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WELCOME



Thinking out side of the box is what makes art the most interesting. A dollhouse can be a depiction of reality, a fictional story, or it can be a personal form of expression. The later is one of my favorites to witness because you can learn so much about the soul of the maker.

Building a dollhouse is an expression of love. Whether the results are frilly, modern, or shabby someone took the time to put their personal touch on every square inch of it and that always brings me joy to see.

In fact, I believe the reason looking at miniatures is so magical is because you are looking into another's world. Each artist has their own vision and what a gift for each of us to be invited in to look around a three dimensional version of their vision.

What I love about *AM* is that there is such a variety of artistic visions all in one place. Each article shows a different way of looking at the world through miniatures.

Not sure what I would have done without this art form during the shutdown. While the rest of the world came to a halt I witnessed the world of miniatures picking up even more momentum. That surely says something about our art form. We already knew that it heals, entertains and builds confidence. And now so many others are giving it a try with the extra time they have on their hands.

We are surely a lucky bunch to have found this form of expression and *AM* is proud to help guide and inspire miniaturists around the world!

Auralea Krieger, Editor
auralea@ashdown.co.uk

Twine jars

A quick and easy way to add interest to basic jars

BY ELIZE VAN ES

I have no macramé or weaving skills at all, so to take on this challenge I had to think outside the box. While grocery shopping, my eye focused in on the packaging net used for the onions, potatoes and garlic. So I did a little experimentation with re-purposing.

1 Measure the bottle/jar and cut a strip of the packaging net that's a bit larger.

2 Glue the strip to the bottle/jar. Let it dry for 30 minutes when using spray glue and for 1 hour if your using Tacky Glue.

3 Wind the thread around the top and secure.

Materials:

Scale = 1:12

- Packaging nets for garlic or onions
- Little glass bottles or jars
- Thread to match the color of the packaging nets
- Tacky Glue or spray glue
- Scissors



(I like making a knot but gluing will work too).

4 Cut off all the threads that stick out.

That's it! It is such an easy way to add interest to these common glass jars.





2



3



Gina's picks from Instagram



Hello! I'm Gina Theesfield, a proud part of the Social Media team for AM. Like all of you, I am a miniature lover, so I'm thrilled to be highlighting some of the spectacular Instagram pages that catch my eye. You will be sure to be inspired by their miniature art.



Oneformini_oneforme

Evelien creates incredible tiny macrame pieces that bring so much joy.

Dollhouse_smithery

Meghan creates incredible 1:12 scale wooden dollhouse pieces with particular detail to hardware and beautifully painted handmade furniture.



Missminilife

Rhenee makes magically tiny shabby chic pieces in 1:24 and 1:144 scale.

Visit Gina on Instagram at [calico_garden](#)

MINI MAIL

■ AM is your magazine, and we want to hear from you. Write to: MiniMail, American Miniaturist, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. Or email: auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Letters may be edited if necessary.

★ Star letter

Hello, I wanted to share miniatures I made using my Silhouette Cameo®.

I designed this room box using its software program, cut it out, sprayed glued it onto foam core and cut it out with a craft knife. The window panes, roof and shingles are made from thicker card stock and cut out using the Silhouette Cameo® as well.

The bed, dresser and table

Winner

What a delightful surprise to open my mailbox and find a small box with my name on it! I had forgotten that I had written a letter to *American Miniaturist* (my favorite magazine) and it was chosen to be the Star Letter. Thank you so much for the lovely mini gifts. The thing I like most about *AM* is the tutorials. I have made many things and learned so many new tips. Keep up the great work!

Susan from Broomall, PA

are cut out from kraft stock (which is like thick cereal box) on the Silhouette Cameo®.

I layered the pieces for thickness and then painted them. The bed and dresser are cut files from downloadable kits that I can put in my Silhouette Cameo® from an artist and the table is from Kris Compas that I adapted to be a cut file. The wallpaper and floor are digital papers from Etsy.

Barbara from Bronx, NY



Fun with flowers

Lilacs are one of my favorite flowers and it's been a struggle trying to figure out how to create them in miniature. Paper punches and individual flower molds just aren't small enough and don't look as realistic as I would like.

So what a thrill to find a tutorial in June's issue (*AM* 206) on how to make lilacs

that are truly in scale! It was a real forehead slapping, “Duh! Now why didn’t I think of that?” moment. The process may be a bit time-consuming, but the results are spectacular. A huge thank you to Kudriavtseva Yevhenia for sharing her technique. I also learned a new word, ‘petiole’ which is the stalk that joins a leaf to the stem. Miniatures are both fun and educational!

Patricia from Seattle, WA

Making minis

Here in Houston, during the sweltering heat and humidity, I will have fun making mini swimsuits and such like Carolyn Hall in *AM207/208*. Stay cool, calm and safe!

Joan from Houston, TX



Highlight

My favorite highlight from the June issue of *AM206* is the quatrefoil mirror. I’m really glad to see an electronic cutter project featured and want to see more! I have a Cricut Maker that I use almost exclusively for making my miniatures.

Marilyn Saint Amant, LA



We would love to hear from you!

Let’s turn this MiniMail page into an *AM* forum. Here are some suggestions from our recent survey on what readers would love to read about from all you innovative miniaturists out there.

- ★ Share a finished project.
- ★ Tell us about new tools or products you have discovered. It could really help another maker!
- ★ Are you searching for something specific in miniature form? Ask for help!
- ★ Do you need help learning about a miniature piece you have? Send in a photo and we can ask in MiniMail.
- ★ Do you want to start a mini group in your area?



Stone walls

Make realistic stone with Paperclay

BY AURALEA KRIEGER

While working on my French cottage and my Bungalow I became a full time mini stone maker. I have used Creative Paperclay for bricks in the past so it was familiar. Many more miniaturists are using it, but for those that haven't I thought I would share my experience. First off, I have read Rik Pierce's tutorial book (Frogmorton-Studios on Etsy) and all of his tutorials and features in *Dollhouse Miniatures* and *AM*. If you have not, then I strongly suggest you do. His tips helped me make

brickwork and stone paths, but for this project I needed stone walls.

I am Scottish/German so the love of building stone walls are in my DNA. I have built many in my real life. I even have the pinched nerve in my shoulder to prove it! But I promise this method will leave you with no achy muscles or busted up knuckles.

There are 3 ways I went about sculpting stone walls from Paperclay so I will touch on each method. Note for all of these methods you want to use gator board as your base. Foam

Scale = Any

Materials:

- Creative Paperclay
- Knitting needle
- Knife
- Gator board
- Wood glue
- Tin foil
- Roller
- Wood strips
- Ceramcoat paints -Rain Grey, Hippo Grey, Jute, Raw Sienna, Frosted Cranapple, Autumn Brown, dark brown
- Plastic egg carton
- Paint brushes
- Cotton rag

board or Styrofoam will warp as the clay dries. Wood may be okay but if it is thin it may warp as well. My gator boards were 1/4" and 1/2" thick. It just depends on the thickness of the wall you want.

First method

Roll out your clay to about 1/8" thick. If you want it uniform then use 2 wood planks that are the thickness you want and roll the clay in-between, keeping each edge of your roller on top of the planks.





TOPTIP:

Lay a damp rag around your clay package and excess pieces while you work so they won't dry. You can do this for a few days so it won't dry before using again. Pour a little water over the rag to keep it damp but don't drown it.

2 Cover the board with wood glue.

3 Lay your clay on the board. I covered one

of sides and the top first. I put wood glue on the top as well and wrapped the clay over. The photos show the reverse side being worked on. Just blend the clay completely into the dry clay with your fingers.

4 Run your knife down the length of the bottom to remove excess clay. If it didn't get glue on it you can save it. (If there is glue on the clay when you use it else where it may resist the paint wash once it dries).

5 Use a coarse brush to make texture in the clay. I worked left to right. This also helps push the clay into the wood glue. It may sort of slide to the right as you are pressing. This way it won't spill over the bottom area that you trimmed.

6 Crumple up some foil and pinch part of it then smash it onto a smooth surface a few times. Then gently press it into the clay from different angles to make a random texture.



Move your hand around so it isn't a pattern. You want an organic texture.

7 Take a knitting needle and mark out the horizontal lines. This wall is pretty uniform but I wiggled the line here and there.

8 Start at the base and make indents for each stone. Round the corners.

9 Work the next line in the same way. Make some vertical lines a little crooked, unless you want it to be strictly uniform.

10 Lastly, I flattened one edge of the foil and pressed it in some of the cracks to flatten the end of some stones. This give the wall more depth variation.

11 I left one end unsculpted because I needed to hold the wall while working. So do one side and the top with about an inch untouched on the right and let dry. Then do the other side



up to that untouched inch and let dry. Then you can hold the finished dry part of the wall while you add on that untouched end. Just blend in the clay with a little wood glue on the dry clay in the thicker areas then blend evenly with your fingers.

Second method

This method didn't really work for the effect I wanted but I want to share it because it was a learning moment with this material and you never know, you may want this result for something else.

12 First, cut long strips of clay and put it on the board into the wood glue.

13 Sculpt lines for each rock individually.

14 Cut a another strip. Add glue to the board and, with a small brush, also on the top of the strip of clay. Lay the new strip down pressing it up against the edge of the previous strip.



15 For most of my wall the strips stayed together but in one area they pulled apart as the clay dried. So the rocks didn't look like they were stacked on top of one another. I suppose if you have a wall on the moon this could work, but not in an environment with gravity. This method could work for a path with moss in between the stone without adding glue to the edges.

Third method

This final method is the one I would use again. It takes a little longer to accomplish, but I liked the result.

16 Roll out a slab of clay about 1/8" thick or less and slice strips from it with your knife.

17 Use a coarse brush to make some texture in the clay. Work left to right always pressing towards the right. This way the strip will get longer and not randomly taller as you press and move the clay.



18 Use the foil to make some texture.

19 Cut the strips into many stones.

20 Pick them up and shape the edges quickly and lay them down. You can add a little texture to the side with the brush or the foil. Don't fuss too long over each. They need to look random and organic.

21 Make some thin strips, thick strips and medium strips.

22 Let them dry with a fan on them. After an hour or so flip them all over to dry. Press any that are curling up so they stay flat.

23 Paint the gator board a dark grey or brown. Let dry.

24 Start gluing your rocks on the board row by row from the bottom up. It is like a puzzle finding the right pieces for a



nice fit. Be sure each row is pressed down onto the one below just as a real stone would be because it is stacked on top of each row. This photo just shows me testing my dry stones to see how they would look stacked.

25 For the flat top, I ran glue along it and pressed down a strip that wrapped over and carved stone shapes into it.

26 I like this method because some stones are more shallow and some stick out more. It just looks so much more real to me.

Painting stone work

One of the things that always comes to mind when I am painting is Rik's tutorial where he said too much paint and it will get muddy. This made me very nervous the first time I painted Paperclay stone

TOPTIP:

It's okay if your wall has a little bit of a wave to it with stones that are stacked thick to thin. Just keep your eye on the overall look as you glue each stone down.

work. My advise is to take it slow and use a few shades of paint all over. Ceramcoat paints are the best because there isn't oil in them like FolkArt paints. I have been replacing all my paints with Ceramcoat as they run out. It is so smooth and easy to work with and it doesn't separate when not being used for a while.

27 I started with a wash of light grey. Keep a cotton rag handy. If the wash is too light and watery dab it up. If it is too thick with paint, quickly run a watered down brush over it and dab it off a little with the rag.



Method one results.



Loose stone made for the top of the wall.

28 Mix your next color into a wash and start hitting different areas. You can wash it or dab it then run your hand over it. Go in and hit it with a wet colorless brush. You will find your method. If you think you will be uneasy painting the stonework then make a test wall while you are making your final wall.

29 This is a little something I came up with that adds a gorgeous finish to the stones. Once the clay wall is dry to the touch, gently run a piece of fine sandpaper over the wall. This is when it comes to life!

30 If you are going to add moss, this is the time. Make a wash of green where moisture would settle, mainly on the base and the corners. This green coloring should get fainter as it goes up the wall.

31 Note that as your wall dries over the next few weeks it will lighten. So if you think you went too dark just give it some time. I glued and doweled two pieces of gator board together for my long wall and it started to warp at the join so right after I painted it I left it under a center weight for a week to be sure.

32 Have fun and don't be scared of this project. I always recall my art

TOPTIP:

Have a photo of a stone wall handy to emulate while you are painting.

teacher in high school helping us with the fear of the blank canvas. He would say, "It's just paper, get over it!" Then he would slash a pencil mark across our white drawing paper or canvas. So remember, it's just clay! Visit me on Instagram @auraleakrieger

The wall is not in the final position or finished. Only positioned this way to show inside of wall.



