The Trinket Doll

In today's mass production market, its difficult to find a gift that a child will keep year after year, remembering you as its giver. How about a keepsake … that *also* stimulates the imagination?

Smithfield artist Jo White asked herself that question and The Original Trinket Dolls were born. Each doll is meticulously created as a one-of-a-kind heirloom - a keepsake that holds the treasures of childhood we all collected at some point in our lives. Remember that lucky coin, 'magic' stone, diary key, first-love ring, mother's locket – the personal possessions that held our secrets – and memories? These unique dolls not only hold these items safe in their pockets, they are a canvas of mystery and discovery from the moment you pick one up.

Upon first glance, you will see a whimsical doll constructed of colorful fabrics, ribbons and textures. Tied to its wrist, hangs a signed collectors tag stating the dolls name, how many pockets it has, and notations on the trinkets unique to that doll. Move in closer and you will see trinkets sewn on the doll or hanging from its ribbons. These are treasures in themselves … vintage jewelry, a watch face, handmade beads, antique buttons, gold or silver charms … often times recycled items that people donate to the artist from *their* overloaded treasure boxes.

Then, the mystery begins … with the discovery of a small scroll, rolled and peeking out of the back pocket. On the scroll is a poem, from the doll to the owner, explaining how you found the first of many pockets – one of which holds a "Secret Treasure" tucked in it. This interaction stimulates the owner to search for pockets, all the while discovering interesting (and vintage) trinkets hanging from ribbons or sewn on the doll.

The pockets are so well hidden, it takes a while to find them all as you hunt down the secret treasure. When the treasure is found, it doesn't sell short … beautiful stones such as turquoise or tigers eye pendants, a pewter angel nugget, a Kennedy half dollar, a clay doll baby, a miniature painting – treasures as unique as the doll itself.

This doll makes for a cherished gift from Grandmother, Auntie or Mom. You can add trinkets of your own by tying them on the ribbons or hiding them in pockets. It is best suited for ages 7 and up, due to its trinkets and handsewing. However, Jo has also been commissioned to make the Original Trinket Doll for adults … to match a bedroom, to hide their jewelry – and as a valentine gift from a gentleman who wanted to hide his engagement ring to his fiancée!

The Original Trinket Doll can only be purchased through the Art Center @319 but they have been given to children as far away as France and Holland. These dolls truly are a Smithfield treasure that are making their mark around the world!