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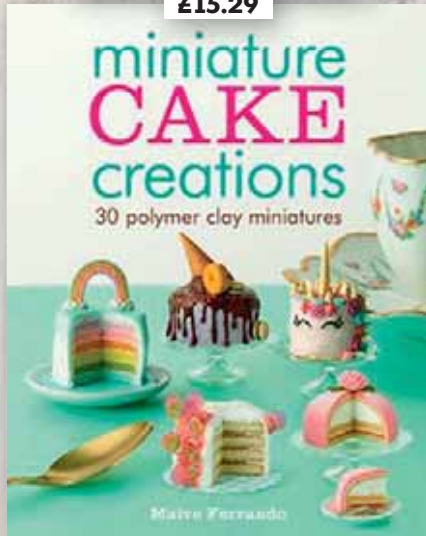


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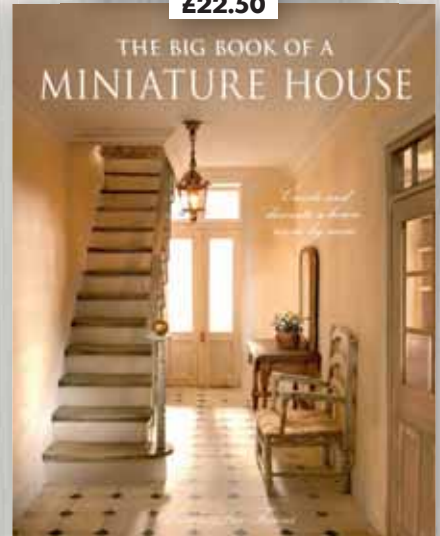
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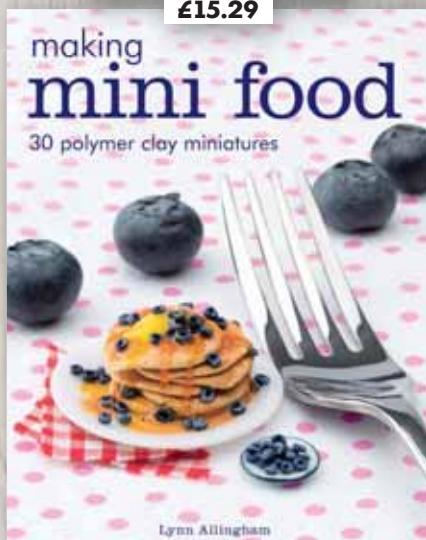
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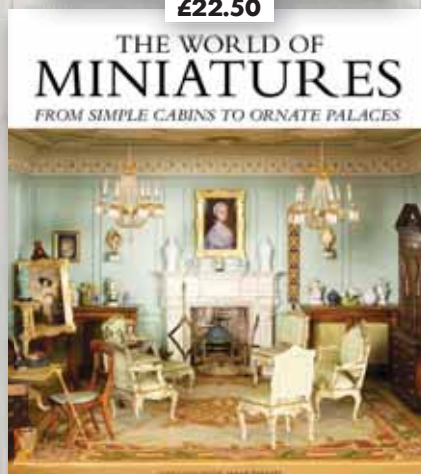
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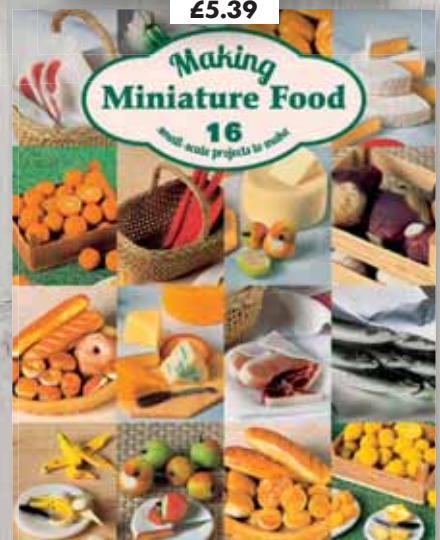
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WELCOME to the August edition!

Join us for a trip around the world this issue, as we discover far away lands and delve deeper into those close by too... we can dream about travelling, right?! Eleanor Catalina Stevens details her favourite miniature villages around the world on page 31, whereas Moi Ali keeps things closer to home with her tour of the Victoria and Albert Museum of Childhood. Project-wise, take a look at Moi's Moroccan inspired doorway on page 26 which ends with a complimentary spice basket quick make to complete your scene.

Elsewhere, Candy Chappill completes her greenhouse project in part 8 of the series – have you been building your scene each issue or waiting until the end to put it all together?! We'd love to see your work so do email it in!

We continue to discover the latest social media talents, interview inspirational artisans and plenty of prizes to be won. We hope you enjoy this fascinating issue!

Happy crafting!

The DHMS team

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

Darren Scala, Sadie Brown,
Candy Chappill, Moi Ali,
Bea Broadwood &
Eleanor Catalina Stevens.



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IDYLIC MINIATURES



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Discover a new world

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS



P22

Marvel at these minis

THE BEST TINY VILLAGES...



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around the world



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The closing date for all entries is
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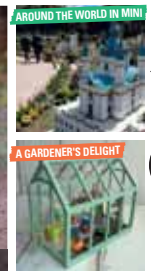
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5 reasons
to never miss
an issue!

REMIND YOURSELF WHY
WE'RE THE BEST ON PAGE 18



The Fisher Dollhouse: A Venetian Palazzo in miniature



Darren Scala was dazzled recently visiting the Museum of Arts and Design at Columbus Circle in New York City to see their new exhibition *The Fisher Dollhouse: A Venetian Palazzo*. Let's find out more...



The Fisher Dollhouse was created with a grand vision in mind by Ms. Joanna Fisher, an interior designer, patron of the arts and miniatures collector. Fisher's childhood fascination with tiny things began when growing up in Westchester County (just north of New York City). She was inspired at an early age by a family friend who had decorative room boxes filled with miniatures set up on walls throughout her home.

Caught up in the Covid-19 crisis, Ms. Fisher struggled like so many of us to ease anxieties and find comfort in the unpredictable pandemic that engulfed the planet. Per a recent article for the *New York Social Diary*, she declared "...I suppose it's the nature of the times in that people are looking for something safe and warm and cosy. It's been a very special project for me which has taken on a life of its own, something I never expected. For me, the

dolls house was really my saviour. It gave me tremendous solace."

Fisher set out on an ambitious effort to curate a "House Within," as she calls it, "... a place people can go in their minds..." Her vision was manifested in a stunning 4-story dolls house with 10 rooms inspired by Palazzo Chupi, a grand private residence known for its wild colour, modern art and stylish design located in New York's Greenwich Village. Her first step was to create the structure by commissioning the British set designer Holly Jo Beck to build the front-opening dolls house cabinet measuring over 5 foot high and 14in deep.

The glamorous and colourful dolls house is filled with an eclectic mix of European and American antique and contemporary 1/12th scale miniatures. Some pieces included were crafted by makers well-known to miniatures enthusiasts and include a Hepplewhite Desk

by Bespaq, a Sonia Messer sink cabinet, silver by Pete Acquisto and metal pieces by Fred Cobbs. Most of the work was commissioned by Ms. Fisher with well-known full-size artists and friends, either reproductions of previous full-scale works or original works crafted specifically for the dolls house. One can't help compare Fisher as the modern version of Carrie Stettheimer who created *The Stettheimer* on permanent view at the Museum of the City of New York.

The dolls house contains a dramatic centre grand foyer accented by a double staircase and featuring a Murano-inspired glass chandelier made by Madrid-based artists Mario Ramos and Mariana Grande. The hierophant sitting atop a cast resin column crafted by Dustin Yeller takes centre stage on the landing. Each of the rooms are beautifully decorated and appointed with swoon-worthy miniatures



such as hand-blown coloured glass lighting fixtures, carved framed painted portraits, hardwood cabinets, upholstered furniture with fine textiles, needlepoint carpets, furry rugs, vintage hammered copper and readable books. Some of the more extraordinary pieces comprise a lovely painted harpsichord, a display cabinet filled with ammonites from the Mesozoic age and a Milanese wood-fired stove.

The Fisher Dollhouse by Joanna Fisher is a wonderful example of original art, architecture and design in small scale with a fantastical mix of whimsy and charm with an added explosion of beguiling colour coming together in dazzling perfection. There are plans to take this dolls house exhibition 'on the road' to additional museums in the United States and Europe. Check my website at www.dthomasfineminiatures.com for details on a special Meet the Miniaturist livestream event (keep a look out for the date) when viewers will be treated to a live virtual tour and a close up look at the dolls house and exhibition by museum curators and a scheduled appearance by Joanna Fisher! 🏠



INFORMATION

Photos by
Jenna Bascom Courtesy of Museum of Arts
and Design



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Village life

Discover the world of Happy Village with Evi, the talented creator behind these magical miniatures.

Relax by the shore with Evi's beach huts



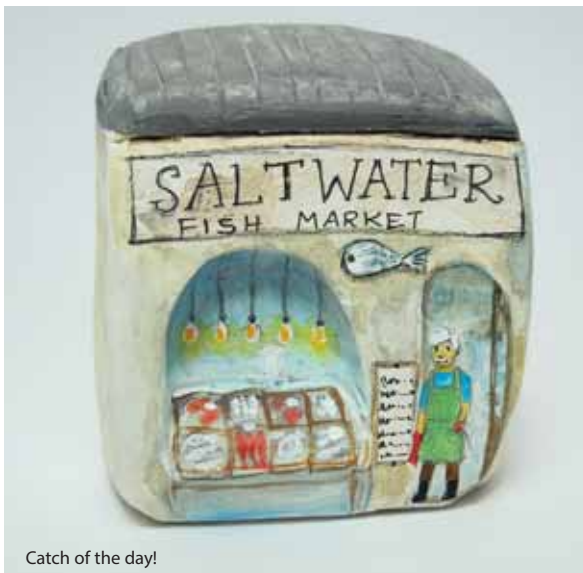
Keep digging those dreams

Idyllic country cottages, seaside retreats and a wide expanse of whimsical buildings, including those inspired by some of our finest literature and favourite times of the year. Handmade from clay and mere centimetres in height, Happy Village is a place built on dreams and thanks to Evi, the architect and talented miniaturist behind these exquisitely hand painted buildings, it's a world we can all inhabit and claim a piece of for our very own.

Evi has been long inspired by her beloved father's creative skill and it's clear that her own artistic flair was in the genes. "My sweet dad was always very arty about everything. He was a fine tailor for big shop brands forty years ago, but he always loved to draw and create. I remember starting to play with clay in my teens for school projects and I spontaneously started making cosy houses." It was an enduring love for this form of creativity which finally saw Evi bring her

exceptional miniature art to the world in 2012, opening her now popular Etsy store.

However, whilst many of us only find a single career path we are passionate about in the course of a lifetime, Evi has been fortunate enough to discover two, having led a fascinating career as an archaeological draughtswoman for many years. This was something which afforded her the enviable opportunity of using her artistic talents to record the indelible mark of history. ▶



Catch of the day!



The intricately sculpted detail of Evi's models can be seen in the doors and windows



This tiny diorama tells a fishy tale



▲ Shabby chic dresser

"I first began to work as an archaeological draughtswoman in my twenties," she explains. "It was the most fascinating job I could imagine! You could never be bored! I remember waking up very early in the morning with a smile on my face, wondering what ancient 'secrets' would be revealed each day and feeling so 'privileged' and proud to be a part of each archaeological team." Evi stresses just how much she learnt from the

archaeologists, topographers and university professors she worked alongside during her years as a draughtswoman and the influence they have had on her current artwork, teaching her the importance of never giving up on those all-important dreams.

Whilst miniaturists' favourite, polymer clay, has its place on

Evi's worktable from time to time, air dry clay is her material of choice, enjoying the ceramic style finish it provides for her finished designs, which are each completed with a sheen of satin varnish. She has very much developed her own signature artistic style and has been able to source copious inspiration from her travels and all the fun of the road trip. "I think there's nothing more



The wonderfully titled 'Alfie's first vacation by the sea'



Time to dig out those bucket and spades at the Beach Shop



A taste of gelato in small scale



Rural life

invigorating for an artist than to fill their head with new images, sounds, smells and experiences. Plus, I had the most amazing, carefree and joyful childhood with my beloved sister and cousins in our own happy village," reflects Evi, going on to describe the many idyllic outdoor family lunches they all enjoyed together. "I've had a very tender and vivid idea of the 'home sweet home' concept in my head since then."

Summer by the sea

Evi's Greek homeland is a country bursting with incredible architecture, a resource just waiting to be mined in miniature, but has our intrepid artisan ever been inspired to recreate some of this and give that immersive sense of history that magical Happy Village twist? "I haven't ever made a miniature Greek house, isn't it weird?" she ponders. "But since some of my dear customers have also suggested this, I will definitely try to make some beautiful, Greek island houses in the future!"

