Battered Barbie aims to raise awareness of domestic abuse

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Harsh reality ... An artist has unveiled shocking new works showing Barbie as a victim of domestic abuse. Picture: Snapper *Source:* Supplied

A BATTERED and bruised Barbie doll has been created as a part of an art exhibition in the UK that takes aim at violence against women.

Student artist Sam Humphreys painted black eyes, bruises and blood onto the faces of the iconic dolls.

Ms Humphreys said she wanted to highlight the realities of violence against women, which children after usually shielded from.

"The dolls are part of a project demonstrating how reality actually is and that life isn't perfect," she told the *Huffington Post* .

"I was interested in how, when we're younger, we're led to believe that everything is perfect and how as children we are quite rightly sheltered from the harsh realities of adulthood."

Bruised and battered ... Ms Humphreys said children needed to be taught about domestic violence from an early age. Picture: Snapper *Source:* Supplied

Three of 10 dolls from Ms Humphreys' project are on display in "Speaking Out" a Leicester University exhibition looking at the depiction of violence against women in art.

The 41-year-old Contemporary Art and Design student said children must be taught about domestic violence from an early age if the crime is to be stamped out.

"Using Barbie is a nice way of using a toy that everyone recognises as an imagine of perfection and undercutting that.

"My children have seen it. My youngest is only eight, so I wouldn't tell her anything scary. She has seen a picture of the bruised Barbie but she hasn't asked what it's all about. She could have just fallen over, I don't think it's explicit or shocking".

A spokeswoman for Mattel, which manufactures Barbie, told the Huffington Post: "Barbie is often used by adults to start conversations or leverage a cause in society."

Changing perceptions ... Barbie as she appears at the exhibition. Picture: Snapper. *Source:* Supplied