

Miniature Photography Creator Checklist



Hi! I'm Erin. For most of my photography career, my work centered around travel and the outdoors. I began creating and photographing miniature worlds in the Spring of 2020, and haven't stopped since!

Miniatures are a wonderful way to introduce more play and a new creative practice into your life. I'm not the first person to photograph miniatures, and I won't be the last – I encourage you to try it, too.

This checklist is for anyone who would like to try to put their own spin on miniature photography. You do not have to use the same gear I do– start with what you've got. Use the information here as a starting point, then go forth and put your own creative spin on it.

CAMERA GEAR

MY GEAR (links on page 3)

- Sony a7RIV
- Sony 90mm f/2.8 G Master macro lens
- Benro TMA38CL Mach3 Carbon Fiber Tripod

TRY

- A macro lens for the camera you already have - renting is a great option if you're not ready to purchase one yet
- Looking at the camera modes available on your phone (there may be a macro mode available)
- Using a zoom mode on your phone's camera (try 2x to start) and experimenting with the angle. This can create a macro look.
- Any suitable tripod for your phone or camera (check weight requirements)

MINIATURE FIGURES

FIGURES I USE (links to shops on page 3)

- Brands: Preiser, Woodland Scenics, Noch, Busch
- HO or N (smallest) scale
- Purchased at hobby shops, local to you or online. Ask for/search for "model train figures".

TRY

- Toys or figurines you already have access to - lego, ceramics, etc.
- Making your own paper/cardboard cutouts
- Chess pieces, matchsticks, or using Photoshop or other software to add yourself into the images

SURROUNDINGS

MY PROCESS

My thought process usually starts in one of these two ways:

- I see an item in my house or the grocery store, and ask myself what it could turn into
- I pick the type of environment I want to create based on somewhere I have been or a memory, and brainstorm what items could create the scene

TRY

- Writing down the type of adventure scene you would like to create. Journal, sketch, imagine. Let the ideas flow and see what emerges in the process.
- Take a tour of your own home and pick a few objects to study. Task yourself to re-imagine these objects: what could they be?

LIGHT

MY PROCESS

For most of my images, I use natural light. For night-time scenes, I use 2-3 Lume Cube Panel Pros, and change the colors accordingly.

TRY

- Positioning your scene next to a window with natural light
- Using a table lamp with a lampshade as a sun or sunset/sunrise
- Using a ring light for additional light

Helpful links

WHERE TO BUY MINI FIGURES

Take a look at some of these shops, or easily run a search on "model train figures," or "model train figure horses/birds/hikers/whatever you're looking for".

- [PreiserUSA.com](https://www.preiserusa.com)
- [MegaHobby.com](https://www.mega-hobby.com)
- [Walthers.com](https://www.walthers.com)
- [HobbyLinc.com](https://www.hobbylinc.com)
- [Shop.Noche.com](https://www.shopnoch.com)
- [WoodlandScenics.com](https://www.woodlandscenics.com)
- [MicroMacroMundo.com](https://www.micro-macro-mundo.com)
- [eBay](https://www.ebay.com) - search your specifics
- [Etsy](https://www.etsy.com) - search your specifics

CAMERA GEAR

My gear:

Sony a7RIV Camera Body: <https://bhpho.to/3u3k22k>

Sony 90mm f/2.8 Macro Lens: <https://bhpho.to/3kFclZ0>

Benro Series 3 Mach 3 Carbon Fiber Tripod: <https://bhpho.to/3G5vQDx> (does not come with ball head)

Other recommended gear, less expensive:

Sony a7 IV Camera Body: <https://bhpho.to/3k7srf0>

Sony a7 III Camera Body: <https://bhpho.to/3rTRExF>

Sigma 70mm f/2.8 DG Macro Art Lens for Sony E: <https://bhpho.to/3vfJyBN>

Venus Optics Laowa 100mm f/2.8 2X Ultra Macro APO Lens for Sony E:

<https://bhpho.to/3Lf0n53>

Great for beginners:

Sony a6000 Mirrorless Camera with 16-50mm and 55-210mm Lenses:

<https://bhpho.to/3OzMXmu>

FYI! Some of these are affiliate links. This means that if you purchase something from one of these links, I may receive a small commission at no cost to you.

Most importantly:

→ BE AVAILABLE FOR POSSIBILITY. ←

Start out with whatever initial ideas you have in mind, and be open to how things change throughout your shoot.

Remember that the creative process is rarely predictable. I often need to remind myself to not judge the process, and to remember that much of art is problem solving. There are usually moments of discomfort during one of my shoots– maybe I don't like what I have made, or it doesn't look the way I thought it would. I find that by continuing to experiment and working with my materials, I often discover a new way to see things. That said, I also still create things I don't like, and that's OK!

Play with moving your figures and the surroundings. Photograph the scene from different angles. Create different foregrounds & backgrounds and move them. See how these changes effect the composition as a whole.

With "regular" landscape and travel photography, you cannot usually change the details of the surroundings... you have to photograph what is there already. With miniature photography, you have a LOT of control! Let this be a place where your creativity can emerge and lead.

Have fun and enjoy the process. Hope this helps you get started.

Erin

