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Features

- 6 Soulful Darlings**
April Norton Continues To Refine Her Skills With Each Doll
By Hannah Kelley
- 10 Irresistibly Inclusive**
EliteDollWorld Prioritizes Designs for Diverse Physiques
By Wil Peterson
- 14 Imagination Unleashed**
QuirkyCritters Are Unique Companions for People and Dolls
By Hannah Kelley
- 18 A Prescription for Perfection**
With Her Medical Background, Inna Shvartsman Brings Precision and Intelligence to Her Craft
By Stephanie Finnegan

6



On the Cover: Inna Shvartsman of Schvartsman Art Dolls created this custom Dashka ball-jointed doll for a collector in Prague.

Departments

- 4 Publisher's Notebook**
- 35 Collector Corner**
- 37 Portraits**
- 40 Doll Scene**
- 44 Curious Collector**
- 46 Paper Doll**
- 48 Classifieds**
- 48 Event Calendar**
- 48 Advertiser Index**

- 22 A New Chapter for DOLLS Magazine**
DOLLS Through the Years
From Diana Jones
- 26 Rooted in Nature**
Adele Pozelaite Unites Environmental Themes and Porcelain Dolls
By Hannah Kelley
- 30 Behind Closed Doors at Ruby Lane**
Meet Carla Thompson
By Karen B. Kurtz
- 38 Fun and Educational**
Pocketlings Celebrates Diversity and Storytelling

Publisher's Notebook



Dear *DOLLS* Readers,

As we share this final issue of *DOLLS* magazine under its current ownership, our hearts are filled with gratitude.

For decades, *DOLLS* has been more than a publication — it has been a gathering place for collectors, artists, dreamers, and storytellers. Together, we have celebrated antique treasures, modern masterpieces, one-of-a-kind art dolls, beloved playline favorites, and the remarkable histories that bring them to life. Through every issue, your passion has given this magazine its true purpose.

To our loyal readers: thank you for being part of this journey. Thank you for sharing your collections, your letters, your enthusiasm, and your unwavering belief that dolls are worthy of admiration, scholarship, and joy. Whether you have been with us since the early years or joined us more recently, you have helped shape the vibrant community that makes *DOLLS* so special.

To the doll artists whose creativity fills these pages: we are deeply grateful for your support these many years. Your artistry, innovation, and dedication have inspired collectors around the world. You have trusted us to tell your stories, showcase your work, and celebrate your achievements. *DOLLS* has always been honored to shine a light on your extraordinary talents.

While this marks the end of one chapter, it is also the beginning of an exciting new one.

We are pleased to introduce the International Art Doll Registry as the new steward of this beloved publication. With a deep commitment to honoring artistry, preserving history, and supporting the global doll community, they will carry *DOLLS* forward under the new name *ART DOLLS*. Their passion for dolls and dedication to collectors and creators alike will ensure that the spirit you have come to love will continue to thrive.

We extend our sincere thanks to the International Art Doll Registry for embracing the legacy of *DOLLS* and for investing in its future. Because of their vision and enthusiasm, the celebration of dolls, in all their beauty and diversity, will continue for years to come.

Though ownership changes, the heart of this magazine remains the same: a shared love of dolls and the stories they tell.

Thank you for being part of our family, for turning every page, and for reminding the world that dolls are art, history, and joy combined.

With deepest appreciation,
Diana Jones, Publisher



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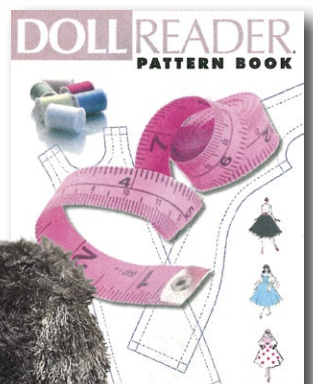
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Soulful Darlings

April Norton Continues To Refine Her Skills With Each Doll

By Hannah Kelley

For April Norton, an award-winning face-up artist and member of Dianna Effner's Doll Dreamers Guild, 2025 was an exceptionally busy dollmaking year. In addition to diligently working to complete a sizeable porcelain doll order, weekly vinyl Little Darlings, and resin ball-jointed dolls, she attended the Modern Doll Collectors Convention in Savannah, Georgia.

Being a vendor and attendee at MDCC has become an annual event for Norton, and she said, "I absolutely loved MDCC 2025! I had a great time and got to spend some time with guild members Nelly Valentino, Magalie Dawson, and Joyce Mathews, and Troy and KC from Dianna Effner, Inc. Plus I got to know other dollmakers like Annette Herrmann. I also had the thrill of meeting up with some friends I had made at other conventions, as well as making new friends that I had only met online. I had never been to Savannah, so it was a great experience for my daughter and myself. Such a beautiful and historical city."

Like other artists with sales tables, Norton produced a collection of dolls exemplifying the 2025 theme. "They were all the Dianna Effner BJDs and were costumed on the theme of the convention — Midnight in Wonderland — by the most fabulous of costume designers, Rachel Fisher!" she said. From her perspective, there was a constant flow of attendees visiting the showroom, many of whom had purchases in hand. Of the dozen dolls she brought, 11 sold at the show and the remaining one sold shortly thereafter. Norton said, "I would be a fool if I didn't understand that (Fisher's) amazing costumes were part of the reason they were so popular. All I had to do was suggest to her what I wanted and then she went to work with her supernatural

Right: Fiona is a doll April Norton painted specifically to experiment with eyes. The artist wanted them to have a watercolor appearance.

Far Right: Saylor (2024) has striking light blue eyes. April Norton said, "She reminded me of a girl playing on the beach by the Cliffs of Dover."





Above: Merry has blond hair and brown eyes. She was the first BJD April Norton painted.

Right: Sadie (2024) is a goth girl April Norton brought to MDCC in New Orleans. Norton said she has an *Interview with the Vampire* vibe in honor of author Anne Rice.

Far Right: April Norton poses with Alice, who won the 2025 *DOLLS* Awards of Excellence Industry's Choice and Public's Choice awards in the Repaint/Face-up category.

abilities. The whole collection was so different from anyone else's."

Although she is not certain she will be able to attend MDCC 2026 in Indianapolis, Indiana, Norton is planning to make a set of BJDs to fit this year's theme: Authors, Artists, and Adventurers. She has also started to consider creating a new vinyl doll collection following a theme of her own choosing, which would involve designing and sewing the dolls' clothes and painting their faces. In the past, she made such collections using porcelain dolls, and they were always well received by collectors.

As someone who's been making dolls since the '90s, Norton has received multiple accolades from the doll community for the superb quality of her creations. In 2025, one of her Alice dolls won two awards in the *DOLLS* Awards of Excellence competition. She said, "I





am always excited to win the Industry's Choice, but adding onto it the Public's Choice is a tremendous honor! I hadn't entered the competition since I became a guild member, but I was very proud of Alice and really wanted to show her off. I felt her eyes looked like they could really see; and they made me realize the possibilities with those Little Darling BJDs."

When asked about what dolls she currently likes to work on, Norton said, "As far as the Little Darlings go, I really enjoy the challenge of creating personalities for each of them. By that, I mean trying to change the shape of the eyes, the mouth, make the smile appear broader or deeper, give them dimples. Sometimes I like to make them look as young and innocent as a 5-year-old or as mature as a 12-year-old. They're very versatile. But I must admit the most fun I have is with the BJDs. I love to challenge myself with them. For me, the eyes are a joy to work with — they're nice and big, and when painted, they show so much character and depth that you can't quite get with an inset glass eye. This is the biggest thing that makes these BJDs different from most others. These dolls have lovely bodies to paint as well, with defined fingernails and toenails and just a nice, healthy child's shape."

A few personal setbacks in 2025 disrupted Norton's workflow, but she took them in stride. She had two surgeries on her painting hand at the start of the year and another on her wrist in October that left her in a cast for six weeks. "I was really scared that I wouldn't be able to paint anymore, but luckily, I believe my work has been as good or better than it was before," she said.



Above Left: Wearing an ornate dress by Rachel Fisher, Aurelia Fae is a fairy warrior.

Far left and inset: Painting clowns is something April Norton enjoys, so even though she wasn't exactly in line with the theme, Raven joined Norton's MDCC 2025 sales display.

Left and below: This playful doll is Pistachio. "I do love painting the clowns; they give me a certain amount of artistic freedom," April Norton said.



Right and below:

The White Rabbit was created to fit with MDCC's 2025 theme: Midnight in Wonderland.



Between the surgeries and dollmaking, Norton welcomed the opportunity to spend time traveling with loved ones: "With my husband retired, we spent a weekend in Niagara Falls for the first time. We only live two hours away, but we had never been there together. Another weekend, we went to Sudbury, which is about seven hours away, for my granddaughter's graduation from firefighting college. And then, of course, Savannah with my daughter Meghann for MDCC, and finally, Rob and I took a cruise on the Queen Mary II around the British Isles and then spent a week in Devon, England, to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary."

With an eye toward the future, Norton said, "In 2026, my big plan is just to improve my abilities with the Little Darlings and the Dianna Effner Little Darling BJDs. I have fun with them and have stocked up on a new supply. I'd also like to do more character dolls." Providing more detail, she said, "I will be trying different techniques that will change the shape, facial features, and possibly ethnicities. These are challenges I will set for myself and will possibly require different materials and definitely different techniques."



Above: Midnight Alice, going along with the theme for MDCC 2025, is a twist on Alice with darker colors and an oversize bonnet with midnight fabric and a felt 3D moon.

Left: Snow Girl was a sweet Christmas offering in 2024. She is wearing a wintery outfit by Rachel Fisher.

Because it can detract from the creative fun of painting, Norton does not maintain a waiting list for her dolls. She is open to commissions and suggestions, though. For those interested in viewing her available dolls and staying informed about future projects and announcements, Norton encourages individuals to visit her website, which is updated regularly. Ultimately, she said, "My goal is to keep relevant in the doll community, which I love being part of. It is a huge motivation for me to keep working well into my 70s." ☺

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Irresistibly Inclusive

EliteDollWorld Prioritizes
Designs for Diverse
Physiques

By Wil Peterson

Photos courtesy of Katya of EliteDollWorld



Pet and coffee prints come together in this collection for 1/6-scale fashion dolls.



