



# Fairy Caitlin

A Tribute to Our Museum's Resident Fairy

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Tucson, Arizona

The Mini Time Machine Museum is bustling with visitors as we celebrate our 5th Anniversary. The staff have been reminiscing over many joyous memories, the creative solutions to new challenges, and pride in our continuing development of educational and inspirational programming. It is the perfect time to reflect upon the original dreams of our Museum Founders, Patricia and Walter Arnell, whose vision and dedication have brought so much joy to so many. Their mission to preserve and advance the art of miniatures, showcasing the fine-scale masterpieces of the international miniature artisan community, has been met by our staff and board with ambitious goals and innovative projects such as our *Sizing Up My World* mini-grants for field trips and outreach, and our *Touch Tours* for the visually impaired. And yet, there is an element here that cannot be measured, that fundamental breath of life to our visitor experience that is felt by young and old, alike. There is *magic* here, a jolly twinkle that springs from the young-at-heart, fostered by our Founders and stitched into the very fabric of our museum. And there can be no better example of this playful tenet than our resident fairy, Caitlin.

Caitlin stems from the imagination of Patricia Arnell, the charming embodiment of her lifelong love of storytelling (and spirited sense of humor). Caitlin exists in many forms: as 1:12 scale figures in her many disguises; as a beam of sparkling light; as the tinkling of



Detail of *Fairy Museum* (Ron and April Gill, 2007). Museum Lobby. Caitlin figure by Todd Krueger. The citation of this piece playfully states that it was "commissioned by Caitlin, the museum's resident fairy."  
Photo by Emily Wolverton.

chimes overhead; and as an elusive spirit in our Enchanted Tree, who appears and then vanishes into the ether. Designed to be the museum's ambassador, Caitlin's influence is felt from the first moment. When visitors approach our museum entrance, they see three sizes of doors: one for the fairies, one for the giants, and one that is just right for human explorers. Upon passing through the door, Caitlin's light floats merrily alongside, encouraging you onward before taking a quick left into her private entrance high up near the foyer ceiling. One peek around the corner puts you directly in front of her very own *Fairy Museum* (2007), filled with her Lilliputian gallery of fantastical wonders – including a stunning collection of crowns. The Arnells intended for Caitlin's world to be the starting point for this museum – even the



Fairies have their own private entrance to our museum (above, left), a 1:12 scale replica of the full-scale door beside it. Upon entering the foyer, visitors can see Fairy Caitlin in her sparkling light form as she floats through the air and enters her private door (above, right). Caitlin's door has been decorated with a miniature garland in honor of our 5th Anniversary. Photos by Emily Wolverton.



golden star emblazoned on the floor of her miniature museum parallels the one found on the floor of our Rotunda, as the entry point of our galleries.

Today, children enjoy searching for Caitlin in our museum scavenger hunt, seeking her out in five hiding places. She is known to wear clever disguises: she can be seen hard at work as a window washer, or dressed in her regal gown; traveling back in time to be a 1920s flapper, or wearing a blue gingham pinafore and glasses; or, perhaps most lovely of all, in her natural forest fairy attire, including an acorn hat. Each figure was sculpted in polymer clay by artist Todd Krueger, who happily accepted Pat's challenge to create the same mischievous fairy in five different costumes. Although her hair's color and length changes along with her fashion, Caitlin's signature wings (actual dragonfly wings!) and large hands help her stand out among her fellow fae. Caitlin never stays hidden in the same place for long, so children can search for her anew on subsequent visits.

Our young museum goers have shared their love of Caitlin in very special ways. Front Desk staff have received personal letters addressed to her to be hand delivered. Some children skip the middle man entirely: when we open our Enchanted Tree for maintenance, we inevitably find neatly folded heart-felt notes that have been dropped in the knothole, as well as "gifts" that a fairy might enjoy (glitter is popular). The sweetness of these innocent tokens of affection do more than tug at our heartstrings - they let us know that the magic that the Arnells have created is reaching a new generation. Near Caitlin's *Fairy Museum* is a placard that reads, "Here at The Mini Time Machine the big and the small exist side by side, each a reflection of the other, scaled up or scaled down depending on your point of view." Children are the most special scale; smaller than adults yet giants in the fairy realm, they know how to walk the edge of both worlds.

Unbeknownst to many of our visitors, Caitlin's *Fairy Museum* holds a treasure more valuable than her fairy jewels: our museum time capsules, housed in two golden chests. Produced in honor of our One Year Anniversary, these time capsules hold evidence of our momentous first year: one, a microchip filled with photos of the year's events, and the other a miniature scroll, with comments from visitors in impossibly small print. They are safe in Caitlin's keeping, guarded by her trusty leprechaun, Finnegan. Truly, Caitlin's story is the story of the museum, itself: a dream that has been brought to life.

Emily Wolverton  
The Mini Time Machine Museum



Fairy Caitlin in her many disguises. These figures were created by Todd Krueger, commissioned by Pat Arnell to help bring Caitlin to life. They are hidden throughout the galleries as a scavenger hunt for our young and young-at-heart visitors. Photos by Amy Haskell.



Caitlin in her ethereal form, appearing in the knothole of our Enchanted Tree. The Enchanted Realm Gallery. Photo by Emily Wolverton.