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INTRODUCTION

Until a retrospective exhibition of her work at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1995,¹ the fanciful, candy-colored paintings of Florine Stettheimer (1871-1944) had been overlooked and neglected in histories of modern art, which had largely privileged the abstract and conceptual over the figural subject matter that seemed to so firmly ground Stettheimer’s work in the material world. Frequently depicting her family and members of the elite social circles and avant-garde art world of New York during the first half of the twentieth century, her paintings did not easily fit into this restrictive model of modern art and were deemed decorative and idiosyncratic. A 1932 review finds both of these qualities in Stettheimer’s work, which it describes as “a Christmas-tree art”:

Those brilliant canvases of hers do resemble gay decorations in colored paper, and lacquered red and blue glass balls, and gilt-foil stars, and crepe streamers, and angels of cotton wadding, and tinted wax tapers. That is because she has a highly refined decorative sense combined with a certain predilection for the ornamental, the frivolous, the festive; indeed, a sense of the poetry and humor and pathos of what is merely embellishing. Many of her graceful, delicate shapes are imitated from festoonery, plumage, tassels, rosettes, fringes, bouquets, and all kinds of old-fashioned trappings…. She seems to delight in garish, tinselly,

glittering colors; the colors of ‘paste’ and bric-a-brac and paper flowers; and induces her paint to form tiny sparkling brilliants.\(^2\)

Although this was, on the whole, a positive review that quite accurately summed up Stettheimer’s aesthetic, its comparison of her art with the decorative, the frivolous, and “what is merely embellishing,” ultimately demeans it by suggesting that it is pretty but not serious, that it is an art that verges on the brink of craft, of the sort practiced by children. In other words, it was perhaps too “feminine” to be taken seriously as art, which was then still a male-dominated field.

While Florine’s paintings are now more widely recognized as important artistic works that contribute to alternate versions of modernism, the same cannot be said of the work of Florine’s older sister Carrie Stettheimer (1869-1944), which has received little critical attention due to its non-art status. Carrie’s two-story, sixteen-room Dollhouse was created over the course of almost twenty years (from 1916-1935), and was inspired in part by the Stettheimers’ luxurious homes, where they hosted a prominent literary and artistic salon. Long considered a toy, hobby, or a work of craft that replicates a house in miniature rather than an inspired work of creative genius, the Stettheimer Dollhouse appears on the surface to embody those same “feminine” qualities the reviewer saw in Florine’s art: “the ornamental, the frivolous, the festive,” without holding any deeper significance. But the Dollhouse is much more complex than it may seem at first glance, \(^2\)

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\(^2\)Paul Rosenfeld, “Art: The World of Florine Stettheimer,” *The Nation* 134, no. 3487 (1932): 523; Florine and Ettie Stettheimer Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. The next sentence demonstrates the overall positive nature of the review: “It is a fabulous little world of two-dimensional shapes with which she entertains us; but beautifully, sharply, deliciously felt; and perfectly communicative of the pleasure with which it was created.” Rosenfeld’s use of “but,” however, implies that he felt the need to defend the lack of seriousness in Stettheimer’s art.
and the aim of this thesis is to uncover the multiple meanings that can be found in the forms of miniatures and dollhouses generally and in the Stettheimer Dollhouse particularly, while not discounting the importance of the “merely” decorative, which is a vital part of such objects, and indeed, merits closer art historical scrutiny.

Carrie’s primary role as caretaker of her home and family has also precluded critical study of her Dollhouse as anything more than a hobby. While her sisters Florine and Ettie took on the more traditionally masculine roles of artist and writer, creating works for public consumption and largely skirting household duties, Carrie’s world was seemingly inseparable from domesticity, as seen in her everyday life and even in her “escape” from it—her Dollhouse. Because of the engrained tendency in Western society to discount the importance of the domestic sphere, Carrie’s productions—the Dollhouse as well as her activities within her home—have not been the subject of scholarly consideration. Accordingly, most of the literature on the Stettheimers focuses on Florine, and to a lesser extent, Ettie, in part because their writings (poetry, journal entries, and personal correspondence) have survived them and also because they created objects (paintings and books) deemed worthy of critical attention and study. Unfortunately, Carrie either did not keep written records of her thoughts or they have been lost; scant personal correspondence survives; and her Dollhouse has not been considered a work of art requiring interpretation. Aside from the literature on the Stettheimers, in which it is mentioned briefly, the Dollhouse has only been the major focus of study in a short Art &
Design article from 1996 and two heavily-illustrated books authored by curators past and present of the Museum of the City of New York, where the work now resides.  

By first analyzing the theoretical and experiential aspects of the miniature as an aesthetic category, I will outline the basic elements all miniatures share, namely the ability to impart the feeling of control and wonder in the viewer. The writings of Susan Stewart and Gaston Bachelard on the miniature provide indispensable sources for these and other ideas explored in chapter 1, including the close associations of the miniature with the detail, the child and childlike, and femininity. Briefly tracing a history of miniatures will provide a context for the Stettheimer Dollhouse and a better understanding of the creative impulses at work where small imitations of reality are concerned. Specific examples of two-dimensional objects, such as painted portrait miniatures, and three-dimensional objects that represent miniature worlds, such as curiosity cabinets, perspective boxes, and dollhouses, will help to illuminate these various characteristics of the miniature. Because the miniature has been gendered feminine, as I argue in this chapter, the dollhouse, with its strong associations with children, women, domesticity, and the decorative, has also been gendered feminine.

From this background, chapter 2 will explore the Stettheimer Dollhouse as a product of the contested terrain of gender and art in modernist Manhattan at a time when  

“the masculinized spheres of art” were beginning to emphasize “abstraction, purity and universal form” to the exclusion of “the decorative, considered frivolous and feminized.” Indeed, Carrie’s Dollhouse can be read as a three-dimensional counterpart to the whimsical paintings of her sister, as both artists shared a penchant for craft, ornament, and miniaturization, all understood to be feminine. Carrie and Florine’s unabashed embrace of these elements placed them somewhat at odds with the avant-garde art world of New York, with which they were nonetheless deeply involved. For not only did the Stettheimers host members of the avant-garde at their salon, but Florine also painted many of them, and they, in turn, created miniature artworks for Carrie’s Dollhouse. More than simply a vessel for the display of diminutive works by prominent artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Gaston Lachaise, and George Bellows, however, the Dollhouse is itself a work of art that engages the avant-garde spirit of playfulness that is highlighted by the works it contains. In addition to providing Carrie with an outlet from her everyday domestic life, her Dollhouse, along with her activities in her home, were part of a systematic attempt to create aesthetically pleasing, fantastical environments and a theatrical mode of life, which can ultimately be viewed as avant-garde in its combination of art and lived reality.

By comparing the Stettheimer Dollhouse to other, similar structures in chapter 3, including Colleen Moore’s Fairy Castle at the Museum of Science and Industry and the Thorne Miniature Rooms at the Art Institute, both in Chicago, I will situate the former

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4Mileaf, 79.
within the popular phenomenon of upper-class women crafting and decorating dollhouses as an extravagant leisure activity and acceptable outlet for feminine creativity during the early twentieth century. This comparison will demonstrate the fact that, rather than aiming for perfection and hiring teams of assistants to help her, Carrie created her Dollhouse by herself, to please herself and its essential playfulness stands out next to these other works. A similar playful and pleasure-loving spirit guided the creation of the Boîtes and Boîtes-en-Valise, which Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) began making in 1935. Possibly inspired by the Stettheimer Dollhouse and the miniature Nude Descending a Staircase that he executed for it, Duchamp employed miniaturization and reproduction in order to create hundreds of boxes containing miniature “portable museums” of almost seventy works in his oeuvre.\(^5\) A comparison of Duchamp’s and Stettheimer’s projects reveals the fine line between the supposedly very rigid categories of avant-garde and bourgeois, and art and craft (with their attendant gendered associations), that these works effectively blurred. On the one hand, domesticity, femininity, the decorative, and the trope of the miniature all converge in the Stettheimer Dollhouse, which mediates “between the domestic and the artistic in an era that understood the two to be incompatible.”\(^6\) On the other hand, however, this modern era saw a loosening of the previously very strict definition of “art,” which ultimately came to include works of craft, assemblages, reproductions, and readymades. Finally, it is because of Duchamp’s

\(^5\)I am indebted to Mileaf, 79, for suggesting a connection between the Stettheimer Dollhouse and Duchamp’s Boîte-en-Valise.

