

= Reborn doll =

A reborn doll is a manufactured skin doll that has been transformed to resemble a human infant with as much realism as possible . The process of creating a reborn doll is referred to as reborning and the doll artists are referred to as reborners . Reborn dolls are also known as Bodo dolls or unliving dolls .

The hobby of creating reborn baby dolls began around 1939 when doll enthusiasts wanted more realistic dolls . Since then , an industry surrounding reborn dolls has emerged . Reborn dolls are primarily purchased on the internet but are available at fairs . Depending on craftsmanship , they range in price from hundreds to thousands of dollars .

The International Reborn Doll Artists (IRDA) group was created to educate artists in the art form of reborn doll making . Any artist can join the association , however certain ethical guidelines must be upheld by members .

Reborning involves numerous time consuming steps . The most basic form of the process involves taking a vinyl doll , adding multiple layers of paint , and adding other physical features to the doll . Artists can pick different brands to best suit what doll they wish to create . Consumers can also buy reborn doll kits that include the doll parts and supplies for creating their own reborn . Making a doll from a kit is called newborning and allows artists to omit some steps in the fabrication process . Many supplies are needed for both external and internal modifications of reborns to make the doll seem more realistic .

Some consumers of reborn dolls use them to replace a child they once lost , or a child that has grown up . Others collect reborns as they would regular dolls . These dolls are sometimes played with as if they are an infant . Critics debate whether reborn dolls are harmful , or whether these dolls can help in the grieving process . Because of their realistic appearance , reborn dolls have occasionally been mistaken for real babies and " rescued " from parked cars after being reported to the police by passers @-@ by .

= = History = =

The craft of making reborn dolls began in the United States in the late 1990s . Reborning follows a long tradition of collectors , artists , and manufacturers restoring and enhancing dolls in order to portray more realism . The internet has allowed doll artists and collectors to create an online society focused on reborn dolls . In 2002 , the first reborn was offered on eBay . This has expanded the reborn market allowing artists to open online stores which function figuratively as nurseries . The niche market for the dolls began with doll collectors who admired the superior lifelike accuracy of the doll . The market quickly reached those who wanted to use the doll as an emotional outlet , either to mother or for therapeutic purposes . Mass media coverage has helped to develop the phenomenon in other countries . Reborning enjoys popularity in the United Kingdom and Australia , but has also reached Canada , the rest of Europe , Africa , and Latin America . Doll manufacturers have also taken advantage of the trend and sell supplies , tools , and accessories catering to reborn followers . This has allowed reborners to invent new techniques causing the dolls to become increasingly realistic over time . Magazines , books , organizations , and conventions dedicated to reborn dolls have been started as a result of this popularity .

= = Fabrication = =

The appearance of the doll depends on the creator ; however , certain reborn artists allow customers to customize their doll , usually using a photograph to replicate a particular infant .

= = = Reborning = = =

Any type of vinyl doll can be used for reborning . Dolls vary by size , shape , and materials , making some more desirable or popular than others . According to Doll Reader Magazine , Berenguer

Babies , Zapf , Lee Middleton , Ashton @-@ Drake Galleries , Apple Valley , and Secrist Dolls are doll companies that make dolls which are easy to transform into reborns . Kathryn Peck of Doll Reader Magazine explains that with JC Toys Berenguer Babies , it is because the dolls already resemble human babies in their expressions , body shapes , surface materials , and other lifelike attributes . Ashton Drake uses a trademark vinyl for their outer skin . Almost all the Ashton @-@ Drake dolls are created using a theme based marketing line . " Preemies " are smaller dolls molded after premature infants . Between " preemie " and regular dolls , sizes can range from 4 inches to Child size .

= = = Newborning = = =

If a reborn is created from a kit as opposed to whole manufactured doll , it may be called newborning . Manufacturers have reacted to the growing trend of artists transforming dolls by hiring reborn artists to become doll sculptors and design doll molds and kits . When newborning from a kit , the first several steps of the process are completed by reborn doll artists and doll manufacturers . The kits come with an already disassembled baby and select supplies . Other supplies not provided in the kit can be purchased separately . The Secrist doll company started making Reborn Doll Kits in 2005 . In 2009 , they began producing supplies , tools , and tutorial videos specifically for reborn or newborning . JC Toys began selling kits in December 2007 Other suppliers offer product lines that give reborners a choice of body parts and skin tones to make a customized doll .

