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Welcome to the May edition!

This month sees the coronation of King Charles III and the UK is set for a weekend of celebrations!

Turn your mini homes into a party with our cover star Maive Ferrando's miniature crown cake on page 6, Sadie Brown's coronation chicken sandwich which will look perfect on a dining table on page 10 and Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel's bunting containing the official royal emblem on page 28 to add some fun decor!

These aren't the only projects this issue, we have an abundance of makes that we know you'll love! Moi Ali gets creative (or should I say 'crafty') with stamps plus check out part four of her mini series Retro Fit Realism, where she looks at interior detailing such as the walls, floors and ceilings. Just two more parts to go for this series, it's certainly been a popular one!

For those looking at money saving tips to keep their passion going during this difficult financial time, Eleanor Catalina takes you on a shopping spree and shows the makes she created on a budget – turn to page 64 to see how she got on!

As always, we bring you the best advice from industry experts Bea Broadwood from Petite Properties and Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel's 'mini tips', plus did you know that you can sign up to our email newsletter for even more fabulous mini content? Turn to page 63 to find out how!

Finally, a massive thank you to this month's contributors; Sadie Brown, Maive Ferrando, Bea Broadwood, Moi Ali, Eleanor Catalina and Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel.

Happy mini-making!

Joanne Garwell

Editor

FANATASTIC GIVEAWAYS!

TURN TO PAGE 62 TO SEE WHAT YOU COULD WIN! ★

CELEBRATE WITH CAKE



06

QUALITY QUICK MAKE



45

SNEAK PEEK... INSIDE NEXT ISSUE!



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DollsHouse
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MORE THAN A MAGAZINE...

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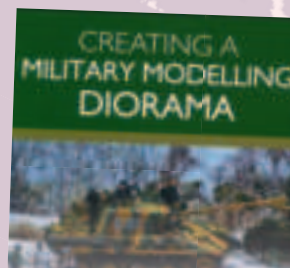


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The closing date for all entries is

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GOOD LUCK!

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06

Coronation cake

There are many steps to make this cake, but it's not as difficult or as time consuming as it seems. To keep the project fun and not feel the pressure of having to make a realistic crown, remember that we are not trying to make a real crown, but a cake where icing, sweets, cream, jellies and other scrumptious things would be used. Surround your finished cake with typical English afternoon tea treats for a royal celebration!



YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Purple, gold (metallic effect or other), translucent, white, black, red, yellow, blue, green (or any other colours for the jewels) and scrap polymer clay
- Liquid polymer clay (FIMO Liquid or Translucent Liquid Sculpey)
- Smooth tiles to work and bake your polymer clay on
- Gold alcohol ink
- Purple mica powders (or eye shadow)
- PVA glue
- Fast drying glue
- Water-based gloss varnish
- Water-based matte varnish (optional)

Tools required

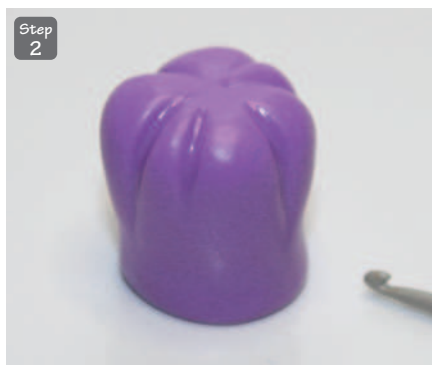
- Blades
- Craft knife
- Needle tool
- Micro marbles
- Small paintbrushes
- Small silicone tapered sculpting tool
- Flat chisel silicone sculpting tool
- Wire
- Pliers
- Nail art hand drill

Step 1



1 After conditioning a small ball of purple clay, shape it into a cylinder. Take another piece and shape it into a ball, then flatten into a pancake with thinner edges. Blend this piece to the top of the cylinder to make the top of the crown.

Step 2



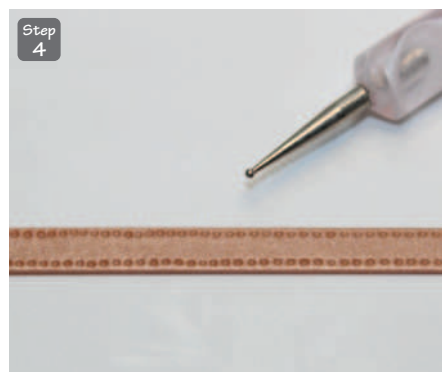
2 Use a long, smooth tool to create the folds in the crown. Blend the grooves with your fingers.

Step 3

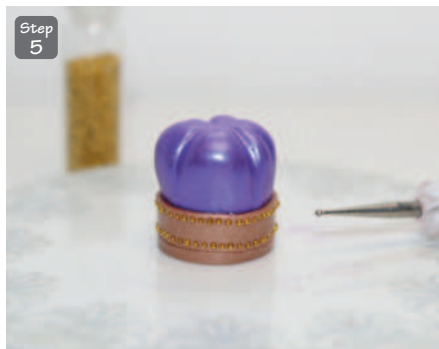


3 Take some purple mica powders and dust it all over the crown. Part-bake for 15 minutes.

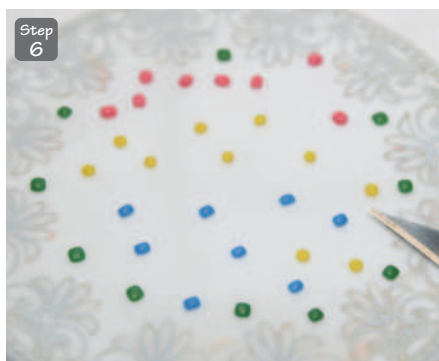
Step 4



4 Put some gold (metallic or other) clay through a thin setting of your pasta machine and cut a strip. Use a small dotting tool to mark lots of holes along the edges. Make sure the size of the holes matches that of the micro marbles.



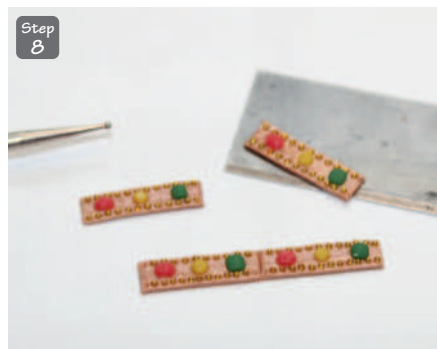
5 Brush a little liquid polymer clay on the base of the crown and add a thin strip of the metallic clay at the base. Then add the wider strip. Carefully brush liquid polymer clay on the holes and place the micro marbles in them. Part-bake.



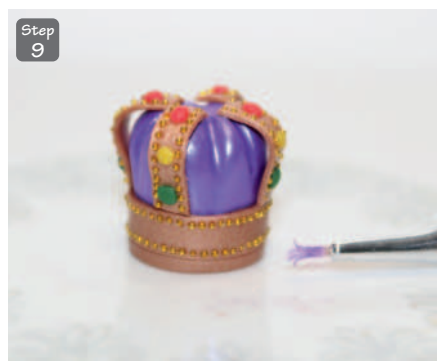
6 To make the sweets for the jewels, take some translucent clay and mix it with small amounts of different colours. I used red, green, yellow and blue but you can use any colours you want. Cut tiny pieces of each and use a blade to shape each colour differently. Part-bake.



7 Take some more metallic clay, cut four even strips and score holes along the edges. You will have to measure the first strip on the crown and use it as a guideline to cut the other three.



8 Brush liquid clay on the holes and place all the micro marbles leaving a small gap at the ends. Dab a small dot of liquid polymer clay where you want the jewels and set them in place.



9 Brush a little liquid clay on the parts of the crown where you need to place the strips, and carefully add these. You should be able to press them down without distorting the shape seeing as the jewels and the micro marbles hold the shape of the clay quite well but do so carefully. Part-bake.



10 Roll a small ball of metallic clay and place it on the end of a toothpick. Use a small embossing tool to create holes on all four sides and add micro marbles, bonding with liquid polymer clay. Part-bake.



11 Once both parts of the crown are baked and cool, fill in the centre where all the strips join with a small square sheet of clay bonding with liquid clay and blend. Then add a small amount of liquid clay on the top before adding the ball and part-baking again.



12 Once cool, use a small brush to paint the gold parts of the crown with gold alcohol ink. You can also use gold acrylic paint. I chose to use alcohol ink because I find it easier to paint with and dries much quicker. Plus, I really liked the colour for this project.



13 Cut a small cross out of the same metallic clay and add a jewel in the centre, surrounding it with four micro marbles. Part-bake. ➡

Maive's Top Tip

"Instead of mica powders you can use eyeshadows. If they're old and you don't use them anymore, you can use them directly on your polymer clay. If you do use them still, scrape some into a separate dish to avoid cross contamination"

Step
14

14 Before gluing the cross to the top of the crown, I made a small hole with a nail art drill and inserted a small piece of wire for support. Then added a tiny bit more glue. Once dried, I painted this and the cross with gold alcohol ink.

Step
15

15 To make the cake, stack some layers of scrap clay together in the height you want your cake to be. Cut out a corner and add a piece of the flavours you want your cake to be. I chose a Victoria sponge cake.

Step
16

16 Roll out a sheet of red clay and cover the cake with it, trimming all the excess. Use a silicone flat chisel tool to push the base slightly inwards so that it looks like a pillow. Round the edges with your fingers. Use a long, thin tool to create a groove along the sides. Fill it in with a thin strand of metallic clay.

Step
17

17 Dab some liquid polymer clay on the centre of the cake and add the crown, pressing it down gently. Cut out a corner of the cake and texture the inside with a needle. Part-bake.

Step
18

18 In the meantime, cut a strip of metallic clay and cut lots of slits along the bottom. Roll the clay into itself to create the tassels. Trim them and roll the ends between your fingers to thin them. Leave to one side.

Step
19

19 Once the cake is cool, brush a little liquid clay on the base of the crown and add a strand of white clay. Use a pointy tool to create a furry texture. Add tiny pieces of black clay here and there, and continue texturing with the pointy tool. Part-bake.

Step
20

20 Roll out a thin sheet of metallic clay and cut thin strips. Brush a tiny bit of liquid clay on the cake and place the longest strips first, making sure they are even in length. Do the same with the sides and finish with the corners. Part-bake.

Step
21

21 Add the tassels trying to let them fall naturally and touching the tile (trim them as you deem necessary) and add the final details on the corners using very thin strands of clay and a soft, pointy silicone tool to nudge them into shape. Brush a small amount of liquid clay before doing this so that the strands stick. Bake one last time for at least 30 minutes.

Step
22

22 Dab little dots of PVA glue where you want the jewels to be (arrange them before gluing them) and carefully glue the jewels in place. Let dry completely and glaze them with gloss varnish. You can use a matte varnish on the rest of the cake if desired. To make the cake board I measured, cut and painted a piece of balsa wood with gold acrylic paint. You can also use polymer clay and dust it with gold mica powders before baking. 

Maive's Top Tip

"How many times you part-bake your cake is your personal choice. I choose to cure it every step or every other step to prevent accidents and to make the sculpting process much easier and smooth. It's entirely up to you"

Turn over...

for another royal project,
from Sadie Brown on
page 10!

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Coronation chicken sandwich

The crowning glory of your miniature celebration
as we mark the coronation of King Charles III in 1/12th scale.



YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- White, grey, beige, light green and orange polymer clay
- Sunflower yellow, golden ochre, dark cadmium orange and brown pastels
- Royal blue and red fine permanent marker pens
- Kitchen foil
- Sculpey Bake & Bond (or similar)
- Craft glue
- 1/12th scale 2.5cm white ceramic plate
- Old 1/12th scale bamboo basket
- Two very small Union Jack flags
- Crushed seashells
- Gloss and matte varnish

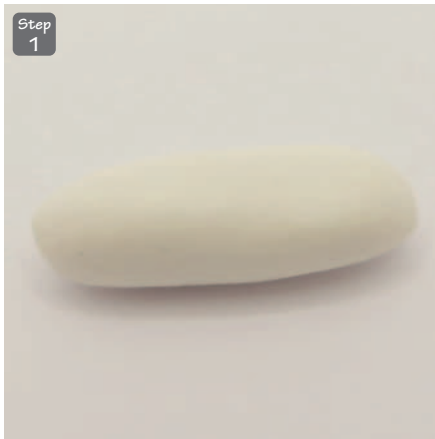
Tools required

- Small paintbrush
- Needle tool or sewing pin
- Craft knife

Did you know?

Invented in 1953 for the official Coronation Luncheon of Queen Elizabeth II, the recipe for Coronation chicken was originally known as 'Poulet Reine Elizabeth'.

Step 1



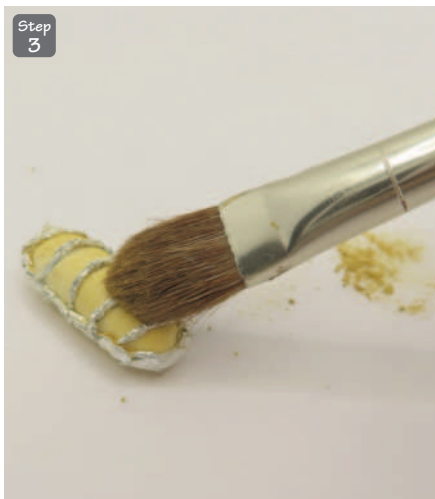
1 Take a 1.1cm ball of white clay and shape into a 'submarine roll' measuring roughly 2.3cm in length and 7mm wide.

Step 2



2 Twist a thin strip of kitchen foil into a firm rope about 1mm in thickness, wrapping all the way around the centre edge of the bread roll.

Step 3



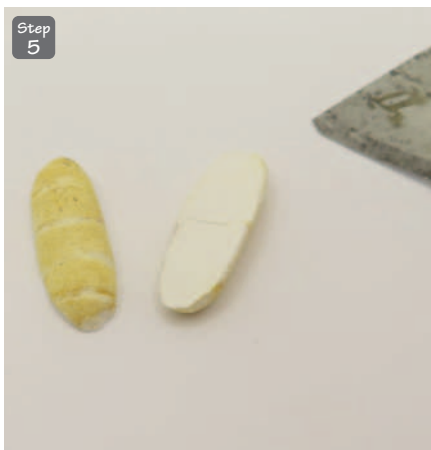
3 Repeat with five shorter ropes of foil, this time pressed diagonally across the top of the roll. Mix some grated golden ochre pastel with a touch of brown and brush over the entire bread roll.

Step 4



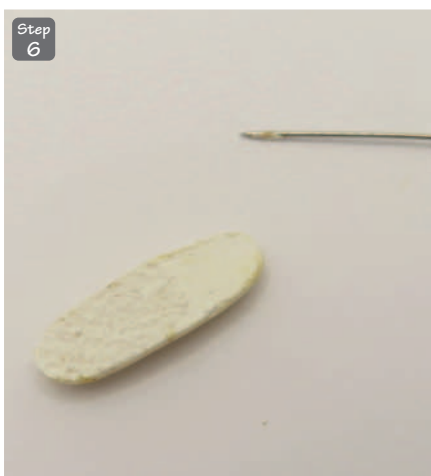
4 Carefully remove all the foil and brush the pastel mixture very lightly over the diagonal indentations across the top.

Step 5



5 Place the roll in the freezer, allowing the clay to harden up a little before carefully slicing the roll in half lengthways, using the indentation from the foil rope as a marker for where to cut.

Step 6



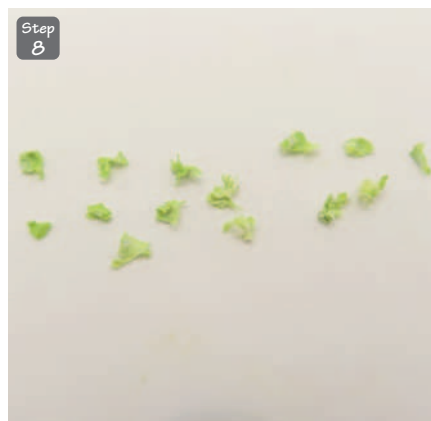
6 Use a needle tool or sewing pin to give the bread texture, taking your time for the most realistic appearance.

Step 7



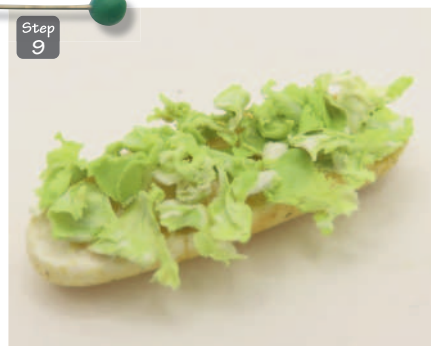
7 Again using the needle tool/sewing pin, make a small hole in the top of the roll, just slightly off centre. Bake both halves and allow to cool.

Step 8



8 Take small pieces of green and white clay, flattening them together against your worksurface, 'dragging' your fingernail over the clay. Scrape the clay away from your worksurface using the needle tool/sewing pin to reveal a fully formed individual lettuce leaf! Repeat until you have enough lettuce to cover the bottom half of the bread roll.

