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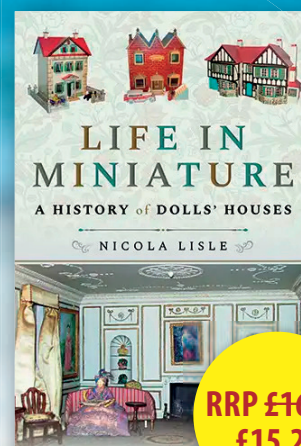
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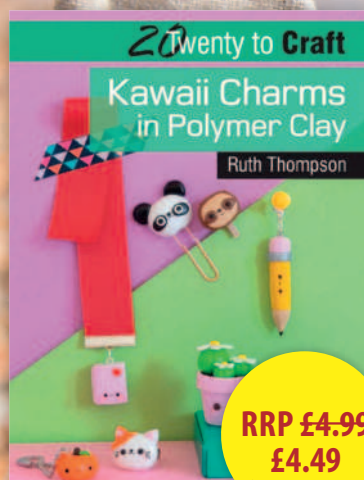
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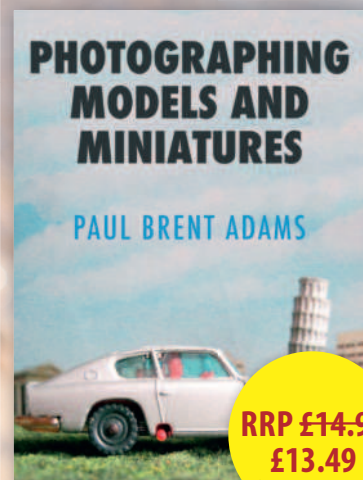
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WELCOME

to the July edition!

As you delve into this edition you'll find it's a tiny treasure trove full of incredible designs! Firstly, as our American friends celebrate 4th July this month, Independence Day, we explore some of the finest American ornithology with IGMA Fellows, Fanni Sandor and Kerri Pajutee – all in mini of course! The Bald Eagle is not to be missed. This month's reader project also has an American feel, as reader Gary Walkden from Australia created a nostalgic 1950's American diner to host his diecast car collection. It is sure to provide lots of inspiration!

Following on from last month's exclusive interview with The Great Big Tiny Design Challenge contestant Bexie, this issue we chat to the winner, Dom! Find out what winning the show was like for him and his experience over those exciting few months.

Elsewhere, there's an abundance of pint-sized projects for you to try your hand at including table place mats and fun seaside delicacies, social media inspiration in Instagram Identities and Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel returns with her top tips on mini makes; this issue with help on glues, mitre cuts, beads and bling plus a few tips for creating rounded shapes from wood.

Happy mini making!

Joanne Garwell

Editor



A massive thank you to this month's contributors...

Sadie Brown, Bea Broadwood,
Anne Evans, Moi Ali &
Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel



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Delicious delights



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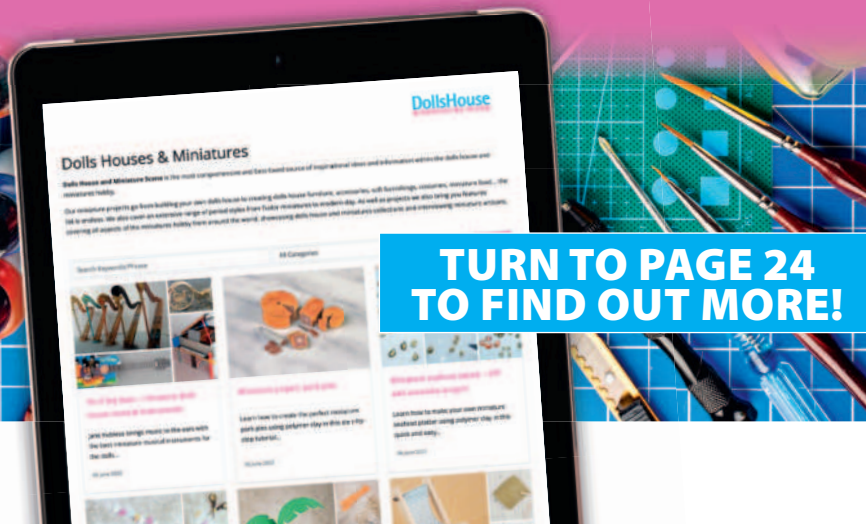
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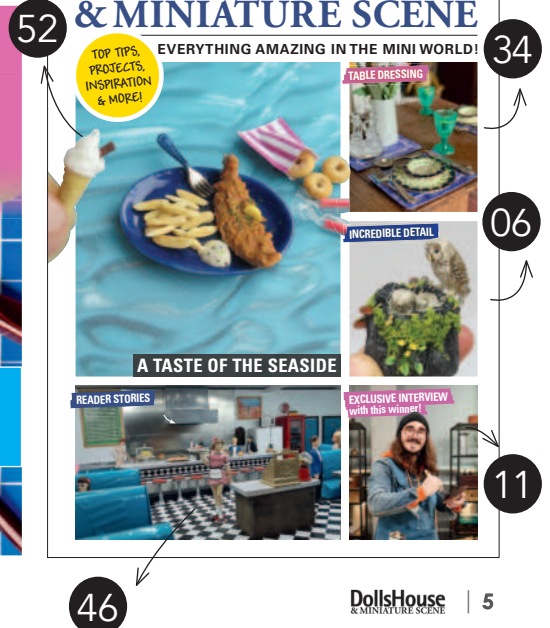
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DollsHouse & MINIATURE SCENE



Take Flight

Spread your wings this 4th July and explore some of the finest American ornithology in miniature with IGMA Fellows, Fanni Sandor and Kerri Pajutee.



▲ Feathering the miniature nest with Fanni Sandor

The Bald Eagle, with its exceptional wingspan of up to 2.3m, is brought down to size into 1/12th scale by the award-winning artisan and IGMA Fellow, Fanni Sandor. This wonderful bird has been the emblem of the United States of America since 1782 but it is also a symbol for the eye-watering skill of mother nature, herself a magnificent artist with a colour palette of bright feathers to rival any paintbox. Fanni's eagles, created using a base of polymer clay, are notable not only for their high quality and magnificent 'featherwork', but for their settings. The Bald Eagle, which can achieve speeds of thirty miles an hour in flight, mates for life and two of Fanni's birds can be found in their extremely well-built nest, complete with eggs. Meanwhile, her other Bald Eagles capture that split second moment in time as these huge creatures swoop down over the water, catching tonight's supper, a delicately crafted salmon, between perfectly fashioned talons. The eagle's eyes too are outstanding and it's hardly surprising that the Bald Eagle has featured amongst Fanni's commission work. However, it is that imaginative splashing water effect that really sees her raise the bar for miniature art, a detail which she has also recreated to stunning effect within her tiny Kingfisher sculpture.

Something fishy!



At the other end of the scale, the Ruby Throated Hummingbird is a real-life miniature. Spending those colder months in warmer climes of Mexico and Central America, this colourful tiny spark is also found in Canada and generally measures around 3.5in in height. Small as it may be, this is also a powerful bird, capable of flying

at around 25 miles an hour despite its size. Just five less than the massive Bald Eagle. Perhaps even more incredible, however, is its ability to flap its miniature wings in excess of 50 beats a second; a figure that takes a little bit of getting your head around! Again, Fanni has captured that moment in time as her miniature hummingbirds feast on the nectar of a well-chosen flower. The detail in the wings of each 1/12th scale bird is truly spectacular and something you can fully appreciate when you see the birds held between Fanni's fingers. The birds themselves are only a fraction of the size of a thumbnail, as are the tiny flowers which provide the hummingbird's focal point. ▶

◀ Fanni's eagle makes a splash!



"...the finely detailed feathers on the adult bird's back are truly amazing, leaving you in awe of Fanni's imagination and expertise"

The intricacy involved in the creation of such tiny sculptures is immense and I know from talking to Fanni on a previous occasion that a single piece of miniature art can take her anything up to a week to complete.

Just as colourful is Fanni's Blue Jay nest, where worms appear to be on the menu for dinner. As intelligent as they are colourful, the Blue Jay is a fine example of Mother Nature's paintbrush at work, and the finely detailed feathers on the adult bird's back are truly amazing, leaving you in awe of Fanni's imagination and expertise.



On sparkling form

◀ Humming to the tune of miniature art.
Fanni Sandor's Ruby Throated Hummingbird



Fanni Sandor brings the next generation of Blue Jay's to life in miniature



Kerri Pajutee's stunning Great Horned Owls

Also taking life on the wing to extraordinary new heights is one of our most famed 1/12th scale animal artisans, IGMA Fellow, Kerri Pajutee and her Great Horned Owls. One of the most widely known species of owl in the United States, this is a magnificent creature. Beautifully crafted from BeeSputty polymer clay, Kerri tells me that these stunning owls have ball jointed heads, allowing them to turn left, right, up and down, enabling them to keep two beady eyes in every direction! As can be seen from Kerri's excellent photography, the owls also have what she describes as wire-based feet, meaning that not only can they stand comfortably on a ledge or other flat surface, but they have the ability to grip that must-have perch with ease. Kerri's use of hand cut feathers and fabric inks/paints brings the two owls to life. Each is filled with character and that authenticity found throughout her extensive portfolio, which away from the world of ornithology, includes wide ranging makes such from a tiny Black Bear to a French Bulldog. 

◀ Home sweet home.
Fanni Sandor's Barred Owl nest

A biologist in a former life, Fanni has also spent time recreating US nightlife in miniature with her Barred Owl nest. A traditional tree hollow nest, it has been finely detailed with moss, flowers and even a few mushrooms growing up the side of the small section of tree. The two chicks are wide awake and hoping for dinner. Apt owing to the Barred Owl's hugely distinctive call, which mimics the sound of the words 'Who cooks for you?'. The cosy

chicks are as perfectly handcrafted as their parent, who stands proudly guarding the nest. Evoking real atmosphere, you can easily imagine the sculpture's rural setting, somewhere in the depths of the forest, the wind rustling through the trees as the cycle of nature continues in their midst.

Entirely self-taught artisans, the massive level of skill demonstrated by both Kerri and Fanni shows us just why miniatures are currently reaching a wider audience

than ever before. Television shows on both sides of the Atlantic, including 'The Great Big Tiny Design Challenge' hosted by Sandi Toksvig on More4 in the UK, have recently introduced an exciting craft to a wealth of potential miniaturists and collectors. The care and lavish attention to detail shown by today's talented artisans is certain to inspire for generations to come, meaning the world of small scale can only continue to fly! 🏠

"...the massive level of skill demonstrated by both Kerri and Fanni shows us just why miniatures are currently reaching a wider audience than ever before"



◀ Getting ready for take-off.
Kerri's Great Horned Owl



INFO

For more information please visit:

Fanni Sandor:

www.instagram.com/fanniminiature

Kerri Pajutee:

www.kerripajutee.com

And the winner is...



Discover how a Warhammer enthusiast came top of the class in a dolls house TV show!



Dom's winning room

After the first episode of More4's eight-part Great Big Tiny Design Challenge, hosted by Sandi Toksvig, I'll admit that my money was not on Dom winning. He clearly had talent in spades, but hadn't at that stage managed to get his head round 1/12th scale.

Quickly blossoming, Dom – who rightly earned the moniker 'The Dominator' – took dolls house scale in his stride. Suddenly my bet was that Dom could well win... and he did!

But how did this young man from Yorkshire, who graduated in Industrial Design, get into miniatures? He said: "Every time I'm asked this, I always find myself reminiscing and travelling down Memory Lane. When I was younger, I spent a lot of time at my grandparents' house as my mum worked full-time as a midwife. My grandma always used to buy me different magazines. You know, the ones that enticed you in with



▲ The happy winner

a ridiculously cheap introductory offer for issue one, with the next 99 volumes at like five times the price!"

"One day, when I was about eight, my grandma came back from the newsagents with issue one of 'Battle Games in Middle Earth'. It was the best thing I had ever seen! It came with several 28mm heroic scale goblins, and enough paint to give them a basic finish. I was hooked! I remember insisting to my mum that I had to stay at my grandparents' house that night so I could get them all painted and finished. It really has snowballed from there."

From a very young age, Dom has been enthralled by fantasy worlds: "For bedtime stories, I would read books by the great fantasy authors – JRR Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Ian Livingstone... I have only recently discovered, in my late twenties, that I am neurodivergent. 🧠➡️"

This has really helped me put the pieces in place to better understand why I loved minis so much. As a child, I loved delving into a fantasy realm where I could build and paint models in my own way, create stories, and play out my own scenarios as a kind of escape and a way to express myself in ways I couldn't really at school."

I asked Dom how he ended up on the telly: "I was contacted via Instagram by Yeti Television, the guys who produce the show. Somehow, I missed the message. I read it one evening, but having had little to no experience in the dolls house scene, I was a bit surprised that they wanted me to apply. Then I thought to myself, why not? I responded instantly and was told that the application process was due to end that night. As you can imagine, that night was a

Deep in concentration



Atmospheric diorama



mad rush filling in the application form and putting together a folder with examples of my work. I think I actually got it submitted with minutes left to spare on the deadline!"

On the telly

We all want to know what it was like being a contestant, so I asked Dom: "From week one I felt out of my depth. I was surrounded by all these amazing people who were absolute legends of their craft, and there was little old me who rolled dice, played games and built scenery in my spare time."

"Despite that, I can honestly say, hand on heart, that it was the most fun, stressful and panic attack inducing period of my life! The whole process was just an absolute rollercoaster of excitement and emotions, filled with loads of highs and a few lows but overall, I wouldn't change a single moment."

"The whole process was just an absolute rollercoaster of excitement and emotions, filled with loads of highs and a few lows but overall, I wouldn't change a single moment"

"There were periods of filming where I was in the hotel on an evening, drawing up templates and questioning my life choices. I've always been quite an anxious person and I like doing things to my own timescale and working in environments where I am relaxed. Pushing myself out of my comfort zone was quite alien. I'm trying to work on myself and adopt a new stress-free, easy

going way of living and I honestly think this show has really helped me implement this into my life. The crew and other contestants were an amazing and supportive bunch and, if anything, I've not only improved myself and my skillset as a miniaturist, but I've also made some great friends on the way which is really what the hobby is all about for me."

One aspect viewers enjoyed was watching contestants grow in skill and confidence, and Dom certainly embraced every challenge: "I'm very at home using wood and foam, and thankfully the storeroom was fully stocked with plenty of options. I knew from day one that if I didn't push myself out of my comfort zone, I'd be in trouble. In some episodes, I made things hard for myself by using materials or techniques that I'd never used before, but I guess you need to get out of that zone to grow as a crafter or builder."

Asked about his inspiration, Dom explained: "It comes from anywhere! My brain goes into overdrive all the time. I feel like a cup constantly overflowing. It's both amazing and annoying at the same time because it's finding the time to make these inspirations into something physical."

"I'll be working, or on a walk with my girlfriend, and I'll just stop and take a picture of a tree or a rock if it looks cool. With these images in my head, I start imagining a completed scene. It really is an awesome feeling getting lost in a scenario that's being played out in my head. My love of fantasy and history is a massive inspiration too. 