However, being surrounded by the ocean has already proved a source of inspiration for Evi's evocative and diverse seaside designs. "If you live in sunny Greece, there's no way that you won't be inspired by the sea, the summer breeze, the delicious food and the beautiful surroundings." She tells me, adding just how lucky she feels to be surrounded by the beauty of the coastline. This summertime range also takes inspiration from some of our traditional

"I feel truly happy and proud of myself each time I finish something tiny, especially if my lovely customers appreciate my work and purchase it. It means the world to me and gives me motivation to make more and different styles!"



Enjoying life down on the farm



▲ The Rose Garden Cottage shares the spotlight

British seaside favourites. There is even a fishy tale or two to be told. Standing at just 4cm in height, Evi's Saltwater Fish Market depicts the building's interior through a sculpted alcove which has then been carefully hand painted to include the catch of the day, providing the piece with a multi-faceted depth. This level of intricacy can be seen again in the tiny carved inset windows and doors of her fish and chip shop, a fabulous design. Exploring the coastal theme further are a range of lighthouses and beach huts. Evi's most recent beach huts, also just 4cm tall, are captivating, offering a glimpse of golden sands and azure blue waters, adding more than a glimmer of sunshine. You can almost see yourself sitting on the striped deckchair listening to the sound of the waves lapping at the shoreline.

▼ Going sailing



A brush with detail

Whether it's the miniscule bucket and spade outside the Beach Shop or chickens in the garden of a rural cottage, the sheer depth of detail Evi manages to incorporate into her miniature designs is incredible, but just how difficult is it to get those



fine details just right when painting such miniscule designs by hand? "It is pretty difficult! Sometimes I need several days to finish a miniature with lots of details plus I have to hold my breath many times to make sure my hand is totally steady!" Evi admits. She does, though, find working in such small scale extremely rewarding and there is no doubting the delight she takes in each new work.

The Happy Village range already includes many different styles and with miniaturists' attention already edging ahead towards this year's autumnal themes, there will no doubt be many exciting pieces to come from

Evi throughout the coming season. Her Halloween and Christmas ranges are both enchanting. My attention is also caught by a pale blue shabby chic cabinet, alive with rustic charm and so, so tiny. When asked if miniature furniture is an aspect of her work she would be keen to expand on, Evi is immediately bursting with the enthusiasm which radiates from her art. Indeed, this new range has already expanded to include a stove and sink!

There are evidently exciting times ahead and whilst balancing her inspirational artwork with the demands of family life, Evi also holds ambitions to begin taking pottery classes in the future, further advancing her creative repertoire as an exciting artist. But there is clearly only one place where her creative heart has found its home, and that is the happiest village in small scale. 🏡



INFO

For further information please visit:

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

website: happyvillage.etsy.com

All photographs provided with kind permission of Evi at Happy Village.

LIVE SHOWS ARE BACK!

Return to the real world this September at Kensington Town Hall. We have created a very special show for 2021 to welcome back all our craftsmen & visitors to our LIVE shows. Come see many of your favourite makers, along with some new faces. The full list of exhibitors is growing every week, so please use the 'Exhibiting in' search on **THE LIST** page on our website to see who is booked in already.

After the tough 2 years we have had, it is so important to support our tiny world. It is a big step for us & all our talented craftsmen to return to Kensington & we really hope you will be there to celebrate with us.

Perfection in Miniature Awards 2021

We will also be hosting the PIMA again. Now in its 6th year, this is your chance to see all the incredible entries in this prestigious competition & you can even vote for your favourite entry.

Covid rules

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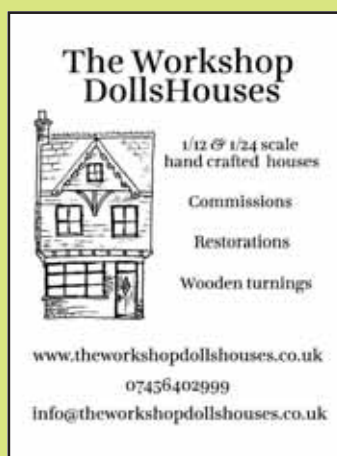
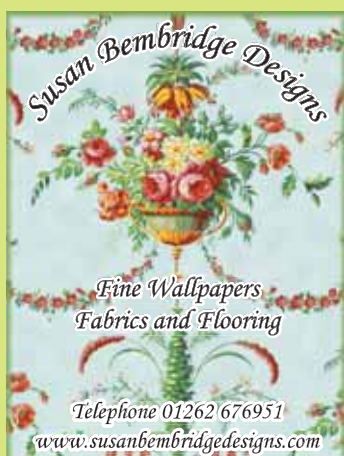
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▼ *Laura Reid*



▲ Coffin makers corner



▲ Caught in the act!

Instagram Identities:

IRINA BORISOVA

Moi Ali finds out about a psychologist who turned to miniatures for a creative outlet...

I warned Laura Reid the minute she said: "I always have a million creative projects on the go at one time... half-finished knitting projects, crochet and tapestry cushions all dotted around the house. I generally can't sit still and am always 'creating'." I thought to myself yes, that's me too. So many readers will identify with Laura's approach to starting everything and finishing nothing!

Of course, it would be hugely unfair to suggest that Laura finishes nothing as she

has actually finished so many wonderful little objects. Beautiful furniture, stained glass, fabrics and carpets... she is prolific – and talented with it!

Laura, from Farnham in Surrey, has an Instagram page, [instagram.com/smaller_than.life](https://www.instagram.com/smaller_than.life). She has always loved small things, "I don't really remember a time when I wasn't fascinated by miniatures," she told me. "I remember when I was very young being shown a real dolls house with lighting and

lovely furniture. Not a plaything at all. I was absolutely mesmerised by it (and annoyed at being told not to touch!). Then I visited Queen Mary's dolls house at Windsor Castle – quite a few times! I would stand there for ages, my face up to the glass, taking in every detail."

Despite Laura's love of all things small, it was only when she had a daughter of her own that she really got into making miniatures: "My daughter was about four. Now she's 18! I decided to make her a dolls house from a kit. When I gave it to her for her birthday, it was almost taller than she was! From that moment on, I was hooked. My daughter played with it until she was about



Light streams into the living room



▲ William Morris chair by an arts and crafts fireplace



▲ A 'lived in' kitchen

nine and it now belongs to my five-year-old niece who loves it to bits."

She continued: "Why do I love miniatures? I always joke that working with small things makes me feel big and important! The truth is that recreating life in miniature has such a beautiful appeal. There is always a moment of realisation when someone looks at a piece and then comprehends that the scale is tiny. It's almost like the brain is expecting it to be real size and then has to take the leap."

Laura rightly identified why so many of us build in miniature: "It might be quite common for miniaturists to build houses that they aspire to live in. In my case that is a small Tudor

cottage with a wonky roof and a large stone fireplace. Also, a country kitchen with a big AGA oven and original stone tiled floor. I discovered I really like paper clay and was able to really go to town with the stone work on the outside. A few glasses of wine one night and the roof tiles were naturally wonky – perfect!"

I've noticed that quite a few miniaturists have a fascination with dark subject matters – graveyards, murder scenes and the like! Laura's current project is no different, as she explained: "I decided to go with a Victorian funeral home where the undertaker and his wife live upstairs. In the parlour, the deceased is laid out in his coffin, awaiting his family for

the wake. My challenge with the dead guy was that, as with all purchased dolls, he had a huge smile on his face, which I managed to hide with a big beard!" She continued: "I am working on the street scene outside, where the funeral carriage and horses stand."

She also made a rather macabre 'book nook' – a re-creation of a Jack the Ripper alleyway in London: "It's very dark and spooky and the legs of the latest victim are just visible in the back. I'm still waiting to be allowed to invite someone to my house who might be perusing the book shelf and notice the magical scene nestled between the books – but after lockdown, I guess!" 



▲ Liberty style bookcase

“It’s not only taking pleasure in the finished piece, but having passion for the process and journey of making it.”



Funeral parlour



▲ The bedroom has a beamed ceiling

My favourites amongst Laura's recreations are her Arts and Crafts movement pieces: "I have always had a passion for the Arts and Crafts movement from the late Victorian and Edwardian eras. I realised that dolls house furniture for sale tends to be Tudor, Regency, traditional Victorian or modern. If I wanted Arts and Crafts pieces, I was going to have to make my own," explained Laura. "Since then, I have really enjoyed creating Charles Rohlf's, Philip Webb, John Henry Dearle and William Morris inspired furniture, curtains, textiles and wallpaper."

She continued: "I never started out with a desire to make my own furniture but it has become my main passion. Appropriately, the Arts and Crafts movement rejected mass-produced objects and celebrated the joy and skill of making and creating."

Her favourite pieces so far are her William Morris reclining chairs. "I don't think I understood the challenge of making two items exactly the same," she explained. "Also, the mechanism for the recline was more difficult than I anticipated. My second favourite is the Charles Rohlf's chair. It swivels 360 degrees and the leather seating pad was really fun."

Laura continued: "I was really struggling to find well priced Arts and Crafts patterned wallpaper so I now print all my wallpaper myself, although it needs to be sealed with spray-on glue. Even though the sheets are A4, it's always easy to hide a seam with a few pictures or a piece of furniture! The Victoria and Albert Museum's website is a wonderful resource, with free downloads of many perfectly coloured original patterns."

Like many a miniaturist, Laura finds materials for her miniature projects all around her: "I find all sorts of tiny bits in hardware stores that I can re-use in my furniture pieces... nuts and bolts, tape, hooks and so on. On country walks I grab twigs (for tiny firewood) and moss (which makes amazing trees and bushes). I see miniature potential in so many things."

I asked Laura about her creative workspace: "I was struggling to find space in the house. I took over the conservatory for about a year but, since it is open to the living room, all my mess was shockingly visible. Taking advantage of my husband's carpentry skills, we built a garden office/art room. It is a gorgeous, warm, quiet, private place and I get to make all the mess I want. My commute is now ten steps

from the house. I put on some music and can lose an entire day in there. I also get to look out of the big windows at the garden and all the weeding that needs to be done!"

Despite having nothing more than an A Level in art, Laura's work is top quality but she still aspires to even better creations: "I'd really like to take some of the IGMA courses to take my skills up to the next level," she said. "There's so much to learn in miniatures. I'd like to try silversmithing or tiny glass blowing. Over the last few years, my husband has given me a complete set of miniature woodworking tools, a lathe, a scroll saw, a table saw and other tools. His hobby is life-sized woodworking and I have learned so much from watching his techniques and then adapting them for miniature."

Looking to the future, Laura told me: "My next house will definitely be a custom build. I am planning to recreate in room box form the drawing room from the Red House, William Morris' own Arts and Crafts house in Bexleyheath designed by Philip Webb. I'd love to recreate the entire house, but it would take up half of my own!"

I felt sure there would be a great market for her beautiful pieces, but Laura confessed that she creates minis for herself alone: "I don't sell anything. For me I think it would take the fun out of it. Also, I have trouble letting my pieces go! Eventually, I will run out of space, I'm sure. My full-time career is in IT, so my creative pursuits are always in my spare time. I am loving lockdown as I get all my commute time back – an extra three hours a day!"

Laura told me: "I'd like to exhibit my work eventually, so maybe when we're all allowed out again and the shows begin, I will start." I sincerely hope that you do, Laura, because we'd all love to see your work in person!

You can find Laura on Instagram at [instagram.com/smaller.than.life](https://www.instagram.com/smaller.than.life) 🏠



5 reasons to never



© Moi Ali

1. Great quick make projects using basic materials for maximum effect!



© Joanne Pittaras

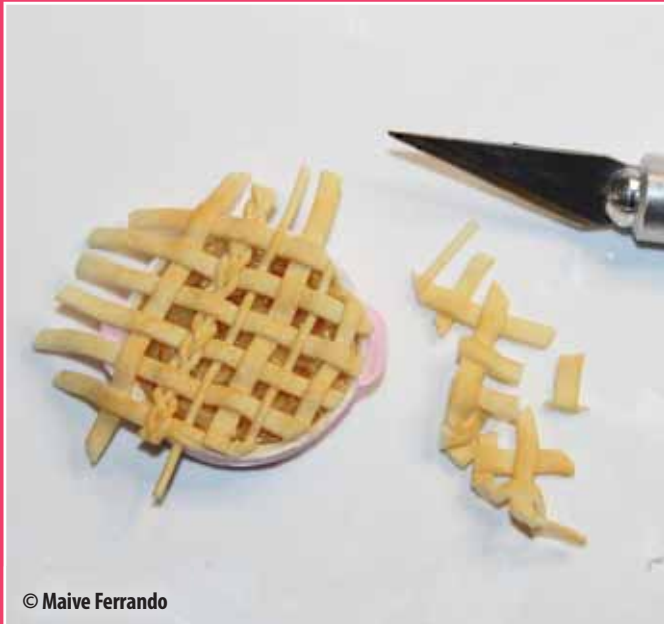
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PLUS

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Gardener's delight...

