



# USE OF MINIATURES

Miniatures and miniature worlds date back as far as Ancient Egypt, when model replicas of ships were built and buried alongside people in their tombs. Most famously, throughout history, miniatures have been used in dollhouses, and have featured as centrepieces in famous collections, including that of Queen Mary.

Today, miniatures are used in a variety of different ways. Dollhouses and model ships are still highly crafted, but the use of miniatures has branched out to include use in tabletop gaming, interior design and stop-motion animation.

In this workshop we will look at using basic materials and techniques to create a selection of miniature pieces. These basic skills and small projects will open the doors to an entire miniature world of possibilities.

# MATERIALS

This workshop will not require you to use any materials that you don't have easy access to, and each project can be tailored to use whatever you have to hand. At the very least you should collect up a selection of cards and papers (such as from cereal boxes and packages). Below is a list of materials used to create the examples in workshop, but you can substitute accordingly depending on what you have available.

- White card
- Coloured paper
- Plain paper
- Matchsticks
- Different sized beads
- Thin wire
- Polymer clay
- Small photograph prints
- Thread offcuts
- Matchboxes
- Push pins
- Small plastic gems
- Polystyrene balls

# TOOLS

The tools needed to create the project pieces in this workshop are quite basic. You will need:

- Scissors
- Craft knife
- Craft glue (quick drying)
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Tweezers
- Paintbrush



# SCALES

Miniatures come in a vast range of sizes, usually dependant on what they are being used for. The size of the miniature is most often depicted as a scale, which represents how big it is compared to the real life version.

Most dollhouses are in 1:12th or 1:16th scale, which means that 1cm in miniature represents 12 or 16cm in reality.

Fashion dolls (such as Barbie) are 1:6th scale, much bigger than traditional dollhouse miniatures.

Tabletop gaming miniatures are extremely small in comparison to the above, usually at 1:56th scale or smaller.

But, if you're just starting out or making miniatures for fun, don't worry too much about accurate scales. Choose something to use as reference, like a doll, and use that to help you decide what size your pieces need to be.

# PAINTING AND EMBELLISHMENTS

You don't need expensive paint for your miniature projects. Normal Acrylic paints will do absolutely fine, and are cheap and readily available to buy. You might want to get hold of some metallic acrylics too, such as gold and silver, which are perfect for adding painted fine details to your pieces.

Some other materials that can add finishing finesse and interesting texture and colour detail include:

- Glitter
- Nail art beads and gems
- Small craft gems
- Ribbon and lace

# TIPS FOR MAKING MINIATURES

- **Measure twice, cut once.** Always be sure that your measurements are right before you cut them out, and if you're unsure always cut a little larger than you need. It is always easier to trim a little excess off than have to start all over again because you don't have enough material.
- If you don't have something in the project material list, you can substitute it with anything else appropriate. Use your imagination, and don't feel restricted or limited.
- Always be sure that something fits, or you know where it will be going, before you glue it up and into place.
- **Use scissors and knives with caution!**

# PROJECT 1: SHELVING UNIT

## Materials:

- Box lid
- Thick card
- Push pins

## Tips:

- Clip off or remove the metal point from the pin before you use them as the feet.
- Space the vertical struts evenly so that you won't need to measure every shelf individually.



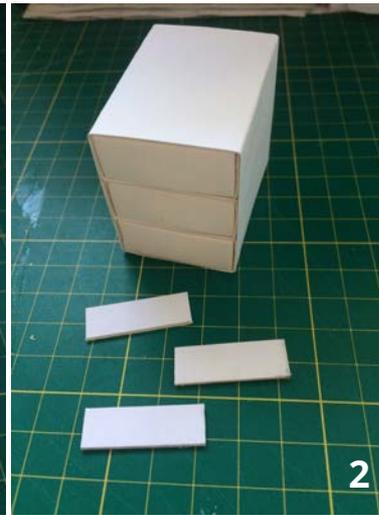
# PROJECT 2: DRAWERS

## Materials:

- Matchboxes
- Thin Card
- Thick Card
- Matchsticks

## Tips:

- Glue the matchboxes together first.
- Use a craft knife to cut the matchstick into pieces, rather than scissors, so it doesn't splinter.



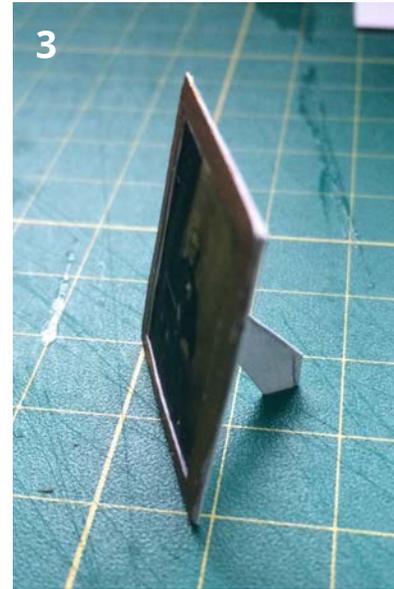
# PROJECT 3: PAINTINGS AND PICTURE FRAMES

## Materials:

- Small printed photograph/painting
- Card
- Gold paint

## Tips:

- Don't forget to paint the edges of the card frame to add to the realistic quality.