"Glamming up" generally gets a hard pass from doll-clothing designer Katya, who is also known as Katherine. Casually chic everyday attire is infinitely preferable, both on a personal-style and miniature-scale level. That aesthetic is evident in her EliteDollWorld brand and releases, which have resonated with countless doll collectors for more than a decade.

"I like to think of EliteDollWorld as a doll fashion world where my designs are clean, modern, and fashion focused. The overall vibe is confident, stylish, and comfortable," Katya said. "I aim to create garments that feel elevated and expressive — pieces that could exist in full-scale fashion but are carefully translated into various doll scales with precision and respect for proportion."

Since the line's debut in 2015, EliteDollWorld has presented a series of colorful, physique-flattering separates — dresses, tops, pants, skirts, coats, activewear, and more — with seemingly limitless mix-and-match potential. Regardless of the item, Katya's primary focus has remained on inclusivity and representation.

One-sixth-scale fashions are available for Integrity Toys models including Nu. Face and Poppy Parker, as well as Mattel's Barbie.

Left: A yellow flannel jacket is paired with a mustard-yellow turtleneck and denim-print leggings.

Right: This look is finished with 3D-printed accessories designed by Katya.



Above from left: Smart Doll boys can enjoy the modern fashions of EliteDollWorld, too. • Smart Dolls model tops and skirts from EliteDollWorld's 2025 Christmas collection. • These dolls are having fun in their pajamas that were released by EliteDollWorld in January 2026.

One-quarter-scale designs fit MiniFee, PashaPasha, and other ball-jointed dolls; while one-third-scale pieces work for Smart Doll and characters with similar heights and proportions.

"My target market is adult doll collectors and creatives who care about quality and fit. This includes photographers, doll customizers, and doll collectors who enjoy styling their dolls and telling stories through fashion," Katya said. "I also design with different doll body types in mind because I believe all dolls deserve clothing that fits well and looks stylish. EliteDollWorld is for people who see doll fashion as more than a hobby: it's a form of creativity and self-expression."

EliteDollWorld is also a family affair of sorts. Katya's designs originate in her New York home studio or a second studio location in Florida. Relatives help bring her creative visions to life by hand-sewing items with her input. "We do not work with factories. I did experiment with factory production once, mainly to understand the process, but I quickly learned how easily quality can be lost when small garments are made in large quantities. For me, quality will always come before quantity," she said. "Most designs are produced in very limited numbers. We usually start with as few as two copies per garment. Many pieces are offered as preorders, which allows production to vary based on demand, sometimes up to around 16 pieces. This approach helps maintain consistency, craftsmanship, and attention to detail in every design."



Above from top: One-sixth-scale dolls celebrate love and Valentine's Day in style. • Cute Valentine's Day pajamas are made for both classic and pear-shaped Smart Dolls. • Sportswear for these Smart Dolls can be mixed and matched in a variety of ways.

Right: The popular retro collection includes casual clothing pieces with rainbow details.



Inspiration for designs often strikes quite unexpectedly for Katya, who began sewing at age 13. At the time, she loved dolls but owned few because of tight family finances. "Everything I know about sewing and construction was passed down from my mother, and creating doll clothing felt like a natural extension of those skills," she explained. "My inspiration comes from everyday fashion and from styles I've loved over the years, going back to my teenage years. I'm inspired by what I see people wearing daily, as well as by magazines and boutiques. Some designs come from things I love to wear myself, and others come from pieces I wish I could wear but never will. Doll fashion allows me to explore both."

Katya's actual design process can range from hours to months. After deciding on the idea, fabric, and doll size, she creates patterns, tweaking them when necessary. "Working with different doll sizes also plays a big role. Smaller dolls can be more challenging, as every detail matters and there is very little room for error. I love the rare moments when a garment comes together in just a few hours, but more often designs evolve over time. Some pieces are created from completely new patterns developed during the process," she said. "What I find most fascinating about designing doll clothing is that you never fully know the final result until the piece is finished. I don't rush the process or settle just to be done. I stay true to my vision, even when a design takes longer or feels challenging."

A super-special family bond initially prompted Katya to set her design sights higher than she'd ever imagined. "EliteDollWorld began when my daughter was 6 years old and received her first doll. I started making a few outfits for her, and she loved dressing her doll and taking it everywhere with her. Seeing her joy made me want to create more clothes, and very quickly I realized how much I loved the design and sewing process," she said. "I officially opened my Etsy shop in 2015, and from day one I treated EliteDollWorld as a real business. Every order



Above: Designs in this collection bring a modern touch to comfortable clothes.

Right from top: Uneven tunics and leggings are made to fit 18-inch dolls. • This eye-catching look consists of a hoodie and jeans by EliteDollWorld, as well as boots and a matching belt and knapsack. • On the back of this hoodie dress, there is an opening through which the doll's hair can flow. • Clothes from EliteDollWorld are easy to mix and match both within and across collections.

mattered, and I approached each sale with care and responsibility. Over time, it grew into my full-time profession, and it continues to be something I take very seriously while still enjoying the creative process.”

A recent family focus has provided potential new design inspiration for Katya. She said, “I dream of creating a sports- and college-themed collection inspired by my daughter’s college-selection process. Seeing school colors, team styles, and campus fashion has motivated me to design pieces that reflect that energy for dolls. It’s something I want to take my time with and put a lot of thought into, but it’s a collection I truly hope to bring to life.”

As for 2026 and beyond, Katya prefers to focus only on the present. “I don’t plan very far in advance. I learn as I go and allow the brand to grow naturally. I didn’t attend fashion school, so my approach is very hands-on and intuitive,” she said. “I pay close attention to what collectors respond to, as well as to current fashion trends and color directions. The doll world is always changing — you never know which dolls will be released next or what opportunities may appear. Because of that, I stay flexible and open to change. EliteDollWorld will continue to evolve organically, with a focus on quality, creativity, and designs that feel current and wearable.”



EliteDollWorld

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Imagination Unleashed

QuirkyCritters Are
Unique Companions
for People and Dolls

By Hannah Kelley



Above: Skullith.

Right: DillyDally.



Tiny, articulated critters with diverse appearances find their way into the world through the creative mind of Chelsea Vincent, owner of QuirkyCritters. As a young child, Vincent felt a disconnect between the toys available on the market and the ones she craved. When she reached the age of about 10 or 11, she had an epiphany of sorts: she didn't need to rely on others to make the toys she dreamed about.

"Filled with love of fantasy, thanks to Tamora Pierce and Anne McCaffery, I was looking up dragons and discovered people that made a magical thing called 'soft sculpture,'" Vincent said. A doll of this type was given to her by her grandmother. The materials and craftsmanship that went into making it intrigued the blossoming artist, and a chain reaction followed.

“My Nana, the one who always supplied me with older dolls to study and play with, also happened to be an incredibly talented seamstress,” Vincent explained. “She studied at the London School of Art and Design and was always, always amazing me with her paintings and stories of her time in school. She helped me design and make my own first dragon. I remember so many hours of learning to use the sewing machine, so many fits of frustration as my Nana seemed to give incomprehensible instructions. The 1940s Singer model seemed to fight me as I tried to make my dream dragon a reality. And finally, we finished it. I still have it, and it’s so amazingly ... *awful!* All lumps and broken seams! Now I knew, though, that I could make my own magic.”

Describing other toys she engaged with at the time, including Barbie dolls and Beanie Babies, Vincent said, “I only wanted to play with toys I could make move in any way my imagination wanted. My scenes and stories required action, drama, flare! All things I could do when my toys were maneuverable.”

Soon enough, ball-jointed dolls entered the picture, and Vincent’s world has never been the same. She said, “Oh, how I *loved* them! The simple grace of Volks, the imagination of Lutz, and then I found Den of Angels and found people that were making their own dolls. I obtained a copy of a Japanese ball-jointed doll book where it showed the process step by step, and then I started to really sculpt and attempt to make the things I wanted to make. I had been sculpting characters out of Sculpey for years — clumsy though they were, I truly loved it. Now I was



Above and left: Dandelion.

taking it seriously, though. By the time I was 16, I had sculpted, made molds of, and cast my first ball-jointed doll. I still have her to this day. And it was the last project of mine my Nana held.”

Having also become familiar with making digital art during her teen years, Vincent said, “For a time, I was fascinated by animation and wanted to be a 3D animator for studios like Pixar. I even took two courses of Autodesk Maya, which was pretty difficult — the animation part, I mean. I loved the modeling and sculpting part. Discovering I didn’t like animation as much as I liked making, I turned my attention to other artistic endeavors.” While still in high school, she enrolled in classes through the Philadelphia Academy of the Fine Arts and the Baum School of Art. “I continued taking college courses at the Baum School in college. Those programs taught me discipline and how to process information in different ways to different fields of study.”

Entering adulthood, Vincent attended college with the intention of earning an arts degree. She almost reached the finish line, but personal matters required her to pause her formal education indefinitely. Despite this, she remained committed to pursuing careers in the arts.

Jumping forward to the present, Vincent lives with her sister and mother in the small city of Dunnellon, Florida, where she runs QuirkyCritters. The name for the business came about organically. She said, “All my life, people had described me as a bit off, an oddball, eccentric, an old soul ... quirky. I’ve always wanted to make fantasy-related critters. I also love alliteration. So, I just added a Q to critters and wham bam, it’s perfect!”

BeBop.





Above: Flower.



SteamPunks.



Mushroom Dragons.

The catchy name practically demanded the creation of a custom mark. “I did play around with my signature for a long time,” Vincent said. “I mostly just used to write it out, but my handwriting is just terrible. It seems to change day by day and it is a bit long for a signature, so I decided to do one of those cool box signatures you see people use, like a stamp! I really liked how it looked. From there, I attempted to make a simplified signifier and realized I could make the Q fit in the other Q. I could easily draw a box, then another box, and just make a line through the corners. Much easier for me to write out and for it to look similar. Unlike writing words!” The evolving signature can be seen on the illustrations of her dolls through the years.