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Building stories of the past

Escape to Greece for the perfect miniature vacation with the work of Andreas Rousounelis

BY SADIE BROWN

With the aid of the internet, Andreas Rousounelis is able to source inspiration without leaving his work bench, but he also says that by observing everything around him he is able to draw inspiration from day to day life. The beauty of whitewashed Cycladic architecture, familiar to us set against a backdrop of the crystal waters of the Aegean Sea, is just one aspect of Andreas' Greek homeland which provides a wonderful source of inspiration for his dioramas.



Above: The shell of a rusting tram waits for passengers who will never come. **Left:** Miniature artist Andreas Rousounelis.



His 'Cyclades' diorama, at home in 1:24 scale and featuring that rich blue so synonymous with Cycladic buildings, was inspired by Mykonos and features excellent use of LED lighting. "I placed it in a box to light it up and give it a

more beautiful and nostalgic atmosphere," says Andreas, who used a range of materials in the scene's construction, including mostly paper for the walls and wood for the doors and windows. "I love using paper for wall construction and wood for making wooden surfaces," he adds. That atmosphere Andreas speaks of is something which is hugely



Left: Cabin fever! Andreas' rustic A-frame cabin. **Above:** Andreas' abandoned Greek house.

the image of abandonment and the atmosphere it produced. The building is made of foam which I carved and the tiles from a circular plastic sheet made and placed one by one."

"I saw the Greek stone house in a photo and I really liked it."

important to his work, believing that detail brings a greater level of realism to a scene.

The perfection of freshly painted Cycladic architecture offers a complete contrast to the abandoned buildings and the stories of yesteryear which are a recurrent theme throughout Andreas' dioramas and form the basis for much of his work. One such scene is a 1:35 scale diorama depicting

an abandoned Greek house, perfectly capturing the feel of a building lost to time and just waiting for someone to discover the history bound forever within its stone walls.

The blue painted doors and the ornate bracket on the wall offer hints of the building's former life. "I saw the Greek stone house in a photo and I really liked it," remembers Andreas. "I mainly liked

Andreas creates a popular range of simple but incredibly evocative vignettes which often portray just a door and window set into an aged exterior. Framed, these scenes are able to spread the word about small scale, with a broad appeal for those with no prior connection to the world of miniatures and are simply looking for that perfect decoration for the home.



Above and right: Discovering stories of yesteryear.

They are the ideal way to reminisce over time spent walking down a narrow Greek cobbled street, envious of those lucky enough to have been able to call it home.

'Old Greek Door' is a 1:24 scale framed vignette which features a blue door and window, the once bright paint weathered above a worn stone step which has held the footprints of the many stories which were told beyond the threshold. Nature encroaches once more as weeds begin to take hold, the footsteps that once kept them at bay now long gone. Above, a bougainvillea continues to flower, bringing a burst of color to the scene.





Above: Get down from there!
Right: Over the garden gate.

Andreas also offers us an intriguing glimpse into the lives of deserted buildings, where once treasured possessions are discovered strewn across a landscape undermined by years of abandonment with nothing but dust and decay to fill the space left behind by those who once lived there. In one scene, an old photograph still hangs on the wall, sitting in the center of an ornate frame above a chest of drawers, again leaving the onlooker to conjure with a myriad of potential tales to be told.

Other scenes left behind by time include the shell of an old tram, which sits rusting away as it waits for passengers no longer likely to board, and



'Lonely Rails', a once lively railway station where, now abandoned, the tracks see nature reclaiming its territory.

Equally captivating is a charming diorama featuring a set of old wrought iron gates at its heart. The scene depicts a young boy wearing a flat cap, stood against a brick pillar as he reflects on how to retrieve the brightly colored ball which, for the moment, remains just out of reach at the other side of the closed gates.

"I mainly use acrylic paints and oil paints to imitate rust," says Andreas, discussing more of the materials regularly found on his busy work bench. "I also use a lot of pigments to



Above: "Old Greek Door".

Below: Oodles of summer sunshine.



build and shape the soil as well as to dust various objects." All these scenes are 1:35 scale, but Andreas also tests his skills with even smaller work in 1:43 and 1:87 scales.

A seafaring diorama, where a large and expensive yacht is seen ploughing through rippled blue waters even saw him venture into the world of 1:350 scale. A recently completed project in 1:43 scale focuses on a delightful A Frame cabin with corrugated roof. With bags of rustic charm, you can imagine this being a much needed riverside retreat for the owner of the canoe which sits outside, waiting to paddle away from the rigors of city life.

Andreas' diorama's also transport us to chillier climbs, where a woman and her small dog stand amid a setting almost quite literally frozen in time and a world away from the Greek sunshine. The scene offers a hint of fading winter light and a time when the sun fails to reach the dizzy heights of summer. Like all Andreas' work, the key to authenticity is marked by his attention to fine detailing. With snow piled high at either side of the freshly cleared path, to the natural way the falling snowflakes have gathered between the brickwork, nothing has been eliminated or forgotten.

In addition to that sharp eye for detail, you can feel

that Andreas also has a keen understanding of a past which



Above: Tiny 1:35 scale wooden house. **Left:** Frozen in time.



surrounds us at every turn. The enduring history of the buildings he is inspired by when creating his models pulses through his designs, enabling us to walk down lanes lined with memories, absorbing a rich history which we ourselves can find out there, waiting for us on our own street corners.



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models

Water garden plant

Jo of Spencer's Nook shows us how to make mini bulrushes

BY JO BEVILACQUA PHOTOS BY JEFF WHITE

We often take bulrushes for granted since we only happen to see them growing and bobbing around by the water's edge. Here's how to make them in miniature for a dollhouse pond or riverside diorama.

1 Roll the clay into a roll, approximately one eight inch thick by one inch long. Cut off ends.

2 Flatten the roll of clay into a flat piece, 1/4" wide by 1/16" thick.

Materials:

Scale = 1:12

- Florist wire, 20 gauge
- Fimo or Sculpty clay, brown or tan
- Wire cutters
- Acrylic paint - Avocado, Burnt Umber
- Rubber stamping embossing powders or brown flocking
- Sketch pad paper (for foliage)
- X-ACTO knife
- Craft glue
- Decoupage scissors
- Paint brush
- Aluminium foil
- Piece of Styrofoam

TOPTIP:

I suggest making the greenery in groups of 3 bunches (at least 5 blades per bunch).

3 Cut the wire into 3 1/2 inch lengths. Gently roll the clay onto the wire, roll-

Pattern:

ing one direction until it's smooth.

4 Cut away the excess clay and twist it into a sharp tip only on one end.

5 Place what you have made on some foil and bake for 18 minutes.





6 Paint glue onto the clay part then dip or roll into the embossing powders or flocking, tap off the excess.

7 Insert the stem into a piece of Styrofoam to let it set.

8 Brush the Avocado paint on the stem only. Tip the top of the stem with the Burnt Umber.

9 Paint the sketch pad paper on both sides, one side at a time, with the

Avocado paint. Let dry, then cut into the strips, points on one end and tapers on the other end (see pattern).

10 Scrape the paper blades slightly to curl and then glue them together by the tapered ends into groups of 5, then let set. Now, you are ready to put the bulrushes and their leaves together and place them into a pond scene or at the water's edge of any project. If you have questions about this project you

can email me at:
jo@spencersnook.com.
Have fun making your miniature water garden come to life!

Fun fact

Bulrushes can handle and withstand long, dry periods better than the more commonly known cattails can. However, bulrushes tend to grow in deeper water, whereas cattails prefer shallow water. Bulrushes are various wetland herbs (aquatic) from the genus *Scirpus*. They are annual or perennial plants that are medium to tall in height. Bulrushes can be found in the same environments as cattails. More specifically they are found throughout North America and Eurasia.

Making time for history

We stop the clock to spend time with miniature artist Keith Bougourd

BY SADIE BROWN

Time has been good to Keith Bougourd, providing a solid basis for a career which last year saw him mark the momentous milestone of twenty-five years as a miniaturist. Working across a broad range of scales, from 1:12 to 1:144, and known for miniatures of an exceptional quality, Keith is renowned for his working timepieces.

Therefore, it is no surprise that the piece he chose to celebrate his quarter centenary in small scale was a beautiful clock featuring solid silver mounts and bearing the same

sense of connection with the crafts people of the past you find on display throughout Keith's work. "The French mantel clock that I made to

Right: The French mantel clock made to mark Keith's 25 years as a miniaturist. **Below left:** Keith Bougourd in his workshop. **Below:** Empire Obelisk table lamps, featuring wooden elements finished in gold leaf.





celebrate my 25th year was based around a clock I had already made but with a faux tortoise finish and cast brass mounts,” he says. “I had the ormolu mounts cast in silver and was looking for a good color for the case that would work well with the silver fittings and found an example of a sky blue clock from the mid-19th century that fitted the bill nicely.”

Keith’s miniatures allow us to walk straight through the doors of history and his anniversary clock is just one of a selection of creations influenced by the French designs of yesteryear. His French Cartel clock is based

on one Keith saw in Paris and is another grand piece which quite literally takes us back in time to another age. “I tend to make things I see around me. Having moved to France six years ago it’s no surprise that I am inspired by all things French at the moment,” says Keith, who was already far from immune to making big life changes, having already taken the plunge and made the move from his career as an architect to become a miniaturist during the Nineties.

The high standard of Keith’s work makes it almost impossible to pick out any single star piece, and it isn’t only the ornate pieces among

Above left to right: Beautiful florals are the feature of this inlaid longcase clock. The grandfather of clocks! 18th century French regulator clock.

Keith’s body of work which capture your attention. The simple elegance of a late 18th century tea caddy with a swan carry handle holds an equal level of fascination for its attention to skilful detailing. However, his phenomenal Louis XVI tables are hugely deserving of a podium place as some of his most exciting creations, in terms of both aesthetics and the level of craftsmanship involved. Keith explains that these beautiful tables are made using a similar

approach to other pieces from his portfolio and he is happy to share both some of the thought process and creative process behind these and similar pieces. “First, I find either a full size original or reference images and draw the piece to scale, then I start building,” he says, adding that the majority of pieces begin with a fruitwood caucous which is able to be veneered if required.

“The tops of these tables are veneered, also the freeze that runs under the top. All of the wood parts are then stained, color blended, sealed, French polished then finally waxed, with lots of sanding in-between each step. Next, it’s time to draw and design the parts that need to be etched like the galleries. Casting would not work here as the parts need to be able to flex around the tops, then onto the castings. Originals have to be made then cast, filled and polished before fitting. Finally, all of the parts are brought together to make a finished table.”

Weekends for Keith sound idyllic, spent traveling through France and scouring the wonderful Vide Greniers, or flea markets, which can be found scattered throughout the country. “Sometimes they are in towns which is great



Above: Sowing seeds of miniature ideas with Keith’s 19th century French jardiniere. **Right:** A French Cartel clock in 1:12 scale.

because you get to see the real France, off the beaten track and away from most tourists. Just occasionally you will find a real treasure a town that’s not been touched by the passing of time and the odd gem of a shop like the one I based my 1:144 Brocante shop on.”

The Brocante shop is just one of a variety of 1:144 scale buildings Keith is well known for, including stunning tiny models of both the 17th century Nuremburg Doll House from the Victoria and Albert Museum and the magnificent Queen Mary’s Doll House. However, Keith particularly enjoys creating buildings in the larger 1:48 scale, as it af-



fords him the ability to create pieces which, as he points out, are perfectly suited to life on to a bookshelf as a stand-alone work of art.

One such piece sees Keith pull together elements from several buildings to create what went on to become his award-winning French Cha-



teau. “The Chateau was built for a competition held at the Miniature Show in Chicago. I was looking for a building that had many elements all in a very tight elevation,” recalls Keith. “Obviously nothing existed so I managed to fit together various details from a number of Chateau around France, with details and features from five or six different buildings. The chimneys, for example, are from Fontainebleau and Versailles. It’s a real blend of different buildings but all around a similar date.”

Working from an enviable workshop in the heart of the French countryside, Keith had been preparing for this year’s Chicago show when the Coronavirus pandemic took hold, but despite this challenging period in our lives he has succeeded in remaining as busy as ever. “It’s been pretty much non-stop while all of this has been going on, trying to make up for not being able to attend any shows,” he admits. “I’ve just started a new 1:48 scale project that needs a lot of time but it is still dif-



Above: Flying the flag for grandeur! Keith’s 1:48 scale French Chateau. **Left:** Say bonjour to Keith’s 1:144 Brocante shop.

ficult to find the extra time, and have a few smaller projects I am trying to get off the ground, mainly more French inspired pieces, and working my way through my work list. It’s a difficult balancing act as some work you think will take maybe 2 or 4 weeks ends up taking 4 to 8 weeks always pushing me backward, but it is only me and it all takes a lot of time to create these small objects.”

