



MAIN PICTURE:
Buttons

Best of friends

Catherine Young, the creator of Bumpkin Bears, tells us how these adorable characters capture the spirit of care-free childhood days

Catherine Young, the artist who brings the sweet Bumpkin Bears characters to life, is British but now lives in a small rural village in Belgium, near the artistic city of Antwerp.

"I live here with my wonderful and supportive partner, two mad

cats and an ever-growing collection of my hand-made bears," says Catherine.

"I have always been creative, making hand-made gifts for family and friends, and I pursued this love at college where I studied art and textile design.

"I love to take the time to create that extra-special gift. I enjoy interior and garden design and when not making bears, you'll find me out in my garden.

"I shared my mum's love of many things in life including teddy bears, and laughing at Winnie the Pooh adventures. Over my lifetime she gave me many bears as gifts – they were often 'just because' gifts and these little characters always gave me a sense of comfort and friendship.

"My dear mum sadly passed away a few years ago but I know she would be my bears' greatest fan. It is my wish that my little Bumpkin Bears can bring to collectors as much love and comfort as these bears have for me.

"Bumpkin Bears come from my childhood days when I spent many a happy time at my granny's home in the heart of the English countryside. Idyllic days were spent out of doors and it is these memories that my bears bring alive in their characters.

"The actual name Bumpkin came from one of these childhood memories. My granny had taken my best friend and me on a trip to London to see all the magical Christmas lights. She asked the taxi driver if he could show 'these little country bumpkins the best sights of London'.

"At the time I am sure I felt embarrassed but now I look back with fondness and really, truly I am a little country bumpkin. My bears love all there is to love about the good old country life. They will bring to you all the love and care that goes into making them, along with their own great sparkling Bumpkin spirit."

The Bumpkin Bears were born following Catherine's visit to a teddy bear fair in Belgium at Christmas 2001, where she got her first teddy-making kit as a present.

"Once I started I couldn't put him down and I've been caught by the bearmaking bug ever since," she explains. "I became dedicated to learn all there was and still is to learn about this wonderful art.

"My little Bumpkin Bears capture care-free days, twinkling eyes of friendship and those ever-important open arms for lots of cuddles."

Bumpkin Bears are cuddly friends designed with the discerning adult collector in mind.

THIS PICTURE:
Finn

Only the finest of materials are used, from the softest Schulte mohair to quality luxurious synthetics, quality blown-glass eyes with custom colours and ultrasuede or wool paw pads.

Each bear is created from an original pattern designed by Catherine and every character is five-way jointed. Stuffings include polyfill and plastic or steel pellets, depending on each bear's requirements.

"They can be demanding little

THIS PICTURE:
Benjamin

bears at times!" says Catherine. "Dependent on the expression of the bear, some are needle and scissor-sculpted to bring out that extra-special character. Their facial features are carefully hand-shaded with permanent pigments.

"Each bear that I bring to life is full of character. Looking into their eyes, you can see what gentle and fun souls they are. With each bear my special memories are brought to life and it gives me such pleasure when they find loving new homes that can cherish these moments



ARTIST PROFILE



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through their new beary friend.

“If I'm not sure where the bears have got to, I can usually find them outdoors in the garden or exploring through the fields and hiding up apple trees. As much as they enjoy all this, their favourite part of the day remains having a loving pair of arms to come home to after a day's adventures.

“My Bumpkin Bears are over the moon about being featured in

the fantastic TBT magazine – I go especially into the city of Antwerp to buy it from the international magazine shop. We all love to sit together to read it and it will be lovely to see the bears smiling out from the pages.” 🐾

Cathering Young

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