

**LET'S EXPLORE:
The Miniature Worlds of Bruce Metcalf**



**Palo Alto Art Center
A Project LOOK! Family Guide**

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All jewelry designs © Bruce Metcalf

Title page: *Deliverance from a Gilded Cage*, 1994

Pins: Sterling silver, brass, 14k gold, Micarta, 3" x 1¼", Stage: Painted wood, 8½" x 7¾" x 1¼", Collection of Nan Schaffer

Back Cover: *Visionary*, (detail)1995

Pin: Sterling silver, copper, brass, wood, paint, Plexiglas, 3¼" x 2½", Stage: Painted wood, brass, silver, drawing on paper, 7" x 4" x 2¼", Collection of Susan Beech

LET'S EXPLORE:
The Miniature Worlds of Bruce Metcalf



PALO ALTO ART CENTER

A Project LOOK! Family Guide in conjunction with the exhibition
The Miniature Worlds of Bruce Metcalf

September 28 – December 21, 2008

LET'S EXPLORE: Words from Metcalf's Worlds!

Brooch: An ornament held by a pin and worn at or near the neck.

Character: A person in a book, play or movie.

Contemporary: Something that is happening now in the present; contemporary art is artwork made in recent years.

Exaggeration: To enlarge beyond the means of truth.

Exhibition: A show of artworks.

Expression: A look on someone's face that shows how the person may be feeling.

Figure: A representation of a human being in a picture or sculpture.

Jewelry: Objects worn on the body, including bracelets and pins. Metal jewelry in silver and gold is often set with gems.

Miniature: A small copy of something big.

Scale: A ratio representing the size of an illustration or reproduction, especially a map or a model, in relation to the object it represents.

Scene: A short section of a play or movie.

Theater: A place where plays and movies are shown.

*These vocabulary words are in **bold** the first time they appear in the guide.*

WORD SEARCH

Brooch	F	G	N	O	I	S	S	E	R	P	X	E	E
Character	A	O	H	J	R	X	R	G	E	F	P	H	X
Contemporary	Y	R	A	R	O	P	M	E	T	N	O	C	H
Exaggeration	C	H	A	R	A	C	T	E	R	F	Z	C	I
Exhibition	E	X	A	G	G	E	R	A	T	I	O	N	B
Expression	E	R	U	T	A	I	N	I	M	O	S	T	I
Figure	T	Y	R	J	E	W	E	L	R	Y	C	R	T
Jewelry	F	I	G	U	R	E	K	B	Q	P	A	Z	I
Miniature	L	B	B	R	N	Q	D	M	F	I	L	B	O
Scale	R	E	T	A	E	H	T	U	H	H	E	W	N
Theater	R	E	T	A	E	H	T	U	H	H	E	W	N

Welcome to LET'S EXPLORE: The Miniature Worlds of Bruce Metcalf!

About the Exhibition

In the exhibition *The Miniature Worlds of Bruce Metcalf* cartoon-like characters, with big brains or plant heads, take the stage. You'll find these characters in different buildings and toy theatres. While they look like sculptures in an art exhibition, they are also pieces of jewelry. Imagine if you wore one. **What do you think people would say as they pass by?**

With the help of this Family Guide you will **LOOK** at artwork, **DISCUSS** what you see, and **CREATE** new artwork!

You will see these pictures throughout the guide and they will tell you what to do.



LOOK at the artwork.