\(^6\)Mileaf, 81.
challenge of the traditional work of art and the increased levity this brought to the art world that the Stettheimer Dollhouse can be taken seriously (or playfully) as a work of art today.
CHAPTER 1

People have created and been fascinated by miniature objects throughout history, as seen in the sculpted miniature figures of humans and animals found in the ancient tombs and archaeological sites of Egypt, Greece, and Mesoamerica, to name just a few areas in which such things were made. Whether these miniatures were used to represent gods and function as talismans, to please the dead and accompany them into the afterlife, or for other, unknown purposes, one thing is certain—their small size allowed them to fit into human hands and to be controlled and manipulated at will. Perhaps on some basic level, people make miniatures in order to make sense of the larger world around them and to feel a sense of control over it: possessing a small thing or collecting a mass of small things gives the possessor physical control over those things as well as the feeling of (at least mental) control over the larger things they represent. As the theorist of everyday experience Gaston Bachelard has aptly written, “The cleverer I am at miniaturizing the world, the better I possess it.”

Illustrating this idea is another example of ancient miniature-making that has continued into more modern times: the traditional Chinese practice of collecting and crafting strange stones, guai shi, which were thought to

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7 The rest of the quote reads “But in doing this, it must be understood that values become condensed and enriched in miniature…one must go beyond logic in order to experience what is large in what is small,” an idea I will return to later in this chapter. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 150.
represent “the universe in miniature, or, more precisely…the inchoate energies that created the universe.”\(^8\) Ranging in size from very small to very large, these stones, also known as scholar’s rocks since they were typically displayed and contemplated in “the scholar’s studio, along with bronzes, paintings, sculptures, musical instruments, and the paraphernalia of writing,” enjoyed the same status given to works of art, and were the subject of intense collection and connoisseurship.\(^9\) Of the various reasons for seeking out such stones, the earliest surviving manual on stone collecting, from the twelfth century, rather poetically states that “within the size of a fist can be assembled the beauty of a thousand cliffs,” making the idea of holding the world in the palm of one’s hand close to a tangible reality.\(^10\)

Control and wonder are just two factors operative in the crafting and viewing of miniature worlds, but these affective categories are essential and will reappear throughout this chapter, which will attempt to understand what makes miniatures so fascinating as they are embedded within modern cultural practices and codes. Specifically, I will explore the important issues at play in the engagement with the miniature, of the notions of scale and detail, the use of the miniature as metaphor, and the associations of the miniature with children and childhood, and women and femininity. I will then briefly trace a history of the miniature and the practice of collecting miniatures, both of which are essential in establishing a background from which one can better understand the

\(^8\)Stephen Little, *Spirit Stones of China* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1999), 16.

\(^9\)Little, 8-9.

\(^10\)Quoted in Little, 16.
Stettheimer Dollhouse. While I will cover two-dimensional objects, such as the miniatures in illuminated manuscripts and portrait miniatures, the focus of this history will be on three-dimensional objects, including curiosity cabinets, perspective boxes, and, of course, dollhouses. To conclude this chapter, I will discuss the modern gendering of the miniature, and especially the dollhouse, as feminine, and discuss the ways this gendering has been complicated in the twentieth century by artists like Marcel Duchamp.

While the descriptive words “small” and “large” are relative and very much dependent upon context, there is a general sense of agreement as to the size of things, especially when those things are miniature or gigantic. About the notion of “standard scale”, the art historian E. H. Gombrich wrote:

> If we still assign a size in our mind to images of pennies or houses this is due to the same habit...of thinking of things in some standard situation in which we usually inspect them. We compare the penny in the hand with the house across the road. It is this imaginary standard distance which will influence the scale at which a child draws such objects and which will also determine our descriptions of ants and men. The notorious question whether the moon looks as large as a dime or a dollar, to which I have alluded before, may not allow of a clear-cut answer, but most of us would protest if anyone suggested that it looks like a pinhead or an ocean steamer, easy though it would be to devise a situation where these statements would be true.\(^1\)

Perspectives of scale are no doubt different across cultures and might change slowly over time: to take Gombrich’s example, for instance, today one might picture a penny, not in the hand, but on the ground, since pennies are largely considered bothersome or

worthless; similarly, one might picture not just any house, but one’s own home, from the perspective of its backyard, to understand how perspectives of scale are indeed closely tied to the universal experience of being human and living in the world of things.\textsuperscript{12} Thus, generally, objects that are smaller than one expects them to be are considered “small” or miniature; more specifically though, a miniature is a small-scale imitation or model of something that is much larger. The miniscule and the monumental exert a power to fascinate perhaps owing to the simple fact that such a wide range of sizes of things exists, and that the very small and very large can exist side by side, as with an ant on a mountain, a leaf on a tree, or a sapling in a forest of trees.

But aside from the striking contrast between large and small, this power to captivate can exist within the small object itself, due to the wealth of detail available there for the patient and careful observer.\textsuperscript{13} As opposed to something monumentally scaled, which tends to awe as well as overwhelm the viewer, a small object more subtly demands the viewer’s attention. Because it does not threaten to overwhelm the viewer, she can spend more time looking at the object, thus becoming more intimately involved with and absorbed in it. Thus, a miniature object, though small, can seem larger than life. Using an example from a nineteenth-century dictionary of botany, Bachelard cites the entry for periwinkle: “Reader, study the periwinkle in detail, and you will see how detail

\textsuperscript{12}Increasingly, it seems, many objects, like phones and computers, are getting smaller but doing more, thanks to the technological ability to store massive amounts of information digitally.

\textsuperscript{13}This idea is explored at length in Bachelard, 148-182; and in Stewart, \textit{On Longing}, 37-69.
This observation brings to mind those extremely detailed seventeenth-century Dutch still-life paintings, which typically depict not only flowers, but all manner of objects, including intricately woven textiles, glass or metal goblets and plates, fruits, nuts, fish, and other edibles, watches, shells, lizards, and insects. As the art historian Svetlana Alpers explains, such objects are often depicted open, peeled, broken, or toppled over, so that multiple views and surfaces are exposed to the viewer; the same reasoning informs the representation of reflective surfaces: “the play of light on the surface distinguishes glass from metal, from cloth, from pastry, and also serves to multiply surfaces. The underside of a vessel’s foot is doubled by its reflection in the adjacent pewter plate. Each thing exposes multiple surfaces in order to be more fully present to the eye.”

This “visual attentiveness” to the details and description of reality, Alpers argues, governs almost all of Dutch art and visual culture of this time period, and sets that art apart from the mostly narrative art of the Italian Renaissance, which has typically been considered the highpoint of Western art history, as well as the standard by which other styles of art are judged. In this Western, Neoplatonic tradition that valued words over images, depth over surface appearances, and the mind and soul over the senses, grand history painting was esteemed while “descriptive” works, such as portraits, still lifes, landscapes, and genre scenes, were largely discounted as “either meaningless...”

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14Bachelard, 155.
16Alpers, xxi, 76-7.
(since no text is narrated) or inferior by nature.” Because this latter category of artistic production was thought to entail merely the imitation of nature with no additional creativity or invention on the part of the artist, the miniature, which is essentially a small-scale object that reiterates or corresponds to a larger-scale thing, inevitably falls into this category as well.

But the miniature, with all its detail, does more than just imitate aspects of the world around it; indeed, it is not only a product of the imagination but it also can be entered into through the imagination, and so expanded to encompass new worlds within it. Like William Blake’s oft-quoted line about seeing a world in a grain of sand, it is possible for the large to exist within the small through microcosmic metaphor, which poets are especially fond of employing. While there are certainly important distinctions between microcosms and miniatures, as Susan Stewart points out, both require flexibility and creativity of thinking in order to jump from small- to large-scale and to see their similarities.

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17 Alpers, xxi.

18 Bachelard, 150.

19 The stanza from Auguries of Innocence reads, “To see a world in a grain of sand/ And a heaven in a wildflower/ Hold infinity in the palm of your hand/ And eternity in an hour.”