= = = Supplies = = =

Starter kits are equipped with basic reborn necessities such as limbs , faces , heads , paint brushes , eyelashes , weighting pellets , ' heat set ' paints , cloth bodies , cable ties , nose drill bits , fake tears , thinning shears , cosmetic foam wedges , cotton dipped applicators , and glue These supplies may be purchased separately from a variety of retailers . The nose drill bits are used for creating and perfecting the nostrils of the doll . Acetone or a paint thinner medium is needed for removing the factory paint from the doll . Hair is an optional choice to add to a doll . Fine mohair , human hair , or wigs are usually used , but it is found in a variety of types . Rooting tools are utilized for this process and are available in numerous sizes 20 @, @ 36 @, @ 38 , 40 , and 42 . The smaller the number the thicker the needle which will grab more hair and leave a bigger hole in the head of the doll . Eyes for a reborn doll are offered in a variety of brands and sizes .

= = = Process = = =

The technique of reborn a play doll typically involves a number of steps . To begin the doll is taken apart and factory paint is removed . Then a blue color wash may be applied to give the appearance of realistic baby skin undertones . For dolls with an awake appearance eyes must be replaced . The outer layer of the vinyl doll is given its skin tone by adding dozens of layers of flesh colored paint . If heat set paints are used , the doll parts must be heat set by baking them inside an oven or by using a heatgun after each layer of paint is applied . Lighter skin tone dolls can take 15 to 30 layers . The effects of the blue color wash combined with the outside layers of paint creates the appearance of veins , and gives the doll its newborn mottled look . Manicured nails and opening of the nose holes are other details that are added during this process .

The next step is to apply hair . The hair can either be done in one of two ways ; wiggging or microrooting . When microrooting , hair is added strand by strand . This can take up to 30 or more hours per head . Once the hair is finished , the original vinyl body is weighted with a soft stuffed body filled with pellets . The weight corresponds with its age to achieve a real effect . Various additions also can be added to give the doll an even more life like appearance . Reborns heads are often weighted , so that owners have to support the head like one would a real newborn . Purchasers can have magnets attached inside the mouth or head for attaching a pacifier or hair bows . Electronic devices that mimic a heart beat , or make the chest rise and fall to simulate

breathing are common . Reborns can come with an umbilical cord , baby fat , heat packs to make the reborn warm to the touch , or voice boxes that mimic infant sounds . For preemie dolls , they may come in incubators with a breathing apparatus attached to their nose .

= = Collecting = =

Institutions have developed to aid reborn hobbyists with collecting by providing information , products , and social networking . These institutions include magazines , and associations and organizations which sponsor conferences and conventions . Collectors and artists have described their reasons for purchasing and / or creating reborn dolls as varying from a love of dolls to a passion for art .

= = = Purchasing = = =

Reborn dolls are usually found online and can be purchased through eBay , artists ' online stores (often termed nurseries) , and conventions / fairs . Incomplete crafting " kits " to create original reborns can also be purchased from various online stores . There is a large price range depending on the quality of the doll , but they can sell anywhere from hundreds to thousands of dollars . There are many factors to look for when purchasing a reborn . If the complexion is too dark this is called a blue baby , and indicates it was dyed excessively or uses colored sand for weight that could have seeped into the vinyl . The type of material used to weight the reborn should be considered because some materials do not react well with vinyl and will cause it to deteriorate . The doll should not be shiny . This indicates the doll was washed with acetone before painting , which prevents the color from correctly sticking to the doll 's surface . It may also be caused by the type of paint used to color the doll . This is corrected with a heat set matte varnish . The parts used are important , as original parts may be replaced . The replacement parts must be appropriately proportioned with the doll and made of quality material . At times having the original body retains the doll 's value either because it was made to fit that specific doll , or the artist left a signature mark . Eye brand , size , fitting , and alignment should be closely examined . Another feature to observe is the type of paint used for coloring and whether the doll is realistic in its details such as veins and newborn imperfections . The material and technique used in applying the hair may determine the quality . The nose should be open with the holes correctly shaped , and the nails should be properly manicured .

= = = Associations and organizations = = =

The International Reborn Doll Artists (IRDA) originated at the first conference for reborn doll artists on January 21 , 2005 . The IRDA group was assembled in order to offer education for improved skills in the art of reborn doll creation . They offer skill building tutorials and instruction so reborners can remain up to date on the newest techniques and meet others who share a common interest in reborn doll fabrication . A reborn artist can join the organization at any skill level , but members are asked to uphold a list of standards that were created by the IRDA 's executive board . This ethical code stipulates the guidelines members are to follow in advertising , listing , and describing their dolls in order to divide credit fairly between manufacturers , sculptors , and artists .

