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THE WORLD IN A NUTSHELL

HARES AND BEARS & DUTCH SCENE DECORATED EGG

Location: Exploring the World Gallery

Here at The Mini-Time Machine Museum, we often hear people referring to us as the “dollhouse museum.” This generalization is certainly not incorrect; our collection boasts over 200 dollhouses and room boxes. However, while these traditional types of miniature displays make up the majority of our collection, some of our most delightful pieces can be found in some rather unusual containers.

For example, *Hares and Bears*, by artist Debra Lowe, can easily be missed by our visitors, nestled in among its somewhat larger neighbors. Tucked inside this open walnut shell are four little hares and four little bears, sitting on the tiniest of shelves as though for sale in a toy shop. There are carved windows over which lace curtains are carefully draped, and throughout one can find portraits of the nutshell's inhabitants. Each individual piece was painstakingly crafted by hand using polymer clay. Pat Arnell purchased this little treasure here in Tucson, at a miniature show organized by The Tucson Miniature Society in 2000.



Dutch Scene, by Anna Derksin, was found much farther from home. In 1990, Pat went on a Miniature Tour of Europe, organized by Glenda Cavanaugh, which granted her the opportunity to meet international miniature artisans. One of the most fascinating of these artists was Ms. Derksin, who welcomed Pat into her home during her stay in Holland. It was here that Pat

purchased *Dutch Scene Decorated Egg*, which is a fine example of both miniature craftsmanship and eggery, or egg artistry, one of Ms. Derksin's specialties. Egg decoration has been a popular art form for centuries, especially in eastern European countries, and often the art of miniatures and scale will play into an artistic egg piece. *Dutch Scene* recreates a traditional sleeping alcove, complete with a hinged double door and matching footstool. Alcoves have been a common feature in Dutch homes since the middle ages, as their small size can retain warmth throughout the night. Upon peeking through the egg's small opening, one can see a young couple is tucked underneath a floral bedspread, seemingly lost in peaceful dreams. Above them is a narrow shelf, safely holding a few personal belongings.

Be sure to seek out *Hares and Bears* and *Dutch Scene* on your next visit, both of which can be found in our Exploring the World gallery. To learn more about the art of traditional egg decoration, contact the International Egg Art Guild (IEAG), a nonprofit association of artists and craftspeople who promote egg artistry through education and exhibition. (www.eggartguild.org) If you're interested in finding a one of a kind miniature world of your own, be sure to attend the next annual Tucson Miniature Society show, coming up this October.