In the final part of this series, Candy Chappill adds the finishing touch, the gardener's wellies!

PART
8

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MATERIALS REQUIRED

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- Sellotape
- Baking paper
- Sand paper
- Small pebble
- Tin foil
- Paints

TOOLS REQUIRED

- Roller
- 1mm spacers
- 10mm wooden dowel
- Scalpel
- Spoons (optional)
- Paintbrush



1 Roll out some polymer clay measuring 1mm thick.



2 Using some sellotape, wrap some baking paper around a 10mm piece of wooden dowel.



3 Carefully wrap your rolled out clay around your paper-covered dowel. Using a scalpel, create a nice neat join and smooth with your finger for a good seal. Once happy, bake. I baked mine over some spoon handles to raise it up so I didn't get a flat spot on the polymer clay.



4 Once cool, trim your tube into two 3.5cm lengths and sand the edges.



5 Wrap a small pebble in some tin foil. This will be to form the foot of you boot, so try and find a nice foot shaped pebble.



6 Roll out some more polymer clay to 1mm thick and wrap it around the pebble. Use a scalpel to trim the edges and smooth over with your fingers. Once happy, bake.



7 Once cooled, sand the bottom of the foot section nice and flat, and trim so it loosely fits against your tube to form a boot shape.



8 Using some more polymer clay, join the two pieces together. This bit can be quite tricky, so be patient. When happy, bake.



9 Once cooled, sand and refine. You may need to repeat steps 8 and 9 until you are 100% happy.



10 Once you are happy and your final pair of wellies have had their final bake and cooled, paint using whichever colours you like. I added some mud to mine using some brown paint. 🏠

Voila! Your garden scene is complete! Missed the previous issues? Don't worry, visit www.dollshouseandminiaturescene.co.uk



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DollsHouse & MINIATURE SCENE

We're excited to announce we're working with regular Dolls House & Miniature Scene contributor, *Moi Ali*, on a series of live presentations!

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Webinars

An A-Z of tips and techniques for new and experienced miniaturists
Thursday 12th August 3pm

An introduction to the dolls house hobby
Thursday 9th September 3pm

Around the world in 80 minutes
Thursday 14th October 3pm



▲ This atmospheric alcove sets the scene with oodles of inspiration

A Recipe for Success

Finding fame in miniature with artisan, Carol Cook.

15 minutes of fame

Famous for her appearance on BBC early evening favourite, *The One Show*, alongside celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, artisan Carol Cook's miniature polymer clay

food has reached a vast audience easily engaged by her true to life artwork. "Initially I was contacted to create food in relation to Jamie's book, which one of the team had made a jest about the minute as an increment of time becoming minute as in measurement. So, their idea was for me to create 15 'minute' meals as in tiny, to accompany his book *15 Minute Meals*." Carol recalls the timescale involved being almost as small as the miniatures themselves, having under three weeks to bring Jamie's recipes to life in small scale. "They sent me a copy of the book straight away and I chose 15 of the meals that looked 'do-able' in the time allotted, plus platters and boards that I had that could be almost matched to the meals chosen.

The week before I think it was, they then asked if I would appear on the show! I was so busy trying to get everything perfect with the miniature meals and get them there on time for the show, I didn't really have time to think about it, so said yes, I'd appear. It was a fantastic experience and well worth the nail biting mini race to the finish."



▲ Playing gooseberry!



▲ A bounty of fresh produce

Carol's mini fruit is a real favourite



Get out of a jam in the mini kitchen with Carol's jars!



Georgian boots

Getting Christmas dinner home on time.
Carol's Ocado commission

The One Show hasn't proved to be Carol's only brush with prime-time television stardom. She also created finely crafted miniature pastries for the BBC drama *The Miniaturist*. Carol was approached to work on the project by Kevin Mulvany and Susie Rogers, the acclaimed miniaturists assigned with putting together the collection of incredible miniatures required for the programme, based on the novel by author, Jessie Burton. But, if Carol had thought her previous timescale for recreating Jamie Oliver's 15 Minute Meals in miniature was a challenge, then this project was about to provide her with an even bigger one. "Originally, I created historically accurate food of the era. However, the BBC decided to bring a food stylist on board to create the 'real' food that would be used in life-size for the drama. They also decided they wanted this food to be replicated in miniature," explains Carol. This left her just ten days to start the project entirely



▲ There's a mouse in the pantry!

from scratch, but she thinks it was a choice the programme's makers were wise to make. "When you see the food used in the drama and that it was replicated in miniature, you understand their last-minute decision, nothing else would've looked 'right', it just added to the detail. Wonderful experience."

Delivering on detail

In another high-profile credit, Carol found herself working with Ocado on a very special project designed to promote not only their upcoming festive delivery slots, but the arrival of their very own miniature diecast delivery van by Corgi. "The Ocado project was so tiny," she recalls. "The little toy van they launched was just 1/43rd scale, so we settled for 1/48th food to complement it. I made the teensy

totes the mini food was 'delivered' in too! Each complete with the tiny Ocado logo I made as transfers. The carrier bags, they wanted me to create from the existing life size bags used upon delivering, that was a task! But well worth the effort, as they looked amazing. We all met at Bekonscot for the photos. Truly wonderful thing to have taken part in." Carol filled the tiny crates with everything you could ever want or need for the perfect Christmas dinner, including tiny crackers, ham, turkey, Brussel sprouts and mince pies. There's even a game of Cluedo to while away the hours after the festive meal.

With a portfolio channelling favourite foods and recipes from down the centuries, including medieval and Tudor, the fruit basket remains a timeless classic that never goes out of style. It's also sits amongst Carol's own favourites and she explains how a single bunch of grapes can incorporate around two hundred handmade fruits. "Each grape individually made, its mind boggling and soooooo worth all the effort. I will always love the humble apple and get a great kick from my finished speckled effect varieties. I have new speckled cherries to crate up soon, they are lovely if I do say so myself," she teases. "The seafood crates and little displays are probably my favourite though. Lobsters are extremely fiddly to make, but very popular, as are the



▲ A Tudor spread

crabs and king scallops. Oh, and the jars! I make them from scratch, ever popular and I love them!" Perfect for summer, the scallops Carol references hold an astounding level of detail and their beautifully, finely crafted shells are a testament to her skill as one of the finest miniature food artisans.

In fact, this year sees Carol mark the momentous milestone of 25 years since she first began creating miniatures back in 1996. But what does she feel has been the biggest change seen by the world of small scale during that time? "Speaking for the UK, as I didn't realise how big the hobby was in the US until 2007-8; it's got to be the sheer amount of high quality and diverse miniatures that are freely available here at this point in time. Especially the quality, it's astonishing!" she says. "My own miniatures are so very different to the ones I originally made; and quite a few familiar faces amongst the miniaturists from when I began have travelled the same journey towards extreme perfection. The detailing is just mind blowing when you take a walk around the live shows and view with the naked eye. Many of us put detail in that is only visible under a magnifying glass, that's how mini OCD we have become. Unbelievable."

Traditional Yorkshire Classics

The owner of a collection of vintage recipe books, generous gifts from her family, Carol says she finds inspiration all around her and thoroughly enjoys visiting National Trust



► A taste of the sea



▲ Putting your best foot forward!

properties. As a Yorkshire based artisan, there are plenty of design ideas to be explored within her home county, a place built on the story of good food and inspirational cookery, not least the iconic Yorkshire pudding. "I used to create loads of Yorkshire puddings just from the oven, but I think I exhausted that avenue long ago," she reflects. "I still create a Yorkshire Stand Pie to this day, which is a traditional pound pork pie from the village butcher. This pie goes back centuries I believe. I haven't made curd tart for a long long time. Liquorice Allsorts, I exhausted those too years ago. Parkin! I still have some mini slices in my confectionery drawers." These traditional favourites are accompanied by a classic inspired by a famous corner of West Yorkshire. "Rhubarb, we have the Rhubarb Triangle, so I've created forced rhubarb under a faux metal forcer, to full size rhubarb in miniature," says Carol. "I guess I should make some rapeseed oil bottles, as it's made one or two Yorkshire farmers millionaires believe it or not!"

Finding character

It isn't only food which inspires Carol's work. Her several times great grandfather was a cordwainer, or shoemaker, and her miniature knee-high Georgian leather boots are just one of an array of pieces demonstrating her range as an artist. She also makes many of the accessories which complement her miniature food from scratch, including baskets and crates. Some may also be

unaware that she makes character dolls. "The dolls are few, my next doll will be number 99; and considering I made my first in 1998, that gives an idea of their limited numbers," she says, explaining that she originally began making them after a search for a Tudor doll needed for her own dolls' house failed to find exactly what she was searching for. "That's also where the shoes came in, I wanted some Tudor/Medieval boots, couldn't find any, so that was the beginning of the footwear. The little costrels, tankards and buckled dagger belts just followed on. I do a couple of styles in gents buckled Georgian shoes too."

As a varied and exceptional miniature talent at the top of her field, Carol has some wonderful advice for any collectors thinking of taking the plunge and starting to create their own miniatures. "I'd love anyone who enjoys the hobby to have a little go themselves at

creating miniatures, even if it's from a little kit. The hobby is so much more enjoyable when you have something you've created yourself; and if it's not in keeping with your house, pop it somewhere only you can see and find it, your own little piece of self-indulgence. And if it turns out better than you expected, one of those 'I can make one as good' when you see something at a show - there you go - you're a maker! We all started somewhere; and my miniatures were never perfect in the beginning." Talking with that same infectious enthusiasm as when discussing her own artwork, it would be difficult not to find yourself inspired by Carol to discover your very own starring role on the miniature stage. 🏠



INFO

For more information please visit:

Website: www.carolcook.co.uk

READER GIVEAWAY!

Carol has very kindly offered one of her small wooden trugs, complete with handcrafted metal handle and filled with beautiful 1/12th scale apples as a giveaway!



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

Competition closes 31st August 2021, good luck!

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

Door to another world

Moi Ali's North African doorway project was inspired by holidays in Morocco and Tunisia. North Africa is a popular holiday destination, with places like Tunis in Tunisia and Marrakesh in Morocco attracting visitors eager to soak up the atmosphere in the souks and bazaars – not to mention the spectacular Islamic architecture. This doorway project will get you in the summer holiday mood, even if confidence in long-haul foreign travel has not yet returned to our post-pandemic world.

YOU WILL NEED

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- 6mm, 9mm, 15mm and 18mm thick MDF
- Decorative wooden trims
- Air drying clay
- Wood glue
- Plaster filler such as Polyfilla
- Paint in your chosen colour palette
- 3D gel
- Round dowel and gaming counters
- Sand texture gel or paint
- Varnish
- Stick and Go Moroccan tile sheet

Moi's Top Tip!

"If you don't have the right thickness of MDF, ask your local woodyard for offcuts; double up thinner MDF; or just use what you have, as there are no hard and fast rules in this project."

1 Cut the back wall from 15mm MDF, approximately 280x350mm. Cut a doorway centrally – either a fancy keyhole doorway like mine, or a simpler one if you are not confident with woodwork.



2 Cut a door to fit the door aperture using 9mm MDF. By using thinner MDF you can ensure that the door sits slightly recessed, as shown.



3 Cut a doorway surround from 18mm MDF that is approximately 280x235mm. The door cutaway area should be 145x210mm.



4 Cut a decorative door overlay that fits neatly inside the door cutaway area (see Step 3) to create a more intricate doorway. Mirror the shape of the doorway. See how the layers are building up.



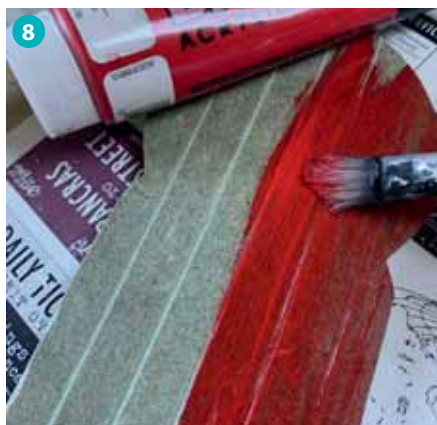
5 Cut a base from a wooden plank or thick MDF the same width as your wall (in my case, 350mm) by approximately 150mm. If you want a deeper room behind, cut a bigger piece.



6 Mark planks with a pencil on both sides of the door.



7 Use a scalpel or pointy tool to incise along the plank lines. If you want a very worn old door, add dents and damage using a hammer or other tools.



