



SPRING



SUMMER



AUTUMN



WINTER

# DOLLS HOUSE

## Projects

SPECIAL EDITION 2015



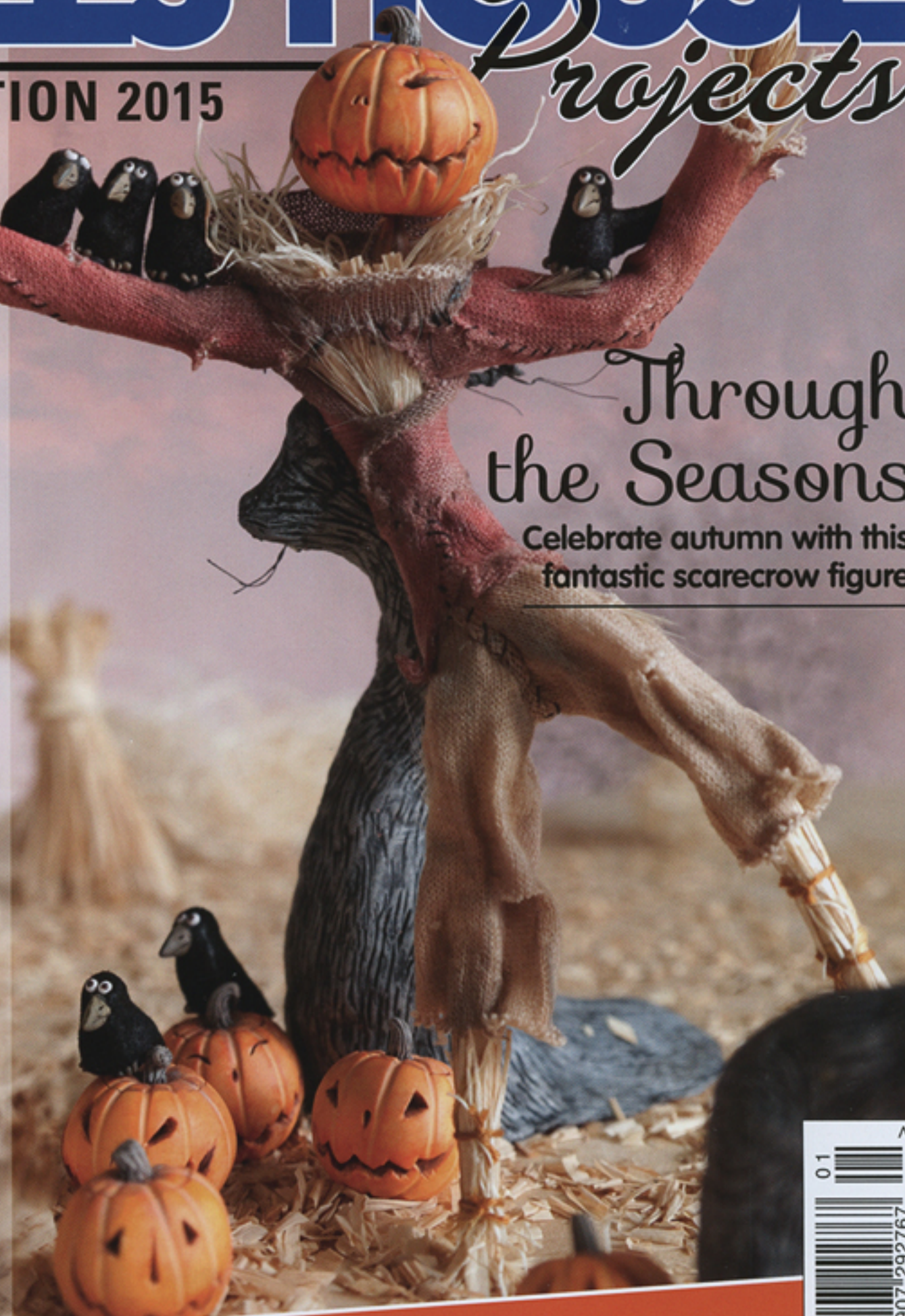
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WARNERS

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Lillian Alberti helps us celebrate spring with this literary inspired shadow box...

# The Secret Garden

The Secret Garden has always been one of my favourite stories. This wonderful novel written by Frances Hodgson Burnett, tells the tale of orphaned Mary Lennox, sent to live in Yorkshire with her uncle in his gloomy manor. While there, Mary not only discovers a reclusive cousin and a friendly garden hand, but together, along with a determined little robin, they unearth a magical hidden garden.

I choose not to highlight any particular scene in the book but just to capture Mary, along with Colin and Dickon, enjoying the splendour of the garden and their woodland friends. I wasn't sure exactly how I wanted to depict the scene so I thought layering the landscaping would be a good start. I kept the areas outside the walled garden somewhat sparse and bare as all the lushness and life takes place magically within the garden walls.

*Following the three basic rules: scale, perspective, and depth, I quickly got started on my new shadow box project:*

**Scale:** While the inside of the shadow box measures 5" x 7" (127mm x 178mm) I sculpted Mary at a mere 2" (50mm) I felt that this scale would emphasise the fact that the secret garden was much larger to her: it has brought her and her newfound friends much love, joy and freedom!

**Perspective:** By placing Mary, her furry friends and the tree in the foreground, I tried to draw the viewer's eye to what lies

beyond them. In the far distance: a glimpse of the manor house can be seen as well as the Yorkshire country side. Just behind Mary, Colin and Dickon are seen exploring the secret garden's fauna and flora.

**Third, and finally depth:** The scene extends further by keeping the landscape flowing on all the connecting interior walls of the shadow box, making sure that the brick wall merges at all points, and 'blurring' all the lines of demarcation.