Step 9



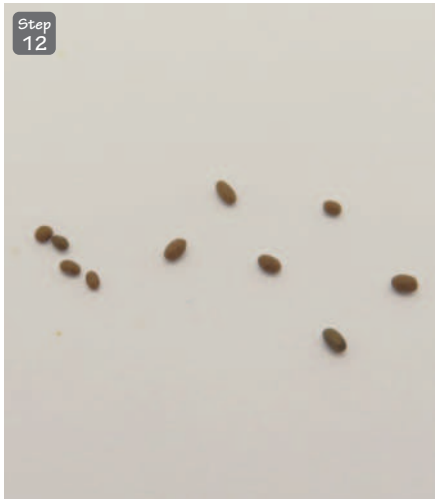
9 Stick the lettuce leaves to the bottom half of the roll using Sculpey Bake & Bond or similar. Make sure that plenty of lettuce hangs over the edge. ▶

Step
10

10 Mix white clay with a very tiny amount of grey and beige to create a colour resembling roast chicken.

Step
11

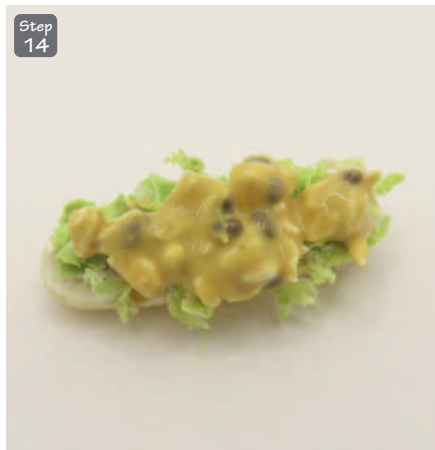
11 Pull pieces of clay from the mixture in random shapes to make very small pieces of chicken.

Step
12

12 Take a small piece of orange clay, mixing together with grated brown and dark cadmium orange pastel. Shape into tiny individual sultanas. Bake both these and the pieces of chicken before leaving to cool.

Step
13

13 Grate golden ochre pastel and mix with Bake & Bond to create a smooth sauce for the Coronation chicken.

Step
14

14 Mix the chicken and sultanas into the sauce before adding to the bottom half of the bread roll, on top of the lettuce. Place the other half of the bread on top to complete the sandwich.

Step
15

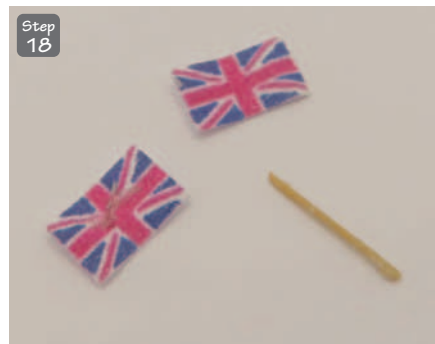
15 Grate a little sunflower yellow pastel, mixing with white polymer clay to make cream.

Step
16

16 Flatten small balls/ovals of cream clay with a fingernail, creating basic crisps in a variety of shapes and sizes.

Step
17

17 Brush both sides of the crisps with grated golden ochre pastel. Press them against the worktop with a fingernail one final time before using a needle tool to carefully lever them away, curling them into natural crisp shapes as you go. Bake the crisps, also returning the sandwich to the oven to bake the filling.

Step
18

18 Print and cut out two tiny Union Jack flags. The flag used here measures 4mm by 6mm and was hand drawn using permanent marker pens before being scanned to the computer and reduced in size with photo editing software. Cut a short length from an old 1/12th scale bamboo basket and glue the stem between the two flags to create the appearance of a traditional 'toothpick flag'.

Step
19

19 Once cooled, coat the top of the bread roll with matte varnish, and whilst the varnish is still wet and able to act as an adhesive, sprinkle some very tiny crushed seashells over the top to resemble seeds.

Step
20

20 Glue the little flag into the hole made in the top of the bread during step 7. Coat the Coronation chicken with gloss varnish, taking care to avoid the lettuce leaves.

Step
21

21 To make the Union Jack design plate, take a 1/12th scale white ceramic plate, 2.5cm in diameter, and begin by using a permanent marker pen in pillar box red to draw two thick red lines in a 'plus' sign. Using this as a starting point will provide a good placement guide when drawing the rest of the design.

Step
22

22 Complete the UK flag design on the plate using blue and red marker pens, adding a coat of gloss varnish to seal.

Step
23

23 Glue the sandwich and the crisps to the plate, piling the crisps on top of one another for added authenticity. 🏠

Sadie's Top Tip

"Why not use the concept of the toothpick style flag to add a special touch to your miniature celebrations throughout the year? They look great in tiny cupcakes!"



Turn to page 6...

for Maive Ferrando's mini royal celebration cake!



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Designs on the future





Designs on the future

Travel in time with Raphael Truffi Bortholuzzi.

A museum piece

The history books and the contemporary world around us provide endless inspiration for our miniature scenes, the latter currently seeing an exponential growth in popularity. But what about the future? Something rarely explored in miniature, 'Vertikaly', created by imaginative artisan Raphael Truffi Bortholuzzi, offers us the opportunity to travel into our own future. Gaining a glimpse into just one potential world through the prism of 1/100th scale art, the diorama forms part of the Imagining Futures Gallery at SESI Lab, a thrilling new interactive museum

// I always like to mention that the imagination and narrative are up to the viewer who will always build their reality, space and time during the experience when viewing the work

Raphael Truffi Bortholuzzi //

in Brasília. "In mid-2021, I was approached by the team of museologists and curators from the Exploratorium Museum in San Francisco, California, together with SESI Lab - Museum of Art, Science and Technology of Brazil with the premise of Imagining Possible Futures."

Looking to discuss Raphael's potential involvement in Imagining Futures, together they bounced potential ideas around before formulating concrete plans for Raphael's inclusion in the project prior to the museum's opening late last year. ▶

▼ Is this our future world?

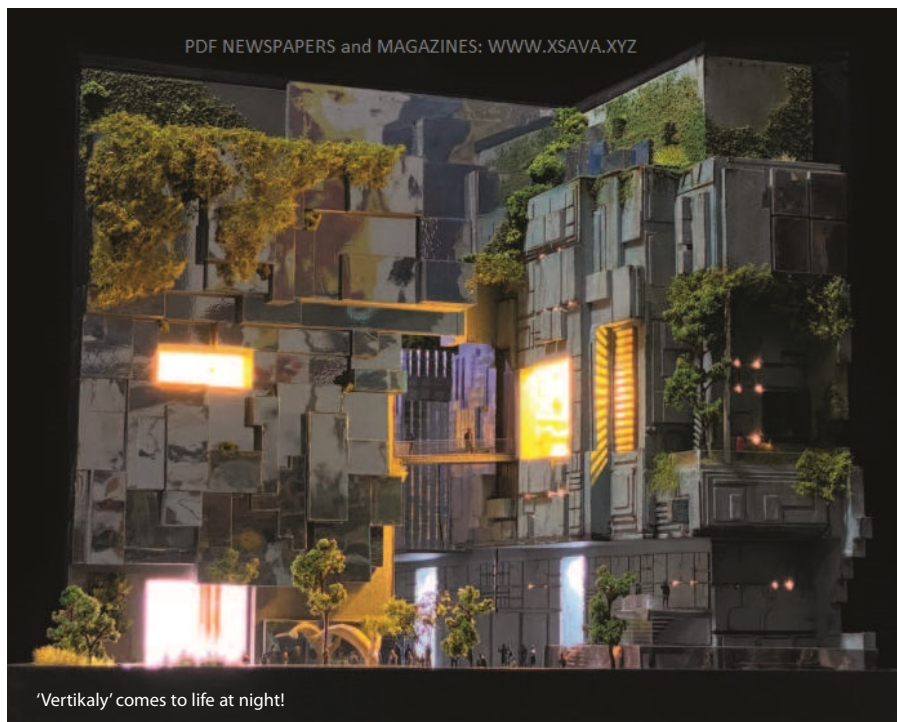




▲ Time traveller: Raphael looks in on the future

"With this theme in mind, I accepted the challenge and had the honour of exploring and creating a diorama-sculpture work using mixed techniques, imagining a futuristic environment for their upcoming long exhibition gallery wall."

We can see the building blocks of Raphael's vision in the architecture of today's urban environments, something Raphael himself references when I ask where within our future



timeline he considers 'Vertikaly' to be set. "Maybe 2090," he muses. "Basically, I think that 'Vertikaly' already exists in many aspects of our current society, but aesthetically we are close and on the way to that without doubt." Raphael is also very keen to point out that the same piece of miniature art can tell many different stories. "I always like to mention

that the imagination and narrative are up to the viewer who will always build their reality, space and time during the experience when viewing the work."

Museum directors allowed Raphael, a talented and experienced artisan at the top of his game, total freedom when it came to bringing his vision to life. This enabled him





▲ Life in the future ▲



to explore his clear idea of our future world, finding himself influenced by everything from 1980s science fiction movies to his own global travels. "When I envision a future today, I see it moving forward very quickly with the use and leverage of artificial intelligence (AI), robotic autonomy, and also our attempt at zero carbon emissions," he tells me. "But I also see a symbiosis between urban life and nature taking place in favour of a quality and self-sustaining life."

Mirror image

The build itself began with a prototype constructed from cardboard. This is an element of the process which Raphael explains is used in the majority of his work, helping him to gain not only an understanding of the size and shapes involved, but to also explore the impact of light and shadow within a scene. The latter being a fundamental aspect when it came to the construction of 'Vertikaly' with its heavy use of mirrored 'glass' as a central theme of the overall design. "One of the things I knew I would use from the beginning was mirrors, as I was always interested in exploring forced perspective along with optical illusion creating depth, and this was only possible with the use of mirrors."

Raphael's enthusiasm for the project evident, as is the thought which went into designing the main structure. Each and every material used in the building's construction isn't simply there to look good. Raphael has also taken in account the

evolution of construction and the ways in which how we build is changing to protect the natural world around us. "For me, the future will have a mix of textures, colours, shapes and lights as we discover new materials and new ways of building," he says. "I find it interesting to mix geometric shapes in the case of the mirrored facade in one of the sectors of the building, the use of blue reflective smoked glass windows with

the shapes representing solar panels that generate energy for it. An efficient, smart, and aesthetic way for the environment."

Life in the future

A character in its own right, nature plays a hugely important role within the diorama's overall design. The way Raphael has cleverly weaved the natural world into the scene, from the over-hanging foliage to [P0](#)



Barking up the right tree!

Growing into the future. Nature thrives throughout Raphael's futuristic world



Intricate detail in all aspects of the world





◀ Alternative view

climbing plants, means this is an urban space people would flock to spend time. Indeed, one of the most intriguing elements of the scene is perhaps his inclusion of human figures. But just how did he create the tiny people who populate this inspirational scene? "This is a great question actually, and I should mention that I rarely use human figures in my work. Although I avoid it, this was a big challenge for me, so the idea of having people had to be well elaborated for me to be able to maintain an aspect of movement and composition of the scene. I managed to reach a satisfactory effect using my 3D printer by printing a small variety of personas in resin." If you look carefully, you'll see that, as Raphael points out when he references movement, these aren't simple static figures. With the aid of modern technology, Raphael has been able to design and create a sense of action within the scene. Some figures appear to be walking, whilst others stand with a hand on their hip or have one arm across their waist whilst

touching their chin in quiet contemplation. "A detail and funny fact is that I modelled the figures in 'low-poly', that is, that I had a relatively small number of polygons, making the final shape of the figure more geometric than organic, thus creating a futuristic effect." Raphael also leaves us to ponder another aspect of our future world, adding, "A question that remains here in 'Vertikaly' is whether the figures are human or androids?"

It's thought that somewhere in the region of 350,000 people a year will pay a visit to SESI Lab, meaning Raphael's diorama, and in turn small scale art, will be viewed by a vast audience. 'Vertikaly' provides a fascinating concept, demonstrating how the as yet untold stories of our future provide the ideal backdrop for the miniaturist's imagination to thrive. Able to travel wherever our ideas take us, the design possibilities are endless. A display board within the exhibition perfectly describes the future as ours to build. And in small scale we're ready to lay the foundations! 🏠



◀ The inside view

▼ Watching the world go by from the balcony



◀ Raphael's walkway in the sky

INFO

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Find out more about SESI Lab at:



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Instagram identities:

@TALESFROMTHEOLDTHREADHOUSE

Moi Ali hears how over 1,500 darling mice are inhabiting dolls houses across the globe.

Idyllic is the word that springs to mind when Becca Wheeler tells me about her working day, making the most adorable dolls house sized needle felt mice...

"I live in a small 17th century black and white cottage in a village called Much Cowarne in rural Herefordshire," she said. "My work cabin is in the garden and we are surrounded by open countryside and apple orchards. I was a curtain maker, but closed my business to concentrate on needle felting as a full-time job. My work cabin is a few steps from the cottage and accessed over a bridge. I spend all day in it creating the little mice." How many of us have a work commute like that? It sounds just perfect.

Becca started needle felting as a hobby, while working as a professional curtain maker, but the pleasure she got from needle felting pushed her in a new creative direction:

// Mice are the perfect scale for a 1/12th scale dolls house, they naturally fit into lots of creative scenes //

"I found I loved it so much that I decided to make it my career. I dabbled with wool and felting needles and honed my skills over a few years, being totally self-taught." This was music to my ears, as I have myself invested in wool, needles and a needle felting book, but my efforts to date have been disappointing. Becca, you have encouraged me to give it another go – and stick at it! If I can make

something a fraction as cute as your darling little mice, I will be a very happy bunny!

Becca continued: "Mice are the perfect scale for a 1/12th scale dolls house, they naturally fit into lots of creative scenes, and I love making them. The only mouse I have ever kept is the one I named Pip. She lives in my workroom with me and gets up to lots of adventures! There are over 1,500 of my mice now living all over the world. I watch what they get up to via social media and love that they are so cared for by their new owners. The mice are sold as collectable items, not toys. They are totally hand-made, including their little clothes, which are finished with trimmings and tiny embellishments I've collected over the years. Each one is unique: no two are ever the same. This ensures they each have their own little 'personalities'. One of a kind!" 🐭



Each one is unique



The perfect creative space



A cosy den of creativity



Becca's Herefordshire idyll

Pip's cottage



Inside Pip's place



Three little mice on an adventure



Such adorable faces



Haute couture for mice



Although she used to take commissions, Becca explained that she no longer does this, "as I found it stifled my own artist approach. I found it very difficult to create someone else's idea, when I have so many of my own!" I can understand Becca's stance. These mice come from her inner well of creativity, and cannot be produced to a certain pre-determined specification.

"For a long time, I didn't have a dolls house and then I decided to make one for Pip. Using the IKEA Flisat as a base, I created Pip's first home. I love making miniatures, and rarely buy an already made piece. I prefer to create my own unique pieces. The second dolls house I created was also Swedish, a Lundby. Again, everything was changed to put my own style into it. I make all of my own kitchen units, sofas, chairs, beds... you name it! My background profession and training as a seamstress means I can make lovely soft furnishings too – as well as the lovely mice clothing. Tutorials are available in my Etsy shop."

It is clear from the way Becca talks about her creations that they have real personalities and lives, and that Pip is one of the family. She told me: "The home Pip mostly lives in is her little cottage. I decided I would scratch build this from some plans I purchased on Etsy. I then added a patio area, and even a little lean-to on the side. Her homes will always be work in process, as they are constantly changed and updated depending on the season and how creative I'm feeling." Lucky Pip!

Clearly Becca is not alone in embracing these uber cute creatures into her life. Her customers are no different. "My customers often get in touch to tell me how their little mouse has changed their lives. They have found having a mouse has sparked an interest in creating a home for them, given them a creative outlook, and provided a therapy and escapism from some of

// One day I'd like to write a book about Pip and her adventures //

the difficulties they are going through. The feedback I get is truly wonderful and makes me feel very proud." I totally get what people feel about these wonderful creations. Just look at their faces! Those big eyes, those cute noses. They are adorable.

Not only does Becca have a dream home

and a dream job, but also all the support she needs: "My family and friends love that I am able to spend my time creating these little mice. They see the imaginary world I have created for Pip and love the stories and adventures that we get up to. One day I'd like to write a book about Pip and her

adventures. I have many stories to tell." If the eventual book is a patch on the mice, Becca, it'll be a best seller!

If you would like to purchase your own unique mouse, you will find them in Becca's Etsy shop, The Old Thread House, or look out for her new website which is coming soon. 

Eyeing up ribbons



Thrice as nice



Ready for Christmas



Super cute

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Tool shed: Taking it easy

Whether celebrating a wonderful coronation, a bank holiday weekend, or just a few spare moments in the back garden, there are lots of reasons to enjoy a good read outside in a comfy chair or a welcome nap in a hammock before toasting some marshmallows over the backyard firepit.

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Small, sturdy cardboard box with lid (mine is 3-1/4in (83mm) square and 1-3/8in (35mm) high)
- Egg carton or other textured pressed paper packaging
- Black scrapbook paper
- Black and cream acrylic paint
- Small branch from your garden
- 19-gauge black steel wire
- Small Styrofoam 'pearl'
- Golden brown eye shadow
- Red heavy cotton
- Matching thread
- Fibrefill batting
- Cream 7/8in (22mm) wide grosgrain ribbon
- Cream crochet or perle cotton
- Two brass jump rings
- Micro-dowels (1/12in diameter)
- Twine
- 3/32in (2.4mm) thick sheetwood
- 1/8in (3mm) square stripwood
- Heavy scrapbook paper
- Four laser cut brackets*, optional
- White glue

Tools required

- Knife and steel ruler
- Ball stylus
- Needle-nose pliers
- Wooden cocktail stick
- 1/4in (6mm) diameter dowel
- Small hand drills
- Needle files
- Emery board
- Sewing needle
- Sewing machine (optional)
- Grid paper
- Small leaf and flower paper punches

*Mine are BRO15a lobe bracket (2/package), source: lasertechminiatures.com

Photos by Stephen Lesbirel



MAKE THE FIREPIT

1 Paint the outside of the box and its lid black. Cut the sides from the lid and set them aside. Cut the top of the lid into strips equal to the box height minus its thickness. Discard the scraps and touch up the paint. Score two lid top strips in half and fold them on those lines. Place their ends together to form an open square.

2 Cut the textured pressed paper into individual stone blocks, each slightly less than half the height of and about a quarter the width of the outside of the box. Mine are 9/16in (14mm) by 3/4in (19mm) for the inside, 7/8in (22mm) for the outside. You will need about 50 stone blocks. Cut more pressed paper strips a bit wider than the cut-off lid sides – mine are 1in (25mm) wide. These will become the capstones to face the top of the firepit. I made the corner capstones square and divided the remaining spaces for two other capstones.

