

YOGA FOR THE MIND

URBAN ARTIST

A MAGAZINE OF BALANCE & SELF EXPRESSION



**The Art of
Looking Closer
with Miniature
Artists:**

LARA BYNG

ALEXANDRA CANTATORE

KATE LEE

**ARTLens:
The Noble
Art of
Miniatures**

Issue 10

APRIL - JULY

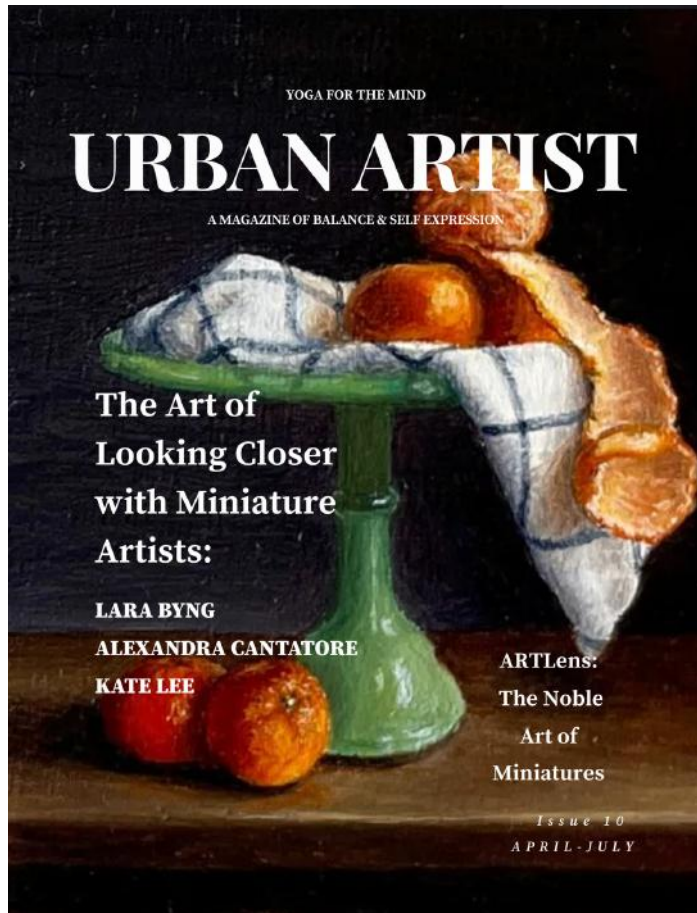
Cover
Jadeite with Clementines 1 (Scale 1:12)
Original painting by Artist Kate Lee

© 2026 Urban Artist Magazine All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the editor, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by the copyright law. For permission requests, write to the editor, addressed “Permissions”, at the address below.
Info@urbanartistdesigns.com
www.urbanartistdesigns.com

The views expressed in this publication are those of the respective contributor and are not necessarily shared by the company or its staff.

Subscribe to Urban Artist go to our website

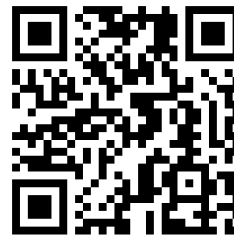
WWW.URBANARTISTDESIGNS.COM



NEVER MISS AN ISSUE!

Enjoy reading

If you would like to be added to the mailing list just scan the code. It will take you to the site to sign up.



DONATE TO URBAN ARTIST MAGAZINE

If you would like to support Urban Artist, please click the link above or QR code to the right. We thank you for your support!



Contents

6

EDITOR'S
letter

10

UPON A MOONLIGHT
CANVAS
Artist Lara Byng

20

Echos of The Studio
IGIA Artist Alexandra Cantatore

32

The Moment it Clicked
IGIA Artist
Kate Lee

46

ART LENS
The Noble Art of Miniatures

51

About Town

I s s u e 1 0

A P R I L - J U L Y

WINGING IT



BONNY BUTLER SOLO SHOW

April 1st - May 2nd 2026

Reception Apr. 2nd from 5-8pm

Gallery 113

1114 State St. La Arcada Plaza, Santa Barbara

EDITOR'S LETTER



Round Hay Fox
5x5 Acrylic
Artist Lara Byng

The Power of Small

Miniature artists Alexandra Cantatore, Lara Byng, and Kate Lee show how patience, imagination, and fine craftsmanship transform small-scale art into a powerful form.

In ART Lens: *The Noble Art of Miniatures*, I explore how miniature painting—an art form traced back to the 700s and continuing today—was prized by the elite and royal courts from the 1600s through the 1800s. These small works served as treasured keepsakes, much like an early wallet photograph.

Miniature art invites us to observe detail. The artists featured in this issue reveal entire worlds within a 1:12 scale.

In this issue of *Urban Artist*, three remarkable miniature artists are highlighted: Alexandra Cantatore (Italy), Lara Byng (UK), and Kate Lee (US).

Cantatore crafts highly detailed miniature easels and artist studio tools, bringing tiny studio scenes to life for collectors and dioramas.

As she explains:

“The most challenging aspect of my work is making the composition feel realistic while also evoking emotion in those who look at it.”

— Alexandra Cantatore

Byng’s moonlit landscapes for Dark Willow Art feel storybook-like, while her Fine Art Miniatures recreate works by Degas and Bouguereau.

Lee approaches miniature painting with classical discipline, drawing from the techniques of the Old Masters while embracing contemporary expression.

What connects these artists is not only the scale of their work but the patience required to create it. When a painting measures only inches across, every brushstroke matters. In miniature art, detail becomes devotion.

At *Urban Artist*, we believe creativity centers the mind—what we call **Yoga for the Mind**. Sometimes the smallest paintings guide us back to the heart of creativity.

Until next time,

Keep creating—because creativity is Yoga for the Mind.

Editor, Urban Artist Magazine



2025/2026 SEASON

**Four fantastic shows,
featuring world-class singers**

Mission Opera's 2025/2026 Season!

Experience 4 unforgettable productions this season: Gian Carlo Menotti's Amahl and the Night Visitors, the thrilling musical Twisted, and the third edition of Mission Opera's journey through works by Carlisle Floyd, Slow Dusk AND The Sojourner and Mollie Sinclair.

Amahl and the Night Visitors warms the heart with its tale of faith, generosity, and miracles. Twisted offers a witty and imaginative twist on a familiar story, filled with humor and creativity. The Sojourner and Mollie Sinclair captivates audiences with its powerful storytelling and emotional depth.

Secure your season tickets now and experience an extraordinary lineup of music, theatre, and inspiration.

