

# VENDING MADNESS MACHINE

by  
Christopher Tupa



THANK  
YOU

# VENDING MACHINE MADNESS

BY CHRISTOPHER TUPA



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When I was young my parents would sometimes buy my brother and I toys from the vending machines located in the front of the grocery or department store. Many of these toys I still have today. The toys I have are figures and robots and spaceships; really neat toys that I would play with as a kid.

I have always had a great fascination for all things toy; not only for the nostalgia, but also for the immense creativity and artistry that goes into designing making them.

At some point, as I grew older, I stopped paying as much attention to the quarter machines as I did when I was a kid. When we did go to a store we went in and got what we needed and left and if there was time I would explore the toy isle, hardly ever noticing the vending machines. I'm not exactly sure when I started paying attention again but it was in my junior year of High School when I got my first job. I pushed shopping carts at a brand new Super K-Mart. I must have walked by the vending machines fifty times a day. It was hard not to notice them and I would get a toy every now and then.

But once I moved off and went to college I really started to notice the vending machines. I lived in a big city and there were a lot of stores that had them. So I started to look for them when I would go to any store. And my collection started to grow.

And it hasn't stopped. I now live in a city with a population of 3500 but within a 60 mile radius I know of where almost every toy vending machine is. And there are a lot more than you would expect. Now if I am in the vicinity, I will go into a store just to check out the vending machine and then leave.

**So why paint pictures of these toys?**

**Well....why not.**

**It started a little over two years ago; I wanted to paint a picture of something but couldn't think of anything interesting until I saw one of my vending machine toys on a shelf by my desk. It looked neat and so I decided to paint a picture of it. It was a small toy still life. After that first one I did a few more because they were so much fun to do. Then –light bulb- I could paint all my vending machine toys! How fun!**

**I could paint my entire collection in the format of still life paintings. It would be a great catalog of my toys and would be more personal than photographs, plus it would be fun to do and I'd get lots of practice painting which can only be a good thing. Once I realized just how many toys I had, I realized it would take a long time to paint them all.**

**So this book is perhaps half of my total collection.**

**Now committed to the idea I set about gathering up all of the toys. I had them on bookshelves, in boxes, at work and who knows how many I had given to my kids. Once I started gathering them all up I realized just how many toys I actually had; a lot! Over the years I had acquired quite a lot of the things. Maybe painting them all wasn't such a good idea after all...**

**The most important step before the actual painting was making sure I actually had all of the toys. I wanted my paintings to be an accurate reflection of what I possessed. I didn't want to paint a picture of say, a tiny green alien figure from a particular line of vending toys only to find two more of the same line of toys several days or months after I had painted that first figure. I wanted to do all three together so they would be on the same page and not split up. It would make for a more cohesive collection of paintings if all the same toys were together rather than mixed up all over the place. So I didn't start painting until I had torn the house apart and found every last vending machine toy I could. They were in the couch, behind the fridge, everywhere! If you ever want something to disappear just give it to a small child and chances are you will never see it again.**

The next big step after the paintings was writing my notes about the toys. I didn't just want each painting to only consist of the painting itself. I also wanted to include the names of the toys, the name of the toy line if there was one and also where and when I bought the toy (if I remembered). Up until this point when I purchased a vending toy I never paid much attention to names or when and where I had bought them, making this step of my project a bit harder.

As for the names of the toys, the internet provided an invaluable resource. I could find most of the information online with some serious digging and surfing. This part of the project was almost more fun than the actual painting. It was really neat to research all these toys and find out what they were called and to see what other toys had come out that I had missed.

I broke the book up into broad descriptive categories and tried to fit the toys in the best I could. I worked on this project over the period of a year and sometimes I would discover new information or facts about a toy I had already painted and would then go back and add the info onto the page. Other times I would acquire a new toy that fit in with one I had already painted so I would have to paint in on a separate page. Sometimes I could fit it on the same page. But you'll recognize both of these instances when you see them in the book.

Also, my collection consists almost entirely of figures. I hardly ever buy any of the jewelry, tattoos or stickers that are also available in the vending machine. I have included one or two really neat rings in the book but for the most part all the paintings are of toy figures because that is my favorite vending toy to collect.

As an artist it is neat to see how my art has changed and improved since I started the project. But since the book is broken into categories instead of placed in the order I painted them it may be harder for the reader to notice as much.

I hope you enjoy my collection of vending machine toys.

Christopher Tupa



# Animals

The standard 1 inch capsule





'Nutmeg'



'Nelson'

I got these two at HEB in Giddings, Tx  
on our way to the Round Top Antique Show  
They're from a line called 'Squishee2.'

## MICROSAURS



The top two I aquired at a Fred Meyer  
Store in Warrenton, OR in 2010.  
The bottom one I got several months  
later somewhere in Texas.


