

The Doll's House Museum in Basel will be presenting:

On the Catwalk through the Eras of Time: Barbie® Fashion Show

from 21st October 2006 until 9th April 2007

The Doll's House Museum Basel will be presenting a special exhibition of over 200 Barbie dolls, dressed by a Parisian artist, Claude Brabant. She has dressed the world-famous Barbie doll in a selection of her hand-made creations, which are accurate miniature copies of the original historical costumes and modern outfits, which transform the world-famous Barbie into a unique fashion doll.

This exhibition shows a review of fashion over the different eras: from the Stone Age, to Madame Pompadour, from the wedding apparel of prominent people in the twentieth century up to present-day trends. This presentation pays homage to top dress designers and prêt-à-porter fashions. Special features of this exhibition are the Barbies dressed in creations by well-known Basel fashion designers. Evening dresses and afternoon outfits by haute couturier Fred Spillmann are on display, as well as outfits by his niece Daniela Spillmann from Couture-à-porter Basel and Basel haute couturier Raphael Blechschmidt. The highlights of the exhibition will be two original designs by both Daniela Spillmann and Raphael Blechschmidt from their latest collections, as well as two original dresses designed by Fred Spillmann. The corresponding Barbie doll versions in miniature wearing the same outfits will also be on display.

With the help of Barbie as the model, this exhibition shows the impressive development of women's fashion through the eras of time. Fashion has always played an important role

since the beginning of man on earth. More than a million years ago, early man and woman wore some form of seasonal clothing to protect themselves against the elements. As time passed, these pieces of clothing became items of adornment and reflected the spirit of the age. As the role of woman changed in society, so did her style of clothing change.

The expression “Mode” in German, (fashion in English) comes from the French language and originates from the Latin word “modus”. Fashion comprises not only clothing, but also hairstyles and accessories. It expresses the preferred trends of the moment. In the Middle Ages, however, fashion was a mark of hierarchy in society with very restrictive regulations. Specific colors could only be worn by certain ranks or guilds. Even today, similar regulations exist in certain cultures and religions. Fashion is however, nowadays, mainly a means of expressing one’s life-style and individualism.

Madame Claude Brabant: a unique artist

Claude Brabant lives and works in Paris. She has been working with dolls since 1980. She started by making fabric dolls. Then at the beginning of the 1990s she bought a Barbie doll in Lafayette department store, which became a passion for her. Madame Brabant began designing individual clothes for Barbie. As she had always had an interest in fashion and the history of fashion, she copied the designs for costumes from important characters seen in oil paintings, art books and museum visits. She was successful in finding subjects in the Louvre and especially in the Albert Museum in London, where she was able to obtain patterns for some of the antique costumes. Much research and preparation are needed before a design can be created. It is especially difficult to find the appropriate fabric. Often the patterns on the fabric are too large for a Barbie doll and therefore many patterns have to be hand-stitched on the outfits.

To start with, Madame Brabant makes an exact miniature copy of the original costume in cheap fabric, which fits perfectly. She then takes this model apart and uses it as the pattern for the costume to be made in more expensive and valuable fabric. Madame Brabant pays a lot of attention to the smallest of details. She uses only the finest and best fabrics to make her outfits, such as gold thread, ermine and valuable silks. Accessories, such as shoes, handbags and jewelry are all made by hand. A large proportion of the outfits have to be sewn by hand. Finally, the hairstyles have to be adapted in minute detail to the fashion of the time. But this is not all: in order to be able to make the elaborate hats appropriate to the different

fashion eras, Madame Brabant specially attended a hat-making course. It takes about 100 hours to make an outfit for a Barbie doll. Over the years, Madame Brabant has received several prizes for her exhibition of fashion dolls. In this special exhibition, the visitor can see how Barbie completely changes according to the spirit of the different ages, and yet basically is always the same doll.

Basel Fashion Designers and Barbie

Amongst the 200 Barbie dolls designed by Madame Brabant, there are some models by famous designers e.g. Dior, Chanel, and Courrèges (dated around 1910). The idea arose to make costumes for Barbie from designs by Basel fashion designers. Thanks to the generous cooperation of Daniela Spillmann und Raphael Blechschmidt, it is possible to show in this exhibition several Barbie dolls dressed in creations from the latest collection of these two fashion designers. In addition, there are several creations from Fred Spillmann (1915–1986), the well-known couturier and beloved enfant terrible from Basel. He was a prominent eccentric, but many well-known international personalities came to his shop at the Rheinsprung to have costumes made. Marlene Dietrich and Grace Kelly were among his clients. He created the legendary feather costume for Josephine Baker. He died shortly before his 100th fashion show at the age of 71. He is still remembered, twenty years after his death.

