



*With grown women clamouring to get hold of the latest must-have accessory – Labubu dolls – we ask...*

# Why are we *ADDICTED* *TO SILLY* *CRAZES?*

**W**e've probably all done it – followed a trend at some point in our lives, whether that be flares from the 70s, sporting a perm and blue mascara in the 80s, or buying anything Spice Girls-related in the 90s. But what happens when a trend becomes a full-blown craze? When something becomes so popular that everyone seems to have it, so, of course, you just have to have it too. Over the decades we've lived through Beanie Babies, Pokémon cards, troll dolls, the Rubik's cube and Jellycat plushies to name just a few. More recently the Stanley cup was the must-have drinking bottle to be seen with, but now, a new craze has swept the nation. Enter the Labubu – a keyring, gremlin-like doll that, thanks to Copenhagen Fashion Week last summer, became the must-have accessory to pair with the designer Birkin handbag.

So popular are they that even celebrities like Rihanna and Dua Lipa have been spotted with them, and *Loose Women's* Olivia Attwood recently filmed herself excitedly unboxing a new one. Part of their allure is that they come individually wrapped in foil packages – 'blind boxes' – so you don't know which design you're getting until you open it. But what makes grown women turn into excitable children when it comes to crazes, and why do we get swept up in them? *Woman* investigates...



## 'What will be next?'

**Lucy Sambrook, consumer PR and branding expert for Seed Performance Marketing Agency ([helloseed.co.uk](http://helloseed.co.uk)) says:** 'One cleverly-timed TikTok video or influential celeb snap can send a product from unknown to utterly unmissable. The Stanley cup blew up when influencers showed off its pretty pastel colours and 'emotional support bottle' charm, resulting in sell-outs and waiting lists. And now it's Labubu's turn. Brands are constantly watching closely, using tools like Google Trends to spot the next big thing before it even happens. In beauty, K18 haircare is set to go viral, and don't be surprised if you see beef tallow skin products making their way into bathroom cabinets.'

## 'A deep-rooted need to belong'



**Consultant counselling psychologist Dr Ritz Birah, founder of Reflect with**

**Dr Ritz, says:** 'As humans, we're wired for connection, so when a craze takes off, it taps into our deep-rooted need to belong. These fads and crazes offer a shared experience. Seeing others get excited

triggers a sense of urgency and curiosity in us. It's not just about the item, but what it represents: inclusion, nostalgia, even status, and sometimes having what others have makes us feel safer, more accepted. It's a powerful mix of psychology, emotion and identity, all wrapped up in something as simple as a collectible.'

## 'IT'S IMPOSSIBLE NOT TO BE TEMPTED'

**Polly Jean Harrison lives in Shrewsbury.** The other day, I was waiting anxiously by the door for the delivery man to arrive with my latest purchase. Like a child at Christmas, I was practically bouncing with excitement. The moment the doorbell rang, I snatched the parcel with such eagerness the poor man looked terrified. But it was finally here, my new Labubu!

Some people might question what self-respecting woman wants to buy an ugly little doll. I have a mortgage, for goodness' sake, and yet here I am, shelling out a fortune to get a hold of the latest drop. But I have to hold my hands up, I'm an absolute sucker for the latest trends. It doesn't matter what it is – if it's the 'it' thing, I simply have to have it. I've lusted after Stanley cups. I've raced to buy Uniqlo bags. I've even ransacked my nearest toyshop to pick up a set of Mini Brands to unbox.

TikTok is particularly lethal for me. With

everyone constantly showing off their hauls and 'viral' products swooping in and out of fashion faster than you can say 'add to cart', it's almost impossible not to be tempted.

## Gotta catch 'em all!

I've always been something of a collector. Long before Instagram even existed, back when the internet was just for sending emails and playing Tetris, I was still getting suckered into the latest thing. Only in the playground instead of on social media!

Beanie Babies were probably my first obsession, or at least the first one I can remember. It was a family tradition whenever we went to the beach to always stop by the 'beanie baby shop'. I'd spend ages agonising over my choices before eventually deciding on my newest friend to take home. I still have my favourite – a monkey my dad bought me, sitting pride of place in my living room.



Polly can't alpaca it in!

Though I am a cuddly-toy fiend even to this day, whether it's giant kawaii alpacas or cute Squishmallows – my collecting needs aren't limited to plushies. Loom bands, tamagotchis and even Pokémon cards (that I still don't know how to play) have all been my thing at one time! I remember one summer at school where jelly wristbands were the latest trend – everyone wore tonnes of them like rainbows up their arms. Just as I'd begged my mum to buy me some, two weeks later it all changed to friendship bracelets instead... But that is the thing about crazes – they come and go.

That doesn't stop me getting caught up in all the hype, however. For me, I hate the thought of missing out on something and am devastated when what I want is sold out. I also love that feeling of having a connection with people and belonging to a community, even if that community is just about collecting silly dolls.

Adult life is stressful and God forbid a woman should have hobbies! Call me a crazy collector if you want, but I'm very happy buying my little trinkets. Now, if you'll excuse me, I think I just heard the doorbell again...