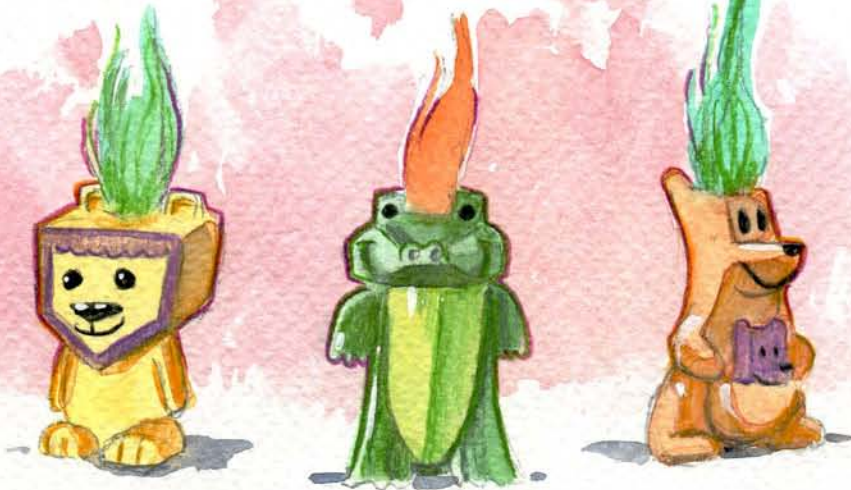




These frog keychains I got at my local HEB Grocery store in 2011. Neat thing about them is their googly eyes! The little black bead rolls around. I haven't seen googly eyes in a long time. When I was a kid they were everywhere and almost every craft project I did in the 80's involved gluing googly eyes on it.

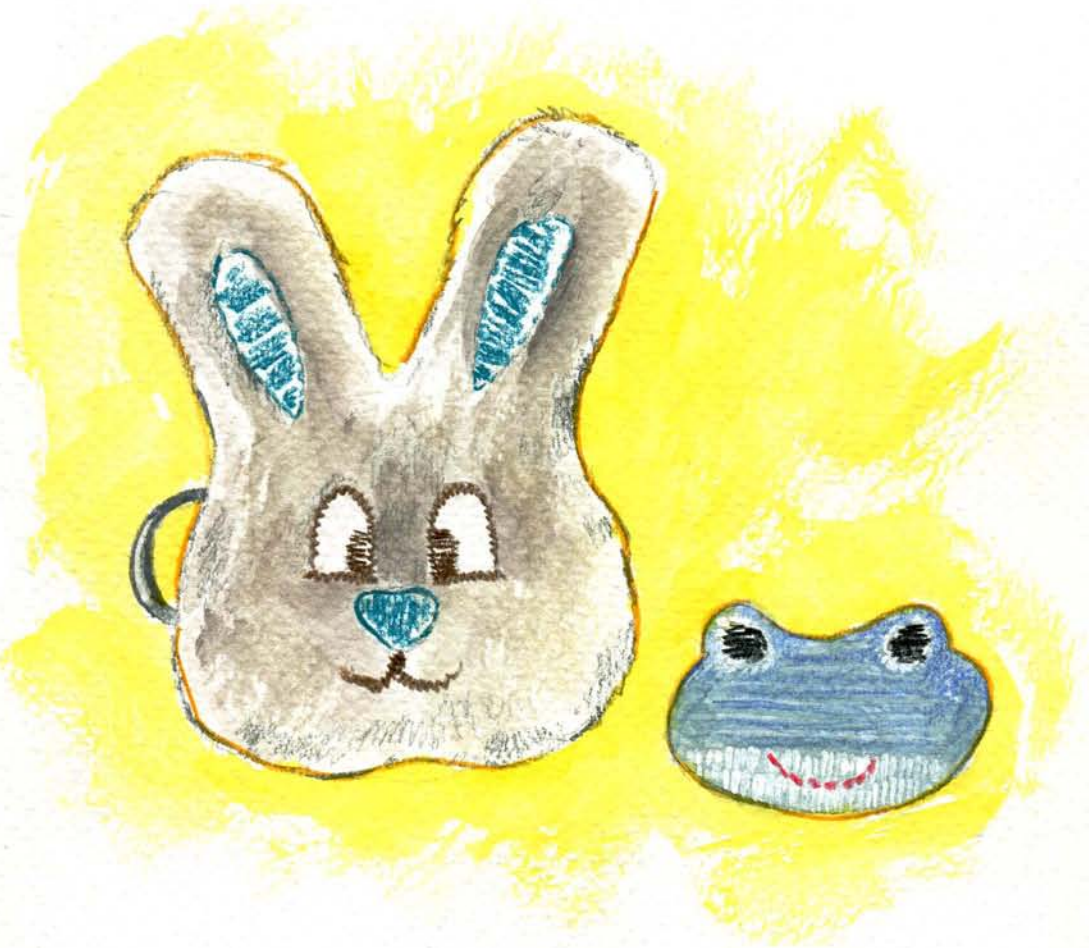
These keychains are translucent and not the easiest to paint...

Fake hair

Three cartoon animals are shown: a yellow lion on the left, a green frog in the middle, and an orange kangaroo on the right. Each animal has a tuft of fake hair on its head. The lion's hair is green, the frog's is orange, and the kangaroo's is green. The animals are set against a light pink watercolor background.

