

Condition and Treatment Report

DATE: March 12, 2021

OBJECT: A blue, plush, dragon toy currently in the private collection of artist, Nina Caporale. Known as “Cuddly Blue Dragon Speak/Repeat Plush Animal” (to be referred to simply as ‘Cuddly Blue Dragon’ elsewhere in this report), this object was designed and manufactured circa 2019 (approximately) by Cupcakes and Cartwheels, a division of Two’s Company, out of Elmsford New York 10523. Tags further indicate REG.NO PA-18405 (HK) 0501207 0919, and compliance with Part 15 of the FCC Rules.

TREATED BY: Nina Caporale

TREATMENT DATES: March 8, 2021 – March 10, 2021

TREATMENT PROPOSAL SUBMITTED: Yes, March 8, 2021

INTRODUCTION:

This document is both a condition report (denoting the condition of an object prior to the initiation of treatment) and a treatment report (stating the purpose of treatment, and the techniques and materials used during the course of said treatment). The contents of this document contain both text and photographic documentation. Photographs have been embedded directly in the report to assist the reader by clarifying both condition issues and treatment steps undertaken to correct them.

Object Description

OUTSIDE MEASUREMENTS :

Side to Side	Front to Back	Top to Bottom
4 inches	10 inches	8 inches

Right: Cuddly Blue Dragon prior to treatment.

MATERIALS & EXISTING CONDITIONS:

The materials are described as 100% polyester in the product specifications. A non-aided visual examination confirms the presence of synthetic plush textile materials stuffed with polyester fiberfill. There are remnants of some (now missing) electronic components within a plastic housing, of which only a fractured polyester disc and a broken zip-tie remain (likely a retention device meant to secure the plush cover over its internal electronic components). There is also a broken plastic nub or stub in the position of one eye socket.



Non-aided visual examination also confirms compression and/or abrasion damage to external plush fibers in some areas, as well as an overall layer of dust, presumed to be dried mud and dirt. There is a minor cut or tear in the polyester felt of the dragon's tongue, and a gap along the seam between neckline and forearm on the right side. Additional cuts and/or tears in the textile are likely to become apparent following a cleaning treatment, in part because the fiberfill will have been removed by that time and the textile will be turned inside out for further examination and mending. The primary reason is that the plush (and a layer of dirt) obscures visibility of such cuts or tears from the exterior. Lastly, there are bits of twigs or leafy matter suspended in the polyester fiberfill where those materials are presently exposed.

HISTORY OF THE OBJECT:

This object was acquired by Nina Caporale on or around January 10, 2021, entirely by chance discovery. It was found on the ground surface of a parking lot at 4205 Red Bank Road in Cincinnati Ohio in a damaged and discarded state. This object's specific history prior to acquisition is unknown.

Right: Cuddly Blue Dragon as advertised.

Research confirms this product has been available at retail from such vendors as Walmart, QVC, and Amazon since at least 2019. The "Cuddly Blue Dragon Speak/Repeat Plush Animal" was designed and manufactured by Cupcakes and Cartwheels, a division of Two's Company, out of Elmsford New York 10523, but is not currently listed on the Two's Company wholesale website. Therefore it is presumed to be a discontinued product at this time. Product descriptions elsewhere suggest there had been a listening and speaking functionality embedded in the electronics, which was designed to repeat back to a child any words or phrases spoken in its vicinity, as well as some corresponding movement functions designed to animate the dragon's head and/or jaw.



PURPOSE OF TREATMENT:

Treatment of this object is undertaken to stabilize its condition, as well as to alter its use by making the object suitable for handling and public display as a hand-puppet. As part of this treatment regimen, existing polyester fiberfill contents are to be largely removed and replaced, holes in the plush textile are to be mended, and a knit lining material is to be added internally as a means to facilitate future use as a hand-puppet. The felt tongue will be removed, replicated, and replaced, as well. This treatment regimen will not include replacing the dragon's eyes at this time, because suitable materials will need to be sourced and/or manufactured.

