

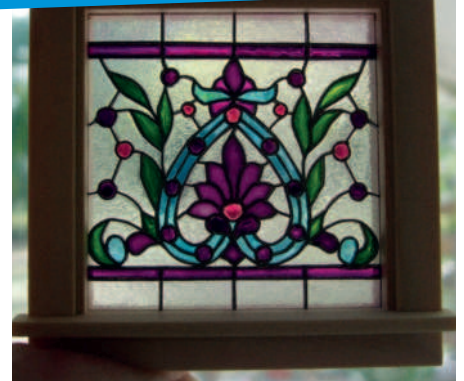
DollHouse & MINIATURE SCENE

£4.99 February 2021 Issue 321

TOP TIPS,
PROJECTS,
INSPIRATION
& MORE!

EVERYTHING AMAZING IN THE MINI WORLD!

INCREDIBLE ARTISANS



GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT



AWARD WINNING DETAIL

MOVING MAKES



DISCOVER NEW TALENT



TOP TRENDS IN MINI



PLUS

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WELCOME

to the February edition!

This edition kicks off in style with a look at the unquestionable talent of Barbara Sabia. Barbara's miniature stained glass pieces are breathtakingly beautiful and would prove the pièce de resistance in any period dolls house. Find out more about how Barbara put together her work on page 8.

Sticking with quality, page 13 sees the start of a feature looking at the award-winning work of Brae Oktober. Those with a soft spot for 1970s design will love this dolls house, finished to a high-end quality. A fan of the softer interiors? Check out the bohemian style of Theresa Gronska. Theresa's dolls house is an interior dream with its trendy vibes displayed in the form of macrame, Moroccan poufs and touches of gold.

Marie Knight was excited to share the news of her latest build, page 30, as she welcomes you to the opening of her gallery complete with moving elements and hand-created miniature works of art.

Elsewhere we champion the work, and are thrilled to both support and share the beautiful creations, by Homemade Hermits aka Chloe Mayes and the incredible realistic miniature food created by Tanja Jensen of Sugarcharm Shop. If mini food is your thing, turn to page 43 to be seriously impressed. Inspired to make your own miniature food? We present you with both a polymer clay stroopwaffle and strawberry cupcake in this issue.

If you're itching to get making more, turn to page 55 for the second instalment of three in our pub series and page 20 to lay the foundations for your outdoor scene in our new eight-part garden series! Talking of projects, find out just how different the results of one kit can vary in Take Two on page 49 – interesting to say the least!

The DHMS team

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

Sadie Brown, Moi Ali, Candy Chappill, Bea Broadwood, Darren Scala and Ruth Flewelling Lesbirel.



If you're reading the online version of this magazine.. keep an eye out for these symbols, they will show you that there this bonus extra content you can view, watch or listen too!

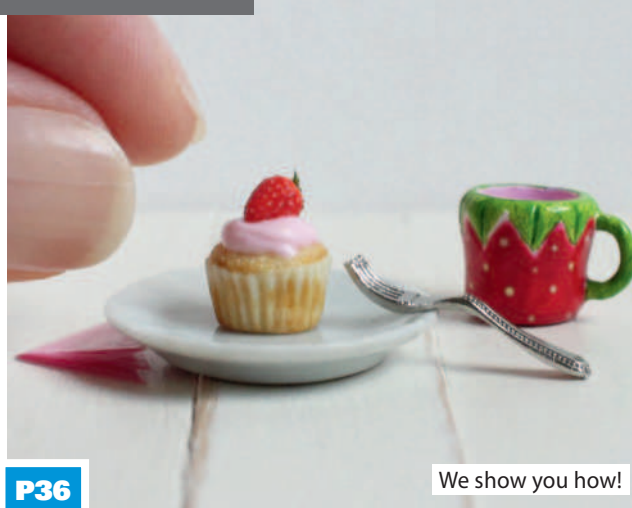
AWARD WINNING MAKES



P13

Step inside Otter Cove

MAKE IT YOURSELF



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We show you how!

TAKE TWO!



P49

One kit, two very different results!



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Moi Ali shares how to create mini stroopwaffle biscuits from polymer clay in this quick tutorial.

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The pub project ▶

Fancy building your own boozer? In the second of three instalments Ruth details how to start stocking your very own bar!



EXCLUSIVE GALLERY CONTENT
FOR ONLINE READERS



EXCLUSIVE AUDIO CONTENT
FOR ONLINE READERS



EXCLUSIVE VIDEO CONTENT
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HOW TO ENTER...

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The closing date for all entries is
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LOVE MAKING
MINIATURES?

TURN TO PAGE 27
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5 reasons
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WE'RE THE BEST ON PAGE 18

DollsHouse & MINIATURE SCENE

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Meet Darren!

The DHMS team are thrilled to welcome US-based miniaturist Darren Scala as a regular contributor!



William Clinger Chair

Meet miniaturist Darren Scala from D. Thomas Fine Miniatures, our newest contributor to Dolls House & Miniature Scene with stories about the miniatures from the United States and beyond! We can't wait for Darren to share his in-depth knowledge of all things miniature every month!

Darren has been unapologetic about his passion for miniatures for as long as he can remember. He was inspired at an early age

by watching Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood on television and fascinated by the tiny objects it featured. At 8 years old, he asked his father, a cabinetmaker by trade, to build him a dollhouse. This was not something a young boy growing up in Brooklyn, New York asked for in the 1970's. With the love and acceptance of his supportive parents, he was gifted a custom dollhouse which became the springboard for a lifelong love of miniatures and the drive to follow his passion without hesitation.

Darren is a graduate of Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts, and received a degree in communications. After a longstanding career with Revlon, the international consumer product company, Scala founded D. Thomas Fine Miniatures, a retail store and gallery in the historic lower Hudson Valley, close to New York City, where began selling quality scale works and curating gallery exhibitions. Today, he sells exclusively online and the company has become the destination for quality miniatures via estate sales and auctions. He spends most of his time working with collectors in the pursuit of finding new happy homes for their amazing miniatures.



▲ Darren at work



Darren Scala

Scala says, "there's something seductive about a miniature – the way your palm can wrap itself around a tiny object; the smooth lines of a perfectly crafted inch-scaled captain's chair rising just three inches high. He says..."my goal is to make everyone a maker, a hobbyist, or simply an everyday enthusiast. I want folks to see how special miniatures are and inspire the same feelings of excitement and delight I have when I see them. I'm excited to be reporting about miniatures from this side of the pond for DHMS Magazine!

With a strong dedication to raising awareness of miniatures as an art form, Darren looks for every opportunity to talk about tiny treasures. In addition to presenting his *'History of Miniatures'* lecture to libraries and arts organizations (live and virtually!), he hosts an online Zoom series called Meet the Miniaturist and interviews artists from all over the world. He also offers his *MiniNews & Views* program, a live broadcast showcasing the happenings in the mini world to an online audience. His excitement and delight about miniatures is infectious.

Darren recently appeared as a contestant on *The Biggest Little Christmas Showdown*, the first commercially televised program about miniatures airing on the Home and Garden Television network (HGTV) in the United States. Teams of miniaturists competed in this 4-part reality-based show to create the best miniatures. Mr. Scala and his team partner, May Burnett, won their episode and went on to compete in the finale.

Darren is an active volunteer and former trustee of IGMA, the International Guild of Miniature Artisans. In his free time, he is a mentor and volunteer for the Make-A-Wish Foundation Hudson Valley New York Chapter. 🏠



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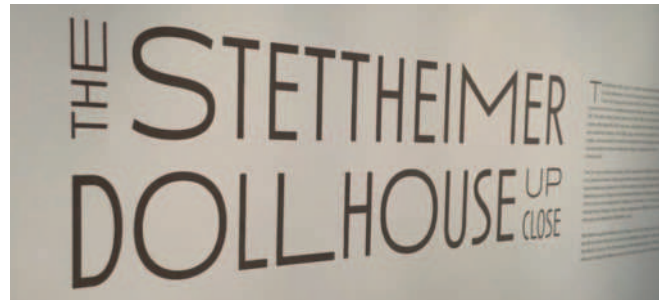
For more information about Darren visit:

www.dthomasfineminiatures.com

where you can access webinars and more!

The Stettheimer Dollhouse

In his first piece for DHMS, Darren Scala ticks an ambition off his list with a long-awaited visit to the see the incredible Stettheimer Dollhouse, on show currently in New York!



Even though I grew up in New York City, I was never able to visit the famed Stettheimer, the elaborate and sophisticated dollhouse and darling of the collection on permanent view at the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY). The Stettheimer is one of the few examples of fine art and architecture in miniature from the early 20th century.

When I learned the MCNY was hosting 'The Stettheimer Dollhouse: Up Close' I knew I shouldn't miss the chance to finally see the dollhouse I had heard so much about and for so long. I now live just north of New York City, in Westchester County, and the trip into the City was quick, especially in the age of COVID-19: everything was either closed or scaled back to limited visitation.

I arrived at the museum, a stunning Georgian-Colonial revival by architect Joseph H. Friedlander and immediately



headed to the exhibit. The dollhouse is usually kept in a corridor, now a new exhibit room houses the dollhouse and collection of related artwork and artifacts, all never seen before. This exhibition celebrates the 75th anniversary the arrival of the dollhouse to the MCNY when it was donated by Ette Stettheimer, sister of its creator, Carrie, following her death in 1944.

Carrie Stettheimer was a New York City socialite during the 1920's and 1930's. She and her sisters, Ette and Florine, lived in an apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan and frequently entertained guests, some of whom were legends in the literary and art world including Gertrude Stein, Albert Gleizes and Marcel Duchamps, well-known for bringing the modern art movement to the US. Carrie asked many of her friends to create works of art in [DHMS](#)

miniature for her dollhouse which she spent 20 years creating, decorating and furnishing.

I was struck by just how much art filled the spaces under its roof. The 16-room dollhouse is much larger and more lavish than I had envisioned. It is several feet wide, equally as tall and is set on a column base. The ceilings are high, adding to the structure's grandeur and elegance. The dollhouse design was inspired by the home where the Stettheimer sisters summered as children located in Tarrytown, New York, just 30 miles north of New York City. The overall aesthetic was considered "outrageously chic" for the time and had an eclectic mix of color, style and design reflecting the energy and personality of its creator and her illustrious friends.

The front opening dollhouse contains rooms which can be seen from all sides of the structure. Windows can be peered through from any angle with visibility to multiple adjoining rooms. The miniature's façade with large imposing columns is framed and set on the wall; nearby, enlarged versions of the miniature artwork seen inside the house to complement the exhibition.

The dollhouse includes a grand ballroom, an impressive space with floor-to-ceiling



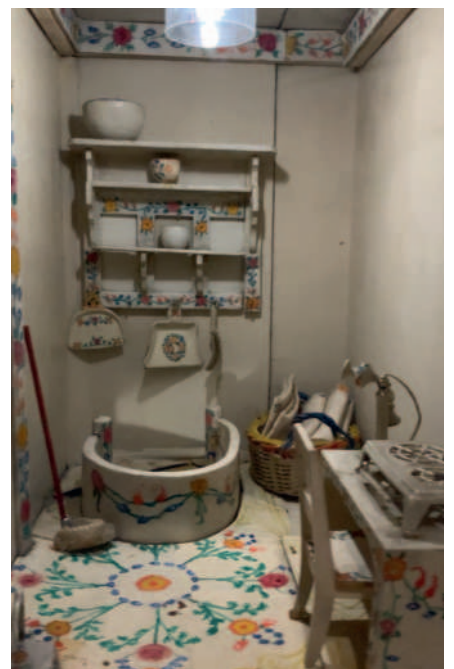
arched doorways, flanked by tall carved sculptures leading to a salon featuring striped painted flooring (a *de rigueur* design choice in stately homes of the time), a mezzanine balcony above and a room filled with original modern art paintings and drawings. I can only imagine that a real balcony must have existed in their Tarrytown home where musicians would be invited to perform while extravagant parties happened below.

The rooms on the lower level offer a snapshot on how the wealthy of the



time lived including an ice box and iron stove in the kitchen, toilets and a bathtub (plumbing!), hand-painted implements in a cleaning closet, an elaborately prepared table in the dining room and working electric fixtures throughout. Many of the rooms are filled with a playful and eclectic mix of graphic patterns with explosions of color, hallmarks of the Victorian era. In one of the upper floor bedrooms, an intricate peacock design runs throughout the décor including the carpet, upholstery, wallpaper and hand painted on the furniture.

It was a terrific exhibition and more than I expected. So much so that I know I'll be making trip back before the exhibit ends on March 14, 2021. To learn more, please visit: www.mcny.org/exhibition/stettheimer-dollhouse-0

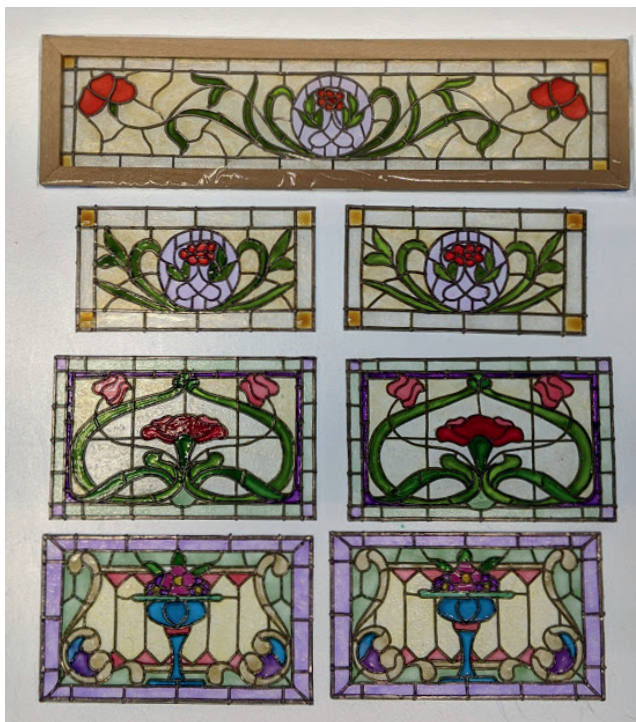


A Timeless World of Light and Colour

Breaking through the glass ceiling of miniature ingenuity with stained glass artisan, Barbara Sabia.

