

SUSAN QUINLAN DOLL & TEDDY BEAR MUSEUM & LIBRARY



Unbelievably, the Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum & Library in Santa Barbara, California, has been in operation for five years now. Over that period of time, Susan and Terry Quinlan have established name recognition in the doll and teddy bear community, a national network of contacts, friendships, credibility, trust, and a reputation for supporting the artists. It seems only natural that they would be the perfect choice to organize an exceptional doll and teddy bear event.

Over the years, the couple has listened to artists and collectors talk about how they miss “the good old days” when shows were fun and had a buzz in the air. There are still some excellent events going on across the country, only a lot fewer of them. The Quinlans wanted to do things that no other shows or conventions were doing, with a desire to make it as inexpensive as possible.

Their event was designed to attract collectors looking for a large concentration of renowned doll and teddy bear artists as well as new artists.

“I have attended many conventions and shows in my 25 years as an artist and yours was all of the best rolled into one! Amazing! Educational! Fun! Inspiring!”

Virginia Jasmer, artist

“I have been attending doll and teddy bear events for 30 years, and this event rates up there in the top three. It was terrific! I had a great time and learned a lot... want to do it next year.”

Nancy Joyner, doll collector

“I have never enjoyed such a wonderful weekend as this [event] before. Loved meeting new artists, both doll and teddy bear, and new customers. My sales were also great.”

JoAnne O’Hanlon, artist

The reactions above are exactly what Susan and Terry Quinlan had in mind when they held their first annual Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention in Philadelphia on May 12-14, 2011. They wanted to turn back the clock to those days when things were affordable and really fun to attend, as well as to stimulate interest in dolls and teddy bears among today’s younger generation. They seemed to have accomplished both.

The fees to attend the event were \$95 for artists and \$195 for collectors, which is a fraction of the cost usually charged to provide the “partiers” with a grand opening champagne reception, seven buffet meals, two more receptions, an open bar all three evenings, all day refreshments, access to all events, and a sales table for artists. The Quinlans realized that

FIRST ANNUAL ARTIST DOLL & TEDDY BEAR CONVENTION

Blue Crew from left to right: Bob and Chris Quinlan, Susan and Terry Quinlan, John and Sue Fleener, Tom and Cindi Fleener.



Friday One-of-a-Kind Sale and Judging for Beverly Port and Helen Bullard Awards.



Beverly Port Teddy Bear Collector Award for Excellence winner by artist Martha Burch.





Left: Friday Sale and Judging piece by Floyd Bell which is entitled "Showgirl" (22").
Above: Friday One-of-a-Kind Sale and Judging.

artists and collectors were attending fewer and fewer events each year due to the economy and that some could only attend one event. To convince these artists and collectors that their convention was the one "must attend" event, the Quinlans offered a money back guarantee if the attendees could find another doll and/or teddy bear event that offered the same amenities for the same price.

As the 270 artists and collectors arrived at the Ramada Philadelphia Airport Hotel to check-in, each knew right away that this was going to be a fun event, for staring them in the face was an immense banner, created by artists Darlene Allen, Martha Leeds, and Judith and Lucia Friedericy, with the greeting "Welcome to the World of Artist Dolls and Teddy Bears" encircled by dolls and teddy bears with open arms. Many artists stopped at the standing banners in the lobby to find their own

creations from the collages of artist dolls and teddy bears that are now in the collection of the Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum & Library.

In the convention handout package was a convention portrait pin with pictures of doll artist Helen Bullard and teddy bear artist Beverly Port, who were both being honored at the convention for their pioneering efforts in the artist doll and teddy bear movements. To make the pin a rare collectable, only one of the 200 produced portrait pins was issued per attending household, and the only way of receiving the pin was to attend the convention. In addition, a collectable Helen Bullard/Beverly Port doll/bear pin was given to each attendee who booked a room at the convention hotel in thanks for helping the Quinlans meet their room block commitment. Those pins were limited to 150 in number.





Winners of the Beverly Port Teddy Bear Artist Award for Excellence from left to right: Karen O'Brien, Lori Simon, Michelle Lamb and Sharon Barron.



Winners of the Beverly Port Teddy Bear Collector Award for Excellence from left to right: Martha Burch, Kristy Northman and Capt'n Ron Northman.



Winners of the Helen Bullard Doll Artist Award for Excellence from left to right: Diane Keeler and Joy Calhoun.



Winners of the Helen Bullard Doll Collector Award for Excellence from left to right: Beverly Walter and Diane Keeler.



The Helen Bullard Doll Artist Award for Excellence.





