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Issue 91, 2023

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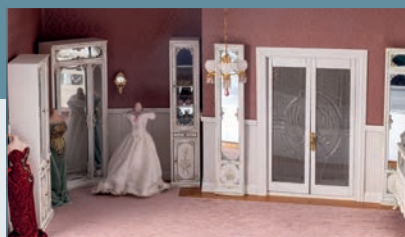


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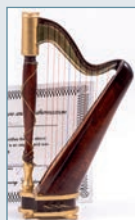
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little details

Issue 91

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welcome

This is a new year full of new opportunities and endless possibilities!

If you are one to make New Year resolutions, but never seem to stick to them, then odds are they are unrealistic goals. So instead of feeling guilty all year for not following through, why not come up with some resolutions that excite you?

I have found that if I set my goals based on things I *want* to do versus things I *should* do, I am much more successful and have lots more fun! Life is short! Is there a project you have always wanted to dive into? Or maybe a workshop you always dreamed of taking? Make it fun and you will get it done!

So let's save the 'should do' things for day-to-day living and focus on happiness for our resolution dreams! A great start to feeling happy is flipping through the pages of this month's *Dollhouse Miniatures* magazine. There are some very inspirational artists who have created miniature projects and items that will inspire you.

I wish you the best year yet and hope you share your project with us here at *DHM*!

Auralea Krieger, Editor
auralea@ashdown.co.uk

dollhouse miniatures

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FEATURE





Last of the Stick Builders

Another monumental creation from an outstanding architectural builder proves that like fine wine, being older can be better.

BY PAM NORTH

In 1999, Indiana resident Jimmy Landers retired from the corporate world as a regional manager for an international environmental corporation. Married, with two daughters, five grandkids, and two great-grandkids, Jimmy might have been content to simply enjoy his retirement. Before long, however, he had embraced a totally new endeavor. Now 81, he has become a master miniaturist and builder of architectural miniatures in 1:12 scale, with twenty-five ambitious builds to his credit so far.

It started in 2005 when Jimmy's wife, Sue, asked him to build a dollhouse for her. A painstakingly diligent, detailed perfectionist, Jimmy undertook that task, so successfully executing it that he ended up selling the dollhouse for a very tidy sum,





FEATURE



- 1** A green and gold chandelier hangs in the bedroom. **2** The porch looking into the dining room. **3** Looking out through the kitchen. **4** A bedroom for the kids. **5** The main room has a piano and gorgeous architecture.





“He envisions luxury miniature structures in his mind and simply starts building them, never making any drawings of form or details.”

and to this day he still owes her that promised dollhouse. “My wife would like to have kept one of my subsequent pieces in lieu of the dollhouse she never got to keep,” Landers remarked. Despite that, she totally supports his late-life hobby, which makes it easy for him to combine home life with his miniature crafting. “It’s not a problem, as this is all I do, and it takes up my spare time. I fully enjoy creating new structures.”





FEATURE



- 1** The house is full of wood paneling that was installed by hand.
- 2** The stone tile floor in the sun room.
- 3** A detailed elegant tub in the bathroom.
- 4** The pool room also had handmade wood paneling.
- 5** The basement has a boiler and shelves full of paints and supplies.



Jimmy is self-taught, with no formal training in woodworking or background in the field of miniatures. He envisions luxury miniature structures in his mind and simply starts building them, never making any drawings of form or details. He has a small but nice open garage to work in, with heat and air conditioning, and his pieces are made with the intention of selling them. His prices range from \$2,000 to \$100,000.

Jimmy says his inspiration comes from his own imagination and dreams, and the reaction from people when they see his work fires his continued interest in building new and intricate projects. Asked what he loves most about miniatures, he cited, "The reaction from people when they first see my work."

Like most artists, he wrestles with his own personal difficulties involved with working in miniature. "While working in the present moment of trying to translate the idea or look into the current structure, I know what it should look like, but trying to get that image or design into what I am working on can be a real challenge", he said." He has developed a real ability for using a hand-miter for cutting small moldings, and considers it his most valuable tool.

His most recent piece is called



1891 Tudor, and it was inspired from a picture of a house he saw ten years ago that was built in 1891. He told his wife that he would build a miniature of it someday, and he recently brought that prospect to reality after taking thirteen months to build it. All accessories go with it (it has \$16,000 of furniture). It is insured for \$100,000. It features the intricate fachwerk (timber framing) characteristics of medieval houses. It also features a real slate roof, oak floors, marble floors, and frosted glass windows, and Jimmy



is asking \$100,000 for it. Jimmy works with wood and stone only, no plastic, and says he's one of the last stick builders. "I love realism in miniature, and I especially like how others enjoy looking at them." His obsession with realism means that he builds his structures simulating the stick-built methods used in actual, real-life buildings. Stick

built homes are those homes that are built using a more traditional method of home building (using framing pine) rather than a modular type.

Asked if he planned to sell the piece or keep it himself to display, Jimmy responded, "I hope to sell it at a price of \$100,000." The sale is likely, since Jimmy's pieces are readily

purchased by those who appreciate the detail in his craftsmanship, a quality he has embraced from the outset, despite his initial lack of experience. "I had no knowledge or interest in miniatures before I started creating them, and now find them extremely fascinating and fun to create. My brain is not wired to build small or simple structures."

‘I love realism in miniature, and I especially like how others enjoy looking at them.’

The techniques Jimmy used for creating his pieces become a bit of a blur in his memory after each piece is completed. "They're still there in my dreams maybe. Once completed, I have no idea how I made it! The finished piece always amazes me, as I put nothing down on paper. I have to admit that the end results come out very close to what I had envisioned, with only a few tweaks. They're all fun to create."

The future of miniatures somewhat concerns him, especially when viewed with the loss of many retail sources of miniatures and their related products. "The overall interest in miniatures is still very much alive. It is a shame that today's youth does not seem to have as much enthusiasm as my generation does."

Jimmy is planning more creations for the future, but hasn't decided what will be his 26th project.



artist details

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Some Artist Tips and Techniques

Enjoy this follow-up with miniature artist, Minna Toivari as she shares some valuable tips on doll making.



In *Dollhouse Miniatures*, issue number 90, miniature doll maker Minna Toivari from Finland shared her wonderful dolls and introduced herself. Minna has generously offered to answer some follow-up questions that we had about what goes into making a miniature doll.

What fiber do you prefer for hair and why? Is there a certain one that's better for long hair versus hair up in a bun? Fibers are my passion, and I have quite a lot of them. I prefer to use natural fibers with porcelain dolls, although they are not always the easiest to shape. The animal fibers I use most are lamb wool and silk. One of my



Above shows different kinds of fibers. As you can see on immediate left, Lempi's bun is made of viscose. To the far left is a little girl doll whose hair is made of silk. Below is an elf whose hair is made of rose fiber.



favorite plant fibers is rose. Of the synthetic fibers, I prefer good-quality viscose, which is easy to curl and





Impi's hair is made from lamb wool.

shape into even complex hairstyles. I am constantly trying new fibers.

Do you have molds? If so, are they molds you made or do you purchase them? What is the difference between how porcelain sculpts versus polymer clay? To make a porcelain doll, you first need to make an original doll sculpture. I usually use polymer clay, plasticine or natural clay for sculpting doll parts. Next thing is to make a plaster mold of the sculpture. I make all my sculptures and molds myself. The porcelain slip is liquid and doll parts are cast in a plaster mold. Doll parts are fired twice in a ceramic kiln and after this you are ready to start painting dolls.



Molds made for the doll making class.

What paints do you use for porcelain? Do you paint before it bakes or after? Are they oil based?