Creating colour

The enduring appeal of each carefully coloured pane of stained glass is its ability to play a role in telling a story. Whilst the world around it constantly morphs and blends seamlessly from era to era, stained glass has marked the passage of time, remaining a colourful constant in our lives for more than a thousand years. Embracing that history along with ever-changing styles, stained glass proves equally at home in a centuries old cathedral as it does within the confines of a suburban semi. "People will always be interested in the historical beauty of stained glass," says Barbara Sabia, known for the exquisite beauty of her stained glass artwork. "Art through all history has been admired throughout time. Look at some of the works of the masters that made by hand, full-scale domes that are awe-inspiring. The designs of stained glass are always changing, and the famous stained-glass artists have evolved throughout history, creating increasingly intricate and beautiful pieces throughout time." 



▲ The magic of stained glass in miniature

► Winchester Mystery House replica window



Barbara's miniature stained glass thrives on an incredible diversity that sees her own designs sit alongside astonishing miniature reproductions of famous and historical designs. With Valentine's Day this month, I'm immediately drawn to the romance of a wonderful Charles Rennie Mackintosh inspired rose heart design window standing at just 2 ¼" tall. "I admire Mackintosh and Tiffany stained glass which was my initial inspiration for my early pieces," Barbara tells me. "Then as I got more comfortable with my art, I began to create my own designs, some from scratch and some from simply children's art books. As I improved, my art became more

versed in the specifics of my method, I started to attempt more and more difficult pieces. However, all of my pieces must be edited in order to be worked on with my particular method and scale."

Barbara's historical reproductions include a recent commission based on the acclaimed designs of 6 Rue du Lac in Ixelles, Brussels, the one-time studio of the Austrian glassmaker Clas Gruner Sterner, built in 1902. A long-held desire to recreate these beautiful Art Nouveau designs in miniature recently collided with destiny after Barbara found herself commissioned to do just that. The unique door and window frames were carefully reproduced in miniature by Carl Sahlberg before she painstakingly recreated the stained glass designs, showing a depth of skill, talent and expertise originally honed through the creation of full size stained glasswork. "I haven't created full-scale pieces of stained glass since the 80s," says Barbara, adding that those she looks back on most fondly are three window custom made for

her old house in Tacoma, Washington State. "A large one in the hot tub room, one in the bathroom, and one in the stairway. They were all still there when I visited Tacoma two years ago and I meant to introduce myself to the new house owners, but never got the chance."

Follow the curve

Barbara's artwork evidently remains much loved by those now living in her former home, but it was an ardent desire for authenticity in miniature which initially led her to bring those skills down to size. "I wanted my own dollhouses to look like real houses," she says. "So, when I looked out



▲ Dancing to a miniature tune!



▲ Birds of Paradise



▲ The fine detail in these French doors is clear to see!



▲► Proud as a peacock!



Shining a light on the art of stained glass



◀▲ The romance of stained glass



▲ Hitting the roof at the Sahlberg

in the miniature world for stained glass, I couldn't find it. When you can't find it, you make it yourself."

The latter is definitely something to which many a miniaturist can attest, and the ways in which artisans achieve what often seems impossible never ceases to amaze. Before talking to Barbara, I have to confess to staring at the magnificent ceiling dome she created for the Sahlberg by renowned artisan Jimmy Landers, and wondering how on earth she did it. Just how did she achieve that perfect glass dome reminiscent of so many grand historical buildings, from the Tate Britain to the National Trust's Berrington Hall? I can assure you that the answer doesn't shatter the illusion, in fact it smashes straight through the glass ceiling of miniature ingenuity. You might even find the answer is sitting in front of you on the mantelpiece right now. "The domes are very thin clock fronts," reveals Barbara, happy to share the secret behind these stunning works of art. "I have to make a mould of these clock fronts to draw the design onto the mould and put the dome onto the mould and work the design."

Shades of colour

Colour is the beating heart of stained glass and it is the colour that tells the story. It feels almost impossible to overstate the attention

to detail found in Barbara's work, whether it's an overall piece or the careful shading of an individual leaf found within that design. Nowhere is this more keenly demonstrated than in the vibrant kaleidoscope of a beautiful round window designed to be inset within a wall piece decorated with beautiful mouldings. Or, indeed, in the intricate reproduction of a magnificent design from the Winchester Mystery House in San Jose, California, famed for its many Tiffany style windows. Both exceptional pieces, they illustrate just why much of Barbara's work centres on commission pieces.

Barbara's clear textured and bevel designs prove equally as compelling as her colourful stained glass and rather than simply providing a finishing touch, you could easily imagine starting out with one or two of these remarkable windows and doors, building the rest of the house around them! However, her designs go far beyond the confines of the dolls' house exterior. Barbara's fireplace screens cover a broad base, her tree designs providing a contemporary edge for those searching for something a little less traditional. The fun, characterful yet elegant designs of her peacock screens mean it is easy to see why they're much loved items in Barbara's Etsy store. They also come in a variety of colours, including a luxurious purple and gold

design, and it isn't only Barbara's customers for whom these birds hold a magical charm. "I love Peacocks, and my favourite colour is teal which attracts me to the peacock colourings," she says. "Customers have asked for a variety of peacock coloured windows and over time I developed designs for wall sconces, ceiling lights, and a variety of peacock fireplace screens."

Into the light

Barbara's ceiling lights are a timely reminder of that other equally vital ingredient of stained glass, lighting. Stained glass lends itself perfectly to the lampshade. What could be more well known than the Tiffany lamp after all? However, it's also quite fascinating to consider that all that's needed to give rise to the most tremendous display, is one of the few things in life free and attainable to every single one of us, natural daylight. Stained glass is home to a treasure trove of inspiration and through her work, Barbara quite literally shines a light on one of our oldest crafts. It's also one to which she has devoted her career to ensuring holds a vibrant appeal for miniaturists across the globe. 🏠



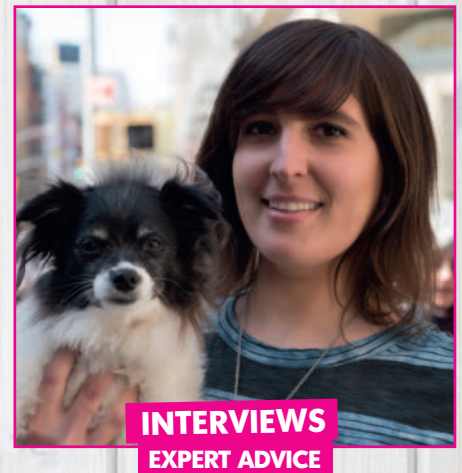
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A Winning Design

Brae Oktober invites us to take a holiday at Otter Cove, immersing ourselves in a world of mid-century modern design.

Classic inspiration

Created with the idea of a holiday retreat in mind, Brae Oktober's award winning Otter Cove lives up to its name. Conjuring up vivid images of the perfect coastal idyll along a shoreline at the mercy of the tidal ebb and flow, the house provides a haven of mid-century modern style combined with a contemporary façade. Built to deadline for the 22nd HBS Creatin' Contest, Otter Cove was the Second Place Winner amongst a stellar line up which always features an exceptional standard of work. "I knew I wanted to do something mid-century modern inspired, but I liked the idea of a more updated exterior," says Brae. "I often save images of interesting buildings and finishes for

inspiration, and I found a beautiful modern home by Christopher Simmonds Architect that contrasted crisp white with reclaimed siding. While my structure doesn't look like theirs as a whole, I did emulate the finishes in mini."

Mid-century modern, designs spanning around three decades from the mid-thirties onwards, is a style we are increasingly seeing brought to the fore by a variety of talented artisans, riding high on a wave of classic design and nostalgia. With a sunken living room and vast curved glass windows bringing the outdoors

indoors where windswept vistas become an interior design feature, Otter Cove is also distant shores away from its foundations as the single story 'Denise's City Cottage Kit'. "I loved the curved roof and beams of the original kit design, and I had originally planned to just add a lower floor," recalls Brae. Her mind's eye, however, had other ideas. "I'd previously created a build with a wall of windows, and something about the kit kept reminding me of that design. So, I flipped the kit onto its front, and I immediately loved the idea of turning the roof and beams into a wall of curved windows." 

◀ The clean lines of Otter Cove's stylish façade





◀ Bringing the story of mid-century modern to life in miniature.

“I love the way the stove turned out. It's a sleek design inspired by the real-life Invicta Pow Wow wood stove. How it's made is one of the few secrets I've kept”

Get in the groove

Adapting, extending and expanding on the framework of the existing kit to suit the Otter Cove build, Brae achieved that stunning curved glass effect by inserting acrylic sheets into specially designed grooves. This left the possibility of being unable to gain easy access to the interior from this angle, something Brae was keen to have, not least for photography

purposes. The dilemma was resolved by a masterstroke of design, adding a carefully hidden slot beneath the flat roof's top cork layer so they can be easily removed, affording Brae the best of both worlds.

The flat roof also includes a much more visible design feature. The small chimney, made from a tiny button and a surplus aquarium filter tube, has been carefully positioned to line up with the focal point

of the sunken living room below, the warm glow emanating from the wood burning stove. “I love the way the stove turned out. It's a sleek design inspired by the real-life Invicta Pow Wow wood stove. How it's made is one of the few secrets I've kept.” teases Brae, who in the main, divulges the secrets and techniques behind her many projects, including Otter Cove, in a fascinating series of in-depth blog posts.



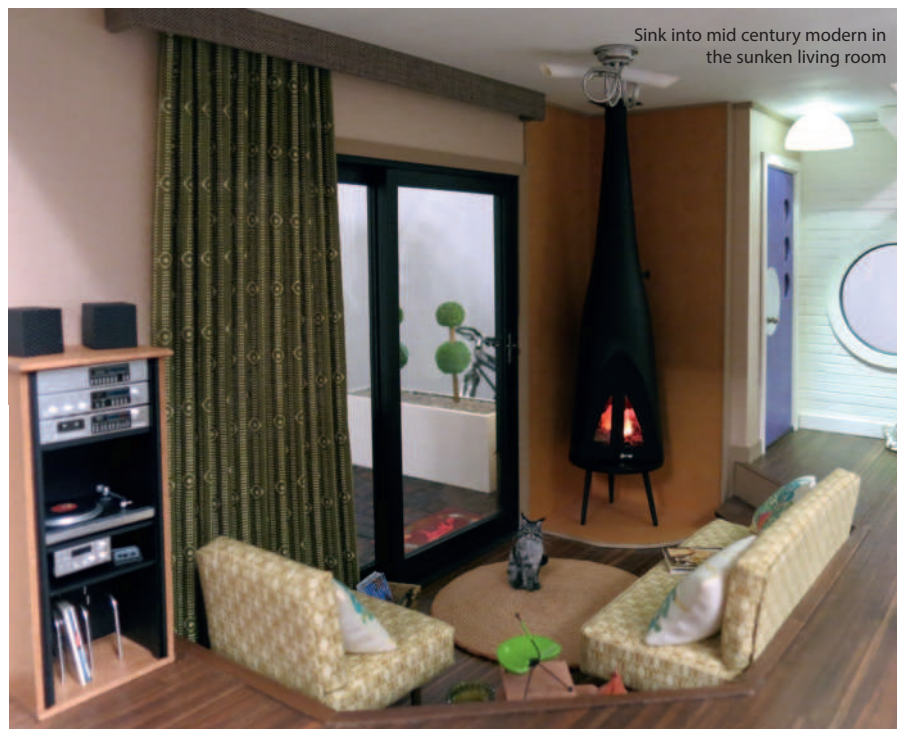
Otter Cove offers a warm welcome



Otter Cove's huge curved windows

Sea-ing detail

Four such blogs detail the construction process behind the custom built front door which, in addition to being inspired by the era of mid-century modern design, provides a clever nod to the imagined coastal setting. Featuring several round windows resembling ship's portholes, the door also provides a link to 1990s nostalgia, painted a shade of lilac fans of Monica Gellar's apartment in *Friends* would be proud of! Meanwhile, a much larger circular window beside the entrance also invokes the seafaring inspired theme. You can imagine whiling away the hours stood at this window holding a pair of binoculars. The round window is inset into a wall with an authentic brickwork texture created with the aid of some paint and a stencil brush. Brae excels at every challenge she turns her creative hand to, but she has a real knack for true to life paint effects. The hand painted Formica style kitchen countertop resembles the real thing with jaw dropping accuracy, whilst the units themselves reflect the popular pastel shades of 1950s kitchens. "The kitchen set was made from basswood and hardware, including a pen clip for the refrigerator handle. The stovetop is made from



Sink into mid century modern in the sunken living room



Take a seat!

laser cut burners with aluminium sheet cut to fit underneath. The knobs and oven front parts are from ELF Miniatures, though I cut my own steel top and acrylic door to fit the space."

A time capsule of glossy mid-century modern design, the sheer volume of time and effort lavished on the project by Brae is simply staggering. Every single piece of wooden siding on the building's exterior was individually cut by hand, whilst in the living room, the tree ring rug took an astonishing seventy-seven hours to complete. Time more than well spent, the rug and the handcrafted sofa it sits in front of are now firmly in the possession of Isabeau, a gorgeous Maine Coon cat crafted by artisan, Maya Schipp!! "While I do keep track of the hours I stitch and have a calendar noting the various tasks I've completed for a build, it's hard to determine the hours put into a miniature project. I work full time and run an Etsy shop, so building miniature houses is third in line."

These days we're used to carrying our music with us on our phones, but for many there's still a place in our hearts and our lives for the old-fashioned stereo system. Brae brings this wonderful element of nostalgia to life in 1/12th scale, complete with an audio cassette tape (remember those?!) and LPs. "The stereo system is made from components from a 1/12 scale Aoshima Pioneer Project A99 kit. There wasn't enough room to include the large floor speakers, so I created more modern cube speakers that sit on top. I also created a wood cabinet to surround the plastic case for a more upscale finish." 



"No, this is my seat!"

