

Staring into Space –

6. Make Your Own Miniature World:

a Waterstones Children's Laureate creative resource
 by Josey Scullard, in consultation with Lauren Child and
 inspired by *The Princess and The Pea* by Lauren Child,
 with photography by Polly Borland (Puffin).



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“The Princess and the Pea is my retelling of a well known fairytale with photography by Polly Borland. Fairytales inhabit peculiar worlds filled with witches, bad fairies, fairy godmothers, trolls and enchanted spinning wheels. The strangeness is exaggerated by the very straightforward way these tales are usually narrated. For example, we might be told that the way to determine whether a princess is a “real” princess is by placing a pea beneath 12 feather mattresses, as if this is a completely normal thing to do.

I wanted to reflect this oddness by making my illustrations look slightly odd. I did this by putting my drawn characters into a three dimensional setting.

The rooms are miniature, created from cardboard cut into sections and painted so the walls appear to be panelled and the floors appear to be wood or tile. Miniature furniture and objects furnish the rooms. The effect is almost like a dolls’ house but the figures are obviously illustrated and, but for a little folding of their paper clothes, pretty much flat.

For the outdoor scenes I used twigs as branches, a tree stump became a house, and moss, gravel and leaves are used to create the forest. I purposely kept the leaves large because I want to keep reminding you that this world is peculiar, the scale is strange, not in keeping with the characters. Polly’s lighting of the scenes and capturing on film lends this world another degree of oddness, making it seem somehow alive, magical and slightly unsettling.”



Activity by Josey Scullard: Make Your Own Miniature World!

Have you ever looked at something through a magnifying glass or microscope? Everything looks so different up close, it's like entering another world. In *The Princess and the Pea*, Lauren has used things from the normal sized world, such as fluffy dried grasses as

Princess Harvonnia's duster. And the 'real' princess's house, if you look closely, is made from an old gnarly piece of tree branch. We have probably all daydreamed about a world in miniature – and now you are going to make your own!

What you need:

Biscuit tin or plastic box or large glass jar
(one per child)



Bag of fine gravel
(one bag per class of 30 children)

Small bag of compost
(one bag per class of 30 children)

Box of moss
(this costs around £6 in a garden centre)
and any found moss
(one box per class of 30 children)

Cocktail sticks
(two boxes per class)

Air drying clay or plasticine
(one bag per class of 30 children)

Thin gardening or florist's wire
(one roll per class)

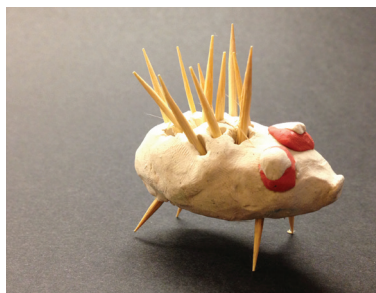
Pieces of twig, driftwood, shells, conkers and natural things

Small stones (bucket full)

Tiny plants, such as succulents
(ideally one or two per child)



Paper, card, scissors, glue and pens if you want to draw anything to add to your scene



Steps to create:

1. This project will help you make your own miniature world with the natural things around you; all you need to do is think 'small scale'. You have to re-think the things in your normal sized world and think tiny; what would work and what would just be too huge?

2. First line the bottom of your container with a layer of gravel about 5cm deep. Next add compost, making sure there is room to add your objects!

3. You can create your landscape by planting the mosses. You may want to make a gravel path or make stepping stones. Gently plant your plants into the soil, the ground doesn't have to be even, there could be a hill or mound.





