



Codeword
Crossword

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2011

The Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum & Library recently purchased several dolls and sets used in Nancy Wiley's 2009 book edition of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," including these of Alice and her sister.



NIK BLASKOVICH / NEWS-PRESS

Wonderland in Santa Barbara

Doll artist's works purchased by local museum

By **KARNA HUGHES**
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

A mysterious White Rabbit just a few inches tall. Cups and saucers that hold less than a thimbleful of tea. Hair literally made of straw.

What's going on here? We're in Wonderland, of course, that topsy-turvy world where anything might happen.

Only these are part of a miniature three-dimensional universe painstakingly crafted by New York-based dollmaker Nancy Wiley and featured in photographs for a 2009 edition of the Lewis Carroll classic.

The Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum & Library recently purchased nine scenes, including handmade dolls, tiny props and painted backdrops, used in vignettes in "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (W.O.W. Publishing, \$35).

The museum will unveil the pieces, which are part of its permanent collection, Sunday, and Ms. Wiley will be on hand from 1 to 3 p.m. that day to sign copies of the hardcover book.

The artist also will sign books from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at Santa Barbara Doll Club's doll show and

sale at Earl Warren Showgrounds.

Among the museum's acquisitions are scenes showing an oversized Alice, filling the entire room of the White Rabbit's house (in real life, a dollhouse); the Mad Hatter's Tea Party; Alice's encounter with the haughty Duchess and a brawling baby; playing cards painting roses red; the Red Queen's croquet match; and the trial of the Knave of Hearts.

After seeing the Wonderland dolls on display at the National Institute of American Doll Artists conference in 2009 in Tennessee, museum owner Susan Quinlan was smitten.

"I fell in love with them, especially the Tea Party one," she said, while sitting in the sunny front room of her museum at 122 W. Canon Perdido St. She had the first pick of the dolls created for the book.

Each tableau is remarkably detailed. A wiry-haired Hatter, wearing a purple teapot hat, eyes his watch while the Door Mouse sleeps on a checkerboard table. Alice sets the pictures on the walls askew after she grows to gargantuan heights. And the croquet scene comes replete with flamingos and tumbling hedgehogs.

Please see **ALICE** on DE

Wonderland dolls are one-of-a-kind

■ ALICE

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Ms. Quinlan pointed out that the Red Queen's dress is so detailed, it even shows an upside-down queen's head, just as it would on a deck of cards.

"I love the colors and love the feel of the whole thing," she said. "I just love everything. I think she's done such a wonderful job."

A champion of doll artists who make one-of-a-kind dolls, the museum, headed by Ms. Quinlan and her husband Terry will be hosting its inaugural Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention in May in Philadelphia, Pa.

The museum already had three other dolls from Nancy Wiley in its collection, including the Giant from "Jack and the Beanstalk" and one of her celebrated "Panniere" dolls, so named for the elaborate 18th-century hoop skirt that serves as a theatrical backdrop for marionettes held in the dolls' hands.

Ms. Wiley came into the public eye when she dressed and styled actress Demi Moore as one of her Panniere dolls for a 1996 cover of *George* magazine. She was the subject of a book ("A Dollmaker's Art: The Creations of Nancy Wiley," published in 2004) and has exhibited her dolls throughout the United States.

"I started out to be an illustrator over 20 years ago when I went to college and went to art school (at Rhode Island School of Design)," she told the News-Press by phone from her studio in

Canandaigua, New York. "Then I was diverted in the '80s to making the dolls, which has been really fun."

The Wonderland project was a way to "bridge the two different mediums."

Her dolls, which range in size from about 5 to 36 inches, are crafted mostly from nontoxic paperclay, a medium made of volcanic ash and other material that air dries and can easily be sanded and painted.

In fact, because her dolls are so painterly — everything from the button on their clothes to their expressive facial features are painted on — some people don't realize the images in the book are real dolls. They can take as many as 100 hours just to sculpt alone.

Since she was a young girl, the artist has had a book of sketches that Lewis Carroll originally made for "Alice in Wonderland." "I was always fascinated with them," said Ms. Wiley. While designing the dolls, "that's what I had in the back of my mind for a jumping-off point."

She'd always liked the story's quirky characters and "the idea of Alice being sort of this Everyman and all these strange and bizarre people she meets."

She also felt she could identify with Alice and the sense of "never quite understanding what everybody else understands."

After wrapping up touring for the project, Ms. Wiley plans to work on her next book: "Cinderella."

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IF YOU GO

Dollmaker Nancy Wiley will sign copies of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" (W.O.W. Publishing, \$35) 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday at the Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum & Library, 122 W. Canon Perdido St.

Those who purchase a copy of the book at the museum will be admitted free that day. Otherwise, admission is \$6.50 for adults, \$5.50 for seniors, \$3.50 for pre-teens, and free to those 4 and younger.

The museum's hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday through Monday. It will be closed Saturday because of Santa Barbara Doll Club's doll show.

For more information about the museum, call 730-1707 or go to www.quinlanmuseum.com.

Santa Barbara Doll Club's doll show and sale runs 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at Earl Warren Showgrounds, 3400 Calle Real.

Admission is \$5 for adults and seniors and free for children 11 and younger. For details, call Bonnie Dunlap at 733-1261.

Limited-edition dolls and greeting cards featuring Nancy Wiley's characters from "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" are available for sale at www.etsy.com/shop/nancywiley. The dolls range from \$175 to \$350 and come in cast resin.



COURTESY PHOTOS

At top, dollmaker Nancy Wiley photographs Alice chasing the White Rabbit down the rabbit hole. She was delighted when Susan Quinlan purchased several scenes for her museum: "I really like Susan and I like what she does with the museum," she said. Above, from left, the Duchess scene, A Mad Hatter Tea Party and a deck of cards falls around Alice.