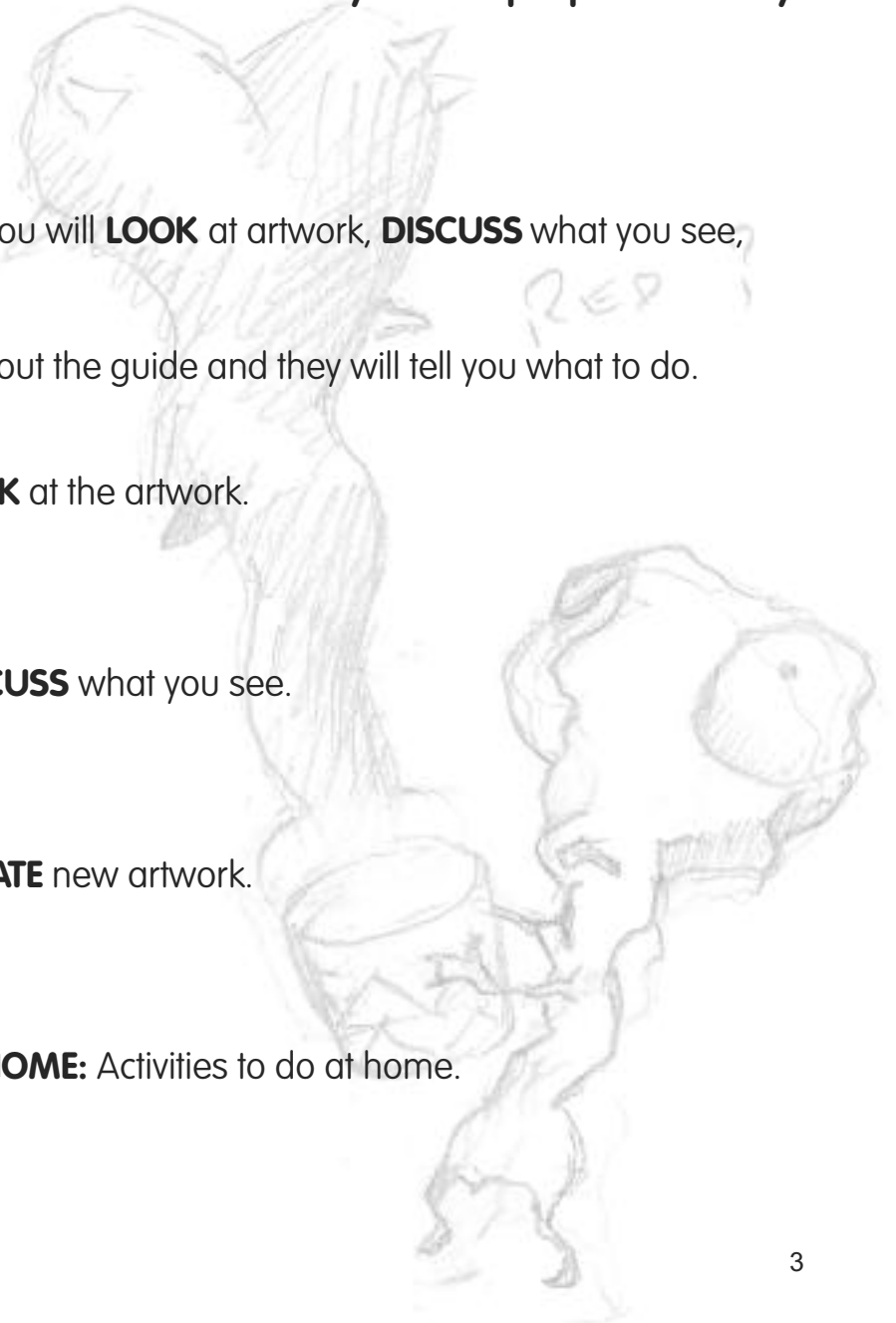
DISCUSS what you see.



CREATE new artwork.



AT HOME: Activities to do at home.



LET'S EXPLORE: Miniatures!



HO scale Train Layout, 2008, Mixed media, 20 x 66 1/2 x 36"



Find the model train layout in the **exhibition**.



Where do you think the train has stopped?

What time of year is it?

What do you think is happening at this station?

Make up a story and share it with your family members.

This train layout is a **miniature** world—a smaller version of the actual train and station. We can imagine stories happening here. The artist, Bruce Metcalf, loves to create miniatures. As a kid, he made miniature airplanes and other models.



Write a story that takes place at this imaginary train station.

