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welcome



This year I made a big move out of the house where I grew up. I moved out

many years ago but after only a year needed to move back in to help my dad after he broke both legs in a car accident. But this move is for keeps and I am selling my family home.

I created many wonderful works of art in that house and although it has happy memories, I just couldn't physically keep it to its full potential anymore. It's so much easier to upkeep or even build a 1:12 scale house! I know my dad is okay with my decision. He left that home to me when he passed away to be sure I had a safe place.

I managed to get all of my miniatures to the new place with only minimal damage. I sold a few to downsize, but preferred to get rid of more furniture than more dollhouses!

Our dollhouses become part of our family and each is filled with hours of work and lots of memories. I look forward to creating future pieces in my new studio. This issue of *DHM* definitely inspired me to keep adding to my dollhouses so their story is told.

Auralea Krieger, Editor
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A Thanksgiving Turkey for the Table

Susan Bukowski shares her extensive vintage miniature collection with us and reminds us that decorating your miniature houses for the holidays is always joyous!

BY SUSAN BUKOWSKI

Since childhood, I have enjoyed using holiday-themed miniatures in my dollhouses. Guests love peeking inside these tiny worlds and finding all has been arranged to mirror the festivities.

In November, nothing evokes the anticipation of a palatial feast like a Thanksgiving turkey. It is easy to set a traditional meal with the many options of newly-created, vintage, and antique miniature foods available. You could invest in highly detailed artisan-made foods. There are some are even realistic enough to be included in miniature museum rooms, such as the Thorne Rooms, in the Chicago Art Institute. Other options are to buy mass-produced delights from craft stores, or even create some charming dishes of



your own. No matter what you choose, a convincing story is told by how you arrange these pieces

for your mini gathering.

Enjoy decorating your special dollhouse for the holidays!

FEATURE

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A Few Rooms in Nob Hills Mansion

Miniaturist Patty Larosa has been making her exquisite Nob Hill Mansion into a masterpiece over the past sixteen years.

BY PATTY LAROSA

This dollhouse was purchased by my husband over twenty one years ago. It was built by Chip Crossman as a commission.

Chip designed this house as an authentic Nob Hill Victorian mansion in miniature, from the period of 1870-1875. The house has sixteen rooms, but in this feature we will be focusing on the kitchen, sewing room and butler's pantry.

Sewing Room

This room has come to life, literally. The doll on the sofa is a perfect image of my husband's mother who has passed; we called her Nana. I painstakingly carved, sanded, and painted the Nana doll face until I thought it was the perfect image of her. I cut and styled her hair the same way Nana wore her hair. Nana's legs, shoes and body look



just like the real-life Nana. She is holding a little girl; this doll looks just like our grandchild Emma.

Nana and Emma are sitting on an overstuffed sofa enjoying the music on the radio. This radio is a copy of an RCA floor model tube radio. My miniature radio actually works, I am able to turn it on and off, or change the stations by pushing its little buttons. The only problem is, the Nana doll is turning on the radio without our assistance.

My husband and I will be in our craft room and all of sudden the radio comes on, I will say, "I guess Nana wanted her radio on again." We laugh, shut the radio off, only to have the Nana doll turn it back on! Like I said, this sewing room has literally come to life.







The walls in this room are covered with a patterned wallpaper, that was used in the old Victorian mansions. The floors are hardwood, covered with a tapestry rug. I made the valance and the pull-down shades by hand. The shades are made from a vintage handkerchief and the pull-down ring is just a small washer that I wrapped with white thread.

The iron board burnt mark is made from the product called "Soot" that I discussed in more detail on the kitchen page. The wall hangings are actual miniature

needlepoint works of art. My favorite piece is the Henning vintage treadle sewing machine, which actually works.

Once again, there is a mouse problem in the house; our tiny little creatures can be seen on top of the valance and on the carpet, while the house cat looks spooked by its presence.

The room behind this room is the laundry room, where the house maid is mopping the floor because the old wringer washer overflowed. The water in her sink is made from little wax beads, that when heated,





turn into water. This melted wax water can be poured into your miniature sinks or tubs, where it then takes the shape of water and hardens. To make the mop look a tiny bit aged, I soaked it in tea water. The shades in this room were made with a netted ribbon, the pull downs on the shades are washers covered with string.

Well, now my haunted little miniature sewing room is completed – only 14 more rooms to go. Good night, Nana!

The kitchen

I especially enjoyed creating this room. First it was large enough for my hands to fit into it, second, in real life I love cooking, and third I really wanted to create a warm-hearted, welcoming environment.

The red and white checkered floor is just paper that I covered in varnish repeatedly so it would look like tiles. I was pleasantly surprised the paper took the varnish without peeling. I used the same process for the white tile walls, but this time



I brushed on a light brown varnish so the tile would have a dirty, aged appearance.

The decorative wallpaper trim was on the top, so it would have been next to the ceiling. But I wanted the decorative trim part to not be on the top, so I cut it off and put it on the bottom, separating the tile and the wallpaper. I never accept anything for face value; these little changes and alterations make the room look so much more life-like.

“The water heater in the corner is leaking; the water is just a clear glue that I puddle on the tile floor.”





You can purchase a model train powder product called "Soot": it comes in black, rust, and white. This is what I used above the pot belly wood burning stove to dirty the wallpaper, and above the old water heater, to give the room a vintage look.

The water heater in the corner is leaking; the water is just a clear glue that I puddle on the tile

floor. I made the glue look dirty by staining it, and the mop in the corner, with tea bags. The water coming out of the kitchen faucet is also just clear glue.

As you can see, there is a mouse above the open cabinet on top of the radio, for my grandchildren to find. This is my whimsical tradition of hiding mice in every room that I complete. The mice never stay



in the same place, I move them around, to keep things interesting.

Being very particular about the dolls in my house, I try to find dolls that look like people I know. The male doll in this room is a likeness of my father, the child doll on the floor looks like my granddaughter Eva. The white lab I had custom made is a perfect image of our dog Blaze, who died a few years ago. He is the best part of this kitchen.

Since the kitchen has over 16 lights, they needed to be put on their own transformer. Thankfully, my husband was able to design this solution – more on that later on. Well, my little Kitchen is finished, only 15 more rooms to go!

Butler's Pantry

This room was very difficult to complete due to how narrow it was. The floor is hardwood, and to achieve the look I wanted, I stained the wood with a dark stain, let it dry, and then sanded the wood with steel wool. This process was repeated three times, then a final coat of clear varnish was applied.

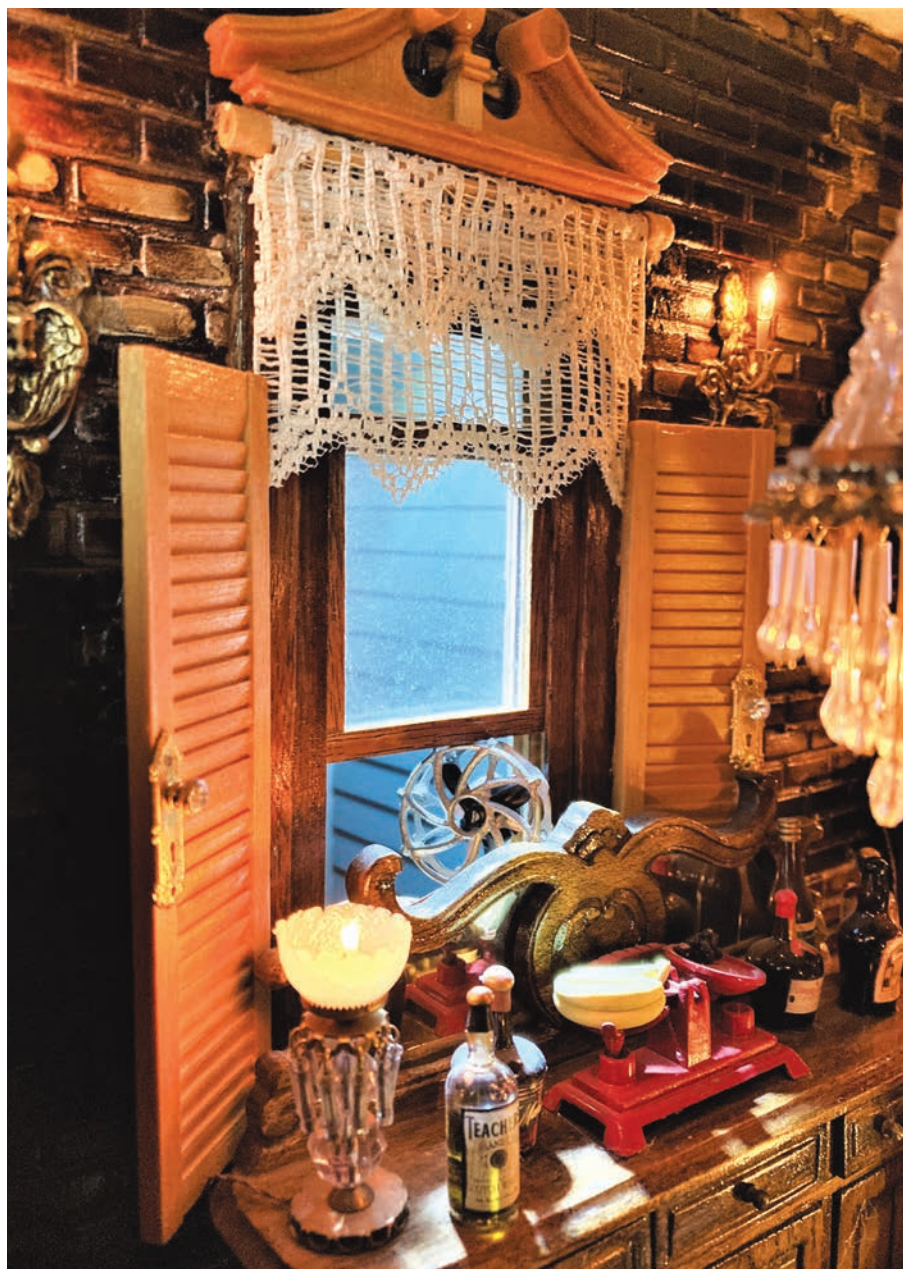
The walls are made of a very



inexpensive red vinyl brick that can be purchased online at any miniature store. To make the brick look old and damp, I used a dark brown wood stain, then coated it with varnish, then accented it with a gray paint.

I like to go to thrift stores to find items I can use; in this case it was an old macrame purse that I took apart and made into the window valance. The tablecloths hanging over the dish cabinet are made from vintage handkerchiefs. The copper pot and wine still were made from miscellaneous miniature kitchen pots, and copper wires that I had.

As you can see, there is a mouse on the beam that has meat and



cheese hanging on it. Again, the beam was made from old things around the house. I just used a small piece of balsa wood, carved out grooves, added little metal hinges and screws, and hung the meat on it.

Remember how I said that I am very particular about the dolls in my house and I try to find dolls that look like people I know? The doll in this room is a likeness of Ambassador Glen Holden.

‘My three grandchildren love to find the mice when they visit.’

Ambassador Glen Holden served during President Ronald Reagan's administration. My husband was his personal helicopter pilot during that time.

The back shelves are filled

with preserves, just as you would expect in an old pantry. Each shelf has lights on them so the jars will illuminate. This room has over 15 lights, which presents another problem, and needs to be put on its own transformer to run all the lights. That problem was solved by my husband: he built an outside tower that matched the style of my house, with toggle switches to control each section of the house. The pictures show how the work was done; I still need to complete the painting of this tower so it will blend in with the house. The Butler's Pantry is finished, three rooms down, only 13 more to go!