A recipe for classic design





A vintage idea

It was with delight that Brae was able to include several genuine vintage pieces within Otter Cove's beautifully furnished interior. Whilst the centrepiece of the first floor is undoubtedly the handmade walnut bed frame with its integrated bedside tables, the vintage high-backed Petite Princess slipper chair and footstool also brings something distinctive and special to the overall scene.

"The bathroom mirror is vintage Lundby with a replacement mirror insert," adds Brae. "Because this is a smallish build, the smaller scale of 1/16 works well in the space and makes the rooms seem larger." The patio furniture was another vintage buy, remodelled to become two papasan chairs. Papasan chairs have brought comfort to those living in Asia for hundreds of years, but only fanned out across the globe after the Second World War, leading to them become an icon of 1970s style.

From the World War One themed Aero Squadron Lounge to a house inspired by her childhood home, a number of Brae's projects are driven by an evocative connection with our past. Otter Cove is a place you'd want to stay for more than just a holiday and its blend of mid-century modern and contemporary proves that whilst time may move on, trends of the past always have designs on our present and future! 🏠



INFO

For more information and to discover more about Otter Cove please visit:

www.otterine.com



The hand stitched wall tapestry took Brae many hours to complete

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Gardener's delight...

PART 2

The second in a new series, learn how to create realistic paving and soil for your outdoor scenes!

YOU WILL NEED

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Sahara, caramel and chocolate Fimo polymer clay

TOOLS REQUIRED

- Ceramic tile
- 3mm rolling spacers
- Acrylic roller
- Tissue blade
- Sandpaper
- Thin wooden board
- PVA glue
- Small hot chocolate grater
- Wooden board



PAVING



1 Roll your two chosen paving colours into sausages. Depending on what level of pattern you want, make one colour smaller or larger than the other.



2 Start to roll, twist, and fold your two sausages together. This is a fun experimental step, so just have fun with it.



3 Once you are happy with your swirly sausage, roll it flat onto a ceramic tile using some 3mm spacers.



4 Start cutting out your paving slabs using a tissue blade. I made a little template of my greenhouse floor, and used that to help me cut the slabs. Bake in an oven once all your slabs are cut.



5 Once baked and cooled, sand any rough edges. I also sanded the top of my tiles to give them a rough sandstone-like finish.



6 Secure your finished paving slabs onto a piece of thin wooden board using some PVA glue in the desired size and shape to finish.

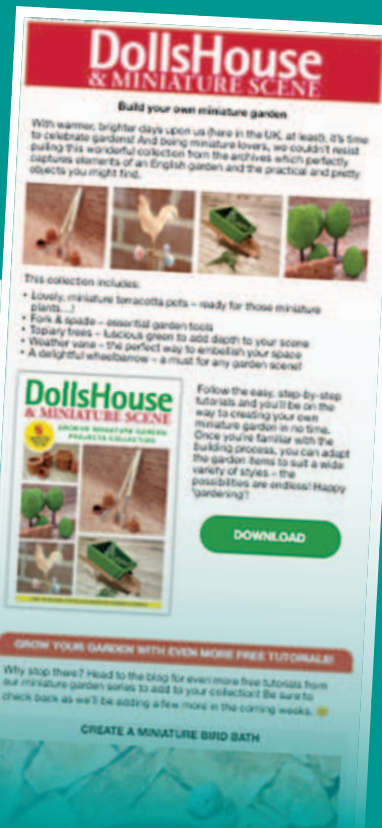
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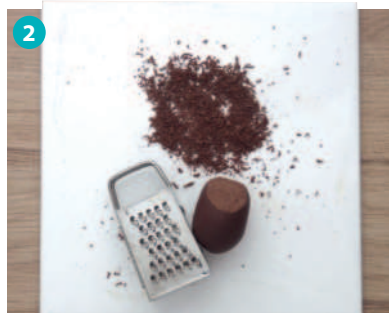
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SOIL

1 Roll out your polymer clay 2mm thick, and cut so that it fits the remaining area of your greenhouse floor, again I used a paper template for accuracy. Don't bake this rolled out piece, but do bake the ball of leftover polymer clay.



2 Once your leftover clay is baked and cooled, grate using a small hot chocolate grater. Be careful with this step, as it can be a bit tricky.



3 Once you have enough, sprinkle your grated clay onto your flat rolled piece, and gently push down. Once happy bake in an oven.



4 Using a thicker piece of wooden board (cut to the same size as your greenhouse floor), secure your final paving slabs and soil bed into place. I painted the edge of my board to match the greenhouse.



Did you miss last month in which Candy demonstrates how to create your very own miniature greenhouse? Visit www.dollhouseandminiaturescene.co.uk to get your digital or printed copy!

NEXT ISSUE...

Learn how to create a potting bench for your outdoor scene!





Instagram Identities:

THERESA GROMSKI

With Instagram proving a hub of emerging miniaturists, let us introduce you avid image sharer Theresa Gromski and her incredibly trendy boho build.

Theresa in her equally stylish home



Looking at Theresa Gromski's Instagram page it's hard to distinguish the photos of her real house from those of her dollhouse! "I've always been fascinated with miniature things," Theresa from Birmingham told me. "I had a dolls house as a little girl that my dad built for me. I loved it. It was my favourite toy and I used to spend ages making things for it: food from Fimo which I'd paint, I cross stitched rugs for it and made all the little throws and cushions." Many of us, like Theresa, can trace our fascination with all things small back to childhood.

"Rustic boho is definitely the style I'm drawn to in the decor of my full-size home," explained Theresa. "I get my inspiration from decor and interiors on Instagram and my dolls house is very much inspired by my own decor style. I often make or have things on my dolls house that I'd like in my own home!"

Theresa thought she'd like to create a dolls house when she had children. When her daughter Anais was three, and starting to reach an age where she could appreciate a dollhouse, Theresa started making a few pieces for it. "A lot of dolls house furniture or accessories you can buy are either Victorian era or quite dated," she explained, "and it's really hard to find modern style décor. I struggled to find the kind of design that I personally like, although these days looking through Instagram and on Etsy, you can



more easily find more and more people making modern style pieces." Theresa asked her husband, who fortunately is really handy at DIY, to make a simple dollhouse out of scaffold boards: "I just wanted a simple, sturdy structure that had a rustic Scandi feel." Some of the furniture, such as the kitchen pieces, bath, toilet, log burner and wardrobes were purchased by Theresa: "Other pieces I adapted or upcycled from dated pieces I had

bought second-hand from eBay. For these pieces I painted and added decoration too, to change their appearance. For example, I painted designs to the chinoiserie style black cupboard, adding decorative hinges and a piece of jewellery to create the look."

Theresa is talented enough to create pieces from scratch, such as the sofa and armchair, or the Scandi rustic style bench. Her creative imagination means she can







transform quite unexpected items into things of beauty. Take the coffee table made from a candle lid and wooden dowel pieces; the Indian print blocks that are now side tables; or a metal section from a Moroccan tea glass that serves as a lovely bedside table. Beads became ornaments, vases and lamp bases.

"The panelling in the sitting room was made from lollipop sticks cut to size, stuck on and painted," exclaimed Theresa with pride. "It probably took an hour or two to do. The raffia style chandelier is just two lengths of fringing secured around a small Fimo ring base. That probably took a couple of hours. It's secured to the ceiling with leather strips and small jewellery fixings." Theresa is living proof that if you have the talent, you can create a high end look for just pennies. "To build the house took my husband a couple of days," she told me. "I've been building pieces for it on or off for two or three years – though not non-stop, obviously! I have phases where I'll spend a week or so making a few pieces."

Theresa studied fashion and textile design for her degree, and that creative flair shows – even though she didn't pursue fashion as a career. Instead she got into illustration: "I worked for a multimedia company for seven years illustrating educational resource material and creating 3D models – digitally, not in the dolls house model sense! I then left to go freelance. I've been a freelance illustrator for nearly 20 years. I used to illustrate children's books but switched focus ten years ago to create lifestyle and fashion illustrations. I sell my work through Getty Images and I stock under my professional name Theresa Tibbetts. I still take on illustration commissions and am in the process of creating my own prints to sell. I don't do commissions for my miniatures as the time it takes would make the price I'd have to charge not viable, though I do often get asked! If someone with lots of money wants to commission a bespoke dolls house with all the contents, I'd be all for it!"

So, readers, if you have a sudden Lottery win, you know where to find Theresa! 🏠



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Elevating Style

Marie Knight cordially invites you to the grand opening of the Exhibit Hall and Art Gallery. Not only is this a sight to behold but the secret to this amazing build is the fully functioning elements!



▲ The Exhibit Hall & Art Gallery opens for business

A constructive idea

Marie Knight has become a leading light of miniature engineering and her latest project proves no exception to that rule. Far from it. At three foot wide and two foot tall, Marie's Exhibit Hall and Art Gallery is an outstanding piece of design, sending us spinning through a revolving door and scaling new heights with a fully functional lift, or elevator. What makes this project even more exciting, however, is that the main structure is also entirely scratch built. "At its core, the exhibit hall and art gallery is just a wood box made from $\frac{1}{4}$ " plywood," says Marie. "I made the walls thicker and more stable by adding a layer of $\frac{1}{2}$ " and $\frac{1}{4}$ " foam board to the walls and floors; this kept the structure lightweight."



▲ Revolving around clever design

Making an entrance

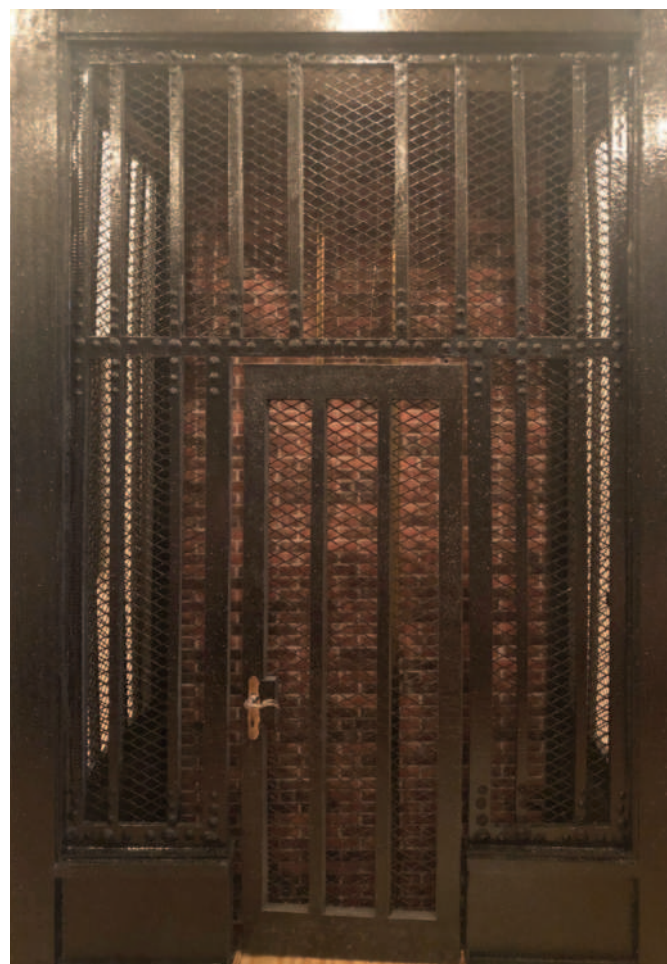
Invented with the aim of keeping the chill outside where it belongs, the energy efficient revolving door was patented in the US by Theophilus Van Kannel in the late 19th century and the classic design remains as relevant and contemporary in today's world. The concept of the revolving door has brought a smile to generations of children, the ability to go 'round in never ending circles a timeless fascination. For Marie, who always brings something extra special to her projects, the temptation of recreating the design in miniature proved too good an opportunity to resist.

"I knew I didn't want a normal front door entry. I saw a revolving door in a TV show not too long ago, and I knew that was the answer I was looking for," says Marie, adding that Pinterest, which has rapidly



become the miniaturists go-to in recent years, provided her own inspiration. The idea of building a working revolving door in 1/12th scale might, on face value, seem meant to drive you to easy distraction, but as Marie explains, it's something many of us can achieve surprisingly easily. "The overall concept of building a revolving door really isn't complicated, but I did have to figure out the easiest way to assemble all the pieces and keep the door centred over its pivot point," she shares. "The door pivots on brass pins inserted into a centre post and into the doorframe. It was critical to keep the pin holes precisely aligned during the assembly so the door would revolve straight and true at all times." The doors themselves are simple balsa wood frames, the glass effect created using clear acetate, and the final result is a worthy work of art in itself. As always, Marie remains modest about her achievements. "This was a wonderful challenge, but one that I feel I met for a first attempt at such a thing. I'm so pleased with it!" 

▲ Up, up and away with Marie's vintage cage elevator



► The first floor elevator cage

Gone fishing

Once through those revolving doors, you're instantly confronted with something else which should surely be classified as an interactive exhibit, the exceptional fully functional elevator. Marie's initial vision for the project had always seen the inclusion of a lift, but after discovering the evocative design of the vintage cage elevator, simply creating the impression of one by fitting doors flush against the far walls promptly left the building through the revolving doors. "At that point, there was no returning to my original plans."

Marie always combines beautiful and inventive hand crafting with the skilled use of the modern technology which now affords miniaturists an almost exhaustive list of new creative opportunities. Readers who have followed her other projects will know that she is a great advocate of the Cricut Maker, which has once again seen sterling service. "I first drew out the design of the elevator on paper with exact measurements, and then reproduced my designs in Cricut's



A lightbulb moment for miniature design



The first visitors arrive

Design Space software," explains Marie, who used her Cricut Maker to produce individual elements of the cage using illustration board. These were then combined with strips of wood and a delicate diamond pattern craft mesh before adding the vintage finish using black spray paint. "The elevator carriage was made from balsa wood and rides up and down on two parallel brass rods located behind it; pulled by fishing line secured to the roof of the elevator. The fishing line is attached to a small gear motor at the top of the shaft. I'm so thrilled with how this turned out!"