When it comes to the initial 2D renditions of her dolls, Vincent said each starts with a spark: “It could be a leaf, a stream, a tree, a type of fabric, really anything at all, and then I feel this spark and I know I need to make a doll inspired by what I had just seen. Sometimes the doll just pops into my visual mind, fully formed. Then I race to my iPad and start sketching before my busy mind wipes them away!”

Even at this early stage, the artist always plans for movement. She said, “I don’t tend to do the blueprint style of doll planning, with the front and side view. I did that in the past, when I was making dolls by hand, but they always felt too stiff. It’s just not for me. Instead, I like to capture the movement and expression of the doll I’m working toward. Just a snapshot of who I’d like them to be. Then I try to sculpt the dolls to mimic this movement. I actually place where I want the joints to be first, in my little digital blank space. Then I do the basic shapes of the parts, and as I’m working, I’m thinking, *Will this part hit this other part when the joint moves this way? How can I account for that? And I’m working around all these points of possible failure. Is this area too thin? Is this part too thick? How do I make this joint and part work like the sketch if this other part is an issue?* And so forth. It’s a lot of mental planning and working at the same time, but somehow it comes together in the end!”



Above: Honey Dragon.

Left: Dollmaker Chelsea Vincent.

Vincent originally sculpted art dolls by hand, but since 2019, she has taken full advantage of the availability of 3D resin printers. In addition to the added precision, it relieves her of some of the parts that become more physically taxing due to her fibromyalgia. The first doll she printed was Echeveria, a succulent fairy. “As time passed,” she said, “I started selling my dolls, and then before I knew it, I was getting more printers and making more dolls. It was like a flood of creativity! Honestly, the printing and designing isn’t the hard part; it’s the sanding.”

The artist puts her whole heart into each doll design, and many have a personal connection with people and moments from her life. As a result, deciding whether one is more meaningful than the others is not possible, and Vincent highlighted a few examples: “Echeveria because she’s my first. DillyDally because she’s the dragon I’ve always wanted. Seaglass because I went to the beach with my granny, who passed last year, to take photos of her. Skullith because it was my deceased uncle’s favorite.” She added, “Every doll I’ve made is my favorite, because each doll reminds me of how they were loved by people I love, and they were created with joy and the thrill of expression and invention. I just can’t pick one.” To date, she estimates she’s completed about 50 dolls but has designed more than 100 in total.

The people closest to Vincent provide much-needed encouragement for her dollmaking: “Everyone I know and love wants me to do this and make dolls. Many friends and family are given the prototypes of the dolls I’ve made when they ask for them. Once I’ve made them, I feel no need to keep them for myself, since my joy is more in the making. It makes me feel happy that I can give something back to the support I’ve been given.”

Although those around her continue to reaffirm her talents, including creators like Frappzilla, who she’s collaborated with multiple times, Vincent said, “Self-doubt is probably the biggest hurdle I’ve faced. The fibro doesn’t help, but that usually hurts the doing, but having self-doubt keeps you from even starting. Overcoming that feeling of being small is so rewarding in the end. I can’t express how happy I am when customers send me photos of their dolls and adventures, or hearing how their dolls bring them such happiness. Sometimes people stop by my booth at conventions and tell me how their doll is doing. It’s always surprising to me when I’m recognized, though! I tend to live in my own little world and forget that I actually do have (somewhat) of a social media presence.”

Vincent will be attending MEGACON Orlando in 2026, but she has no other planned show appearances. She hopes to reach out to some venues soon, though, if she can work up the confidence. There’s always a chance she’ll turn up announced, so collectors should keep their eyes open.

No matter where she is, she has a simple and worthy goal for her art: “I want to make magic. I want people to be able to hold something that is real to them — fantasy brought to life. Why can’t our lives be filled with fairies, dragons, and other mystical creatures? I want people to feel like they have been transported to a magical glen in a hidden forest and they can feel safe enough to believe. That’s what I’ve always wanted to do, ever since I was a kid. Because that’s what I’ve always wanted for myself, too.” Adding to this, she said, “If anyone ever has any questions about making dolls or my processes, I am an open book. Feel free to message me, and I will try and help where I can! Everyone deserves to make the things they dream about!” 🍄

Quirky Critters
quirkycritters.com

A Prescription for Perfection

With Her Medical Background, Inna Shvartsman Brings Precision and Intelligence to Her Craft

By Stephanie Finnegan

Inna Shvartsman is a remarkable woman who proves that determination and drive can be used to overcome anything. When the talented artist decided to brand her company after her maiden name, an error popped up in the registration papers. Somehow, an extra letter — a “c” — was added, and her company became known officially as Shvartsman Art Dolls. But that pesky extra consonant didn’t deter her, because Shvartsman was wise enough to know that the doll business was more than a name. It was an echo of her inner self and her outward dreams. She said, “Shvartsman Art Dolls marked an important moment in my life. It is when I truly found myself, discovered my path, and realized what I love and who I am as an artist. That



Above: This photo focuses on the Alice mold, which is approximately 14.6 inches. According to the artist, the image was created “specifically to showcase the new body design I developed. It is more anatomically complex, more articulated, and with improved mobility and aesthetics. It is very important to me that my dolls are not only beautiful but also feel ‘alive.’ My dolls should be able to express emotion through movement, posture, or even a subtle head tilt.”



Above from left: Inna Shvartsman of Shvartsman Art Dolls. • Little Dashka was created using the digital sculpt of a Mouse that Inna Shvartsman designed in ZBrush. “This was the first face in the My Little Mouse doll series. This was the starting point of the entire storyline of these tiny, magical characters. I created her simply because I felt the urge to bring an inner vision to life. This is a deeply personal project for me. That is what makes this doll especially meaningful.” • Zoi is one of the artist’s newest sculpts. She is shown here in her basic version, without face-up or wig. The artist’s dolls are available in three different formats: fully styled (with face-up, wig, and outfit); just with face-up and wig, but no clothing; or as a blank — no face-up or wig. All of the current dolls feature a new, improved jointed body construction. This is the latest version available for orders.

Left: Hand-painted face-ups and custom wigs can transform a doll into a different version and character. This Dashka variation was a one-of-a-kind creation, based on the wishes of her future owner.

name became the beginning of my creative journey. Over time, it became not just a label but a part of my identity. It was a reflection of my freedom, my soul, and my artistic voice.”

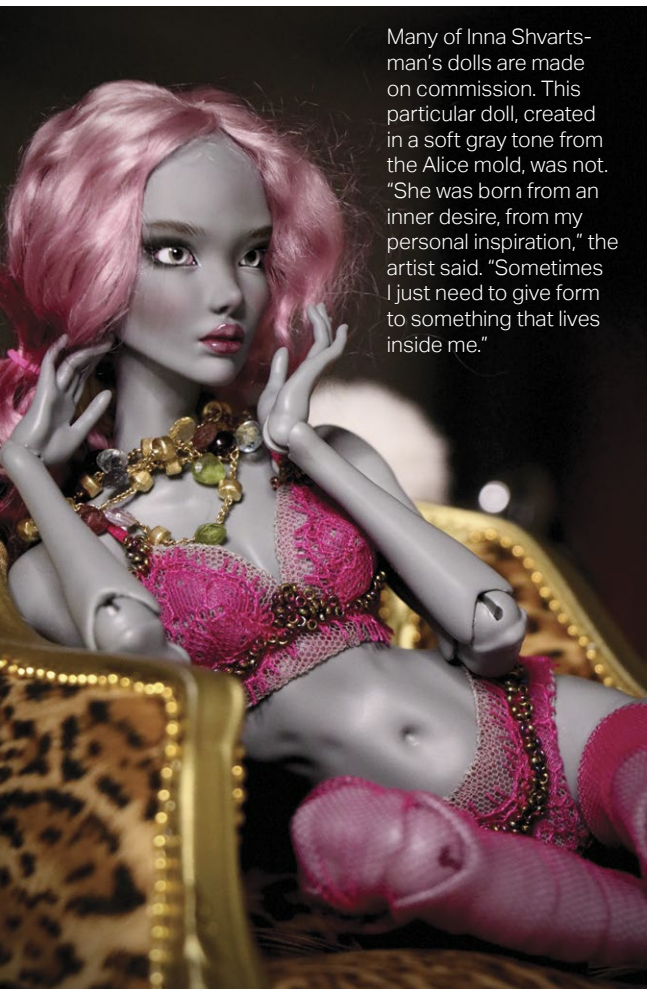
Shvartsman resides in Odesa, a city on the Black Sea in southern Ukraine. She has lived in this vibrant port city for 32 years and credits its ambience with helping to feed her musings and her artistic outpourings. “Odesa is a unique seaside city — bright, elegant, full of life and color. It has warm, sunny energy and vivid, expressive people. You can feel a spirit of freedom here, a creative energy, and an openness to the world. There’s always color, humor, warmth, and inspiration in the air. All of these things mean so much to an artist.”

The dollmaker has always been drawn to the world of coaxing her dreams into reality. Even though she was encouraged to pursue a career in medicine — which she eventually did — Shvartsman’s imagination could not be contained. She was always inclined to fill pages of notebooks with doodles, drawings, and illustrations: “I would draw everywhere — in sketch pads, on desks, even walls. Art was my own little world. In Yakutia, where I grew up, there weren’t many opportunities to study art seriously, so I taught myself. But it was mostly in secret. My parents often scolded me for drawing instead of studying. I had a deep fear of being judged, so I kept my creativity hidden. Still, I couldn’t stop. It was part of me.”

When Shvartsman, at the time a practicing doctor, discovered the world of dolls, it was as if a door to a brand-new, exciting adventure had swung open. She gravitated to all the challenges and the demands that this art form required. It was a universe of possibilities that she wanted to participate in full time, not just as a hobby or a dilettante’s pastime. Being blessed with both an artistic temperament and a studious personality, she approached her entrance into this art form with precision, patience, and pure dedication. “My love for dolls began with a spontaneous moment. I saw a photo of a doll on social media, took a screenshot, and started showing it to everyone — family, friends, and anyone I knew. I couldn’t believe something so beautiful and expressive could be handmade. It was a true revelation.”