To see more of Patty's Nob Hills Mansion download a digital version of *American Miniaturist* 161.



miniature art by Auralea Krieger



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A Dedicated Doll Maker

Minna Toivari from Finland shares her story about how she became fascinated with sculpting wonderfully detailed miniature porcelain dolls.

BY JOAN MCKENZIE

When Minna was a small child, she fell in love with a beautiful dollhouse she had discovered in a store window. This dollhouse had functioning electric lights, operable doors and a staircase leading up to the second floor. She thought that this was exactly like a real home! She so desperately wanted this as a Christmas present, however, Santa brought her only an overly simplistic house. The coloring was gloomy brown, there were no doors or windows, and she was never able to think of it as her own.

She decided to build a home with a stable for her Mary Quant Daisy doll. Minna made everything she could by herself and ensured that everything would be as realistic as it exists in the real world.

More than 15 years later, she returned to the world of miniatures and dolls when she enrolled in a class held by Piitu Nykopp, who had studied doll making in the USA and Germany. Piitu was the first Finnish woman to receive the internationally acclaimed Grand Master of Doll-making title from the American Doll Artisan Guild.

At the same time she was taking the class, she made windows, doors, wiring, and a small staircase leading upstairs. After the completion of this structure, her mini residents began moving in.

About 50% of our readers here at *Dollhouse Miniatures* believe that a home without a resident is an empty house. Minna agrees completely. She likes how dolls bring a dollhouse to life and make it a



Miniature artist Minna Toivari.

real home with their personalities. Minna found that she yearned to learn more about creating her own dolls. She took several different doll making classes and started learning sculpting on a small scale. Making dolls combines art and craftsman-



ship and she found the combination of these things to be fascinating.

If eyes are the mirror to the soul, then this is where one should begin. When Minna is creating dolls for dollhouses, she strives for realism. The personality of the doll should be evident in its face and essence. She endeavors to continually develop her skills and learn from her role models. It's clear to see from the photographs in this feature how her dolls are completely unique, and very beautifully composed. In fact, I can now look at a picture of a doll and know immediately if it has been made by Minna.

While each doll is distinct, there is something so singular about Minna's dolls that are not like any others. They are completely delightful and filled with personality. The older folk seem to have lots of stories to tell; they have been through hardship and joy during their lives, but their glass is always half full, so they appreciate the life and all the days that they have ahead of them.

Minna has advised that there are numerous diverse areas of exper-



“They are completely delightful and filled with personality.”

tise in doll making where one can develop sculpting, painting, hair, clothing, and photography. One can even improve in painting the pinhead-sized eyes of the doll, and there are numerous painting techniques. Repeatedly, Minna makes multiple sketches for a doll, however, only the best versions get used for the final model. Sometimes one drop of glue falls on a silk dress of an almost finished doll – and then

multiple hours of work are futile. Occasionally one piece of porcelain falls to the floor and shatters. Last summer a magpie seized a doll's head when Minna was assembling dolls in her garden. That had to be devastating.

Minna prefers natural materials. She makes her miniature dolls out of New York Dynamic Porcelain's slip that use old Seeley's formulas-which she considers to be one of the best products available. Porcelain is fascinating due to its poise, durability, and stability. As a material-porcelain is both strong and sensitive. In soft parts of the body, she uses organic Finnish sheep wool. For the cloth-



1



2

1 Minna's little girl in a checkered dress. 2 Young boy in a sweatshirt. 3 This little girl has long straight hair tied up with a ribbon and look at those adorable slippers! 4 These two are jet-setters and they are heading off on their latest adventure.



3



4



This beautiful one-inch scale grandmother is soaking in the sun with some beach yoga.

ing, she uses cotton, linen, and silk. Her hair is made from silk or other natural fibers, sometimes rayon. Most of her dolls are in a 1:12 scale, but sometimes she makes them in smaller scales as well.

Making porcelain dolls is a slow and laborious process. Minna sculpts all of her doll models. Her favorite tool is a metallic sculpting utensil. Minna is also fond of her tiny brushes. Perhaps the most valuable tool of all is her magnifying glass with a lamp. Each doll is fired at least five times in a kiln before they are assembled and clothed.

Sometimes Minna finds it difficult to give away one of her dolls, so that doll manages to sneak into her dollhouse to live there in secret. The first version of each doll can be found

inside her dollhouses.

In the beginning, Minna's doll making was merely a hobby. However, now it has become her second job. She also works in the IT industry at an artificial intelligence company. She has a degree in doll sculpting and graduated as a Specialist Qualification in Handicrafts in 2018.

Minna also teaches art doll making and sculpting to future craft professionals, and she holds miniature doll workshops. She sells miniature porcelain dolls at some local dollhouse miniature fairs, and she sells online through Etsy. Last, she sometimes takes commissions.

She has been planning a potential excursion to a dollhouse miniature fair abroad, but for the





past couple of years it has not been possible to do this safely with the pandemic still looming.

Dollhouses are an art form for Minna. She considers the creative and versatile process where wood, textiles, wires, metals, and ceramics can be used as needed elements. However, when making miniatures, Minna stresses that using your imagination, trying multiple techniques and always being open to learning new skills is of paramount importance. Usually, Minna makes her miniatures at her home, but she sometimes creates at the local miniature club, and she occasionally takes classes. She is also delighted

to find miniatures made by other artisans inside her dollhouses. Currently Minna already has seven dollhouses in varying sizes, and she does not dare tell herself that “there will be no more”.

Minna is always fascinated to see the dolls that she makes come to life. They live in their homes and travel to all parts of the world. Her dolls are having adventures! Some of them are living in the heat of California, some live with retired folk in Florida, some are in the wilds of Australia, and some have travelled to the supreme beauty of New Zealand. And of course, they live all across Europe. Minna is always happy to hear from





people who have adopted her dolls to see how they are doing.

Dolls enter the human world through photographs. For example, her beautiful woman wearing white and sitting by the ocean practicing yoga, looks so happy even though she has left her home base. She is enjoying life to the fullest. And this makes Minna very happy. She always takes a few dolls with her when she travels abroad.

When Minna became aware of the worldwide fascination for quality dollhouse miniatures it was close to the year 2000. At the turn of the millennium, this was a relatively new and small hobby in Finland. Over the years, the popularity and the awareness of this art form has transformed and grown in

Finland as well as around the world. The internet and social media have helped spread the word. Because of the versatility and enchantment, Minna believes that the miniature art form will preserve its esteem and continue to grow. Minna has beautifully encapsulated my own thoughts perfectly:

"When there is chaos around us in the real world, there is gentleness, goodness, and beauty in the world of miniatures."



artist details

Minna Miniatures

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Stroll Along Vancouver's Main Street

Bonnie Morrison tells the story of her trio of Landygo room boxes that create an imaginary shopping district many would love to visit on a weekend outing.

BY DEB WEISSLER

Award winning miniaturist Bonnie Morrison may have begun as a blue ribbon cake baker, but it was miniatures that captured her heart. In 1982, she won four blue ribbons for a real size "Christening" cake she decorated following two 8-week classes in Australian and African cake decorating techniques. It features a beautifully dressed bedroom and afterwards someone approached Bonnie and asked if she did miniatures. "What's miniatures?" Bonnie replied. A bit of research and two weeks later she joined the Miniature Club of British Columbia and has never baked a full size contest cake since!

Years later, this lifetime member and former board member of NAME loves the idea of including

all her favorite crafts in one genre: mini calligraphy, cake decorating, decoupage and miniature collecting. It was a trio of Landygo room boxes that touched off one of her biggest projects, inspired by the architecture of Vancouver's historic Main Street and her own town of Fort Langley.

"I saw a room box for sale at a local show, loved it, and bought it," Bonnie recalls. "No sooner had the dealer put the piece in my hands when he said, 'there is another piece that goes with it'. Turns out it was both dirty and missing windows, so I bought it as-is. Unfortunately I didn't have enough cash so I borrowed the money from my friend, Arlone Emmington. Then the dealer said there was a third piece, but he had donated it to the show



Miniaturist, Bonnie Morrison.

raffle. It turns out, Arlone's husband won the raffle! When I repaid the borrowed money, she handed me the third piece, saying her husband wanted me to have it!" Now Bonnie had three room boxes that required extensive restoration.

Intrigued by the shops on Main





Street in Vancouver and businesses in other small towns, Bonnie went armed with a camera and notebook, intent on replicating some of the interior and exterior finishes that intrigued her. She set to work with wood, paint, Fimo, Air Dry clay, fabric, matte board, wiring, strip lighting, spray paint, leather, decoupage, alcohol ink, bricks, sawdust, plastic, egg cartons, resin, sandpaper and metal to create a Best in Show winner.

"Once I had obtained the three boxes, it was a matter of going through everything I had made or acquired over the years and placing them where I thought they fit best. I had also done a lot of miniature baking, cake decorating, stained glass and millinery, so slowly things fell into place. This project finally gave them a home."

The result was a street scene that includes three shops housing four

businesses: Nos Quoque Exploremus, an eclectic antique shop; Le Parisienne, a bakery; Yes M'Lady boutique and Little Peeps, which share a space. Rather than shove the three room boxes together, Bonnie placed them far enough apart so she could create alleyways, a rooftop garden, an outdoor art gallery, a sidewalk bistro and graffiti art on the rear of the buildings.

Nos Quoque Exploremus is filled with a variety of treasures even before stepping inside. Stained glass pieces are hanging in the windows and a tiny jewelry box sits outside on a trunk. The trunk is filled with a hockey stick, fishing pole with worm and books, while a BC Apples wooden crate is stuffed full of needlepoint pillows (Terry Parkin). Nearby sits a washing scrub board, box of rubber boots, a steamer trunk filled with knitted wares (Florence Thompson), and



An antique trunk filled with miniature treasures and trinkets.

dressers. The Sunkist Orange crate is made into an adorable 1940's era Crate Scooter with roller skate wheels (Paddy Culhane).

Bonnie points out all the details. "The front is black highlighted with turquoise while tea-stained shingles add texture under the front windows. The interior is painted white with beams and shelves where tapestries and a chair can be hung. Inside you'll find lamps, frames, a toolbox, dollhouse, shelves, records, suitcases, a gold cupboard filled with bric-a-brac, hats, handbags, a chandelier, stained glass table, carpet, baskets and masks, to name a few.

An overflow lot allowed for a place for a croquet set (Peggy Logan), milk jug, oil barrel, wash basin, cart wheel, bale of hay, branch chair, and a variety of bird houses. There is a rusted-out bicycle, a wonderful old pie cupboard and ice box filled with little bottles of Coke resting in the ice."

Le Parisienne is painted in pastels highlighted with gold leafing. Here you can indulge in a high tea served on delicate Stokesay



A mural was painted on the side wall.

Ware china. If you are just window browsing, you'll see a tea cup and saucer chandelier, a chocolate Eiffel Tower and a Tinker Bell tea cup, (Elizabeth Murta). The ribbon cake was made in a Ruth Stewart class, and the display rack holds éclairs, choux pastry puffs, a croque-en-bouche and other delicacies from classes taught by Carl Bronsdon, who made the beverages and goodies sitting on top of the golden tea trolley.

Inside, the display cabinets hold years of Bonnie's mini cakes, pies and pastry making and pieces collected from around the world such as a small selection of pastries purchased when Bonnie met up with Orsi Skulteli in Budapest and





A little positive graffiti on the shops.



at Schonbrunn Palace, in Vienna, or the boxed selection of cookies (Paris Miniatures/Anita Mills). All but one of the display cases and work spaces were made in various workshops.