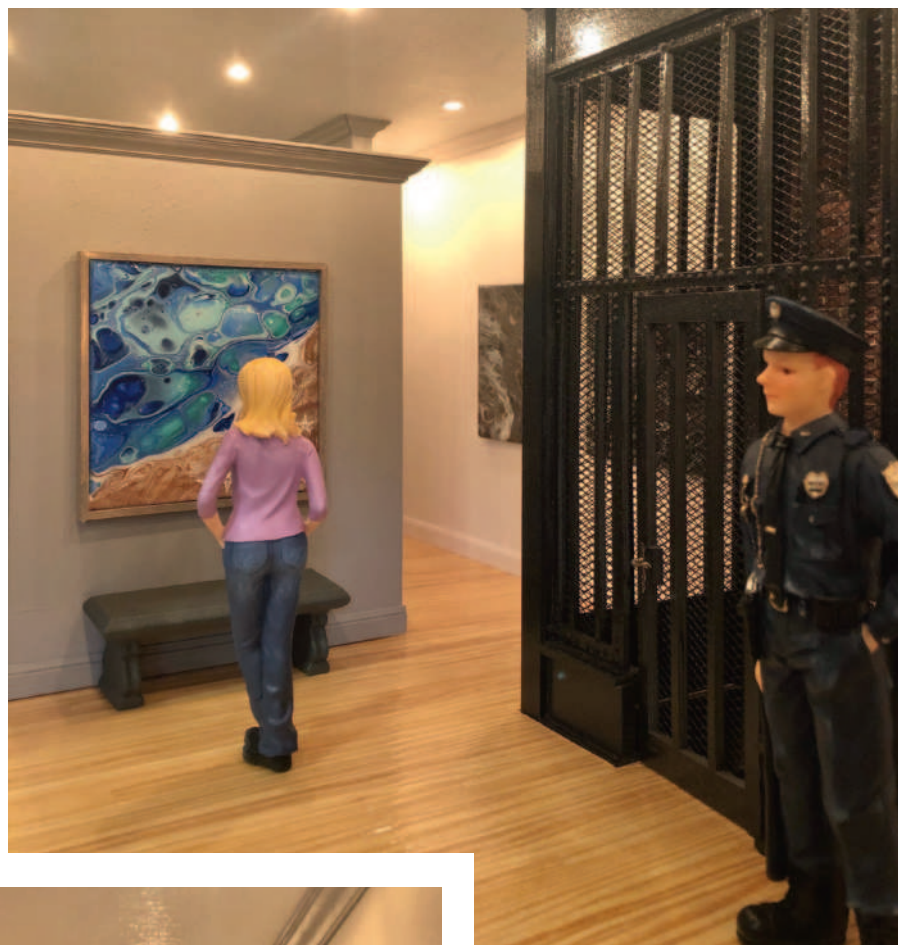
The Cricut Maker also proved its worth when putting together the illuminated 'EXIT' sign above the solid emergency door. It's these thoughtful elements of authenticity which bring a genuine sense of realism to all Marie's projects. "The sign is a tiny wood box painted silver, with an insert inside of black vinyl with the letters E X I T cut into it with my Cricut Maker. The insert was attached to a clear plastic piece, and the sign is backlit by a tiny bulb. The door is several wood pieces covered in stainless steel contact paper, glued together and to the side wall."

The inaugural collection

Marie has been toying with the idea of changing the exhibits and art work displayed on a regular basis, meaning the hall and gallery has the ready-made potential to become a showcase for

artists and miniaturists alike. Such is the adaptability of the expansive two story building that she has also considered the possibility of turning it into a dance studio at a later date. "I built this project to be extremely flexible in what I can do with it. One never knows what it will be a couple of years from now!" For the time being, the ground floor exhibit hall is devoted in its entirety to the inaugural exhibition and the many hours Marie spent recreating the highly skilled and wonderfully ornate designs of the passionate 3D printing artist, Zane Rogers. Zane, whose intricate work is available online through his Etsy store, was also the talented artist who originally inspired the project, leading to his very own 1/12th scale exhibition!

"I discovered Zane Rogers and his unique 3D modelled characters in my Elegoo Mars 3D printing group on Facebook. There was just something about his unique designs that captivated me," says Marie. "I knew that I would be 3D printing a ton of his models but wanted a unique way to display them. The idea of a miniature exhibit hall just popped into my head out of nowhere!"



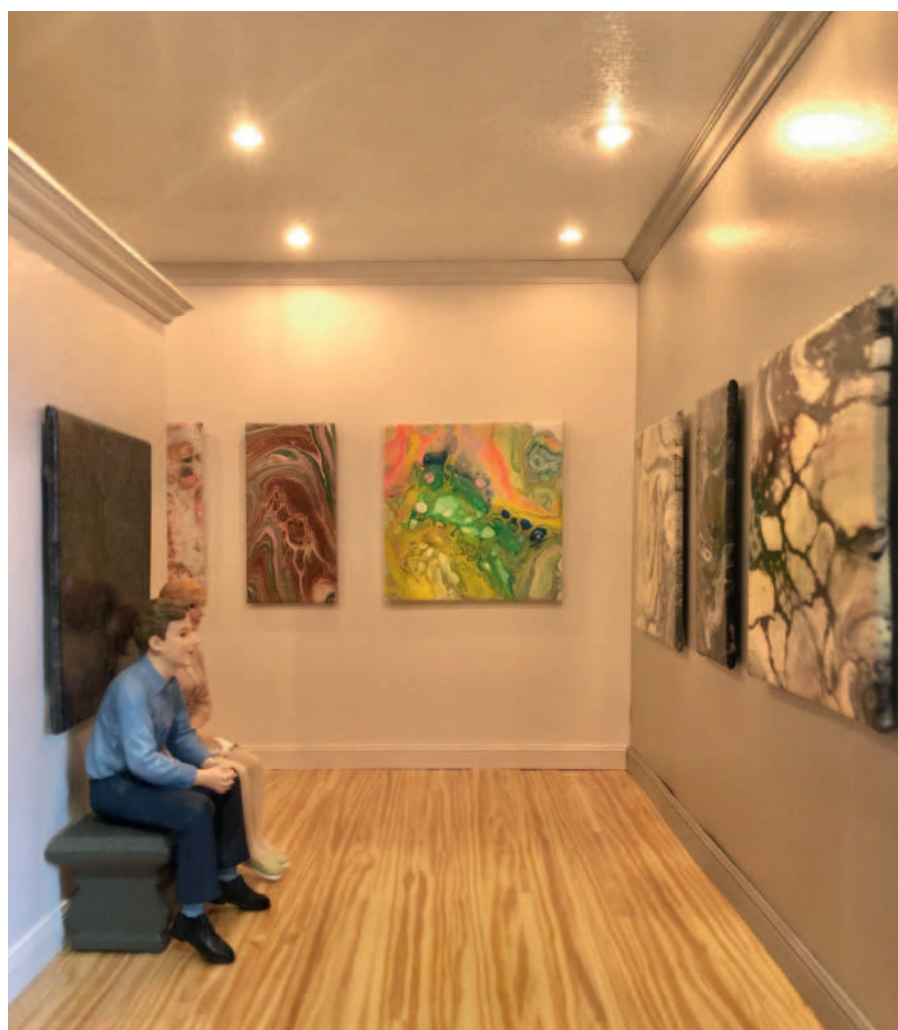
▲ Under the watchful gaze of security

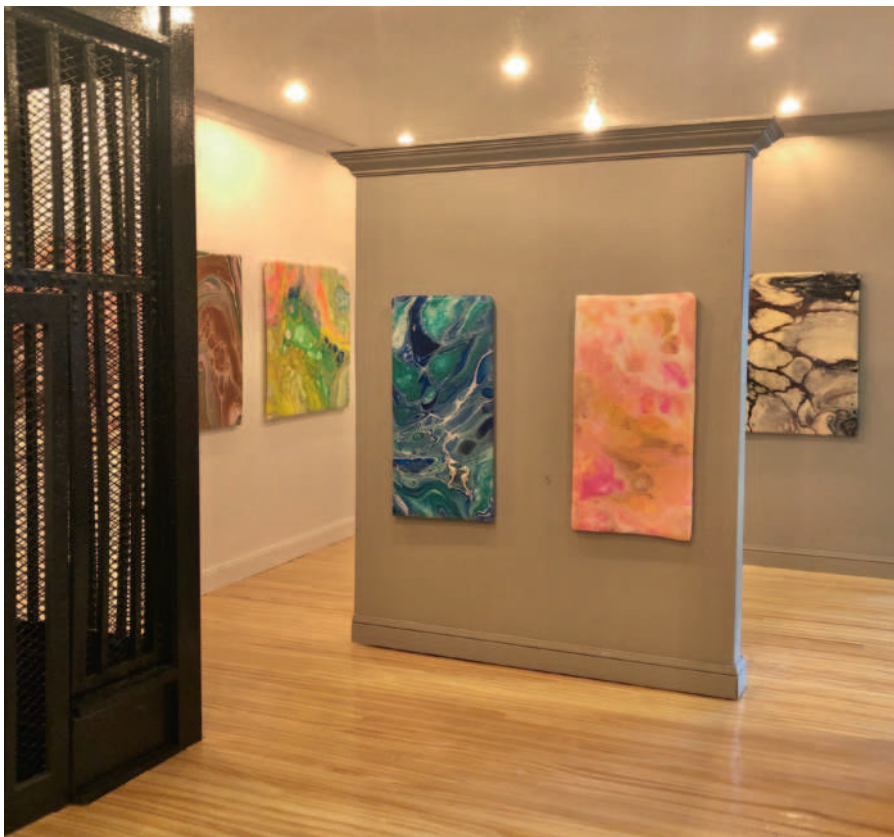
"I built this project to be extremely flexible in what I can do with it. One never knows what it will be a couple of years from now"

And then, shortly after, as I was creating some small pour paintings, it dawned on me that the exhibit hall could also include an art gallery. Suddenly, I was designing a two-story structure."

Marie's zest for 3D printed art has become a signature aspect of her project, and enabled her to create the many plinths required for showcasing Zane's designs. This part of the process alone took almost an entire weekend to complete. Marie also 3D printed Zane's name in large letters, creating an eye-catching display which has been creatively inset into the back wall. ▶

◀ A quiet moment of reflection





◀ Spot the seahorses!

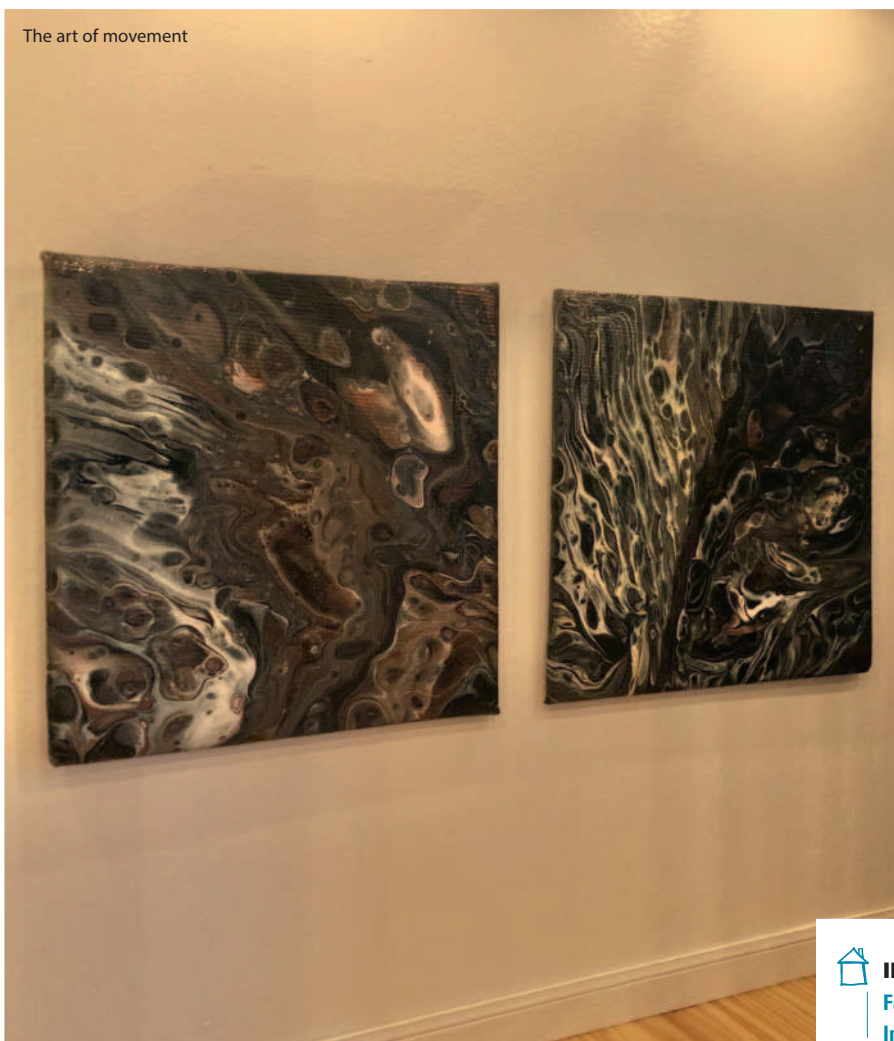
“I'd never built a 1/12th scale vintage cage elevator or a revolving door but I managed to pull them both off in this project with careful planning and research. If you can see it in your mind, you can make it with your hands.”

The fluidity of art

Taking the lift up to the first floor we find ourselves immersed in the world of colour that is the unveiling of the Marie Knight Fluid Art Collection. This is a colourful collection showcasing Marie's talent for pour painting, the largest canvas measuring just 4 inches square. “Pour painting is where you put several different colours of acrylic paints into a cup, or several cups depending on the method you choose to use, and then pour the cup of paint out onto a canvas,” explains Marie. “The canvas is then tilted in several directions until the paint covers the entire canvas and all four sides. It really is a fun, and messy, way to paint, and the results can be very random and stunning! And like a finger-print, no two pour paintings are alike.” Marie's canvases offer so much to the eye, including a magnetic sense of texture and movement. If you look very carefully, you'll also notice that one or two of Marie's paintings incorporate a nautical theme with tiny starfish or shining silver seahorses.