8 Undercoat the door in a base colour such as red. If you prefer, do Step 11 first and then paint over the 'nails', depending on the look you want to achieve.



9 When the paint is dry, paint over the door in a clashing (such as turquoise) or complementary colour.



10 Sand when dry to reveal patches of the undercoat and to create a weathered look.



11 Create a decorative pattern on both sides of the door using 3D gel to simulate nail heads.

12 Print any extras, such as a street sign, Moroccan tiles and wall art to adorn your completed building.



13 Create decorative elements by rolling out air-drying clay, pressing interesting shapes into the wet clay, then sanding edges smooth once the clay has dried. Set to one side.

Moi says...

"Add door furniture if you wish, such as black forged hinges and a big door pull."



14 Make door columns by cutting dowel to size, then making a base using whatever is to hand. You can use gaming counters, wooden shapes or even bottle tops. Once painted you'll never guess!



15 Paint the door columns in the base colour. Paint veins to resemble marble and go over them using a very sharp pencil. Apply varnish.



16 Glue the back wall, doorway surround, decorative door overlay and the decorative elements made in Step 13 in position. ▶



17 When the glue has dried, cover with filler to fill any gaps (if your cutting is not neat, as is the case for mine!) and to create a textured surface. If you prefer, you can omit this step and have a smooth wall finish.



18 When dry, sand the filler if it is too rough, then paint using your chosen colours. A distressed effect works well, building up layers of dirty washes (using paint diluted with water) to create a realistic weathered finish.



19 Add any external decoration such as street signs and decorative wooden trims. I used gloss varnish on my street sign to make it look like enamel.



20 Cut side walls from 6mm MDF (or whatever you have to hand). The dimensions are 9x22.5cm. Glue the façade (completed in Step 19) to the base, and glue the side walls at the back to form an internal room. Finish the sides externally to match the external façade.



21 Paint the ground outside using textured gel (or textured paint) to create a rough surface. If using gel, paint when dry in a suitable colour.

22 Glue the pillars in place, then apply filler and paint around the base so they look like they've been there for centuries.



23 Decorate the inside using filler and paint, as per the façade. I used floor tiles from Stick and Go and made the 'skirtings' from cardboard and printed images of tiles.



24 Cut two layers of card to make a door surround, paint to match the walls, and glue in place. Glue the door in place, either in the closed or slightly ajar position. 🏠

READER GIVEAWAY!



My Moroccan tiles that I've added to the interior were designed especially for this project by Stick and Go (www.stickandgocrafts.com).

Five lucky readers can each win a sheet.

To enter simply visit www.dollshouseandminiaturescene.co.uk and click on giveaways! Competition closes 31st August 2021, good luck!

David Garrett at Stick and Go is also offering DHMS readers an exclusive offer. You can buy a sheet of this limited-edition self-adhesive tile design for just £2.99 per sheet. Simply mention the magazine when ordering to receive your discount!

The spice of life

Make baskets of spices in a thrice! Trips to north Africa always involve a trip to the souk to soak up the atmosphere and stock up on exotic spices. Nothing beats the fragrance of freshly ground cumin, fenugreek, cardamom and coriander. Recreate the sights and smells of the bazaar in miniature, with this quick make that uses ordinary household throwaways.

YOU WILL NEED

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Plastic milk bottle tops
- Old string
- Old polystyrene packaging
- Craft sand
- Paint
- Glue
- A teabag
- Offcut of white card
- Sewing pin



1 Select containers for your spices. I used a plastic milk bottle top for a low-sided basket. Make taller baskets by choosing the cap from an aerosol or similar.



2 Use discarded packaging materials such as polystyrene to fill the container. Cut the material so it stands proud of the container rim.



3 Carve the top of the polystyrene so it is slightly domed.



4 Cover the dome in glue and sprinkle with fine craft sand. Leave to dry.



5 Paint the craft sand dome in the colour of your choice. Earth tones such as browns, oranges, yellows and greens are a good choice.



6 Find some old string and soak it in hot tea to stain it (leave the teabag in). Set aside to dry.



7 Wrap the string around the container, starting at the bottom and using plenty of tacky glue to hold it in place.



8 Make a spice label using an offcut of card and a pin. Simply glue the pin to the back of the card and stick it into the painted polystyrene. 🏠

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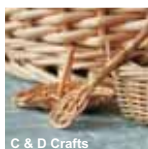
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Miniature villages around the world

Whilst the situation over the last year has been incredibly difficult and life changing for us all, we must hold onto the thought that the future will be much brighter. When the pandemic has passed and travel is hot on peoples list again, why not visit a few of these wonderful miniature villages and displays... they may not be ones you have heard of before...

Mini Siam

Mini Siam is Thailand's famous miniature park, which proudly invites you to experience the world, 'not in 80 days - more like 80 minutes'. From the Statue of Liberty to the stunning domes of the Church of the Savior on Blood in St. Petersburg, there are nearly 100 1/25th scale replicas of landmark sites on display. The park is split by a small stream into two zones - Mini Siam and Mini Europe - with the former displaying the many breathtaking, iconic locations of Thailand. If this wasn't enough, it is all set within beautiful grounds too.



“

*“...experience the world,
'not in 80 days - more like 80 minutes'”*

”

Miniatur Wunderland

With its home in Hamburg, Miniatur Wunderland offers an incredible 13 Theme Worlds, allowing you to 'Dream big in small Venice', and even head 'High above in the Alps of Austria'.

Spanning 125m², the Knuffingen Airport took nearly six years to create and is considered the most technically fascinating section of them all. Then comes Miniatur Wunderland's oldest landscape, Central Germany, which has impressively become 'an important milestone in the renaissance of model building' since its completion in 2001. ▶



Miniature World

Being open for 48 years with over 85 miniature dioramas, Miniature World has become a very popular attraction in Victoria, Canada, in which they ensure your visit 'will be a memorable experience for years to come.' From the World's Smallest Operational Sawmill to the World's Largest Model Railways, Miniature World also has two of the World's Largest Dolls Houses on display - that have over 50 beautifully decorated and delicately furnished rooms. If this perhaps is not for you, you can take a stroll through several of Europe's incredible castles, relive your childhood by visiting the circus, experience the World of Dickens... or even travel to 2201 AD! A little cliché to say the least, but there truly is something for everyone at Miniature World.



The Ave Maria Grotto

Quite different to the usual miniature displays is The Ave Maria Grotto at St. Bernard Abbey, Alabama. People have travelled from worldwide since 1934, to experience the work of Benedictine monk Brother Joseph Zoettl, which 'consists of a landscaped hillside of 125 small stone and cement structures.' When not in prayer or working at the Abbey, Joseph gave time to building the miniatures - which includes replicas of St. Peter's Basilica, a Tower of Babel and scenes of ancient Jerusalem - using stone, concrete, and unwanted donated materials, such as broken plates, costume jewellery, beads and seashells. The last piece created was the beautiful Lourdes Basilica Church, in 1958 when he was 80 years old.



Godshill Model Village

Located on the beautiful Isle of Wight, this delightful model village gives visitors a glimpse into Godshill & Shanklin Old Villages and Chine 'as they were in yesteryear...' All of the houses, cottages, churches and pubs of real life can be seen in this 1/10th scale version of the village, each made using original materials and methods - such as sand, cement and thatching - so they truly are just like the real thing! What's more, Godshill Model Village has over 3,000 ornamental conifers and shrubs, making it the most detailed landscaped garden on the island, with many being coarse bonsai treated to maintain their scale with the buildings.



Cockington Green Gardens

Although in Australia, the park is named after the village of Cockington in the UK. Founded with miniature models that included the thatched roof village of Cockington, Scotland's Baraemar Castle and even Stonehenge, an international area has slowly developed where you can experience many more of the world's stunning locations - such as St. Mark's Church from Croatia and the Lahore Gate and Red Fort from India. Along with the miniature park, an indoor exhibit displays a Georgian style dolls house, which has an incredible 34 rooms! With a small steam train ride, a mini train display, two acres of gardens... and even a cafe, Cockington Green Gardens is a real family day. [PAG](#)



Swiss Miniatur – Switzerland

With its home on the shores of Lake Lugano, Swiss Miniatur is an amazing 1/25th scale representation of Switzerland. The open-air park consists of 120 replicas of houses, castles and cathedrals, such as Burgdorf Castle and Chillon Castle, in addition to a vast miniature train display that includes 11,500 feet of track and 18 moving trains.



Anglesey Model Village

This tiny world has an incredible display of models which incorporates the many landmarks and beautiful features of the island. Experience Anglesey in one place through the impressive castle in Beaumaris to the legendary story of St Dwynwen, the St Valentine of Wales, not to mention the rural and urban lives of the model villagers too. Do not forget the fantastic model railway and the famous train station at Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch!

Situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty - with gardens, wildlife and play area - the model village is also a wonderful place to relax and experience the breathtaking views of Snowdonia and the North Wales landscape. It truly is a wonderful day out.



The Mini Time Machine

The imagination and commitment of Patricia and Walter Arnell has resulted in 'the mini time machine' in which they wanted visitors to be 'seemingly transported to different eras by the stories and history of the pieces in the collection.' The impressive collection at The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures is a permanent display of more than 500 dolls houses and room boxes, each one complete with hundreds of delicate miniature objects. With the museum dedicated to all who engage in the world of miniatures, all proceeds go back towards funding the display.



Lyon's Musée Miniature et Cinéma

Another quite different experience is the museum of founder Dan Ohlmann's two passions - the magic of film special effects and the art of miniatures! Being the only one of its kind in Europe, Lyon's Musée Miniature et Cinéma displays the largest collection of miniatures in France, consisting of a collection of miniature scenes - such as the famous 'Maxim's-de-Paris Restaurant' and the Natural History Museum - each created by Dan, along with work from more than 30 worldwide miniaturists. With more than 120 realistic reproductions and dioramas of everyday spaces, the museum also includes over 1000 miniature objects, that showcase an incredible variety of the world's professions. One can't forget the special effects in films aspect, which shows the tricks and techniques of film production before digital kicked in. 🏠



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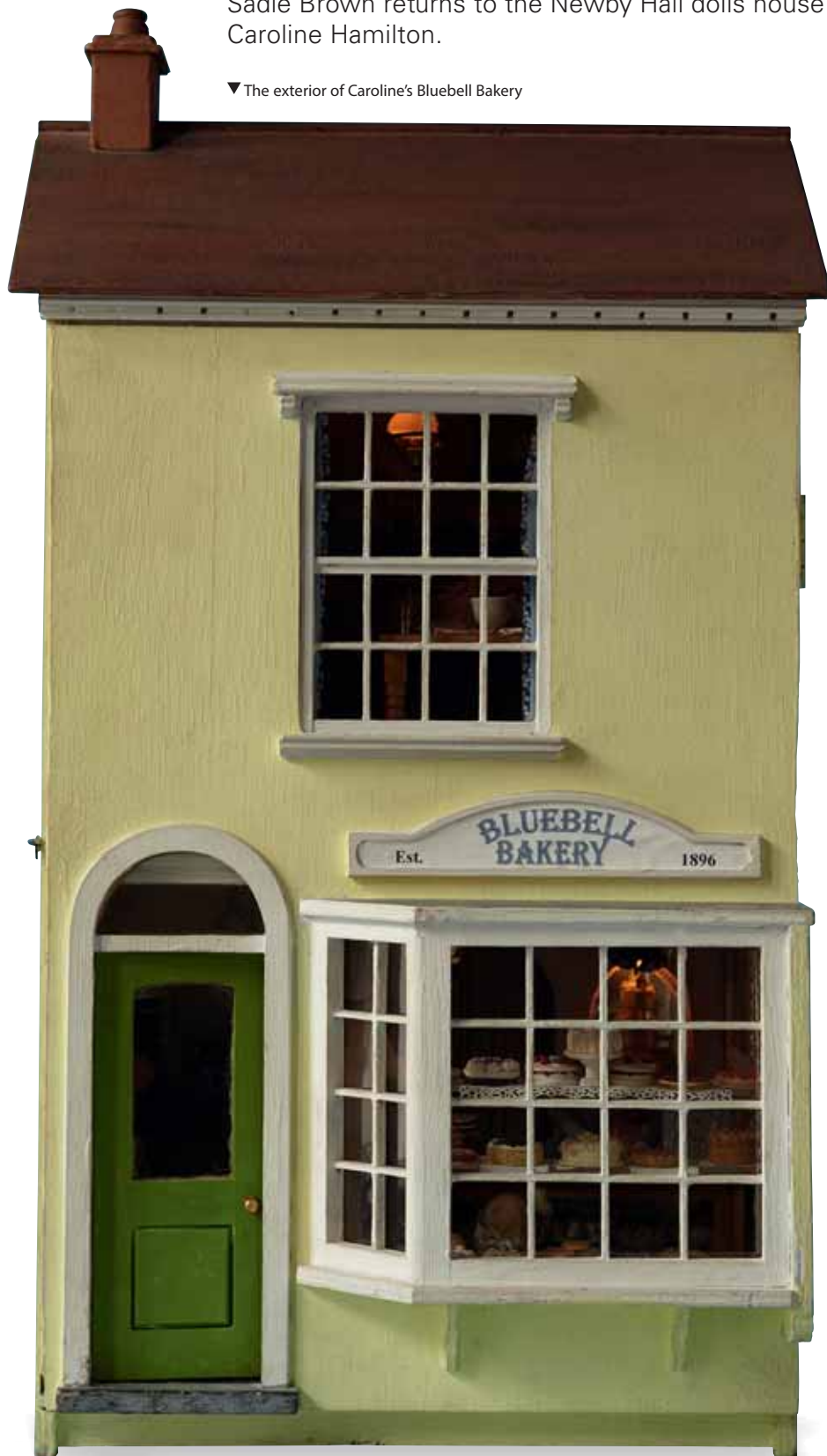
If you have enjoyed reading this great magazine, or indeed any of the ones shown above, it would be great if you could leave us a review. We all like to know when something is good and when we've done a good job! Thanks 😊



Going shopping

Sadie Brown returns to the Newby Hall dolls house collection with Jane Fiddick and Caroline Hamilton.

