

PLACING YOUR DOLL IN AN APPROPRIATE PRE- RAPHAELITE SETTING

Part 2

by Rachelle Spiegel

Waterhouse –I am half sick of shadows:

This picture depicts the Lady seated at her loom in a long, romantic red dress with gold girdle. There is a yarn shuttle and ball of yarn in her lap. To her left is a large round mirror in which can be seen a partial reflection of her tapestry and loom, a medieval portico with columns and a bridge over the river, which winds toward the towers of Camelot in the distance. She is seated on what appears to be a wooden peacock chair covered with fabric or cushions. (see plans to construct one below). The background of the painting is dark and details are suggested rather than clearly indicated. The floor is a black and white checkerboard. In the left foreground there is a yarn swift (winder) filled with white yarn on a stand. Beneath the loom is a basket. Inside the basket and on the floor are several small balls colored yellow and orange, which represent balls of yarn. Hanging off the side of the loom are a hank of yarn and two filled shuttles. Although the walls are indistinct, they appear to be wood, although it would be quite in keeping with the period for the walls to be of stone. With this in mind, we will discuss both options below.



Room

The first requirement for an indoor scene is to have a container in which to place it. Construct or purchase a room box – choices of materials for the under-structure are: Wood – either purchase a ready made box or kit, or cut and assemble one yourself. Gator Board – Must be cut with a saw and assembled– but very lightweight and rigid– will not warp if wet glue or modeling material is applied.

Foam Core –Cut with a knife and assemble. Lightweight – but will warp if you use paper clay or other wet substance for stone.

Choices for walls

Since the background in the room is unclear in the picture, walls could be dark wood paneling or even some kind of material that looks like stucco. Materials for these choices are readily available online and at your local miniature store if you are lucky enough to have one nearby. Paneling can be done just as you would in a dollhouse, either as wainscot, or a more formal application. Since the background in the picture is quite dark, a dark stain on the wood would be appropriate. There are several magazine articles

that discuss wall paneling. My own choice for walls would be stone, as this was the major medieval building material.

Stone walls

There are a number of choices for creating stone castle walls in miniature. One of the most popular materials, and probably the easiest to use in reproducing stone in miniature, is Creative Paperclay. It can be worked and re-worked with a little added water, until you are satisfied with the results. It can't be reconstituted if it is bone dry, but if the project starts to dry while working with the medium, it can be sprayed with water to extend the working period. A damp cloth can be placed over a work-in-progress to slow drying while taking a short break. It is lightweight, air drying and seems to be universally loved by miniaturists as evidenced by the many positive comments in the Small Stuff Archives.

To correct a large error that has dried, you can easily cut the offending piece out with a knife or sand it off. You can also apply a thin layer of glue and put a new layer of rolled out PaperClay on top. Once the material is dry, it will maintain its shape unless you immerse it in water. You can even use an oven to speed the drying process. General information on use of the product, a variety of craft projects, and online store for the product can be found here:

<http://www.paperclay.com/index.htm>

Flooring

The floor in the picture is a simple black and white checkerboard. A number of products are on the market which create flooring that is in scale. Your miniatures or hobby store will have a variety of brands of flooring that can be pasted into your display, some in sheet form and some as individual tiles. You can also create your own flooring, either by painting a checkerboard grid in black and white directly on the floor, or on paper or card which can be inserted into the box. You also can opt to make your own tiles from air drying or oven baked clay and lay a floor.

The following magazine articles contain tips on tile flooring. They were obtained from a very valuable index on the NAME website:

| General Subject | Magazine | Issue Date | Page |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|------|
| tips for laying wood, tile, carpet | Nutshell News | 1/94 | p84 |
| linoleum tile – Thomas | Miniature Collector | 4/98 | |
| p56 | | | |
| tile | Miniature Collector | 7/99 | p24 |
| tile | Miniature Collector | 8/99 | p 24 |
| tile | American Miniaturist | 3/03 | p 44 |
| tile | NAME Gazette | 11/04 | p 32 |
| checkerboard tile | Nutshell News | 7/64 | p 68 |
| tile from paint | Nutshell News | 2/95 | p 39 |
| simulated tile | Nutshell News | 8/92 | p107 |

| | | | |
|------------|----------------------|------|------|
| vinyl tile | Nutshell News | 1/92 | p105 |
| tiles | American Miniaturist | 3/05 | p 40 |

Mirror

Probably the easiest method of reproducing the mirror is to use a computer graphics program to isolate the mirror from the rest of the picture, resize to fit the proportions of your scene and then glue to a backing to mount on the wall or glue to the wall itself. If you are artistic and wish to paint your own scene, you can paint on paper, canvas, a wood circle, or other support, or, paint onto a round mirror of the appropriate size, leaving out the reflected items from the room. The mirror will reflect your items that you have placed in the scene and if your work is a bit different from the pieces in the pictures mirror, the discrepancies will not show.