One of Dom's dioramas



▲ Dom chilling on the small screen



▲ Dom's work

A fantasy creation by Dom



Working as a team

The finalists

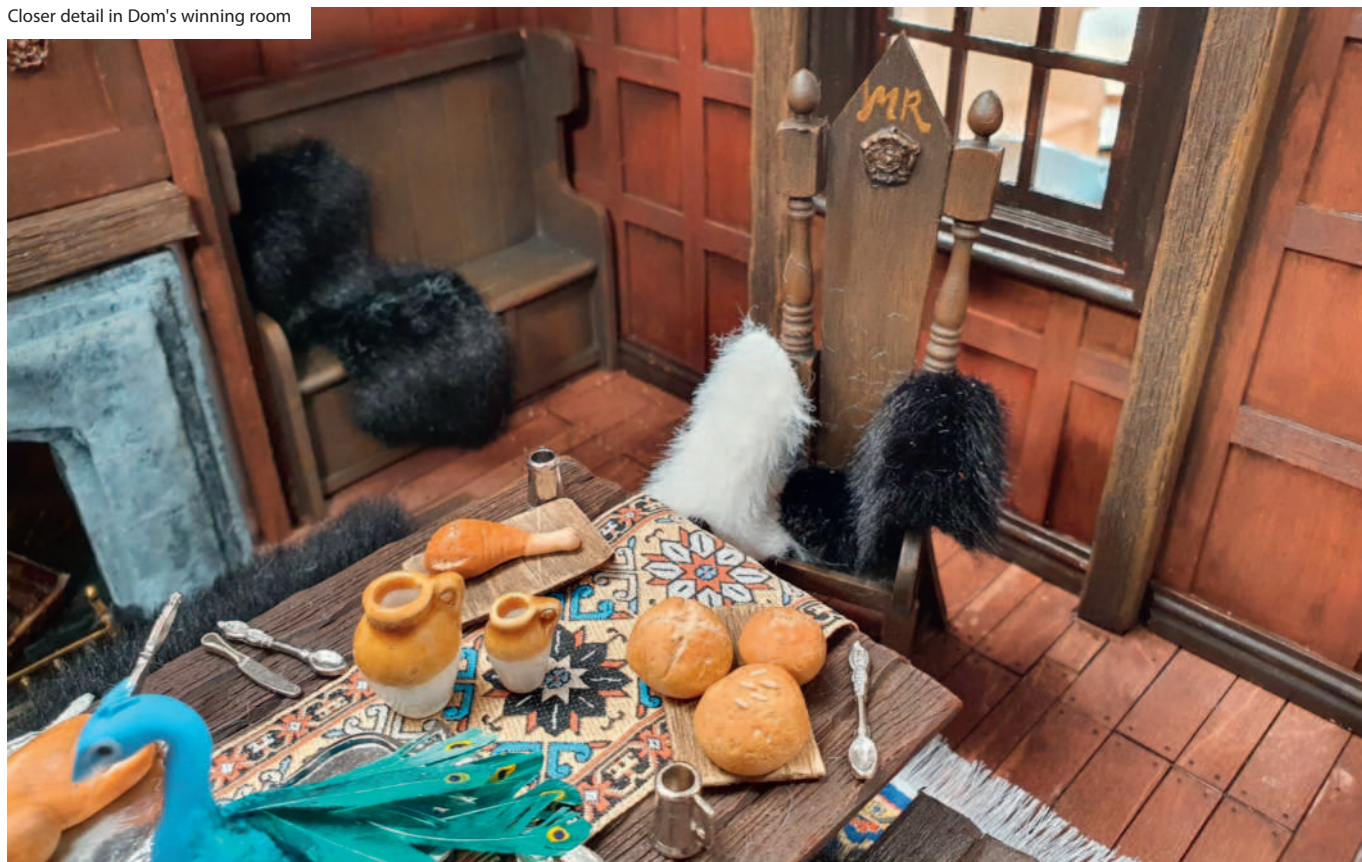


Choosing a winner was hard for the judges



A winning miniature feast

Closer detail in Dom's winning room



Probably 99% of my builds are based on a fantasy scenario or historical event."

"I'd also say my loved ones are a massive form of inspiration for me, especially my girlfriend and my close family. They are all so supportive of my hobby and most of the time seeing their reaction to some of my builds is enough for me. Nothing like that warm belly feeling when someone smiles at your work, proper cherry on the top moment is that!"

Like many of us, Dom honed his craft by trial and error, without any formal teaching or training: "I've thrown more stuff in the bin than I've built! I can just imagine some bloke at the local tip has a load of my ruined builds on his shelf in the office! I watch loads of videos on YouTube and I get a lot of tips and tricks from these which I try to implement in my builds. The internet really is a wonderful place for things like that."

"I'm really lucky that both my Grandad (rest is soul) and uncle were and are really handy when it comes to woodwork of any kind. I guess it runs in the family, although I decided to drop it down a few pegs on the scale side of things!"

Dom works as a mechanical contract engineer, designing and managing the installation of large industrial heating/cooling pipework systems in a range of fields from food to pharmaceuticals and

manufacturing. In his spare time, he is a tabletop gamer, so his miniature collection revolves around Dungeons and Dragons, Warhammer and suchlike.

He explained: "I have a number of unfinished models and armies. My pile of unbuilt/unfinished shame is something to behold!" During lockdown, I managed to complete a few dioramas I'd really been wanting to get finished. I entered some in diorama competitions on Instagram. A good friend of mine, Jo (@encounterterrain) runs monthly building competitions for scenery, dioramas and playable gaming terrain using independent judges, and I'm happy to say I've won a few of them as well."

I was there, along with the rest of the UK's miniaturists, on the sofa with a mug of tea and a couple of chocolate biscuits, watching the final of The Great Big Tiny Design Challenge back in May. It was nerve-racking enough being a viewer, but how did Dom feel in that final episode?

He told me: "It still blows me away when I think about how far I got and how much I have achieved. I'm a very humble person and it's not often I show pride in myself publicly, so to be told that I had won and given that moment was very raw and emotional for me. It's definitely something I'll carry with me for the rest of my life."

"Honestly, I have the most amazing set

of supporters anyone could wish for and they're all ecstatic for me. Not just because I won, but because I pushed myself and grabbed with both hands something that not many others get a chance to do! I'll have to mention them because there's going to be hell to pay if I don't! My girlfriend, my close family, best friends, work colleagues and my gym family at Viking Strength who've all been watching week on week cheering me on. The list is endless, they're all the best supporters and I'm truly blessed to have them all in my life."

Aww, what a nice man. Well, Dom, I am sure they are just as blessed to have you in their lives, and we have been blessed to have you on our screens. You won and it was richly deserved. 🏆



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Moroccan roombox

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The Quartermaster:

MAKING MINIATURES IN MINUS 20 DEGREES!

When the temperature outside is -20 degrees, keeping busy making miniatures is one way of keeping warm. Angela Kinnunen of Raptor says a lovely, heated workshop is actually the best option!

Photos by Rob Tysall



Tudor roombox



Art deco roombox

Although Angela Kinnunen lives in Finland, close to the Arctic Circle, she is originally from South Wales and is very patriotic about her roots. So much so, that when expecting her two children, she went back to Wales to give birth to them to ensure they were born Welsh.

Angela has lived in many different places around the globe. She moved to Mexico City in 2005 with her job as HRD site manager for Latin America and it was there that she met her husband. She was already a keen collector of dolls house miniatures in her spare time, following in her aunt's footsteps, who had been into dolls houses since the

mid-70s. Back in the 1990s Angela only collected, but never made miniatures.

Her aunt built a Tudor house which Angela finished, working from plans in a magazine. Later she met and commissioned well known miniaturist Brian Masters to make her some Tudor pieces. However, she couldn't find everything she was looking for, and thought to herself, "You know what, I can do that."

Angela put a photo online of what she'd made and was contacted almost at once from someone wanting to know if she could make them one. That was the very start of her moving from being a collector to a maker. Meanwhile, work commitments were

taking her and her family to various parts of the world. Over the years she has lived in Dubai, Egypt, Mexico and now Finland, although she regularly returns to England for dolls house shows such as Kensington and Miniatura.

She decided to turn her hobby into a full-time career about three years ago. The name of the business is Raptoor, which was a bit of a mistake. "I'd intended it to be Raptor, the shortened version of the dinosaur Velociraptor that people will remember from Jurassic Park, and was my little boy's dream. Only my husband couldn't spell it, and then it was too late to change it!" 🐲➡️

▼ Nurse Ratchet roombox, based on One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest



▼ Pompei cells and instruments of torture





Witches ducking stool

She continues: "Jumping from a collector/builder to kit designer was a steep learning curve as I had to learn how to turn my thoughts into reality. Also, on a practical level I had to learn how to design and use graphic design and use a laser cutter. My first ever kits were a small set of Tudor items; a 4-poster bed, side tables, wardrobe and linen chest. They sold almost immediately when I put them on Etsy and this encouraged me to continue.

"I converted my garage to a workshop as in -20 degrees, it is not possible to work outside or in a non-heated room. My workshop now has two laser cutters working side by side as I design, cut, market, package and post all the orders. If I have many orders, I have packers to help. People tend to ask if I can make something, and I say if you can give me a picture, I can make it. If it is not something used today, I will build numerous prototypes until it starts to feel right. Also making things 3D – I do my best, so that it's realistic. I mostly work with MDF wood and mountboard. Some kits include metal, paper, card, chain – it depends on the kit. Depending on the intricacy, my designs have taken from an hour to four hours to make. I design in three scales; 1/48th, 1/24th and 1/12th."

Her inspiration comes from what she sees around her. In particular, nature, books, films, Halloween, the sea, the countryside, the places she has lived and visited and especially history. In addition, she is meticulous about researching the item. If it exists in the real world, she does her best to see it in real life.



The gallows

"I recently finished a round table and chairs inspired by the legend of King Arthur," said Angela. "I have visited Tintagel many times, to feel the vibes of the place. If I can go to a medieval castle or church or a place where I know there is a life-sized item, I will go and see how it looks. I spend a lot of time on the internet finding out about the history of things too."

Angela would be the first to say that she doesn't make run of the mill miniatures and has discovered that people do like the darker, more morbid type of miniatures for their dungeons, cellars and asylums. A lot of her work is instruments of punishment, which she researches, as she has a great love of history and interest in how mankind treats one other over the years and how

we have changed, if we have changed! "Of course, some of these items no longer exist, so a lot of research has to go into making them as real as possible. Then I have to use my imagination," Angela added.

"For example, I have made a model of Pompeii cells. I'd got dungeons and other people have dungeons – so why not cells? Again, I had to use some artistic licence in making these, as they are no longer there." She also made a little seating area, as people would have sat and watched other people being punished in ancient Roman times.

Inside the cells of Pompeii were three rather unpleasant instruments of punishment: A bed of nails, a Catherine Wheel – not the firework type, and the rack. Her favourite macabre piece is



“Everything has to be historically accurate”



▲ An electric chair

◀ Marie Antoinette's guillotine

Marie Antoinette's guillotine. For the last 18 months she has been working on an Iron Maiden. When completed this will be a 1/48th kit.

As well as kits, Angela also creates roomboxes. Every roombox she makes is based on something she has seen or researched. Amongst the many she has created are Nurse Ratched's treatment room from the classic novel and film, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, also a roombox from Tudor times, an Agatha Christie Poirot inspired roombox, a Moroccan box which was inspired by the architecture she remembered when she lived in Dubai, an Egyptian roombox and a Beatrix Potter room.

"I now look at the world as a designer and can see the intricacies in a flawless design of say a table. I look at life-size items and calculate in my head if it's possible to make it in miniature. Then I'll prototype the kit several times to ensure it fits together well and it looks good." 🏠



INFO

Discover more of Angela's miniatures at:
Website: www.raptoorcrafting.com



The ironmongers



Six of the Best:

Ironmongers

Continuing our tour of Moi Ali's personal collection...

I have a thing about miniature shops with living accommodation above. Perhaps it harks back to my childhood, growing up in a flat above my mum's clothes and haberdashery shop. A couple of months ago I showed readers my corner shop and this time I'd like to invite you inside my hardware and ironmongery store.

The building is a cheap MDF one I picked up years ago at a dolls house fair in Scotland. Although anything but artisan, I could see its potential so I carted it off in my car and got straight to work. First, I spruced up the externals by painting the walls and shopfront woodwork; adding gold lettering to the fascia, a metal Juliet balcony to the upstairs window and wooden bargeboards to the roofline; slating the roof and adding a brick slip chimney with weather vane. The latter came from Dutch miniaturist Arjen Spinhoven. Metal advertising signs (fridge magnets) completed the scene.

I then set about decorating the upstairs flat, using an old book of Art Nouveau wallpaper patterns. The staircases that came with the house were not right at all. They had no sides or handrails and ate too much into the space in the rooms. Furthermore, the little square opening for the staircase looked implausibly small and plain wrong. What to do? I decided to keep the ground floor staircase, but add a side wall to it, as it would be a private staircase up to the flat above. I omitted the first-floor staircase altogether. The hole in the floor/ceiling was hidden by a couple of cubicle-type constructions that I cobbled together. These not only concealed the hole and the fact that there was no stair; they also created an interesting feature in the upstairs rooms.

The first-floor room doubles up as a living room and dining kitchen, as was the case in so many houses of that era (the 1960s – when I was living above the shop). I bought the fab 1950s vinyl sofa from a maker on eBay, and made the coffee table by shortening the legs on a cheap dining table. The green armchair started life as a yellow floral one, but I painted it with acrylic paint. The big rug is a computer mouse mat with a velvety finish. The sideboard at the front is a vintage Barton one and is actually 1/16th scale (so I added an MDF plinth to raise its height). The television on it is a plastic vintage Triang TV, also in 1/16th scale. The 'utility' sideboard at the back was made from a Jane Harrop kit.

I scratch-built the sink unit and made the striped curtain from a shirt tail I chopped off an over-long shirt. The kitchen unit was a kit by Elf. The cooker was a second-hand



Hardware storage unit



Homemade paint and polish



Moi made the paint pots



Handmade table



After concealing the staircase



Living room/kitchen



Pretty decor



Slippers by the armchair

purchase that was part of a job lot. The other items in that lot are in my Mountfield House (which I will write about in the future, when it is finished – most likely some years away at current rate of progress!) The flying ducks are Phoenix metal ones that I painted. The Ascot water heater is also a Phoenix kit.

Upstairs is the bedroom, which contains scratch-built twin beds with a mass-produced bedside table in between, and faux patchwork quilts (the 'patchwork' design is printed on). The wirework cot looks too new and needs to be distressed – although I am contemplating removing it altogether, as it was never intended to go in that house. The cot contains a Rupert Bear annual I made and an adorable miniature Rupert toy bought on Etsy.



Ready for bed



Child's toy



Another view



Moi made the quilts



Needlepoint rug from eBay



Rupert Bear



Rupert reading

The bedroom is really big so I needed something to fill the space. I added a Jane Harrop table on which I have created a sewing scene with a sewing machine, vintage patterns and sewing paraphernalia. The chair is a plastic Chrysnbon kit.

In the shop – which is far from finished – I made most of the stock. Paint tins were created by painting a dowel and adding labels I'd printed off the internet. Tins of floor polish and other items were made in the same way. A plain wooden bookcase was painted black and advertising signs added, then I stacked up tins of paint on the shelves. The wallpaper sample book was

made by gluing leftover wallpaper scraps into a book made using coloured card from an old ring-binder divider and adding a handle made from thread. The mangle was made from a Phoenix kit but it's the wrong era and I shall have to find it a home elsewhere in due course.

