

Why Miniatures: Fairy Tales and the Feminist Agenda

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The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

Tucson, Arizona

Over many centuries, women's interest in fairy tales has waxed and waned like the moon. Most often, fairy tales are popular at times of civil strife, when society's disinterest or outright mistrust of the female consciousness does not allow women literary opportunities for the expression of feminist thoughts and ideals.

In times of enlightenment, like the late 17th century, or the early 20th century, educated women organized and met in salons to develop agendas in support of a non-violent, balanced, social system, where love is a civilizing force. Often, though, women's ideals of fairness and equality are ultimately censored or silenced, forcing their retreat to a fantasy world.

In fairy tales, the expression of feminist ideals finds an innocent disguise that allows women to explore their own heroic journeys. Even the physical embodiment of a fairy allows women to understand and appreciate the feminine physique as a beautiful and powerful symbol for change.

In modern times, women have made great gains in their quest for equality. Yet fairy lore and the tales of the past still hold great significance. Fairy god-mothers, for example, are dedicated to making the world a better place. No task or request is unworthy of the fairy god-mother's ardent attention. She is all powerful, and without ego, as she sets solutions in motion.



*Forget-Us-Not Fairy Castle, Tooth Fairy's Room (detail). Ron & April Gill.
Photo by Amy Haskell.*

Fairy tale miniatures are a part of the feminist legacy documenting the evolution of some of our most important societal values. To be sure, men's contributions to this body of work are also important. Embracing the rare and wonderful treasure we have wrought under difficult circumstances brings new meaning to the fairy tale aspect of our history.

Nina Daldrup, Executive Director
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