Porcelain dolls are painted with China paints made from metallic and mineral oxides. (China paint requires medium oils to be mixed with to create a paint-like substance.) I usually paint 3-5 layers of paint to miniature porcelain dolls. Each layer of the China paint has to be fired in the kiln to bind with porcelain. Painting with China paint can be compared to painting with watercolor paints.

What is your favorite sculpting tool? With polymer clay, I prefer to use metal shaping tools. With clay, I use wood shaping tools. Dentist's tools and toothpicks are also very handy when sculpting.



Where do you find your material for dressing your dolls? I buy small pattern fabrics from the miniature fair. I also use recycled materials and make excellent finds at flea markets.

What tips would you give a beginner who wants to dress their dolls? Material is important when making clothes. Preferably choose natural materials for clothes, such as thin 100% cotton, linen, wool or silk. Synthetic fibers don't sit so well on the doll and are not as controllable as natural fibers. Sewing is easiest with a small and sharp needle.

What tips would you give a beginner who wants to start working with porcelain clay? Making a porcelain doll is a complex and

precise process. It is worth taking a course to learn the basics of sculpting, making molds and working with porcelain and China paints.

Have you ever made a doll that you felt was not suitable to sell but could not discard it? Yes! With porcelain, you have to be ready for failures at different phases of the process. I have modified failed dolls for example into witches and even zombies.

What was the biggest learning curve you experienced while honing your skill?

There are almost endless things to learn in sculpting. It is also important for me to receive honest feedback in order to learn new things. There is always room for improvement!

Is there anything else you would like to share?

Small things matter! Try to be meticulous in every step. You also have to be ready to practice and do it all over again.

Vist <https://www.minnaminiatures.fi/> to see more of my art!



A badly successful casting ended up becoming a witch.

miniature art

by Auralea Krieger



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Creating Pure Whimzy in Miniature

Connie Sauve came across a small room box that challenged her to get in touch with her wild side.

BY CONNIE SAUVE

In 2012, while browsing at a thrift store, I spied a very whimsical, resin theater sculpture with a resin jointed marionette clown hanging inside. When I turned the theater sculpture around, I noticed it was actually signed by the original artist who made it, Judie Bomberger and was titled "Oliver". It was not my usual style, as it was very colorful and a bit wild looking with all the different colors, patterns and also had funky animal feet holding the theater up. I thought the checkered pattern and colors reminded me of MacKenzie-Childs very stylized furniture and accessories. I saw the price of \$15, and figured, why not? One more piece to add to my stash of unusual containers!

I like to think about a new project for a while before actually starting it. This one sat in my stash for a couple years before I came up with a plan for the container. I did some research online by looking at MacKenzie-Childs (MC) pieces of furniture and other accessories that might work inside. It was a very small space inside, measuring only 4" deep x 5" wide x 8" high, so I knew it would only hold a few items. I found pictures of a MC chair I liked and also a table and a chandelier. Now I just needed to







1 Trompe l'oeil graphics adorn the ceiling and walls. 2 Connie repainted 'Oliver' to match the interior. 3 Original marionette clown theater purchased at a thrift store. 4 Trompe l'oeil graphics were used for the doorway, window and curtains.





replicate them in miniature!

I wanted to keep the integrity of the box intact, so I decided not to change any of the colors and patterns on the outside or inside of the room box. They actually were perfect for the MC look I was going for.

It would have been a waste not to use Oliver the clown, as he was part of the funkiness I liked about the room box, so I decided to move the marionette to the top of the box. He added quite a bit of height to the overall scene by sitting on top, but I liked how the marionette's feet draped over the edge of the sign at the top. I found a colorful porcelain

cabinet door knob at Hobby Lobby, which made a great little pillow for Oliver to sit on and it also helped raise him up so I could hang his feet over the sign.

When I had picked out a MC style upholstered chair and footstool to replicate for the tiny room, I immediately thought of Kari Bloom's whimsical chairs. I remembered she had made a chair that was an exact match to the one I wanted to make. I lucked out and she happened to be teaching that same style chair at a class at the 2014 Good Sam Miniature Show, so I signed up. Before the class, I sent her a photo of the chair I wanted to

make and she was able to provide me with the custom printed fabrics and chess pieces for the chair legs. I made the pouf footstool at home using a MC footstool for reference. It ended up being fun getting out of my comfort zone by combining all the different patterns and colors of fabric. I ended up using 7 different fabrics on the chair.

During the chair class, a fellow student had brought in some wonderful trompe l'oeil painted mural books by Graham Rust. I hadn't decided what to do for the interior of the little room box yet, and thought trompe l'oeil murals would be a great idea. After I returned home, I purchased several books by Graham Rust. I photocopied several different graphics for the walls, ceiling and door, and tested each one of them in the room. When testing the different designs, I would take a picture of each design, then I could compare the photos to see which I liked best in the room.

I found the curtain graphics in one of the trompe l'oeil books I had purchased by Graham Rust, they were the deciding factor for the look I wanted. I loved the striped fabric, draping and shadows. The graphic for the window I found online and the style went perfectly with all the other murals. After sizing all the graphics to the exact size I needed, I had them printed out at OfficeMax. I carefully cut out each of the graphics and glued them to the walls. With a thin wash of grey, I hand-painted the drop shadows for the door and window onto the blue walls. Shadows are essential to make trompe l'oeil look realistic. I ended up combining 7 different graphics from the trompe l'oeil books to create the door, window and ceiling.



Brass chandelier repainted in the checkerboard MC style.

I decided to call the scene, "Whimzy". I thought the title fit well with the style of the piece, along with changing the 's' to a 'z'. I found a fun type font on my computer and printed it out to size. Using double stick tape, I taped each paper letter onto craft foam and cut out each letter using my Xacto knife. Once all the letters were cut out, I painted them with acrylic paints and glued them to the header.

The small round table in this scene was made by using a plastic chess piece for the base and a round wood disk for the table top. I rounded the edge of the wood disk tabletop to soften the look of it before painting it with a checker and polka dot MC style pattern.

For the chandelier, I started with a brass chandelier with 5 arms I had in my stash. Using black, cream and gold enamel paints, I painted the chandelier and plastic shades using stripes, checkerboard and polka dots. I had to get creative on how I was going to hang the chandelier on the ceiling; the wires are hidden under the paper ceiling graphics. The wires run down along the inside front edge and out through the bottom of the room box. The terminal block, wires and transformer cord are neatly hidden underneath the room box.

The room was nearly finished with only a few more details needed. A bowl of apples was

added on the table to match the apple on the trompe l'oeil window sill. My Dad, Maurice Sauve, made the turned black/yellow acrylic and black ebony lidded box. The clown picture on the wall I found on the internet, then made the frame and painted it black. The clown, colors and checker pattern on the picture fit perfectly with the room box.

There ended up being a monkey theme to the graphics of the room. It didn't set out to be the theme of the room, but just evolved that way with one above the door and one on the window sill. Following the new theme of the room, I searched the internet for monkey pillows and found one that would be perfect for the room. I printed the design onto fabric and made the little pillow. For the final whimsical touch, I wanted to have a 'real' Capuchin monkey sitting on the arm of the chair, so I had him custom-made for me by Teresa Dudley. He is holding an apple made by Jan Patrie. This mimics the monkey with the apple on the windowsill.

When I was just about finished with the room box, a friend of mine suggested the clown was a bit drab compared to the rest of the scene, so I decided to repaint him in some fun colors and patterns. The blue diamonds on his tunic are actually some of the leftover fabric I used for the chair. I put a dowel into the bottom of the clown, which slides into the stool. This helps stabilize the clown, so he won't fall off sitting in his precarious position.

This was a really fun miniature project to design and work on and got me out of my comfort zone. It was pure Whimzy!

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

calendar listings 2023

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.

February 4 & 5

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.

