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Welcome to the November edition!

We get things off to a festive start this issue, as there's no time like the present to start updating your dolls houses to suit the season – if you haven't done so already!

Moi Ali provides her top tips on creating the '12 days of Christmas' all in mini, Angela Turner shows how to make knitted stockings to hang from your fireplace and this month's reader project is simply incredible... we showcase Conal Oakes' beautiful miniature baubles that include a scene from his family's favourite Christmas film, Muppet's Christmas Carol – thank you for sharing these makes with us, Conal!

Elsewhere, we have all the autumnal feels with Sadie Mansley Mackie's beautiful cake adorned with tonal foliage that would be perfect for a Thanksgiving scene, Moi Ali's firework fiesta tutorial and to commemorate Remembrance Sunday we have a wonderful military hat project.

Not only the abundance of projects, but this issue will provide you with inspiration galore, from an interview with The Great Big Tiny Design Challenge semi-finalist Michael Robbins, to the best advice from industry experts Petite Properties' Bea Broadwood and Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel's 'mini tips', to Kim Finch's tour of her stunning dolls house. We can't wait for you to get started!

Finally, a massive thank you to this month's contributors; Moi Ali, Bea Broadwood, Sadie Mansley Mckie, Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel, Kim Finch, Maive Ferrando and Angela Turner.

Happy mini-making!

Joanne Garwell

Editor

SEASONAL DELIGHTS

Editor loves!



FINISHING TOUCHES



SNEAK PEEK...

INSIDE NEXT MONTH'S BUMPER ISSUE!



FANATASTIC GIVEAWAYS!

TURN TO PAGE 63 TO SEE WHAT YOU COULD WIN! ★



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DollsHouse
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Exclusive Projects...

NOVEMBER 2023 ISSUE

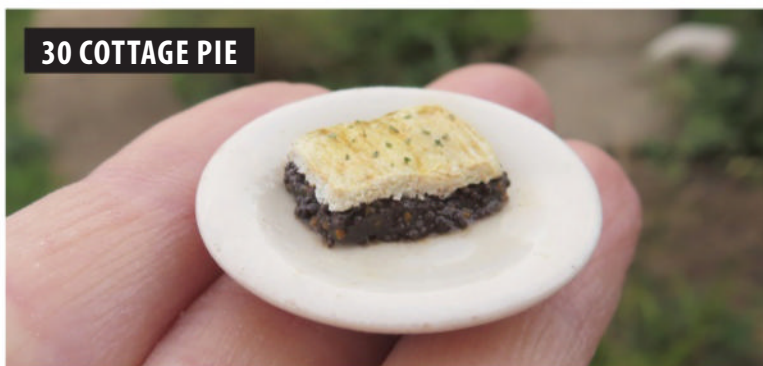
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Take a look at who we've been loving on social media this month...

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At Home with the Broadwoods

This month professional miniaturist Bea Broadwood not only shares an exclusive first look at her latest shabby chic creation, but her top tips on how to bring it to life!

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Insta Identities: Landau House

Find out more about how miniaturist Sarah Leighton became renowned for making incredibly intricate books all in miniature...

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Ruth's mini tips

Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel shares her top tips and advice from her years of experience.

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The Whole Kit & Caboodle

This issue Moi Ali's kit reviews a Georgian dolls house kit.

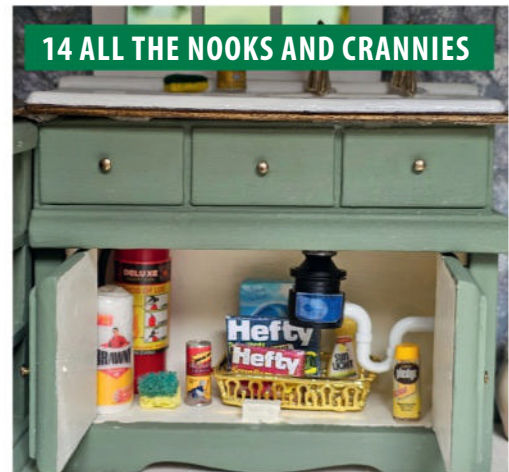
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What's in the December issue?

A sneak peek inside your BUMPER December issue, you won't want to miss this winter special!

DOLLS HOUSE & MINIATURE SCENE

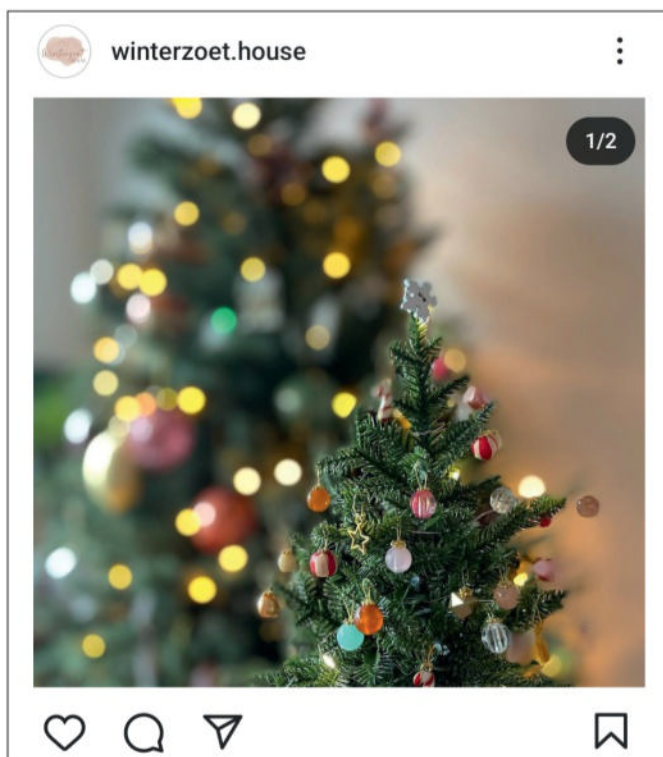
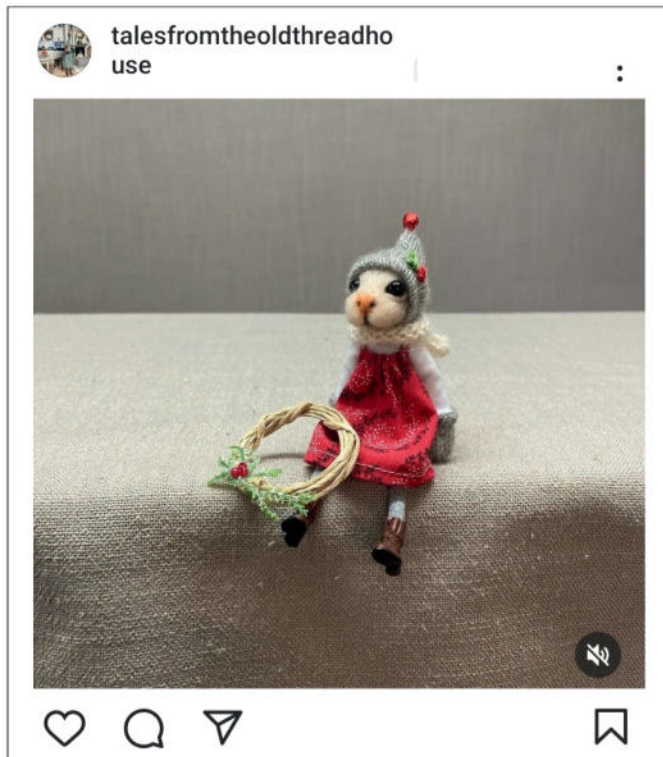
Collections and Features...



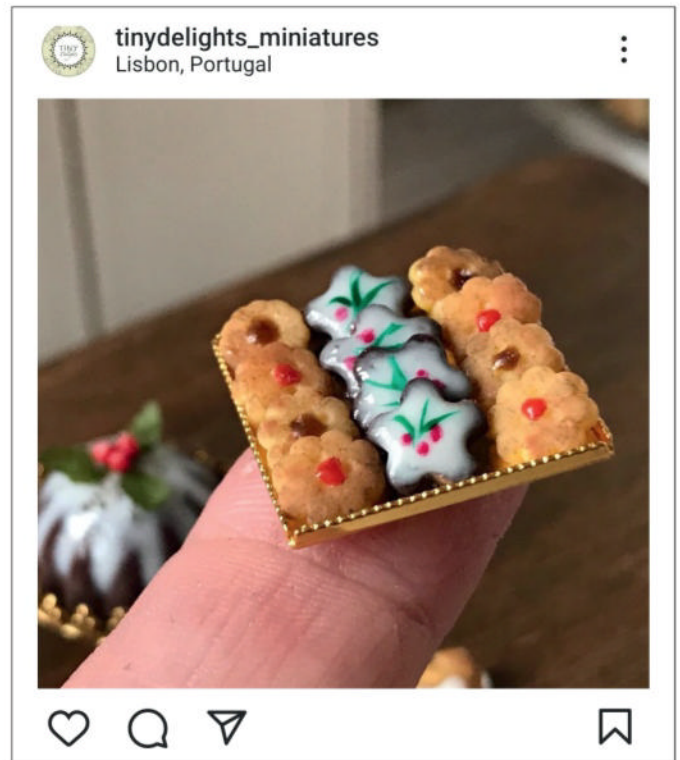
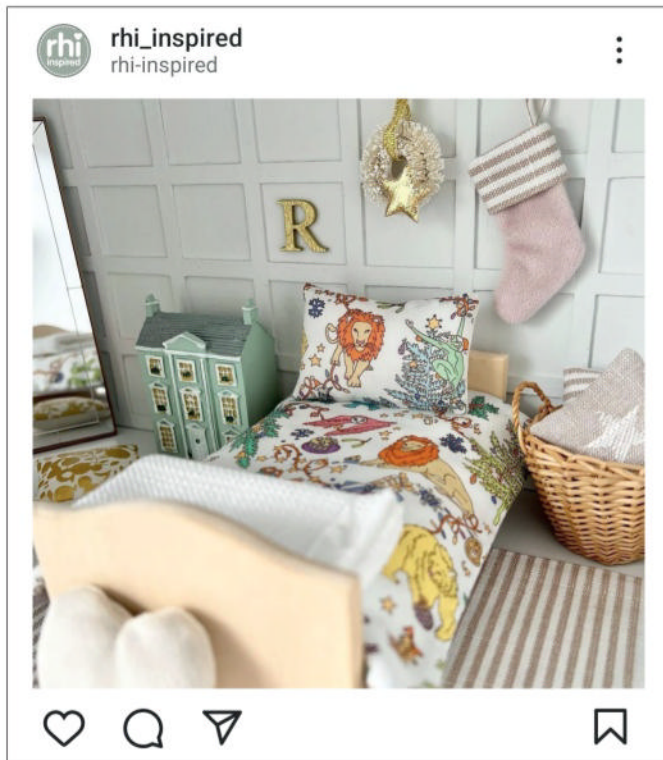
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Caught on camera

Here at DHMS, the team have been



amazed and inspired by these mini makes as seen on Instagram this month...



A slice of autumn

Getting ready for Thanksgiving will be a piece of cake this year, with this floral showstopper.

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

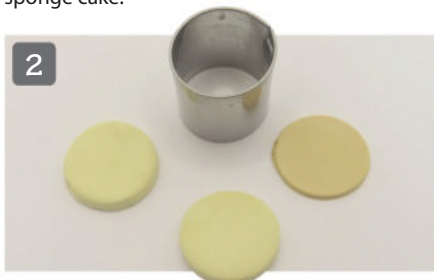
- Ecu, white, yellow, orange and brown polymer clay
- Golden ochre, dark cadmium orange and brown pastels
- Orange, yellow, dark green, metallic green, metallic copper and metallic bronze acrylic paints
- 1/12th scale autumn leaves
- Small dried flowers in autumnal colours
- Card
- Craft glue

Tools required

- 2cm round sugar craft cutter
- Small paintbrushes
- Craft knife
- Roller
- Needle tool or pin



1 Mix white polymer clay with a little yellow to make cream. Divide the mixture in half, putting one aside. Add grated golden ochre, dark cadmium orange and brown pastel to the other half, creating a shade resembling golden sponge cake.



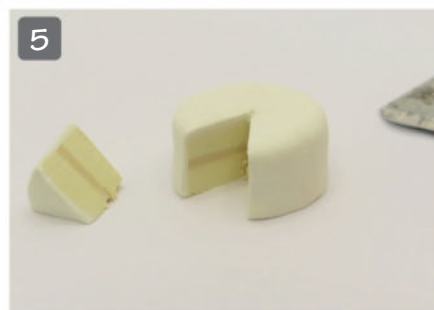
2 Roll the golden sponge clay out to just under 4mm in thickness and some ecru clay to 1½mm in thickness. Use a 2cm round sugar craft cutter to press out three circles, two golden sponge and one ecru.



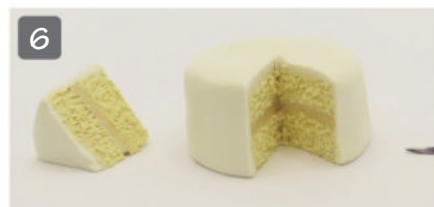
3 Place the ecru circle in between the two sponge layers to form the cake.



4 Roll out the cream clay as thin as you can manage and less than 1mm in thickness. Carefully cover the cake, cutting away any excess to form a neat edge.



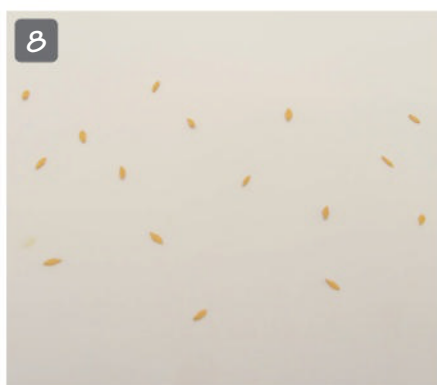
5 Place the cake in the freezer for a few minutes, allowing the clay to harden up, before cutting a small slice and revealing the layers.



6 Use a needle tool or sewing pin to texture the sponge layers of both the cake and the slice. Take care to avoid the ecru 'coffee buttercream' in the centre.



7 Mix grated golden ochre pastel with a little dark cadmium orange/brown pastel before adding a little water. Use a small, thin brush to paint the base of the cake and slice, taking care to avoid the outer frosting.



8 Mix bright orange polymer clay with a little white to create a more muted shade. Roll tiny balls into a tube with a point at each end, flattening with a fingernail to create petals.



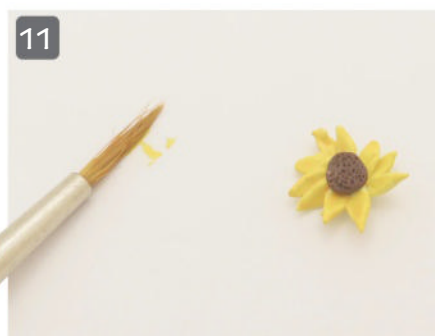
9 Form a flower by putting the petals together in a circle, adding another layer from the centre.

Sadie's Top Tip

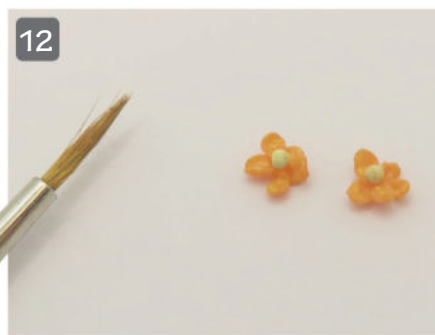
"For the most realistic effect, arrange the flowers and leaves in a pyramid shape on top of the cake."



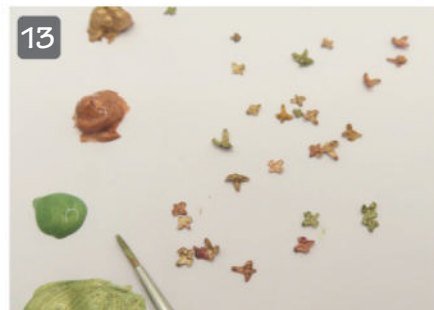
10 Roll five tiny balls of orange clay into little carrot shapes with a point at one end. Flatten with a fingernail, creating petals. Put them together to form a flower shape. Repeat to make a second flower. Next, create more petals similar to those from step 8, but a little smaller. Put them together to make a single layer of petals. Roll three even smaller balls of cream clay and place one in the centre of each flower. Use a needle tool or sewing pin to make a small hole in ball in the centre of the flower with the thin leaves.