Despite being one of the most talented artisans in his field, Keith remains modest when asked what achievements he is most proud of from a career as impressive as the miniatures he creates. “Knowing I have lasted this



Above: Louis XVI wine table.

Above right: Louis XVI Gueridon table.

Right: This beautiful 1:12 scale bureau is among several made by Keith.

long so must be doing something right,” he says. “Having my work represented in private collections as well as museums around the world and trying to develop ways of making miniatures that look complicated but simplifying the build process. Also having my own hardware range that works with the pieces I make.”

Our artistic heritage has given Keith a present constantly evolving with the discovery of new ideas. And as for the future one thing's certain, both time and Keith have so much more to tell!



A love for making miniatures

Susan loves making miniatures for holidays or for any day of the year

BY SUSAN CLARK

I love making Halloween and Gothic miniatures along with an assortment of home decor items and accessories.

Like many miniaturists I received my first metal dollhouse for Christmas when I was seven years old. Many many years have passed with collecting, creating, and ultimately having a business.

I had a wide variety of careers but I am most proud of being a home economics teacher and lastly a retired respiratory therapist. My husband and I make country

style furniture which includes upholstered pieces. Creating polymer food is yet another outlet for me. When you can't eat real desserts making them in mini is quite satisfying.

Most of the items I made involve techniques of aging, distressing and upholstering. If you make minis, just relax and enjoy the process. Mistakes happen but just move on. Sometimes those mistakes make the most awesome Halloween miniatures.

Make sure to add your personality to Halloween



miniatures be it Gothic, goolish, scary, morbid or just cheerful and fun. There are so many minis you can create for the Halloween season or keep a haunted house or scene set up all year round. That is what I do.

Visit Susan on her website at <http://minimelange.com>.



A little wagon full of wonders

Iris Arentz shares her joyous miniature Garden Gnomes Residence with us

BY PAM NORTH

Belgian resident Iris Arentz first become interested in miniatures from something her grandparents had in their home: an old dimensional wall diorama showing a lovely cupboard with tin plates on shelves, a table with flowers in a vase, and a fireplace with a Madonna on the mantelpiece. “I loved it as a child,” Iris explained, “and I inherited it when they passed away in the late 1970s. It was then that my father told me that it was made from scratch by one of my great-uncles from cigar boxes and bottle caps. I wanted to try it myself, but I could not get the perspective right, so I made my first interior in a wooden wine box instead.”

Retired now from 20 years of working for a bank, plus 10 more years for a



Right: The welcoming front entrance to the Gypsy wagon.





Left: Someone has been busy painting lots of gnomes to help keep the garden tidy.

telecom company, Iris now spends her time doing what she loves – making 1:12 scale, fully-decorated, shabby vintage and country-style shops, market stalls, and other displays, despite having no formal training in the miniature field.



“My husband endures my mess with love and patience. My children look at me with a mixture of ‘she can’t help it because she is an artist and a little bit crazy’, but they show off my work to all their friends and sometimes, when I get very lucky, someone tells me I am a genius!” She finds it easy combining home life and miniature life, “because I do the miniatures and the cooking, and my husband does the rest.”

She finds inspiration just by looking around her, and wondering how she could make this or that, and with which materials. She finds it easy to part with her creations, for, as she said,

“things do not matter so much to me – the fun lies in the making of them.”

“My husband endures my mess with love and patience.”

Iris described her work area as a “large table in my living room, with a trolley next to me filled with little boxes, tools, paint, glue, etc., backed up by a garage filled with materials and tools.” She exhibits her products for sale at the Dolls House Show in Arnhem, Netherlands, and at the 1zu12 Die Messe, in Rheda-

Wiedenbrück, Germany. She runs workshops, at her home or at shows, for small groups (maximum 8 people). She makes a model shop, stall, or display, then shows the students how to realize it themselves. They come for a session (+/- 6 hours) 3 times or more, depending on the project, with a 2-week interval between the sessions to make their “homework”.

Over the years, Iris has made things for: The Miniatures Museum of Taiwan, The Carole Kaye Museum, The Toys Museum

Below: A pair of bats sleep by the window. Mushrooms are a plenty around the wagon. Garden tools are kept around back.





Right: Sunlight streams through the tiny window over the plants.

in Basel, Switzerland. and more recently the Prince of Catar became one of her regular customers.

Iris recently created a detailed piece she named, *Garden Gnomes Residence*, in 1:12 scale, a whimsical rendering of a Gypsy wagon gnome home. "I had made a similar project about 15 years ago, gnomes in a thatched cottage. At the request of my workshop students, I agreed to do it again, but

‘I paint with acrylic paint, using different kinds of patinas and stains to give the paint a used and weathered finish.’

as I don't like making the same thing twice, this time a painting of an old Gypsy wagon was inspiration for the living accommodation of my gnomes family. I asked Albert Holzner of Miniwelt, Germany, to build the wagon after the model pictured. The rest is made by me, except for the glass jars, cutlery, and stools. Materials used were wood, paint, paper, cardboard, fabric, Sculpey clay dolls.





Right: The inside of the wagon is overflowing with beautiful details.

She shared ten of her main techniques: “1) I paint with acrylic paint, using different kinds of patinas and stains to give the paint a used and weathered finish; 2) I always use Pattex Glue to glue wood/paper/fabric, and Pattex Repair Extreme to glue metal and glass; 3) to make bushes and plants I am a serial killer of thyme plants because they do not break easily even when they are dead; 4) to make plants/flowers I print the real petals/leaves on recto/verso paper strips to get the exact colors. I punch or cut





Above: The tiny kitchen has everything needed for cooking.

them with fine scissors and glue them on stems or on the thyme branches; 5) to make galvanized metal items I print templates on gray paper, and use self-adhesive zinc tape to cover those. To get the old, used look the zinc tape is sanded, then gets a patina with a mixture of white acrylic paint (matte) and black metal stove polish; 6) to get the right scale/color fabric, I look on the internet for samples, adapt them as I want, and print them on Ink jet 100 % cotton fabric sheets, as it is very thin and very easy to glue or stitch

together; 7) As I mostly use printed paper and cardboard to make miniatures, I finish everything I make with acrylic matte varnish to fix the colors and keep them from fading when on display in the sunlight; 8) I avoid working with paint, glue, or other components which are unhealthy for people and the environment; 9) I boil Fimo items in salt water. It takes only 3 minutes to get hard, and I prefer that method over baking in the oven; 10) To get a used and weathered look, almost nothing has to be exactly straight, therefore, I rarely use rulers or measuring tapes.”

The hardest part for her in making this project were the dolls. “They were difficult to make, but after throwing away several corpses, I finally was nearly satisfied with my little creatures!” she joked. “My favorite part about the piece was the left side, the table with paint and brushes where the garden gnomes are being painted and restored. It also was fun to make the wild flowers.”

As for it turning out exactly as she had envisioned it, she remarked, “I never



Right: The wagon front steps are lined with tiny plants.

“I paint with acrylic paint, using different kinds of patinas and stains to give the paint a used and weathered finish.”

have an exact idea of how a finished project will look because during the process of making it difficulties and/or possibilities often are encountered which lead to a different outcome. In this case the problem was the dolls. I had asked several doll makers to make them for me, but no one had the time or possibility to do so, so I bought a book about making garden gnomes, reduced them to an acceptable scale, and made them myself. The piece will be on display in Arnhem, and if it isn't sold there, it goes to Rheda-Wiedenbrück this fall. I don't know yet what the price will be exactly.”

Looking ahead, Iris has a few projects in different states of progress: a second-hand bookstall as seen on the banks of the River Seine in Paris; a small greenhouse with a cactus collection; a Provence meat, wine and cheese shop; a Moroccan restaurant; a hippie shop; a



perfume shop; and a ladies gift shop. “I like what I do, I'm 69 years old, and I hope to be in good health to continue doing this for many years to come. The future of miniatures has promise. I see very old ladies coming to the shows, but also a younger generation who is interested

in making miniatures, and I think that is a good thing.”



Welcoming whimsy to Halloween

New Halloween treats from Brazilian American artisan Betinha Murta

BY JOAN MCKENZIE

Betinha Murta is an expert at designing original artwork that seems to cascade from her mind to her talented fingers every day. Her delightful creations are made with her own recipe for cold porcelain instead of using pre-made polymer clay.

She prefers cold porcelain for several reasons. The cost to make this product is incidental compared to the cost of pre-packaged polymer clay. The consistency is softer so there is no warming up effort. Most importantly,

cold porcelain is air-dried, not baked, so there is no potentially harmful chemical residue that humans have to breathe in. For this reason, Betinha has agreed to share her recipe with us so that we all have the opportunity to explore this unique miniature medium safely.

She gets her inspiration from everyday objects, delighting in the possibility of transforming them into 1:12 scale. She has an Etsy shop, goes to shows all over the USA during non-Corona vi-

rus times, and takes commission orders as well. She finds that she awakens each day with an abundance of ideas that she has to document quickly before that morning coffee or else her mind will take her in other directions. Every miniature item that she creates begins with a very tiny special heart inside of it. This is her spiritual way of spreading love to her cher-

Below left: Miniature artist Betinha Murta. **Below:** A collection of Halloween related miniatures.







ished customers who delight so much in her continually delightful creativity.

Betinha was born in Brazil, but moved to the USA when she was 54 to be close to her beloved daughter who was attending college in Washington D.C. After living in America for a few years, she knew she genuinely wanted to become a citizen. Becoming a US citizen is a long and costly process to go through, requiring ample amounts of documentation, especially since 9/11/2001, however she has been making progress. Being gainfully employed is a part of that process and Betinha is never

without work. Her life is incredibly happy in America. Today she lives in Orlando, Florida, enjoying the bountiful sunshine and flowers that Florida is famous for, and visiting Disney World with her daughter each week whenever possible, which is such a colorful experience that she always leaves there with multiple ideas for even more creations.

Below is Betinha's special recipe for Cold-Porcelain. It is homemade with simple ingredients, baked in a microwave and in just minutes you will have a wonderfully soft clay that you may use for up to six months.

Above: A wonderful Halloween inspired collection of handmade whimsical miniatures.

Ingredients

- 1 cup of Elmer's white glue (extra strong formula)
- 1 cup of corn starch
- 1 tablespoon of lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon of Johnson's baby oil
- 1 tablespoon of moisturizing cream (i.e. Equate)

Directions

In a microwavable bowl add glue, corn starch, lemon juice and baby oil. Mix everything until you get a smooth mixture. Place the bowl in a microwave oven for 30 seconds. Mix again until all of



the ingredients are blended. Add this mixture back to the microwave for 1 minute more. Mix again. Add back to microwave for 30 seconds more and mix again. If necessary, keep adding for 30 seconds more until you obtain a desired consistency, similar to bread dough or clay.

Spread the moisturizing cream on a flat surface and



Left and above: Three stacked cakes that are full of whimsy and elegance for Halloween.

mix in the original 4 ingredients enough to make the final product pliable and the right consistency for molding. Be careful because the clay may still be hot. Let the finished cold porcelain cool completely and then wrap with plastic (Saran Wrap) but keep this outside of your refrigerator. You may use this mixture for up to six months.

Coloring the clay

Use any color you prefer of oil paint to mix with the cold porcelain until you get the color you desire! This is

simple and fun!

We hope you enjoy the new Halloween collection that has been created by Betinha for *American Miniaturist* subscribers Autumn edition! Have fun trying your hand at cold porcelain and, as always, be sure to share your creations.



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The Krazee world of Halloween

Cathy Foley welcomes us to Krazee Frazee's, a project brought to life through the magic of friendship

BY SADIE BROWN

Krazee Frazee's is a Halloween emporium of staggering miniature proportions, with tricks and treats hidden around every corner. However, the store spent the first two decades of its life as the ghostly shell of a half-built kit, languishing in the depths of Cathy Foley's basement until the magic of friendship saw the cobwebs brushed away on a long-held ambition.

Disassembling the kit, Cathy dispatched it to fellow miniaturist, Evelyn Allen, who had agreed to tackle the

construction element of this exciting project. "She's so skilled at so many things," says Cathy, who named the store in honor of her maiden name, Frazee. "We put our heads together and discussed ideas and dreams for this charming little kit." Together, the two friends put those dreams into practice and brought the kit to life. They incorporated unique design

elements such as the illuminated exterior sign, hand carved by Evelyn and which gives the store its distinctive appearance, ready to cast a spell over anyone who crosses the tiny threshold.

Having last seen the kit in pieces after it lay dor-

Below left: Miniaturist Cathy Foley. **Below:** Sometimes All Hallows Eve isn't all it's cracked up to be!



MINI SHOP





Above: Potted mysteries in the shop window.

mant for so many years, Cathy has vivid memories of the day she tore open the enormous Fed Ex box on its return as a spellbinding two storey building. The interior walls were beautifully lined with the paper she had carefully hand-picked and the store was ready for her to plan the layout, and fill with the amazing collection of miniatures she had amassed through the years, in the fervent hope that they would, one day, line the shelves of Krazee Frazee's. "It was in perfect condition," recalls Cathy fondly. "I'm forever grateful to my good friend, Evelyn. Her skills made it possible."