On the red accent wall, a collection of clocks, café signs and magnets bring back memories of Bonnie's trips abroad. Outside the bakery, a bistro set is made from white covered wire and painted black. The stained-glass table (Sharon Hammell) features Rennie MacIntosh's roses. A colorful flower basket hangs on the corner

where a set of stairs allows the gardener access to water them. An Eiffel Tower graffiti scene is painted on the back of the building. After a cup of tea, we're off to Little Peeps!

Stepping through the wrought iron gates, past two topiaries (Theresa Daniele), Easter is in season all year round. A tiny bell atop the Dutch door announces our arrival. Hutches and window sills are filled with Easter candies and those quintessential marshmallow peeps (Stephanie Bell). A table is laden with a hollow chocolate Easter Egg with a bunny inside (Julie Johnson);

an Easter tree made from a grape stem, baskets filled with goodies, pillows (Terry Parkin), books and gift ideas. "Above on the white brick wall is more from my mini stash and I can't help but wonder how I ever acquired so many bird-houses", Bonnie laughs.

Bonnie loves to show off her miniatures, from grade school children to senior living. »

With Easter shopping done, let's head to the last building on Main Street, Yes M' Lady. Outside the boutique is a blanket rack with a hat, purse and knitted blanket (Jan Smith) and underneath blanket (Florence Thompson). A brick walkway leads to the doorway flanked by two Maui-shell topiaries (Julie Johnson). Inside is a stunning porcelain mannequin (Paddy Culhane) holding a gorgeous Swarovski necklace purchased at the Kensington Dollhouse Show. Equally exquisite are two identical hats (Nancy Manders), one atop the mannequin and the other placed upside down on the floor in order to show the incredible detail of silk rose finishing of the hat's design.



There is a lovely outdoor Easter scene at the entrance of this charming shop.

The boutique is filled with many hats both purchased and gifted, as well as Bonnie's own millinery and wig designs, one of her favorite things to make in 1:12 scale. The cabinets, dresser, perfume bottles and bric-a-brac were all made during several classes. Laden with shopping bags, we head north, where a sandwich board points to Arts Off Main, an outdoor art shop featuring miniature canvases based on the originals (Chris Cooper & Peggy Logan) by Monet and Van Gogh.

Bonnie loves to show off her miniatures, from grade school children to senior living. The very young and very old are spellbound. Catching the interest of tweens and teens is a challenge. They often walk around her displays but are quick to return to their seats. That's

when she sends them on a Scavenger Hunt challenge, where they must return to the vignette and find the items on her list.

"I let them know that knowledge of geometry and mathematics, history, English, woodworking, cooking (for mixing resins or making air-dry porcelain), metal work, and electrical skills can be used to make a miniature, in other words everything they are taught in school! I also explain that both men and women have made full-time careers out of miniatures."

Over the years Bonnie has won many awards and blue ribbons, hosted holiday open houses and taught workshops at various NAME conventions. "We definitely need to keep introducing our craft to younger people, to make it exciting and inspire them to use their imaginations."



Don't miss **dollhouse.live**

The team at Dollhouse Miniatures weren't sitting idly by during lockdown. As well as producing the magazine we also came up with an online newsletter to serve the mini community.

But the good news is that **Dollhouse.live** has been such an amazing success that we've decided we have to keep it running.

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calendar listings 2022/23

Due to the current pandemic, please be sure to double check with the show provider's website and social media pages for the latest up to date information.

November 4 - 6

CHERRY HILL, NJ

Philadelphia Miniaturia 2022 will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton, Philadelphia/Cherry Hill located at 2349 W. Marlton Pike, Cherry Hill, NJ 08002. To be admitted on Friday preview, November 4, 2022, you must purchase a preview ticket for \$25, (covers full weekend admission). Preview hours are Friday, 6pm - 9pm and Saturday, 9am - 10am.

You may purchase from dealers during preview hours! Workshops listed on our website: www.philadelphiainiaturia.com. For daily show general admission - pay at the door, Saturday, November 5, 2022, the show runs from 10am to 5pm and Sunday, November 6, 2022, 10am to 3pm. \$10 Adults per day and \$4 Children under 10 years old per day. Lunch will be available for purchase each day.

November 11 & 12

Chicago, IL

Chicago Autumn Showcase of Miniatures will be held at Holiday Inn, 1000 Busse Rd, Elk Grove Il, Chicago, IL.

Show will be held on Fri 4pm-8pm and Sat 9am-3pm. For more information, please visit

www.miniatureshows.com or contact tdminiatures@gmail.com or call 314-277-2601.

November 19

Columbus, OH

The Columbus Miniature Society (CMS), a 501-C3 non-profit organization, is pleased to announce the 35th annual miniature show and sale on November 19th, 2022, at Bethel International United Methodist Church, 1220 Bethel Road, Columbus, Ohio 43220 from 10:00am - 4:00pm. The longest running miniature event in central Ohio features a free-to-the-public exhibit hall with 150+ displays by local miniature artists. The sales hall has dozens of artisans and shops selling one-of-a-kind scale items. This one-day event features thousands of unique items for sale and is \$5 at the door. Parking is free and the location is completely handicapped accessible. Lunch can be purchased on site and is sponsored by TWIG with all proceeds benefiting their good work. For more information about the event please visit www.columbusminiaturesociety.org

February 4 & 5 2023

San Diego, CA

San Diego Miniature Crafters 48th Annual Miniatures Show & Sale will be held on Feb 4 & 5, Sat 10am - 5pm · Sun 11am - 4pm at a NEW LOCATION: University of San Diego, Hahn University Center, 5998 Alcalá Park Way, San Diego, CA 92110.

Adults \$10 · Kids (8-12) \$5. FREE Sunday with Paid Saturday. Text MINIS to 22828 to get email updates. Exhibits, Sales, Workshops, FREE Parking. Food Available. Website: sdminiatureshow.com FB: facebook.com/sdminiatures IG: instagram.com/sandiego.minishow Email: sd.minishow@gmail.com

February 11th

Culver City, CA

Miniatures West Miniature Fantasy Show and Sale will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott, 6333 Bristol Parkway, Culver City, CA 90230 on Saturday, February 11th, 2023 9:30am - 4:30PM. Tickets \$7.00. Children 6-12 \$3.00 (no strollers). Free Exhibit Room. Parking \$8.00.

For show information, contact Nancy Branch on 310-454-2054, email: wbranch@earthlink.net www.miniatureswest.com

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A Christmas Room With Many Traditions

Debbie Walker completes her goal of making a holiday themed room box in 1:12 scale while reminiscing of Christmases past.

BY DEBBIE WALKER

Goals! We miniaturists love goals, don't we? Whether it be to finish that ten-room mansion we have been working on for the last five years or getting that certain scene 'just right,' we all know how satisfying it feels when, after months of great care and attention, we complete that special project.

I had one project, and one only, for 2022. I wanted to create a

Christmas room box, one that was classy and meaningful; not overly stuffed with items, but 'just right', and in September I could finally say, "mission accomplished."

Welcome to my Christmas Room Box! It truly is my pleasure to share it with you. As with any Christmas scene, let's start with the Christmas Tree. I purchased the tree at a dollar store and set about ordaining it with four strands



The 1:12 scale desk has greeting cards that have come from close friends and perhaps some going out to family.

of clear working lights, beads, genuine ball ornaments, angels and gold garland. Two gold beads sit atop the tree. I was aiming for a Victorian themed tree with a pink satin tree skirt and gifts underneath it. A tiny puppy with a Santa hat guards the gifts, or is he waiting for Santa to come with more?

In front of the tree is the desk, with pencil and cards ready to sign off on and mail. I grew up in the era where everyone sent Christmas cards and I remember every year, we had rows of cards on display at home that we received from friends and family. At the end of the season, we had a huge pile







of cards! I made the pillow on the chair as well as the cross-stitched poinsettia rug that the chair rests on. A small Victorian Christmas tree sits beside the desk.

Next to the tree on the wall is the "Joy Joy Joy" bell pull that I made, and I stitched it with floss that complemented the color scheme of the room; I wanted it to be just right.

The fireplace draws immediate attention, and I spent weeks making

the garland and wreath; they were the most time-consuming part of the entire project. The bows on the garland are made from wired ribbon (it is amazing how much time it took to make those bows) and aside from the gold balls, the decorations are beads that I painted with glue and rolled in glitter so that the coloring was just right. Remember how fun it is working with glitter; there was lots



of handwashing involved. A small Nativity scene, with Mary, Joseph, and Jesus sits to the side of the fireplace. A part of this scene is a tribute to my late Bichon Frise dog, AJ. He lays in front of the fireplace guarding his stocking (that I made) waiting for Santa to arrive.

On the coffee table are some shortbread cookies for Santa. Shortbread was a staple in our home when I was growing up. Every year my mom made shortbread using Grandma's recipe; we all know Grandma's recipes are the best, right? Also on the table are Christmas crackers,



Reutter china, a box of After Eight Mints (another staple in our home) and a copy of Charles Dickens', "A Christmas Carol." If we weren't reading the book at Christmas time, we were watching the movie! Can you relate?

A poinsettia rug is under the coffee table (it is actually a doily that just happened to be just the right shape and size) and two pillows sit on the chairs which I made from Christmas material I had on hand. I made all of the furniture in the room box along with the fireplace from kits, stained in Minwax English Chestnut, my

favorite stain shade. The flooring I had in stock at home and the wallpaper came from "The Little Dollhouse Company" in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

On the wall is a Noel banner, Noel meaning "the Lord's birthday," along with a Reutter Christmas plate rack. A Reutter poinsettia arrangement sits on the floor behind one of the chairs.

I am not a visual person in the sense that I can picture what the final scene looks like when I start a project, but after months of thought, time and patience, I think it turned out just right.



As you think over your miniature goals and what you might like to accomplish in the new year, what would you like to give your care and attention to? Is it finishing that big project with a final dedicated push or starting something new? Whatever it is, what will you do to make sure your project is "just right?" Enjoy your miniature journey and Merry Christmas from my home to yours!



So Little Time

Miniature artist Connie Sauve found a pocket-watch alarm clock at a consignment shop and turned it into a “study in scale” project you will love.

BY CONNIE SAUVE

This little project began after finding a wonderful pocket-watch alarm clock at a consignment shop in Monterey, CA. I immediately visualized a 1:48 scale clock shop inside. A few years ago, I had completed an elaborate clock shop on the top of a grandfather clock called “Hickory Dickory Clock Shoppe”, and since then, I keep finding wonderful ideas for other clock related projects.

The pocket-watch alarm clock was the perfect size to house a 1:48 scale clock collection. It even had a built-in stand which allows the clock to sit at the correct angle on a table. Whenever I start a new project I usually ‘see’ the finished scene in my head, but in this case the project evolved while I was working on it.





A quarter next to the scene, that goes inside the clock, shows the scale.

Since I wasn't sure what the rest of the scene was going to look like, I started by altering the clock. The back of the clock pops out, which gives access to the interior to remove the mechanism inside. I found a very delicate and simple clock face design online, which allowed the interior of the clock shop to be viewed.

Starting with a thin piece of acrylic, I used lead tape found at a golf store and applied the number design to the acrylic using narrow strips. Once the design was finished, I aged the lead with a blackening acid. I also cut out the clock hands using the lead and applied them to the clock face. The finished clock face was then glued to the back of the domed crystal that came with the alarm clock. The hands and clock face are permanently protected inside the domed crystal. The finished piece then slips into the front of the alarm clock. This gave me the look of a real clock, while still being able to view the scene inside.

With the project being so small I didn't need a lot of clocks, so I searched online for 1/4" clocks to fill the space. I ended up ordering a few kits online, bought some at a miniature show and made others using clock cutouts. For the interior of the clock shop, I wanted it to have a rustic and cozy feeling, so I added wood to the back wall and floor, and





used tiny brick for the floor base and around the narrow side walls and ceiling.

