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Wed, 2014-02-19 18:03 — Robin Olson

There are few things in the world that make me feel happy the way cats do, but one of them is so be around art. As a [Graphic Designer](#) ^[1] I get caught up in beautiful typography, bright colors and clever ideas visualized, so when I had the opportunity to attend the 111th [American International Toy Fair 2014](#) ^[2] in New York City, I was beyond delighted.

Okay, I LOVE toys, too.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Like a moth to a flame, one of the first things I see, before I even enter the show floor is a very GOOD (Bub) sign.

Imagine you're 7 years old and you get to go to the biggest toy store in the world that carries every kind of toy imaginable, from a mind-blowing array of plush toys (*way beyond a bear, we're talking plush MRSA virus and plush Pancreas* ^[3]), kid-sized fantasy outfits, handmade musical instruments to out-of-this-world models of monsters causing mayhem, bobbleheads and more. Now imagine being middle-aged and feeling the same way. That's what Toy Fair does to you from the moment you set foot in the Javits Center.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. [Sugar LuLu](#). ^[4] Even dogs are welcome here.

So what about cats? This IS a cat blog after all.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Oh yeah, baby.

That's where I had a few surprises-seeing some very cute cat-centric items for humans that will be hitting the consumer market in the next few months.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. I loved this [banner art from Innovative Kids](#) [5].

The first thing that got me excited was **Chet the Cat & Friends.**TM [6] Think, funky 1960's illustration style combined with a juicy color palette that makes up the world of Chet the cat. Chet has a line of child-sized appliances and other cooking related items emblazoned with delicious artwork that any child would be attracted to. **Their line of 3+ up toys inspire creativity and imagination while helping tune fine motor skills. In my book, I'd buy it just because I love the artwork and hey, don't judge me if I have a tea party with my Chet teapot while I'm at it.**



©2014 Robin A.F Olson. Lusting after these gorgeous goodies.

Educational Insights also created a game I'd love to see go into every school. It's called **Kitten Caboodle™** [7] and in their own words:

"The Big Idea: Find your purr...fect match in this game of furry, feline fun! Draw from the stack or "go fish" from another player's hand to collect cards that match the all of the pet necessities and accessories of the cat you want to adopt. Collect everything that cat needs and adopt it! Adopt the most cats and you win this preschool matching game."

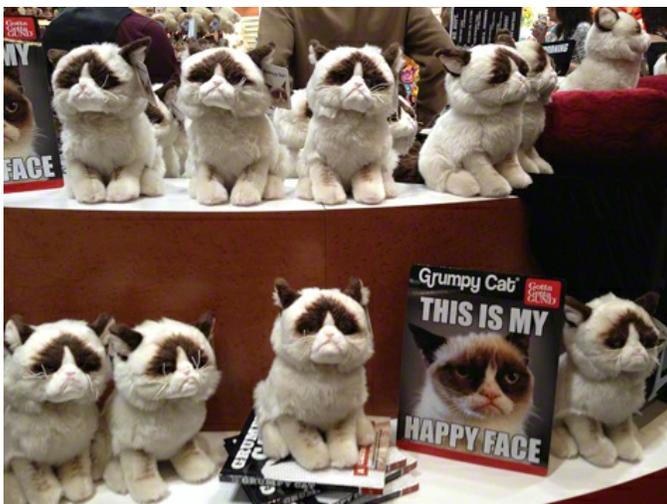


HURRAY! This game's theme carries a powerful message that inspires children to understand what cats need and that only when their needs have been met is when they can be adopted. I love it.

It's also clear that celebu-cats are having their day in the sun with the appearance of a line of **Grumpy Cat** [8] merchandising by the famous manufacturer of plush, **Gund**. Grumpy Cat, herself, was even at the show, but sadly, due to traffic heading into NYC we missed her by a few minutes.



©2014 Robin A.F Olson. I missed seeing Grumpy Cat again. I hated it.