▼ The exterior of Caroline's Bluebell Bakery

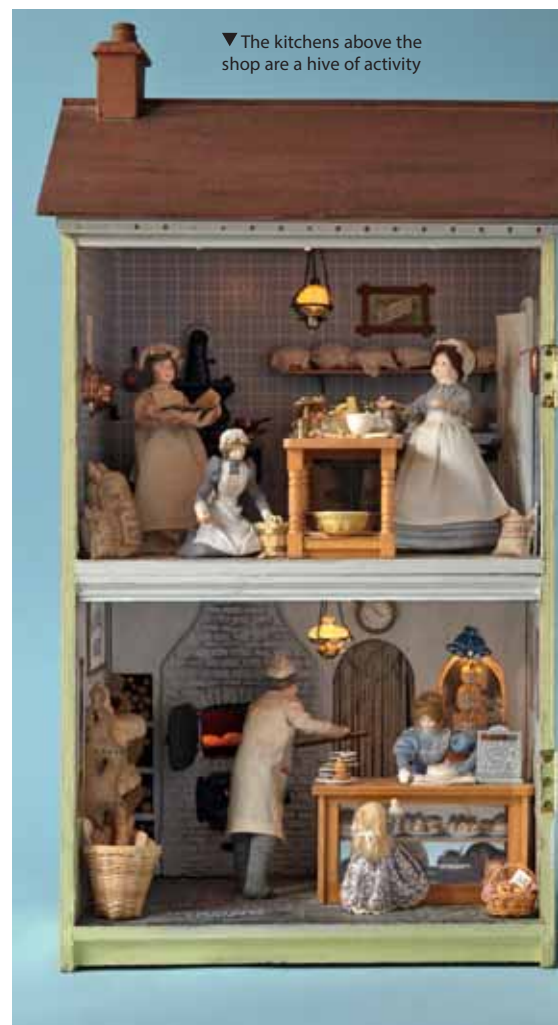


All sewn up

Jane Fiddick and Caroline Hamilton are undoubtedly two of the most inspirational miniaturists I have ever had the pleasure of talking to. Their extensive body of work, on permanent display at Newby Hall in North Yorkshire since summer 2015, is a staggering achievement. With almost seventy dolls houses in the collection, there is always something new to discover.

Mimi and Musetta, which many might recognise as having been named after the two young ladies from Puccini's 19th century opera, *La bohème*, is a beautiful and expansive haberdashery, hat shop and

▼ The kitchens above the shop are a hive of activity



dressmakers with much to explore within its two storeys. Jane clearly recalls the late night prior to the shop being first exhibited at the London Dolls House Festival, fond memories for a dedicated miniaturist. The structure itself is a Sid Cooke design and his acclaimed miniature properties proved to be something of a turning point for both Jane and Caroline.

"I think it is fair to say that our collections of shops began with the appearance of Sid Cooke and in particular his York Street corner shop, with which I instantly fell in love. It became Thos. Appleton, purveyor of fine foods," recalls Jane. "Sid went on to produce such attractive buildings that they were difficult to resist, particularly the shops. These give an opportunity to concentrate on an area of activity other than the standard home and allow for collections, say, of china, baked goods, fish, vegetables, copperware, toys and... hats." It is this collection of fine millinery which finds itself proudly displayed in brightly illuminated cabinets on the ground floor of Mimi and Musetta. From the simple straw boater to those creations adorned with lavish feathers and florals. "Caroline and I found it very difficult to resist the succession of the delightfully proportioned buildings of all kinds produced by Sid and I think that it's fair to say that we bought without knowing at the time what



Freshly baked bread

each one was going to be," concludes Jane. "I doubt whether Caroline had set out wanting a bakery! And sometimes you have to live with an empty house before deciding. Of course, the windows would dictate whether a house would be residential or commercial. Sometimes, even, we persuaded Sid to add another storey to his charming single storey buildings, which were inevitably shops, but could have residential premises above. But Mimi and Musetta could only be a shop. Downstairs, and the upstairs room offered

the opportunity to display haberdashery, knitting and especially, displays of sewing threads, etc."

No pun intended, the haberdashery department is literally bursting at the seams with everything to inspire both the novice and experienced seamstress. It is also here where you will find some of Jane's own most intriguing work. There are reams of fabric, wool in almost every colour of the rainbow, and the handcrafted counter alone is filled with many different bits and pieces, [see page 38](#)



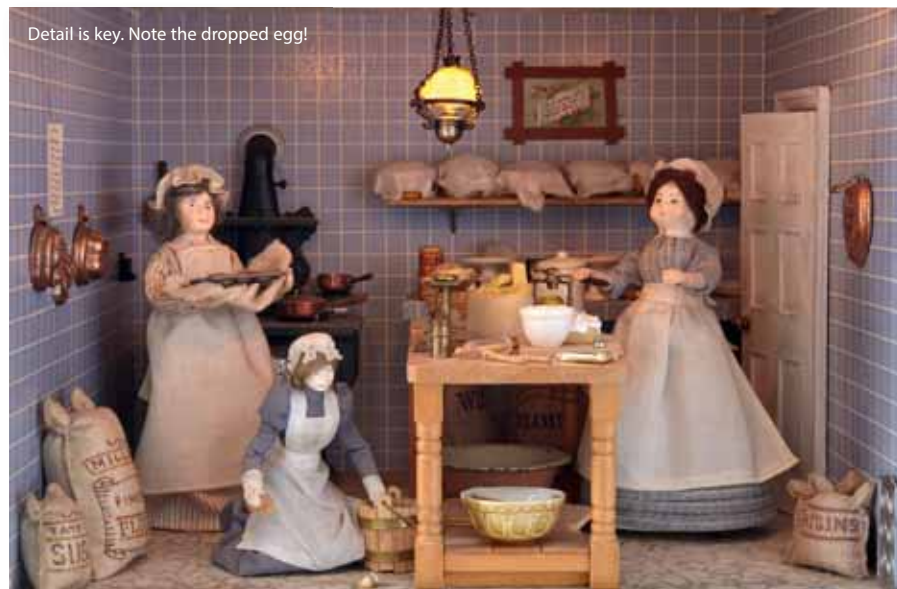
Great design is a piece of cake for Caroline!

including buttons and ribbons. But it is the miniscule and individually handmade spools of thread displayed on the counter top which inspire beyond measure and show nothing is impossible for the determined artisan. As always though, Jane is keen to discuss the other artisans whose work is displayed within the shop walls. I was especially excited to find out more about the pastel pink dress on the dressmakers' mannequin and the seamstresses' current project. The tiny tape measure draped around the mannequin's shoulders is the kind of finishing touch that is the mark of an exceptionally well-designed piece. "The case on the floor was made by the very talented Australian maker Alan Waters, who also made the wool winder on the counter. The knitter of display goods was June Stowe. I'm

afraid that the dressmaker's work was an impulse buy and I can't remember by whom, except that it was American. If it were European, the

tape measure you mention would probably be in centimetres rather than inches."

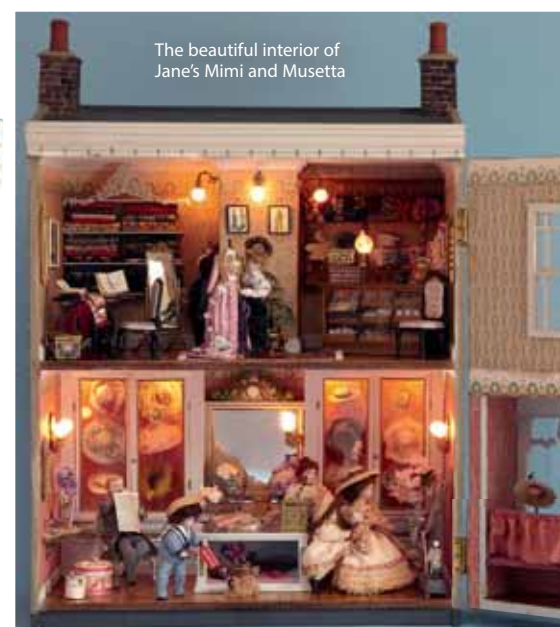
▼ The pretty exterior of Mimi and Musetta



Detail is key. Note the dropped egg!

A piece of cake

Caroline's late Victorian bakery is also a two storey Sid Cooke design. However, the main structure of Bluebell Bakery has been given that Hamilton twist, with an imaginative false wall allowing the inclusion of not only a hidden space lying behind the beaded curtain, but also the wonderful built in bread oven at the heart of the bakery. The latter includes such a depth of realism that Caroline even went so far as to install a flickering light. "Several of my small Sid Cooke houses do not even hint at stairs but it really isn't right to expect the inhabitants to fly up and down as in the toy shop or the antiques shop." Caroline tells me, only adding to the theory that hidden corners are always some of the most exciting aspects of any project. "In the bakery I liked the idea of a hot oven so that smoke-stained false wall depth also gave



The beautiful interior of Jane's Mimi and Musetta



The haberdashery is bursting at the seams with inspiration!

me the chance to hint at stairs behind a bead curtain. That is why there is a door on the wall upstairs, but carefully opening so that you can't see that there aren't really any stairs there."

The addition of the false wall also gave Caroline leave to add an extra feature in the shape of a small illuminated alcove, the ideal place to display the bakery's star attraction. "I realised I could have a niche for the wedding cake made with slices of different sized dowels propped up on bits of tooth-pick and wrapped in scraps of silver doily. The tiny bride and groom on top are only my sketch on a tiny piece of card, but there is a wee card saying 'Wedding cakes to order.'" It is the importance of including these finely-honed details which are key to all Caroline and Jane's designs. Even the details you don't necessarily know are there. The little girl buying a strawberry jam tart is actually holding a tiny coin in her hand as she reaches

up to pay the shop assistant. The baker, seen removing a fresh batch of loaves from the oven, was dressed by Caroline herself, but just like Mimi and Musetta, Bluebell Bakery showcases work by many exceptional artisans, including dolls by both Jill Nix and Judith Cipkin. There's also a delightful holly wood rolling pin by the craftsman, David Edwards.

Opening new doors

Together, Caroline and Jane have built a tremendous, world renowned legacy on the strongest of miniature foundations. There is, though, more to come and I was overjoyed to discover that Jane has not one, not two, but three additional houses awaiting completion. All of which will go on to become an integral part of the Newby Hall dolls house exhibition going forward. I was even more thrilled when Jane was happy to share some exclusive

details ahead of what will be an eagerly anticipated reveal. "One is a version of Sid's corner shop with different windows and belongs to a photographer," says Jane, hinting at the layout, which will see the ground floor display a range of optical equipment and toys created by Jim Watt, whilst the second floor will become the all-important studio space. "Another is to be an ironmonger, with watchmaker living over. The last and biggest is a bakery, with sales of bread and cakes on the ground floor, banqueting hall on first floor and kitchen and cool store, for butter, lard and dried fruits, at the top." Jane, we can't wait! 🏠



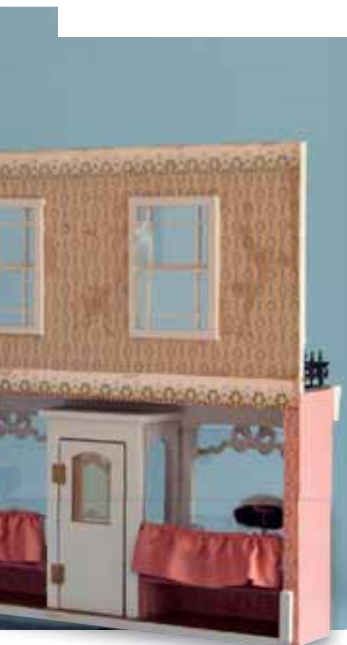
INFO

For further information visit:

www.newbyhall.com

Photography by [Bay Hippisley](#).

