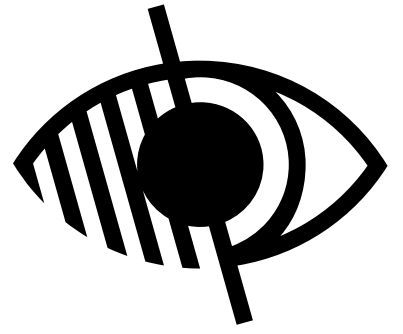


Barbie[®]

THE EXHIBITION



LARGE PRINT GUIDE

the
DESIGN
MUSEUM



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BARBIE®: THE EXHIBITION

Barbie, one of the best-selling dolls of all time, has reigned over the toy aisle for 65 years. In that time, she has had more than 260 careers, at least 50 different houses, and influenced the social and emotional development of generations of children.

The Barbie story is a design story; one that spans manufacturing, architecture, fashion and film. This exhibition tells that story, looking at the ways in which the world of Barbie reflects the 'real world' – at least as it relates to mainstream, western consumer culture.

BARBIE®: **THE EXHIBITION** (continued)

The Barbie doll has shaped children's view of adulthood through imaginary role play, taking centre stage in scenarios from the everyday to the fantastic. The importance of play has long been recognised by the design world; in 1961, the architect and furniture designer Charles Eames noted that 'toys and games are the preludes to serious ideas'. It's no surprise, then, that this small doll has had a huge impact.

THE DEBUT

Barbie was the creation of Ruth Handler, cofounder and first president of the Mattel toy company. Founded in California in 1945, Mattel quickly established itself as a respected toymaker, with Handler's husband Elliot leading the company's research and design efforts, while Ruth herself headed the sales and marketing side.

In the early 1950s, Ruth identified a gap in the market for a fashion doll designed to resemble an adult woman. Observing her daughter Barbara playing with paper dolls, she noted that 'little girls just want to be bigger girls', and that there was nothing yet designed to fulfil that need. Dolls of the 1950s tended to look like babies, socialising young girls to expect marriage and motherhood as their eventual life path. Handler realised that an adult-bodied doll, with a glamorous, 'grown-up' wardrobe, could offer a new and more flexible way for children to play.

BARBIE IS HERE

> Through arches, on the left

On 9 March 1959, Ruth Handler launched the first Barbie doll at the New York Toy Fair. Reaching this point had been a struggle, for Ruth had had to convince Mattel's male executives that an adult fashion doll was a product worth developing. They feared that no parent would buy their child a doll with an obviously mature female figure.

Ruth was inspired by several sources, including the German novelty doll Lilli, which she encountered on a trip to Europe in 1956. To augment the play appeal of Barbie, she developed the concept of multiple, interchangeable outfits that could be purchased separately.

BARBIE DOLL, 1959

> On central plinth

The very first Barbie doll was marketed as a 'Teen Age Fashion Model'. Her groomed appearance and glamorous accessories gave her an air of maturity, akin to prominent 1950s models such as Dovima and Dorian Leigh.

Nevertheless, her swinging ponytail, which came in blonde or brunette, ensured that she could be perceived as a teenager, since the hairstyle was associated with young actors like Sandra Dee.

'BARBIE YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL' COMMERCIAL, 1959

> Opposite wall

The first Barbie commercial aired during popular American children's programme The Mickey Mouse Club, which was sponsored by Mattel. It promoted both the doll and the range of outfits and accessories, which could be purchased separately.

The commercial emphasised the doll's function as a role model for young girls. It sought to reassure parents by suggesting that Barbie encouraged girls to adopt good grooming habits and feminine deportment.

SUBURBAN SHOPPER, 1959

> Next room on central plinth

Barbie required an extensive wardrobe to fulfil her potential as a fashion doll. At her launch in 1959, 22 separate outfits were available to purchase, inspired by the leading couturiers of the day.

Some of these garments cost more than the doll itself, reflecting their high quality. Engineering them to fit correctly on the doll's body was a difficult task, avoiding disproportionately thick seams and bulky gathers of fabric.

BARBIE PATENT, 1959

> Continue anticlockwise around plinth

This patent diagram demonstrates how the Barbie doll stands up, with angled pins in the base supporting her feet; as well as the articulation of her arms and legs.

Ruth Handler's ambitious vision required specialist knowledge of materials and manufacturing. Aerospace engineer Jack Ryan, hired as Mattel's head of research and development in 1955, brought Handler's concept to life.

BARBIE PACKAGING, STAND AND BOOKLET, 1959

The thrill of receiving a Barbie doll has always been amplified by the product's packaging. Originally, this was an opaque cardboard box, illustrated with the different fashions that were available to buy separately.

The box also contained a miniature fashion catalogue, and a stand with pins that inserted into tubes in the doll's feet. This style of stand was soon replaced with a more stable one that held the doll under the arms.

PRODUCTION FOOTAGE OF FIRST BARBIE DOLLS, 1958

> Left of projector

This footage documents the first Barbie dolls being manufactured in Japan. A new technique called rotational moulding allowed for a greater level of detail than older methods of plastic production. Plastic granules are spun in a mould, at high speed and high temperature, until they melt and coat the inside of the mould.

The footage captures the entire production process, including garment sewing, hair being styled, and the dolls being packaged.

BARBIE TIMELINE

> Continue left

- 1945** Mattel founded in Hawthorne, California.
- 1959** Barbie launches at the New York Toy Fair, as a 'Teen Age Fashion Model'.
- 1961** Barbie takes on the first of many careers: Ballerina, Registered Nurse and American Airlines Stewardess. Ken is launched as 'Barbie's boyfriend'.
- 1962** Launch of the first Barbie DreamHouse.
- 1963** Introduction of Midge, the first of many friends of Barbie.
- 1964** Launch of Skipper, 'Barbie's Little Sister'.
- 1965** Barbie takes on the new career of astronaut - four years before a man walks on the moon.

BARBIE TIMELINE (continued)

- 1967** The first major Barbie redesign - a new look for the Mod era.
- 1968** Introduction of Christie, the first Black friend of Barbie.
- 1971** Launch of Malibu Barbie.
- 1977** Superstar Barbie marks another major redesign of the doll.
- 1980** The first Black and Hispanic Barbies are launched.
- 1985** Oscar de la Renta becomes the first couturier to design outfits for Barbie.
- 1986** ‘Barbie: Portrait of BillyBoy*’ created by Andy Warhol.

BARBIE TIMELINE (continued)

- 1992** Totally Hair Barbie launches to become the best-selling Barbie doll of all time. Barbie 'runs' for President of the USA for the first time.
- 1993** Earring Magic Ken launches, and becomes the best-selling Ken doll of all time.
- 1999** Generation Girl Barbie marks a redesign for the new millennium.
- 2001** Release of 'Barbie and the Nutcracker', the first CGI animated Barbie film.
- 2014** @BarbieStyle launches on Instagram, and has since inspired a following of 2.9 million.
- 2016** Barbie introduces three new body types, and a broader range of skin tones and hairstyles.

BARBIE TIMELINE (continued)

- 2018** Barbie launches the Dream Gap Project, a global mission dedicated to challenging gender stereotypes.
- 2021** Mattel introduces Barbie 'Brooklyn' Roberts in 'Barbie: Big City, Big Dreams'.
- 2023** Release of 'Barbie: The Movie', starring Margot Robbie and directed by Greta Gerwig.
- 2024** Barbie celebrates 65 years, continuing to evolve and reflect culture.

BARBIE AND FRIENDS

The initial popularity of the Barbie doll took the toy industry by surprise, with over 300,000 dolls sold in 1959 alone. The doll was a successful stand-alone product, but it was in the next few years that it came to represent a brand. New dolls and accessories were designed to complement Barbie herself, enabling ever more elaborate scenarios for children's play.

This world-building process was augmented by the launch of Barbie merchandise in the early 1960s, with branded products ranging from novels and comic books to thermos flasks and record players. This increased the brand's visibility and turned the doll into a fully realised character.

KEN DOLL, 1961

> On central plinth

Introduced as 'Barbie's boyfriend', the original Ken Carson was the epitome of clean-cut, collegiate American masculinity. Like the Barbie doll, he had an extensive wardrobe of elegant clothing, heavily influenced by preppy Ivy League style.

Ken was presented as a youthful, wholesome counterpart to Barbie, with his blonde or dark brown crew-cut and slender physique. The new doll allowed children to role-play relationship scenarios in an age-appropriate way.

MIDGE DOLL, 1963

> Continue left along plinth

Midge Hadley was introduced as 'Barbie's best friend'. With her round face, freckles and stylish flip hairstyle – available in red, blonde or brunette – she was designed partly to appeal to parents who felt that the glamorous, made-up appearance of Barbie was too adult for a children's toy.

Nonetheless, Midge had the same body shape as Barbie, and was therefore intended to share the same wardrobe of fashionable clothing and accessories.

ALLAN DOLL, 1964

The introduction of Allan Sherwood as Ken's friend, and Midge's boyfriend, meant that Barbie now existed at the heart of a social set. This opened up more possibilities for role-play.

Just as Midge and Barbie could share a wardrobe, Allan could share clothes with Ken and embody the same youthful, wholesome look.

SKIPPER DOLL, 1964

Skipper was introduced as 'Barbie's little sister', with a more childlike face and body. She boasted an equally stylish wardrobe, much of which was designed to match that of Barbie.

Like Midge, she was developed to counteract concerns that Barbie was too adult in appearance for a children's toy. Her character also made it possible to role-play childcare scenarios, with Barbie as babysitter, without having to reimagine Barbie as a wife and mother.

‘BARBIE SINGS!’ VINYL, 1961

> Continue clockwise along plinth

In 1961 Mattel released Barbie Sings!, featuring Charlotte Austin as Barbie and Bill Cunningham as Ken. The ‘six terrific teen-age tunes’, aimed at a young female audience, convey the excitement of first love. They established the characters of Barbie and Ken as the epitome of wholesome teenage romance. Barbie Sings! was released as a collection of three 45 rpm vinyl records containing six songs, and an illustrated booklet with lyrics.

'BARBIE SINGS!' COMMERCIAL, 1961

> On wall

1 minute | Courtesy of Mattel

ALL ABOUT BARBIE

> On central plinth

Barbie was the character at the heart of a rapidly growing franchise, which incorporated merchandise and media to build an entire world around her. From the early 1960s, Mattel licensed the publication of Barbie novels and short stories, comics and a bi-monthly magazine with news about her fashion-filled lifestyle.

With their bright, bold graphics and lighthearted tone, these publications revealed insights into the world of Barbie, keeping young audiences engaged and eager to discover more. They suggested and shaped play scenarios, while maintaining the doll's status as an aspirational role model for children.