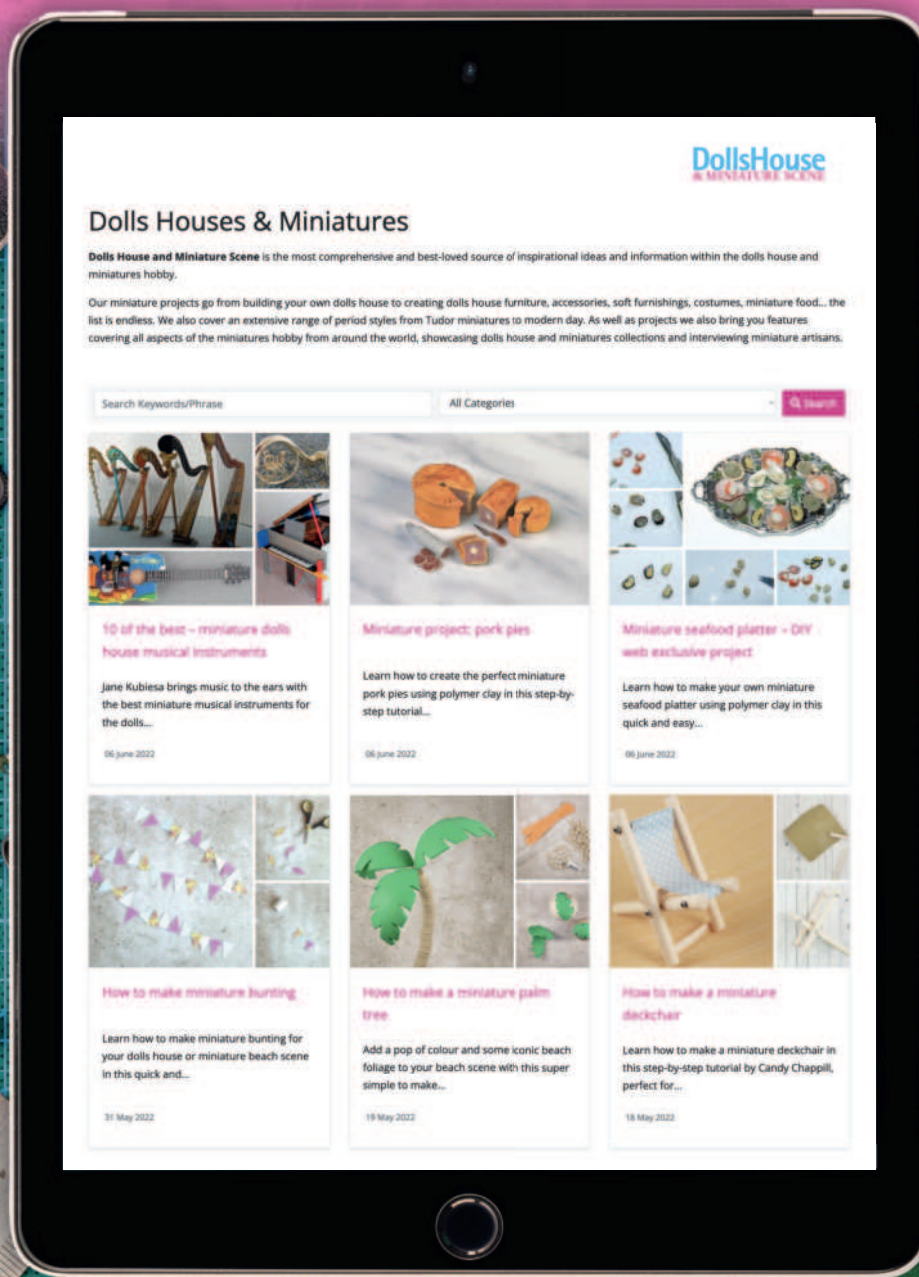
The shop till is actually a pencil sharpener I picked up at a car boot sale. I printed out some 'old' pre-decimal money to go inside and added advertising signs to it, as well as some vintage price 'flags' – again in 'old' money. It sits on a counter I bought at a fair, and behind the counter is a unit (it used to be a wooden advent calendar, which I cut in

half and stained) to which I added handles and labels indicating the stock inside. I have a good deal more stock to make to fill the shop, as these old hardware shops had items stacked up everywhere and then I'll need to make things to go in the window. It is very much work in progress.

I am hoping to have a display outside of galvanised buckets and watering cans, tin baths, brushes and brooms, rakes and garden hoses. However, I need to get the inside finished first. Like so many of my miniatures, it may have to wait until that golden day in the future when I retire and finally have time to tackle my petite properties! Can't wait! 🏠

CONTINUE TO GET YOUR MINIATURE FIX OVER ON THE WEBSITE, INCLUDING:

- Advice • Inspiration • Tutorials • Interviews
- Tips & tricks • Techniques



Please visit:
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Instagram Identities:

SAM BLACKWELL (@MOUNTFIELD_DOLLS_HOUSE)



Sam's French fancies

Ooh la la, says Moi Ali, about the work of Francophile Sam Blackwell...



Sam Blackwell from Huyton, Merseyside is a charity shop manager by day and a miniaturist by night! We share something in common: a Mountfield House by Dolls House Emporium. When I found his Instagram account (@mountfield_dolls_house) I just had to find out more.

Sam's house is very different to my own, and his creativity in stamping his own unique style on all his projects certainly comes through with his Mountfield. But first, how did Sam get into miniatures: "It all started with a newspaper advert for Dolls House Emporium that my father showed me when I was around seven years old. I remember my parents ordering me the catalogue. I'd spend hours and hours dreaming of one day owning my very own dolls house. Fast forward maybe 12 years, I purchased my first dolls house, the Mountfield, and the rest is history."

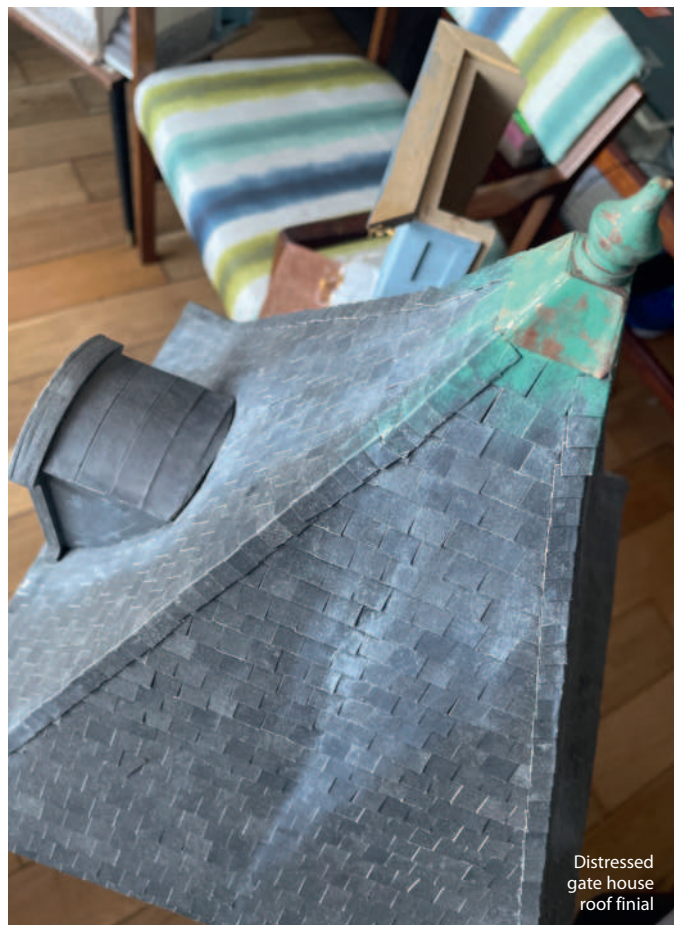
Like many miniaturists, Sam has always loved historical buildings: "My love for the distinctive building styles in different countries has grown more as I've got older. At the moment I have a great love of France and its architectural history and styles. I watch TV shows and documentaries and visualise how I could re-create the sets and buildings in miniature."



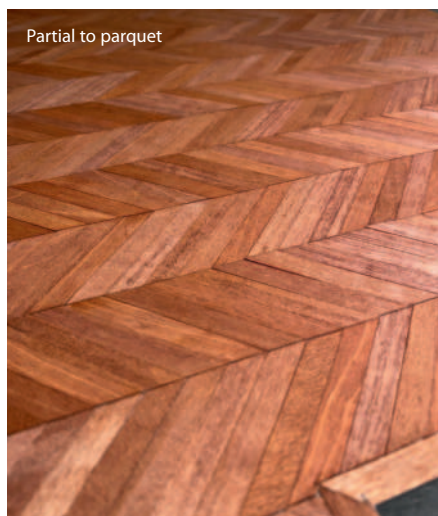
Diamond painting jewel step



Gate house roof



Distressed gate house roof finial



Partial to parquet

► French fireplace taking shape nicely

"At the moment I have a great love of France and its architectural history and styles. I watch TV shows and documentaries and visualise how I could re-create the sets and buildings in miniature"

With several on-going projects occupying his free time, Sam is currently working on quite a diverse range of builds. These include his little French shop of curiosities, which is filled with tiny things he picks up along the way. As a store manager for Barnardo's, he often comes across interesting and quirky bits and bobs that he purchases for his little curiosities collection. "My most unusual item of all comes from my garden," Sam told me. "It's a little toy horse I found whilst gardening. It didn't start its life out as a miniature, but I have adapted it to give it a new life."

Another of Sam's projects, again with a French flavour, is the chateau gate house, although this one is finished: "I actually completed this build over three days," explained Sam. "I wanted to challenge myself to see how quickly I could complete a project, because I'm such an indecisive person." Funnily enough, I also have the Gatehouse kit (another one by Dolls House Emporium) but mine has sat under the bed in the spare room for ten years... I need a Sam onsite!

Talking of chateaux, Sam's abandoned chateau roombox was built by one of the charity shop volunteers as an empty shell, ►

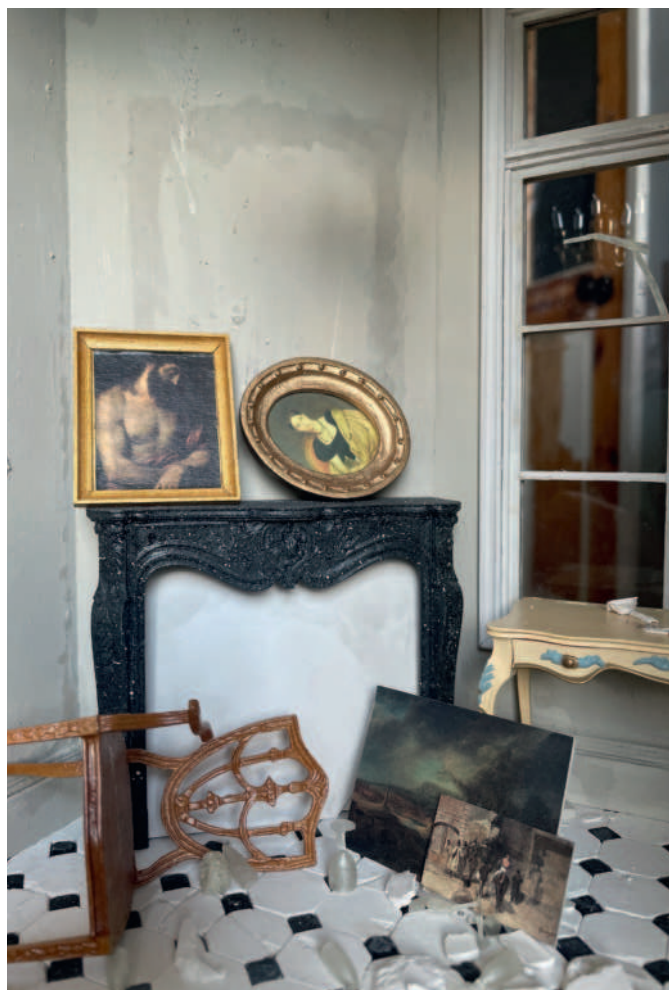


Fireplace in situ



▲ Sam with the abandoned chateau roombox

▼► Stolen artworks at the abandoned chateau



Old Curiosity shop.



▲ Terrific trellis



▲ Inside the gate house

and he explains the inspiration behind its unusual theme: "It sat there empty for a good few months waiting for me to start the project. It was the summer lockdown of 2021 and I'd just watched a Netflix show about the famous Isabelle Stewart Gardener Museum robbery. During the show there was mention of several theoretical locations for the stolen art, one being a chateau in France. Thus, the idea was born for the story behind the roombox... hidden away in central France in an abandoned chateau was the stolen art from the museum!"

Then there's the chateau itself, a one-of-a-kind creation designed and built by Sam, as he explains: "I spent months planning this build, from initial sketches to researching different companies capable of cutting my required design. I ended up using an independent CNC company near Preston. The windows are also one-of-a-kind. I designed them myself and I laser cut them at a makers' collective called DOES. If you're local to Liverpool, I totally recommend you look them up!" Oh, Sam, I sincerely wish I was, as access to a laser cutter and help with working it, would be a dream come true.

Sam's creativity and imagination is shown time and time again in his miniatures, so I was keen to understand how someone who works in retail has such a creative streak, without any formal arts training or

background. He told me: "I come from a long line of creative people who have always inspired and pushed me to be the best I can be. Some of the interesting donations to the charity shop also inspire my miniatures. I have received numerous books on historical houses and architecture and this is reflected in both my miniature style and personal style. For a short time, I also did an apprenticeship in cabinet making, but 90% of my skills are self-taught."

Time (or a lack of it) is definitely the biggest challenge Sam faces, and those of us working full-time can understand that. "Money is another challenge," added Sam, "as I have big ideas but not enough to fund my miniature dreams. I'm sure this is a feeling shared by many in the community." 'Fraid so, Sam!

I was amused to see that Sam had purchased diamond painting gems, as I did exactly the same recently. I spotted mine in a charity shop and felt sure they would come in handy for a miniature project (though I have yet to find a use). Sam is one step ahead of me: he used his to make a tiled entrance hall to his French shop. He also used compostable plant pots to create a faux brick effect.

I am beginning to think that Sam is my Soul Brother, as like me, he also purchased microscope slides. I was sure I'd find a use for

mine somewhere – glass shelves, miniature picture framing... they were bound to come in handy. They never did! It won't surprise you to hear that Sam, on the other hand, has made use of his: "I wanted to use real glass in my build," he explained, "because I think it gives a better depth to miniatures. I looked online but couldn't really find what I was after. I did, however, find a medical supply company in London and placed an order for 14 individual slides. A couple of days later, 14 boxes of 100 microscope slides turned up. That's 1,400 slides! I have used these slides in a number of miniature builds and I've still got several hundred left!!"

I asked Sam what his friends and family think of his hobby: "They all love to hear what I've been up to, and my partner Michael is also very supportive. Those closest to me have been there throughout the years, taking me all over the county to pick up different houses and miniatures. I've made some amazing friends through the Instagram community too. I don't think I've ever been part of such a loving and nurturing community of like-minded people as those involved in miniatures." Yes, Sam, it's wonderful how miniaturists love to share their tips and techniques. Oh, and expect a call from me on what I can do with 1,000 microscope slides and ten packets of diamond painting gems! 

At Home with THE BROADWOODS



THE CASTLE ON THE HILL

Continuing on from the May issue, this month professional miniaturist Bea Broadwood goes underground and up the hill as she shares the techniques and materials that she used to bring PP's brand-new quarter scale 'Dungeon Display Base' to life!



"Turrin Castle is an epic design, inspired by my most favourite full-scale place; Corfe Castle... so I knew from the very start of the design process, that its display base would have to be pretty epic too!"

Back in the May issue, I shared an exclusive first look at our exciting new quarter scale kit; Turrin Castle, and from the response it has received ever since, this epic kit appears to have really captured our customers' imagination. Initially, I thought the castle's design would naturally lend itself to historical or Harry Potter inspired miniature dioramas, but since the castle's launch back in March, we have heard of plans to turn it into a hotel, stately home and even the home of King Arthur!



In April, we were delighted to follow up the launch of Turrin Castle with the release of a specially designed display base. However, this unique base was unlike any we have designed and produced before, and during the development process it turned out to be the most complex 1/48th base structure we have released to date!

◀ Bea's sketch of Corfe Castle, the full-scale inspiration behind her latest 1/48th kits

Going underground...