With many thanks to Jane and Caroline.



Hats off to Jane for telling such a wonderful miniature story

At (THE NEW) Home with THE BROADWOODS

NEW BEGINNINGS...

A business that began at the kitchen table is now on the move... Following a random property viewing, professional miniaturist Bea Broadwood, had divine inspiration. The result; she's facing her biggest challenge yet!

The Old Methodist Church



Be careful what you wish for....

I think many people blindly believe that luck will just fall into your lap. I've never really believed in luck. I've always found that the reality is that you make your own; the harder you work, the luckier you become. But when we spotted that our local church was up for sale, I can't lie... I felt lucky and my head started to spin.

As a team we emerged from our first viewing of the church silent, yet smiling. We knew we had to go for it and so ensued months of legal wrangling, red tape and planning permission; but unlocking the large entrance door for the very first time, made the journey to get the keys well worth the effort and wait.

“As we started to explore the interior of the church, the enormity of our purchase began to sink in and I wasn't sure whether I needed to breathe deeply into a paper bag or open some bubbly to mark the occasion... We went with the latter!”

Bea

▼ The pulpit and original oak altar furniture



As our purchase of the church progressed, we were delighted to learn that the Methodist community wanted to leave the entire contents of the church intact. From teacups to bibles, altar furniture to the limestone font... everything was left for us. We were delighted. Many of the pieces of inherited furniture are original to the building and before we'd even stepped over the church's threshold, they'd already inspired some future PP kits!

All joking aside, ownership of a beautiful church at the very heart of our village is not something that we take lightly. The interior of the chapel is an inspiring and magical space with lofty ceilings and 4500 square feet of pure potential, all just a 10 minute walk from our home. As a family business, it is our plan to look after the church, change as little as possible and ultimately open it back up as an asset for not only the local community but as a meeting place for miniaturists, artists and crafters too.

▼ This old oak lectern will definitely inspire a future PP kit!



PP's new home...

The interior of the church could best be described as a building of two halves. The main church area is vast and retains all of its original features including an oak pulpit, altar and even a (fully working) organ! Doors on either side of the alter lead into the back half of the building; which includes a chapel room, walk in store, kitchen, toilets and a large hall that was once used as a

school room. From the very beginning, we had this section of the church earmarked to become PP's new home.

The chapel room, once used for church business, will become my new creative domain, a space I will share with PP's Minion Mo. However, she has made me promise to keep my creativity under control and I am not to view all flat surfaces in the room as a 'challenge' to cover with my work (as if I would!). ▶



Of course Mo just could not resist having a go!

PP will be housed in the rooms at the rear of the church



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The school room was once home to the local Brownies and it is the largest space in the rear section of the church. It will become home for all our stock, as well as providing plenty of space for kit production and the processing of orders too.

A hub at the heart of the village...

I have always loved to create. Whether it was making cardboard houses for my Barbie dolls or drawing in my sketch book. Art is an escape. A retreat.

A hideaway when life is just too much. During lockdown the world of art, crafts and creativity certainly helped many people to fill empty days and keep troubled minds occupied and engaged. Back in the



▲ Lets get crafty!

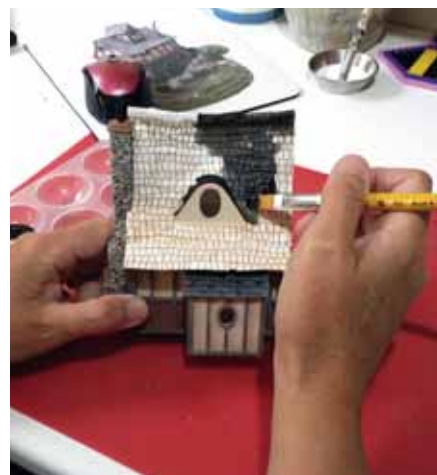
day, I always wanted to be an art teacher, but life had other plans for me and this ambition never became a reality. However, I know through my day job that art brings so much joy, therapy and fun. One of our plans for the church is to set up a community art hub. A place where people of all ages can access a variety of art and craft activities, learn new

skills and explore new mediums. Art has always been a huge and important part of my life and through the art hub; I hope to be able to share that passion with our local community and beyond.

Introducing 'The School of Miniatures'

Alongside the art hub, next summer we will also be launching an exciting new venture; The School of Miniatures. Our plan is to offer a wide range of miniature related workshops and events. From relaxed drop-in sessions, to advanced workshops, we plan to run a wide variety of classes. We are also keen to host guest tutors too, so that many different

elements of the miniature world can be explored and covered. Workshop exclusive kits will be launched and Mo will be on hand to help too. Ultimately, it is our hope that The Old Methodist Church will become a focal point for miniaturists, crafters and railway modellers alike!



▲ Why not join in the fun and learn some new skills...

After all the time we've had to spend apart recently, we hope that we will finally be able to come together. For us, the church is synonymous with hope for the future and our plans for it are ongoing and ever changing. Ultimately, it feels right that such a special building is once again used and enjoyed and we feel very privileged to be able to open up this amazing space. The building may not remain a place for worship, but it feels right that it will remain a place where people can come together to laugh, learn, create and enjoy the wonderful world of miniatures. It's certainly going to be an adventure and we hope you will join us for the ride! 🏠



INFO

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To follow our progress on the church and take a peek behind the scenes, why not follow us on Instagram?

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London calling

Moi Ali visits a world-class dolls house collection in London.



The Victoria and Albert Museum in London is famous across the globe for its world-class collection of furniture and decorative arts. What is less known is that it has an equally awesome collection of dolls houses - over a hundred in total. They are displayed in a lovely Victorian building on the other side of the city, the V&A Museum of Childhood. Here you will find not only dolls houses, but also toys and games of yesteryear. The museum houses the United Kingdom's national collection of childhood-related objects, one of the finest in the world.

My favourite in the collection is a little boulangerie patisserie which is so evocative of Paris. What is effectively just a room box exuding charm. Despite its vintage appearance it dates only to 1980. The butcher's shop is



also very sweet. It is typical of educational toys made in the Victorian era. For some reason butchers' shops were very popular, complete with carcasses of meat and somewhat gruesome looking chopping blocks!

Another favorite is the very grandiose villa made in 1889 by a Thomas Risley and possibly inspired by a real house. I adore the little lean-to conservatory at the side, so typical of British houses of that era. It is believed to be a model rather than a plaything and much attention has been given to the architectural detail - balustrades, metal railings, fancy slates, finials and decorative barge boards.

Most of the dolls houses come with a real-life story. For example, Devonshire Villas was built in 1900 by a carpenter and would



A house named Risley



Boulangerie Patisserie



Cosy nursery

have cost a great deal to make. It is based on a real house in Kilburn, London, which no longer exists and is decorated and furnished in the very latest style for the time. Many of the features, such as the fitted bathroom, the double sink in the kitchen and the telephone in the hall were very modern for the era. The bathroom walls have 'sanitary' wallpaper which is coated to be washable – a new invention back then.

A gift from a father to his daughter, the little girl recipient made the carpets, lampshades and upholstery in the bedroom and drawing room. Later the granddaughter also played with the house. As an adult she gifted it to the museum in 1972. More than a century after this dolls house was created, it is still providing joy to children young and old!



Butchers

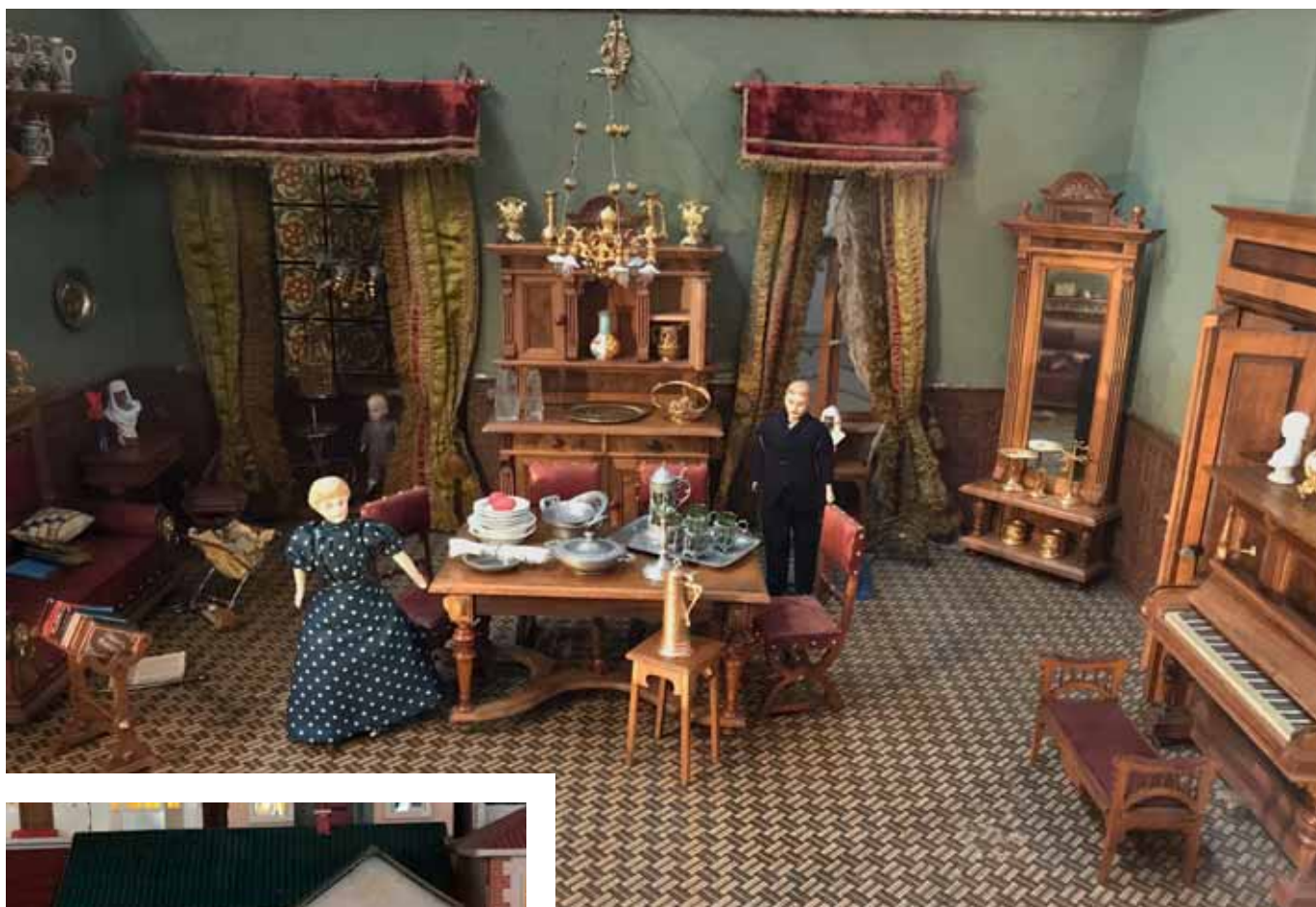


Devonshire Villas



▲ Humble hand made house

May Foster's grand town house is a hundred years older than Devonshire Villas and also comes with a history. Dating to around 1800, it was owned by the daughters of John Foster, a wealthy engineer who ran Liverpool Docks. This house has triangular pediments and Greek urns along the roof. One of the Foster sons travelled to Greece and worked with archaeologists, discovering



▲ Full of detail

◀ Lattice window house

ancient ruins. He later designed many of Liverpool's grand public buildings.

Although the dolls house is said to be a model of the Foster family home and it does resemble that house, the miniature version is grander. When she grew up, May Foster married the mayor of Liverpool. Her sister



▲ May Foster exterior

▼ Many houses of this era had overscale wallpaper



▲ Look at the toy theatre



Isabella married a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. Isabella had several children and the dolls house eventually passed to her great-granddaughter, who donated it to the museum in 1925. It had become a family heirloom, having been in the family for 120 years and was looked after very well by successive generations of children.

Mrs Bryant's Pleasure also has a fascinating history. It was custom-made for Mrs Ann Bryant in about 1865. Believed to be modelled on her own London suburban house, Oakenshaw, the beautifully carved rosewood and mahogany furniture, rich upholstery and wallpapers and carpets are typical of a conservative, middle class household of that time. There are a few mass-produced items – such as lacquered trays in the kitchen – but most of the furniture is unique, probably commissioned from a skilled cabinet-maker.