ALL ABOUT BARBIE (continued)

1 'BARBIE' MAGAZINE, 1962

2 'BARBIE AND KEN' BOOK, 1963

Cynthia Lawrence and Bette Lou Maybee Random House

THE BARBIE LOGO, 1959–2024

> On back wall

The Barbie logo has evolved to meet the needs of the brand, in tune with wider graphic design trends. The 1976 redesign introduced a deep drop shadow and bolder typography, referencing the Pop Art movement.

This was simplified in the 1990s, after which the new millennium saw experimental cursive and a playful feel. Today the logo has come full circle, returning to its original 1959 script to reflect the brand's heritage.

THE DOLL

> Continue left along wall

Barbie is many things – a brand, a fictional character, and a cultural reference point. All those accumulated layers of meaning are resting on one foundational object: the doll itself.

Like any product, the doll occupies a position between the designer and the user. It embodies and communicates wider societal preoccupations, while also functioning as an avatar onto which children can project their own stories, desires and assumptions.

The Barbie doll may be small at 11.5 inches high, but it represents a huge feat of engineering. Over the decades, its design has embraced pioneering technologies and manufacturing methods. These have been deployed to bring the doll to 'life' with movement and sound. The doll has leveraged design to evolve with the changing times, using new materials to represent different skin tones and hair textures.

THE CHANGING FACE OF BARBIE

This chronological display charts the significant redesigns of the Barbie doll over the decades. Her appearance has undergone numerous changes, helping to maintain her cultural relevance for over 65 years. Beginning with a single design in 1959, the Barbie line today boasts a catalogue of hundreds of distinct head and body moulds.

Head moulds – sometimes referred to as ‘face sculpts’ – are the blank, unpainted plastic head shapes which are transformed into recognisable Barbie dolls with the addition of synthetic hair and painted facial features. On a modern production line, these additions are automated, with face paint applied using stencils and stamps.

AMERICAN GIRL BARBIE DOLL, 1965

> Continue into next room

The original Barbie head and body moulds were first introduced in 1959. They continued in use through the 1960s, topped off with a variety of hairstyles. The first body variation was introduced in 1965, when Barbie gained not only a chic new hairstyle – the ‘American Girl’ bob – but also bendable legs which were jointed at the knee.

TWIST 'N TURN BARBIE DOLL, 1967

> Continue clockwise around room

The new Twist 'n Turn waist signalled a shift in the design of Barbie. It took the doll from the classic glamour of mid-century America to the youthful Mod style of 'Swinging London', with a completely remodelled face. At her launch in 1967, the new doll could be purchased for just \$1.50 when trading in an older Barbie. This was half the usual price of \$3.00, which would be about £28 today.

TWIST 'N TURN STACEY DOLL, 1968

The first Stacey doll was launched in 1968 as an English friend of Barbie, complementing the new Mod mood with her style that referenced London's fashionable Carnaby Street. The 'Stacey' head mould would be reused for 1971's Malibu Barbie, seen to the right.

The difference between Stacey, with her rooted eyelashes and pale skin, and the wide-eyed, tanned Malibu Barbie, demonstrates how face painting can drastically alter the appearance of a head mould.

SUNSET MALIBU BARBIE DOLL, 1971

With long, straight blonde hair and oversized lilac sunglasses, the Malibu Barbie doll was the epitome of 1970s California cool. This doll uses the head mould first deployed for the Stacey doll. Her appearance recalls the character of Marcia Brady from *The Brady Bunch*, which first aired in 1969. Her tanned skin – reflecting an age before widespread public awareness of sun safety – signified an aspirational outdoor lifestyle of surf, sand and sunshine.

STEFFIE DOLL, 1972

Though the Steffie character was only in production for a year, her design was to have a lasting impact on Barbie. The 'Steffie' head mould, with its wide eyes and open mouth, has remained in use for over 50 years. It has been used to portray numerous dolls in the Barbie universe, including friends of Barbie such as Cara, P.J. and Whitney – as well as several different incarnations of Barbie herself.

HAWAIIAN BARBIE DOLL, 1975

Hawaiian Barbie was one of the first Barbie dolls to reuse the 'Steffie' head mould, seen on the doll to your left, and here completely reconfigured through new hair and make-up design. With her dark hair, lei garland and 'grass' skirt, she reflects Hawaiian culture through an American lens.

SUPERSTAR BARBIE DOLL, 1977 (2022 REPRODUCTION)

Superstar Barbie represented the doll's most dramatic redesign in a decade. Her voluminous blonde hair, reflecting the style of stars such as Farrah Fawcett, complements a sleek and sparkling pink dress that recalls eveningwear designed by Halston.

The new 'Superstar' head mould would become the standard face for white Barbie dolls, for the next two decades. This was also the doll that solidified the long-standing association between Barbie and the colour pink.

TWIRLY CURLS BARBIE DOLL, 1983

From 1980 onwards, the character of Barbie was embodied in a variety of ethnicities, including Black, Hispanic and white dolls. Twirly Curls Barbie, who came with a battery-operated 'Twirly Curler' device for use on the doll's hair, was one of the earliest to be envisaged in three different ethnicities. It uses the same head mould as the Sun Gold Malibu Barbie doll, shown to the right.

SUN GOLD MALIBU BARBIE DOLL, 1984

This doll uses the same head mould as the Twirly Curls Barbie seen to the left; as did more than 30 other Black and Hispanic dolls designed between 1982 and 1990. In 1988, the mould was also used to introduce Teresa, the first friend of Barbie with Hispanic heritage.

PERFUME PRETTY BARBIE DOLL, 1988

Perfume Pretty Barbie, sold with a miniature bottle of real perfume, epitomised the extravagant and opulent fashions of the 1980s. The head mould used for the Black iteration of this Barbie is known as the 'Christie' mould, since it was first used to portray the character of Christie, a friend of Barbie, in 1987.

SPECIAL EXPRESSIONS

BARBIE DOLL, 1993

This doll uses the 'Teresa' head mould, which was developed specifically to portray that character in the early 1990s. The mould was used for Hispanic iterations of Barbie throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. It has also been deployed to portray dolls of South Asian and Native American heritage.

BEAD BLAST BARBIE DOLL, 1997

The Black iteration of Bead Blast Barbie uses the 'Nichelle' head mould, first developed for The Marvelous World of Shani. This Mattel line, launched in 1991, featured exclusively Black dolls, designed to represent a broader and more authentic range of Afrocentric features.

The characters of Shani, Asha and Nichelle were ultimately absorbed into the Barbie line, and their head moulds used to represent both Barbie and other characters of colour.

CORDUROY COOL BARBIE DOLL, 1999

With her striped clothing and palette of lime, blue and brown, Corduroy Cool Barbie shows the influence of Prada's Spring 1996 collection, which incorporated similar patterns and colours.

This Black Barbie uses the 'Asha' head mould, another design first developed for the Shani doll line. This mould has been in circulation since the early 1990s, used to portray Barbie and also her friends Christie and Nikki.

GENERATION GIRL BARBIE DOLL, 1999

The Generation Girl line refreshed the Barbie brand for the new millennium. As well as a brand new Barbie head mould, it introduced several new characters, with their own unique moulds that remain in use today.

The 'Generation Girl' face became the primary mould for white Barbie dolls produced in the 2000s, superseding the 'Superstar' face. Compared to the latter, it has slightly fuller lips and more defined cheekbones.

FASHION FEVER BARBIE DOLL, 2007

The Fashion Fever line of Barbie dolls emphasised glamour. A new head mould was introduced along with this line, which was used concurrently with the earlier 'Generation Girl' head, and which also appears on many of the ballet- and fantasy-themed Barbie dolls of the late 2000s. With her thin eyebrows and frosted pink lips, this Barbie perfectly captures the prevailing look of the decade.

BARBIE BASICS COLLECTION 001

MODEL NO 04, 2009

Created by Bill Greening, Principal Designer Barbie Signature, the Barbie Basics were a line of dolls aimed at an adult collector audience. These dolls deploy the 'Model Muse' body mould, which features tilted hips to mimic the pose of a runway model.

This Barbie uses the 'Goddess' head mould, which was first used on a doll by fashion designer Bob Mackie, who has developed numerous collectible, or Signature, dolls for the brand.

BARBIE BASICS COLLECTION 001

MODEL NO 07, 2009

This doll wears a chic black dress and neutral-toned make-up, like the other dolls in the Barbie Basics line. Her head mould is known as the 'Aphrodite', since it first appeared on a fantasy doll showing Barbie as the Greek deity Aphrodite. It has subsequently been used on many Signature dolls.

FASHIONISTAS GLAM BARBIE DOLL, 2009

The first iteration of the Barbie Fashionistas line consisted of six dolls based on specific fashion 'personalities': Glam, Wild, Cutie, Sassy, Girly and Artsy. This doll reuses the 'Generation Girl' head mould, this time with pink-toned make-up to complement her dress.

BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #49, 2016

This doll was the first to debut an important new Barbie head mould, dubbed the 'Millie' – a nod to Millicent, her official middle name. With soft, symmetrical features caught in a small smile, this is now the primary head mould used for white, blonde iterations of Barbie. It is usually designed with relatively natural and low-key make-up, especially when compared with earlier Barbie faces.

BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #27, 2016

In 2016 the Fashionistas line was relaunched, led by Senior Vice President of Design, Kim Culmone. It now features a range of new head moulds, hairstyles, skin tones and body types, reflecting Mattel's commitment to diversity.

This doll sports vibrant blue hair and the new 'Curvy' body design. Viewed as a group, the contemporary Fashionistas better reflect the world that children see around themselves.

BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #25, 2016

Another doll from the relaunched generation of Fashionistas, this Barbie showcases the new 'Petite' body type. She uses a head mould known as the 'Mbili', which has been in use since 2001, and which was designed specifically to represent Afrocentric facial features. Her lace-patterned dress and oversized earrings reflect catwalk fashion trends from 2014-15.

BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #29, 2016

The contemporary Fashionistas line incorporates a 'Tall' body type, as seen on this doll, alongside the Curvy, Petite and Original Barbie bodies. Her head mould, the 'Neysa', is the same as that on the blue-haired Barbie displayed to the left, with slight dimples and a pointed chin. Since its introduction in 2014, this versatile mould has remained in frequent use across many Barbie product lines.

BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #105, 2018

This Barbie has an Afro hairstyle and hi-top trainers on her flat feet. Her head mould, dubbed the 'Daisy', was originally developed to complement 'Curvy' bodied dolls, with fuller facial features. It has subsequently been used to represent dolls with a variety of body types, skin tones and hairstyles.

BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #126, 2019

This 'Curvy' doll was the first Barbie to use the 'Violet' head mould, which has pronounced dimples and broad, high cheeks. Her bronzed skin, balayage hair and thick, defined eyebrows reflect beauty trends that emerged on social media during the 2010s.

