



Cristina Caballero

No doll is too small,
no figure too tall
for this Spanish artist

Cristina beside her mixed-media figure *Miaow Antoinette in Red*.

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lephantine to elfin, size doesn't matter to doll artist Cristina Caballero. She willingly undertakes any scale in her work.

The Spanish-born artist specializes in one-of-a-kind creations using a variety of techniques and materials—from clay to fabric, wood to plastic, fiberglass to metal.

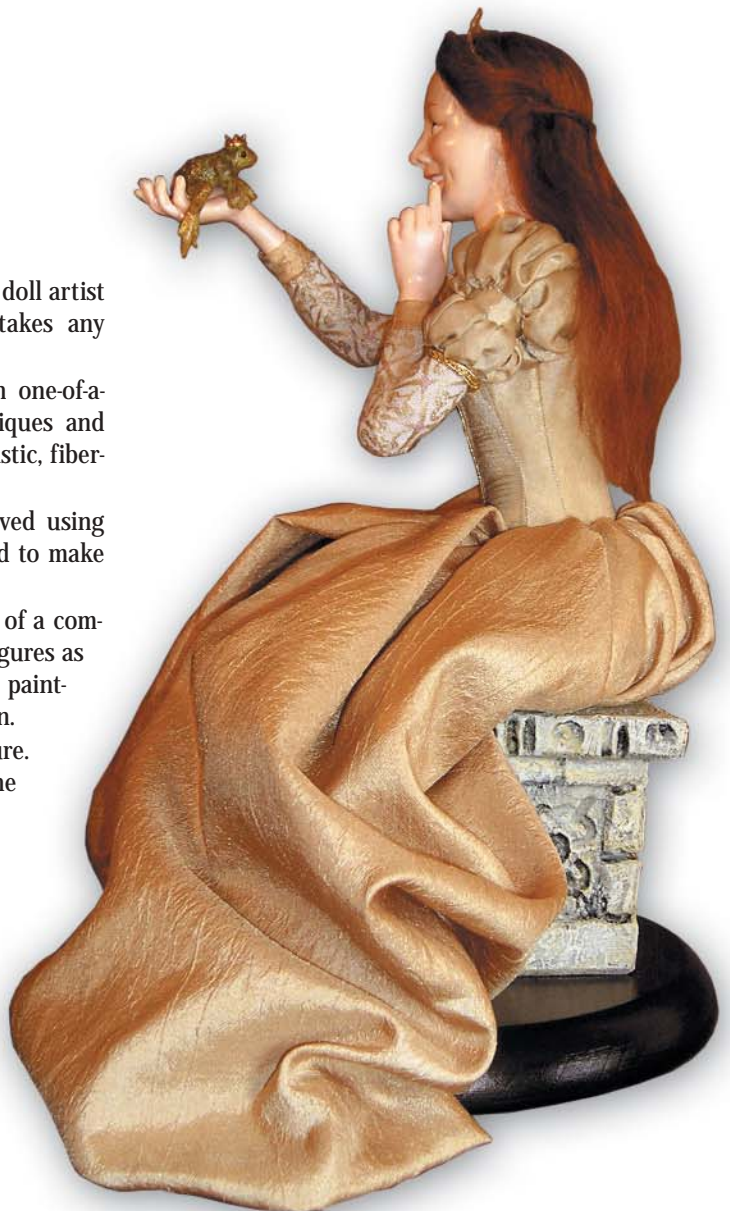
Some figures are direct work, while others are achieved using parts cast from her own molds and afterward manipulated to make them each a one-of-a-kind.

Figures such as her *Carnival* collection are the result of a complex process. The series, which depicts life-size historical figures as animals in period costume, required a balance of sculpting, painting and mold-making techniques as well as costume design.

Miaow Antoinette in Red is a mixed-media, 68-inch figure. Her *King Henry VIII*, a bulldogish interpretation of the monarch, is 70 inches tall.

But when it comes to impressive or imposing scale, Cristina's life-size elephant created for a float in the Reyes Magos Parade in Madrid takes top honors at 9 feet in height. The piece was sculpted in polystyrene (a.k.a. Styrofoam).

Love at First Sight (The Frog Prince) was donated to the IDEX charity auction in Orlando, Fla., benefiting children with AIDS. The smitten princess sits on a bench made of hydrocal-coated Styrofoam. The piece is 14 inches tall.



Artist profile

However, Cristina is not married to the massive. She also works in smaller formats. Her *Storyteller* and *Elf with a Bird* cloth characters are just 16 and 14 inches tall.

“Those years [in the United States] gave me more perspective as an artist ...”

— Cristina Caballero

According to Cristina, she felt an attraction for art from an early age. While other kids played with toys, she attended painting classes or made an art project in her room.

Later, she studied fine arts at the University of Madrid, graduating from its sculpture and painting programs.

A few months after receiving her diploma, she went to work for a renowned Spanish scenic studio. There, the variety of techniques and materials opened a new world of creative possibilities for the young artist.

She advanced through the ranks to manage the art department where she met Diego Cid, a young artist who soon became her life partner.



artist profile

Storm includes an interior hand-painted set depicting a vessel confronting an ocean storm. The 19-inch piece incorporates Super Sculpey, papier maché and fabric.

Cristina and her husband moved to the United States years later and ran their own scenic studio for more than a decade, working for the entertainment industry under the name Creators of Legend. The client list included Nickelodeon, Warner Bros., DC Comics, NBC, Live Broadway and Discovery Channel.

“Working for these major companies is very demanding,” says Cristina. “You have to be quick, resourceful and pay a lot of attention to detail. You are always facing new challenges, so you must have the will to learn new techniques with each project and keep your artistic skills updated.”



Mostly Free is a Super Sculpey sculpt standing 14 inches tall.

One day, in search of inspiration, Cristina came across art dolls. Looking at other artists' work and techniques, she knew it was going to be a terrific new means of expression for her.

"Drawing from my experience as a commercial artist, there were two things in doll making that immediately caught my attention," she says.

"First, the extremely friendly environment in which doll artists share and exchange experiences and information, as opposed to the competitive mentality of other creative professionals. Second, the possibility of getting almost instant gratification with your work, something almost impossible to obtain in the creation of the-
atrical sets and theme projects

Lady Bird is one of Cristina's more recent works. The doll is 16 inches tall, made of polymer clay and has a waxed papier maché costume with transferred images.



Elf with a Bird, is one of Cristina's earlier cloth dolls. The piece is 14 inches tall.

that usually take many months of planning and fabrication."

Cristina recently moved back to Spain, but appreciates her time in the United States.

"Those years gave me more perspective as an artist and the opportunity to meet some unique people that changed my life forever," she says.

Cristina will present a new collection of figures at the January IDEX Show in Orlando, Fla. →

To learn more about Cristina's work, visit her website at www.cristina-ardoll.com.



Cristina Caballero at work on a life-size elephant figure that was used on a parade float.