With so much to see



within its carefully constructed walls, you can come back to Krazee Frazee's time and time again, and always discover something new. The magic begins before you even step inside, brilliant window displays, a grumpy cauldron by Georgia Marfels baring its teeth and a delightful personalized welcome mat greeting you from the front veranda. It's so easy to imagine the excitement and anticipation of the young and young at heart as they walk through the door, jaws dropping at the magical world beyond. Although the small child sat sobbing hysterically on the floor after dropping their lollipop may vehemently disagree!

The 'glass' counters are filled with fiendish tempting



Left and above: The upstairs has costumes and specialty jewelry.

cakes and candies, resembling those found in the finest patisseries at this time of year and showcasing the work of some top miniature bakers. It isn't only the contents of the bakery displays that catch your eye, however. To the everyday customer, the counters are simply decorated with seasonal orange and black paper chains, but from the perspective of the miniaturist, these tiny, time consuming creations show miniature magic hard at work! A black bistro table and chairs also offers Krazee Frazee's 1/12th scale clientele the opportunity to sit down with a coffee and a slice of cake. The tiny paper cups with 'Boo' emblazoned down the side are a joy.

The candy counter Cathy selected has allowed her to create a unique display, each of the individual 'glass' fronted sections completely filled

with candies. Meanwhile, the countertop itself is swarming with festive spirit. Here chocolate mice sit alongside more lively rat shaped counterparts, including one intrepid little adventurer wearing a cape as he bravely investigates an unusual looking apple. The 'helium' balloon at the back of the display is another inspired addition.

With so many magical elements, you can't define one single aspect of Krazee Frazee's as the overall centerpiece, but the towering black Halloween tree found at the bottom of the twisting staircase is vying for pole position. Your eyes can't fail to be drawn towards base of the tree and the colorful selection of gifts sitting beneath the sparkly orange tinsel, bows and baubles. Designing the colorful wrapping paper using Print Artist, and carefully handcrafting each of the tiny bows, Cathy has also added tiny gift tags to each parcel, further demonstrating her skill for fine detail. "The shop is filled with projects I made over the years," reflects Cathy. "I like working in all media. Recently I've been making rugs out of thousands of single French knots. Teresa Layman sells rug kits which got me started embroidering. It wasn't long and I was designing my own rugs."

Taking those winding stairs up to the top floor, last but by no means least, we find the wonders of the costume department, where a rack of colorful clothes takes pride of place, gathering together everything needed for the perfect All Hallows Eve.

Through combining her creative skills with those of Evelyn Allen, Cathy has created a world which holds an exceptional depth of detail. The store has the air of those magical old-fashioned department stores where you could get anything and everything all under one roof, and it's impossible not to find yourself bewitched by its charm.

‘Dressing up and pretending is magical to me.’

If the idea of building a kit instills a sense of foreboding worthy of Halloween in your soul then Cathy has some suggestions to brighten the looming dark days of winter rapidly casting their shadow. "Over the years I've enjoyed making projects and collections inside of glass domes, lanterns, boxes with acrylic covers, clock cases, basketball display cases and whatever container inspires me," she explains. "You don't have to

have carpentry skills at all! With a little patience and vision, you can accomplish many fun things."

Although the nights may be drawing in, for many this time of year holds a sense of wonder unrivalled by any other. For some it's the crisp shades of fall which hold the magic, whilst for others it's the myth and legend of Halloween. For Cathy it's both. "The colors of the leaves, the harvest time, cooler temperatures and going back to school when young thrilled me.

Dressing up and pretending is magical to me. I still dress up each year to greet kids of all ages," she says, adding that due her rural location, trick or treaters can be few and far between, meaning her large collection of decorations instead brings the thrill and excitement of Halloween to her friend, Ruth's house in the city. "She has a very large porch," laughs Cathy. "We often get fifty plus kids or more to get candy and enjoy the decorations, life sized animated dolls, lights, sounds, and to push buttons on all kinds of fun things. I thoroughly enjoy all of it."

It's just a shame there isn't a button we can press to wave a magic wand and become customers of Krazee Frazee's this fall!

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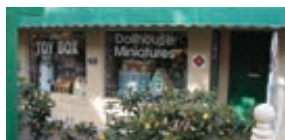
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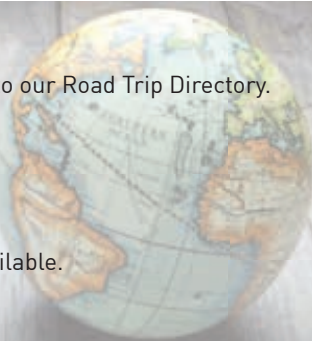
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Batty doughnuts

Create miniature magic with a taste of Halloween

BY SADIE BROWN

Every Halloween celebration needs some festive sweet treats. Let's make some!

1 Mix white polymer clay with a little Sunflower Yellow to make cream. Roll six cream balls, each measuring roughly 7mm in diameter. Use a small ball tool or similar to make a hole in the center of three of them. Twist six thin ropes of foil, wrapping one around the center side of each doughnut.

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Polymer clay - white, Sunflower Yellow, orange, black
- Pastels - Golden Ochre, Dark Cadmium Orange, brown
- Small ball tool or similar
- Small paintbrush
- Old butter knife
- Sculpey Bake & Bond
- Extra fine acrylic paint pens - white, green, purple
- Matte varnish
- Black paper
- Kitchen foil
- All-purpose glue
- Small bat shaped paper punch

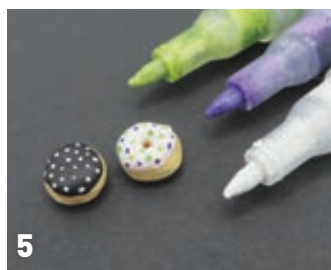


2 Mix grated Golden Ochre pastel with Dark Cadmium Orange and brown to create the perfect shade of a deep fried doughnut! At this point, it's always a good idea to test the mixture on a spare piece of the cream clay to ensure you're happy with the color. Brush the mixture over the doughnuts and remove the kitchen foil. Bake and allow to cool.

3 Use an old butter knife to mix Sculpey Bake & Bond with white polymer clay, creating a mixture the thickness of icing. Spread the mixture over the top of the three ring doughnuts. Coat two of the remaining

doughnuts with a Bake & Bond/orange clay mixture and the final one with a Bake & Bond/black clay mixture. Return to the oven to bake the 'icing'. Once again, allow to cool.

4 Take two of the white iced ring doughnuts and add small balls of black clay which have been flattened with a fingernail where you want the ghosts' eyes to sit, sticking them into position with Bake & Bond. Flatten two slightly smaller balls of white clay and place on top of the black circles. Add a very tiny ball of black clay to the center of each eye to form the pupils, before returning



the two doughnuts to the oven for the final time.

5 Add tiny bright green and purple dots to the white icing on the single remaining undecorated ring doughnut, using extra

fine acrylic paint pens. Use a white acrylic paint pen to create the same effect on the black iced doughnut. Once the paint has dried, coat all the doughnuts with matte varnish.

6 Cut two bat shapes from black paper using a small paper punch. Fold the bats lightly in the center to give them a 3D effect and stick one to the top of each orange iced doughnut with a dab of all-purpose glue.

Why it is important as a miniaturist to have rulers for all units of measurement.

Our world isn't as small as it used to be, no pun intended. Since the invention of the internet we are able to communicate and share with the rest of the world so easily and each part of the world has their own unit of measurement.

When creating a miniature project some measurements can be crucial. Conversions can be tricky. Sometimes a rough conversion will suffice but there are other times when even a slight mistake can alter the outcome.

In this publication we try to determine when it is acceptable to round up or down to inches from cm or mm. But there are times when it is more efficient to give you a specific cm measurement instead of a slew of decimals to inches.

Having a cm, mm, and inch ruler is a great idea for those that would like the most accurate results from our tutorials. Even if you are pulling some tutorials from the internet it will save you time and frustration in the long run.

We will continue to do our best to convert to inches for you but please consider expanding your units of measurements by having a ruler for inches, mm, and cm. We are very lucky to have our *AM* family expand across the globe!

A love of miniature pillows

The pandemic, tiny pillows, the world, and June Sprigg Tooley

BY JUNE SPRIGG TOOLEY

It all started with the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020, when I began making tiny pillows to relieve my anxiety. As a kid, I made mini quilts and stuffed animals. As an adult, I have collected miniatures for more than twenty years. My original project was a room box inspired by Grandma's kitchen, but fourteen room boxes, a dollhouse, and an antique shop later, I was running out of room in my 800-square-foot house.

With no room but lots of time, my tiny pillow enter-

prise was born. My kitchen is now a workshop. Supplies line my long table and my workplace is my handy island counter, a convenient height and directly under bright light. My comfortable workstation allows me to stand, a healthy change from sitting. Let's just say that making miniatures is more interesting to me than cooking!

Once I got the hang of making simple squares, I found that making pillow sets allowed me to combine colors and patterns in the unconven-

tional ways I like. I experimented with mini furniture kits from CastleCrafts, nicely designed and easy to finish with chalk paint and wax.

My go-to source for mini fabrics is Les Chinoiseries. With two major suppliers based in South Africa and Spain, Tooley's Tiny Pillows was off to an international start. I branched out with unfinished furniture and

Below left: Miniaturist June Sprigg Tooley. **Right:** An assortment of miniature creations adorned with pillows!



MINI PILLOWS



graduated to finished pieces which I give new life with paint, pillows, and upholstery, a step up from making simple pillows and a whole new challenge. I shop online always on the lookout for whimsical furniture. I'm just starting to work with 1:24 scale chairs and settees. My smallest pillows are 1/2" across, smaller than my fingernail.

The pillows are glued, not sewn, because I can have more fun with embellishments. I would be lost without Aleene's Fast Grab Tacky Glue. Nothing else sticks so efficiently and dries clear. I use the tiniest trims I can find: silk ribbon, buttons, pom-poms, tassels, silk cord, and lace. Some years ago, I found 2mm buttons for a project. Now the smallest I can find are 3mm. (If you know a source for the really tiny ones, please let me know.)

People comment that the work must be hard, but it just needs patience. The hardest part for me is waiting for the paint or glue to dry.

My earliest efforts featured traditional colors and patterns, but I have increasingly indulged my preference for unexpected combinations. If a piece has six or seven different fabrics, I think that's just

about right. I love contrasting colors and patterns that "go but don't match." I play around with asymmetry. Since making minis is a way for me to play, I make what I like and figure that someone else will find it appealing, too. I've been pleasantly surprised that some of the wilder pieces have been quick to sell.

Since the coronavirus quarantine changed the rhythm of life, I've had more time to develop marketing. Without miniature shows, online sales are the only venue. I opened a shop on Etsy in April and have enjoyed small but steady sales and a growing number

of people who call my shop a favorite.

I also opened a Facebook page called TooleysTinyPillows with the intention of selling, but within days I realized that something extraordinary was happening. To my astonishment, the page had 2,000 likes, then 4,000, and within just a few weeks there were more than 8,600 people from more than forty countries around the world who were interested in tiny pillows!

The vast majority are from the Middle East, Africa, and many parts of Asia. Many are Muslim, as I have learned in message conversations I cher-



Right: Two beautifully adorned dining chairs.

ish. There are more men than anybody would expect.

I haven't had a single sale from this page, but that's not why it's important to me. I use the page for global goodwill outreach. I enjoy thanking people in their native languages (thanks to Google Translate). At first I tried to check everyone's Facebook pages to try to understand who they were, but with so many followers, it became impossible.

“So why on earth do more than 8,600 people around the world like tiny pillows?”

However, one woman's page showed her beautiful quilted and embroidered handbags, placemats, and other goods. I asked her if I could use my page to share her work, and ever since, Khin Phyto Lwin in Myanmar has sent me photos of her creations, which I post on the TooleysTinyPillows page.

I post what I am making, with photos of the process of selecting furniture and fabrics. I celebrate my sales with pictures of each item and where it went in the world. My best friend, also a dollhouse enthusiast, gave me a sweet miniature of my cat Marley, and I use Mini-Marley in my



photos, crediting her as the business manager and boss. People love her tiny accessories – a mug of hot cocoa, a cup of tea with a slice of lemon, a MacBook laptop of her own – and of course a tiny face mask! My goal is to create items with precision work, lots of detail, and stylish design, in a range of prices from under \$10 to \$150 and up.

