

Dollhouse Miniatures[®]

JUNE 2005
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World of Miniatures in a Nutshell

Chicago International Show 2005:

*Marietta Loudon brings the
jeweler's art to garden minis*



Dollhouse treasure
Dingley Hall

Kings, castles, and coronets at the
Naples Museum of Art

TO MAKE:

- > *A Goblin Marketplace*
from Joann Swanson
- > *Garden benches*
from Roz Weitzman



CHICAGO *International*

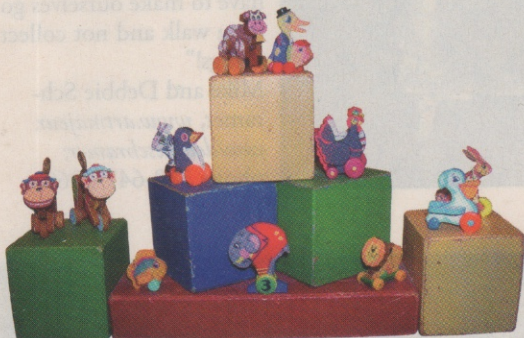
By Lauren M. Walker

Tom Bishop's Chicago International Show is famously one of the best and biggest in the world. Held April 2 and 3 at the Hyatt Regency -Woodfield, in Schaumburg, IL, with the overlapping new wholesale show at the nearby AmeriSuites on April 1 and 2, the show featured 229 exhibitors at the main show and 34 at the wholesale venue. Economically, the show ended on a note of cautious optimism. Exhibitors polled informally shared the opinion that interest in miniatures might be, if not reviving, at least holding steady, with several artisans reporting sales at least as good as last year. "I'm agnostic now. We didn't come here enthusiastic, but now I am optimistic," said Fran Meehan of Meehan Enterprises, Peoria, AZ. "I think the miniatures business is coming back, but it's coming back at a different level than before. The collectors are not going as high-end, but the middle range is coming back. Our lower- to mid-range furniture sold out the first night." Meehan said she and other exhibitors have adjusted what they bring to shows to reflect the new climate. "We would not have sold as much if we had brought our usual fare," she explained.

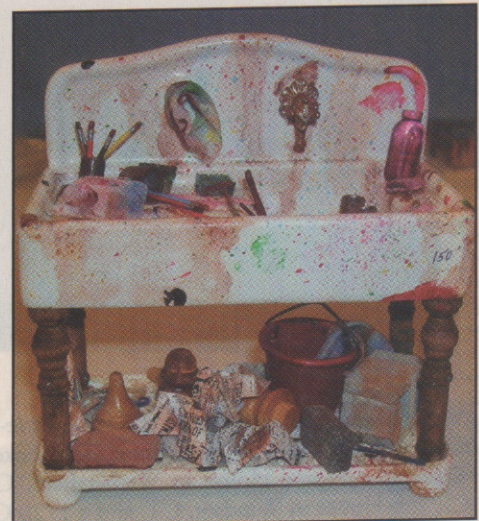
Show presenter Tom Bishop echoed Meehan's observations. "Since about January, shows seem to be up, buying-wise," Bishop said. He is also seeing more exhibitors sign up for space in his shows. Next year's Chicago International will be held at the same location, March 28 through April 2.



The Silver Cat chaise and Bunny table and chairs are by Marietta Loudon. For more information, see "Conversation with: Debi Kolenchuk, Marietta Loudon, and Linda Young." (pg. 59). Marietta Loudon, myarboro@tampabay.rr.com; phone 941-722-1702.