KEN

> Continue into next room, on left wall

The character of Ken has undergone as profound an evolution as Barbie herself, from fresh-faced student to today's diverse line-up of dolls. Originally presented as her 'boyfriend', today the relationship between Ken and Barbie is deliberately undefined, allowing children to project their own assumptions and imagine different play scenarios.

The doll's periodic redesigns have responded to changing notions of male fashion over the decades. Over time he and his friends have followed Barbie into an era of greater representation, with the Ken of today embodied in a broader variety of skin tones, hairstyles, body shapes, and various disabilities.

KEN (continued)

> Continue clockwise around room

1 KEN DOLL, 1961

Garet 'Midge' Newell

**2 NEW GOOD-LOOKIN' TALKING
KEN DOLL, 1969**

Kindly loaned from the private collection of Daniel Lee

3 BRAD DOLL, 1970

Courtesy of Mattel

4 MOD HAIR KEN DOLL, 1973

**5 SUNSATIONAL MALIBU
KEN DOLL, 1981**

**6 SUNSATIONAL MALIBU
KEN DOLL, 1983**

Courtesy of Mattel

7 CRYSTAL KEN DOLL, 1984

8 CRYSTAL KEN DOLL, 1984

9 BEACH BLAST STEVEN DOLL, 1990

KEN (continued)

- 10 EARRING MAGIC KEN DOLL, 1993**
Joey Jarossi (YouTube: Beauty Inside A Box)
- 11 CONCERT DATE KEN DOLL, 2001**
- 12 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #8, 2017**
- 13 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #16, 2018**
- 14 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #130, 2019**
- 15 BARBIE BMR1959, 2019**

REPRESENTATION

> Continue clockwise around room

Barbie has always been presented as a role model for children, who are encouraged to see their future adult selves reflected in the doll. With that in mind, representation is a critical component of the Barbie brand's ongoing relevance. Children need to see themselves, to be themselves.

Between 1959 and the present day, Barbie has gradually shifted away from a narrow vision of white-skinned, straight-haired, able-bodied beauty. Over the last seven decades, the Barbie doll has undergone a series of design evolutions, to better reflect the realities of our diverse, pluralistic society.

FRANCIE DOLL, 1967

The original Francie doll was launched in 1966 as 'Barbie's MOD-ern Cousin' to showcase the youthful Mod fashions of the era. In the following year, Mattel launched a Black version of the Francie doll, using the same face mould and hairstyle. Francie was the first doll of colour released by Mattel, and paved the way for greater representation in the Barbie line.

CHRISTIE O'NEIL

Introduced in 1968, the Christie doll was the first Black friend of Barbie to be designed with Afrocentric features and hair. In her earliest incarnation, her look was influenced by stars of the Motown music scene, such as Diana Ross and Gladys Knight. She was relaunched in 1977 as Superstar Christie, but was redesigned once again in the 1980s.

Christie would eventually be joined by other characters of colour, and by Black Barbie herself from 1980. Nonetheless, Christie has been a central figure in the story of Barbie for over 55 years - a symbol of Black representation for generations of children.

CHRISTIE O'NEIL (continued)

1 TWIST 'N TURN CHRISTIE DOLL, 1968

Kindly loaned from the private collection of Daniel Lee

2 SUPERSTAR CHRISTIE DOLL, 1977

2021 reproduction

3 BEACH BLAST CHRISTIE DOLL, 1990

**4 CHRISTIE 55TH ANNIVERSARY
DOLL, 2023**

MALIBU TO BROOKLYN

Since 2021, the character of Barbie has been embodied in two distinct doll designs, with the introduction of the Black character Barbie 'Brooklyn' Roberts in the animated film *Barbie: Big City, Big Dreams*.

Together with the white Barbie 'Malibu' Roberts, these dolls now serve as the two lead characters of the Barbie brand, across all social media content and related outputs. They are distinguished by the nicknames 'Malibu' and 'Brooklyn' to denote their respective hometowns.

MALIBU TO BROOKLYN (continued)

**16 BARBIE BIG CITY BIG DREAMS
'BROOKLYN' DOLL, 2021**

**17 BARBIE BIG CITY BIG DREAMS
'MALIBU' DOLL, 2021**

REIMAGINING THE BARBIE DOLL

For the first two decades of her existence, the character of Barbie was exclusively imagined as a white woman. In 1980, Kitty Black Perkins led the design of the first Black Barbie, as well as the first Hispanic and ‘Oriental’* Barbie dolls. Perkins was Mattel’s Chief Designer for the Barbie line, and the first Black woman to hold that position.

These dolls were an important step towards representation. Black Barbie, in particular, could claim cultural authenticity, her Afro-textured hair adorned with a pick. Whilst the Black and Hispanic Barbies used the ‘Steffie’ face mould, a new mould with East Asian features was developed for ‘Oriental’* Barbie.

REIMAGINING THE BARBIE DOLL

(continued)

- 5 BLACK BARBIE DOLL, 1980**
- 6 HISPANIC BARBIE DOLL, 1980**
- 7 ‘ORIENTAL’* BARBIE DOLL, 1981**

*This was the title under which the doll was originally sold in 1981. ‘Oriental’ is now recognised as an offensive term. We have reproduced it here for historical accuracy.

FRIENDS TOGETHER

For over 60 years, Barbie has had a large group of friends. From Miko and Teresa – the first Asian and Hispanic friends of Barbie – to Becky, the first to use a wheelchair, these dolls have reflected a wide range of ethnicities, varying disabilities, and cultural contexts.

This group of friends have also opened up new role-play scenarios, as with Happy Families Midge, who offered a child-friendly representation of birth and motherhood.

FRIENDS TOGETHER (continued)

- 8 DELUXE QUICK CURL CARA DOLL, 1976**
- 9 TROPICAL MIKO DOLL, 1985**
- 10 COOL TIMES TERESA DOLL, 1989**
- 11 UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON
KIRA DOLL, 1990**
- 12 SHARE A SMILE BECKY DOLL, 1997**
- 13 AMAZING NAILS LEA DOLL, 2002**
- 14 HAPPY FAMILIES MIDGE DOLL, 2003**
- 15 NIKKI DOLL, 2013**

WE ARE BARBIE

Today, Mattel is proud to call Barbie the world's most diverse doll brand. The present product line-up embraces 35 skin tones, dozens of hair colours and textures, four body shapes and a variety of disabilities.

Rather than assigning prescriptive ethnic or social 'identities' to individual dolls, Mattel have chosen to leave this interpretation in the hands of the consumer, who may project their own cultural references onto the doll. This approach also reflects our contemporary understanding of identity as more fluid, and less dependent upon binary categories.

WE ARE BARBIE (continued)

- 1 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #121, 2019**
- 2 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #135, 2020**
- 3 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #146, 2020**
- 4 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #166, 2021**
- 5 BARBIE LOOKS #2, 2021**
- 6 BARBIE LOOKS #3, 2022**
- 7 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #187, 2022**
- 8 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #208, 2023**

DESIGNING THE DOLL

> Continue clockwise around room

Before any Barbie doll is released, it undergoes a complex design process, which can take up to 18 months from first concept to launch.

To celebrate the 65th anniversary of Barbie this year, Carlyle Nuera, Lead Designer for Barbie Signature, has developed an homage to the original doll from 1959. Every aspect of these dolls' design, from their clothing and hairstyles, to the packaging and photography, has been shaped by a team of specialists at Mattel.

The process combines traditional, analogue skills – such as hand-painting the prototype faces and sewing toiles for the dress – and cutting-edge digital techniques used to sculpt the dolls' faces and accessories.

THE CONCEPT

Carlyle Nuera was briefed to design a doll which marks the 65th anniversary of Barbie. From the sunglasses and red lipstick, to the monochrome stripes, his concept sketch references the design of the original 1959 Barbie doll.

At the start of the design process, Nuera compiled a mood board of inspirational images from fashion and popular culture, including works by Dior and Christopher John Rogers. As with any Barbie doll, this background research ensures that the design resonates with a contemporary audience – even as it references the history of the brand.

THE CONCEPT (continued)

1 CONCEPT SKETCHES, 2022

Courtesy of Mattel

2 MOOD BOARD DESIGN REFERENCE IMAGES, 2022

Courtesy of Mattel

HEAD AND HAIR

The basic shape of a modern Barbie doll head mould is digitally modelled using Freeform, a 3D sculpting design platform. Once it has been produced in vinyl, the design prototype is given hair, facial features and make-up; in accordance with the concept sketch.

The dolls' hair, which is made from synthetic Saran fibre, is rooted into the head on a machine designed for that specific purpose. At the prototype stage, the dolls' faces are painted on entirely by hand. Once the doll goes into production, this hand-painted design is replicated using a stamping method.

HEAD AND HAIR (continued)

3 3D SCULPTING FILM EXCERPT, 2023

1 minute 30 seconds | Courtesy of Mattel

4 HAIR ROOTING FILM EXCERPT, 2023

3 minutes | Courtesy of Mattel

5 FACE PAINTING FILM EXCERPT, 2023

1 minute 20 seconds | Courtesy of Mattel

6 HAIR SAMPLES, 2023

Saran | Courtesy of Mattel

7 HAIRSTYLES ON HEAD MOULDS, 2023

Saran and vinyl | Courtesy of Mattel

8 MAKEUP ON HEAD MOULDS, 2023

Acrylic paint on vinyl | Courtesy of Mattel

FASHION AND ACCESSORIES

A series of toiles are used to determine the dress pattern. This needs to fit correctly on a doll-sized body, without puckering or bunching up at the seams. The fabric needs to be lightweight; as well as being easy to work with at the manufacturing stage, and compliant with relevant safety legislation.

Accessories are modelled digitally and prototyped on a 3D printer. Once the design is finalised, a 'spec sheet' is compiled for the manufacturer, outlining every detail from the type of fabric used, to the exact shade of hair fibre.

FASHION AND ACCESSORIES

(continued)

9 FABRIC SAMPLES, 2023

Taffeta and tricot | Courtesy of Mattel

10 SEWING PATTERNS, 2023

Courtesy of Mattel

11 TOILES, 2023

Muslin | Courtesy of Mattel

PACKAGING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Packaging design is a key part of a doll's appeal, especially for Barbie Signature dolls. It needs to be both functional – for transportation and retail display purposes – and aesthetically pleasing, emphasising the significance of the doll inside the box.

The finished dolls are then photographed for marketing and promotional material, on Barbie-sized sets which are lit and styled like any life-size photoshoot. Together with the packaging, they contextualise the dolls, shaping consumers' expectations of the final product when it is released.