Drawing on multiple visits to the iconic Tower of London, I wanted the layout of the subterranean rooms in the base to mirror the layout of the rooms in the castle above. Viewed from the rear, the left-hand room features a rising faux staircase in the turret room beyond, which 'appears' to lead up and into the castle above. The left room also houses an optional 'prison cell'. However, one customer has already told me that they are going to instead transform it into a wine cellar; complete with barrels and bottles galore!



▲ One of the subterranean dungeon rooms features a prison cell... or could it be a wine cellar?

The middle room has a feature arched divide and the room on the right can be utilised to conceal a battery for lighting if required, with access for wiring up into the staircase turret above (the wall with the wall supports and door is fully removable). Alternatively, it can also simply be an additional basement room to suit your theme.



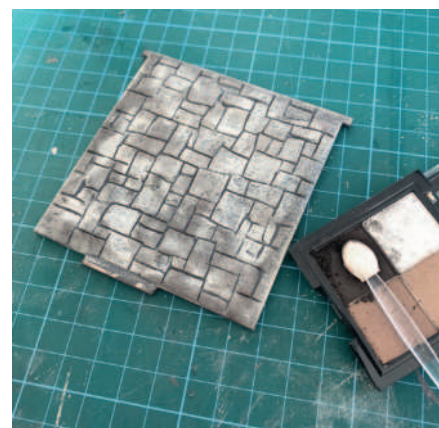
▲ PP's Dungeon Display Base features three subterranean rooms, plus two turret basement rooms too

"Drawing on multiple visits to the iconic Tower of London, I wanted the layout of the subterranean rooms in the base to mirror the layout of the rooms in the castle above"

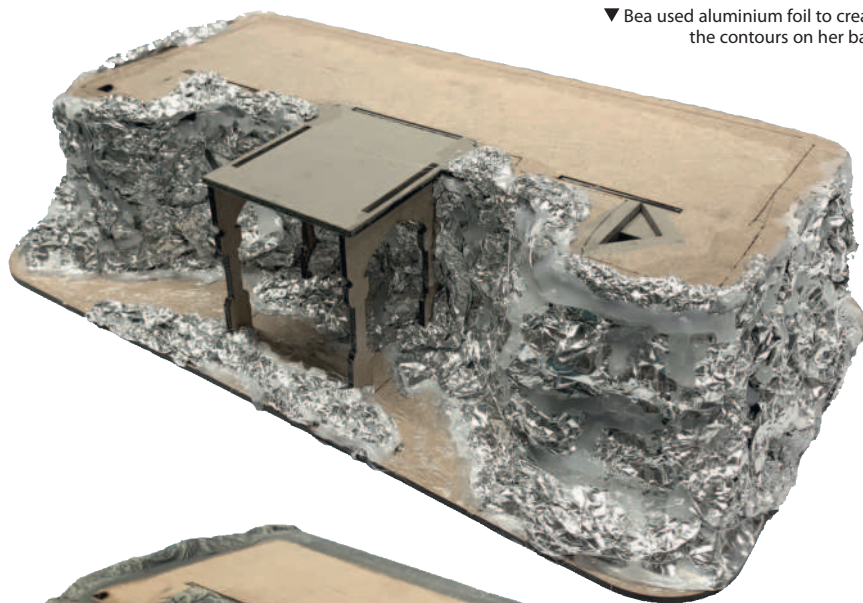
As the dungeon rooms are underground, I wanted them to have a damp, dank and oppressive feel. I weathered and aged the walls using dark brown, matt eye shadow, then added patches of vivid green eye shadow to portray dampness and mould. A rough flagstone effect was applied to floors in each of the three subterranean rooms using inexpensive Interior Decorator's

Filler mixed to a stiff paste, then spread evenly onto the floor. Once dry, I etched the flagstones into the surface of the filler using a simple scribe tool. The floors were then sponge painted and distressed with dark grey and green eye shadow. ▶

▼ Bea's realistic flagstone floor is not only simple to create, but also super cheap too!



▼ Bea used aluminium foil to create the contours on her base



► A little bit of 'dry brushing' brings the base rock to life



Up on the hill...

Regular readers will know that creating miniature landscaping is one of my favourite parts of my job. I would even go so far as to say, it is totally addictive too! Inspired by the lofty mound that Corfe Castle sits atop, I wanted to try and replicate this steeply tiered, rough grassland in miniature. First of all, I used inexpensive aluminium foil to create the contours of the base. The crumpled-up foil was securely stuck into place using a hot glue gun. Once I was happy with the overall shape of the base, I completely covered the foil with strips of tissue paper, stuck into position with generous amounts of PVA adhesive. Once the tissue paper had completely dried and the PVA adhesive had hardened, I painted the entire base with two coats of dark grey paint. When the paint had dried, I used a dry bristle brush to lightly apply some stone colour paint to the surface.

Using my original photograph of Corfe Castle as a guide, I collected together a variety of PP landscaping scatters and materials, then using a combination of PVA adhesive and a hot glue gun, I stuck the assorted landscaping materials onto the base, allowing some of the underlying base rock to show through here and there.

And finally...

As always, landscaping my Dungeon Base was so much fun, despite the mess I created all over my work bench and beyond! But despite being not much taller than a bunch of daffodils, Turrim Castle turned out to be a huge project that almost never made it off of my workbench. However, I am so glad I persevered and I really hope that you might be inspired to have a go yourself and create your very own castle on the hill... all in miniature of course!

Bea Broadwood 🏠

◀ It might look like a mighty castle on a hill, but it's actually not much taller than the daffodils!

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Setting the table

Make these super easy table mats to complete your table settings.

YOU WILL NEED

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- ☐ Materials required
- ☐ Table mat images
- ☐ Thin card
- ☐ Rubber stamping inepad
- ☐ Glue
- ☐ Clear sticky back plastic (optional)



Moi says...

"I have collected full-size Spode Italian china for many years and my kitchen is full of this timeless blue and white design, complete with matching tea towels, tea cosy and other kitchen items bearing this classic image. I decided my miniature kitchen would benefit from a splash of Spode splendour too, so I shrunk my table mats! These little mats are super easy, super quick and super cute, so get making! Round or rectangular, they take no time at all to complete. Miniaturise your full-size table mats, or do something completely different to match your mini décor."



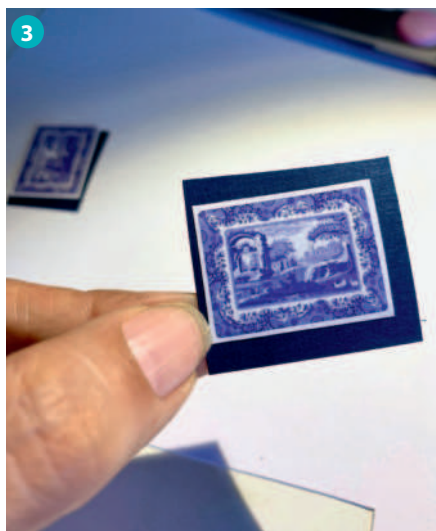
1 Scan one of your own table mats, re-size to the scale you want on your computer and print out as many as you need. Alternatively, find an image you like online from a store selling table mats.



2 Cut out the images but leave a little extra paper around each table mat.

Moi's Top Tip!

"If you want a glossy, wipe-clean table mat, add a layer of transparent sticky-back plastic."



3 Glue the table mats to matching card.



4 Trim to size. This ensures a neater finish than cutting at step 2.



5 Using an inkpad in a matching colour, ink the edges to camouflage the white edge of the cut paper. 🏠

Moi says...

"When printing, set the printer to the best print setting for the clearest image.

Although I have a colour printer, I tend to use my local print store for my miniatures, as it's only 40p per A4 sheet, I can cram loads of images onto a page so it's great value and the quality is excellent."

ABOUT SPODE

Master potter Josiah Spode developed a ground-breaking 'underglaze blue transfer' printing process in around 1783. It was not introduced into production until 1816, by his son Josiah Spode II. The distinctive Blue Italian design was immediately fashionable and my Kitchen is testament to how this timeless design is every bit as popular in the 21st century as it was in the 19th!



The Jubilee caravan

PART 2

The Jubilee caravan is furnished using removable modules, so changes can easily be made. Not making the caravan from the June issue? These modules are great additions for a loft or studio apartment too. The tiny kitchenette module boasts a 'stainless steel' sink and fridge, induction cooktop, convection microwave oven, as well as storage for everything from cleaning products to cookware, paper towels to bowls, and even cooking utensils.



YOU WILL NEED

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- 1/16in (1.6mm) thick sheetwood
- 1/16in (2mm) by 1/4in (6mm) stripwood
- Round wooden cocktail stick
- HD stripwood
- Wooden knobs
- Matt board
- Foamcore
- Black 1/8in (3mm) beads
- Black, white and silver shiny card
- Silver metallic heavy scrapbook paper
- Silver eyelet
- Miniature faucet set
- 'Rippled water' sheet (miniatures.com)
- Clear plastic packaging sheet
- Clear plastic packaging bubble*, approximately 1-3/16in by 1-3/8in by 1/2in (30mm x 35mm x 13mm)
- Black, silver and white acrylic paint
- White polymer clay
- Wood stain
- Satin varnish
- White glue
- Superglue
- Glue stick
- Transparent and double-sided tape
- Museum wax (Source: miniatures.com)

**Common packaging at a discount, hardware, or sewing notions shop.*

TOOLS REQUIRED

- Knife and steel ruler
- Small saw and mitre box
- Coarse sandpaper
- Ball stylus
- Small hand drills
- Needle tool
- Needle file



Photos by Stephen Lesbirel

Ruth says...

"The kitchenette is made up of a series of similar boxes in just two sizes, which all assemble in the same way: the back is glued against the base, the sides to the back and base, and the top to the sides and back. For simplicity, the doors are all silver metallic scrapbook paper hinged to the outside of a side. The additions that make each 'box' unique are noted below."

SINK CABINET PREPARATION



1 Sand and reverse paint the plastic packaging bubble silver. Re-paint when it dries. Pierce a hole in the centre of the bottom and insert the eyelet. Tape metallic paper flanges around the top. Cut the sink cabinet base, back, two sides, two base spacers, floor, top, half shelf and its supports, two doors, and the false drawer front from sheetwood. Stain these pieces. Cut the extended kickplate and paint it and three wooden knobs black. Drill the doors and drawer front for knobs.

CABINET ASSEMBLY



2 Glue the spacers atop the edges of the base. Assemble the cabinet as described in the note above. Glue the floor onto the base spacers, the door strike to the inside centre of the false drawer front, and that drawer front against the sides. Fit the sink into the top and glue its flanges onto it. Glue paper hinges to the

inside of the doors and outside of the sides. Glue the supports under the half shelf edges and this shelf to the left-hand floor. Glue-stick white shiny card to the matt board sink lid for a handy work surface.

MAKE THE FRIDGE



3 Cut the fridge parts from matt board. Glue the shelf spacers to the sides and assemble as for the cabinet. Cut 'rippled water' plastic shelves. Glue white painted HO strips to the upper front edge of each shelf and slide them into the slots in the sides. Glue shiny silver card to the face of the handle. Glue the handle to the left side of the door and the paper hinge along the right inside edge. Glue-stick metallic paper to the door front against and under the handle, wrapping onto the opposite edge. Glue the hinge onto the outside of the fridge side.

PREPARE THE COUNTER



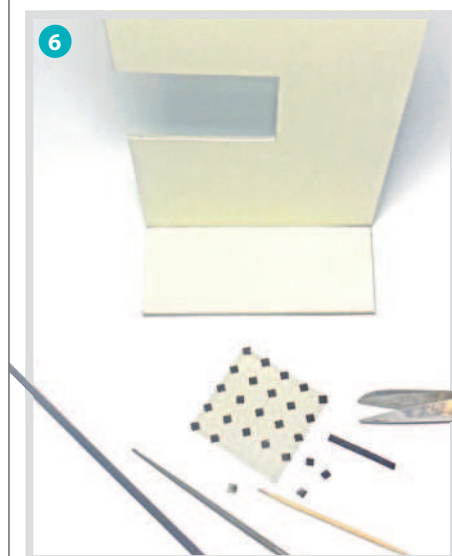
4 Cut the matt board counter with its sink opening. Cut the matt board cooktop. Use double-sided tape to secure shiny white card to the counter, wrapping the front edge, and 1/4in (6mm) onto the underside. Glue-stick shiny black card to the cooktop and paint its edges black. Make an X-cut in the shiny card, corner to diagonal corner, in the sink cut-out. Fold, glue and tape these tabs to the underside.

COOKTOP AND COUNTER FITTINGS



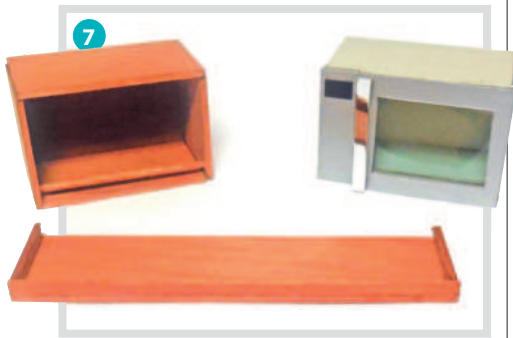
5 Fill the holes in four black beads with white clay. Glue the beads to the cooktop as controls. Double-sided tape the cooktop beside the sink opening. Superglue the faucet set to the counter. Glue scrap matt board spacers to the top and left side of the fridge. This will level the counter, adjusting for the under counter tabs and sink flanges, and also allow the adjacent cabinet door to open further.

TILE PANEL AND MODULE WALL



6 Cut and pencil-score the shiny white card tile pattern. Cut a 1/8in (3mm) wide strip of black shiny card and cut it into 1/8in (3mm) lengths. Glue the black squares at the abraded intersection points of the tile. Add black painted HO stripwood framing atop the edges. Cut the kitchenette module backing and two bases from matt board. Glue the module bases together, weight them, then glue them against the bottom of the back. Spot-glue the tile panel to the back beside the window opening.

OVEN, UPPER CABINET, AND SHELF



7 Cut the oven pieces from matt board and the cabinet and shelf pieces from sheetwood. Stain the sheetwood and a cocktail stick fence. Drill the cabinet sides and imbed the fence. For each unit, assemble as for the other boxes. Glue the rim pieces atop the shelf. Varnish the visible faces of the cabinets and shelf. Glue the matt board oven doors together with a clear plastic window between them. Cover the door and control panel with silver metallic paper. Add a black shiny card display window to the control panel and glue it to the front. Face the matt board handle with shiny silver card and glue it to the door. Glue a scored metallic paper hinge to the inside of the door, opposite the handle, and to the outside of the oven.

Ruth's Top Tip!

"To ensure doors stay closed and yet can be opened, place a speck of museum wax on the door corners, where they close against the cabinet, fridge, and oven."

KITCHENETTE ASSEMBLED



8 Trial-fit the module inside the caravan. The cut-out should surround the small window, with the module base sitting against the wheel well cover. Adjust if needed. Double-sided tape the fridge against the sink cabinet and the counter to the top. Glue the knobs into the prepared holes. Glue this assembly to the module's base and back. Glue the kickplate across the bottom of the cabinet and fridge, against the module base. Glue the upper cabinet and oven side-by-side above the window opening and the tile panel. Glue the shelf against the backing and to the top of the cabinet and oven. Glue-stick metallic paper to the side of the fridge and oven.

OPTIONAL ACCESSORIES



9 Sew a loop to a draped tea towel to hang on a cabinet knob. Glue silver shiny card to an HO strip spanning the tile panel. Glue the utensils to it and this utensil hanger to the tiled panel's frame. Make a roll of paper towels by gluing a strip of facial tissue around a 7/8in (22mm) straw length. Make a soap dispenser by gluing a short bent wire into a small bead atop a teardrop-shaped larger bead. Glue a flat button onto the oven base as a turntable. Glue coupon cut-outs to dowels or matt board scraps.