I added a few clock gears behind the hands to give the illusion of a working clock.

There are two single LED Nova-lytes at the top of the little room to illuminate the interior. The wires run behind the bricks on the outer walls and out through the bottom of the clock, then through the lid of the top book. A battery pack is hidden inside the secret compartment of the top book. I can also hook up a transformer with a plug-in if I need the lights to work for extended periods of time.

I was lucky to find a heavy chain which is actually a necklace, at an antique shop. It was exactly what I was looking for! I also added the decorative rectangle watch fob which I found at a craft store in the jewelry department.

The scene continued to take shape. I decided I wanted the pocket watch to be sitting on an old book, like it was on a nightstand of a bedroom, or in an old-fashioned library in a turn-of-the-century house. I wanted the book and watch to be



a nice stand-alone vignette and not have wires coming out the back, which is why I used the self-contained battery pack.

Instead of using a real book, I found a secret compartment book at a HomeGoods store. I bought it for the size, because I needed to fit the battery pack inside, and planned on refinishing the outside. I photocopied some antique bookend sheets for the outside of the book and then added the leather on the spine and corners. I aged the whole book by sanding it in spots and rubbing dirt into the paper on the cover. The title for the project, "So Little Time", seemed



appropriate, so I hand-painted the name on the spine in antique gold, and used my name as the author. I also added the little clock on the left of the spine for added interest and dimension.

Not having worked in 1:48 scale before, I had lots of fun making all the clocks for the interior. All the grandfather clocks are made from kits as well as the tiny clock on the shelf. Some of the other clocks are from my collection, and the simple round ones I made from images I found on the internet.

Every clock shop needs a cute little cat to keep it free of mice, so there is a cat stalking a tiny mouse that is sitting on top of the Craftsman grandfather clock. The mouse is actually a very tiny N scale cat which I positioned to look like a mouse.

When I made my "Hickory Dickory Clock Shop", Linda Fisher made two custom full-size, very realistic mice for the scene. I thought this would be a really fun idea for



this project too, so I ordered another mouse from her, and when it arrived a couple weeks later it was perfect! I had Linda position the paws so the mouse could be holding an hourglass.

Months later, thinking I was finished with the project, I got the idea to add a second book to the stack for the clock and mouse to sit on. Once again, I found a secret compartment book at HomeGoods. For the second book, I used the back side of some leather for the main part of the book. It looked really aged which was just what I was looking for. I hand-painted the name of an actual book called "The Clockwork Mouse" along with the author's name. I thought the title fit

“The project lends itself to being changed it up a bit and I can decorate it seasonally.”

perfectly with the project.

I ended up using six different scales in this project which was a lot of fun. The pocket-watch and chain are larger than a real pocket watch, the mouse and books are life-size, the hourglass in the mouse's paws is 1:12 scale, the clocks are 1:48 scale, the cat is O scale, and the tiny mouse is N scale.

The project lends itself to being

changed up a bit and I can decorate it seasonally. For several years, I have displayed the scene during the Christmas season at The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures in Tucson, AZ. I simply add a Santa hat to the mouse and lay a Santa coat in the scene and set the whole project on a snowy winter wonderland.

For starting a project that I had no clear idea of what I wanted it to look like, I really love how it turned out. Sometimes it's best to let creativity lead the way, and see where it takes you.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me Connie Sauve at cmsauve2@gmail.com. ConnieSauveAmericanInMiniature.Shutterfly.com.

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A Taste of Winter

Take the chill off the dark winter nights and take a sleigh ride to visit Robina Patterson's hot chocolate bar for a taste of the holiday season.

BY SADIE BROWN

Capturing atmosphere within a piece of art is not easy, and miniature art is far from the exception. There's the setting, the lighting, the fine detail; all combining to evoke that sense of time and place. The passage of time is ironically one of the few constants in an ever-changing world; the turn of the seasons always guaranteed. Robina Patterson's seasonal diorama perfectly captures the essence of winter.

There's the smell of rich hot chocolate in the cold air, the crunch of freshly fallen snow beneath our feet, and that strange, almost eerie light you only ever get in the darkest days of winter; not quite light, not quite dark. The sun tries hard to light our way to springtime, unable to reach the dizzy heights of a few

short months ago, its warmth on our back little more than a distant memory.

"I grew up with long cold winters, and staying inside for months gets boring fast, so out we went," says Robina, reflecting on her own idyllic childhood memories, and the inspiration behind the scene.

"There were outdoor skating rinks and there would be hot chocolate stands off to the side. It also reminded me of Christmas markets I attended in Germany many, many, years ago, that had stalls that offered hot drinks to customers, so they had something warm while they shopped. I switched my farm store to a Christmas shop, and I wanted to have that same feature, a hot drink while people browsed or went on a sleigh ride."

The backdrop to Robina's diorama, a landscape of bare trees worthy of any Christmas card scene, is thoughtfully chosen, but it is the hot chocolate bar which becomes the scene's beating heart. Hot chocolate itself pre-dates the birth of the Baby Jesus, thousands of years old. Not quite Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, but special all the same.

Built using a modified Greenleaf kit, the bar instantly draws you into the scene, nothing ever tasting quite as good as hot cocoa, outside on a chilly winter day. But just what changes did Robina make to that original kit? "The biggest modification I made to the stand was to add a back with a faux door into it. I was thinking that selling hot chocolate in the winter could be a cold endeavour and my mini seller would like





to have an enclosed space," recalls Robina. "Next, I remade the counter, so it was deeper, and I added some wire to the open sides. That was about it. I didn't use the roof that came with it as I wanted it to be snowy."

That snow is exceptionally realistic, from the way it lightly dusts the surrounding fir trees to the icicles overhanging the bar's sloping roof. Each icicle cleverly handmade and inspired by fellow well known artisan, Kristine Hanna, the roof itself is crafted from a foam board base with a layer of Gesso, added before a finely honed mixture of modelling snow and salt create the final effect.

Like every worthwhile project though, Robina met her challenges along the way, revealing to an audience captivated by the diorama on social media that the roof broke while attempting to correct a warp! Not that you'd ever know; the design flawless in its snowy appearance. The bar's interior is equally well thought out, with every festive flavour catered for! A tin of Christmas tea by Dorota Mateusiak, candy canes and jars of cinnamon and nutmeg are just the start.

'To me there is something magical about a winter's night lit up with colored or white lights.'

A difficult decision amongst so many beautiful pieces, Robina cites the gorgeous pair of urns standing on the counter and offering hot cocoa and coffee as probably her favorite accessory. It's easy to see why. "I knew I wanted something that stood out for serving the hot chocolate and other hot drinks, and the beautiful copper color of those urns did the trick," she says. "There are rolled blankets inside the hut that I made, with the thought they could be given out to customers to keep warm while drinking their hot chocolate. There are also several styles of packaged goods on display inside that I made."

The rolled blankets are, of course, tartan, adding to those festive vibes, and the tiny packets



of mulled apple cider mix look so intriguing. And don't forget those reindeer snacks!

The snowy scene really comes into its own once dusk begins to fall, the bare trees in relief against the darkening sky, that low sun dipping back below the horizon. The winter fir trees twinkle with the same warm white lights found strung around the decking's snow-white fence. You can easily imagine the welcoming glimmer of bright warmth through the trees as temperatures drop and the longest nights begin to embrace that winter chill. "To me lighting the scene was a very important part. I grew up in northern Canada where



it gets dark fast in the winter and seeing Christmas lights was one of my favorite things to do during December. To me there is something magical about a winter's night lit up with colored or white lights."

Day or night, the red and white directional signpost by artisan Carlotta Rossi immediately catches the eye, adding to that sense of atmosphere as it offers a hint of something more, a whole world of Christmas magic to explore amongst this rural woodland clearing. A sleigh ride to Santa's Workshop or the Elf Village, and just

what is waiting for us along Candy Cane Lane? Taking us on a journey through the imagination with just a few simple words.

Having garnered more than a hundred thousand followers on social media, Robina is one of the miniature scenes brightest talents, her scenes able to delve deep into that emotional connection we have with art and the changing seasons, whether it's through recreating a breath of fresh spring air at the Easter table, the 4th of July by the lake or, as we've seen here, enjoying a very Merry Christmas!

An Antique Shop with Charm and Heart

Mikako Nishi achieved her vision of a cozy little antique shop on the European countryside.

BY MIKAKO NISHI

I made this one-inch scale antique shop between 2013 to 2014. I have named it, *Cozy Antiques*. While making this miniature piece I wanted to express a nostalgic and cozy space similar to one you might find in a rural European town.

While I was trying to decide what sort of shop I would make, I found some beautiful dishes and a few sewing boxes I had made in the past. I made the plates back when I was baking pottery from clay and painting the pieces. I was also creating miniature porcelain plates. I have always thought it was sad to store the miniature accessories I've made over the years as well as items I have collected in drawers where they were forgotten and not enjoyed.

As we all know, making an antique shop is the perfect way to pull out all of those forgotten miniatures and display them with purpose and joy.

So, in this dollhouse, the works of other artists I have collected are also displayed along with my own miniature art.

Before I start building a structure I tend to imagine certain scenes. For this one I envisioned various small items all lined up in a bay window where the early afternoon



Miniature artist, Mikako Nishi.

light would showcase them.

I very much enjoy designing bay windows within my structures because I like how much light they add to the room inside. I remembered that there was a window kit I bought when I started making dollhouses, so I decided to use it for this project. When I use kits, I try to add my own unique touch to them to make them stand out as originals. So altering the kits is fun for me.

As for the arrangement of the furniture, in reality, the glass case in the center should face the entrance side of the room. But if I had arranged it that way, it would



A collection of very special items to put on display in the shop.







1 The charming little shop shown from the front. **2** The inside of the shop featuring a large wooden shelf against the wall to hold miniature shop inventory. **3** A dresser with many drawers. **4** A lovely blue chair holds old books and fresh pink roses. **5** The check out counter has a register.





The exterior stone work is gorgeous and every piece that Mikako adds has a purpose and feels like it belongs.

be turned away from the viewer as they look inside. When designing a dollhouse, at an early stage, you have to decide which side you want the house to be seen from.

I made the door to the shop look like a pâtisserie you would find in southern France, but this antique shop has a fully open side. When I make this configuration, I often make another door on the front side so that there is no discomfort. It's troublesome to make two doors, but I think it also has the effect of making the dollhouse feel liberated and spacious, and makes the

viewer want to 'walk' around the room. For this build, I made both doors from scratch.

“I love taking the time to think about ideas for this kind of display.”

I wanted to make this antique shop have a comfortable atmosphere with a touch of femininity. So, for me, that meant

lots of lace and embroidery! I prefer this look to a more pretentious and expensive antique shop.

One of the visions I had for a small scene in the shop was of a sewing box where knitted lace was spilling out. Unfortunately, I am not very skilled with sewing and knitting. I asked my friend who is a miniature tatting lace artist to provide me with some excess end pieces. Tatting is a form of vintage lace. It is a type of needlework, in the same family as crochet.

With those pieces, I was able to



combine small lace edges to make lace necklaces and embroidery samplers. Then, I stored a lot of sewing accessories such as lace on the shelf that's located on the left side of the room. I love taking the time to think about ideas for this kind of display. Sometimes if you spend some time daydreaming you can come up with wonderful ideas to add to your projects.

The decorative plates with the strawberry and butterfly designs are ceramics that I made from scratch. The pottery kiln I have is very small and the temperature is low, so they didn't turn white, but I feel that it's also an interesting nuance. I also drew pictures of sewing boxes, umbrella stands and small foreheads.

