



Wax On, Wax Off in Celebrity Shakeup (Los Angeles)

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Bob Pool(c) 2009
The Associated Press

(AP) — LOS ANGELES -- Harrison Ford, Elizabeth Taylor and Leonardo DiCaprio are hanging around a Newbury Park warehouse Friday , waiting for the hammer to drop on their careers as a Hollywood attraction.

They are among more than 200 hand-sculpted figures that will be auctioned off Friday evening by the Hollywood Wax Museum as part of a celebrity look-alike shakeup.

Some of the life-size replicas made of oil-painted wax are being permanently removed from the Hollywood Boulevard tourist attraction. Others are being replaced with updated figures that visitors can touch and pose with for snapshots, said museum partner Tej Sundher.

The figures are expected to fetch about \$3,000 each, said Joseph Maddalena, president of the Profiles in History auction company. Bids can be telephoned in or made on the Internet, he said.

Inside in the darkened warehouse, replicas of Jay Leno and Rodney Dangerfield stood like zombies and stared at Roslyn Tomlinson and her husband, Peter, as they inspected the wax celebrities Thursday. The Tomlinsons operate their own wax museum in Surfers Paradise, Australia, and are planning to expand their collection.

"You're not seeing them at their best. You're seeing them at their saddest," Roslyn Tomlinson said, explaining that wax museum figures morph from creepy to creative when displayed in movie-like settings beneath artful lighting.

The pair were quick to pick Australian stars Nicole Kidman, Paul Hogan and Mel Gibson from the crowd of characters.

Peter Tomlinson said he has commissioned a wax replica of President Barack Obama for their museum.

Sundher, meantime, said his museum is phasing out its politicians. Up for auction are depictions of Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

Sports figures such as Tiger Woods and singers like Cyndi Lauper are also being culled as his collection tilts more toward movie and TV personalities, he said.

"We're the Hollywood Wax Museum and that's what people expect," he said.

The new figures will allow visitors "to interact with the stars -- sit on the bench with Forrest Gump or on the bed with Hugh Hefner," Sundher said.

Although the new figures will be made to be more durable, they will continue to be sculpted from wax and not molded with polyester or plastic.

"The name 'Hollywood Polyester Museum' doesn't sound as good," Sundher said.

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