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February 11

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

March 12

Claymont, DE

The First State Mini Club of Delaware is hosting their 46th dollhouse miniatures show and sale on Sunday, March 12, 2023, 10 AM - 4 PM, at the Brandywine Plaza, 630 Naamans Road, Claymont, DE 19703. Quality vendors, grab bags, yard sale, door prizes, no

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April 28 - 30

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Sugar and Spice

Candida Maritato has been busy making sugar and spice, and everything nice in Calabria! Get to know her, and enjoy her mouth-watering miniatures.

BY DEB WEISSLER

The mini bakers in your vignettes better buy a lot of sugar if they are going to follow along with Italian artist Candida Maritato!

Her gingerbread houses, cookies and sweet treats sparkle with mouth-watering sweetness. The time she spends is well worth it as she creates realistic compositions with seasonal fruit and vegetables, as well as festive sweets for the Christmas season.

Her work is time consuming and detail oriented. In fact the time spent mastering each step of the process can cost Candida hours or days. Not willing to settle for second best, if something does not turn out just right, she is willing to toss out her efforts and try again. This is one artist who does not give up easily. Having no formal art training, she has





You can see the endless hours of trial and error that must have gone into this perfection.

relied on videos or books to guide the way. Trial and error eventually enabled her to develop her own techniques, along with a healthy dose of patience and love.

"There are many difficult parts to making miniatures, but the most challenging part for me is when I go to create the details," Candida explains. "The details take a lot of time for me and I have to be very careful in creating them to be able to make them look realistic. But I have to be honest; despite the difficulties, I enjoy the process and relax at the same time."

When this talented food maker sits down to create, she already has a vision: size, shape, colors and composition. With this goal in mind, her pieces almost always turn out as she envisions. And since she makes all her own creations, she never has to rely on another to get things right. She loves creating baskets, saucers, cutting boards and plates to create the perfect vignette.

"Every creation is fun when I go to make it. I enjoy it because

a tiny new world opens up to me, along with imagination and desire. Although my work focuses the most on realistic food, I also work with ceramics, making saucers, bowls and vases. I use wood for making tables and cutting boards. I also create miniature animals, flowers and plants. Miniatures make me feel good! I have loved them since

I was a child and now I have finally realized my dream of being able to make them all for myself. At the end of each creation, I always say that even if I still have so much to learn, I feel satisfied with the results. "

Candida was introduced to polymer clay four years ago by her boyfriend, Tiziano, who creates his own line of Kawaii-style pendants and earrings in full size. Encouraged to try making something using polymer clay, she went on to learn various techniques by watching videos or reading books on the subject. It wasn't long before she developed a passion for creating miniature foods.

"Many times I find inspiration from real recipes, a table featuring a plate of homemade pasta and next to it the ingredients to prepare it, eggs, flour, and all the ingredients. Or I am inspired by plates with cutlets and chips, saucers with pasta, cakes, trays with biscuits etcetera. Of the many creations I have made, my favorite remains the coffee table with apples placed



Everything you need to make a delicious miniature cherry pie!

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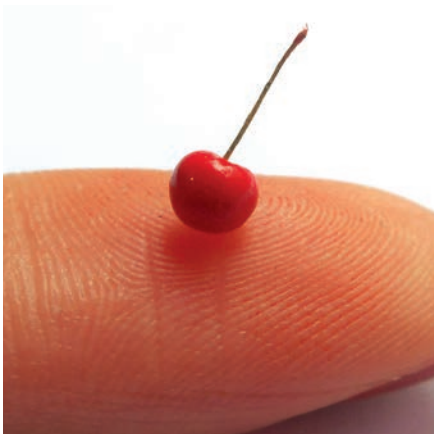
1 Time to make the gingerbread house. This would look perfect in a holiday kitchen scene. **2** 1:12 scale sugar cookies in the making. **3** Some tortellini is being prepared in this scene. **4** Various cheese wheels and a fig cut in half.



inside a small basket. Why apples? Because the apple is a unique fruit of abundance and richness. Food is inspired by still life and I am inspired by it because it is a harmonious symbol, which is why I give it great attention to detail."

Candida's studio is located in a small attic room with a tiny window that proves a blessing, allowing natural light to illuminate her work table during the day as she sculpts. Her materials and tools include polymer clay, pastel chalks, brushes, needles, a utility knife, a burin, liquid FIMO and an oven. She uses several needle-like probes with various tips. A utility knife creates small details, such as the inside of a cake or the inside of bread





with realistic air bubbles. It is fine, exacting work that requires infinite amounts of patience.

Candida's work has garnered several private commissions. One of her most memorable was for a famous chef of Japanese cuisine. She created a cutting board with sushi, taiyaki (a Japanese dessert in the shape of a fish), filled with anko, a paste made of sugary azuki beans. She also made bowls of Ramen noodles.



As the holiday season draws to a close, Candida will return to her love of making miniature replicas of traditional southern Italian cuisine. Most of her creations are dedicated to Italian food, such as pizza, fresh pasta, spaghetti with sauce and sweets typical of her

region. Meanwhile, Buon Natale from sunny Italy!

artist details

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The Making of Le Château Martin

Anne Ramos Martin took on the exciting challenge of creating a French Château in sunny Spain by repurposing and making most of her own miniatures.

BY ANNE RAMOS MARTIN EDITED BY DEB WEISSLER

As horrendous as the Covid pandemic has been since 2020, there have been wonderful opportunities for experienced and new miniaturists alike to deep dive into their hobbies. In 2019, Anne Ramos Martin left a stressful position as faculty head in a Southeast London school and returned to Spain, where she has lived on and off for 43 years. With her children grown and gone and her career now at an end, she realized she needed something creative to do. Inspired by her aunt's dollhouse, she decided to give a go at one. Her first dollhouse arrived at the end of February 2020, on the eve of Covid lockdown in Spain.

Two and a half years and four dollhouses later, Anne is currently finishing her biggest project, Le

Château Martin, a house which stands almost six feet high and 4 feet wide. Enamored with French chateaus and inspired by real life makeover programs, Anne desired a large house with big rooms. The structure she found began as an original Ashthorpe Manor by The Dolls House Builder and was purchased second hand in the UK. It had to be transported over land to Spain in the middle of the pandemic and it was touch and go for awhile, but fortunately it arrived in one piece.

Due partly to the scarcity of good miniatures and building products in Spain, the enormity of the project, and the cost involved in buying everything new, Anne has had to use all of her creative skills to make or re-purpose almost everything in the



Miniaturist Anne Ramos Martin.

Château. All of the furniture started out as commercially available, inexpensive secondhand pieces, which she transformed using embellishments, decoupage and gallons of



FEATURE



1 The purple bedroom is fluffed with luxe fabric and even has a little fancy bed for the dog.

2 The lavish gold bathroom is fit for a queen. **3** The music room is full of joy and sweet melodies – a perfect room for a party. **4** The dollhouse shown closed from the front.





gold paint. Anne made pelmets (a structured-type valance) from cardboard and created elegant chimney breasts by adding clay moldings. To add intrigue to the Château, the dining room features a false wall leading into the depths of the interior, and a hidden staircase from the Countess' bathroom to the chapel above. This is the escape route for the Countess's lover, Pasqual. All of this was constructed from foam board.

Early on, Anne knew she would like to add dolls to the Château, but after purchasing a custom doll from talented Russian doll artist, Lia Chernysheva, she realized that the cost of purchasing character dolls would be prohibitive. So 18 months ago she decided to teach herself how to make her own polymer dolls. Lia very generously offered to be her mentor. Drawing inspiration from legendary doll makers James Carrington and Pauline Puglisse, so began the second part of Anne's passion, doll making.