Above: This Dashka incarnation was a custom order for a collector in Prague. "I am always happy when my dolls find their special place in different corners of the world," Inna Shvartsman said. "Each of the dolls carries a piece of soul and inspiration. Dashka is special. It feels like she can speak with her eyes and always knows what you are feeling."



Many of Inna Shvartsman's dolls are made on commission. This particular doll, created in a soft gray tone from the Alice mold, was not. "She was born from an inner desire, from my personal inspiration," the artist said. "Sometimes I just need to give form to something that lives inside me."

Having this image as her Holy Grail, Shvartsman brought an intensity to her immersion as a doll artist. "I researched everything — artists, materials, techniques. I wrote to dollmakers whose work deeply inspired me, asking if they would take me on as a student. Unfortunately, no one agreed." Not to be deterred, Shvartsman located a girl in a nearby town who made "quite charming dolls. I went to her for a few lessons. She gave me the basic understanding of where to start and how to begin."

It's been 12 years since Shvartsman began navigating this exhilarating learning curve, and she has watched her skills improve and branch off into different directions: "I created my first dolls using Flumo, a facial casting plastic. From the very beginning, I dreamed of making porcelain ball-jointed dolls, because I've always been drawn not just to the form but to movement, emotion, and the feeling that the doll is truly alive. For me, a doll is not just a statue — it's a living presence. The ability to play and pose is essential in my creative world. Later, I bought a kiln and began experimenting with porcelain. I truly loved the material: its refined texture, cool shine, and jewel-like quality. It felt like real art, delicate and precious. Although I've paused my work with porcelain for now, I hope to return to it in the future."

Shvartsman's detour away from porcelain led her to the wonders of polyurethane. This medium fits her requirements and her goals. She said, "It offers what matters most to me — the ability to interact with the doll without the constant fear of breaking it. It preserves the beauty and elegance while allowing the doll to move, express, and be part of a story. It's been more than a decade since I began my journey in the doll world. During this time, I've learned so much — not only about techniques and materials, but about patience, emotional sensitivity, and the ability to truly listen to form and feeling. Working with dolls is a deep journey inward. It teaches me to slow down, to trust my vision, and — most of all — to believe in myself, even when no one else did."

The physician turned doll artist has incorporated her lived experiences into the BJDs she brings to life today: "My work as a doctor gave me a lot. I learned how to observe the face deeply, to see form, symmetry, and proportion — and that helps me tremendously when sculpting, painting, and designing my dolls. Dollmaking brought me peace and quiet — the ability to look inward. Most artists are introverts, and I'm no exception. I love sitting quietly, drawing, sculpting, creating. I'm doing the thing I love most in the world."

In addition to her doll innovations, Shvartsman is the mother of three adult sons. Her children are proud of what she has accomplished: "My middle son recently promised to design a beautiful website for me, and I'm really looking forward to that."

"I also have a (production) partner, Valera. At one point, when he lost his job, I suggested he try working with polyurethane doll casting. At the time, there were no casting studios in Ukraine that specialized in dolls, so I decided to start something from scratch. I purchased the first equipment, paid for his training, and Valera began learning by casting my dolls."

"Now, he's become a high-level professional in his field. He works not only with me but also with renowned BJD artists from around the world. He has clients in the United Kingdom, Spain, the United States, Portugal, and already leads his own small team. I'm truly proud of him and inspired by how far he's come. He still casts my dolls — and yes, I get to skip the waiting list! He uses high-quality American polyurethane and materials, and despite how difficult things are in our country right now, we continue to work, support one another, and create something beautiful, kind, and lasting. We've truly become a strong team, and I value that deeply."

It is a testament to Shvartsman's fortitude that she has honed her art career during a time of war and deprivation in Ukraine. As the war unfolded, she came to a professional realization. She would obey her own heart, not



Above from left: Part of the My Little Mouse series, this doll found her home in the United Kingdom. Her mold is no longer available for preorder. "She lives a bright, eventful doll life! She even appears in calendars by Eileen Lam. My little star." • Still available for preorder, Mi is one of the newest molds. Mi has become very popular, and the artist chose her to become the main character in her first fairy tale. "I wrote the story myself, used photos of the doll as illustrations, and added a touch of magic through AI," Inna Shvartsman said. "The book is titled *The Magic in Your Palm. The Night I Met My Mi*. It is available through Amazon."

Right: Dashka has become Inna Shvartsman's most popular sculpt. Made with a 3D printer, this is the artist's personal doll. "She lives with me, travels with me, and takes part in exhibitions and photo shoots. She is the one that started it all. At one point, I considered launching a full line of 3D-printed dolls, but in the end, I decided not to. Even though I chose the most durable, high-quality resin available, I realized I couldn't guarantee its longevity the way I can with other materials — and quality means everything to me."

the demands or control of others: "There comes a moment when you start listening to yourself, and you realize that you chose your profession because of family expectations or circumstances — not because it was truly yours. When the war began, I wanted to dedicate myself fully to dollmaking — to something that truly fulfills me. The transition wasn't easy. The world of handmade dolls takes a lot of effort, time, and growth — and most importantly, there are no guarantees. Especially when you're creating one-of-a-kind, handcrafted pieces: you can't produce many at once, and it takes courage to



commit to this path. But I knew that this was mine. This was what I would do even if no one paid me."

She added, "Each of us has our own path, and there is no point in comparing ourselves to others. We can be inspired by someone else's journey, but it is essential to follow our own and stay true to who we are."

Living life on her own terms, working to the beat of her own heart, Shvartsman is a woman who is fulfilled and is providing her collectors with what they crave and desire. She treasures the commissions that she accepts and is a receptive listener to what her customers need and want. She is happy to accommodate and strives to make commissioned dolls rise to her clients' requests and wishes.

Reflecting on her evolution, Shvartsman is philosophical and grateful. "Why dolls? Honestly, I don't even fully know," she said. "Maybe it's something from childhood. My parents couldn't always afford to buy me dolls when I was little, and perhaps that sense of something missing stayed with me. But as they say, we all come from childhood. And dolls ... they are my life. My love. My way of expressing joy." ☺

Shvartsman Art Dolls

Instagram: @shvartsman.dolls

Facebook and YouTube: Shvartsman Art Dolls

For inquiries: shvartsman.dolls@gmail.com



A New Chapter for DOLLS Magazine

From Diana Jones

We're thrilled to share an exciting new chapter in the story of **DOLLS magazine**. After decades of celebrating creativity, craftsmanship, and the extraordinary artists who bring dolls to life, **DOLLS** is officially transferring to new ownership.

Please welcome the new owner, Lesley Duthie. Lesley is the acting CEO, or more like the CDO (Chief Doll Organizer), of the International Art Doll Registry (IADR), who works to keep the home fires burning so that others may find their inspiration, educational classes, or a mentorship that will help them achieve their dream.

Lesley has been creating dolls since 1985, working in the medium of porcelain. She has taught classes, was a Bell Distributor, and loves sharing her passion of dollmaking with others. Her style of dollmaking is creating contemporary characters that tell her a story as she sculpts (or is it the local gossip?). Lesley has been a member of the IADR since 2017 and in October 2022 she assumed the mantle of CDO of the IADR. She has run her own doll business for over 30 years, during which time she has had to adapt and change as the doll business has changed. Through it all she has kept her love of dollmaking alive and will bring that same energy into the next stage of **ART DOLLS**.

DOLLS Through the Years

Jones Publishing • JP Media



Spring 1994 -
First Issue of
DOLLMAKING



December 1996 -
First Issue of
Doll Artisan



May 2001 -
First Issue of
Doll Crafter



From Lesley Duthie

2026 is a year of change and also growth. The January/February 2026 edition of *DOLLS* magazine may have been the last printed edition, but it's not the last digital issue. *DOLLS* has been stable reading for doll lovers from all over the world. The March/April 2026 digital issue will be the last issue offered by JP Media LLC, but that is not the final chapter.

Starting in May 2026 (with a release date of March 23), the International Art Doll Registry will be continuing the digital issues of *DOLLS* magazine under the new title of *ART DOLLS* with the Spring Edition. Featured in the magazine will still be those sections that *DOLLS* readers are familiar with — articles on dolls and doll makers, doll clubs, event calendars, and many more familiar pages. We are very excited to be continuing the *DOLLS* Awards of Excellence! *ART DOLLS* magazine will also be available in both English and Italian — one subscription will allow the reader access to both versions.

Current subscribers to *DOLLS* will receive the new *ART DOLLS* digital magazine for the remainder of their subscription (issue for issue).

ART DOLLS magazine is for all doll lovers — the doll collector to all doll artists. All are welcome as kindred minds sharing our passion for dolls in any medium. We are also looking for submissions from collectors and artists alike. You may submit an article or images to the magazine for consideration to ARTDOLLSmagazine@outlook.com.

Each edition of *ART DOLLS* magazine will include articles about doll artists, doll club news, fashion creations, tutorials, collections, and past or upcoming events. Some new sections that readers will find in the *ART DOLLS* magazine will be the "Do What You Love" pages, IADR Juried Show Competitions, and articles about international doll shows.



The *DOLLS* website will still be available at www.dollsmagazine.com as this change in leadership unfolds. Updated information on the annual *DOLLS* Award of Excellence will also soon be posted to this site. Subscribers will receive an email with information on how to reset access to the subscribers-only section of the website and where past issues of the digital versions of *DOLLS* magazine will still be available.

We would like to thank JP Media LLC staff (and especially Diana Jones), writers, and subscribers for allowing the International Art Doll Registry to continue their terrific work of keeping the love of dolls a part of our lives.