20 Bachelard gives a number of examples of writers using microcosms in his chapter on the miniature, while Stewart, On Longing, 53, 128-131, writes mainly of the book and the body as microcosms, and refers to multum in parvo, much in little, as it works in the miniature as well as literarily in “the quotation, the epigram, and the proverb.”

21 “Like other modes of exaggeration, microcosmic thinking involves juxtaposition with relation to scale and detail. Exaggeration is not possible without correspondence and relativity. But whereas miniaturization involves the juxtaposition of object and representation, of everyday and extraordinary scale, microcosmic thought is a matter of the establishment of correspondences between seemingly disparate phenomena in order to demonstrate the sameness of all phenomena”; Stewart, On Longing, 128.
enabled new ways of seeing very small and previously invisible worlds as well as incredibly large and distant ones, so too does the miniature allow access to the small and large at once. To return to the careful observation of the periwinkle by Bachelard’s botanist, he notes:

The magnifying glass in this experience conditions an entry into the world. Here the man with the magnifying glass is not an old man still trying to read his newspaper, in spite of eyes that are weary of looking. The man with the magnifying glass takes the world as though it were quite new to him...[he]—quite simply—bars the every-day world. He is a fresh eye before a new object. The botanist’s magnifying glass is youth recaptured. It gives him back the enlarging gaze of a child...Thus the minuscule, a narrow gate, opens up an entire world. The details of a thing can be the sign of a new world which, like all worlds, contains the attributes of greatness.  

While there is no doubt a difference between “enlarging” (to the eye) what is already small by looking through a magnifying glass and viewing miniatures of things that exist in a larger form, the same sense of childlike wonder in the world is central to both kinds of looking. Thus, in addition to nicely stating the idea that the miniature can be deceptively and counter-intuitively large, Bachelard also introduces the association of the miniature with the child.

On a very basic level, the small size of both the miniature and the child creates a similarity between them that makes them appealing, as Vivien Greene notes in her book *English Dolls’ Houses*: “Most of us feel the attraction of that miniature scale; who can be unmoved by a rocking-chair standing on a matchbox? Its neatness and composure evoke

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22Bachelard, 155.
the same affection as for an infant hedgehog (let us say): it is exquisite, it is absurd, above all we wonder at it.”23 While they may inspire wonder, miniatures, baby animals, and children are typically thought of as cute, precious, and quaint, and so they are also often regarded as trivial. Bachelard suggests that “the tiny things we imagine simply take us back to childhood, to the familiarity with toys and the reality of toys,” which are also regarded as lacking in seriousness.24 But it is not just their shared smallness that reinforces the connection between miniatures and children, as both Bachelard and Stewart make clear. As the magnifying glass example demonstrates, looking at the world from a child’s point of view, with a childlike imagination, reawakens the senses and allows the world-weary adult to experience wonder again. Miniatures can give the viewer, whether child or adult, this same feeling of awe. As Stewart points out, taking as her subject textual descriptions of miniatures and fictive worlds, which occur especially in children’s and fantasy literature,

the child continually enters here as a metaphor, perhaps not simply because the child is in some physical sense a miniature of the adult, but also because the world of childhood, limited in physical scope yet fantastic in its content, presents in some ways a miniature and fictive chapter in each life history; it is a world that is part of history, at least the history of the individual subject, but remote from the presentness of adult life. We imagine childhood as if it were at the other end of a tunnel—distanced, diminutive, and clearly framed.25


24Emphasis is his; Bachelard, 149.

25Stewart, On Longing, 44.
Thus, the miniature is not only associated with the child but with childhood, which, because it is thought of as distant chronologically, is also pictured as faraway spatially, or miniaturized in the imagination, and so difficult to recapture.

But numerous artists and art movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries made it their goal to recapture this childlike spirit and perspective in order to tap into their creativity and to view and represent the world around them in new ways. “From Baudelaire to Monet and on to Gauguin, the vision of the child has been invoked as a metaphor for the authoritative purity of the modern artist whose images arise from intuition and feeling, in contrast to the academic artist’s plodding deployment of conventionalized images and procedures.”26 Other modernists, including Wassily Kandinsky, Alfred Stieglitz, and the Dadaists and Surrealists, to name just a few, also embraced what they felt were the primitive and liberating qualities of the child, who was thought to be closer to nature and so less corrupted by bourgeois society than adults.27 Stieglitz in particular not only embraced the simplicity and trueness of the child’s vision and encouraged these qualities in the work of the artists in his circle, but also featured children’s artwork in a series of exhibitions at his 291 gallery in New York, from 1912 to 1916. Georgia O’Keeffe, who embodied for Stieglitz his vision of the “woman-child,” cultivated her own sense of childlike creativity, which had its roots in the imaginative


world of her childhood, when she had crafted and played with a dollhouse outdoors.\textsuperscript{28} Indeed, she thought of her painting process as “a recovery of and escape into her child self,” an entering into her own “little world,” as she called it.\textsuperscript{29} And her paintings, in which she was able “to pull the gaze in toward the form to produce the private world of the miniature or to pull out the frame, expanding it, to capture the sense of the self alone in the macrocosm,” reflect this powerful imaginative vision and play with scale.\textsuperscript{30} Most modernist artists, however, with the notable exceptions of O’Keeffe and Marcel Duchamp, who I will turn to later, adopted only the particular aspects of the child or of childlike art that suited their aims, and largely resisted a complete embrace of the miniature, perhaps for fear of not being taken seriously.\textsuperscript{31}

Likewise, because women have been so closely linked to children, due in part to their traditional roles as mothers and nurturers of them, they also have been characterized as irrational and primitive, and, indeed, childlike.\textsuperscript{32} Thus, women can be linked to the miniature through children, with all three having in common their supposed delicate, fragile natures. But there is also a stronger connection between the feminine and the miniature, and it hinges on the detail. As already discussed, the reduced scale of the

\textsuperscript{28}Pyne, 249.
\textsuperscript{29}Pyne, 249.
\textsuperscript{30}Pyne, 249.
\textsuperscript{31}Of course, this was not a fear of the Dadaists, who attacked seriousness and championed the absurd. While Florine Stettheimer also adopted a naïve, childlike style and depicted miniature, doll-like figures in her paintings, which I will discuss in more detail in chapter 2, her canvases remained rather large.
\textsuperscript{32}Stieglitz’s formation of O’Keeffe as “woman-child” is a case in point.
miniature makes detail extremely important; in fact, the miniature is almost reduced to its detail. And as Naomi Schor argues in her book *Reading in Detail: Aestheticism and the Feminine*, the idea of the detail has frequently been denigrated throughout history (the phrase “nitpicky detail” comes to mind), and has only recently been recovered as significant:

To focus on the detail and more particularly on the detail as negativity is to become aware…of its participation in the larger semantic network, bounded on the one side by the ornamental, with its traditional connotations of effeminacy and decadence, and on the other, by the everyday, whose ‘prosiness’ is rooted in the domestic sphere of social life presided over by women….The detail does not occupy a conceptual space beyond the laws of sexual difference: the detail is gendered and doubly gendered as feminine.33

The miniature, then, in all of its nitpicky detail, also can be read as feminine, and the examination of miniature objects, especially the portrait miniature and the dollhouse, which I will now turn to, will bear out this idea.

To trace the etymology of the word “miniature” is to move into the illuminated manuscript tradition of medieval Europe: the term “derives from the Latin *minium*, the red lead used to emphasize initial letters in manuscripts, decorated by the *miniator*” and thus originally referred to rubrication. “However, on account of a mistaken etymology, the word has become connected with ‘minute’” and so is used today to describe both the

small-scale images in manuscripts as well as other small paintings. \(^{34}\) From this practice of illustrating a text, the miniature evolved into an art form of its own in the sixteenth century. \(^{35}\) While miniature paintings in general were essentially just smaller versions of their larger counterparts, miniature portraits, although largely copying the stylistic conventions of regular portraits, differed from them in a number of important ways. As opposed to the traditional medium of oil on board or canvas, portrait miniatures were at first made on vellum and later on ivory, usually with watercolor and gouache; these materials allowed for finer detail and greater permanence. \(^{36}\) Portrait miniatures were also more private and personal than large-scale portraits, and were often exchanged by family members, husbands, wives, and lovers as signs of affection and tokens of remembrance. Because of their small size and portability, owners could carry the miniatures with them or wear them on their bodies in elaborately decorated, jeweled frames, as became the trend for women toward the end of the sixteenth century. With the shape of the frame either circular or oval, like a locket, rather than the standard rectangular frame for full-

\(^{34}\)Ian Chilvers, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists*, 3rd ed., s.v. “miniature” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 392. Of course, a similar tradition of miniature illuminations can be found in Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Mughal manuscripts and stand-alone works of art as well.