General Printables tutorials which may help with the mirror

Printies in Paint <http://www.geocities.com/justauntb/index.html>
 Printables tutorial <http://68.38.137.242:8090/dh/Printabletut.html>

Furnishing the Room

The furniture in the room can, of course, be purchased or crafted. Plans for two types of seats have been provided to us by Renaissance Le Corbeau. (See the links to sections for [Peacock Chair and Coffe's Chair on the Spring issue page](#)) Several online sources for period furniture are listed in the links below.

Loom

Since the Pre-Raphaelites were more interested in the Romance of the period than in historical accuracy, most any wooden loom should work for the setting.

Scale miniature looms are available at the following websites:

Weaverlili's Miniature Weaving Looms: 1/12 scale handcrafted looms
<http://www.geocities.com/weaverlili/miniloom/>

A 4-Harness Jack-type Maple Loom can be found at Maple Leaf Miniatures
<http://www.mapleleafminiatures.ca/gallery/v/Loom/loom1.jpg.html>

If you order a loom, perhaps you can arrange to have a started tapestry already attached.

Weaving Accessories

Several weaving accessories are included in the scene. There is a basket full of yarn balls. Miniature baskets are readily available from many sources (shops, shows and online) and you can roll your balls of yarn from thin threads or fine yarns, being careful to keep

things in scale. Other small weaving items such as shuttles can be made from small scraps of wood. Modern weaving sites have clear photos of these tools, which have not changed much over the years and should not be difficult to copy in miniature. At the bottom left of our Lady of Shalott picture is a yarn swift or winder. The Woolery site has a modern winder pictured. Some dowels and tiny turnings could be used to adapt the construction of the modern one to something similar to the one in the picture/

Yarn.com - <http://yarn.com/webs/0/1/0/0-0-1113/>

The Woolery - <http://www.woolery.com/pages/weavaccess.html>

Tapestry

You might try to replicate the tapestry in miniature yourself, either by embroidering your own or printing on fabric or purchase one already made. Here are some sources that may help you:

An entire site devoted to Medieval embroidery and tapestry.

<http://www.advancenet.net/~jscole/medembro.html>

Medieval tapestries for sale at SP Miniatures at reasonable prices:

<http://www.spminiatures.com/medievalother.html>

Miniature needlepoint kits for 1/12 scale dolls houses, suitable for dolls' house wall hangings or as miniature pictures for the home. Designs based mainly on Celtic, medieval, and Tudor artwork. Kits include 22 or 24 count fabric, backing fabric, braid or ribbon, DMC stranded thread, needle, color block chart and key, sewing and finishing instructions

<http://www.knighttimminiatures.co.uk/>

Tutorials for printing on fabric:

<http://www.rebeccachulew.com/ezine/printingonfabric.html>

<http://www.cynthiahoweminiatures.com/fabricprinting.htm>

Furniture sources

Ann High Co. Carved and painted Medieval, Tudor and Arts and Crafts miniature furniture by IGMA artisan Ann High.

<http://www.annhigh.co.uk/>

Pear Tree Miniatures The miniature furniture on this site has been made by Barbara Moore, inspired by antiques in books and museums, and by furniture illustrated in paintings.

<http://uk.geocities.com/peartreemins@btinternet.com/samples.html>

Sue and Alan's Little Treasures - Supplies Tudor/Medieval furniture and houses.

http://www.saalt.co.uk/shop_pages/shop_acc_furniture.shtml

A few books are available which give directions for items from the Tudor period. Two that I found are:

Medieval furniture: "Making Dolls' House Interiors in 1/12 Scale" by Carol and Nigel Lodder, 1997, has plans and instructions for a Tudor Room, giving instructions for the room box itself done as either a kitchen or parlour and for furniture.

"Dolls' House Needlecrafts" by Venus Dodge, 1995, has Tudor soft furnishings and accessories.