

Miniature Masterpieces

It is no small feat that October is Dollhouse and Miniature Month. Miniatures are a multi-million-dollar industry, with trade conferences, museums dedicated to displaying fine art miniatures, collectors, and artisans. While it is obvious that people love tiny things, it is less clear why we love it when things get miniaturized.



Psychologists believe that creating miniature settings provides life-sized humans with feelings of power and control. Humans assume the role of godlike creators who create and manipulate

elaborate miniature dreamlands that fulfill all our desires. This is why children, who often lack control, so enjoy playing with dollhouses. Kids can control both the environment of the house and the social actions of the dolls themselves.

Miniatures are also especially pleasing to our senses. Vast amounts of detail are crammed into tiny surface areas. The human eye is drawn to detail, tempting our brains to process vast amounts of input. Miniatures are like candy for our sensory-hungry brains.

Dollhouses did not originate as children's toys but as pursuits for wealthy adults. The first "cabinet houses" of the 17th century were built so that the rich could show off collections of precious miniature objects. Tiny "Nuremberg kitchens," complete with hearths, brooms, and even servants, were constructed for mothers to teach their daughters how to set up and run households.

In many ways, little has changed in the world of miniatures. They are often still a hobby of the rich. The world's most expensive and elaborate dollhouse is the Astolat Dollhouse Castle, a seven-story, 29-room, miniature masterpiece valued at \$8.5 million. The nine-foot-tall house was built by famed miniaturist Elaine Diehl over 13 years. Every one of its 10,000 miniatures was handcrafted, including its working fireplaces, stained glass, gold chandeliers, and the world's smallest antique Bible.

October Birthdays

- Charles Johnson – October 4th
- Teresa Mazza – October 6th
- Joe Bustamante – October 6th
- Virginia Moyle – October 9th
- MaryAnn Pryor – October 13th
- Opal Thompson – October 14th
- Jill Pond – October 14th
- John People -October 17th

Drawing Success



In 1923, the talented cartoonist Walt Disney moved to Los Angeles, California, after his Laugh-O-Gram animation studio went bankrupt. On October 16 of that year, Walt and his brother Roy founded

the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio, the studio that would eventually become the Walt Disney Company. It would be five years before Disney created Mickey Mouse, who debuted in the cartoon short *Steamboat Willie*. Mickey would become so popular that Walt used the character in several cartoon shorts. Walt's ambitions then grew. In 1934, he decided to produce a feature-length cartoon. The film employed over 300 animators, artists, and assistants and went 400% over budget. Some called it "Disney's Folly," but we now know it as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. This smash-hit would make the Walt Disney Company the most successful media company in the world.

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Clocking In to October

October is Clock Month, a month when time is of the essence. Time. Why does it seem as if there is never enough of it? Soon, we will be turning the clocks back and returning to standard time just to steal a little bit of daylight. But what if we could really turn back the clock and travel through time? Hollywood has given us several movies about time travel and the wondrous machines that blip us forward and back through the eons. Not just Hollywood writers, but scientists, too, have been studying time travel. They have determined that yes, in fact, time travel is theoretically, if not realistically, possible.

Physicist Pascal Koiran has postulated that time travel could be facilitated through wormholes. A wormhole, also known as an Einstein-Rosen Bridge, acts as a tunnel between two distant points in space. Spacecraft could theoretically enter one end and be transported to a distant part of the universe, defying the rules of both space and time. Unfortunately, not a single wormhole has been discovered yet.

Another physicist, Amos Ori, has gone as far as to propose the design of a time machine. He proposed theoretically manipulating gravitational fields in order to curve the linear structure of spacetime. Essentially, the future bends backward, allowing visitors from the future to visit the moment that the curvature was created. Again, several significant problems exist with this model, the first one being that there is no known way to use gravity to bend spacetime.

Despite these nearly impossible challenges, physicists and astronomers continue to explore the nature of time and how to manipulate and control it. Scientific luminaries like Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking have attempted to answer questions about time and space. While we wait for the invention of a time machine, we can enjoy fanciful movies featuring time machines like *Back to the Future*, which incidentally enjoys its own holiday on October 21.