MAKE THE TOP



10 A top not only completes the caravan but keeps the dust out over time (who wants to clean while on holiday?!) Sand the top edge of the front and back shiny card ends and glue shiny card U-shaped rims over these edges. Glue white painted stripwood along the foamcore between these rims on both sides. Double-sided tape shiny card overhanging by 1/4in (6mm) all around a foamcore piece to fit between the sides and ends.

NEXT MONTH

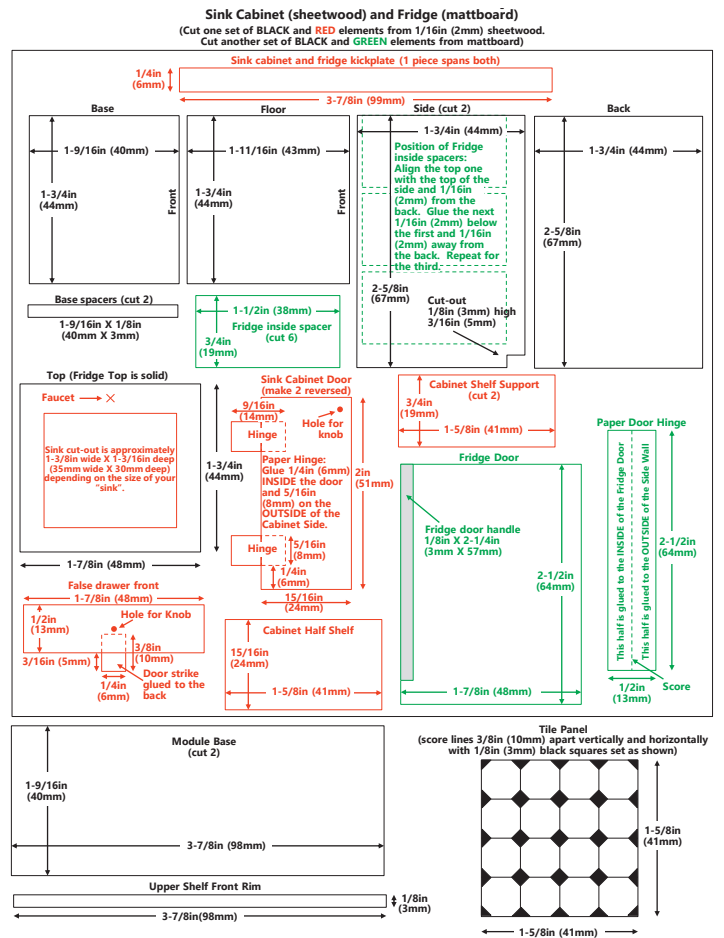
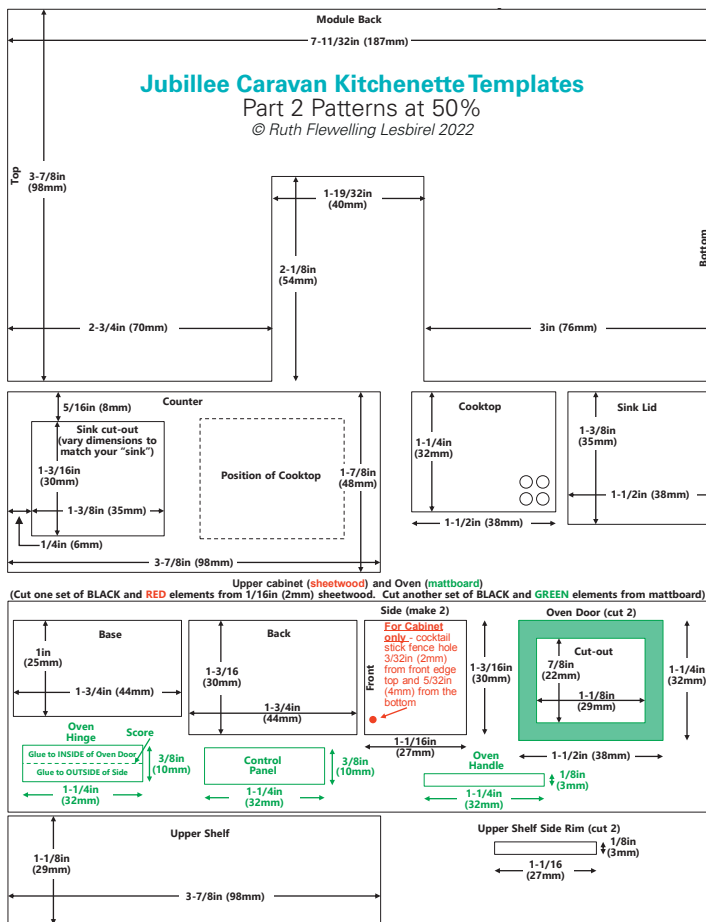
We add the dinette, with its table and benches converting to a comfy bed!



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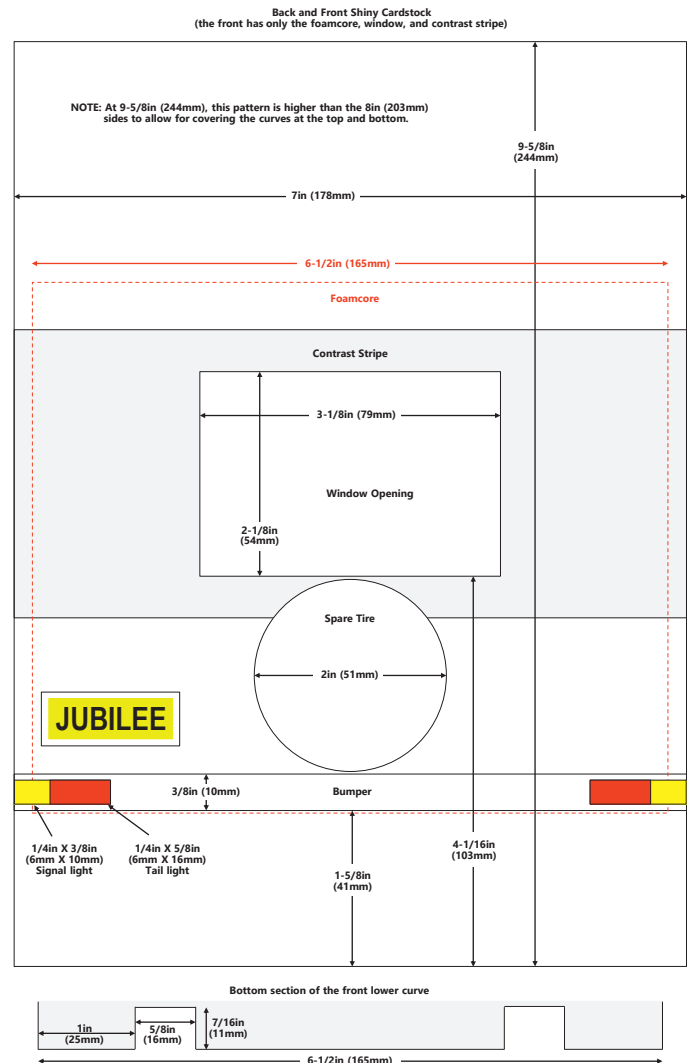
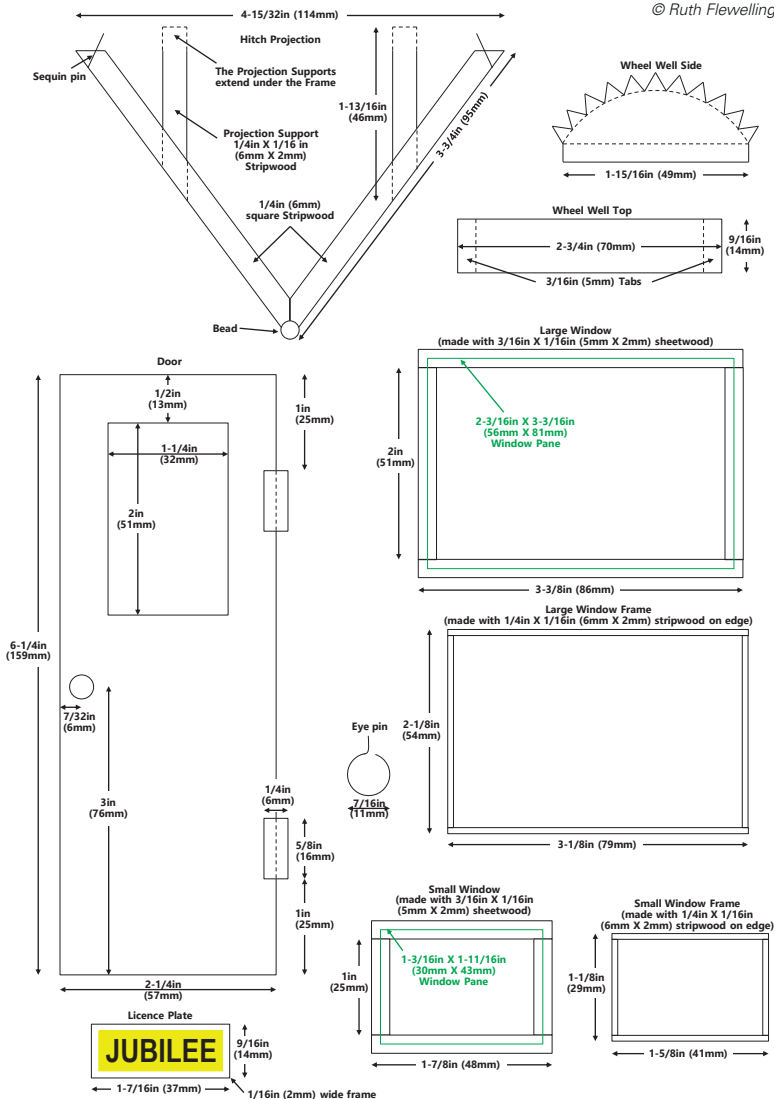
The eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed some templates were missing from the end of part one in the June issue – fear not, here they are!



Jubilee Caravan Frame Templates

Part 1 Patterns at 50%

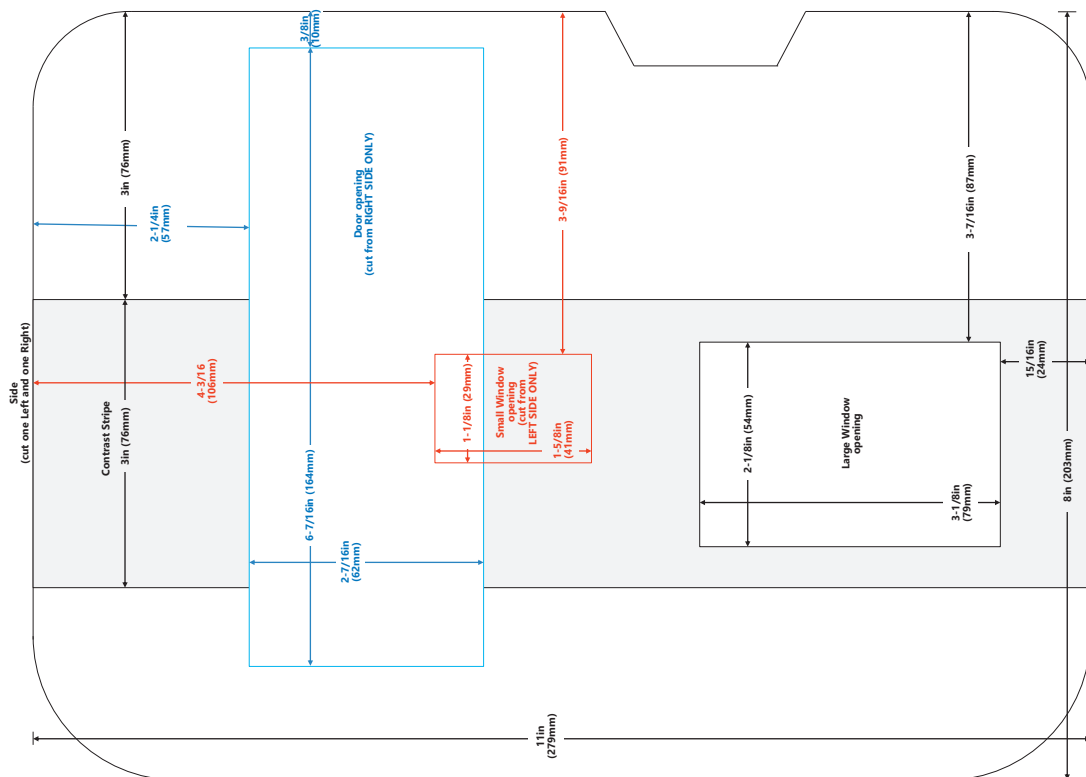
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Jubilee Caravan Frame Template

Part 1 Pattern at 50%

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Ruth's MINITIPS

Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel continues her top tips and advice for what she's found that has worked (or not worked!) throughout her years of experience. Last month we looked at a few tips to take wood beyond the basic cutting and sanding. This month we start with glues, then mitre cuts, beads and bling. Concluding the wood series, there are also a few tips for creating rounded shapes.

Glues

I use water-based glue whenever possible, for its easy clean up. Weldbond gives a bit of work time for repositioning as needed, yet it gives a strong hold when it is set. Waxed paper releases well from a glued piece and is also good for holding small pieces steady on a speck of glue, so they can be stained or painted. As I mentioned last month though, it's essential to weight wooden or matt board pieces that are layered together with a water-based glue, to prevent warping.

When I must, I use superglue – we have a love-hate relationship at best, but there are some situations where it's a must, e.g. adhering metal. Water-based glues work best on permeable materials like wood, paper and leather. I also use double-sided tape which won't warp paper, wax adhesive to secure tiny parts on a shelf and sticky putty for large pieces within a setting.

For a sturdy miniature furniture piece, it is important to build in extra support, corner strips, or even a frame inside the piece. Overlapped joints are always more substantial than joints where the wood is simply butted together. Where additional internal supports aren't possible, for example in stretchers between chair legs, drill and embed the tips for more contact or use pins to strengthen the join.

Adhesives and embedded stretchers



Sometimes, to get the thickness required, two pieces of wood are glued together. If several pairs of wood pieces are needed for a project, especially if they are complex shapes like curved legs or feet, number the sanded pairs on the unstained side. This makes it easier to select and glue them together into the originally sanded pairs, in case there is some slight variation in them.

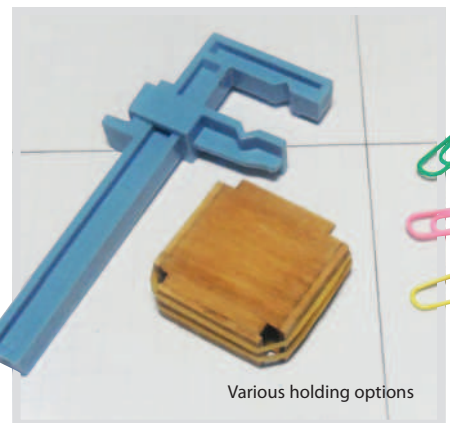


Layered feet

To easily make square assemblies, make a project board by taping grid paper onto a stiff piece of cardboard, e.g. part of the packaging of many wall calendars. Mark a vertical and horizontal line in pencil in the middle of the grid. Wrap waxed paper around the entire project board and tape it in the back.

Less is more when it comes to glue. Technique is individual, but mine is to squeeze out a drop of glue onto the tip of the closed bottle and dispense it with the tip of a wooden cocktail stick. Some prefer a corsage pin, but I find wood won't scratch wood. Keep one end of the cocktail stick dry to clean up inevitable seepage. I like to smear glue to a thin, even coat with my finger, with a handy paper towel for cleanup. A paper towel works better than a facial tissue, which tends to produce lint or get stuck in the glue.