Museum Historic Gallery: Russian, Gold Rush/Chinese and Black Dolls

The handout materials informed the artists and collectors up front that there were no convention giveaways, such as “free” gifts or table pieces. Eliminating these giveaways was one of the reasons why their registration fee was such a bargain. Susan and Terry preferred that attendees take the \$100 normally added into their registration fee for those “free” convention gifts and spend it on something that they really wanted at the convention, to the benefit of many artists. Since creating interest among new collectors for dolls and teddy bears is one of the Quinlan’s long-term goals, the only giveaways were the door prizes for adults and gifts to children attending the Saturday Show & Sale.

Also in the convention package was a Speaker Evaluation Form used to record activities attended at the convention in order to earn credit toward a new Doll and Teddy Bear Collector and Artist Education Certificate Program. Attendees could choose to work toward any one or more of the following four certificates: Doll Collector Certificate, Doll Artist Certificate, Teddy Bear Collector Certificate, and Teddy Bear Artist Certificate. Each certifies completion of an extensive curriculum in appreciation and knowledge for collectors or in creative and business disciplines for artists. The Certificate Program is offered at no cost. Certificates are awarded upon completion of 20 class hours at these conventions, and advanced certificates are awarded for each additional 20 class hours of attendance.

To provide security and assistance to the attendees, a “group of eight” was everywhere one looked. Wearing blue t-shirts with a picture of one of the collectable pins given to conventioners, the group became known as the Blue Crew by the attendees. The Blue Crew consisted of Susan and Terry Quinlan and three of Terry’s nephews and their wives. They all came from California and Washington to help make things go smoothly.

The convention kicked off with Susan Quinlan welcoming everyone to the historic event—historic in the sense that it was meant to give the doll and teddy bear worlds a shot in the arm by doing something completely different from any previous event in terms of cost and venue. Susan and Terry felt that in order to turn around any segment of the economy, something completely new had to be done from top to bottom, from overall design to the smallest detail.

The podium was quickly turned over to the keynote speaker, John Paul Port, an artist and leading authority on teddy bears. John paid tribute to his mother Beverly Port on behalf of the teddy bear community of artists, collectors, and supporters. A multimedia teddy bear and doll artist, Beverly is also an international award-winning designer, author, consultant, and speaker on the art of the teddy bear; she even coined the term “teddy bear artist” and is known as the mother of teddy bear artistry.



Top: Museum Historic Gallery: Japanese, European, African and Egyptian Dolls Left: Museum Fairy Tale Forest Right: Museum Security Guards: "Wart" the Warthog and "Hoffmann" the Nutcracker





Attendees anxiously waiting to get into the Friday Sale and Judging.



Teddy bear collector W. Alan Thomas from Moscow, Pennsylvania was one of the many lucky winners at the drawing for discount coupons good toward any item shown on their favorite artist's sales table.



Teddy bear artists John Port and Martha Burch conducting the Saturday auction.



One of the Saturday Show & Sale rooms during the 6:00 a.m. set up of artist sales tables.

Not only was the tribute a walk down memory lane of her many wonderful creations over the years, but John also shared his personal experiences of growing up in the amazing world of artist teddy bears. The presentation by John was followed by a champagne reception and buffet dinner, which was a surprise to the attendees, who were only expecting more hors d'oeuvres carried over from the reception. At the last minute, Susan and Terry thought everyone would appreciate a sit-down dinner after a day of traveling to Philadelphia. The open bar throughout dinner was the standard at all three of the convention's buffet dinners, just part of the "have fun and relax" theme of the convention.

The next morning, during the hearty buffet breakfast, the admission line to enter the first sales event of the convention formed early and never seemed to disappear. The event

consisted of signed one-of-a-kind artist signature pieces submitted for the sale and judging for the Helen Bullard Doll Award for Excellence and the Beverly Port Teddy Bear Award for Excellence. A signature piece is a doll or teddy bear that reflects what most collectors recognize as the artist's particular style and image. There were nearly 20 doll entries and 50 teddy bear entries. Two types of awards were given, Artist Awards and Collector Awards, and dolls and teddy bears were judged separately. The purpose of the Artist Award is to be judged for excellence by one's peers who design and make similar creations (dolls or teddy bears). The purpose of the Collector Award is to be judged for excellence by those who collect their type of creations. Granted, some create or collect both, but Susan and Terry felt this voting procedure seemed fair and certainly easiest to administer.



Teddy bear artists John Port and Martha Burch conducting the Saturday auction.



Bob Quinlan, one of the "Blue Crew" became a new collector with his first-ever purchase of a teddy bear at the Saturday auction.



