

Why Miniatures: Small Objects & Safe Behaviors

August 29, 2012

The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

Tucson, Arizona

In addition to their natural attraction to human faces, babies and very young children want to investigate small objects close at hand, paying little attention to large scale objects and the world around them. Researchers suggest that these tendencies, known to be highly refined in humans, are actually the result of natural selection for behaviors that ultimately keep us safe from household and environmental hazards. Infants' attraction to small objects (even though they can see big ones far away) evolved in part because it reduces their tendency to wander.

As babies grow, their ability to connect the sound patterns of their human caregivers with the objects they explore allows them to develop communication skills and early language, bringing meaning to, and greater autonomy in their rapidly expanding world. No wonder dolls (the face) and miniature houses filled with furnishings, toy cars and trains (those small, familiar objects) hold so much fascination for children as they grow.

At The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures, we have two wonderful new programs that allow people to explore the universe of small objects first hand for learning and enjoyment. Art Carts are now available in the museum on most days filled with miniatures and room settings for you to arrange, handle, touch and explore. They are themed on a variety of



1930s Kitchen. Pat Arnell, 1978. (detail)
Photo by Amy Haskell.

educational topics from history to mathematics with a knowledgeable docent nearby to provide an even more content-rich experience if desired.

Our Dr. Betsy Farmer Dollhouses in the Schools project allows us to place a fully furnished dollhouse in a school classroom for an entire academic year to actively involve students in learning experiences that build skills in language development, vocabulary and math concepts, to name just a few. These dollhouses are donated to the museum and refurbished by volunteers with donated miniature items that represent historic and contemporary households. There are no restrictions for teachers, who also receive a gift card to purchase items for the houses that will assist them with specific lessons and concepts they are presenting to their students.

The Art Carts and Dollhouses in the Schools activities are high quality programs that allow many more people to connect with miniatures in meaningful ways. Both programs are very dependent on generous donations to keep them well stocked and running efficiently. We hope that you will have an opportunity to enjoy and appreciate our programs and perhaps contribute to their support.

Nina Daldrup, Executive Director
The Mini Time Machine Museum



Museum docent Carol Deters refurbishing a donated dollhouse for the *Dr. Betsy Farmer Dollhouses in the Schools* project.
Photo by Emily Wolverton.