Ruth's Top Tip

"If your shears leave serrated marks along the edges of the blocks, sand them off. Also sand the corners to blend any block seams"

3 Glue scrapbook paper pieces over the outside of the corner joins of the open square. Glue a row of stone blocks around the inside bottom of this square, trimming, scoring and folding them at the corners as needed. Space the stones slightly so the black 'grout' shows between them. Glue another row around the inside of the square, offsetting the vertical grout lines and showing a horizontal grout line between the rows.

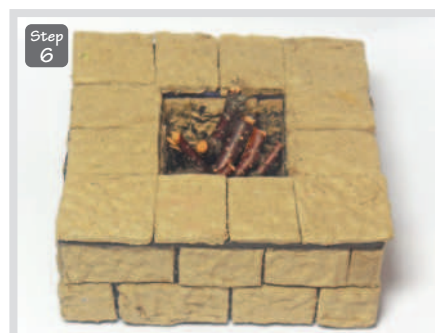
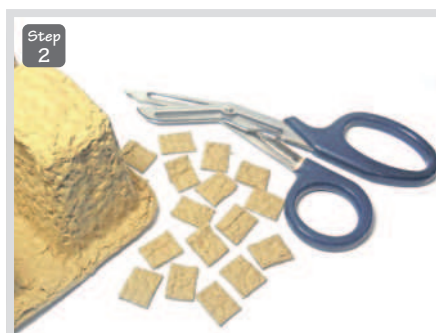
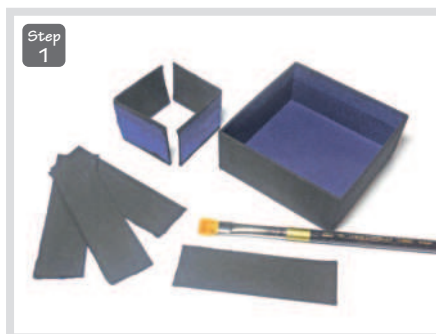
4 Use two lid sides to span across the top of the box at each side. Cut the remaining lid side(s) to span the distance between these side spans so that you have an open frame the size of the top of the box base. Glue scrapbook paper across the bottom of the joins. Glue the stone block covered inner square in the centre of the box base and the frame atop the square and the box.

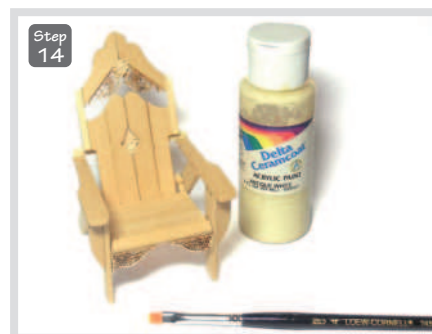
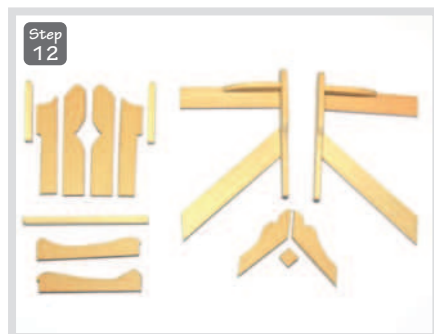
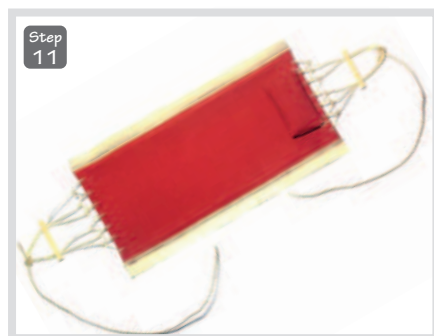
5 Glue a row of stone blocks along the outside bottom of the box on opposite sides, spacing them slightly as before. Glue a half stone block at the ends of the remaining opposite sides, simulating the thickness of the stones on the adjacent faces. Finish that row with whole stone blocks between the half ones, spacing them as before. Make a second row in the same way, offsetting the vertical grout lines and simulating the block thicknesses at the corners.

6 Cut the capstone textured paper strips so they overhang the top frame slightly and show grout lines between the stones. Glue the capstones onto the frame. Smudge the inside of the firepit with black paint to look like soot, making it more densely smudged at the bottom and showing the stonework nearer the top. Cut branch lengths to fit inside the square.

7 Cut a 4in (102mm) length of wire and fold it in half. Form short right-angled ends for the fork prongs. Hold the prongs with the pliers and turn the folded end to form the centre twists of the fork. Embed the prongs in a small piece of Styrofoam, brush the end lightly with golden brown eye shadow, and place the fork on the firepit capstones.

8 Cut a 4in (102mm) by 8in (203mm) piece of cotton, mitre the corners, and press 1/4in (6mm) under along all the edges. Sew or lightly glue these seams shut. Cut a 2-1/2in (64mm) square piece of cotton, fold it in half, sew one end and the long side with a 1/4in seam allowance. Mitre the corner and trim the seams. Turn the pillow and stuff it lightly with batting. Turn in the open end and sew it closed by hand. 





MAKE THE HAMMOCK AND PILLOW

9 Cut two 3in (76mm) long micro-dowels. Centre and lightly glue the dowels to the underside of the hammock just behind of the end seams. Glue the ends over the dowels, encasing them and forming a double edge at both sides at the ends of the hammock. Press 1/4in (6mm) under along both long edges.

10 Cut a 7in (178mm) length of grosgrain ribbon, pencil mark it down the centre, and cut it on this line. Remove the long threads from the cut line back to the bound selvage edge. Glue the fringes selvage edges on the stitching lines along both long sides of the hammock. Sew the upper corners of the pillow to the hammock around the encased dowels, leaving 3/16in (5mm) spacing in the crochet cotton.

Ruth's Top Tip

"Apply the glue to the hammock a bit at a time under the fringe with a cocktail stick tip"

11 Thread the crochet cotton onto the needle and knot it. Hold a larger dowel against one hammock end's encased dowel and, starting from the underside, stitch over the dowels making six equidistant loops from side to side. End with two stitches on the underside. Remove the dowel and repeat for the opposite end. Cut a 1-1/4in (32mm) length of square stripwood and drill through it 3/16in (3mm) from each end. Tie a 6in (152mm)

length of crochet cotton to an end loop, thread it onto the needle and pass it through a stripwood hole, through a jump ring, back through the opposite stripwood hole, and tie it to the third loop from the opposite end. Repeat for the next loops over, twice. Repeat for the opposite end. Tie a length of twine to each jump ring.

MAKE THE CHAIR

12 Cut all the wood pieces noted in the chair's cutting list. File and sand the arms, arm supports, top trim, back slats and the seat supports to the shapes shown in the template. Glue the arm supports against the front legs with the top and outer edges even. Glue an arm onto a front leg and arm support for each side, overhanging the front by 1/4in (6mm). Glue the back legs to the arms where shown. Turn these assemblies and glue a seat support to each front and back leg pair.

13 Glue the top trim pieces together in the middle and the square into the bottom of the join. Glue the back slats together. Glue the outer uprights against the slats, with the bottom ends even with the side cut-outs. Glue the top trim just below the taper at their tops. Sand the top front corner of the back batten rounded. Brace the side assemblies 1-11/16in (43mm) apart. Glue the batten onto the back of the arms and the seat slats onto the seat supports, beginning at the front (see the template). Glue the assembled back against the back batten and between the furthest back seat slat and the next forward one.

14 Glue a laser bracket against each front leg and the front seat slat. Punch four leaves and a small flower from scrapbook paper and emboss them with the ball stylus. Overlap them to fill the diamond space in the seat back and glue them together. Glue this shape into the diamond space, against the back support. Make a similar shape and glue it to the wood square. Glue the remaining two brackets against the wood square and top trim. Paint.

Ruth's Top Tip

"Jewellery filigree, lace, punched leaves and flowers, curled wire, or quilled paper scrolls are all good substitutes for the laser trim"

MAKE THE BUNTING

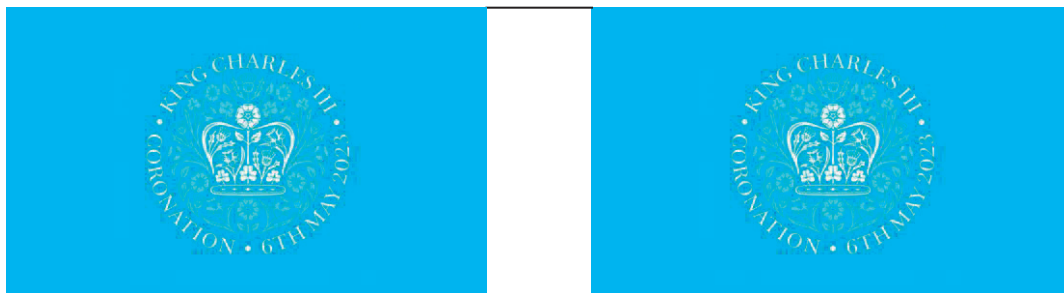
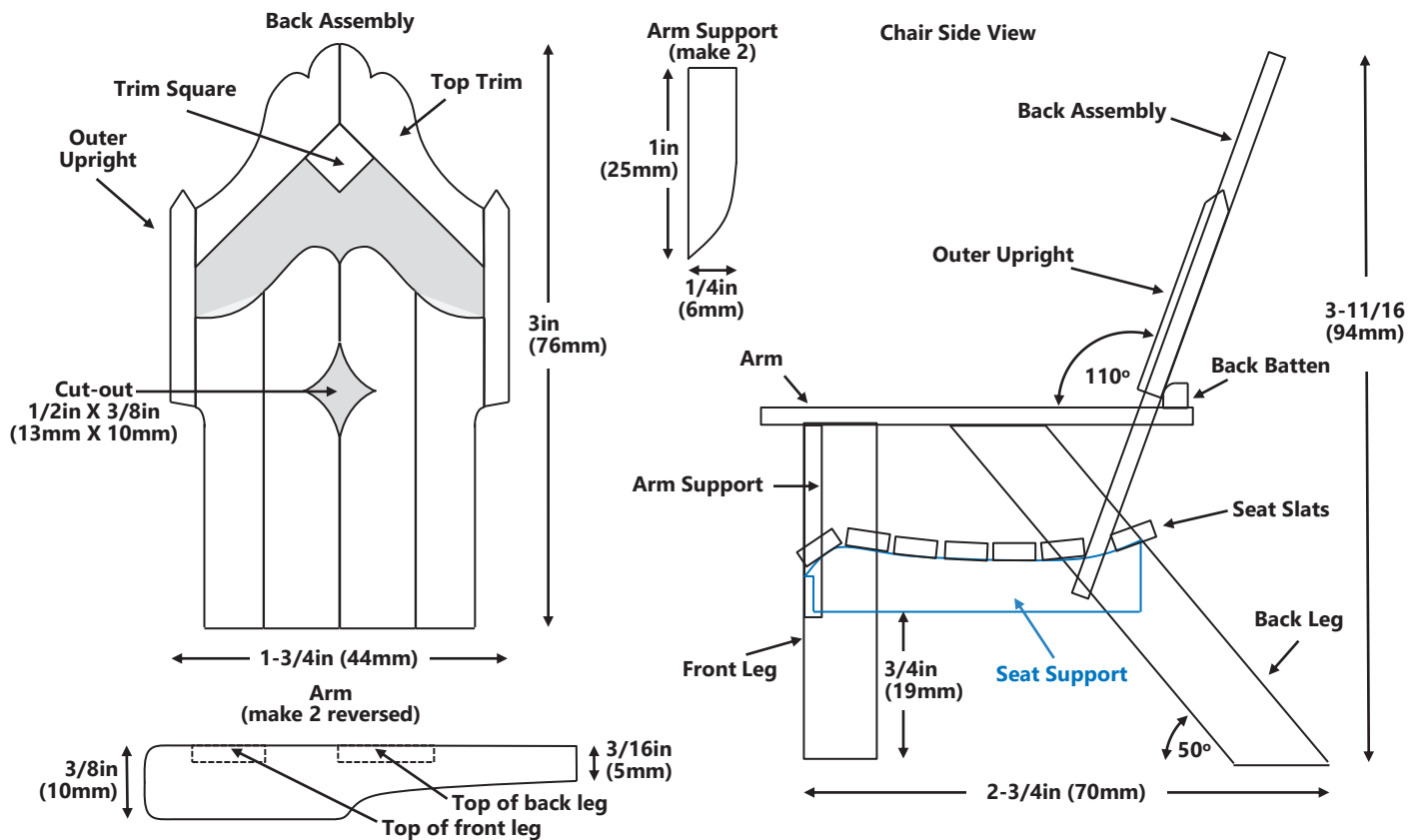
Using the official royal coronation emblem from the template provided, you can adorn your outdoor space with decorations to celebrate the occasion if you wish. Check out the March and April issues if you'd like to build this shed that is featured here!

Glue the flag around a painted 3/16in (5mm) dowel, topped with a brass bead, and glue into a large wooden bead or doll pin stand. Fold the bunting pieces in half and glue them over coloured string to complete.

TOOL SHED: Taking it easy

Patterns at 100%

© Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel 2023



Making a good impression

Crafting rubber stamps can be used to make miniatures, says Moi Ali.



Moi says...

"Many miniaturists are also keen crafters, who have a stash of crafting goodies that can also be put to great use in a dolls house scene. If this sounds like you, raid your crafting cabinet and see what you can press into action to create unique miniatures.

I have a large selection of crafting rubber stamps that I use for scrapbooking and cardmaking. I have found two great uses for them: impress them into clay to make items (in this case, I'll show you how I used the technique to make an Elizabethan 'metal' fireback and a manhole cover); or use them as they were intended, to stamp an image – in this case, onto cushions and tiles. I'll also show how they can be used for heat embossing"

FIREBACK AND MANHOLE COVER

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Rubber stamps
- Clay (airdry or polymer)
- Black paint
- Pencil



1 Roll out airdry clay (if you use polymer clay, remember to bake it after step 2 or 3), lay a rubber stamp on top and press down evenly for a clean impression.



2 Carefully remove the rubber stamp, then cut the clay into a rectangular, square or even curved top to make a fireback.



3 Cut a circular shape for the manhole cover. It doesn't have to be perfect, as you can sand any rough or uneven edges after the clay has dried.



4 Let the clay dry thoroughly, which may take several days. Sand if necessary and paint both the manhole cover and fireback black (if using black polymer clay, you can omit this step).



5 Use a pencil and colour the entire surface of the items to give a silvery sheen that resembles metal.

Moi's Top Tip

"Adapt the manhole cover project to make a delightful Victorian ceiling rose. Paint it white or cream (or use white/cream polymer clay) and add gold gilding wax to highlight the pretty detail. Small stamps can make 'plaster' medallions of the sort found on Georgian houses"

TILES AND FABRIC

The other use for rubber stamps is to stamp them onto a surface, such as walls, tiles or even fabric. Make sure the inkpad you use is permanent ink, or the image may bleed, smear or rub off. When using fabric, rubber stamps enable you to create your own unique soft furnishing such as curtains, cushions and bed linens. You can even make dolls clothes from stamped fabric.

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Rubber stamps
- Inkipad
- Tiles or fabric
- Shoe polish (for tiles)
- Coloured marker pens (for fabric)



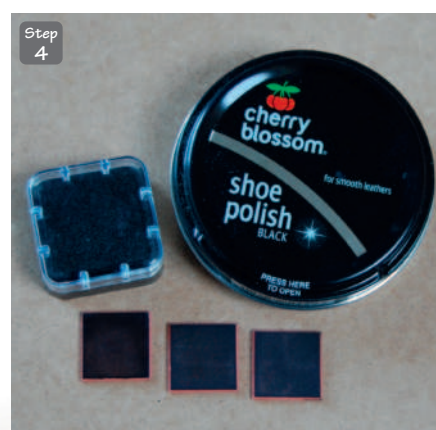
1 Stamp a small repeating pattern on each tile, or use a big stamp across several tiles.



2 You can use more than one colour of ink, and different rubber stamps on the same tile. Let one colour dry before adding another.



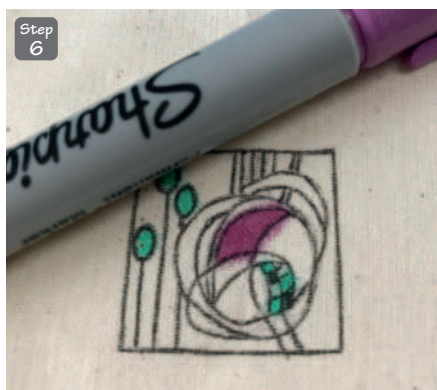
3 Clear wax shoe polish over your stamped tiles gives a lovely depth of colour (the one on the right is polished).



4 Turn terracotta tiles black using a permanent black inkpad and black shoe polish to add a sheen. The black tiles look nice interspersed with patterned ones. [DHMS](#)



5 Stamp your fabric, ensuring that you have a tight weave fabric that will hold a crisp image.



6 Use fine permanent markers to add colour to the stamped design (test it first to make sure it won't bleed).



HEAT EMBOSsing



Sprinkle embossing powers over an ink stamped image when the ink is still wet to achieve a raised impression. I created 1/12th scale shields this way. First, I cut shield shapes from stripwood. Next, I painted the shields with stripes and block colours, then distressed them with sandpaper for an aged and worn effect. When everything is dry, stamp the shields. I used fleur de lys and crown stamps. When the ink is wet, carefully sprinkle with gold embossing powder and tap off the excess (the powder will stick to the wet ink). 'Set' the gold powder using a crafting a heat gun. It will leave a beautiful raised design. Ring the changes using other metallic powders such as silver and bronze. 🏠

Moi says...