So why on earth do more than 8,600 people around the world like tiny pillows? I'm convinced that it is a consequence of the coronavirus. People have more time at home. On all our Facebook pages I see universal concern about the pandemic and a global plea for staying home, staying clean, and wearing masks. As for the baffling appeal of tiny pillows, I suspect it has something to do with comfort. In a big, newly challenging world, people of

Above: A chaise lounge chair in greens and reds.

all kinds are drawn to a cozy, manageable miniature world where in their imaginations they can rest on tiny settees, nestle in comfy pillows, and get away from it all.

We are all in this together. That is the biggest gift of the tiny pillows that have come to play an important part in my daily life. In the meantime, I've set myself new challenges – refining the art of making 1:24 scale bolsters, real applique, and perfect rosettes. Stay tuned!



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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tooleystinypillows>

Rustic ceiling beams

Add some interest to your ceiling with beams

BY AURORA



MEET THE MAKER: Aurora

"I live in rural Dorset, England with my husband. My 3 children are now adults and following their own lives. I have been a miniaturist for 30 years and love that imagination knows no bounds with creativity."



Give the ceilings of your miniature room some interest by adding wood beams to them.

1 First decide how far apart you want your beams, mine are 6cm.

2 Measure the room front to back to get the length for each beam. If you have a square room they should all be the same length.

3 Put a small pencil mark at the front and back of the room for the correct spacing this will help to line them up when you glue them to the ceiling.

4 Cut them to the right length with your saw.

5 Using your knife, carefully slice small random pieces from the corner edges. Different sizes work best. Start with a few as you can always add more.

6 Next, score small straight lines along

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- 1cm square long wood
- Cutting knife
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Fine sandpaper
- Dark wood stain
- Tiny hooks
- Gorilla wood glue
- Saw
- Soft small paint brush

3 flat edges. Remember one edge will be glued to the ceiling. You are trying to achieve a natural aged look. Some of the lines along the flat edges can be at a slant and if you like you can cut small pieces out of the wood.

7 Using your sandpaper, gently sand all over, including the ends. If at this stage you want more pieces cut out or more straight cuts, this is the time to do it. Then sand again.

8 Stain with a dark wood stain. I used Dark Oak, but you may have your own color in mind. Then leave to dry. Apply a second coat of

PROJECT



the one unscored side and stick it to the ceiling using your pencil marks as a guide. Hold in place until the beam sticks by itself. I found a few minutes was all it took.

11 Any excess glue can be easily wiped away with a Q-Tip.

You did it! Be sure to visit me on Instagram @paganmoonminiatures

stain if the color is not dark enough. You will see how the cuts will appear slightly darker, adding to the naturally aged effect.

9 This is when you can add tiny hooks into the beams if you want to, or just leave them bare. I opened up a few tiny screw eyes and screwed them into the wood so I could hang bunches of herbs.

10 Apply a small amount of wood glue along



A miniature house full of positivity

Marc La Fontijn made his latest miniature project a reflection of his favorite things

BY MARC LA FONTIJN

I am a new kid on the block as far as making dollhouses and also the maker of *The House of Elliott*, *Shabbylane 61*, which I imagine is somewhere on this big planet. I've always been a creative person and have a love for interior design. Dollhouses have always fascinated me because of the decorative aspects. I enjoy making lamp shades, ceramics, paintings and recently I made an exact miniature copy of Judy Garland's red ruby shoes from *The Wizard of Oz*!

‘It is a reflection of myself and it was a very personal and autobiographical project.’

In the winter of 2018 I was watching a Victorian show on BBC and in one of the sets I saw a gorgeous dollhouse and that was all I needed to give me the push to



Above: The front of *The House of Elliott*. **Left:** A 1:12 scale doll who is a reflection of this creative Belgian miniaturist.

start making one of my own.

So in January 2019, I purchased the Fantasy Villa from Woodcroft in 1:24 scale. This



first house was a test to see if I could pull it off and I did! After three fun-filled months *Blue Manor* was finished.

Since I didn't want to make another in that same scale I decided to purchase the Exmouth House kit in 1:12 scale which then became *The House of Elliott*.

This house and resident is a reflection of myself and it was a very personal and autobiographical project. I am a gay man and I use a wheelchair so of course there had to be a wheelchair in the house. I bought a DIY kit and made my own version of a fantasy wheelchair or better said a 'wheel throne'.

I love cats, books, Marlene Dietrich, eclectic interior design, beige, gold and turquoise, Victorian style,



Above: The dollhouse shown with the front open as well as from the sides. The sides have framed tributes to the makers favorite movies.

Rococo, 1920's, Art Deco, and shabby furniture. So I blended all my loves together into a perfect mix. Of course, Elliott who lives there, loves all the same things that I love.

Just as everyone does, I also have my own story about

my miniature house and it's resident. Elliott (a Robert Downey Jr. character doll) is a gay man who lives in *The House of Elliott* and he is waiting for his partner Arthur to move in with him.

Arthur (Chris Evans char-



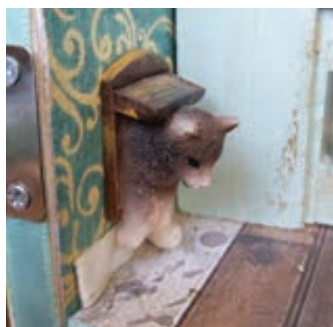
Below: The front doors of the house has shallow vignette spaces for each of the rooms.



acter doll) hasn't arrived yet, but if you look closely you find things referring to him.

Here and there are little subtle details of a gay lifestyle such as Dior and Versace



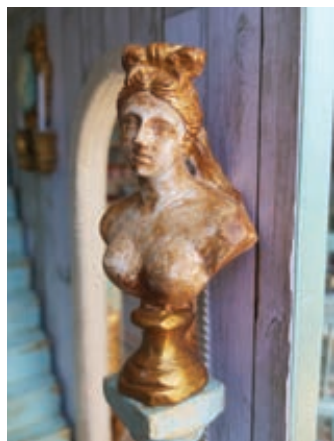


Above: A little cat door is on the side of the house. Marc's cats are integrated throughout the house.

books in the bedroom, pink champagne, a miniature issue of Playgirl and fitness magazines in the bathroom and in the attic there are male model calendars hanging on the wall.

Every time you look into the house you discover new





items hidden throughout. I also have my real life cats and myself in old paintings that were made using Adobe Photoshop, which I used to decorate the interior.

I made a lot of things myself but also bought items. I never use purchased items in their original state, always

Below: Marc adds his own touch to each item that he adds.



Above: You can see Marc's wonderful sense of humor throughout.



make them my own by repainting, restyling or adding special details to them.

I had the most fun making the roof. I cut over 900 shingles from sandpaper and I also enjoyed making the attic.

This project was a very interesting adventure and I learned more that I could have imagined. I loved every minute of it!

My next project will be a room box called, *Marlene Dietrich's Dressing Room*.

I am a member of several very interesting Facebook groups like Mike Guidry Miniatures, World of Doll-houses and Miniatures, French Style Miniatures and



Above: Ribbon was used as wallpaper border. This house truly is a mixed media work of art. Marc's 1:12 scale house is a great reminder that you can get creative with dollhouses. There are no rules when you make art through miniatures. Just express yourself.





Brocante Miniatures. I learned a lot from them and they have given me so much support and motivation to keep on creating. I now have my own dollhouse group named, The House of Elliott.

When I start on a project I always have an idea of what I want, but I never know how it will turn out. Once I get started it comes to life and I like it that way.

It took me nine months to build this house and I enjoyed every minute!

I think *The House of Elliott* will never be finished because I keep on adding and removing things. I hope you can appreciate this house and all its details and I hope I inspire the creativity in you.



Sewing box

Make a cute little sewing box

BY KAREN HRITZ

Follow along and add this sweet miniature sewing box to your 1:12 scale scene.

1 From the cardboard, draw and cut out the following:

- 2 rectangles that are 1" wide by 3/4" deep – these are the top and bottom of the sewing box.
- 2 rectangles that are 1" wide by 5/8" deep – these are the front and back sides of the box.
- 2 rectangles that are 3/4" wide by 5/8" deep – these are the left and right sides of the box.



2 Using a toothpick, apply a THIN layer of white glue to the bottom cardboard piece and place it in the lower half of the LINING



FABRIC. The glue needs to cover the entire piece of cardboard, especially along the edges.

3 Glue the 4 side pieces in the same way, placing them as shown with NO SPACE BETWEEN BOTTOM AND SIDE PIECES.

4 When the glue is dry, trim around all sides EXCEPT THE LONG EDGE OF THE BACK PIECE.

5 Next, fold the sides of the box up with the fabric on the inside.

6 Run a thin bead of glue on the seam at each

Scale = 1:12

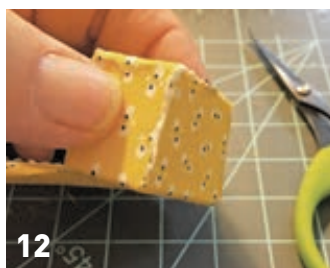
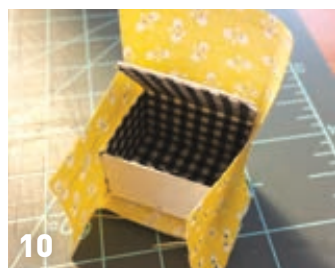
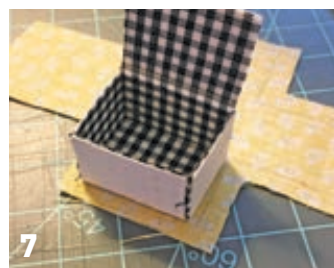
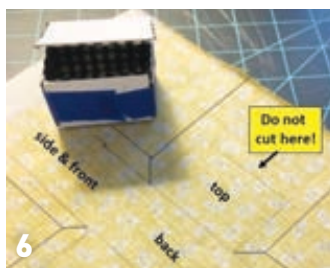
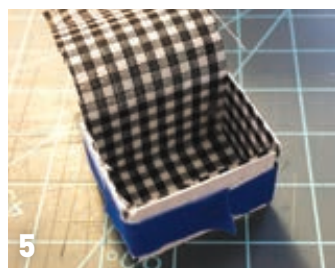
Materials:

- Cardboard, approximately 3" x 5" – card stock or index card are too thin
- Fabrics
- 1/4" ribbon or trim
- White glue
- Cord for edging and handle
- Beads for feet and button
- Paper clip for handle
- Scissors or cutting knife
- Toothpick
- Ruler
- Tape
- Pencil

corner to connect the sides. Apply a small piece of tape to hold the corners while the glue dries.

7 On the wrong side of the outer fabric, trace around the box bottom, back and top as shown in step 6. Then turn the box on its side and trace the sides/front. NOTE: I cut the outer fabric this way so that it would cover the glued corners of the box for a neat appearance.

8 Cut the outer fabric as shown in step 6, leaving 1/4" allowance on all edges.



9 Apply a thin layer of glue to the bottom of the box and glue in place on the wrong side of the outer fabric.

10 As with the lining fabric, the glue needs to cover the entire piece of cardboard, especially along the edges.

11 Apply glue to the back of the box and fold the fabric up into place. Make sure the fabric is pulled snug around the edge.

12 Apply glue to the sides of the box and fold the fabric around, making sure it is snug around the corner.

13 Fold the fabric around to the front of the box and trim so it overlaps 1/8", apply glue and secure fabric to front of box. Let dry.

14 Trim excess fabric from box bottom.

15 Apply a thin line of glue along each raw

edge of the bottom to seal.

16 Glue a length of ribbon over the place on the front of the box where the raw edges overlap.

17 Glue cord along bottom edges.

18 Apply glue to the fabric that extends above the opening of the box.

19 Turn to the inside of the box and secure with clips until dry.



20 Apply a thin layer of glue to the box top.

21 Holding the box closed, fold the fabric over the top. Let dry. Note: If you glue the top without folding the box closed, the fabric will be too tight to close the box when it is dry!

22 Apply glue to the edges of the fabric and fold to the inside to finish the edges of the top.

23 Glue another strip of ribbon on the top, aligning it to the piece on the front of the box.

24 Cut a 6" piece of cord and tie a knot, creating a loop at the center point of the cord.

25 Apply a thin bead of glue on the front edge of the box lid.

26 Align the loop in the cord with the ribbon. Glue in place making sure not to glue the loop down.

27 Glue the remaining cord around the top edges of the box.

28 To create the handle, I used a small paper clip. Reshape the paper clip as shown in step 23. It should be about 1/8" wider than the box.

29 Cut a piece of cord (at least 8" long). Apply glue to the cord and wrap the handle making sure not to leave any gaps. Note: Do not wrap the short

ends. Those will be inserted into the box.