Converting this object to a hand-puppet will necessitate some reconstruction of the object's internal structure, starting from where the electronic components once resided, and extending upwards into the head and jaw area. This reconstruction will not only guide the insertion of a

hand to the appropriate position within the object for performative animations, it will prevent any new fiberfill from being easily removed or displaced by its intended use as a puppet. Prior to undertaking this reconstruction, but following removal of most of its existing fiberfill, the object will be gently washed in order to lift and remove dust, dirt, and debris from the remaining/existing materials.

The following pages detail specific condition issues, steps undertaken in the course of treatment, and results of this treatment regimen.

Below: Cuddly Blue Dragon prior to cleaning.



Below: Cuddly Blue Dragon after cleaning, but before mending.



Below: Details show a gaping seam between the neck and forearm, and a cut or tear on the felt tongue.



WASHING METHOD

Soak in a solution of cold to lukewarm tap water mixed with (cleaning agent) household laundry detergent for approximately sixty minutes. Rinse with cold to lukewarm tap water for approximately twenty minutes, or until rinse water appears clear and colorless. Hang to dry at ambient room temperature in a clean, dry indoor space with moderate airflow. Agitation is to be avoided as much as possible. Heat sources are to be avoided as much as possible.

Cleaning agent: Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day Laundry Detergent Concentrated
Manufactured for The Caldrea Company, 1525 Howe Street, Racine Wisconsin 53403
(877-865-1508)

Below: Details of minor cuts and/or tears as seen from the interior (object is turned inside out).



Below: Details of mending treatment as seen from the interior (object is turned inside out).



RE-CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Mending on the plush polyester textile material will be applied on the interior side, exclusively, in a woven mending pattern. A single strand of polyester all-purpose thread is to be woven into the polyester mesh in a simulated warp and weft pattern that will transfer tension to un-damaged areas of the textile, immediately proximal to each hole in the mesh. When it is necessary to anchor the thread via knot work directly to the plush, these knot work stitches will be confined to seam allowances, exclusively, to prevent any visible disturbance or distortion to the outward appearance of the plush.

To replace its damaged tongue, the existing polyester felt material is first removed by carefully opening the seam which secures it to the Cuddly Blue Dragon's mouth. The shape of this tongue is copied onto a fresh piece of polyester felt material that is comparable in both quality and color to the original, and then this new material is cut to the desired shape. The new tongue is then sewn by hand back into the original seam (precisely where material had been removed from the object). Steps to reconstruct and/or replace the dragon's eyes are going to be deferred for the time being. A follow-up treatment proposal and subsequent Condition and Treatment Report can be drafted at the appropriate time.

Measurements taken via non-aided visual examination will inform the drafting of a sewing pattern for constructing the lining. Initially, this lining will be assembled using the aid of a standard sewing machine. Seam allowances of the lining will then be matched to relevant internal existing seam allowances within the object. Small, handmade stitches will affix the lining material to the interior along those seams, restricting all handmade stitches to the seam allowances exclusively. New polyester fiberfill material will be sandwiched between this lining material and the original polyester textile, resulting in sections of pillow-like loft within boundaries defined by relevant seam allowances. The resulting internal structure and volume so created should restore much of the object's original character and outward appearance. Lastly, the unhemmed edges of this lining material will be turned inward by hand around the existing opening (where the electronic components were removed), and then a line of stitches will be applied by hand to marry the new lining material to the exterior plush material. This last seam will serve to seal the object's stuffing against loss while providing a readily penetrable interior for handling, thus facilitating the insertion of a hand for puppet-ing this object.