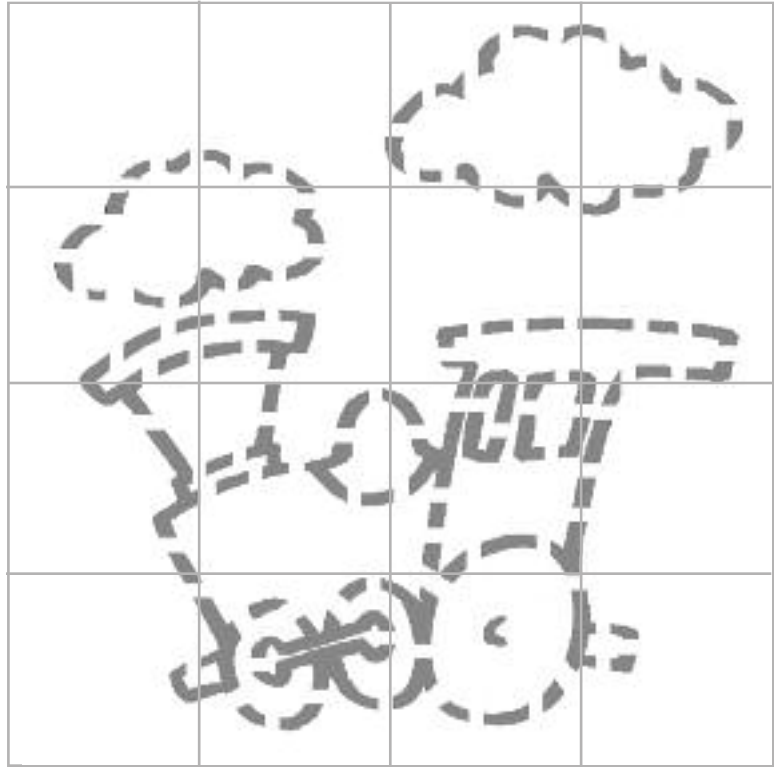


How do we make big objects into miniatures?

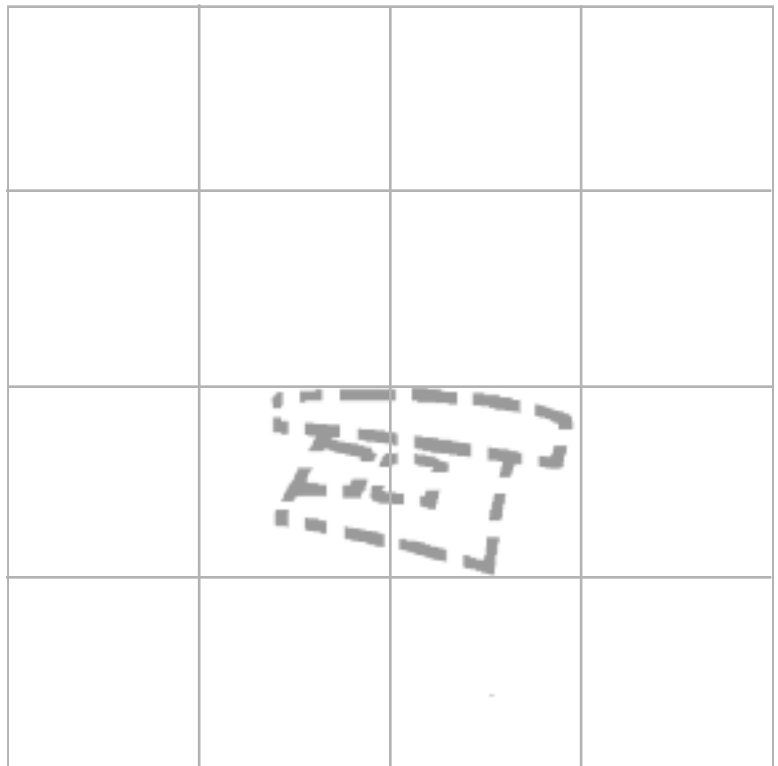
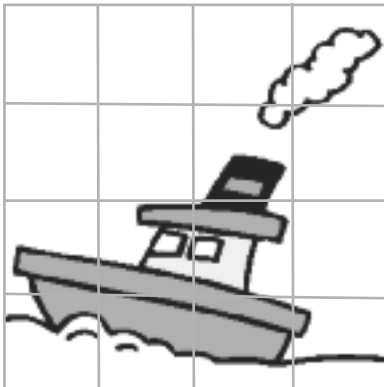
Discover one way to change the **scale**.

