

Blonde and Beautiful

Jimini Hignett - 2008

There's an idea which has been hanging around for a while now, somewhere on the edge of my peripheral vision, imposing a whiff, like dog-shit embedded in the rutted soles of ones trainers, nagging at me to be dealt with - to knit one of those inflatable sex-dolls.

I have been putting off starting because the need for a pattern gleaned from an original, requires that I visit the shops in the red-light district which sell such items. I'm sure it's going to be expensive and I don't even want the bloody thing other than to draw a pattern off. In fact what I really need is a shop-soiled one. One that's been on display and has faded or has a leak, and perhaps I can get it discount, or free even. But the idea of bargaining for this feels like a vulnerable prospect.

Psychologically I mean.

So I have this friend who is blond and beautiful and whereas I just get in arguments, she can be charmingly intellectually superior in a way that I never manage. Breakfasting one day on the edge of the red-light district we get up the courage to shop for my inflatable doll and set off round the sex-shops together. Clearly she's the one to protect me from myself on this mission.

It has to be the 'classic' version, the icon, the one instantly recognisable as *the* inflatable sex-doll, the cartoon version as it were.

Round hole of a mouth, over-cute face, blond hair.

This turns out to be surprisingly difficult.

Most models have been modernised, with printed photograph faces of real women, just flat not 3D. Also they're absurdly expensive.

So we walk from shop to shop asking for one with a hole in - ha ha yes we know they all have holes, thank you, ha bloody ha - or ex window display - no, not used, thank-you-very-much, ha ha ha, very funny!

Finally, having tried about a dozen shops, a bloke produces from its cardboard box, a plastic bag revealing blond hair complete with red ribbons, wide blue eyes and the classic rubbery O-shaped mouth.

That's the one.

And we even get it for half-price.

But when I get her home and unfold her to measure-up for the pattern, I discover that she is tiny - only just over waist-high to me, child-sized.

A child with lurid breasts and gaping orifices. Only then do I notice the text under the photograph of the real woman printed on the box - 'Little Girl Doll'.

Now I hardly dare to touch the girl and lay her carefully, gently, on a cloth on the table. I do not know what to do with her. Later I fold her carefully back into the box.

So sad and disturbing, almost an alter-ego, scary.

Eventually I take the tracings I've made of the doll to the copy-shop.

In order to get a pattern of the right size to knit from I have to enlarge them 180%.