

Dolls: A Cross Section of Contemporary Culture

ZOLTÁN FEJÓS Pages for a Book on Dolls

In terms of modern material culture, dolls belong to a category of objects rife with significance. The present article illustrates the great diversity of this group of objects by examining "snapshots" of Váci utca, a familiar central Budapest shopping street. There, in what might aptly be called "Doll Lane," an entire calvalcade of dolls and similar figures greet those who chance by, despite the absence of any actual toy store. On Váci utca, souvenir dolls, mannequins, advertising figures, display dummies, and a variety of toys all point to a striking contemporary "cult" of dolls. The array of figures on display witnesses to the activity of a vigorous doll-making craft culture, a current fashion for doll collecting, and the popularity of the doll as a souvenir object. The article's field survey of the Hungarian capital can be analysed in terms of the general questions surrounding the definitions of dolls and similar figures. In the most general sense, a doll is a copy of a human being, an artificial double formed of any of a great number of materials. The great variety of materials employed in their construction, ways in which they are used, and styles they represent all suggest that in the relationship between people and objects, dolls represent a highly diverse array of cultural meanings. Dolls change contexts with ease, an ability that stems, it would appear, from their anthropomorphic nature and the way in which they can be used to depict or portray. The use of dolls today is characterised by several striking trends, three of which the present article examines in some detail. First, there are the close relationships between doll culture and the past, and doll culture and the peasant/agrarian character; secondly, and in stark contrast to this, there is the compelling manner in which dolls are used to express and model modern ideals; and finally, there is the way dolls are used to satisfy a current demand for extreme realism.

EMESE SZOJKA On Dolls in the Museum Environment

The present writing seeks to answer the question, "What kind of object is a doll?" through the example of a museum collection. With the museum environment as its starting point, the study considers various types within the ethnographic genre, from the toy doll, to several historical groups of mannequin in folk dress, to the dolls dressed in local folk costume used recently in contemporary villages, to the souvenir figures found in private and community collections.

The author, drawing on her own museum experience, writes of dolls shown in exhibitions of the distant and recent past, and of new methods and forms of presentation that better familiarise the modern viewer this particular artefact type. In doing so, she asks the question: "How can the doll, as a museological artefact, be utilised as a means of communication in teaching folk culture both in its traditional form, and in such manifestations as persist to the present day?"

IRÉN DEMETER The Subjective Story of a Doll Family

One side of my family produced only girls for four generations. The present thesis acquaints the reader with both this family of girls, and the family of their dolls, taking an approach that is, by virtue of the nature of the girl-doll relationship, necessarily subjective. Accordingly, the paper ascribes two types of value to dolls: the objective, or material, and the subjective, which comes, for instance, from a doll's having been made or used by some important person, or its being particularly old. Subjective value is something that is felt only by the doll's owner or her family. The greater the emotional bond between owner and doll, the greater its subjective value. Subjective value, which lasts a lifetime, may best be expressed via the medium of the personal anecdote. In the case of this thesis, subjectivity is increased by the circumstance that the dolls in question are mine, my grandmother's, mother's, aunts',

sisters', and daughters', and therefore recall to mind the stories of my family's distant past, my own childhood memories, and memories of when my daughters were young. Such stories imbue the dolls with life even now, so that – like magic – objects with value to no one but their owner are transformed into real, living, breathing beings with souls of their own.

For me, the word doll is understood to mean any object – a stuffed animal, a store-bought or home-made toy, even a pillow – that enjoys added emotional value in the hands of some person, and that has played an important role in his or her childhood.

JÚLIA TÉSZABÓ Adult Dolls

Throughout the ages, dolls have served purposes closest to their original cultic ones in the hands of adult women. In particular, dolls have played the peculiar role of substitute child from the times of traditional cultures up to the present day. Both the PCD dolls of the late 20th century and "reborn" babies of the early 21st, for example, speak to women who have never had children of their own, or whose children are already grown. While such dolls are produced using a full range of methods for evoking an emotional response and to a degree of realism that is both repelling to many, and entirely foreign to the mind of the child, they represent an important source of emotional satisfaction for the individuals, chiefly middle-aged women, who purchase them.

ZSÓFIA FRAZON Doll, Mannequin, Figure, Clothes Rack: the Mannequin in Museum Use

The present study analyses two major topics – the changing scientific role of the exhibition mannequin, and the relationship between mannequin display and considerations of artefact conservation – in terms of both the historical background and contemporary examples.

