Gabriele Layne Celebrates Mardi Gras

by Pam North

Who doesn't love Mardi Gras, and what better theme could there be for a miniatures project? Gabriele Layne embraced just such a challenge, whisking up a concoction of wispy feathers, shiny beads, glittery rhinestones, and bright metallic colors to showcase an assemblage of items that perfectly celebrate the spirit of this iconic fete. Mardi Gras, also known as Fat Tuesday or Shrove Tuesday, begins on or after the Christian feast of the Epiphany (Three Kings Day), and culminates on the day before Ash Wednesday. It is an annual carnival celebration in New Orleans, Louisiana, and is a season of parades, masquerade balls, king cake parties, and general revelry.

Asked what inspired her to create this charming composition that focuses on this exciting celebration, Layne explained, “Mardi Gras always has held a fascination for me because of the beautiful jewel colors used in the costumes and masks. I was intrigued to make a vignette to reflect this.”

Layne outlined all the steps she went through to create her project. “The five-level shelf unit was spray-painted matte gold, and then purple trim, which I found in the sewing section of a fabric store, was added to the side framework. Bead necklaces, made from tiny seed beads, were applied to hang along the left and right front edges. These were strung on thin wire so they could be draped nicely. Tiny purple rhinestones added some twinkle. The fronts of the top and bottom shelves were covered with masks that were adorned with tiny pieces of feathers. More masks were placed on the shelves. The traditional rich colors of gold, purple, green, and yellow, with accents of pink, were used to depict the Mardi Gras theme. The top shelf features a fan made from a bead-tipped peacock feather earring, which had the perfect colors. A gold vase, made from findings, holds gilded flowers, and beside it is a green jar with a fleur-de-lis top, and a small jester forms the top of another jar. The clown singing to the moon is a brooch from my jewelry box; I painted the background dark blue to depict the sky, so the moon and the clown would stand out. It was a perfect alternate use for the brooch, since I did not plan on wearing it anytime in the future. The shelf underneath holds another vase made of findings, some trinket boxes, a crown, a tiara, and there's also a jester which had been part of a necklace that I cut apart, and then painted the face. Another jester in purple is on the next level, alongside cookies, candies, and a king cake. Paper plates with Mardi Gras masks decor lean against the back wall. More masks, tiaras, and fancy hats are decorated on all of the shelves in the vignette, and some candy jars were placed on the bottom shelf.”  
Layne's creation is a perfect type of representation that a miniatures collector might want to make as a memento of a trip to New Orleans.