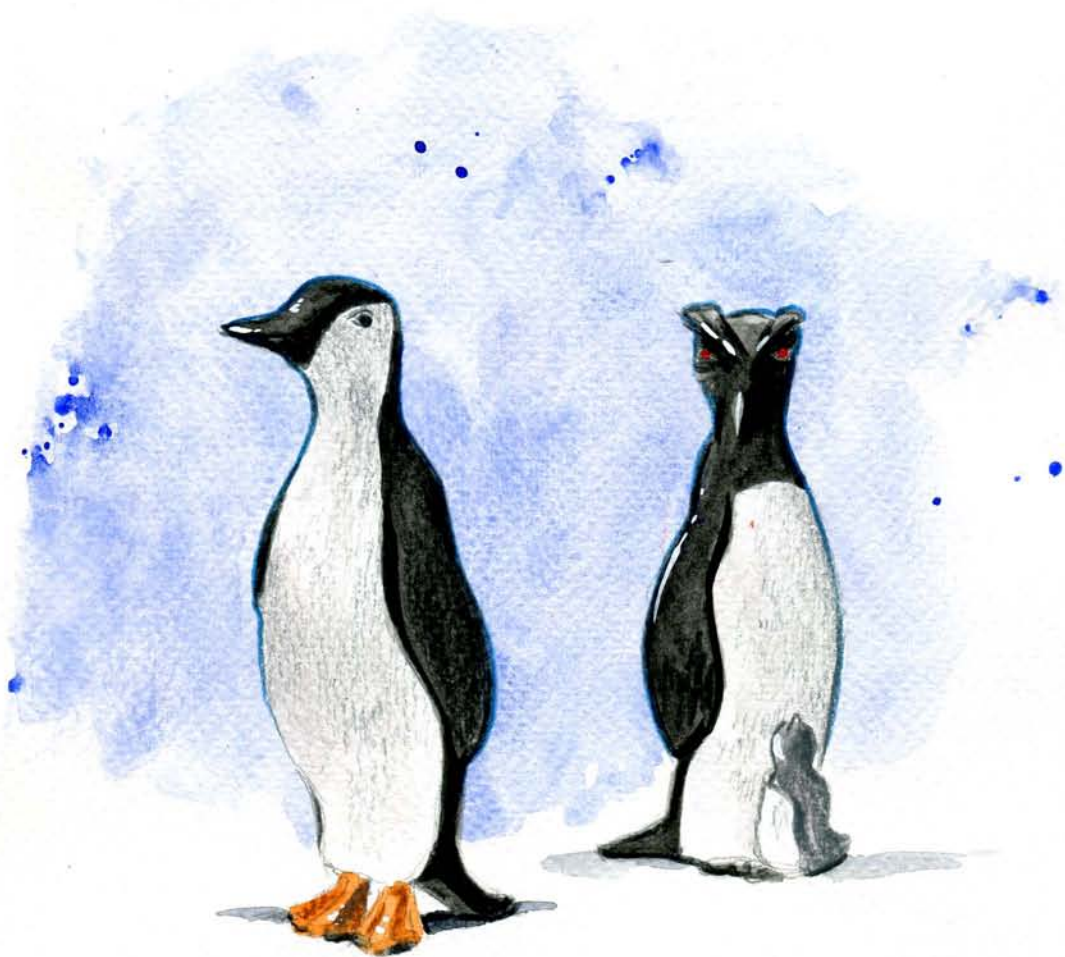
## Jungle Pals

I bought a complete set of these on ebay  
and gave them out at Christmas as stocking  
stuffers. These three belong to my wife and kids.



Two plush toys I've gotten. The rabbit is  
a key chain. I think I won him in a  
crane game at 'Kiddie Park' in San Antonio.





These two penguins came from a 50¢ machine  
at a place called 'Kiddie Park' in San Antonio.





### Tiny Goldfish

The purple fish on the left is made of a hard plastic and the two on the right are soft and squishy.

The squishy ones we got in Waller, Tx



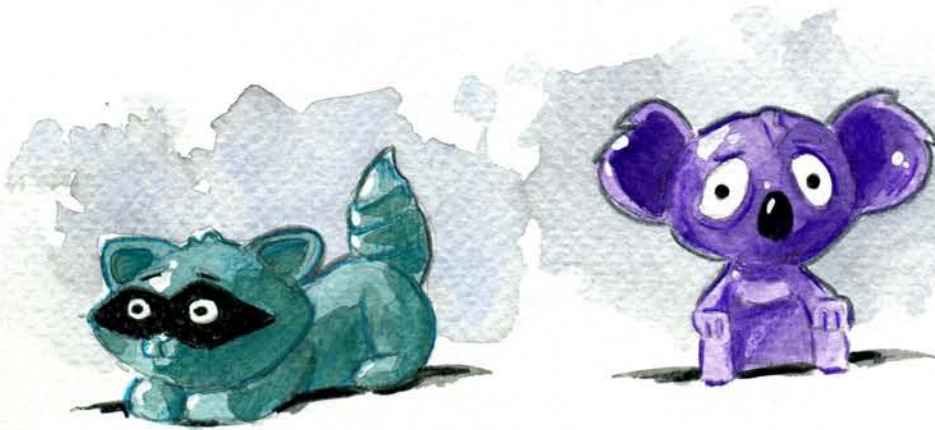
This chicken opens up and if you put a quarter in it, it wobbles back and forth. We did have a pink pig as well but he's since disappeared...

★ I was looking through my old journals and found the instructions for this toy. You put a nickel inside with a quarter on top and then it wobbles. These are called 'Roly-Poly'. There is a chicken, hippo, cow, bear, penguin, monkey, pig and rabbit.