"I used Charles Rennie Mackintosh rubber stamps to make cushions for my Mackintosh house and plan to use the technique to make bed drapes and wall hangings in colours to match my décor"

Moi's Top Tip

"Rubber stamps make lovely frieze designs above picture rail level, as well as below dado level. Pick a large design for a dramatic effect, but make sure it's still in scale and a suitable design for the style of the room"



Contemporary beach scene

Expert artist Stephanie Guy demonstrates how to paint a contemporary beach scene.

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Derwent Artbar Watersoluble Wax in:
Dark indigo
Turquoise
Primary yellow
Paprika
Burnt umber
Primary red
Opaque white

Tools required

- 300gsm (or heavier) cold pressed slightly textured ('not') watercolour paper
- Sharp craft knife, cutting mat and steel ruler
- Three water pots
- Size four synthetic watercolour or acrylic brush with a good point

1 Choose the size of piece you want to create and using your steel rule and craft knife, or a good sharp pair of scissors and a steady hand, cut out the watercolour paper. If you're using a frame add an allowance so that you can stick it in place at the end. I'm using approximately 50mm x 60mm paper.

Firstly, pop a little drop of water onto your indigo, primary yellow and turquoise artbars. This will soften them and make them easier to work with. The first four steps happen very quickly, so read through the instructions before you start. Dip your brush into a pot of clean water and swirl it round on the indigo artbar to pick up lots of juicy colour. Swish the brush across top of your paper with the point of the brush in thin air over the top edge, and the belly of the brush doing all the work.

2 Dip your brush quickly in and out of the clean water and touch the point of it to the bottom of the still wet indigo paint on the paper. Bring the brush downwards, moving it with a diagonal action and leaving a couple of gaps with no paint. We're looking for a dynamic sky with lots of movement and no straight lines.



3 Now clean your brush thoroughly in two pots of water, using your dirty water first and your clean water second. Swirl your clean wet brush on the turquoise artbar, and paint over the bottom edge of the still damp indigo. Bring the turquoise down the paper, again using diagonal wavy lines. Blooms will almost certainly be forming in your sky, looking rather beautiful and forming the edges of clouds.

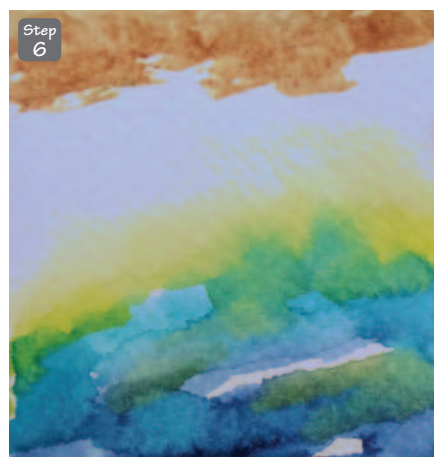
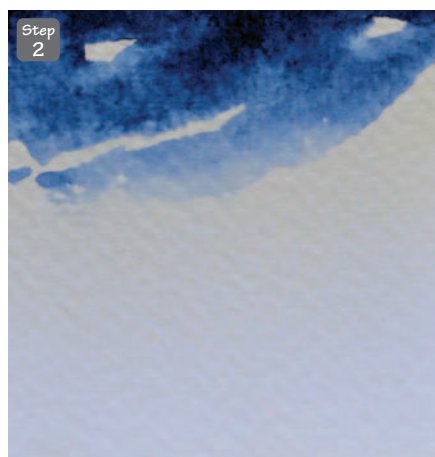
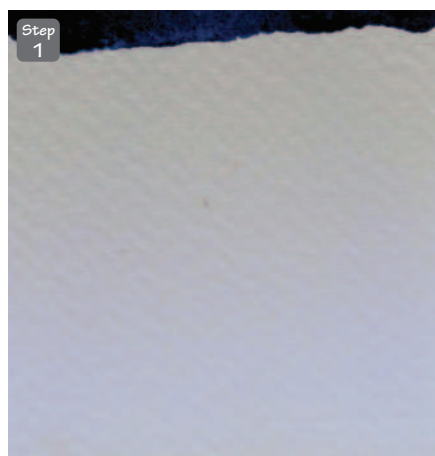
4 Again, wash your brush in the dirty water then the clean water, giving it a good mix around on the bottom of the pot to release the old paint. By now you will probably need three pots of water, working from dirty to clean, to ensure that you always have a clean brush for picking up fresh paint. Swirl your brush on the primary yellow, pick up lots of juicy colour, and overlap the yellow onto the still damp turquoise. Without cleaning your brush return upward and paint a little yellow over some of the turquoise and indigo, remembering to keep some of those white gaps paint-free.

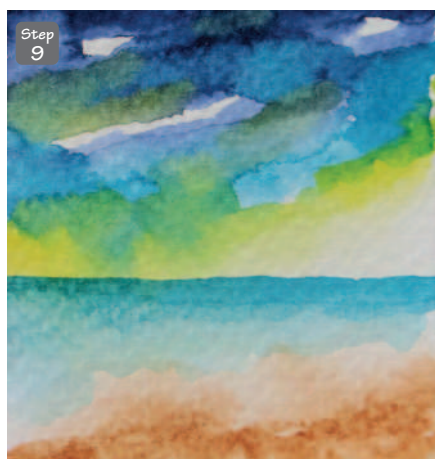
5 Clean your brush systematically (I can't stress this enough - it's essential for your brush to be completely clean when you pick up fresh paint) and soften the bottom edge of the yellow by gently tickling it with a damp brush. Sit back and wait for your painting to dry. Once it's dry, if you feel that you don't have enough colour in your sky you can brush more paint over the top using slightly less water. I'm happy with mine as it is.

6 Turn your paper upside down ready to paint the sand. With a clean brush, swirl your brush on the paprika artbar. You may find that it takes more swirling to get enough colour here. Apply the paprika paint diagonally across the paper, varying how much you press on so that your beach is not uniform in colour.

7 Clean your brush and soften the edge with water by tickling it with a damp brush. Allow your painting to dry before moving on to the next step.

8 Turn your paper the right way round again and choose a position for your horizon. It can be anywhere you like, it just needs to overlap the bottom of the sky and be above the highest point of sand in your painting. When you've chosen your horizon line, pick up some turquoise paint in the same way as before and paint as straight a line as you can manage across the paper.





9 Just as before, soften the bottom edge of the turquoise with water. Leave a white gap between the sea and the sand.

10 Add a few yellow hints to the sea whilst it is still damp. Do not worry about blooms or cauliflowers that form in the sea, just like in the sky this adds texture and interest. Allow to dry.

11 If your horizon is looking a bit wonky, this is where we can correct it. Turn your paper upside down and pick up a little indigo on your brush. Paint the mountains in the far distance keeping the point of your brush on the horizon line at all times. It helps to move your arm from the elbow rather than the shoulder, this keeps the line straighter. The belly of the brush will no doubt touch in different places as you paint, and this will create the hills.

12 Now to add my signature texture to the paintings. Take a scrap of paper and cover the sky and sea to protect it. Hold the burnt umber artbar in your non-dominant hand and swirl your clean wet brush onto the end. Now flick paint from the end of the artbar over the sand.

Top Tips for Painting in Artbars (watersoluble wax)

- Always store your brushes flat, never resting on their points as this will damage them (either in or out of your water).
- Don't use expensive brushes with artbars as you will wear them out quite quickly. Synthetic student grade watercolour brushes will be perfect for this medium.
- Artbars are opaque and will muddy your clean water very quickly. Before changing colours wash your brush in a series of two or three water pots, beginning in the dirtiest water pot and working towards the cleanest. You should find that this means that your clean water will stay clean for longer, you will need to change water less often and your colours will not get muddy.
- Just like watercolours and gouache, artbars can very easily form 'cauliflower' patterns if you add more water or more paint before the previous layer has dried. Cauliflowers can be very beautiful in art and fit this style perfectly, so before you try to correct it take a step back and decide whether it adds anything to your painting. If you really don't like them, don't panic, just lift off as much as you can with a damp brush and tissue, then wait for it to thoroughly dry and then paint over it.
- If you find that you have paint where you don't want it, simply lift off as much as you can with a damp brush and tissue, dab it dry then wait for it to fully dry, then paint over it.

Stephanie says...

"These little beach scenes are one of my most popular styles of miniature painting, which is really lucky as I simply love painting them.

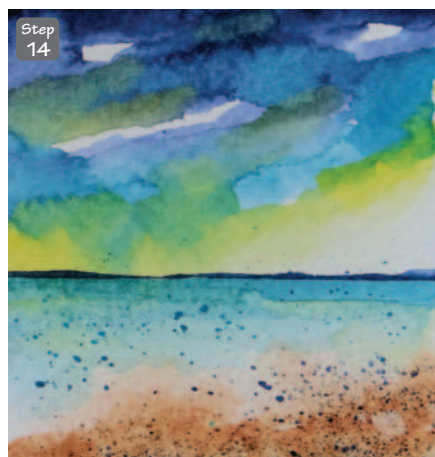
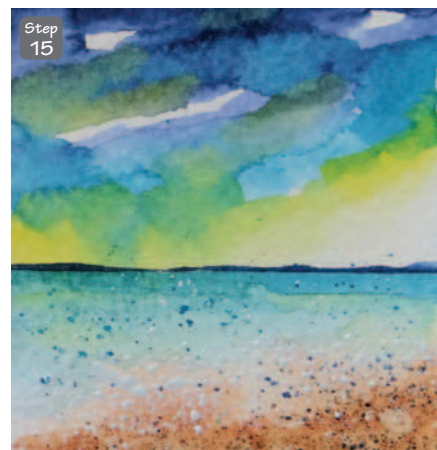
My technique using Derwent Artbars means that every single one is completely different - I couldn't recreate one exactly no matter how hard I tried. Yours will not look like mine, yours will be totally unique and special. Just relax, go with it, and enjoy the process."

13 Repeat with a little indigo. This is a very strong, dominant colour so go carefully so as not to swamp the piece. If you flick too much paint you can dab it off with a tissue and try again.

14 Move your protective paper up to cover only the sky, and splash turquoise over the sea. It doesn't matter if some goes on the sand as well.

15 Splash opaque white heavily along the shoreline and a little into the sea.

16 Splash some primary red onto the sand. Surprisingly, this lifts the colours of the whole piece. Finally splash primary yellow into the sea to reflect the sunset in the sky. 🏠



For loads more miniature projects...

For loads more miniature projects head to page 25 to find out how you can access our DigitalPlus!

Something different...

Why not try again using different colours? Instead of the sea you could try a green meadow with splashy flowers, or you could paint a dog on the beach.

I really like how these contemporary paintings look sat on a miniature easel made from large matchsticks.



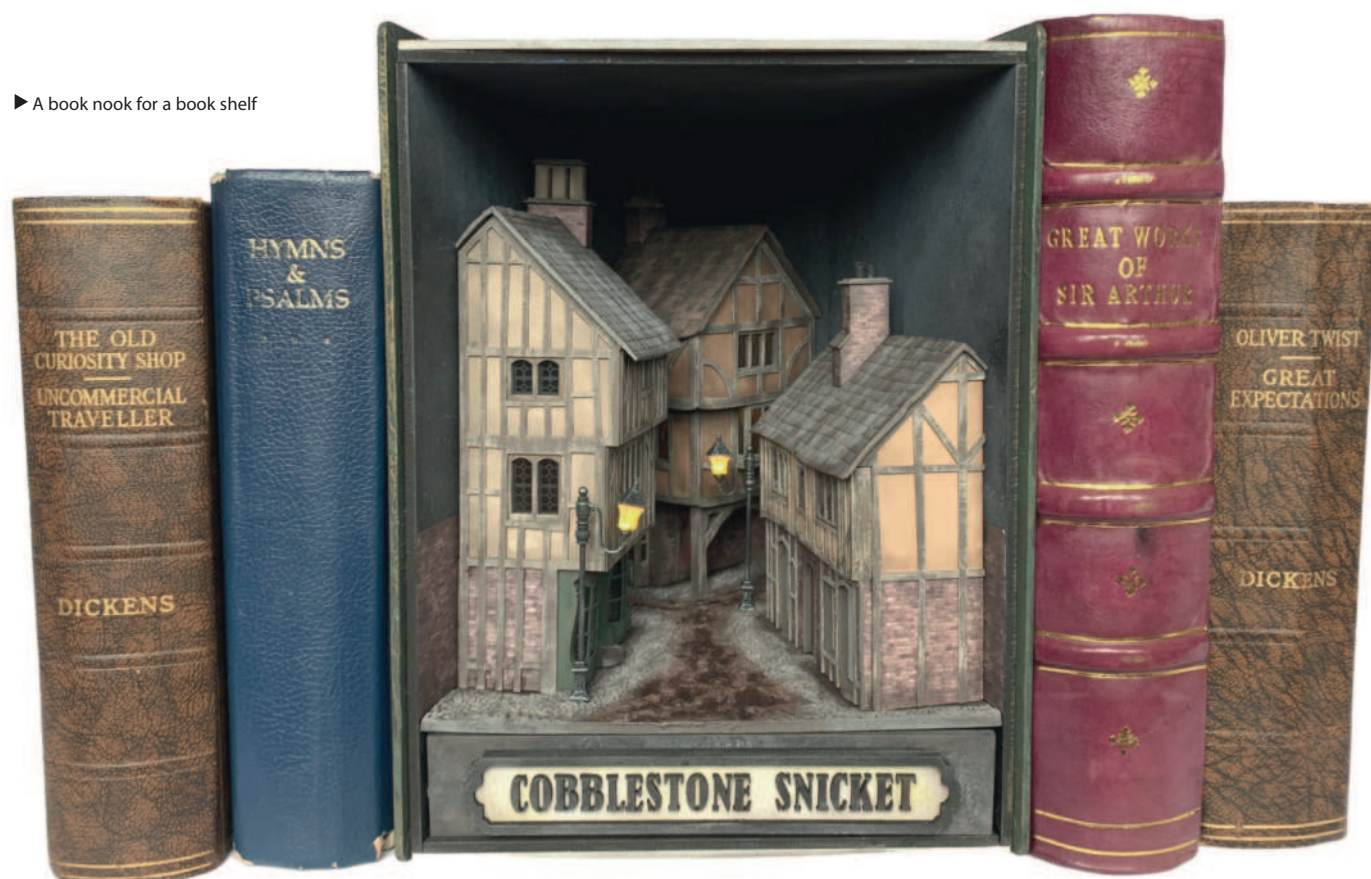
At Home with THE BROADWOODS



BETWEEN THE COVERS

This month, professional miniaturist Bea Broadwood exclusively shares her unique new Book Nook, plus explains all about her 'eureka' moment and why the inspiration behind it came from a completely different miniature hobby all together!

► A book nook for a book shelf



Inspired by the medieval streets of historic York, back in 2017 I designed a new 1/48th PP collection. It comprised of seven individual quarter scale dolls houses, which could be displayed together to form an atmospheric miniature street scene. Launched at Autumn Miniatura the same year, Cobblestone Snicket was an immediate success and we have since heard from our customers that it has become home for the likes of Scrooge, Marley and Tiny Tim (all in miniature of course!). It has even been transformed into a well-known fantasy alley, filled with magical characters and merchandise! Measuring just 85cm

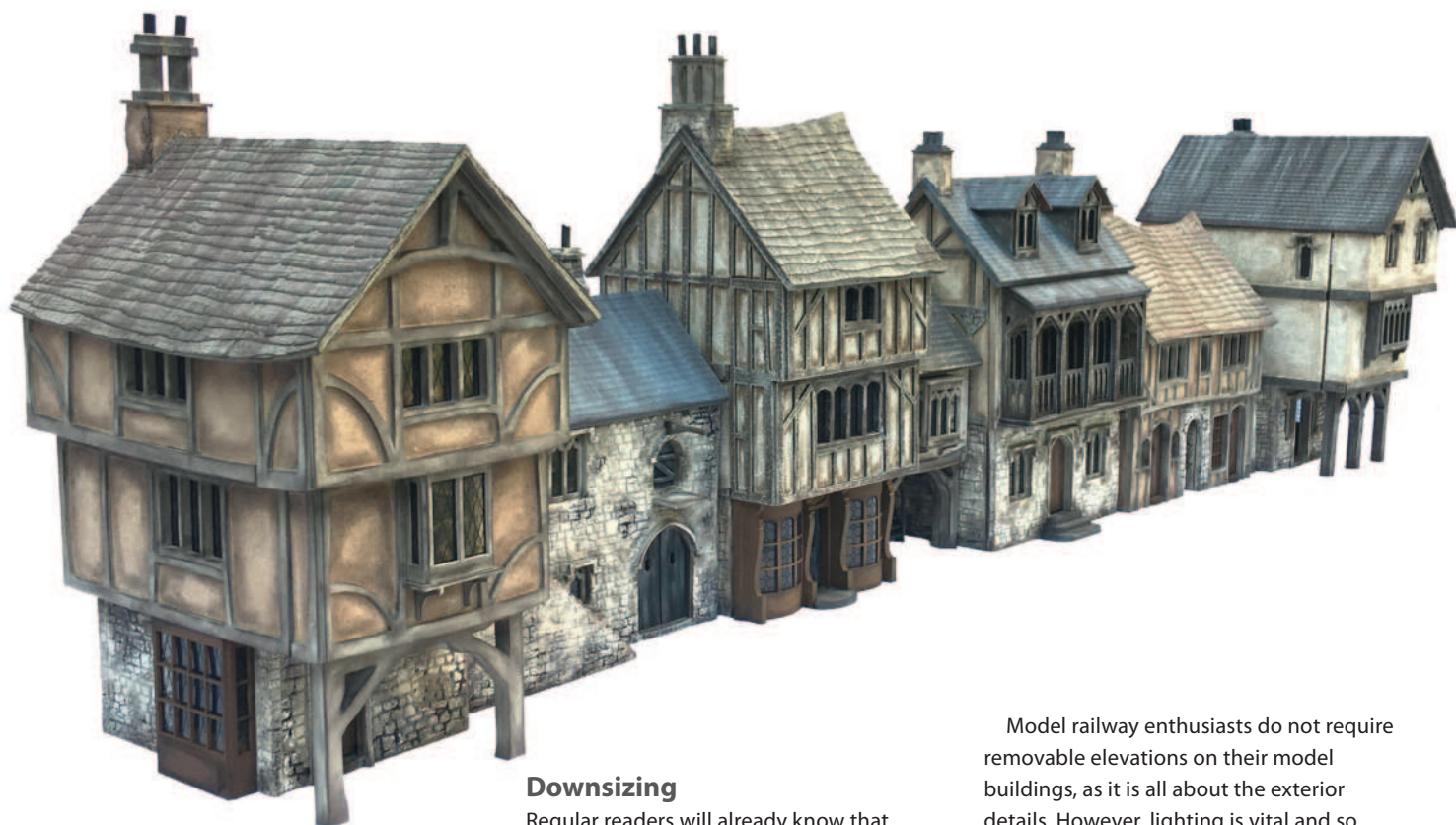


▲ Bea's sketch book

long, Cobblestone Snicket is small enough to be displayed on a simple shelf, mantle ledge or window sill and I think that due to its accommodating size it has remained a firm favourite with quarter scale fans around the world.