Marie's vintage cage elevator is one of the most exciting miniatures of our times, a symbol of the inventive imagination and skill of the modern miniaturist. Watching it travel between floors is a mesmerising experience, and one which can be witnessed for yourself on her Instagram account. “As daunting as something may feel, never be afraid to try it out,” she insists. “I'd never built a 1/12th scale vintage cage elevator or a revolving door but I managed to pull both of them off in this project after careful planning and research. If you can see it in your mind, you can make it with your hands!” 🏠

The art of movement



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At Home with THE BROADWOODS



CREATING THE WORLD OUTSIDE... IN MINIATURE

This month, professional model maker Bea Broadwood begins a brand-new series of features that will explore the fascinating world of smaller scale dioramas. Helped by members of the PP Modelling Community, she will not only be sharing her top tips, but together they will be taking a closer look at the techniques, materials and tools that can be used to create highly realistic miniature landscapes on even the smallest of budgets!



▲ Pumpkin Cottage without a base...

◀ ...and with a base

“What material should I use for the base structure of my diorama?”

Alan Freeman

Creating miniature landscaping and smaller scale dioramas

“Is it better to have a miniature building with surroundings or just by itself?”

Winnie Finesse

Bea: To be honest, how you display a miniature building (in any scale) is really up to your personal choice and it also depends on how much space you have available too. Some quarter scale dolls houses look just fine, arranged on a shelf or window sill.

However, regular readers of this column will already know that I am really passionate about miniature dioramas and creating them has to be one of my favourite aspects of the work that I do. Personally, I feel that setting a quarter scale dolls house onto a landscaped base, not only creates the perfect display, but also helps to bring the property to life. It also really helps to add atmosphere and can help support any theme or back story that you want your 1:48 scale dolls house to convey. Creating a landscaped display base can be as simple or as complex as you want, as what you add, is totally up to you!

Bea: A strong and sturdy diorama base can be made from any robust material, such as piece of MDF or a wooden board. If a spot of wood work is not for you, pieces of foam core board can be stuck together in layers to form a rigid base that, when dry, can be cut to the size required. A key point to also consider is the size of your planned diorama, as the larger the base, the stronger it needs to be to ensure that it does not warp or bend. Alternatively, if the DIY option is not for you, Petite Properties do have a wide range of base kits, which have been specifically designed to suit many of our different property kits.

► Mixed filler applied with an old butter knife

Hills and valleys, contours and mounds...

"What is the best way to build a rise or hill in the landscape? Thanks."

Rachel Scott

My first response to this question is... how messy do you want to get?! Adding contours and undulations to the surface of your miniature landscape will definitely help to add interest and of course ultimately create a more realistic outdoor scene. There are many different materials that you can use to achieve fluid or rocky shapes; some are easier to work with than others and they all have their pros and cons.

To help work out which medium is right for you, here's my general guide... starting with the messiest (and cheapest) first:

• **Papier mache:** For many of us, memories of this simple technique may come flooding back from our early years at school. Strips of newspaper are slavered in a water based adhesive paste and laid over contours or mounds created with either scrunched up newspaper or tin foil.

Pros: Almost no cost and the final structure is very light.

Cons: Very messy!

Top Tip: First fix the scrunched up paper or tin foil in place using a hot glue gun to ensure they do not move on the base when the strips of newspaper are later applied.

• **Interior decorator's filler:** This is a material that I return to and use time and time again as it is just so effective and realistic. Regular readers will already know that I use an inexpensive 'interior powdered filler' to create the contours and also any exposed rock faces on many of my miniature landscaped settings. I simply mix the filler powder with cold water to form a VERY stiff paste. This paste is then spread over the base using an old butter knife and then left to dry.

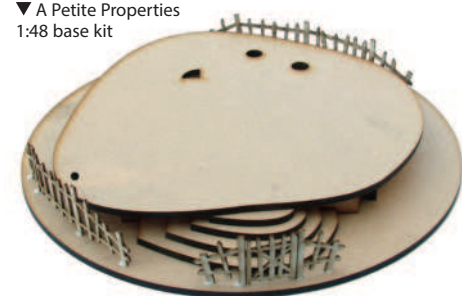
Pro's: Great value and incredibly versatile.

Cons: Can take a long time to dry and creates quite a heavy base.

◀ Planning the layout of a diorama

▲ The Robin's Nest base is small, so it did not need to be very thick

▼ A Petite Properties 1:48 base kit

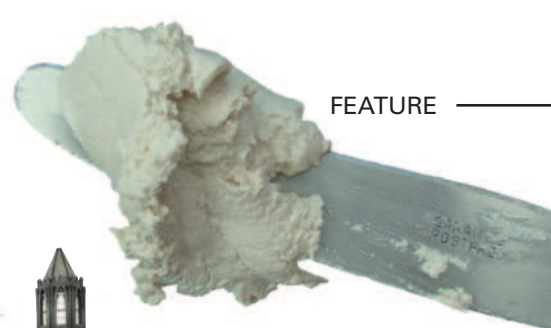


Top Tip: "Size does matter! If you are creating your own base structure, make sure it fits the space you ultimately want to display it in."

"I have never done landscaping, but want to in the future. How do I get started please? Do I plan it on graph paper or go with the flow?"

Linda Goodhart

Bea: How you go about designing your base is really down to how you like to work. Sometimes, I just go for it and plan nothing, however this can be a chaotic and messy approach that isn't for everyone! Most of the time I do pre-plan and lay out key design elements directly onto the base board; moving them around until I am happy with the layout. I then draw around all the elements to define the edges of the display board. Finally, I take a few photos on my phone so that I can remember the layout and off I go from there. Alternatively, it's also handy to use a large sheet of paper (a double spread of newspaper or a piece of wallpaper lining paper are both ideal) and mark out the layout of the features you wish to include to ensure that they all fit. Finally, if you are using a pre-cut base kit, first assemble the base structure then again mark out in pencil the positions of what will be displayed on it.



◀ The Watch Tower's base features exposed rocks created with decorator's filler



• **Mod Roc:** This is a common modelling product that is readily available either from craft shops or online. Mod Roc is a bandage that has been impregnated with plaster of Paris. Wet strips of Mod Roc can be laid over pre-created contours, created with either scrunched up newspaper or tin foil.

Pro's: Creates a very strong structure on which to landscape.

Cons: Very messy and can take a long time to dry out.

Mod Roc is messy to use, but fun!



• **Builder's insulation foam:** This is actually a product used in the full-scale building world and can be brought from DIY stores. However, the model railway world regularly use it as a landscaping medium to create model railway layouts. It can be easily sculpted with a sharp knife to form ground work contours or to replicate exposed rock faces which then can be stuck to the base structure.

Pro's: Easy to sculpt, light weight and can be used on VERY large bases.

Cons: Can be hard to find in small amounts, if only a little bit is required.

With the base structure of the diorama complete, next month Bea and her friends take on miniature shrubs, hedges and trees! 🌳



INFO

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Strawberry Cupcakes

Get your miniature bakery ready with these classic vanilla cupcakes with strawberry and chocolate icing, and juicy strawberries on top. The strawberries require a steady hand, but the end result is beyond mouth-watering!

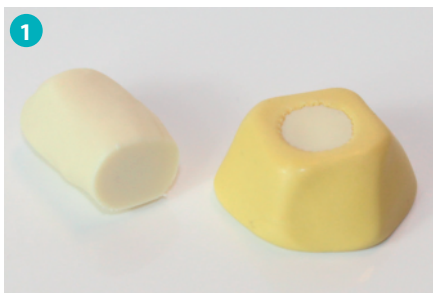
YOU WILL NEED

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Polymer clay in: pink, brown, olive green, light yellow, translucent.
- FIMO liquid (or other liquid clay)
- Acrylic paints
- FIMO gloss (or other water-based varnish)

TOOLS REQUIRED

- Silicone mould putty
- Small embossing tools
- Needle tool/fine ended tools
- Toothbrush
- Small paintbrushes
- Blades & Craft knife



1 After mixing and conditioning some light-yellow clay with some translucent, fill in your cupcake mould to the top. Cupcake moulds can be bought from specialized shops or you can make your own master cupcake liner from polymer clay and made a mould using silicone mould putty.



2 Add a small disc-shaped piece of the same clay on top, press it down giving it a domed shape and texture it with a toothbrush. Make as many as you need and bake them in the mould for 10 minutes at the recommended temperature.



3 Using the same clay, roll it into a strand and cut even pieces to make the strawberries. Roll each piece into a ball, place it on the end of a needle tool or toothpick and shape it. Using another fine ended tool, gently poke tiny indentations to create the illusion of seeds. Bake for 10 minutes at the recommended temperature.



4 Once baked and cool, paint the strawberries with red acrylic paint and a little dark red/carmine starting from the tip and blending it downwards. Let dry.

Maive's Top Tip!

"You can bake the strawberries on the same toothpicks where you sculpted them using some scrunched up tin foil as a base; or gently push them off the needle tool with a craft knife, rotating the needle so as to keep the shape of the strawberry and resting the strawberries on the base (where the hole is) to bake them, so as not to distort the shape or ruin the seeds."



5 Once all the strawberries are dry, take some olive-green clay and press it on your worktop. Use a small embossing tool to poke and crush the clay into small leaf-like pieces. Attach the little pieces to the strawberries with a little FIMO liquid.



6 To make the cupcakes look baked, take some acrylic paint in ecru/light beige/raw sienna and paint the bottom two thirds or so of the cupcake liners. Don't forget to paint the bases as well. Using a smaller brush, paint the edge of the sponge, blending it towards the centre with a little water.



7 Once the paint is dry, mix pink clay (and brown for chocolate) with some FIMO liquid until you get a consistency like icing and spread it on the cupcakes. Add the strawberries and bake for 30 minutes. Let cool and apply a layer of varnish, even a couple on the strawberries to make them look extra glossy and decadent. 🏠

MAKING MINIATURE Mignonette Toy Dolls

Past DHMS contributor Sandra Morris has been working very hard and is proud to announce the arrival of her own book, *Making Miniature Mignonette Toy Dolls*.

"The word 'Mignonette' has its origins in France, dating back to 1690-1700, and means 'small and delicately pretty'. Mignonette dolls are therefore particularly pretty petite dolls. "These tiny dolls have a special appeal to miniature collectors, and although their small scale can be challenging, it is not difficult to acquire the skills necessary to make your own heirloom creations" says Sandra, "From tools and materials, through to mastering basic techniques and costume elements, the designs described in my book will provide you with all the information you need to begin creating your very own tiny, toy dolls. Once you have mastered the basics, you can go on to experiment and design your own unique costumes. The projects chapter features different costume styles, from very simple to more elaborate, with ideas for variations."

Written with beginner in mind, but inspirational for experienced micro dressers, the patterns can be mixed and matched to create a wide variety of styles, from historical dolls of the 1700s, through to the most elaborate doll fashions of the 1890s and on to 20th Century toy dolls.

Woven throughout is the whimsical story of La Mignonette, a French doll shop where the talented hands of Mademoiselle Emilie, brings her beautiful creations to life...

Buyers of the book are also invited to become members of Sandra's new Mignonette Doll Club, which has many benefits including access to a private Facebook group, discounts and exclusive special offers, free instruction packs, monthly mignonette dolls to make, updates on the story of La Mignonette, a monthly newsletter and competitions.

Each month, Sandra will be creating a different Mignonette doll, instructions for which will be available as a digital download... free of charge for club members. Members are very welcome to share their mini doll makes and share hints, tips and suggestions. They can also send photos of their dressed dolls to be featured in the Miniature Mignonette 'Hall of Fame' on the Tower House Dolls website. 🏠



INFO

'Making Miniature Mignonette Toy Dolls' is £12.99 and is available exclusively from the Tower House Dolls website -

www.towerhousedolls.co.uk



French chic, Kiwi style!

Meet Chloe Mayes, not only a truly talented artisan of beautiful bespoke miniatures but a master of capturing them in the most stunning images with light providing the finishing touch have you questioning if it's really minature you're looking at!



Beaconhill House

Handmade sideboard in the third floor hallway of BeaconHill House



Cushions stuffed with sand



Some of the first furniture Chloe made



When Chloe Mayes started tagging DHMS in images of her incredible makes on social media our attention was well and truly caught. After we'd checked we were definitely looking at real, full scale interiors (the clever use of lighting in the images had us seriously questioning ourselves!) we were blown away by the talent.

New Zealand-based Chloe, who goes by the name of Homemade Hermits professionally, has been creating 1:12th scale miniatures for about 15 years on and off, and the experience clearly shows. When asked what first inspired her it was our turn to feel a sense of pride, "Your magazines actually! No kidding! I had surgery on both my feet when I was 15 and mum brought a pile of books home from the library, amongst them, Dolls House & Miniature scene! I fell in love! I had never seen anything like it, miniatures as a hobby was almost unheard of here in New Zealand and it is still extremely difficult sourcing supplies here. But I was hooked, I started making little bits and pieces immediately, it gave me something to do while I was recovering. Not long after, my parents, who have always supported my left of centre creative endeavours, bought me the Beaconhill kit from Greenleaf in the US which I constructed on my bedroom floor and to this day is still a work in progress. Prior to this I did have play dolls houses when I was very little, my dad built them for me and as he is a flooring fitter by trade, they were constantly getting new flooring! It's always been 'just' a hobby for me, I am a tattoo artist by trade, and then the pandemic happened and we all got locked in. My husband and I got back home after a week of what was meant to be our trip of a lifetime - several months travelling Europe for our honeymoon. We came back to no jobs and no home. [▶▶](#)

So I began creating and posting online just as a way to kill time and keep a little sanity and discovered others have a real interest in what I'm doing. I was pretty overwhelmed by it actually. I'm starting to get the odd commission now and I would really love to make more to sell.