Some of the small ducks we've acquired over the years. The kids take them right away and I rarely ever see them again. I'm sure there are more around the house somewhere but these are all I could find. My favorite is the tiny black one; it's also a pencil topper!





These are called Mini-Malz and some of my favorite capsule toys.

The green bear at the bottom is missing his body because I was going to make my own resin figure by mixing his head with a M.U.S.C.L.E. body but I never completed it. Only the head remains...





A few months after I painted the previous page I found these three Mini-Malz at a store in Fredericksburg, Tx in the summer of 2012. They were 25¢ each.



These soft and squishy dinosaurs are 1 inch and cost 25¢ each. I got them July 2012 at a small grocery store in Hungerford, TX. They are quite detailed for something so small.

About four months later I found this orange guy at another grocery store. →





'Quackey'

'Nelson'

'Champ'

Three more figures from the Animal Squisheez line. These are painted with many colors compared to the other monochrome versions.





### Safari Piggy Banks

These round piggy banks split in half.  
They were 75¢ and I found them at  
Hastings Book Store in Victoria, TX.







Birthstone Bear Keychain  
'November'

HEB Grocery Store, Victoria Tx  
1.20.13



Alphabet Bear  
HEB Grocery Store, Edna Tx  
1.13



Zany Zoo Animals  
Wal-Mart, Victoria TX - 2012

# Creatures

## 1 inch capsule

This one is made of black plastic because it contained a tiny glow stick and thus protected it from sunlight.





'Stinky'

'Knuckles'

These two came from the Austin, TX  
HEB on Braker Lane.  
These are called Freaky Geeks.





## Bok Choy Boy Buildable Figure

I first saw these in late 2010, early 2011. The body/feet/arms are one solid piece and the head splits in half and the body fits inside.



### One of the 'Monster Pals'

This guy came from the Cinemark movie theatre in Victoria, Tx. We hardly ever get to go to the movies but we did manage to go and see 'Indiana Jones and the Crystal Skull' at a midnight showing and that's where I found this guy. The movie made me sad but this guy made me glad. So glad in fact I went online and bought the whole set!



Monster Pals complete set , Part 1



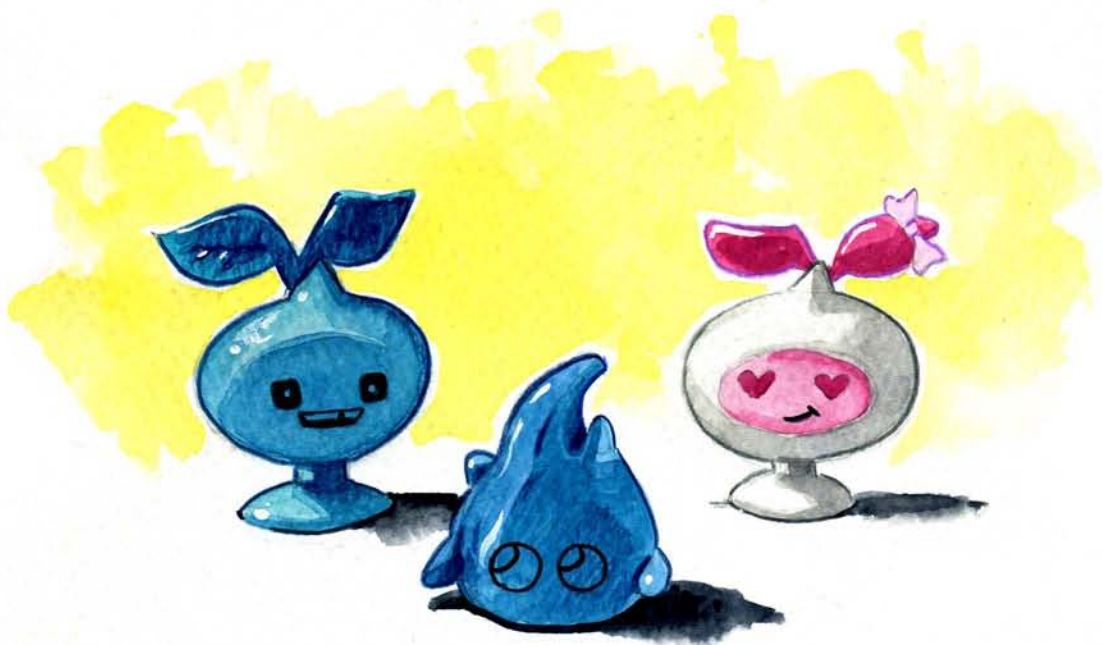


Monster Pals complete set, Part 2





I got this character as a kid in the 80's.  
He was originally a stamp but I cut  
off the stamp-base and used him as a  
figure to play with.



### Nino 'n Dip figures

50¢ each at Pinballz in Austin, TX • 2012

These are plant creatures and the guy in the middle is 'Dip' a drop of water.



'Tota'

'Hype'

Two more characters from the Nino'n Dip line of figures. These are different colors than the previous ones.



'VLAD'



'WILLY'



'ALICE'

NUMB  
SKULLZ  
5 of 12



'BERNIE'



'IRA'





### Tiny Monster Finger Puppet

I got this guy at a grocery store in Waller, Tx. We were headed to Yogi Bear's Jellystone Campground to spend a couple nights and stopped in Waller to pick up supplies.