Tens years ago, his niece Daniela Spillmann started designing knitwear. Twice a year she presents her „Couture-à-porter“ collection at the Rheinsprung shop. She creates haute couture designs for conscientious women, which are easy to wear. Her designs are refined and elegant without any knick-knacks, well-made and comfortable. Raphael Blechschmidt's credo was clear from the start: fashion should be easy to wear and elegant. He shows two collections a year at his shop in the Bäumleingasse. His designs are distinguished by their simple lines and exquisite fabrics, which are sometimes specially made for him. Raphael Blechschmidt pays particular attention to collar shapes, sleeve insets and necklines. Each creation is hand-made in Switzerland.

Competition and Workshops

In cooperation with Mattel Switzerland, the Museum is organizing a competition and workshops for children during the period of the exhibition. Boys and girls will receive a Barbie

doll free-of-charge and under the supervision of experts they will be able to create their own Barbie outfit. At the end of the workshop they will be allowed to take home their own doll and outfit. They just need to bring along some patience to the workshop.

Dates of the workshops (2 – 6 p.m.)

Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th November 2006

Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th November 2006

Saturday 9th and Sunday 10th December 2006

Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th December 2006

Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th January 2007

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th January 2007

Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th January 2007

Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th February 2007

Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th March 2007

Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th March 2007

Saturday 31st March and Sunday 1st April 2007

“Who can create the most beautiful Barbie outfit” is the title of the competition, which will take place during the special exhibition and comprises two categories: category A for children up to 12 years and category B for children from 13 years and adults. Participants have twice as much chance of winning, as the jury consists partly of the visitors to the museum and partly of experts from the fashion scene. Attractive prizes will be given to the winners in both categories. Each participant can keep his/her Barbie doll and, in addition, will receive a consolation prize. Entrance forms can be found in the Doll's House Museum at the Barfüsserplatz.

Opening Hours

Museum, shop and café: daily from 10:00 to 18:00

Entrance

CHF 7.–/CHF 5.–

Children up to 16 years are admitted free of charge, and only if accompanied by an adult.

There is no additional entrance fee for this special exhibition.

The whole building is accessible to wheelchairs.

Doll's House Museum, Basel

Steinenvorstadt 1

CH-4051 Basel

Tel. +041 (0)61 225 95 95

Fax +041 (0)61 225 95 96

www.puppenhausmuseum.ch

Barbie® – the story of a legend

“Lilli” Forerunner of the Barbie Doll

Fashion dolls and dress dolls have a long tradition. They exist since the Middle Ages, long before Barbie was thought of. But none were so popular as the little blond doll from America. In actual fact, Barbie originated in Germany. On 24th June, 1952, the caricaturist Reinhard Beuthin made a sketch of a woman in an empty column of the Bild newspaper, which would have corresponded to the readers' idea of a crazy, lascivious woman – an adult body with very long legs, ponytail, stiletto heels and a very short skirt (10 years before the miniskirt appeared). The woman caricature was very popular with the readers and appeared daily in the paper with a salacious text. This was the birth of the cartoon figure “Lilli”. Lilli was soon to become so popular that clever marketing strategists began to see the potential for a new dimension for her and in 1955 the forerunner of the Barbie doll was created. The modeller Max Weisbrodt, who was under contract to the company Hausser Elastolin in Neustadt-Coburg, designed the Lilli doll. Martha Maar, the mother-in-law of Rolf Hausser, was responsible for the doll's clothes. On 12th August 1955 the Lilli doll went on sale on the German market for DM 19.90. She was originally 30 cm tall and at a later stage a smaller version measuring 18 cm was introduced. Bild-Lilli stood on a stand, on which was printed the red logo of the Bild newspaper or the name “Bild-Lilli”. The body was made out of slightly transparent plastic. Each Lilli wore a dress from a quite substantial wardrobe of clothes. She was displayed for sale in a cylindrical box. The clothes were not sold individually. Each doll carried a mini version of the Bild newspaper. Lilli was initially sold in tobacco shops as an attractive mascot for male adults. She went on sale in toyshops at a later stage.

The Birth of Barbie

One of these Lilli dolls was discovered by Ruth Handler in a Lucerne shop window, redesigned and appeared for the first time as Barbie at the New York Toy Fair in March 1959.

Ruth and Elliot (EL) Handler and Harold (Matt) Mattson founded a new company called “Mattel” in a garage in southern California in 1945. The company's name is an acronym of the two family names Mattson (MATT) and Elliot (EL). The first products were picture frames. In addition, Elliot made doll's house accessories from picture frame scraps. With the success of their dollhouse accessories, the company turned its attention to the production of toys. Elliot Handler soon bought his partner Mattson's share in the company.

Ruth Handler noticed that her daughter was fascinated with dressing and undressing cut-out paper dolls. Ruth started to think about designing a three-dimensional adult-bodied doll, which girls could dress up and imagine themselves to be in the world of adults. When on her trip to Europe, she saw the Lilli doll in Lucerne she realized what her adult doll should look like. She obtained the rights for the Lilli doll after a year of difficult negotiations. The Lilli doll then had to be revamped and adapted to the American market. Ruth quickly found a new American name. "Barbie" was the nickname of her daughter Barbara Joyce.

