

Camaraderie is key at Quinlan Show

Teddy bear artists and collectors from across the globe flocked to Philadelphia in early May for the annual Quinlan Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention

BY LAUREN C. NIELSEN

Walking up to the Clarion Hotel, Philadelphia on May 4, 2017, you would expect it to be just another day in early May. But once inside, you would discover that it was not, in fact, just any other day – it was the beginning of the Artist Doll & Teddy Bear Convention presented by the Susan Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Museum.

Doll and teddy bear artists from across the globe flocked to Philadelphia for the three-day convention event. For those who arrived early, optional workshops were provided throughout the day on Thursday. Workshops included Soulful Smiles by teddy bear artist Michelle Lamb, Sculpting a Woman's Head by doll artist Debbie Weimar, creating a Skinny Bear with Wire Armature with Francisco Carreno, and over 20 other fun and informative workshops.

At 4:30pm, the convention kicked off with a gallery of creations from the

day's various workshops and a Boot Camp Indoctrination for First-Time Attendees. Artists, collectors and visitors to the convention were then welcomed to join together for cocktail hour, during which Susan and Terry Quinlan welcomed everyone and held the opening ceremony. While everyone enjoyed their drinks and talked amongst themselves, they were also able to view the numerous bears and dolls available at the Signed One-of-a-Kind Artist Signature Piece Doll & Teddy Bear Sale.

While attendees gathered to view these pieces, they were invited to vote for the Beverly Port and Helen Bullard Awards for Excellence. Teddy bears and dolls of exquisite design and exceptional quality were on display at over 10 tables. A huge range of pieces could be seen, from dolls and bears with special themes to traditional looks to realistic looking bears. When the sale and judging closed, those who



had chosen to attend the buffet dinner made their way down the hallway to the grand ballroom, where tables were beautifully set with lovely candles, place settings and centrepieces.

Susan and Terry Quinlan again welcomed everyone to the convention before each table was dismissed to take part in the elaborate buffet.

After a good night's sleep, everyone was up early to start the first full day of the Quinlan Doll & Teddy Bear Convention. With each day featuring a full buffet breakfast, attendees were ready to hit the ground running, first at the Artist and Collector Market Place which included vendors selling items to those looking for doll and teddy bear making supplies. During this time, attendees could also view six special one-of-a-kind doll and bear galleries including a Bling Figures Gallery, a Make Me Smile Gallery, and a Figures from the Dark Side Gallery.

The Quinlan Convention offered some interesting classes throughout the day on Friday. Morning classes included a Teddy Bear Tai Chi Class with Agnes Indelicate and Audrey Howell, Every Story is an Heirloom by Maggie Anderson, The Chocolate Road Trip by Donna Manthey, and many others.

Teddy bear collector Mark Allen led a class on the Ultimate Collector Convention for Teddy Bear & Doll Collectors. This class was discussion-based about what attendees love about teddy bear and doll conventions and what





Katie Rae Bears by Katherine Hallam





they would someday like to see. Another featured class was The Business of Being an Artist Panel. The panel was chaired by Vanessa Lee and included panelists Darlene Allen, Valerie Gladstone, Cindy McGuire, and Donna Nielsen. Each panelist discussed a different side of the business aspects of running your own doll or teddy bear business.

After a filling lunch, classes continued with those like a Teddy Bear and Doll Show and Tell with Terrie Stong and Italy Top to Bottom by Cindy McGuire. A panel entitled Creative Aspects of Being an Artist featured doll and teddy bear artists speaking about their creative inspirations and backgrounds. In the late afternoon, Mark Allen presented another lecture called A Few of My Favourite Things, in which collectors were invited to submit images of their favourite pieces. Susan and Terry Quinlan even presented a number of their favourite pieces in their own collections.

By 5:30 pm, doll and teddy bear artists were all set up for the preview sale in the ballroom and collectors were lined up outside the door, anx-

iously waiting to enter and purchase pieces from their favourite artists. When doors opened, collectors rushed in, some even running to get to a table and find their special doll or bear. The show floor was buzzing with excitement. Artists talked to their neighbours and collectors, showing off their new and one-of-a-kind pieces. Collectors examined the treasures at each table, looking for the perfect addition to their collections.

After a successful Preview Show, attendees gathered again for a delectable buffet dinner, during which the major artist doll and teddy bear organisations were introduced. These included Good Bears of the World (GBW), Original Doll Artist Council of America (ODACA), Hunt Valley Teddy Bear Show (HVTBS), Professional Doll Makers Art Guild (PDMAG), National Institute of American Doll Artists (NIA-DA), and Teddy Bear Artist Invitational (TBAI). After the meal and presentation, everyone was off to bed to rest up before the big show day!

Saturday morning came quickly and the sun shone bright through the breakfast dining room windows.



After the breakfast meal, attendees had the chance to listen to the musical duo 'Our Times' which is comprised of John and Linda Trinckes. Linda is a teddy bear artist who also loves to write poetry and songs about teddy bears. Her husband, John, is a musician who has put her poetry and song lyrics to music. The duo performed numerous funny and sentimental tunes for the great enjoyment of their audience.

Soon after, the show room opened again, with collectors and artisans alike ready for the day. A constant stream of visitors were coming and going throughout the day. Free refreshments were provided for attendees when they needed a short break from shopping. Collectors gathered in the hallways, showing new and old friends their precious purchases.

During the show, the Professional Doll Makers Art Guild held a Word Scramble Scavenger Hunt and Great Bears of the World held a Silent Auction. In the afternoon, Great Bears of the World gifted a donation of teddy bears to the local police station. Two officers came to the hotel to receive

the gift. The donated teddy bears will be given to children and their families in traumatic situations.

The show came to a close with collectors still rushing to buy their last items and artisans happy after a wonderful full day. Many artists' tables were looking thin towards the end of the show and some even sold out – definitely signs of a successful show!

Saturday evening ended with cocktail hour followed by the Closing Ceremony Banquet. At the banquet, attendees were treated to a delicious spread and wonderful camaraderie. The Quinlans announced the winners of the Beverly Port and Helen Bullard Awards for Excellence. Winners of the 2017 Beverly Port [Teddy Bear] Artist Award were Ginger Brame, Wanda Carson, Tami Eveslage, Svetlana Rhabarova, Michelle Lamb, and Joanne O'Hanlon. Winners of the Beverly Port [Teddy Bear] Collector Award were Wanda Carson, Tami Eveslage, and Svetlana Rhabarova.

The Convention came to a close with many fond farewells, lasting memories, new friendships, and the hopes to return in the coming year.

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