

Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Club Newsletter

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2012 Convention Award Winners

Our Second Annual Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention held at the Clarion Philadelphia Airport Hotel (previously Ramada Airport Hotel) on May 3-5, 2012 had many memorable activities, but none bigger than the Signed One-of-a-Kind Artist Signature Piece Doll & Teddy Bear Sale and Judging for the Beverly Port and Helen Bullard Awards for Excellence. Attendees not only get to preview this exhibition of world class artist pieces, but get to judge and buy their favorites before the public sees them at the Saturday Show and Sale. There are four separate award categories: teddy bear entries, doll entries, voting by artists, voting by collectors. Only 5-10% of the entries in each category receive an award so that award recipients are recognized as being something special among their peers. This year the convention attendees chose the following artists as the award winners.

Beverly Port Teddy Bear Artist Award Winners (Artist Choice Awards):
Deb Canham – Fiddle-de-dee
Francisco Carreno – Mr. Peepers
Tami Eveslage – K'eyush
Katherine Hallam – Nat Silver

Beverly Port Teddy Bear Collector Award Winners (Collector Choice Awards):
Sharon Barron – US Navy Petty Officer
TEDDY
Tami Eveslage – K'eyush

Helen Bullard Doll Artist Award Winners (Artist Choice Awards):
Stephanie Blythe – Into the Woods
Mark Dennis – Rescue

Helen Bullard Doll Collector Award Winners (Collector Choice Awards):
Mark Dennis – Rescue
Diane Keeler – Procession

To see pictures of these award winning pieces, go to the home page at www.quinlanmuseum.com and click on the name of each artist to see a picture of their winning creation.

Sneak Preview of 2013 Convention

This is a sneak preview of the Third Annual Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention to be held in Philadelphia, PA on May 2-4, 2013. These are questions asked of Susan and Terry Quinlan by Jones Publishing for their future articles.

Question: Overall, how do you feel the Second Annual Quinlan Convention went?

Answer:

The convention in 2011 was our first attempt to organize and conduct a convention for the artist doll and teddy bear community. Everything was an experiment with us. Some things worked well, others not so well. Although we had six west coast family members, known as the "Blue Crew," due to the color of their matching t-shirts, helping us run the event, we never had time to go around and shop at the artist sales tables.

This year we simplified the convention handout material, improved the name badges, added half-day and full-day workshops, lengthened the hours of the Show & Sale, eliminated the Saturday auction and lectures so nothing competed with the Show & Sale, allowed time for tea/coffee breaks between presentations, increased the hours of early access to the sales areas for those attending the convention, expanded the space for the One-of-a-Kind (OOAK) Judging and Sale event, simplified security procedures, and made every effort to direct

attendees to all nine (9) exhibition and sale areas. The Blue Crew did most of the work this time so Susan and Terry had time to shop at the Thursday OOAK Sale and the Saturday Show & Sale. Overall, those attending the convention had an easier time understanding what was going on, had a greater variety of things to do, had more time to do them, and the quantity and quality of the food and beverages was a big hit again. Most importantly, many of the artists told us that they sold well, very well, or sold out.

Question: What would you like to see changed for the Third Annual Convention in 2013?

Answer:

It is not a matter of what we would "like to change" as it is what we "will change". For the first two years, we used nine sales areas located at opposite ends of the hotel. In 2013 we intend to use six connecting areas as the sales rooms and use the other three rooms for functions that we hope will draw more collectors to the Saturday Show & Sale.

The focus of our promotion in the past was to attract artists to participate at the convention. We now have a sufficient data base of artist contacts that we hope not to have a problem filling the 125 available artist slots. A matter of fact, we are probably the only doll or teddy bear event that is intentionally reducing the size of artist participation slightly in order to increase their number of sales. So in 2013 the focus of our promotion

will be to attract more collectors. In other words, the first two years were devoted to increasing the supply of artist dolls and bears at our program. Now we are shifting gears to increase the demand for dolls and bears at the Show & Sale. This will increase the ratio of buyers to artists considerably.

