

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*Exhibit images available upon request.*

## STEREOTYPES TO CIVIL RIGHTS: BLACK PAPER DOLLS IN AMERICA

Exhibit of encyclopedic collection opens February 20, 2016

**February 9, 2016 (KANSAS CITY, MO)** – Paper dolls provide a glimpse into the history of racial perceptions in a new exhibit at The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures. Featuring the private collection of noted author, lecturer, and collector Arabella Grayson, *Stereotypes to Civil Rights: Black Paper Dolls in America* documents the 150-year evolution of cultural images of African Americans from Little Black Sambo and Aunt Jemima to Jackie Robinson and Beyoncé Knowles.

On view from February 20, 2016, through August 21, 2016, the exhibit includes the first commercially produced black paper doll: 1863's Topsey from Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The first black paper dolls were steeped in stereotypes of African Americans: savages, minstrels, mammies, and one of the most recognizable African Americans in advertising, Aunt Jemima. With the civil rights and black pride movements, companies began producing more realistic paper dolls and, eventually, present day sports and entertainment figures: Grace Jones, Eartha Kitt, Martin Luther King, Jr., Michael Jackson, and a black Miss America. Visitors may even recognize a hometown hero displayed next to the President of the United States in paper form: the 2015 World Series Champion Kansas City Royals outfielder Jarrod Dyson.

More than mere toys, paper dolls were mediums for caricature, criticism, and compliment. To further explore this fragile yet enduring link to past concepts of gender, race, and beauty, T/m will be hosting the following lectures and workshops:

### **THE TWO HUNDRED YEAR HISTORY OF BLACK PAPER DOLLS**

APRIL 7, 2016 | 6-7PM

From the late 18th century to the present, social changes have been reflected in paper dolls. Collector and author Arabella Grayson will examine these changes through a chronological history of the origins of paper dolls and the introduction of black paper dolls in popular media. \$10 for general admission. Free for museum members, and UMKC faculty, staff, and students. RSVP (816) 235-8005 or mercierk@toyandminiaturemuseum.org.

### **HOW DO WE KNOW WHO WE ARE?**

APRIL 8, 2016 | 2-3PM

Collector and author Arabella Grayson will highlight the ways in which the media influences self-image and self-esteem through play. Using current affairs, personal anecdotes, and insights from her rare collection of black paper dolls, Grayson reveals how individuals are always responding to media images by embracing or rejecting them. Included with museum admission. RSVP (816) 235-8005 or mercierk@toyandminiaturemuseum.org.

## **CUTTING THROUGH STEREOTYPES**

APRIL 9, 2016 | 1-4PM

Using a tour of *Stereotypes to Civil Rights* as inspiration, visitors will create paper figures based on historic or current events, or famous personalities. Included with museum admission. Recommended for ages seven and up.

## **ABOUT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF TOYS AND MINIATURES**

The National Museum of Toy and Miniatures educates, inspires, and delights adults and children through the museum's collection and preservation of toys and miniatures. Located on the University of Missouri - Kansas City campus, the museum exhibits the world's largest collection of fine-scale miniatures and one of the nation's largest collections of antique toys. The museum reopened on August 1, 2015 after a year-and-a-half, \$8 million renovation. For more information, call (816) 235-8000 or visit [www.toyandminiaturemuseum.org](http://www.toyandminiaturemuseum.org).

### **MUSEUM LOCATION**

The National Museum of Toys and Miniatures  
5235 Oak Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64112

### **MUSEUM HOURS**

Open Daily 10am – 4pm  
Closed Tuesdays and major holidays

### **MUSEUM ADMISSION**

\$5 for ages 5 and up  
Free for ages 4 and under  
Free for members  
Free for UMKC faculty, staff, and students

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