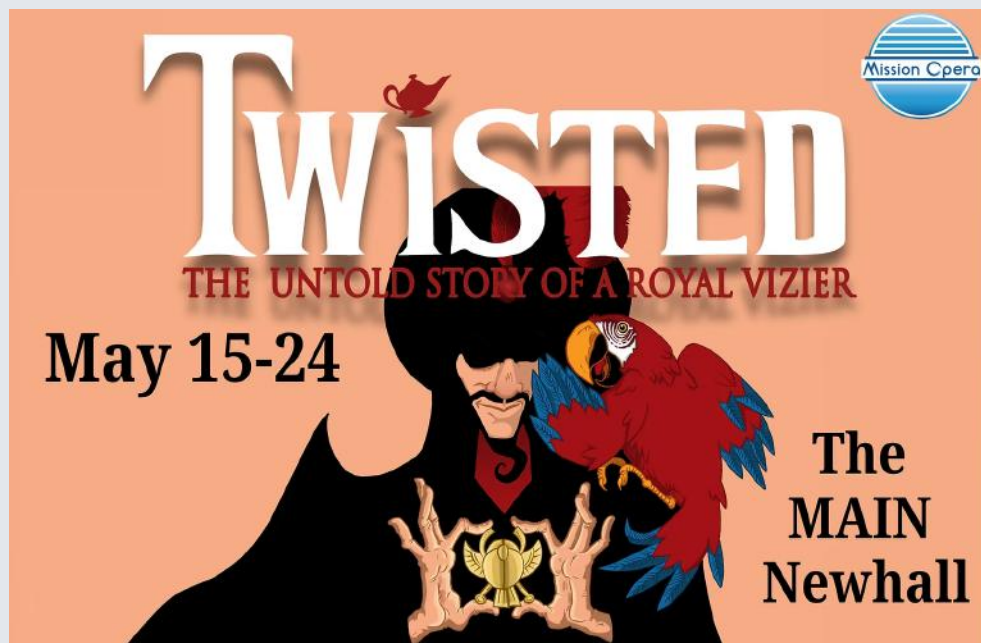
for more information and Tickets visit:

**Missionopera.com
for more information**



April 10 - 12th for :

[Tickets](#)



May 15-24 for :

[Tickets](#)

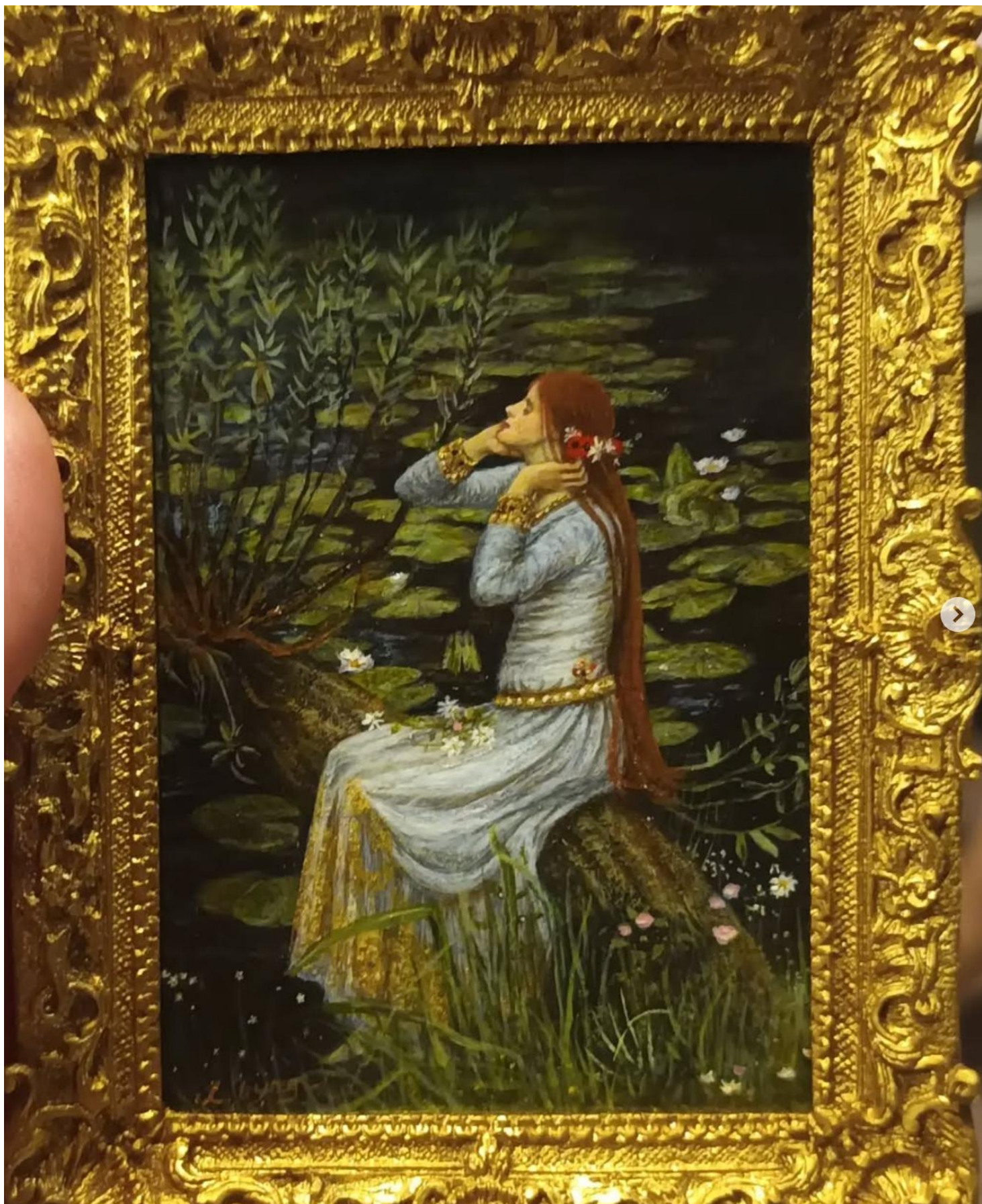
“

*The Miniature- often overlooked, becomes
monumental*

ONCE UPON A
*Noontit
Canvas*

with
Artist Lara Byng

Facing page: Lara Byng's ½
reproduction of John William
Waterhouse, Ophelia, 1894



Artist Lara Byng

Where the story begins....

Inspired by childhood wonder and guided by her family, Lara Byng's Dark Willow paintings and miniature masterpieces open small doors to magical, meditative worlds.

I wanted one of the old masters to hang in my miniature home—something quiet to rest my eyes on between thoughts. I lose myself for hours in paintings like *The Song of Angels* and *Two Dancers on a Stage*. What better companions than art that seems to breathe?

With this in mind, I turned to art for companionship and guidance through life's mysteries.

I wanted more than a reproduction. I longed for an artist—someone painting from the soul, who honored originals and listened to art.

That search eventually led me to miniature artist Lara Byng.

Encountering her work had that quiet, unmistakable impact certain paintings do. Lara has exhibited in the UK, including at *Bankside Gallery*, and her pieces have been acquired by the *National Museum of Toys and Miniatures* in Kansas City. In addition to recreations, she paints original worlds under the name *Dark Willow Art*.