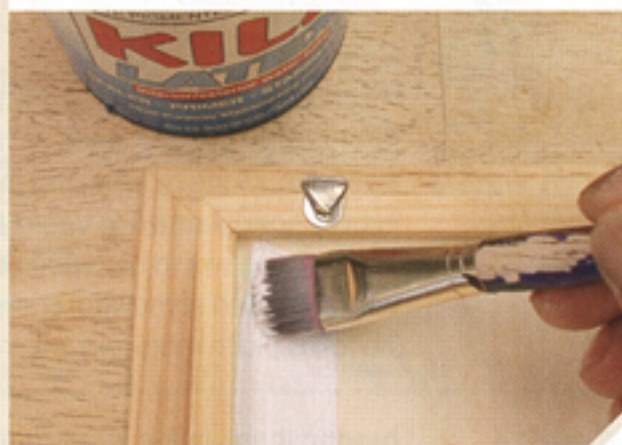
## Painting the scene

### You will need:

- 🏠 8" x 10" (203mm x 254mm) wood shadow box
  - 🏠 Wood primer
  - 🏠 Alene's craft glue or similar product
  - 🏠 Creative Paper clay or paper clay of choice
  - 🏠 22 gauge uncoated floral wire
  - 🏠 Ashland moss or similar product
  - 🏠 Red felt
  - 🏠 Small remnants of printed fabric for dress
  - 🏠 Assorted paint brushes
  - 🏠 Faux hair
- Assorted craft paints including:**
- 🏠 2-3 shades of green
  - 🏠 Brown
  - 🏠 Light blue
  - 🏠 White
  - 🏠 Orange
  - 🏠 Yellow
  - 🏠 Red
  - 🏠 Flesh colour

### Step 1

I always recommend coating the inside of the box with primer, making sure to seal all crevices. A second coat is necessary if the wood is heavily striated.



### Step 2

I painted the 'sky' with two coats of the light blue and added clouds using a quick dabbing motion.



### Step 3

I laid down my basic landscape theme of sloping hills and applied two coats of each shade of green.



### Step 4

I added the sun and painted a path blended into the green to avoid any obvious lines of demarcation.

I then added a few smaller, sparse trees receding into the background to emphasise the dreariness of the world outside the garden walls.



### Step 5

I painted a brick wall highlighting only a few 'bricks' to show some interesting contrast, then created an arch over the entrance and layered a few creeping vines.



### Step 6

After painting the garden gate, I painted trees in the background and the manor house peeking out from above the trees on the left. Next, using my accent colours, I added small shrubs and flowers as desired.

With a fine tipped brush and using a quick brushstroke action, I painted several 'clumps' of grass scattered about the landscape and repeated the same using a second choice of green.

Finally, I lightly applied a shading effect with watered down black paint to all the elements.



### Step 7

Using the wire, I crafted a simple tree armature with several limbs and wrapped it with aluminium foil.



### Step 8

Next came layering the aluminium foil with paper clay making sure to spread an even, thin layer over each of the limbs. Allow appropriate time to dry between layers.



### Step 9

The tree, now thoroughly dry, is painted with contrast and subtle shading.



## The characters

### Step 1

For Mary Lennox, I created a small and simple wire armature and covered it with Creative Paper making sure to leave the leg and arm wires exposed.

I coated the wire limbs with glue and later paper clay to offer a smooth surface that will eventually be painted.



### Step 2

Using small remnant fabrics, I selected a check for her dress and I fashioned a tiny beret for her head.

I also used a small piece of red imitation hair for her wig.

And, though the face was very tiny, the facial details were carefully painted.



### Step 3

After cutting the red check into smaller workable strips, I fashioned a tiny dress by simply gluing the pieces directly onto the clay body.

Likewise, the sleeves were glued right onto the upper section of the wire arms.

The arms and legs were painted a flesh colour and, finally, the socks and shoes were painted.



### Step 4

I went on to create a tiny and rudimentary wire armature for the fawn and covered it with Creative Paper, again, making sure to leave the leg wires exposed, covering them with glue and later painted them.



The finished fawn.



Painting the scene

Step 5

I repeated the same for the rabbit.



The finished rabbit.

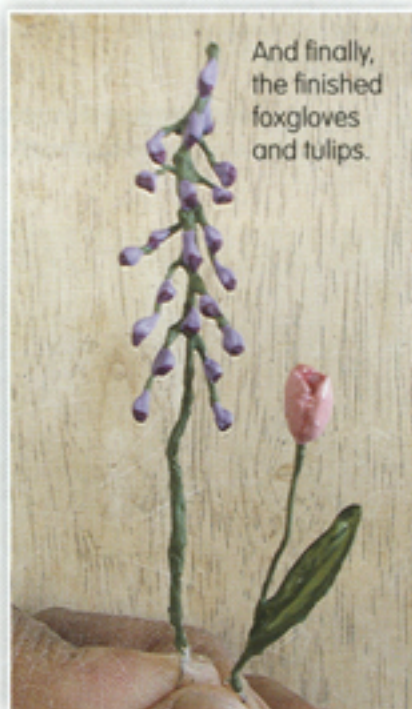


Step 6

And again for the foxgloves and tulips.



And finally, the finished foxgloves and tulips.



To finish



I finish painting the final details... Colin and Dickon.



I then place my cast of characters in their places; Mary, the tree and the rest.



My Secret Garden Shadow Box project is completed!

Information

Lillian Alberti lives in the United States where she creates full scale OOAK art dolls and shadow boxes. She is a member of ODACA (Original Doll Artists Council of America) and AMA (Association of Miniature Artists (non-typical format)). You can see more of her work on her website: [www.a-lil-whimsy.com](http://www.a-lil-whimsy.com) and read about her doll making process at her blog: <http://cottagehill.wordpress.com/>



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