\(^{35}\)Elizabethans referred to portrait miniatures as “pictures in little” or “limnings,” the latter referring to their connection to illuminated manuscripts; Chilvers, 392.

\(^{36}\)On the switch to ivory in the eighteenth century, however, Marcia Pointon writes “Although miniaturists initially found it much more difficult to achieve the same degree of artistic mastery with ivory, the material was more consonant with the idea of precious jeweler’s work than vellum, which had been used not only for illumination but also for all forms of documentation since the Middle Ages.” Marcia Pointon, “‘Surrounded with Brilliants’: Miniature Portraits in Eighteenth-Century England,” *The Art Bulletin* 83, no. 1 (2001), 53.
size portraits, the miniatures themselves looked like jewels, and often were incorporated into jewelry as well (fig. 1).\textsuperscript{37}

While portrait miniatures remained popular over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and into the nineteenth,\textsuperscript{38} “there was always the danger that it [miniature painting] would degenerate into a minor art, devoted largely to the reproduction of oil pictures…and that it would only be patronized by such collectors—and practiced by such artists—as were more interested in curios than in works of art.”\textsuperscript{39} Indeed, in the eighteenth century, when portrait miniaturists began imitating more closely the style and techniques employed in full-scale portraits, the “artistic decline” of miniature portraiture set in, as its increased popularity made the genre “a happy hunting ground for copyists and dilettantes” rather than the practice of serious artists.\textsuperscript{40} Since portraiture, created by “face painters” as these artists were derisively called, was already regarded as less important than other genres, portraiture in miniature was considered lesser still. This association of “face painting” with the feminine “art” of make-up would have further reinforced the perceived triviality and femininity of portrait miniatures,

\textsuperscript{37}Pointon, 50-3.

\textsuperscript{38}Portrait miniatures declined in popularity with the advent of portrait photography in the mid-nineteenth century.


\textsuperscript{40}Colding, 121. An important exception to this statement, however, is the Venetian pastellist and miniaturist Rosalba Carriera (1675-1757), whose career was incredibly successful: in addition to initiating the practice of painting miniatures on ivory, she also was inducted into the Accademia di San Luca in 1705 and her works brought great international acclaim. See Thea Burns, \textit{The Invention of Pastel Painting} (London: Archetype Publications, 2007).
already worn by women like jewelry (fig. 1). 41 Specifically regarding the gendering of the eighteenth-century portrait miniature, Marcia Pointon observes that

Women might publicly display on their persons men’s images, but men might not act reciprocally without loss of masculinity. Men owned and cherished but did not normally publicly display portrait miniatures. Indeed, the wearing of a miniature was, it would seem, precisely a site for the inscription of sexual difference. Accordingly, the wearing of a miniature of oneself was a feminizing and solipsistic act, a form of unacceptable and transgressive narcissism. 42

This gendered attitude toward the display of miniature portraits continued into the nineteenth century, and extended to large-scale wall portraiture as well, which was gendered masculine. As Katherine Rieder explains, “Often hung in the principal yet semi-private rooms of a family’s home, the portrait served as a reminder of the family’s lineage and its economic and social power....Men, as keepers of the family’s legacy, thus often inherited these larger-scale, more public images, which, like large pieces of furniture, became linked to the architectural spaces of the family home.” Portrait miniatures, on the other hand, because of their status as “movable” forms of property and their other feminine associations, tended to be kept by women, who were like movables themselves, as they moved from one male-headed household (that of their father) to

41 Tamar Garb, The Painted Face: Portraits of Women in France, 1814–1914 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 1-4. Although her focus is on the nineteenth century, when make-up became “exclusively associated with women,” the author traces the “long-held associations between paint and make-up, painting and ornamentation, canvas and skin” back to the seventeenth century.

42 Pointon, 59.
another (their husband’s).\textsuperscript{43} Thus, the portrait miniature was considered feminine on a number of levels.

A different tradition, almost exclusively practiced by wealthy men (usually royalty but also merchants) in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries in Europe, was that of collecting all sorts of natural, manmade, and often exotic objects in rooms (\textit{Wunder-} or \textit{Kunstkammern}) or curiosity cabinets (\textit{Wunderkabinette} or \textit{Kunstschränke}, literally ‘art-cupboards’) for the delectation and edification of the owners and small groups of friends and fellow collectors.\textsuperscript{44} Also evocatively referred to as “theatres of the world” in their day and often cited as the forerunners to encyclopedic museums in our day, wonder rooms and curiosity cabinets housed all manner of things, both large and small, including shells, coral, stones, precious minerals, bones, animal and plant specimens, coins, medals, mirrors, scientific instruments, automata, textiles, art and sculpture (fig. 2).\textsuperscript{45} Many of the more exotic objects featured in these cabinets came from the New World thanks to the expansion of European trade during the Age of


\textsuperscript{44}Increasingly though, private collectors began to allow the public to view their collections; Patrick Mauriès, \textit{Cabinets of Curiosities} (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002), 50, 56. For the most part, women did not own curiosity cabinets until the eighteenth century, when they were starting to become less relevant. Thus, women’s collections were deemed more decorative and less serious and scholarly than men’s. For a discussion of these ideas, see Katherine Sharp, “Women’s Creativity and Display in the Eighteenth-Century British Domestic Interior,” in \textit{Interior Design and Identity} ed. Susie McKellar and Penny Sparke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 10-26.

\textsuperscript{45}Mauriès, 51.
Exploration. Because these Wunderkammern were seen as microcosms, representing all of the material things in the (recently expanded) world, the smaller cabinet versions of these wonder rooms were essentially miniature microcosms, and because of their smaller size, they were easier to order and organize. They also tended to be as much or more of a work of art as the contents inside (fig. 3). Often made of exotic woods, with ivory, marble, and amber accents, and decorated with enamel work, semiprecious stones, silver or gilt-bronze, and miniature paintings and bas-relief sculpture, the container reflected the preciousness and exoticism of the materials it contained, and both reflected the wealth and diversity of the outside world and the power of the collector who brought it all together in his interior world.

Yet, while the widening of the world, along with the increasing knowledge of it through new scientific technologies, may have given the collector more access to material goods and a greater ability to study them, it also brought with it a conundrum. As Patrick Mauriès notes: “The history of cabinets of curiosities began with the notion of a correspondence…between man and nature, between the microcosm and the macrocosm. And it started to disintegrate when this correspondence was revealed an impossibility, when the ordered space of the cabinet of curiosities lost its claim to reflect the multiplicity of the real world, but could merely boast that it contained a few remnants of


47 Barbara Maria Stafford, “Revealing Technologies/Magical Domains,” in Devices of Wonder: From the World in a Box to Images on a Screen (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001), 7.
Nonetheless, by organizing, categorizing, and displaying the objects in his cabinet, the collector was exerting control over, if not the entire world, his little corner of it.

Of the essential interiority of the collection, that is, a group of objects brought inside from the outside world, Susan Stewart notes that

> The collection relies upon the box, the cabinet, the cupboard, the seriality of shelves. It is determined by these boundaries, just as the self is invited to expand within the confines of bourgeois domestic space. For the environment to be an extension of the self, it is necessary not to act upon and transform it, but to declare its essential emptiness by filling it. Ornament, décor, and ultimately decorum define the boundaries of private space by emptying that space of any relevance other than that of the subject.  

