

Why Miniatures: A Place for Memory & History

March 15, 2012

The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

Tucson, Arizona

In times past, traditions and customs were handed down through generations. Change came slowly and life unfolded in a more or less predictable fashion. Our ancestors had little need to record and preserve the details of daily life because they did not experience a material sense of loss associated with the passage of time. Memories were integrated into the customs, relationships, and ethics of families and whole communities, accumulating over time as richly diverse cultural identities and resources.

The historic record was largely a literary function for reconstructing and recording important events and the accomplishments of people through the ages. In a way, the emphasis and attention placed on producing an accurate and detailed historic record trivialized a need to capture the sentiment and memories that shaped lives, if not the world.

Our society has experienced an “acceleration of history” with the melding of cultures and the breakdown of family and workplace traditions. With this change, we are becoming super conscious of memory and a feeling that everything is disappearing. We are acutely aware that while history is about the past, memory is about life. Memory is magical.

The modern day love of miniatures often begins with a small collection of meaningful mementos that we have accumulated on a shelf or in a drawer. These little objects represent people, experiences or occasions in our lives that we want to remember. We experience pleasure when looking at and handling our treasures, and they come to represent who we are in a rapidly changing world. Ultimately, the quest for memory is the search for our history.



The Collectors (detail) by Madelyn Cook.
Photo by Amy Haskell.

The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures is unique among its peers in that value is placed equally on preserving history and memory in miniature, both as important aspects of our culture. While we pay homage to historical artifacts that relay important stories of the past, we are delighted and comforted by beautiful collections of familiar objects that capture a more recent moment in time. As civilization marches on, having a space for memory has become increasingly more important for humans in search of meaning amidst the chaos.

Nina Daldrup, Executive Director
The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures