



Gemstar model Micro 110 camera



Novelty Popeye camera, plastic case



Promotional novelty camera



Cartoon character inspired novelty camera featuring Bugs Bunny



Cigarette lighter in the form of a miniature camera on a tripod



Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle novelty camera



Promotional novelty camera made by Kellogg's



Highly collectable Mickey Mouse camera

Advice on collecting toy and novelty cameras from **BAYSIDE ANTIQUE & COLLECTABLES CENTRE**

Photography paraphernalia, such as cameras and photographs, is a popular and well-recognised collectable topic. A lighter side to this genre is entertaining, interesting and FUN – collecting toy and novelty cameras, whether functional or purely decorative. Older models are rare, so consider collecting toy and novelty cameras for their shape, colour or design and build a comprehensive collection without a great cost.

NOVELTY cameras that take photos

Since the early development of cameras, novelty cameras have been made with expert designs and manufacture. One very early camera made by Sanderson in the 1890s resembles a hard covered book when the camera was closed. Another early example is the Expo Watch camera. This disguised camera was a popular novelty. The watch winding stem was the camera's lens. First introduced in the USA in 1905, it was sold as late as 1939.

Post-Bakelite, plastics were the ideal media for many varied and unusual cameras to be produced worldwide. These working novelty plastic cameras used 126, 110 or 35 mm film. The quality of the lens and therefore the photo produced may not be great, but the cameras are definitely quirky and eye-catching.

The greatest variety were produced from the 1960s to 1990s and there are still more designs produced today. Popular cartoon character shapes were used for working cameras, particularly in the 1960s to 1980s, including Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny and many others from Disney, Looney Tunes, Hanna Barbera and other production companies. There are cameras in the shapes of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, bear faces, clown faces and animals.

Many miniature cameras were promotional material, shaped as a branded soft drink and beer cans, cigarette packets, fruit juice and cereal packs, and sporting cameras in the shape of balls. Some looked like a camera and displayed the company's name and/or logo, generally produced in brightly coloured plastics.

All these working novelty cameras are very popular and starting to jump in value. Perhaps the general demise of film cameras in the

digital era makes their workings and novelty forms seem more attractive.

The 110 Black Cat camera is highly sought after in Japan. Cartoon character cameras such as the Bugs Bunny item are rising in value, from \$80 to \$150, depending on condition. Complex miniature cameras, such as an early folding camera or the Peter Pan gramophone in a box camera case can cost hundreds of dollars.

TOY and decorative cameras

There are also toys and mementos that look like cameras but are only decorative, coming in a huge range. They can be photo albums, handbags, piggy banks, belt buckles, candles, clocks, coasters, compacts, vanity, decanters and flasks, dishes and tableware, jewellery, key chains, lights, music boxes, pencil sharpeners, phonograms, puzzles and games, radios, 'squirt' cameras, statues and figurines, viewing devices or just toy cameras. Even McDonalds produced toys in the shapes of cameras to give away.

Looking at the miniature camera on a tripod measuring only a few centimetres, would you have guessed that it is actually a functional cigarette lighter? My favourite, it now fetches between \$80 and \$200, depending on condition. Some items were shaped like the lens of a camera, such as a mug that easily fools one into believing it is a lens.

EASY to reach, easy to shop

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We are open 7 days a week from 10 am to 5 pm. The friendly team combine many years of experience and are happy to assist wherever they can. Please free to ask, ring or email, or simply drop in for a trip down memory lane ●

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Camera, plastic case, black cat design



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