Collections, then, by their very nature dictate specific modes of interaction between the viewer and the space she inhabits, and can be seen to represent the collector. But while the curiosity cabinet marks off an interior space in which the viewer can “expand” through contemplation and wonder at its contents, its microcosmic relationship to the outside world and its emphasis on natural history nevertheless tether it to an external, non-domestic sphere in a manner markedly divergent from that of any dollhouse. More akin to the dollhouse in terms of presenting a miniaturized version of an interior space is the seventeenth-century phenomenon of the Dutch perspective box, which, through the use of anamorphic imagery and the principles of perspective, created the illusion of a real, three-dimensional space within a box usually no bigger than three feet in each direction (fig. 4). Unlike cluttered curiosity cabinets, the perspective box “contained

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48 Mauriès, 43.
nothing at all—except for a single, multifaceted image projected and painted over the discontinuous surfaces of the box’s interior,” which, when looked at through the eyehole in the box, resolved into a continuous, illusionistic image of a domestic or church interior.⁵⁰ Expecting to see something diminutive in size, the viewer would be surprised to find that the objects and figures depicted in the box “appear not only to be life-size but to stand free within the fictive space”.⁵¹ In this way, the small is made to seem large, and the eyehole, placed at keyhole height, both disorients the viewer and implicates her as a voyeur.⁵² Thus, the trompe l’oeil perspective box offers the promise of possession yet denies it, inverting the shifts in scale operative in a dollhouse. In its very physicality, the dollhouse invites not just visual but also tactile interaction, and so reinforces the viewer’s bodily presence. It is to a discussion of the dollhouse’s unique deployment of scale and perspective (both visual and social) that the remainder of this chapter shall turn.

Although dollhouses today are generally considered children’s playthings and associated with girls and women, this was not always the case. In fact, some of the earliest baby houses, as they were called until the late eighteenth century, were made for wealthy men, including Duke Albert V of Bavaria and Duke Philip II of Pomerania-Stettin, for whom such houses were made in 1558 and 1610, respectively. The Duke of Bavaria’s miniature house, though no longer extant, was apparently “an impressive four-


⁵¹Brusati, 365.

⁵²Brusati, 375. “The fantasy of ocular ubiquity offered by the perspective box not only gratifies but also disarms and disembodies the viewer, for the box’s seductions and possessions are not available to an embodied beholder but only to the eye placed at the peephole.”
story house, a copy of one of the many elegant ducal residences of the time”\textsuperscript{53} and was displayed in the Duke’s \textit{Kunstkammer}, along with a number of other miniature curiosities.\textsuperscript{54} Splendidly appointed with miniature versions of household objects and other precious items, baby houses, like the larger ones they were modeled after, were intended to show off their owners’ wealth and prestige—they were essentially curiosity cabinets in architectural guise.\textsuperscript{55} On the similarity between curiosity cabinets and dollhouses in general, Barbara Maria Stafford writes, “Like the \textit{Wunderschränke}, the prototypical dollhouse depends on the architecture of a subdivided chamber containing rearrangeable goods to provoke individualized rituals of cross-referencing. In either case, child or adult mobilizes tangible items that exist within a larger unifying structure. Like the enchanting curiosity cabinet, the diminutive house beckons the visitant to enter a visionary topography of dizzyingly nested spaces.”\textsuperscript{56}

Dutch miniature houses of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also were intended to impress viewers with the wealth and status of their owners, though without the exterior architectural pretense of German baby houses. Rather, their miniature rooms and household effects were arranged in the kind of everyday domestic cabinets used for


\textsuperscript{54}Susan Broomhall and Jennifer Spinks, \textit{Early Modern Women in the Low Countries: Feminizing Sources and Interpretations of the Past} (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), 108.

\textsuperscript{55}Pasierbska, 10, 18.

\textsuperscript{56}Stafford, 9.
linen storage and the like.\textsuperscript{57} These houses were owned by elite women who spent small fortunes on their creation and decoration, commissioning miniature artwork and furniture from contemporary artisans. Often these miniatures were “exact reproductions of the owner’s household furnishings.”\textsuperscript{58} The late seventeenth-century cabinet house owned by Petronella Oortman, of which there also exists a 1710 painting by Jacob Appel, both now in Amsterdam’s Rijksmuseum (figs. 5-6), probably cost its owner around 30,000 guilders, enough money to afford a contemporary, full-scale house along one of the city’s canals.\textsuperscript{59} In a comparison of these female-owned dollhouses with their German, male-owned counterparts, Susan Broomhall and Jennifer Spinks point out the attentiveness to detail relating to the practical experience of living in and taking care of the home in Dutch dollhouses, demonstrating the “careful awareness of a female perspective on the household” that is not present in the other miniature houses.\textsuperscript{60} The authors further argue that the female owners were well aware “of the contradictory forces of desire for childish amusement on the one hand and recognition of mature responsibilities on the other, and of the contradictory nature of the dolls’ house as both an insignificant object of play and an evocative mirror of human nature. And perhaps more significantly than the ideals they convey within them, the Dutch dolls’ houses attest to the rare opportunity for the

\textsuperscript{57}Pasiersbska, 17-8.

\textsuperscript{58}Stewart, \textit{On Longing}, 61.

\textsuperscript{59}Broomhall and Spinks, 101, 111.

\textsuperscript{60}Broomhall and Spinks, 113-117.
adult mistress of an early modern Dutch townhouse to create an object of play, to take time away from everyday domestic tasks, and to escape into a utopian world.\textsuperscript{61}

Other, mostly German, dollhouses from the same time period, however, were not used as an escape from domestic duties but as teaching tools to help people learn the proper ways of caring for a house.\textsuperscript{62} Anna Köferlin’s Nuremberg dollhouse, no longer extant, is an oft-cited example of such a house, which she publicly displayed for educational purposes, charging admission to the children, women, and servants who came to see it.\textsuperscript{63} Our knowledge of it comes from a 1631 pamphlet that reads in part:

Therefore, dear little children, study everything carefully, how all is well ordered, so that it will provide a good lesson, and when finally you have your own house and God gives you your own hearth, which will become the work of your life and love, you will be able to organize everything in your household in a proper way. Then you will understand what your beloved parents have tried to tell you: that a house that is in disorder reflects the disorder of its housekeeper’s mind.\textsuperscript{64}

The moralizing tone and content of this passage clearly show that the message Köferlin was trying to get across was more than just a practical one about how to clean and organize a house; it also instilled traditional values of love and respect for God and one’s elders. Through the proper arrangement and upkeep of the home, one could establish not

\textsuperscript{61}Broomhall and Spinks, 122.

\textsuperscript{62}Indeed, even the Dutch dollhouses studied by Broomhall and Spinks may have served a similar didactic purpose for their owners, as is argued in Michelle Moseley-Christian, “Seventeenth-Century Pronk Poppenhuisen: Domestic Space and the Ritual Function of Dutch Dollhouses for Women,” \textit{Home Cultures} 7, no. 3 (2010): 341-364.

\textsuperscript{63}Pasierbska, 15.

\textsuperscript{64}Quoted in Broomhall and Spinks, 107.
only an efficient and satisfying space in which to live, but also a sound moral compass and a healthy mental disposition. Although others viewed the dollhouse as well, the fact that the pamphlet directly addresses children suggests that they were the intended audience and that the conventional association of dollhouses with children was established at least as early as the seventeenth century.

Dollhouses as the playthings of children, however, seem to have taken longer to become established. Although writing about miniature, handwritten books in particular, Susan Stewart’s observation may also be applied to the dollhouse: “while the materiality of the product is diminished, the labor involved multiplies, and so does the significance of the total object.” Handmade dollhouses were luxury objects, and because of their high cost and their collections of small, fragile, and sometimes irreplaceable objects, they were often made not for children to play with so much as to look at and learn from, as already mentioned. Demonstrating this idea is a humorous passage from H. G. Wells’s 1909 novel *Tono-Bungay*, in which he describes his narrator’s Victorian childhood: “We even went to the great dolls’ house on the nursery landing to play discreetly with that, the great dolls’ house that…contained eighty-five dolls and had cost hundreds of pounds. I played under imperious direction with that toy of glory.” If the old nursery rhyme that refers to imported Dutch toys is any indication—“The children of Holland take pleasure

66Quoted in Pasierbska, 21.
in making what the children of England take pleasure in breaking,”—children were not to be trusted with fragile or expensive things.\textsuperscript{67}

Perhaps because of children’s rambunctiousness, simpler miniature rooms, which were less cost prohibitive and more portable than large dollhouses, gradually became popular in Europe throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries among adults and children alike. Finally, it was during the nineteenth century, when cheaper manufacturing methods became available, that the dollhouse was “no longer commissioned and furnished chiefly by adults for adult amusement: it has lost that valuable appearance and a decisive difference in aim is apparent; it has from its inception become a nursery plaything.”\textsuperscript{68} The gradual shift from the dollhouse being associated with adults to children, it would seem, roughly coincided with the “invention of childhood” in the seventeenth century, when children ceased being treated like miniature adults.\textsuperscript{69} But while children may have become the primary audience for dollhouses, that did not stop adults, and especially women, from crafting dollhouses for themselves, a practice which was very popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and which continues to this day.\textsuperscript{70}

\textsuperscript{67}Quoted in Greene, 27.

