



League of N.H. Craftsmen

205 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301
603 224-1471/ Fax 603 225-8452
nhleague@nhcrafts.org www.nhcrafts.org

Mixed Media:
Dolls

STANDARDS CRITERIA FOR DOLLS

Handmade dolls take many forms. The quote below was very helpful when the League was developing guidelines for artist dolls. It is reproduced from the book *Contemporary Artist Dolls* by Susan Oroyan and Carol-Lynn Rossel Waugh. Used by permission of the authors. Thanks to April Devlin for locating this quote and securing permission for its use.

Seeing ourselves – the interpretive figure

Essentially, all doll artists are illustrators of the human condition. Some, like those who make portrait and character figures, have narrowed their focus and specialized their type of interpretation. Others are wide ranging generalists who seek to help us define ourselves by illustrating humanity in terms of everyday thought, action and emotion.

These illustrate every stage and condition of life from the innocence of a child through the joys and frustrations of parenthood to the quiet reflection of old age. They also show us how the human form can be abstracted to make a child's play object, in doll form. They also show us pursuing cultural and aesthetic interest and in personal relationships. They illustrate our ethnic, festival and holiday past times and they show us as we define ourselves in terms of such abstract concepts as love, beauty and even death.

They are very much concerned with finding and illustrating the shared patterns and truths, which make us human beings. They help us to realize what unique phenomenon humanity is. They celebrate life.

Moments in time - the portrait figure

Artist who create portrait figures are those who are finely tuned to the individuals and personalities who have shaped and influenced the history of mankind and they find great pleasure in making those people come to life for us in doll form.

To reproduce the figure and facial features, or even a recognizable impression of someone who lives or has lived, is an exceedingly challenging task and in setting that challenge to themselves, portrait artist automatically accept a stricter critical factor. Their work can be, and often is, compared to the existing reality – the person, other portraits or photographs. With a mission for authenticity, their reconstructions are only begun after extensive research in pictorial archives, biography and execution of extremely exacting detail in sculpture and costuming and the figures that result from their diligence never fail to strike deeply with their vitality, presence and realism. They bring life to the dry pages of history. They reacquaint us with our heritage and they teach us gently with the most delightful of examples...the doll.

Flight of Fancy – The Character Figure

Not bound by the realities of the world around themselves, the artist who create character figures put together the odds, the ends, and the not normally associated parts of life to explore the outer limits of the possible for mankind and then, just as often, take us one step beyond by creating new possibilities.

They make things with wings, things with tails and things that live only in the imagination. They sense the extremes – the sublime and the ridiculous, the extraordinary and the pathetic. They exaggerate, they manipulate and they rearrange. All this usually requires them to invent and develop new techniques to bring their mind play into a tangible, visible reality.

Knowingly or not, their work is often geared to create an intense reaction. They want us to laugh or cry or become angry...or, at the very least, to consider and to think about their conceptions personality. They remind us, often with tongue in cheek, that all is not what it seems to be or as we would wish it to be. They are the innovators, prophets and visionaries of the doll world and we cannot do without their comments, messages and directions if we wish to realize our full potential.

STANDARDS CRITERIA FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTIST DOLLS

League standards for artist dolls require that the materials be fundamentally transformed by the artist; resulting in finished work that demonstrates technical fluency, integrity of intent and result and a spirited sense of personal vision.

An artist doll is an artistic expression of an animate form, conceived by the artist and constructed in a variety of media. The resulting work should meet the criteria of other fine craft pieces, a pleasurable combination of line form and color, or a visual social statement, an expression of the artist's intent.

The League recognizes that artist dolls are often multimedia in nature, and may come in a variety of materials, including, but not limited to clay, wood, synthetic clays, wax, composition, resin, cloth, paper, corn husks and other natural materials. Regardless of the material, the criteria above will apply.

Technical Guidelines:

1. Dolls should reflect a strong, consistent and original stylistic development. Applicant should present a body of work (6-12 pieces) that demonstrates range and ability.
2. Clothing and accessories should fit and enhance the form in a way that is integral to the function and expression of the piece.
3. Any purchased parts used must be necessary to the work, be of high quality, and not dominate the work.
4. No commercial molds or commercial patterns may be used. The original must be made by the artist.
5. The doll must demonstrate overall quality craftsmanship, construction and materials. Dolls that are meant to be moveable or posable should function as intended.
6. Toys and children's dolls must meet Federal safety guidelines.

Limited Editions:

The League's focus is on work made by hand by individual craftspeople. Commercial production methods used solely for high volume are not acceptable for League standards, although exceptions may be made, especially if the following criteria are met:

1. The work has an extremely high level of originality and expressiveness in design.
2. The original model for the master mold must be made by the state juried craftspeople.
3. Items are numbered and limited in quantity.

Handcrafted accessories (i.e. baskets) created for individual artist dolls do not need to be separately juried. However, if they are to be produced separately from the doll they must meet the standards criteria for that category of craftwork, and be approved by the appropriate state media jury.

Truth in Labeling;

All dolls should be signed by the artist. Labeling must comply with League state and juried standards. Craftspeople are encouraged to provide supplemental materials that educate the public on craft and process.

Aesthetics:

The work must demonstrate more than technical proficiency, more than the reproduction of a recognized style; it should express the personal aesthetics and vision of the maker, and demonstrate a coherent stylistic development, with every attention to detail, design, function and finish. A harmony of intent, process and result is the measure of successful work.

LNHC Standards Guidelines for Juried Work - Applicable to all media categories

Components and Accessories

Components or accessories are parts that are not made in the studio of the juried LNHC member, which are incorporated into craft objects. Such components and/or accessories are acceptable and appropriate only if: they are of high quality construction and materials; they do not visually dominate the finished object; and they would not be reasonably interpreted, based upon appearance, as objects created by juried LNHC members.

Commercial Production Techniques

The League's focus is on work made by hand by individual craftspeople. Commercial production methods used solely for speed or high volume are not acceptable by LNHC Standards, although exceptions may be made. Craftspeople who utilize machine assisted production methods must maintain an extremely high level of originality and expressiveness of design. The juried craftspeople must create the imagery, color choices, and design.

Health and Safety Guidelines

The craftspeople are responsible for assurance that craftwork meets all federal, state, and local health and safety requirements.