February 2002 -
First Issue of
DOLLS



Summer 2007 -
First issue of
Barbie Collector



March 2012 -
DOLLS merges with
DOLL Reader



May 2012 - First
issue of *DOLLS*
Presents *Haute Doll*



IADR 2026 Convention

The International Art Doll Registry (IADR) is having their annual convention on May 8-10, 2026, in Florence, Italy in the Hotel Albani Firenze ballrooms. The convention will include a juried doll competition; several workshops presented by international artists; an Art and Aperitivo dining event with guest speaker Stephanie (Stevi) Tiongco, an award-winning fiber-art artist; and two days of open-to-the-public exhibit/sales tables.

“Myths and Legends” is the convention theme. This theme reminds us to learn from the past through myths, legends, and fairy tales to build a better tomorrow.

The three-day convention starts on Friday, May 8, with a day filled with workshops provided by international doll artists. Attend a class on sculpting a face by artist Patrizia Cozzo or make fairy wings and mermaid fins with Elisabetta Bernardi. Create a miniature wooden vintage doll chair with Giusy Di Rocco or make Demon Hunter Rumi’s hair braid in Cosclay with Loredana Salvo. Anna Esposito will take students through the process of designing and creating an anime-cartoon-style character in fiber, or attend the workshop with Angela Rinaldi on making a vintage doll-size chair with cold porcelain and textiles.

After the workshops, the Friday evening activities will begin with the Art and Aperitivo event, where guests can mingle and dine with the doll artists and special guests attending the convention. After this social, the special guest presentations will begin, followed by the IADR Juried Show Awards. The evening will conclude with a special advance viewing of the exhibits in the Exhibit & Sales area.

On Saturday and Sunday, May 9-10, the Exhibit & Sales area will be open to the public for viewing the doll displays and the 2026 Juried Show winners. Admission is free! Don’t miss out on this opportunity to visit IADR artists and see their one-of-a-kind art dolls.



The IADR juried competition is open to all attending the convention. IADR Juried Shows are for one-of-a-kind handmade dolls that are human or fantasy animals acting like humans with human characteristics. Dolls may be made in any medium, to include polymer, porcelain, paper-clay, fabric, and/or needle felted art dolls. The juried show will include awards for each of the doll categories (Sculpted Art & Fiber Art) in each of the five skill levels consisting of Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Professional, and Master.

Registration for the convention is available at the IADR website (www.international-art-doll-registry.com). How to sign up for the workshops being offered during the convention, rules on submitting a doll for judging in the juried show, and/or requesting a sales table in the convention center are all available.

Come join us in Florence in May 2026, for fun-filled days centered around one-of-a-kind doll experiences, and see the art and sites while attending the convention in Italy — the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance! 🌟





Rooted in Nature

Adele Pozelaite Unites Environmental Themes and Porcelain Dolls

By Hannah Kelley

Adele Pozelaite grew up in a small town in eastern Lithuania, surrounded by family that wholeheartedly encouraged her to pursue her passions. Early on, they found meaningful ways to show their support for her interests — two of which were dolls and art.

As a child during the '90s in a newly sovereign country, imported dolls were quite expensive, so Adele fondly recalls receiving her first Mattel Barbie: “Several members of my immediate family had to pool their resources to afford it, which made it feel incredibly special. I was completely enamored with that doll, and it became my most prized possession.”

That doll and others were common fixtures of her childhood. She said, “The best part wasn’t just the dolls themselves but sewing clothes for them and creating houses out of scraps and cardboard. That sense of making and inventing worlds was always central to the play.”

Carrying forward her unique perspective into adulthood, Adele moved to the country’s capital of Vilnius in 2009 to study set design at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Her plan was to go on to design theater scenography and costumes. After obtaining her bachelor’s degree, she worked on a few projects professionally but

Above: Monstera Sister, finished in 2018, has long locks of blond hair.

Left: Rafflesia, a porcelain BJD from 2022, has a stunning outfit and intricate hairstyle.





Above from left: Adele Pozelaite of Nymphai Dolls. • Even as a work in progress, beauty radiates from this porcelain head.



Right: Green Jade is a porcelain BJD that was completed in 2021.

said, “I realized that I’m too individualistic for large-scale group work, so my search for the right creative path continued.”

Dollmaking turned out to be just the route she was looking for. Most of her skills were learned through trial and error, due to the limited number of educational resources available at the time. Adele said, “I wanted to sculpt realistic, human-like dolls with some stylized features, which meant I couldn’t hide my technical shortcomings behind easier design choices.” The process proved to be slow, but she persevered.

Providing an overview of her evolution as a dollmaker, Adele said, “I started making dolls in 2014. At that time, my work was quite naïve and amateur, but I was very proud of it, so I began photographing my dolls and sharing them on Facebook. Quite quickly, people started asking if they could buy them. That same year, I opened my Etsy shop. Although dollmaking wasn’t yet my full-time job — I was working as a graphic designer for a large online shop, mostly creating advertisements — I found immense joy in making dolls as a hobby.

“After about a year, something shifted. I began to take dollmaking much more seriously, while at the same time feeling increasingly unhappy and unfulfilled in my full-time job. I started saving money and preparing to leave my position so I could focus entirely on becoming a doll artist. The transition happened between 2015 and 2016. During that period, I devoted much more time to my dolls, studying anatomy and practicing sculpting as intensively as possible. I also launched a collection of plush dolls.

“However, the moment I truly began to see myself as a professional doll artist came a bit later, with the creation of my first porcelain doll and the launch of Nymphai Dolls. I had dreamed of working with porcelain for a long time, but I knew I still had a lot to learn and refine. By that point, I had already been a full-time doll artist for about two years — and only then did I fully consider myself a professional.”





Above from left: Flowers add a sweet touch to Monstera Sister's look. • This handmade green wig is one of Adele Pozelaite's works in progress.

Adele settled on Nymphai Dolls as the business name before she sculpted her first porcelain doll. She explained, "I knew I wanted to create dolls that embodied the most beautiful — and sometimes painful — aspects of nature. My dolls represent nymphs and guardians of plants and the natural world itself. They are deeply connected to nature and to specific places, such as trees, forests, meadows, streams, and the sea." After stumbling across the word "Nýmphai" while reading about nymphs and deities, she instantly knew it fit with the vision she had for her art going forward.

In addition to nature, she finds inspiration through a variety of media, such as books, films, and other forms of art. She said, "Approaching inspiration this way allows ideas to come more naturally, and it also helps me avoid unintentionally repeating visuals that already exist within the doll community. Seeking inspiration elsewhere keeps my work feeling personal and authentic."

Her original point of view can be seen both in her porcelain ball-jointed dolls and in her plush dolls. Whereas the porcelain BJDs are meant to be symbolic art pieces, the plush dolls are more lighthearted — Adele described them as "a kind of serotonin décor" that she produces when she is between projects that are more complex.

In terms of the BJDs, designing and sculpting is only part of the job; Adele also paints them, designs their wigs, and handcrafts each tiny outfit. "I'm a strong believer in making costumes specifically to accentuate a doll's character. In my opinion, a costume can elevate a doll to an entirely different level. It offers clues about who



the doll is, her story, and the world she belongs to. I use costumes and accessories as an essential part of the storytelling process and character-building," Adele said.

Valuing self-discipline, the artist chooses to maintain set work hours to ensure projects continue to progress. She noted her work is "more technical than purely creative" and added that execution of ideas takes up the bulk of her time.

Owning a small business also requires time to be put toward self-promotion. "One of the biggest challenges has been shifting my mindset and developing new skills on the business side of my work," Adele said. "Being a good artist doesn't automatically mean you can make a living from it. I spent the first couple of years learning how to balance being an artist with being a small-business owner. Today, artists are required to wear many different hats: marketing on social media, organizing international shipping, photographing and filming their work — and at times, that can feel overwhelming and even unfair.

"At the same time, I'm very aware that without the internet, social media, and the ability to reach an international audience, I likely wouldn't be able to support myself financially through this work. In that sense, I feel grateful that all these circumstances aligned in a way that allows me to be a full-time doll artist."

Utilizing the digital tools at her disposal, Adele now does much more than simply market her own completed work — she provides collectors and aspiring artists with a close-up view of her process through social media posts, video tutorials, and online courses. In this way, she is helping grow the community and close the information gap that existed when she was a fledgling dollmaker. "Teaching



Above from top: Air-dry clay is used to sculpt prototypes like this leg and foot. • A porcelain hand nears completion.

Below: The Dying Forest is a porcelain BJD from 2024. Adele Pozelaite said, “The theme is very close to my heart — the disappearance of our forests. I grew up next to a forest that was a constant presence in my life for nearly 30 years. We walked there, gathered mushrooms and berries, studied animal tracks, and experienced every season of its ever-changing nature. Then, within the span of a single month, it was gone — cut down and sold. It felt as though a friend had died.”



Above: The details on this dress made for BJD Rafflesia are impeccable. When it comes to making clothes, Adele Pozelaite said, “My favorite part of the process is definitely embroidery and beading. I can spend weeks attaching thousands of beads by hand and slipping into a meditative state. I truly love this stage, and my dolls wouldn’t feel complete without it.”

has turned out to be one of the most rewarding parts of my career — it revealed another calling I didn’t initially expect,” she said. “Today, I have over 1,400 students, and I’m deeply grateful to everyone who has trusted me to be part of their dollmaking journey.”

For those who are inspired to jump into the wonderful world of dollmaking, Adele said she would love to be part of the journey and added, “Feel free to visit my website or reach out on social media — connecting with fellow creators is always one of the most rewarding parts of this work.” She hopes to make more in-person connections in the future, too, be it through exhibitions or shows.

Adele currently lives in Vilnius with her partner and their cat. Reflecting on her work thus far, Adele said she finds gratification and motivation in seeing how her skills have developed and how the themes behind her work have become more complex. For 2026, she said, “I hope to introduce new porcelain dolls and continue sharing my creative process with others. I also have some new plush doll designs in mind, and I’m excited to finally incorporate porcelain elements into that process as well. Hopefully, there will be enough time to bring all of these ideas to life!”

