

## TIPS ON STARTING YOUR OWN

# Art Doll Round Robin

First, a disclaimer: If you start a Doll Round Robin, it will not be a LAFTA project like the one for Hosparus or the Child Advocacy Center. It will simply be a group of creative souls, who share LAFTA membership in common, working on a collaborative project for personal enjoyment.

Some of the tips below were taken from publications & the work of artists Lynne Parrella and Kathryn Bold. The book "Somerset Studios Presents The Art Doll Chronicles" published in 2002 by Stampington & Company was an inspiring reference for our group. Stampington & Co. also publishes 2017 Art Doll Quarterly, a magazine that can be ordered online or from a book store. The rest of these notes come from our personal experience.

*"THE CREATION OF SOMETHING NEW IS NOT ACCOMPLISHED FROM THE INTELLECT BUT BY PLAY INSTINCT ACTING FROM INNER NECESSITY. THE CREATIVE MIND PLAYS WITH THE OBJECTS IT LOVES." - C. G. JUNG*

The Round Robin begins with a simple concept: Circulate a group of dolls among an equal number of artists, allowing each woman to contribute something to each work-in-progress. In the end, every artist has a one-of-a-kind creation. The dolls serve as vehicles for artists to express themselves, learn about each other, reflect on womanhood and doll or body images, and pick up a technique or two. In the process, each doll comes to life.

You must allow your artwork to be developed by the hands of others - surrendering your control of the piece. You may feel anxiety or fear that harm might come to your creation. But the ultimate lesson we recognize through this surrender is TRUST. The project goals: Play, surrender, passion, creativity, trust. Learning to see and think in new ways. More ideas will come as the doll progresses.

Rule Number One: There are NO rules. There is NO RIGHT OR WRONG!

To form your own Round Robin Group, gather 7 to 9 friends who are interested in this process. A group of 7 will take 7 months to complete the project if you allow 1 month per exchange; a group of 9 will take 9 months. Any more than 9 might be too large to work well. If you have 10 interested, you could make two groups of 5 each.

One member of the group needs to take on the responsibility of being the facilitator. This person will remind everyone of each month's exchange meeting: date, time, place to meet. Our group met on the first Thursday of the month at 1:00PM at various coffee shops. The person facilitating will follow up with group members to keep the exchanges running smoothly and to handle any issues that may arise.

Each artist will begin the project by making a doll embryo of sorts: a beginning but not a fully formed idea. The starter doll could be just a single part, such as a torso, or it could be a completed blank doll shape from bald head to enormous feet. Any material can be used: fabric, metal, wood, paper. The dolls in our group began as a cigar box, a wire torso, a leather face, a painted canvas, several fabric doll parts, a paper sculpture and a candleholder.

Each doll will travel with her/his own "travelogue" in the form of the owner's choosing. It may be a journal, a clipboard with paper, a photo album, etc. A small spiral bound notebook that lays flat seems to work very well. Artists will add to the story of each doll's adventures as they move from artist to artist. You may add notes, ideas,

photos, whatever you want to say about the doll's journey. Again, there are no rules. Stamp on it or in it, write part of the continuing story, add collage, staple, glue, sew, paint. Enjoy!

The only constant will be that dolls travel from artist to artist on a structured timeline. Once a month, on a schedule determined at the first meeting, rotations will start and continue until all artists have added to each doll and journal. When an artist receives a doll, they can add embellishments of their choosing: limbs, clothing, hair, accessories (a pet, suitcase, instrument) other body parts or decorations like beads, buttons, charms, embroidery, etc. They can use any media - Anything goes!

It is IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER that when you add to a doll, you need to allow space for the other participants to make their additions to the doll as it travels. In other words, don't finish each doll yourself. After you've made your additions there could be as many as 7 artists in line for that doll.

Meetings for the exchanges could be at coffee shops or restaurants - that must also be decided at the first meeting. Our group decided to meet at several different coffee shops, with the shop's permission. We always asked because we moved tables around and it's always best to have permission. We felt that meeting at a centrally located coffee shop made it more convenient for the members. We gathered at the appointed time, had some coffee & a little fellowship, showed what we had done to the dolls, read from the journals, exchanged with the next artist, and then we were on our way. Simple, easy, fast. You may also consider having a final meeting – maybe a potluck or dessert party – to show off and enjoy the completed dolls & journals.

Although it is important for the group to stay on a regular schedule, everyone is busy these days and individuals may not be able to attend every exchange meeting. If for some reason, a member can't make it to an exchange, they must arrange to get their doll to the meeting and to have someone pick up the doll they are to work on next.

As your dolls travel with their journals through the loving hands of their creators, they become unique works of art. In the end, every participant receives their own doll in the completed stage – transformed, MAGICAL!

Get started, and more than anything, have a good time and enjoy the process. It will be an adventure for everyone and a rewarding experience. It will expand your horizons.

### *IT WILL BE AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY!*



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