

The Joys of Toy Collecting

One of the areas of collecting which seems to gather the most interest whether it be at auctions or antique shows, is toy collecting. We all remember staring in open-mouthed wonder at the dolls of our grandmothers, and finding our old Barbie dolls, teddy bears or our friends' children's books, toy trains and Meccano sets.

These are collected more and more as the population which played with them is getting older and starts to look back fondly on those toys of old. Some do it for the sheer joy of collecting; others do it with a view to turning a handy profit and, finally, others simply to own a piece of the time when life was a little simpler.

Among the choice areas for collectors are train collecting which is a whole industry all its own with books, shows, associations and others. Collecting board games is now becoming more and more popular as is collecting Victorian children's books, some of which have magnificent illustrations by the important artists of the day, and, of course, those books by Beatrix Potter.

Doll collecting, as well as anything related to dolls, be it clothing, housewares, tea sets, etc. has been around for a very long time. We all know the great names of the makers of antique dolls like Heubach, Kestner, Jumeau, SFBJ and Bru, but newer dolls, produced as late as the 1980s, are now becoming more and more collected.

Which brings a very important point in toy collecting, which is probably what sets it apart from other areas: condition, condition, condition. By their very nature, toys were made to be played with – and what grubby little hands can do to toys is enough to make collectors shudder with horror! So keep in mind that you will always need to pay a premium for items in pristine condition. And even more so for toys in their original boxes with all tags, information or rules (for games) intact. Care should be given to making sure that all items are present and accounted for – that means all the houses and hotels for a Monopoly game, every pair of sunglasses and shoes for that lovely Barbie doll, and every lion, tiger and bear for that Noah's ark! Pieces should be examined for touch-ups, repaints and dents, and books should be looked through to make sure there are no missing pages, tears or scribbles.

And, of course, keep an eye out for fakes and reproductions, which means talking with your dealer, reading as much as you can on those pieces you wish to collect and also, whenever possible, attending conventions and seminars. It is always fascinating to see how much one can learn simply by listening and talking with other collectors at such gatherings. People in the know are often happy to share their knowledge, and flattered that you would take the time to seek their advice.

So the next time you see a box of toys in a garage sale, take a few minutes to have a better look – it's surprising what you can find sometimes. And who cares if it is not one of those sought-after pieces that serious collectors would give their first toy for, it may serve as an interesting conversation piece or get you back a piece of your long-lost (and for some of us, quite long) childhood.

Are you interested in collecting toys? Send us an e-mail and let us know. We'll try and keep an eye out for you. In the meantime, you can **search for toys** in all of our current auction items.

This article was provided by Theresa Taylor Auctioneering to help our customers. Would you like to see an article on another subject? Drop us a line.