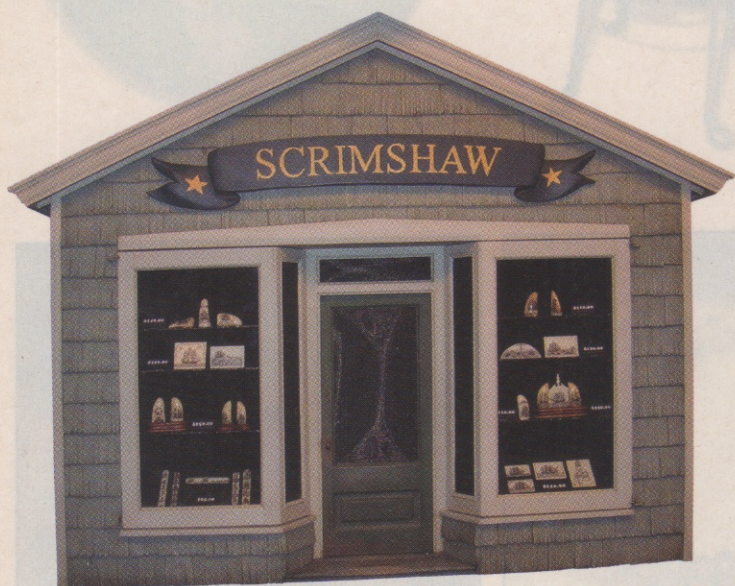
These vintage-look 1:12 toys are handcrafted by Brenda O'Brien of The Twelfth Dimension. Her wares include 50s-style pull toys, a toy farm with silo, and a Lincoln Logs cabin, as well as vintage radios, picnic tins, and canisters. The Twelfth Dimension, 4570 N. 104th St., Wauwatosa, WI, 53225; phone 414-464-4880



Sisters Joan Such Liponi and Peggy Such Kinkead of Such Things showed a variety of delights at the wholesale show, including 1", 1/2", and 1/4"-scale jewelry by Kinkead, such as this pearl choker, and Liponi's delightfully detailed work sink. Such Things, 422 Caseta Way, Santa Barbara, CA 93118; phone 805-964-5994



Lynn Whisenant's vibrant silk sofa shows off her modern style. Lynn Whisenant Designs, 813 Quail Valley DR., Brentwood, TN 37027, lwmini@bellsouth.net; phone 615-371-0812



Allison Ashby and Steve Jedd specialize in re-creating historic rooms and displayed stunningly accurate room boxes of kitchens from the 1766 Silas Deane House in Wethersfield, CT, the 1765 Hezekiah Chaffee House in Windsor, CT, and a 1720 Colonial Virginia house. Also on display was this scrimshaw shop (above) and its wares (right); Jedd is the scrimshander. Ashby and Jedd, ashbyjedd@aol.com, PO Box 525, Riverside, IL 60546; phone 708-485-5116



Artists Mike and Debbie Schramer seem to have an unusually ready portal to fairyland. Exhibiting their majestic Fairyhouse and newer Fairy Castle in Chicago, they also showed these whimsical chairs. Much of their work is enhanced by items they find near their Bellingham, WA, home. Indeed, their love of and inspiration by nature is so compelling that Debbie says, "Sometimes we have to make ourselves go for a walk and not collect things!" Mike and Debbie Schramer, www.artmajeur.com/debbieschramer; phone 360-647-2969





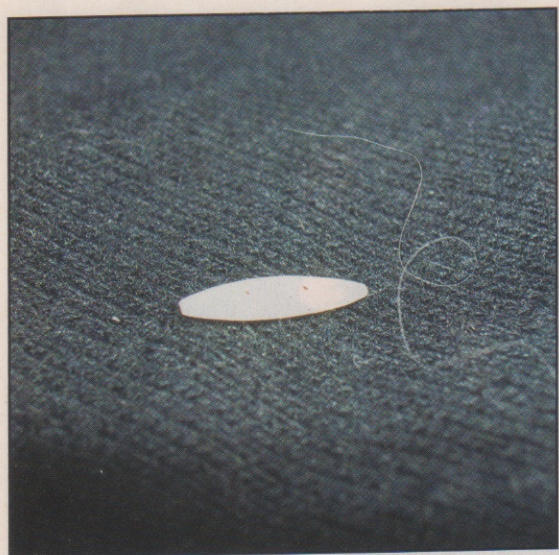
These 2"-scale ceramics are stoneware-glazed to give the appearance of salt glazing. Jane Graber of Graber Gallery also does one firing a year of 1:12 pieces using genuine salt-glazing technique. She also showed Colonial-style redware in sgraffito and slip-trailed designs in 1/2", 1", and 2" scales. Graber Gallery, janegraber@aol.com, 2357 Grandma Barnes Rd., Nashville, IN 47448; phone 812-988-8014, fax 812-988-0884