I love to travel and it's even more fun when you find great vending machines.



Danger



Water



Mountain

# BOK CHOY BOY

Figures and  
corresponding  
symbols

Series 1 and 2



Day



Snow



Time



Luck



Fire



DOMO  
FIGURINES  
SERIES 1

2012  
EDNA, TX  
HEB GROCERY STORE





DOMO  
FIGURINES  
SERIES 2



2012  
EDNA, TX  
HEB GROCERY STORE





# People

Standard 2 inch capsule





1- Sandman from The Bone Hedz figure series

2- Homies Santos Religious Figures  
- San Antonio Santos

I got him at HEB in Edna, TX.



## Tiny Wrestlers

The figure on the left I've had since the mid-80's.  
The back has a clip you can use to clip it  
to a pencil.

The figure on the right I got in 2010 or 2011.  
It's really small, about 1" tall. It kinda looks  
like a tiny 'Rock' knock-off.





'Sancho'  
Homies Series #8



'Poco Loco'  
Homies Series #8



'Commander Carl'  
Homies Trailer Park



'La Muerta'  
Homies Series #7



'Long Gone John'



'Brain Dead Britney'



'Dead Zone Dave'

### Zombie Planet Figures

Zombie vending toys!  
How cool is that?! These are pretty detailed and the paint application is some of the best I've seen. They really look dirty and gritty. Oddly enough, because of this they're not my favorites.

Found at HEB Grocery store in Edna, Tx.



- Campeón

Los Tremendos  
Lucha Dorez

1" wrestler figures



- Muerto

Walmart, Victoria TX  
2012



- Gordo

# Robots, Aliens and Space Ships

2½" capsule  
from Japan





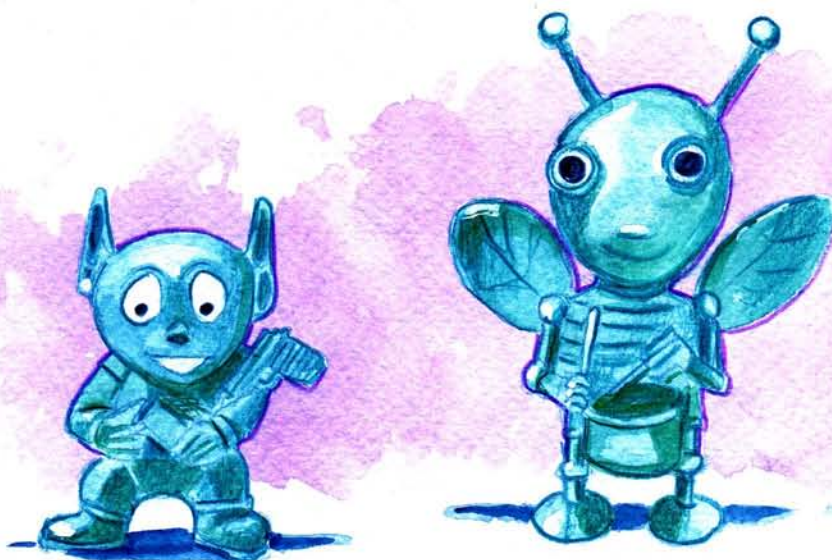


## Martian Men

My favorite is the one on the bottom right;  
it's a play on the 'Bob's Big Boy' restaurant.

These are also sold under the title:  
Planet X Mini Aliens



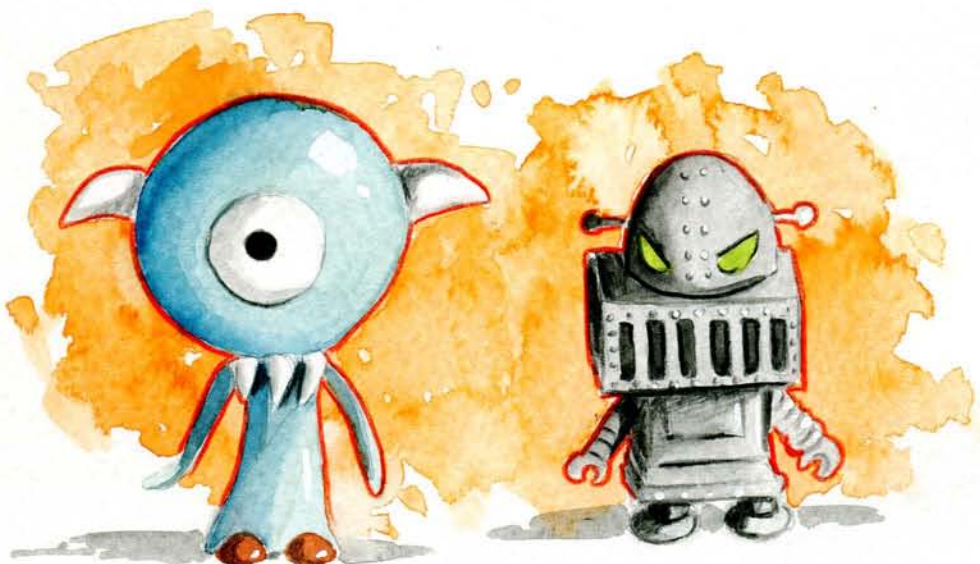


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1- Space Bandits figure

2- This guy may have come from a crane machine in Port Lavaca, Texas WalMart in 2011.