PACKAGING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

(continued)

12 SAPPHIRE HAND TAG ARTWORK, 2023

Courtesy of Mattel

13 PACKAGING DESIGNS, 2023

Courtesy of Mattel

14 MARKETING PHOTOGRAPHY, 2024

Courtesy of Mattel

15 BARBIE 65TH ANNIVERSARY DOLL, 2024

Courtesy of Mattel

16 BARBIE 65TH ANNIVERSARY DOLL, 2024

Courtesy of Mattel

MAKING BARBIE MOVE

> Continue clockwise around room

Bringing Barbie to life has been a crucial part of her appeal, expanding the range of role-play possibilities available to children. Underneath the doll's plastic exterior, a range of mechanisms have been deployed to make Barbie and her friends walk, talk, dance and even grow.

Expanding the doll's capacity for realistic role-play goes beyond entertainment value. In 2022, a Cardiff University neuroscience study, commissioned by Mattel, concluded that doll role-play has significant benefits for children's social and emotional development.

NEW DYNAMICS

From 1970 onwards, the Barbie doll was augmented with the latest in material and structural innovations. Marketed as fully posable, the Dramatic New Living Barbie doll improved upon the bendable legs and Twist 'n Turn waist of earlier dolls, with moveable ankle, wrist and elbow joints.

Soon, she was joined by the Busy Barbie doll, whose bendable thumbs enabled her to grip a variety of accessories. The Free Moving line of dolls, including Barbie and her friends Cara, P.J., Curtis and Ken, had an even greater range of motion, activated by a tab attached to their backs.

NEW DYNAMICS (continued)

**1 DRAMATIC NEW LIVING
BARBIE DOLL, 1970**

Kindly loaned from the private collection of Daniel Lee

2 BUSY BARBIE DOLL, 1972

3 FREE MOVING CARA DOLL, 1975

Courtesy of Mattel

BARBIE WALKS

Released in 1972, Walk Lively Barbie was the first Barbie doll designed to walk 'gracefully at any pace'. When attached to her stand and pushed along, her arms and legs automatically swayed back and forth, and her head looked from side-to-side.

In 1999, the Walking Barbie doll could be clipped onto her baby sister Krissy's pram. When the pram was manually pulled along, its wheels spun, and the doll's legs would move in step to give an air of realism to her walks in the park.

BARBIE WALKS (continued)

4 WALK LIVELY BARBIE DOLL, 1972

Kindly loaned from the private collection of Daniel Lee

5 WALKING BARBIE DOLL, 1999

GROWING UP SKIPPER DOLL, 1975

The character of Skipper, 'Barbie's Little Sister', was reconfigured as a teenager during the 1970s. Growing Up Skipper bridged the gap between these two iterations. The doll's torso contains a mechanism, activated by rotating her arm, which causes her to grow taller and develop breasts. This simplified version of puberty offered children a reassuring take on the prospect of 'growing up'.

DANCING BARBIE

Dancing has always been used to showcase the Barbie doll's movement. In 1971 children could rock Live Action Barbie on a stand to make her waist twist and groove, and in 1995 they could help Dance Moves Barbie practice her high kicks, ready to perform on the dance floor.

The introduction of the malleable 'Ever-Flex' body, with soft vinyl around an internal joint, gave the Dance 'n Flex dolls almost limitless movement. Accessorised with microphones, cassette players and a portable stereo, these dancing Barbies capture the music trends and routines of their eras.

DANCING BARBIE (continued)

6 LIVE ACTION BARBIE DOLL, 1971

Kindly loaned from the private collection of Daniel Lee

7 DANCE MOVES BARBIE DOLL, 1995

8 JEWEL GIRL BARBIE DOLL, 2000

9 DANCE 'N FLEX TERESA DOLL, 2002

‘LIVING BARBIE WITH MAUREEN MCCORMICK’ COMMERCIAL, 1970

1 minute | Courtesy of Mattel

‘WALK LIVELY BARBIE’ COMMERCIAL, 1972

1 minute | Courtesy of Mattel

‘DANCE MOVES BARBIE’ COMMERCIAL, 1995

30 seconds | Courtesy of Mattel

@BARBIESTYLE AND @BARBIE INSTAGRAM REELS, 2022–23

30 seconds | Courtesy of Mattel

‘TALKING BARBIE AND FRIENDS TV SHOW’ COMMERCIAL, 1970

30 seconds | Courtesy of Mattel

BARBIE TALKS

In 1968, Barbie and her friends 'spoke' for the first time. The prototype shown here reveals the miniature spinning record and voice box inside her torso, making Barbie speak one of six phrases when an external pull-string was tugged.

By 1991, Teen Talk Barbie contained a chip which was programmed to play four random phrases from a total of 270 possibilities. With the advance of digital technology, the potential to interact with Barbie was fully realised. Dolls such as Video Girl Barbie, with her embedded camera, could be used as tools for creative expression.

BARBIE TALKS (continued)

10 TALKING CHRISTIE DOLL, 1969

Kindly loaned from the private collection of Daniel Lee

11 TALKING BARBIE DOLL PROTOTYPE, 1968

Courtesy of Mattel

12 TEEN TALK BARBIE DOLL, 1991

13 VIDEO GIRL BARBIE DOLL, 2010

MADE TO MOVE BARBIE DOLL, 2016

Barbie can master the splits, lunge into the warrior pose and stretch down to her toes. The Made to Move dolls have 22 points of articulation, making them the most realistically flexible Barbie dolls to date. Their limber abilities are captured on the @BarbieStyle Instagram page and other social platforms through stop motion animation, demonstrating features such as hinged hip rotation and double-jointed elbows.

BARBIE INDUSTRIAL X-RAY CT SCANS, 2023

These interactive scans compare the construction of an original Barbie doll and a contemporary Made to Move doll. The scans have been created by Lumafield using their 'Neptune' industrial CT (computed tomography) scanner, revealing assembly methods such as double-jointed knees and shoulders with rotating hinges. The orange areas indicate harder, denser vinyl, and the blue areas show softer plastics, highlighting the range of materials used to produce just one Barbie doll.

HAIR PLAY

> Behind, on central plinth

The cultural and emotional significance of hair is reflected in the popularity of doll hair play. The tactile and versatile nature of human hair is echoed by the design of Barbie hair, which has deployed various technologies and materials to enhance its play value for generations of children.

The popular perception of Barbie, as a doll who can be identified only by a mane of voluminous, platinum-blond hair, is far from accurate. Barbie and her friends have sported a wide variety of hair colours, textures and styles across the years, leading to today's diverse portfolio of dolls.

HAIR HISTORY

> Continue clockwise around plinth

Between 1959 and 1971, Barbie sported a broad range of hair colours and styles, reflecting the changing fashions of the day. Her original ponytail, in blonde or dark brown, was followed by a range of fashionable styles. These included the mid-1960s 'Bubble Cut', popularised by US First Lady Jackie Kennedy, and later the 'Marlo Flip' with turned out ends inspired by the actress Marlo Thomas. These came in a variety of shades, with names such as 'Chocolate Bon-Bon', and 'Titian' red.

HAIR HISTORY (continued)

1 BUBBLE CUT BARBIE DOLL, 1961

Jill Harrison

2 MARLO FLIP BARBIE DOLL, 1969

Kindly loaned from the private collection of Daniel Lee

HAIR PLAY

The first 'hair play' Barbie doll was Fashion Queen Barbie, which came with interchangeable wigs. Later innovations included a 'Growin' Pretty' mechanism to extend the doll's hair when pulled, 'Quick Curl' technology which incorporated fine wire strands to bend the hair into place, and a 'Magic Curl' solution which could transform hair between curly and straight.

Hair play reached its ultimate expression in 1992 when Totally Hair Barbie became the best-selling Barbie doll of all time. Using fine, heat-responsive Kanekalon synthetic fibres, her long hair could withstand hours of play.

HAIR PLAY (continued)

8 FASHION QUEEN BARBIE DOLL, 1963

**9 GROWIN' PRETTY HAIR
BARBIE DOLL, 1970**

Kindly loaned from the private collection of Daniel Lee

10 QUICK CURL BARBIE DOLL, 1973

11 MAGIC CURL BARBIE DOLL, 1982

12 TOTALLY HAIR BARBIE DOLL, 1992

13 TOTALLY HAIR BARBIE DOLL, 1992

TEXTURES, TWISTS AND TONES

The Barbie Fashionistas line has released 76 distinct hair styles and 94 hair colours since its launch in 2009. This includes a doll with no hair, reflecting the lived experiences of children with alopecia and other conditions causing hair loss.

BMR1959, the streetwear-influenced line from 2020, also epitomises the way in which Barbie honours Afro and textured hair, leaning away from trends promoting the use of chemical straighteners. Instead, Barbie champions edge-controlled baby hairs, bright purple Bantu knots, and thick eyebrows.

TEXTURES, TWISTS AND TONES

(continued)

3 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #156, 2020

4 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #150, 2020

5 BARBIE LOOKS #11, 2022

6 BARBIE BMR1959 DOLL, 2020

7 BARBIE FASHIONISTAS #54, 2016

THE WORLD OF BARBIE

> Continue into next room, on right central pillar

The Barbie DreamHouse has always been a space of infinite possibility. In its various iterations across the last six decades, it has acted as a backdrop for imaginative play: a home for Barbie, within which all kinds of stories can be told. The DreamHouse, together with the other playsets, vehicles and accessories produced to complement the doll, tell us something fundamental about who Barbie is.

Simultaneously domestic and fantastic, these structures are rooted in real, recognisable design trends – albeit realised in a way that prioritises play over architectural accuracy. With the 2022 publication of *Barbie Dreamhouse: An Architectural Survey*, architects, curators and critics have affirmed the significance of the DreamHouse, with Nile Greenberg dubbing it ‘a contemporary representation of the sublime rivalling Piranesi’.

ON TREND

> Behind, on left wall

The houses, furniture, cars and other objects that comprise the world of Barbie have always reflected and connected with wider cultural and aesthetic shifts. They don't simply copy the language of design – they communicate it, suggesting what is desirable at any given moment in time.

This process requires careful balance.

Barbie needs to feel 'grown up' from a child's perspective, and her world sufficiently like our own to be relatable, while still maintaining a childlike appeal. As the definition of desirable has shifted over the decades, so too has the appearance of this world.

A MODERN GIRL

> Continue right along plinth

The first Barbie DreamHouse was an open-plan space filled with simple, mid-century Modern furniture in the style of designers Florence Knoll or George Nelson. Created entirely from cardboard, it included a combined television-stereo, a closet, and shelves full of books – but no kitchen.

When this house was introduced in 1962, it positioned Barbie as an independent woman. In reality, it was virtually impossible for a woman to obtain a mortgage without a male guarantor. Her first car – a British-designed Austin-Healey 3000 – was a sporty two-seater model which also suggested a carefree independence.