‘On this trip, I was able to go to the Cotswolds region in central-southwest England for the first time. ’

I became a little anxious as this work neared completion because I was also making another shop at the time. I was eager to prove to myself that I could make this structure feel like it was in a European countryside. But I felt that something was missing. Perhaps I needed one very special item for this work?

Just at that time was when the Kensington Dollhouse Festival was held in London. I quickly got show, plane and train tickets, made a hotel reservation and took off for a trip to London!

It was a wonderful trip. The Kensington Dollhouse Festival was



The door was aged beautifully and the iron work on the window adds charm.



A closer look at the exterior. The shop has many rusted and weathered items along the path.

a very exciting experience with a lot of great miniatures. I brought back some baby socks and other items. Among them, included some wonderful miniature jewelry.

I had an intuition that these were the special items necessary to complete the antique shop. I remember that they were works by Spanish miniature artists, but unfortunately, I lost that person's card after moving my residence a few times. Someday, somewhere I hope to meet them again.

On this trip, I was able to go to the Cotswolds region in central-

southwest England for the first time. Even though it's my first time, it felt nostalgic...I felt as comfortable as if I was home. I also went to Paris on the Eurostar high-speed rail service. I was relieved to confirm that my design was going in the right direction. I think it was really good that I was able to actually go to the European countryside and experience the atmosphere in person.

You will notice slight variations in the photos that I took at the time of completion and the photos I have taken recently. There are small

items I made and bought later, and the display changed a little. Once I've finished my work, I feel that by occasionally working on it, the fresh air is born, and the work is happy.

My hope for all that have miniature accessories in drawers or in small boxes is that they pull them out and give them a home in a beautiful miniature shop!



artist details

Mikako Nishi

Dollhouses, furniture and other miniatures

Email: minimika2324@yahoo.co.jp

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





The Grand MacLeod Manor

Shelly MacLeod is obsessive about miniatures but also has great technical skills. Put the two together, and you have the recipe for a stunning dollhouse.

BY SANDRA HARDING

I have used the word ‘magnificent’ only a few times over many years writing for you, but this is one creation that really does deserve the title. Shelly MacLeod has created everything you see here, including the front. I guess I had better start at the beginning, with a quote from Shelly: “Painting is a passion, miniatures my obsession”.

Shelly is an artist with her own gallery and she decided that she wanted to create a miniature village in the gallery, which makes complete sense to me! Over eight years she has created a twelfth scale village called Lalla- Ville, as she and her husband live in Lalla, Tasmania. The village measures 19 foot by 19 foot, but she was sad to leave it behind every day in the gallery. The answer was that she would create a





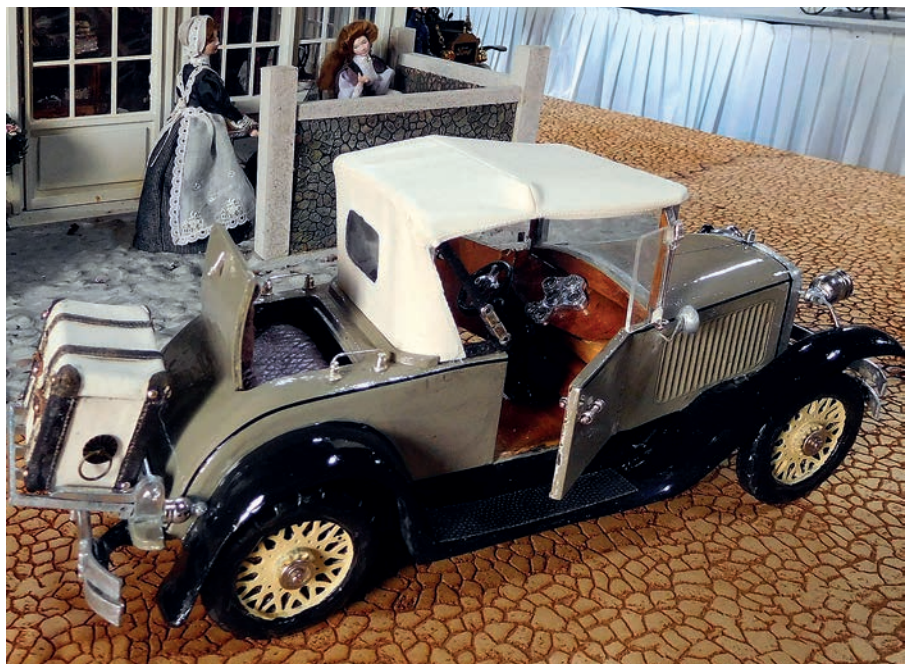


There is an important family wedding today in the Macleod Manor.

very grand house, but at her home where she could play to her heart's content. She decided to design her own and put a glass front on it.

Shelly was soon busy putting together the main structure using 6mm MDF board; the overall size is 6-1/2 foot high, 4 foot wide, and 1-1/2 foot deep. Wow, that's big. The rooms were designed assuming that the front would be glass, and everything would be on show at once but, after listening to friends' comments, she decided that 'a big reveal' would be better.

Retrofitting is never easy and, as Shelly had not planned on a front for the house, the interior walls were quite random and did not line up from top to bottom. Looking at





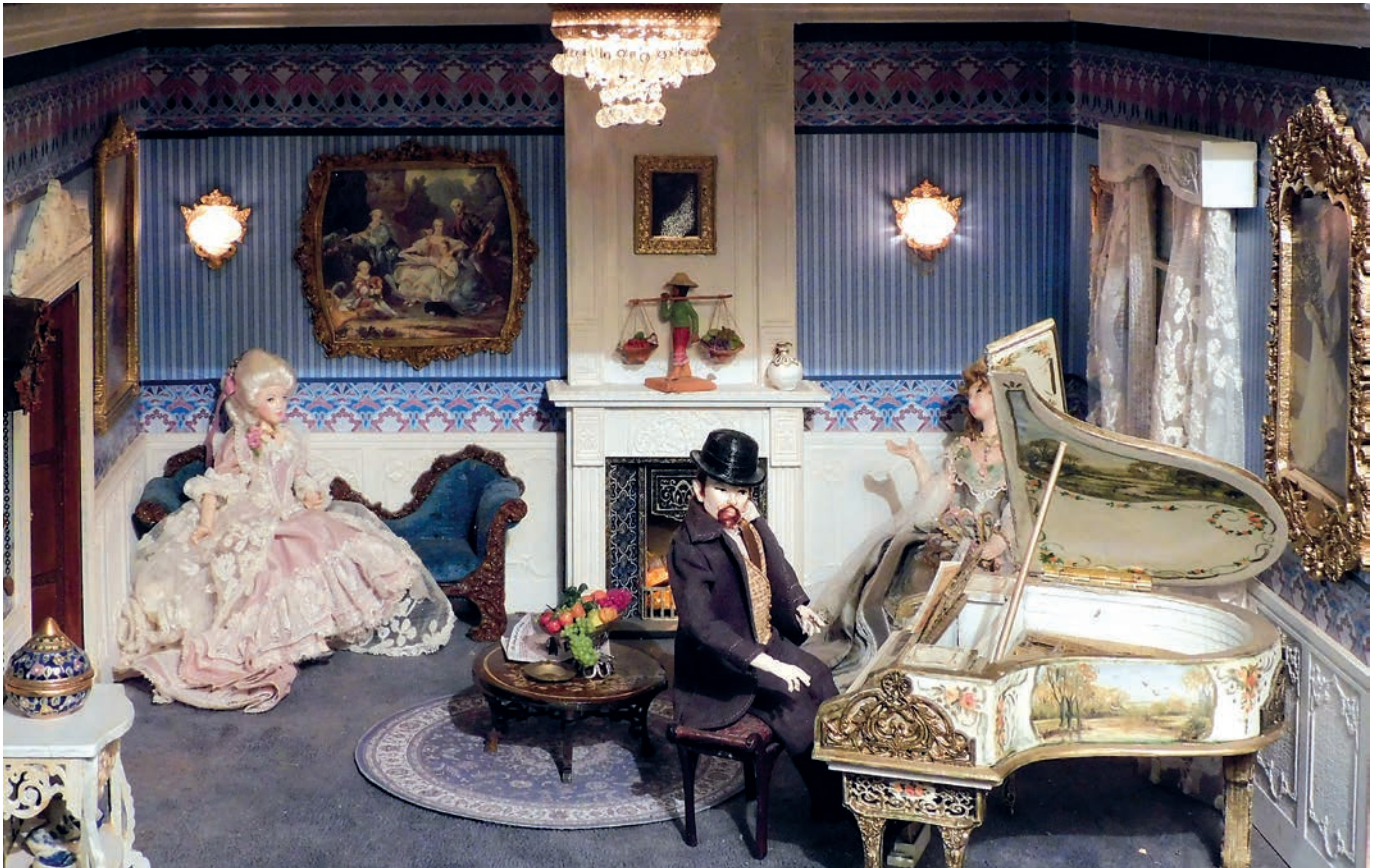


the front therefore, the windows are also random, to avoid having walls half way through the window but my goodness, the use of 12mm marine ply has worked beautifully.

“Over eight years she has created a twelfth scale village called Lalla- Ville, as she and her husband live in Lalla, Tasmania.”

The windows are a real feature which Shelly made using her laser engraving cutting machine. There are three layers on both the inside and outside but, luckily, once Shelly





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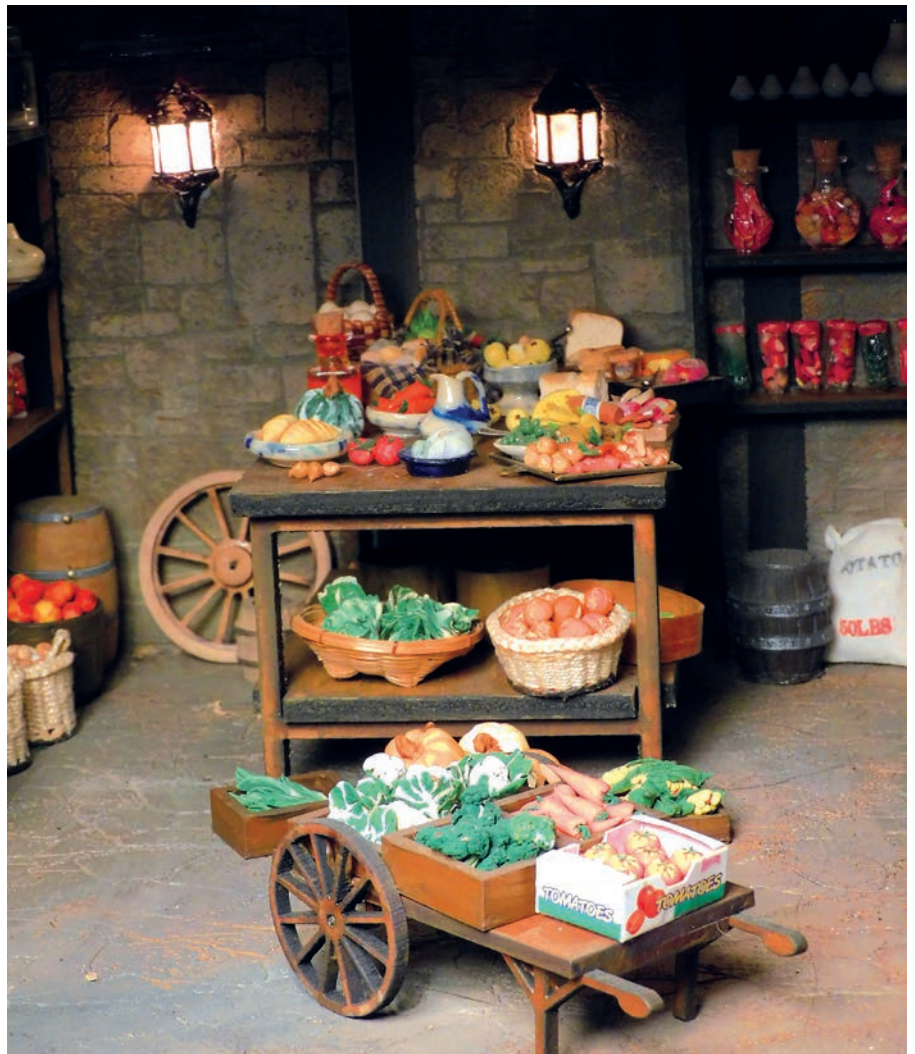


The two grand pianos in the manor are Shelly's favorite pieces in this 1:12 masterpiece!





had made the template, the machine does the rest as if by magic. The glass on the front door is laser engraved to look like etched glass. Shelly admits that she made almost everything in the manor, from the intricate, beautiful furniture to the light fittings, accessories and even the gorgeous dolls. Shelly uses porcelain for the dolls, which she pours into the mold and then fires, adding the paint and finally dress-





ing them herself too. Lately, she has been experimenting with 3D printed dolls which are a lot less work, but not quite as lovely.

