

Why Miniatures: Making the Most of a Miniaturized Landscape

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The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

Tucson, Arizona

For hundreds of years, humans searching for identity and meaning have turned to nature as a starting point. We have personified familiar and sometimes fearsome aspects of nature, like Mother Nature and the Man in the Moon, to create not only a manageable context for understanding the forces of nature, but a lexicon for the deep emotional ties we have with the natural world.

To experience nature, whether in a grand wilderness, or a window box, is to suspend the structure of everyday life, if only briefly, allowing us to clear our minds, relax and enjoy the moment. There is an intimacy for us in nature that is restorative for mind and body. It is no wonder that people find gardening therapeutic, and the occasional hike in the hills as transformational.

Not surprisingly, gardening and the creation of magnificent landscapes in miniature has also been enjoyed for centuries as therapy and for simple enjoyment. The most obvious example of this is the ancient art of bonsai, or miniature tree cultivation, practiced by Far Eastern cultures dating back to the Han Dynasty of 200 BC in China. The ancient Chinese philosopher, Lao Tzu, claimed that bonsai cultivation allowed one to discover the world without leaving one's home.



Nina's Park. Photo by Emily Wolverton.

Whether you choose to cultivate live plants in a miniature landscape, or to create the garden of your dreams in paper and clay, it is comforting to know that your efforts are well spent and beneficial. Our relationship with nature actually helps to strengthen problem solving and perception skills by exposing us to fragility, the passage of time, incompleteness, asymmetry, simplicity and, of course, beauty. The hours we spend developing our miniature gardens are an investment paid back in psychic energy and well being that will last a lifetime.

Nina Daldrup, Executive Director
The Mini Time Machine Museum