A MODERN GIRL (continued)

1 BARBIE'S DREAMHOUSE, 1962

Design Museum Collection

2 BARBIE'S OWN SPORTSCAR

Manufactured by Irwin Corp. for Mattel

BARBIE FAMILY HOUSE, 1968

To match the Mod Barbie redesign in 1967, the Family House embraced the atmosphere of 'Swinging London', complete with Carnaby Street sign. Unlike the original DreamHouse, this folding cardboard structure is covered with printed vinyl, and came with moulded plastic furniture.

In searing yellow and orange, the hand-illustrated interiors reflect the late 1960s interest in Edwardian revival and Art Nouveau styles. They depict a Persian-style rug, ornate pendant light and tiled panels.

BARBIE DREAM FURNITURE COLLECTION, 1978

This line of Barbie furniture was produced to complement the new 'A Frame' DreamHouse (which you can see on the plinth behind you). It bears all the hallmarks of 1970s European design: bold, chunky shapes and innovative materials.

The green and magenta chairs are especially on-trend for the period, referencing the plastic Pastil chair (1967) by Finnish designer Eero Aarnio, and the Togo sofa (1973) by Michel Ducaroy.

BARBIE TOWNHOUSE, 1979

The multi-storey Barbie Townhouse was launched in 1973, featuring a working lift and an open-sided design for easy play access. It was originally produced with hand-illustrated backdrops for each room. This version, issued in 1979, was the first to use photographic backdrops.

Bright colours, maximalist pattern-clashing and an abundance of plants demonstrate the height of late 1970s chic, when sleek Modernist furniture mixed with traditional floral fabrics and ornate woodwork.

GIRL ABOUT TOWN

Many Barbie vehicles have been designed in partnership with established car manufacturers. These are often European despite the doll's American roots, transmitting design internationally through play.

Some vehicles, like the Barbie Jaguar or Ferrari, represent aspirational luxury. Others, including the Barbie Vespa and more recent Fiat 500, have a compact, urban feel to reflect the realities of city living. In the UK especially, the Fiat 500 is associated with young female consumers, making it a relatable choice for the doll.

GIRL ABOUT TOWN (continued)

3 BARBIE JAGUAR XJS, 1994

4 BARBIE FERRARI F355 GTS, 2000

Courtesy of Alice Bell

5 BARBIE VESPA SCOOTER, 2002

**6 FIAT 500 BARBIE DOLL
AND VEHICLE, 2021**

BARBIE TRENDY LOFT, 1998

The 1990s trend for loft living was sparked by the widespread conversion of disused industrial buildings into urban apartments. This Barbie playset captures the 'high/low' style of the archetypal loft.

It combines inexpensive pieces such as the futon, inflatable chair and green table – showing the influence of IKEA's HATTEN table – with sleek, Postmodern designs. These include the zig-zag shelf, which recalls Ettore Sottsass' 1992 Adesso Però bookcase, and the Butterfly chair.

MODERN MINIMALISM

Currently the Barbie brand aesthetic focuses on streamlined contemporary design. This reflects the 21st century revival of interest in mid-century Modern interiors. Play accessories such as this bedroom set offer an interpretation of mainstream interior trends that can be understood and appreciated by children.

Barbie has always had an affinity with contemporary design. In this context, Italian design house Kartell have created a limited-edition, Barbie doll-sized series of their best-selling chairs, each designed by Philippe Starck – all finished in pink, of course.

MODERN MINIMALISM (continued)

7 BARBIE DOLL AND BEDROOM PLAYSET, 2023

8 BARBIE X KARTELL SET OF DOLL CHAIRS, 2024

Ghost chair | ErolSI chair | Masters chair | A.I. chair
Venice chair | Courtesy of Kartell and Mattel

CALIFORNIA DREAMING

> On central pillar, behind 'The World of Barbie' panel

To understand the world of Barbie, it's necessary to understand California. The most populous US state, it's a global culture and technology hub. The spectacular natural landscape, with forests, mountains and desert, stretches along 900 miles of Pacific coastline.

Barbie was created in southern California, where Mattel has always been based. Her world is heavily influenced by this regional context, from the architecture of the DreamHouse to the aspirational aesthetics of beach culture. The version of California presented by Barbie plays heavily on the perception of the state as a place of glamour, freedom and unlimited opportunity.

A-FRAME DREAMHOUSE, 1978

> On central plinth

The pitched roof and angular windows of this structure resemble an A-frame house. It's a plastic take on the rustic wooden holiday home that was popular in mid-century America.

This DreamHouse recalls early work by California-based architect Frank Gehry, with its modular structure and bright colours. Gehry, who is known for his innovative Postmodern designs, also designed an (unbuilt) residence in 1972 for Ruth and Elliot Handler, the creators of Barbie.

OUTDOOR LIVING

> Continue clockwise around plinth

The classic Barbie camper van has been redesigned for successive generations of children. Launched in 1971, the Country Camper was the first of these. It was printed vinyl and cardboard, decorated with swirling psychedelic motifs. This was a nod to ‘hippy’ counterculture, which by that date was sufficiently mainstream to influence the design of a children’s toy.

The Mountain Ski Cabin was also a fold-out vinyl playset. Outdoor pursuits such as skiing and camping were, and still are, presented as aspirational, adventurous Barbie play scenarios.

OUTDOOR LIVING (continued)

- 1 BARBIE COUNTRY CAMPER, 1971**
- 2 BARBIE MOUNTAIN SKI CABIN, 1972**

ON THE BEACH

The introduction of Barbie coincided with the rise of beach and surf culture as an aspirational, youth-oriented lifestyle. Surf-inspired music and fashion has created an appealing, playful framework for her imagined world. This world has centred on Malibu, an idyllic Los Angeles beach community that is renowned for its surfing opportunities.

Surfing, which depends on clean coastal habitats, has always been intertwined with the environmental movement. Today, the 'Barbie Loves the Ocean' line of toys includes playsets and accessories manufactured from 90% recovered ocean-bound plastic.

ON THE BEACH (continued)

- 3 BARBIE DREAM POOL PLAYSET, 1980**
- 4 CALIFORNIA DREAM BARBIE
SURF 'N SHOP PLAYSET, 1987**
- 5 BARBIE LOVES THE OCEAN DOLL, 2021**
- 6 BARBIE LOVES THE OCEAN DOLL, 2021**
- 7 BARBIE LOVES THE OCEAN DOLL, 2021**
- 8 BARBIE BEACH DAY PLAYSET, 2021**
- 9 BARBIE BEACH SHACK PLAYSET, 2021**

OPEN ROAD

There is a particularly American ideal of freedom and glamour associated with cars and the open road. The Barbie collection of vehicles suggests this ideal, especially those inspired by the Chevrolet Corvette, the definitive American sports car. Beginning with the 1977 Star 'Vette, it was the model for many of the most glamorous Barbie vehicles.

Mattel responds to the distinctly Californian car culture surrounding its Los Angeles headquarters in designing vehicles for Barbie. From 'hot rodding' classic cars in the 1960s, to contemporary mass-market electric vehicles, California has been the birthplace of some of the most significant developments in modern automotive design.

OPEN ROAD (continued)

10 BARBIE, KEN AND MIDGE'S HOT ROD, 1963

Manufactured by Irwin Corp. for Mattel

11 STAR 'VETTE, 1977

12 BARBIE 2 IN 1 ELECTRIC VEHICLE, 2023

DAY TO NIGHT DREAMHOUSE, 2021

The contemporary Barbie DreamHouse has reverted to its Modernist roots, with simple spaces and unadorned lines. Its open walls – necessary for play access – recall the vast windows of mid-century Californian ‘Case Study Houses’ by architects such as Richard Neutra and Pierre Koenig.

Like many of those houses, the contemporary DreamHouse is centred on a swimming pool, evoking the photography of Slim Aarons, and the paintings of David Hockney.

THINK PINK!

> Through pink arches, to the left

Barbie Pink is one of the greatest branding successes of our time. But this colour was not always a core part of the Barbie brand.

The reign of bright pink began in 1977, with the release of Superstar Barbie and the adoption of consistently pink packaging. Its success was partly due to its effectiveness in toy shops, where row upon row of pink boxes allowed Barbie products to dominate the consumer's view.

Pink is a colour with many cultural connotations. In the world of Barbie today, it signals optimism, confidence and the power of femininity.

FINE FURNITURE

> Continue right along plinth

Pink was perfectly suited to the conservative mood of the 1980s. In this decade the American and European middle classes turned back to traditional interior design, inspired by antique furniture and ornate chintz patterns.

The world of Barbie reflected this shift, decorated in hyperfeminine pink and floral motifs. The arched canopy bed shown here resembles an early 19th-century design called a 'field bedstead', with pink ruffled upholstery. The pink dining room set, with its curved cabriole legs and vaguely Rococo china cabinet, suggests a formal, elegant setting for children's play.

FINE FURNITURE (continued)

- 1 BARBIE DREAM BED, 1982**
- 2 BARBIE FASHION DINING ROOM SET, 1984**

BARBIE MINI VAN, 1995

This mini van represented a significant departure from the usual line-up of Barbie vehicles. In contrast to a sporty two-seater, the mini van is designed to accommodate large groups of people and baggage. It emerged in the 1980s, and quickly became a popular style with families due to its spacious and flexible interior. Here, it's been given a distinctive Barbie makeover with pink trim and floral motifs.

BARBIE MAGICAL MANSION, 1990

The Magical Mansion was the largest ever Barbie house at the time of its launch. It is an elaborate and detailed domestic playscape in pink, with working lights and sounds.

The house mimics Colonial Revival architecture, with fanlights, Neoclassical columns and balustrades of the type imported to America by European settlers. This style has strongly influenced the design of suburban homes, with its aspirational overtones of status and tradition.

BARBIE DREAMHOUSE, 1995

This DreamHouse looks to American architecture of the late 19th century, with its corner turret, front gable and decorative mouldings. The style, known in the United States as 'Queen Anne', was heavily influenced by English architects such as Norman Shaw and Charles Locke Eastlake.

Additionally, this DreamHouse was produced in white and purple colourways, both liberally trimmed with pink.

TASTE AND TRADITION

These two Barbie houses may not be entirely pink, but they continue the brand's engagement with traditional architecture. The blue Family House, with trellis panels and Palladian windows, feels like an elegant country cottage. Its compact volume contains an ingenious series of folding and rotating multipurpose spaces, maximising the possibilities of play within.

The two-storey Talking Townhouse offers another take on tradition. It incorporates classical details such as the green pediment over the front door, but in an unorthodox arrangement that reflects Postmodern architecture around the year 2000.

