

WILLIS WONDERLAND

POP-UP BOOK

The Legendary House of Atomic Kitsch

NEUTRON DANCE



Allee's handmade motorized artwork exploded from her super-charged imagination, fueled by a desire to combine her music with her art. After her song "Neutron Dance" became a smash hit by The Pointer Sisters, Allee paid homage to its chart-topping ascent with a sonically charged piece that gyrates to the iconic tune.

Vernors SHAKER

Vernors, "The Original Ginger Soda," was first served in 1866 by a Detroit pharmacist. What could be a better combo than Allee's beloved hometown's favorite brand of pop made into a percussion shaker that she used prominently in co-writing and recording the magnificent songs for the Tony-winning Broadway show (then feature film) *The Color Purple*?



The Supremes WHITE BREAD

Allee Says, "What was the marketing guy thinking when he hooked up The Supremes with a bread brand deal? Pumpernickel maybe, but white bread?!" This is the rare plastic wrapper the loaf came in, made in 1966 by Schaefer Bakeries in partnership with Hitsville Merchandising.



Libby The Lovely Liberated Lady

Pull down her skirt, and there's a surprise squirt! In Allee's words, "An early 1970s Women's Lib toy. Unintentionally Kitsch, the best kind, because Libby took on THE characteristic of the oppressor she was attempting to free herself from. Power to the Kitsch people!"