Best described as French chic, Chloe's miniature makes all feature regal touches with luxurious draped curtains framing beautiful windows, ornate details on walls such as cornicing and ceiling roses, sumptuous furniture and sparkling chandeliers. With such an array of miniature

styles available to create we wondered what is was that drew this talented artisan to this style in particular? "Hmm that's a tough one, I make all sorts of different things, from flowers to food and furniture, partly because it was almost impossible to buy things in New Zealand when I started and partly because I have a very Kiwi attitude - "I could make that, how hard could it be..." or maybe "jack of all trades master of none" is a better way to describe it! Mostly I just enjoy the tinkering side of miniatures. I like working out how a particular items could be constructed realistically. At the moment most of the minis I'm making are loosely French style, I like soft colours and patination, but I'll give anything a go!"

With New Zealand located a world away from France we wondered how Chloe sourced inspiration, "I spend a lot of time trawling through Pinterest, looking at furniture and interiors, I've always loved beautiful old interiors, sometimes it's just something simple like sunlight filtering through an old window and I'll want to try recapture that vibe in miniature. Instagram is also one of my top resources for inspiration, there are makers from every corner of the earth out there that blow my mind every day, and most people are happy to share tips and ideas if you ask."

Talking of mind blown, one thing is for sure and that is when you look at Chloe's work, you really struggle to see it is miniature. The quality of the makes is outstanding without a slightly out of sync scaled make or a blob of glue in sight. Quite a skill when you consider the range of materials used to build each scene. How we



The parlour fireplace in Beaconhill House



The central hallway with handmade chair in Beaconhill House





▲ The dining room in Beaconhill House



▲ A handmade chaise longue



▲ "My first attempt at a chandelier"

imagine most miniaturists would love to hold such skills! We asked how the process worked, "For most things, it usually starts with some research on Pinterest to find the life size version of what I want to recreate in miniature, like flowers or furniture. If I'm making a piece of furniture I'll then do a sketch to get some rough dimensions. I like working with basswood for furniture and I also use a lot of cardboard, cardboard is so versatile! A lot of the time I just faff with my piles of hoarded maybe-I'll-use-it-later bits until something happens, I prefer to have only vague plans and sort of make it up as I go. Oh, and superglue, absolute buckets of the stuff." [Peg](#)



"The cluttered desk echoes my own constant state of chaos"



The new new chateau roombox

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With an incredible number of makes to her name Chloe makes not only for herself but will also take on some commissions when time allows. Hard to image when the time is found for this as we marvel over the many many wonderful images sent to us to use as part of this interview. Where do they all end up? "I have moved with my dolls house six times to different places, it's had its own room twice and those times I barely looked at it, I like being in the middle of things rather than tucked away in a separate room, despite having to look at the mess all the time. Currently my house and craft stuff lives on my mahogany dining table (which I destroyed the top of a while ago when I spilt turps all over it.) It's never been used as a dining table and was doomed from the moment I proudly brought it home. It is set up in a corner of our living room and it's a bit of a squeeze between

the tv and the fireplace but it gets wonderful natural light. When I'm really pressed for space I spread out all over the floor too. It gets a little hectic sometimes as our current house is tiny!"

We're sure that by now you're as impressed as we are and thinking 'I could never do that!' "You always hear people say, oh that's amazing but I could never do that, but I believe anyone can make anything if you do some research and set your mind to it! Don't be afraid to ask fellow makers for advice, I've been overwhelmed with the support, kindness and creativity of others in the mini community on Instagram. Just have a go!

As we sat mesmerised at all the wonderful work struggling to decide what to include alongside this interview we thought we'd best help ourselves by discovering Chloe's favourite project, "Usually my favourite project is whatever I'm working on currently.

At the moment I'm building a chateau style roombox and I'm enjoying solving all the challenges it is throwing at me, I worked out a pretty good way to make a decorative 'plaster' ceiling with stencils and wood filler and a ceiling rose from polymer clay. I really enjoy making chandeliers too. But my Beaconhill will always have a special place in my heart, I've had it so long now. It's had several makeovers and its *almost* finished, which I never thought I'd say! I also have a stone cottage I halfway built and a grotty apartment roombox also unfinished... but as I'm sure all us creative types say, one day..." Whenever it's ready to be showcased to the world, we'll be waiting, ready to marvel! 🏠



INFO

To view more of Chloe's work visit

Instagram: [@homemadehermits](https://www.instagram.com/homemadehermits)

The entrance hall of Beaconhill with Chloe's first attempt at marquetry for the flooring





We discover: TANJA JENSEN

Find out more about the work of Tanja, who excels in miniature creations. The accuracy of these makes is simply incredible whether it be a household item, piece of food or model of a well-known actor!

How long have you been making miniatures and what first got you interested in the hobby?

If you had said to me, when I was a kid, that one day I'd spend the majority of my time making tiny replicas of real life objects with the focus on food, I probably would have given you a strange look. Not because it

doesn't sound like the coolest thing ever (it does), but because I didn't know it was a thing. I had no idea that there was an entire community of dollhouse collectors until 2011. The first time I can think of, that I was really introduced to the world of 1:12th scale miniatures, was that year. I came across some pictures of miniature food online. At that

time, I'd been making simple charms from polymer clay for a short while, but when I saw the little to-scale portions of food, something just clicked, in that little nugget of mine I call a brain, and I decided to have a go at it myself. I still keep a little box of my first miniatures from that year – just to be able to look back at where it all started and how my work has progressed. I'm not sure what it is about miniatures that seems to captivate people. There's something satisfying about recreating life in a small scale. [Read more](#)





“I've had a go at dolls, furniture, animals, ceramics, accessories and more but my main focus has always been food. Food has always been inspiring to me - I'm not sure why, I think it might be the emotions and memories you associate with it”



For me, I really enjoyed playing with dolls as a kid. I never had a dollhouse but would build an apartment for my dolls by stacking two desks on top of each other or having my bed propped up on bricks in each corner so I'd have more room for their 'living space' underneath. My favorite part was the little plastic food you could get! Setting up a dinner table or cooking scene. If it was summer time and my dad was getting the grill ready - my dolls would be grilling too. If it was Friday night and we were having pizza or McDonald's - my dolls would be having pizza or burgers as well. I would cut some of the hair off my "Betty Spaghetti" dolls to make pasta. Seeing the 1:12th scale pieces seemed like a better, more grown-up version than that.

What sort of miniatures do you make and why these in particular?

I'm too scatter brained and too inspired by everything around me to stick with just one thing so I've had a go at dolls, furniture, animals, ceramics, accessories and more but my main focus has always been the food. Food has always been inspiring to me – I'm not sure why. I think it might be the emotions and memories you associate with it. Where you were and who you were with in situations where particular dishes were served. Do I still enjoy it as much as I did in the beginning? Have I gotten even remotely tired of recreating the same types of food multiple times throughout the years? No. If anything, I am enjoying it so much more than I did back then. Part of that has to do with the progress I've made, but it most definitely also has to do with the fact that I'm less limited now. As an example; back in 2011 when I used to buy miniature ceramics off Ebay, it didn't take long for me to think "how cool would it be, if I could make ceramics myself?". At that time it seemed like a very unrealistic thought - I didn't have much knowledge when it came to that type of equipment, the only reference I had in my head of a kiln, was the big kilns they had in the 'art rooms' of schools. I was living in a small apartment, which I moved into with my boyfriend in the late summer of 2010, clearly not spacious enough for such a kiln, and I most definitely wouldn't have been able to pay for it either. The area I was sitting at the time, when working on my miniatures, was a desk in the corner of our living room. Fast forward to now; we still live in an apartment, but slightly larger, I have a craft room/studio to work in and I've since learnt that kilns come in much smaller sizes - which are not only a better option financially, but make a



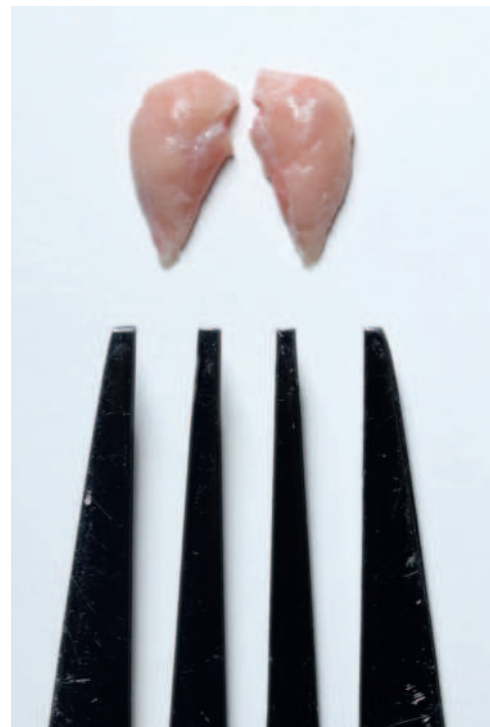
lot of sense for someone who only wants to fire miniatures. I now have the supplies and tools needed to work with wood, metal and other materials, which offer new possibilities. So if anything, I am loving what I do, more than ever before, and I am truly grateful that this is something I get to do.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

Everywhere! Take food, as an example; It can be something as simple as walking through the aisles of a store when going grocery shopping, or being out at a café or restaurant – you see something and you just have to make it. I'm also a big fan of any food related television show or movie and follow hundreds of food photographers and chefs on social media. We're constantly surrounded by the things we recreate in miniature scale, the hardest thing is picking and choosing what to make with the, with the way too few, hours in the day.

Tell us how you go about creating your work?

No matter what I create, I always begin by figuring out the size of that object – whether it'd be food, animal or a person. For food, I always try to measure the item in real life. With people, it's fairly easy to figure out the measurements by searching online or measuring yourself/others around you. And luckily for celebrities, if you want to make eg. an actor or a character as a doll, you can find 



“We’re constantly surrounded by the things we recreate in miniature scale, the hardest thing is picking and choosing what to make with the way too few hours in the day.”

Where do you make your miniatures?

Do you have a dedicated craft room?

Yes! My boyfriend was ever so kind to allow me to have the spare room in our apartment – I think for him, it was just a relief to get my stuff out of the way and out of sight. Previously, my setup had been a desk and a few storage units in the corner of our living room... now, I probably could use a larger room but I’m very happy with my little cave.

Do you have a top tip you would like to share with the readers?

My best tip, for making anything in miniature is; measure and use references. Study things with your eyes and take mental notes when you notice details or see something you particularly like about the subject. I keep all my measurements in a notebook and have TONS of pictures, which means I can usually skip the ‘research’ portion of the work.

What do you do with the miniatures you make?

I think I realised, in 2012, that it didn’t make sense to hold on to all of them and at the time I’d been sharing my work online and had received positive feedback. So together with a friend of mine, who was also making miniatures, we started looking for fairs within the borders of Denmark. I haven’t been to a fair since 2015 though, now I sell all my miniatures through my website.

Do you have a favourite project?

It’s so difficult for me to choose a favourite... mostly because you can’t truly compare the different categories. An apple, even if it looks really good, is not as difficult to create as one of the portrait dolls. And even within the same category, one object, effect or face can be easier to capture than others. But one of the pieces has to be my ‘Dame Maggie Smith as Mrs. Crawley’ miniature doll. I really enjoyed working on her and had fun with a lot of aspects of the process for that one including designing, printing and even dying the fabric for the dress to get a little closer compared to the materials I could find in shops! ➡



the height of most of them, by making a quick Google search. Next is finding references. Sometimes I might have the item in front of me, if we just happened to have it in the kitchen, but most of the time I’ll work from pictures. I’ll find good quality pictures that really show the true colors and textures – and different angles as well. The material I use for most of my work is polymer clay. I don’t think there’s a more versatile medium out there. And then, depending on what I’m making, I’ll add pastel, different types of paint, varnishes and other additional materials to achieve the look I want. I make my own ceramic tableware to use with my food to be able to get the size, color etc needed, and for animals and dolls I’ll add different types of fibers for the fur/hair and try to find a decent type of fabric for the clothes.



Dame Maggie Smith



Morgan Freeman



Tom Hanks



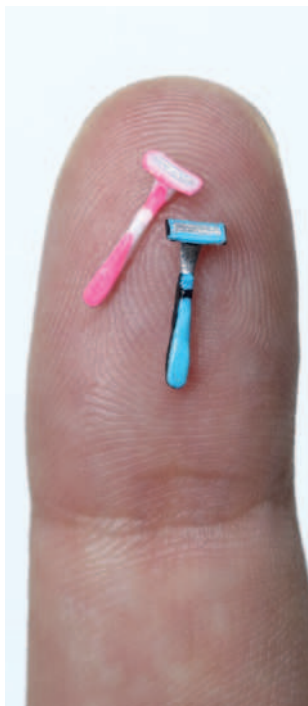
INFO

To view more of Tanja's work visit

Website: www.sugarcharmshop.dk

Instagram: [@sugarcharmshop](https://www.instagram.com/sugarcharmshop)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SugarCharmShop





Georgie's Arches kit as a interiors shop

Take Two!

Moi Ali looks at the what happens when two people have completely different ideas for the same kit!



Moi Ali's Arches kit as a pub

The minute I laid eyes on Dolls House Direct's 1/24th Arches kit, I just knew it had to be a pub. I'd been longing to do a traditional, slightly shabby public house complete with piano, dart board, cigarette machine and one-arm bandit. I saw in an instant that this kit was just the ticket. The look I was trying to achieve was basic – not quite spit and sawdust, but not far off. I wanted nicotine-stained walls and ceilings; grungy, dark colours and a slightly down-at-heel feel.

Georgie Steeds, the woman behind The Miniature Garden paper flower kits company,

(www.theminaturegardenkits.com), bought the same kit but took it down a totally different route. Think 'smart contemporary interior design shop' she explained, "I bought the Arches kit purely for the window. I loved the architectural element and the fact that it looked vaguely industrial. It reminded me of the newly converted railway arches at the Coal Drops Yard redevelopment in King's Cross, London. An interiors shop was something that had been at the back of my mind for a while. I've decorated lots of dolls houses before, but

always traditional Victorian or Edwardian. It was time to go modern."