Nymphai Dolls
nymphaidolls.com

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS AT RUBY LANE

By Karen B. Kurtz

Photos courtesy of Carla Thompson

Meet Carla Thompson



OLDECLECTICS AT RUBY LANE

- 🎀 Oldeclectics ranks No. 1 among the Top 50 doll shops on Ruby Lane, a leading online marketplace.
- 🎀 Business owner Carla Thompson offers customers a vast selection of 19,000 items through her Ruby Lane storefront.
- 🎀 Shop antique, vintage, and collectible dolls, toys, jewelry, and artwork at rubylane.com/shop/oldeclectics.
- 🎀 Prices are reduced daily.
- 🎀 Oldeclectics is always willing to negotiate.
- 🎀 Layaway is available.
- 🎀 Oldeclectics prefers beautiful dolls as found and does not make refurbishments.

Above: Carla Thompson, the owner of Oldeclectics, photographed with a collection of her inventory as the 2025 holidays are in full swing.

According to Network Solutions, buying habits are shifting as people choose simpler, more sustainable lifestyles. But this is nothing new to seasoned business owner Carla Thompson from Richmond, Virginia, who carved out her niche in the secondary doll marketplace 36 years ago. Her success is based on childhood memories, a deep love of dolls, and warm, personal friendships with customers — something most online sellers cannot maintain.

Carla fondly remembers Mrs. Fullerton, an old neighbor. “Mrs. Fullerton offered cookies that were great, but nothing prepared me for the wonders inside her house!” Carla exclaimed. “She had a magical collection of all kinds of dolls and dollhouses! Mrs. Fullerton was a kind soul. She let me hold the dolls. She taught me their history and how she got them. I stayed for what felt like hours that first day, then returned every week to explore until my family moved away.”



Above: A glass case holds a fraction of Carla Thompson's collection.

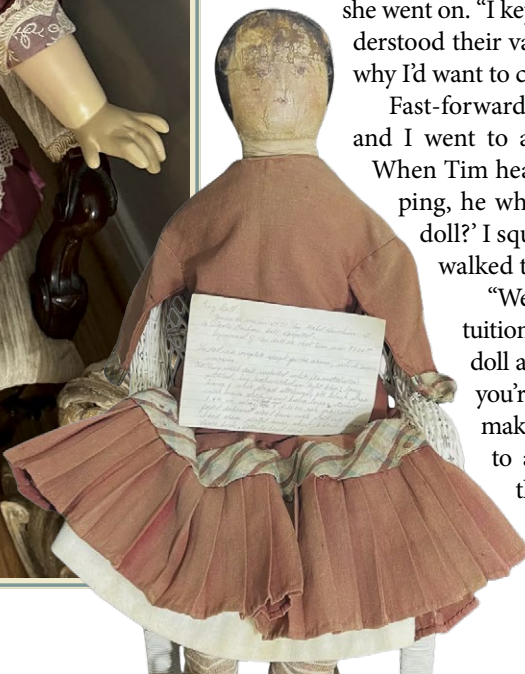
Left: Jumeau Long-Face Triste Bébé by Emile Jumeau with head mold designed by Carrier-Belleuse, circa 1879-1886, 28 inches tall. Marked doll on a repainted chunky body with straight wrists. Head free of hairlines/cracks, closed mouth, old mohair wig, paperweight eyes, applied pierced ears. A stunner in an old dress and antique bonnet!

Below: Handmade oil cloth folk art doll with handwritten provenance made for S. Hall circa 1843, 25 inches tall. Carla said, “This doll is one of the most interesting dolls I have had, not just for her look but because of the old paper telling of some of her travels.” Minor age wear/damage, arms missing.

Carla and her father, John, loved flea markets. Carla “gravitated toward dolls while he hunted for new musical instruments,” she went on. “I kept my dolls in nice condition and understood their values. Kids my age didn’t understand why I’d want to collect antiques.”

Fast-forward to the 1980s: “My husband, Tim, and I went to an old farm auction in Oklahoma. When Tim heard the gavel strike and people clapping, he whispered, ‘Who just spent \$200 on a doll?’ I squirmed in my chair as the bid spotter walked that doll home to me.

“We didn’t have much back then, but Intuition said someone was looking for that doll and I could profit from it. Tim said, ‘If you’re going to keep collecting, you’d better make a business of it.’ So, from flea markets to antique shows, doll shows to shops, then eBay, and finally finding my home on Ruby Lane, I’ve built this business myself from the ground up.”





DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERS PASS THROUGH OLDECLECTICS

Photos courtesy of Mark A. Kurtz

Doll collecting brings joy, learning, mindful connection, and monetary value. Collectors care for dolls as objects, historical artifacts, cultural reflections, and cherished personal items. They preserve and manage their growing collections. Eventually, most collectors pass their dolls on to others (stewardship) so their beauty and stories endure for future generations. Here are some dolls that Oldeclectics sold and stewarded onward to others in past years.

Clockwise from upper left: Marked Tête Jumeau Béb , 1892-1899.

- Madame Alexander Cissy in black velvet torso gown with hangtag from Fashion Parade series, 1956.
- Emma Clear Barbary Coast Gent in tagged costume, 1947.
- Cameo composition Kewpie, 1940s.
- Madame Alexander Cissy in Tea Rose Cocktail, 1990s.
- Large Kestner 150, all bisque with glass eyes, 1890 onward.
- Dressel & Koch Topsy-Turvy, black papier-m ch  head and white bisque head with glass eyes, 1893-1897.
- Ideal Revlon in rare Queen of Diamonds costume, 1955.
- Mattel's Barbie and Ken Star Trek Giftset, 30th anniversary, 1996.
- Armand Marseille and Vogue Just Me in fired bisque, the rare 11-inch Suzanne, 1930s.
- Canadian Dee and Cee Koweeka, 1960s.
- Marked Dam troll with hangtag, 1960s.
- Madame Alexander Karen Ballerina from the Porcelain Collection, 1999.
- Skookum Native American dolls, designed by Mary McAboy, 1913 onward.
- Ideal Shirley Temple MIB in rare school dress, 1957.
- Vogue Ginny Rodeo Girl from Frolicking Fables series, 1952.
- Kling very white quality china boy with molded blond hair, 1880.





Above from left: Carla Thompson's husband, Tim, handles packaging and more at Oldelectics. Winter holiday season is very hectic, filling orders and moving shipments out into the world. • Carla Thompson's late father taught customer service policies still in use today at Oldelectics.

Two sisters, Doris and Grace, mentored Carla early on. "We bought, sold, and traded together to get all the dolls we wanted," she remembered. But renting an in-person storefront was demanding and challenging; she needed flexibility to raise her daughter, Macon.

"Mrs. Fullerton's magical house inspired Oldelectics, the name of my online storefront at Ruby Lane," Carla said. "I mixed words with curated items that spark joy. Every time customers visit Oldelectics, they might stumble upon something new and unique. It's really amazing to see our curated collections shipping to new homes around the world."

Carla begins her whirlwind days with an early-morning breakfast, followed by "exercise, which keeps me grounded, even on the most chaotic days," she said. She answers more than 500 emails and voicemails per day for immediate customer needs, checks Ruby Lane for sold items, answers new questions, locates sold items, prepares postage, and creates descriptions for new finds.

Carla credits the multitasking skills of her "small, tight-knit family" with having a significant business impact. "Tim is wonderful at handling payments, tracking layaways, packaging, and shipping," she explained. "He makes sure items are well-wrapped and will arrive on time in expected condition. You might skimp on some things, but packaging is *not* one of them," Carla declared emphatically.

Macon, now settled in her own career, was a seasonal worker during college. "My daughter learned to appreciate the history of antiques and collectibles," Carla said, "and developed her own collecting taste."



Above: Karr Range Company of Belleville, Illinois, manufactured this working heavy cast-iron stove — a salesman sample, circa 1910. This rare find is 21 inches tall by 13 inches wide. It comes in a rich blue enamel fired-on finish, is chrome decorated, and sits upon a fancy base with claw legs. Cast-iron burners, large oven wood/coal door, ash drawer, plus a full-length warming tray above. Missing center cover and priced accordingly.



Left: This red-roof Gottschalk dollhouse made of wood and brightly lithographed paper was likely German-made during the late 19th or early 20th century. It opens from the front, contains a closed-in balcony with windows, and has three rooms. Dollhouse is 15.5 inches long by 21 inches tall.

• All-bisque doll, 15 inches tall, is a marked artist proof by Italian artist Beatrice Perini, with glass eyes, jointed body, tags, and marked wooden stand. She wears a handmade Little Red Riding Hood outfit, holds the Wolf puppet, and carries a basket of goodies.



Right: Made by Huret in France and marked on the bottom of the top table. Bowls and pitchers were often made in Germany, but these two pitchers were made in France and the bowl in Germany. Set has the rare matching vase. Bottom drawer is meant to keep what dolls might need, like soap, perfume, etc.



Above and right: Antique Paris Bébè Jumeau bisque doll with composition body, 36 inches tall, wearing original shoes. Holding a rare antique Pinocchio doll.

Will, Macon's boyfriend, is the third team member at Oldeclectics. He takes photos, finds and lists items, wraps, packages, and "anything else we may need," said Carla.

Carla cares for her mother now and John is gone. "We have great merchandise, but connecting with people is also really important," she said. "Dad's life lessons still impact how we prioritize and care for our customers. He was a big believer in treating people honestly: treat every customer like you would want someone to treat you and your family. Dad taught me the value of doing the right thing simply because it is the right thing to do."

Cheryl Katz, a West Palm Beach collector, described her long-time relationship with Carla that started with messages and letters 25 years ago. "She treats everyone with love, patience, and respect. Carla is always helpful, generous with her knowledge, and willing to look for special items for my dolls and bears," Cheryl said. "Once we spoke on the phone, we recognized we were kindred spirits. I'm so grateful she's now part of my family."

"Humor and understanding guide me in business," Carla observed. "Dolls, toys, and bears are not something people must have, but they do bring joyful memories back into our lives. We all have a doll that brings back a smell, memory, or happy moment. I still remember loving my Mrs. Beasley doll; my friends remember their favorite doll. That feeling remains inside us, no matter how old we are."