Artist Lara Byng's reproduction 1:12 scale of 'Two Dancers on Stage' by Edgar Degas
Art work has been enlarged for viewing purposes

For Lara, creativity has always lived quietly beneath the surface — waiting, observing, gathering light.

As a child in suburban Leeds, she spent her days drawing and telling stories. She wandered galleries with her mother, Leonarda, who saw that art was a calling. Even at three, her parents believed she would become an artist. They could not know how future detours, tenderness, and grief would shape her vision.

Years later, after becoming a young mother and relocating between military bases in the UK and the United States, Lara's life changed dramatically. Eventually, following the sudden loss of her younger sister, she returned home. In the period that followed this loss, painting re-entered her life—not as an ambition, but as a necessity. In the stillness after profound loss, she picked up her brushes again, this time for solace, reflection, and survival. It was during this period, after returning home and facing loss, that *Dark Willow* was born: moonlit landscapes steeped in softness, shadow, and a quiet, otherworldly glow. Each new painting became a pause in the world's noise—a small meditation, a place to breathe.

While living with her two young boys, Lara began working on smaller projects, revealing an unexpected devotion to miniatures. Practical necessity soon evolved into a new artistic language. Through recreations of masterworks in these tiny worlds, she practices deep attention. Every brushstroke becomes an act of reverence, every detail a conversation across time. The miniature, often overlooked, becomes monumental.

In both her original paintings and her miniature masterworks, Lara embodies what Urban Artist calls Yoga for the Mind. Creativity is contemplation, presence, a gentle return to oneself. Whether beneath the glow of a painted moon or inside the intimate frame of a dollhouse wall, her work offers refuge. Each piece provides a small, luminous moment where memory, story, and imagination meet.

A painting, Lara believes, is like a story. So I asked her to tell me the story herself — about the child who drew in the margins of storybooks, the woman who found her way back to painting through grief, and the quiet magic of working small enough to hold an entire world in the palm of her hand.

In her Words:

Could you share a bit about your artistic background? What path led you to create miniature paintings under the name Dark Willow Art?

“I have always loved drawing and painting since childhood and was hugely influenced by the detailed, magical illustrations that I saw in my favorite storybooks growing up. They still influence me today, and I think ‘Dark Willow’ sounds a bit like the beginning of a storybook!”

A storybook sense of wonder runs through Lara's work, shaped by the illustrated stories she loved as a child. Creativity also runs in the family. Her father enjoyed drafting detailed airplane drawings, while her mother had a love for illustration. Though neither pursued art professionally, their interests helped encourage Lara's own creative path.



Artist Lara Byng's *Dark Willow* original work

Opposite page:

Top - The Moonlit Path

Lower left - All Hallows Ever

Lower right- The Gilded Tree

Your work often references classic art and atmospheric landscapes. How do historical artistic influences shape the miniatures you create?

“The visual narrative, the myths, the symbolism, and the drama! I adore old paintings; they speak without words.”

The Old Masters painted what they saw, but they also painted what they understood. Their works carried story, symbolism, and atmosphere all at once. Byng’s miniatures echo that tradition. Though small in scale, they retain the same sense of narrative presence — proof that a painting does not need grandeur to hold meaning. Lara has painted famous works by Degas, Rossetti, Grimshaw, Waterhouse, Edward Robert Hughes, and her own originals.

What was your first miniature artwork like? What inspired you to translate full-sized artistic ideas into miniature form?

“My first miniature was purely experimenting with color and application of paint; I had no idea what I was going to paint. I let the paint guide me. I decided to be free of what I thought I should paint and did exactly what came to me.”

Painting can be meditative, and most artists talk about getting into a “zone,” a space where you can only see the canvas and let your inner voice guide you through your piece.

Miniatura UK is a renowned platform for miniature art. What has exhibiting there meant for your practice and your relationship with collectors?

“Miniatura has some wonderful exhibitors and attendees, you cannot help but be inspired by so many creative and fascinating people from all over the world!”

The Minatura UK show has been held since 1983. It is a gathering of miniaturists who enjoy the craft, and artisans get together to celebrate their hobby.

Your paintings are so amazing. I love your Song of Angels, The White Rose, and The Red Rose, Landscape View of Arundel Castle. Literally everything I have seen you do. How long does it take to do pieces like this? How many do you work on at once?

“Each painting is different. Sometimes the paintings that look easy take weeks. Sometimes the ones that look very difficult aren’t too bad. I sometimes have to redo a painting several times and end up in tears, and then on occasion, they go smoothly without too many hiccups and may take 3-4 days! I typically only work on one painting at a time because I’m in that painting and feel the mood.”

Artist Lara Byng’s Fine Art Miniatures)
Opposite page:

Reproduction 1/12 scale of
William-Adolphe Bouguereau’s artwork
The Song of Angels

Miniature Woodwork by
Artist Michael J. Mortimer
Miniature Furniture artist



Can you describe your process for creating a miniature painting — from idea to finished piece?

“With my Dark Willow, I don't plan them; I go with the flow. I apply the paint and let it guide me. They're like a walk in nature, you have no idea where you're going, but you're just enjoying the fresh air!

With my Fine Art Miniatures, it's a lot more structured, using traditional methods.”

What medium do you use? Do you use a magnifying glass?

*“I use watercolours and acrylics.
Nope! No magnification, not yet anyway. I have extremely good close-up vision, but I can't see 5 meters away!”*

What do you find most rewarding — and most difficult — about miniature painting?

*“Most rewarding is actually painting itself. I am in another, peaceful world when I paint. You can't really beat that! The most difficult?
Hmmm. Knowing when to stop!*

I know exactly what you mean. Suddenly, the world grows quiet, and you have only you, the paintbrush, and quiet.

How do you decide what to paint next? Is it emotional, narrative, or inspired by something you've seen or felt?

“All of the above!”

Do you accept commissions? If so, what kinds of miniature pieces do you enjoy creating most?

“I do accept commissions. In the beginning, this made me anxious because I worried that they might not turn out as expected, but now I don't worry. What's the worst that could happen? The most enjoyable bespoke pieces are when there is deep meaning behind the painting to that individual, and I get to share that.”

Where can people view and purchase your work online today?

“I did have a website solely for Dark Willow, but I have a new one now that incorporates all my miniature paintings; it is still a work in progress!”

Lara's website is complete; to see more of her work. Please select the website link below. You may also see her work on Instagram and Facebook.