11 Create more thin petals, this time using cream clay. As before, put them together in a circle. Roll a tiny ball of brown clay and flatten with a fingernail and placing in the centre of the flower to create a sunflower. Use a needle tool or sewing pin to add lots of tiny dots to the brown centre. Bake the cake, slice and all the flowers. Once cooled, mix orange and yellow acrylic paint to create a bright shade of sunflower and paint the sunflower petals.



12 Use a small paintbrush to create a mottled effect on the round petals of the two small flowers with yellow acrylic paint.



13 Take a packet of 1/12th scale autumn leaves, painting a few with acrylic paint in metallic bronze, metallic copper, metallic green and a metallic copper/metallic green mix. Allow to dry thoroughly.



14 Use craft glue to attach the flowers and metallic leaves to the top of the cake.



15 Cut some very tiny, dried flowers in an autumnal shade and glue into position inbetween the flowers.



16 Cut two small leaves from card or even from real leaves found amongst a dried flower arrangement, painting with a rich dark green. Once dry, glue into place amongst the floral arrangement to add a colour contrast, completing the look. 🏠

...And a partridge in a pear tree!

Moi Ali creates the 12 days of Christmas all in miniature!

One of the most fun Christmas songs has to be 'The 12 days of Christmas'. Kids just love trying to remember all the items from that ever-growing list! Moi Ali challenged herself to track down all 12 in miniature form – although for some of them, a bit of artistic licence was used!



Twelve drummers drumming



I had to settle for drums rather than drummers for this one – but these drums from Minimum World are delightful! They cost under a tenner, but they look a million dollars. For two decades, Minimum World – a family-owned business – has stocked renowned international brands including Reutter Porzellan and Mini Mundus. Every Christmas party needs a drum beat to get granny dancing around the Christmas tree!

Pair of drums on stand: £9.71

 www.minimumworld.com

Eleven pipers piping



I'm afraid I was ready to throw in the towel on this one. Search as I might, I simply couldn't find anything to fit the bill. Fortunately, Angela from Valerie's Miniatures got me out of a hole and made me a pipe and some sheet music. Bravo Angela! Although this is not a regular line for Valerie Claire Miniatures, you will find plenty online to tempt you – from pharmacy items to Christmas decorations.

 www.valerieclaireminiatures.com

Ten lords a-leaping



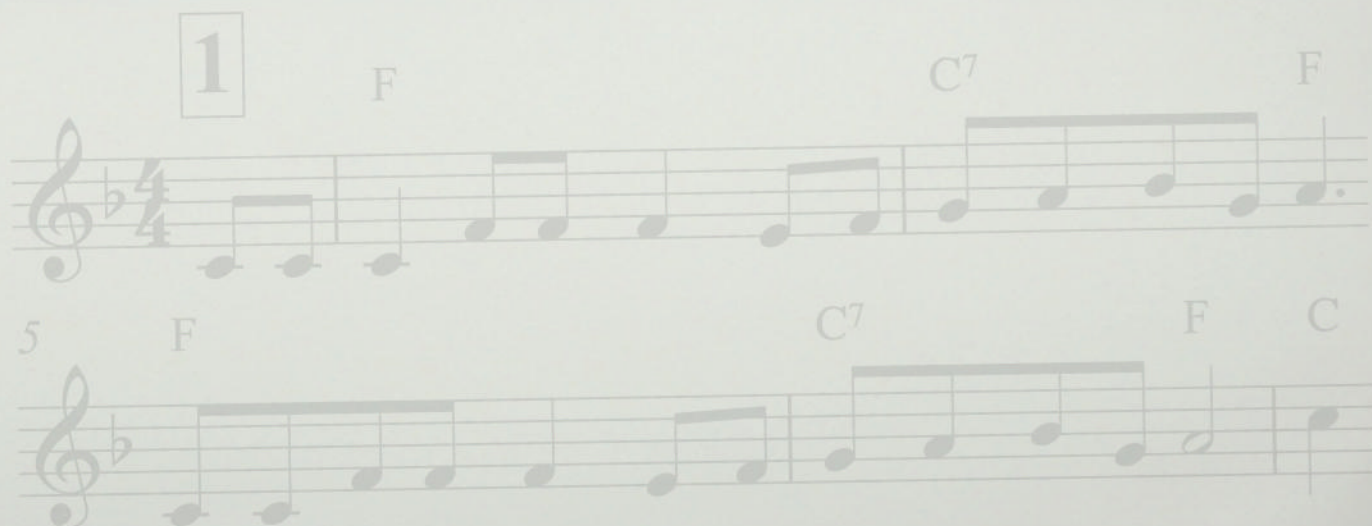
Did you know that the 'lords' in the song are not people at all? I didn't, until I started my research. This line is actually a reference to the Ten Commandments in the Bible. That is why my little scene shows a lovely carved bible box, made from a kit by Arjen Spinhoven, and a beautiful bible with illuminated pages by MiniShacks. Dutch-based Arjen is an architect by background, and Madeau Christou, who runs MiniShacks, has been selling tiny tomes since 2016 and also has a degree in architecture.

Bible box kit: £25.56 (UK buyers will need to order from Arjen's Etsy shop)

 www.arjenspinhoven.nl

Bible: £17.40 from Madeau's MiniShacks store on Etsy

 www.etsy.com/uk/listing/548400169/1-12-scale-miniature-bible-miniature



Nine ladies dancing



This was challenging, and I had no idea where to find nine ladies dancing. Thankfully Eden from Edenshart on Etsy came to the rescue, 3D-printing and handpainting nine bespoke ballerinas in a range of different poses. They look just perfect in this toy crate made from a kit by one of my favourite makers, Jane Harrop, and painted a festive red. Eden's Etsy store has quirky items ranging from Moroccan tagines to miniature balloon art doggies!

 www.etsy.com/uk/shop/Edenshart

Toy box kit: £4

 www.janeharrop.co.uk

Eight maids a-milking



This evocative milk parlour scene was staged using a milking stool, milk churn, and glasses of milk from Melody Jane, and a milk jug from Minimum World. Melody Jane has been going for over 20 years and stocks nearly 7,500 different items in 1/12th, 1/24th and 1/48th scales.

Rustic milking stool: £3.50, rusty milk churn: £7.99, two glasses of milk (comes with a glass jug of milk, not pictured): £6.99

 www.melodyjane.com

Streets Ahead white milk jug: £2.16

 www.minimumworld.com

Seven swans a-swimming



These swans are great as ornaments, but would also make fabulous ice sculptures. Just imagine one as a spectacular table centrepiece for a grand banquet, with delicious food all around! Or gliding across an icy lake. I spotted a delightful crystal swan in the Edenshart shop on Etsy, and Eden kindly made me a set of seven resin swans in different sizes. You will find many items to tempt you in this Etsy store, for Christmas and all year round.

Crystal swans, large: £4.30 each

 www.etsy.com/uk/shop/Edenshart 

Six geese a-laying



This set of miniature farmyard geese conveniently comes in a six pack! As they need to be geese a-laying, eggs are essential. I sourced eggs in ceramic bowls from Melody Jane, which is also where the geese came from. Perfect for a village green, country cottage or farmyard scene.

Set of six geese: £10.99

Bowls with eggs: £5.99 for two bowls

 www.melodyjane.com

Five gold rings



These gold rings on a hand display are available in kit form from Valerie Claire Miniatures, where you will find a huge choice of other delightful jewellery too. Crowns, tiaras, brooches and rings – it's all there, and much more. Quality, choice and very affordable prices make this a go-to supplier for so many miniature items. And as it's the season to be merry, check out the Christmas range!

Rings display kit: £2.90

 www.valerieclaireminiatures.com

Four calling birds



I confess that I had absolutely no idea what a calling bird was, but older readers may remember the song used to call them 'colly' rather than calling birds. 'Colly' is an old word for black, so a calling or colly bird is simply a blackbird. Mine came from Molded Candy on Etsy and they're adorable. A blackbird is for life, not just for Christmas, so pop a couple on a chimney pot, window sill or garden wall.

Blackbirds by Molded Candy on Etsy: £2.50 each

 www.valerieclaireminiatures.com



Three French hens



These hens are courtesy of Edenshart on Etsy. As to their nationality, ooh la la – let's just call them French. They're clucking with a Parisian accent, and to ensure there is absolutely no dispute as to their country of origin, Eden made a tricolore hen house complete with a couple of baguettes in a basket. What a star! Speak to Eden if you'd like to discuss a special commission.

Everyone knows that hens are kept for their eggs, and I scrambled mine from Minimum World.

www.etsy.com/uk/shop/Edenshart

www.valerieclaireminiatures.com

Eggs: £1.16 for half a dozen

www.minimumworld.com

Two turtle doves



Google helped me out in identifying what a turtle dove looked like, then Molded Candy (who trade on Etsy) kindly made a pair of billing and cooing turtle doves specially for me. They are absolutely gorgeous, and totally hand-painted with exquisite markings. Owner Nick loved the turtle doves so much that they will now form part of the Molded Candy range.

www.etsy.com/uk/shop/moldedcandy

And a partridge in a pear tree



I couldn't find a pear tree, but I managed to source a delightful potted Ficus and a crop of a dozen juicy pears that look the biz in a fruit crate made from a kit by Jane Harrop. I sourced partridge in a pear tree images online, and used them to make sheet music, a book and a framed print (in a vintage frame).

Potted Ficus: £8.40

www.minimumworld.com

Pears: £3.25 for half a dozen

www.melodyjane.com

Sudlow Farm crate kit: £4

www.janeharrop.co.uk

If you feel inspired by the 12 days of Christmas song, why not make up a miniature advent calendar and put a different item from the song inside each cubby hole? Kids (including adult ones!) will love it!

You can find lovely advent cabinets that are just perfect from www.artofmini.com.

This one is around 50 Euros. 🏠





All the nooks and crannies

It's all in the details... as Kim Finch shows inside her marvelous miniature kitchen...

Nestled at the heart of my dolls house, the kitchen reigns supreme as the bustling hub of miniature existence. Here, the art of cooking and the everyday of domestic life meld harmoniously.

As the saying goes, "the devil is in the details." At first glance, the kitchen radiates a welcoming warmth. The petite La Cornue range, adorned with its gleaming minuscule knobs, eagerly anticipates the touch of an

invisible culinary virtuoso. Hidden behind the oven door, a perpetually roasting turkey—its golden-brown perfection emitting an irresistible, aromatic allure, forever cooking but never consumed.

In a much-used corner of the kitchen, a quaint Amish jelly cupboard holds an array of pantry essentials, from flour and sugar to the fragrant coffee beans necessary to jump start our early mornings.

The refrigerator, though compact in stature, houses all our family's essentials: fresh fruits, delectable meats and cheeses, farm fresh eggs and, of course, juice bags for the little ones. Nestled deep within the vegetable drawer, out of the reach of tiny hands, resides my secret stash of sweets. And one mustn't forget a trusty box of baking soda to keep everything impeccably fresh! 🍷







The kitchen island assumes its role as the ideal workstation for crafting hearty, mouthwatering meals for my tiny family. It also doubles as a stage to showcase my decorative yet functional culinary tools, including a charming wooden rolling pin and dainty silver measuring spoons, perfect for cookie making during the upcoming holiday season.

The pantry, a miniature epicentre of culinary delight, conceals an abundance of provisions, from delectable, sweet treats to rows of soup tins, and an assortment of cereals and crisps. My greatest joy in the miniature world is crafting these tiny foods, mostly from paper, and my inspiration often springs from leisurely strolls through the grocery stores.

An antique clock, with its hands forever frozen at 1:30 pm, imparts a sense of nostalgia and unwavering punctuality to the room.

The white farmhouse-style draining board sink, complete with its miniature faucets and soap dispenser, stands as a testament to the importance of tidiness. Underneath the sink, a compact waste disposal unit emerges as a practical ally in our ongoing endeavour to reduce waste and minimize our contributions to landfills.

In my dolls house kitchen, it's not just the tiny physical objects that captivate my imagination; it's the sense of domesticity, warmth and familiarity that emanates from every nook and cranny. It's a reminder that even in the smallest of spaces, life's essentials and pleasures can find a place. 🏠

INFO For more information visit:

Kim Finch – Tiny House Dollhouse



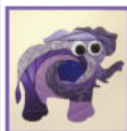
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Creating the best

After finding fame on television's Best in Miniature, Susete Saraiva talks about her time on set.

Lights, camera, action!

Susete Saraiva is one of the highest profile names in miniature art. As the inaugural winner of the CBC television series, Best in Miniature, broadcast in the UK on Discovery+, her work has achieved global acclaim and reached a vast audience. An audience who quickly found themselves captivated not only by Susete's skill and talent, but the incredible haunted house she created during her time on the show. Designed to capture a moment in time as a member of the spirit world wreaks havoc throughout the house, the scene cements Susete's place as a visual storyteller. Explaining to her social media followers how she tried to portray a story in each room, leaving you to question reality,

Susete shows the depth which can be found in small scale. However, knowing that even an experienced artist can feel the pressure when creativity is being captured on camera. I asked Susete about her time on the show, "I was really nervous when we first arrived on set, but as soon as filming began my creative instincts took over and I just got into my natural groove," she tells me. "Of course, there were good and bad days. But in the end, to have been crowned winner, with a Horror-inspired house and a storyline that was far from 'normal', I was shocked."

So successful was Susete's stint on Best in Miniature that she made a brief return during season two, something she says was exciting as it enabled her to experience the show from another perspective. "I loved being 'on the other side'. It brought back a lot of great memories. Meeting the new contestants and seeing their amazing creations was also a ton of fun."

Scary beginnings

Becoming an award-winning miniaturist is a long way from Susete's first memories of small-scale art, which, like many, began with the well-trodden childhood path of a popular doll's famous pink accessories. "Although I didn't pay much attention to miniatures until I found myself collecting action figures in my adult years. I began building them custom backdrops and props to display in my room. Building these displays quickly ascended into a full-time career." It may have taken until adulthood before Susete began to develop her love of miniature art, but her fascination with the horror genre which defines her work began much earlier. "I couldn't have been more than four or five at the time, peeking into the living room to see *The Exorcist* on TV, and without my parents knowing," she recalls. "I ended up watching just enough to realise that horror movies were exciting! I was terrified, yet thrilled."

One of Susete's most intriguing miniatures has to be 'The Waiting Widow'. The widow in question sits in a dilapidated chair, a white sheet wrapped around her.

A Merry Christmas?

Susete's Krampus gingerbread man



Except, there seems to be something missing. The widow herself. "I had the idea while watching *The Conjuring 2*. In one scene you can see a tired old sofa, which had an indentation of someone sitting in it. I wanted to create something like that," explains Susete. "After making the chair and base, I felt something was missing to really make it a special piece. I envisioned a silhouette in the chair and tried to figure out a way to freeze the moment. I draped fabric over an action figure, covered it with glue and let it sit to dry. Once dry, I removed the figure, and the fabric was left in its ghostly silhouette shape. The name 'The Waiting Widow' just seemed the most fitting. If you stare at it long enough, you can almost see her moving." The way the fabric falls around that missing figure is exceptional, creating a haunting scene which lives long in the memory.

Equally spooky are Susete's original haunted houses. Much smaller than the buildings she created during her time

Valentine's cookies with a twist





Hilltop house



▲ Susete's stunning commission house

on Best in Miniature, one house sits perched on 'Grave Hill', pumpkins at the door and surrounded by gnarled old trees. You can almost hear the wind whistling through them under the cover of darkness. Meanwhile, the quirky slanted window-frames of another, the house on 'Spirit Hill', epitomise that haunted feel. "When I work on original pieces, I don't really think ahead. I'll have a very rough idea in mind and just start building. Hoping that with each piece added, it'll tell its own story," says Susete. "Sometimes my models come together exactly as I hoped, and other times I just want to throw them out the window. I love the aesthetic of a haunted house! I admire the look of the lop-sided rooftops, asymmetrical lines, curved walls, window frames that resemble sad eyes. To me there's more beauty in the imperfections, it enhances the character of a piece."