Amongst Shelly's many favorite items is the beautiful piano which is handmade and painted – Shelly actually made two. One was dark, which did not suit Macleod Manor, so she made the white one you see in the photographs. The Singer sewing machine in the laundry is

another favorite, again made and hand-painted by Shelly, in memory of her grandmother who had an identical machine. In the bathroom, there is a laser engraved ceiling replicating a pressed metal ceiling, and the leadlight glass panel is also laser engraved, and painted.

The light shade is 3D printed. In the library, Shelly has made everything apart from the chess set. The little lady in here is 3D printed, as is the gramophone. The globe is made from a ping pong ball but the frame is laser cut. The coffee table is hand carved from a piece of oak from a tree in her garden, and the little gold chair is laser cut and hand painted. Most of the books are solid, with covers showing, but there are some opening books, one of which is held by one of the dolls. The book shelves and wainscot panels are laser cut and engraved.

Shelly loves to tell a story with her creations, and Macleod Manor is no exception. There is an important family wedding today and the bride has just made her appearance to the delight of the staff of the household, who have all been



The front of the manor shown closed.

given permission to watch. Family members are also gathered and the bride, groom and flower girl are all being photographed for the family album.

“The globe is made from a ping pong ball but the frame is laser cut.”

The wonderful model of the Ford Roadster car is parked outside in readiness for the honeymoon getaway. Shelly admits that she had many failures before she achieved the finished car which is made of wood, with a few metal trimmings. Outstanding work! Luckily, Shelly has a very well-stocked workroom, and she loves her 3D printer, the laser engraver cutting machine mentioned above, and Dremel drills. She also loves using the graphics program on the computer for designing. I am astonished at the many skills this lady obviously has from her talent as an artist/painter to her many design and technical skills too.

big buzz

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Highlights contest

We would love to know what your favorite highlights were in this issue of *DHM*. You could win this 1:12 wooden mantel clock.

All it takes is a small paragraph for our random drawing! Send your entry to **DHM90 Highlights contest**, via email to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. You may also mail entries to PO Box 3, Belcamp, MD 21017. Please be sure to include *DHM* issue number, and your name and address.

The deadline for this contest is **Friday, Dec. 2, 2022**.

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Recent winners

DHM89 Highlights contest

Arlene from Denver, CO

Kettle giveaway

Debbie from Pelham, NH

Congratulations!



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Mini basket of rolls giveaway

Enter to win this 1:12 miniature basket of rolls made by Allyson's Minis. Send your entry to **DHM90 Mini rolls contest** via email to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. You may also mail entries to PO Box 3, Belcamp, MD 21017. Please be sure to include *DHM* issue number, and your name and address. The deadline for this contest is **Friday, Dec. 2, 2022**.

Allyson's Minis

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Calling out to our readers

Do you have questions about a miniature piece in your collection that you would like to ask our readers? Please feel free to email the editor at auralea@ashdown.co.uk and we can list your questions right here in Big Buzz. Our readers have a vast knowledge about vintage

miniatures and miniature artist's works. Or maybe you have some exciting news about our miniature community! Be sure to mention you would be interested in Big Buzz page content!

A little reminder: Please remember to add ALL of the required info in your contest entries so you can be considered for the drawings!

Contributing tutorials

We hope you have been enjoying all of the wonderful tutorials in *Dollhouse Miniatures*. There are so many impressive creative ideas and new techniques in the miniature community. We try our best to find projects we think our readers will enjoy, but we know there are more that we can find out there. Please consider being one of our valued contributors. We have great opportunities for miniaturists who submit tutorials, such as credit towards subscriptions and individual issues. And, if you are in business, your tutorials are a great way to promote your business. We'll furnish

these details after your submission has been approved.

Imagine how much joy your mini project could give others who share your passion for this art form! Send your step-by-step instructions and photos to Tutorial Submission, *Dollhouse Miniatures* PO Box 3, Belcamp, MD 21017. You may also send your entries via email to auralea@ashdown.co.uk. Please be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and email address. We can't wait to see your projects!

little letters

FEEDBACK AND STORIES FROM OUR DEVOTED READERS

★ Star letter winner

I started reading *DHM*89's contents page, then I started reading "A French Chateau Kitchen" article on page 7. WOW! It's truly beautiful and a work of art. It reminded me of my most expensive miniature purchase, in the 1990's. I had to make regular payments to make it mine. It's a Fjare Wooton desk. It's so intricate and fabulous, I treasure it, and it's at the top of my list of things to grab if my house ever catches on fire!

Then I read on to page 14; "Making Everything From Scratch." This is more in my league, but I'm not an artist. Right now I am finishing up 3 wall quilts, before I can get back to my miniatures.

Every issue of *DHM* inspires me to keep at it, and to do the things I can do, and purchase what I can and BOY do I enjoy the hobby AND your Magazine!



Thank you for keeping me inspired!
~Ruth from Altair, TX

Highlights

An absolutely amazing issue. I am a Francophile and an Anglophile so I fell in love with the Kitchen Château which Suzanne Crowley really pulled together; Connie Sauve's front-opening Pub and the hard work that went into the piece. Wonderful artwork and details from artisans June Clinkscales and Chris Toledo – what a team, and the beautiful dollhouse and intricate furnishings of Yanki Elgina.



It is difficult to pick one thing to talk about in this fantastic issue as with so many of your issues. Very inspired by Sandra Gurney Turner Making Everything from Scratch; the lessons on Egg Carton Masonry, which I never understood until Sherrill Necessary's article; using card stock for a panel door by Lone Schacksen; the darling Fall Harvest by Auralea Kruger, the Secret Garden Diorama by Kristina Truter-Golightly as well as her lovely paper clay garden diorama. So great to learn new techniques. The theatre was beautiful – Marc La Fontijn did an impressive job.

So after mentioning everyone else in this issue I have to add that I love, love, love the miniature children from Catherine Munière. They are the first dolls I've seen by one artist that don't all have the same face shapes or expressions. Finally, I was interested in Susan Bukowski's collection of Vintage Caco Baby Dolls, mainly because I lived in Chicago and also went to the toy department at Field's once a year where I was allowed to choose one item. I did not opt for the dolls as I was interested in the furniture which was beautiful and solid, but I have never seen any articles about it. I think they sold the same line from the 40s onward. It was like the picture of Susan's baby doll stroller on the top page right. I mourned their loss. Because we moved around the country so often my father was able to blame their disappearance on movers.

~Arlene from Denver, CO



Be our Star letter winner next issue

You could win this miniature wine and cheese set just by sending in a letter with whatever is on your mind about miniatures or an issue of *DHM*!



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I Believe in Fairies

Patricia Schantz took on her miniature club challenge and built a room box, behind a frame, and filled it with some fairy magic!

BY PATRICIA SCHANTZ

A fairy themed scene has been on my To Do list for a long time. The idea for "I Believe In Fairies" began when a fellow miniature club member suggested we all build boxes behind pre-made frames of our choice and create whatever we wanted in the interior. A lucky find at a thrift store was the gold frame, and working in 1" scale, the box was made of foam core with a plywood base for stability.

For me, the challenge for any miniature project to make as many things

as possible, from the wallpaper to the flooring to the contents. There are only 13 items that were purchased or from my collection in this display, most notably the two little fairies, the radiator (a Chrysnbon kit leftover), the magnifying glass, the glass container with chocolate macarons, the potted plant on the floor, the porcelain castle figurine, the microscope and the binoculars. The beautiful wicker basket was made by fellow miniaturist Helen Jeremiah, who creates the most





amazing baskets in all scales. The shelving unit began as a 2021 NAME convention souvenir that was kit bashed to create the desk space and drawers. And the chair was made following the Sherrill Necessary tutorial in AM Issue 228.

At the top of the list of my favorite handmade pieces is the framed fairy dress on the desk. The dress is made of real hummingbird feathers. At the right angle, the beautiful iridescence can be seen. It was great fun making the acorns, the fairy shelter constructed of twigs, and the mushroom houses. Two other pieces dear to me are the pot of pansies and "leather" book on the desk, both of which I made a few years ago and have been saving for the perfect project. I also enjoyed making the mini boxes of film and film canisters. Naturally, a camera was needed but finding one in the right scale proved unsuc-

cessful. Using my old SLR camera as a model, I made one along with the telephoto lenses. The fairy teddy bear is one of the first mini bears I ever made from my own pattern, and now she gets to spend her days chatting with a magical friend.



It was a given that a tiny fairy door would have to be included in this room. It's located next to the radiator and is a duplicate of the door used on the back of the box to provide access to the batteries, just much, much smaller.

The small rock with a hole in it on the desk is known, among other names, as a hag stone. They are purported to have magical powers attributed to them. The hole is supposedly a portal into the world of the fae (fairy realm), and it's claimed that looking through it gives you the ability to see fairies. I found this hag stone on a beach decades ago; now it has a proper fairy home.

One of the most fun things to





make were the mini letters! My new computer can print size 2 point fonts that are readable. I can't tell you how happy that makes me! The letters are written to me from fairy researchers. The file folders also contain information about fairy lore along with pictures.

The colored pencils are carefully whittled toothpicks with paint added. They are ready for use on the artist sketch pads. Making the books, magazines and newspapers took the most time to create. That's because every book and magazine can be opened as they each have pages glued to their spines.

The most difficult part of this project was filling all the shelves. I had specific items in mind at the outset but, it turned out, not nearly enough. It was overwhelming looking at all the empty spaces! The solution was to view each shelf individually, decide what would be stored there, and then move on to the next. Bit by bit the shelves were filled, and I celebrated when the final one was completed with the addition of a little doll.

The biggest stumbling block was how to attach the frame to the box. Hinges and I don't work well together, so I used what is best described as a strip and gutter method. The gutter is glued to the top exterior of the box and a strip of wood that





fits within the gutter's channel was glued and screwed to the back of the frame. The strip sits down inside the gutter, holding the frame in place. No more wrestling with stubborn hinges and the tight fit keeps the dust out.

This piece morphed a little as work progressed. It was far too neat a scene and felt a bit sterile. Disorderly shelves and items on the floor give it a more lived-in look, which is better than the initial concept. One of my biggest difficulties working in miniatures is my own expectations. I want everything I make to be perfect and have to accept the reality that not everything I produce will be perfect. Sometimes "good enough" is good enough.

Now that "I Believe In Fairies" is finished and proudly on display in my dining room, I've begun work on another fantasy inspired piece – a tree stump house for a sweet little mouse.