Website: [Lara Byng Fine Art Miniatures](#)

Instagram: [Larabyng_Fieartminiatures](#)

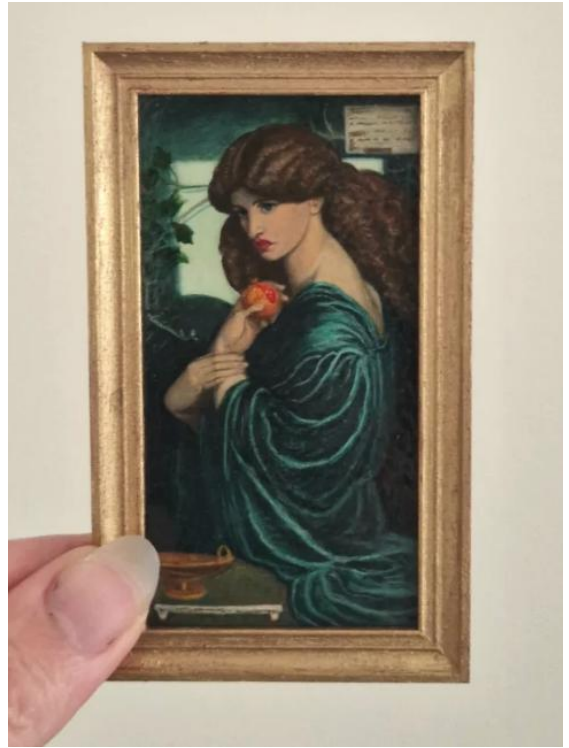
From Artist Lara Byng's Fine Art Miniatures)
Opposite page:

Lara's ½ scale fine art reproductions of:

1. Edward Moran's - Ships in the Night
2. Dante Gabriel Rossetti - Proserpine
3. Jean-Francois Millet - The Angelus
4. Edward Moran - View of Arundel Castle



1.



2.



3.



4.

Echos of the Studio

Artist

Alexandra Cantatore

*In delicate miniature Worlds
Alexandra Cantatore brings the
memory and atmosphere of the artist's
workspace to life*

K. Gonzales

Creativity and Alexandra Cantatore have always been inseparable. Long before she realized her craft would focus on miniatures, creativity was woven into her daily life. She describes herself as someone with a vivid imagination, cultivated through an artistic and humanistic education. She loves all things creative: reading, writing, drawing, painting, and, yes, crafting small objects.

If she is not doing those things, she is visiting museums, going to flea markets, taking walks, or spending time in nature with her dogs and children.

But perhaps her greatest influence came in the studio. As a child, Alexandra was the only one allowed to sit quietly inside her uncle Gianni Cavani's painting studio. He was a professor of drawing at the Academy of Fine Arts of Bologna and a respected painter and restorer. She perched on a stool for hours, watching him work and absorbing not only technique but also the atmosphere: the tools, the shelves, and the quiet ritual of making.





Alemikimikri

“Making Miniatures

must come from a great passion
for this small world.”



Artist Alexandra
Cantatore at her Booth

The time she spent with her uncle in his studio left an imprint. Years later, it would resurface in her meticulous miniature studios and painter's workbenches. These spaces feel less constructed than remembered.

I stumbled upon Alexandra's work because I am a collector of miniatures. I have been since I was a child. I don't quite know what attracts me to them, except the stories they evoke when I see them. The artist's studio mirrors my own world — the easels, brushes, and worktables are part of my everyday language. I like the idea of reconstructing studios like those of Rembrandt or Vermeer in miniature. Maybe it's for inspiration, or maybe it's my way of observing the masters in my mind's eye. I found Alexandra's work while searching for easels, pastels, paintbrushes, and artist's tables. It stood out with the authenticity I imagined.



For Alexandra, miniature is not about scale alone. It is about memory, observation, and the profound challenge of making something small feel fully alive.

Family inspires and shapes our creativity. Hours in her uncle's studio led Alexandra from childhood to becoming an internationally recognized miniature artist. In the following conversation, she reflects on her journey.



Getting to know Alexandra Cantatore

We have already learned what influenced Alexandra, but why did she choose to pursue miniatures?

Tell us more about your journey becoming the artist you are, and how that led to your miniature work.

“When I was in art school, I helped my teacher build some dioramas in plaster. On this occasion, for the first time, I realized that I didn’t find it difficult, but rather I found it pleasant to concentrate on those small steps of the Sumerian village. In the early 1980s, I gave my grandmother a dollhouse, and together with my mother, began to create objects and small furniture in 1:12 scale, because they were very difficult to find in Italy at that time.”

Do you remember your first miniature?

“My real start in the world of miniature came more than twenty years ago, when my daughter expressed a desire to have a dollhouse. All the skills I have acquired over the years have proved precious in creating the furnishings and accessories for her dollhouse. The first miniature I built was a painter’s box (image on right). I used one of my own as a model. Then there was an old coffee grinder and a watering can. These three objects continue to be part of my exhibition, although they have clearly evolved.”

Alexandra’s success with becoming a master miniaturist began with love, not ambition. It was a simple request from her daughter, which set the catalyst in motion. Her painter’s box was made by her own hand to be as authentic as



possible for her daughter. This set the path for other objects her daughter wanted: a coffee grinder and a watering can, all familiar things. Things that hold memory through use.

Living in Italy, surrounded by museums filled with the Old Masters, offers a special kind of fuel. For many of us, visiting such spaces feels ceremonial. It is an occasion. For her, inspiration is woven into daily life.

But what stands out to me is not how close she is to all this history, but what she does with it. She draws inspiration from museums, the memory of her uncle's studio, and the things she has gathered around her. Her art is something you can hold in the palm of your hand.

Your artist workbenches and studio pieces are incredibly detailed. Roughly how long does it take to complete one from idea to finish?

“It mainly depends on whether I can get hold of or make what I need to complete the project. Some projects remain unfinished for months because I’m missing something. Others take just a couple of days. Some take weeks. For example, it takes about a week to make a painter’s shelf, the creation of each detail, and finally the assembly of each composition. In my mind, a character takes shape, and that shelf rather than a table will represent him or her.”



Above are some of Alexandra's miniature works:

1. A doll
2. watering cans



Miniature Studio Sinks 1:12 scale by
Alexandra Cantatore



What is the most challenging aspect of working in miniatures for you?

“The most challenging aspect of my work is to make the composition realistic and evoke emotions in those who look at it.”

As a collector, that is what drew me to her work. The small brushes, paint sets, and worn studio tables are all familiar to me and to anyone who spends time in a studio. These things she creates are very personal to my creative life. My studio is my happy place, and so creating it on a small scale feels very comforting. I suppose this is why her work resonates with me so strongly. It's the feeling of being in the studio.

What advice would you give to new artists or beginner miniaturists just starting?

“My advice is to look at reality, to reproduce what you love and know best. The decision to make it a profession can only come from a great passion for this small world.”

Who are some miniature artists you admire or draw inspiration from?

“I am also a collector, and I admire many artists. I draw inspiration from visiting museums, historical houses, old books, and, of course, the flea market.

For those interested in purchasing your work, where can they find you or your pieces?