When I saw Georgie's dolls house, I was struck by how different it was to mine. Her genius creative idea was to reverse the kit and put the window at the back. Why didn't I think of that? I asked her where the idea came from: "When you open a dolls house," she explained, "you are usually met with what is basically a roombox. I wanted to include that wonderful arched window in the interior. Another benefit of including the arched window at the back is



▲ Inside Georgie's interiors shop



▲ The exterior of Georgie's Arches kit



▲ Window slots to house new windows



▲ Paint sample pots



▲ Beautiful contemporary cushions



▲ The exterior of Moi's pub



▲ Inside Moi's pub



▲ Fruit machine



▲ Bar area



▲ Ash tray and beer

that it allows light to enter from the rear, which I really like. I was inspired by American dolls houses, which often have open backs. It's a lovely look, as the windows become part of the rooms, not just something you look through. As well as reversing the kit, I had a local wood supplies shop cut three inches off the depth of the kit so it would fit on a shelf. Space is very limited in my house! They also cut the holes for the long horizontal windows in the door panel. The windows are laser cut windows which I adapted and made frames for."

Work in progress

While Georgie steamed ahead with her Arches kit, I'm afraid mine has been on the back burner for rather too long. I've designed a shelving unit for the recessed area at the back of the bar, with cupboard space, a mirrored back and clear Perspex shelving for bottles and glasses. It's yet to make it off the drawing board so a bookcase is there to temporarily fill the gap. I've also drawn up plans for upholstered bench-style seating, but again no progress in terms of getting

anything made, so as a temporary measure I'm using cheap stools. It'll look great when it's finished, but heaven knows when that will be.

Like Georgie, I wanted to give this little two-room building character and dimension so it was less box-like, but I took a less unusual approach to her. I fell back on one of my old tricks: the illusion room. Basically you cut and join two walls in an 'L' shape formation to create the illusion of an entranceway to a room beyond. I placed mine in the corner to



conceal the hole in the floor/ceiling where the staircase should run.

The fruit machine was a cheap children's toy that looked too shiny and plasticky. I part-covered it with matt black Fablon to give it an older appearance, replaced the gaudy stickers with images taken from a vintage one-armed bandit, and made a stand from basswood covered in the black Fablon. Not bad for £4!

I bought the dart board ready-made but scratch-built the scoreboard and surround myself. I used a white gel pen for 'chalk' writing on the blackboard. The piano was a cheap white wood specimen, which I stained and waxed. The oversized pedals were chopped off (but I have yet to replace them with something more in-scale), then I printed out suitable sheet music and added that. While I worked on my pub accessories, Georgie was making more upmarket contents for her shop. "I made all the shelving and the wallpaper book table from strips of basswood, stained with watered down acrylic paint" she explained. "A lot of the contents were purchased, but I did make the yellow kitchen units on the door. Probably the things I am most proud of are the wallpaper sample books, again just card and paper. I used decorative papers from my stash and free downloads. The sample paint pots are lengths of dowel covered in foil from disposable baking trays with paper labels. The colours were punched from a paint colour card. The framed colour charts on the wall were made in the same way."

Exterior work

I was especially taken with Georgie's brickwork on the exterior. Mine is paperclay and it took forever to do. Georgie was far smarter, and used embossed card from Streets Ahead. "I loved the white weathering which I think gives it much more interest than just plain brick. The plain strips are card painted and the whole front was weathered using acrylic paint washes applied with brushes and a sponge. I did lots of research on industrial buildings to get the right look. It was then that I came across ghost signwriting, which seemed perfect for this project. To get the ghost writing on the building, I first practised on some spare brick paper, then I outlined the letters with school chalk which I knew I could remove easily. When satisfied with my work, I used a chalk pen and a couple of thin coats to get the desired effect."

Georgie wanted to create the sort of shop she would love to own in real life. "We have an interior's shop in my home town of Lewes," she told me. "It was a huge inspiration. Like mine, it's also called Freight!" Why did Georgie choose 'Freight', I wondered: "Because my shop is based on a converted railway arch and there would have been freight trains stopping to load and unload." Good choice – a bit edgy and hipster.

I'll be glad simply to get mine finished, but Georgie is already planning further improvements. "I'd like to add a roof terrace with modern slatted fencing and an outdoor barbeque kitchen. I have most of the materials but just need the time to do it!"

Georgie is a professional photographer specialising in gardens and still life with flowers which are sold worldwide to magazines, greetings cards and calendars. She told me how she got into miniatures. "The hobby started for me when I made my first dolls house from a kit 30 years ago. Of course, one wasn't enough! Anyone else know that feeling? So I made a florist's shop but couldn't find any plants to fill it so I made my own. I started selling to a few local shops and then did a very small local fair. Caroline Hamilton, the original organiser of The Kensington Dollshouse Festival, visited the fair and invited me to have a table at the show. That's how my business was born. I exhibited at the Festival and Miniatura for many years but with my move to Lewes I decided to concentrate on online sales. I was a collector for many years too, but my business took over and I stopped collecting and making dolls houses."

Georgie didn't stop at just one shop. "I have gone on to increase my miniature retail empire with a row of three small shops. Aside from the florist – and, of course, the



interiors shop – I have a coffee shop and a modern boutique."

"Lockdown reawakened the urge to create miniature worlds, especially of things I was missing in the real world. And although it has been a tough and horrible time for all of us, miniatures gave me an escape to a safe world where anything was possible. It took my mind off the scary things happening outside. So to me, Covid has been a time of creativity. I think a lot of people found it the same and hopefully long will the urge to create continue." Here here! 🏠

Learn how to create ultra-realistic paperclay bricks in the October 2020 edition! Digital and printed copies available at www.dollshouseandminiaturescene.co.uk



Stroopwafels!

Use polymer clay in this quick make project to create a delicious Dutch delicacy!

YOU WILL NEED

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- White and yellow polymer clay
- Yellow, orange and brown pastels
- Fimo Deko Gel

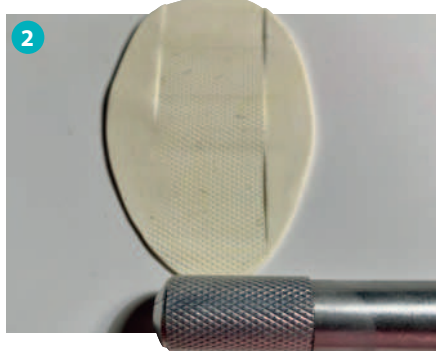
TOOLS REQUIRED

- Rolling pin
- Crosshatch section of a craft knife
- Small round cutter or pencil
- Paint brush
- Mixing tool
- Tweezers

Hailing from the city of Gouda, famous for its cheese, the Dutch stroopwafel was invented during the late 18th century by thrifty bakers wanting to use up scraps, crumbs and other leftovers. These biscuits, sweetened with cinnamon syrup, are now synonymous with the Netherlands and any trip to Holland is incomplete without sampling this tasty delicacy. This quick make can be completed in around the same length of time that it takes to boil a kettle and drink your tea break cuppa.



1 Mix a tiny amount of yellow clay into white clay and roll out to a thickness of 1mm.



2 Roll the crosshatch part of a tool, such as can be found on the handle of many craft knives, across the clay to create a waffle effect.



3 Cut rounds in the clay freehand or using a cutter. I used the metal top from a pencil, having removed the rubber first.



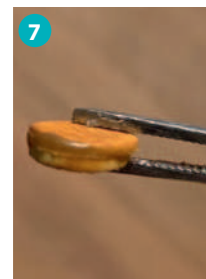
4 Brush golden yellow, orange and brown pastels across the waffles, building up the colour from light to dark so the biscuits have a baked appearance. Bake for ten minutes according to the manufacturer's instructions.



5 Mix Fimo Deko Gel with yellow and brown pastel to make a syrup.



6 Apply to syrup to half the quantity of waffles.



7 Sandwich two waffles together using the syrup as glue, letting it ooze out a little. Bake for a further ten minutes to finish. 🏠



HOBBY'S

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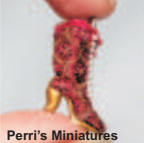
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- Houseworks oak flooring #7022
- Four legs (e.g. Houseworks #12016)
- Miniature casing, crown moulding, and baseboard
- Four porch spindles (e.g. Houseworks #1009)
- Two porch posts (e.g. Houseworks #7030)
- 1/16" (1.6mm) thick sheetwood
- 1/8" (3mm) by 1/4" (6mm) stripwood
- 1/4" (6mm) square stripwood
- 20-gauge brass wire
- 3/32" (2.4mm) diameter brass and aluminium tubing
- Screw-eyes to fit the brass tubing
- Brass 3/32" (2.4mm) crimp and 1/32" (6mm) disk beads
- Brass ball-head pins
- 2" (51mm) by 3" (76mm) and 1-1/8" (29mm) by 2-3/4" (70mm) clear mylar, e.g. from packaging
- Outdoor scene magazine cut-out
- Mattboard
- Shiny silver cardstock
- Metallic tin scrapbook paper
- Marble-effect paper
- Miniature wallpaper
- Miniature tap and knobs
- Miniature brass doorknob (e.g. Houseworks #1134)
- Silver eyelet
- Wood stains - Golden Oak, Red Mahogany
- Satin varnish
- White glue
- Superglue
- Glue-stick
- Wax adhesive
- Grey duct tape
- Transparent tape

TOOLS REQUIRED

- Small saw and mitre-box
- Knife and steel ruler
- Hacksaw
- Needle files
- Emery board
- Small hand drills
- Ball stylus
- Wooden cocktail stick

After making the pub bar and barstools last month, it's time to make the room around them take shape. We start with the warm stained oak floor and a mirrored back wall, with a welcoming door. We'll add a brass footrail to the bar, ale pumps, and a fridge to keep drinks cold. A back ledge includes a handy bar sink and there are even shelves above the ledge for stemware and additional libations.



Photos by Stephen Lesbirel

PREPARE KEGS, FLOOR, BACK WALL



1 Stain the two kegs to place under the bar and the oak flooring with Golden Oak stain. Mark the top and bottom of the kegs' raised bands and individual staves with pencil. Cut the thick foamcore the size of the flooring and edge glue the flooring to the foamcore. Cut a thinner foamcore wall, the length of the flooring and 10-1/2" (267mm) high. Paper the wall with 9-1/2" (241mm) high wallpaper pieces, 3/4" (19mm) above the bottom edge.

ALE PUMPS



2 Cut the pump-shaped portion from the four short legs (see template). Sand the top smooth and stain. Drill the top of each pump and insert a trimmed ball-head pin through a crimp bead for a fancy top. Cut and stain two pieces of sheetwood (see template). Glue the smaller piece centred on the larger one. Superglue four disk beads to this base. Superglue the four pump assemblies onto these beads. Varnish the pumps and base.

SPOUTS



3 Bend four pieces of brass wire as shown in the template. Drill the edge of a 1-5/8" (41mm) stained thicker stripwood piece to receive the wire and superglue the tubing into these holes. Superglue a crimp bead onto the end of each wire as a spout. Wax-adhere the pump base to the countertop over the kegs' shelf and glue the spout assembly to the underside of the counter aligned below it.

FRIDGE CASE

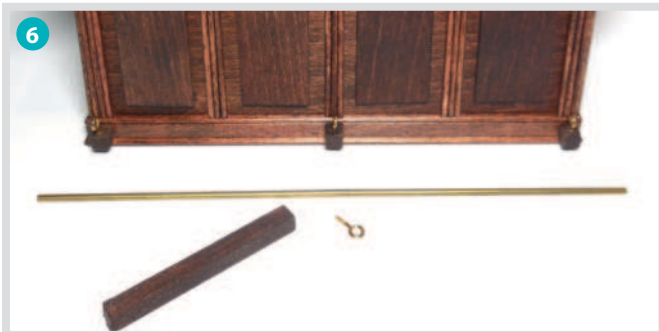


4 Cut the fridge template pieces from mattboard. Glue the shortest inside wall pieces to the sides aligned with the indentations. Glue the lowest inside walls a shelf thickness above the indentations and the top (shorter) inside walls even with the top edges. Glue the middle inside walls equally spaced between these two on both fridge sides. Glue the two sides to the back. Slide the shelves into the spaces and glue the kickplate to the front indentations. Glue the top on this case.

COMPLETE THE FRIDGE



5 Glue the smaller mylar piece centred on the back of the mattboard door frame. Hacksaw the aluminum tubing to length and bend the ends at right angles. Mark and drill the door handle locations on the frame. Hold the door frame over the front of the fridge case and duct-tape the hinge side onto the outside of the case. Cut and glue-stick the metallic paper onto the front of the door frame. Pierce the holes and snug-fit the handle into the door. Wax adhesive keeps the door shut.



BRASS FOOTRAIL

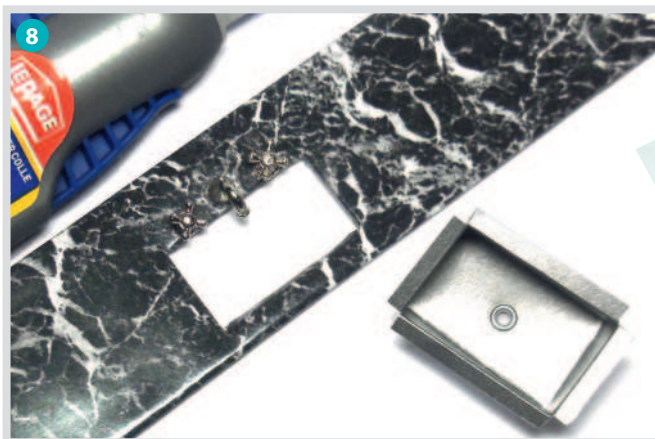
6 Cut three 1/4" (6mm) lengths of stained, varnished square stripwood. Drill holes and embed the screw-eyes in the centre of the end of each length. Glue the adjacent side near the top of the bar's baseboard, with one block centred and one near each end, and the eyes perpendicular to the bar. Hacksaw the brass tubing to 7-1/8" (181mm). Slide it through the eyes. Secure with a drop of superglue on the eyes under the tubing, if needed.

BACK LEDGE



7 Cut a 1-1/2" by 7" (38x178mm) and a 1-7/16" by 6-7/8" (37x175mm) mattboard ledge piece. Cut a 3/4" by 1-1/4" (19x32mm) hole in each piece, centred end-to-end and 9/16" (14mm) from the back edge. Glue-stick the mattboard pieces together with the cut-outs aligned. Cut marble-effect paper 1" (25mm) longer and wider than the ledge. Glue-stick the larger side of the ledge centred on the paper, smoothing it over the top. Mitre the corners and glue-stick the overlap to the underside, pressing the paper into the grooves with the ball stylus.