It took longer to work on the original vinyl mold. Several extensive trips were made to Japan, where the doll was to be made for the American market. The first Barbie doll was made by Pony Ltd. under the supervision of Mr. Yamasaky. This is when the story of Lilli ended and Barbie's career began.

Barbie, the Fashionable Dress Doll

Barbie made her official debut in the American market on 9th March 1959 at the New York Toy Fair. She was marketed as a "Teenage fashion model" and given the serial number 850. She was 29.5 cm tall and was available either as blonds or brunettes. She wore a legendary black and white striped swimsuit, sunglasses and signature stiletto heels. Embossed on the back of the doll was:

Barbie TM
Pats.Pend
MCMLVIII
By
Mattel
Inc.

A list of all the latest accessories was included in every Barbie sales bag, in order to encourage the buyer to buy more items. Barbie soon became a hit.

Like Lilli, Barbie was a stereotype dress doll. With sales of over 350'000 in the first year, the extraordinary success of Barbie surprised Mattel's directors. The success of Barbie made Mattel the leading producer in the toy-making industry and brought delight to many generations of girls. Ruth Handler created a very clever strategy for Barbie. According to her ideas, Barbie was to help girls to develop their future adult lives whilst playing.

In 1961 Barbie's boyfriend "Ken" came onto the market. He was named after Ruth and Elliot Handler's son, had brown hair and his own collection of fashionable outfits. Shortly after, friend "Midge" and Barbie's sister "Skipper" (1965) were introduced.

“Christie” an Afro-American came next and was the first representative of a different ethnic group in the Mattel collection. She was later followed by “Theresa” (1968) and “Kira” (1990), who were Barbie’s Latin American and Asian friends.

When Mattel decided in 1964 to export Barbie to Europe, they opened their first subsidiary in Germany.

Barbie designers create annually about 150 different outfits to fit her dream figure, including shoes. Well-known designers from international fashion houses, including Oscar de la Renta and Dior to name only two, have had the opportunity to create models for Barbie. Even famous jewelers have crowned Barbie’s head with their creations.

In 2001 Barbie became a film star playing the main role in her first film “Barbie in the Nutcracker”. The film is computer animated and lasts the length of a normal film. The TV première took place in November 2001.

It is no longer possible to think of a child’s room without a Barbie. She has been designed to assimilate in dress and skin color to 45 different countries. She has become an icon and a myth. She is loved by millions of little girls, coveted by collectors and an inspiration for fashion designers, film producers and pop-stars.

To give an example of a coveted collector’s item: an original, mint-boxed Barbie from 1959 is now worth €4’500. Barbie is not only popular with children, but also with their parents. In the 1980s, they were the first generation of children to play with Barbie and have now grown up to become passionate collectors. Mattel recognized this potential and introduced in 1986 the “Blue Rhapsody Barbie”, the first porcelain Barbie. This was the starting signal for the collectors.

A Timeless Beauty

Barbie basically remains the same, but has adapted over the years to new trends. About every 7 years, her face is redesigned to match the latest tendencies. Initially, Barbie had a fixed expression, but nowadays her expression is more flexible. She can close and open the eyes, bend her knees and even speak.

Over time, her social standing has also developed. At first, she represented the youth of the day, but since the 1980s she has become a career woman. She has taken up many occupations over the years e.g. teenage model, ballerina, nurse, doctor, stewardess, astronaut, fashion designer, college lecturer, surgeon, Olympic athlete and even a pilot in a fighter aircraft and many more. Influenced by fashion, music and films as well as politics and sport, Barbie always represents the spirit of the time as well as the life-style of whole generations. Always in tune with current trends, the Barbies of the 1990s were dressed in a colorful mixture of styles from design to fun sport.

Facts and Figures about the Successful Barbie Doll

- 351'000 Barbies were sold in 1959 for the price of \$ 3.00.
- Since 1959, the number of sales of Barbies and friends of Barbie is well over a billion.
Every second, 2 Barbies are sold worldwide.
- Over a billion clothes and shoes have been created for Barbie and sold.
- Barbie is on sale in well over 150 countries in the world.
- 150 new designs are created annually for Barbie and sold.
- Barbie possesses the largest collection of shoes in the world – over a billion pairs.
- American girls between the ages of three and ten have on average 8 Barbies. In Italy the average is about 7 Barbies, in France and German about 5 Barbies.
- Over one million meters of fabric have so far been used for outfits for Barbie. Mattel is the biggest clothes producer worldwide.
- About 100 different Barbies, friends, family members and special products are created annually.
- Barbie has been redesigned over 500 times. Her facial features have changed many times.
Her first new face and look appeared in 1998.
- Barbie has over 40 domestic pets ranging from dogs, horses, ponys, cats, a parrot, a chimpanzee, a panda, a lion cub, a dolphin, a giraffe and a zebra.
- Her motor fleet consists of convertibles, all-terrain vehicles, limousines, dream carriages, sledges, motor scooters, a beach-mobile, the latest trailer and trekking bike.
- Barbie represents 45 different nations in the international collection of “Dolls of the World”.