We are one of the very few doll or teddy bear events that has a policy that collectors will get what is advertised. We promote our event as an “artist doll and teddy bear” event, so that is what the shopper will find. There are no vendors selling at our event – only artists. There are no tables that are predominantly animals, accessories, or supplies, which was a complaint we heard from collectors about a number of the shows they have attended. (There is one table with fur for the bear artists.) We also have a 75% Rule that says 75-100% of the items on each sales table must be dolls and/or bears made by the artist. Nearly every artist has followed that rule with the exception of 3 or 4 artists, and they will not be with us in the future as they had two years to “get with the program.”

In 2013 there will be more events offered to attract collectors to the convention. We cannot reveal what they are, but we believe many will be unique and no other doll or teddy bear event will be offering them. We also have some ideas for attracting large groups of collectors.

Question: When can artists and collectors start registering for next year’s May 2-4 convention?

Answer:

One week after our May 2012 convention, we put out a call for convention speakers, panelists, demonstrators, and workshop instructors so we now have the agenda in place. By mid to late September, the 2013 convention registration forms will be available on our website and mailed out to everyone. We hope to have all of the 125 artist sales tables spoken for by October-November.

Question: What do you think is needed to help create new teddy bear and doll collectors?

Answer:

We just completed an extensive Doll and Teddy Bear Collector Survey that was distributed to about 10,000 doll and teddy bear people in the U.S. There were some interesting results that make us question the belief that the first priority should be to attract more of the younger generation and get them to play with dolls and bears. This may be more applicable to collectable dolls and bears (those made after 1930) but not necessarily to artist and antique pieces. Based on our Collector Survey, the original interest in collecting artist and antique pieces did not stem from playing with dolls and bears but from other experiences later in life as many started collecting them in their 30’s.

With artist dolls and teddy bears, the major problem is not finding new mar-

kets. Their problem is more fundamental. Most people visiting our Museum in Santa Barbara never knew there was such a thing as an artist doll or artist teddy bear. The artists need to get articles written in magazines, newsletters, bulletins, flyers, etc. that are not doll and teddy bear related. Those reading doll and bear publications already know artist pieces exist. It is the rest of the world that needs to get the word.

We think artists should stop thinking about what needs to be done to increase the collector base in the long-term and worry more about increasing their market in the short-term when they need the necessary cash inflow to continue their passion. Most importantly, they need to start thinking and working as a single profession toward common goals. We see artists operating as single entrepreneurs, doing their own marketing, backroom tasks, and selling. They think of themselves as a “doll artist” or a “teddy bear artist” — not as an “artist” who can learn from and work with those in the two arenas. As with the business world, management understands the synergy of consolidation, partnerships, and diversification. The artists need to understand these concepts and realize that working as an isolated individual is not in their best interest. Many of the more professional artists understand these things. Some like teddy bear artist Martha Burch has been “preaching to the choir” of artists for years about adopting these concepts and techniques. There are many generous artists willing to share

their years of experience with other artists through presentations, demonstrations and workshops like those offered at our annual convention. We offered free mentoring for new artists to have the opportunity to have their work reviewed and to receive constructive advice from experienced artists. Nearly 20 artists offered to be mentors but only 5 new artists asked to be mentored — a case of many wanting to help others, but so many not wanting to be helped. I do not get it!

Artists need to use their contact list of customers for purposes other than for their own benefit. Our Collector Survey indicated that most collectors may stop buying from an artist after owning 3 of their pieces, certainly after owning 3-9 of their pieces. Think of your contact list as a portfolio of stocks. Those stocks that have risen the most are now overpriced. There may be more growth potential in the stocks that have appreciated the least. In other words, your probability of making sales to those with only 1 or 2 of your pieces is a lot greater than those that own 10 or 15 of your pieces. So if artists collectively understand this, they would all benefit if they cross-promoted each others pieces to their bigger collectors.