'KOZ'  
The Gool: Toys  
Mini Art Monsters  
1 of 6

RETROBOTS  
1 of 8

These were 75¢ each and purchased at  
Toys 'R' Us in Sugarland, TX on 12-9-12.

# Licensed Properties

This capsule is 2" x 2.5"  
and came from Japan.





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These are from gashapon machines in Austin, TX.  
Most likely from Fry's.

- ① Fish Out of Water from 'Chicken Little',  
shaped like an egg
- ② Dale chipmunk; the bases all fit together.  
Can also be used as a pencil topper.





Pablo from Backyardigans.  
I picked him up in 2005 at a  
highway truckstop on our way  
from Austin to San Diego.



'Stewie'

'Chris'

Tiny 'Family Guy' bobbleheads  
Bought at Big Lots in Austin, TX.



'Blue'

One of my first vending machine purchases as an 'adult'. When I moved off to Austin to go to college I really started paying attention to the vending machines again; and ever since I never go into a store or restaurant without first looking over the quarter machines.



Another one of these really cool capsule toys. Dora fits inside the dolphin costume. These types of toys are some of my favorites; and for 75¢, you can't beat them.

In recent years I've seen several types of capsule toys being copied by big toy companies and sold in stores, for a lot more money too. I've seen these types of toys and squishies being appropriated by big toy companies.



## Pixar Buildable Figures



'Hamm'



'Mike'



'Buzz Lightyear'

## Marvel Buildable Figures



'Iron Man'



'Spiderman'



'The Hulk'



### Madagascar 2 figures

These were 50¢ each and about the size of a quarter. Amazing details for something so tiny.

Note: Madagascar 3 just came out and they're selling these same figures for that movie as well.

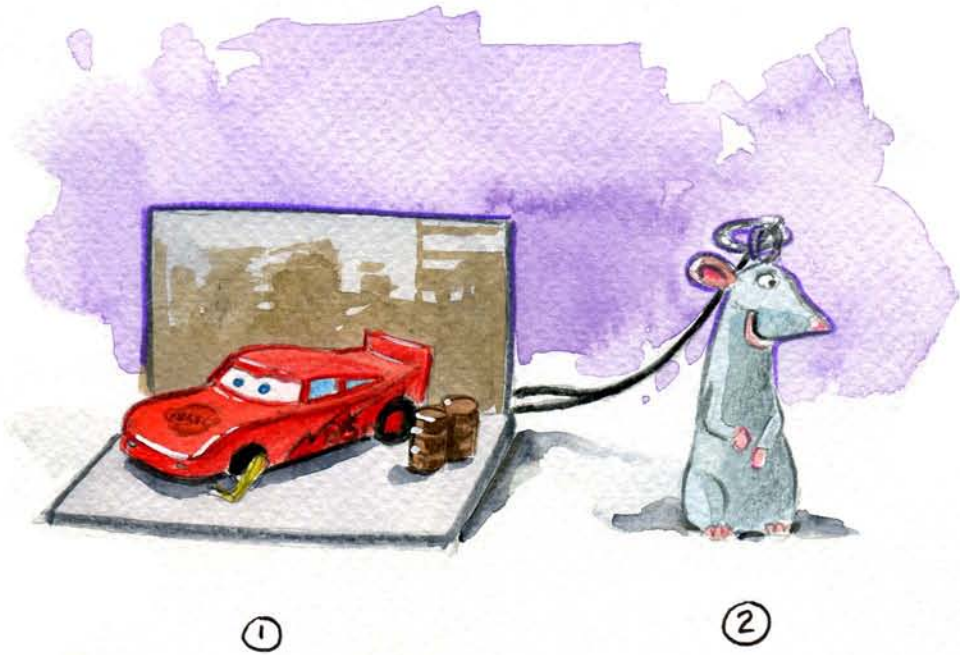


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- 1- Homer Simpson bobblehead (actually bobbles at the waist)
- 2- Maggie Simpson in a movie theatre seat. These came out when the Simpsons Movie did and each Simpson family member has their own seat and when you put them side by side it's one whole row of theatre seats.





- 1- Lightning McQueen Gashapon; a very small but detailed toy. The car comes off the display as well. This is from the scene in the movie 'cars' where Lightning is impounded at the junk yard.
- 2- Remy from 'Ratatouille'; my least favorite Pixar movie. But this dangler is pretty neat.





I don't remember where I got these guys but they cost 25¢ and are the same size as a quarter. They appear to be tiny 'Street Fighter' knock-offs.



'Abe Sapien'

'Kroenen'

Hellboy Figure Collection Series 1 : \$1 ea.



Buster and D.W. From the Arthur cartoon  
50¢ each, possibly from Big Lots...





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- 1- The Leader from The Incredible Hulk; Marvel Bobblehead Collection Series 1
- 2- SpiderMan from the Marvel Heroes Thumb Wrestlers. It won't fit on my thumb; it's child-sized.