SINK



8 Make an X-cut in the marble paper, corner to diagonal corner, in the sink cut-out. Glue the folded tabs to the underside of the ledge. Cut the sink from metallic paper and score the folds with the ball stylus. Pierce the drain hole and glue in the eyelet. Fold, glue, and tape the side tabs, folding the top flanges outwards. Superglue the tap and handles behind the sink on the back ledge. Glue and tape the flanges onto the underside of the ledge, centred on the cut-out.

INSTALLING THE LEDGE

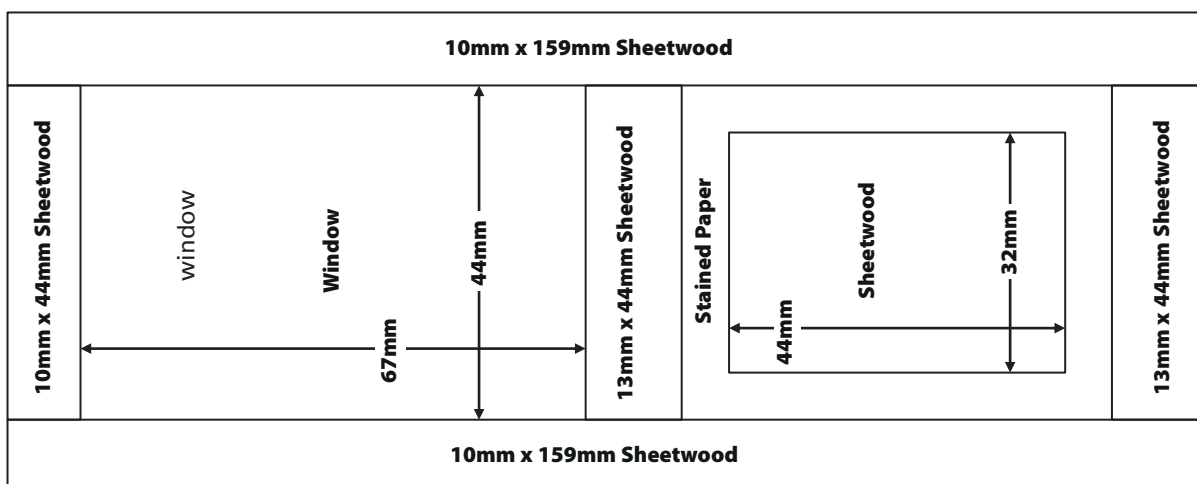


9 Stain two 2-1/2" (64mm) pieces of square stripwood and superglue them under the back edge of the ledge, at each end. Glue four stained, varnished spindles to their mitred square stripwood tops. Superglue them under the ledge's front edge. Glue the wall against the floor. Glue the ledge to the wall and floor.

DOOR



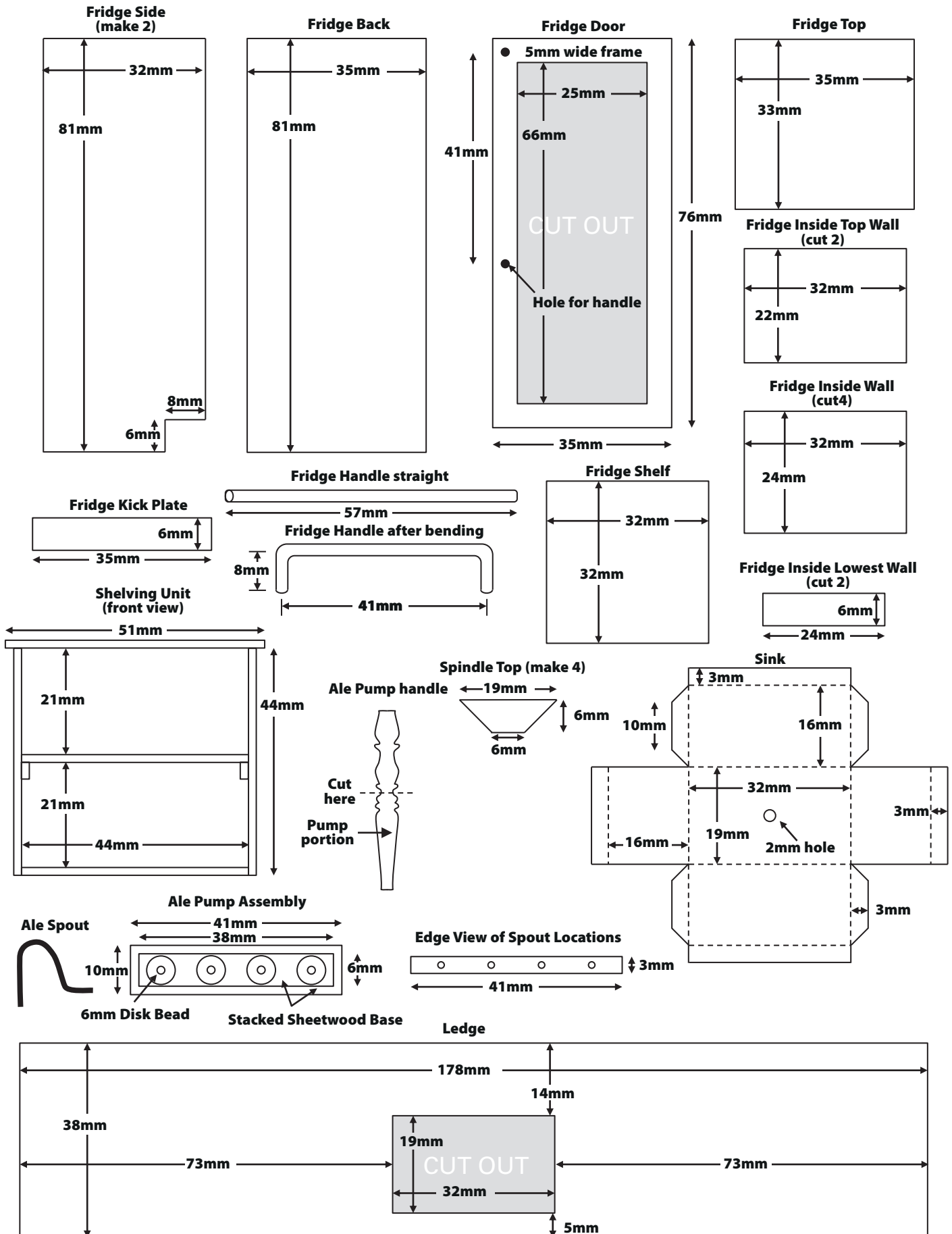
10 Mark your pub's name on the clear mylar door panel, using Sharpie pens. Edge glue the mylar over the outdoor scene, with the printing backwards, so it can be read from the "outside". Construct the door using 3/8" (10mm) wide sheetwood uprights and top, and 1/2" (13mm) wide mid and bottom strips, stained paper, and a sheetwood lower panel. Glue the door onto a thicker stripwood threshold and the mylar panel to the back. Frame with stained, varnished, mitred casing. Superglue the doorknob pieces to the door and casing. Glue this assembly to the wall. [P3](#)



PUB TEMPLATE PART 2

Patterns at 100%

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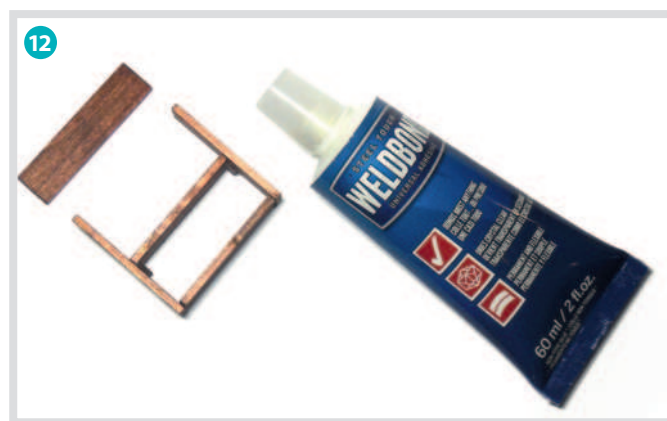


MIRROR



11 Cut a 5x7" (127x178mm) piece of shiny silver cardstock. Spot glue it to the wall above the ledge. Glue a stained, varnished thicker stripwood piece to the ledge, on edge against this mirror. Stain and varnish two porch posts and glue them to the wall on either side of the mirror and ledge. Mitre-cut, stain, and varnish crown moulding to fit between and over the columns. Glue it to the wall, over the top edge of the mirror.

SHELVING UNIT



12 Cut two uprights, the shelf, top, and bottom from 1/2" wide sheetwood strips. Cut two 1/8" by 1/2" (3x13mm) shelf supports. Assemble this shelving unit as shown in the template. Wax-adhere it to the ledge. 🏠

NEXT MONTH

Next month, it's quiz night and a darts competition, with table seating, a cozy fire, and much more!


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From Part Works to Palace

Cathy Naylor shares the trials and tribulations of putting together her kit house and making her dream a reality.



▼ The dollhouse exterior – The ill-fitting front panels are obvious in some places and it has to sit on garden kneelers but it shows what a nice idea it was of del Prado's



When I was eleven a friend of my mum's showed me her dollhouse that she had made from an old cupboard. I was fascinated by the miniature world inside and I wanted one of my own. My dream started to become a reality in the 1990s when del Prado published their dollhouse part works. This wasn't the cheapest option but I was living in lodgings at the time and I could store them in a box until I had the chance to start putting them together.

The pieces didn't fit

I started building it after I bought my house in 1998, but I was disappointed to find that the ply panels and joints weren't cut properly and didn't fit. The first attempt at the living room was so wobbly that I had to dismantle it and start again. Even when the house was complete there were still gaps between the floors, walls and ceilings and, although a little stronger, it was still very fragile.

To cover the gaps between the panels, I bought and painted ready-made coving and skirting boards for each room. I chose decorative ones for the sitting room and bedroom and plainer ones for the kitchen, hall, landing and bathroom. Unfortunately, one or two of the panels had split but even though the series I was collecting was finished, del Prado had re-issued it so I was able to replace them.

▼ The playroom – This is one of my favourite rooms. The varnished rocking horse was made recently.





The bedroom with its furniture. I bought the fireplace but the rest was provided by del Prado. The bedside table could do with a second varnish



▲ The living room with its wooden furniture

stronger magnets on the main panels to stop them from swinging open.

It is very much a work in progress. There is more furniture to be made. Ties need to be sewn to the curtains to keep them open. I also want to find a way of better securing the front door panel and the lights need to be connected to something that will make them work. On a smaller scale, the attic beds need covers. I have foam rubber to make mattresses for them so there's plenty to look forward to in the future as well as adding new things for the family of five dolls (a nanny for the children is to come at a later date) and moving things around. Mum's friend made food out of flour and water paste, if I remember correctly, baked them in an oven and painted them. That is something I am planning to try.

Despite all the problems, my dream has come true and I believe my dolls have a little palace! 🏠

Not nimble fingered

I'm not nimble-fingered and many of the jobs were fiddly. It was particularly difficult putting the hinges on the doors using tiny tacks. Many of these got dropped and some were lost completely. Two legs broke off one of the armchairs so I had to stick them back on using match sticks as reinforcements. The front door panel is held on only by the magnets that keep it shut as I haven't been able to make the hinges stay on. There is little room for holding screws. The wire broke off on the sitting room ceiling light. I have left the shade up but made holes in the back panel and fitted working wall lights on either side of the fireplace. I have made other alterations. Lighting was not provided for the attic rooms so I have added them hiding their wires underneath the roof tiles. I bought rings and rails for the curtains so they open and shut. They fitted well under the provided pelmets. I added a kabab stick for a coat hanger rail in the wardrobe. Light switches and door hooks have been put in every room.

Period piece

The theme of the house could have been anything from the 1890s to the 1950s and I have chosen the latter period. The older furnishings and décor provided with the part-works fit well with the technology of the period. The kitchen has a range and a dresser but room for a retro-fridge and there is a 1950s television in the living room. The attic nursery is filled with toys from the period and the dolls that occupy it wear clothes as close

to the 1950s as I could buy. Every year the house is decorated for Christmas in a way that a family in those days would have done it.

It is still very flimsy and now, even after twenty years, I come across something that needs repairing. I'm not sure it would survive being moved. It bows slightly in the middle so it sits on three garden kneelers for extra support. The roof has to be lifted in order to open the bedroom panel beneath. I have put

▼ The kitchen in action with a meal being prepared by the lady of the house



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Each kit contains everything you need except the glue. Simply snip out the labels and paste them to the assembled bottles which are quickly made by gluing the stoppers to the bead bottles using a supplied pin. The whole lot shown here can be made in an hour. 🏠

THE FACTS

Buy from: Valerie Claire Miniatures
(www.valerieclaireminiatures.com)

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Comes with: All components, including bottles, stoppers and labels

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Experience: Complete beginner

Top tip: Tacky wax is great for holding the bottles in place in your dolls house.



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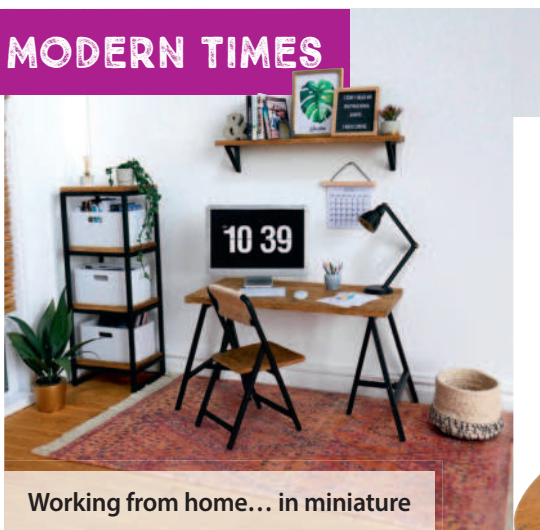
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