"A 'snicket' is a Northern English term for a narrow passage between houses; an alleyway."

Sometimes the design and development process of new kits can take time and patience, but Cobblestone Snicket was one of those rare designs that literally leapt off the pages of my sketchbook. [PSD](#)



▲ The original 'Cobblestone Snicket' in quarter scaleself

However, even as I sketched out my ideas on paper, I already knew that I wanted to do more with these little houses than just one street scene... and the beginnings of a book nook design began to roll around my head.

Book nooks: Nooks amongst the books

Since the rise of inspirational online platforms like Pinterest, a quick scroll is all it takes to stumble across a book nook. Built in all manner of genres and scales, even non-miniaturists have fallen for the beguiling charm of having a tiny scene or other worldly diorama nestled on display between books on a shelf. A PP take on a book nook has been on my 'to do' list for many years and in spring 2023 I (at last) found the opportunity to dust off my old sketches and make it a reality. My first consideration was which scale to work in? I knew I wanted to create an alleyway that combined depth and perspective, so I needed to choose a scale that would allow for multiple houses to be included without making the book nook overly deep. Despite its diminutive size, 1/48th was just too big... I needed something smaller, but not too tiny. So 1/76th scale was the Goldilocks solution; small enough for three buildings, yet big enough for even super fine details.

Downsizing

Regular readers will already know that alongside smaller scale dolls houses, I also design model railway buildings too. The most popular railway scale in the UK is 1/76th and I just love working in it! For those of you who like to know the 'maths' 1/76th is equivalent to 1 foot = 4mm, making it approximately a third smaller than 1/48th which is 1 foot = 6.35mm.

Model railway enthusiasts do not require removable elevations on their model buildings, as it is all about the exterior details. However, lighting is vital and so when I design in 1/76th scale I always add lighting holes in the bases and internal floors to allow simple LED lights to be concealed inside. After choosing which PP designs from the original Cobblestone Snicket I wanted to include in my book nook, I went back to the virtual drawing board to adapt and re-scale each one.



◀ Honeymead House in 1/48th & 1/76th



It's just an illusion

Having selected and rescaled all three houses, my attention then turned onto the display case for them. I wanted my book nook to create a 'point of perspective' and create a configuration that draws the eye into the scene and hints at a 'beyond'. I experimented by placing full size books either side of my prototype book nook, but I just wasn't happy with the results. After much pondering, I felt that parallel sides just didn't create the illusion of depth that I wanted... then I spotted one of my discarded books stood on end, with its cover and pages splayed. Needless to say, it was a eureka moment!

With the sides of the book nook slightly splayed, all that was needed was a little bit of tissue paper and cardboard to help create a realistic faux book cover. A concealed area within the display case was also incorporated in which batteries can be hidden to power all the lighting which brings the Snicket to life.

"This little Book Nook was such fun to work on, as it allowed me to play with perspective and also to do some Blue Peter style modelling too!" Bea.

Of course, you don't have to add a faux cover. The book nook's display case could simply be painted and then hidden amongst your books. Whatever you decide and no matter how much space you have, there's always a little bit of shelf space to accommodate a lost alleyway or snicket!

Next month...

Bea exclusively shares how to create your very own faux book display in her unique, step by step project.

If you would like to read more about PP's original 1/48th Cobblestone Snicket street scene, why not check out Bea's 'At Home With The Broadwoods' feature in issue 283/Dec 2017 of DHMS Magazine.

Bea Broadwood.

▼ Cobblestone Snicket Book Nook



▲ A miniature world within a book

► Lost Alleyways & Snickets

If you would like to read more about PP's original 1/48th Cobblestone Snicket street scene, why not check out Bea's 'At Home With The Broadwoods' feature in issue 283/Dec 2017 of DHMS Magazine, available from www.dollhouseandminiaturescene.co.uk



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Looking for inspiration for your next smaller scale project?

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The Jasper Community Theatre

Showtime!

Brae Oktober raises the curtain for opening night at Jasper County Community Theatre.

All boxed off

A visit to the theatre is to lose yourself in the power of imagination, watching the extraordinary come to life before our eyes as the story unfolds. Not entirely unlike the world of miniature art! 'Once Upon a Porch' won a rave review following its opening night, with an esteemed Honourable Mention as Brae Oktober's entry in the 29th HBS/Miniatures.com Creatin' Contest. A visual storyteller, Brae's depictions always show fascinating depth and Jasper County Community Theatre, named after her faithful feline companion, is no different. The 2022 Creatin' Contest saw entrants use the 'Welcome All Porch' as a base for an array of captivating designs, but for Brae it soon became clear that the stage was set for one of her most exciting productions

yet! Brae's initial intention had been to simply construct the porch as just that, a porch, enabling her to use the completed kit in photo shoots for her range of outdoor furniture. However, once bitten by the urge to tread those miniature boards, there was no turning back! With the decision made, Brae's attention turned to the auditorium, her inventive use of a painted cardboard box demonstrating that you don't always have to invest too much more than time and imagination! "I never planned to create an actual industrial building to house a theatre, from doors to windows to ceiling beams, but I needed something to serve as the illusion of a larger space," says Brae, adding that she used velvet curtains and poster board to help create the impression of a larger space beyond. Your fingers almost

itch to peel back the pleated curtains, half expecting to find a bustling front of house, an excited audience waiting to take their seats. Seats which add more to the story behind the theatre than just somewhere to sit. "The folding chairs, water cooler and concessions table were things I added to sell the idea of a small budget local theatre that operates on the generosity of donors and audience members. Perhaps it might be affiliated with a local school for the arts where students can put their talents to the test. For the entire build, I went with the idea of less is more."

One of the theatre's standout features, adding much to the overall ambience of a highly realistic setting, is the lighting. It's something which Brae has endeavoured to ensure is authentic as possible. ➡



The view from the audience



Gus takes to the stage for his moment in the limelight



Popcorn and candy floss. Getting ready for the interval!



Just look at those tiny programmes!

"The lighting truss and stage lights were attached across the top of the box, giving the illusion of a support structure and electronics high above the audience. Once the lights were turned down outside of the box and the stage lights turned on, the black surfaces became visually larger in the mind's eye. The contrast between light and dark worked even better than I had hoped." The designs for the rig and the fabulous spotlights were sourced online and then cleverly brought to life by Brae's friend Debora, Debora's husband, and a 3D printer. A piece of technology rapidly revolutionising what we can achieve in small scale, the results are incredible. "The low overall illumination and the high spotlights really sell the idea of being in a theatre, waiting for the play to begin," says Brae.

A starring role

Meanwhile, the lightbox displaying tonight's eagerly anticipated opening night makes inspired use of an inexpensive battery-operated keyring. This is just one of a host of fine details you might not necessarily notice at first glance. Like any good stage play, expect the unexpected. Including a charming red squirrel! "I'd originally intended for the squirrel to run along the roof, but the lighting truss blocked that view. He ended up bounding over the fence, ready to lead Gus on a wild chase!"

Gus is the star of the show, our leading man. He's also a delightful 1/12th scale Border Terrier! "The play to me is a slice of Americana daily life, a bit of a tearjerker, filled with sentiment and hope. I also introduced the mystical aspect of an animal on an adventure," reveals Brae. "I didn't write a whole play, but I did write a prologue to set the mood. Gus was custom made by Michal Gvir. He was originally intended for another build a couple of years ago, but the artist's waitlist was not open at the time. Gus fit well into this current build, so when the waitlist opened, I jumped at the chance to have him made."

In addition to the specially written prologue, which can be found on Brae's website, she designed a detailed cover for a 'Once Upon a Porch' programme/flyer, featuring Gus's image. Reduced in size and then printed in 1/12th scale, souvenir copies can be seen on the folding chairs in some of the photographs. With small touches like this, Brae has perfectly captured the atmosphere of a thriving local theatre at the heart of its community, but was also inspired by her own experiences as a theatregoer. "There are two plays I saw many years ago that heavily influenced the feel I wanted for this build. One was at The Annoyance

Theatre in Chicago. This is a smaller theatre and bar where the audience is right up front along the action. It's cosy and informal and delightful! The second was an outdoor performance of Twelfth Night done in Tex-Mex style at Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens in Ohio. This was also cosy and informal. The play I saw here was plagued with prop mishaps that ended up being even more comical in the way the actors just worked with the chaos. Both plays bring back warm memories."

As is clearly evident, the theatre and miniature art are in many ways, closely related, both seeking to draw you into the stories we want to tell. As we reach the curtain call for 'Once Upon a Porch', Brae has a message for those fascinated by the Jasper Community Theatre's stunning interior. "You don't have to create every last detail to sell the idea of a larger structure. You need just enough to let your mind and eye fill in the rest. All smoke and mirrors... like any great stage play." 🏠

INFO

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Petite pain au chocolat

Treat yourself to some miniature pastries with this quick make project.

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Brown, white and yellow polymer clay
- Golden ochre, light cadmium orange, dark cadmium orange, brown and white pastels
- Sculpey Bake & Bond (or similar)
- Small paintbrushes
- Needle tool or sewing pin
- Gloss varnish
- 1/12th scale ceramic plate

Sadie says...

"After dusting the pastries with pastel, use a small paintbrush to remove any excess on the plate"

Step 1



1 Roll some brown polymer clay into tubes measuring 1mm in diameter. Bake and allow to cool.

Step 2



2 Mix white polymer clay with yellow to make cream, rolling out to less than 1mm in thickness. Cut six rectangles measuring roughly 2.2cm by 7mm.

Step 3



3 Cut twelve 'chocolate batons' from the tubes of clay, each 7mm in length. Place a single tube across the end of one of the rectangles and roll the clay around it once before adding a second tube.

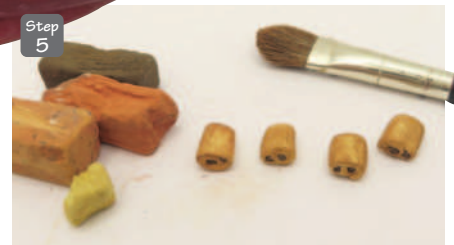
Step 4



4 Continue rolling the cream clay all the way around and flatten very slightly into the shape of a pain au chocolat. Repeat steps three and four until you have six pastries.



Step 5



5 Brush the pastries with grated golden ochre pastel mixed with a little brown. Create a darker shade using grated light and dark cadmium orange pastel mixed with golden ochre and brown, brushing mainly over the top of the pain au chocolat, leaving a little of the lighter colour visible at either end. Use a damp brush to 'diffuse' the pastel, giving the pastry a more realistic appearance.

Step 6



6 Use Sculpey Bake & Bond to stick the pastries to a 1/12th scale ceramic plate before baking. Once cooled, coat the pastry with gloss varnish, avoiding the 'chocolate'. Whilst the varnish is still wet, grate white pastel over the top of the pastries.

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RETRO-FIT REALISM:

INTERNAL WALLS, FLOORS AND CEILINGS

In part four of our mini-series, Moi Ali looks at adding realism inside the dolls house. Walls, floors and ceilings are a blank canvas. Use them to add realism in your dolls house. Let's start at the top, with the ceiling and work down to the floor.



▲ Moi painted this vibrant floor

Moi says...

"I sometimes use offcuts of full-size embossed 'anaglypta' type papers on dolls house ceilings. So long as the pattern is in-scale, it can give a nice effect"

Ceilings

Think about real life interior architecture. Modern homes probably have a plain ceiling and perhaps plain coving. A 1980s house is likely to have a swirly or stippled artex finish. A 1970s house may have no ceiling adornment. An Edwardian interior will have a simple cornice and ceiling rose. Victorian homes had highly detailed ceiling roses and cornices, while Georgian ones often had painted ceilings contained within delicate plaster shapes – often roundels and ovals – and spectacular plasterwork. Reproduce the correct ceiling treatment for the era of your diminutive dwelling.

To paint the ceiling of your Georgian mansion, ready-made paintings and decorative plaster moulding sets are

Ceiling roses come in many styles



available from Sue Cook Miniatures. Just paint the ceiling a base colour (mint green, pastel pink, baby blue and pale yellow were popular palettes); paste pictures of cherubs and the heavens (ready-made; or



▲ Spectacular plaster ceiling

A daring option is a tented ceiling for the ultimate in theatrical, dramatic effect. This technique was brilliantly executed in Jon Trenchard's Hordel Castle nursery. Let it inspire you!

Walls

Paint, wallpaper, fabric, tiles, tongue-and-groove, wood panelling, plaster panels, three section walls... choose the best style for the period in which your house is 'set'.

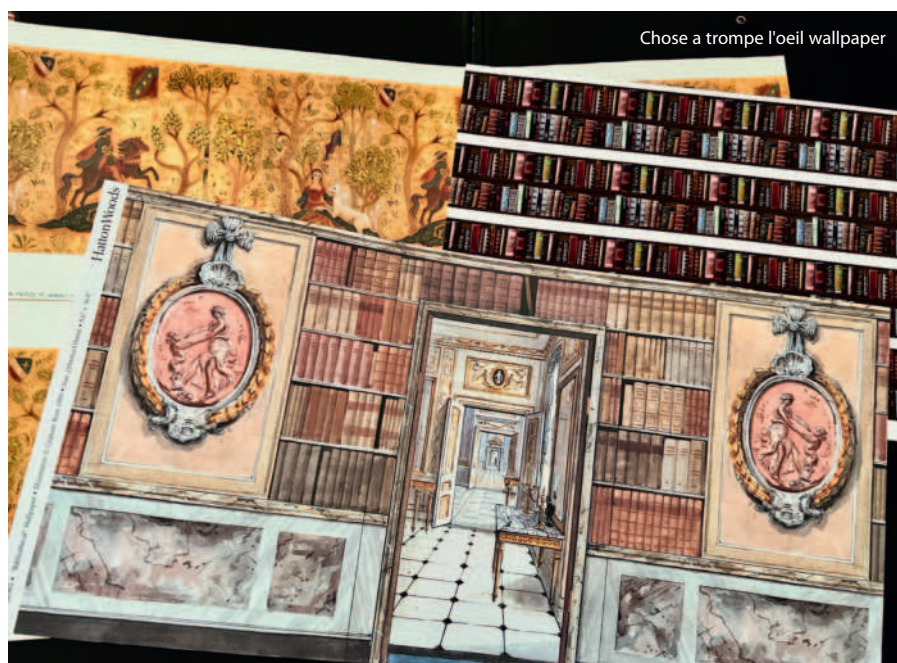
Paint is easiest and cheapest (use little tester pots), and it can be very effective, but for me, wallpaper can transform a room and can be retro-fitted – albeit that getting two big hands in one small room can be challenging. Specialist dolls house paste can be purchased, but I use ordinary household paste. Some types of wallpaper are easy to apply, but others are prone to wrinkling, bubbling and even tearing. Thinner, cheaper papers are generally trickier, so try to get a decent weight of paper. I love Jennifer Khan's papers and Poppet's Dolly Bits. Alison Davies and Susan Bembridge make gorgeous papers too.

For something a bit different, try a trompe l'oeil (trick of the eye) wallpaper. Library papers create the illusion of rows of shelves of books (Stick N Go do a sticky-back one that doesn't even need glue). Or use a paper that looks like wood panelling, or even intricately carved wood.

A mural can also transform a room. Jennifer Khan has some lovely designs, and she is happy to size them to the height of your room. Her designs work well in period rooms as well as modern interiors. [Read more](#)

sourced online, re-sized and printed); then add mouldings to frame the ceiling images. Paint mouldings white, or gild them for uber opulence. Buy plaster or plastic mouldings, or make your own using plaster (or polymer clay) and a silicon mould such as those used in sugarcraft.

Sue sells a wide range of plaster ceiling roses and cornices, to suit many eras. Most dolls house suppliers will have them too, usually in plastic (for ceiling roses) and wood for cornices. Once painted, you'll never know! To add a ceiling rose, just glue it, although that you may need to drill it for electrical wiring. Fitting cornices always confounds me! In principle, it's easy: measure, cut, glue. In practice, getting angles right can be tricky. You will need a mitre block to cut 45-degree angles, but some will be internal angles and some external. Make sure you buy a bit extra, in case of errors.



Chose a trompe l'oeil wallpaper

Or why not try real wood panelling? If you are skilled and have the tools, make your own. If you're not, purchase ready-made panels. As they are pricey, I often intersperse them with plain uprights so that one panel goes further, and the uprights can be adjusted (made wider or narrower) so that the panelling neatly fits the space.

