## Iconic Gym is a Knockout - Inmaculada Burgos Ruano

By Pam North

Fans of the popular movie series, *Rocky*, can almost relive the experience of the boxing world in Inmaculada Burgos Ruano's painstaking recreation of Rocky's gym - the scene is startlingly realistic. Even in Segovia, Spain, where Ruano resides, *Rocky* is iconic. “The idea of making Rocky's movie gym was not mine; I had never even imagined doing such a thing,” Ruano explained. “My son, Guillermo, saw the first *Rocky* movie on television; he liked it so much that he asked me if I could recreate the gym from the movie. My answer was a resounding 'no', because it seemed very difficult. When he later repeated his request, I reconsidered and decided to try. It was impossible to make an exact replica of the gym, as it was very large, had two rings, toilets, offices, and areas that could not be seen well. There was another difficulty; there were not many photos, so I had to view the scenes of the film again and again, stopping the image to see the details. It was worth the effort, however, as my son is delighted with the scene, and that's what matters.”
The scene measures 62 centimeters wide, 31 centimeters high, and 30 centimeters deep. The angled façade has double doors, with panels of mosquito net in a dark color, and she added acetate glass, two wire handles, and pieces of tin at the bottom. The exterior has a faux brick appearance.
The interior is decorated using a dark green base paint for the gym's lower walls, sanded to look scuffed, and white paint for the upper walls. Strips were cut into pieces for the floor, and before painting them, Ruano scratched, sanded, and gouged out small pieces with the cutter to suggest wear and age. Watered-down brown paint was applied, then partially wiped from the surface with a cloth, and some areas re-sanded. The ceiling was formed with pieces of slats, each a centimeter wide, painted beige and made to appear dirty. A dark green partition divides the gym from the locker area. The walls have various moldings: one in the form of an arch is made of wood; the ones on the front and the top are thick cardboard; those on the locker room side of the partition wall are of slats, painted beige over the green base and sanded to look very worn. The lockers were made with thick cardboard. Most of the locker doors were glued on, but one locker was made open, showing a robe and trunks like Rocky wore in one of his fights. Tiny padlocks and louvers complete the realism of the lockers.
The ring in the gym was more complicated to make. The base is a box made of wood, with the corners cut at an angle to allow insertion of the battens, and the ring surface covered in canvas. The table is made of wood, the steps are of varied slats, and the thick cardboard bench is painted the same worn green color.
The teeth protector on the table was made with air-dried paste, as were the gloves and the heavy ball, which also are leather-coated. The head and waist protectors are cardboard, lined with leather. A miniature hat, just like the one Rocky wore in the film, hangs on one corner of the boxing ring. She explained its details: “The hat was designed in cardboard, with a thin velvet fabric glued inside, and, authentic to the film, also a tiny piece of paper with the password number of the box office. The hanging punching bags are leather glued to cardboard, with filling inside. The poster of Rocky on the gym's wall is a montage her sister made with Rocky's body and her son's face. “This scene was made with so much affection for my son, a great admirer of both the movie character of Rocky, and the actor, Sylvester Stallone, who played him,” Ruano remarked.
Ruano became interested in miniatures 15 years ago, when she started to build a house she had purchased. She finds inspiration from many sources: magazines, television, the Internet, and everyday life. She is passionate about miniatures. “They are not monotonous, I like the variety of ideas and techniques that can be explored. I like to do everything myself, even if I make mistakes.” She is self-taught, and said her most valuable tools are scissors and the cutter. She cited her most difficult challenge in working in miniatures is getting the scale right. “I love making miniature scenes, either for myself or to sell at some shows once in a while.”
She expressed enthusiasm for the future of miniatures. “I think it is increasing both the number of people who make miniatures, and the number of people who buy and collect them. Since discovering the world of miniatures, my life revolves around them; I have found a way to capture my artistic talents, and enjoy the creation process as I had never imagined.”