◀ Inspired by the house from 'The Blair Witch Project'

Have a grumpy Christmas

Despite her evident love of the classic horror genre, Susete also brings her passion for all things scary to a selection of seasonal miniatures. Her traditional festive cookies take on a spooky twist, as an angry Christmas tree snarls surrounded by a selection of equally displeased snowmen and gingerbread. Presumably they're cross at the possibility of being usurped by Susete's not entirely fearsome looking Krampus inspired gingerbread man, complete with presents and candy canes. "Despite my love and fascination with the genre, I'm not exclusively into horror... I take inspiration from anywhere, and sometimes I'm just caught in the spirit of the season. However, I'd still want to put my spooky or creepy signature on things I create across other genres. Also, the juxtaposition as something so jolly like Christmas mixed with a little horror is striking!" Continuing the theme throughout the year, Susete also puts her heart into a small Valentine's range, her glittery cookies ideal for those looking for something a little different with that eerie vibe.

As one of a select number of artisans creating art as part of Laika Studios' Laika by Makers, is there a horror movie house or miniature Susete aspires to make but hasn't got around to yet? "There are many! A recent one that I cannot seem to get out of my head is the cookie cutter house in the film *Vivarium*," she muses. "It's such an unsettling watch and while the house itself is not a complex build, it's the overall feel of the movie that inspires me to want to build the house."

Moving away from the genre entirely, Susete recently completed a private commission, creating a beautiful double fronted house, complete with colourful garden in full bloom. The house not only shows her exceptional skill, but also her diverse range. A modest and exciting artisan, much of Susete's art is inspired by some of the top talent in the horror genre, but there is no doubt that it is her own work which has gone on to inspire many others and will continue to do so. After all, she is the best in miniature. 🏠

◀ The Waiting Widow

For more information visit:



www.instagram.com/monstress

// To me there's more beauty in the imperfections, it enhances the character of a piece //



INFO

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Email: jcm.gabbey47@btinternet.com

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Sunday 10th March 2024

9.30am to 2.30pm Entrance £3
(Early bird entrance from 8am £5)

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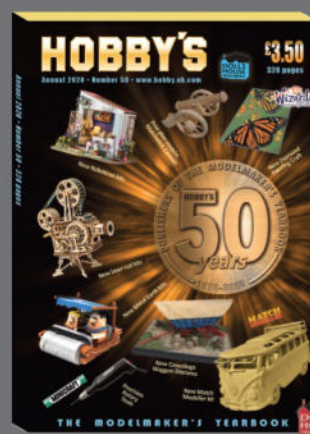
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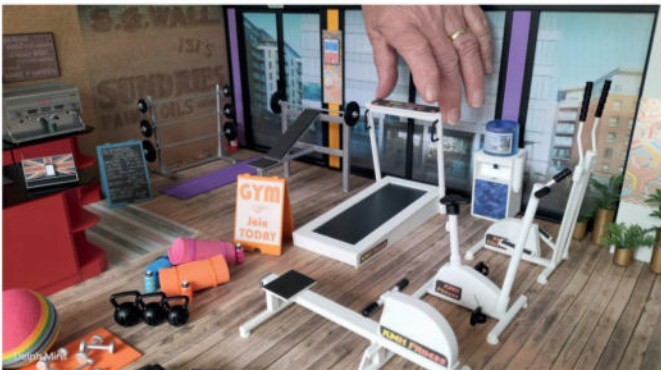
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The charity stand is now in its 11th year at the
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Thanks to our loyal supporters, so far you have
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to seeing you on Sunday 19th November.

Limited Edition
2023 Advent Calendar Kit
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1/12th, 1/24th & 1/48th scale kits

We will be exhibiting at York Dolls House & Miniatures Fair
on Sunday 19th November.

Join me at 2.30pm in the demonstration area for my talk 'seasonal sparkle.'

Firework fiesta

If you want bonfire night to go with a bang, this is the project for you.



Fireworks boxes

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Firework graphics
- Card
- Tissue paper
- Glue



1 Manipulate graphics by cropping and stretching so you have suitable pieces for a box lid and sides.



2 Glue the main image centrally to thin card.



3 Use a paper folder to score fold lines, then snip away the corners and make tabs for gluing the box together

Moi says...

"Remember, remember the 5th of November! You don't want bonfire night to be a damp squib, so light up the sky with mini fireworks. These are easy to make, and they also look good as shop display items. Source vintage fireworks graphics online and manipulate them on your computer as necessary. This can be done easily in Microsoft Word, so there's no need for a fancy graphics software."



4 Glue box lid together then glue the side images in place



5 Make a fractionally smaller base using the same technique. Cut coloured tissue to line the base.



6 Fill the boxes with assorted fireworks. 

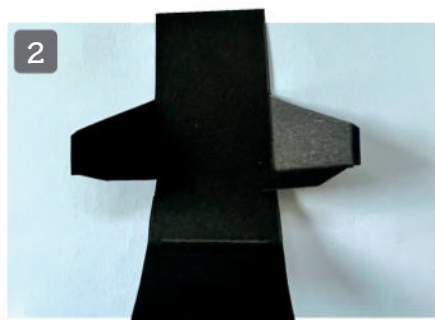
Display box

YOU WILL NEED

- Materials required**
- Graphics
 - Thick coloured paper
 - Glitter card (optional)
 - Glue



1 Make a template for a display box, ensuring that you include tabs to glue the display box together. Make sure your graphics will fit.



2 Draw around the template and cut out an identical shape from stiff coloured paper. Fold and glue to form a display box.



3 Cut thin glittery card (or use matching or contrasting plain card), making a base and a back. Glue in place, to strengthen the display box and to add decorative interest.



4 Glue graphics in place. Fill the display box with fireworks.

Roman candles

YOU WILL NEED

- Materials required**
- Graphics
 - Lollipop sticks
 - Coloured tissue paper
 - Glue



1 Print out re-sized firework wrappers and cut a lollipop stick to size.



2 Wrap the lollipop stick pieces in coloured tissue, twist the tissue at the top and trim.

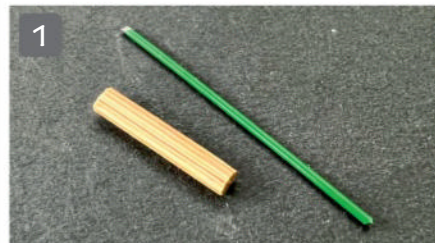


3 Glue a label on each firework.

Rockets

YOU WILL NEED

- Materials required**
- Graphics
 - Kebab skewers
 - Stiff florist's wire
 - Thick sewing thread (optional)
 - Coloured paper
 - Glue



1 Cut a kebab stick in approximately 1.5cm lengths and florist's wire in around 2.5cm lengths. Glue together so they are level at the top.



2 Glue label to kebab stick, then punch circles of coloured paper using an office punch, cutting a segment from each circle,



3 Glue circles to form a little pointy cone.



4 Glue a cone to the top of each rocket.
Optional: glue a small piece of thread to the bottom of the kebab piece as a fuse.

Rocket bucket

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Thin card
- Coloured paper
- Wooden discs
- Florist's oasis
- Sand
- Glue



1 Stack and glue a few wooden discs (or punch out some card circles about the size of a penny)



2 Glue a firework image to a strip of stiff coloured paper that's long enough to fit round the discs, with an overlap.



3 Glue the strip around the discs to form a bin shape. Fill the bin with florist's oasis.



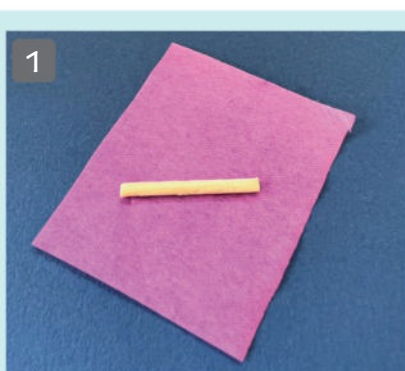
4 Top the oasis with glue and sprinkle on some crafting sand. Arrange rockets in the bucket.

Fountains

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Graphics
- Cocktail sticks
- Coloured tissue paper
- Felt tip pen
- Glue



1 Cut a cocktail stick and a small square of coloured tissue paper.



2 Colour the base of the cut cocktail stick with a pen of the same colour as the tissue paper.



3 Wrap the cocktail stick piece with coloured tissue and twist the tissue at the top and trim.



4 Glue a label on each firework.

Sparklers

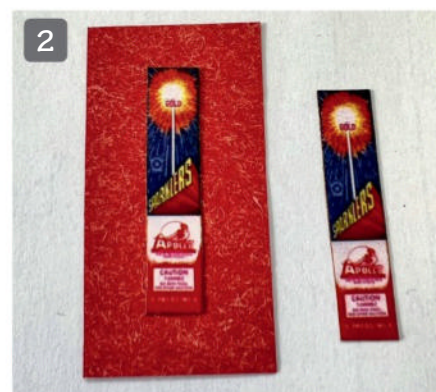
YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Images
- Coloured paper
- Scrap paper
- Glue



1 Scan, re-scale and print the front of a packet of sparklers (or find an image online).



2 Glue image centrally to coloured paper.



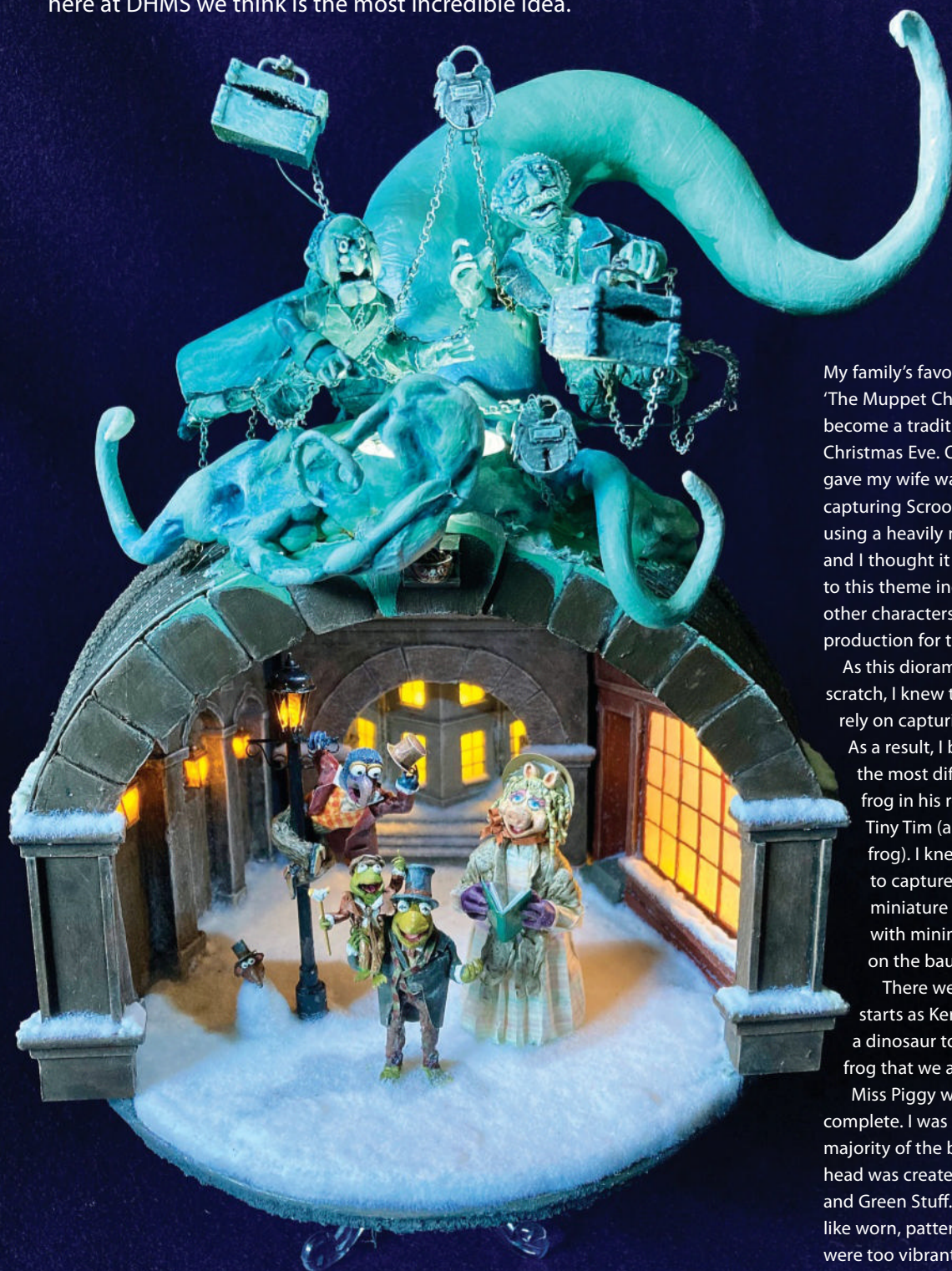
3 Glue folded scrap paper the same size as the image to the reverse to provide bulk.



4 Snip the corners then fold the paper to the back and glue to make a packet shape.

Beautiful baubles

Family traditions are wonderfully nostalgic, especially at Christmas. Reader Conal Oakes has created the most wonderful mini-making yearly gift for his family, involving their favourite Christmas film, that we have to say here at DHMS we think is the most incredible idea.



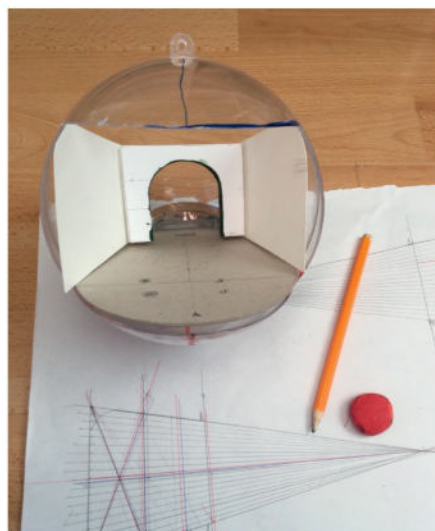
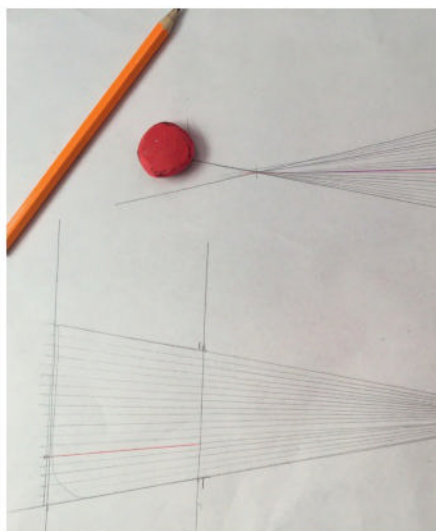
My family's favourite Christmas movie is 'The Muppet Christmas Carol' and it has become a tradition of ours to watch it every Christmas Eve. One of the first baubles I gave my wife was actually an attempt at capturing Scrooge in his counting house using a heavily modified gaming miniature and I thought it would be nice to return to this theme including some of the other characters from the muppet's fine production for this year's Christmas present.

As this diorama was to be built from scratch, I knew that the whole scene would rely on capturing the characters in role.

As a result, I began with what I felt was the most difficult character, Kermit the frog in his role as Bob Cratchit, carrying Tiny Tim (ably acted by Robin the frog). I knew that if it was too difficult to capture a reasonable likeness in miniature size, I could change my idea with minimal time having been wasted on the bauble itself.

There were admittedly a few false starts as Kermit metamorphosed from a dinosaur to a lizard and finally to the frog that we all know and love!

Miss Piggy was the next character to complete. I was able to create the vast majority of the body out of card and the head was created from a mixture of Sculpey and Green Stuff. I wanted the dress to look like worn, patterned material and paints were too vibrant for the pattern.