“Much of my work can be found on Instagram under [Alexandra299](#), or on my Facebook page: [Alemikimikri](#). With this name, you can find me at exhibitions like the [Kensington Dollshouse Festival in London](#), the [Tom Bishop International Miniature Show in Chicago](#), and [Philadelphia Miniaturia](#). You can also see her blog spot at [alemikimikri.blogspot.com](#)

This June 2025, I will be in Castine, Maine, where I will teach two courses for the first time at the [Guild IGMA School](#). I have been a member of this association for several years. I received the IGMA Artisan Certificate in 2019.”

From Watching to Becoming

There is something deeply personal in Alexandra Cantatore's devotion to the artist's studio. The compositions she builds today echo the space where her uncle once painted, where she was allowed to sit quietly and watch. In recreating shelves, workbenches, and painter's tools, she preserves not just objects, but memory itself — translating atmosphere into scale with remarkable precision.

As both artist and collector, Alexandra continues to draw inspiration from museums, historic homes, flea markets, and the quiet poetry of everyday life. Whether exhibiting internationally or teaching the next generation at Guild IGMA School, she remains guided by the same principle she offers to aspiring miniaturists: look closely at the reality you love, and recreate it with passion.

In her work, scale becomes secondary to spirit — and the intimate becomes enduring.

For those of us who love art, her miniatures do exactly what she hoped: they make us feel something. And sometimes, they remind us of our own studios, real or imagined.



Alexandra's miniature works:
Artist Table
Colored Chalk & Drawing
Charcoal
Paint Brushes



The Art of Harriette Knight



Saturday, April 25th at Barn and Charm

9:00 am - 5:00 pm

22700 Lyons Ave, ste A&B, Newhall, CA 91321

&

Saturday, May 2, at Newhall Marketplace's Spring Collective

10:00 am - 5:00 pm


22421 Market St. Newhall Community Center, Newhall, CA 91321





SATURDAY, MAY 16 • NOON TO 6:00 P.M.
OLD TOWN NEWHALL

ART WALK

DISCOVER ART AROUND EVERY CORNER
 Stroll through the galleries, restaurants and businesses along Main Street in Santa Clarita's Arts & Entertainment District where every space can be an arts venue for a day!

**LIVE PERFORMANCES • OPEN STUDIOS • HANDS-ON ART
 CREATIVE DISPLAYS • LOCAL TALENT**





 For more information, visit ArtsforSantaClarita.org/ArtWalk



Old Town Newhall Art Walk Festival

Saturday, May 16th

12:00 pm -6:00 pm

Main Street 24300, Newhall, CA



Kate Lee's 1:12 scale reproduction painting of Sir Henry Raeburn, *The Skating Minister*, 1790s

The Moment it *Clicked*

A lifelong creative urge finds resolution in the intimate world of miniature painting.

The Scale that answered back.

After years of unfinished canvases, miniature artist Kate Lee realized her creative vision fit a smaller world. Though she never attended formal art school, Kate always wanted to paint. Her trek into the art world began not with mastery, but often with frustration.

For years, Kate returned to painting as if revisiting a dream—hopeful yet discouraged. Something I think most artists starting out can relate to, I know I envied those artists who just seemed to take a brush to canvas and move along. Every attempt to capture her vision met resistance; nothing ever felt finished or right. The canvas stayed a space where intention and outcome failed to align.

Each time, the paints were returned to storage—but Kate never lost her creative drive. In June 2025, she experimented with 1:12 scale miniatures.

Kate would find love in creating miniature reproductions of the masters, with a few of her own works thrown in. She has always had a love for the Old Masters and wanted to understand their styles and methods. So after attending a few classes held at ‘Guild School’ - International Guild of Miniature Artisans (IGMA), Kate found her calling. Immediately selected into the Artisan Membership of IGMA, Kate was on her way.

This shift brought not gradual improvement but sudden clarity. At a reduced scale, painting finally made sense for Kate. The struggle faded, even as she humbly insisted, “I wasn’t very good.”

Many artists, regardless of medium, experience self-doubt. Over time, as with Kate, that doubt can fade as belief in oneself grows.

In this new domain of miniature paintings, creating art no longer seemed like a struggle. For Kate, it finally became an expression of truth.



Kate Lee

Shares the story behind her miniature practice.

K. Gonzales

I started our conversation by asking Kate to tell us a little about herself as an artist and creative person, and what brought her to miniature art.

“I’ve always been creatively inclined. My history as a painter is a little complicated and very sporadic. Most people think I’ve been painting in full scale all along before discovering

miniatures, but that's not the case at all. I only started miniature painting in June of 2025.

Before that, I hadn't seriously painted in over ten years. I have always loved to paint, but I have never been successful at translating what I picture in my head onto the canvas. I would furiously try to paint for a few days or weeks, grow frustrated, and then put away my paints for years until the urge struck again. This cycle started when I was a teenager, and I would paint maybe once every few years.

It's funny because I don't have any finished paintings to look back on. I never finished anything because it was such a painstaking and challenging ordeal. Discovering that I could paint in miniature was a complete revelation."

This is an honesty in her story that many artists recognize but rarely admit. Creativity does not always unfold steadily from start to finish; more often, it arrives in cycles.

Most artists struggle with these periods, but once we find our style or the process begins to peak for us, we start to learn to listen to our inner voice. Building confidence and trusting our skills. This isn't unique to Kate; all creatives have struggles.

Is anyone else in your family an artist?

"My siblings are creative in other ways, but no, I'm the only artist in the family."

Your Instagram feed showcases expressive miniature paintings. How did you develop your style at such a small scale?

"I would say that it's an ongoing process. I'm not entirely sure how I would describe my style. I don't really like to box myself in and say that I paint in one genre. I'm still challenging myself to see what I can paint next; there's still so much I want to try, but at the same time, I have very firm ideas of what kind of art I like."

I heard you mention how fond you are of the Masterworks and your desire to truly study how those artists created their paintings. In doing so, you explore the different methods used across art history — from the Old Masters, who relied on careful underpainting and subtle layering, to more modern painters like Wayne Thiebaud, known for his heavy, luscious brushwork and visible strokes, building layer upon layer of thick paint. Looking at your studies, I can see the differences emerging between your reproductions of Judith Leyster's *Young Flute Player* and Thiebaud's *Girl Toweling Off*. Both are beautifully executed and reveal an artist learning through observation and practice.

“Studying a master is not imitation — it’s a way of listening to how a painting was made.”



Kate Lee's 1:12 scale reproduction painting of Wayne Thiebaud's Girl Toweling Off



Judith Leyster

Young Flute Player, c. 1630s

Oil on board, 1/12 scale

Kate Lee's 1:12 scale reproduction painting of Judith Leyster's Young Flute Player



What was the very first miniature you created for yourself? What memory stands out from that time?