'Komodo Moe'



'Coco Bandicoot'

Crash Bandicoot figures; 50¢ each  
possibly at Big Lots in early 2000's



'Ginger Snap'



'Orange Blossom'

Strawberry Shortcake figurines  
Two sizes; one 50¢, the other 25¢



### Hello Kitty Rainbow Erasers

The capsule doubles as a piggy bank and each comes with an eraser. The eraser material is too hard to actually use but the sculpts are very fun.

Bought at Fry's Electronic Store in Austin, Tx for \$1 each; June 2012.



← what the  
Stamp looks like →

## Disney Cuties Impression Rings

I haven't painted hardly any jewelry simply because there's so much of it; enough for it's own book. But these two rings I thought were really neat. I like the designs and each one is also a stamp (You have to provide the ink)

HEB, Edna TX • 2012





'Ed'

'Edd'

Ed, Edd n Eddy figurines  
Probably from Big Lots, early 2000's



'Dare Devil'

'SpiderMan'

### Marvel Heroes Foam Balls Series #2

Got these at a truck stop somewhere between Edna, TX and Fredericksburg, TX in March 2012.



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- 1- Gossamer; I think he was originally connected to a dangle with a suction cup but it disappeared.
- 2- Tasmanian Devil keychain



Vidia, a fairy from Pixie Hollow  
This gashapon is less than 2" tall.





I don't recall where I got this 1.5" tall Gumby. I do recall watching the TV show quite a bit as a youngster. I really liked it; especially when they drove the toy vehicles around and interacted with other toys. If they made this show today, just think of all the awesome toys Gumby could play with!



George Sanderson  
'Monsters Inc.' movie



Frozone  
'The Incredibles' movie



Ozzie the Possum  
'Over the Hedge' movie



Larry the Shark  
'Shark Tale' movie



Batman 'The Dark Knight' movie keychain and a Mach 5 race car dangle from the 'Speed Racer' movie.





Dee Dee from  
Dexter's Laboratory

Norbert Foster Beaver  
from Angry Beavers

Both of these I got years ago when I first started paying attention to the vending machines again. At the time I had never seen either cartoon but that didn't stop me from spending my quarters.

Dee Dee's head is so heavy it's leaning over, preventing her from standing up straight. The Dexter's Laboratory figures also have stands that connect to each other.



'Mac'

'Bloo'



'Cheese'

'Eduardo'

Cartoon Network Figurines  
These four are from the show:  
'Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends.'  
A great show; Bloo is hilarious !!



'Mung Daal'

'Chowder'

'Shnitzel'

Three more Cartoon Network figures. These are from the show 'Chowder'. I'm not a fan of the show but I ended up with these while trying to get the 'Fosters' figures on the previous page.

These Cartoon Network figures have great detail, especially since they're only slightly bigger than a quarter.

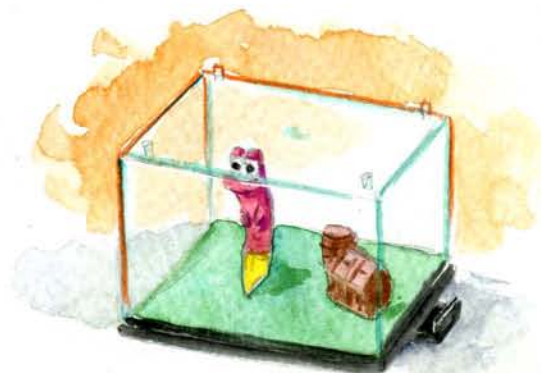
HEB, Edna Tx



'Rockin' Eeyore'  
Rock-Along with Winnie the Pooh  
Figure Collection



'Roo'  
Gashapon Capsule Toy  
One of my favorites  
So well sculpted; it  
looks like a tiny sculpture



'Jacques'  
2003  
Finding Nemo Aquarium  
Gashapon Capsule toy  
There are 8 of these in  
the set. You can hook  
them together at the  
base or stack them on  
top of each other.





Littlest Pet Shop Dangles  
Part 1



Duck Dodgers and Queen Tyr'ahnee

### Duck Dodgers Cartoon Figurines

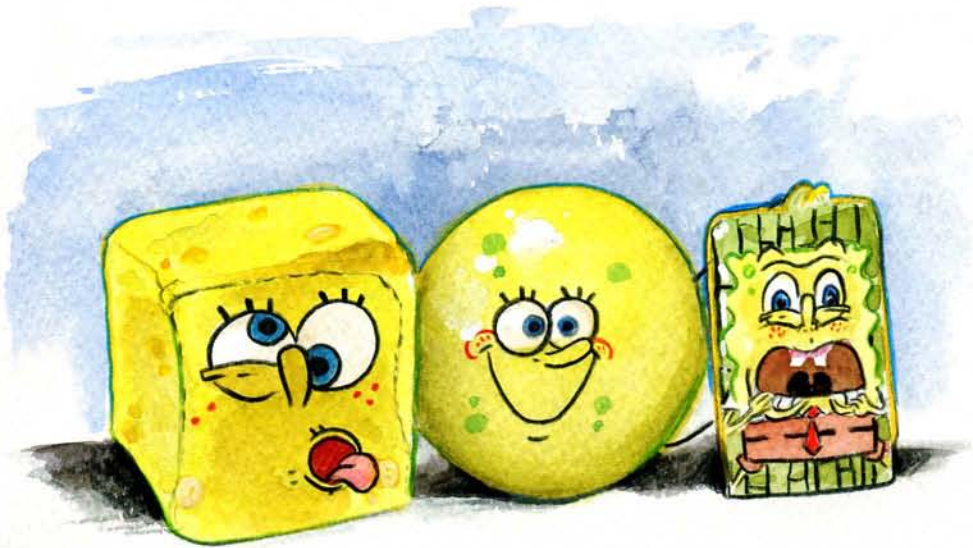
These are from the early 2000's. If you got Duck Dodgers, The Young Space Cadet (Porky Pig), Martian Commander X-2 (Marvin the Martian) and Commander K-9 (X-2's dog), they all fit together to make a circle and the Queen fit in the middle 2





