

September 2012 MarbleCollecting.com Newsletter

Fake Gutta Percha Marbles on Ebay



Fake Gutta Percha

Over the past 6 months or so, there have been a number of Ebay listings which feature marbles that are described as Gutta Percha. In some cases, these marbles have sold for over \$100 each! The image to the left is one of these marbles that appeared on Ebay.

In fact, these marbles are modern handpainted ceramic marbles produced by a woman named Laura Berretti at Marbled Arts in Italy. Marbled Arts produces marbled paper to that is used on the inside covers of high end books.

She has applied the technique to spheres and the company has been selling them as modern marbles. Unscrupulous sellers on Ebay have bought some of these and are passing them off as antique marbles. Beware.

Below is a handout produced by Pete at LandofMarbles.com a couple of years ago, that shows how these marbles are made. LandofMarbles.com was selling these marbles for a while, as contemporary marbles, but has discontinued selling them. My thanks to Pete for sharing this handout and giving permission for it to be reproduced here.



Genuine Gutta Percha

Marbled Marbles

These marbles are unique works of art by Laura Berretti; a contemporary artist working out of Italy. Laura used the same centuries-old technique used to apply marbled patterns to the lining of old book covers to create these "marbled" ceramic marbles in Summer 2006 for LandOfMarbles.com



Before processing, the marbles are unadorned, white ceramic spheres ~ 3/4" in diameter. Marbling is a graphic process. Different colors are dropped onto a liquid bath made of a jelly is extracted from seaweed, which allows the colors to float without mixing.



Patterns are then created in the paints by using a special stylus or rakes, that are reminiscent of the vein pattern in marble. Each marble is dip dyed into this color bath.



After this each marble is rinsed of extra color and left to dry on a grids to the left of the artist. At right are finished marbles. 'Pontils' form at the point on the marble that leaves the color bath last.