

# A Unique Way of Saying ILY

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*Coffee Shop Notes*

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Yolanda Arredondo's friend collects items with the ILY sign on them, so when she looked for a present for her friend's birthday, she couldn't find anything that her friend did not already have. This led her to come up with the idea of decorating one of her handmade stuffed dolls with an ILY shape on it: <http://www.articulatedeaf.com/yolanda.jpg>

Arredondo has been using papier-mâché for quite some time now, using a simple recipe commonly used for Mexican piñatas, and it has been two years now that she has been making doll heads and using polyfill to stuff the soft bodies underneath. The doll heads, which reflect matronly women, are hand-painted, so no doll is completely alike. The look is distinctively European, with the feel of a Russian nesting doll set, because of the pear-like shape of the head and the body that consists of a large bosom. The painted cap atop the head reflects an affinity for folk-style patterning, as well. When asked about her particular approach to the heads, Arredondo says the dark short hair is modeled after her mother's hairstyle.

This approach to using the ILY sign in arts and crafts is distinctive, insofar as the ILY does not appear to dominate the work as a design, but rather, its use enhances what is already a lovely piece of work. The positioning of the ILY shape is reminiscent of the large brooches our mothers and grandmothers often wore on their dresses or coats. The beaded edge also contributes to the already soft and matronly feel of the doll.

Arredondo is engaged to a Deaf man and has taken ASL classes. She calls her fiancé "the best teacher in the world!" She lives near Sacramento, California, and sells her work on eBay, under the name of Antonia's Closet. Run a search with the terms "Deaf" and "ILY." Also for sale is her other romantic vintage-style crafts, such as pillow slipcases and table runners.

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