Take a look at these pictures of a train below.

The train on the left is half the size of the train on the right.



Now you try!
Draw the boat.



LET'S EXPLORE: Toy Theater!



Find the case in the exhibition that contains the work, *Deliverance from a Gilded Cage*.

When these **brooches** are not being worn as art **jewelry**, they rest in a small **theater**-like building. Metcalf's buildings look like toy theaters. The back drops, stage, and **characters** are miniature.



Do you like to make up plays? Have you been to a theater? What was it like?



Take a good look at *Deliverance from a Gilded Cage*. Imagine this is a **scene** from a play. **What do you think is happening in this scene?** Write about it below. Use extra paper if you need to.



Deliverance from a Gilded Cage, 1994
Pins: Sterling silver, brass, 14k gold, Micarta, 3" x 1 1/4"
Stage: Painted wood, 8 1/2" x 7 3/4" x 1 1/4"
Collection of Nan Schaffer

Scene 1

What happens next?

Draw a picture and tell the story below.



Scene 2

LET'S EXPLORE: Comic Book Art!



Find the work of art entitled, *Tied to a Jagged Moon*. It is in a case where each **figure** is carrying something very heavy.

Check off the item each figure is carrying once you spot it:

a moon

an umbrella

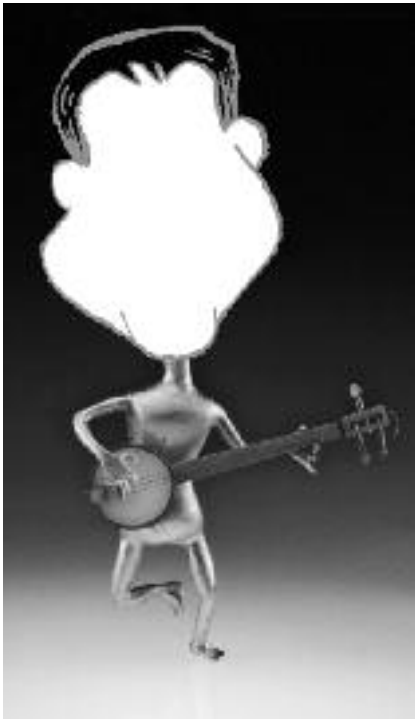
a cactus



Bruce Metcalf often **exaggerates** the features of his characters. Body parts are really big or small or in unusual shapes. His figures are also very **expressive**, in other words, their faces show a lot of emotions or feelings. Choose a sculpture in this case. **How do you think the character is feeling?**



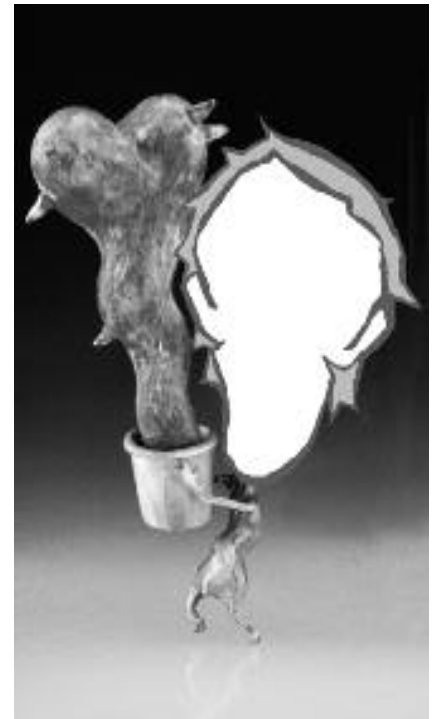
Below are some Bruce Metcalf pins, but they are missing their faces! Draw each face to match the feeling.