Why not create Georgian-style wall panels? Simple rectangles made from mitred mini mouldings (picture frame or dado rail) help break up a big expanse of wall. Paint within the rectangle a toning colour, or hang decorative plates or pictures within. Perhaps add a niche, although this will involve cutting a recess. It's a lot of trouble, and not so straightforward to retro-fit – but it can be done and will look fabulous.

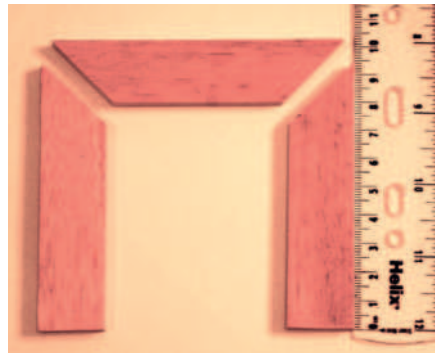
Fabric is another option. Opulent silks and damasks were hung in fine country houses as wall coverings and many miniaturists reproduce this in their dolls houses. Take care not to get glue on the surface of the fabric, and remember that the fabric will need to be stretched over a frame of some sort. Morocco leather is another stately home wall treatment, which can be reproduced in miniature.

How to make a fireplace

Perhaps the most dramatic difference you can make to a room, bringing realism in spades, is to add a chimney breast and fireplace to a plain room.



- Cut a chimney breast from MDF or other suitable material. Use a solid block and cut a fire recess in it, or build a frame for the breast and cover with mountboard.



- Use three wood offcuts to create a frame for the fireplace.



- Cut decorative wooden strips and add other embellishments to suit the style of the fireplace.



- Cut a wooden mantelpiece slightly wider than the fireplace.



- Glue the components, paint (white or black are good choices), and glue to the opening. Add brick in the aperture or paint it black and sooty.

How to make a false wall

Be more adventurous and make a wall with a recessed 'stone' fireplace to add features to a featureless room, or one that is too deep and needs to be brought forward. Fitting a door into the wall, and leaving it slightly ajar, adds depth and realism, plus provides a glimpse into the room beyond.



- Cut a wall from MDF with an aperture for the fireplace, and a doorway too if you wish.



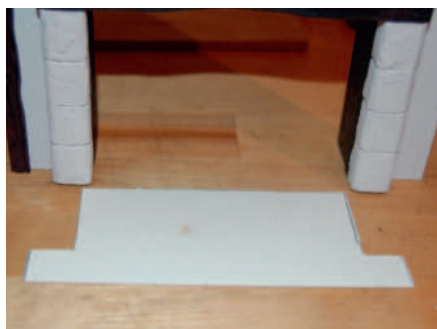
- On the reverse of the wall, add a strip of wood either side of the fire aperture to create fire sides.



- Cut two 'stone' sides from MDF and make shallow saw marks to simulate individual stones. Paint a stone colour.



- Cut a mantelshelf from MDF, distress it to look like old wood and paint it brown. Use real wood if you prefer and stain it a dark colour.



- Cut a hearth from thick card, paint it slate grey and add a sheen and depth of colour using black shoe polish.



- Make a fireback from MDF and cover it in brick paper, or use a brick stencil for even greater realism.



- Assemble everything and fit the fake wall in place, a short distance from the back wall.

Floors

Working our way down the wall, we reach skirting board level – the place where wall and floor meet. Use plain, narrow stripwood for modern homes, or a deep, decorative Victorian or Georgian one. Just above skirting level, think about plug sockets. Modern and old styles are available from Delph Miniatures, along with light switches (another essential realistic detail) and smoke alarms.

How to make a tiled hearth



- Find a tile pattern online, re-size it on your computer and print it out. Glue it to thick card the size of the finished hearth, leaving a little paper overhanging.



- When the glue dries, trim the paper to the exact size of the hearth using a scalpel. Run a bone folder or blunt knitting needle along the grout lines of the tiles to create a 3D effect.



- Use a spray gloss varnish (you will need several coats, depending on how glossy you want your tiles) – or leave your tiles matt if you prefer.



- Glue the tiled hearth in place, and add logs, coals, a grate and fire irons or a basket.

Moi's Top Tip

"An inkjet printer is unsuitable for this project. If necessary, get your tile design printed at a print shop to ensure it is colourfast and the inks won't run"

Carpets, rugs or hard floors?

Parquet, marquetry, tiles, floorboards or lino? Decisions, decisions! Dolls house carpet comes in many self-adhesive colours, but I prefer wool felt. I think it looks more realistic. Velvet also looks good but it frays, unlike felt.

Rugs can be bought, or you can make your own using techniques such as needlepoint, punch needle, or even printing on fabric. Needlepoint kits are available from makers such as Janet Granger and Nicola Mascall, or follow a pattern in a book.

Hard flooring can use real ceramic, marble or stone miniature tiles; vinyl tiles; embossed tile sheets; printed tiles that are flat or embossed – or you can paint your own. Convincing flagstone flooring can be carved into MDF using a scalpel to mark out the stones. Paint grey or stone colour, grout between the gaps, then add a coloured or neutral shoe polish and buff to a sheen. Paper clay also provides a good material for stone floors.

Wooden floors can be made from real veneers, or you can use printed or embossed sheets. I intend to experiment using iron-on kitchen worktop edging veneer, and if it works, I'll do a tutorial. 🏠

Next month...

Moi looks at how to achieve a realistic setting for your dolls house.

MUST-HAVE BOOK THIS MONTH!

Creating a diorama offers miniaturists a chance to display their figures and vehicles in a realistic setting, often providing a 'snapshot' of a moment in history. This book provides simple step-by-step instructions on how to plan, design and build a diorama and is suitable for new and more experienced miniaturists. Examples are included from the Napoleonic Wars, American Civil War, World War I and World War II.

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RETRO-FIT REALISM:

INTERNAL WALLS, FLOORS AND CEILINGS





Ruth's MINITIPS

Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel continues her top tips and advice for what has worked (and not worked!) throughout her years of experience. This month, Ruth details how she finds her inspiration...

Photos by Stephen Lesbirel

Where to find inspiration

People sometimes say to me, 'How do you keep coming up with new ideas to make in miniature?' I wondered that myself years ago. And yet, the ideas seem to keep appearing, at least to this point! In truth, ideas are all around us, all the time. Remember the Samuel Johnson quote, "When you are tired of London, you are tired of life". There is no end of things to see and do in London and that's really true of miniatures too. Much like 'writer's block' however, it may sometimes seem that you have no new ideas. I find this is when I'm either very tired or stressed and I need a refresh to get going again. That's where a holiday can really fit the bill! When isn't it a good time for a holiday?

After a few days away from my routine, the down time of a relaxing holiday really spurs my creativity. I start getting ideas about everything really, but particularly miniatures. Sometimes I see something in a castle, garden, or stately home while on holiday, like Queen Charlotte's horseshoe-shaped reading desk or the copper fountain at Chatsworth that inspire some of the miniatures I've shown in previous Mini Tips. Other times, inspiration appears seemingly to materialize out of thin air!

Sometimes it's a request to duplicate a piece of furniture in miniature. The most unusual piece I have ever made was when an editor asked me to do an Aesthetic Era chair from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. I have to say, I didn't much care for it at the time and I don't like it any better now, but someone liked it. As in life, no one piece, real or miniature,

will be everyone's cup of tea. A museum visit however, can provide endless inspiration for furniture, clay, paper, and even textile pieces to make in miniature.



V&A Museum chair

Closer to home though, a visit to a friend's new home inspired me to make a washstand similar to an antique one she had, which she painted white. I made it in miniature in two scales, a 1/12th scale one painted white and a 1/24th scale one stained mahogany as I envision the origin was. Sometimes another miniature, like a highly detailed mantel I recently bought, sends me off on a tangent, sparking the idea for a future gilded furniture piece to go beside it. I'm picturing a pale blue silk upholstered sofa with a gilded ornate frame. Other small items inspire some of my quicker makes, like a spiral library staircase or the bed steps that I once saw by a high four-poster bed.



I admit I'm not much of a shopper, but sometimes even in passing or on a shopping mission for something else entirely, a special piece will catch my eye. My tip here is to try to be on the lookout anytime and anywhere for an interesting addition to your collection. One Christmas when I went to my local craft shop for some metallic scrapbook paper, I spied two rocking reindeer just inside their entrance. One was painted red and the other white and they looked so festive with their greenery garlands around their necks and at their bases that I stopped short, took some pictures, and a couple of basic measurements. It's a good idea to always carry a small tape measure, some paper, and a pen or pencil for just such occasions.



Rocking reindeer from a local craft shop

Sometimes I've accepted a challenge, like when someone commented that I didn't do flowers – I've done lots of them since. Challenges are inspiring! Walking by an antique shop another time, I noticed a unique 4-tier plant stand in their window. Remembering the package of assorted wood circles and the spindles that I had at home, it seemed like another possible addition to my miniature greenhouse or to a Victorian scene. ▶

◀◀ Spiral library staircase and bed stairs





▲ 4-tier plant stand, based on one at a local antique shop

My local Georgian house museum, where I was a volunteer guide, provided the inspiration for about thirty pieces of furniture to date, with several more possibilities in the future. Sometimes it's easy to overlook what is right before our eyes, and even if what you see is not exactly what you want to make or is too difficult to achieve in miniature, it can be a spring-board to another idea, maybe an updated version of the piece. Sort of, what would that be or look like in a more modern style? Since I'm partial to the Georgian era style, I made most of these pieces as closely as I could to their originals.

▼ Merritt House kitchen fireplace



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▲ She Shed, inspired by a shed in the yard of a local shop

Driving home one day, we passed a window and door shop and saw a very striking little red garden shed in their yard. I'm sure they were very disappointed when we pulled in, parked in their yard, went inside the shed to examine its construction, and took measurements, only to tell them I was hoping to replicate it in miniature! This became the basis for my She Shed, a nice backyard retreat for the lady in my dolls house.

The internet, books, or magazines can all be great sources of inspiration too. I saw a picture of a garden folly in a magazine a few years back and a Google search yielded lots of details

about it. I modified the design a bit and came up with my own backyard castle. Searching for a specific item initially or augmenting an idea with online research, can spark so many projects. I have made several metamorphic pieces, from a library chair stair to a breakfast table writing desk, a bed in a chest to a leather wing chair with a retractable gout stool. Before that, I made a captain's davenport – all of these were the result of online research.

▼ Leather wing chair with gout stool, chest bed, and captain's davenport



I'm always looking for something a little bit different in furniture pieces to replicate. I don't find many modern styles challenging to make. That's not to say that their straight-lined styling isn't perfect for modern miniature settings. More challenging and perhaps more interesting to me are the details of period style pieces, which tend to inspire me more. They



Victorian telephone lounge



▼ miniature tea trolley and book table

evoke an earlier age and sometimes even hint at a story. At the other end of the spectrum from today's furniture, Victorian pieces tend to be really complex to reproduce due to the ornate curves and carving. I don't do much Victorian for this reason but their sometimes-over-the-top detailing can be approximated to a degree in miniature with the use of various beads, layered punched paper shapes, and twine. You may find Victorian pieces for inspiration yet in old attics or at jumble sales.

There's plenty of inspiration in historical drama novels or on TV, or period productions at the cinema. Similarly, current home and garden product shows, television shows, related magazines, or even stage productions of your favourite plays are additional sources of inspiration. Auction house catalogues, online or in print, of various era's furniture and accessories provide even more ideas. These sources in addition to travel inspired a series of Tudor pieces for my backyard castle.

Ideas could be as simple as a beloved piece of your own furniture, or something recalled or maybe passed down from a family member that provides inspiration for a miniature make. I made a miniature version of a small book table for the February 2022 issue and a few years ago, a miniature version of a tea trolley from my dining room.



Your next inspiration could even be something that you would love to have but either don't have the room or can't yet afford.

I glimpsed a lovely dovecote in an English garden and really wanted one in mine too. Ultimately, it seemed like it would be less work to make it in miniature and enjoy it, inhabited by tiny plastic doves from some wedding favours I had. So, I made two!

◀ Four poster bed in miniature

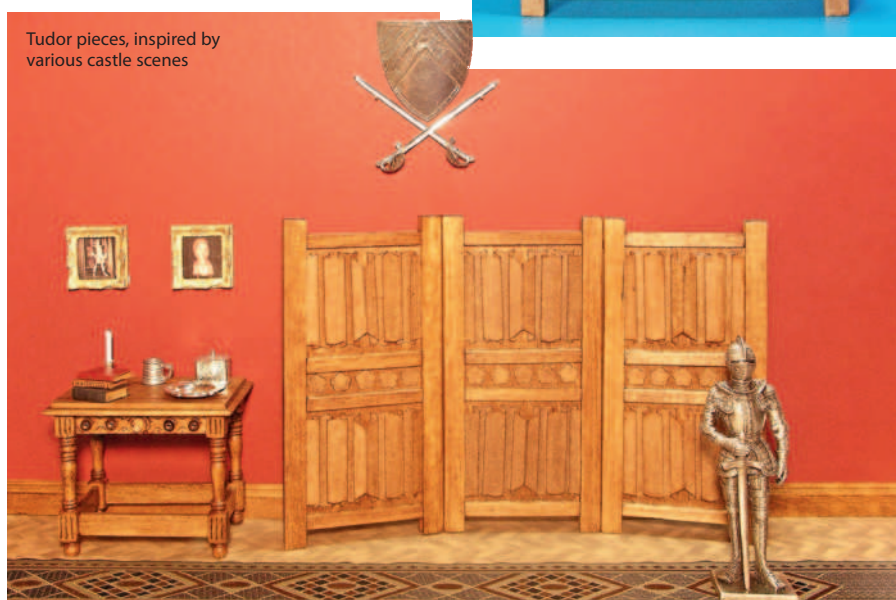


▲ Dovecotes

Next time you need some inspiration, take a little break and consider a few of these sources. I guarantee something magical will spring to mind! 🏠

Next month...

Ruth discusses her road to the miniature world and the obstacles she faced...



Tudor pieces, inspired by various castle scenes



Tiny House, tiny kitchen

Kimberly Finch embraced her time in lockdown by creating Tiny House Dollhouse and re-visiting her childhood love of miniatures. I'm sure you'll be seeing more of Kimberly's miniature makes soon in DHMS!

At my Tiny House Dollhouse, the kitchen is the heart of my home. Here, we gather to cook meals, share stories, and spend quality time with each other. This is where important decisions are made, from planning special occasions to simply deciding what to have for dinner. The kitchen is a place where loved

ones connect and unforgettable memories are made. I truly have the kitchen of my dreams... it's just very tiny.

My passion for dolls houses and miniatures has been with me since childhood. However, during the COVID quarantine, I rediscovered this long-lost

love and tapped into a newfound creativity I never knew I had. Social media was a way to pass the time during those months locked away from the world. My favourite channels were those featuring tiny kitchen cooking videos and miniature meals, and I scoured various accounts and platforms





just to get my fix. Eventually, my curiosity and excitement led me to purchase a 1/24th scale Garden House model kit online. Assembling the small furniture and creating all the plants and flowers was an absolute joy, and I knew that this hobby was exactly what I needed in my life.

I craved a never-ending project, so I purchased a pre-built 1/12th scale Duracraft Cambridge Dollhouse from a neighbour up the street. Although moving from a 1/24th model kit to a 1/12th scale dolls house with seven rooms was daunting, I was eager to explore this new world. I immediately started a full demolition of the kitchen, removing

all the wallpaper, trim work and staircase to open the space. After patching the hole in the ceiling, I added rustic ceiling beams using stained lollipop sticks and painted earring hooks to display my collection of baskets and buckets. The walls were painted a deep grey and I used painted eggshell cartons to create a stone-like effect on the walls.

For the cabinetry, I took apart a hutch and removed the drawers from a small dresser to create a more hodgepodge look. The cabinets were painted with a soft moss green chalk paint, and the pine flooring was whitewashed with watered-down paint and applied using a dry brush.

I purchased the stove, refrigerator and pantry online and filled them with all my family's favourite foods and snacks. I make all my tiny treats from oven bake clay and paper, drawing inspiration from my trips down the aisles of the grocery store and my own childhood memories.

The devil is in the detail, and I find the most satisfaction with the intricate aspects of miniature making. From open cookies in the pantry to spilled chips on the floor, I love to trick the eye and make people take a second or even a third look. So, come pull up a chair in my Tiny Kitchen and join me on my adventure! 🏠

Tiny House, tiny kitchen





A family passion

Moi Ali chats with Ian Macaulay, and hears the story of his 'girls' dolls houses – and his own passion for the Arts and Crafts Movement in miniature.