This is one of the earliest houses in the collection to feature photographs. The many small black and white prints may well be of Mrs Bryant's grandchildren. Photography studios had opened on high streets across the country by the 1860s, and Mrs Bryant appears to have been an enthusiastic participant in this new craze.

The most unusual exhibit is not a dolls house at all - it's a mountain of them! Rachel Whiteread's celebrated artwork *Place (Village)* (2006-2008) is a sculptural work featuring a 'community' of around 150 dolls houses which were collected by Whiteread over two decades. And I thought I had a big collection!

The large-scale artwork is an assembly of vintage dolls houses in a variety of architectural styles, including models by leading makers such as Lundby and Triang.



Typical victorian interior

A charming interior



Part of the 'installation'

The houses sit on stepped platforms, evoking a sprawling hillside 'community'. Lit from within, the houses are deserted: the lights are on, but no one's at home! This creates a thought-provoking installation. It is not often that a dolls house exhibition leaves one reflecting on life, locality and community!

The best bit about this museum is without doubt the dolls houses, but the antique and vintage toys and games are worth a look – and as the museum offers free entry, this is a day out that won't break the bank and offers something to look forward to as life slowly returns to normal after the pandemic! 🏠

**INFO**

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We discover:

MELISSA JACKSON

We love discovering new talent and hearing the wonderful stories behind the makes! This month we find out more about miniature maker Melissa!

How long have you been making miniatures?

I got started late in the game, I began working on them in late December of 2019.

What got your first interested in making miniatures?

I've loved miniatures since I was little. My mum made and sold miniature jointed teddy bears when I was younger and was always into some different art project of her own. Whenever she went to the huge craft store across the river, I always had to tag along just to wander the miniature aisle. It was always exciting to find a new miniature that they had just added to their inventory.



“I love food myself, and strive to make the most realistic pieces with not only a ton of detail, but a bit of whimsy as well”



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

I focus mainly on 1/12th scale polymer clay food. I love food myself, and strive to make the most realistic pieces with not only a ton of detail, but a bit of whimsy as well. I like to add extra pops of colour so the plate isn't boring, and love making my favourite dishes. Basically, anything comforting like pasta, dessert, roasts, etc.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

My main inspiration is any food blog, and what's in my house. I'm always searching the internet for dinner and lunch ideas, especially holiday foods. I sometimes get a bit of artist-block, so I tend to rely on real food to give me ideas.

Tell us how you go about creating your work?

I make all of my pieces at night. I began working night shift at a local hospital, so when I'm off I stay on my work schedule for the most part. I believe my best pieces have been made between the hours of midnight and 6am. I make sure to first mix my colours of clay for whatever piece I'm working on at the time. The colour and translucency of the clay is important to get as close to a realistic piece as possible. Once I have the colours I want, I roughly sculpt the piece before working on any details and texturing. My process isn't as clean as some miniaturists that have YouTube channels. But the end result is what's most important to me. ▶





Do you have a favourite material to work with such as wood etc?

My favourite material is polymer clay. I just discovered the leather effect clay and love how it creates a whole new dimension to some of my pieces. My go-to colour would be translucent though. Mixed with other colours, this gives me the most realistic appearance of food when sculpted and baked correctly.

Where do you make your miniatures? Do you have a dedicated craft room?

I began the year making my miniature wherever I could find space. I had an office that was a cluttered mess with my husband's old table from the garage. I never wanted to work in that space, as I didn't feel like it was mine. My husband recognised this, and helped me to decorate and make it a space I wanted to create in. Now I love my little office with all its storage and pretty paintings on the wall.

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

I eyeball everyday items to see how I can reconfigure them into a small miniature. I've made some pretty cool additions to my miniature roombox by doing this. For example, simple pieces like popsicle sticks make great dollhouse floors, and random pieces from model car kits can be made into awesome miniature kitchen gadgets. I recently made a few pizza cutters using headlight lamps from a model car.

What do you do with the miniatures you make?

Besides keeping a few pieces for myself, I sell all my creations on Etsy. My business name began as HoneyBee Curiosity because I wanted a name that was unique to me (Melissa means Honeybee). I started out trying to find my passion in the arts by working with resin, making food jewellery, and miniatures. But I have been slowly changing my name over all my social media sites to Miniature Curiosity as my absolute passion is dolls house miniatures.

Do you have a favourite project?

Every new piece I work on becomes my new favourite project. I put so much care into each miniature, that when it turns out exactly how I wanted it to, it's so exciting. I'm constantly discovering new ways to create my miniatures, and can't wait to see how my pieces have evolved through this next year. But I believe my antique roombox I purchased online would be my favourite project. I have refurbished the whole thing, from the floors, to the wood beams in the ceiling. It's becoming a great piece to display my miniatures in. 🏠



INFORMATION

To view more of Melissa's work visit:

Etsy: www.etsy.com/shop/HoneyBeeCuriosity

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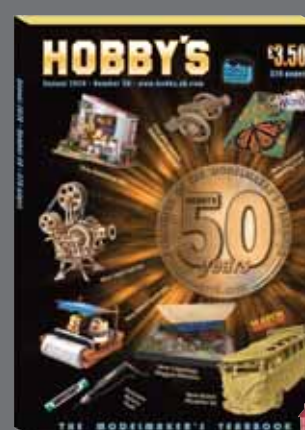
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When a dream becomes reality

We chat to Simon Williams to find out how he has turned his hobby into a profession and made his dream come true.





How long have you been making miniatures?

I've been building miniatures as a hobby for over twenty years. However, after being made redundant in the summer due to Covid, I am now building them full time, professionally. Prior to this I was a Procurement Manager for 15 years. Very much office based at a desk, dreaming of building miniatures full time. Now, my dream has come true!

What got you first interested in making miniatures?

I've always had a passionate interest in architecture and design. The historic 'layers' of an old house or building have long held a fascination for me and reproducing them in miniature gave me an outlet for this creativity. My passion is British architecture (country houses and public buildings), in particular the Georgian period because of the theory behind the design and the general aesthetic.

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

Recent commissions have ranged from a 16 room mansion to a model theatre all at 1/12th scale, I've particularly enjoyed creating these because of the variety they have offered me as a model maker. I work a lot with retailers on their campaigns, for example, the 16 room mansion was for a high end furniture maker for their Christmas window display. Depending on the scale, projects take approximately two months and begin with initial conversations after which I draw up a sketch and work out costing and dimensions. Once the client has approved this we can begin. The theatre was made for a lovely client in the south of France and based on European opera houses that the client enjoyed visiting. www.dollhouseandminiaturescene.co.uk



Where do you get your inspiration from?

Inspiration can come from anywhere. A movie; a piece of music; a visit to a stately home. I have a large collection of reference books covering all architectural styles and periods. These, along with interior design books, are a main source of inspiration and reference. For example, Chatsworth House for their interiors and collections and John Fowler for pure creativity. I love the way he wasn't afraid to be different to everyone else. For example, how he approached working with The National Trust and working on historic interiors. He let the artwork and architecture do the talking. I also admire how inventive he was (had to be) in the years immediately after the war, for instance, making the most beautifully intricate curtains out of army blankets.

Tell us how you go about creating your work?

Creativity is a difficult thing to define. I've learned over the years to be open to different things, be they design styles, influences etc. Sometimes I think you can get stuck on one idea and it becomes all you think about, when being able to adapt or change an idea can be more rewarding and ultimately, more creative. I do lots of research and ask the clients lots of specific questions (e.g. if it's a replica of a house they once lived in I ask them to give me photographs and plans, if they can). I have a vivid imagination so a lot of the work is done in my head before I sketch out a rough plan. When you're working with large budgets it's



best that everyone involved has a clear understanding of what is required, so there isn't much deviation from the initial plan, unless, of course, the client suddenly has a brainwave.

Do you have a favourite material to work with such as wood etc?

I don't have one particular favourite material to work with, however, foam board is in my top five, largely because it's lightweight and easy to cut (with no mess!) Also love using Edward Bulmer paints for their consistency and their green ethics.

Where do you make your miniatures? Do you have a dedicated craft room?

We turned one of the guest rooms into a studio. I'm very thankful for this space. It allows me to have my books and building paraphernalia in one place and means I don't have to be too tidy!

What is the most outrageous thing you've been commissioned to build?

I was commissioned to build a very lovely lady a bird feeding station in the style of her house. I think this is more ingenious than outrageous. It was made from pressure treated hardwood and outdoor paints.



What sort of people do you create for?

I take commissions from everyone and anyone. People often have a desire to reproduce a version of a cherished home or property in miniature. But in reality, it could be anything.

What makes your work so special?

I care immensely about the whole process and want to ensure that the client's expectations are exceeded. Naturally, their input is hugely important and I think this collaboration is ultimately what makes a project special.

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

It would have to be what I mentioned earlier - don't overthink it, just give it a try! It's nothing that can't be fixed or changed. As a hobby this is to be enjoyed and there are wonderful platforms which offer support, advice and a real sense of community.

What do you do with the miniatures you make?

Depending on the commission, pieces are either packed off to their eagerly awaiting new owner, or form part of a shop window display or exhibit.

Do you have a favourite project?

My favourite project is whichever project I am currently working on. It completely occupies me - my attention, time and energy. I think this is one of the key elements to creating a successful project. 🏠



INFO

To view more of Simon's work visit:

Website: simonwilliamsminiatures.com

instagram.com/simonwilliamsminiatures



Within these walls

Before:
Classic Colonial



Moi Ali shows how wallpaper can transform a room – plus find out how you can win a makeover for one room!



After:
Classic Colonial

In our full-size homes we so often lavish time on selecting the perfect sofa and choosing curtains to complement, but when it comes to our walls, the extent of our interior design efforts is to slap up a bit of white or magnolia paint on them! Don't make the same mistake with your petite property: go to town with your walls!

A white wall in a dolls house can look soulless. Pep up your premises with a vibrant wallpaper, or evoke a period feel by using a patterned designed in your chosen era. Go groovy with a 60s or 70s vibe. Select a demure classical print for your Georgian town house. Choose an overblown floral design for your Victorian villa, or a refined iconic William Morris creation if you want to go down the Arts and Crafts route. Whatever style of little house you have, you can be sure that there's a wallpaper to match.

Unless you're quite handy with DIY, wallpapering a real room is quite a skill, but

anyone can paper a dolls house. I asked Poppet from Poppet's Dolly Bits for her top tips on how to approach the task. She told me: "People are quite daunted at the prospect of wallpapering, but it's quite simple. The first piece of advice I'd give is to invest in a rubber craft roller. You can use it for all manner of crafting projects, but it's an absolute must for wallpapering. It helps get rid of any lumps, bumps and air bubbles so you end up with a flawless finish."

I asked Poppet's advice on what kind of adhesive to use for best results: "I always use ready-mixed wallpaper paste, although craft glue can also be used. There's no need to buy expensive special products," she explained. Poppet also advised priming the walls first, with a coat of matt emulsion to seal them – although

if they are already papered and the paper is in good condition, it's OK to paper straight on top of it. "If you're stripping old paper though," warned Poppet, "make sure you remove all of it or you might find that it creates an uneven surface that spoils the finish of your new paper."

Poppet's Dolly Bits has just become the UK's only supplier of Bradbury & Bradbury Art Wallpapers, an upmarket American company who reproduce fine hand-printed authentic patterns for full-size historic homes, fancy hotels, restaurants, museums and even film sets for cinema and historic dramas for the small screen. They have now branched out into 1/12th scale papers and Poppet is thrilled to have become sole UK supplier of their stunning range.

Generally, when we think of wallpaper, we imagine a paper product – but Stick and Go create wallpapers made from self-adhesive vinyl. Owner David Garrett explained: "I created this range as a fast, affordable and easy way to decorate a miniature home. It's so easy – peel, stick and go!" As well as wallpapers, the same 'stick and go' concept has been extended to floor and wall tiles, coving and skirting, roof tiles and paving, and a host of other applications.

David advised when using a vinyl adhesive to ensure that the surface is smooth and dust-free: "Rough or dusty surfaces may affect the adhesive performance otherwise," he explained. I decided to assess for myself the impact that wallpaper can have in a room. I made up some

room sets against a plain white backdrop, then recreated them with an appropriate period style paper. The paper transforms the scene and adds an authentic touch.

Library living

This Stick and Go vinyl 'trompe l'oeil' gives the appearance of a library without the expense and effort of having to make 100s of books. It's a kind of instant library, and highly effective. Library steps by Dolls House Emporium, cabinet by Reina Mab and books a mixture of bought and hand-made.

Nautical but nice!