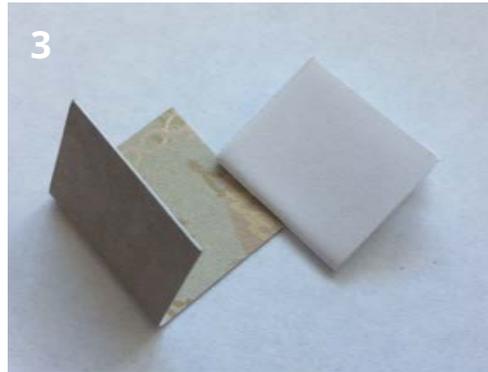
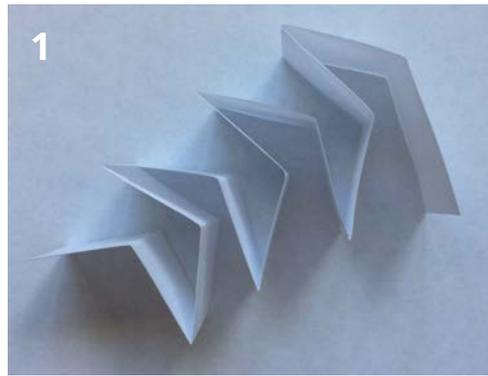
# PROJECT 4: BOOKS

## Materials:

- Plain paper
- Coloured or patterned paper/thin card

## Tips:

- Fold the paper like an accordian, ensuring there is a constant middle crease, which will be the spine (as in image 1).
- Glue or sew the page spines together, and then trim the open edge to free all the pages and make the edge even.
- Glue the book cover to the front and back pages.



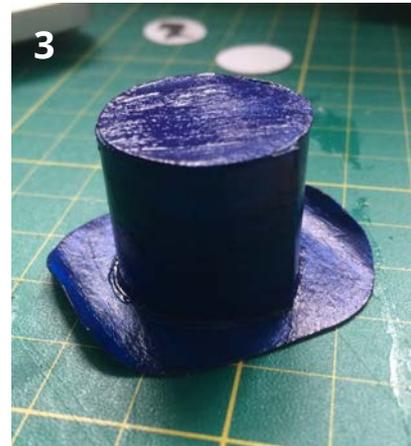
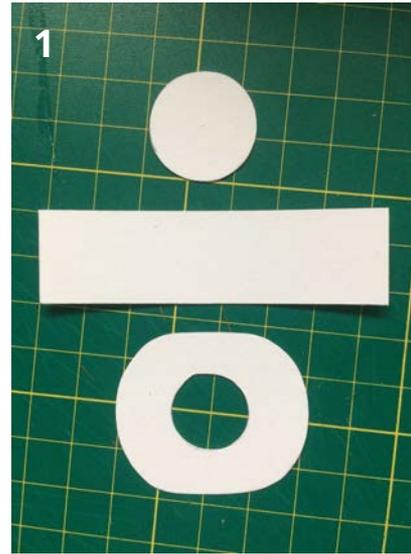
# PROJECT 5: HAT

## Materials:

- Thin card
- Paint
- Paper flowers (covered on the next slide)

## Tips:

- Use a thin tool, like a paintbrush handle, to help curl up the edges of the hat.
- You could also add ribbon around the hat base for an additional flourish.



# PROJECT 6: FLOWERS

## Materials:

- Coloured paper
- Nail art beads or glitter

## Tips:

- You can draw and cut out any shape flowers if you don't have a pattern punch to create them.
- Shape the petals before you glue them together.
- Use a pair of tweezers to help with these fiddly small pieces.
- Use beads or glitter to make the centres stand out.



# PROJECT 7: JEWELLERY

## Materials:

- Gold jewellery wire or floral wire
- Small plastic gems
- Thin card

## Tips:

- Use a pair of long nosed pliers or tweezers to bend the wire into decorative shapes.
- You can use anything to make jewellery pieces, including adding glitter, metallic paint and using beads on string instead of wire.



# PROJECT 8: YARN BALLS

## Materials:

- Embroidery thread, wool or string offcuts
- Small bead, polystyrene ball or ball of clay

## Tips:

- Use the bead or ball to wrap the thread around. This provides it with a round shape and also means that you don't have to use as much thread to make the ball. However, you don't need to have this centre, and can just wrap the ball up with more thread.
- You can also add a paper strip label around the yarn ball.