She is constantly striving to improve her skills, and enjoys weaving scandalous stories around her Château and its owners, the Count and Countess Dupont. The pair has stolen the home from the countess's aunt, Countess Martin, who they keep locked away in the attic. Anne actually now has a huge Facebook following, with her readers often suggesting story lines. Her next venture is to begin selling her dolls.

Inside, the decor is of no particular style or era and Anne does not consider herself a design purist. Everything has been created from imagination and the materials available to her. She did not wish to create a life-like replica of a French Château, but more of a fantasy house in which her imagination can run wild. She demonstrates that you do not need a stash of gold to produce a beautiful dollhouse.

The papers and panels, for example, were made by reducing







real life designs to 1:12 scale and adapting them to the rooms. Floors were created by painting marble effects onto card, cutting it into squares and laying the squares like marble tiles. Stained Popsicle sticks became elegant wood flooring. All of the ornate beds have been made from plain, wooden beds and have been embellished with lush fabrics, beads, lace and plaster moldings added to create luxurious furniture.

The fireplaces all started out as boring, wooden surrounds and have been transformed into opulent marble using a few, clever paint techniques. The stonework on the entrance arches was created from painted egg cartons. With the ex-

‘She is constantly striving to improve her skills, and enjoys weaving scandalous stories around her Château and its owners, the Count and Countess Dupont.’

ception of a few pieces purchased from other artists, there is nothing in the Château in its original state.

Anne is most proud of the chapel.

Having lost her mother-in-law this year, Anne created a chapel in the attic, called The Capilla de Nicolasa de La Concepcion. The chapel includes all of the religious effigies her mother-in-law treasured and inspiration for the design came from the Basillica of Candelaria in Tenerife, in her husband's homeland. Her mother-in-law's hand-embroidered linen has been adapted to making bedding for the home as well.

During lockdown, Anne was unable to see any of her family, including her two sons and elderly mother, who all reside in different countries. Imagine their surprise when they were eventually reunited two years later and were confronted



by Anne's three dollhouses: a Spanish villa, a Georgian mansion and the Château. Work and family commitments had never allowed Anne to embrace her creativity. Now this hobby has become a lifeline during a very difficult period.

Future plans are to furbish the Château's basement by adding a huge kitchen, wine cellar and servants' quarters. Once complete, Anne plans to begin a new house, where each room will be thematic, based on a nursery rhyme or child's story. This will be a project that will take some years to complete. She also plans to begin selling her dolls and design furniture for her Fantasy Furniture range.







Knit a Baby Dress Set for Christmas

Angela Turner shares how to knit in miniature using this delightful 1:12 scale Santa outfit as a project.



BY ANGELA TURNER

Before starting be sure to separate the strands of the embroidery thread and wrap around a bobbin. Use just one strand at a time when knitting.

Dress

Front (knitted in one piece to armholes)

Cast on 68sts with cherry and g-st 3 rows.

Work 16 rows st-st.

Next (dec) row: K2tog to end. 34sts

Next row: Purl (try to keep the tension tight).

Change to mid grey.

Next row: Kfb in first st, knit to end. 35sts

Next row: Knit.

Begin armhole shaping:

First row: K9, bind off 2sts, k17 (including st remaining from bind off), turn (leaving last 7sts on left hand needle).

Next row: Bind off 2sts purlways, p15 (including st remaining from bind off).

Work on these 15sts for front first:

First row: Knit.

Next row: Knit.

Change to cherry.

Next row: Knit.

Next row: K2, purl to last 2sts, k2.

Begin neck shaping:

First row: K9, turn.



Next row: Bind off 3sts purlways, p4 (including stitch left from bind off), k2.

Work on this side first.

Next row: K4, k2tog. 5sts

Next row: Purl to last 2sts, k2.

Next row: K3, k2tog. 4sts

Next row: Purl to last 2sts, k2.

Bind off.

Rejoin yarn to second side.

First row: Knit.

Next row: K2, purl to end.

You will need

- 1 strand Trimits embroidery thread cherry GE0431
- 1 strand Trimits embroidery thread mid grey GE0134
- 1 strand Trimits embroidery thread cream GE0131
- Miniature knitting needles: 6/0 (UK size 22)

Extras

- Sewing needle
- 2 seed beads or buttons
- 1 gold 1.5mm belt buckle

Abbreviations

- alt = alternate
- cont = continue
- dec = decrease
- foll = following
- G st = garter stitch
- k = knit
- k2tog = knit 2 together
- kfb = knit 1 front & back
- p = purl
- p2tog = purl 2 together
- rem = remaining
- rep = repeat
- RS = right side
- skpo = slip 1, k1, pass slipped stitch over
- st(s) = stitch(es)
- st-st = stocking stitch
- WS = wrong side
- yfwd = yarn forward

PROJECT

Next row: K2tog, k4. 5sts
Next row: K2, purl to end.
Next row: K2tog, k3. 4sts
Next row: K2, purl to end.
Bind off.

Back

Return to first set of sts (9sts) and rejoin mid grey thread.

First row: Purl to last 2sts, k2.

Next row (buttonhole): K1, yfwd, k2tog, knit to end.

Next row: Knit.

Change to cherry.

Next row: Knit.

Next row: K2, purl to last 2sts, k2.

Rep last 2 rows again.

Next row (buttonhole): K1, yfwd, k2tog, knit to end.

Next row: K2, purl to last 2sts, k2.

Bind off.

Rejoin yarn to second side (7sts).

First row: Knit.

Next row: Purl to last 2sts, k2.

Next row: Knit.

Next row: Knit.

Change to cherry.

Next row: Knit.

Next row: K2, purl to last 2sts, k2.

Rep last 2 rows again twice.

Bind off.

Use the tail ends to sew the seams, where possible.

Sew shoulder seams of dress.



Sew the shoulder seams together, starting at the outside and working inwards.

Use the cast off st at neck to sew a few sts on to right front of dress to help neaten the neckline. Sew seam of dress at back to waist.

Turn right side out. Overlap the buttonhole border at the base so that it sits on top of the button band. Tie in all loose ends. Sew a tiny button or bead to button band to match buttonhole positions.

Sew a tiny red seed bead or but-

ton on the red fabric and a black one on the mid grey belt.



Sew a tiny 1.5mm gold belt buckle to the front of mid grey belt to finish.

Use a length of mid grey to sew the tiny belt buckle at the front of the dress.



Place dress on doll, being careful not to pull limbs or head too much.

Pants

Start at back and cast on 16sts using cream.

Work 4 rows 1x1 rib.

Next row: K2tog, rib to last 2sts, k2tog. 14sts

Next row: Rib.

Rep last 2 rows till 6sts rem.

Work 2 rows rib.

Next row: Kfb in first st, rib to last st,



PROJECT

kfb. 8sts
Next row: Rib.
Rep last 2 rows till 16sts.
Work 4 rows 1x1 rib.
Bind off in rib.
Join side seams (before leg shaping) tog. Tie in loose ends.
Turn right way round and put on the doll.

Hat

Start at base and cast on 32sts using cream.
G-st 3 rows.
Change to cherry.
Starting with a knit row, st-st 8 rows.
Next row: (K2, k2tog) to end. 24sts
Starting with a purl row, st-st 3 rows.
Next row: (K1, k2tog) to end. 16sts
Starting with a purl row, st-st 3 rows.
Next row: (K2tog) to end. 8sts
Starting with a purl row, st-st 5 rows.
Next row: (K2tog) to end. 4sts
Starting with a purl row, st-st 19 rows.
Change to cream.
First row: Knit.
Next row: Kfb in every st. 8sts
Starting with a purl row, st-st 3 rows.
Next row: K2tog to end. 4sts

Cut yarn and thread through sts.

