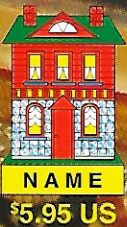
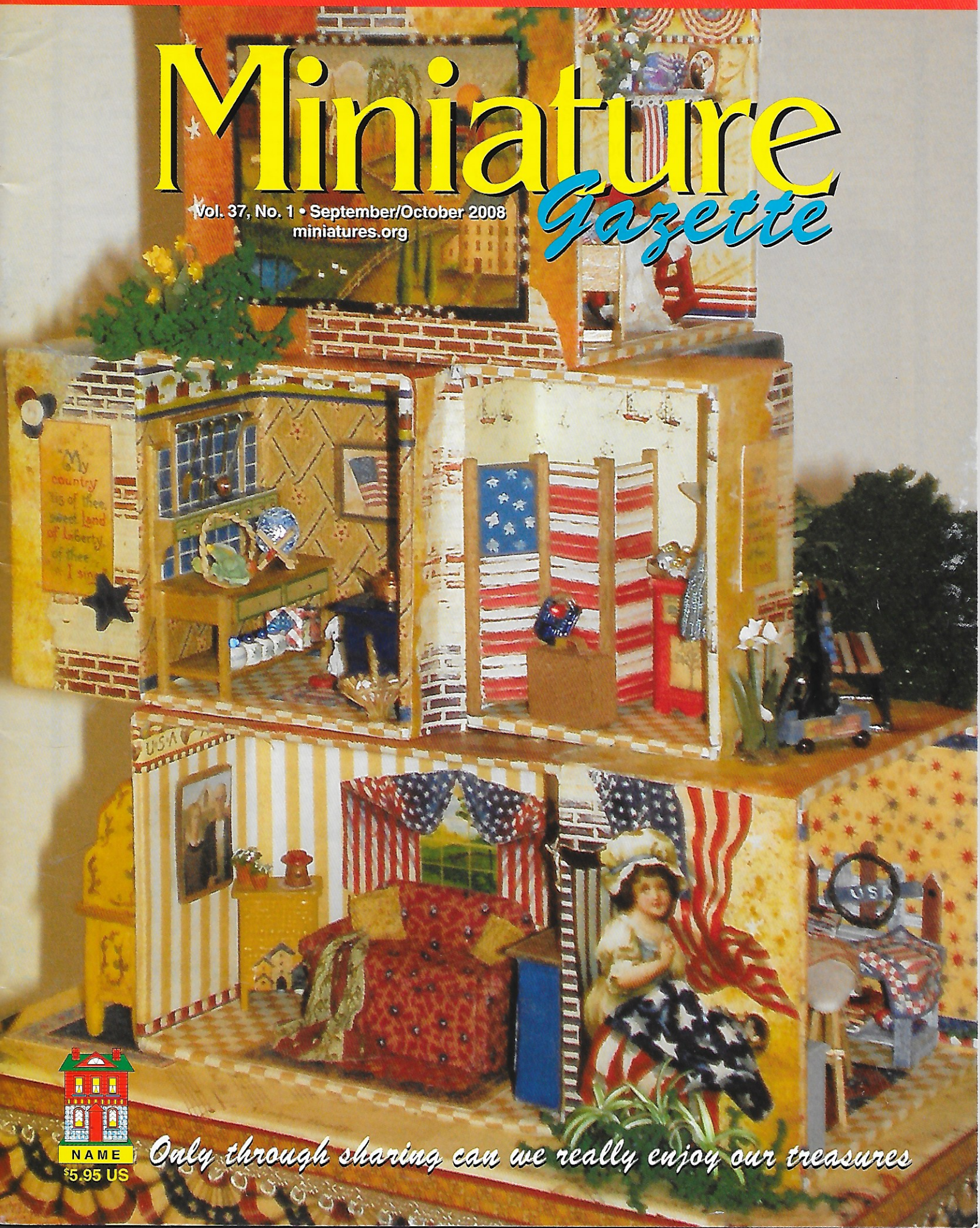


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Only through sharing can we really enjoy our treasures

"The Making of America's House and the Making of Your House"

by Debby Basaraba

Symbol

The something that represents something else by association or convention- especially a material object used to represent something invisible.

Symbolism

The practice of representing things by means of symbols or of attributing symbolic meanings of symbols and or representations.

Symmetry

Beauty as a result of balance or harmonious arrangement or proportion.

Asymmetric

Lack of balance or symmetry. (I find this beautiful too).

I started with these definitions because they influenced my choices and decisions when planning this altered miniature project.

I wanted to make a house that wasn't a house- an artistic expression of my love of my country and its values of freedom and democracy.

I started with a list of desired features that I wanted to include:

- It had to be original but symbolic.
- Asymmetrical but balanced.
- Boundaries of walls, but versatile in form and function.
- Classic, but unique.
- Comfortable but organized.
- Furnish it but fill it with a variety things that I have collected over time, made myself, was given, or bought from talented miniaturists that have meaning.

Interestingly, my list reflects my philosophical view of what being American is.

But what form should it be in....repeatedly "box" popped in my mind..."box", "box", "box"..... How boring, how plain and uninteresting...."box"...what can I do with a "box"...

I made 5 boxes- all the same height, and varied the width and depth. I made at total of 10 "boxes" or rooms (2 of each size).



