



For Keeps

VOLUME EIGHTEEN | ISSUE TWO | SUMMER 2020

AN INSIDE LOOK
AT THE DREAM BOOK

TOM BEST TALKS
FROSTY FRIENDS

KOC EXCLUSIVES







Exclusively for you at Ornament Premiere

Get the inside scoop on these KOC exclusives that are heading to the event in July.

SWEET SANTA BY TERRI STEIGER

For fans who enjoy the stories told through companion pieces, Sweet Santa is a subtle nod to this year's Artist Signing Event ornament.

"I think that he makes a good companion piece because the studio piece is a gingerbread themed carousel," says Keepsake Artist Terri Steiger.

The piece most closely ties to the signing event ornament by Santa's cookie of choice—the gingerbread man.

"All the animals on the carousel look like gingerbread cookies, and while my Santa is not exactly a cookie, he does have decorations that feature details that nod to a gingerbread cookie."

CHRISTMAS WINDOW #18 BY NINA AUBÉ

For this year's addition to the series, Keepsake Artist Nina Aubé went back to where the series started.

"Usually we do storefronts, like a bookstore or a toy store, but the very first ornament in the series was a room scene, and I decided to go back to that and change it up a little bit," says Nina.

A fun fact for fans of the series: the little girl looking for Santa on this year's ornament has a special connection to Nina.

"It's my niece Jessica, and the stuffed animal on the ornament is her Piggy that she's had since she was a baby. And Piggy goes everywhere with her."

With callbacks to the series beginnings and personal touches added to the design, this year's Christmas Window is a whimsical reminder of the magic the season has for the young and young at heart.

Tom and his frosty friends

As the Keepsake artist with the second-longest run on the Frosty Friends series, Tom Best sat down to answer some questions about the the long-running adventures of Frosty and his North Pole pals.

Q: The Frosty Friends series has had quite a few artists work on it in its lifetime. Who are all the artists that have worked on the series ornaments, and how many have they worked on?

A: *(In order of when they first started on the series):*

Jim Mahon (Series Creator) – 2 ornaments

Ed Seale – 19 ornaments

Bob Siedler – 1 ornament

Sharon Pike – 1 ornament

Julia Lee – 2 ornaments

June Brock – 1 ornament

Sharon Visker – 3 ornaments

Tom Best – 12 ornaments

Q: Up until recently, the creator of the series was incorrectly attributed to a different artist. Why was there so much confusion?

A: *"Who did what has always been the biggest misconception with the series. Back in the day, they didn't put names on boxes, so the creator of the series was always just speculated, not actually known. But getting that all figured out is something I took on when I started on the series, and I'm glad we got that corrected."*

Q: How did you find the actual creator?

A: *"A former Keepsake Artist, Julie Forsythe, had friended Jim on Facebook because they had known him from back when he worked here. And when we started trying to figure out who was the original creator of Frosty, she reached out to him. And so, I ended up friending him, too, and we found out Jim was our guy."*

Q: What ever happened to Jim Mahon?

A: *"He went on to have a really stellar career; he worked for Jim Henson and the Muppets. And he talks so kindly of Jim and how wonderful he was and how great those years were."*

Q: What was the inspiration for the 41st ornament in the series?

A: *"It's based on the old 'going to the carnival and put your head in the display.' That was the whole idea. Considering there's very little material for a boy in the frozen tundra, ice tends to be a popular material for building. And because Frosty in the past has sculpted before, the tools in #41 are the same as the ones he used back in 2000 for #21."*







Behind the scenes of the *Dream Book*

See what goes into the creation
of the yearly catalog.

PLANNING

In the early stages of the 2020 *Dream Book*, a small team consisting of a writer, designer, editor, art director, editorial director and account lead sat down to determine the theme of the book and the overall layout. This part of the process involved taking cutouts of each new ornament and putting them on large pieces of paper to figure out the flow of the book.

From there, the *Dream Book* team and members of Union Hill Studios, Hallmark's photography and video production studio, worked together to figure out the photography.

THE PHOTO SHOOT

"The *Dream Book* shoot was from the week of November 17 to the week of December 17," says Union Hill Art Director Danielle Mousley. "We had a total of 78 shots in the *Dream Book*, but the total number of shots we took was most likely in the thousands. This is the largest photography project our studio takes on in a year."

All told, 10 members of Union Hill worked on the photo shoot for the 2020 *Dream Book*. They cast 22 models for the shoot, and shot photos in three different homes and four different sets that were built.

While the photo shoots are underway, the *Dream Book* writer interviews the artists about their ornaments, finding personal stories and interesting tidbits for readers to enjoy.

Because the *Dream Book* is worked on so far in advance to an ornament's production, sometimes the team has to use what are called "blue bodies," which are blue, 3D-printed models of the ornaments. They do this so that photographs can have proper shadows and the layout of a photograph can be as close to the real thing as possible.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Once the photographs are taken, they're taken into retouch, where small imperfections in the photographs can be fixed. This can include adding coloring to the blue bodies that match the ornament's actual color, erasing imperfections like glares on walls and surfaces, and digitally adding ornaments to an image.

After the photography has been retouched and the articles written, they are laid out into the design. It goes through multiple rounds of revisions until it is approved for printing.

At the end of the project, which has involved more than nine months of work and over 20 people, the *Dream Book* is complete and ready for everyone to experience the new kinds of wonder that are on each page.



Keepsake convention exclusives

When it comes to creating convention exclusives, the Keepsake artists always put the fans first.

For this year's convention-exclusive ornaments, the Keepsake Studio took different approaches to their pieces.

For Harry Potter fans, Keepsake Artist Kristina Gaughran went with an unexpected, yet popular, choice. "[Professor Boggart Snape] has gotten a lot of love from the cosplay community, so to give fans an ornament this unique is exciting," says Kris.

For the National Barbie Doll Convention, Keepsake Artist Debra Nielsen was guided by the convention

itself. "The theme for 2020 is 'Paradise Found'," Debra says. "I am given some top-secret artwork relative to the theme and need to create a new shoe design based on it. In this case, the Barbie with the ocean waves hair artwork was provided, and I added the hibiscus floral pattern to complement it."

Those are just some small insights into the process of creating convention exclusives. Get a closer look at our convention offerings below.



► See when & where these convention ornaments will be available by visiting Popminded.com/Events

Save the date

JULY 10 | KOC Ornament Premiere Early Access

JULY 11-19 | Keepsake Ornament Premiere

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER | Keepsake Artist Signing Events

OCTOBER 3-11 | Keepsake Ornament Debut

DECEMBER 3-6 | Keepsake Trim the Tree Event