

All they need is love

The poorly patients of Pritchard's doll and teddy hospital in Burscough.

by Eza Doortmont

With special thanks to Jeannie Pritchard

*This book is accompanied by a USB-stick with a
sound scape*

Created for Documentary and Sensory Media

Lecturer: Rupert Cox

MA in Visual Anthropology

Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology

University of Manchester

May 2018

To Konnie,
For always staying by my side

*So wherever I am, there's always Pooh,
There's always Pooh and Me.
"What would I do?" I said to Pooh.
"If it wasn't for you," and Pooh said: "True,
It isn't much fun for One, but Two
Can stick together," says Pooh, says he.
"That's how it is," says Pooh.*

*- Now We Are Six
A.A. Milne*



Before you go to the next page, I want to introduce myself. I am Konnie, the creator of this book's twenty-five-year-old stuffed bunny. I currently live in Manchester in the United Kingdom, but I actually have lived wherever she lived. In the picture you can see me with Eza in 1995. I've chosen this photo because in this photo I still appear to be pink. I am made of terrycloth and I wear pink dungarees. In my head there is a little bell she used to hate, and in the picture, I still have the little label she would stroke with her thumb. Since I've been with Eza from birth, my appearance is, obviously, worn. I've flattened significantly, because she uses me as her pillow, and I became less pink over the years. Eza's grandmothers and mother repaired me over and over again, with skill and care. Sewing my head and ears back on or closing my jumped seams. When my terrycloth became see-through, they mended me carefully with pieces of washcloth in different colours. I am covered in layers and layers of these now and I'm kind of proud of it. Without care, I would not exist anymore. To be honest, I'm hurt at the moment and I can't wait till Eza takes me home to her mum, so she can patch me up once more. Quite a good public healthcare service, isn't it? After all, we all are vulnerable creatures and in a need of care. (Valtonen, 2016)

'I'm not really a sitting-still person. So, after two years of being ill I decided I wanted to do something. I ended up doing a course in ceramic renovations and it turned out I was quite good at that.'

Jeannie Pritchard was doing ceramic renovations at the Museum of Lancashire, when somebody brought in a doll. She had never fixed a doll or teddy before, but ever since she worked on that first one, there is little else she enjoys doing as much. *'I learned everything by doing it. There are no courses on mending up dolls and teddy's. You just have to do and go with it, but also understand the love for the object. And you have to be a bit inventive.'* In her doll and teddy bear hospital Jeannie has patched up many loved toys.

'Grownups burst into tears when they bring in their poorly toys. There is nothing better than seeing their faces beaming with joy when they leave. Nobody can explain it, but people have very special connections with their dolls and teddies.'





'Months on end I only have white dolls, but sometimes there are a lot of black ones too. Like now.' | 11





The dolls and teddies who are left in the loving hands of Jeannie are handled carefully. *'A too hard of a squeeze can sometimes destroy the dolls. It is a precise job, to find the right balance fixing and not fixing too much. You don't want to give back a doll or teddy who doesn't feel like the one the owner brought in. They need to have their flaws and imperfections in order to be who they are.'*

Jeannie's hand delicately holds the fur, of what once was a teddy bear, now without filling. His arm lays on the table in front of her, the head is dangling on tiny threads from the piece of fabric. The tip of Jeannie's thumb gently strokes the fabric where once were the palms of the bear. *'See, here you can see the colour of its little palms', referring to the teddy bear like it is a human. 'I need to find the same kind of colour and structure of fabric, so we can give him his hands back.'*

'I have a six-month waiting list. I don't work on one thing at the time, so there are patients everywhere.'







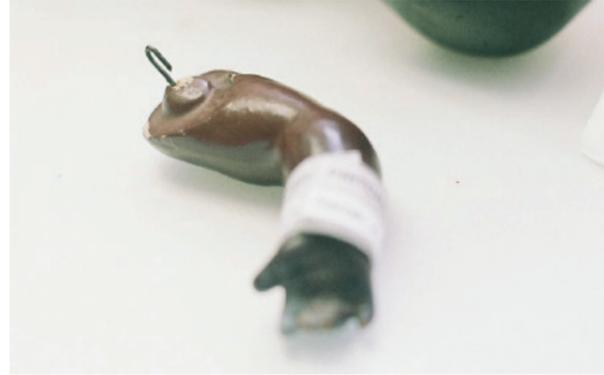
'I see the stitches and patches done by its owners over the years as preservation. So they loved once are preserved and I can restore them.'