Museum Tea Room Mural:
Teddy Bear Picnic at
Santa Barbara East Beach



Illustrated here is the collectable pin (limited edition of 200) that was received by each household attending the convention.



Illustrated here is the collectable pin (limited edition of 150) that was received by those who booked a room at the host hotel.

The following artists were the first winners of these new awards:

**Helen Bullard Doll Artist
Award for Excellence Winners**
Joy Calhoon Diane Keeler

**Helen Bullard Doll Collector
Award for Excellence Winners**
Diane Keeler Beverly Walter

**Beverly Port Teddy Bear Artist
Award for Excellence Winners**
Sharon Barron Michelle Lamb
Karen O'Brien Lori Simon

**Beverly Port Teddy Bear Collector Award for
Excellence Winners**
Martha Burch
Capt*n Ron & Kristy Northman

The winner of each award was also given an Award for Excellence Certificate to pass onto the purchaser of the award-winning piece.

Only one vote was allowed per household in attendance. The number of awards was based on the number of entries so that the recipient of an award would know that she or he was judged to be in the top 5-10% of the competition. For example, there were nearly 50 artist teddy bear entries, so four Teddy Bear Artist Awards were presented. Since there were not quite 20 artist doll entries, only two Doll Artist Awards were presented. Two Teddy Bear Collector Awards and two Doll Collector Awards were presented regardless of the number of entries. Only those registered for the Artist Doll Convention could vote on the doll entries, and only those registered for the Artist Teddy Bear Convention could vote on the teddy bear entries.

The sale and judging were followed by keynote speaker Mikki Kavich, who paid tribute to her grandmother, Helen Bullard, in a presentation entitled "Remembering My Grandmother – A Tribute to Doll Artist Helen Bullard." Helen Bullard was the founder of the National Institute of American Doll Artists (NIADA) in 1963 and championed the idea that original handmade dolls should be considered an art form. She was the president of NIADA, president of the United Federation of Doll Clubs (UFDC), the author of a number of books, and an editor of doll magazines. Helen also made hand-carved wooden dolls under the name of "Holly Dolls" and was a recognized sculptor. Mikki described her observations of her "Gran" and showed great photos of her as a young woman that told the story of a girl who was not going to go unnoticed. Mikki described Helen as "a strong, fierce woman whom it never occurred to that she had to fight for equality. She just took it as a right!"

Most of Friday consisted of outstanding and diverse presentations and demonstrations for both artists and collectors by many of the country's leading doll and teddy bear artists. Among some of the notable speakers were Donna May Robinson, NIADA



Young Christian Lopez (“Little Guy”) studying his favorite piece at the Saturday auction preview.



Young Christian Lopez’s surprise at learning they were the winning bidder!

president and doll artist, who spoke on “NIADA: The Art of the Doll,” Sarah Russell, ODACA Standards Committee chair and doll artist on “ODACA: 35 Years of Artistry,” teddy bear artist Martha Burch on “Trials of Being an Artist,” doll artist Stephanie Blythe on “The Business Side of Dolls: From the Artist’s Process to the Collector’s Passion,” International Golliwog Collector Club President Jan Ross on “The Golliwog in the Twentieth Century,” and teddy bear artists Cindy Malchoff and Donna Nielsen on “A Journey into the Work and Creativity of Teddy Bear Artists.”

The last sessions of the day consisted of up-close demonstrations of how to design, create, and make doll and teddy bear creations. Among the doll artist demonstrations were Floyd Bell showing how wood carving tools are used to carve doll parts used to create a jointed doll; Maryanne Oldenburg explaining the process of how one of her dolls came to be, from the idea all the way to the finished piece; Judy Brown whittling a 6-inch jointed wood doll; and Annie Wahl explaining her method for making eyeglasses with lenses. Among the teddy bear artist demonstrations were Deana Ellis showing the various tools used in wool needle-felting; Joanne Livingston talking about the signature features of her works, including needle sculpting and pulled toes; Denis Shaw showing how a bear template is cut out and placed on patterned material so that you see the design of the material in the shape of a bear before cutting the material; Michelle Lamb giving tips on photographing your bears; and Steve Schutt describing helpful tips on bear jointing.



Young Christian Lopez’s purchase at the auction is entitled “A World Apart – One Heart” by artist Joy Calhoun.





The wall banner, which measured fourteen by five feet, welcomed everyone to the convention.



Doll artist Nancy Wiley setting up museum's latest acquisition of vignettes used to illustrate her book, Alice in Wonderland.