TASTE AND TRADITION (continued)

3 BARBIE FAMILY HOUSE, 1998

4 BARBIE TALKING TOWNHOUSE, 2002

Courtesy of Monica Hodgson

BARBIE DREAMHOUSE, 2016

The enduring appeal of historic architecture is apparent in this three-storey house. It nods to the Neoclassical tradition with its pink pediments and simple white pilasters. The house is almost entirely open-sided rather than presenting a realistic building façade, enabling easier access. Unlike some earlier iterations of the DreamHouse, this example is more obviously a child's toy than an architectural model.

THE WAY WE PLAY

> Back into main room. Back wall, to the left of columns

Play is powerful. It's how children learn to navigate the world – to connect with others, to understand society, and to develop their own creative self-expression.

The fundamental purpose of Barbie has always been as a children's toy, encouraging open-ended role-play in a variety of scenarios. Catapulted into space one minute and playing dress-up the next, she is brought to life through the imagination of children.

Barbie has been through numerous incarnations since she was launched in 1959, including more than 260 careers and a wardrobe reflecting six decades of fashion. She was and is an introduction to adulthood for generations of children, presented as both a role model and as a blank canvas onto which they can project their dreams and identities.

CAREER MINDED

> Continue right

Many of the play scenarios prompted by Barbie are centred on the 'real world' experiences of adulthood – social relationships, domestic tasks and, of course, work.

The many careers undertaken by Barbie have reflected the changing role of women in the workforce. Initially she held a small number of jobs in the 1960s, like nurse, teacher, cheerleader, and fashion model. Since then, she has forged an ambitious path, becoming everything from an astrophysicist to a CEO, and running for president seven times. Barbie prompts us to consider how our careers help construct our identity.

WOMEN AT WORK

Women were increasingly occupying professional and corporate jobs in the second half of the 20th century, and this context has informed the various careers undertaken by Barbie.

In the 1960s, Barbie was a 'Career Girl' in an elegant suit. By 1985, she had an executive office, complete with computer and early mobile phone. This could convert into a bedroom, while her pink power suit transformed into a glamorous evening dress. Barbie had achieved 'work-life balance', a term first coined in the late 1970s.

WOMEN AT WORK (continued)

**1 BARBIE DOLL, WEARING
'CAREER GIRL', 1964**

Francesca Mottola

2 DAY-TO-NIGHT BARBIE DOLL, 1985

3 BARBIE HOME & OFFICE PLAYSET, 1985

4 WORKING WOMAN BARBIE DOLL, 1999

KEYS TO FAME, 1963

This game shows that Barbie was envisaged as a career woman from the very beginning of her existence. It challenges players to make their way around a board, collecting various cards representing different skills, until they have collected everything necessary to begin their dream career.

The careers range from glamorous – movie star and ballerina – to professions such as nurse and teacher. The inclusion of astronaut reflects growing public interest in space flight, while mother is included as a separate career by itself.

‘YOU CAN BE ANYTHING™’

Barbie has undertaken many traditionally male-dominated careers, especially in scientific and service-oriented fields. She was first imagined as a doctor in 1973, when fewer than 10% of American doctors were women. In 1993, an Army Barbie doll was produced in the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm, along with a Police Officer Barbie doll; both occupying roles whose status is often questioned in society.

The 1980s slogan ‘We Girls Can Do Anything’ has evolved into today’s brand tagline ‘You Can Be Anything’. This emphasises the ambitions of the individual child, rather than wider inequities in the labour market.

'YOU CAN BE ANYTHING™' (continued)

5 BARBIE DOLL, WEARING 'GET UPS 'N GO: DOCTOR', 1973

Kindly loaned from the collection of Daniel Lee

6 BARBIE DOCTOR DOLL, 2021

7 STARS 'N STRIPES ARMY BARBIE DOLL, 1993

8 POLICE OFFICER BARBIE DOLL, 1993

9 FLIGHT TIME BARBIE DOLL, 1990

10 BARBIE COMPUTER ENGINEER DOLL, 2010

11 BARBIE BUILDER DOLL, 2017

12 BARBIE SCIENTIST DOLL, 2022

BARBIE ECO-LEADERSHIP TEAM DOLLS, 2022

The careers represented by Barbie are an important medium through which children can understand significant global issues and newsworthy events.

These dolls embody the concept of 'eco-leadership', in response to the global climate emergency. Comprising a conservation scientist, renewable energy engineer, chief sustainability officer and environmental advocate, the dolls in this set have bodies and clothing produced from 90% recycled plastic.

BARBIE CAMPAIGN TEAM DOLLS, 2020

Barbie has been portrayed as a presidential candidate in almost every US election since 1992. In 2020 she appeared alongside an all-female campaign team, including a campaign manager, fundraiser and voter. During that pivotal election year, in which the American political spectrum appeared more polarised than ever, the Barbie Campaign Team offered children a means of comprehending and engaging with the debates that filled the media around them.

BARBIE FOR PRESIDENT

Presidential Barbies illustrate the possibility of women occupying highly visible, aspirational roles, encouraging children to develop confidence and leadership skills.

From the very beginning of her candidacy, Barbie has been envisioned in both white and Black iterations, as well as more recent Hispanic and Asian versions. Barbie follows in the footsteps of Charlene Mitchell and Shirley Chisholm, the first Black women to run for US President in 1968 and 1972 respectively.

BARBIE FOR PRESIDENT (continued)

- 13 BARBIE FOR PRESIDENT DOLL, 1992**
- 14 BARBIE FOR PRESIDENT DOLL, 2000**
- 15 BARBIE FOR PRESIDENT DOLL, 2004**
- 16 BARBIE FOR PRESIDENT DOLL, 2008**
- 17 I CAN BE PRESIDENT
BARBIE DOLL, 2012**
- 18 BARBIE PRESIDENT AND VICE
PRESIDENT DOLLS, 2016**

EVERYDAY LIFE

Even the most mundane of adult tasks can be made magical through imaginative play, investing children with a sense of autonomy. Many Barbie careers and playsets have translated the minutiae of everyday life into scenarios that are simultaneously familiar and exciting.

The adults that children might encounter, such as a teacher or a nurse, are turned into relatable figures who can be brought to life through play. Many of these Barbie dolls are designed with simple symbolism on their clothing, such as the pasta shapes on the chef shown here.

EVERYDAY LIFE (continued)

- 19 TEACHER BARBIE DOLL, 1995**
- 20 BARBIE SO MUCH TO DO!
POST OFFICE PLAYSET, 1995**
- 21 BARBIE DOLL, WEARING
'REGISTERED NURSE', 1961**
Garet 'Midge' Newell
- 22 BARBIE AND SUPERMARKET
PLAYSET, 2018**
- 23 BARBIE PASTA CHEF DOLL, 2020**
- 24 BARBIE PARAMEDIC DOLL, 2021**

FASHION PLAY

> Behind, on mirror shaped panel

From her earliest existence as a 'Teen Age Fashion Model', to the present era of @BarbieStyle, Barbie has kept pace with fashion since 1959; always reflecting trends in a relatable, child-friendly way.

Barbie clothing is designed for play, cut to fit correctly on the doll's body and to be put on with ease. Fabrics and embellishments need to work well at small scale, as well as being safe for children.

A creative outlet for many children, dressing Barbie has inspired the careers of notable fashion designers, including Martin Margiela and Jeremy Scott.

BARBIE'S FASHION SHOP PLAYSET, 1962

> On central plinth

Fashion play is not simply about clothing. It's about the joy of getting dressed, the creative act of styling an outfit, and the thrill of the new. Fashion is both an individual and a social activity, and a key outward marker of a person's identity. This cardboard Fashion Shop playset, from 1962, emphasised the social aspect of fashion play. Designed in the style of a couture showroom, it enabled children to stage fashion shows, emulating the clothing of the adults in their own lives and in popular media.

> Continue anticlockwise around plinth

**‘BARBIE’S FASHION SHOW’
COMMERCIAL, 1962**

1 minute | Courtesy of Mattel

**‘THE BARBIE LOOK’
COMMERCIAL, 1965**

1 minute | Courtesy of Mattel

**‘PEACHES ‘N CREAM BARBIE’
COMMERCIAL, 1985**

30 seconds | Courtesy of Mattel

THE FIRST WARDROBE

The original set of 22 outfits which launched alongside Barbie were designed by Charlotte Johnson, assisted by Fumiko Miyatsuka. These outfits, along with the other ensembles introduced in the early 1960s, looked to high fashion for their inspiration.

Her wardrobe covered all occasions. Relaxed outfits for travel and leisure recalled the work of American designers Claire McCardell and Bonnie Cashin. Opulent evening gowns looked to European designers such as Christian Dior, Hubert de Givenchy and Cristóbal Balenciaga. Everything was produced to the highest standard, with linings, miniature zippers and matching accessories.

THE FIRST WARDROBE (continued)

- 1 WINTER HOLIDAY, 1959**
- 2 BARBIE AND MIDGE PURSE PAK, 1962**
- 3 POODLE PARADE, 1965**
- 4 MIDNIGHT BLUE, 1965**
- 5 SLUMBER PARTY, 1965**
- 6 STUDENT TEACHER, 1965**
Francesca Mottola
- 7 ABOARD SHIP, 1965**
Francesca Mottola
- 8 GOLDEN GLORY, 1965**
Francesca Mottola

THE BARBIE LOOK

Barbie was redesigned in 1967, with a new look that referenced the youthful Mod styles of 'Swinging London'. Her wardrobe was modernised to match, with bright prints, miniskirts, and embellishments influenced by 'hippy' and folk dress.

Whereas earlier Barbie clothing had a couture feel, the new look was closer to street style, although still produced with great attention to detail. Barbie Best Buy Fashions were introduced in 1972 – these were simpler and less expensive, though no less current. They resembled the kind of aspirational but achievable looks available in department stores.

THE BARBIE LOOK (continued)

9 PAJAMA POW, 1967

Francesca Mottola

10 GYPSY* SPIRIT, 1970

Francesca Mottola

11 BARBIE BEST BUY FASHIONS, 1977

12 BARBIE BEST BUY FASHIONS, 1977

13 BARBIE BEST BUY FASHIONS, 1978

14 BEAUTIFUL BRIDE BARBIE, 1979

*This was the title under which the outfit was originally sold in 1969. 'Gypsy' is now recognised as a potentially offensive term by the GRT (Gypsy, Roma and Traveller) community. We have reproduced it here for historical accuracy.

SUPERSTAR TO STYLE ICON

The 1980s and 1990s were a particularly pink moment for the Barbie wardrobe; which also saw a shift towards thematic fashions, covering everything from eveningwear to exercise gear. Many of these were the creations of Carol Spencer, Chief Designer, Barbie Collector Dolls and Collectibles, who had worked on Barbie fashions since 1963.