Lastly, leave the glued assembly to completely set before moving on in the construction process. Use rubber bands, paperclips, or clamps to hold pieces together and as mentioned earlier, books or other weights to prevent flat pieces from warping. A glued assembly that is still wet can easily collapse, so walk away or stage the work so you can go on to another step while the glue dries.



Various holding options

Mitre cuts and filling

Mitres can be tricky at the best of times and worn mitre-boxes aren't always true. If a mitred joint is less than perfect, back bevel the inside surface slightly, stain it, and then sand lightly and touch up the stain at ▶▶

Project board and glue technique



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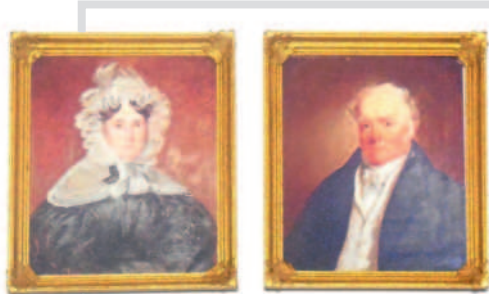


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the meeting point. If the joint can't be fixed in this way, re-cut the pieces, adjusting for the first problems. Sometimes, poor joints can be covered to advantage by adding paper 'carving'. Even the most careful cuts can sometimes show daylight when glued together. As I mentioned last month, to solve this more minor issue, rub a tiny bit of stain-matched polymer clay into the joint, like wood filler is used in full scale. Large gaps can often be covered with model railroad HO scale strips.



Leaves on the mitred corners

HO scale stripwood has so many uses! Contrast strips are very effective, as on this shelf clock, tiny HO strips make stepped mouldings on the shelf clock and the tall case clock shown below, and meticulously glued grillwork on this China cabinet door. Similarly, wooden cocktail sticks are integral parts of this Windsor-style commode chair back, stretchers on this intricately beaded dining chair, and at the top of this clock.



Knobs and hardware

Purchased wooden knobs are great additions, whether stained to match or painted white or black. Other good hardware choices are miniature brass knobs and dressmaker or sequin pin heads. Wire 'keys' add realism and are easy to shape, as are embroidery thread tassels. I approximated the hardware on an antique bookcase secretary, currently used

for a beautiful set of dishes, with wire and bead pulls. Wire loop handles added that gleam of brass on this breakfast table.



White knobs, key and tassel, bookcase secretary

Imitating carving and marble additions

A variety of small leaf and flower punches and various sizes of circle punches can make elements that look like carved wood. Beige scrapbook paper, stained to match the wood in a project and combined with mustard seeds and/or beads can make quick 'carving'. Emboss the paper additions with a ball stylus and cup them to add more realism. Marble patterns printed onto glossy paper can be glued to matt board for realistic marble-topped tables, an alternative to the usual stained tabletop. Note the bling of these purchased brass finials and beads on this hall tree.

Stripwood, contrast stains and cocktail sticks



Beads

Wooden beads are realistic additions to many furniture pieces. They often come in unfinished wood, a few basic stain colours, various sizes, and occasionally carved. Use medium or large ones glued together on a wooden skewer or cocktail stick as bedposts or buffet columns. Smaller ones, again on cocktail sticks, make furniture legs. Tiny wooden beads add to 'carving' as flower centres and buds.



Incorporating beads

Appliques and bling

Sanded and stained wood or matt board make great additions to many wood furniture pieces, like the end of this pew and the clock bonnet shown below. Picture framing, crown cornice, cove and quarter round mouldings of various sizes, baseboard, laser cut shapes, and brackets, can all be used to take a basic furniture piece to the next level. Bling can be

▼ Paper carving, mustard seed trimmed mirror, marble and brass bling



“Bending or curving wood or matt board is a very impressive technique in miniature furniture that is actually quite easily achieved”

as simple as cut-outs from foil paper doilies. Casters, brass crimp beads, gold foil stickers and even brass hinges all add bling.

When cutting wire, hold the end in a paper towel. This not only saves searching for the cut off piece, but avoids injury from flying wire. Finally, it is very possible to fool the eye. If all else is right, especially the scale, the eye will see what should be there. For example, brass eyelets become great column bases and tops, and a curled, fringed foil candy wrapper makes Corinthian capitals! Eye-pins make harp strings on last month's piano-organ and the marble topped table already shown. Backplates for knobs can be simple jewellery findings. Brass mesh makes elegant screening on the white-knobbed breakfast table above. Black satin ribbon makes a horsehair seat. Even humble domed brass stickers really accent the clock and the hubs of this tea wagon's wheels.

Steaming rounded shapes

Bending or curving wood or matt board is a very impressive technique in miniature furniture that is actually quite easily achieved. Thinner wood pieces are the easiest to handle – either layered and later glued veneer pieces or 1/32in (0.8mm) thick sheetwood work well. Sections of strong cardboard tubes or purpose bent cardboard can also be incorporated into upholstered furniture. Curved shapes are achieved by either steaming or soaking the wood or cardstock until it is pliable, forming and binding it around a jig, and then leaving it to dry in that shape. I use kitchen tongs to hold wood over the steam of a tea kettle, or simply soak it in a bowl. Jigs are made from various diameter dowels, wood blocks, or small tin cans superglued to a scrap board.

I hope you find some of these tips helpful with your next miniature project! 🏠

NEXT MONTH...

...we'll take a look at what's in my toolbox.

Simple and laser-cut wood additions, brass and sticker bling



Clock, horsehair chair seat, tea wagon



Jig, serpentine dresser and sleigh



Endless summer diner



Dreaming of the rockin' 50s with a passion for vintage diecast cars, Gary Walkden from Queensland, Australia took the opportunity of a lockdown to turn his collection into a nostalgic scene...

At the beginning of March 2020, Covid 19 lockdowns were being put in place here in Ipswich, Queensland, Australia, so I decided I would need a project to keep me busy. I own quite a collection of 1/18th scale diecast cars from the 50's era, so I decided to have a go at building a 1950's American style diner to display them.

Originally, I was just going to display them in cabinets in my 'Man Cave' which I share with my wife Joanne's 1/12th scale miniatures. However, I had seen some 1/12th scale roombox diners at shows we had been to, and knew I would need something bigger to show some of my car collection. Thus, the plan to build one big enough to display a lot of cars, came to life. All I needed was a spare dining room table.

So, I began to build my 'Endless summer diner'. The name came to me from a love of all things to do with going to the beach, right back to the 1950's as a child camping with the family in tents at the beach. We have lots of beautiful beaches here in Australia, and surfing, swimming, my favourite rock and roll band from the USA - The Beach Boys, and old cars are still things I enjoy greatly, so the name was an easy task.

The building itself wasn't that hard to construct using MDF as my main material, and being a home handy man, it was good fun. Painting was also easy enough; I have done plenty of that. The challenges came quickly though, having to build bench style seats, tables, the kitchen area, and finding materials to use to make the items I needed. I found it very challenging, there were times where, after spending hours on a particular item it was thrown in the bin and I walked away in frustration, not knowing what to do. But I pushed through, trying things for this and that, hoping I had it right this time. The bench style seats are made from mint tins. The bar stools were built using golf tees with key rings to go around the edge of the cushions.

A big thank you goes to the Ipswich Mini Crafters (@IpswichMiniCrafters), where Joanne is a member, for their help and encouragement, sharing ideas, tips and tricks for my diner project. Special thanks

Gary & Joanne Walkden



go to Vanessa Williams, Sally Hetherington, Allan 'The Master Miniature Builder' Lindup, and my wife Joanne Walkden for their passion and wisdom in all things miniature, #legends. Extra special thanks to our daughter Rachel Lane nee Walkden, for drawing the diner girl for the wall near the juke box.

As you can see many of my display items are purchased, not made by me. That's OK, and I hope you like what you see.

► Endless Summer Diner









Embellished books

Transform a ready-made book with a flat printed cover into a 3D medieval embellished book binding with jewels and gold embossing.

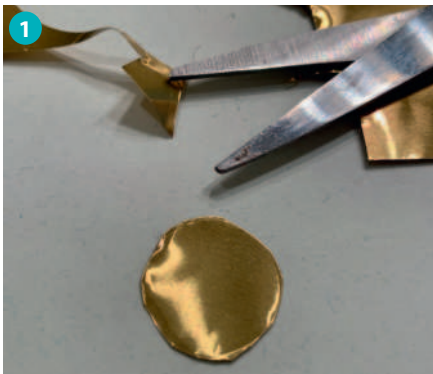
YOU WILL NEED

MATERIALS REQUIRED

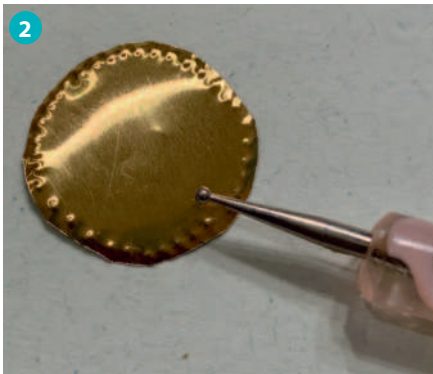
- Books to embellish
- Thin gold or copper metal sheet
- Self-adhesive gems and pearls
- Embossing powder

TOOLS REQUIRED

- Embossing pen
- Heat gun



1 Cut a metal circle to an appropriate size for your book cover to make the corners.



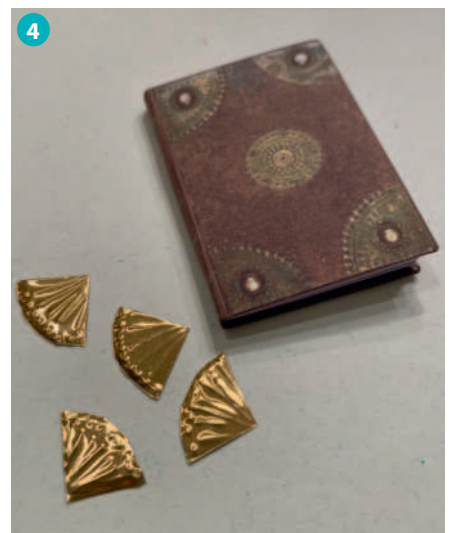
2 Using a dotting tool or knitting needle, emboss a line of dots around the circumference of the circle.

Moi says...

I used ready-made books but this technique works just as well on the plain covers of home-made dummy books. These embellished books look super in all manner of settings: old libraries, churches, witches' towers, Gothic settings, Harry Potter rooms... the list goes on!



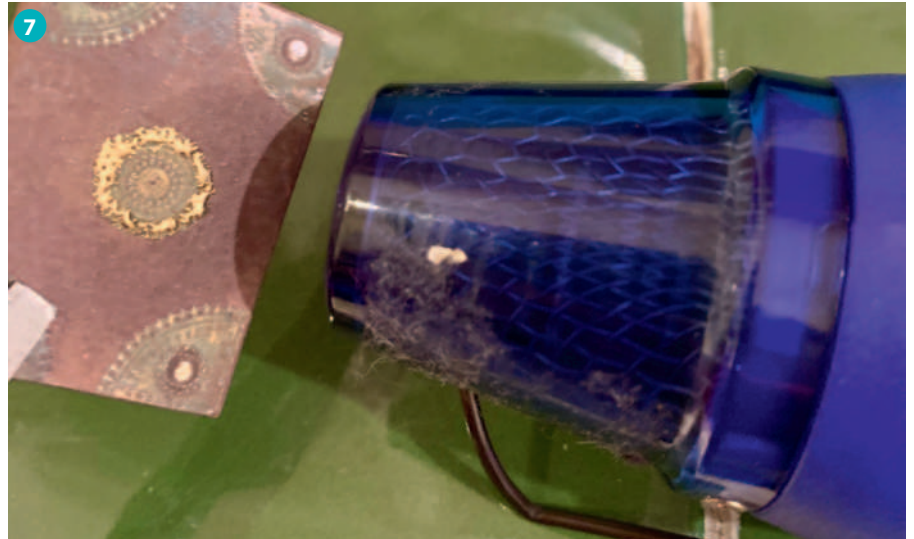
3 From the centre of the circle, emboss lines in a starburst formation outwards towards the circumference.



4 Cut the embossed circle in half, then half again to create quarters.



5 Embellish each quarter with a tiny, self-adhesive gem.



7 Sprinkle embossing power on the wet ink and shake off any excess. Heat to melt the embossing powder. Glue on the decorated corner pieces.

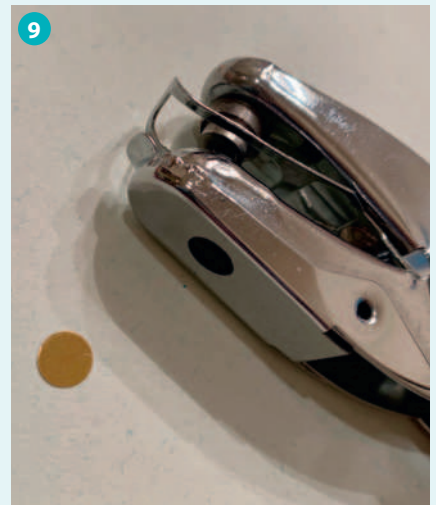


6 Draw on the book cover with the embossing pen, where you would like to heat emboss. It can be hard to see the ink, as it is near invisible.

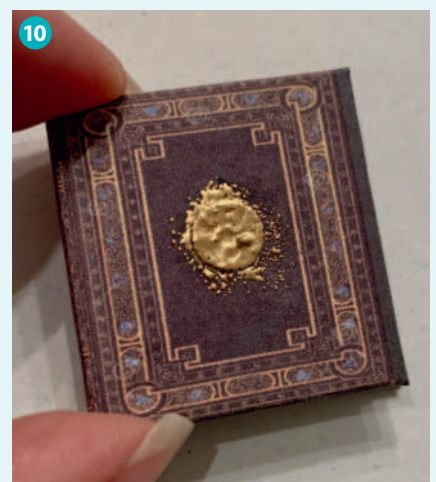
ALTERNATIVE FINISH



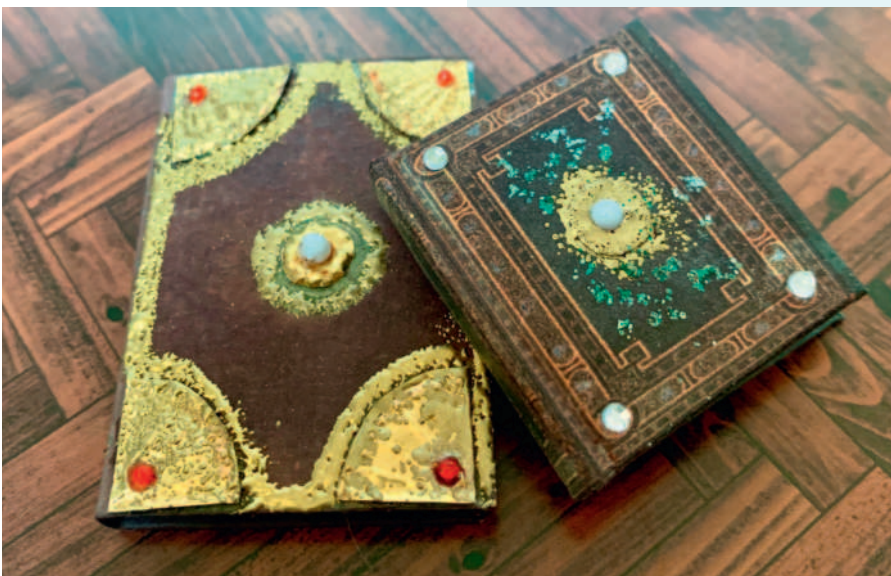
8 Take a different book.



9 Punch a small circle from the thin metal.



10 Heat emboss around the circle. Don't worry if powder goes on the circle, as this is the effect you want. Add pearls to the centre of both books. 