Miniature Apothecary Caravan

Often it pays to have a go at making something yourself rather than buying one, and Debbie Mills discovered that was the right path for her gypsy caravan.

BY SANDRA HARDING

Debbie Mills decided that she wanted a caravan, so she did what we all do when we want something: she looked online. She saw many beautiful caravans but in the end decided to have a go at making one herself. Well, after all, she has been a very good miniature maker for some time.

The gypsy apothecary caravan you see here is the result and Debbie has made everything in it and on it. It is made of wood and measures 17" long, 13" high, and 7" wide. The roof is simply tree bark — what a good idea. The wheelbase came from a broken old wooden pull-along rabbit, and the rear paws have been hinged to create the fold down front steps.

The roof lifts off for easy access to the inside and there is a Dutch door in the front which also gives a tanta-



FEATURE



lising glimpse inside. What you see in there are a stove with a chimney, a worktop for making potions, a sink, a dressing table with jewellery and make-up mirror, as well as sleeping quarters with a ladder access. These were all made from scrap wood and other bits from stock. There are also drawers with kitchen utensils and, of course, there is even a potion recipe book.

On the outside there are lanterns that light up, with batteries hidden in the trunk on the top. On the back there is a still for cooking the potions, made from a wooden finial, wood dowel, plastic tubing, electrical connectors, copper sheeting, beads and wires. Very clever and inventive. (A still is an apparatus used to distill liquid mixtures by heating and then cooling to condense the vapour).

The customers need access to the window to purchase their potions so there is a tree limb with steps cut into





it, complete with a beaded handrail. The posters and advertisements were copied from online searches and the potion dispenser in the window is a copper tube with an earring back attached as a spout. The wooden kegs were made from dowels by sanding down the ends and carving the wood slats on the side. The shutters were



FEATURE

made from accordion folded cardboard for the louvres, glued to small pieces of wood.

The outside decorations consist of many bits of scrap wood and a lot of different beads. Debbie painted everything to create an aged look, but it still shows how fanciful the gypsies liked their caravans.



Make Colorful Mini Bowls for Your Fruit

Bonnie Morrison shares how to use alcohol ink to make very colorful fruit bowls in just a few steps!

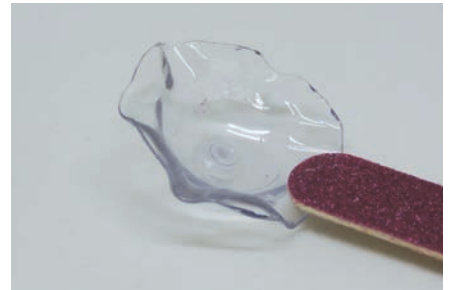
BY BONNIE MORRISON



This is a fun way to make some decorative bowls that look like professionally blown glass pieces. You will have lots of fun coming up with many different color combinations. Fill with fruit or display on a mini table.

Step 1: Prepare a 330ml bottle of water. These are made of a lighter plastic and easier to cut than the larger bottles.

Step 2: It is easier to cut the bottoms off the bottles and measure when they are laying almost flat on a hard surface. With a small-tip black felt pen, mark a line from the



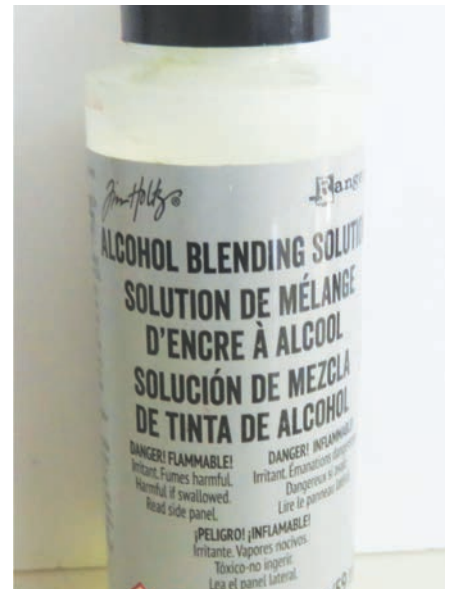
You will need

- Selection of alcohol inks
- Alcohol Blending Solution
- 30 ml water bottle
- Black felt pen
- X-ACTO knife or scissors
- Nail file
- Aluminum foil
- Vinyl disposable gloves
- Popsicle® sticks
- Toothpicks or cotton swabs
- Straw (optional)
- Small double-sided tape
- Sally Hansen Hard as Nails® or Diamond Glaze®



center of the bottom, making an approximate 1-1/2cm radius circle. Continue all around and join the lines. This makes a 3cm bowl.

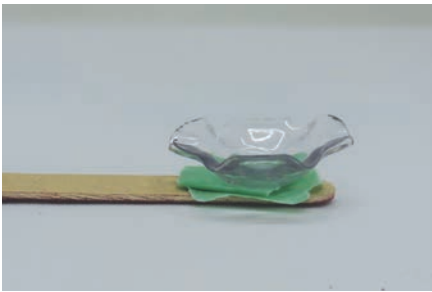
Step 3: Use an X-ACTO knife or sharp scissors to carefully cut off the access plastic until you are just inside the black line. Use a nail file to smooth the edges.



PROJECT

Step 4: Line a tray with aluminum foil to use as your work surface. Wear disposable vinyl gloves when working with the alcohol ink. Alcohol ink is not forgiving – it will stain your skin, nails, table and clothes.

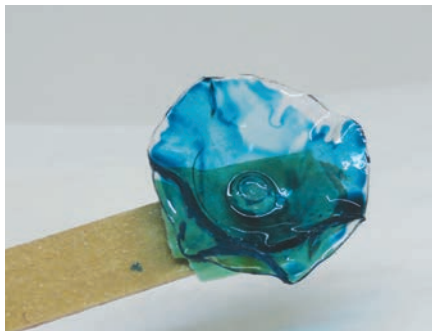
Step 5: Place your clear bowl on a Popsicle® stick using double-sided tape for ease when adding color to your bowls. It also helps if you want to tilt or swirl your piece while the inks blend together.



Step 6: Using a toothpick or cotton swab, place a drop of Alcohol Blending Solution onto the piece and spread to the edges.



Step 7: Put a drop or two of Alcohol Ink around the edge of your bowl and watch as it changes shapes and blends with the Blending Solution.



TOPTIP

You could paint each color on pieces of the left-over water bottles, just so you would have samples to refer to. The colors will really change when they are mixed with the Alcohol Blending Solution! Don't use too many colors at once or it gets too muddy – three tops!

Step 8: Add a drop of additional color and watch them blend together or help them by blowing through a straw, or using a toothpick or just swirling them around on the stick. You may want to add just a drop in the center.

Step 9: Keep adding until you get the inside the way you want it. If it gets too dark, add a drop of extender. Only work on the inside of the bowl.



Step 10: Once satisfied, put aside to let dry.

Step 11: After your bowls are all dry, use a coat of Sally Hansen Hard as Nails® or a Diamond Glaze® on the inside of the bowls. Let dry.



Step 12: Add your mini fruits to your bowl.



Stamp Quaint Quilts to Cover your Bed

Joyce Mori creates some colorful quilts to add warmth and charm in any bedroom, using a painting technique she learned in a workshop.



BY JOYCE MORI

I took a wonderful workshop offered by Patty Johnson at the Metro Mini Makers Show in Iowa. Patty is very active in N.A.M.E. and works to promote miniatures. She showed us how to make a bedspread with a painted design. Prior to my retirement, I was a professional quilter who wrote books,

articles, and taught around the country. I mentioned to Patty that I thought I could use the concept to create quilt blocks. Well, I tried that and found that the concept works wonderfully to create the illusion of a Baltimore album style appliqué quilt in miniature.

Please read all the directions carefully before starting. I used 1/4" seams when sewing the blocks together and the borders onto the quilt. All seams were trimmed to 1/8" after the sewing was complet-

ed. Extra designs are provided. You only need 12 to make a quilt or 6 to make a wall quilt. Consider painting them all and then selecting your favorites for the quilt.

Patty recommends not washing your fabric prior to using it. The sizing gives the fabric some body and helps to keep the paint from spreading. However, all of the fabric I used for my samples had been prewashed. As a quilter, I always wash every fabric as soon as I bring it into the house. I did not find

You will need

- Dollhouse bed
- Box of round toothpicks
- Craft paints
- Freezer paper
- 100% high quality cotton fabric for the quilt blocks (a fat quarter yard is more than needed, but allows for mistakes. White is a good first choice as colors show up well.)
- Rotary cutter and mat
- Ruler
- Cellulose sponge
- Fabric for the quilt border
- Lace or other trim for the quilt border, 1 yard
- Craft glue
- Paper plate
- Thin piece of fleece (pillows) 1-1/2" x 4" x 1/4" high
- Light box
- Gloss varnish
- Paint brush



I had any problems with my pre-washed fabric.

However, I did not have an unwashed sample of this exact fabric to test against. So if you are buying fabric, do not wash it. If you already have prewashed fabric, try a block to see if you have any problems.

TOPTIP

Be sure to start with a light colored or white fabric so your stamping will pop out against the background. Then you can add deeper colors for your borders.

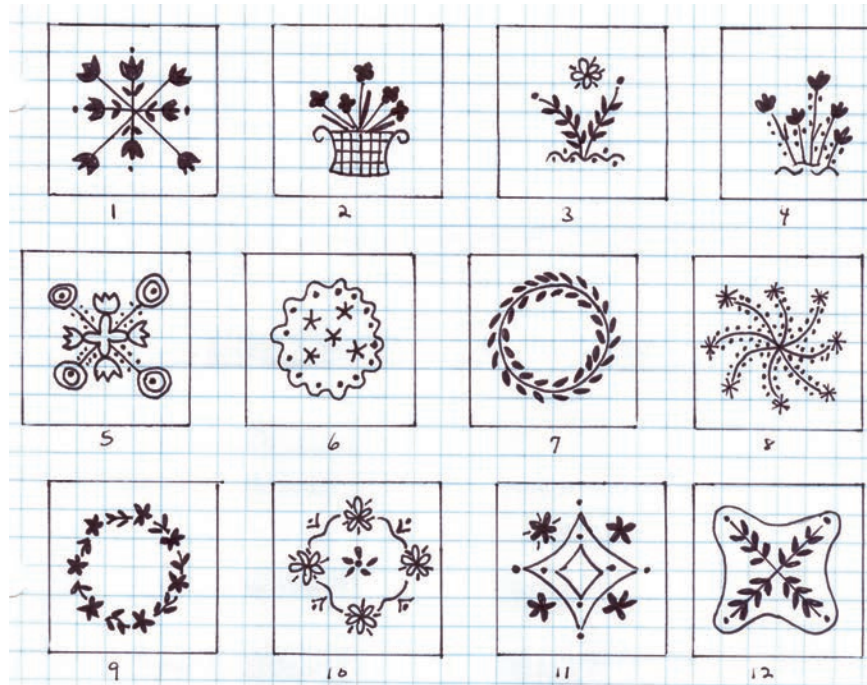
Step 1: When making full scale quilts, I like to use a fabric with an all-over printed texture as a background. For miniature ones, I use an ordinary sponge to create a texture or background on my white fabric.

Step 2: Iron a piece of freezer paper to the back of your quilt fabric.

Step 3: Place a quarter size patch of paint on your paper plate.

Step 4: Carefully place the sponge in the paint and then stamp lightly on the clean part of the plate to remove most of the paint. Then begin stamping the fabric. You do not want the background to be really dark or the design won't show up. You will have to keep placing the sponge in the paint and stamping on the plate prior to stamping the fabric. You may need to add more paint to your plate. Turn the sponge in different directions, so the pattern looks random.

