation.
- Also perform part-time in-character roles, engaging participants through interactive storytelling and role-play.

EDUCATION

Parsons School of Design
MFA, Design and Technology
Aug 2024–May 2026
physical-digital interaction · hardware prototyping · creative coding · product design

Beijing Film Academy
BFA, Film and Television Literature
Aug 2017–Jun 2021
screenwriting · storyboarding · film planning · narrative theory · animation

SKILLS

Toy, Physical & Spatial Design
· Toy & Character Design
· Concept Sketching
· Storyboarding
· 3D Modeling
· Physical & Rapid Prototyping
· Blender
· 3D Printing
· Packaging Design
· Exhibition Design
· Physical Production
· Manufacturer Coordination

Game & Interactive Technology
· Unity 3D
· TouchDesigner
· Arduino
· AR / VR Interaction
· Creative Coding
· Branching Narrative
· Interactive Storytelling

Web & Programming
· HTML
· CSS
· JavaScript
· p5.js
· Front-end Feasibility

Product & UX Design
· Figma
· Wireframing
· Interactive Prototyping
· Design Systems & UI Components
· Interaction & Workflow Design
· Gamified Product Design
· Community & Engagement Systems
· Usability Testing & User Feedback
· Figma Handoff Specifications
· Cross-functional Collaboration

Lead Game Narrative Designer

Beijing, China

Sohu.com (Game) Ltd. Feb 2021–Feb 2023

- Led narrative design for Rakshasa Street, a commercially released mobile RPG adapted from a licensed animation IP; translated established characters and story worlds into interactive chapters, onboarding and tutorials.
- Collaborated with art, engineering, and production teams, using player research and playtest feedback to refine narrative structure and pacing.

Visual, Brand & Motion

· Creative Direction
· Brand Identity
· Visual Storytelling
· Adobe Photoshop
· Illustrator
· InDesign
· Premiere Pro
· After Effects
· 2D Animation

AI-Assisted Design & Development

· Codex
· Claude Code
· AI-Assisted Workflows

Languages

· English — Professional
· Mandarin Chinese — Native