



DARK SIDE OF THE MOON ANTIQUES AND ODDITIES RON & APRIL GILL, 2013 ENCHANTED REALM GALLERY

Issue No. 41

Thursday, October 10, 2013 The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

Tucson, Arizona

The sweltering heat of our Sonoran summer is being ushered out and replaced with pumpkins on porches as Tucson's residents find themselves giddy with the first delicious chill of autumn. The change of season brings a renewed energy to this desert city, and the museum itself is no exception. October at The Mini Time Machine Museum means the sudden bustle of new Fall visitors, the return of our popular [Flashlight Tours](#) and the spooky annual transformation of our lobby décor. Keeping with the Halloween spirit, we present our museum's newest acquisition, *Dark Side of the Moon Antiques and Oddities*, now on display in the Enchanted Realm gallery.

Ron and April Gill are long-time friends of the museum and the co-creators of some of our most well-loved pieces, including *Forget-Us-Not Fairy Castle* (1998) and *Academy of Enchantment* (2002). *Dark Side of the Moon* (2013) highlights their remarkable ability to fashion their own slice of reality; in this case, often tweaking found objects to inspire new and exciting concepts. This particular shop was inspired by a television show on the Science Channel, *Oddities*¹, which features strange and unusual antiques and rare artifacts, including fantastical creations (such as mummified mermaids). The Gills became inspired by the visceral qualities of the objects on display – and the apparent cleverness behind the fabrication process. They decided to make their own one-of-a-kind shop,

manufacturing their own “oddities” in 1:12 scale using insects and found bones. The results are quite remarkable – and often amusing.

Among the various sundries is a two-headed calf, a necklace made of minuscule teeth, and

a table with octopus legs. One table display features the *Giant Millipede*, captured in resin, which is none other than a common garden centipede, made larger than life in the one inch scale. Perhaps the most eye-catching piece is what Ron named the *Trigillaraurusron*. April describes the evolution of this strange creature: “I did the skeleton from a chipmunk, took me a while to get it cleaned. The tail is made of the turkey bones that are [found] in the legs.” These mini bones were found on the Gills' property in an area which they call “fence row” – an area in which numerous hawks and owls in the vicinity leave remnants of their meals. The reward for their patient searches and tedious cleaning process are miniature beasts that harken from another ancient, tinier, world. The shop is rounded out with other peculiarities, such as a tiny replica stereoscope, gems and minerals, and a mysterious helmet-like contraption which has an electrical cord – one is not certain if this headdress promises to send its wearer back in time or if it will simply provide a curlier, albeit crispier, hairdo.

Ron and April got their start in miniatures long ago, when they made the decision to begin carrying miniatures in their pet store, at April's mother's suggestion – a woman who loved and created miniatures of



Dark Side of the Moon Antiques and Oddities. (Ron and April Gill, 2013). Photo by Emily Wolverton.



The *Trigillaraurusron*. *Dark Side of the Moon Antiques and Oddities*. (Ron and April Gill, 2013). Photo by Emily Wolverton.



A two-headed calf in *Dark Side of the Moon Antiques and Oddities*. Photo by Emily Wolverton.

her own. In their autobiography in *A Reference Guide to Miniature Makers Marks*, they describe the transition of owning a pet store and wedding flower business to becoming the dynamic duo they are today. "So much for the real world! Little by little the miniatures took over our lives."² They are now recognized throughout the world for their imaginative designs and quality work, becoming IGMA* Artisans and IGMA Fellows, as well as members of the National Association of Miniature Enthusiasts.

Dark Side of the Moon Antiques and Oddities is a tribute to the imagination, a formal invitation for the viewer to play along with these mischievous creators. You can almost hear the creak of the door as it opens, or smell the dusty mildew on the shelves. Who wouldn't want to peer into those jars or flip through the pages of the books? Perhaps in the end it is our human curiosity which is the real treasure.

Emily Wolverton
The Mini Time Machine
Museum of Miniatures

*IGMA, International Guild of Miniature Artisans

1. *Oddities* features a Manhattan shop called *Obscura Antiques & Oddities*. It is part documentary and part reality television, following the day-to-day operations and business efforts of the shop owners, Mike Zohn and Evan Michelson.



A view through the shop window. *Dark Side of the Moon Antiques and Oddities*. Photo by Michael Muscarello.



Electrical headgear in *Dark Side of the Moon Antiques and Oddities*. Photo by Emily Wolverton.