

## Domestic abuse Barbie: Iconic doll given black eyes, split lips and bruises for new exhibition

- Sam Humphreys painted black eyes, bruises and blood onto iconic dolls
- Three now on display at Leicester University exhibition, Speaking Out
- Show looks at depictions of violence against women in art

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

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Here's Barbie as you've never seen her before: as a victim of domestic abuse.

A student artist has painted black eyes, bruises and blood onto the faces of the iconic dolls.

Sam Humphreys said she wanted to show the difference between how children view the world and its much darker realities.



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Artist Sam Humphreys said she wants to show the difference between how children view the world and its much darker realities

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Her project, It's A Matter Of Trust, has the tagline 'We shouldn't be taught that life is perfect.'

She said: 'The dolls are part of a project demonstrating how reality actually is and that life isn't perfect.'

'I was interested in how, when we're younger, we're led to believe that everything is perfect and how as children we are quite rightly sheltered from the harsh realities of adulthood.'

Sam, 41, who is studying a degree in Contemporary Art and Design at the Writtle School of Design in Chelmsford, Essex, used ten dolls for her project.



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**Here's Barbie as you've never seen her before: as a victim of domestic abuse**

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They range from some showing the iconic toy as bruised to some being sick and others being beaten to death.

Three have been selected for a display at Leicester University called Speaking Out which looks at depictions of violence against women in art.

This exhibition explores how survivors can overcome their traumatic experiences and promote a positive view of women's forms of resistance and empowerment through art.

Sam herself argues that the only way domestic violence can be stamped out is by teaching children about respect from an early age.

She added: 'Using Barbie is a nice way of using a toy that everyone recognises as an image of perfection and undercutting that.'

'My children have seen it. My youngest is only eight, so I wouldn't tell her anything scary.'



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**A spokeswoman for Mattel, which manufactures Barbie, said: 'Barbie is often used by adults to start conversations or leverage a cause in society.'**

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'She has seen a picture of the bruised Barbie but she hasn't asked what it's all about. She could have just fallen over, I don't think it's explicit or shocking.

If they asked me about it I would tell them, they know that some people in life are not as nice as others, I don't shield them that much.'

A spokeswoman for Mattel, which manufactures Barbie, said: 'Barbie is often used by adults to start conversations or leverage a cause in society.'



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[Mrs H.](#), Derbyshire United Kingdom, 1 month ago

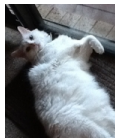
Whatever next!

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[hmpfh](#), USA, 1 month ago[Click to rate](#)

Wow I was horrified to see that image being a survivor of domestic violence. One out of 4 women experience DV, most falling between 20-24 yrs of age. The statistics haven't changed much in decades so, as a culture something is wrong. 1 of 3 women who are victims of homicide were murdered by their partner. And the abuse affects children.

[2](#)  
[11](#)[Click to rate](#)[murphycakes](#), Melbourne Australia, 1 month ago

Everyone knows what happens -we don't need a barbie doll to show us what happens GEEZ

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I think there are better ways to teach our children. We have to protect them and shield them from adult issues but we are always teaching them about respect and not hurting people and telling us if they are hurt. We don't have to teach them by telling them about domestic abuse. I find this really attention seeking and she's just used barbies to try and shock people.

[7](#)  
[3](#)[Click to rate](#)[jonah](#), Manchester, 1 month ago

Will ken be joining her for the men who get physically abused too

[5](#)  
[17](#)[Click to rate](#)[smitten kitten](#), London, 1 month ago

CSI barbie

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[10](#)[Click to rate](#)[ElleWestlake](#), Gallifrey, United Kingdom, 1 month ago

Leave Barbie alone. Her purpose is to be a fun children's toy not an advocate for body image, abuse, or whatever is next. Good grief!

[12](#)  
[37](#)[Click to rate](#)[Not proud to be British](#), UK, 1 month ago

Why would we want to teach children that they should grow up to expect at least one of their boyfriends to beat them up? Sorry I think this woman has issues...

[10](#)  
[28](#)[Click to rate](#)[sauce](#), Sydney, Australia, 1 month ago

I agree. I have been involved in domestic violence, and half the issue is believing that this is how women are to be treated. We should be teaching them that this is not normal, and not ok.

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[patticake](#), raleigh, nc, 1 month ago

I do not think its appropriate to expose children to the realities of domestic violence when they are so young... I am sorry some children have to experience this but it is not everyones reality... And the best way to raise healthy, caring adults is to provide a safe environment for them as children. We do not need to bring children up in lesser circumstances to teach them to be empathetic!

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9

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[han123](#), Portsmouth, 1 month ago

This is so art GCSE

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