Tongue material: 100% polyester felt textile

Lining material: 100% polyester knit textile

Stitch work material: 100% polyester all-purpose thread

Fiberfill material: 100% Polyester Cluster Fiber Fill
REG.NO PA-28344 (FL)
Pellon Consumer Products,
4801 Ulmerton Road,
Clearwater Florida 33762

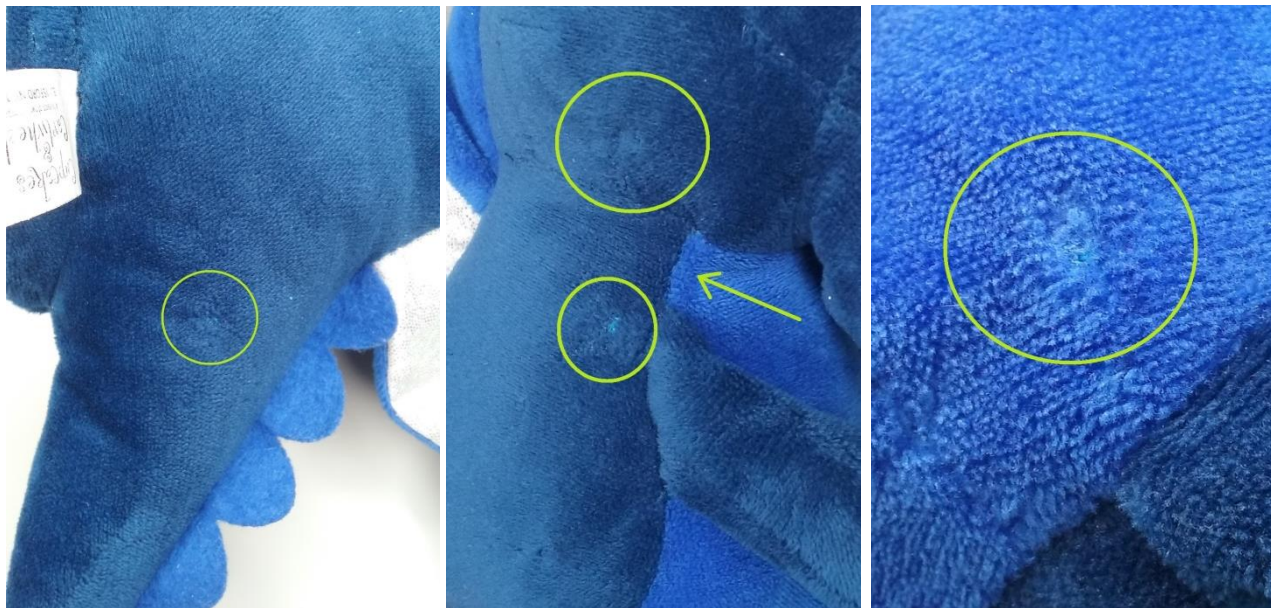
Right: Lining material, right-side out.



Below: Steps in the reconstruction, including securing the lining material and replacing the fiberfill.



Below: Details of mended areas at the conclusion of this treatment, as seen from the external plush.



Below: Detail of tongue replacement on the Cuddly Blue Dragon, and the finished lining seam work.



Below: Overview of Cuddly Blue Dragon at the conclusion of this treatment.



PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

Embedded in the Condition and Treatment report and saved to digital on HDD and/or SDD.

Color Prints: No Transparencies: No B&W Prints: No Digital Images: Yes
Full view: Yes Details: Yes Ultraviolet: No Infrared: No Micro: No

EXAMINATION METHODS

Naked Eye: Yes Hand Lens: Yes Ultraviolet Light: No Infrared Light: No
Microscopy: No Chemical Tests: None Additional Recommended Testing: None at this time

RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE

The object should be inspected once a year to determine whether any additional treatment is required. Normal dust removal should be performed with a soft dry cloth using no commercial cleaners or polishes. If the object is to be stored, it should be protected from an excess of dust, moisture, heat, UV light, etcetera.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The materials pictured to the right were removed from the object, but have been retained. These include the zip tie, the fractured polyester disc, the stub of a lost eye, and the felt tongue. Use value has yet to be determined. All original polyester fiberfill which had been removed from the object has since been discarded, leafy matter and all.

This report constitutes my first attempt at this form of documentation. An adapted version of this document has been made accessible in a weblog of similar documents on my website at the following URL:
<https://www.ninapower.info/conservation>