Pull up sts tightly then sew seam of cream 'pom-pom' with reverse st-st facing. Run a length of cream around the base of the pom-pom and pull up tightly to help form the spherical shape. Sew seam of hat using mattress stitch.



Fold over the tip of the hat and attach to the brim to the side with a small stitch.

Booties (make 2)

Using mid grey, cast on 16sts (leaving a length of thread for sewing up) and g-st 4 rows.
Next row: K6, skpo, k2tog, k6. 14sts
Next row: Purl.
Next row: K5, skpo, k2tog, k5. 12sts
Next row: Purl.
Next row: K4, skpo, k2tog, k4. 10sts
Work 5 rows g-st.
Bind off knitways.

Sew over g-st sole seam and turn right way round. Place on foot of doll and mattress stitch the seam at the back of bootie.

Use the doll's foot as a form for sewing the booties – it is very difficult to put on the doll without sewing them on the foot first! Leave on the doll for a couple of hours and the bootie will hold its shape when removed.



See more of my work at [Etsy.com/shop/Angela TurnerDesigns](https://www.etsy.com/shop/AngelaTurnerDesigns).



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Artists featured: Framed photos
top to bottom- Sherrill Necessary,
Angela Turner, Candida Maritato, Karen
Hritz, Melanie Belinsky, Kendra Sechovec,
and Margarita Atanasova Silhouettes from
top to bottom - Aurala Krieger, Sadie
Brown, Sadie Brown

Interior Space Hand Made with Finesse

Lone Schacksen makes her one-inch scale interior accents using card stock and mat board.

Back in *Dollhouse Miniatures* 89, Lone Schacksen shared a tutorial on how to make a panel door from card stock. Now we are excited to see more of her work and learn a bit more about her in this *DHM* interview.

DHM: How did you come up with the idea for this piece? Were you inspired by one certain item or moment, or was it a gradual accumulation of ideas?

Lone: I love Georgian architecture in London, as well as classical Parisian architecture. So my work is a bit of a mix of the two. I also like to mix old furniture with modern pieces.

DHM: Did the idea for this piece morph over time, or did the final piece turn out exactly as you had envisioned?

Lone: Because I draw up everything first, my pieces usually come out just as I've envisioned.

DHM: How much of this piece was made, and how much was bought or collected?

Lone: I make all of my pieces myself.

DHM: What materials did you use to make this?

Lone: Mountboard, Foamboard, Carstock, Obeche wood.



DHM: Can you share your technique for creating the piece(s)?

Lone: I draw everything up on the computer, and then hand cut everything and carefully piece it together.

DHM: Did you use a unique process or unconventional method for creating any of these pieces?

Lone: I love layering pieces of card stock to create architectural detail such as moldings, door frames, and panels.

DHM: What is your most valuable tool that you could not live without?

Lone: I use a Swann Morton scalpel handle with a 10A blade.



DHM: Why did you make this piece?

Lone: I love creating rooms that look totally different to the flat I actually live in.

DHM: What's your favorite part about this piece?

Lone: That it's all made out of card stock and mount board.

DHM: What part of this was the most fun to create?

Lone: I had the most fun making the fireplaces and all of the architectural details.

DHM: Are you going to sell this piece or display it?

Lone: I make and then sell my room boxes and dollhouses online for \$800 and more.

DHM: Have you made anything that you can't bear to part with?

Lone: I have a 1:24 dollhouse that I'd be sad to see go. I enjoy seeing it tucked away on my bookshelf.

DHM: What's next for you and your creations?

Lone: Lots more of the same!

DHM: What's the biggest difficulty involved with working in miniature?

Lone: I get sore shoulders after bending over my desk for too long.

DHM: Do you have any formal training in your miniature field (i.e. art instruction for a painter, architecture for a dollhouse builder, sculpting for a doll maker, etc.)?

Lone: I am trained as a scenic painter and set designer.

DHM: When did you first become interested in miniatures or how were you introduced to the hobby?

Lone: As a child I used to make dollhouses and furniture out of cardboard boxes so I guess it was early on.

DHM: What do you do for your career?

Lone: I am a theatre designer.



1



2

1 Lone's one-inch scale room box.
 2 The windows and paneling molding on the back wall of the room box while it was in progress.
 3 Gorgeous panelling over the fireplace. 4 The beautifully staged fireplace showcasing modern art and pink roses.



3



4



which have been on show at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and at the National Theatre in London

DHM: What do you love most about miniatures?

Lone: I feel that anything is possible in miniature!

DHM: What do you think about the future of miniatures?

Lone: I think miniatures have a bright future. Instagram and Tik Tok have opened up the art form to a lot of new people.

DHM: What's next for you and your creations?

Lone: Keep on building and one day I'd like to participate in the Kensington Dollhouse Festival.



artist details

Lone Schacksen

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Instagram: @londonminiature

DHM: Who is your biggest fan?

Lone: My boyfriend, Richard, is very supportive.

DHM: Where do you find inspiration?

Lone: In interior magazines, Pinterest and on Instagram.

DHM: Describe your workplace.

Lone: I have a studio space in our small flat in London. I use it for both miniatures, and my career as a theatre designer.

DHM: Have you made any special items (i.e. something for a celebrity, a piece on display at a museum, etc.)?

Lone: In my other career I have made many models for the stage,





FEATURE





Good Sam Show Report

Enjoy the Good Sam Showcase of Miniatures show report, for 2022.

BY SUZIE JONES PHOTOS BY MICHAEL PUFF

The 46th Good Sam Showcase of Miniatures show brought us back to the San Jose Double-tree hotel on October 8-9, 2022.

Wandering the aisles of the show was a delight as this all-volunteer run event hosted a total of 68 dealers, with 10 from international locations. This juried show brings a unique mix of artists together in one location so you can find that perfect piece for your scene or collection. Our show is proud to be a source of funding for the Auxiliary of Good Samaritan Hospital. Their mission is to provide voluntary service and support to the Good Samaritan Hospital Community.

With inspiration around every corner, local clubs and miniaturists showed off their latest creations in our Exhibitors Gallery in the lobby.

Also featured are our Friday workshops, a Silent Auction, Children's workshops, a White Elephant sale, a Dealers Donation Drawing, and door prizes. It's always a thrill to see that perfect item that is begging to come home with you, and this show certainly didn't disappoint on that front.

If you missed it this year, mark your calendar now for next year when we celebrate our 47th show! Join us in San Jose on October 14-15, 2023. For updates on the show, visit our website!

Above is small scale miniature work of Samantha Murray. To the right is silver work by Pete Acquisto.



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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GoodSamShowcaseOfMiniatures>





artist details

A.W. Creations Miniatures

Web: <https://awcreationsminiatures.com>

A gorgeous 1:12
scale potted plant
arrangement.



artist details

Dollhouse Land

Tel: (949) 496-9841

Email: LauraCrain2@aol.com

A colorful and highly detailed 1:12
scale floral arrangement.