= = = Conferences and conventions = = =

The First Annual International Reborn Doll Artists Conference was held in Orlando , Florida on January 21 ? 23 , 2005 in conjunction with IDEX The Annual Debut of the World 's Finest Collectibles . In January 2006 in Las Vegas , Nevada , Doll Reader Magazine sponsored the IDEX Reborn Competition at the First International IDEX Reborn Convention . Doll Reader Magazine started publishing over twenty @-@ five years ago . It is now published nine times a year , keeps collectors informed on trends of modern @-@ day doll collecting , and continues to sponsor the IDEX trade shows that feature reborn competitions and conventions . In the summer of 2008 , ABC

News followed a reborn convention in Illinois . ABC News was also in St. Louis , Missouri to attend the first annual Tiny Treasures Show held in 2008 . The show features exhibitors , collectors , retailers , manufacturers , workshops , and contests for reborners . Reborn dolls can be found at doll fairs as well .

= = Social issues and reactions = =

The overwhelming majority of reborn customers are older women . The process of buying a reborn can be done to simulate an adoption process , rather than a prosaic sale of a product . As part of this , the dolls often come with fake birth certificates or adoption certificates . Many women collect reborns as they would a non @-@ reborn doll , whilst others purchase them to fill a void of a lost child and may treat reborns as living babies . Media features and public receptions have used such adjectives as " creepy " to describe the reborns . This can be explained by the uncanny valley hypothesis . This states that as objects become more lifelike they gain an increasing empathetic response , until a certain point at which the response changes to repulsion . Department stores have refused to stock the dolls because of this reaction , claiming they are too lifelike .

= = = Emotional bond = = =

Many reborn owners are simply doll collectors , while others have experienced miscarriage , stillbirth or neonatal loss , have no means for adoption , or suffer from empty nest syndrome . They may utilize the dolls as a substitute for a child . Some women dress the dolls , wash their hair , and may even take them for walks in strollers and take them shopping . Reborn hobbyists refer to the emotional response to holding their dolls as cuddle therapy . Studies suggest cuddling a baby causes a release of hormones which produce a sense of emotional well @-@ being , and some psychologists believe that this may happen with realistic dolls as well . Consultant psychiatrist Raj Persaud explains that mothering a real newborn baby releases the hormone oxytocin in the mother , and hypothesizes that this may explain why " reborn mothers " become emotionally attached to the reborn doll .

For grieving parents who form emotional bonds with reborn dolls , some child bereavement counselors advise against parents substituting their deceased child with the dolls . Reborn mothers contend that they are not replacing children but remembering them . Psychiatrist Sue Varma , teacher at the NYU school of medicine , says mothering reborn dolls rather than just collecting them can become a problem when it is used as prop and becomes the person 's only form of socializing . Psychiatrist Gail Saltz with New York Presbyterian Hospital supports the use of reborns for people who do not want to make the commitment of having a real child , and also to comfort bereaved parents . She offers that in this case the reborn may symbolize a step in the grieving process . Concern should only come if someone who lost a baby grows too attached to their reborn because it could indicate their grief is not getting resolved . In this case , the likeness of the doll to the deceased child risks being harmful as a permanent replacement for the grieving parents . Ian James , a doctor at the Centre for the Health of the Elderly at Newcastle General Hospital in the U.K. , said that holding the dolls helps calm elderly residents , helping them feel peaceful and quiet .

= = = Law enforcement incidents = = =

Reborn dolls look so real they have been mistaken for real babies . In July 2008 , police in Queensland , Australia smashed a car window to rescue what seemed like an unconscious baby only to find it was a reborn doll . The police stated that the doll was " incredibly lifelike " and that bystanders who thought a baby was dying were frightened by the incident . A similar incident was reported in the United States , in which police broke the window of a Hummer to save a baby that turned out to be a reborn doll .

In 2009 reborners uncovered a blogging hoax in which a woman ? described by ABC News as an " anti @-@ abortion blogger " ? claimed she was pregnant with a terminally ill child . She opened a

P.O. box in order to receive gifts , money , and prayers . The hoax was uncovered when reborners reading the blog realized that the pictures of the baby posted on the blog were actually a reborn doll that they recognized through the familiar reborn sculpture .

= = = Media appearances = = =

Reborn dolls have been featured in a number of television shows . A December 10 , 2008 episode of Dr. Phil entitled " Obsessions " discussed the topic of rebornings . In January 2008 , a Channel 4 series , My Fake Baby , explored the lives of women who collect the lifelike baby dolls . Featuring this documentary the British television magazine show on Channel 4 , Richard & Judy , held an interview with the reborn artist in the documentary , Jaime Eaton , collector Mary Flint and psychiatrist Raj Persaud . On January 2 , 2009 , an ABC News article described both the manufacturing and the emotional interaction of reborn dolls , while a January 20 / 20 episode talked about the mothering process and attachment to reborns . On January 31 , 2008 , Inside Edition aired a segment showing artist Eve Newsom and her reborn dolls . In December 2015 , Shaylen Maxwell , owner & artist of Reborn , Sweet was featured in The Globe and Mail , in a LIFE feature on the therapeutic value of reborn dolls in treating anxiety and grief .