

Mom's Joy Room

Where Obsolescence Ends and Wonder Begins

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHENTICITY

Genuine Seal Fur Artist Teddy Bear, 20"

ESTIMATED WORTH

\$275-\$475



*Full view — 20" jointed seal fur bear,
satin bow, button outfit*



*Detail — amber glass eyes, stitched
nose, naturally worn muzzle*



*Detail — hand-finished suede paw
pads*

A striking 20-inch fully-jointed teddy bear constructed of genuine seal fur, dressed in a black satin ribbon bow and a tailored button-front satin outfit. The bear's amber glass eyes, hand-stitched nose, and hand-finished suede paw pads reflect careful, deliberate craftsmanship. The muzzle area shows natural wear consistent with genuine fur aging, while the deep, dense black-brown coat retains excellent color and pile across the body, ears, and limbs.

"Some bears are born in a factory. This one was born again — from a fur coat that once kept someone warm, remade to be loved a second time."

History

Genuine seal fur teddy bears are a rare and distinctive category within the broader world of fur-covered toys, and one that is frequently confused with an entirely different — and far more common — historical term: "seal

plush." In the early 20th-century teddy bear trade, makers such as Steiff and their contemporaries used the term "seal plush" to describe a specific type of long-pile mohair fabric, woven from Angora goat hair, whose dense texture visually resembled sealskin. Despite the name, seal plush bears from this era contain no actual seal fur whatsoever — they are entirely mohair, and the "seal" in the name refers only to the fabric's appearance.

This bear, by contrast, presents as a genuine fur construction rather than a woven textile, and its overall build points toward a distinct and well-established modern craft tradition: the artist-made "memory bear," hand-constructed from a real, previously-worn fur coat rather than assembled from new mohair or synthetic plush. This craft has flourished for decades among independent teddy bear artists, who take heirloom fur coats — mink, sealskin, and other pelts — and transform them into fully-jointed, one-of-a-kind bears, often for a client wishing to preserve a treasured garment (frequently one that belonged to a parent or grandparent) in a new and huggable form. Comparable examples of large artist-made bears crafted from reclaimed vintage fur coats, including specifically documented seal fur examples, have appeared at auction and through independent bear artists working in this tradition.

The construction details visible on this bear support that attribution: the amber glass eyes, hand-stitched nose, and finished suede paw pads are all hallmarks of individually hand-crafted artist bear work rather than early-20th-century factory production, which more typically used shoe-button eyes, felt pads, and mechanically-set joints. The tailored satin outfit and ribbon bow further suggest a bear dressed with deliberate, considered styling — consistent with a bear made as a keepsake or gift rather than a mass-produced factory toy.

Regardless of its precise age, this bear represents a genuinely rare material choice. Seal fur is a far less common substrate for teddy bear construction than mink, rabbit, or the ubiquitous synthetic and mohair plush most commonly seen in the collecting world, and its use — whether by an independent artist repurposing a vintage coat, or through some other route — adds meaningful rarity and tactile presence to the piece. The bear's substantial 20-inch size, full jointing at the head, arms, and legs, and excellent overall fur condition (aside from the naturally worn muzzle, a common feature in genuine fur pieces subject to handling and affection) all support a solid collector value.

Notable Features

- ♦ 20" fully-jointed teddy bear — head, arms, and legs articulate
- ♦ Genuine seal fur construction — a rare material choice, most consistent with a fur coat repurposed by an independent bear artist
- ♦ Amber/orange glass eyes, hand-stitched nose
- ♦ Hand-finished suede-style paw pads
- ♦ Black satin ribbon bow and tailored button-front satin outfit
- ♦ Naturally worn muzzle consistent with genuine fur aging and handling
- ♦ No maker's tag or label currently identified

COLLECTOR NOTES

This bear's construction — glass eyes, suede paw pads, tailored satin styling, and genuine fur rather than woven plush — points toward a hand-crafted artist "memory bear" made from a repurposed vintage seal fur coat, a well-documented and respected craft tradition, rather than an early 20th-century factory-made antique. This attribution is stylistic, based on construction details, and not confirmed by any maker's mark. Note also that "seal fur" (this bear's actual material) should not be confused with "seal plush," a mohair fabric term used by early 1900s makers such as Steiff that contains no real seal fur at all.

Sandy Wade

Proprietor, Mom's Joy Room

This certificate accompanies the item at time of sale and reflects research conducted at the time of cataloguing.