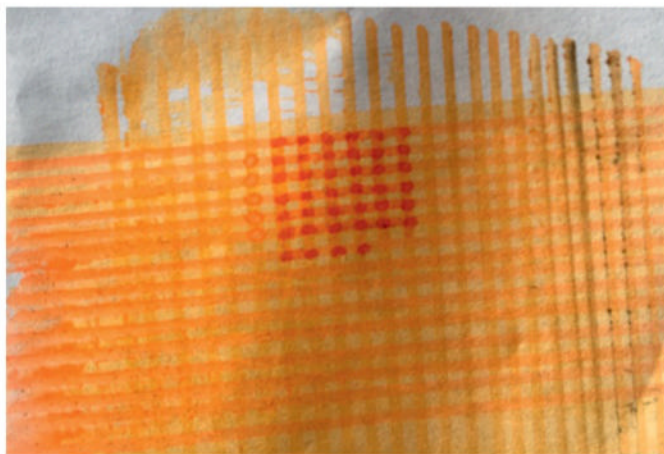
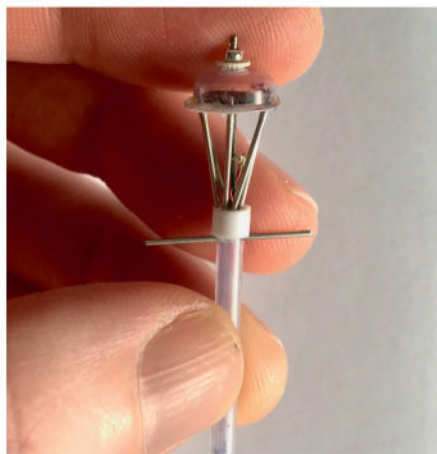


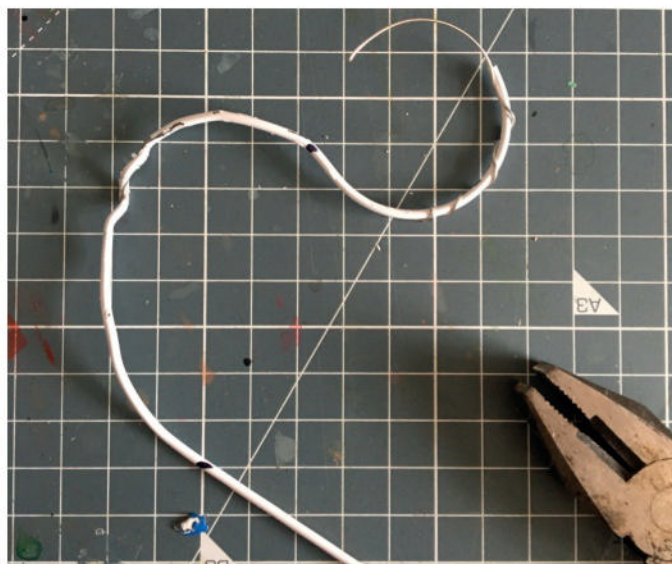
The desired effect was achieved using marker pens thinly applied to paper and folded to mimic the folds of address. I used the same technique in Gonzo's waistcoat.

To create the remainder characters, I used Sculpey for the main body shape and added Green Stuff for the finer details on the face. For the very fine detail I used wire for the fingers of the models and paper to recreate the clothes such as the shirt collars, waistcoats and cravats. A straw was used for the manacles on the ghosts' hands and the top hats.

With the key characters completed, I turned my attention to the setting. I wanted it to be in keeping with the film and I love the scene where the penguins ice skate along the street. There is a Victorian feel to the setting with its muted colour palette that I wanted to try to capture.

Working with the spherical shape of the Christmas bauble over the years, I found the most awkward area of the bauble to be at the very back of the sphere where





space becomes limited. Any modelling that takes place in this area can appear cramped and often detract from the key focus of the diorama. This year I wanted to capture the illusion of space. I angled the building at the very back of the bauble and added two angled mirrors hidden behind the arch to create the illusion that the street was running much further than the space allowed.

Another trick was to use false perspective when creating the wall sections leading directly to the arch at the back of the bauble. I wanted the street to appear much longer than space would actually allow.

I sketched out a reference grid with the vanishing point in the centre of the diorama

and used this as a guide when creating the left-hand wall and the shop front on the right-hand side of the bauble. This meant making three separately sized lights which was a bit of a nuisance but ultimately worth the effort.

I wanted Marley and Marley to make an appearance as they are some of my favourite characters from the film. I thought it would be novel to incorporate them floating on the outside of the Christmas bauble in the ghostly miasma that they bring with them.

A problem that occurred was how to light the two ghostly characters. Placing an LED at the front of the bauble would be very visible and spoil the illusion completely. I decided to create a hidden light well below

the two models and use reflected light from two hidden mirrors placed on the back of the floating box (middle right) and the ghostly vapour (lower left) to shine on the faces of Marley and Marley. Wires were hidden behind the wall of the large arch in the foreground and joined to a small battery back underneath the floor of the diorama.

I have to give my three children an honourable mention, especially my youngest son (age 6) as they enjoy watching the progress of the bauble in the weeks leading up to Christmas. They managed to keep the bauble a complete secret and not give the game away, even when we sat watching the Muppet Christmas Carol movie on Christmas Eve! 🏠

Cottage pie

Cook up an autumnal classic and plate up this hearty cottage pie.

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Brown, black, white, yellow and orange polymer clay
- Golden ochre, brown and dark cadmium orange pastels
- Sculpey Bake & Bond
- 1/12th scale cream ceramic plate
- Gloss and matte varnish
- Dried parsley

Tools required

- 1/12th scale fork
- Small paintbrush
- Roller
- Craft knife
- Needle tool or sewing pin



1 To create the minced beef, roll brown polymer clay into very tiny balls, as small as you can manage.



2 Mix some orange clay with a little yellow and roll out to around 1/3rd of a millimetre in thickness. Cut into small cubes. Bake these and the balls of clay made in the previous step before leaving to cool.



3 Add a small amount of yellow polymer clay to white, making a pale shade of cream resembling mashed potato. Roll out to 1½mm in thickness and cut a rectangle measuring 1.3cm by 9mm.



4 Use a small 1/12th scale fork to score your preferred pattern into the top of the cream clay.





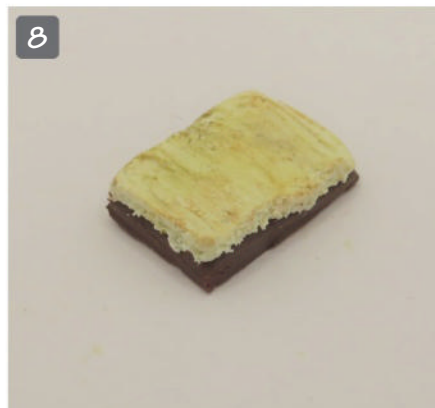
5 Add texture all the way around the side of the cream clay using a needle tool or sewing pin, taking your time to achieve the most realistic mashed potato effect.



6 Grate golden ochre pastel, adding in a little dark cadmium orange and brown. Brush the mixture over the top of the mashed potato to create the perfect browned appearance, varying the shading and taking care to avoid the sides.



7 Roll out some brown clay to 3mm in thickness at one end and 2mm at the other, creating a bit of a wave effect. Cut a rectangle a little larger than the mashed potato. Use Sculpey Bake & Bond or similar to adhere the mashed potato to the top of the brown clay.



8 Using a craft knife, carefully cut the brown clay all the way around the mashed potato layer.



9 Mix Bake and Bond with grated brown pastel, adding in just a very small amount of black.



10 Stick the cottage pie to your chosen 1/12th scale ceramic plate with Bake & Bond. Use the needle tool or sewing pin to spread the Bake & Bond/pastel mixture from the previous step all the way around the base layer below the mashed potato before adding the 'minced beef' and 'carrots'. Bake and allow to cool thoroughly.



11 Coat the cottage pie filling with gloss varnish and the mashed potato with matte. Whilst the varnish is still dry and is able to act as an adhesive, finely chop some dried parsley and sprinkle over the top. 🏠

Did you Know?

Cottage pie is over 200 years old, with records of the traditional British dish dating back to the late 18th century.



We Discover:

Michael Robbins

A semi-finalist on More 4's The Great Big Tiny Design Challenge, Michael Robbins' work is full of life and personality. We simply had to find out more...



What first captured your eye in the world of miniatures?

When I was young, a family friend owned a dolls house and as soon as I saw it, I wanted one for myself! I think it was the idea of having something in miniature that I couldn't own in real, full-size life that appealed to me most.

How would you describe your style?

My main style of work I create is rooted in fantasy. I am inspired by fairytales, theme parks, movies - anything out of the ordinary. Often my work has distinctive faces. I also love Halloween and Christmas so these two seasons definitely influence my work.

You describe yourself as a maker and a collector – do you have a preference?

I don't have a preference. Both aspects of the hobby interest me equally. I love creating whatever is in my head that day but I also love collecting from others. My collection is mainly dolls, vintage looking artisan teddy bears and toys, and beautiful French furniture - very different from the work I make to sell.

What minis do you enjoy making?

I love to make anything with a face. I will put a face on pretty much anything from a pumpkin, to a candle, to a clock - even furniture sometimes. I always sculpt from scratch without the use of moulds so it's always exciting to see what characters and expressions form out of the clay. It can just be the slightest mark in the clay or the placement of the eyes that can really change up the face and I love that every one comes out unique.



What is your preferred material to use and what advice do you have for those using it?

I mainly like to work in polymer clay. I find it easy to manipulate and sculpt with and the nice thing is, if something goes wrong, you can just roll it up and start again without wasting it! My biggest advice for polymer clay would be to really focus on colour. The standard polymer clay colours are often primary or very bright and intensely pigmented which can be jarring when baked. I always mix some beige doll clay and a tiny piece of brown into any colour, as it tones down and mutes the colour which I think looks much nicer at such a small scale

What advice do you have for those new to miniatures?

Go to a miniature show if you can, especially a bigger one with a range of artists with different styles and abilities and prices. It's a great way to get a good concept of scale and what is possible in mini (which is most things!). My other piece of advice is - give it a go! Try lots of different things. Even if you think you would be suited to one particular medium, it's amazing what things you can learn when trying new skills and those new skills can help expand what you are able to make.

Do you enjoy attending shows?

The shows are my favourite thing. They're the weekends of the year that I most look forward to. As miniaturists, we tend to live quite solitary lives working away on our own in our work spaces and so to have the opportunity to get together at the shows, catch up, and see each other's latest creations in person is just the best.

You appeared in More 4's The Great Big Tiny Design Challenge, tell us something about your time on the show that wasn't aired? Any behind the scenes stories?

Well luckily for me, a few times where things went seriously wrong for me didn't air! I remember particularly having a complete nightmare with a chaise lounge in the rococo hallway challenge. Let's just say, me and superglue don't get on well!

What did you learn from your time on the show?

The show was great in getting me to try new things in miniature that I hadn't before. Especially furniture making. I surprised myself with some of the things I made and it definitely made me more confident in that regard - so much so that I ended up with a dremel and scroll saw on my return from filming!

What do you have on your must-make list for the future?

There is an infinite list of makes I'd like to create. A few include a Cinderella pumpkin carriage complete with nice, a fairytale bed, and I would love to attempt more dolls as I do find them quite a challenge... oh and I'd love to sculpt a big tree with a face... the list goes on! 🏠



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At Home with THE BROADWOODS



Shabby AND Chic

There are many different creative genres and styles that are popular in the miniature world and French style dolls houses and miniatures definitely have a huge and passionate following. So this month, professional miniaturist Bea Broadwood not only shares an exclusive first look at her latest shabby chic creation, but her top tips on how to bring it to life too!

Regular readers will already know that I have a deep love of full scale 'real' architecture and it is my passion for buildings that inspires me when I'm designing my miniature creations. However, although 'Authentic Architecture in Miniature' is PP's official strap line, every now and again I do enjoy ripping up the rule book and experimenting with altogether more imaginary styles and finishes.

Over the last 20 years I have seen French inspired miniatures steadily gaining in popularity. And rightly so! Who doesn't love subtle pastel shades and fluted feminine lines; all gently weathered and distressed to create the feel of shabby chic elegance. This popular style has not just been confined to the 1/12th modelling arena, its influence has reached into all of the dolls house scales, including even the smallest; 1/144th.

Gallic elegance...

Happy to be swept along by Gallic shabby elegance, back in 2014 PP released its very first 'shabby chic' 1/48th dolls house. Le Petit Palais was an instant hit with our customers and so it was quickly followed up with a number of new French inspired designs. Of course, shabby chic dolls houses can be finished to look like 'real' houses complete with faux lead roof and mellow stone. But they are also at their most elegant when simply painted in pastel tones. As I had previously applied a range of differing finishes to the exterior of other dolls houses, I was keen to try something a bit different with my latest design... but I didn't quite know what?

Those who know me know I have an innate aversion to tidying up. I avoid it like the plague. However, there are some times when a bit of a sort out is needed and it was during one of these uncharacteristic clean up sessions that I re-discovered some long-misplaced scrap book paper! Flicking through my old stash, one sheet in particular really sprang out of the folder and I instantly knew exactly where it was heading!

"I found it easier to choose the paper first, and then pick a complimentary colour to match the paper, than the other way round!"

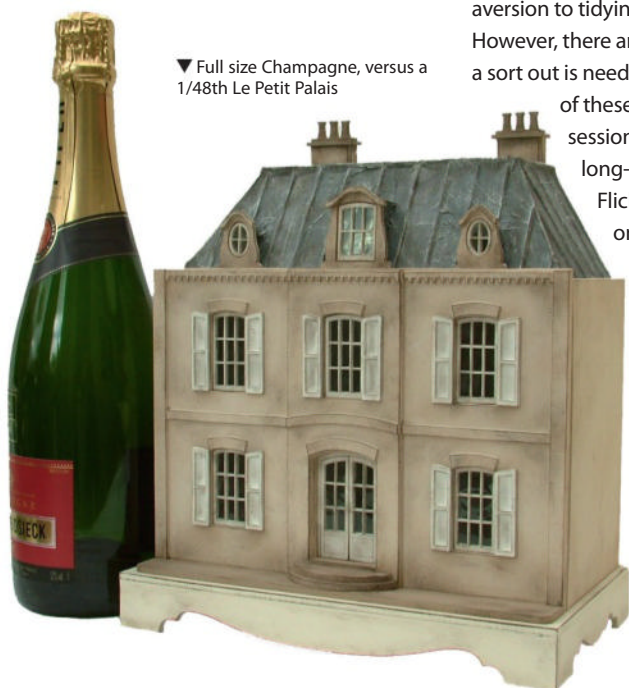
Bea



Kitchen alchemy

Throwing thoughts of 'real' architecture out of the window and fully embracing my inner shabby chic, my plan was to cover parts of the exterior of my Manoir and base with the pretty duck egg blue paper that I had found. I would then simply paint the rest of the exterior in complimentary colours.

▼ Bea's homemade paint chart for the colours she used on her Manoir



▼ Full size Champagne, versus a 1/48th Le Petit Palais

However, after rummaging through my paint cupboard, I couldn't find a colour that worked with the scrap book paper; so I decided to mix my own. After an hour or so of alchemy in the church's kitchen; our new 'Eggy Blue' paint emerged!

Armed with my scrapbook paper, paint and my trusty eye shadow palette, at last work on the new master model could begin. My first decision was which parts to paint and which parts should be covered with paper? As the sheet of patterned paper I had found was quite big, I was able to cover the whole front of the house and still had enough for the front and sides of the display base too. I used a builder's bond PVA adhesive to stick the paper into place. However, to avoid the paper warping, it is important to evenly apply the adhesive to the surface of the kit and NOT apply it to the paper itself. Once the paper had dried, I carefully trimmed the excess edges of the paper using a scalpel.

If you don't have scrapbook paper – worry not! There are loads of different types of paper that can be used to cover the exterior of the house. Most miniaturists that I know are great hoarders and many of you reading this will probably already have the perfect

paper hidden away in your craft stash... so get ransacking! Wall paper, gift wrap even paper napkins could be used. However, I would avoid anything that has a heavy texture as this would make sticking architectural details (such as the window surrounds) onto it problematic.