Jim specializes in
miniature lighting
and sculpture.



artist details

Jim Pounder Sculptures

Email: pounder@clarkston.com



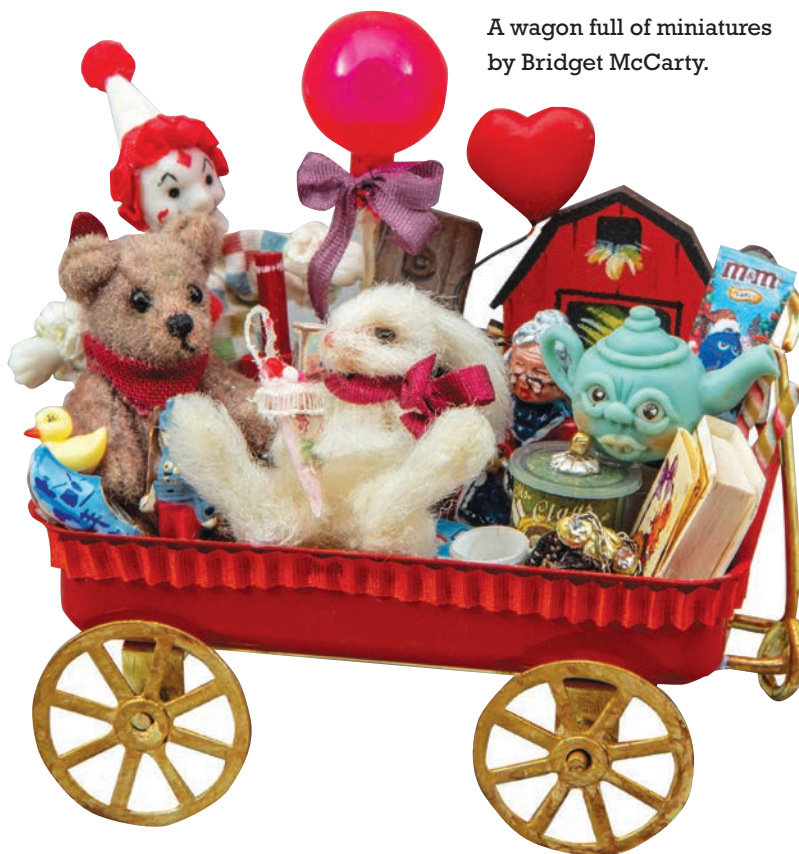


Two 1:12 scale porcelain dolls by Debra Hammond.





Exquisite miniature Delft pottery
by Henny Staring-Egberts.



A wagon full of miniatures
by Bridget McCarty.



Two of Johannes
Landman impeccable
miniature oil paintings.



Fern Vasi shows her
sense of humour
with her 1:12 scale
porcelain dolls.

FEATURE

A costal painting in 1:12 scale by Barbara Stanton.



Miniature baked goods by Jasmin Schwarz.



Miniature furniture and accessories by Julia Stewart.



A holiday themed 3-tier cake in miniature by Elizabeth Murta.

A Holiday Dinner That's Gone to the Dogs

Place your tongue firmly in your cheek and the food safely in the bin as Mags Cassidy creates uproar with an alternative Christmas dinner.

BY MAGS CASSIDY

How I remember the magic of Christmas Day. We were only allowed toast for breakfast because of all the sweets we would eat in the day. There was always so much to do in the kitchen that mum wouldn't have time to join us in the lounge to open her presents until later. Perhaps that's why everything ran like clockwork and mum would put a beautiful, golden turkey on the table with sprouts and roast potatoes, followed by Christmas pudding and mince pies with custard and cream.

Thank goodness that mom was an organized cook! However, with all the activities and excitement of Christmas morning; opening presents, an early drink or even going to Church, it is easy to forget about the dinner cooking in the oven. While most Christmas dinners might turn out just fine, others will be destined for the dog.

For a bit of fun I have taken this idea and turned it into an alternative Christmas dinner. This is great fun to do, especially if you want your dollhouse to be a bit different, or if you

are making a room box scene.

The food is made out of polymer clay as usual, but with more dark pastel applied to the surface after baking it, to make it look burnt. This is fairly quick to do and very forgiving, especially if you are still learning to make food with polymer clay as your detail will not need to be perfect. Add to that a dog who eats anything, knock over a glass of wine and generally enjoy making a disorganised mess and you have a Christmas scene with a difference – literally.





Painting in Miniature

Bonnie Lee Clendenen Walker enjoys painting in oil and acrylic on small canvases. Then she makes a custom frame for each of her works of art.

BY BONNIE CLENDENEN WALKER, SU EPSTEIN & LES WALKER

Since I was a child, I was artistic. Drawing and making many small things from found objects, cardboard and construction paper. But in the sixth grade I found a book in the library on dollhouses! From that chance encounter I was inspired to funnel the crafting I had been doing into a lifelong hobby.

I was lucky my dad was a woodworker. I designed my own house. Dad cut the pieces, and as I was not comfortable with power tools, my brother cut out the windows. From there my hobby grew to more houses than I can count. At that time, like many miniature artists with little money, the only artwork hanging on the walls were pictures taken from magazines or other sources with store bought frames.

As I got older, I learned to make

my own frames. I also grew as an artist, though I never stopped working on miniatures. In 2001, I graduated from Ringling College of Art and Design and I began doing large-scale commissions and entered the realm of professional artist. Shortly after this, I also met my husband, Les, who had been custom crafting 1:6 scale collectible figures for quite a while. He had been selling these figures on eBay for years, and suggested I make miniature paintings to sell, thereby combining two of my passions.

My first sale was exciting and a new path for me was forged. My miniature paintings are of my own design. This allows me the freedom to paint whatever I wish: from landscapes to still life, from animals to portraits, and from reality to fantasy.



A barnyard painting and a close up of a baby calf in the barn.



My eBay originals I try to keep affordable so that everyone can have a real piece of art!

There are few times I work in oil paint, but most of my paintings are acrylic on canvas paper. For commission work, I am comfortable with any base surface. Occasionally, if I am painting a full size piece, I will use the scrap canvas for my miniatures. The painting is then mounted on cardboard to give it strength. I make the work's wooden frame by hand from available materials found in hobby stores or online. I then add a second cardboard backing with wire for hanging, as with life size art work. This way one does not have to permanently affix the artwork to the wall of their house, but will be able to change the pictures as they wish – just like life size houses.

Frequently I am asked why I have chosen a particular subject or subjects. The variety I paint is in part

to keep my interest, in part it is for the challenge, but it is also to provide just the right image for someone who is looking for artwork for their particular house. My ideas can come from anywhere: magazines, pictures, calendars, my own photos, and my own imagination. I have miniaturized my own life size work. I look to the background, rather than the subject of a picture or photograph. I am often looking for what inspires me, wondering what I can add to or remove from a picture to make it what I want.

Recently, I received a request from a customer to repaint a previous picture. He was making something with a medieval theme and not wanting to give up the painting he had purchased in its current location, he asked me to duplicate the original picture for him. Of course I did! How flattering to know he wanted to keep his purchase across time.

Occasionally, I create other min-

iatures to sell; decorated mini-hats, a small side table. I hope to expand into miniature framed drawings. But this is still in the experimental stage. Whatever I expand out to, I'm sure I will continue to paint in full size and in miniature.

Art should not be kept in a museum, but should be hung on the wall to inspire and bring joy to all. Maybe we cannot afford to have a life size art collection, but I would like to think any hobbyist would be able to hang real art in their miniature rooms.



Recreating Warhol's Silver Studio in Mini

The *Silver Factory* was the nickname for Andy Warhol's art studio and Marc decided to make it in miniature.

BY MARC LA FONTIJN

After *Les Misérables* (Featured in *DHM89*) and *Madame de Pompadour* (Featured in *American Miniaturist* 223) I wanted to make something completely different from the baroque style. I have always thought that Andy Warhol was very interesting. He was best known as an American visual artist, but was also a film director, and producer. Most recognize him as being a leading figure in the visual art movement known as pop art.

For this project, I decided to create my own interpretation of what would best represent his

painting studio, The Silver Factory. I was inspired by the Netflix series, *The Andy Warhol Diaries*.

In the 70's, Warhol had his studio in New York City and it was similar to a loft. Billy Name designed the studio for him and created a world of silver. Everything that could be painted silver was painted silver and he even covered the walls with aluminum foil.

This was challenging for me because I have used wallpaper, paint and fabric in the past to cover walls, but never aluminum foil.