Right: All-original Madame Alexander McGuffey Ana doll in original box, tagged clothing, and wrist tag; perfect hair and rosy cheeks; circa 1950s. Inspired by iconic characters from McGuffey Readers, Madame Alexander manufactured various McGuffey Ana doll iterations. Over time, they became beloved nostalgic collectibles.



She added, "There are never 20 dolls of the same type at Ruby Lane, all identically dressed. Most dealers share their information and historical knowledge, helping to enrich our industry, increasing education and knowledge."

Flexibility and multitasking are critical skills for Carla's team. Inventory — sourced from flea markets, thrift stores, antique shops, estate sales, and auctions — is stored in the Thompsons' massive temperature-controlled multistory house and garage. The team has developed an old-school organizational system to number and catalog inventory. Items are sorted by type and other features, providing location assistance when items are sold.

"Purchasing inventory is the most fun part of my job," Carla said, smiling.

An online business can become powerful financially, but with such a constant flurry of activity, Carla's biggest challenge is taking time off. Holidays are incredibly stressful.

"Doll collecting will always be in demand," Carla wisely reflected, "because it is driven by people's childhood experiences and relationships with people who impacted their lives, like Mrs. Fullerton, who loved antique and vintage items. Most collectors realize they are in it for the long haul when their collecting interests deepen."

Hats off to Carla! Her life has successfully manifested a winning combination of simple, beautiful dolls; sustainable materials; and treating customers like family. 🌟

Karen B. Kurtz (karenbkurtz.com) specializes in writing about dolls, history, and antiques.

OLDECLECTICS
rubylane.com/shop/oldeclectics

Collector Corner



George Scherling said, "While attending a doll meeting of the Letitia Penn Doll Club, I saw a 1950s-era Mary Hoyer on a sales table for only \$15. She was not in an original outfit, but I didn't care, and I quickly bought her. I showed her to the woman standing next to me, who was none other than the granddaughter of Mary Hoyer — Mary Lynne Saunders, who also owns the legendary doll company. She said the doll was a rare walker and that she would have bought it had she noticed the doll before I did."



Phawinee Frederiksen made the outfit worn by this Meadow Doll and said, "She is happy in the front yard in late summer."



Vicki Monthei said, "Yin is grateful for the warm shawl I knit her. She was ordered a few months ago from DreamHigh Studio. It's hard to wait for overseas BJD orders! At 6 inches tall, Yin will be a great storytelling Nana to my 3-inch tall RealPukis."



OOAK polymer clay dolls by Monika Mechling recently joined Sandy Winfree's collection.



Vita Vlasenko said Evgenia Melyakh (Vassabika) painted this Dollshe BJD.



Alice Peterman said Baby Genius was made by Madame Alexander in 1936. "I find composition dolls very appealing and have quite a few in my collection."



Sandra Gallo added this Adora Name Your Own Baby Doll by Frank Young to her collection at Christmas.



"This is my Blythe doll, Jayla," Angela Jackson said. "I made her a jeweled pull cord, which accentuates her green eyes. She is basking in the sun. That simple cotton shift she's wearing came from Etsy, and the background is in my own backyard."



Johanna Reinhardt said, "This is the Tonner Summer Soiree Gwendolyn Wilde doll sold by the Virtual Doll Convention (VDC) in Colorado. She is wearing a shirt purchased from VDC and the coat from Tonner's Absolutely Aspen Sydney Chase doll. Her purse is a miniature charm purse by Coach."



Ellowynne Wilde, by Robert Tonner, is ready to go shopping. Angela Temple said, "She's modeling an ensemble of exclusive fashion pieces and accessories created for, and sold by, Rachel Hoffman of Virtual Doll Convention." The handmade leather coat was purchased on eBay, and the pink neck scarf was made by Temple.

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"Victoria is a three-faced porcelain doll with a rotating head, showing happy, sleepy, and crying expressions. She bears no maker's marks and was ordered from England to Romania," Nerisa Hosu said, adding, "She is one of the dearest and most unique dolls in my collection."



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DOLLS: What offerings do you have at your store?

Osayi Lasisi: Pocketlings offers a curated collection of children's products centered on culture, creativity, and representation. Our store features:

- New Pocketlings plush dolls celebrating Black joy and designed by my daughter at age 9
- Limited-edition collections, including our Wealth Collection inspired by Nigerian names and meanings
- Three Pocketlings children's books (*ABC for Awesome Me*, *123 for Awesome Me*, and *Just Because I'm Awesome*)
- Accessories and small add-ons sized for the dolls
- Creativity and affirmation materials used in our workshops and story time events

All items are new and focused on confidence-building, representation, and joyful storytelling for kids.



Above: Pictured is a trio of Pocketlings dolls.

Below Left: Olabisi is 7.9 inches tall.

DOLLS: Who are the intended buyers of your dolls?

Lasisi: Pocketlings dolls are created for families who value representation, culture, and joyful play.

Our buyers include:

- Parents and caregivers looking for affordable, high-quality dolls for children ages 3-10
- Gift buyers shopping for birthdays, holidays, and special cultural occasions
- Budget-conscious families as well as those who collect limited-edition or culturally meaningful dolls
- Online shoppers across Canada and the U.S., plus in-person buyers at markets, community events, and local stores
- Beginners who simply want a beautiful, soft doll for their child, and collectors who appreciate diverse or culturally themed dolls
- Kids who want to play, cuddle, and take their Pocketlings everywhere — though some families also choose to display them as keepsakes

Overall, our dolls are for anyone who wants play-friendly, culturally rooted characters that help children feel seen, joyful, and represented.

DOLLS: How did you first get started in doll sales?

Lasisi: Pocketlings began when Olamide was 9 years old and couldn't find plush dolls that looked like her — cute, soft, and full of personality. She started sketching her own designs, and together we decided to bring those drawings to life.

What began as a simple mother-daughter project quickly grew into interest from friends, families, and community members who also wanted dolls that reflected their children. We produced our first small batch, sold out quickly, and realized there was a deeper need for joyful, representative plush dolls.

From there, we expanded into events, books, and a small online store. Pocketlings has been growing ever since, rooted in Olamide's creativity and our shared desire to help kids feel seen, confident, and celebrated.

DOLLS: Have you had any particularly memorable sales?

Lasisi: Yes — one of our most memorable moments was receiving a community grant to host a free family celebration and give Pocketlings dolls to local kids.

Instead of a traditional sale, it became a meaningful community experience: children picked out their dolls, listened to Olamide's story of designing them at age 9, and participated in affirmations and creativity activities. Seeing kids light up as they held a doll that looked like them was unforgettable.

It reminded us that Pocketlings is more than a product — it's a moment of belonging, joy, and representation for families.

DOLLS: What do you enjoy most about this line of work?

Lasisi: What I enjoy most is seeing children light up when they feel seen. Pocketlings started as a creative project with my daughter, but it has become a way for kids — especially Black children — to recognize their beauty, their culture, and their possibility.



Above: Olamide and Osayi Lasisi are the cofounders of Pocketlings.

Right: Oladapo measures nearly a foot tall.

Below Left: Olayemi is a 9.8-inch plush doll.

I love watching families connect with the story behind the dolls, hearing children proudly share their own ideas, and creating moments of joy and confidence at events. It's incredibly meaningful work, and every smile reminds me why we do this.



DOLLS: If someone wants to learn more about your offerings, what should they do?

Lasisi: They can visit our website to explore our dolls, books, and upcoming events, or follow us on Instagram ([instagram.com/pocketlings](https://www.instagram.com/pocketlings)) to see new releases and behind-the-scenes updates. We're also happy to answer questions directly — people can reach out anytime through our contact form or by email. ✉

Pocketlings Dolls & Books
pocketlings.com



Fawn by Rose Lacefield

Fawn is a new 2026 release in the Cricket doll line. She has glass eyes, a wig, and a face-up by Lacefield, as well as a cute outfit. The resin BJD is available as a basic or full set. (bbflockling.com, bb.flockling@yahoo.com)



Come Nelle Favole by Elisa Nunziatini Salhi

This 35-inch doll was released in June 2025. She is made of cotton, wool, fabric, and wadding. (nunziatinielisa@gmail.com)



Santa's Baby by Kathy Bergen

Wearing a Santa suit, this 4-inch doll is sculpted from oven-bake clay. Her head, arms, and legs move. (etsy.com/shop/katscanvas, kbergen1@gmail.com)



Four Seasons Fairies by Georgia Ossipov

Every season has a little helper, but humans normally don't see them. They lurk under leaves and snowflakes and help nature to dress up for the next phase. This little quartet of fairies is one of a kind. They are about 2 inches tall and come with removable stands and accessories. (amiablecurios.com)



Phoebe Secrist by T. Coates

In November 2025, Coates finished this 22-inch doll using Special Care Nursery air-dry paints. It's the first doll she's painted, and her first time painting hair.



Tumble by Virginia Lee

These cute resin BJDs are 6.5 inches tall. (ForeverVirginia.com)



Maple Hill Piper by Helen Kish

Kish painted this 14-inch jointed vinyl doll by hand. It is a limited edition of 11. (kishandcompany.com, tamas@kishandcompany.com, 720-320-9152)



Edie by Chriss Wright

This Blythe-type doll features custom carving, custom eye chips, gaze correction, pull strings, and faux aging details. Her outfit includes a handmade skirt and bloomers, dress, straw hat, socks, and leather shoes. (spookydollhouse.com)

Dollstown Amber by Sandy Winfree

Winfree combined fabric, rayon ribbons, an amethyst necklace, decorative gears, and netting to create a unique costume for this 23-inch doll. She also made the wig. The face is by Val Zeitler.