Happy



Surprised



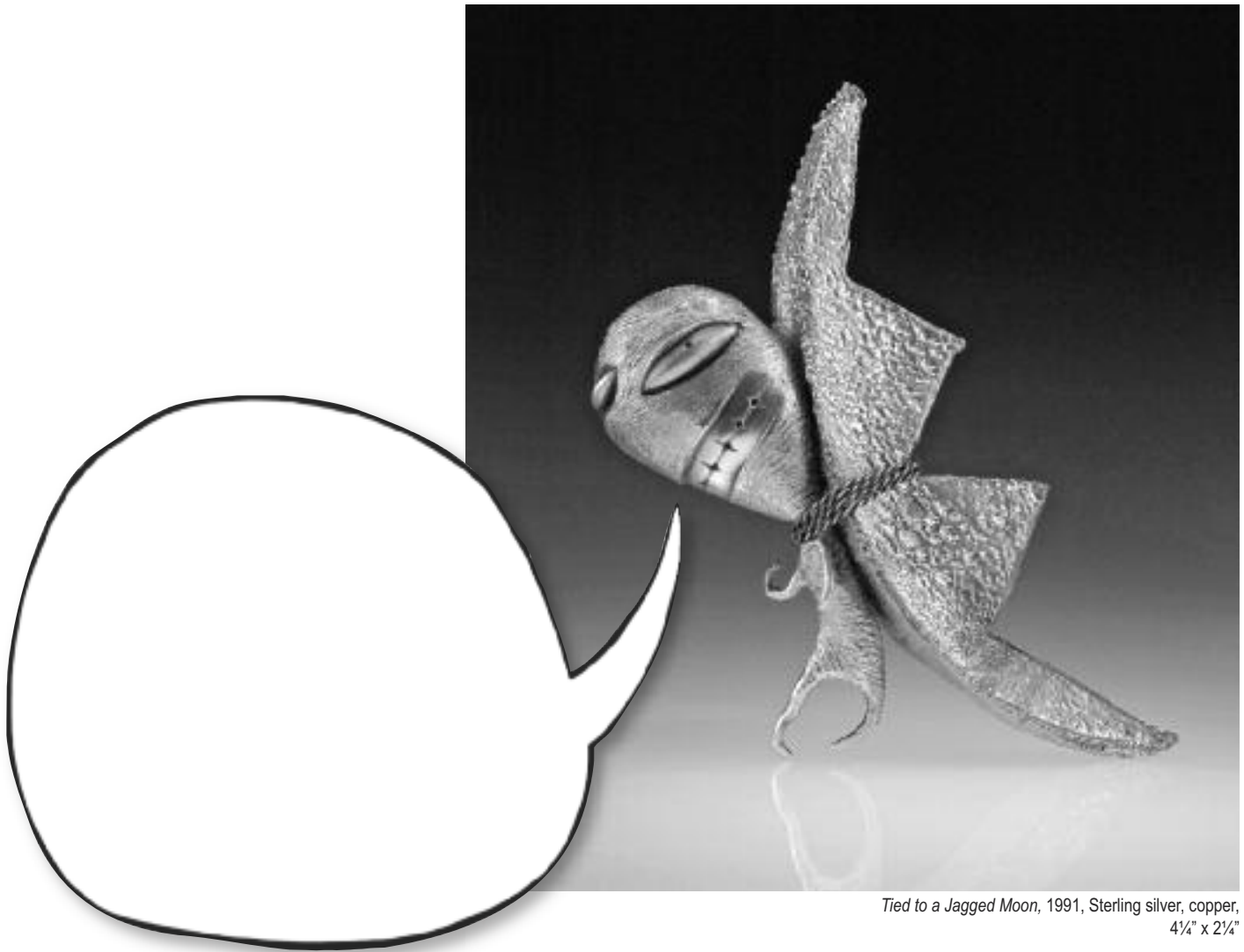
Sad



Now find the piece, *Tied to a Jagged Moon*. Look at the figure's expression and exaggerated features. **What do you notice?**