Step 5: Let the fabric dry. You stamped more fabric than you need for a quilt. This allows you to make some mistakes and to create a pillow for your bed. Do not remove



the freezer paper from the back of the fabric. This provides stability when you cut out the blocks.

Step 6: For my quilt fabrics, one of the objects I used to stamp fabric with is a child's toy, a colorful, flexible ball. I am not sure what it is called exactly, but I think it makes a wonderful texture. I have frequently used it in teaching my classes on fabric painting.

Making the blocks

Step 7: Cut the fabric into 2-1/2" squares. Do not cut up all the fabric. Save a piece that is large enough for the center tuck in a area, 1-1/2" x 5-1/2". Except for the width of the tuck piece, the sizes provided for the blocks and tuck piece are larger than will be needed for the actual assembly of the quilt. This allows for slight adjustments when trimming or for fraying that may occur.

Painting the blocks

Step 8: Remove the freezer paper. Center a fabric block square over

one of the drawings and paint it.

Step 9: Use a light box or some equivalent to see the design through the fabric. You will not need to use the light box to copy the entire design. Rather just paint the key elements and then take the fabric off the light box and freehand paint in the remaining elements. For instance, on block #6, paint the wavy wreath. Once that has been painted, the other elements can be easily placed. On block #2, you can paint the outline of the basket. On block #10, you can paint the four flowers and so on.

Step 10: All the motifs are painted with the tips of round toothpicks. Use just a little paint on the end. I like the toothpicks because you do not have to keep rinsing out brushes and you can have one for each color.

Step 11: Wipe the tip off with a tissue when you have finished with it, so globs of paint do not dry on the

PROJECT

end. The tips are perfect for painting tiny circles because they act like a stamp.

Step 12: Invent new designs of your own using some of my motifs as a starting point or create entirely new ones. I often add extra leaves, dots, etc. when I paint my blocks.

Putting the quilt together

Step 13: The description covers the blue/yellow/green quilt, which is easiest to complete. All the blocks must be trimmed to 2" square.

Step 14: Lay out the blocks to create a pleasing arrangement. You can move them around and you do not need to use the same placement that I did. Add your own creativity to this project.

Step 15: Use a 1/4" seam allowance and set your stitch length at 2.0. Sew three blocks together to create each row. Trim the seams.

Step 16: Sew the tuck piece between the first row and the second row.

Step 17: Trim the seams.

Step 18: Press with a warm iron.

Step 19: Cut your two side borders. The width is 2". Be sure to measure your exact length.

Step 20: Sew the side borders.

Step 21: Cut the top and the bottom borders. The width is 1". Be sure to measure your exact length.

Step 22: Sew the top and the bottom borders.

Step 23: Trim the seams.

Step 24: Press with a warm iron..



Finishing touches

Step 25: Glue under 1/8" hem around the outside of the quilt.

Step 26: The blue quilt has a small rick rack glued around the outer edges as a trim. It looks a little like a prairie point edge on a quilt. Glue it to the back of the quilt with the points just sticking out.

Step 27: Put the fleece pillow shape on your miniature bed. Place the quilt on your bed.

Step 28: Make the fold for the tuck area. Press the tuck to hold its shape.

Step 29: Push the top and the bottom borders down between the headboard, the footboard and the mattress.

Step 30: You will probably want to attach your quilt to the bed with glue or tape. This secures any folds you made at the corners to keep

Color combinations

- A color combination of red and green would be perfect for a decorating a bedroom for the Christmas holidays. You could even try pink and lime for a modern Christmas theme.
- Blue and yellow with some green is a great combination for a spring theme.
- Pale pink, yellow, blue, and lilac remind me of the colors found in the quilts of the 1930s.

the drape of the quilt as you want it as well as the fold in the tuck area.

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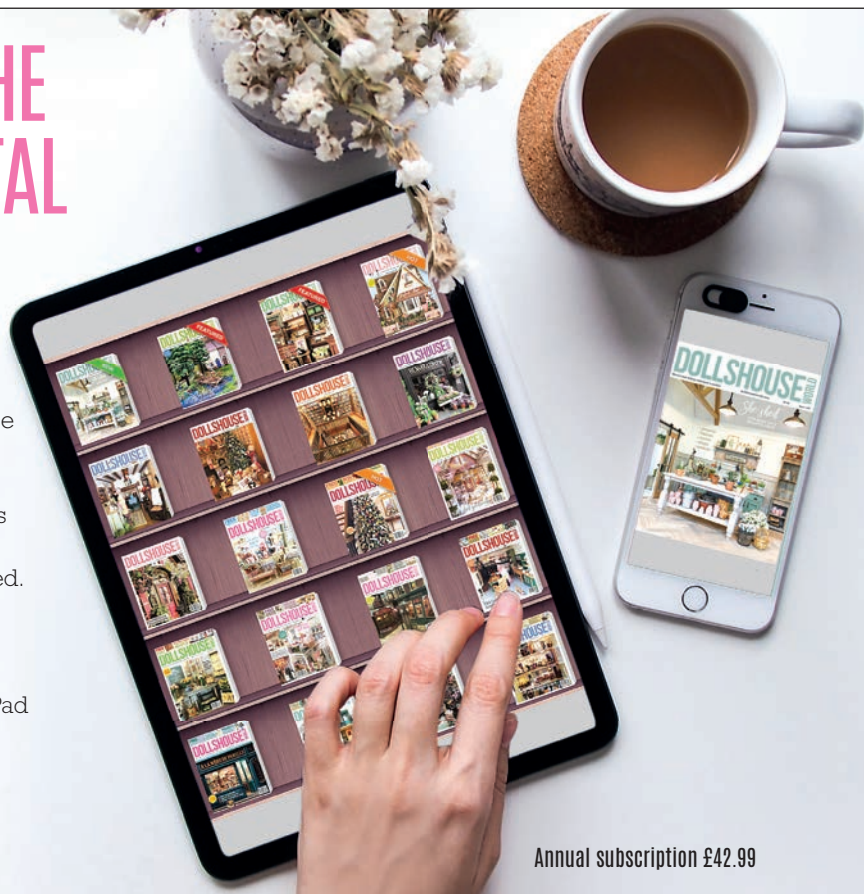
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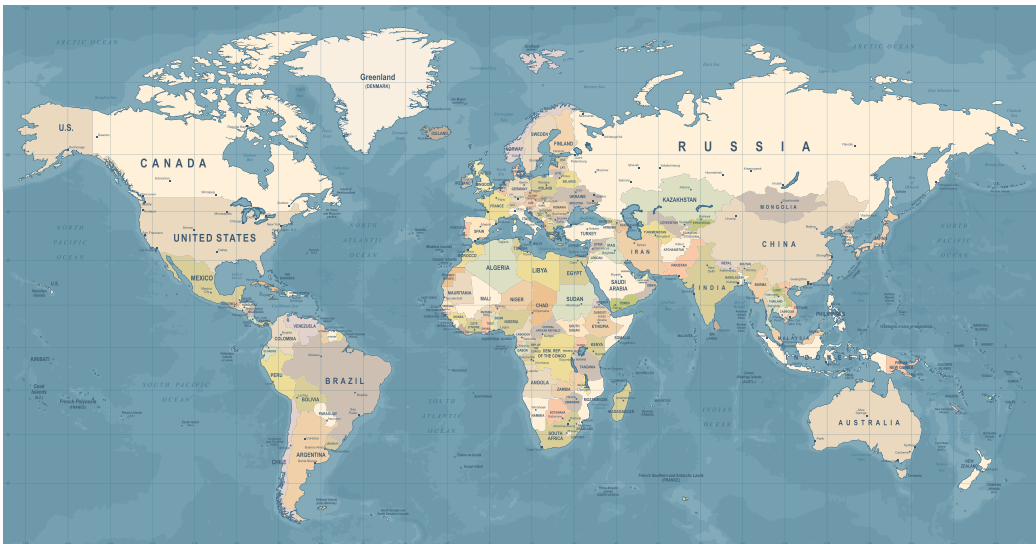


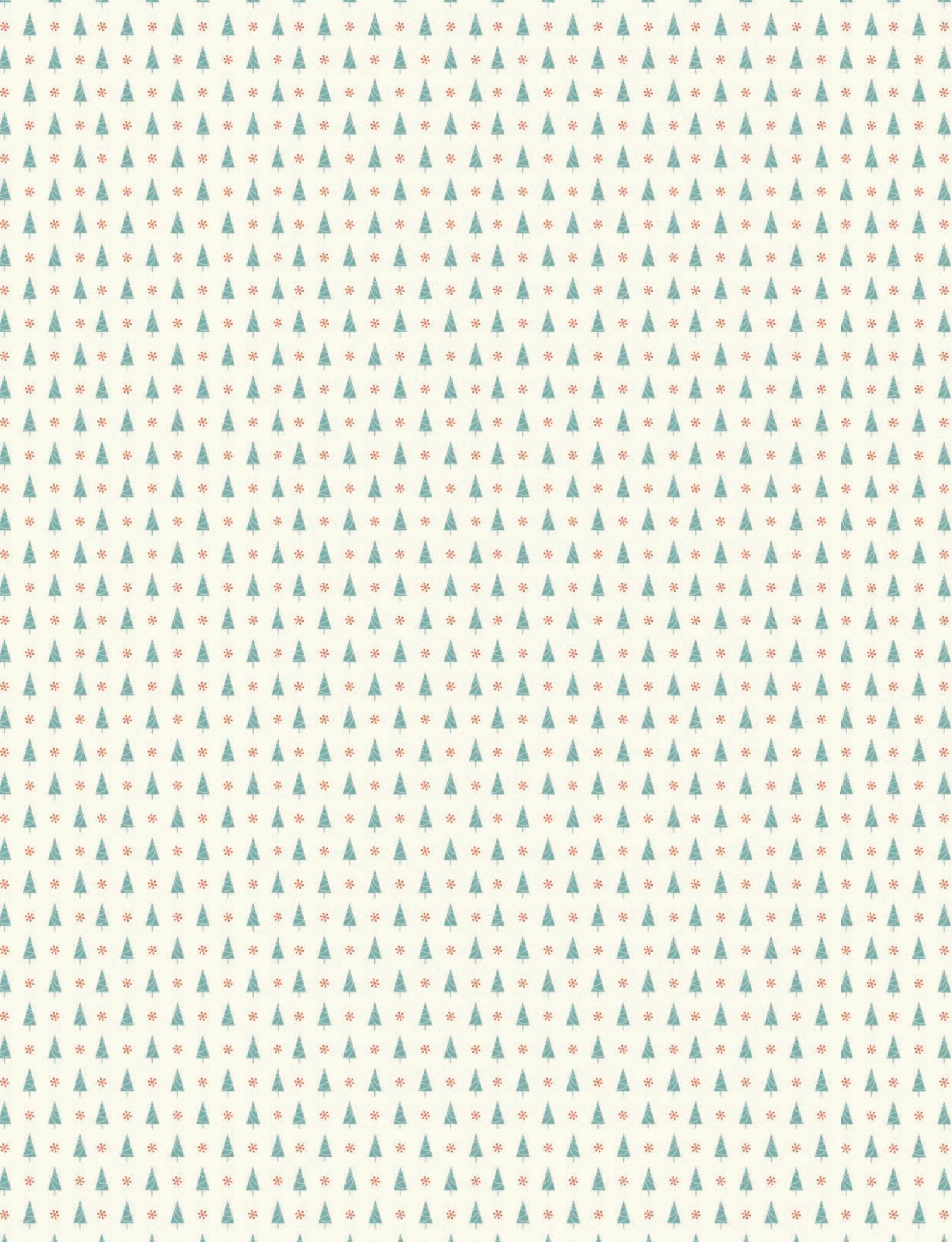
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