The same thing applies with cross-promotion between the doll and teddy bear world. Generally, collectors do not buy only dolls or only bears. Over 60% of the collectors own both dolls and bears according to our Collector Survey. That is one of the beauties of our convention. It

exposes doll collectors to bears and bear collectors to dolls. Frequently we hear comments from artists that a doll collector just bought their first teddy bear from them or that a bear collector just bought their first doll from them. If artists are not ready to co-promote with other artists in their own arena, they might at least consider partnering with artists in the other arena.

Many artists have offered to distribute our convention promotional material to their customers and to distribute it at various shows, and God bless all of them, because we need that support. But those artists who do not spread the word are only hurting their own profession – not us. Our Museum does not benefit from whatever they do to support our event. We merely provide a facility to promote the education and sale of artist dolls and bears. When Terry Quinlan was in banking and conducted conferences for the big banks in the U.S., there was one major New York bank that had the reputation of always attending but never contributing. They never offered to be a speaker and they never shared their knowledge in the discussion forums. They were “takers” – not “givers”. We have way too many “takers” in the artist doll and teddy bear world.

Rather than trying to create new markets for their pieces, artists need to skim off the sales available in the existing markets. The one thing that is common across the doll and teddy bear world is that everyone is a collector. Within that world are

several markets, e.g., antique, artist, collectable, miniature, etc. Artists need to cut out a share of these other markets. Our Collector Survey indicated that often there is a hierarchy as to the order in which one starts collecting dolls and bears. First are collectables, then artist pieces, then antiques. It seems to follow the affordability of the pieces. Most collectors collect from two or three of these categories. The artists need to carve out a larger share of the collector’s individual collections.

Something we have been trying to do at our convention is to get the artists to recognize and take advantage of product differentiation. The four features that artist pieces can possess that nearly all antique and collectable pieces do not have are: (1) piece is handmade entirely by the creator (artist), (2) signature of the creator (artist), (3) piece is one-of-a-kind or extremely limited edition, and (4) a certificate of authenticity that the piece is one-of-a-kind or from an extremely limited edition. These things should accompany every artist piece. Our Collector Survey indicates that a number of collectors are even willing to spend more for a piece that is signed, comes with a certificate, or is a one-of-a-kind.

Question: What pieces did you add to your collection from the convention?

Answer:

These are some of the fifteen pieces we added to our Museum.

Bears:

Anatomy Bear by Bev White

Cedric by Pat Berkowitch

Mr. Peepers by Francisco Carreno, winner
of the 2012 Beverly Port Artist Award
for Excellence

Takoda by Margaret Jackson

The Newlydeads by Amy Thornton

Dolls:

Elias by Kevin Buntin

Jolean by Bing Ruitter

Love is Forever by Adriana Esqueda

Love's Pledge by Joy Calhoon, winner of
the DOTY Award

Splendid Fascination by Christine
Shively-Benjamin

The Puppet Master by Roxanna Maria
Sullivan



The Puppet Master
Roxanna Maria Sullivan



Love's Pledge
Joy Calhoon



Anatomy Bear
Bev White



Elias
Kevin Buntin

The *Anatomy Bear* by Bev White has been a great educational tool for showing visitors to our museum, especially children, the intricacies of bear making and all that goes into it (figuratively and literally).

Want to Share Your Show Experience?

If you attended our Show and Sale in Philadelphia last May 5, 2012 and wish to share your favorite purchase with the rest of the Club members, please send us a picture and tell us the artist's name (if you remember) and what made you decide to buy it. Send to terry@quinlanmuseum.com or Susan Quinlan Museum, P.O. Box 3218, Santa Barbara, CA 93130. It is always interesting to see dolls and bears through the eyes of other collectors and to share your experiences with other Club members.

Please feel free to send a copy of this newsletter to your friends, customers and club members. If they wish to receive the newsletter in the future, they can join our free Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Club at www.quinlanmuseum.com or (805) 687-8901.