

# MECA Miniature Enthusiasts, Craftsmen & Artisans

## An Oasis for Miniaturists



### Featured Artisan Nicky Cooper

Firstly let me introduce myself, my name is Nicky Cooper and I live in Bedfordshire with my hubby, two children in their late teens and a lovely, lively border collie called Patch.

I have always had numerous creative hobbies starting with studying for a city and guilds in sugar craft when I was very young, that led to a career in cake decorating later on in life.

In the year 2000 I not only discovered polymer clay but also took on my daughter's doll house. It was a road that has led me to where I am today. For many years I sculpted dolls almost solely for the Great American Doll House Museum, then, as that project neared its end I started selling my dolls on the open market. Nearly 2000 dolls are now in private collections and other museums too, let alone countless critters. Not being the best person around babies, to me they all sound and look alien. It was many years before I would attempt sculpting them.

Three years ago I was commissioned to make a bird lady, so I set to learning to sculpt birds as well. Birds are beings that are definitely spoiled when they come to our garden, even when pennies are hard to come by they never go short! My hubby thinks they are better fed than he is but believe me that is definitely NOT the case!

I took a few birds to a show in Rugby along with my dolls, just to test the water and they just flew off the shelf. So now I can safely say I split myself in two, half of my week is spent sculpting birds, bats, rats, mice, squirrels and other small critters in both 12<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> scale and the other half is spent sculpting the Dolls.

I am an avid collector too, although space is at a premium and I passed on my collections of roomboxes and a few other houses, I have kept a few projects that I will never part with. I love the diversity of the miniature world. Your house/roombox is only limited by your imagination, something I have a lot of.

I love giving the dolls a sense of purpose and a little story. In fact that is normally where I start, I imagine the character, personality, warts and all, before I set about creating them in clay. I have never used molds nor have any molds ever been taken of my work, each doll is hand sculpted from scratch.



I love the older characters as they have faces where every wrinkle tells a story of its own; a face of a life lived. Its emotions and expression I like to put into each character to go with their stories, so even if it is a child being naughty behind a teacher's back, or a lady that can't make up her mind when shopping, or someone dreamily thinking of their memories, it all gets incorporated into the clay.

I also love designing and printing the fabrics for the dolls. It means that even their clothing is unique. It can sometimes take up to three hours alone to design the fabric, which is done digitally. I also make my own doll eyes; the process takes a long while but the final effect is just what my dolls need.

In October 2009, I decided to stop doing fairs as I have had a bad two years health-wise. Then in March when John got made redundant, I took a break until we were back on our feet again! Now I am back to making my dolls and critters again and on cloud nine. My waiting list for commissions is over six months long but for me it's a definite labor of love!