“I remember making little handbags for my Barbies out of bits of fabric. I didn’t like the bags they had, so it only seemed natural to make them exactly the way I wanted. I just remember the satisfaction I got from creating things with my own hands, and that feeling has never gone away.”

How does working in miniature differ from larger painting – creatively or technically – for you?

“I’m not classically trained in art, and I didn’t go to art school, so I feel like I’m figuring things out for myself most of the time. I struggled to paint in full scale, but when I started painting small, something just clicked and I was finally able to convey how I always wanted to paint. I still don’t really understand the why but I’m so very happy to be a part of the miniature world.”

You exhibited at Philadelphia Miniaturia 2025. What was that experience like, and how does being part of the miniature community influence your work?

“Choosing to debut at Philadelphia Miniaturia last year when I hadn’t been painting miniatures very long was a little impulsive, but it was overall a great experience as a first-timer. Putting my artwork and essentially myself out there in a public way was unlike anything I had ever done before. I could never have imagined doing something like it without the encouragement and enthusiasm shown by my fellow miniaturists.”

Historically, miniature shows were considered a quiet specialty gathering, but have been gaining momentum in the United States. Events in Philadelphia and Chicago now attract serious collectors, artisans, and painters from across disciplines, following a tradition long established in Europe, where miniature work has always been treated as a serious fine art. Entering these shows and stepping on this stage as a new and emerging artist carries a bit of vulnerability. This scale invites close scrutiny, so all decisions are visible. So Kate's choice to showcase her work at an early stage in her career isn't as impulsive as it might seem; it shows a desire to grow in public. It shows her devotion to artistry.

Walk us through your creative process. Do you start with sketches or work directly at scale?

"I don't have a very rigid academic process; I like to approach paintings in different ways. Sometimes I do a quick study to figure out the composition and color scheme, and other times I just jump right in."

What medium are you painting in?

"I only use professional-grade oil paints and use mostly Willamsburg, M.Graham, and Old Holland paints. I do not recommend student-grade paints unless you're not sure if you're going to stick with oil painting."

opposite page:
Miniature Reproductions by Kate Lee
Sir Anthony Vandyck's
Portrait of Cornelis van der Geest

Right:
John Singer Sargent's Mrs. Charles E. Inches
(Louise Pomeroy).





Reproduction by Kate Lee of Anne Marie Vallayer-Coster,
Still Life with tuft of Marine Plants, Shells and Corals



Kate Lee painted her favorite image as a tribute to Philip de Laszlo.
Image on Left: Is the original painting by Philip de Laszlo, The Queen Mother, 1925

The painting on the right is Kate Lee's 2/5 scale reproduction of that same painting!

What's the biggest challenge you've faced as a miniature artist so far?

“A challenge for me is thinking about scale. Making sure that the dimensions of a miniature painting make sense, usually in relation to a 1:12 scale dollhouse. I just finished working on my biggest [miniature] piece, El Jaleo by John Singer Sargent. It was a true labor of love as it's one of my absolute favorites. I'm so excited to post about it very soon.”

I can't wait to see it! I'll be looking for that post as I love that piece!

According to the National Association of Miniature Enthusiasts, miniatures may be defined as “precisely scaled reproductions or creations of objects that are intended to create the illusion of reality.” A great deal of study goes into creating a reproduction of the object. For instance, when Kate creates a replica of a famous masterwork, such as Judith Leyster's Boy with a Flute, she will research the techniques Judith Leyster used. How many layers of paint did she use? What were her painting strokes? This is more for understanding the painting and its technique.

What advice would you offer to artists intrigued by miniatures?

“Just try it! I promise nothing bad will happen. Try painting at a quarter of the size you normally paint in; you don't have to go super tiny from the very beginning.”

Are there artists (miniature or otherwise) who inspire you? Why?

“There are so many miniature artists that inspire me. I feel very fortunate that there are so many talented miniaturists who define what it means to be the very best in their craft. They all push me to improve and make me excited to paint every day. As for the greats, I can't mention some of my favorite artists like Sargent, Vermeer, and Velázquez.”

I'm a huge fan of Vermeer, Sargent, and Leyster. I think it's the way these pieces capture light and emotion. I think that is one of the things that caught my eye in your work. Especially the Boy with a Flute piece you did! I cannot wait to see your latest. El Jaleo is quite a piece to take on.



**Original painting by Kate Lee
'Jadeite with Clementines 2.'
1:12 scale**



**Original painting by Kate Lee
'Jadeite with Clementines 1.'
1:12 scale (also cover photo)**

**Original painting by Kate Lee
'Costco Lemon.'
1:12 scale**





Where can people find and purchase your work?

“I don’t have a website at this time so, people can find me at miniature shows. I will be at the Tom Bishop Miniature Show in Chicago from April 10th – 12th, and also plan to attend the Philadelphia Miniaturia show on November 6th -8th. I’m on Instagram under @painterleekate. You can reach out to me there or email me at painterleekate@gmail.com, and for now, that’s the best way to get updates on upcoming shows and to see what I’m working on.”

