

Realistic 'reborn' dolls surge in popularity in US

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(NewsNation) — A new industry dedicated to creating realistic dolls known as “reborns” is gaining popularity across the U.S.

Reborn babies are silicone dolls made to look lifelike and are typically bought and sold online. Some look so realistic that people on the street have mistaken them for being real infants.

“People in the community are just people like you and I that just love babies,” Dave Stack, founder of Reborns.com, said.

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Reborns.com handles about 50 sales a day, with an average price of around \$200. The most realistic reborns can sell for up to \$5,000.

“There’s a wide variety of people that buy them and there’s lots of different reasons that people buy them, you know overwhelmingly people who buy them are just baby lovers and they love the newborn stage and you know, young child stage,” Stack said.

Reborn babies have long played a role in helping families navigate grief and trauma. Some have even come to consider the dolls as part of their family.

Christinia Keeler, a wife and mother of two, documents her journey as a human and reborn mother through her popular YouTube channel, “The Reborn Family.” Keeler first worked with Reborns while caring for Alzheimer patients and is well aware of the judgment and controversy the hobby can generate.

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“My main goal is to normalize it, make it not so weird, because people are unfamiliar. I’m a normal housewife, I’m a mom, and I have Reborns,” Keeler said.

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According to Stack, reborns have proven to be a source of comfort for some elderly folks.

“One of my favorite uses for the dolls are nursing homes, they’re a big buyer. You have people that have dementia like, it brings you back to a time they were raising their children, which they can remember clearly and it calms them down,” Stack said.

While reborns are global, the community is most active in the U.S., with serious collectors and investors even attending conventions and annual gatherings.

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“Someday I’m sure I’ll be an empty nester,” Keeler said. “I will probably have as many as possible as ones that look like this. You know, I’ll have all of them.”