

# American miniaturist

June 2019



\$9.95 USD

INSPIRING MINIATURE ENTHUSIASTS TO CREATE

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ISSUE 194

**PROJECTS:** ☆ DOG CARRIER ☆ ALBUM ☆ CRAFTSMAN SCREEN  
☆ CAPRI PANTS ☆ ROOFING ☆ BONNET ☆ AND MUCH MORE

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# Making a special little place

*Sarah Santosa has discovered how cool miniatures really are while making a mini yoga studio*

BY PAM NORTH

Sarah Santosa has been in love with mini things for as long as she can remember. “My childhood was spent constructing small worlds in my closet, using my imagination to transform shoe boxes into mansions, and bottle caps into platters for decadent treats,” she shared. “When I was 10, a dollhouse shop moved into town and offered a youth class, so I soaked up all the knowledge I could there. Later, as a teen, I worried that minis

weren’t ‘cool’, so I let the passion subside. My college set design and architecture programs brought me back into the land of model-making, and I couldn’t resist the pull of dollhouses, so I have kept building ever since.”

Her college major encompassed scale, spatial storytelling, and planning as part of her training, and the tools and materials she learned about in that process proved relevant and useful for miniatures as

well, but she is self-taught in many of her other skills.

Sarah currently lives on a farm animal sanctuary on an island, with a view from her window of their pasture and animals, and she is now the mother of a four-month old infant daughter, Gwendolyn. A spare bedroom next to the nursery is her craft room for now, but as she suggested laughingly, “If we expand our family,

**Below left:** Miniature artist Sarah Santosa. **Below:** The front entrance to the yoga studio.



we might have to build out a cozy spot in the barn!”

She makes 1:12 scale minis, and almost always opts for a full house structure. “I love the story that a full home tells,” she explained. “Room boxes drive me crazy, because I always want to know what is on the other side of the wall!”

She had been following the Hobby Builders Supply/miniatures.com Creatin’ Contests for years, and in

**Right:** Now realizing how cool miniatures are, Sara has made a wonderful house based on one she saw in full scale. **Below:** There are stairs that wind up to the living spacious area.



2018 finally got up the courage to enter.

Her recent entry in the 25th Creatin’ Contest used the Three Gables House kit, which she transformed onto her *Little Yoga Studio*, and her efforts netted her the Second Place award.

Her inspiration was a gorgeous hilltop house she once had seen, with a complex roof line and an interesting mix of stucco and wood details. She decided to apply those motifs to her project. She also wanted to include a space within it as a yoga studio. She purchased the original kit and addi-



**Above:** The upstairs has a fresh and spacious living area with a small kitchen and large windows. Planning for large windows is a great way to get more light into your dollhouse for photography.

tional needed raw materials (wood, paint, sand, hot glue, etc.), but nearly all the architectural elements and most of the furniture were handmade by her.

Other purchases were the trees, doors, and storage furniture in the yoga studio. Her plans were to put the kit on top of another story, with exterior stairs because she thought it was architecturally beautiful and different. The concept for the yoga





studio to occupy the ground floor evolved only after she had begun building.

Sarah cited her greatest challenge in completing her house was the arrival of their first child, along with having the constant attention of their household cats. Between snuggling an infant, feedings, and shooing curious cats away, Sarah managed to complete her project. She was especially pleased with how the stairs turned out, commenting that they had been a labor-intensive project, and one that she sometimes had thought she

“Now I don’t think I’ll be able to do another build without some plantings.”

might have to scrap.

Because she never had done any kind of garden or landscaping before, she was intrigued with experimenting with the accents of greenery. “Now I don’t think I’ll be able to do another build without some plantings,” she commented. The 3D printing of the hand weights, done

**Above:** The downstairs of this mini house is a yoga studio complete with student yoga mats. What a beautiful place to get in shape!

by a friend for the exercise studio, was another unique aspect, since Sarah had been unable to find those miniature items anywhere.

One difficulty Sarah cites in working in miniature is making fabric look realistic. “The perfect dent to show plushness in a pillow, or the proper drape in bedding or curtains is so difficult. Finding contemporary prints in that small scale, or something that makes a

great nubby linen is so hard. I have resorted to printing my own fabric when I get desperate.” What she loves most about miniatures is the architecture and interior design. “Before becoming a parent I fully remodeled our home and did freelance design work. Minis allow me to explore spaces, decor, styles, and fantasies that I wouldn’t be able to create in real life!”

Sarah is looking ahead to her next creations. “Next winter we plan on having an open house and fund-raiser for our small animal sanctuary where a mini holiday village is the show piece. I now have a collection of buildings that I will deck out for the holidays to create a snowy village scene. I just need a few more structures and to amp up my mini holiday décor. I am



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**Above:** The house in progress during the early stages.

**Below:** The 1:12 scale masterpiece shown next to the family pet here you can see the scale perfectly.

so excited to work on this over 2019. Minis, holiday cheer, and cute animals - what’s not to love?”

