

Sasha books her place in history

A talented miniaturist with a wonderful imagination is inspired to create an incredible 1/48th scale house in a book. Here she tells us how she did it

BY ALEXANDRA (SASHA) MOORE

After reading the novel 'The Miniaturists' by Jessie Burton, inspired by Petronella Oortman's doll's house exhibited in Amsterdam, I was compelled to create a scene from the book.

Rather than following the description of the house as in the book I looked up Dutch interiors of 17th century so perfectly depicted in the paintings of Johannes Vermeer, and then, carried away with my own imagination, I attempted to transform the book into a 1/48th scale miniature.

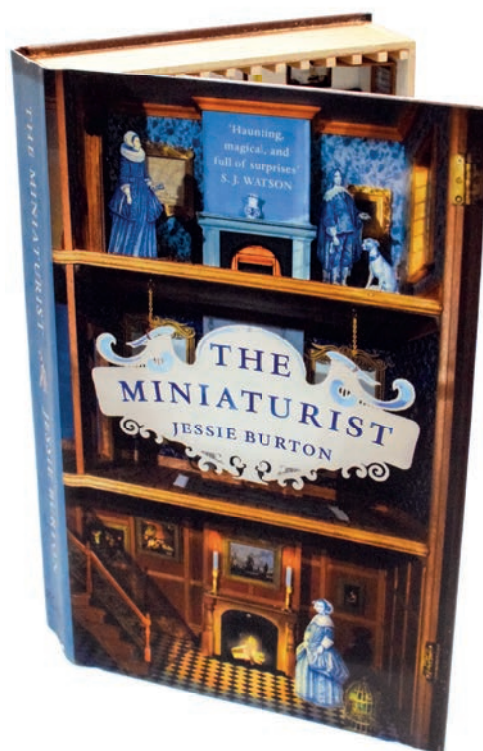
Firstly I must apologise to all the book lovers for defacing the book by carefully removing the pages. I then constructed a frame from MDF, the exact thickness of the pages I had taken out, painted the outside with Rowney's 'Gold Finger' to represent the pages, and the inside with antique white sample pot paint. Due to the restrictions of the depth I decided to build just one room on each level.

On the ground floor Petronella (doll by Sally Reader Miniatures) arrives with her parakeet, Peebo, in the bird cage (silver charm bought second hand on eBay) at her husband's house. I made the cabinet house out of very thin wood and painted an impression of contents inside. The table, chairs and fireplaces are made of toothpicks and scraps of wood. The leaded glass in the window is just a bit of packaging with lines scratched in and coloured with a pencil. The vista

seen out of the window is a picture cut out from a magazine. The stair leads to a door that goes nowhere.

The first floor has a beautiful four poster bed and a chest, both of which I made from kits by Petworth Miniatures. The exquisite earthenware on the chest is by Elisabeth Causeret, purchased at Kensington Dollshouse Festival.

I printed the tapestry that hangs above the bed and the carpets using images collected on internet. The paintings are mainly by Vermeer. I collected the images on the internet, reduced their size and printed them.



They are framed with very thin wooden beading, first painted black and then smudged with Gold Finger.

On the top floor is merchant trader Johannes Brandt's study. The desk and the settle are again kits by Petworth Miniatures that I made up. On the desk you can just see an inkwell with a quill made of a tiny green bead and a cut down feather from my pillow.

The globe is made from a bead, card, a bit of wire and toothpicks. I didn't have to try too hard to represent the inaccuracies of the 17th century maps.

The candle sticks are made from a small section of wooden beading and a bead represents the candle. I have covered the books in leather and they have bookmarks made of red sewing thread.

In the fireplaces flames (made from small pieces of sweet wrapper) consume the logs (represented by tiny twigs from my garden).

Only one dog remains in this part of the story. It is pining for his owner and his friend (the dog is a silver charm painted with acrylics).

I have enjoyed making this project and best of all it does not take up any space in my home. It sits unassumingly on a bookshelf amongst other books providing a surprise for unsuspecting visitors.