Jeannie is well-known in the doll and teddy bear fixing world. She is being sent them from all over the world and people trust her with all kinds of antiques. Her waiting time is six months. *'The bears and dolls people bring in have survived the test of time over decades. Sometimes over 80 years. I even restored a doll found in the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen. I think that was the most special one I've ever done.'*

'The biggest problem I have now, are all these things that aren't available anymore. Sometimes you just have to go with a smaller size eyeball, or use a similar piece of fabric, even if that isn't totally the same.' Everything Jeannie does, every movement she makes is in order to take care of the toys. Her voice lowers when she talks lovingly about her patients, every single one as important as the other. Her movements are gentle, her fixing precise. She does everything to achieve the best result she can.





'I think this is more rewarding than when I still worked for the NHS. And this is kind of similar. But now I do something almost nobody can do for these poorly teddies and dolls. I still consider my job as worthwhile.'

According to herself Jeannie isn't much of a dolly person, but she 'loves being that little girl again'. The former NHS social worker just really likes to care. Caring for these objects which literally have been loved to death. *'Nobody will ever understand somebody's love for these useless objects, but at the same time they have been through everything with these people.'*

This heroic doll and teddy doctor is very poorly herself. When diagnosed with Lupus, she had to retire from the NHS. Not only the illness has tried to get her down, she has been through a lot during her life. 'I'm not somebody who just gives up', says Jeannie with a smile from ear to ear. Almost a year ago she opened a teddy bear themed cafe in Burscough. Sadly, she had to sell this last November, when she had two small heart attacks. Luckily the new owner and Jeannie are friends now and the cafe still has its teddy bear theme. Her new project is building a boat to live on and to work on all here poorly patients.



I saw Jeannie's care in her embodiment of mending and handling the toys. I've tried to represent this in the photos in this book.

This photobook is accompanied by a USB-stick with a soundscape of Jeannie in her studio.

As Pérez-Martínez et al. (2018, p.21) explain it; 'a soundscape is a methodology based on the perception of dominant sounds'. According to them it is the way person or people experience and/or understand an acoustic environment. Without sound, people can't imagine themselves in a place (McCombe, 2011, p.2). A space is in need of sound in order to be experienced.

I saw Jeannie show her care not only in her handling the toys, but also in her use of language and voice when talking about the toys.

On the soundscape you can hear Jeannie talk about some of her patients and you hear her work. You can hear Jeannie's use of language, when she talks about her patients and she explains her actions.

In her voice I could hear the care she holds for these toys, who belong to other people. In her language she chooses words carefully. I was amazed by the show of her love, while mending these dolls and teddies. The ways she handles them and how she chooses to mend them in incredible detail. Jeannie is an expert in the field of restoring these old toys, but more than that, in my eyes; she is an expert in taking care of them.

The soundscape is supposed to be listened to while looking at the photos in the book.

Accompanying this photobook with soundscape is an academic essay in which I discuss the theory behind this project, the chosen methodology, and the conclusions of this audio-visual research project. When you are interested in this paper, you can find it on the USB-stick.

Copyright © 2018 by Eza Doortmont

Reference list

Carpenter H and McLuhan M (1973) Auditory space, p35-7

McCombe, C., 2001. Imagining space through sound, p.1-2

Milne, A. and Shepard, E. (1961). Now we are six. New York: Dutton, p.37.

Pérez-Martínez, G., Torija, A.J, and Ruiz, D.P, 2018. Soundscape assessment of a monumental place: A methodology based on the perception of dominant sounds. Landscape and Urban Planning, 169, p.21-22

Valtonen, A., 2016. Teddy bears. Consumption Markets & Culture, 19(3), p.259-263.