Another key feature to consider is the paper's finish. I like to work with a matt finish, as it allows me to easily and quickly distress it using eye shadow. Gloss finishes are much harder to subtly distress, so this is an important consideration to bear in mind when selecting the paper you want to use. ➡

◀ A brand new scalpel blade is a must, to keep the paper edges neat



▼ A matt finish will allow the paper to be easily distressed using eye shadow





▲ Use every little bit of the sticker sheet!



▲ Spot the tiny door handles!

Whenever I am building and decorating a master model, I always keep a little writing pad by my side, so that I can make notes as I go along. These are the key notes that I made whilst building my Le Manoir and I hope you find them helpful:

- Measure your paper carefully to ensure (before you start) that you have enough for your project.
- Make sure your work surface is completely flat AND clean (I didn't check the latter and a disaster with my paper was only narrowly avoided!).
- Always use a brand-new scalpel blade when you begin a new project.
- When working with paper, make sure your hands are clean.
- Have everything you need to hand, BEFORE you start applying any adhesive.
- Wait until the adhesive has completely dried before attempting to trim the edges.
- When cutting paper with a scalpel or craft knife, ALWAYS use a metal ruler with a finger guard.
- Take your time!

Bea's Top Tip

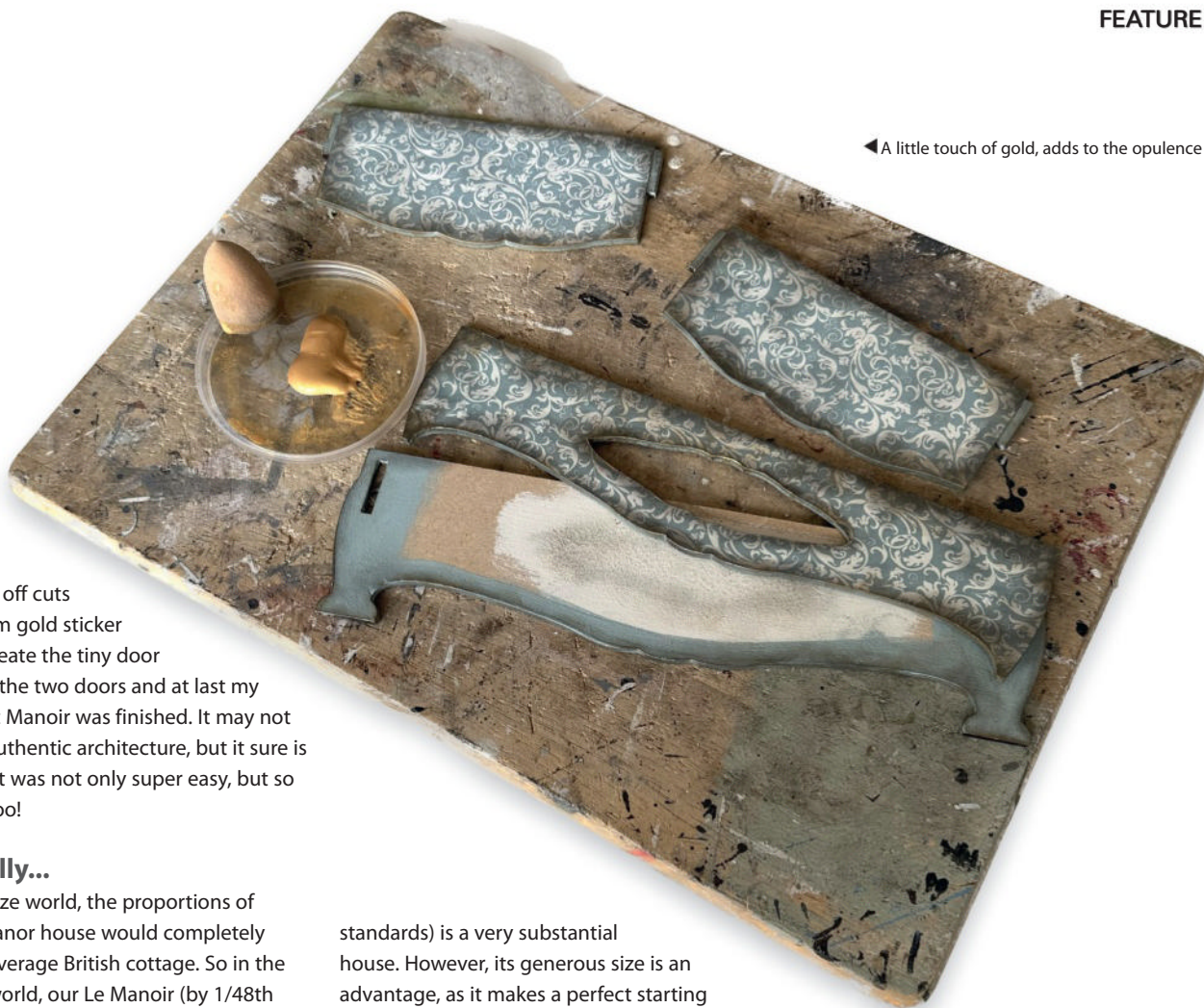
"The little bits left behind on gold peel off sticker sheets make fabulous quarter scale door furniture!"

Finishing touches...

As I also wanted to incorporate a touch of opulence to my master model, I decided to add some subtle gold highlights to the exterior. To apply the gold paint, I used a small dry cosmetic sponge and allowed the paint to lightly catch on the edges and the textured surface. On the roof I applied the gold paint with a dry bristle brush using vertical brush strokes over the painted surface



◀ A little touch of gold, adds to the opulence



I used little off cuts leftover from gold sticker sheets to create the tiny door handles on the two doors and at last my shabby chic Manoir was finished. It may not represent authentic architecture, but it sure is pretty and it was not only super easy, but so much fun too!

And finally...

In the full-size world, the proportions of a French manor house would completely dwarf the average British cottage. So in the miniature world, our Le Manoir (by 1/48th

standards) is a very substantial house. However, its generous size is an advantage, as it makes a perfect starting point if you are new to quarter scale... Little, but not too little!

Of course, you can fill your Manoir with French inspired furniture or accessories or you could simply enjoy this shabby chic dolls house as an elegant standalone display house. The choice is yours! So whether you are new to the smaller scales or maybe you are completely new to the dolls house

hobby itself, Le Manoir Des Saison could be the perfect introduction to miniatures and your very own gateway kit to a whole new small scale world!

PS... If you love shabby chic and 1/144th scale, why not check out the August '23 issue to read more about the teeny tiny micro version of Le Manoir Des Salons!

Bea Broadwood 🏠

Bea says...

"Check out the August '23 issue to read more about the tiny version of Le Manoir Des Salons!"

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LANDAU HOUSE

London-based Etsy business-owner Sarah Leighton is renowned for making incredibly intricate miniature books, and Moi Ali needed to find out more about this teeny tiny novel maker...





Inspired by William Morris



A good book Photo Rachel Palmer

I first came across London-based Sarah Leighton on Etsy when I purchased some of her adorable miniature books for my personal collection. I'd had a go at making my own, but hers were so much superior and very reasonably priced to boot! Her countless five-star reviews are well deserved. Then when I saw Landau House on Instagram, finally I had an excuse to get in touch and find out more!

Sarah got into making miniature things as a hobby initially, "and then it kind of escalated into a small online shop," she explained. "When I opened my Etsy shop in 2017, I never expected my books to be so well-received. It's a lengthy process, as all of my miniature books are made to order. I feel blessed because the miniature community is so lovely and supportive. I've met some truly inspiring sellers and collectors along the way."

I had to know, why mini books? "That's a very good question. I love making them, it's as simple as that! I get such a buzz to see my books in their new homes all over the world. I can't imagine doing anything else now. How many people can say that they love their profession? I can!" Lucky Sarah! Just imagine a job that you absolutely adore, that also involves making miniatures. Sounds perfect to me. 📖



Teeny books in a tiny book



Books and letters

I am such a fan of Sarah's work, because she has a great eye for what will work in miniature form. I have just fallen for her set of vintage Penguin classics, including titles such as *Brighton Rock*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *The Great Gatsby*. These perfect miniature replicas – a set of eight different titles in the distinctive Penguin orange jackets – costs just £7.95 including UK postage! The pages are blank, but fully turnable. That's what I call a steal.

Other series include Jane Austin novels with William Morris covers (I already have a set of those in my own collection), and a set of children's classics such as *Black Beauty*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Water Babies*. She has a knack of capturing books that evoke nostalgia for childhood, or that have a fabulous vintage feel for the types of interiors miniaturists love to create.

Sarah also sells a truly stunning Book of Hours, inspired by the illuminated c1500 Catherine of Cleves book. Sarah's mini version, which is just 3x2cm, has 36 beautifully illustrated pages with gold edging. Incredibly, this wonderful miniature costs just £8. Sarah can even make smaller versions by request. Each book is handmade. Sarah glues and trims each individual page so they line up perfectly (rather than 'fan folding,' which gives a thicker edge to the pages) before gilding each one – just like a real-life illustrated manuscript.



A pile of reading



Tiny tomes

Sometimes when I interview someone for this series, I'm disappointed to learn that they don't actually have a dolls house. I was therefore relieved to hear that Sarah does: "Yes, I have the Green Leaf Buttercup Cottage. I poured my heart and soul into it when my Mum died in 2020." It's interesting how so many of us use miniatures in that way, as a kind of therapy or a coping mechanism for bereavement, illness or some other trauma. Sarah continued: "I also have a patisserie that I built from a kit, which I adore too."

Sarah's personal collection is very much on a bookish theme and includes miniature vintage bookcases which she's filled and hung in her home: "My husband always jokes, 'Oh, you're going to sell that one?' He's so funny! I'd never part with them. My answer is always 'No!' Bless him!"



Beautifully illustrated

a few which now reside on my wall."

Like many of us, Sarah's biggest challenge is work/life balance: "Finding that healthy balance between work and family can definitely be a challenge. I'm blessed that I can work from home, which certainly makes achieving that balance easier, but I still need to be careful and share my time between family and my mini books business. My family are very supportive of what I do, so I'm very lucky. My Mum was, of course, my biggest fan, followed by my sister who comes to visit us and always ends up leaving with something I've made."

Many mini makers accept special commissions, and Sarah is no exception. I asked what her strangest request so far has been: "A customer once asked for a miniature

copy of the Karma Sutra!" Without batting an eyelid, Sarah made up the miniature version of this famously risqué book, which is no doubt pride of place in someone's miniature scene. I didn't enquire as to the nature of the scene in question!

Looking to the future, I asked Sarah if she had any special dreams or ambitions. I should have guessed it would involve tiny tomes: "I would love to own the smallest book in the world. That would be my dream come true, but it's just way out of my budget." Better start buying those lottery tickets, Sarah! 🏠

I enquired about Sarah's professional training and how she came to be in this field. "Oh dear, well I have no exciting professional background really. I started out making

miniature dioramas inside vintage books. These were snapped up by a really sweet gallery owner who purchased all of them. Sadly I no longer make them, but I did keep



Gorgeous covers

If the cap fits

Moi Ali's project has a military theme to mark Remembrance Sunday.

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Felt
- Coloured paper & thin card
- Black leather
- Glue
- Fine black braid
- Thick lurex thread or sewing floss in white or red
- Heavy gold paper
- Paper punch
- Feathers
- Netting
- Small flower punch
- Small pearl or jewel
- Needle and thread

Moi says...

"This month marks Remembrance Sunday, when we remember British service members who died in wars and other military conflicts since the start of the first world war. This project has a military theme, but with a twist.

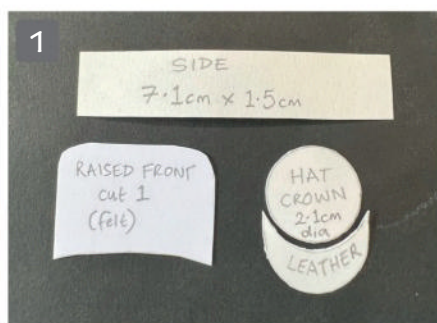
I'm no military history expert – and these military hats predate WWI and are not intended to be accurate historical headdresses – but they are rather nice. These little shakos and kepis look great on display in a period room set, perhaps casually perched on a chair or side table, or in the hallway of a grand house with a pair of riding boots alongside. Use one in a contemporary antique shop on a mahogany hatstand, with a framed display of war medals, or in an old-fashioned gentleman's/military outfitters.

I have also shown how to make a ladies' pillbox hat, perfect for wearing to a Remembrance Sunday service, using the same technique as for the kepi."

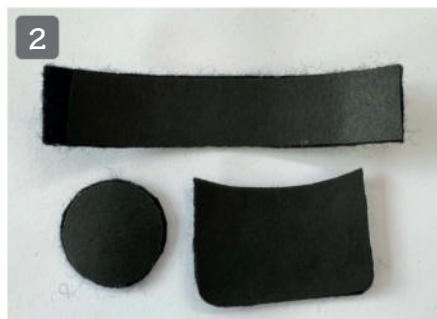


What is a shako?

A shako is a distinctive tall, cylindrical military headdress usually with an ornamental feather dating from around 1800 onwards.



1 Draw and cut out the pattern pieces onto thin card.



2 Cut out the shako hat pieces from black felt (don't cut the peak yet). Cut a second set of pieces from black paper. Glue the paper to the corresponding felt piece.



3 Glue the two short ends of the hat sides to form a short tube, then glue the crown to the top of the tube.



4 Glue braid around the raised part, but not along the bottom edge.



5 Glue the raised part to the tube, covering the join. Check that the peak template fits perfectly around the curve of the hat.



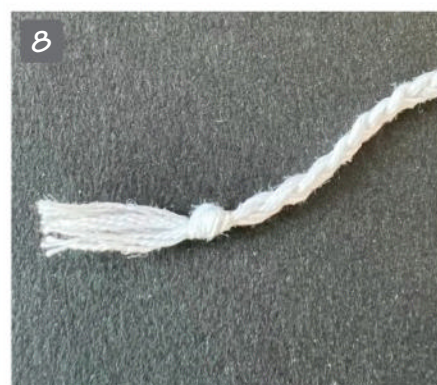
6 Cut two pieces of leather using the template, and glue suede sides together to form a peak. Glue the peak to the front of the hat and trim if necessary. Glue the black braid all around the bottom of the hat, just above the peak.

Moi's Top Tip

"If you want the raised front of the hat to tilt forward, cut a slight curve at the bottom of that part (as shown on the template). If, however, you want it to sit flat against the hat sides, cut it flat at the bottom."



7 Cut three lengths of thick lurex thread around 12cm long. Tie a knot to join the three pieces, and use cellotape to fix the knotted end to the edge of your table. Plait to your desired length then tie a knot. Add glue to the top and bottom of the plaited length to prevent fraying and cut off the knots when the glue is dry.



8 Follow the same step as above if using embroidery floss, but when the plait is finished, do not add glue or chop off the knot. Instead, unravel the floss strands to make a tassel.



9 Glue the plait tips on to either side of the shako, so that it falls in a swag at the front of the hat. You can use a bit of jewellery chain if you prefer. ➡



10 Punch out a regimental badge from thin shiny gold card using a suitable paper punch. Glue in place at the front of the hat.



11 Add a feather, short piece of chenille pipe cleaner, or bit of needlefelt wool to create a plume.



12 Make a kepi in the same way, but cut shorter sides, and omit the raised front part.

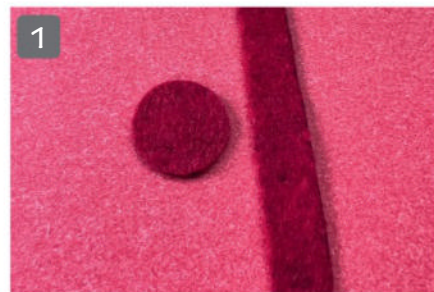
Alternative finishes

Make a wide range of different versions simply by:

- Using different coloured felt: black, red or navy are good choices – or even khaki
- Using different coloured plaited trim: try red, white, cream or gold
- Changing the fine braid from black to red, gold or white
- Using different coloured feathers, singly or as a plumage of several feathers
- Making a cap badge in aluminium rather than 'brass'
- Making different heights of hat
- Some hats can have a lower back (cut a slight convex curve to the back) or a more slanted peak.