As always, I did a lot of research and the more I found out about

Andy Warhol the more I learned and discovered that he was a very interesting artist and that he had so much more accomplishments than Campbell Soup Company cans and Marilyn Monroe paintings.

I tried to give this project a 'loft' look with rusty pipes, which are actually straws that I covered with aluminum foil. I also added a ventilation system and electricity box that I made from bits and pieces that I sprayed silver and aged with acrylic paint to give them a rusty look. To create the illusion of rust, I used black and orange acrylic paints.

I paid a lot of attention to his art and tried to make as many miniature replicas as possible in 1:12 scale.

His *Last Supper* work (1986) was







1 *The Last Supper* installation showcases the mutual trust, shared inspirations, and political concerns of Warhol and Basquiat's collaborative works in the 1980s. **2** A ladder with paint. **3** The silver bathroom. **4** A section of the Silver Studio where Andy Warhol created.





An art installation re-created in miniature as well as Pop Art paintings that Andy Warhol is famous for.

based on Leonardo Da Vinci's *Last Supper*, but he made his version as a series of ten punching bags with the face of Jesus and added graffiti to them. I made three of them in 1:12 scale using small painting rolls. Then I drew Jesus' face by hand and copied it three times.

There are also three of his Brillo soap pads boxes, his silver Coca Cola bottles and some Campbell Soup Company cans. Of course I also made a 1:12 scale version of his *Silver Clouds* that are little pillows covered with six layers of silver metallic paint to make them look like balloons. There was no doubt that I had to add some celebrity paintings including one of Marilyn Monroe.

Recently the Andy Warhol Foundation and Skaterworld designed some skateboards

with some of his Campbell Soup Company cans on them. So I made three scale versions in miniature for this project.

As usual I finished this project inside and out. The left side is dedicated to his Coca Cola work. The right side of the room box is dedicated to his Campbell Soup Company art and the backside of this diorama is dedicated to the over 50 album covers he designed for Diana Ross, Liza Minnelli, Aretha Franklin, The Stones, Paul Anka, Debbie Harry, John Lennon and many more.

Inside you can also see his silver toilet. Warhol had a famous red couch, which can be seen at The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I made a copy of it in 1:12 scale using rubber foam and red and crème fabric. I aged it with

dark acrylic paint.

I made the miniature spray paint cans by cutting off the tops of pencils with a small saw and gluing labels around them.

I tried to incorporate as many details as possible so it would be just like the real Silver Factory. I also added items like his disco ball, the Polaroid photos he always took and his silver chair on wheels.

To finish this piece I added a 1:12 scale version of *The Andy Warhol Diaries*. I always like to add a book to my projects. This was a very interesting piece to make and I enjoyed the process very much. It also pushed me out of my comfort zone, which is a real challenge. I hope you enjoyed it as well!



Above is the famous red sofa made in miniature and below are the silver pillows shown in miniature.



big buzz

CONTESTS, PRODUCTS, NEWS, & VIEWS FOR MINIATURISTS

Highlights contest

We would love to know what your favorite highlights were in this issue of *DHM*. You could win this quarter inch scale furniture kit by Hart's Desire Miniatures.

All it takes is a small paragraph for our random drawing! Send your entry to **DHM91 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, January 27, 2023**.

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Recent winners

DHM90 Highlights contest

Joyce from Kettering, OH

Roll basket giveaway

Ruth from Altair, TX

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Toaster giveaway

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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

Issue 89 of *Dollhouse Miniatures* magazine was outstanding! But I really quenched my thirst reading every word of Connie Sauve's article about *The Fox Tavern & Inn*. I love refurbishing dollhouses and I also sell on eBay, so I could relate to her story. Shame on the eBay seller who did not properly package her treasure! And I am glad eBay stood by Connie and helped her retrieve some of her loss. It was interesting to learn of her additions, modifications and handmade items. Connie's attention to detail really added to the Pub and brought it back to its original glory and beyond!

~Martha from Shreveport, LA

Highlights

I loved everything about Mikako Nishi's cozy one-inch scale antique shop in



Dollhouse Miniatures issue number 90. She certainly did make it look as though it was in a the European countryside.

I love the textures she introduced to this project. The stucco work on the exterior has such a charming look. She is a very inspirational artist because she has such great focus while finishing one

piece and does so much research. It really does show in the finished project. I really enjoyed the large dresser as well as the dried plants that are hanging from the ceiling beam. I look forward to seeing more of her work.

~Carol from San Diego, CA

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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Visiting My Little Petite Boutique

The beautiful curves of a metal framed shelf instantly appealed to Sue Barcelona and right away she knew it could be turned into an enchanting French boutique.

BY SANDRA HARDING

Like Sue Barcelona, had I seen this unusual framed shelf for sale I would not have been able to walk away either. Its lovely shape was just calling out to be made into a Christmas shop as far as Sue was concerned, and how right she was. It's just perfect!

Working with her husband Russ, they cut off the chicken wire at the back to create a wall, which Sue had already decided would have an old-world look to it. Sue started searching YouTube for suitable videos, and ended up watching so many that her ideas were forming thick and fast. She also realised that she would be able to make a lot of the things herself, which she found exciting.

Having already acquired various pieces of old dollhouse furniture which was not the style she wanted,





she realized that she could give them a makeover for her Christmas shop. A picture was by now forming in Sue's mind, and, as she loves France, the shop would be what she imagined a French Christmas shop would look like, and be called: "My Little Petite Boutique".

‘The attention to detail in this creation is amazing.’

The chaise was bought from an Etsy shop, while tiny parcels were made and wrapped and placed perfectly. Delightful paintings and prints were carefully arranged and a cuckoo clock and other matching items added to the walls. The pretty Christmas trees were decorated





The classic checkered flooring give a rustic feeling to the piece.

with various sized baubles; lovely swathes of ivy and ribbon decorate the fireplace alongside candle holders and other accessories. There is even a tiny dollhouse amongst the display and a wonderful clock over the fire-place in pride of place.

There are numerous tiny animals all decorated for Christmas, a carousel, and several angels. The distressed chairs and tables, full to overflowing, were painted and decorated by Sue, and even the urns all match this delightful monochrome effect. This is not as easy to



do as you might think. It takes a lot of thought, and this is what makes this scene so delightful and different from the typical red and green Christmas variety.

Interestingly, when Sue first became interested in miniatures, she was overwhelmed by everything she saw on the internet, on Facebook and in magazines and began by creating miniature gardens in her garden. Just look how she has developed her skills since those early days.

The attention to detail in this creation is amazing. I think that this is an idea that one or two of us might want to copy.



Making a Perfect Family Home

We take a look back at a beautiful Regency house which has been decorated and furnished in the style Valerie would have loved for her full-size house.

BY CHARLOTTE MERRYMAN

I don't know what I envied most, the view from the garden or the wonderful house in the dining room. After leaving the main road and turning into the village, one begins to feel a little hedged in by narrow lanes, but when I parked the car and entered the garden the view that greeted me was breathtaking!

‘It is the house I would love to have really lived in when my children were growing up in the 1970s.’

Living on the edge of Dartmoor, UK with her husband and two very lively red setters, between two villages, Valerie Wheeler often goes for days without seeing anyone else. During most of the

Richard built the basement; he also fitted the ‘prop’ to hold the roof up, and replaced the original paper roof with over 600 wooden slates with real leading flashing. He also made the chimney stacks.





Above and to the right is Valerie's elegant room – purposely designed with little color except for the lovely Persian rug. The walls, carpet and sofas are all cream, as is the Adam-style fireplace, and the adjoining cupboards, which have large full wall mirrors filling the alcove. There is a chandelier, a glass coffee table with silver tea service. It is her favorite room in the house. The cupboards are trompe l'oeil as is the fireplace.

year she and her husband Richard, are kept busy with an enormous garden, which is Valerie's first love.