Hiroyuki and Kyoko brought Hiroyuki Kimura's breathtaking animal figures and Kyoko Mikai's exquisite plants and Japanese flower arrangements. Hiroyuki and Kyoko, www.dollhouse-kimura.com/DH-gallery; phone 81-55-962-8810, fax 81-55-962-5149



This gilt four-poster bed is after the style of Robert Adam, circa 1770. It's a result of collaboration between master miniaturist John J. Hodgson, who created the bed, and Judee Williamson, who dressed it. John J. Hodgson, www.johnjdhodgson.com; phone/fax: 011-44-12-62-674066



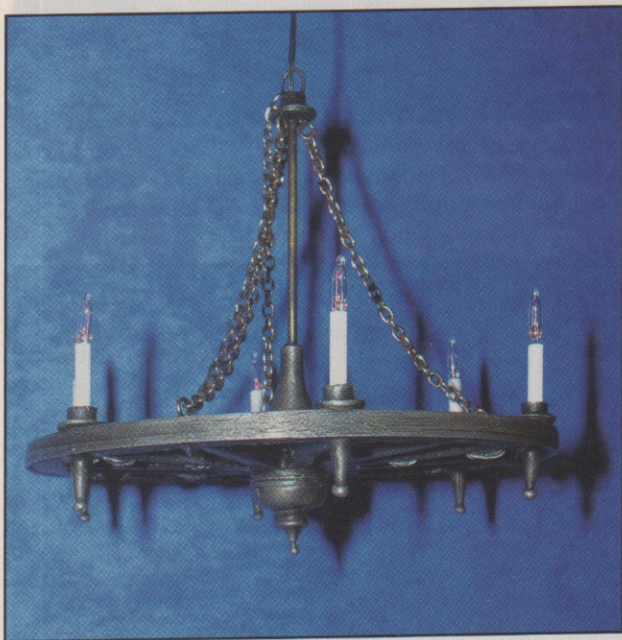
The newest offering on display in Chicago from David Edwards Miniatures, this tatting shuttle would actually work if you could find fingers dexterous enough and a fine-enough thread. David Edwards Miniatures, davidedwardsmin@onetel.com, 3 Marchhall Rd., Edinburgh, Scotland, EH16 5HR; phone 0131-667-8802



Isabella Gallaon-Aoki lives and works in Niigata, Japan, and brought her Japanese-themed miniatures and figures to Chicago. Japanalia, japanali@info-niigata.or.jp, 5-7 Fujiyama Kobari, Niigata-shi 950-2021, Japan; phone 81-25265-2907, fax 81-25265-2910



Bernd Franke brought the quintessential German Christmas to Chicago. Bernd Franke Fine Miniatures, Weingartenstr.26, 97072 Würzburg, Germany; phone/fax: 49-0-934-84280



One of the newer offerings from Ray Storey Lighting, this cast-iron-look chandelier could fit Medieval, Gothic Revival, or Arts and Crafts interiors. Ray Storey Lighting, www.ray-storey-lighting.com; phone/fax: 44-0-191-2807876



You have to wonder what these monks by Ellen Poitras are laughing about. Ellen Poitras, www.epdolls.com; phone 407-277-8012



These ivory tones are a new direction for artisan Susan Harmon. Heirlooms by Susan Harmon, 20773 Caylor Dr., Soulsbyville, CA 95372, heirloomsbysusan@msn.com; phone 209-532-4951



An antiques dealer in "smalls," David Omer finds small prints in book illustrations, postcards, and early trade cards, too small for ordinary full-scale display, and frames them in appropriate antique style as miniature prints. He also sells the miniature graphics unframed. Vintage Images of the Past, 3342 Aldrich Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55408; phone 612-822-9537



This sofa, by June Clinkscales, features softly flowing fringe. Miniatures by June Clinkscales, www.miniaturesbyjune.com; phone 760-954-4575



Artisan Peter Tucker creates unique lighting, such as the mica- and vellum-shaded lamps in this Mission setting, for his detailed room boxes. The furniture is also his work. Roomboxes etc., www.roomboxes.com; phone 604-224-3928



This armchair is new work by Williamson Walton Marble. Judee Williamson provides the upholstery; Nicole Walton Marble creates the wooden frameworks. Williamson Walton Marble, nmarble@prynet.com, PO Box 11, Flat Rock, NC 28731



