

Doll exhibit reflects trends in society

Look mom, its just like the turnture in my old doll house. . . it makes me sad for all my old dolls.

middle aged woman at the Provincial museum.

by Suzanne Lundrigan

Such are the responses to the Provincial Museum's Gallery of Dolls. Featuring dolls from the 1860's to present, the show appeals to all ages. Victorian dolls sit primly in horse-drawn carriages opposite a silver-gloved Michael Jackson Cabbage Patch doll.

Curator, Sandra Wiseman, explains that there is more to the dolls than meets the eye. "Dolls reflect the mood and trends in society. For example, dolls from the Victorian period are very prim and proper. This is in keeping with the Victorian attitude towards children. They were expected to be like miniature adults; well groomed, well behaved and prim. Their dolls reflect this attitude."

Hasbro's G.I. Joe is well acquainted with the ups and downs of public whimsy. Introduced in 1964, G.I. Joe was a very popular item. However, in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, Joe's popularity slipped drastically. Ultimately, in 1976, Hasbro was forced to discontinue the line. Apparently, in 1982, war became marketable again and G.I. Joe was reintroduced. In Aug. 1983, he became the best selling toy on television and the subject of a Marvel comic series.

Baby dolls are also featured in the exhibit. Whereas, the Victorian dolls are very artificial in appearance, the German baby dolls are realistic to the point of confusion. Perhaps the most famous of baby dolls, is the Baby Bye-lo. Creator, Grace Story Putnam, spent years searching the hospitals and nurseries for a suitable model for the doll. Though, the Baby Bye-lo actually came into being in 1920, it took Putnam five years to find a firm willing to market it. Most found it far too realistic for comfort. Nevertheless, Baby Bye-lo went on to become a smashing commercial success. This doll described in the advertising as "so soft, warm and lifelike in texture and colour, you would think that you were holding a living breathing, infant," was nicknamed the Million dollar baby.

This exhibit goes beyond the chronological development of dolls as it explores the purposes which dolls have served over the years. Included are those dolls who "worked" in commercials like the Campbell Soup kid and the Pillsbury Dough boy. In another vein are the Chinese medicine dolls. These were used by woman to indicate to their physicians the location of their ills. Dolls surely move beyond the realm of playthings.

Though this exhibit has failed to include some of the old stand bys: Raggedy Ann and Andy, and G.I. Joe, it is delightful. The only valid criticism being that it is not longer.

Author unearths new Lennon facts

John Lennon
Ray Coleman
Futura

review by Ken Hui

Published by Futura in 1985, Ray Coleman's *John Lennon* is an astute biography of the rock star. As a close friend of the Beatles, Coleman was privy to previously undisclosed information. Among his sources were Lennon's Aunt Mimi, his first wife, Cynthia, his son, Julian Lennon, and Yoko Ono. Coleman's research paid off as he unearthed a gold mine of photos, manuscripts and drawings. Among these gems is a Christmas card which Lennon drew for Cynthia.

Coleman paints an honest picture of the

late singer's life, though he does venture some subjective comment. He goes so far as to suggest that Lennon was merely Abbie Hoffman and Gerry Rubin's puppet. He centers this argument on the song "Sometime in New York City" which he claims was merely political sloganeering.

Coleman is to be commended for his discussion of Lennon's role in the social arena. As a singer, he did influence numerous people and events and was indeed a man of social conscience.

Coleman treats his topic in a passionate, yet not overly dramatic, manner. *John Lennon* was published five years after his death and Coleman brings to the work an objectivity which was missing in those biographies published in 1980.



"Hi, my name is Barbie. Do you want to go to the prom?"



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