One of the most popular events was the last event of the day, the Artist Market Place, where artists and collectors could sell and trade things for making dolls and teddy bears, such as trims, material, furs, supplies, trinkets, do-dads, and silly things. Also held at the same time was a well attended book signing and sale by leading doll artists (Judy Brown, Mark Dennis, Sherry Goshon, Nancy Wiley, Stephanie Winson) and teddy bear artists/authors (Joan Greene, Dee Hockenberry, Ted Menten).

After another delicious buffet dinner on Friday, the recipients of the Helen Bullard and Beverly Port Awards for Excellence were announced, followed by the lucky winners of the Discount Coupon Drawing held earlier in the day. The discount coupons were good at your favorite artist's sales table at the Doll & Teddy Bear Show & Sale being held the next day. The discounts ranged from 10% to 50%. A few lucky people in the audience won a number of coupons. The next day, one of them passed by the Registration Desk with their arms full of purchases and proudly announced, "We've been using our coupons!"

The Quinlans are not into pomp and circumstance. They prefer casual attire to create a relaxed, informal event. (This may be one of the reasons why spouses of 40% of the artists attended, which must be a new high for such events.) On "Funky Friday" the dress code was to wear your funkiest, silliest, or most outrageous doll or teddy bear top (e.g., blouse/shirt/jacket/sweater), since the conventioners would have the hotel all to themselves. The dress code on "Showtime Saturday" was your favorite doll or teddy bear top and accessories (e.g., blouse/shirt/jacket/sweater/jewelry/pins).

On Saturday, the public started to arrive for the Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Show & Sale. The nearly 150 participating doll and teddy bear artists and handful of vendors made the show the largest artist event of its kind in decades. Many attended the free pre-show and sale presentations. Author and publisher Krystyna Poray Goddu spoke on “Dollmakers and Their Stories: Women Who Changed the World of Play,” based upon her children’s book of the same name. NIADA patron Michael Collins spoke on “Art Dolls: The Thrill of Discovery,” which highlighted a broad spectrum of art dolls and provided attendees with some insight on why dolls have become one of the world’s most popular art forms. The presentation “The Teddy Bear as Art,” by author and artist Ted Menten, described what is an artist bear, the process of making bears, and the history of artist bears, including competitions and gallery shows that helped to establish bears as a genuine fabric art form.

Before the doors to the Saturday Show & Sale opened at 10:00 a.m., over 200 people had arrived to take advantage of the offer of free admission to the first 200. When the doors opened, a loud rendition of music from the movie *Rocky* filled the air. The four ballrooms of artists broke out into a loud applause. The music was a big hit with the local Philadelphians and kicked off the constant “buzz” in the room that is a sure sign of a good show. The show organizers continued to let people in free well beyond the first 200 until nearly noon. Admission was charged for the next hour, but all those arriving after 1:00 p.m. were allowed in free also since many did not realize that the Show & Sale was ending at 2:00 p.m., at which time the preview and auction of signed one-of-a-kind artist dolls and teddy bears was scheduled to begin. A popular feature of the sale was the under-\$100-artist-sales table where new collectors could purchase original artist pieces at very affordable prices.

All children under 12 were given the choice of a doll pin, a wood doll coloring kit, or a Buddy Bear. The most popular choice was the Buddy Bear, a 4-inch golden brown mohair bear with jointed arms, legs and head, which was small enough to put in a shirt pocket or handbag. The intent of the Quinlans was for Buddy Bears to serve as a companion for a child to take with them wherever they might go. The idea came from stories of WWII fighter pilots taking small teddy bears on flight missions, police and fire fighters taking one on their calls, children having a constant companion in hospitals, and adults taking one on all their travels. Susan and Terry have often said that for the teddy bear and doll world to turn itself around, the public needs to understand that teddy bears and dolls can serve many purposes other than as playthings. They can provide companionship and motivation, and even serve as role models.

Artists were encouraged to bring a sample of their work or material that they would not mind children touching and feeling, an idea provided by a NIADA doll artist. The intent



Many of the artists who participated in the convention helped create this banner, one of two present at the event, which stood in the hotel lobby.



Museum Tea Room Mural: International Dolls and Teddy Bears and the Santa Barbara Mission

was to create a child-friendly atmosphere where children are encouraged to learn by touching and asking questions, as opposed to constantly being told not to touch things.