Karen's Miniatures displayed a multitude of garden accessories in terra cotta, ceramic, and brass, including these birdhouses and birdbaths. Karen's Miniatures, www.skycrestproducts.com; phone 505-532-0939

Conversation with: Sue Ann Thwaite, "Lady Bug"

A show like the Chicago International can be daunting for the beginning miniaturist, because the quality of the work on display can seem unattainably high. But miniatures should also be fun, and that's where Sue Ann Thwaite, of Lady Bug, comes in. "I cater to do-it-yourself beginning miniaturists," Thwaite says. "My projects are a great way to get kids involved. I want them to make more flowers, make a mess, and have fun. If you make them do it precisely, they're going to hate your hobby." As well as a line of eye-achingly tiny fairies, each marked with an even tinier trademark ladybug, Thwaite sells and demonstrates easy-to-use miniature landscaping materials, including "flower mixes," tiny crumbs of painted Styrofoam that add flower-like color to greens, florist's wire, and preserved lichen. "I'm here for the landscape-impaired," she says. Although it would be impossible to capture Thwaite's heartwarming and lively patter here, her basic message is that miniatures should be a source of joy and an expression of love. Her "lipstick fairies," shown here, come with a poem to remind their owners that "someone Loves YOU!" Sue Ann Thwaite, www.ladybug-fairies.com; phone 301-865-1984; fax 301-865-4705



"Shrinking Violet"



"Dogwood"



Instant flowers



Lipstick Fairies

Photos by Victoria Masters



Materials: Flower mixes, greenery, and florist wire



Dip wire in glue



Roll glue-dipped wire in flower mix



Tiny stalks of hollyhocks

Conversation with: Debi Kolenchuk, Marietta Loudon, and Linda Young

Although these three artists have been collaborating since 2001, Chicago was a special event for them because it was the first time that Debi Kolenchuk and Marietta Loudon had met. Linda Young, known professionally as Lady Jane, creates leaded-glass greenhouses, conservatories, and display cases; Loudon is a custom jeweler working in silver, gemstones, and cloisonné. The two met at the gym in Florida, where both live, and while “yakking during cardio time,” Loudon expressed an interest in Young’s miniature work. Loudon explains, “I had studied enameling—the art of glass on metal—for several years, and just fell in love with it. My challenge was to find an application that worked. It is far too delicate to use in jewelry. Making miniature furniture has opened up a whole new world for me. The cloisonné is an art unto itself, and my metalsmithing is only about creating a frame for the cloisonné. The use of precious metal as a frame for the furniture is also limiting, and that’s where Debi comes in. Her wicker is the perfect mate to my cloisonné.”



Artists Debi Kolenchuk, Marietta Loudon, and Linda Young

Kolenchuk’s hand-painted furniture and wicker seemed a natural fit with Young’s greenhouses—and with Loudon’s cloisonné. The one obstacle? Kolenchuk lives and works in Quesnel, British Columbia, three time zones and a continent away. “Linda had the idea of combining the two mediums,” says Kolenchuk. “She thought I’d be versatile enough to adapt to adding another dimension to my wicker work. In the beginning we did much of our planning by phone, then tidied up and finalized details through e-mail. We keep Linda in the loop of our plans, and then she creates the buildings and decor around what we’ve come up with.”

In the *Purple Conservatory*, displayed in Chicago and pictured here, Young did the glass work, the braided rugs, and the hanging lanterns. Kolenchuk and Loudon collaborated on the iris-patterned wicker furnishings. The plants and flowers are by Linda and Mary Kinloch, and the orchids are by Mary Kinloch and Karl Blindheim. Young retains exclusive resale rights on the collaborated pieces. ■

Lady Jane, www.ladyjane.com; phone 9241-776-2768. Debi Kolenchuk, www.embraceables.com; phone 250-747-4497. Marietta Loudon, myarboro@tampabay.rr.com; phone 941-722-1702.



The Purple Conservatory, a joint effort.



Interior of the Purple Conservatory. Structure, rugs, and hanging lanterns are by Linda Young/Lady Jane. The wicker and cloisonné furniture is by Debi Kolenchuk and Marietta Loudon.