





## Welcome to Deb Wood's world of make believe.

"Where is 'Faerieland'? Its position is elusive. Just over the horizon and sometimes beneath our feet."

FAERIES BY BRIAN FROUD & ALAN LEE

hey come in all shapes, sizes, and ages. They flit. float, and fly into our imaginations like longforgotten dreams, reminding us of childhood fantasies we once held so dear. It's been said that fairies will either accept you into their world or they won't, but just when you've despaired that the world of fae has deemed you unworthy, doll maker Deb Wood invites you to step inside her fairy ring to explore a magical region she has been privy to since she was a child.

"Each person has their own personal reasons why

fairies appeal to them," Deb says knowingly. "Some love the more natural, wild-looking fairieswoodland faes and sprites. Others love the glittering Swarovski crystalencrusted princess fairies. Still others are drawn to fairytale romantic fairies. Regardless of your favorite theme, fairies make us feel good."

As long as Deb can remember, her life has been filled with fantasy. Content to play alone for hours with her dolls as a child, she kept busy in her playroom with paper, fabrics, and colors. This love of art led to a major in graphic arts at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where her interests eventually turned to dimensional arts and the world of sculpting.

Previously enamored with the lifelike look of porcelain dolls, Deb discovered polymer clay and quickly realized that medium looked even more lifelike. Although fairies were always a favorite subject matter, it was her Happy Habits nuns and L'il Bits that caught the eyes of both the commercial gift market and collectors worldwide.

"It was absolutely fantastic while it lasted!" Deb recalls fondly. From 1995 to 2002 she marketed her lucrative gift lines, but always niggling in the back of her mind was her desire for one-on-one contact with her customers. The events of 9/11 gave Deb the impetus to rein in her commercial ventures and start fresh, where she found her

beloved fairy realm waiting.

With no limitations on themes, Deb finds inspiration wherever she looks. A twig, a color, a scrap of fabric, an antique bob, a crystal, or a beautiful magazine model can send her scurrying back to her studio to sculpt. Her figures are fully sculpted, with no detail left out. Even fully clothed, each doll is anatomically correct, allowing Deb's exquisite hand-dyed costumes to fall naturally over the lines of the body. Wisps of silk, fine cotton, natural fibers, feathers, crystals and beads, mohair, and iridescent wings in every imaginable color and style give Deb's fairies an ephemeral quality that appeals to her many fans.

Many of Deb's customers admit they are little girls at heart, still playing with dolls and creating fantasy realms in their own homes.



Caught in the rain, Mina, 6 inches (15 cm), sits on a mushroom cap, holding her coneflower umbrella over her head.



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is suspended by a brass rod and tube concealed in her skirting. Her garments are made from natural and synthetic fibers with a faux leather bodice. Avery, 11 inches (28 cm) tall, is seated on a mother-of-pearl pillar adorned with handmade silver-beaded leaves. She wears hand-dyed silk skirting, natural fiber bodice with Swarovski rhinestones, Swarovski crystal and rhinestone tiara, and Fantasy Film wings. A dramatic pose and costuming made Semone a very popular sculpture. Her flowing auburn hair is accented with gold leaves. She holds a staff made from a large Swarovski crystal. Her garment is silk shot with metal fibers, her wings are Fantasy Film, and she stands atop a polished Manzanita base. Kaela is Deb's first Flower Fairy. She has silk undergarment and flower petal accents, Fantasy Film dragonfly wings, and soft angora mohair. Kaela stands on a wood base accented with faux mosses and flowers.



Naia is a tiny forest fae with wild spiked blond mohair framing big blue eyes. She wears a hand- dyed and natural fiber garment, with finch feather accents; the hood can be worn up or down.



Seven inches (17-1/2 cm) tall excluding wings. Joria is one of Deb's most popular figures. Created in the fall during the apple harvest, the elder fae sits peacefully in the act of peeling apples. Joria wears a natural fiber costume, wool hair, and leather sandals. The apples are polymer, painted, and "peeled" with a scalpel.

Others find that Deb's personal joy in creating fairies translates into a passion that imbues each sculpture with the act of living. Each nuance of head, hand, and body tells a story, like Joria, a peasant-style woodland fairy serenely going about her task of peeling apples; Rivka the Storyteller, an ancient crone who spins her tales to delight the young fairies gathered at her feet; or sensual Semone, who holds aloft a crystal staff and is the epitome of female power and

Perhaps it is Deb's log home that helps inspire so many of her creations. As light filters in through large windows from the woods and gardens, an abundance of wildlife, nature, and soft music create an atmosphere of calm and creativity. It's not uncommon for her to work 14 hours straight, sculpting with brushes, knitting and darning needles, and

Many of Deb's fairies reflect her love of Victoriana and art nouveau. Most range from 6 to 9 inches (15 to 22-1/2 cm), although some are more than a foot (30-1/2 cm)

tall. Made of Fimo Puppen Doll Modeling Clay over an armature base, each fairy is sent to her new home before Deb can start another.

Not that everything goes smoothly from start to finish. In a hurry one day, Deb accidentally baked her sculpture at too high a temperature, turning it a shocking shade of caramel. With specific plans to create a dancing fairy, Deb was horrified until she began to experiment with tints and even added some body art. "She became a dancing moth fairy and actually turned out better than my original plan, Deb laughs. A bit of fairy magic perhaps?

Fairies have certainly opened up their world and permitted Deb glimpses into their realm of magic and enchantment. So why not linger awhile in fairyland and s where it leads you? The world of make believe awaits. D

You can see Deb Wood's work on her Web site at debwood.com or find her work on eBay under the seller ID "debwoodenchantedhearts."