

Why Miniatures: Mysteries & Miniatures

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The Mini Time Machine Museum of Miniatures

Tucson, Arizona

“What one man can invent, another can discover.” Sherlock Holmes could easily have been talking about miniatures when he made that statement. Truly, mysteries and miniatures have a lot in common because a natural part of our existence is to question what lies beyond what we know for sure.

Mysteries are about real life, just as many miniatures are. There is a plot, a satisfying conclusion, and they allow us a glimpse into the lives of others. Predicting the future as we must when trying to solve a mystery, or second-guessing the motive, or just dreaming of what lies beyond imagination and beyond knowing, are all healthy cognitive functions.

Behind all this mind play is an irrefutable truth: there is a transcendent, unknowable meaning to our existence – a mystery. We can't know everything. Once we recognize the futility of trying to understand everything, we accept ignorance, or mystery, as a part of our central unknowable core. It makes life interesting, frustrating, fulfilling – an adventure.

Exploring miniatures, we embark on an adventure that frees our imagination to question, fantasize, deduce and understand our world, and ourselves, better. Miniatures provide a safe and often provocative setting for new ideas and problem solving, much like a great mystery. We spend hours in them and emerge amazed.

A large part of why we love miniatures is a mystery, wrapped up in how our minds work and what makes us happy. Both inventing and discovering are just plain fun. “Elementary, my dear Watson!”

Nina Daldrup, Executive Director
The Mini Time Machine Museum



*Apothecary Desk, Italian (detail). Manuzio, acq. 2002.
Photo by Amy Haskell.*



Just Suits, ca. 1905. Photo by Amy Haskell.