30 Mark a spot on each side of the box, centered top to bottom and side to side.

31 Use a large sewing needle (I used a sewing machine needle) and poke a hole through the side.

32 Insert one of the short ends of the handle into each hole.

33 Glue small beads on the bottom if you want feet on your box.

34 Glue a small bead on the front of the box for the closure! You are done!

A luxurious miniature suite

The lavish Peacock suite is ready for it's first lucky guest

BY CHARLENE TRIMELONI

The Peacock Suite of the Queen Patricia Bed & Breakfast Bakery & Boutique (www.queenpatricia.com) has been a collaboration between my family and international artisans, with a time line extending over a year. We are very excited to share this bedroom and adjoining bath, the final spaces in our mini-masterpiece to be completed.

The main construction of the rooms is consistent with that of the house at large: swirled plastered ceilings painted bright white, ornately carved ceiling medallions in walnut and multi-globed light fixtures. We selected a green-copper crackle paper with matching green wainscot and border for the bedroom and an antique white floral lace patterned paper with beige floral wainscot and borders for the bath.

The walls, both top and bottom, are accented with



walnut stained dentil crown molding and a Victorian height baseboard.

Inspiration for the room's peacock theme and jewel tones palette began in winter of 2019 with the purchase of a pair of Louis XVI chairs upholstered in a Peacock Garden silk crepe from Susan Bembridge. This set, along with the romantic grande

Above: The peacock theme carries over to the armchairs.

duchess bed with a wood frame in walnut and canopy posts and casters in brass were offered by Carol Clarke. We forwarded pictures of the bed to Diana Boyle, who accepted the project of customizing the bed and window coverings, as well as hand-painting matching



Above: The room shown in full.



furnishings to fit the theme. Susan forwarded items to Carol within the UK, allowing us to save on international shipping costs, and we mailed items back and forth to Diana in the US, who lastly returned our commissioned pieces.

Diana re-upholstered the bed and bolsters, converting the original cream jacquard fabric to Susan's peacock scene printed on cotton sateen. She chose a satiny



Above: There are many tiny details on the vanity.

gold fabric for the spread and assembled coordinating pillows. All quite stunning! The drapery fabric is the softest! Diana was disappointed that the fabric wouldn't hold a pleat for her, yet we found the alternate look to be quite elegant. Next, she selected and transformed a mahogany stained Bespaq vanity. She envisioned, drew, laser cut, and painted peacocks to surround the vanity mirror and created a matching conversation table. Both pieces serve to unify the golden hues in the room.

In October of 2019 I came across a tutorial for a hardwood floor pattern by Kate Andrews (*AM206*). It took some time before I

could find the time to take it on. I incorporated my pre-stained and varnished wood strips, with the completed

squares measuring a little over 3". I finished the floor with 2 coats of glossy varnish consistent with the Queen Patricia's neighboring rooms. Kudos to Kate, I love the depth and elegance that the pattern portrays!

Finishing touches: using swatches from Diana, we refurbished a heart-shaped chair jewelry box for a vanity seat. We mounted a gold-bordered mirror on the right wall to reflect the bed and adhered a roaring 20's clock with peacocks made of "Beautiful Board" by Renea Harrison, which we painted to coordinate.

Using the chain links







Left: The bathroom is a gorgeous place to unwind in a bubble bath.

housing handmade perfumes and a two-tiered table displays a collection of toiletries by Bette Jo Chudy.

Most recently I found a dressed mannequin, "Peacock Fantasy" designed by Cheryl Sansom, upon its arrival from the UK, it will be the perfect final scene accessory. With the Queen Patricia now complete, mom and I assembled and filled the Peacock Suite with my Esther, Claudette, and Irene dolls by Dana Burton!



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and tassels from a necklace and pair of earrings purchased at the local department store, we accented the window blinds and tied back the draperies. An English Springer Spaniel puppy sits watchfully at the bedside. The bath is filled with porcelain furnishings adorned with pink roses, a Bespaq hutch

Right: A full exterior view of the Queen Patricia. Photograph by Brandon Hirt.



Pretty shopping bag

This will help to lighten the load while mini shopping

BY JILL MUNDY

When shopping for a the family's groceries or going to market for fresh vegetables, a very large bag is essential, and this one is so easy to make, you can make it in any size.

1 Cut a pattern 1 1/2" square, and cut two pieces of fabric. Cut another piece of fabric approximately 7" x 3/4" – this will make the gusset and handles.

2 Turn over and glue a small hem at the top edge of the bag on both of the pieces.

3 Turn over and glue a small hem at one end of the long strip.

4 Glue wrong sides together – start at the top edge and glue the gusset

around the front piece.

5 Cut off the strip and turn over a small hem on the finishing edge, making sure that it is in line with the front piece.

6 Glue the back piece in place – remember the seams are on the outside of the bag.

7 Cut the remaining strip in half lengthways to make the handles.



8 Fold each piece in three and glue.

9 Glue both of the handles in place.



Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Cotton fabric
- Scissors
- Tacky or fabric glue

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Make some miniature books for your scene

BY BELINDA MCWILLIAMS

Fill our book shelves or miniature library tables with an assortment of books. Or one special book for a side table.

We will be starting by making a book cover made from card. Whatever card you were able to find, cut the card into pieces 28mm x 16mm.

Measure 2mm in the center of the long sides score and fold on the marks. The printed book covers would be cut apart and scored along the edges of the spines. The scoring could be done either inside or outside the cover. Some of the spines are wider than others, but that's fine because you'll end up with a nice variety of books.

The cover edges can be decorated with a gold marker or aged with chalk, ink pads, pencil crayons, pastels, eye shadow, etc. Coloring the edges gives the book cover a 'grounded' look.

For the pages, measure the inner measurement from the spine to the cover edge. My cover is 11mm, which is less half a mm so my page width is 10.5mm.

Cut a strip of printer paper 10.5mm.

Measure the height of the cover. Mine is 18mm - less 1mm so my page is 17mm.

Cut up the paper strip into 17mm pieces -

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Sheet of white paper
- Steel ruler
- Cutting knife
- Pencil
- White glue
- Card stock in any color, design, pattern, print, etc

Optional

- Paperback to cut up
- Printed mini book covers available on internet

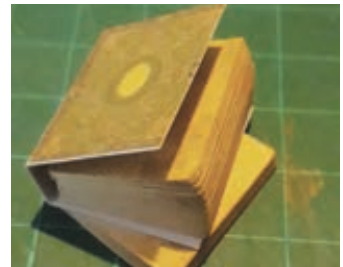
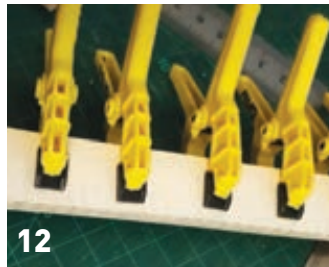
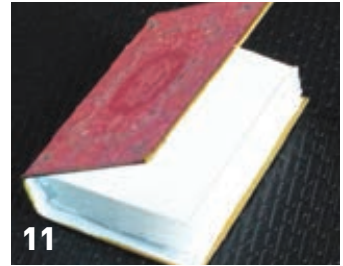
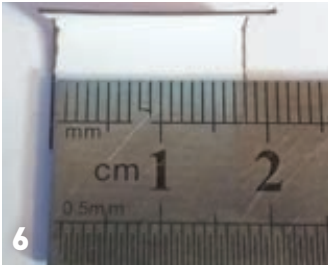
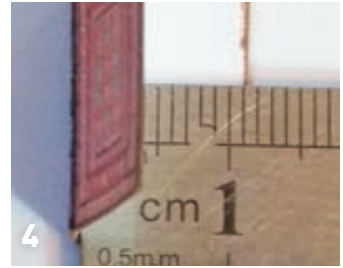
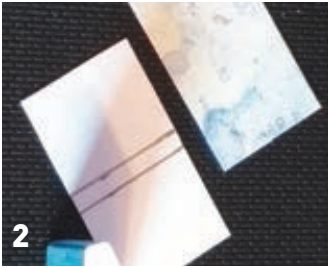
these will now be your book pages.

There are 2 ways to add your pages.

Method 1: Tack enough pages to fill the cover. You can either glue the pages in one at a time or you can glue the spine of the pages and then glue the stack in. This would give you a book with pages that can turn. Mini books with separate pages are great for displaying individually.

Method 2: If you are impatient or need a mountain of books, you can use foam core or even thick card for





a quick and easy filling. This is really great for many quick shelf filler books all the same thickness. You can get very clever and glue a miniature book page onto the foam cover so that it peeks out.

9 My best friend Debi taught me a great method to make book pages. Pop out to your local charity store or 2nd hand book store and buy a handful of the cheapest books. Rip off the covers.

10 Measure and mark your desired page width from the page edge. It doesn't matter if you will be cutting through the type because what you are really needing are the page edges.

11 Holding the ruler firmly and securely, cut through the whole book until you are left with a pack of page ends.

12 Straighten them up and clamp them evenly and neatly.

13 Put an even layer of glue on the cut edge..

14 When dry, measure the pages to figure out the size for the covers with a lip and cut them out.

15 Glue the book pages into the covers. Clamp until the glue is dry.

16 To dress up the spines I use tiny stickers like you can find in nail art.

Visit www.castlecrafts.co.za.

THE mini SCOOP

■ AM's news page is devoted to keeping busy miniaturists up to speed. Please submit items of mini interest to auralea@ashdown.co.uk or to *American Miniaturist* - Mini Scoop, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944.

Be sure to visit Dollhouse.live

Access Ashdown's miniature magazine titles in digital format. Keep in touch with other miniaturists around the world. Every month our dedicated team will bring you features, projects, videos and lots more. We'll be sharing articles from the magazines, but will also be bringing you a wealth of exciting new content.

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keep you up to date with all that's happening in the mini world. It's completely FREE!

You can always find us by heading to the web page www.dollhouse.live on your computer, tablet or phone.



Instagram contest

Want a chance to win this mini framed drawing by a mother and daughter team (@dollhouse_smithery)? Judith Yanok (mom) does drawings in pen & ink. Then Meghan Boo (daughter) makes the wooden frame and assembles the piece. Contest rules:

1. Follow AM on Instagram @americanminiaturist
2. Tag a friend on the AM Instagram contest photo

Good luck! There are regular giveaways on AM Instagram so be sure to follow us!

AM Social Media

We have a lot happening on *American Miniaturist's* Facebook and Instagram page! Be sure to follow us and be a part of our future polls, keep up with the latest news in our miniature community and enjoy fun giveaways!

Giveaway contributions

If you would like to be considered to have your products featured for our giveaways with your free link mentioned please email the editor at auralea@ashdown.co.uk.



WHERE'S ARTHUR CONTEST

Arthur was found on page 80 watching dish towels dry in the June issue (*AM*206). We have randomly selected **Kathie** from **New Milford, CT** to be our winner for this month's Where's Arthur contest. We will be sending her a very special prize from

Hobby Builders Supply/miniaturess.com for helping us find Arthur.

But as you know Arthur loves to roam through each page and, as expected, he has once again wandered off while we weren't looking. Hopefully you can help us find him.

Contest entries

To be eligible for the listed contests/giveaways please indicate the **name of the contest/giveaway** and **AM issue number** and send your entry to *American Miniaturist*, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944, or email them to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address. The deadline for this issue's entry is **Friday, October 16, 2020**. Good luck!

Recent winners

June Highlights

Marilyn from Saint Amant, LA

Frame giveaway

Joyce from Kettering, OH

Congratulations!

A little reminder. Please remember to add **ALL** of the required info in your contest entries so you can be considered for the drawings!



Be sure to like and follow *American Miniaturist* magazine on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

September-October Highlights contest



We would love to know what your favorite highlights were in this issue of *AM*. You could win this pdf file by Debbie Booth (RibbonwoodCottage on Etsy). This Fall Decorating Adobe Acrobat pdf book has over 50

ideas inside. All it takes is a written paragraph for this random drawing!

Send your entry to September Highlights contest, *American Miniaturist*, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. You may also send your entries via email to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address.

Doll giveaway

We are donating these two rubber dolls (approx. 2" tall) to giveaway. Fun for a fantasy scene or for little ones to start their own dollhouse story.



Fancy pedestals

Use cake pillars to make one-inch scale pedestals

BY SANDRA HARDING

I suggest before you start to research marble pedestals, either via pictures online and in magazines. You will be amazed at how many colors, styles and patterns there are; in fact, almost anything goes.

1 Cut out cardboard shapes to fit on the top and bottom of the pillar, and glue them in place over the holes. Let them dry completely.

2 Using a medium brush and white paint, paint the pillar, holding it by the top and bottom. Let it dry. Paint



the top, and then the bottom of pedestal. Let it dry. Add another coat if needed. The paint will be the base coat for the marble finish.

3 Place a large amount of white paint in the center of your empty ice cream tub, and place small amounts of your various color choices around the outside of this main quantity without mixing.

4 With medium brush, loosely blend in colors

creating a 'whirl' of each color, and without further blending apply quickly to the pedestal, in different color whirls, working very quickly, but without over working.