Ladies' pillbox hat



1 Cut the crown and side pieces as for the kepi from poppy red felt. Glue red paper to the reverse of the crown, but not the side piece. Assemble the hat as for the kepi (but without the peak)



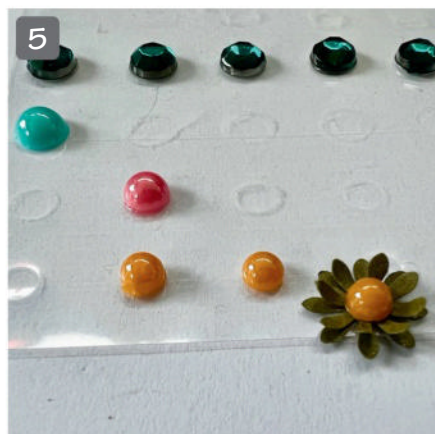
2 Glue a trim around the top of the hat to cover the join.



3 Punch two small flower shapes from coloured paper.



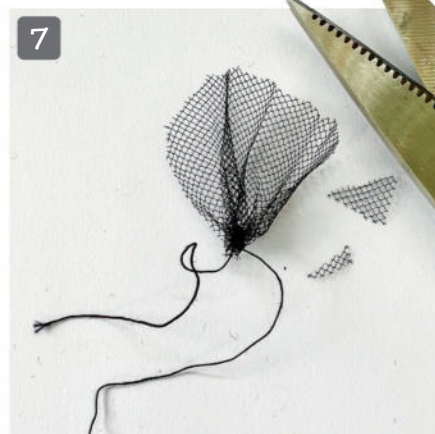
4 Using your thumbnail, curve the petals on one of the flowers.



5 Glue the curved flower on top of the straight flower, with the petals staggered. Add a self-adhesive half pearl or small, flat-backed jewel to the centre.



6 Cut a small square of netting or black gauze.



7 Run a running stitch along one edge of the gauze, then gather up and pie off in a double knot to create a fan shape. Trim the netting to a pleasing shape.



8 Stitch the fan to the hat, covering the join in the felt. Glue the flower on top. If you wish to strengthen the sides of the hat, glue a strip on red paper to the inside sides, covering your stitches from when you sewed on the netting. 🏠



Moi's Top Tip

"How about making ladies' pillbox hats in a range of pretty colours! Add gauze netting over the face area, rather than as a fanned embellishment. Add jewelled embellishments, a cameo, or flowers in various colours and shapes. Bows work well too. These glamorous hats can go in or sit on a hatbox, you can arrange them in a ladies' outfitters shop window, or pop one on a stand on the dressing table."

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 discusses her tips for attending shows...

Photos by Stephen Lesbirel

To begin with, it should go without saying that before you attend a show, you should actually know where that show is. Since I'm telling you all my best tips that really worked well for me, I also have to tell you what didn't. Assuming I knew exactly where to go without adequate research was one of those things that didn't work out so well. It was my first time to Miniatura. We went to the autumn show in Birmingham, which was at that time at the NEC. Being terrible on names as I am, I thought, "Oh great! I'm staying at the Hyatt Regency, partly because it's within walking distance of the train station, and luckily, it's



▲ Enjoying Dionne Warwick at the ICC Sep 20, 2018

also attached to the NEC! What better?" Well, of course it's not. Although owned by the NEC Group, it is the ICC (International Convention Centre) that is adjacent to the hotel. The NEC (National Exhibition Centre) is several miles (kilometres) away, closer to the airport. So, although I was so excited to be there when the doors opened on day one of Miniatura, I ended up arriving more than an hour later. I had a wonderful time anyway. The next time, I knew where to go and how best to get there. We did enjoy wonderful concerts in Symphony Hall at the ICC each time we were in Birmingham too, but I've learned that they are not the one and the same venue!

No matter what show, sale, or auction you plan to attend, my next tip is to get on their mailing list. That way you get first notice of show information. Another tip is to buy your tickets ahead of time, if you can, so you don't waste time and energy standing in a queue at the venue. Advance purchase is often cheaper than at the door – more money for miniatures! If it applies, spring for the opening day of the show, when you will find the best selection. These tickets may be a little more expensive but along with first choice of colours and stock in general, you will avoid the risk of popular items selling out and you will see each vendor brimming with stock of every description, which does bring me to my next tip...

As with any other shopping trip, it's a good idea to have a budget, but try to include a splurge factor. Shows are relatively rare and you can never predict what potential treasure you may find. If you have trouble sticking to a budget, try cash or debit instead of a charge card. With all the merchandise on offer at a

Early email from Miniatura with ticket information

Ticket details

30th September & 1st October - 10am to 4pm

Saturday* - On the Door - Adults £9.50 / Child £3.00 - **In Advance - Adults £6.50 / Child £3.00**

Sunday - On the Door - Adults £8.00 / Child £3.00 - **In Advance - Adults £5.00 / Child £3.00**

All Weekend* - Only Available In Advance - **Adults £7.50 / Child £4.00**

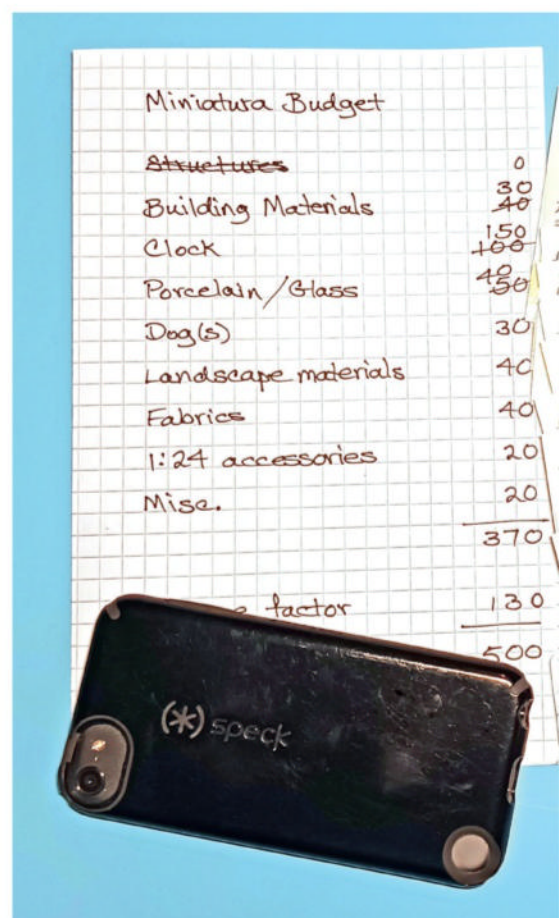
*There is a limit to the number of people we can have in the show and we were close to that in Spring 2023 so please check availability as we approach the event.

A single 75p transaction fee applies to advance bookings. All children (aged 5-15) must be accompanied by an adult. Children under 5 are free.

Here is your quick link to the tickets page - [Tickets Page](#)

See you there!

large show, it's oh so easy to overspend in any case. If you're unsure about a purchase, ask the artisan if the item is also available from their website. Sometimes thinking about a potential large purchase for a while, the need cools and you'll find you really don't need or want it after all. Setting a budget and a splurge factor can help focus your ideas and purchases. If you allow, for instance £500 to



spend in total, you can then break it down into categories, rearrange rough estimates, and possibly eliminate some areas altogether. You will likely find that this is just a rough outline and you will over spend in some areas and need to conserve in others, but it's a way to not only see how quickly purchases can add up, but to also prioritise and manage your expectations.

Before you go to a show though, a list of your wants and needs may be helpful. It's easy to lose track of what you came for, with all the vendors' wares on display. I always recommend buying as much of your needs as you can at a local miniatures or craft shop. This helps support a local business where you can browse and select directly, generally whenever you want. Shopping locally just might mean that that source is available in future. Online and remote shopping has made it hard for many small businesses like miniatures shop owners. There's no denying that sometimes a local shop may not have what you are looking for however, and especially with an auction, you may have opportunities to buy items that are no longer available elsewhere. And of course, a large miniatures expo is very exciting. All the more reason to have a list and at least attempt to stick to it. I can attest that there really is such

My adjusted budget and splurge notes



Specific wants on my list with some of my purchases

“ Before you go to a show though, a list of your wants and needs may be helpful ”

a thing as 'buyer's remorse' – I once bought a lovely gazebo for more than I should have spent. I had to keep it stored away out of sight for some time once I got it home, before I actually felt comfortable displaying it.

On the other hand, if something really does grab you, pick it up before it's gone, if it fits the budget at all. You are likely not the only one it appeals to and delay can mean disappointment. My advice is to buy it when you see it; if something sticks in your mind, go back and pick it up. I still recall a white 'faux fur' broad-brimmed hat I didn't buy in Paris. But I digress!

Study the floorplan and vendors list, if they are available ahead of time. See any YouTube

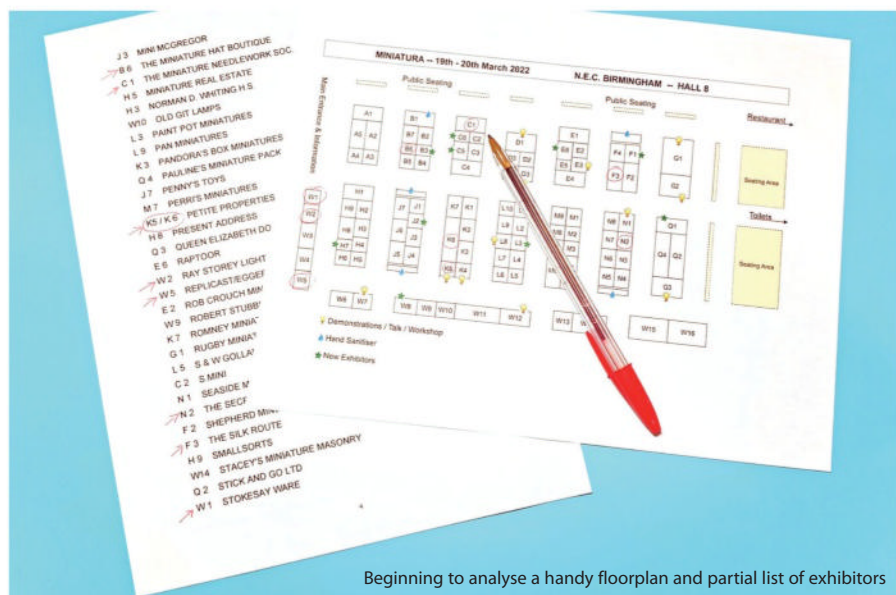
video previews or exhibitors' snapshots online. Visit the vendors' websites and note the ones of particular interest to you. Maybe you don't want to follow the floorplan up and down each aisle from left to right at the start of your visit. If you are after a particular artisan's work or you feel some vendors may have their best variety of stock early on, make a beeline there first and double back for a more sequential route later. Think of it like going to see the Mona Lisa at the Louvres – make that stop your top priority when the show first opens and you will often not only have the best selection but a bit of time to consider options and talk with the makers, while few others have made their way there yet.

Now armed with all your pre-planning, it's time for the big day itself. Aside from figuring out your transport to the location, you'll want to take along a sturdy canvas shopper bag for all the little things you buy. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes and clothing, since there may be a fair bit of walking. I found that even getting from the train station to the NEC involved quite a trek. Your shopper bag can also hold your clutch purse and a cardigan in case the venue is chilly. A dress maker's tape measure is also handy or even a hand drawn scale card. Most show vendors are meticulous on scale, but this may not be the case for a private sale or auction. If it looks wrong to you, do a quick check, multiply the measure up, and be sure before you buy. Be aware that various scales other than the ubiquitous 1/12th have existed over time and those items may not sit comfortably in your 1/12th scale dolls house. Though less common today, 1/16th scale, sometimes called 3/4 scale, accessories and some furniture pieces can fit into 1/12th scale scenes quite well, I find. I never put oversized scale pieces in my scenes, however, since I think they ruin the illusion of an otherwise believable miniature room.

There are often classes, demos, or workshops associated with a show and these can be great chances to expand your knowledge and broaden your skills. Once at the show, be sure to take time to meet the artisans, chat a moment, and get to know them. These may well be people you have read profiles and features about in miniatures magazines, and getting to know them a bit makes those articles and your purchases pleasant recollections later. Get their business cards, not just to record your purchases but perhaps to contact them in future for more items. Take pictures too, if you're allowed. You likely won't be able to buy everything you see so these pictures are the stuff of dreams for the next show. Photos can also unscramble your memory in future about who made a particular treasure you either bought or left behind.

I need to record what I spend for Canada Customs but it's really not a bad idea for anyone. Aside from good reference for possible additional items from the same artisan, it's often fun to look back on the show by reviewing your purchases. Maybe not so much fun to compare what you actually spent to what your budget was, but those memories soon fade and more than likely, you'll be glad you weren't quite as frugal as you had hoped to be.

Most of all, just have fun indulging and meeting people in this marvellous hobby! 🏠



Beginning to analyse a handy floorplan and partial list of exhibitors



Canvas bag, cardigan, measuring tape, and walking shoes with programme



Business cards and statements for future reference



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WENDY

LOUISE

CHRIS

BOB

Gilded rams' head bench

"This little bench was inspired by a visit to the fabulous Kenwood House in London earlier this year. Along with their remarkable art collection, there are also wonderful furniture pieces throughout the house and particularly striking pieces in the music room. I used a deep teal silk which I already had for my bench, but the Kenwood bench features a beautifully patterned celery green silk and has a matching sofa. I was particularly taken with the rams' heads at the corners and the ornate hoof-based, cabriole legs" *Ruth*

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- 6x 3/4in (20mm) cabriole legs (AA Dollhouse brand from China Shen zhen via Amazon.ca)
- Polymer clay
- Charcoal and gold acrylic paint
- Gold foil paper doily (or painted gold)
- 20lb hemp cord
- Medium candle-wicking flat braid
- 1/16in (2mm) by 1/4in (6mm) and 3/16in (5mm) square stripwood
- 1/16in (1.6mm) thick sheetwood
- 3/16in (5mm) and 5/8in (16mm) diameter dowels
- Scrapbook paper
- Lightweight card
- Matt board
- Silk fabric
- Satin varnish
- Quilt batting
- White glue
- Double-sided tape

Tools required

- Knife and steel ruler
- Small saw and mitre-box
- Ball stylus
- Larger square stripwood
- Small leaf and 1/6in (2mm) circle paper punches
- Emery board
- Wax paper
- Grid paper



Photos by Stephen Lesbirel

1 Make four 3/16in (5mm) diameter softened clay balls. Roll each to a slightly pointed egg shape and press it onto the corner of a large square stripwood. Shape it into a triangle on the stripwood with your forefingers and a thumb forming a flat, straight top and a pointed, thinner nose. Indent the sides twice along the stripwood on each side to form a chin and jowl while keeping the forehead to nose line straight. Define the eyes and nostrils with the ball stylus. Roll a 3/32in (2mm) diameter clay 'rope' about 4in (102mm) long and cut it into eight 1/2in (13mm) lengths. Roll one end of each piece tapering it to a point, making it about 3/4in (19mm) long over all. Curl each piece into a circle and press the point onto the top of the base. Make four horns curled to the left and four to the right. Press the horns onto the heads and against the stripwood sides. Add clay tiny 'wool' balls to the top of the head and a bit to the back of the jowl, under each horn. Form eight 1/8in (3mm) pointed triangular ears. Press each to the side of the head, through the circle of a horn, using the ball stylus. Detail the horns and wool additions with the ball stylus. Bake the clay on the stripwood at 250F (120C) for 10 minutes. Carefully remove from the stripwood with the sharp-bladed utility knife under each head and set aside.

2 Cut two 43/8in (111mm) and four 1 1/2in (38mm) lengths of the smaller square stripwood. Glue two of the shorter lengths 3/32in (2mm) from the ends of the longer pieces over grid paper. Glue the remaining

shorter pieces equally spaced within this rectangular frame. Cut two 17/8in (48mm) and two 4 1/2in (114mm) lengths of flat stripwood to later face the frame. Paint one side of the stripwood pieces gold.