\textsuperscript{68}Greene, 33. She also notes “the miniature silver has long been replaced by china and prettily turned woodware; cornices and paneling disappear, the houses are…now convenient to play with…and above all…the locks have disappeared.”


\textsuperscript{70}I will pick up this thread again, and look at the practice of early twentieth-century dollhouse-making in more detail when I discuss the Stettheimer Dollhouse in context, in chapter 3.
Due to the rigidifying of nineteenth-century society into separate gender roles for the sexes and the gendering of public and private spheres, with men dominant in the former and women in the latter, it is not surprising that women took up dollhouse-making as a leisure activity and that dollhouses became so strongly associated with femininity. Stewart notes that “in the advertisements for, and catalogs of, miniature articles issued by firms such as the Franklin Mint, the Concord Miniature Collection, and Federal Smallwares Corporation, ‘period furnishings,’ ‘storybook figures,’ the ‘charming,’ the ‘picturesque,’ and the ‘old-fashioned’ are presented to a bourgeois public immersed in the discourse of the ‘petite feminine.’”

It is no wonder then that so many dollhouses, even today, are Victorian in style, as this era so readily evokes images of girls and women playing with dolls, decorating dollhouses, or crafting objects for their own houses, to make them homier. Because these stereotypes lingered and because there existed an entrenched notion that high art was practiced by men while craft pursuits were inherently feminine, Carrie Stettheimer’s Dollhouse has long been viewed as a mere plaything, its creator relegated to the status of a hobbyist and homemaker. But while it was considered natural for a woman to design a dollhouse (and unnatural for her to be an artist) during the first half of the twentieth century, the male artist of the period who adopted miniature-making risked the stigma of being feminized or demoted to the status of craftsman or hobbyist. Yet this is exactly what a number of male artists, including Marcel Duchamp, did by crafting miniature versions of their artworks for the Stettheimer

71Stewart, On Longing, 62.
Dollhouse. Thus, Stettheimer’s project and Duchamp’s role in it especially, given his gender ambiguity and his embrace of miniaturization throughout his career, complicate the notion of the miniature as a strictly feminine practice, just as they bridge the divide between art and craft. Before turning to the Stettheimer Dollhouse in particular, however, it is important to first establish the historical context of its production and its maker’s life, subjects which chapter 2 will address.
Given the general tendency to view works of art through the prism of their creators’ lives, it is tempting to read the Stettheimer Dollhouse as a miniaturized, composite version of the Manhattan homes inhabited by Carrie Stettheimer and her mother and two sisters. And indeed, according to one recent scholar, Carrie did intend “to portray, in miniature scale, the surroundings, customs, and tastes of her own life, and to reflect the artistic talents of her friends and family” in her Dollhouse.72 Thus, this chapter will situate Carrie within that milieu of influence, and it will investigate her Dollhouse as a form of portraiture not unlike that produced by her sister Florine, who created paintings of her family and their circle of artistic friends. It must be emphasized, however, that the Dollhouse is not an exact replica of any of the Stettheimer homes, nor is it an open book that tells us about its maker’s life in a straightforward manner. In fact, to interpret the Dollhouse in this way is to risk misunderstanding the complicated lives of the members of the untraditional Stettheimer family as well as the meanings of the Dollhouse itself. For the Dollhouse is a product of a creative imagination and as such it is a work of fantasy as much as it is supposedly “nonfiction.”

72Clark, 8.
To approach the aesthetic structure of the Dollhouse as a product shaped in the contested terrain of gender and art in modernist Manhattan, I will first examine the Stettheimers’ unique position between two eras—late Victorian and early twentieth-century modern—as these historical moments erected conflicting notions of femininity. I will then assess the Stettheimers’ role in the avant-garde art world of New York, with which they were both deeply involved and somewhat at odds. I will argue that Carrie and Florine’s commitment to their comfortable domestic life, their adherence to traditional modes of femininity, and their embrace of the decorative, set them apart from the anti-bourgeois and anti-materialist aspects of the avant-garde circle within which their artistic productions circulated. Images and accounts of the family’s homes, where they hosted a salon for members of the avant-garde, and Florine’s poems and paintings, particularly her portraits of her family, help to illuminate the Stettheimers’ problematic position within modernity. By analyzing Carrie’s various activities in the Stettheimer household, including her creation of the Dollhouse, I will show how she managed to treat both her domestic duties and her crafting of miniatures as forms of art, even if such activities would not be considered artistic by early twentieth-century standards. The last part of this chapter will present an examination of both Carrie’s and Florine’s engagement with miniaturization as it is exemplified in Florine’s 1923 painting Portrait of My Sister Carrie W. Stettheimer with Dollhouse, and commented on in critics’ writings about other paintings Florine executed. The sisters’ embrace of the miniature demonstrated their preference for creating their own little fantasy worlds in which the decorative, the domestic, and the feminine reigned supreme.
Caroline Walter Stettheimer was born in 1869 in New York to a wealthy family of German-Jewish descent. One of five siblings, she developed the closest relationship with her two younger sisters, Florine (born in 1871) and Henrietta, or Ettie (born in 1875), and all three stayed with their mother Rosetta after their father abandoned the family and the two eldest siblings moved away from home. Living primarily in New York but traveling frequently throughout Germany, Italy, and France, the sisters enjoyed a highly cultured and fairly luxurious adolescence and early adulthood. They were educated by nurses and private tutors, and a steady regimen of visiting art museums and attending the theatre or ballet in European capitals gave them a distinctive cultural edification. While Florine and Ettie both went on to attain higher levels of education—Florine attended the Art Students’ League in New York for painting, and Ettie received her Ph.D. in philosophy from Albert-Ludwig University of Freiburg, Germany—Carrie took up the full-time task of caring for Rosetta and their household, which was permanently relocated from Europe to New York at the start of the first World War. In part out of loyalty to their mother, the three sisters decided not to marry or move away from home, and so they created a close-knit family group that was only broken up by Rosetta’s death in 1935. The fact that none of the sisters married has also been attributed to “their matriarchal upbringing and the changing role of women during the last decades of the nineteenth century,” which saw a “significant transformation in the legal and professional possibilities for middle-class Western women.” 73 With this increased freedom, symbolized by the figure of the New

73 Barbara J. Bloemink, *The Life and Art of Florine Stettheimer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 13. Although her focus is on Florine Stettheimer, Bloemink provides an authoritative source.
Woman, women of means became less dependent upon men and could more easily live on their own, on their own terms, without giving in to the societal expectations of marriage and motherhood. This was certainly the case with the Stettheimer sisters, particularly Florine and Ettie, who, freed from the roles of wife and mother, could devote their time to their artistic and literary careers. And while Carrie could also be seen as embodying the New Woman through her participation in their untraditional, all-female household, her role as domestic caretaker prevented her from fully embracing this new, modern, feminine identity. Instead, she essentially played “mother” to her mother and “wife” to her sisters.

The unique position of the Stettheimer sisters, and Carrie especially, in regard to older and newer modes of femininity can best be understood through art historian Barbara Bloemink’s astute observation about Florine: “The unusual timing of the artist’s life, caught on the cusp between two centuries and cultures, gives it a complexity and richness of contrasts drawn together into a visual crazy quilt of memories. The quilt’s underlying structure of the culture and mores of the nineteenth century is balanced by the social changes brought about by the new century…” The crazy quilt metaphor is an apt one because of its associations with the old-fashioned, feminine domain of craft, in which Florine and Carrie both remained absorbed despite its being at odds with the emerging of biographical information on the Stettheimer family.

