

GIFTS GALORE!

Folkmanis Inspires Creative Play With Stellar Lineup of Plush Puppets



A gift of a puppet encourages imaginative, open-ended play, endearing hugs, and snuggly companionship – and no puppet inspires warmth and imagination better than those created by Folkmanis, the world’s premier puppet manufacturer and a company whose own gift for design shines through in all its creations.

The seeds for Folkmanis were planted back in the late 1960s, when Judy Folkmanis began sewing character puppets from patterns in a magazine for her two young sons’ nursery school in Watertown, Massachusetts. Before she knew it, her creations began attracting a growing group of other parents eager to pay her for puppets for their own children; and after moving to California in 1972, Judy picked up the thread, so to speak, and kept creating and selling puppets on a small scale.

By 1976, she and her husband, Atis, decided to try turning the hobby into a real business, giving it a year to see what happened. The rest, as they say, is toy industry history – as Folkmanis’ line and renown grew by leaps and bounds, and its puppets spread to stores all around the globe.

“The success that Folkmanis has enjoyed for more than 30 years simply reinforces the fact that when it comes to children, old-fashioned, open-ended play patterns are the best, and the simplest toys are really the healthiest gifts one can buy for a child,” says Elaine Kollias, marketing director. “That

is why puppets are so firmly in the ‘good toy’ category – not just that they encourage and inspire imaginative play, but that they represent a thoughtful and fun gift that is more than ‘just’ a toy.”

Widely regarded as the most innovative puppet-maker in the world, Folkmanis consistently designs beautifully crafted toys that inspire creativity, promote hands-on discovery, encourage interaction, teach fine and gross motor skills, help develop early language, and become a child’s lovable companion to be treasured for years. The company’s line includes a virtual menagerie of plush pets and friendly wildlife friends, with new designs constantly on the drawing board.

For spring 2008, for example, Folkmanis is introducing a diverse lineup of new puppets, highlighted by Gift Box Puppy and Gift Box Kitty, which combine the excitement and anticipation of a gift with an adorable “pet” puppet. An extension of the company’s award-winning peek-a-boo puppets collection, each of the two new puppets comes attached to its own 5-by-5-inch gift box – in gold tones for the kitty and blue for the puppy – and both are perfectly sized for little hands.

Also making its debut is a delightful



Chihuahua, complete with removable pink collar. An outstanding replica of the well-recognized “toy” dog, Folkmanis’ Chihuahua stands slightly larger than life at 14 inches tall, and features a smooth fabric coat, stout legs, apple-shaped face, and distinctively upright ears. Yet another new-for-spring puppet is a fabulously fluffy Angora Rabbit, adorned with long, silky white plush “fur.” Realistically detailed and irresistibly snuggable, the Angora Rabbit puppet also measures 14 inches.

New Stage Puppets are joining the Folkmanis lineup for spring, as well. First introduced in 2007, the Stage Puppets collection quickly won multiple awards, and will be joined for 2008 by characters including Sheepdog, Rabbit, Fox, Raccoon, Monkey, Toucan, Bear, and Big Bad Wolf. As with all Folkmanis creations, the new Stage Puppets have ultra-soft, heirloom-quality fabrics that help bring each animal to life.

“Every Folkmanis puppet is designed to offer high quality at a moderate price point – making each puppet an extraordinary value in terms of the long-lasting and imaginative play it inspires,” Kollias says. “Our puppets are gifts that keep on giving, because children never tire of playing with them, and even hand them down to their own children when the time comes.”

Adds Judy Folkmanis, “As the industry changes and becomes more technological, we remain true to our original mission: making wonderful puppets that are as much fun to play with as to cuddle.”