Some of Bruce Metcalf's sculptures look like cartoon characters. **Who is your favorite cartoon character or anime figure?**

Pretend *Tied to a Jagged Moon* is a character in a comic book. **What do you think it is saying?** Write it in the speech bubble below.



Tied to a Jagged Moon, 1991, Sterling silver, copper, 4¼" x 2¼"



Write your own comic strip, using the figure from *Tied to a Jagged Moon* as the main character.

LET'S EXPLORE: Nature Heads!



Find the cases with figure pins or brooches that have plant heads and human bodies. Check off the following items once you've found them:

shovel

tambourine

maple leaf

banjo



These pins ask us to think about how we are alike or different from plants in nature. **If you were a plant which one would you be, and why?**



In the space below, draw your own nature head.



Figure Pin #141, 1997
Maple, copper, brass,
14k yellow gold, steel, 23k gold leaf
4 1/2 x 2 1/2", Private Collection

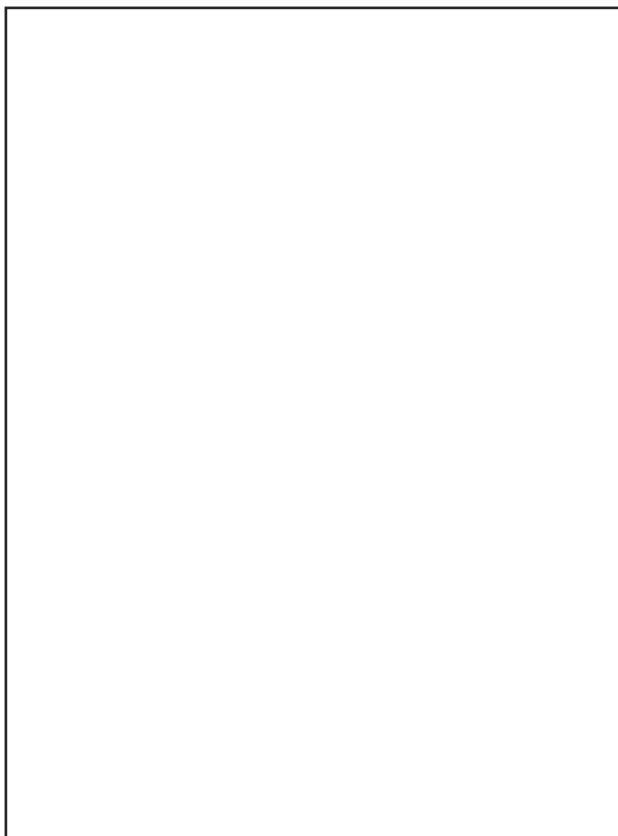


Figure Pin #139, 1997
Maple, copper, brass,
Corian, acrylic plastic,
rosewood, 23k gold leaf,
5 1/2 x 3", Private Collection



Make your own Metcalf inspired brooch! Draw your character on a piece of thin cardboard, cut it out, and add details with markers. Attach a pin to the back and wear your brooch so everyone can see!

LET'S EXPLORE: What is that?!



Find the name of the art using the clues below. Write the name in the space.
Use the exhibition labels to help you!