These seafaring accessories – trunks and shipping charts – conjure up images of the coast, but this sailing boat paper from Poppet's Dolly Bits adds a nautical flourish that brings cohesion to the separate items. ➡



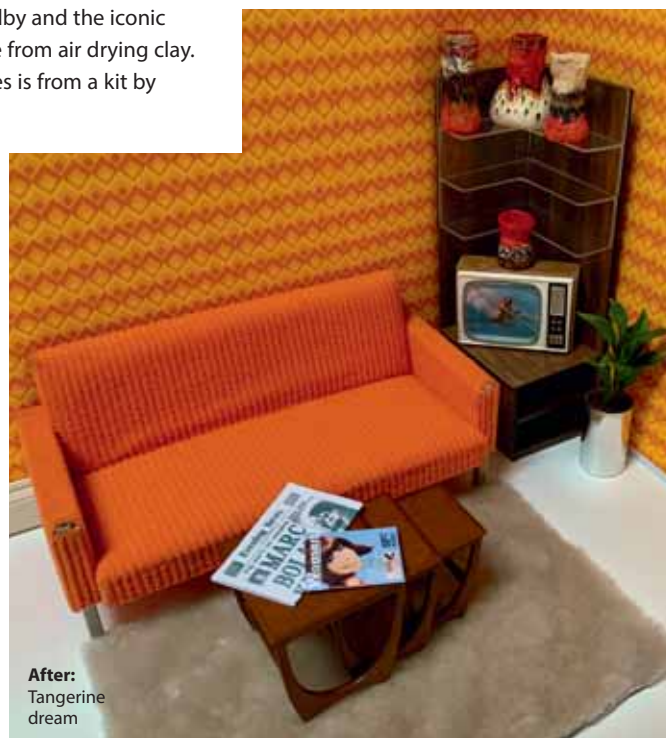


Arts and crafts

Jane Harrop Arts and Crafts furniture made from kits (the plans are also available in her book on Arts and Crafts) is shown to best affect against an authentic design, Lion and Dove with Briar Rose, by Bradbury & Bradbury.

Tangerine dream

Nothing says 1970s more than orange. It was the colour of the decade and this paper by Poppet's is totally groovy, man! The rug is made from a scrap of shearling, the TV is a vintage piece by Lundby and the iconic 'fat lava' vases are made from air drying clay. The G-Plan nest of tables is from a kit by Arjen Spinhoven.



Fab 50s

The distinctive style of the 1950s is evoked with this iconic wallpaper, adding real period atmosphere to the room, which contains a resin Eames lounge chair and ottoman designed in 1956, and a 1950s salon table from a kit by Arjen Spinhoven. The painting of the so-called 'green lady' by Vladimir Tretchikoff dates from 1952 and was sold at Woolworth's! The Zambesi vase was made from air-drying clay.



Before:
Gentleman's relish



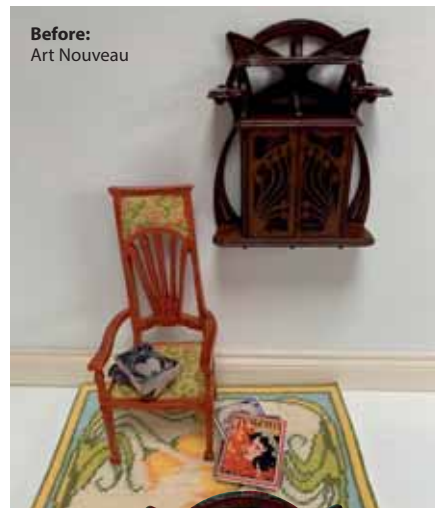
Gentleman's relish

Wood panelling is expensive, but a wood effect wall covering is quick and easy – and very effective. This lovely design from Stick and Go creates an atmospheric gentleman's study, with warm, rich mahogany panels created in an instant. Gothic bookcase by Sue Cook.

Art Nouveau

The poppy was a characteristic Art Nouveau motif and this vibrant design by Poppets Dolly Bits forms the perfect backdrop to an Arjen Spinhoven cabinet and hand-stitched rug.

Before:
Art Nouveau



After: Gentleman's relish



After: Art Nouveau



After: Classic Colonial (see p56)

Classic Colonial

This Colonial Williamsburg design by Bradbury & Bradbury works in harmony in this music room. Tea set by Victoria Fasken and table from a kit by Alison Davies. Candlesticks are painted plastic ones from a kit by Crysnon. Fruit made from polymer clay.

READER GIVEAWAY!

Would you like to win some beautiful paper to give one of your rooms a makeover?

Five lucky winners drawn at random can each choose three sheets of paper of their choice from Poppet's Dolly Bits exciting range, enough to revamp a complete room.

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

Competition closes 31st August 2021, good luck!

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



Building a village

With help from Dolls House & Miniature Scene, Rosalind Embleton has been making miniatures since 1995 and with lockdown proving to be the perfect time, she has delved into the world of kits – a move which has since added to her substantial collection!

I started my hobby in miniatures in 1995 when I spotted a 'leather' settee in a dolls house shop and loved it so much I decided I needed a dolls house to put it in! Most of my houses I have built myself, from flat pack. Others I bought ready-made and decorated and furnished with the help of your fantastic magazine!

The grand house with the dual staircase at the front and the red door is the first house I built from flat pack, I even managed to put lighting in. I bought it from a shop in Newcastle which sadly isn't there anymore. The house with blue door, a beautiful Edwardian style house, was from Streets Ahead and is called Highgate House, one of Sid Cooke's houses. It consists of four rooms and a basement area with side gates, the front opens in one piece and it has a hinged roof. It is the last one I built in 2019 before the virus started. There is actually a third house built from flat pack, from Dolls House Emporium and a ballet boarding school I built from a kit, all MDF.

I started delving into miniature kit work while in the first

► My very first build



lockdown and have continued until now. The kit work has added to collection and I now have, at present and not including my new beach huts, 13 houses and shops completing the collection.

When the lockdown came in March I already had a beach hut to start and was so pleased at the result I decided to fill my sideboard. It took quite a while but, as I was going nowhere, I ordered them from a lovely man in Edinburgh who cuts them and posts out. They are great as they come plain and you can paint them whatever colours you wish. They have pride of place in the room. When the outside of the beach huts were finished, I bought the café.

The rails on the upper floor were very fiddly, they were the size of matchsticks and had to be painted first, glued, then

inserted into grooves of rails. I have arthritis in my hands so found it a bit awkward but I got there in the end. I also recently built the café, purchased online from Hobby's, with open top dining and filled it with people. Every night while watching television I do miniature knitting for my little people. I've been doing this since the very beginning. Some of the patterns are from your magazine, quite a lot are made up and some are from friend. The people themselves I get from fairs, friends and Ebay.

I have also built a shop in the past year, well, it is more of a department store as it has four different shops inside, and an

◀ The Ballet Academy

▼ Inside the Ballet Academy





▲ Inside the Victorian shop

▲ Seaside shopping

antique shop, both built from kits from the man I mentioned previously in Edinburgh. My collection also comprises of a tea room with upper living room I built from a kit.

My favourite piece is the little Victorian shop with the perspex top. This took me the longest to create as I was new to the hobby at the time and I wanted to make a wooden floor from strips of wood not just floor paper. I wanted to

make the food packets and food too.

Now apart from needing to furnish inside some of the beach huts, I am now getting itchy fingers and needing another project to start. However I do admit I am running out of room, I'm sure I can squeeze one in somewhere though!

When I stated this hobby I found an article in a dolls house magazine asking for

pen pals who were miniaturists who were interested to get in touch. I decided to take part and I still write to the two ladies I connected with in the very beginning. One is in Canada, the other is in Scotland and we share ideas. Could it be an idea for an article in your magazine? I love looking back on all my old mags of yours when I need tips for certain projects. 🏠

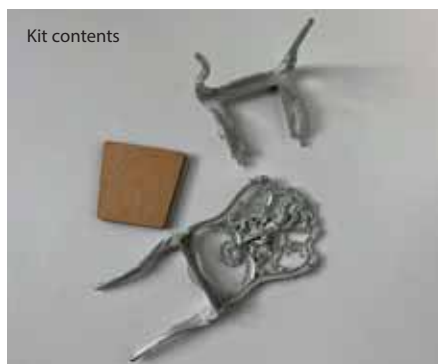
▼ Beach huts



The Whole Kit & Caboodle:

FRENCH 'PUTTO' CHAIR

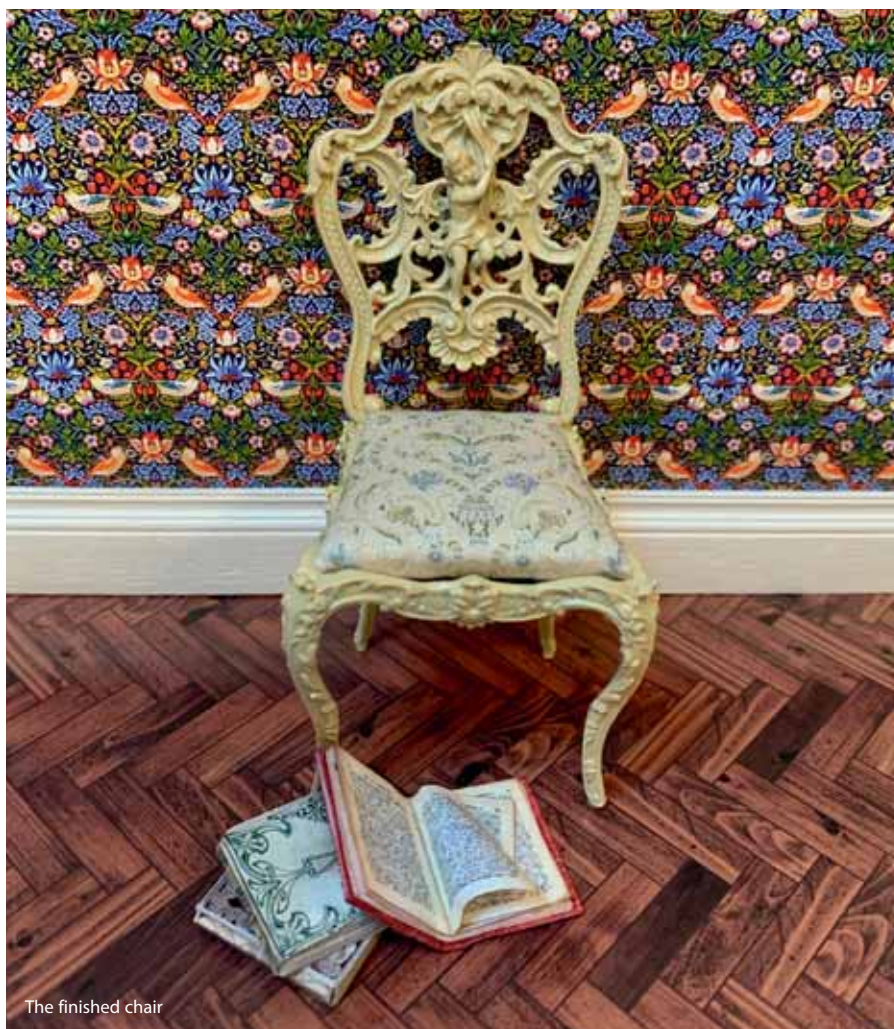
Find out how Moi Ali rates this Alison Davies chair kit



What's not to love about French antiques? They ooze chateau chic, but oh, the price tag! Don't despair: you may not be able to afford the full-size French armoire or fauteuil, but Alison Davies's kits will give you the look – in miniature, of course, and with a correspondingly small price tag!

Alison's kits cover a very wide range of items, but the choice of chairs is second to none, so if you have a chair fetish, check out her website. Alison used to cast in resin for her kit components, but has swapped this for metal alloy casting. It allows for very fine details to be reproduced and once primed, takes paint very well.

When your chair is painted, you will need to upholster it. The chair comes with a wooden seat base, but you will need foam and fabric (thin foam from packaging is ideal). I used a delicate cotton print from Poppet's Dolly Bits, but an opulent velvet would work well too, or a raw silk. 🏠



Moi says...

"Create a pristine finish or opt for a slightly distressed shabby chic effect."

THE FACTS

Buy from: Alison Davies

(www.alisondaviesminiatures.co.uk)

Cost: £25

Comes with: Chair frame and seat base

Additional materials needed:

Super glue, paint, foam and fabric

Specialist tools needed: None

Time: An hour

Experience: Beginner

Top tip: Remove any spurs from the casting of the metal components using a small needle file. It's a normal part of preparing any white metal piece prior to assembly.

READER GIVEAWAY!

Would you like your very own Alison Davies French chair?

One lucky reader will win this lovely Alison Davies Putto chair kit.

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

Competition closes 31st August 2021, good luck!

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