74 As Bloemink points out, the new symbol of the Femme Nouvelle, or New Woman, “pervaded mass media on both sides of the Atlantic” in the last decade of the nineteenth century, Life and Art, 13.

75 Bloemink, Life and Art, 5.
modern art world in the United States, which largely privileged big ideas and abstraction over small details and decorative schemes produced in lace and ribbon. A few of Florine’s poems illustrate this preoccupation with pretty, traditionally “feminine” things, and capture a sense of the Stettheimers’ existence between “two centuries and cultures” (European and American). One poem, untitled, offers a recollection of her childhood that evokes a kind of old world, European elegance and shows especially well the Stettheimers’ taste for the finer things in life. Linda Nochlin calls it Florine’s “hymn to lightness, lace, feminine sensibility, and the goddess of it, her mother”:  

And things I loved—
Mother in a low-cut dress
Her neck like alabaster
A laced up bodice of Veronese green
A shirt all puffs of deeper shades
With flounces of point lace
Shawls of Blonde and Chantilly
Fishues of Honeton and Point d’Esprit
A silk jewel box painted with morning glories
Filled with ropes of Roman pearls
Mother playing the Beautiful Blue Danube
We children dancing to her tunes
Embroidered dresses of white Marseilles
An adored sash of pale watered silk
Ribbons with gay Roman stripes
A carpet strewn with flower bouquets
Sèvres vases and gilt console tables
Mother reading to us Grimm’s fairy tales
When sick in bed with childhood ills
All loved and unforgettable thrills.

I will explore this idea at greater length in chapter 3.

Linda Nochlin, “Florine Stettheimer: Rococo Subversive;” in Sussman, et al., 103, quotes the poem’s lyrics as follow here in my text.
Visually rich, this poem acts as a counterpart to Florine’s painting *Portrait of My Mother* from 1925, which features Rosetta at the center of a lush interior space, complete with jewelry box and pearls on the left (fig. 7). The almost invisible window or doorway behind Rosetta opens up onto a distant, miniscule scene of her young children, “the mother’s dream-picture” of them, which is surrounded by lace.\(^7\) The quiet, sheltered, luxurious existence presented in this poem and painting contrasts greatly with Florine’s poetry about New York City, which in itself varies depending upon the time period she wrote about. On her life in the early 1890s, she reflected, “Art Student days in New York/ Streets of stoop houses all alike/ People dressed sedately/ Bright colors considered loud/ Jewels shoddy…” These lines literally pale in comparison to another poem written after the family’s move back to New York in 1914:

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New York
At last grown young
with noise
and color
and light
and jazz
dance marathons and poultry shows
soulsavings and rodeos
gabfests and beauty contests
sky towers and bridal bowers
speakeasy bars and motor cars
columnists and movie stars.
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The excitement of the modern city, with all of its kitschy Americana, would serve as inspiration for Florine’s colorful art throughout her career, especially her series of

Cathedrals paintings. But she would also retain the same love for material finery and decorative detail that she felt as a child, and she would express that love in her art and her surroundings, creating an unusual and distinctly feminine modern aesthetic, one that was shared by Carrie as well.

New York City, “at last grown young,” had indeed seen significant changes over the almost two decades the Stettheimers had been abroad. In addition to changes to the physical landscape—the world’s then-tallest skyscraper, the Woolworth Building, was completed in 1913—the city had also experienced a cultural revolution that was still holding strong when the sisters returned. Centered in Greenwich Village, “the artists, writers, and bohemians who composed the cultural revolt wanted to use art to liberate themselves and society from what they considered to be artificial abridgments of personal and social freedom”: namely, they were opposed to the “bourgeois, Protestant, and materialistic” qualities that they felt governed American life, and which they saw as “personally stifling and socially reactionary.” Instead, these cultural radicals embraced experimentation, individualism, and personal freedom in their artistic, political, social, and sexual lives. Often these radicals critiqued the very same middle- and upper-class society to which they belonged or at least had been born into, and even occasionally they

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79 These are *Cathedrals of Broadway* (1929), *Cathedrals of Fifth Avenue* (1931), *Cathedrals of Wall Street* (1939), and *Cathedrals of Art* (1942-44), all at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

relied on bourgeois patrons for support.\textsuperscript{81} Nevertheless, these bohemian individuals operated from the margins of that bourgeois society and attempted to subvert tradition and establishment, even if only succeeding in their words or art, and not in their daily lives.\textsuperscript{82} While not all the members of this cultural avant-garde were young, the spirit of turning against traditions and norms emphasized the new, as the movement was characterized by one of its leaders “as a movement of youth,”\textsuperscript{83} fitting for the city that was referred to as not “merely New, but ever-new, York.”\textsuperscript{84} The participants in this city’s Dadaist movement, including Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Francis Picabia, Katherine Dreier, and the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, to name just a few, shared many of the same tenets as the other cultural radicals in New York at the time, but they also resisted taking themselves, or anything else, too seriously. In fact, this sense of playfulness, seen in their fierce embrace of irony, amusement, and humor, guided their productions to such an extent that it can be considered the one thing they did take seriously.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{81}These ideas are explored in regard to the Bloomsbury Group in Raymond Williams, \textit{Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays} (London: Verso, 1980), 148-169.

\textsuperscript{82}Williams, 155-6. Peter Bürger argues that the essential aesthetic and social gesture of the avant-garde consists of turning against the bourgeois notion of the autonomy of art as separate from life in \textit{Theory of the Avant-Garde} (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 47-54.


The Stettheimers were an important part of this avant-garde world, through their art production and salon, but they were also at a remove from it for a variety of reasons, most notable among them being their comfortable and in some ways old-fashioned upper-middle class lifestyle. Already in their forties by the time they settled permanently in New York, the fact that they were chronologically older than their peers (or than the ideal of the young revolutionary artist) was perhaps not as significant as the influence of their posh and respectable late-nineteenth-century upbringing. At the Stettheimers’ salons and social gatherings, held from 1914 to 1935 at their various Manhattan homes and at the summer homes they rented in nearby Tarrytown and Sea Bright, “an Old World atmosphere prevailed: the attire, manners, and multicourse meals were formal, with conversations frequently conducted in French.” This atmosphere was enhanced by the rather regal and sophisticated decorative sensibility that pervaded the interiors of their homes, which will be addressed in more detail shortly. In attendance at these occasions were members of the avant-garde and cultural elite, including the likes of Marcel Duchamp, Alfred Stieglitz, Charles Demuth, Georgia O’Keeffe, Avery Hopwood, Joseph Hergesheimer, Philip Moeller, Muriel Draper, Henri-Pierre Roché, Fania Marinoff, and Virgil Thomson, among others. The art critic Henry McBride and the writer and photographer Carl Van Vechten, who were lifelong friends of the Stettheimers, were also habitual attendees. Describing the salons as “the American avant-garde’s version of courtly society,” cultural historian Steven Watson has dubbed Florine the avant-garde’s

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86 Watson, 253.
“court painter,” since she depicted so many of these individuals in portraits and other works. But this somewhat contradictory notion of the Stettheimers as aristocratic and avant-garde highlights the way in which they were ultimately at odds with the avant-garde, in their commitment to an essentially “haut-bourgeois” lifestyle, centered on their home and home life.

The remark of music critic and composer Virgil Thomson, that the Stettheimers “have no salon. They entertain their friends, most of whom happen to be celebrated,” would indeed seem to suggest that the Stettheimers were in it only for the cheese and conversation, and not for anything more serious or intellectually stimulating. Compared to other influential salons of the period, such as that of Mabel Dodge or Walter and Louise Arensberg, the latter of which tended to be more raucous and unpredictable, the Stettheimer salon perhaps seemed, to Thomson at least, too tame and civilized to be ground-breaking in any way. After first noting its importance in “the shaping of the intellectual and artistic impulses” of New York, Henry McBride’s follow-up comment about the Stettheimer salon makes one question its supposed avant-garde status: “there was nothing unexpected in the proprieties that prevailed there and which were fairly Bostonese in character. Occasionally a gifted refugee from Greenwich Village drifted in, but if there were too much of Eight Street in his manner, he was unlikely to reappear.”