Cover the whole pedestal, including the top if you can, to make sure it matches. If you like the effect let it dry. If not use a damp kitchen roll, wipe it off, let it dry and go back to stage 2.

5 Using the fine brush and darkest color you

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

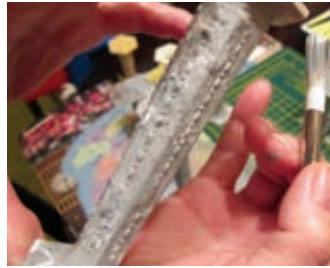
- White plastic cake pillars
- Set of cheap acrylic paints
- Small pot white emulsion
- Fine and medium water color paint brush
- Oil paint brush or tooth brush
- Water, kitchen roll
- Two empty ice cream tubs
- Thin light colored card
- Scissors
- Glue
- Spray on hobby varnish



are using (or maybe just try black) apply the lightest of lines, delicately and, if needed, and before it dries, feather it out with a dry brush to soften the edges. Add other colors to create the effect you want. It's quite fun to experiment at this stage, remembering that you can always wipe it off, let it dry and start again if it doesn't go quite right. I had quite a few mistakes before I was happy with the result. Let it dry.

6 Lay the pedestal in another ice cream tub. Using the oil paint brush or toothbrush, and using any of the other color choices, dip brush gently in the paint, and using your finger nail or thumb nail, splatter the brush lightly over the pedestal from about 4-5" away, using caution until you get confident.

Do each side more or less the same, and then the top. Any large spots can carefully be smoothed in



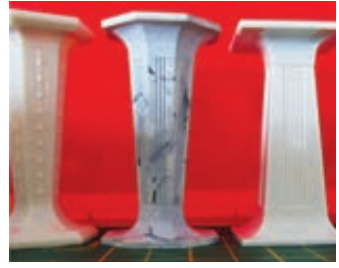
with a dry or damp brush, depending on the effect you want. Let it dry.

7 Repeat with any other color you want to use. Be sure to wash your brush in between color changes, otherwise it will just look muddy. Let it dry.

8 Lightly spray your pedestal with a varnish to add sheen and give it the 'marble' look.

Bird bath

To create a bird bath, leave off either the top or bottom piece of card, and glue in a paper plate. Paint it all as before. When it is dry, just add scenic water. Shown



here is a full-size bird bath to use as a sample while painting.

Outdoor display

To create an outdoor flower planter, leave out the card from one end, paint as directed earlier for the pedestal. Half fill the hole with oasis foam, and create a flowery display for your garden by pushing your flowers stems in the foam.

Below is a full-size pedestal that you can use as a reference to create that aged stone look.



Kitchen island chairs

Add some high top chairs to your kitchen island

BY RANDALL CASTLE

My human made some chairs for my Bibi's (Grandma's) kitchen. Now you can make some for yourself! Because I'm a doll, my human will share how they did it.

1 First draw the seat shape and cut from mat board.

2 Cut two to 3 3/8" long. Then cut two to 2" long from 3/16" x 1/8" basswood strips.

3 Cut six strips of wood the length of the back of the seat as shown in the step 1 photo.

4 For the front of the chair, glue one of those

six strips flush to the top of both 2" long strips and another 5/16" up from the bottom of the 2" long strips. See photo at the top back. Use a toothpick to get rid of any extra glue. Set aside and let dry.

5 For the back of the chair, take the (now

dry) front leg assembly you just made and line it up to the two 3 3/8" strips you cut to make the back of the chair. Glue in the mat board seat. Then add two of the six strips under the seat mimicking the front leg assembly. Use a toothpick to get rid of any extra glue. Set aside and let dry.

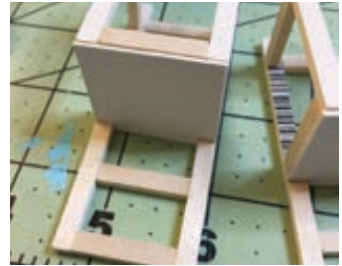
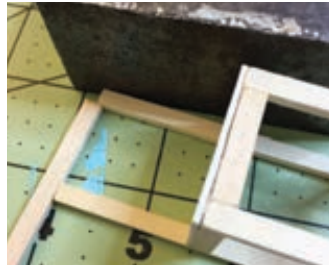
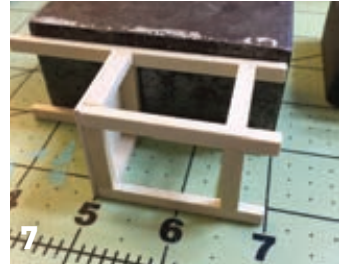
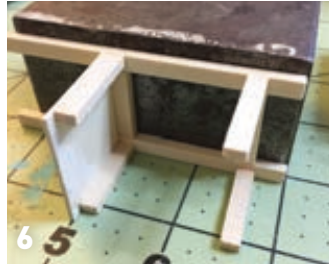
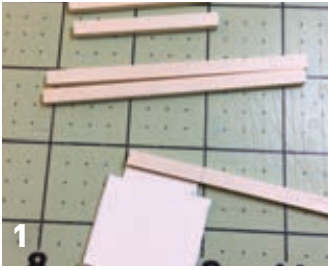
Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- 3/16" x 1/8" basswood strips
- Wood glue and Tacky Glue
- Toothpick
- Mat board
- Cutting knife
- Foam
- Card board
- Fabric



PROJECT



6 Press the back of the chair against a jig of some sort. Lay a strip of wood in under the chair seat and mark a line where you will need to cut for the

front chair assembly to fit flush under the seat. Cut 4 strips that length. Glue in two (1 under the seat and 1 lined up with the bottom back assembly). Let dry. Flip the chair over and glue in the other two.

7 Glue on the front leg assembly.

8 Lay chair on it's back and glue in the last two of the six strips you cut at the start as back supports.

9 Paint and make a cushion! The cushion was first cut from some cracker box cardboard then I glued on some foam with Tacky Glue and then wrapped with fabric.

My human hooked you up, right? Come on over to [@randall_castle](#) on Instagram and get to know me and my crew. Would dig it if you joined in on our daily adventures. Looking forward to seeing you there. Peace out!

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Haunting miniature paintings

Enjoy these Halloween decorations with a boo-tiful artistic twist

BY DEB WEISSLER

Fall is finally here and with it comes one of our favorite holidays! While tricks, treats, and costumes comes to mind as ways to celebrate the spookiest time of year, professional artist Margaryta Yermolayeva, who likes to be called Ryta, takes Halloween themes to the moon! Her full size paintings, reduced to miniature, go beyond the paper and cardboard decorations so ubiquitous with Halloween.

Born in the former Soviet Union, Ryta spent her very

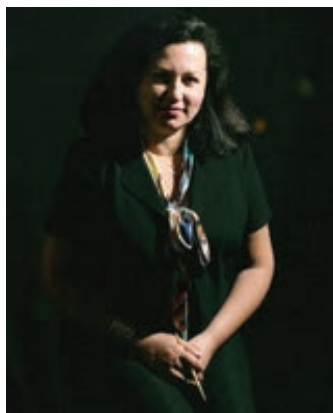
early years in a village where her mother was a doctor and her father directed a communal farm. When Ryta was 3, the family moved to Razan near Moscow, a beautifully historic town filled with museums and several old Russian Orthodox Churches. "I was surrounded by this culture my entire early childhood," Ryta recalls. "I saw beautiful realistic paintings, icons, and churches. There were forests and rivers along with captivating landscapes of Russia. These early memories still

influence my art today."

When she was 7, Ryta's parents divorced and her mother remarried, resulting in a move to Odessa in southern Ukraine. It was a huge change and for Ryta her childhood seemingly ended. A new school, new traditions, and new language happened all at once but, being young she quickly adapted.

Ryta had often looked

Below left: Miniature artist Margaryta Yermolayeva. **Below:** One of Margaryta's paintings shown next to a coin for scale.



through her mother's medical books and quickly decided she did not want to become a doctor. Her step-father's law books were equally uninspiring. She had enjoyed painting since early childhood and quickly discovered that Odessa was not only beautiful, it was full of culture and museums and home to the famous art institute, The Mikhail Grekov University of Fine Arts, where she studied for 4 years beginning at age 15.

"Women in the Soviet Union tended to marry young and I married at 17. This upset my instructor very much because she wanted me to continue my education in art in Moscow. My family didn't have the money to send me to Moscow for school, so I stayed in Odessa and had a son. I interrupted my education for a year before completing my degree. My marriage lasted 14 years and during that time I painted icons for churches, worked as an art teacher, and did exhibitions in Odessa. Then In 1992 the Soviet Union collapsed."

The collapse brought economic hardship to many. People lost their savings and jobs and families fell apart. Ryta's was no exception. Divorced and on her own, she walked away with nothing. She worked two

jobs to support herself and her son, but never forgot she was an artist. She continued painting at night and in her spare time. "I also dreamed of finding a good man. I put my profile on an International dating service and that is how I met my husband. He came to Odessa several times in a year and then brought me to America to get married."

The immigration process took a half decade, but Ryta was able to obtain a work permit during that time. She filled her days with painting, unable to sell them because she did not have a social security number. Careful to follow the immigration laws, the family settled in and waited.

"I tried to legalize my art diploma from the USSR in America but it was too expensive, so I went to work in retail. I had built up a large portfolio of paintings and sold them in galleries, who took way too much commission. We tried local art shows, but it didn't make good business sense. I opened my on-line store in 2007."

Research soon revealed what sold and what didn't. Full size paintings may take awhile to sell, but Ryta soon realized tiny prints had their niche with miniature collectors. So she decided to reduce all of her images to 1:12 scale

prints, which opened up a whole new market for her artwork. It was so successful that she expanded into doing original hand-painted dollhouse furniture.

Although Halloween is beginning to catch on in Russia now, Ryta had never heard of the holiday until she moved to America. She soon discovered that fine art doesn't sell as well as Halloween and Halloween items are highly collectible. Having started over building a reputation and a portfolio, Halloween images became a way to compete.

Ryta's art is just not about Halloween however. Many of her pieces are surreal and ethereal. Pure fantasy and folk art. There's touches of recognizable images such as *Downton Abbey* and *Sherlock Holmes*. "I am well read on a lot of topics and I pay attention to my surroundings and people's behavior with an artist's eye. I know a lot of Eastern European legends and folk lore. Sometimes when I have an





idea, I have to visualize it using my past experience in life to put it on canvas.

I never know when I am going to have an idea or inspiration. I don't necessarily go looking for ideas. With Downtown Abbey, I went to their blog looking for recipes and came away with a painting. I have a piece titled Sherlock Holmes, which was just my memories of a movie I watched as a girl. A lot of my pieces are just where my feelings were at a particular time. As for my personal feelings about Halloween, as an artist I am an observer who reflects on the struggle between good vs evil. The art always includes both the light and the shadows, which creates the story."

Working at her kitchen table, Ryta gets up with the sun. Working 5-6 hours a day, 6 or 7 days a week, she typically creates 3 images a week. Special commissions often take longer and she mixes up

full size and miniature work, creating her own inspirations or those requested by others. 20% of her work is 1:12 scale, especially Halloween and Christmas. Her animal images are sheer delight.

It wasn't long before others spotted Ryta's art. "I have illustrated books, poems. I've done logos for private clubs. I even had a candy company use one of my images for packaging. Robert Pandis, who has a very nicely done book entitled *Vintage Hallowe'en, Tricks Treats and Traditions* has used several of my images in his book and recently requested more for a new book he is working on. My art appears on the cover of a book by Andre Swartley entitled *The Wretched Afterlife of Odetta Koop*. A prominent postcard seller named David Toretta in Washington State who resells and collects postcards is a fan of mine. He is a member of the International Federation of

Above: Three of Margaryta's miniature paintings.

Postcard Dealers. I once sold a print entitled *Dogpack*, which features a dog rock band, to Dave Mason in the UK."

Although there are few challenges associated with creating miniature prints, one common theme arises from many of Ryta's customers: where can they buy tiny frames for her prints? If anyone knows of a source, please let Ryta know!

With Halloween just around the corner, some folks are already buying her prints to hand out instead of candy. Prints have been given away as gifts and a Halloween Alphabet in sets have been purchased by teachers. Her prints frame beautifully. I just recently bought a framed mirror and removed the glass, replacing it with one of Ryta's prints. It's a treat all in itself! Happy Halloween!

UPCOMING SHOWS, AUCTIONS & EXHIBITS

OCTOBER 2-3

BRIDGETON, MO

St Louis Dollhouse and Miniature Show will be held at Machinist Hall located at 12365 St Charles Rock Rd, Bridgeton, MO. Classes, Raffles and Exhibits. For more information visit www.miniatureshows.com or email Teresa at tadminatures@gmail.com or call Teresa at 314-277-2601.