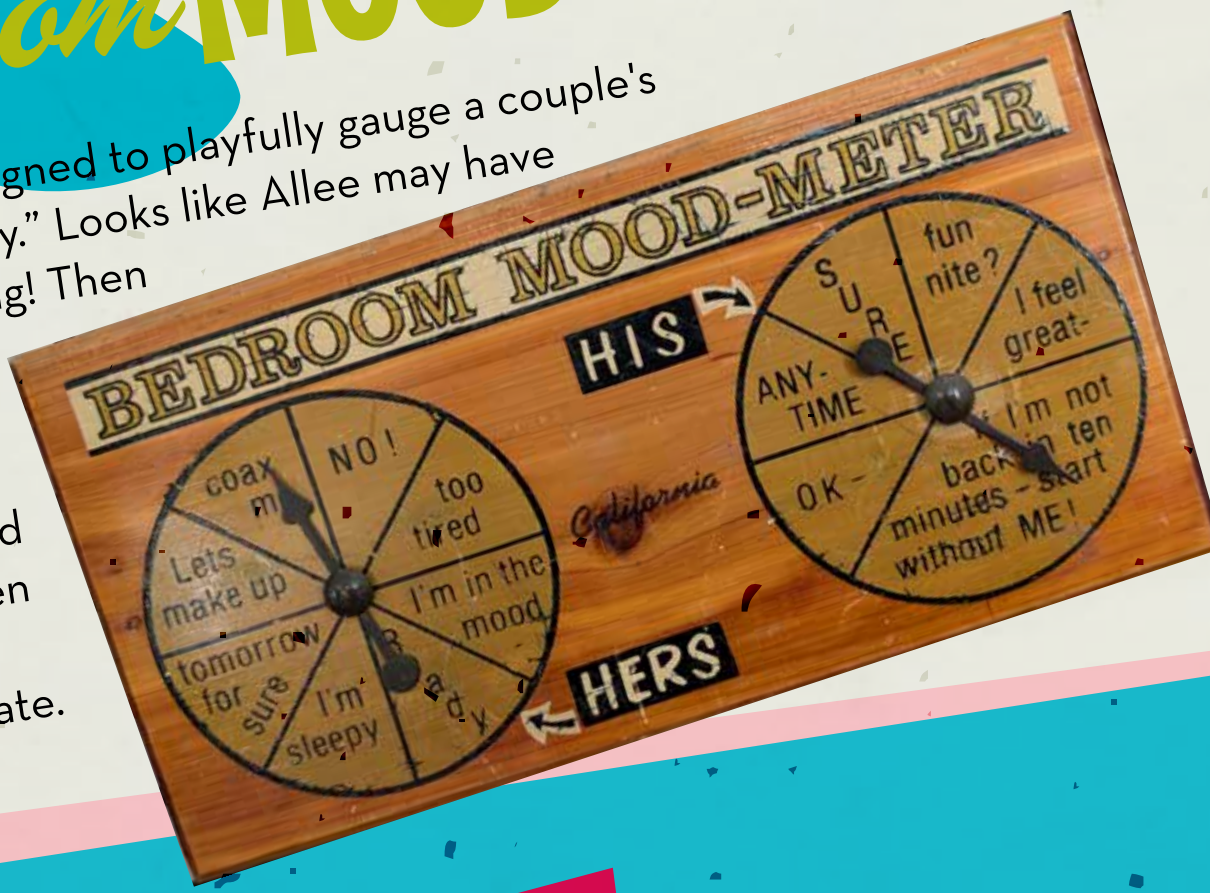
Rubber Hand PUPPETS

Made by Childcraft in 1968 and used in African-American classrooms to teach about good role models, the set includes two girls, two guys, one kid, a grandmother, a grandfather, a policeman and Nelson Mandela. Allee said, "The grandfather and Nelson Mandela look suspiciously alike. I like how one can merely change their suit and go from leading a family to leading a nation."



Bedroom MOOD-METER

From the 1950s, "designed to playfully gauge a couple's readiness for intimacy." Looks like Allee may have needed some coaxing! Then again, there is a "California" scorch mark in the middle, so maybe the Mood Meter ran hot when Allee was in her adopted home state.



SOCK IT TO ME Ashtray



The "Queen of Kitsch" loved a good catchphrase, especially when it adorned a once-trendy gag gift. In Allee's words, "These squished beer and soda bottles 'It to Me' from the late '60s when the phrase 'Sock it to me' from the TV show *Laugh-In* went from crossing the color line to become the reigning colloquialism of the era. I have tons of 'Sock It to Me' memorabilia as well as stretched bottle art, but none so perfect as this smokeables receptacle made by Houze Art, USA."

WELCOME Intrepid Investigator!

Let's take a closer look at some of the treasures found inside the Willis Wonderland pop-up book.



Crackerature

This piece could be a little cheesy if you think about it: it's a portrait of Allee made out of crackers, chips, and pasta by her long-time partner, Prudence Fenton, an award-winning animator and founder of the Willis Wonderland Foundation.



Afro PIKS

Allee sure knew how to pik' em! She loved that her voluminous collection of Afro Piks had no duplicates—sometimes the same card design with a different pik (and vice versa). She especially relished a hair "don't" when the packaging awkwardly covered up the model on the card.



DO IT NOW!

As Allee ate breakfast every morning, she would play with all of the things on the table, especially this napkin holder that was a touchstone—reminding her to never put off creative ideas and always act on them.



Dr. Ben Casey BOBBLEHEAD

From the '60s, this is one of three items from Allee's childhood that she kept and brought with her when she moved to Los Angeles. But the good doctor couldn't save Allee from a broken heart and she stabbed her beloved bobblehead with a pen after an intense breakup.



Mugs Galore



While Allee had an extensive collection of kitschy mugs, she had multiple variations of "Half a Cup of Coffee." Surprising that she loved them so much as Allee never did anything halfway.

Button Collection

Always a trendsetter, these are all buttons Allee wore in high school and college through the '70s, even wearing them on suspenders—way before *Mork and Mindy* featured the look.



ALLEE'S MOM with figurines

This is a photo of Allee's beloved mom with black figurines from their house in Detroit. Both the photo and the statuettes themselves were two of the few items that made it to LA with Allee.



American BEAUTY Bar

Allee was known for her legendary backyard parties, so of course the bar had to be a real beaut! Built with authentic Motor City found items, this 1986 portable bar was hand-sculpted by Allee and features a 1955 Buick grille, DeSoto hubcaps, and even a bowling ball (because, of course).



Awards

As a Grammy/Tony/Emmy/Webby award-winner and nominee, three of Allee's most Hall of Fame award, her Songwriters Hall of Fame award, her Grammy, and the Distinguished Detroit Award, which is an exact scale model using the same materials used for the iconic statue "The Spirit of Detroit."