During the late 19th century, museum/exhibition methods witnessed the rise of the interior, the staged scene, and the "costumed," life-sized mannequin – phenomena that enjoyed prevalence well into the 20th century – as ways of lending realism to the museum experience. Today, however, it has become both important and necessary to consider whether the complex social structures, spaces, and phenomena of contemporary culture can still be understood through these methods, applied in unaltered form. The appeal of historical exhibition devices resided in the spectacle they provided – in

their ability to impart illusion. The sense of completeness they offered created coherence, both among objects in the arrangement, and between the museological composition and various social phenomena.

The exhibitions of the historical and contemporary material analysed for this study exemplify how presentation can be made to take aesthetics, visual design technique, conservation methods, and financial support alike into account in a critical, creative, and reflective manner. The concept of reflection, may be applied at at least two points: in the creation of the mannequins themselves and in the arrangement of the spaces in which they appear. From mannequins to three-dimensional structures (e.g. clothes racks) used to display museum artefacts there are numerous tools for shaping the exhibition space.

LÁSZLÓ ZSUZSA The Case of the Easter Egg: The Introduction of the Persona Doll Method in Hungary

Can children have prejudices? At what age does one take name-calling seriously? Can an institution raise a child counter to the system of values of his or her parents? The Persona Doll, used successfully in countries around the world, is designed to answer these and similar questions. The method centres about a doll that comes with various clues as to his or her personality: family background, personality traits, favourite personal effects, etc. The benefits for children include a sense for how much prejudiced behaviour can hurt others, improved self-confidence, and an ability to stand up not only for themselves, but also for others who suffer injustice. In Hungary, the Ec-Pec foundation has been conducting Persona Doll training programs since December of 2007. Although the method is based on international professional literature, given our initial feedback, we felt that the sorts of conflicts that tend to arise in the Hungarian education system require a special approach. The present article undertakes not only to describe the method, but also to keenly evaluate the peculiarities associated with its introduction in Hungary.

TÍMEA JUNGHAUS Barbie Dolls in the Art of András Kállai

András Kállai, a contemporary artist of Romani descent, graduated from the Budapest College of Fine Arts with a major in sculpture in 2006. In 2007, Kállai's sculpture *Fat Barbie*, displayed among the works of 16 European Romani artists at the First Romani Pavilion of the Venice Biennale, enjoyed considerable success. This year, Kállai placed in the contest *Roma in Hungarian History*, sponsored jointly by the Hungarian Art Institute and 2B

Art Gallery. The works presented here employ the Barbie Doll and/or certain Barbie body parts in the genre of sculpture, installation art, and *objet trouvé*.

In Kállai's art, fuelled in part by the barely 22-year-old Romani's sub-conscious mind, and in part by a conscious effort on his part to demolish, overwrite and appropriate the associative environment of the Barbie Doll, "Barbie" – the personified cultural icon, the ideal of white women, the leading product of contemporary consumer culture – undergoes a metamorphosis that is unexpected, shocking, provocative, and often humorous.

NOÉMI NÁDUDVARI

Contemporary Dolls OR

Invasion of the Plastic Dolls in Contemporary Art

Among contemporary Hungarian artists are a number who have begun using injection-moulded toys, figures, and other childhood artefacts and mementoes in their work. *Plastic Fantastic*, an exhibition by the Ferenczi and Tsai Auction House and Gallery in 2008, includes the work of seven contemporary artists whose works employ dolls and toy figures to demonstrate both the variety of forms in which childhood objects appear, and the manner in which cultic elements can be recast and reinterpreted.

MAGDOLNA JÁKFALVI

Cyberdoll

In the 19th century, the use of the diorama, panorama, photograph, and moving picture all conditioned the mind in its creation of virtual spaces. Today, however, various cybernetic structures have altered humankind's understanding of the world. Virtual reality video technology overcomes the power of nature, enables the performer to do virtually anything, and liberates the ancient power of art. The now-familiar Sims Family, second-life.com, and other programs involving virtual figures demonstrate how a character is constructed in the age of second modernity. In analysing these programs, I contend that identities formed in cyberspace can be interpreted as roles, and their actual manifestations as dolls or puppets. In this way, the subtleties of the phenomena of new media can be discussed in terms of the devices and language of form applied to theatrical models. In short, the discussion asserts that the creation of an on-line identity and the creation of a puppet figure can be placed within the same paradigm.