3 Cut a 17/8in (48mm) by 47/32in (107mm) piece of sheetwood and two pieces of quilt batting the same size as the sheetwood. Cut a piece of silk 1in (25mm) wider and longer than the sheetwood. Lay the batting pieces and sheetwood centred on the wrong side of the silk. Gently pull and glue the corners to the back of the sheetwood. Glue the edges to the back on all four sides, pulling each edge evenly taut along each side. Glue the cushion centred on the frame.

4 Cut two 17/8in (48mm) long pieces of the larger dowel. Spot-glue a layer of quilt batting around each piece. Cut two 2 1/2in (64mm) by 33/8in (86mm) pieces of silk. Glue one short edge onto the quilt batting with equal overhang at the ends. Lightly glue a narrow hem in the opposite edge, roll the silk snugly around the dowel and glue it shut. Pleat the ends and glue them to the centre of the dowel ends. Cut doily flowers and glue them over the ends of the pleats on each end of each squab.

5 Cut two 13/8in (35mm) by 7/8in (48mm) pieces and two 13/4in (44mm) by 17/8in (48mm) pieces of matt board. Soak the top 1in (25mm) of the shorter sides until pliable.

Ruth's Top Tip

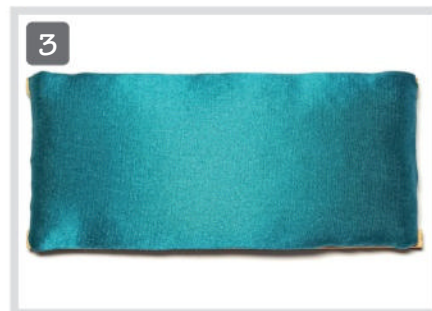
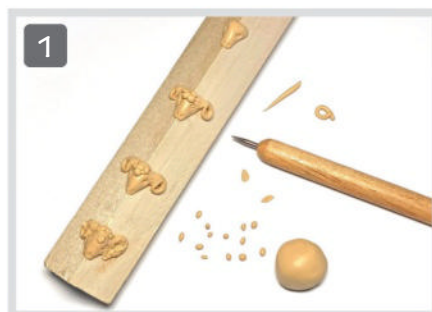
"Use glue sparingly to avoid staining the silk. Alternatively, cotton is much more forgiving!"

Round these ends to match the wax paper covered template and let them dry. Glue them together in pairs along the edges, with the shorter matt board 1/4in (6mm) above the outside bottom of the longer piece. Cut a 1/4in (6mm) square out of the bottom longer matt board piece for both of these arms, front and back. Cut two 17/8in (48mm) by 23/8in (60mm) pieces of quilt batting. Spot-glue them to the longer matt board, with the bottom edge 1/4in (6mm) above the bottom edge of the matt board. This lower 1/4in (6mm) will later be glued against the frame. Spot-glue the batting up the curved arm, just over the outer edge, and end on the outer face just below that matt board edge. Cut two 21/8in (54mm) by 3/2in (89mm) pieces of silk. Glue one short edge just below the shorter matt board on the outside of the arm. Double-sided tape the silk onto the matt board at the start of the batting above that. Hold the silk in the curve, pull it over the edge, and down the batting on the inside. Lightly glue the lower edge to the matt board just below the batting. Lightly glue the side overhangs to the matt board edges.

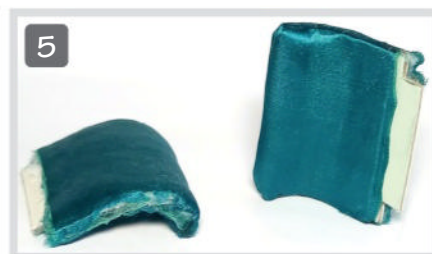
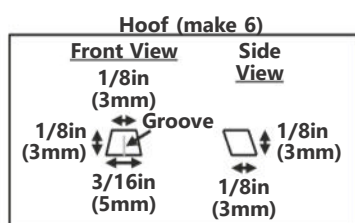
6 File and sand the front and back of each leg to smooth the sharp edges. Cut the extensions from the top of the legs and sand them smooth. Cut six 1/8in (3mm) thick pieces of smaller dowel. Sand each piece slanted at the front top and back bottom and tapered towards the top as shown in the template. Groove the centre front and paint these hooves charcoal. When they dry, varnish the sides. Set aside for the final step.

7 Cut small flowers and/or leaves from the doily or punch them from scrapbook paper and detail them with the ball stylus. Glue these pieces to the legs. I used five overlapping small oak leaves with three tiny punched circles down the front. Cut and glue flowers in a row on each gold-painted stripwood face for the frame. Glue cord along the top and bottom of each stripwood piece and paint it gold. Cut four arm trim pieces from card and paint them gold. Place two curves in each direction on the work surface. Glue braid along the centre and cord along the edges, ending with a small doily flower at the top. Paint the six legs, four arm trim curves and four rams' heads gold.

8 Glue the unfinished base of each arm against the ends of the frame, with the bottom edges even. Place the bench upside-down, with the seat cushion only on supports, to set. Glue the frame's flower-trimmed stripwood onto the bottom edge of the arms and then to the front and back of the frame, with all bottom

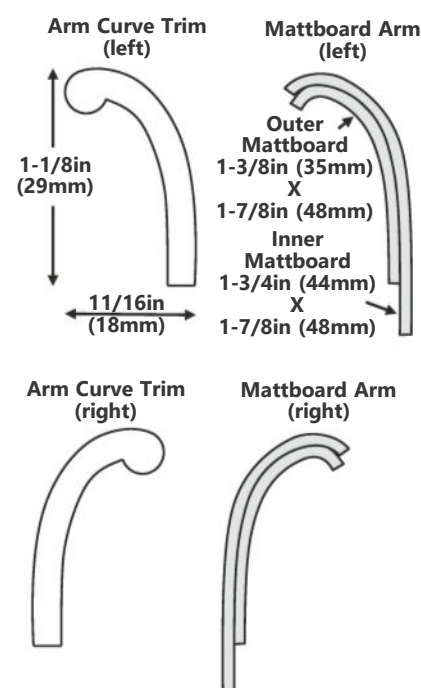


edges even. Glue the arm trim pieces to the front and back of each arm. Glue the top of a leg at each corner of the frame, orienting the knees diagonally from each corner. Glue the two remaining legs in the centre of the frame, with the knees facing outwards. Glue the rams' heads onto the top of the legs and against the corners of the decorated frame stripwood. Glue the hooves to the bottom of the legs, aligning the grooves with the knees.



Gilded Rams' Head Bench Template
 Patterns at 100%

© Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel 2023



Miniature gingerbread house

YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Beige, light brown, white, dark brown and white polymer clay
- Fimo liquid
- Yellow soft pastels
- Miniature cookies, chocolate and sweets (pre-baked)

Tools required

- Paper
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Tiles to work on
- Blades
- Toothbrush
- Small round cutter
- Craft knife
- Dotting tool
- Pointy tool
- Cling film
- Tweezers
- Plastic piping bag

Inspired by celebrity baker Mary Berry's gingerbread house, in this tutorial learn how to create your own miniature version featuring giant chocolate buttons, candy-like windows and lashings of icing for a cosy and homemade look.



1 Using a pencil and ruler, trace the shape of the front and sides of the gingerbread house on a piece of paper and cut them out. To make your templates last longer, you can seal them in see-through tape.

2 Mix light beige polymer clay and a smaller amount of light brown to get a gingerbread colour and adjust as desired.

3 Roll the clay through setting #3 or #4 of your clay conditioning machine and cut out two of the shapes. If you don't have a clay conditioning machine, use a rolling pin with guides on both sides (a few playing cards stacked together work well) so the sheet is about 1mm thick or so.

4 Texture the pieces with a toothbrush, remembering to texture all the sides as well.

5 Using a small round cutter, cut the arch of the door and a blade to trim the remainder of the clay. At this stage you can add a little shading with brown soft pastels on the edges to make them look baked.

6 Using a craft knife, cut out two small windows on the side walls of the gingerbread house. Mix some Fimo liquid with yellow soft pastels to make a melted candy-like substance and use it to fill in the windows. Part-bake the pieces for 10 minutes at 110 ° Celsius.

7 Once baked and cool, texture a sheet of polymer clay in the gingerbread mix and gently press the pieces in place to build the house. Cut the base around the house allowing space to add decorations and texture before baking again for 10 minutes.

8 Measure the roof pieces and make a paper template. Make them in the same fashion as the other parts and part-bake them. Apply some firm white 'icing' made from mixing white polymer clay and Fimo liquid to bond the roof pieces to the house.

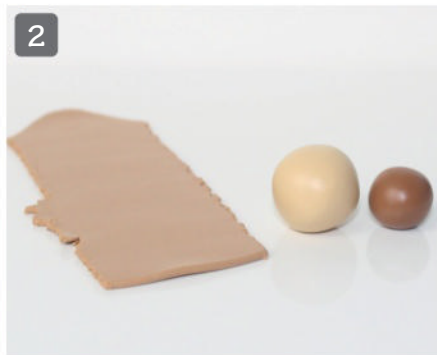
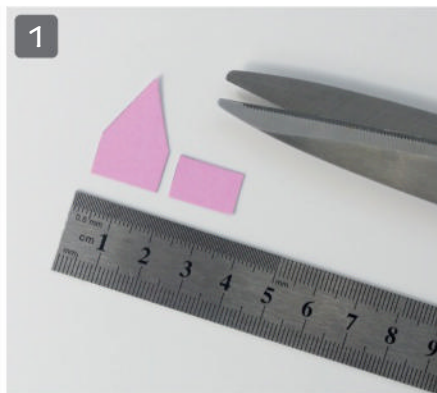
9 To make the giant chocolate buttons, roll out a thin sheet of dark brown polymer, place a sheet of cling film on it and use a small cutter to cut out the shapes. Part-bake for 10 minutes.

10 Apply firm white 'icing' to the roof and place all the chocolate buttons, starting from the bottom. You may need to cut some in half to fill in the gaps.

11 To make a little chimney, cut a small square of gingerbread mix polymer clay, poke a hole in the centre, texture it and add it to the roof. To make shell-like decorations, roll small pieces of white clay into balls and then into tear drops by rolling only one side of them. Flatten them slightly and use a pointy tool to create lines converging toward to the narrow end. Place them on top of the roof and part-bake.

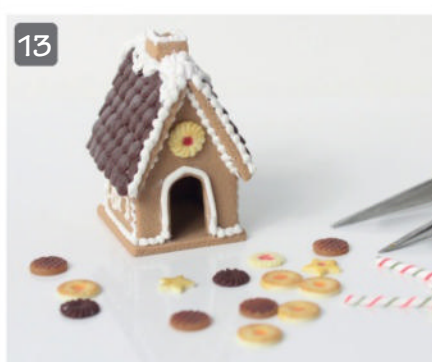
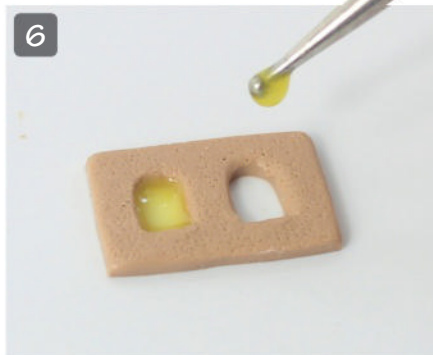
12 Take your white 'icing', add a little more Fimo liquid if it's too firm, and place it in a plastic piping bag. Trim a small piece of the tip and start piping! You can also use this mix as glue to add other decorations.

13 Add the last few touches with pre-baked biscuits, sweets or chocolates; your imagination is the limit! Bake one last time for at least 30 minutes and glaze once cool, if required.



Maive's Top Tip

"Cut and texture all the parts of the gingerbread house on a tile or another oven safe surface, as transferring your cut out pieces to a baking tray will distort the shapes."



The Sweet Taste of Autumn

Create the warm glow of a bonfire night classic with a selection of toffee apples.

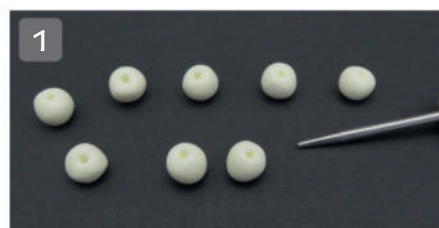
YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Polymer clay: white, sunflower yellow
- Pastels: brown, spring green, sunflower yellow, black, red, dark cadmium orange, light orange, red ochre, golden ochre
- Sculpey Bake & Bond adhesive
- Small twigs
- Super glue
- Gloss and matte varnish
- Fine craft sand in a natural shade

Tools required

- Needle tool & small paintbrush
- Scissors or craft knife



1 Mix white polymer clay with sunflower yellow to make cream. Roll the mixture into balls measuring 6mm in diameter and use a needle tool to make a hole in the top of each one.



2 Mix grated spring green pastel with sunflower yellow and brown to create the perfect apple green shade. Brush liberally over the apples before baking and allowing to cool.



3 To create the bright 'toffee' most commonly associated with toffee apples, mix Sculpey Bake & Bond with grated red, red ochre and dark cadmium orange pastel. Make the 'caramel' mixture by adding red ochre, dark cadmium orange, light orange, brown and golden ochre pastel to Bake & Bond. The 'chocolate' mixtures are the most straightforward of all, the 'milk chocolate' simply Bake & Bond mixed with brown pastel and the 'dark chocolate' Bake & Bond/brown and black pastel.



4 Roll the apples in the pastel/Bake & Bond mixtures, ensuring the top of each apple, surrounding the small hole, is left uncovered. Place the apples on your foil/baking surface

with the hole facing upwards, allowing the liquid to pool a little around the base, creating the familiar toffee apple shape before returning the oven to bake.



5 Once the apples have cooled, cut a selection of small twigs. Dip the sticks in a tiny amount of super glue and insert one into the top of each apple. Coat the 'toffee' 'caramel' and 'dark chocolate' apples with gloss varnish, using matte for the 'milk chocolate' apples. Whilst the varnish is still wet, roll one or two of the dark chocolate and caramel apples in fine craft sand in a natural shade to decorate.



6 Coat the 'toffee' 'caramel' and 'dark chocolate' apples with gloss varnish, using matte for the 'milk chocolate' apples. Whilst the varnish is still wet, roll one or two of the dark chocolate and caramel apples in fine craft sand in a natural shade to decorate. 🏠

Choristers in the Chancel

A Scene of Christmas Cheer

A few years ago, I made a chapel, loosely modelled on the church we attend in Canada. Over the years I've accumulated a number of little boy figures, with the idea of one day making my own scene of choristers in the chancel. So here's my little ones, collecting their carol books and getting into their gowns in preparation for "Nine Lessons and Carols", just in time for the festive season.

Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel

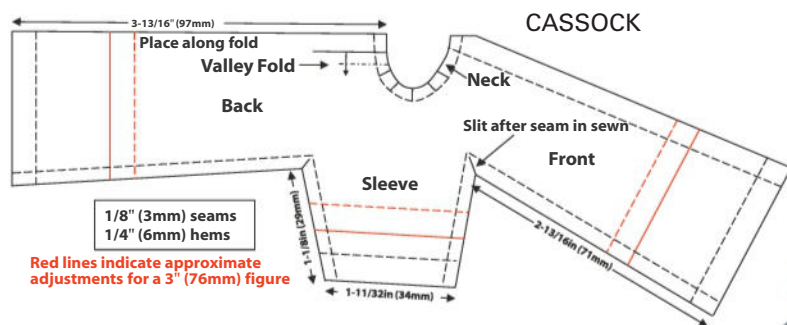
YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- Red & white lightweight 100% cotton fabric
- White narrow lace with one scalloped edge
- Red & white thread
- Red or blue narrow ribbons
- Tiny gold beads
- Gold foil insert card
- Green (or preferred colour) velvet paper
- White paper
- Glue-stick & white glue

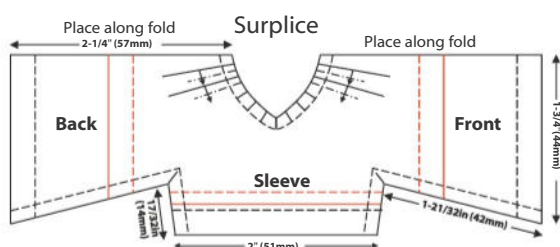
Tools required

- Steam iron
- Scissors
- Sewing needle & sewing machine
- Wax paper
- Straight pins
- 5mm (3/16") hole punch
- Forceps (optional, but handy for turning sleeves)
- Wooden cocktail stick
- Ball stylus
- Steel ruler



CASSOCK

1 The pattern pieces are for a 102mm (4") tall figure, but can be hemmed for any height differences and are either wrapped or loose-fitting, so they will fit most figures. Aim to have the cassock at ankle length ➡



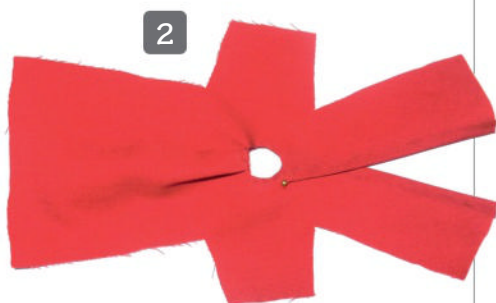
Surplice



and the surplice, including lace, below the knee. Determine any changes you need to make in pattern lengths for your figures and also consider any sleeve alterations that may be needed.