Frog Princess by Zofia & Henry Zawieruszynski

A limited edition of one, this 33-inch vinyl doll with a cloth body is dressed in a gown made of silk, velvet, and tulle. (zawieruszynski.com, zawieruszynski@msn.com, 763-647-9648)



Spring by Kathleen Hill

Part of the Woodland Maiden series, this 16-inch Annora doll by Robert Tonner was customized by Hill. She is dressed in a OoAK outfit consisting of underwear and a petticoat; lace-up boots; a ruffled lined skirt with hand-dyed silk greens; asymmetric drapes; and an Ultrasuede bodice and arm bands with assorted embellishments. (kathleenhillstudio.com, brynhk@gmail.com, Photo by Kathleen Hill)

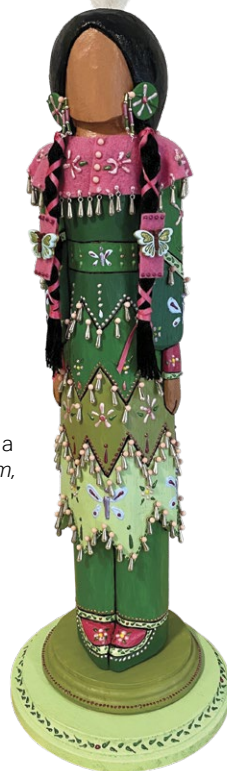


Ellie by Nina Tugarina (left)

Polymer clay, silk, and leather were used to create this 10-inch doll. She is a limited edition of one. (ninatugarina.com, ntugarina@gmail.com)

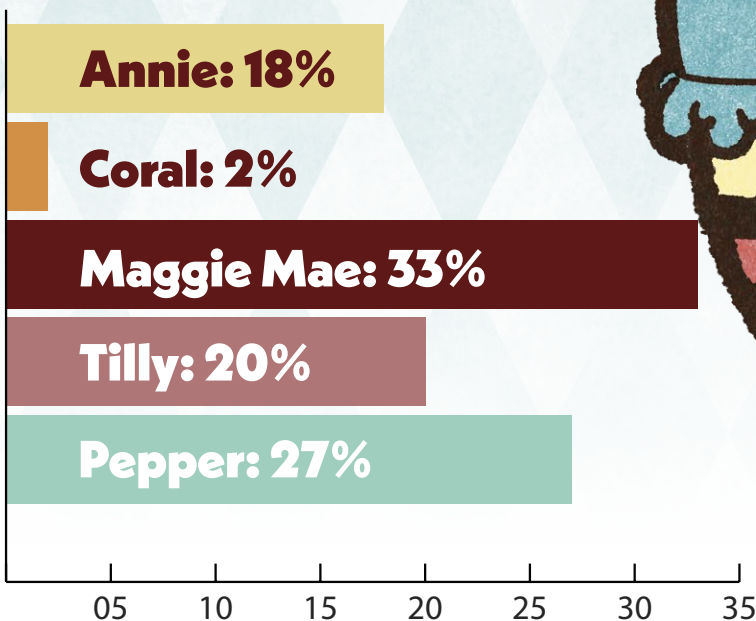
Jingle Dress Fancy Dancer by Linda Rous (right)

October 2025 saw the introduction of this OoAK hand-carved doll. Standing 18 inches tall, she has been decorated using acrylic paint, felt, embroidery floss, and metal jingles. (etsy.com/shop/MyPeopleDolls, lindarous@aol.com)



Doll Name Reveal:

Maggie Mae



Curious Collector

By A. Glenn Mandeville

Circa 1954 American Character Tiny Tears

Q I am a senior collector and I have been organizing my doll collection. I never knew I had so many dolls, and I cannot remember much about when I bought each of them and why! I always loved mint-in-box dolls. And this time, I remember buying this 14-inch Tiny Tears doll, perfect in a gift set. I remember my doll friends were crazy about this doll at the time, and I wondered what you could tell me about her?

A I can fully understand why your doll friends went crazy when they saw this doll.

There were many different versions of Tiny Tears available in the 1950s. Because of the all-vinyl body and the fur wig, I can date her to approximately 1954.

Baby dolls were a hot item during that period, and American Character's Tiny Tears and Ideal's Betsy Wetsy were among the main players of the time.

There's not much to say about the doll itself other than one is seldom, if ever, found in the condition of your doll.



Other sets came with a carry-on for the doll, and there was even a put-together playpen for Tiny Tears. The dolls could drink, wet their diapers, and even blow bubbles. All of these dolls were issued at a time when young girls wanted a chance to pretend to be a mommy.

There is one very interesting detail: If you look closely at the inside lid of the gift set, you will see a picture of Miss Frances as she appeared on the television series *Ding Dong School*. This extremely popular children's show featured preschoolers finger painting and doing simple tasks under the guidance of Miss Frances, whose real name was Dr. Frances Horwich. Broadcast from 1952-1956 on NBC and syndicated until 1965, it was sponsored partly by American Character.

These dolls were meant to be played with, and few have survived as well as your doll has. That said, a current value is very difficult to determine. But when consulting with other collectors, it seems as if \$500 and up could be a starting value.

Thank you for sharing this incredible piece of history. She is indeed a treasure!

Send queries about vintage and modern dolls, with photos, to aglenmandeville@aol.com.

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1940s Ideal Deanna Durbin

Q I have written to you before and have always been pleased with your answers. I've recently acquired this 25-inch all-composition Deanna Durbin doll.

She is absolutely in mint condition. She has the typical human-hair wig and is only missing her photo pin. The dress is tagged with the usual Ideal tag with Deanna Durbin's name, so I know it's original. However, I have never seen this dress in all the years I have been collecting, and I wanted to know what your opinion is about this fashion. Is it really rare or have I somehow missed it in the past?



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A Thank you for being pleased with the answers to your questions in the past. I hope I can live up to it once again!

We spoke on the phone regarding this dress, as I needed to know if the tag was sewn in by hand. That's because I have neither seen nor heard of this dress before. I would also add that I have virtually every Ideal catalog.

So, I will have to throw this question out to the readers — if anyone knows of this dress, please send me a photo.

The doll itself was made around 1940, as I'm sure you know, and it is a perfect likeness of actress and singer Deanna Durbin. Durbin was one of the top celebrities of the day. It was difficult to find a movie magazine without her photo on the cover.

Thank you for your question. Hopefully, we will get a response. ☺

Fleur

by Diana E. Vining





Diana Vining
2016

Event Calendar



Florence, Italy

May 8-10: Myths & Legends - 2026 International Art Doll Registry Convention. Hotel Albani Firenze, Via Fiume 12, Firenze. Contact: Lesley Duthie, internationalartdollregistry.com, IADRegistry@outlook.com.

Maryland

Mar. 28: Best Little Doll Show in Southern MD.

13 Vendors

TWO SPECIAL TABLES

Stringing/Repair: Sandy Hohne

Hitty Collector Estate Sale (8 foot table of dolls, clothes, accessories)

Historic Waldorf School Auditorium, 3074 Crain Hwy, Waldorf. Contact: Black Eyed Susan Doll Club, Harryc459@gmail.com, 240-925-9009.

Missouri

June 27: Doll Friends ~ Doll, Bear & Toy Show & Sale. VFW, 1347 S. Morley St., Moberly. Contact: Janice Wassmuth, janie_annie@hotmail.com, 660-676-6304.

North Carolina

Feb. 28: Asheville Doll, Toy & Miniature Show. WNC Agricultural Center - Boone Building, 761 Boylston Hwy, Fletcher. Contact: Southeastern Doll & Toy Shows, SoutheasternDollShows.com.

Ohio

Apr. 25: Toledo Doll & Bear Show & Sale. TOCA Toledo Sports, 10020 S. Compass Dr., Rossford. Contact: Karen Kosies, toledodollshow.net, karen@toledodollshow.net, 520-270-0179.

Oct. 24: Toledo Doll & Bear Show & Sale. TOCA Toledo Sports, 10020 S. Compass Dr., Rossford. Contact: Karen Kosies, toledodollshow.net, karen@toledodollshow.net, 520-270-0179.

Oregon

Mar. 29: Portland Doll & Bear Show. Embassy Suites - Portland Airport, 7900 NE 82nd Ave., Portland. Contact: Joe Koury, queensofthedollaisle.com, joe@queensofthedollaisle.com, 650-303-4140.

Mar. 30-31: PNW Doll Artist Expo. Sheraton Portland Airport, Portland. Contact: pnwdollartistexpo.com.

Pennsylvania

Apr. 26: Lancaster Doll, Toy, Teddy Bear Antique, Modern, Collectible Show & Sale. Lancaster Farm & Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster. Contact: Sue Funk, padollshow@gmail.com, 717-371-0395.

Nov. 1: Lancaster Doll, Toy, Teddy Bear Antique, Modern, Collectible Show & Sale. Lancaster Farm & Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster. Contact: Sue Funk, padollshow@gmail.com, 717-371-0395.

Texas

Feb. 21: 34th Bi-Annual Hill Country Doll Show & Sale. Schertz Civic Center, 1400 Schertz Pkwy., Schertz. Contact: Dorothy Meredith, dolldr.com, dmeredith@dolldr.com, 830-606-5868.

Aug. 29: 34th Bi-Annual Hill Country Doll Show & Sale. Schertz Civic Center, 1400 Schertz Pkwy., Schertz. Contact: Dorothy Meredith, dolldr.com, dmeredith@dolldr.com, 830-606-5868.

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Brenda Mize Dolls	www.brendamizedolls.com	37
Diana Vining	www.paperdollshoppe.com	37
Diane's Doll Shoppe.....	www.dianesdollshoppe.com	2
Doll Peddlar, The	www.dollpeddlar.com	49
Doll Show USA.....	www.DollShowUSA.com	49
Edith's Editions	www.etsy.com/shop/EdithsEditionsCloset ..	2
G Schoepfer Inc.	www.schoepferseyes.com	49
HunnyBuns Dolls & Reborn Supplies.....	hunnybunsrebornsupply.com	37
Lancaster Doll, Toy & Teddy Bear Show		49
Ms Mollie O.....	www.msmollieo.com	37
Oldeclectics	rubylane.com/shop/oldeclectics	2
Pacific Northwest Doll Artist Expo	www.pnwdollartistexpo.com	48
Resin Rose BJD Expo	resinrosebjd.com	37
Southeastern Doll Shows	www.southeasterndollshows.com	45
Tamika's Paper Art	instagram.com/tamikaspaperart	37
Whispering Grass.....	wgrass.org	37

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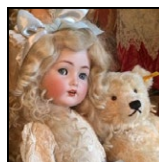
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