Nina's house

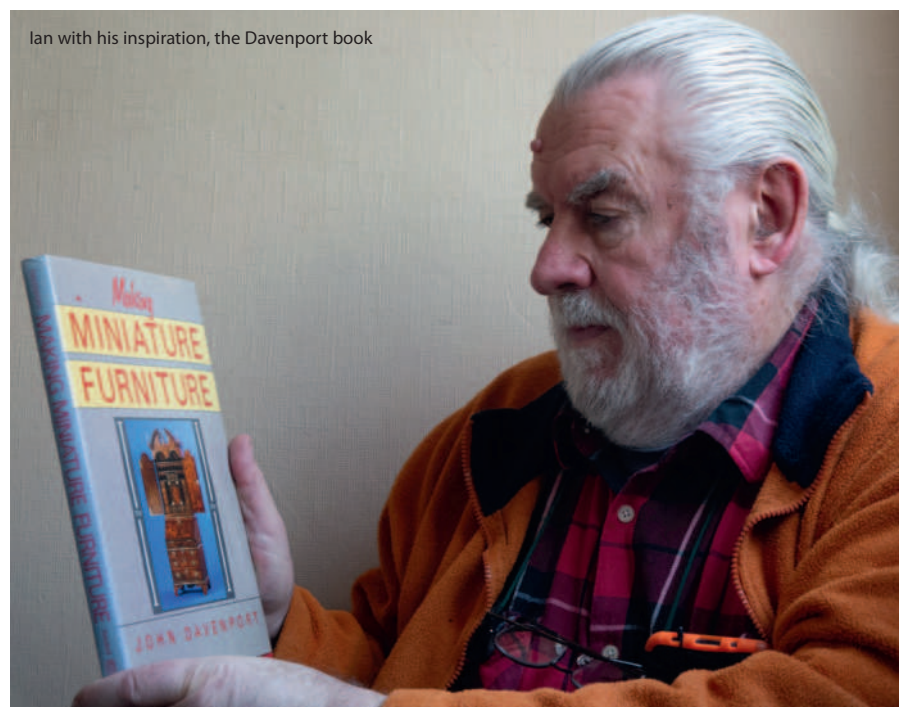
Alexina, known as Nina, had a dolls house as a child, lovingly made by her father, but it was shared with her sister, so when she had a daughter of her own, back in 1969, little Nina was to have one all to herself!

Just like mummy Nina, little Nina's dolls house would be made by her father, Ian. The family were living in a small flat in Edinburgh at the time, and Ian was using the Reader's Digest home improvements manual to refurbish it. He's always been handy, especially when it comes to woodworking, and professionally he trained as a draughtsman and graduated in Mechanical Engineering.

Ian takes up the tale: "By chance there were plans in the manual for a dolls house, so that's what I decided to build. I found an advert for plywood off-cuts from a joiner. Armed with the cutting list from the Reader's Digest manual, off I went to buy the materials. The joiner, seeing the cutting list, took it from me and worked through it. He kindly cut all the off-cuts to the exact size specified. I left with a flat pack dolls house made from top quality plywood. A very lucky father!"

Ian constructed, painted and furnished the dolls house for little Nina: "The furniture was for young girls, blocky but strong, and unbreakable which was good! We had a toy for life. Before we knew it, our second child arrived, also a girl. In 1975 the family moved to Wembley, London, as I had been promoted. The dolls house moved with us."

He continued: "I can't remember the year, or even what prompted a family visit to a dolls house fair in Kensington, but the



Ian with his inspiration, the Davenport book



The hallway



Family photo



Cosy corner



Japanese wardrobe

show sowed the seed in me to make tiny dolls house furniture. In 1988 I purchased a book by John Davenport, 'Making Miniature Furniture,' and I was set on what has proved to be a lifetime mission to try and emulate his astounding work." Having seen Ian's work, I can vouch for its quality. It is stunning – and John Davenport would be proud!

Ian's wife Nina then decided that she wanted a dolls house, but she was very particular as to its dimensions. Having been lucky enough to have been brought up in a house with 11-foot-high ceilings, she wanted her dolls house to be spacious and airy. The dolls houses she had seen for sale had low ceilings and everything seemed cramped to her. Nina determined that hers would have only two rooms - a downstairs and an upstairs - linked by a staircase. The plan then expanded to a roof garden in the attic space. Ian explained: "I didn't have a problem with this, but I wished the roof space could have been in the original design."

Undaunted, Ian built the house to Nina's specifications, including the stairs, the window frames, the cladding, everything! Nina made artistic interventions when it came to the Chinese cabinet and the picture frames. She had seen a Chinese cabinet somewhere, but it was not for sale, so she wanted a blank canvas that she could decorate to her own taste. The picture frames are Nina's design, Ian made them and Nina painted them. This is true family collaboration.

With such a talented husband, I was surprised to hear that most of Nina's furniture has been bought, either ready-built or in kit form. If my husband was half as good as Ian at making miniatures, he'd have the longest 'to do' list on earth!

Ian explained that ready-made furniture suits him, as Nina is content to paint it to suit her dolls house: "Kits, on the other hand, are purgatory for me! It's my job to assemble them, but kits are invariably butt-jointed. Getting a butt joint in the correct position, and holding it there as you assemble the other butt joints, is a nightmare! My furniture is constructed with all the joints made according to the cabinet maker's design. Assembling a piece with proper joints, and clamping the piece together knowing that everything is in proper alignment, is a dream. Another problem I have with kit furniture is the wood used. If it is going to be painted, then fine. If, however, it is to look like a piece of quality furniture, personally I feel it should have the look and scale of its big sister (or brother) – and that means that the timber used must be

appropriate in terms of colour and grain."

I am still shaking my head wondering why the women in Ian's life don't have their dolls houses stuffed with his exquisite pieces. He displays his craftsmanship by setting out his pieces on a shelf display cabinet in his home office. Many of his pieces are small versions of full-size designers such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh, Charles P Limbert and Gustav Stickley. Mackintosh, like Ian, was a Scot, and Limbert and Stickley were both American furniture designers from the Arts and Crafts era, contemporaries of Mackintosh, who were influenced by him and by William Morris. His repertoire, however, embraces a wide range of eras, right back to 17th century pieces.

Elder daughter Nina has now bought her own dolls house. Younger daughter Shelagh wanted a pub, and Dad stepped in and built it: "Once again it grew in specification! The pub has an office off to the side, and Shelagh then decided that she wanted a flat above, but at that point in the build, there was no space for stairs! So each of my 'girls' have their toys and I have enjoyed making

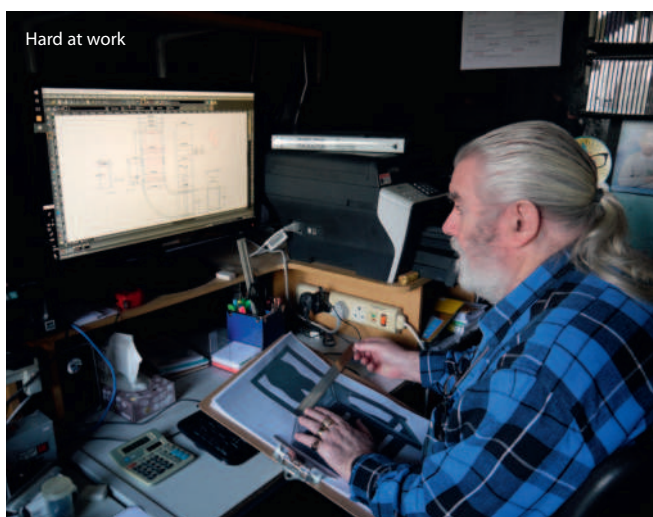


Work in progress in the flat above the pub

and advising them, but my yearning to make quality, true to scale furniture, like I had seen at the Kensington all those years ago, had not been satisfied. I yearned to make pieces of furniture like John Davenport – not necessarily copies of his pieces, but smaller versions of named makers from the past.”

Ian explained: “Over the years I have bought most quality tools for making miniatures, and jewellers’ tools as well, mostly following the advice from John Davenport’s book. I also have some that John would probably have given his eye teeth for, mainly my specially built-for-me, small but extremely accurate CNC (Computer Numerically Controlled) milling machine.”

After retirement, Ian’s dream came true. Not only did he have the time to make exquisite mini replicas of design classics from the Arts and Crafts era, but he ended up exhibiting and selling his work at the Kensington Dollhouse Festival, the very place that inspired him all those decades ago! His life in miniature had come full circle! 🏠



Hard at work

INFO Find out more about Ian and Nina at



www.Onetwelfthscale.co.uk

Next month...

Ian shares his secrets with readers, with his exclusive tutorial on how to make a Charles Limbert umbrella stand!

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Budget makes

Miniatures - you truly can make them out of (pretty much) anything... you just need a few tools, a little imagination and a couple of pounds.

Visiting two different UK Pound Shops, a stop in The Works and a quick stop at The Range, ALL of these mini makes have been created using purchased items that cost just £1.50 or less!

Whilst tools don't run out, materials do, there are a selection of basic tools that you will need, but nothing more than glue, a hacksaw, scissors, pen, ruler and wire-cutters. Plus if you're anything like me, a delve into your huge stash of 'bits and bobs' that 'might prove useful'. It's okay, we all have one!

They may not be perfect but each piece is truly unique, enjoyable to create and a small little addition to your miniature scene.



Chosen items

- Cocktail sticks: £1
- Wooden lollipop sticks: £1
- Embroidery cotton: 25p
- 3x spatulas: £1
- 5x washi tape: £1
- Candles: £1
- Tealight holder: £1.50
- Puzzle pieces: £1

Pod chair

As soon as I saw this item, the idea immediately came to me, and with a few simple steps it resembled the real thing.



1 First, find the point in which you wish to cut depending on the size of seat you'd like, then begin to snip around the circumference to separate it from the rest (you can remove the whole pod first as I did).



2 Now, using lengths of the cotton, create a plait long enough to cover this new edge, using a dab of glue to hold it in place when complete.



3 Take the plug/tea-light holder from the base and carefully glue it in place to act as a stand.



4 To finish off, furnish as desired with some existing blankets and pillows from your collection, or make something new with those stashed materials of yours.

Bunting

Simple, fun and quick!



1 Take as many lengths of cotton as you wish, but be sure to divide it up into less strands, to ensure the end result is not too bulky.

2 Cut several pieces of washi tape roughly 1.5cm long and simply stick them back to back with the cotton running inbetween.

Note: Some washi designs do allow for the tape to be one piece wrapped around, as the pattern is not 'one way up'.

3 Once in place, cut off either side to create a long triangle.

Mix up the designs or stick to one, make short strands or long, small triangles or large... the possibilities are endless - especially with all the available designs out there too!

Candles

No one needs reminding of their age, so take those birthday candles and use them for good instead of evil!



1 Pull out the candle and cut it shorter using a craft knife.

2 Paint the holder in black, but chip away a little colour to make it look worn.

3 Pop the candle back in - you could even light it for a few seconds to slightly melt down!

4 Add them to a spooky scene, castle, or other such diorama for your very own 'iron-work' lamp candle.

Eleanor's Top Tip

"These very same steps can be taken to make small table candles too, just by cutting the holders stem off and your candle even shorter to fit!"

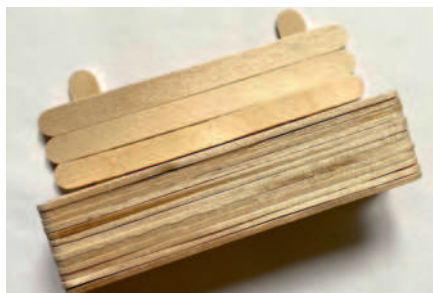
Garden lights



Although practically the same as the lamp candles, the candle can be replaced with a small yellow/white crystal bead to create outdoor/garden solar lights.

From a bench to fence to floor, lollipop sticks just keep on giving...

We all need a break! The simplest designs are often the most effective.



1 Glue several lollipop sticks together to form a stack, repeating the process to make a second of the same height (I chose 13 high, but height is to your liking).

2 Next, glue three sticks edge to edge - repeating this too - one for the seat and one for the back.



3 Take one more stick and cut it in half, followed by gluing each piece to one of your three stick panels to create a 'backrest', ensuring to leave the long end visible beneath.

4 Once all four components are fully dry, space the two stacks evenly apart and apply the 'seat' on top.

5 On one side, glue the back in place using the two lengths previously left longer.



6 Allow to dry again before painting as you wish, with small black 'nail' dots at the joins to finish off.

Floor

1 Using a craft blade or hacksaw, cut the rounded ends off each of the lollipop sticks, then cut to length if desired.



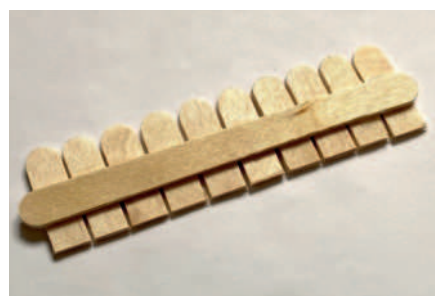
2 Apply a thin coat of glue to your surface and place each piece accordingly to create the appearance of a wooden floor.



3 Once fully dry, use a thin wash of various shades of brown paint before adding small 'nail' dots like the bench.

Fence... or edging

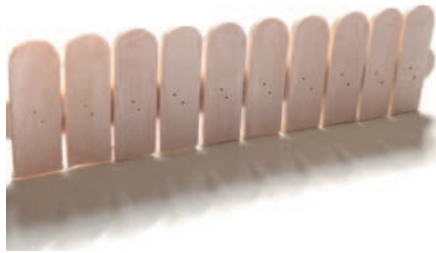
1 Ensuring to keep the rounded end intact, measure your desired length of fence pale and cut through.



2 Next, space and glue each piece to an uncut stick running horizontally, making sure to leave space above and below.

Note: Although here I have made a short version to be used as edging, the same method can be used for a taller fence too! 

3 If making several complete panels to form a line, trim the rounded ends off the back piece for a flush join to the next.



4 Once fully dry, paint with an even cover of white before adding small black 'nail' dots at the rail intersections.

Set the gate free!

In its former life, this quirky little gate was a boring spatula. But, with just two cuts it is free to live its true purpose.



1 Firstly, using a hacksaw, cut off the tapered end before measuring/mark the height as desired.

2 Once again, cut along this line to create your gate.



3 With the addition of a small bead and a lick of paint, it is ready to stand to attention.

Modern table

Whilst I'm a traditional girl, modern fixtures and fittings do have their place in 'real life' and in miniature form alike - and this time only one cut is all it takes!



1 Using a second spatula (and your hacksaw) make a cut at the length you would like your table top to be, being sure to form an interesting shape, rather than just a straight line.

2 Take three or four of the birthday candle holders and glue them in place where required as legs.



3 Leave 'natural', or paint as desired to finish off.

Tiered plant stand

This last spatula make utilises all three handles and those conveniently pre-drilled holes.

1 From the very end point (as it does taper slightly), measure in 7.5cm (more or less if you wish).

2 Cut through each piece using your hacksaw, creating a small curve to the edge.

3 Using a couple of beads (yes, we all have more of these than we know what to do with too!), glue inbetween each piece covering the hole, making sure to off-set as you go and allow to dry (you may want to support it whilst it does!).



4 As with the table, leave 'natural' or paint to finish off.

Play time with puzzle pieces!

Although I do mean for your minis, I guess this is play time for you too!



1 Using a selection of bright colours, paint each puzzle piece on both sides and around all the edges as well.

2 Once dry, leave some blank, adding numbers, letters, pictures etc. to others to create an array of play mats for a child's nursery.

Rolled mat

To finish, here is a very simple rolled mat, mimicking its real-life bamboo counterpart.



1 Lining up several of the cocktail sticks, glue on two strands of the embroidery cotton parallel to each other top and bottom, making sure to leave the same length used (plus a little) at one end of both.

2 Once fully dry, flip the whole piece over and glue the remaining cotton the same as before, tying a small knot to join the two ends together.

Note: If you wish to add paint, do so before adding the cotton so no colour transfers.

Whilst there are countless more makes to create that are budget friendly, I'll leave that up to you to discover. But, to start you off...

Cocktail sticks and cotton:

Garden climber supports

Washi tape:

Room wall borders

Lollipop sticks: Raised beds 

Edwardian lady

Did you make this Edwardian lady's dress in the March issue? Now you can make her accessories; a hat, bag and umbrella!

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Young lady 1/12th scale doll with ample bosom, small waist and painted ankle boots
- Scrap of fine lace or tulle for stockings
- Fine white cotton for pantaloons and petticoat (approx. 12x7in)
- White lace for underwear trim (approx. 1 yard)
- Fine cotton or silk for blouse base and blouse sleeve base (approx. 6x4in)
- Lace or tulle for blouse front and sleeves (approx. 7x5in)
- Silk or cotton for skirt, hat and bolero jacket (approx. 12x6in)
- Selection of flat lace trim to make cut-outs for skirt, bolero, blouse, bag, umbrella and hat decoration (approx. 16x12in)
- Scrap of contrasting silk or cotton for belt, bag, umbrella and hat lining
- Scrap of bonding web for belt
- Scrap of strong foil for hat inner, fine chain for bag handle and cocktail stick plus acrylic paint for umbrella
- Mixture of silk ribbons/feathers/braid for decoration
- Jewellery findings/filigrees, beads and crystals for bag clasp, umbrella, brooch
- Edge sealer like fraycheck/fraystop
- Good quality fabric glue

PREPARATION:

- Enlarge the pattern pieces if they have not been printed to full scale. Trace the pattern pieces. Check the fit against your doll and make any adjustments (it is a good idea to make up the garment in kitchen paper/roll first before cutting your fabric).
- Once you are happy with the fit, cut the patterns out from the relevant fabric and seal all edges to stop fraying.
- There is a seam allowance of three 16ths of an inch included on all pieces unless otherwise stated. Clip all curves and press seams open unless otherwise advised.



HAT, BAG AND UMBRELLA:

NB: The hat is asymmetrical.



Cut the hat from your main fabric, contrast and strong foil (I used a clean pie dish from a shop-made pie but do be extremely careful, as this type of foil can be very sharp).

Trim all the edges of the foil piece so that it is slightly smaller than the fabric pieces. Glue the foil to the wrong side of your main hat piece and allow the glue to dry thoroughly.



Carefully glue the hat lining/contrast over the foiled piece.



Decorate the edge of the contrast/lining side with a frill of lace. Neaten the edge of the main side with narrow braid or ribbon as desired. **NB:** The more pointed side of the hat is indicated by a pointer.



Once all the glue is dry, the hat can be bent into shape to sit nicely at an angle on your doll's head. The pointed side should be tilted lowest, whilst the more rounded side should sit highest and can be curled/turned up.

Once you are happy with the shape and tilt of the hat, carefully glue the hat in place, before proceeding with the decoration.

Firstly, glue the feather/s in place on the hat and allow these to dry.