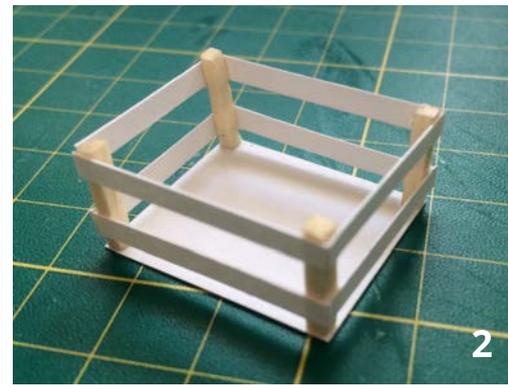
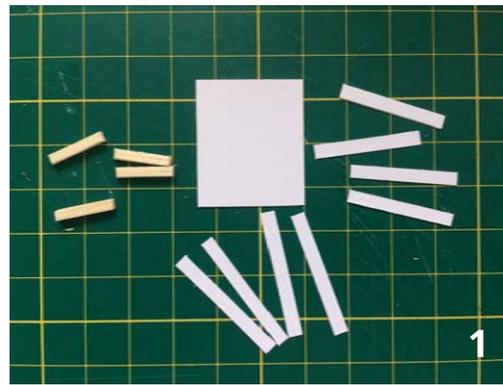
# PROJECT 9: CRATE

## Materials:

- Thin card
- Matchsticks

## Tips:

- Use a craft knife to cut the matchsticks instead of scissors to avoid splintering.
- Glue the matchsticks to the corners of the base first.
- You could also use thin wooden sticks (like coffee stirrers) instead of card for the panels.



# PROJECT 10: SNAIL TANK

## Materials:

- Card
- Clay
- Shell
- Sand
- Fake moss/grass

## Tips:

- You can make a single window, or add them into every side of the tank, keeping them open or, if you have it available, covering it with clear plastic.
- Instead of a snail tank, this could house a hamster, lizard or snake.



# PROJECT 11: BASKET OF COOKIES

## Materials:

- Clay
- Crepe paper/coloured paper

## Tips:

- Twist 2 strands of clay together to get the baskets woven effect.
- Use a sharp pointed tool to 'fluff up' the cookies, making a more realistic texture.
- You can also line the basket with fabric instead of coloured paper or crepe paper.



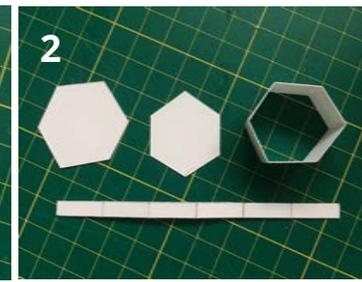
# PROJECT 12: HAT BOX

## Materials:

- Thin card
- Coloured paper

## Tips:

- Once you have drawn out the base for the hat box, create the base for the lid, which should be a little bit bigger so that it fits over the box.
- The lip of the hat box lid should only be thin, whereas the hat box itself will be quite deep.
- You could also cover the box in glitter, patterned paper or you can paint it.



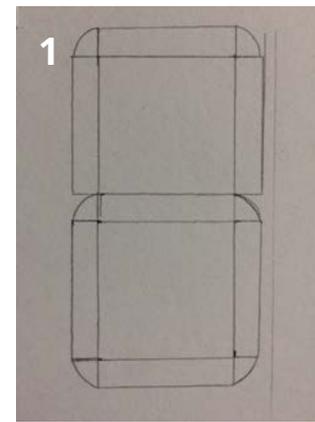
# PROJECT 13: BOX OF DONUTS

## Materials:

- Thin card
- Clay

## Tips:

- Look at pictures of real donuts for ideas.
- Consider adding a window into the lid, and some bakery branding labels.



# FINAL COLLECTION



## FURTHER PROJECTS

There are many, many ways to customise and re-create all of the miniatures you've made in this workshop, and these projects will have provided you with a good base set of skills to take on to further, more adventurous projects.

There are plenty of ways to use odds and ends and recyclables to make miniatures, and plenty of places to gain inspiration from. Check out **Pinterest** for a huge range of ideas and tutorials, or search online if you have something specific in mind that you'd like to make.

# REFLECTIONS

**We hope you have enjoyed learning the basics of miniature making with us. You can now take what you've learned and develop it further. The only limit is your imagination.**

It is important to remember to constantly self-evaluate your work as you go along. Keep practicing and redesigning and learn from any mistakes, but whatever you create you should be proud of!



**The OCA would love to see what you've created. Share your pictures and videos with us by tagging us in them on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.**



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