

MOM'S JOY ROOM

2964 Fairmont Road, Morgantown, WV 26501 | (304) 282-3671

CERTIFICATE OF DESCRIPTION & VALUATION

Genuine Mink Fur Teddy Bear — Handmade — 24" — Oversized — Distinctive Masked Face



MARKET VALUE

\$175-325

Realistic quick-sale price via shop, site, or collector market

ESTIMATED WORTH

\$350-500

Ceiling for an oversized 24" genuine mink bear with distinctive character and excellent fur condition



DESCRIPTION

A handmade teddy bear measuring approximately 24 inches in height, crafted from genuine mink fur in a rich, deep brown tone. The bear features a distinctive "masked" face — cream and white fur patches around the muzzle and eye area set against the dark brown body, giving it a unique, expressive character unlike standard mink bears. The fur is dense, lustrous, and in excellent condition, with the soft, silky texture characteristic of quality mink pelts. The bear is fully stuffed and proportioned as a substantial display piece. No maker's label or tag is present, which is typical of individually handcrafted fur bears made by independent artisans from recycled or repurposed mink coats.





Above: Full front view, facial detail showing the distinctive cream-masked face pattern, and side view showing the rich, dense mink fur texture. 24" tall — an impressively oversized piece.

HISTORY & CONTEXT

The tradition of crafting teddy bears from genuine fur — particularly mink — has a rich history that intersects with the fur trade, the teddy bear collecting boom of the 1980s–1990s, and the modern "memory bear" movement. The finest antique fur bears were made by European toy houses (Steiff, Hermann, Bing) using mohair and occasionally real pelts, but by the mid-20th century, a parallel tradition emerged in North America: **independent craftspeople and furriers creating teddy bears from recycled mink coats**. This practice accelerated dramatically in the 1990s and 2000s as the fur market declined and many owners of vintage mink coats sought to repurpose them into keepsake items rather than let them sit unworn in storage.

A **24-inch mink bear** is notably larger than the standard for this craft. Most handmade mink bears run 14–19 inches tall, requiring the fur from a jacket or short coat. A 24-inch bear of this proportions would have required significantly more material — likely the full pelt from a **full-length mink coat** — making it both more expensive to produce and less common on the market. Custom "memory bear" makers such as Fairy Godmother Creations price their work on a sliding scale by size: \$185 for 10–14", \$205 for 16", \$230 for 18" — and a 24" piece would sit well above that range, reflecting the additional fur, labor, and stuffing required. Stadler Fur Bears of Wisconsin, the best-known commercial mink bear maker, lists their 24" "Lunarine" mink bear as one of their largest and most premium offerings.

The **distinctive masked face** on this bear is a particularly charming feature. Most mink bears are made from a single uniform fur color — typically all dark brown or all black. This bear's maker intentionally used contrasting cream and white fur patches around the muzzle and eyes, creating a "masked" or "bandit" face effect that gives the bear a unique personality. This kind of deliberate color blocking requires more skill and planning than a single-color bear, as the artisan had to source or select contrasting fur sections and integrate them into the face construction. It suggests the work of an experienced fur craftsman rather than a beginner.

The broader market for genuine fur bears remains active among several overlapping groups: teddy bear collectors who appreciate real fur as a premium material, people seeking to repurpose inherited fur coats into keepsake "memory bears," and vintage/antique buyers drawn to the craftsmanship and texture of real pelts. The growing interest in sustainable and repurposed goods has also given recycled fur bears new appeal — they represent a way to honor the original animal and the

craft of fur work without supporting new fur production.

NOTABLE FEATURES

- ◆ **Genuine mink fur** — rich, deep brown tone with dense, lustrous texture
- ◆ **Oversized 24 inches** — significantly larger than the standard 14–19" mink bear; required substantially more pelt material
- ◆ **Distinctive "masked" face** — cream and white fur patches around muzzle and eyes, a deliberate artistic touch by the maker
- ◆ **Likely made from a full-length recycled mink coat** — the size suggests a full coat was used rather than trim pieces
- ◆ **Excellent fur condition** — dense, soft, and lustrous; the single most important value factor for fur bears
- ◆ **Handmade / artisan crafted** — no maker's label, typical of individually produced fur bears from independent craftspeople
- ◆ **Substantial display presence** — at 24", this is a statement piece that commands attention on a shelf or in a cabinet

"Some bears are cuddled. Some are displayed. This one demands both — at 24 inches of mink, it earns its place in any room."

Collector's note: The 24-inch size is the primary value driver for this piece — most mink fur bears on the market are 14–19 inches, making this one notably oversized and less common. The distinctive cream "masked" face adds unique character and suggests the work of a skilled fur artisan rather than a novice. No maker's label is present, which is standard for individually handcrafted fur bears; attribution is to the general tradition of recycled-mink-coat bear making, which peaked in the 1990s–2000s. Comparable custom-made mink bears at this size range from \$230–\$375+ from professional makers, while secondhand examples in good condition typically sell for \$150–\$300. This bear's excellent fur condition, large size, and distinctive face place it in the upper tier of the range. Distinct from the 15" beaver fur bear and the 14" alpaca fur bear also in the Mom's Joy Room collection — this is the largest of the three fur bears.