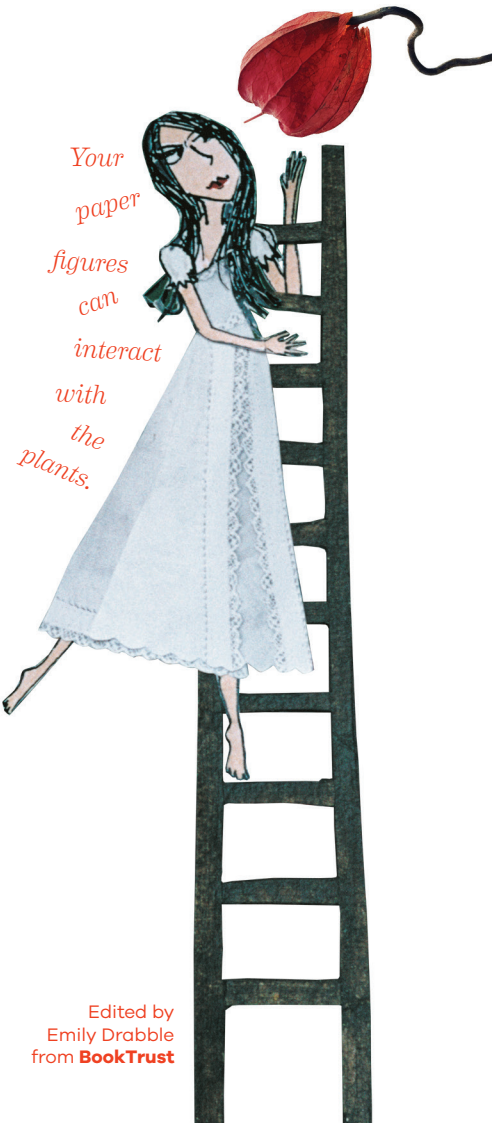
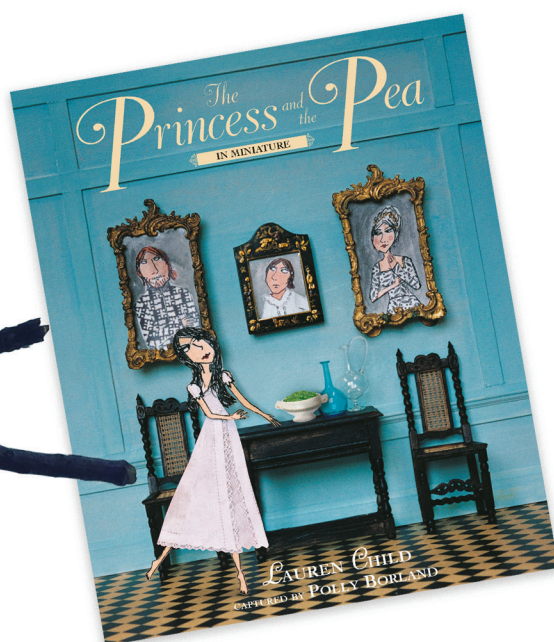
Back the
paper figures
with card.

4. Once you are happy with your mini landscape, you can add stuff to make your world! You may want to add a few sticks for a fence or shelter. Or take any dried natural material, for example twigs, conker shells, pinecones or seashells for scenery. These can easily be bound together with thin wire to make more complex shapes and pushed into the moss with cocktail sticks.

5. People and animals can also inhabit this landscape. You can make them out of clay or plasticine or natural objects you have collected. You could even use tiny dolls or figures you may have.

6. You may want to add figures in the same way Lauren Child does in *The Princess and the Pea* by photocopying them (and shrinking them down) or drawing them. Then roughly cut the figure out, stick onto card, cut around it as accurately as you can and make a little tab (an extra piece of card glued to the back at the bottom of your image with 1cm of card sticking out so you can bend it back and let the figure stand). Laminating your figures will make them waterproof!

7. You now have a miniature world that you can play with. Make new characters to go in it and change the objects if you wish. All you need to do is water it now and then and it should last for ages, or even forever!



Download all the creative resources plus find more information and images www.childrenslaureate.org.uk/staringintospace.

See Lauren's website www.staringintospace.me for more creative inspiration

The Princess and The Pea
by Lauren Child
and Polly Borland
(Puffin).

*Miniature worlds by
Josey Scullard and the
children at Brockwell Park
Community Greenhouse
in London.*