This period saw the first designer collaborations, in which Barbie was dressed by brands from Oscar de la Renta to Benetton. Together with the Fashion Avenue collection, produced 1995-2002, they ensured that Barbie was aligned, first and foremost, with fashion.

SUPERSTAR TO STYLE ICON

(continued)

- 15 BARBIE FASHION FANTASY, 1983**
- 16 BARBIE FASHION MAGIC, 1987**
- 17 BARBIE BRIDAL COLLECTION
FASHIONS, 1995**
- 18 BARBIE FASHION AVENUE, 1995**
- 19 BARBIE FASHION AVENUE COAT
COLLECTION, 2001**
- 20 BARBIE FASHION FEVER, 2005**
- 21 BARBIE FASHION CATALOGUES,
1970S–90s**

ADAPTABLE GLAMOUR

With the release of Pretty Changes Barbie, a new style era was introduced. The look that would define Barbie in the 1980s was opulent and romantic, influenced by Nolan Miller's costumes for soap opera Dynasty and the much-publicised wardrobe of Diana, Princess of Wales.

This period was marked by a significant marketing shift, from purchasing one doll with many outfits to a series of themed Barbie dolls, each with its own distinctive look. These outfits tended to incorporate elements that could be reversed or re-used, for additional play value.

ADAPTABLE GLAMOUR (continued)

- 1 PRETTY CHANGES BARBIE DOLL, 1979**
- 2 CRYSTAL BARBIE DOLL, 1984**
- 3 PEACHES 'N CREAM
BARBIE DOLL, 1985**
- 4 JEWEL SECRETS BARBIE DOLL, 1987**
- 5 SHANI DOLL, 1991**

DOLL DIY

Fifty years separate these two items, yet both respond to the creative urge to develop new looks. In the 1960s, Mattel's range of Sew-Free Fashion-Fun products allowed children to make their own Barbie outfits from a pre-printed pattern. More recently, the Digital Dress Barbie used responsive LED lights to produce a variety of designs, anticipating the experimental light-up garments of Zac Posen and Iris Van Herpen

DOLL DIY (continued)

**6 BARBIE SEW-FREE FASHION-FUN,
'DAY IN TOWN', 1963**

7 DIGITAL DRESS BARBIE DOLL, 2013

FASHION FORWARD

Barbie has always kept pace with mainstream trends – but at particular moments, she and her friends have explored specific aspects of fashion.

Francie introduced American children to the boldness of British Mod style. Thirty years on, Fashion Savvy Barbie, designed by Kitty Black Perkins, highlighted the nuances of Black American high fashion; while the later So In Style line, created by Stacey McBride-Irby, championed streetwear brands owned by Black entrepreneurs.

Today, Barbie continues to push the limits of contemporary fashion with Barbie Extra, featuring exaggerated looks which respond to a post-pandemic desire for maximalism and fun.

FASHION FORWARD (continued)

8 FRANCIE DOLL, 1966

Kindly loaned from the private collection of Daniel Lee

9 FASHION SAVVY UPTOWN CHIC BARBIE DOLL, 1998

10 SO IN STYLE BABY PHAT GRACE DOLL, 2013

11 BARBIE EXTRA DOLL, 2022

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

> Behind, on wall

Whether on the stage or the sports field, many Barbie careers have embraced the idea of performance, allowing the child to see themselves as the performer. By positioning Barbie as a role model for aspiring athletes and artists, these careers suggest the desirability of attributes such as discipline, teamwork, and confidence.

Her performance careers respond to popular culture, significant global events, and changing trends in music and film. In this way, cultural moments are translated for children through the medium of play.

BARBIE CAREER OF THE YEAR: WOMEN IN FILM DOLLS, 2024

> Continue right

The most recent Career of the Year set honours the work of women in film. It comes after the record-breaking 2023 success of *Barbie: The Movie*, starring Margot Robbie and directed by Greta Gerwig. This set highlights roles behind the camera, including a director, cinematographer, and studio executive, as well as an actor. Dressed in a pink gown, the latter clutches an award in the shape of an original 1959 Barbie.

ON STAGE

The 1964 'Little Theatre' was a cardboard playset that encouraged collaboration and creativity. It came with a script book, with doll-sized theatrical costumes available separately, and prompted children to direct their own productions with Barbie as the star.

Ballet, with its emphasis on physical grace and discipline, has also been a longstanding Barbie career. The first Barbie ballet outfit was produced in 1961, and her sister Skipper was given a matching ensemble. In 1975, Barbie and her friend Cara were sold as dedicated ballerina dolls for the first time.

ON STAGE (continued)

1 'GUINEVERE', 1964

Francesca Mottola

2 'CINDERELLA', 1964

**3 SKIPPER DOLL, WEARING
'BALLET CLASS', 1964**

Mrs Hazel de Tscharnher Vischer

4 BALLERINA CARA DOLL, 1975

MUSIC STAR

Playing with Barbie dolls can offer an outlet for many children's ambitions of musical stardom. Her own musical careers have spanned genres from rock and rap to classical, always reflecting shifts in popular culture.

Influenced by the look of stars like Kim Wilde and Cyndi Lauper, Barbie and the Rockers epitomised the colourful excesses of 1980s music. Several years later, Rappin' Rockin' Barbie responded to the mainstream popularity of hip-hop, thanks to the success of acts such as Salt-N-Pepa and Run-DMC, as well as Spike Lee's 1989 film Do The Right Thing.

MUSIC STAR (continued)

- 5 BARBIE AND THE ROCKERS:
BARBIE DOLL, 1986**
- 6 BARBIE AND THE ROCKERS:
DEE DEE DOLL, 1986**
- 7 BARBIE AND THE ROCKERS:
HOT ROCKIN' STAGE PLAYSET, 1987**
- 8 RAPPIN' ROCKIN' BARBIE DOLL, 1992**
- 9 BARBIE MUSICIAN DOLL, 2017**
Courtesy of Mattel
- 10 BARBIE POP STAR DOLL, 2018**
Courtesy of Mattel
- 11 VIOLINIST BARBIE DOLL, 2023**

SPORTING EXCELLENCE

Gold Medal Barbie was produced to celebrate the USA's participation in the 1976 Montreal Summer Olympics – with an Australian version (in green and yellow outfit) also produced for that market.

Since then, international sporting events like the Olympic Games have influenced Barbie sports. These have reflected disciplines in which young women are highly visible, such as gymnastics, dominated by figures like Gabby Douglas, Simone Biles and Aly Raisman. Skateboarding, also increasingly popular with girls, joined the list of Barbie careers in 2016 – before being recognised as an Olympic sport in 2020.

SPORTING EXCELLENCE (continued)

12 GOLD MEDAL BARBIE DOLL, 1975

2021 reproduction

13 BARBIE GYMNASTICS PLAYSET, 2021

14 BARBIE SKATEBOARDER DOLL, 2020

BARBIE AND KEN TENNIS STARS DOLLS, 1988

Tennis shook off its genteel image in the 1970s and 80s, becoming a fashionable, headline-grabbing sport. This tennis-themed Barbie and Ken set responds to the sport's popularity, boosted by high-profile players of the period such as Steffi Graf, Chris Evert and John McEnroe.

This set included a net and rackets, allowing children to re-enact a tennis match. In their co-ordinating outfits, Barbie and Ken are ready for the game.

BARBIE CAREER OF THE YEAR: WOMEN IN SPORT DOLLS, 2023

The Career of the Year accolade, first introduced in 2010, positions Barbie in a career field that is topical and in which women are underrepresented.

For 2023, the theme reflected growing public interest in women's professional sports, as demonstrated by that year's FIFA Women's World Cup, which broke records for global viewership of women's football. This set of dolls represents a range of sports careers, including coach, manager, referee and reporter.

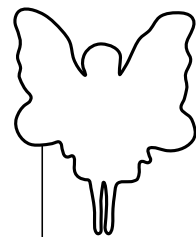
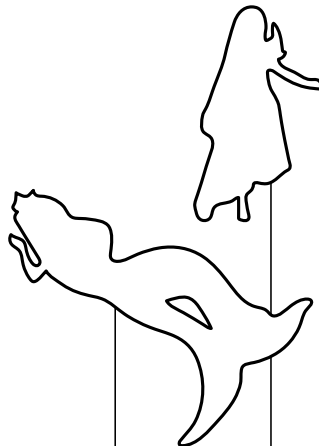
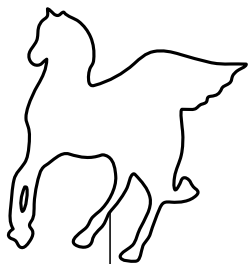
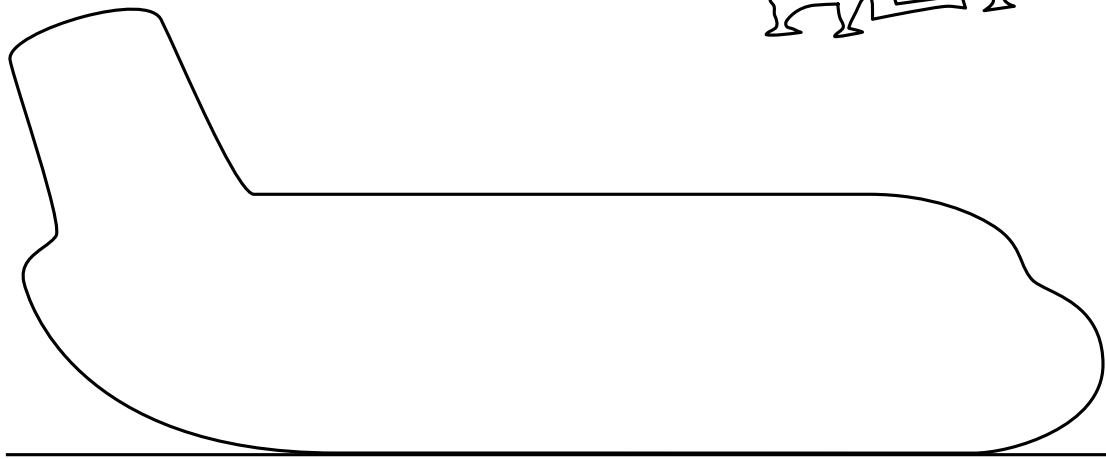
EXPLORATION AND ADVENTURE

> Continue clockwise, next to oval showcase

Barbie has always engaged with the imaginative possibilities of play, whether in the realm of science or of magic and fantasy.

She was launched at the height of the jet age, and of space exploration. At the same time that this futuristic context was influencing popular culture, classic fairy and folk tales continued to reach an enthusiastic public. Whether in the guise of an astronaut, or a mythical mermaid, Barbie dolls have embodied adventurous play scenarios for generations of children.