Follow her on Instagram: PainterleeKate

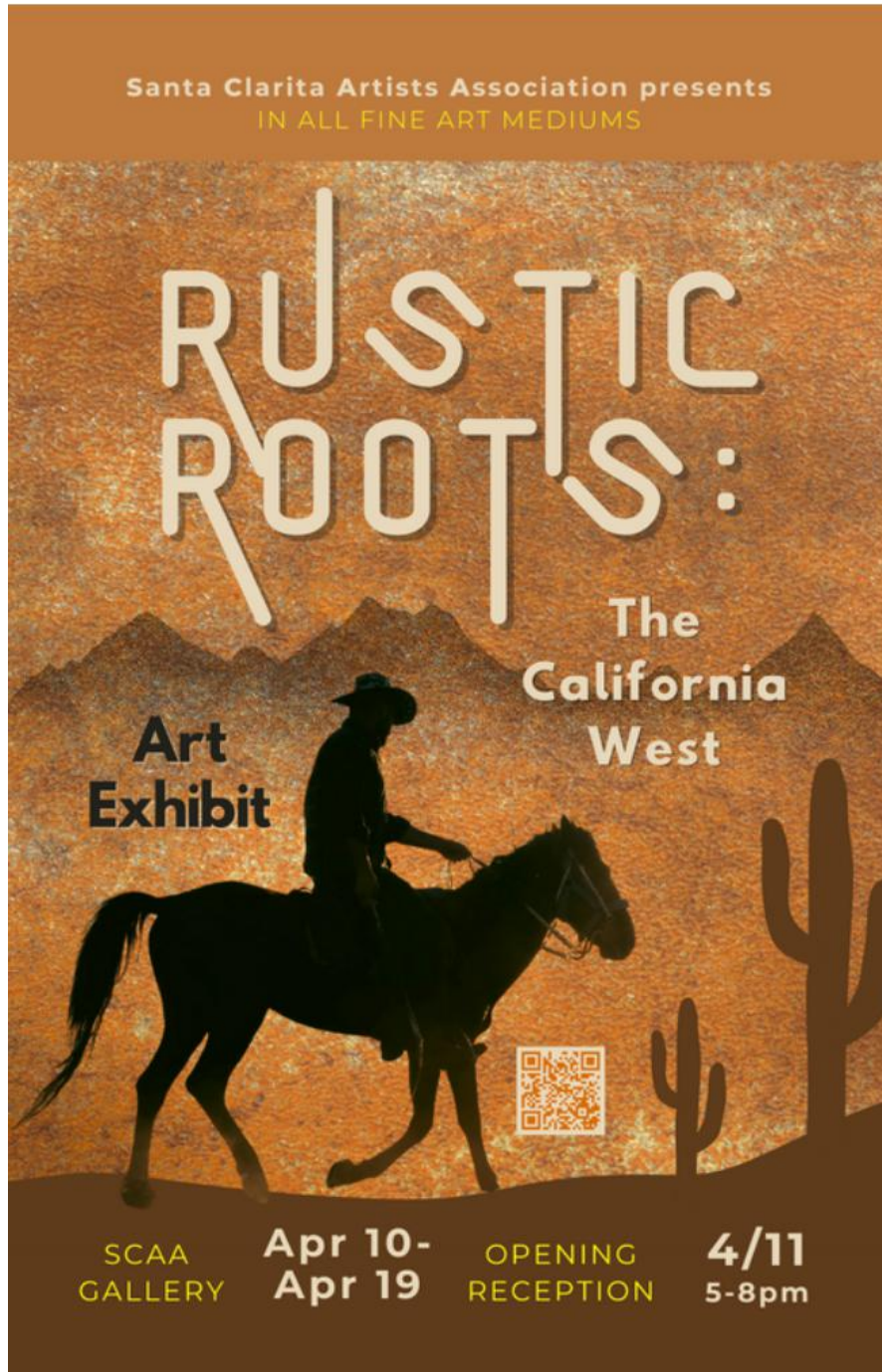
Images opposite page:

Kate Lee’s original paintings
 Top - Jadeite with Clementines 1
 (also used on the cover)

bottom - Jadeite with Clementines 2

This page:

Image of Artist Kate Lee and her booth at the Philly Miniature show
 2025



Show runs April 10-April 19th
Reception is on April 11th 5:00 - 8:00 pm
For More information, visit:
[Santa Clarita Art Association](#)

Art Lens

The Noble Art of Miniatures

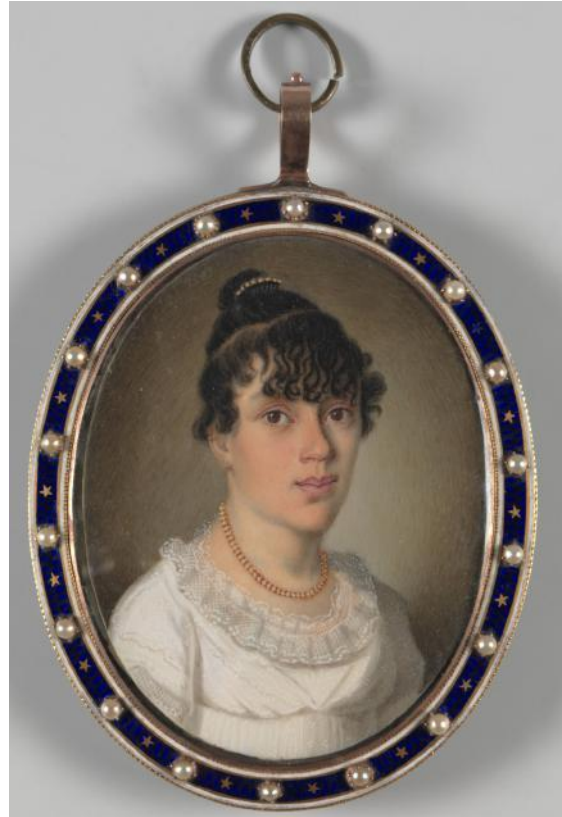
From royal courts to modern collectors

Funny how we fall into various interests. I have always loved miniatures ever since our neighbor from across the street came over to ask my mom if I had any dollhouse furniture I no longer wanted. I think I was all of five. This was the first time I ever saw a dollhouse like his. Mine, of course, was a child's toy his... well, his was almost like a real home. It had working lights and a tiny working television. I was hooked.

I asked so many questions: how did he get the lights to work? Where did he get the fixtures and furniture? The pieces he eventually placed inside looked so real—the woodwork on the desk legs, the tiny chairs that looked like something you would find in a real home. It captivated me.

That was the attraction. What began as a childhood curiosity would eventually become my hobby as an adult. I went to shows and bought beautiful pieces for my miniature home. These artists turned tiny pottery, while others constructed furniture using miniature lathes and tools.

Creating works of art for the serious collector, and certainly not for children. In fact, miniatures were once reserved for royalty and the elite.



Anonymous, "Portraits of Surinamese Girls" ca. 1810 (Photo: domain) courtesy of the Rijksmuseum collection

Miniature paintings served as the most intimate way to preserve a person's likeness. These tiny works of art were once among the most prized possessions of the aristocracy. Commissioned primarily for royalty, nobility, and the wealthy elite, these paintings and furniture were treasured objects no larger than a few inches. Some of these items were meant to be carried, worn, or privately shared. It allowed people to carry images of loved ones.

Art Lens

Queen Elizabeth I commissioned many miniature portraits from the renowned artist Nicholas Hilliard, who served as the court's official miniature painter. He captured not only the likeness but also the status and elegance, which helped him maintain his place in Elizabeth's court.

Creating a miniature required extraordinary patience and technical skill. Artists typically painted on vellum, ivory, or parchment with brushes so fine they could hold only a few hairs. Every detail had to be rendered with precision.

Despite their small size, these paintings were far from simple. Framed in gold, enamel, or jeweled settings, these objects reflected the owner's wealth and prestige. Miniature portraiture flourished across Europe, Asia, India, and, of course, the UK. The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam houses a worldwide-renowned collection of miniatures. Three of the most famous 17th-century collections are the Petronella Oortman collection, which showcases the craftsmanship of the Dutch Golden Age.

Today, miniature art continues to thrive through organizations and exhibitions that attract collectors and artists from around the world. Societies such as the [Royal Miniature Society](#), founded in 1896 and granted a Royal Charter in 1905 by King Edward VII, and the [International Guild of Miniature Artisans](#), established in the United States in the 1970s, continue to



celebrate and preserve this remarkable art form.

For me, this fascination with miniatures has never faded. Each tiny object still carries the same sense of wonder it did when I was a child. Even now, it takes me back to the days of being that little girl who once dreamed of living inside that tiny dollhouse.