A taste of the seaside

Rock your summer with a selection of traditional favourites as we take a trip to the British seaside.

YOU WILL NEED

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- White, translucent, sunflower yellow, red, fuchsia pink, orange, brown, dark blue and spring green polymer clay
- Golden ochre, dark cadmium orange and brown pastels
- Sculpey Bake & Bond (or similar)
- Black acrylic paint
- 1/12th scale oval blue ceramic plate
- 1/12th scale fork
- Matte and gloss varnish
- Faux foliage or dried parsley
- 1/12th scale lemon cane (optional)
- Small piece of cellophane
- Patterned paper suitable for making 1/12th scale paper bags
- Craft glue

TOOLS REQUIRED

- Small paintbrushes
- Needle tool or sewing pin
- Small ball tool or bamboo skewer
- Old butter knife
- Craft knife
- Scissors
- Small square shape cutter

HOW TO MAKE THE ICE CREAM



1 Mix white polymer clay with sunflower yellow to make pale cream, rolling out the mixture to around 1mm in thickness.



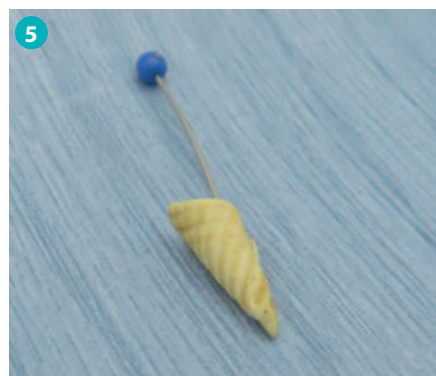
2 Cut a 1.1cm square using either a craft knife or a square shape cutter. This will form the basis for the ice cream cone.



3 Use the side of the needle tool or similar to score lines across the small square of clay.



4 Mix grated golden ochre pastel with a little dark cadmium orange and brown. This is the colour for the ice cream cone so test the mixture on a spare piece of cream clay to make sure you're happy before brushing lightly over the square of clay.

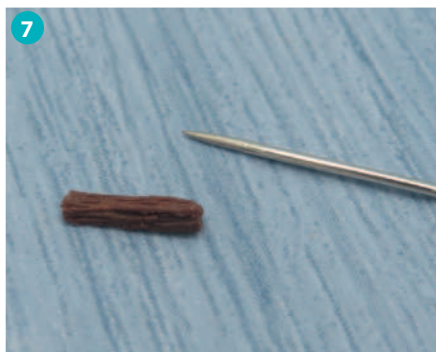


5 Roll the square of clay into a cone shape around a needle tool or sewing pin.



6 Cut away the excess clay at the top of the cone, creating a flat top ready to fill with 'ice cream'.

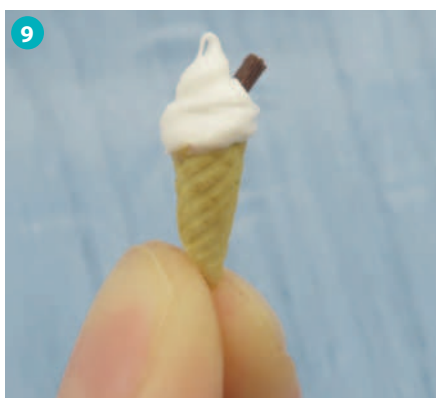
HOW TO MAKE THE DOUGHNUTS



7 Cut a small rectangle of brown clay and carefully score lines down the length of each side to create the effect of a chocolate flake. Bake this alongside the cone and allow both to cool thoroughly.



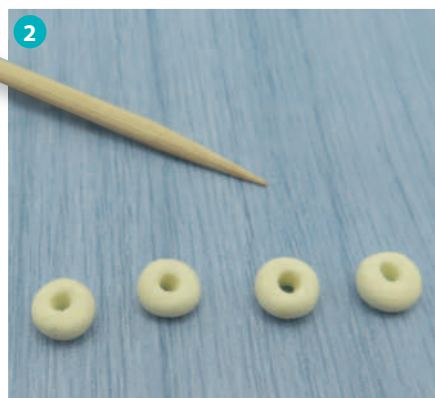
8 To make the ice cream, mix Sculpey Bake & Bond or similar with white clay, creating a mixture thick enough to allow you to create a swirl texture.



9 Fill the inside of the cone with a little white clay, adhering with Bake & Bond. Use a needle tool or sewing pin to add the ice cream mix in a swirl on top of the cone. Stick the flake into the ice cream and return to the oven. Place a small piece of kitchen foil over a piece of clay and use a small ball tool or similar to make a tiny indentation to stand the cone within whilst baking so that the ice cream retains its shape. Once cooled, coat the ice cream with gloss varnish, being careful not to overlap onto the flake or cone.



1 Take four balls of cream polymer clay, each measuring around 5mm in diameter, flattening slightly to form the shape of traditional doughnuts.



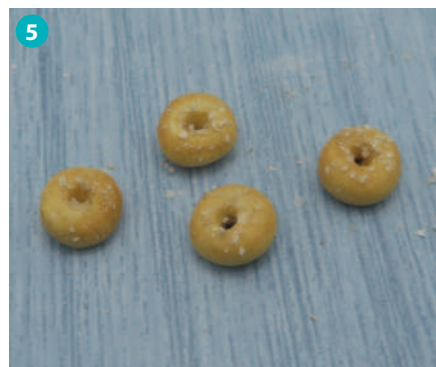
2 Use a small ball tool or bamboo skewer to make a hole in the centre of each doughnut.



3 Mix grated golden ochre, dark cadmium orange and brown pastel. This should be a darker mixture than for the ice cream cone, brushing liberally over the clay to create the impression of deep-fried doughnuts.



4 Grate translucent clay into small pieces. Bake this and the doughnuts, allowing to cool before using a glass or roller to crush the grated clay into even smaller bits. Once you're happy the mixture resembles fine miniature sugar, coat the doughnuts with matte varnish. Whilst the varnish is still wet and is able to act as an adhesive, sprinkle the finely grated clay over the doughnuts.



5 Cut two small pieces of paper with a pretty seaside inspired design and suitable for making a paper bag. The design used here was put together using photo editing software, but the ideas really are limitless!



6 Use craft glue to stick the two pieces together, forming the bag. Once dry, stuff a couple of doughnuts inside, leaving the other two spilling out. Alternatively, put the remaining doughnuts on a 1/12th scale ceramic plate. ▶

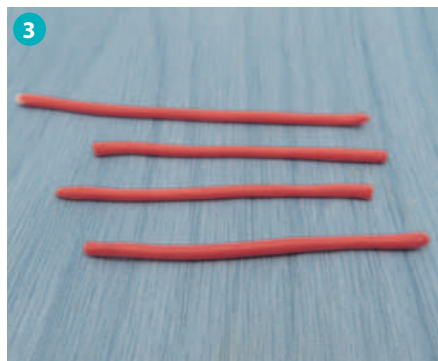
HOW TO MAKE THE STICK OF ROCK



1 Mix red polymer clay with equal parts fuchsia pink and orange to create the traditional colour of seaside rock. Roll the mixed clay out as thinly as possible.



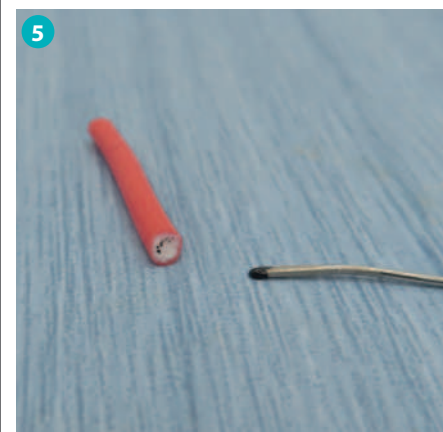
2 Wrap the red/pink/orange clay mix around a thick tube of white clay, cutting away any excess to ensure a neat join.



3 Roll the clay into tubes roughly around 2mm in diameter, making sure each one is as straight as possible. Bake and allow to cool.



4 Cut the baked tubes of clay into individual sticks of rock, measuring 2.1 cm in length.



5 Dip a needle tool or sewing pin into black acrylic paint and create the effect of a word running all the way through the sticks of rock by adding very tiny dots in a curve on either end of each stick.



6 Wrap each stick of rock in cellophane, sticking around the middle with tape. Twist the ends and cut away any excess. Print or cut out small seaside pictures measuring about 4mm by 6mm and glue into position on each stick.

HOW TO MAKE FISH AND CHIPS WITH TARTARE SAUCE



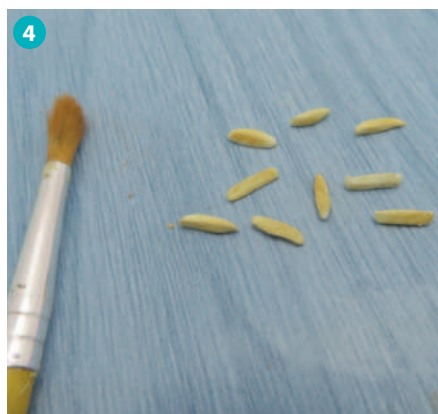
1 Shape a piece of white or cream clay into the rough shape of a piece of battered fish, curling over at one end. Brush with mixed dark cadmium orange/brown/golden ochre grated pastel and add texture with a rough brush.



2 Mix Sculpey Bake & Bond with a little cream clay and plenty of dark cadmium orange pastel with a little added brown and golden ochre. Keep mixing until you feel you have a colour and thickness which resembles golden fish batter. Use a needle tool or sewing pin to coat the fish with the mixture, adding lots of texture and 'bits' of batter sticking out/up.



3 Roll balls of cream clay into 1/12th scale potatoes. Place in the freezer and allow to harden before slicing into realistic chips.



4 Brush the chips liberally with the now familiar grated golden ochre/dark cadmium orange/brown mixture, going for a shade similar to that used for the ice cream cone.



5 Use Bake & Bond to adhere the fish and chips to a 1/12th scale oval ceramic plate. Blue makes a great choice for that added seaside influence.



Sadie says...

"For the ice cream, create the atmosphere of a hot summer's day and add one or two drips of ice cream down the side of the cone, using a slightly thinner mix of white clay and Sculpey Bake & Bond"



6 Mix a little cream clay with Bake & Bond to make the base for the tartare sauce, adding to the ceramic plate. Mix brown, dark blue and spring green clay to create a colour similar to the capers found in tartare sauce. Add very tiny balls to the Bake & Bond/cream clay mix, along with a few pieces of spring green clay. Bake the fish/chips/tartare sauce and leave to cool before coating the fish and chips with matte varnish and the tartare sauce with gloss.



7 Glue a 1/12th scale fork to the plate along with a few sprinkles of faux foliage or even dried parsley. Optionally, you can also add a small segment cut from a 1/12th scale lemon cane to complete the look. 🍋



Small is Beautiful:

MINIATURE ART EXHIBITION

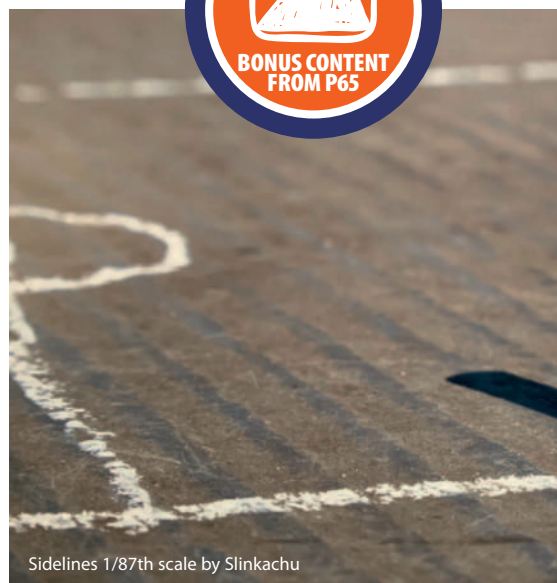
Moi Ali visited a London exhibition that's big on little things.



Lemons by Claudia Campanale



Sidelines 1/87th scale by Slinkachu

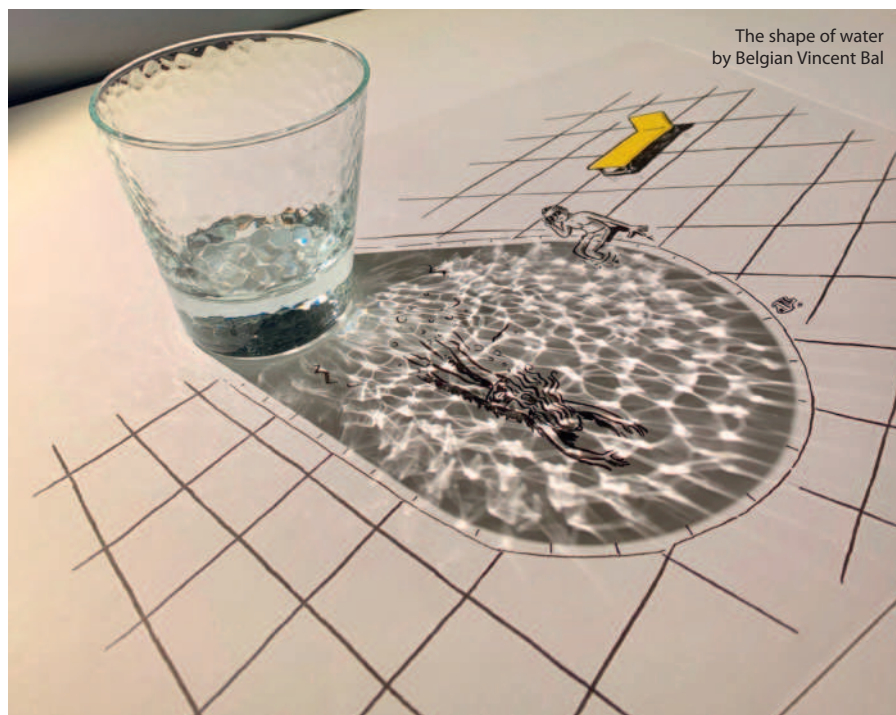




Amazing detail,
flower shop Tokyo



Crocodile Dundee



The shape of water
by Belgian Vincent Bal



▲ The Beatles

After great success in Paris last year, Small is Beautiful arrived in London in April, and I was amongst the first to get to see what has been billed the most important European exhibition to compile the work of 34 local and international miniature artists (from countries including France, UK, USA, Belgium, Sweden, Bosnia, Germany, The Netherlands, Ukraine, Italy, Peru, Iran and India). Over 140 miniature artworks are on display.

The organisers said: "After the undisputed success of the #MiniatureArt phenomenon on social networks, the exhibition offers exclusive access to the magical and sometimes unusual worlds of some of

the greatest artists in the movement, offering behind-the-scenes access to small-scale universes full of artistry and poetry. Attention to detail is paramount at the exhibition, and fans of the mini phenomenon can immerse themselves in the most unlikely objects, bringing their childhood imaginations back to life inside a number of small-scale universes."

The #MiniatureArt hashtag has millions of posts under it but, as the exhibition organisers remind us, miniaturism is not a new artform. It has existed since ancient Egyptian times and today's miniaturists are keeping the ancient tradition alive. [Read more](#)

Candy beach by Minimiam



Eternal Love 1/12th scale



Eerie and atmospheric



Little flower shop 1/10th scale



Many scales are represented in the exhibition, including the absolutely tiny. Take the sculptures by Bosnian artist Jasenko Dordevic, which are carved on the tip of a pencil. Jasenko likes pencils! One of his tiny sculptures turns a pencil into a train tunnel, with the pencil carved in microscopically accurate detail into a speeding train. Talking of microscopes, British engineer-turned-artist David Lindon from Bournemouth carves things so small in the eye of the smallest needle that you actually need a microscope to see them!