©2014 Robin A.F Olson. I'm waiting for info from Gund on when the GC merch will be in stores or through the [Gund website](#) [9]. Stay tuned.

Gund also has a line based on [Venus](#) [10], the famous Chimera cat.



Here's Venus and her GUND® imitation. Image: [Gund.com](#) To learn more about Venus, pop over to her [Facebook page](#). [11]

I saved the best for last. Our dear, Lil' Bub also has a brand new plush version of herself so everyone can have a Bub of their own. I spoke with Emily from [Cuddle Barn](#) [12] who manufactured the Lil' Bub plush. Cuddle Barn's focus is generally in creating scarily-accurate animated plush, but this first series of Lil' Bub plush won't be animated just yet (*though stay tuned their may be one in the future*).

Emily spoke at length about how thoughtful Bub's "Dude," Mike Bridavksy, was in working with them in creating the most lifelike plush possible. She whispered to me that it took six months to get her just right and it's clear their efforts were worthwhile.

Holding the Lil' Bub in my arms, though bigger than the real Bub, captured her Bub-liness perfectly, featuring her bright green owl-like eyes, her white paws and that show stopping bubble gum pink tongue hanging out.



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Now that's a BIG Bub.

What continues to impress me is that Bub's dude recognizes that although he has, to be crude, a money-maker in his hands with Bub, he does not exploit her. He could sit back and rake the money in and with pre-sale orders of the Lil' Bub plush about to hit 5,000 already, what's to stop him?



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. I LUB my Bub plush! (They made me stick out my tongue. Honest.)

This is why I adore Mike and Bub because Mike gives back. He promotes adopting cats from shelters and to spay and neuter your pet. He donates thousands of dollars to rescue groups...

...like Mid-Hudson Animal Aid, who had a terrible fire last September and got a HUGE donation from Mike to help them recover from their loss. **Mike has the sort of compassionate heart I wish all people who find themselves at the helm of a lucrative business would have as well. It's clearly not about greed, it's about being grateful and about being an inspiration to others, not about making a buck when he's just meeting a demand from his dotting public.**



©2014 Robin A.F. Olson. Me with BIG Bub.

Cuddle Barn created a one-of-a-kind BIG Bub I immediately lusted after, but they said it was not for sale. I'm guessing we'll see it with the real Bub some time soon.

Lil' Bub's lil' plush will be available in smaller outlets and Urban Outfitters starting in April. If you want to pre-order one for \$24.00, the only way to get it is through Lil' Bub's store ^[13] and be warned..the pre-sales are almost filled!



Lil' Bub and Plush Bub thanks to LilBub.com ^[14]

Good Job, Bub.

Good Job, Dude.

Good Job, Toy Fair.

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[One I Hold in High Regard](#) ^[16]

[You Rock!](#) ^[17]

Comments

Fri, 2014-05-23 17:26 — [Catnymouse \(not verified\)](#) ^[18]

Need a plush one of Colonial Meow. ^[19]

Would LOVE to see a Colonial Meow one too!

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Links

[1] <http://ultramaron.com/>

[2] [http://www2.toyassociation.org/AM/Template.cfm?](http://www2.toyassociation.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=TF_Home&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=520&ContentID=15399)

[Section=TF_Home&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=520&ContentID=15399](http://www2.toyassociation.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=TF_Home&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=520&ContentID=15399)

- [3] <http://iheartguts.com/>
- [4] <http://www.sugarlulu.com/>
- [5] <http://www.innovativekids.com/>
- [6] <http://www.educationalinsights.com/category/parents/brand/chet+the+cat--8482-+and+friends.do>
- [7] <http://shar.es/FpCuH>
- [8] <http://www.grumpycats.com/>
- [9] <http://gund.com/>
- [10] <http://shop.gund.com/p/venus-the-amazing-chimera-cat-11>
- [11] <https://www.facebook.com/VenusTheAmazingChimeraCat>
- [12] <http://www.cuddle-barn.com/>
- [13] <http://store.lilbub.com/product/lil-bub-plush-toy-pre-order>
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