The above image is from the Royal Collection in the dollhouse of Windsor Castle. A miniature print in the Royal Collection Trust. Artist Henry Holiday (1839-1927) Mercy and Truth Have Kissed Each Other c.1923



April Second Saturday Tour



OJAI
STUDIO
ARTISTS

**SECOND SATURDAY
OPEN STUDIOS**
curated by neighborhoods

MIRA MONTE
APRIL 11TH
10am - 5pm




register
for maps h

Christine Beirne
Leslie Clark
Sharla Fell
Bruce Grabin
Sooz Glazebrook
Stephanie Hubbard
Lisa Skyheart Marshall
Sandra Torres
Myra Toth


FREE

self-guided tour











*April Second Saturday Tour
Open Studios in Mira Monte neighborhood*

4/11/26 10:00 AM - 05:00PM

Free Tickets



Exhibiting artists:

John Cosby, Steven Curry, Carolyn Lord, Kim Lordier,
Jennifer Moses, Charles Muench, John Nava,
Michael Obermeyer, Jesse Powell, Ian Roberts,
Ray Roberts, Dave Santillanes, Dan Schultz,
Frank Serrano, W. Jason Situ, Alexey Steele,
Sarah Vedder, Anne Ward, Wendy Wirth.

Ojai Mystique is curated by Jennifer Moses and Dan Schultz

Sponsored in part by David and Kathy Leeds,
Willi and Stephanie Coeler, and the City of Ojai Arts Grant Program

For Ticketed Preview Reception, Thursday, April 16, 6-8 pm and more information:

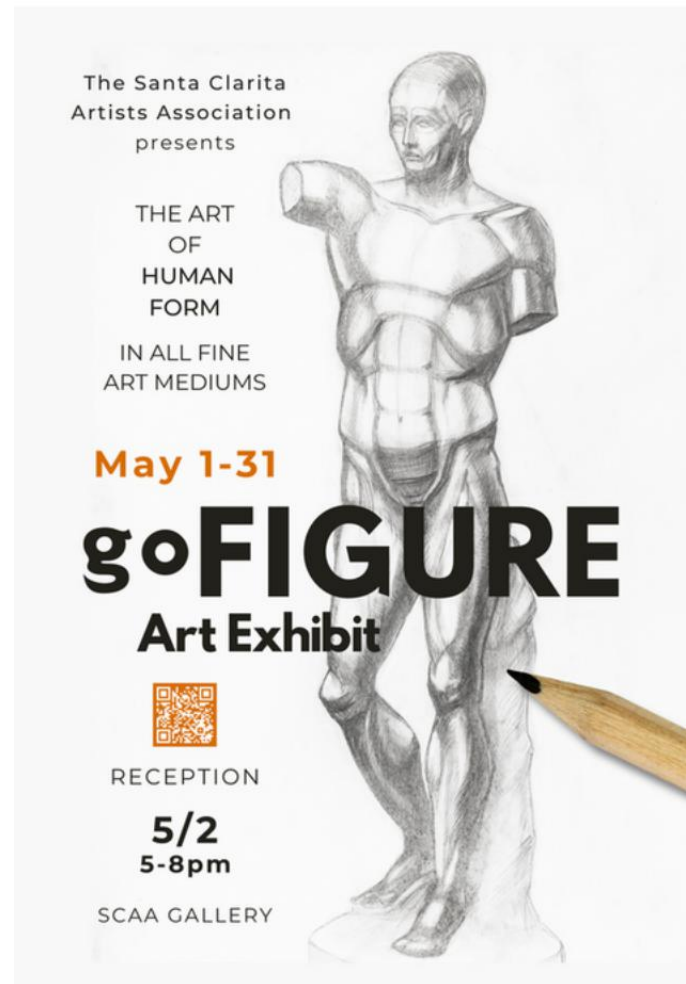
www.ojaivalleymuseum.org

Local Call to Artist



CALL TO ARTISTS
go Figure

Exhibit Dates: May 1 - May 31 (closed
Mothers' day)
Reception: Saturday, May 2, 5-8 pm
Submission Deadline: Sunday, April 12
Notification: Tuesday, April 14



For more information on these go to :
<https://www.santaclaritaartists.org/>

About Go Figure: Work for this exhibit must focus on the human body and form. While other elements may be included, the primary focus must remain on the human subject rather than secondary or complementary imagery. As this is a figurative exhibition, works should emphasize the human figure; submissions consisting solely of portraiture (the head only) are discouraged. All 2D and 3D fine art mediums are welcome; however, video and AI are not permitted. To be considered, work must not have been shown at SCAA Gallery within the last two years. Due to the theme of this exhibit, tasteful nudity is acceptable, but sexualized or pornographic works will not be considered. Decisions made by the Selection Committee are final.

UA Magazine Selected Exhibitions

Los Angeles

The Getty

1200 Getty Center Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90049

How to Be a Guerrilla Girl

Nov 18 - April 12, 2026

Beginnings: The Story of Creation in the Middle Ages

Jan 27 - April 2026

Photography and the Black Arts Movement, 1955-1985

Feb 24- Jun 14, 2026

Virtue and Vice

Mar 3 - Jun 7, 2026

Coming soon:

“Every minute is history”: Five Views of Los Angeles

Sep 1 - Jan 3 2027

Instante/revelación: Moments in Mexican Photography

Sep 1 - Jan 3, 2027

LACMA

5905 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035

Sueño Perro Exhibition on view through July 26

FÚTBOL IS LIFE Exhibition on View Through July 12

Deep Cuts: Block Printing Across Cultures

Nov. 9, 2025 - Sept. 13, 2026

The Broad

221 S. Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Featured Installation of Takashi Murakami

Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind

May 23 - October 11, 2026

Santa Clarita

Santa Clarita Art Gallery

22508 6th Street
Newhall, CA
Open Fri 5-8, Sat 11-8, Sun 11-5

Rustic Roots

Exhibition April 10- April 19th.
Artist Reception Saturday April 11 5-8 pm

SCV ART WALK

May 16th, noon - 6:00 pm.
Main street 24300, Newhall, CA

UA Magazine Selected Exhibitions

Pasadena

Norton Simon Museum

411 West Colorado Boulevard
Pasadena, CA 91105

Dear Little Friend: Impressions of Galka Scheyer

February 20, 2026 - July 20, 2026

Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara Museum of ART

1130 State Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

As if in a Dream History, Fantasy, Future

March 8, 2026 - January 3, 2027

Magical Realism: Latin American Photographers in Dialogue

Through June 14, 2026

Random-Access Memory: Internet Art

Through September 27, 2026

Sullivan Goss

An American Gallery
11 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Sarah Vedder State of Grace, 2026

February 27 - April 27, 2026

Sidney Gordin Space and Form

February 27 - April 27, 2026