To make the lace rosettes, cut a length of lace around 6in long and join the ends with a little glue.

Run a tiny gathering stitch along the edge and pull up very tight to form the rosette.



The centre of the lace rosettes can be further decorated with ribbon loops/bows/roses etc before being carefully glued onto the hat as desired.



Cut the bag from your contrasting fabric and, with right sides together, fold along the lower fold line and stitch a very narrow seam on the side edges as shown.



Turn right way out and carefully turn under the side and top edges. Cut a piece of fine chain slightly longer than you need and glue this in place at either side. Allow the glue to dry thoroughly before proceeding.



Pad the inside of the bag with a little toy stuffing or tissue paper and glue the flap down. The bag can then be decorated as desired. 



Cut the umbrella from your contrasting fabric and decorate the curved edge as desired. Paint your cocktail stick at the ends as desired.



With the top edge level, glue the other straight edge over the first to form a seam and let the glue dry.



Starting at the seamed edge, carefully roll the umbrella as tightly as possible, gluing as you go. The umbrella can then be decorated as desired.

Louise's Top Tip

"If you use a plastic cocktail stick for the umbrella, give it a good rub with some sand paper to roughen the surface and help the paint to adhere better.

Carefully glue your painted cocktail stick to the inside of the umbrella piece along one straight edge as shown. Allow the glue to dry completely before proceeding"

TO FINISH:

Add tiny findings/filigrees/crystals etc for jewellery, plus any other accessories to complete your doll.

Your Edwardian lady is now ready for her stroll in the park!

INFO

This miniature Edwardian lady is for sale. If you are interested in purchasing her please contact Angelique Miniatures for details:



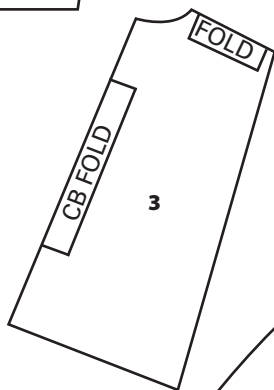
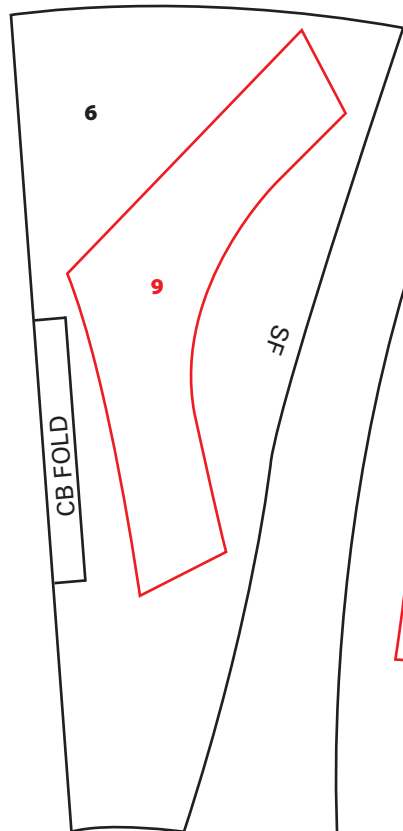
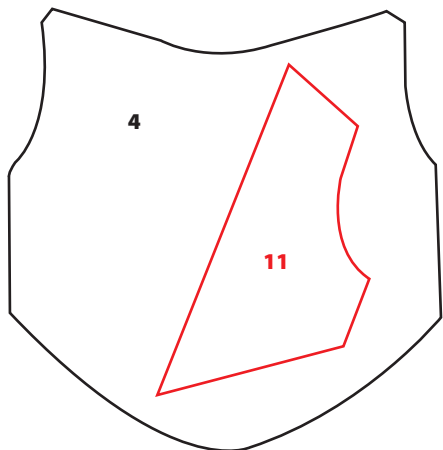
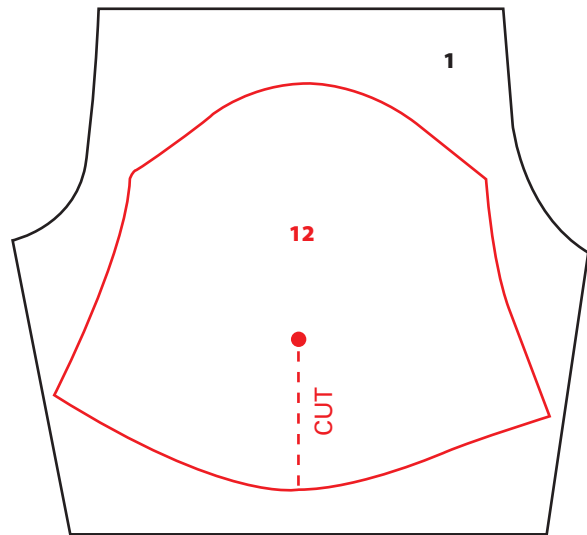
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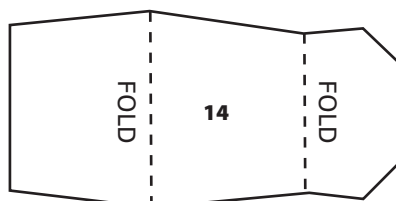
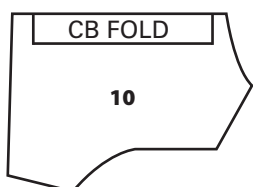
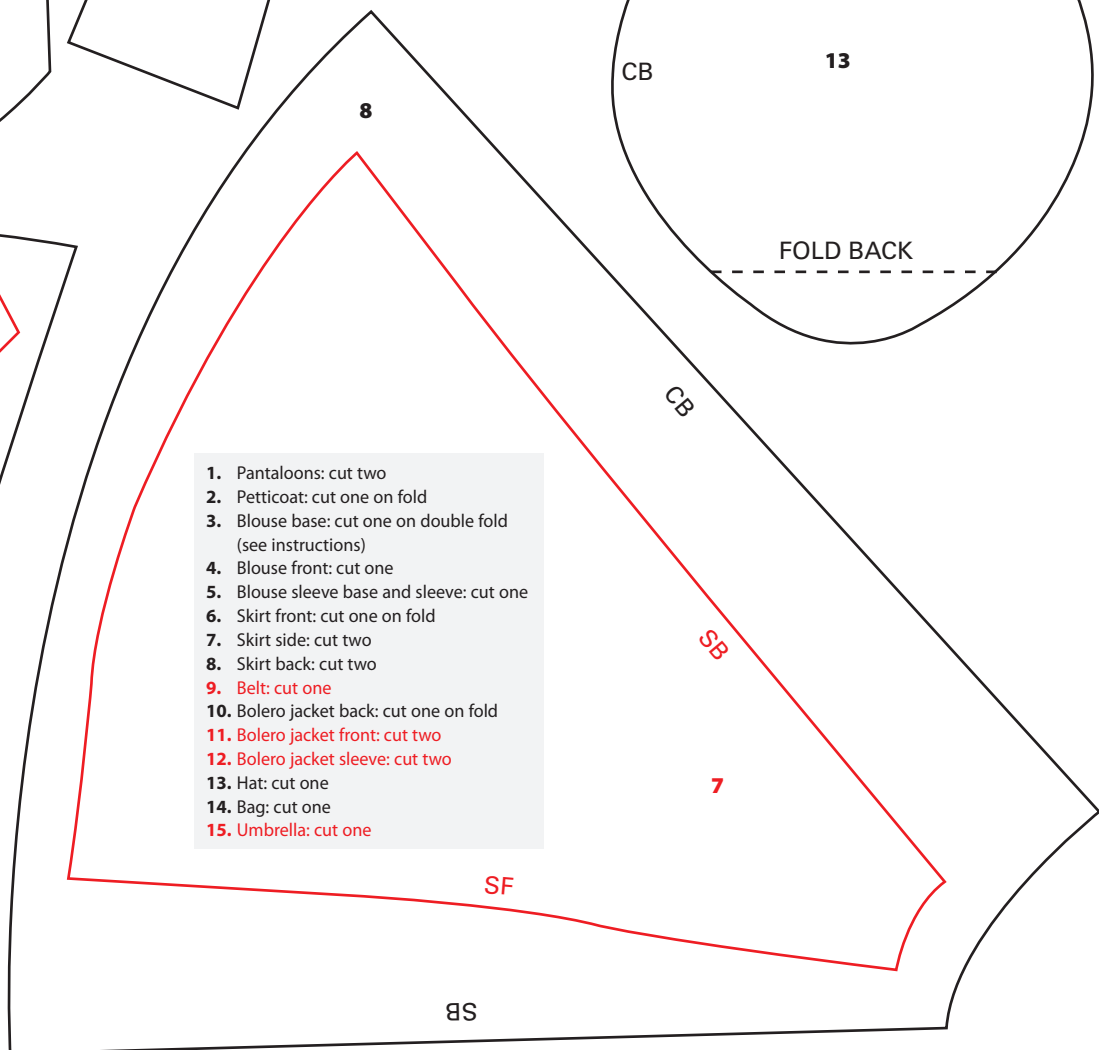
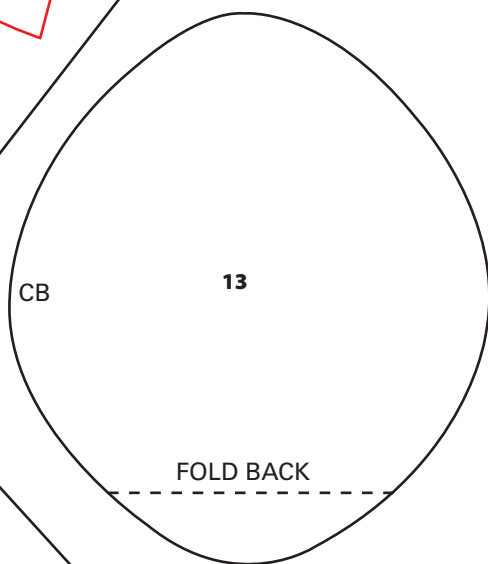
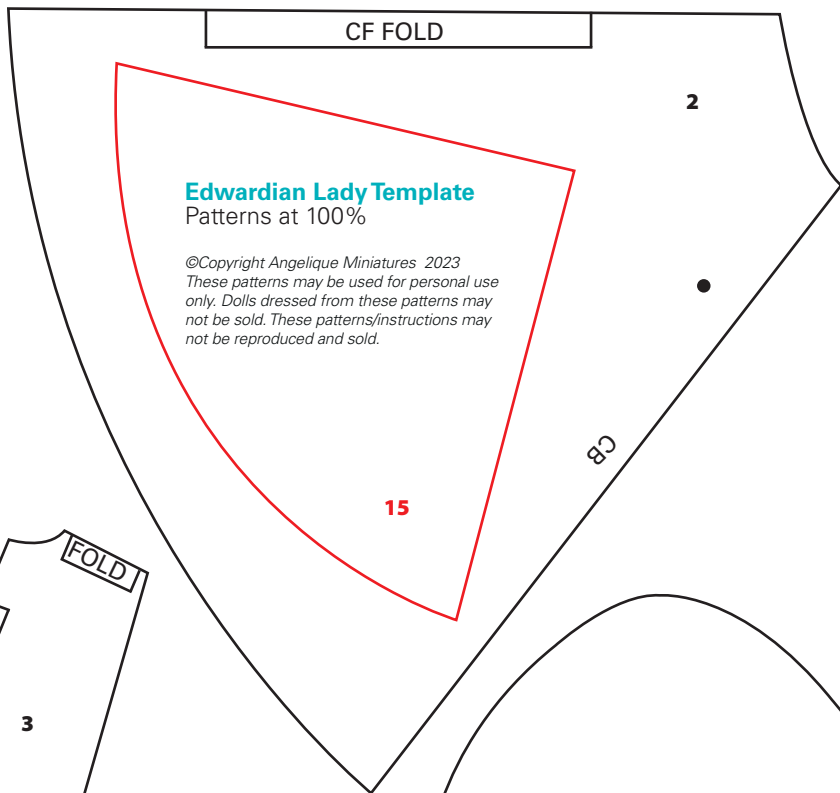
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Missed the March issue? Head to...
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1. Pantaloons: cut two
2. Petticoat: cut one on fold
3. Blouse base: cut one on double fold (see instructions)
4. Blouse front: cut one
5. Blouse sleeve base and sleeve: cut one
6. Skirt front: cut one on fold
7. Skirt side: cut two
8. Skirt back: cut two
9. Belt: cut one
10. Bolero jacket back: cut one on fold
11. Bolero jacket front: cut two
12. Bolero jacket sleeve: cut two
13. Hat: cut one
14. Bag: cut one
15. Umbrella: cut one

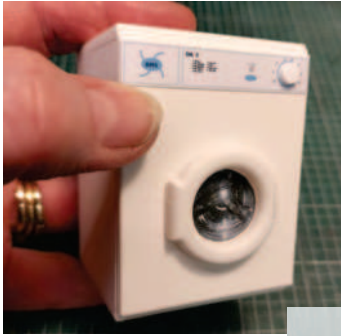


NEXT MONTH...

Louise shows you how to make a dress for a Regency lady!

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Sunday 18 June 2023

Conference Centre, Westpoint, Clyst St. Mary, **EXETER**, EX5 1DJ



Saturday 15 July 2023

Strathbrock Community Centre, 189a West Main Street, **BROXBURN**, West Lothian, EH52 5LH

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The Whole Kit & Caboodle:

CHURCH KNEELER

Every mini church needs these, says Moi Ali.



Moi's Top Tip

"Use a magnifier and daylight bulb if possible"

What could be more romantic than a spring wedding? Picture the scene, with a picturesque flower-filled country church, blushing bride... every detail perfect, right down to the needlepoint kneelers. If that's a scene you want to create in miniature, you'll

be needing Nicola Mascal's delightful church kneeler kits. I have made one to go in my church and it certainly looks the biz! Kits come with 40 holes per inch silk gauze canvas pre-mounted on a stitching frame, complete with thread, a large full colour chart that's so easy to follow, needles, and even the backing fabric. Nicola's kits are made up in the same way as full-size ones, so if you've done needlepoint

before, you'll have no problem doing it at small scale – although if you don't have 20/20 vision, you'll likely need magnification. Her range of kits embrace everything from exquisite carpets and rugs that take considerable dedication to make up, through to bell pulls, cushions, pole and fire screens, footstools and dressing table stools. The church kneelers are available in different designs and colourways. 🏠

THE FACTS

Buy from:
Nicola Mascal Miniatures
(www.nicolamascalminiatures.co.uk)

Cost: £16 plus P&P

Comes with:

Everything you need including colour block chart and instructions, canvas, needles, cotton thread, backing fabric, felt and card filler

Additional materials needed:

Glue to attach the backing fabric

Time: A week working every evening

Experience: Confident beginner

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★ ★ a church kneeler kit of your choice?

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Competition closes 31st May 2023. Good luck! ★ ★

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

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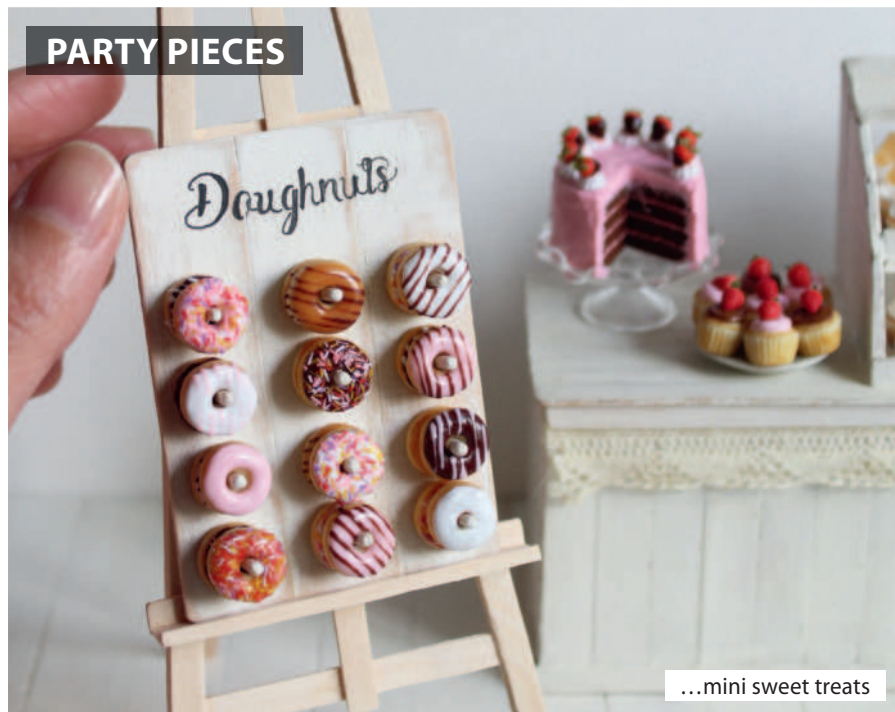
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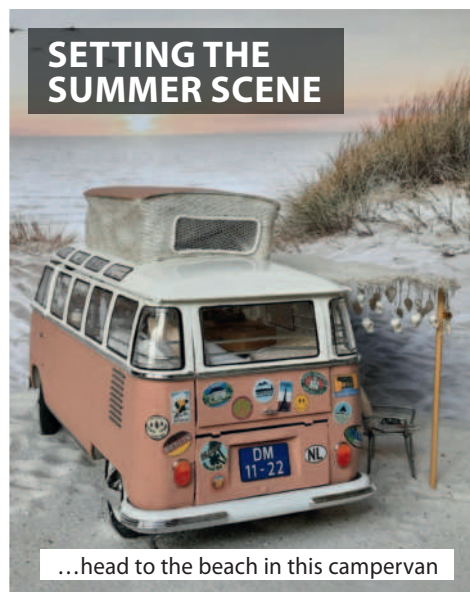
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