During lunch on Saturday, a panel of leading doll artists described what makes their creations unique so that collectors could understand what goes into designing and creating artist pieces. Floyd Bell described how the smell, touch, and feel of wood make for an ideal material for something as personal as his dolls. Stephanie Blythe explained how she tries to create an heirloom-treasure quality using the finest quality materials available and why she loves working in porcelain, which has been valued for its quality, endurance, and beauty over the centuries. Mark Dennis uses his engineering/mechanical side and fine art side of his personality to capture that “one moment in time” in his sculpting using polymer clay, which gives him the best results in combining movement with his need to recreate the most realistic figures that he can. Deborah C. Pope uses wet felting and an attention to detail, combined with a vivid imagination and color sense, to create spectacular,

one-of-a-kind pieces that are both imaginative in their subject matter and exquisitely costumed to complement the spirit of her creations. Nancy Wiley combines fine art techniques with traditional doll making skills to give the doll a different look, such as painting facial features, applying the painted treatment to the costuming, and using unusual materials like raffia and unraveled burlap for hair.

The Saturday afternoon auction of signed one-of-a-kind artist dolls and teddy bears was absolutely packed! There was standing room only. Each auction piece offered all three key determinants of value: quality, scarcity, and the artist’s signature. Another unique aspect of the auction was that the artist received 100% of the winning bid; none of the proceeds went to a show organizer or to a charity. It was just one of the ways this event was trying to financially support the artists, to encourage them to continue making their wonderful creations.

If there was one moment at the convention that succinctly expressed what the convention was all about, it was the experience of one young boy who stood out among all of the



Museum Tea Room: Doll and Teddy Bear Tea and the Santa Barbara Mountains

winning bidders at the auction on Saturday. At the auction preview, eight-year-old Christian Lopez singled out one piece that he fell in love with. Entitled “A World Apart – One Heart” by artist Joy Calhoun, it was a portrait piece of two young boys, one from America and one from Uganda. Kacey, the American, leans on the top of a world globe showing Gabriel where he lives in Florida, while Gabriel tries to just hold on to his world and to make it a better place. Even though they are from much different worlds, their hearts are still connected through the love they share. Christian, who is called Little Guy around the house, was attracted to the piece because it contained male dolls, which he finds unusual in the doll world, plus it had an ethnic theme, which he has learned to appreciate from his home schooling provided by his parents Marilyn and Christian Sr. When Little Guy heard that they were the highest bidder, he became emotional with tears of joy. There could be no clearer expression of what artist dolls and teddy bears are all about. They bring joy and happiness to the world. Christian’s emotional connection gives us all hope that today’s younger generation does appreciate artist creations.

The Quinlans have found that many of the doll and teddy bear shows feature antique or contemporary dolls and bears, which overwhelm the artist pieces. They felt that it was time that these talented and creative people had a major venue of their own where their work would be showcased, in addition to the three leading artist events held by NIADA (National Institute of American Doll Artists), ODACA (Original Doll Artist Council of America), and TBAI (Teddy Bear Artist Invitational). However, this is the only show that combines both the artist doll and artist bear world of collectors. Based on the Quinlan’s study, 89% of doll and teddy bear collectors collect more than one type of collectable. The convention also educated collectors about the differences between the artist’s creations and commercial/manufactured dolls and teddy bears.

What does this convention hold for the future? Terry Quinlan said, “We never intended this first effort to be the prototype of our future conventions. It was simply the testing grounds for as many activities as possible and crammed into a narrow time window so that Susan and I could get a crash





Susan Quinlan with some of the museum collection pieces (left to right) by renowned doll artists Deborah Pope, Leslie Molen, Ankie Daanen and Lesley Keeble.

course in the demands of artists and collectors, as well as what does and does not work.”

The next Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention will be held on May 3-5, 2012, at the same location, the Ramada Philadelphia Airport Hotel. Based on the suggestions from the participating artists and the Quinlans’ observations, an optional full day of workshops will be added; the convention will include friendly critiquing sessions for new artists to learn from more experienced artists; only artists (not vendors) will have tables at the Saturday Show & Sale with two exceptions, a doll artist book publisher (Reverie Publishers) for the doll community and a fur/mohair seller (Mohair Maniac) for the teddy bear artists; the length of the Saturday sale hours will be increased to eight hours; conventioners will have four hours of early access to the sales rooms; and the public also will have an opportunity to access the sales areas early.

Susan and Terry whole-heartedly agree: “This event could never have been nearly as successful without the support of the many artists that so generously offered to distribute the convention promotional material at other events and to their customers by email and postal mail. It only goes to show what can be done by working together. We will always be eternally grateful to all of them.”

**Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear
Museum & Library**

122 West Canon Perdido Street
Santa Barbara, California

www.quinlanmuseum.com (805) 730-1707
or email: sq@quinlanmuseum.com