I started stacking them in multiple configurations until I came to a form that I wanted to keep. (HINT- draw a picture or number the boxes' formation- the stack needs to be un-assembled for wallpapering).

Because all of the rooms are open faced- I added a fully enclosed box with roof on the top. It allowed me to add doors and windows. These doors are very symbolic- they represent opening yourself to others, to thoughts, to knowledge, to change and accepting them into your "home". By having the opposing door- it symbolizes that your "home" or life is in constant flow of change- "Change is never good if it doesn't happen".

The asymmetrical shape represents this change and growth. Growth is never predictable- it is not even in its pace or volume. As in family and relationships- people change and grow at different speeds- so effort is needed to keep connected, to maintain cohesion to remain a "home".

The content of your house makes it your "home". Associating friendship or family with a particular item occurs in miniature size too. I find it comforting and inspiring to fill my home with "stuff" that I have collected over time by purchase, gifts or creating. Sometimes it is the smallest item that has the greatest impact.

We never had children in my "human" world, but in miniature I have many... it means much to see a child's room, or their toys scattered about....it is permission to be young, to be innocent, to be non-judgmental and enjoy the moment. It is also symbolic of family- which is very important to me.

I also find myself drawn to kitchens and laundry rooms- which I find very amusing. Again in my human life I would rather not be associated with it at all. But in miniature- I find the warmth of the kitchen- the "heart of the home" and the

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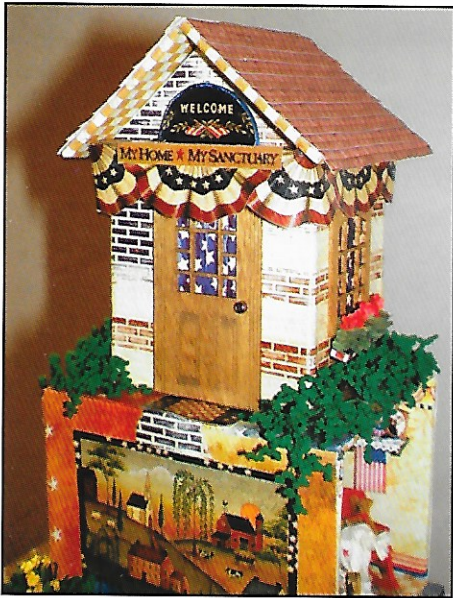
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organization of the laundry room. Maybe ironing is symbolic of a simpler time; thank goodness I can fulfill this need with symbolism and not a real ironing board.

It is important for me to include animals in my home- pets are real tangible proof of love in the home. I believe that is their only purpose, to love us and for us to love them back.

The exterior of your "home" is important. First impressions are very important (have you heard that one before?)

The outside and interior is infused with patriotic symbolism of the USA, by color choice, by flag, by art- it is a very strong representation of the strength and independence I have, of all the possibilities in my life, and how grateful I am to have them- but not to take them granted, for they were and are still being achieved at great cost.



I used bricks to symbolize long lasting life and commitment, but I also found it important to use stars- for dreaming, for having goals and reaching for them.

On one of the out-cropping next to the garden shed you will find a dandelion. Growing up- my father was very specific that there was never to be a weed in our yard, and for many, many years we worked as a family for that result. (naturally we were unsuccessful). Rather than

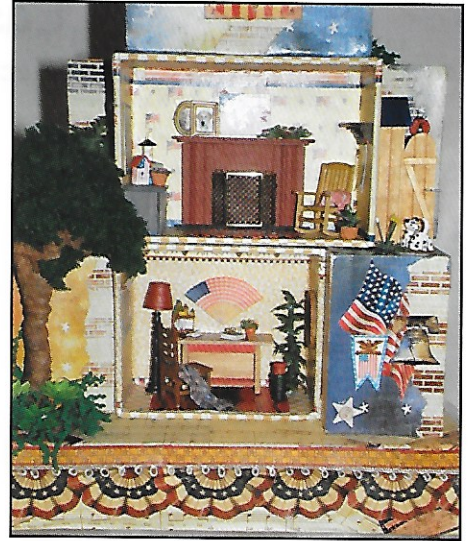
having a negative image, I believe that a perfect yard can have a perfect weed. Compromising with Mother Nature is a very wise thing.

This is my challenge to all of you: look at your miniature art for symbolism. I believe you will find many connections that you never consciously thought of.

Now take another step: Take this simple box pattern and make your own "home", fill it in and out with symbols that hold great importance for you.

Do not concern yourself with creating a "perfect" replication of a house, but creating a "perfect" home full of meaning for no one else but yourself. This takes guts, to expose yourself to basic emotions, to past experiences. It gives you a chance to reflect on the many influences that has molded you into who you are.

This "home" can have one room or 50, you choose. Decorate it with your heart and memory... then share it with others. Explain what certain things mean. Life is important to share- this is great opportunity for you to share yourself with your family, friends, club members or acquaintances.



I would be anxious and proud to see pictures and discussions thru the Gazette or the Online Region on what you create. It is NAME's motto: "only through sharing can we really enjoy our treasures".

Additional pictures of "America's House" can be found on my blog: <http://www.alteredminiatures.blogspot.com/>

Workproject begins on page 28

