



## Bye-Lo Baby Doll

### Date

c. 1924

### Primary Maker

Grace Storey Putnam

### Medium

Cotton, wax and oil paint

### Description

Bye-Lo babies, known as "million dollar babies," are among the biggest money-making dolls of all time along with Barbie, Kewpie, and Shirley Temple. The first Bye-Los, copyrighted in 1922, had composition bodies, which proved too hard for the realistic effect desired by consumers. Subsequently, cloth versions such as this one were made from one piece of fabric and designed so the legs turned inward in a naturalistic position. The color for the cheeks, lips, eyes, and hair appears to have been stippled directly onto the wax surface with oil paints. The

maker of this doll, Grace Storey Putnam, is often referred to as the "great American success story" in doll lore. It was her desire to create a doll which was as lifelike as humanly possible. She searched hospitals in Los Angeles until she found a three-day-old infant in the Salvation Army day nursery who was the most perfect she had ever seen. After working diligently to duplicate them, it is said the when Putnam finished her wax model and laid it beside the baby, onlookers could hardly tell which was the live baby and which was the doll.

### Dimensions

18 × 12 × 6 in. (45.7 × 30.5 × 15.2 cm)