Miranda Rolfes

*Miraberen*

by Pam North

 Miranda Rolfes has been creating bears in Holland since 2012, under the name *Miraberen.* As she navigated the design process, she discovered and embraced her own innate style. As she explained, “At first I used the normal, standard materials like mohair, suede, and felt, but because I like beautiful colors, quilt fabrics, and flowers, I searched for a way to combine these to develop my personal, unique expression. My plan worked out well, and my own signature style was born.”

 “I make different sorts of bears. First of all I make realistic-looking bears that are flexible, because of the use of a skeleton, but I translate that to my own style, using high-quality mohair or faux fur in beautiful, pastel colors, combining these with matching quilt fabrics that I use for the paw pads. As a finishing touch, I use flower accessories to complete the bear. Beside the naturalistic bears, I make classic teddy bears from old-fashioned mohair, and also in beautiful soft colors combined with quilt fabrics. My bears, big or small, are always made from high-quality materials because I believe that if you use good materials you are halfway toward the result you have in mind.”

 Rolfes is always seeking inspiration. “Many times, an idea for a new bear is born when I see a piece of mohair or faux fur, or even a little piece of quilt fabric. This year I also started to make miniature bears from mohair and quilt fabric, and I am creating a series of little bears that are dressed up like other animals. I like the contrast of the tiny ones with my big, naturalistic bears, I also like to work with special themes, such as circus or fairy tales.”

 “For this year I have lots of plans. First of all, I want to develop the style and the appearance of my natural bears so that they become even more real-bear-like, while still reflecting my own style. I also want to develop my design skills with other types of animals. Last year I made a raccoon, and at the beginning of this year I have designed a meerkat that worked out well, so I want to see if I can make a fox, wolf, or even a monkey. I also have a weak spot for raccoons - they are so funny! I can spend hours in the zoo just looking at them, but I have that feeling also with meercats and ring-tailed lemurs.”

 Rolfes derives much satisfaction from the creation of her animals, saying, “I consider my bears successful when they put big smiles on people's faces, and they fall in love right away.”

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