

# Studio Artist - Brad Elfrink

An Introduction to Studio Artist Brad Elfrink

by Susan Buffum



## Featured Studio Artist

Brad Elfrink  
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When you hear the name Brad Elfrink for the first time and you see the whimsical, wonderful, marvelous, magical buttons he carves you might very well believe you've met a man who actually dwells in a thatched-roof cottage in a sun-dappled dell in the heart of an enchanted forest with elves and woodland creatures frolicking in his front yard. His talent is simply that amazing.

The truth is that this creatively-gifted 34-year old carver lives in a charming old house in Cape Girardeau, Missouri with his faithful canine companion Simba. Some of you may have already met Brad at the 2004 National show in Appleton, Wisconsin, or you may have recently seen his telephone and elephant buttons in the December 2004 issue of *The National Button Bulletin* (center color section, page 2, top left corner and page 5, row 2, first button). Or, perhaps you've bid on one of his many **ebay** button auctions that have been his primary venue for selling his miniature works of art.

I met Brad for the first time on December 3, 2004 when he joined my **buttonlovers** group on Yahoo! (formerly owned by Debra Wisniewski- she turned the club over to me at the end of March 2003). After reading his self-introduction in the club I jumped over to ebay to check out his current button auctions. The buttons were astounding! Curious about the artist I then investigated his *About Me* page on ebay and found it both informative and amusing. When his next set of auctions came up on ebay and I saw his exquisite Robin Hood figural button I knew it was a sign that I had to write about this young artist/carver/button maker. Not only do I collect buttons but I also have a pretty large Robin Hood collection.

Brad is a natural born artist, blessed with a gift for artistic endeavors at birth. He has sketched, sculpted, carved wood, painted, worked clay, whittled and done computer graphics. He's earned a degree in commercial art, and until recently was employed as an optical lab technician. Brad took a leap of faith around October 2004 with his buttons creating a stir among collectors. He quit his job and turned his energy toward full-time button carving. He has, in a short span of time, become a top-notch studio button artist.

Brad's hand-carved and crafted buttons are made from unusual materials from nature. Many buttons are carved from pre-ban elephant ivory, fossil mammoth tusk, elk, moose or white-tail deer antler, Asian buffalo horn, cow horn, coral, turquoise, Siberian jet, green marble, rhodonite, catlinite, varisite, lapis, opal, abalone shell, mother-of-pearl, cedarwood, and rosewood to name just some the materials used. Tiny steel pins, nuts and screws aid in the assembly of the miniature mechanical marvels with moveable parts such as the Santa in the Chimney button.

