

# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

## MARINA OSETROVA

My name is Marina Osetrova and I am a bear maker. I am from Moscow, Russia. I have been creating my bears since 2010. I concentrate on making Realistic Bears. I design all the patterns by myself. The largest part of the techniques that I use on making bears I have created myself.

My bears are easy to pose in natural positions and can smile. My bears are warm and

very soft to the

touch. They are

bears for hugs!

Without a doubt

you remember

that a teddy bear was

your favourite childhood

toy. We went to bed, hug-

ging a teddy bear, played with

a winding drummer-bear.

We used to dress up

this toy and walk

around with him

in a stroller. For

many of us a

big teddy bear

with a bow

tie served as a

decoration of a

bed or a sofa.

Everyone knows

the adorable teddy

bear. Many

countries even

have a special

day for this toy

- Teddy Bear

Day, celebrated

on the 27th of

October. In Rus-

sia a teddy bear

is simply called «plyush bear», although in many cases it is made not out of Russian «plyush», but many other materials, such as fur, base or fleece. Russians associate «plyush bear», with the oldest, most beloved toy. Until the 30s of the 20th century, teddy bears were imported

to Russia. Back to those days, teddy bears were made in small co-operatives and artels. Only paws were movable, the head was sewed to the body and remained static. Bonding discs were different from the ones we have today. The discs were made of plywood. Splint pins and screw-bolts were not used, bonding

discs were attached to a wire. For a simpler versions of toy bears, bonding discs were not used at all, instead rope bondings were used; rope was sewed through the main body of a teddy bear, starting from one shoulder to another and then back. Teddy bears were stuffed with

wood-wool, saw

dust, cotton

or woollen

hards. These

stuffings

were not

long-lasting.

The stuffing

that could lasts

the longest

was wood-wool,

bears stuffed with

it were light and firm.

Wood-wool was used

for big bears. Teddy bears

stuffed with saw dust were

heavy. With time, wire

that held together

bear's paws made

holes in the

outside

material. Saw

dust escaped

through

those holes

and



gradually teddy bears were losing their shape. Cotton had a tendency to cake. Woollen hards were

in correct places. Back paws were sewed to cossacks. All in all we had a bear in clothes, that was his inseparable part.

Russian «plyush» is a soft, fluffy and shaggy textile, that is made of a base (cotton), with 8 mm fleece and has a three thread structure.

Depending on the kind of fleece, one can distinguish cut and uncut (looping) plush and de-

pend- ing on the way of manufacturing and processing — smooth, figured, imprinted, etc. In order to achieve a tidy look, plush is being combed with a soft brush in one direction. The main canvas of plush is made of cotton or woollen threads, canvases fleece — of cotton, woollen or silken threads. This technique reminds of how velvet is made, but for velvet

having thicker and shorter fleece. Do not confuse German «Plüsch» with Russian «plyush». In my own words - German Plüsch is artificial fur (made of synthetic materials). Russian «plyush» is a fabric made of natural materials (cotton and silk), that reminds of viscose, which is sold to make teddy bears.

I can tell about a funny case from my experience. I have decided for the first time to take part in a contest in an «Old Teddy Bear» category. For me, as for a Russian person, old bear is a bear made of plush, so I made such kind of a toy for the contest. I can imagine perplexity of the respected judges, when they saw my creation in such a prestigious category! Russian «plyush» bears is beloved by all children, a good friend in any game. The older generation remembers its childhood and, of course, the «plyush» bear. Nowadays, «plyush» bears are made by teddy bear artists. Many art-

ists sew their bears in accordance with old patterns. «Plyush» bears are collectable items and a symbol of childhood.

considerably better than cotton, but they were quite expensive. Fluffy flannel, one — or two-sided baize, Russian «plyush» were used as the main materials for teddy bears. Calm and natural colours were preferred — brown, beige, grey and milky-white. Expensive materials were not used. Very often the main material was combined with additional ones, cotton and velvet, these materials could be of bright colours and with prints. Additional materials were used to make clothes for bears, what is interesting clothes was a part of a bear. Bear's body was sewed with a costume already on it, it could consist of waistcoat and cossacks (wide trousers). Waistcoat was the upper body part, while cossacks were bottom and paws. Cossacks were draped on the waist line and sewed to the waistcoat. Head and front paws of a bear, made of the main material, were stuffed and sewed to a waist coat