1 3 2 5 4



10

7

9

8

TO THE MOON AND BACK

> **Continue right**

Since floating onto the scene in 1965, Astronaut Barbie has been established as a cultural and scientific pioneer. At the height of the Space Race, before Neil Armstrong reached the moon, Barbie conquered the cosmos as Miss Astronaut. In 1985, she demonstrated her scientific prowess in a metallic pink spacesuit – shortly after Sally Ride became the first American woman in space. Most recently, Barbie comes equipped with her own space station and investigative tools, ready for scientific discovery.

TO THE MOON AND BACK (continued)

**1 BARBIE DOLL, WEARING
'MISS ASTRONAUT', 1965**

Courtesy of Mattel

2 ASTRONAUT BARBIE DOLL, 1985

**3 BARBIE SPACE DISCOVERY
ASTRONAUT DOLL, 2021**

**4 BARBIE SPACE DISCOVERY DOLL
AND PLAYSET, 2021**

BARBIE'S FRIEND SHIP PLAYSET, 1972

A collaboration with United Airlines, the Friend Ship was the original Barbie aircraft, predating the now-familiar Dreamplane. It epitomises the golden age of international travel, with a luxurious cabin and fully equipped service area. The Friend Ship folds away into the shape of a travel case, encouraging children to follow in the doll's adventurous footsteps.

MAGIC AND FANTASY

Whether living under the sea or flying through the sky, Barbie can be a catalyst to the imagination, offering children the autonomy to construct their own magical kingdoms. Today, fantasy Barbie dolls are often aimed towards younger children. The characters of the dolls are commonly derived from animations, such as the 2023 Barbie: A Touch of Magic television series. They are purposefully vivid in colour, and designed with children's dexterity in mind.

MAGIC AND FANTASY (continued)

- 7 JEWEL HAIR MERMAID
BARBIE DOLL, 1995**
- 8 BARBIE: A FAIRY SECRET DOLL, 2011**
- 9 BARBIE: A TOUCH OF MAGIC
BROOKLYN DOLL, 2023**
- 10 BARBIE: A TOUCH OF MAGIC
PEGASUS, 2023**

BARBIE GOES INTO SPACE

> On left wall

In 2022 this Barbie doll journeyed into space with the European Space Agency astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti. Hailed as a role model for the next generation of scientists and explorers, Cristoforetti was filmed in space alongside the Barbie doll created in her likeness, answering questions aiming to inspire girls to pursue careers in STEM. Since then, Mattel has created one-of-a-kind Barbie dolls to honour the contributions of space scientist Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock, and astronauts Katya Echazarreta and Anna Kikina.

BARBIE GOES INTO SPACE (continued)

5 BARBIE ROLE MODELS: SAMANTHA CRISTOFORETTI DOLL, 2021

On loan from the European Space Agency (ESA)

6 'WORLD SPACE WEEK – SAMANTHA CRISTOFORETTI APPEARS WITH HER BARBIE FROM THE ISS TO ANSWER KIDS' QUESTIONS ON SPACE', 2022

1 minute 30 seconds | ESA/NASA

THE ICON

> Continue to next room, on left

Barbie is a globally recognisable figure, a reflection of our society and its preoccupations. She is presented as a role model for all.

Barbie has engaged with design in all its forms since she was first introduced in 1959. Now, the design world has reciprocated by engaging with Barbie as a key cultural reference point. The fashion world, in particular, has embraced Barbie as both muse and model. The doll has been dressed by major fashion brands, from avant-garde labels to the largest couture houses, and has in turn influenced what we see worn on the catwalk and on the street.

A constant presence across art, media and popular culture, Barbie has been featured on the covers of Time and Vogue magazines, painted by Andy Warhol, and the subject of an Oscar-nominated film. Her status as an icon of our time is assured.

THE IMAGE OF BARBIE

> Continue right

Barbie occupies a prominent space in mainstream culture, across a variety of media. In 1986, the doll's status as a pop culture avatar was confirmed when Andy Warhol painted his muse, BillyBoy*, in the guise of Barbie. In 2023, Barbie joined Forbes magazine's list of 'The World's 100 Most Powerful Women'.

Barbie dolls have appeared on the front cover of significant publications. Vogue Italia ran a special 'Barbie Issue' in parallel to its 2009 'Black Issue', championing Black iterations of Barbie; while TIME chose to spotlight the 2016 Barbie redesign, indicating the outsize impact of this small doll.

THE IMAGE OF BARBIE (continued)

**1 'ANDY WARHOL WITH BARBIE:
PORTRAIT OF BILLYBOY*', 1986**

© DMI/The LIFE Picture Collection/Shutterstock

**2 'VOGUE: THE BARBIE ISSUE'
MAGAZINE COVER, 2009**

© Michael Baumgarten, Vogue Italia, © Condé Nast

3 'TIME' MAGAZINE COVER, 2016

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**4 'BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK'
MAGAZINE COVER, 2023**

Courtesy of Bloomberg L.P.

**5 @BARBIESTYLE X FORBES
INSTAGRAM POST, 2023**

Courtesy of Mattel

INSPIRING WOMEN

> Back to entrance of room, first plinth to the right

To be portrayed in Barbie form is often considered a significant achievement, highlighting an individual's cultural impact. Many of the women thus honoured have been recognised for their social activism.

Shown here are several of those dolls, including the tennis champion Billie Jean King, the award-winning actress Laverne Cox, model, actress and founder of Gurls Talk Adwoa Aboah, and Wilma Mankiller, the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. All of these women have leveraged their public profile to advocate for causes including mental health, women's rights, LGBTQ equality and anti-racism.

INSPIRING WOMEN (continued)

**1 ADWOA ABOAH ONE-OF-A-KIND
BARBIE DOLL, 2019**

Courtesy of Adwoa Aboah

**2 BARBIE INSPIRING WOMEN
BILLIE JEAN KING DOLL, 2020**

Courtesy of Mattel

**3 BARBIE TRIBUTE COLLECTION
LAVERNE COX DOLL, 2022**

**4 BARBIE INSPIRING WOMEN PRINCIPAL
CHIEF WILMA MANKILLER DOLL, 2023**

Courtesy of Mattel

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

> On wall to the right

With almost four million followers on the @Barbie Instagram account, and 12 million YouTube subscribers, the cultural reach of Barbie extends beyond the doll itself. These platforms have enabled the brand to engage with a huge audience, sharing content on significant issues such as anti-racism, mental health, disability rights and LGBTQ equality.

The 'Dream Gap Project', launched in 2018, is of particular importance to the Barbie brand. This refers to research indicating that young girls are socialised into limiting their expectations and ambitions around the ages of five to eight years old.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (continued)

5 'BARBIE AND NIKKI DISCUSS RACISM' YOUTUBE VLOG, 2020

3 minutes | Courtesy of Mattel

6 'WHAT'S THE DREAM GAP?' YOUTUBE VLOG, 2018

5 minutes | Courtesy of Mattel

BEST DRESSED

> Back to entrance of room, first plinth to the left

Some of the biggest names in fashion have designed looks for Barbie, either as one-of-a-kind creations, or as products available to consumers. The couturier Oscar de la Renta was the first, designing a range of outfits which could be purchased separately from the doll.

The earliest collaborations championed American labels such as de la Renta, Donna Karan and Bill Blass. In recent years, Barbie has adopted a more international approach, being dressed by a range of designers from the Beijing-born Guo Pei to London's own Richard Quinn.

BEST DRESSED (continued)

1 OSCAR DE LA RENTA FOR BARBIE COLLECTOR SERIES VII, 1985

2 DONNA KARAN BARBIE DOLL, 1995

3 YVES SAINT LAURENT BARBIE DOLL, 2018

Courtesy of Mattel

4 GREEN BEADED EVENING GOWN, 2020

On central plinth | Richard Quinn | Swarovski crystal embroidery on Italian duchess silk | Richard Quinn Fall/Winter 2021 Look 39

5 RICHARD QUINN ONE-OF-A-KIND BARBIE DOLL, 2021

Courtesy of Mattel

6 GUO PEI BARBIE DOLL, 2022

BARBIECORE

> Continue clockwise around room

The Barbie aesthetic is bright, bold, and immediately recognisable. This has made her a muse for fashion designers, giving rise to 'Barbiecore' – a trend based on key motifs from the doll's wardrobe, including oversized elements, glossy textures, and, of course, the colour pink. Through the @BarbieStyle Instagram account, she has also taken on the role of fashion influencer.

Jeremy Scott for Moschino, and more recently Olivier Rousteing for Balmain, are two of the key architects of Barbiecore. They have collaborated with Mattel to translate nostalgic Barbie looks into attention-grabbing, contemporary high fashion.

BARBIECORE (continued)

7 LOOK 45, SPRING READY-TO-WEAR 2015 COLLECTION

On central plinth | Moschino | Cotton and acetate
Courtesy of Mattel

8 BBUZZ 23 BAG, 2022

Balmain x Barbie | PVC and leather
Courtesy of Mattel

9 DISCO BAG, 2022

Balmain x Barbie | PVC and leather
Courtesy of Mattel

10 BEHIND THE SCENES @BARBIESTYLE, 2024

On back wall | 2 minutes | Courtesy of Mattel

WELCOME TO BARBIE LAND

The hugely anticipated Barbie: The Movie was released in 2023. Starring Margot Robbie and directed by Greta Gerwig, it broke box-office records.

Costume designer Jacqueline Durran referenced original Barbie dolls when creating ensembles for Robbie and her co-stars, as well as sourcing pieces from fashion brands. Set designer Sarah Greenwood and decorator Katie Spencer drew upon the history of the DreamHouse in their vision for the fictional 'Barbie Land', as well as featuring pieces by contemporary designers such as Adam Nathaniel Furman. Durran, Greenwood and Spencer have all been Oscar-nominated for their work on the film.

WELCOME TO BARBIE LAND

(continued)

11 **GLOWBULE STACCATO FLOOR LAMP, 2022**

On central plinth | Adam Nathaniel Furman
Free-blown glass, metal, acrylic Made by CURIOUSA

12 **NEON BARBIE ENSEMBLE, 2022**

On central plinth | Jacqueline Durran | Elastane
Courtesy of Warner Bros.

13 **HOT SKATIN' BARBIE DOLL, 1994**

14 **MALIBU MULES, 2022**

GINA | Leather, satin, and Swarovski crystals
Courtesy of Warner Bros.

15 **'BARBIE: THE MOVIE' PROMOTIONAL POSTER, 2023**

Courtesy of Warner Bros.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

> Through exit

The Design Museum wishes to express its sincere thanks to the institutions, studios, design practices and individuals who have generously lent objects and shared intellectual property to support this exhibition.

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(continued)

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#BarbieTheExhibition

the
DESIGN
MUSEUM