But during the long winter evenings she knits, sews or paints watercolors, and was drawn into the miniature world many years ago







The above room was copied from the study in their full-size house; it has a wall of books, his desk and her bureau. There is an old map above the desk and a gun rack above the bureau. The floor is polished wood and the walls are pale green. To the right are maps that reflect Richard's full-size collection. On the left is the large kitchen, which has a black and white tiled floor and terra-cotta walls. There is an AGA Cooker placed into the recess where the old range once was. An old dresser on one side is decorated with a trompe l'oeil effect, and modern units on the other with cupboards above. There is cook working at the kitchen table and another table and chairs for informal eating.

after seeing an advertisement in a magazine for a dollhouse kit, and after visiting a dollhouse show in Exmouth, UK where she saw some 'proper' dollhouses.

Her passion for the hobby quickly grew and soon the little house was far too small, and she started looking for her ideal miniature property. In 1997, another advertisement by The Dolls House Workshop in *Dolls House World* showed the perfect house. The rooms in the house are all of a very large size, although the original design was slightly altered for Valerie, as she rather liked having the rooms on one side of the house larger than the others. This was achieved by narrowing the hallways.

Valerie explained, "It was silly having large halls. I don't know why it was designed like that. There is now just enough room to put a little furniture in each of the hallways."



Valerie knew the house was right and she told me why it is so special to her: "It is an outlet for my vivid imagination. It is the house I would love to have really lived in when my children were growing up in the 1970s." It was originally designed as a Regency house but the interior has been modernized. Valerie has decorated and furnished it how she would have for her family growing



up, had she had plenty of money.

Valerie added, "In 1970 my husband bought an old property in the centre of Exeter, originally three houses in a terrace of 12 built in 1815. It had been converted into a hotel after the First World War, and was then left to become derelict. He converted it back into three houses, and then each house into five self-contained flats. We lived in one of these flats ourselves before buying our present home, and my dollhouse is just as I imagine one of these houses would have been."

Valerie continued, "The family that lives in the house is me (as a grandmother now), my husband and two sons. One son still lives in the house while the other has come to visit with his children. I have a granddaughter, Clare, just like the



little girl in the house. They have come for the weekend. There is a young baby in the house so they have an Au Pair who lives in the

The dining room shown on the left has a pale green wooden floor, mostly covered with a green patterned carpet, there is a long oval dining table on two pedestals (made by Valerie from scratch) with seven Chrysnbon chairs covered to match the walls. The table is set for a luncheon party. There is a sideboard (made from a kit), a white fireplace with large gilt mirror over. A chandelier lights the room and there are two wall lights. The sideboard was made from a kit she received as a present from her younger son. The Welsh dresser was bought for the kitchen in pine, and then repainted to match the dining room furniture. To the left is the brown wallpaper, and patterned carpet (the reverse of material used in girl's room). A wooden fireplace has a 'lit coal' effect. This room is due for a 'make-over' - it is very dated. The fireplace is one of Valerie's early efforts as are the chairs. The television came from the top of Valerie's 60th birthday cake.



The side table onto the top left was bought during a holiday in the Lake District. Above shows the sweet treats on the dining room buffet. Below is the Au Pair's bed-sit and en-suite bathroom, where she is having her bath and is chatting to her boyfriend while he enjoys a glass of cola. There is a bed, wardrobe and drop-leaf table and a chair and a sewing machine.

basement. She can be seen taking a bath in the en-suite while her boyfriend sits patiently waiting for her as he reads his paper.

"The lady in the kitchen just comes in to help out. The family are quite well off, so can afford extra help around the house."

When asked if she has a favorite

item Valerie replied, "It is a tallboy given by my son as a kit. It was the first piece of 'quality' furniture that I made. It isn't a complete piece anymore because I have the base in the house, and didn't have anywhere to put the top. I think my son had just come down from university; it was his first wages from the Meteorological Office. The base is in the dining room. I wanted to use it, but just couldn't put it anywhere as it is such a large piece."

The dining table was the second piece of furniture Valerie made



FEATURE



To the left is the main bedroom. It has blue wallpaper and a beige Dralon carpet. There are matching wardrobes on either side of a dressing chest with a mirror over it. The double bed has pink silk covers and a padded headboard. The bedside tables have framed silhouettes above them. The bed was a piece of foam covered to simulate a modern divan. The rug was painted onto curtain material. The dress and jacket was Valerie's attempt at Haute Couture. To the bottom left is the guest bedroom. It has flowered paper walls with matching frieze in white, green and yellow. The twin beds are covered in green and white chintz and have a matching headboard. The bedside table between them matches this 'inlaid' wardrobe. Valerie admits she is quite pleased with the results of her inlay effect on the furniture.

To the right shows the rooms on the attic floor. There are two children's bedrooms. The girl's room has pale pink walls with a rabbit frieze. The cot, playpen, high chair and chest of drawers are painted in white and pale green to match the frieze. There is a single bed with a bedspread of white polka dot net over a pale pink underskirt. There are two dollhouses, a knitted doll in the playpen, a resin doll on the bed, baby in the cot and toddler in the high chair. The carpet is a piece of curtaining. The frieze came from *DHW* and the nursery furniture (a present from her granddaughters) was re-painted to match.

although this was not from a kit but a piece of cherry wood, which she carefully cut. Chairs were also made to go with it, but these can



now be found in other rooms in the house as Valerie later found daintier ones which she painted and upholstered.

Valerie loves to make as much as possible and gets her ideas mainly from real life and of course *DHW*. She adds: "If I can make it to my satisfaction then I do. Obviously I have to buy glassware, and I am given items for Christmas presents." The beautiful miniature glassware on the dining room table was another gift from one of her sons. "Very often at Christmas time they will think of something and

‘The beautiful miniature glassware on the dining room table was another gift from one of her sons.’

pop it in. The glasses came with the two bottles of wine."

Valerie made the knitted outfits on the bed. "I'm quite proud of them, they were again from a



The boy's room has green walls with a frieze, beige carpet and painted rug. There are bookshelves, a single bed, desk and chair, and a chest of drawers with toy box to match. The boy is made from a porcelain kit, and has a smart red jumper. The rocking horse was a present, as was the goldfish bowl. The teddy named 'Titch' was made by Country Folk and was bought on a day out in the Cotswolds. The walls are painted with just a tablespoon of green emulsion, 'stolen' from her husband who was painting their bedroom at the time. The Merry-go-Round was a Christmas tree decoration. Valerie loves the goldfish in a bowl – it was a present from her husband and the teddy bear was from her grandsons.

pattern in *DHW*.' She has also made all of the food in the kitchen: "The cherry pie worked beautifully — it was from instructions given in the magazine. Every month you think, 'oh perhaps I can make that,' and then you have to find somewhere for it. The paper bags were again from cutouts in her miniature magazine."

Valerie's next project will be in 1:24 scale, although hasn't seen anything she likes yet. "I am still looking. I don't know whether to be ambitious although I won't try to build a house. Getting the shell professionally made does make a difference unless you have a carpenter in the family."

Valerie has given a lot of thought to each room of her main house, and her enjoyment of the project shows as everything works well together, particularly the furnishings and accessories.

‘It hasn’t been a dollhouse for me. I’ve been there and imagined it as my house as if I am living there and it’s how I would like it.’

"It hasn't been a dollhouse for me. I've been there and imagined it as my house as if I am living there and it's how I would like it. And if I had the money in the '60s when I first got married it is the house I would have liked. I would be quite happy with that – a large house, two little boys, an Au Pair."

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The newsletter began as a way of keeping miniaturists in touch with the hobby during lockdown, and also letting people know how makers and others were coping with isolation.

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