NOVEMBER 13-14

ELK GROVE, IL

Chicago Fall Miniature show (formerly Wee Cee), Holiday Inn, 1000 Busse Rd, Elk Grove IL. Starts Fri 4 pm - 8 pm, Sat 9 am - 3 pm. Classes on Friday. Raffles, Classes and Exhibits. For more information miniatureshows.com Facebook "Miniature shows" Email: tadminatures@sbcglobal.net or call 314-277-2601.

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FEBRUARY 6-7

SAN DIEGO, CA

47th Annual San Diego Miniatures Show & Sale will be held February 6 & 7, 2021 on Saturday from 10am-5pm and Sunday 11am-4pm. The show will be held at San Diego Marriott Del Mar, 11966 El Camino Real, San Diego CA 92130. For more information, please visit www.sdminiatureshow.com plus be sure to check updates and new details that will be posted on our social media pages! <https://www.facebook.com/sdminiatures/> and <https://www.instagram.com/sd.minishow/>

MARCH 27 - 28

PHOENIX, AZ

Phoenix Arizona Miniature Show & Sale by Small World Miniature Club - NAME C-143 will be held on Saturday, March 27, 2021 10 AM to 5 PM and Sunday, March

28, 2021 11 AM to 4 PM. Admission Adults \$8, Children under 12 \$2. Show will be held at the Arizona State University - West Campus, 4701 West Thunderbird, Phoenix, Arizona 85306. For more information: www.phoenixminiatures.com or call 480-466-9691, or email phxminishow@gmail.com We are featuring: Sales room, exhibits, raffles, Door Prizes and a free "Make-and-take project for children age 4 and older.

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Issue 207/208

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- Pam's Tiny Trunks
- Kitchen Island
- Weathered Finishes
- Touches of Safari

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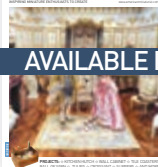
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- Lilac Flower Project
- Gumball Machine
- Create Fancy Floor
- Sew Summer Quilt

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- Kitchen Hutch
- Flower Display
- Cookbook Room box
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- Easter Dessert
- Window Blinds
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- Noah's Ark Toy
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- Vintage Drug Store
- Valentine Roses
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Ironing board

Make an old fashioned scene with this ironing board

BY RUTH FLEWELLING LESBIREL PHOTOS BY STEPHEN LESBIREL

Here's how to make an old fashioned ironing board with wooden legs like the one my grandmother gave my mother. If you would like to update the look, just paint the legs in gloss white with matt black feet. Ironing board tops haven't changed much over the years!

1 Cut the board shape from matt board. Cut a thin piece of quilt batting the same size along with a piece of printed cotton fabric 1/4" bigger than the board itself on all sides. Machine zigzag around the outer edge of the fabric or run a bead of white glue there to prevent fraying.

Scale = 1:12

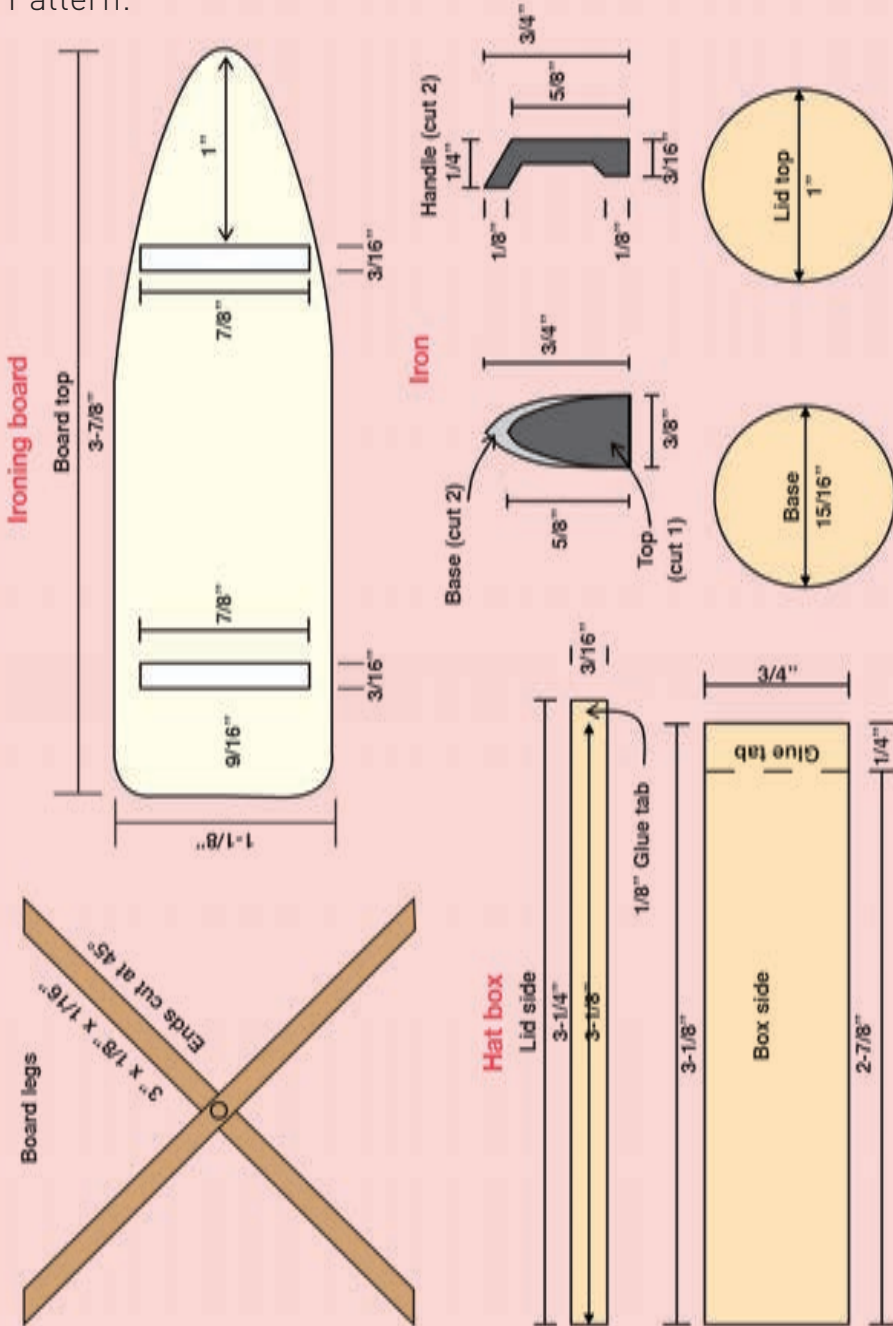
Materials:

- 1/16" thick matt board
- Small patterned cotton quilting fabric
- Quilt batting
- Acrylic paint, black (or color of choice), silver

2 Cut four legs from 1/8" x 1/16" strip wood,



Pattern:



angled as shown in the template. Drill holes 1 1/2" from the top of each leg, big enough to fit a sequin pin snugly. Cut two sequin pins to 3/16" shanks. Overlap the legs and insert the pins from the outside.

3 Glue two 3/16" x 7/8" stops of matt board to the underside of the board where shown on the template. Glue the top of the legs to the board and against the stops, with the legs at the pointed end of the board outside the legs at the square end of the board. Let dry completely.

4 Position the quilt batting on the top of the board and the printed fabric centered over it. Thread a sewing needle with white thread and sew this padded cover onto the board by lacing it back and forth on the underside.

5 Cut the two iron base pieces, the top piece, and the two handle pieces from matt board. Glue the two bases together and the top to the base with the back edges even. Sand the curve on both sides to round it down to the base. Glue the two handle sections together and to the top.

6 Sand a point in the front of the base and handle. Paint the iron and its handle black and the underside of the base silver.

Hatbox

Scale = 1:12

Materials:

- Miniature wallpaper
- Embroidery floss
- Tiny ribbon rose
- Recipe card or similar weight card stock

This hatbox is on the small side for holding a miniature hat, but great as a room accent or to hold small items in the sewing room or bedroom. If you would like it to hold a hat, photocopy the template at 200% for a 1 3/4" inside diameter hatbox, ample for any wide-brimmed fashion, or 150% for a 1 5/16" diameter interior for a modest style.

7 Cut the template pieces for the side and base of the box and the top and side of the lid from the recipe card. Cut the side only for the box from wallpaper, adding a 3/32" extension at the top to roll to the inside. Cut the lid's top and side from wallpaper. Trim the wallpaper sides for the box and lid 1/16" longer than the template pieces with-

out glue tabs. This allows the wallpaper to just meet rather than lap, and eliminates a bulky seam.

8 Assemble over wax paper, so that any excess glue will release easily. Glue the box side overlap tab inside the box, forming a ring. Repeat for the lid's side. Use a toothpick to run a thin bead of glue along the bottom edge of the box and position the base on the glue. Set aside to dry. Repeat for the lid.

9 Score a line 3/32" below the top edge of the wallpaper for the box's side, on the inside, using the steel ruler and ball stylus. Cut tiny slits to aid folding this 3/32" area. Cover the outside with a thin coat of glue. Press the wallpaper onto the glue, so that the bottom edges are even and the sides just meet. Hold in place lightly with a rubber band. When set, roll the top edge over the box rim and glue to the inside.

10 Glue the wallpaper to the lid top and edge. If your ribbon rose has a stem, cut to 1/4" pierce the center of the lid, insert the stem, and bend it flat inside. If there is no stem, glue to the top of the lid.

11 Finish the top and bottom edge of the lid's side by gluing on embroidery floss. I used the six strands and coated a cut length in white glue before positioning it. The top piece of floss covers any visible problems in meeting the wallpaper top to the side. If the bottom edge of the hatbox is uneven, a third length of floss can be added to the base.

Knitting basket

Materials:

- Purchased basket Scale = 1:12
- Three colors of floss or yarn
- Two straight-pins with very small heads
- Acrylic paint - yellow and black
- Paint brush

12 Roll the floss into tiny balls and glue them into the basket.

13 My mother had knitting needles like this when I was a little girl. Paint the pin shaft yellow and let dry. Paint the heads black.

14 Insert the pins into the yarn balls.

You could add a quilt-stand with a quilt in progress or even a loom to your sewing room. I'm running out of space in mine!

dollhouse miniatures

FINE MINIATURE ART FOR THE DEVOTED COLLECTOR

Don't miss the tutorials, tips and techniques by mini makers in the latest issue of *Dollhouse Miniatures*. Mari Meredith makes a garden deck. Tanja Jensen shares how she made a tiny iPhone and Minnie Kitchen shares her secret for creating strings of garlic to hang in a mini kitchen.



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Halloween hotdog fingers

Make some spooky treats for your Halloween scene

BY GINA THEESFIELD

We are taking finger foods to a new and terrifying level! Gina Theesfield shows you how to create some gory Halloween hotdog fingers from polymer clay. Your little ghouls and goblins will love them!

1 Use light color clay and beige/tan colored clay.

2 Roll out snakes. Light clay should be 6.5mm thick. Beige/tan clay should be 2.5mm thick.

3 Cut light clay 17mm long. Cut beige/tan clay 15mm long.

Materials:

Scale = 1:12

- Polymer clay - Ecru, beige, white
- Craft blade
- Translucent liquid Sculpey
- Pastel chalk: dark yellow, Red Oxide, red
- Satin glaze
- Needle tool
- Ceramic tile
- Paintbrush



4 Round out the ends for the hot dog and bun.

5 Slice bun down the center of the length with a craft blade. Shade outside of the hotdog bun with pastels. I used a dark yellow pastel first. Then a light dusting of Red Oxide.

6 On the hotdog finger, make an indentation on the tip for the nail bed. Then add the smallest amount of white clay to form the nail. Use a needle tool to create 1st and 2nd knuckle wrinkles.

7 Add the hotdog finger to the bun.

8 Mix translucent liquid Sculpey and red pastel dust together to make ketchup/blood.

9 Add the ketchup/blood around the hotdog/finger. Bake according to polymer clay directions. Let cool. Seal ketchup portion and nail with satin glaze.

Be sure to visit Gina on Instagram @calico_garden.



Mini tutorials needed

We hope you have been enjoying all of the wonderful tutorials featured in *American Miniaturist*. There are so many impressive creative ideas and new techniques in the miniature community. We try our best to find projects we think our readers will enjoy, but we know there are more that we can find out there.

If you would like to be a part of this fun publication, please consider being one of our valued contributors.

We have great opportunities for miniaturists who submit tutorials such as credit towards subscriptions and individual issues. And, if you are in business, your tutorials might actually help promote what you are selling. We'll furnish you with these details after your submission has been approved.

Imagine how much joy your mini project could give others who share your passion for this art form!

Send your step-by-step instructions and photos to Tutorial Submission, *American Miniaturist*, PO Box 219, Kasson, MN 55944. You may also send your entries via email to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address. We can't wait to see your projects!

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