



HICKORY DICKORY CLOCK SHOPPE, BY CONNIE SAUVE *Connie Sauve: Renovated And Restyled Miniatures* Location: Exploring the World

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The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

Tucson, Arizona

Why is our museum called The Mini Time Machine? It is a question often posed by our visitors, especially children. Some folks have even asked us where we keep it, as though we have the real deal on display in one of the galleries or, even better, hidden away in a secret laboratory. As funny as it sounds, the truth is we do have a time machine on display, although nothing like the whizzing, blinking, metal machinery of science fiction novels. Like all museums, our collection itself is a time capsule. We are similar to a time machine, in that our galleries allow guests to visit far away places, both real and imagined, and see the world through a variety of time periods. And we do it all through miniature artistry, which is no small feat. The historical accuracy of the miniature works in our collection is made all the more impressive by their reduced size, a challenge made more challenging through the limitation of tools and resources which may be otherwise available to those not hindered by the scale of the finished work. And the payoff to our visitors is tremendous- because we feature smaller works, we can display even more than the average museum. Here you can see not just the period costume, but the whole period house- several houses, in fact. We are unique in our ability to set the stage, presenting dioramas that both educate and delight the viewer. It is no wonder that the average visitor can spend several hours here, completely losing track of time in a place that calls itself a time machine.

Like every good time machine ought to do, our museum never sits still. We are always seeking new displays by innovative miniature artists, to enrich our visitor's experience and broaden the pre-conceived miniature concept. One of our newest temporary exhibits, *Connie Sauve: Renovated and Restyled Miniatures*, on display until April 29, 2012, is just the ticket for those who think they've seen it all. Connie



Hickory Dickory Clock Shoppe. Photo by Connie Sauve.

Sauve is an IGMA Fellow, recognized for her work in doll costuming and doll making. However, it is her use of unique containers that steal the show here, each providing a fresh take on the use of scale and proving to be just as important to the artistry as the miniatures within its framework. There is *Emmet's Fix-It Shop*, cleverly displayed within a 1935 Zenith radio cabinet, and *Daddy's Little Workshop*, a tribute to Sauve's father and their time spent together building her childhood dollhouse, adeptly nestled within an antique shotgun shell box.

Perhaps appropriately, my favorite of these exhibit pieces is Sauve's *Hickory Dickory Clock Shoppe*, a clock shop set within the top of a grandfather clock. The refurbished clock bonnet is beautiful in and of itself, the polished elegance of a simpler time. Using it to house a shop of clocks and watches may sound cliché, but instead it becomes a wholly satisfying and fitting tribute to the clockmaker's trade, showcasing the scope, skill and artistry of keeping time. Within the shop are 87 little clocks, 33 teeny pocket watches and 41 infinitesimal wrist watches, so magnificently delicate that they force me to imagine my own clumsy fingers attempting to make them (and no doubt ultimately squashing them). There are sundials on display – a nice touch – and the cuckoo clocks are for lack of a better word, adorable. Little touches of timed perfection can be spotted by the serene observer, including a framed display of miniscule clock hands. The shop itself is also a working clock, chiming every quarter of an hour, and the sign hanging from the storefront is a repurposed full-scale pocket watch.



Hickory Dickory Clock Shoppe. Photo by Connie Sauve.

In her article, "My Journey Through Time," published in *Dollhouse Miniatures*, Sauve writes that her clock shop was a project she fell into by chance.¹ The bonnet was found by luck at a flea

market in 2008, and was in need of some serious repair. "It was very dirty, and broken, and had some cobwebs on it and a dead bug. I asked 'How much?' The lady said 'Free,' I said 'Sold!'"² Intending to give the piece to a friend, Sauve changed her mind after cleaning the wood,



Hickory Dickory Clock Shoppe. (Detail)
Photo by Emily Wolverton.

discovering a gorgeous burl walnut beneath the layers of dust. Her love quickly led to inspiration, and thus began the long road of restoration and creativity. She taught herself how to veneer wood, discovering through trial and error that dark walnut and mahogany red matched the burl perfectly. She also learned how to make and design stained glass, providing herself with the additional challenge of creating one in a barrel-shape, for the shop's ceiling.³ Sauve's list of alterations and repairs seemed an uphill battle; her perfectionism even forced her to completely strip and re-stain window cornices by Bespaq, a process she loathed. Her tiresome work paid off, the result being a seamless transition between interior and exterior.

Matching her panache for technical touches, we see that Sauve is also quite crafty in her use of scale, intermingling the full-scale world with her 1:12 vision. "Sometime while making the project, I had an idea that everything outside the shop would be full sized and inside the shop would be miniature. I like mixing different scales in my projects," she writes.⁴ The most noticeable of these artistic liberties are her mice: two normal-sized mice (created by the talented Linda Fisher) sit perched outside the shop, in scale with the clock bonnet; inside the shop are four miniature mice, one of whom gazes outward at one of the larger fellows. The larger of these two

mice holds a key to unlock the clock bonnet, while the smaller mouse holds a miniature key in perfect parallel. The “door” to the shop is not a miniature door at all, but rather a reproduction of the broken original glass door, meaning that the door knob and lock are not in 1:12 scale. The shopkeeper would not be able to open the door to his own



Hickory Dickory Clock Shoppe.
(Detail) Photo by Emily Wolverton.

shop! This play on scale is reminiscent of the theatrical expression “to break the fourth wall,” acknowledging the viewer’s gigantic existence in this miniature bubble.

Sauve’s distinct look at the world is but one of many here at The Mini Time Machine. To recreate the world in miniature, one must first understand each component in its original context, making any creative license a true reflection of the artist himself. We want to encourage all of our visitors to come and see the world anew, reflecting on the exceptional skills of our artisans and perhaps, taking a journey through time.

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The Mini Time Machine Museum

1. Sauve, Connie. “My Journey Through Time.” *Dollhouse Miniatures*, Issue 26. March/April 2012. P. 28 – 34.

2. Ibid. p. 28

3. Ibid. p. 29

4. Ibid. p. 33