Ruth's Top Tip

"Glued hems look more in scale than sewn ones, but apply the glue very sparingly with the tip of a cocktail stick to the hem portion, rather than the main fabric, so it doesn't seep through to mark the right side."



2 Iron the fabrics smooth. Pin the cassock pattern piece on the folded grainline of the red cotton fabric. Mark and cut out this piece. Finger-press and hand-sew the box pleat in the back across the neck edge. Make tiny clips around the neck edge, finger-press, and lightly glue the fabric to the inside as a facing. Work on wax paper to protect the work surface. Turn the open edges of the front under, finger-press, and lightly glue, as a self-facing. Make a small thread loop at the top of the left front. Try it on the figure. Position and sew a bead to the top right front, so the front fastens across the figure's throat.



3 If the arms are free, place the cassock with right sides together, pin the seams, and machine-stitch from the ankle to the wrist. Clip into the angle, close to the stitches, and finger-press the seams open. Determine the sleeve and overall lengths for hemming. Finger-press and lightly glue the sleeve and bottom edge hems.

Ruth's Top Tip

"Slip a pencil inside the sleeve and glue the hem before turning the sleeve right-side-out. If there are arm restrictions, sew the side seams halfway up, hem, and sew the side and sleeve seams by hand while on the figures."



4 Position the surplice pattern piece on folded white cotton, following the grain line. Cut out the surplice. Finger-press and hand-sew the pleats around the neckline. Make tiny clips around the neck edge and lightly glue the fabric to the inside as a facing. With right sides together, machine-sew the side and sleeve seams. Clip into the angle and finger-press the seams flat. Lightly glue the hems and turn the surplice right-side-out. Hand-sew the straight edge of the lace along the bottom edge of the hem. Again, if there are arm restrictions, hand-stitch the sleeve and side seams together after the surplice is on the figure.

"My assortment of boys vary in heights between 76mm (3") and 114mm (4½") with the biggest challenge being the rigid resin arm positions! If you are buying figures for this project, try to get ones with their arms free from their sides and ideally, moveable. Moveable arms make dressing the figures infinitely easier!

If not, leave one or both cassock and surplice sleeves open so they can be sewn together on the figure, depending on the pose of the doll. Or slip the sewn cassock sleeve(s) through the surplice sleeves and sew the cuffs together at the back as I did with two figures."

5



5 Thread the needle with doubled, knotted thread. Make short running stitches along the straight edge of a 64mm (2½") long piece of lace. Leave the needle attached. Pull the thread to gather the lace around the figure's neck. Stitch this lace ruff together at the back of the neck. Often choir members will wear ribbons earned at choir schools or in competitions. Some of mine have blue or red ones with gold medals. Cut a 89mm (3½") length of ribbon, place it around the chorister's neck, and spot glue the lapped ends in the front. Punch a gold circle and glue it over the join.

6

Carol sheet template at 100%



Sheet music

6 Cut 25mm x 38mm (1"-1½") piece of velvet paper. Score a 2mm (1/16") wide spine in the centre and fold along these lines. Photocopy the sheet music onto white paper. Score the fold lines on the music strips. Cut out the strips, removing the black top and bottom edges. Run a glue-stick along the back of the music strip and beginning at one end, fold it on itself accordion fashion. Weight the book flat and white glue the spine into the scored area of the cover. 🏠

INFO For more information visit:

All Photos by Stephen Lesbirel

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Miniature news

When rumors start circulating about a company closing, Moi Ali had to investigate to find out the truth behind Barbara's Mouldings...



Moi's church The model is discontinued - for now!



Morcott with basement

A good friend phoned me recently, almost in tears. She had heard that Barbara's Mouldings were no longer selling to the public and she was distraught. "What will I do for mouldings? What about that dolls house kit I was considering buying?" Well, I did some detective work and I am pleased to report that Barbara's Mouldings is still going strong – from strength to strength, in fact.

I spoke with Rachel Read, Chief Executive at Minimum World, the company that has just secured the rights to stock Barbara's Mouldings products. She told me: "Barbara's Mouldings is still going strong. The company continues to manufacture all of the dolls house kits themselves, right here in the UK, but they are no longer selling the range directly to consumers. Minimum World is

very proud to have been chosen to be the UK retailer of their house kits."

I heaved a sigh of relief! Rachel continued: "Barbara's Mouldings are a well-loved British brand; they have an impeccable reputation, and over 30 years' experience in the industry. Their dolls houses are beautifully designed and the kits are excellent quality, so when the opportunity to stock their products came up, we were excited to get involved."

I wondered if Minimum World planned to stock the whole product range. Rachel explained: "Not all of the kits from the original Barbara's Mouldings range are in production any more, but we will be looking to stock as much of the range as possible."

Confession time: I have built three Barbara's Mouldings kits to date and I love

them all. I have the church, which is sadly now out of production ("but not necessarily gone forever" according to Rachel), plus Morcott House and now the Georgian house too. I was therefore delighted to hear that Minimum World would like to expand the range in the future. Rachel told me: "Yes, we very much hope to develop new designs. There are lots of exciting possibilities ahead!"

"In addition to the dolls house collection, we are also now stocking the Barbara's Mouldings range of mouldings, such as skirting boards and cornices, as these are very popular with miniaturists. They are the perfect DIY items to finish a dolls house kit and to add realism."

It's great to hear that the Barbara's Mouldings brand is here to stay! 🏠



Skirting



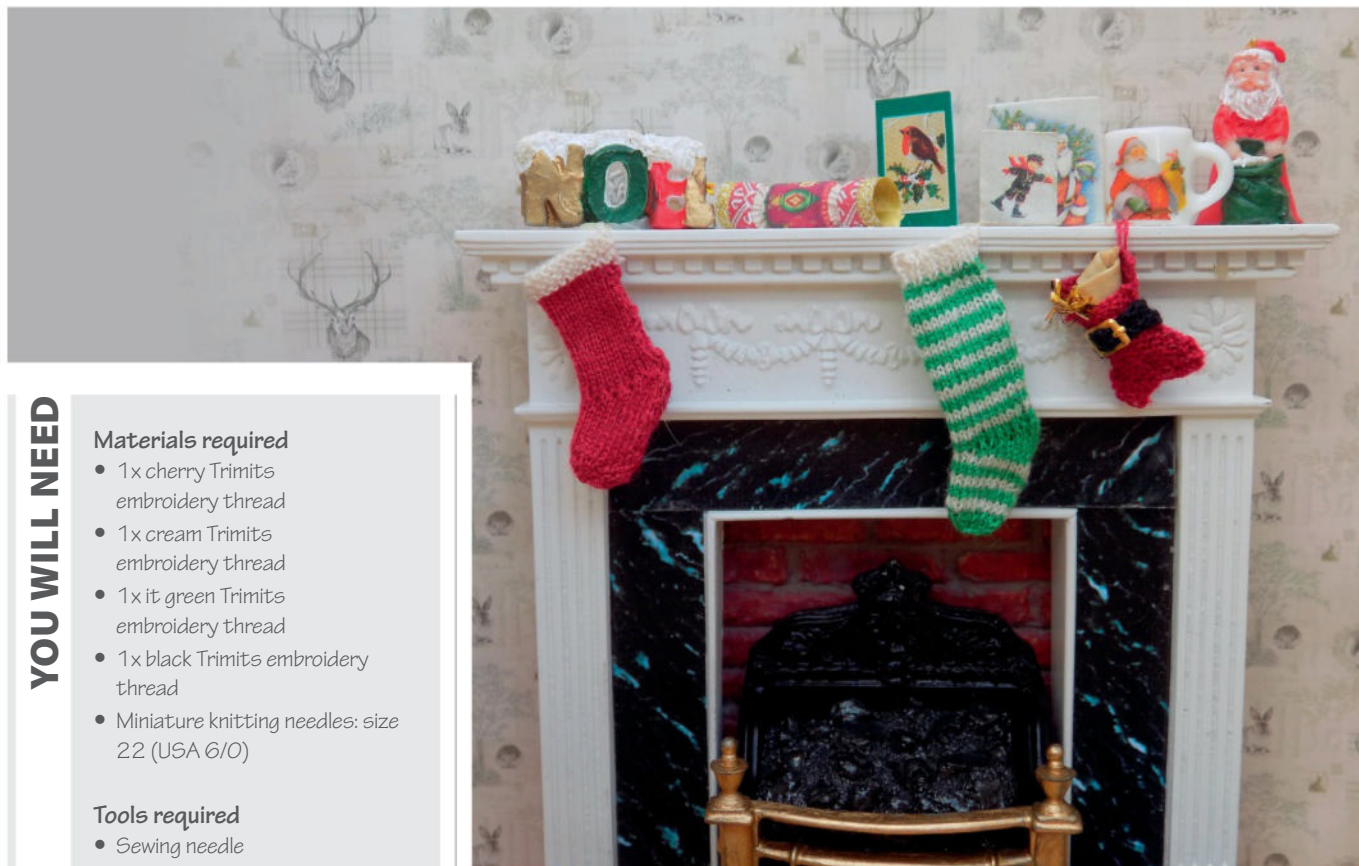
Quality coving



Classic coving

1/12th scale knitted stocking

Add a nostalgic touch to your décor with these knitted stockings.



YOU WILL NEED

Materials required

- 1x cherry Trimits embroidery thread
- 1x cream Trimits embroidery thread
- 1x it green Trimits embroidery thread
- 1x black Trimits embroidery thread
- Miniature knitting needles: size 22 (USA 6/0)

Tools required

- Sewing needle
- 1.5mm gold buckle

Abbreviations:

dec: decrease

g-st: garter stitch

k: knit

k2tog: knit two together

kfb: knit one front and back

p: purl

rep: repeat

st(s): stitch(es)

st-st: stocking stitch

Before you begin...

Separate the strands of the embroidery thread and wrap around a bobbin.

Use just one strand at a time when knitting.

STRIPED CHRISTMAS STOCKING

Using light green, begin at toe and ast on 10sts.

First row: Purl.

Next row: (K1, kfb) to end, 15sts

Next row: Purl. Change to cream.

Next row: (Kfb, k2) to end, 20sts

Next row: Purl.

Change to light green and st-st two rows.

Change to cream and st-st two rows.

Change to light green and st-st two rows.

Change to cream and st-st two rows, including one st each end of second row, 22sts

Work heel shaping as follows:

Change to light green. First row: K9, turn.

Next row: Purl to end.

Next row: K7, turn.



Next row: Purl to end.
Next row: K5, turn.
Next row: Purl to end.
Next row: K3, turn.
Next row: Purl to end.
Next row: Knit to end of row, knitting into the back of the stitches where there is a little gap.
Next row: P9, turn.
Next row: Knit to end.
Next row: P7, turn.
Next row: Knit to end.
Next row: P5, turn.
Next row: Knit to end.
Next row: P3, turn.
Next row: Knit to end.
Next row: Purl to end of row.

Change to cream and st-st two rows, dec one st each end of first row, 20sts
 Change to light green and st-st two rows.
 Work four rows in stripe pattern, including one st at each end of first row, 22sts
 Repeat last four rows again, 24sts
 Work 16 more rows in stripe pattern.
 Using cream, work four rows in 1x1 rib.
 Cast off in rib.
 Gather round cast on sts and sew seam using mattress stitch. Use the thread from the cast off to create a little loop to hang the stocking.
 Ensure all loose ends are tied in securely to finish.



RED CHRISTMAS STOCKING



Work as for striped stocking using cherry, but instead of working 16 rows for the leg, just st-st four rows. G-st eight rows in cream for the top of the stocking and work the little loop as before.



DOGGY CHRISTMAS STOCKING



Using cherry, begin at toe and cast on 11sts.

First row: K5, p1, k5.
Next row: Knit.
Next row: Kfb, k4, p1, k4, kfb, 13sts
Next row: Knit.
Next row: K6, p1, k6.
Next row: K2tog, k9, k2tog, 11sts
Next row: K2tog, k3, p1, k3, k2tog, 9sts
Next row: Knit.
Next row: K4, p1, k4.
 Rep last two rows six times.
Next row: Kfb, k7, kfb, 11sts*
Next row: Kfb, k4, p1, k4, kfb, 13sts
Next row: Knit.
Next row: K6, p1, k6.
Next row: Knit.
Next row: K2tog, k4, p1, k4, k2tog, 11sts
 Cast off.

Cut a length of cherry thread and secure at the centre of cast on row. Now, run a line of sts up the centre of the bone shape and pull gently to shape. Run the same thread back down the bone to shape the other end. Make a second bone shape in the same way to * then cast off. Just run the thread from base to cast off and gently pull. Place this shorter piece over the top of the first piece and sew around the edges. Use the cast off thread to work a little loop for hanging.

Belt

Using black, cast on 18sts.

First row: Knit.

Starting with a knit row, st-st three rows.
 Cast off knitways.

Thread belt through buckle then wrap around bone stocking. Sew in place securely at the back and tie in all loose ends. Place a little bone and some tinsel inside to complete. 🏠

Angela's Top Tip

"To block your stockings, draw around the shape onto a piece of card and cut out. Dampen the stocking slightly and insert the piece of card.
 Leave in a warm place to dry."

The Whole Kit & Caboodle:

Georgian dolls house

Moi Ali reviews a Georgian dolls house kit.



Moi says...

"You can have fluted window mouldings, or reverse them as I did for a plain window surround."





Imagine waking up on Christmas morning and finding this beauty under your Christmas tree! If you don't think Santa's got a dolls house down against your name, why not treat yourself to one? This kit is simple to put together, even if you've not tackled a kit house before, and the results are – I'm sure you'll agree – very impressive for a price tag that is under £200.

Not only is the kit easy to assemble, and great value, but despite having six well-proportioned rooms, the footprint isn't too big, so you should have no problem accommodating it even if you are a bit pressed for space. It will sit comfortably on a chest of drawers or sideboard.

I have bought Barbara's Mouldings kits before, but this is by far the easiest and quickest to put together, and the Georgian proportions make for an elegant end result. What's more, you have enough time to get it made up ready for Christmas, so what are you waiting for! 🏠

Moi's Top Tip

"Seal the MDF with a 50/50 PVA/water mixture to achieve a great paint finish when you decorate. Always seal both sides, or the MDF will warp."



THE FACTS

Buy from:

www.minimumworld.com

Cost: £199

Comes with: Stairs, front door, windows and surrounds, quoin stones

Additional materials needed:

Glue and paint/decorating and flooring materials. To finish you will need two internal doors, window acetate, bannisters, door knobs and skirting boards

Time: Just an hour to build the carcass, but a few days for preparation plus painting and decorating

Experience: Confident beginner

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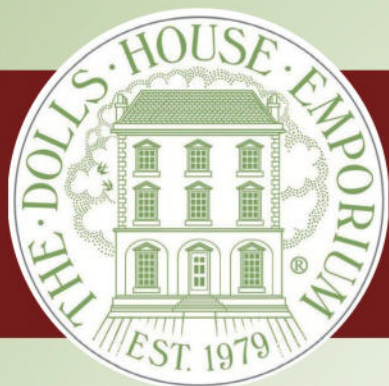


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