Various SpongeBob Square Pants  
figures I've picked up over the  
years. I believe all of them  
were 50¢ each.





Three SpongeBob Squarepants items. From left to right: A sponge to soak up water and toss at someone, a plastic ball, and a screen cleaner dangle (to clean your cell phone or other electronic device). I love the various facial expressions.





### Peek-a-Boo Chip n' Dale

I bought the whole set of 12 online three or four years ago and gave them away as Christmas presents. I kept these three for myself. They're so adorable.



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## Buildable Figures

1- The dog from the movie 'UP'

2- NFL Steelers football player



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②



③

DC Buildable Figurines (3 of 6)  
HEB Grocery Store, Victoria TX 1.19.13

- ① Batman
- ② Robin
- ③ Green Lantern

# Other

1  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch round capsule







①  
'Mocha Choca'



②  
'Man Zilla'



③  
'Emo Joe'



④  
'Emo Joe'

## Urbanzees

1-3 These three I got at Geno's Pizza in Astoria, OR. Great pizza and several quarter machines and arcade games.

4 I can't remember where I got this one but he glows in the dark!



My brother gave me this gashapon prize for Christmas in 2010. The top slides up and there is a tiny amount of storage inside.



A few 'String Dolls'  
and 'Voodoo Dolls' I've  
collected...



These three came from a claw machine at Pizza Hut in Edna, Tx. The yellow spaceship looks exactly like one made by 'Sankuokai' back in the 80's. I'm not sure if it's one of theirs or if another company used the same mold. The tiny army man is surprisingly detailed.

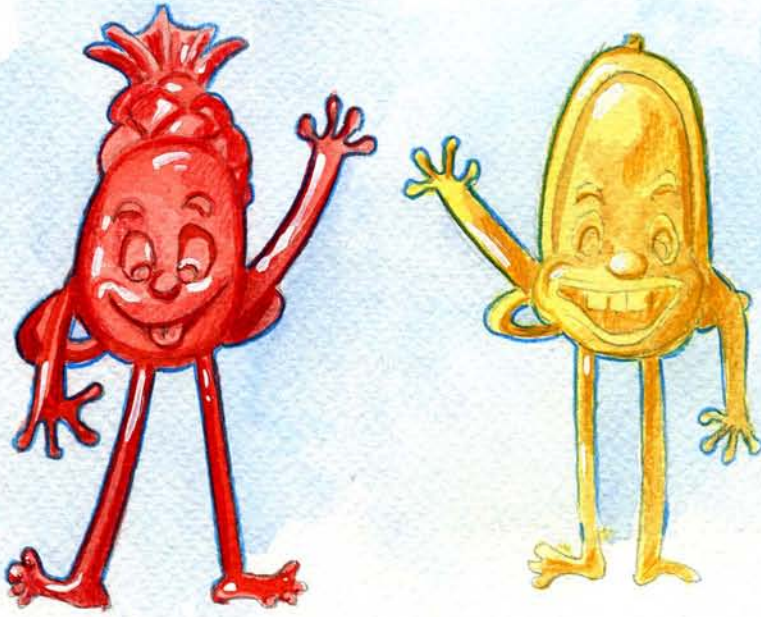




Several years ago we went to a small park in San Antonio, TX called 'Kiddie Park'. They have a bunch of carnival rides for the kids and the rides haven't changed since the 1920's. They also have a bunch of quarter machines there as well and a crane game also for 25¢. But it's an old version of the crane game where you actually operate a crane. That's where I got these three. The bear whistle was missing his ear when I got him.



These two are about 1.25" long. I think  
I got them a couple years ago at  
Big Lot's in Victoria, TX; but  
I could be wrong...



These fruit characters are rings but also came with enough plastic string to make them into a necklace if you wanted, I guess; there's no where to attach the string though. The first guy I have in red and yellow.



### Jumbo Burger Necklace

I bought a set of 10 of these on ebay and gave them out at Christmas as stocking stuffers.

It's a tiny hamburger box from the 80's. The best part - it opens up!





3 of 4 Silly Sports Dudes



These two came from a claw machine at a WalMart in Port Lavaca, Tx. The little squishy Snoopy has an interesting orange-yellow coloring. I got these in early summer, so getting the tiny Santa dangle was pretty funny.



I got this capsule toy quite some time ago.  
The tiny box (1.75" x .75") has the car inside  
it. Pretty neat for \$1!

Tomica Capsule Series #7, 2005  
Nissan Fairlady 200ZG

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