You will also find the more familiar 1/12th dolls house scale too, including makers such as the legendary British artists Mulvaney & Rogers. I was blown away by their stunning abandoned rotunda. Chris Malcolmson's

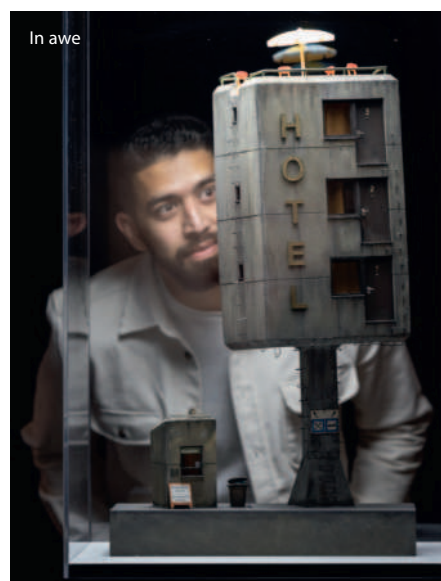
brehtaking furniture can also be seen – cabinets, teapots, tables and sewing boxes with marquetry and brass inlays. I was also delighted to see Italian lawyer-turned miniaturist Claudia Campanale showcased too, as I wrote about her amazing still-life dioramas for DHMS a year or so ago for my Instagram Identities feature.

There are many an Instagrammer's work to be seen on display, including London-based photographer Slinkachu's creations. He has more than 182,000 followers on Instagram, where he showcases his miniature street art. A visual artist and photographer, Slinkachu stages tiny characters in urban settings, photographs them in situ and then 'abandons' them. I've always been on the lookout for one of his works, but I've so far not been lucky – perhaps he'd like to leave something in Edinburgh for me to find (hint hint!)?

Exhibition Director Serge Victoria said: "One of the main purposes of the show is to be able to give the public the chance to discover miniature art in real life. There is a difference between looking at an Instagram

post and getting 'inside the screen' and seeing the work up close and personal."

One of the things I like about this event is that it is being run alongside creative miniature art workshops for children aged 7 to 12, with the aim of nurturing potential new miniature artists of the future. It's attracting through its doors people who would not normally take an interest in miniatures. Hopefully that will help spawn a whole new set of folks into our wonderful hobby. 🏠



"There is a difference between looking at an Instagram post and getting 'inside the screen' and seeing the work up close and personal"





Make your own regal rug

In this exclusive project, Moi Ali has figured out how you can recreate a right royal rug of your own.

YOU WILL NEED

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- 18 count canvas
- Size 24 tapestry needle
- Fine two-ply crewel wool in three colours
- Masking tape

Moi says...

"Following on from the June issue, Ingrid Thomson and I agreed that a fitting way to mark the late Elizabeth Leslie's contribution to the exquisite needlepoint rugs in Glamis Castle, Scotland, would be to allow one of her beautiful carpet designs to live on in dolls houses across the globe. For that reason, the Castle has agreed that we can exclusively reproduce a design from the archive – the dining room carpet – so that you can make your very own regal rug. This is a project best suited to someone with experience of needlepoint. If you're a novice, try a few small kits first, until you feel confident to tackle this."



Moi says...

It's advisable to use a frame, as I know from bitter experience how easy it is for a lovely rectangular design to become a lumpy rhomboid in the absence of a frame!

You will need suitable yarn in three colours: golden yellow, muted red (nothing too vibrant) and royal blue for the background (although the original design attached to Elizabeth's drawing appears to have a green background and the full-size carpet is navy rather than royal blue). Alternatively, choose a different combination that matches your décor.

I note that Elizabeth used DMC Broder Medici. My research shows that this is a very fine weight smooth wool used for canvas embroidery and crewel embroidery, but was discontinued some years ago. Apparently, Bella Lusso from Fleur de Paris is closest to Medici in look and feel and is therefore a good alternative. There is a needlepoint shop in the USA that sells online a substitute for Medici that is spun in the same mill and uses the same dye formulas as the DMC thread if you want to opt for a totally authentic reproduction. Stranded yarn may also be a good choice, as you can use two strands.

The design comprises three diamond shapes: one with a lion, one with a monogram and crown, and one with a geometric diamond design. The carpet is a repeat design: one row of geometric designs followed by a row of alternating lions and monogram/crowns.



Moi says...

"18 count is slightly larger than true 1/12th scale, and you will find that a 22 count canvas is truer to scale but very difficult to work – especially if you have poor or aging eyesight! Elizabeth used 18 count for the Glamis carpet. A 22 count will require a size 26 needle."

1 Map out your design on graph paper, working out how many repeats you will need for the size of rug you want (Elizabeth has used about ten rows of plain blue at the very outer edge as a border, with a single line of red and then two lines of blue working inwards).

2 Cut your canvas to the size of your finished rug, allowing an extra two inches on each side for hemming.

3 Fold masking tape along all edges to prevent fraying and to stop the wool from catching on the jagged canvas. Attach the canvas to the frame.

4 Start stitching (I have not included guidance as it is assumed that you already know what to do!).

5 When completed, remove from the frame, remove the masking tape and hem your carpet using your preferred method. If you have used a frame and an even tension, there will be no need to block the rug to re-shape it. 🏠

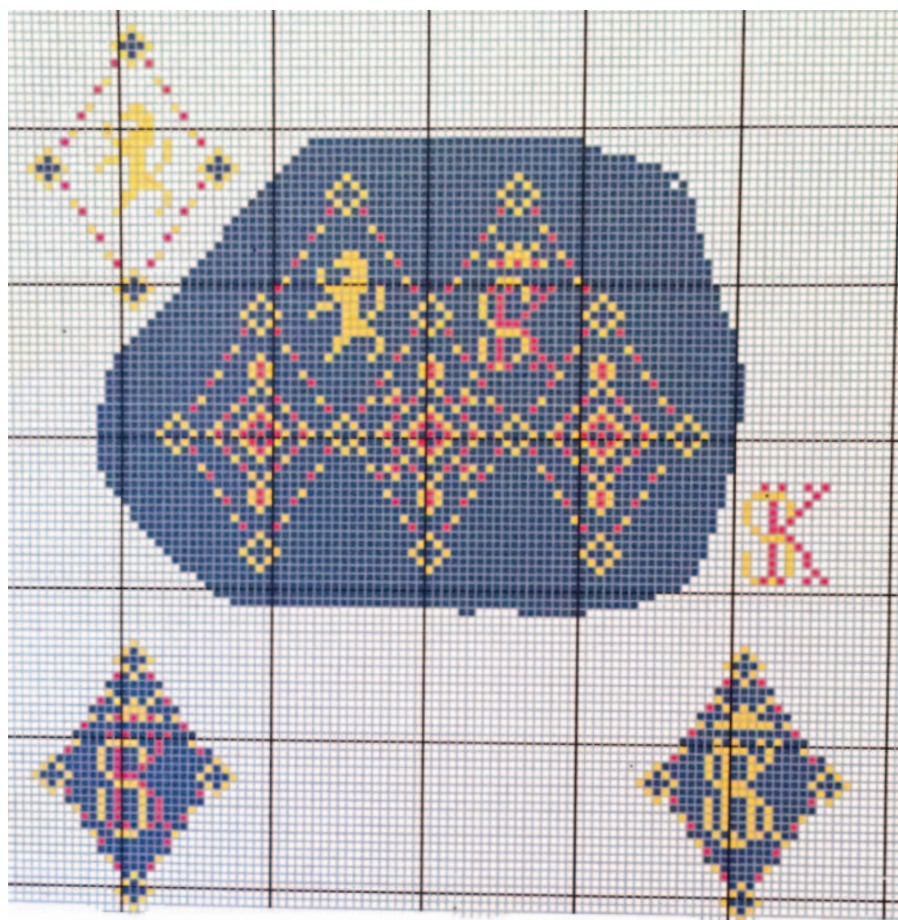
Moi's Top Tip!

"When calculating the number of pattern repeats needed for 18 count canvas, bear in mind that a finished rug that is just over 7x5in will be 132 stitches by 89 stitches. Don't forget to allow for a border and a hem allowance."

"Adapt the design to make a cushion if you'd prefer to make something small – or you want cushions to match your lovely rug."



▲▼ Elizabeth's drawing from the archive



The Whole Kit & Caboodle:

ART NOUVEAU MICRO SCALE HOUSE

Moi Ali reviews a dolls house of particularly petite proportions.



Moi's says...

"Use a Sharpie permanent marker to colour the window frames quickly and neatly."

I love micro scale dolls houses because you can complete them in a day or less, including decorating! And if you like 1/12th scale, as I do, the 1/144th scale micro houses are the perfect proportions to be a 1/12th scale house in a 1/12th scale house! I've placed my little house by MyMiniatureRoomBox in my 1/12th scale dolls house workshop.

This kit is simplicity itself to build, despite the daunting number of parts. It all fits together easily and quickly, and the level of detail is impressive – with decorative windows and etched roof slates and brickwork. The house is highly unusual in that it has windows at the sides and back, as well as the front. It has an ingenious opening at the side.

Caroline, who runs the company, has a real eye for design and her micro houses are really quite different. There's a Nordic-style Art Deco house, a haunted house, an adorable Tudor house... and a host of others, including my choice of Art Nouveau house. If you need furniture to fill it, Caroline has that too – and it's very affordable. Her micro scale four-poster bed kit, for example, is just £3.50. 

THE FACTS

Buy from: Caroline's Etsy shop, MyMiniatureRoomBox

Cost: £35

Comes with: All components, including doors, windows and magnet closures

Additional materials needed: Paint and glue

Specialist tools needed: None

Time: A half-day

Experience: Beginner

READER GIVEAWAY!

Fancy winning one of these lovely little house kits from My Miniature Room Box?

One lucky reader will win an Art Nouveau house courtesy of Caroline!

To enter, simply visit www.dollshouseandminiaturescene.co.uk and click on giveaways!

Competition closes 31st July 2022. Good luck!

For more information regarding competitions visit www.warnersgroup.co.uk/competition-terms/

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**PRINT EDITION:
THURSDAY 28th JULY**

No. 338 Issue July 2022
dollshouseandminiaturescene.co.uk

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Printed by Warners Midlands plc



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Competitions in issue 338 are open 1st July – 31st July 2022.

**DollsHouse
& MINIATURE SCENE**

Magazine established December 1992
ISSN 0967-4918

Next issue on sale 17th June

Dolls House & Miniature Scene magazine is published 12 times a year.



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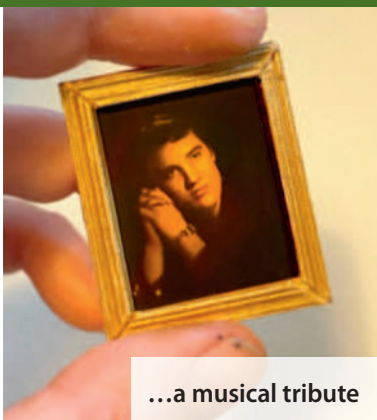
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**DETAILS ON HOW TO CONTINUE TO GET YOUR
MINIATURE FIX CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 24**



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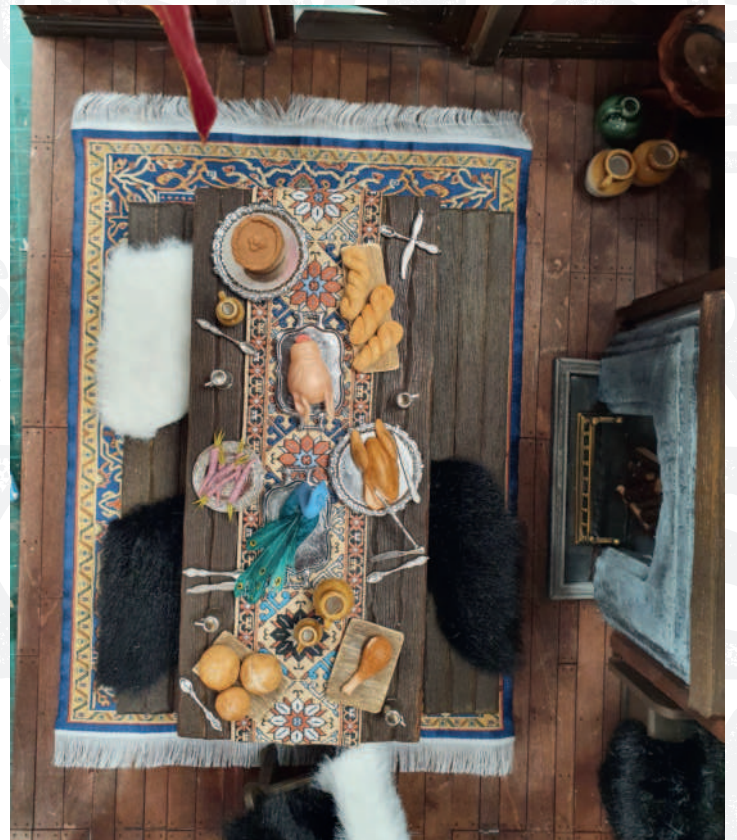
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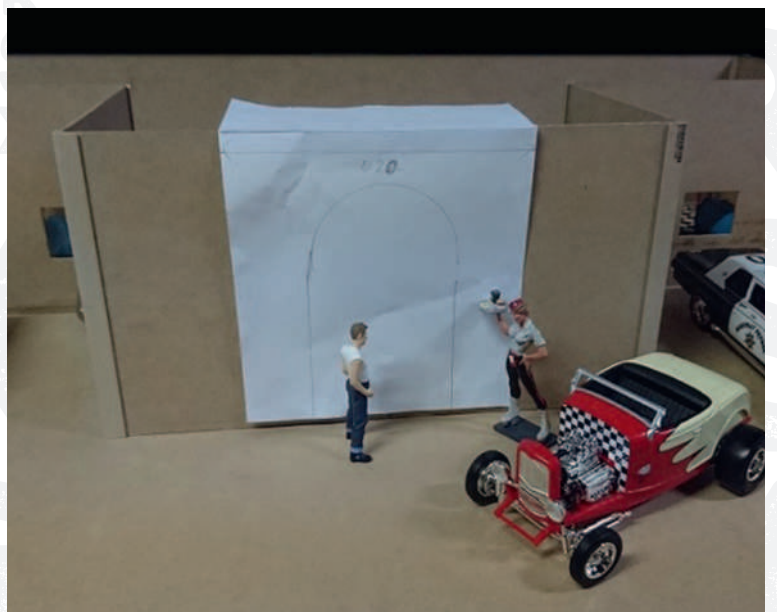
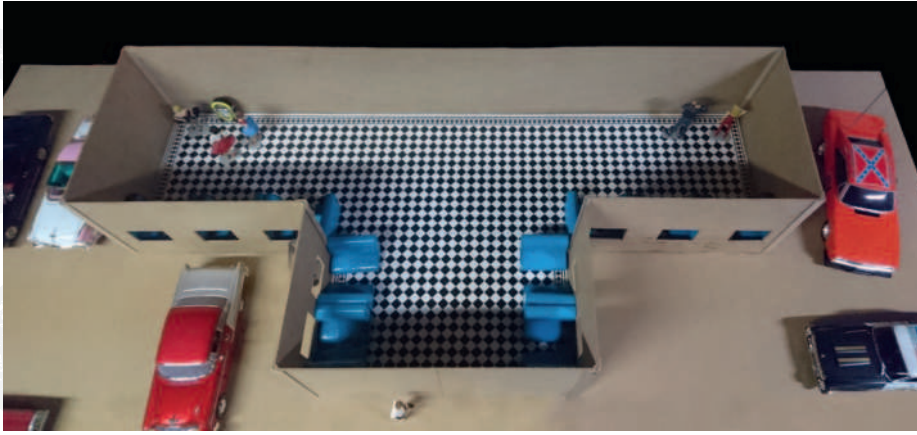


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