

## **'THERE'S A BEAR IN THERE...'**

This is a line from a song in a children's television show - unfortunately there was no "bear in there" for me, and that is probably why I love them so.

Although I have made them most of my life, my most memorable makes were with the late Mirka Mora.

### **THE DOLLS**

For the most part I hand-craft my fabric dolls, taught by Mirka.. They are SOFT-SCULPTURES and not playthings for small children although small children may appreciate the work and craft that goes into them. They are SOFT-SCULPTURES not toys, most with meanings for now or in the past, they express something I feel or I am dealing with. I don't make many, and I find the hand making very therapeutic, as most handwork is.

I recently discovered a pattern for blanket dolls which during the early days of Australia on outback stations. They had no shops, no television, and not many books, so the simple blanket dolls were much loved. Nowadays vintage blankets are a treasure in themselves, and not like in the old days, discarded when old - certainly not cut up to make dolls.

### **THE BEARS**

*VINTAGE BEARS and TOYS.* From time to time I find VINTAGE bears and stuffed toys in op-shops (destined mostly for landfill) and elsewhere - I can't resist. I buy them, recondition them, make them new, sometimes change them up, add clothing, and sell them like the bears in this exhibition. - reconditioning purchased or made bears toys and dolls is an important and treasured part of my art work, and allows me to work on donated bears and pass them on to others with no cost.

I particularly focus on tiny and very old bears, although I have worked on very big bears. These usually come in dreadful condition and require many hours of fine work to make them like new or close to.

The bears in the exhibition **marked NFS** are donated bears, and destined for small children. If you have a child who longs for a bear, take one, there is no charge. All the other bears and stuffed toys are reconditioned or remade.

**CARE BEARS.** I collect hundreds of bears a year. They are donated to me and may or may not be in good condition. I fix them up, wash them, refill them when necessary, then they are passed on (at no cost) to Ambulance Officers, the Police, Crisis Centres and Catholic Welfare Societies.