1. Two doves sit in a tiny tree. Can you find me?
I am resting on my knees.

2. It is quite dark where I am, but luckily I have a candle to help me to see. Hmm...why do I also have sunglasses with me? My name is



3. Giant worms are attacking a town! Where did they come from? This artwork is called

4. My head is different than yours, you see. Instead of eyes, nose and mouth, I have a light bulb glowing on top of me! I am



Answers
1. Two Doves in a Private Garden 2. A Candle in a City of Darkness 3. Worms from Mars Invade an Authentic New England Village 6. Figure Pin 157

LET'S EXPLORE: More about Bruce Metcalf



Bruce Metcalf at his desk, Summer 2008

Bruce Metcalf is a **contemporary** artist living and working just outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Known for his miniature brooches (or jewelry pins) set in theatrical scenes, he creates tiny worlds out of metals and wood. Metcalf's cartoon-like figures have large heads, exaggerated eyes, and skinny stick-like arms.

Bruce Metcalf was born in 1949 in Amherst, Massachusetts. As a child he enjoyed making plastic models of cars and trains. He found models interesting because they connected to the bigger world and to his imagination. Metcalf's passion for miniatures as a child continued into his adult life as an artist.

In addition to making models, Metcalf could often be found doodling and drawing goofy cartoons. Some of his favorite comic book characters were Pogo and Dick Tracy. During his high school years, Bruce Metcalf never took an art course but continued to practice his modeling and cartooning skills. He was even chosen as the class "comic book guy." It was not until college that Metcalf discovered jewelry making. Later, he learned that his grandfather was a goldsmith—a person who makes objects out of gold.

Metcalf's art jewelry consists largely of playful figures that are self-portraits or portraits of someone he knows. Metcalf starts by thinking about how that person looks naturally and then distorts his drawings by enlarging features and by focusing on certain characteristics of that person. This is very similar to creating a caricature—a drawing of a figure with exaggerated features. Often you will see street vendors creating these. Have you ever had a caricature drawn of you?

While Metcalf's artwork is playful and humorous, each contains a strong statement. He uses symbols—something that represents something else—in his work. For example, the musical instruments of his dancing-figure pins symbolize joy and celebration.

How long do you think it takes Metcalf to make a work of art? It takes about three to four weeks to create one of his figure pins. Being an artist is hard work!

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Palo Alto Art Center

A Project LOOK! Family Guide

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Produced in conjunction with the exhibition: *The Miniature Worlds of Bruce Metcalf*

September 28 – December 21, 2008

Signe Mayfield, Curator, Palo Alto Art Center

The Miniature Worlds of Bruce Metcalf a 120 page, full-color catalogue accompanies the exhibition with essays by Signe Mayfield, Dr. Vicky A. Clark, and Bruce Metcalf. The exhibition is slated to tour to Mint Museum of Craft + Design, Charlotte, NC; Bellevue Arts Museum, Bellevue, WA; Fresno Art Museum, Fresno, CA; Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR; and Racine Art Museum, Racine, WI. Support for the exhibition has been provided by the Rotasa Foundation, Windgate Charitable Foundation, Susan Beech, Forrest L. Merrill, Pew Fellowships in the Arts, Silicon Valley Bank, Mona and Tom Vertin, Zazzle and private donations. The Palo Alto Art Center, Division of Arts and Sciences, City of Palo Alto is funded in part by grants from the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation; Arts Council Silicon Valley, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and the California Arts Council.

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Palo Alto
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Hours: Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 1-5pm, Thurs evenings 7-9pm

Admission is FREE

CHECKLIST:

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Two Doves in a Private Garden, (detail) 1999

23k gold leaf over maple and brass, 18k gold, copper, ebony, plastic resin, garnets, 3¾" x 3", Collection of Diane and Marc Grainer

A Candle in the City of Darkness, (detail) 1996

Brooch: Sterling silver, 14k yellow gold, Delrin, Corian, 3¼" x 2", Stage: Painted wood, pencil drawing on paper, brass, 7½" x 5"

Worms from Mars Invade an Authentic New England Village, (detail) 1971, Lithograph on cardboard, painted lead, galvanized steel, dimensions variable

Figure pin #157, (detail) 1997

Painted maple and brass, acrylic plastic, 5" x 3", Courtesy of Sienna Gallery, Lenox, MA



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