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87 Watson, 255, 257.
88 Thomson, quoted in Bloemink, Life and Art, 95.
Their policing of their salon by keeping the too-bohemian, the riffraff, out, demonstrates the Stettheimers’ ambivalence toward living a full-fledged, carefree, avant-garde lifestyle and underlines their essential bourgeois attitude toward their home as a private, and cherished, place.

As many scholars have argued, early twentieth-century modernist avant-gardes, at least ones that are now established in the art historical canon, were largely at odds with the domestic sphere. Generally speaking, “the home has been positioned as the antipode to high art. Ultimately, in the eyes of the avant-garde, being undomestic came to serve as a guarantee of being art.” The critic Paul Rosenberg observed of the Stettheimer salon,

Artists…went there and not at all merely because of the individualities of the trio of women and their tasteful hospitality. They went for the reason that they felt themselves entirely at home with the Stetties—so the trio was called—and the Stetties seemed to feel themselves entirely at home in their company. Art was an indispensable component of the modern, open intellectual life of the place. The sisters felt it as a living issue. Sincerely they lived it. (emphasis mine)

The Stettheimers were perhaps too much “at home” at their salon and with art to be considered truly avant-garde—instead of bringing art and life together in a radical, challenging way they succeeded rather in bringing art into their daily lives, as evidenced

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90 This subject is explored extensively in the series of essays in Christopher Reed, ed., Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996).

91 Reed, 7.

92 Paul Rosenberg, quoted in Bloemink, Life and Art, 95.
by their surrounding themselves with beautiful things and other artists, and immersing
themselves in their various creative projects. Yet the Stettheimers’ seemingly bourgeois
embrace of domestic life coexisted with their ultimate rejection of “the means-ends
rationality of the bourgeois everyday” through their integrating art, fantasy and reality so
completely, as we shall see. 93 Theirs was a subtler, less aggressive form of avant-
gardism than that practiced by artists such as Duchamp, but it was avant-garde
nonetheless.

The Stettheimer sisters at first hosted their salons from the townhouse they lived
in with their aunt (Rosetta’s sister) on the Upper West Side, which Ettie referred to as the
“sale d’attente deuxieme class,” or second-class waiting room, perhaps because quarters
were cramped. 94 It must have been acceptable enough, however, because the family lived
there until 1926, when they moved to a twelve-room, single-floor apartment in the Alwyn
Court building in midtown Manhattan, where they remained until 1935 (fig. 8). Its
elaborately decorated façade was “so alive with crawling salamanders and plump putti”
that Carl Van Vechten referred to it as the “Chateau Stettheimer” and celebrated it in a
photograph (fig. 9). 95 Despite this seeming disparity in quality of their two homes, both
residences “shared the same scheme of red taffeta draperies, red velvet upholstery, gray
walls, and gold moldings—all of which served as a backdrop for Stettheimer’s paintings

93 Büger, 49.
94 Watson, 252.
95 Bloemink, Life and Art, 155.
and the family’s gilded rococo furniture”\textsuperscript{96} (figs. 10-11). Further decorating the space were accents of “fringe, Nottingham lace and heavy brocade…accompanied by cut-crystal bowls, glittering chandeliers, and Aubusson rugs. The grand dining table, laid with Italian antique lace altar cloths, was graced with Florine’s extravagant flower arrangements.”\textsuperscript{97} These were not interiors that screamed their owners’ avant-garde status, but rather approached more closely a heavily decorated Victorian aesthetic. Van Vechten recounted that when Florine offered to decorate the entire apartment at Alwyn Court, her sisters “protested volubly against this attempt to usurp their rights.”\textsuperscript{98} It was of the utmost importance for each sister to have her own personal space which she could decorate in the way she saw fit. Florine’s bedroom was white and gold, a combination she used repeatedly in her art and in the decoration of her Beaux-Arts studio overlooking Bryant Park, where she would not only work but also live toward the end of her life. Old-fashioned lace and shiny cellophane, a modern invention, were the dominant motifs in her decorating vocabulary (figs. 12-13).\textsuperscript{99} As for her sisters, “in keeping with their disparate personalities, Carrie’s bedroom was quietly and elegantly decorated in shades

\textsuperscript{96}Cecile Whiting, “Decorating with Stettheimer and the Boys,” \textit{American Art} 14, no. 1 (2000): 35. Bloemink, \textit{Life and Art}, 19-20, discusses the French Rococo revival in decorative art and furniture that occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which had a great influence on the Stettheimers.

\textsuperscript{97}Watson, 253-4.


\textsuperscript{99}For more on the decoration of Florine’s living spaces, which are the most well-documented of the Stettheimers’ interiors, see Whiting, 24-49. On Florine’s use of cellophane in particular, see Judith Brown, \textit{Glamour in Six Dimensions: Modernism and the Radiance of Form} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 145-172.
of green, while Ettie’s room was painted in violent tones of blue and red with theatrical Chinese-style furniture.”

Despite their differing tastes, presumably there was some agreement among the sisters and their mother as to how the more public, shared areas of the home should look.

For interior space and its decoration were undoubtedly important to all of the Stettheimers, and particularly Florine and Carrie, in their homes as well as in their art. The idea that a person’s belongings and surroundings reflected his or her personality grew in popularity around the turn of the century, especially in France, and gave the ordinary world of material things the potential for a deeper significance. Likewise, the decorating and arranging of the interior space of the home began to be viewed as something of an art (even if inferior to “high” art), capable of expressing the owner’s creative vision or true self. Such ideas continued to gain momentum in the early twentieth century, and their popularity was firmly established by the publication of Emily Post’s The Personality of a House: The Blue Book of Home Design and Decoration in 1930.

These ideas were also formative ones for Florine, who, as Bloemink notes, was an avid reader of Marcel Proust, who championed the detail and “articulated a definition of interior space as the index of personal memories.” A passage from Proust’s Within a

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100 Bloemink, Life and Art, 157. Unlike the case of Florine’s rooms, there are no surviving images of Carrie’s or Ettie’s rooms.


Budding Grove nicely sums up his philosophy: “That composite, heterogeneous room has kept in my memory a cohesion…alive and stamped with the imprint of a living personality…. The things in my room…were…an enlargement of myself.”

Objects for Proust, whether footstools or pastries, were not just full of personal memories but also alive with them, which is an idea that Florine, and no doubt Carrie too, found captivating. In Carrie’s Dollhouse and Florine’s paintings, the sisters endowed objects and interior spaces, and their depictions, with a personal significance that not only meant something to them but also expressed something of themselves to others.

Frequently in Florine’s portraits of friends and family, her sitters are pictured, à la Proust, in some sort of interior environment surrounded by personal belongings of importance to them, as seen already in Portrait of My Mother. Alternately, an interior is only hinted at, as when the artist includes curtains in an otherwise “outdoor” scene, such as in Portrait of Henry McBride, Art Critic (1922). Florine included a wealth of details relating to the sitters’ personalities, such as their favorite things and places, and their hobbies and professions—as if the more objects she assembled within the pictorial space, the better represented her subjects would be. In a painting that departs from this rule, Family Portrait No. 2 from 1933 (fig. 14), Florine depicted herself along with Carrie, Ettie, and their mother, Rosetta on a brightly colored carpet inscribed with their names in the center. Flanked by curtains (of cellophane behind Florine at the far left and in red with gold fringe behind Carrie on the far right), the family group is not overwhelmed by a

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103 Proust, volume 2 of Remembrance of Things Past, quoted in Bloemink, Life and Art, 23.
clutter of objects, but rather is dwarfed by the oversized flowers that encroach on the canvas. Florine’s love for creating extravagant flower arrangements had also manifested itself in her painted bouquets. While this practice extended the life of her ephemeral subject matter, here the flowers have an additional, symbolic purpose. It has been suggested, and is mostly likely true, that each element of the bouquet—the three flowers and a fern frond—represents a member of the family, although which specimen is associated with which person is debated. In any case, the more explicit symbolism in this painting is more subtly articulated, and is found in the pairing of each family member with a work of architecture behind her, represented in ghostly white on the blue background. As Bloemink explains, the Chrysler Building and chandelier, with “their clarity, sharp edges, and cool character,” are intended to represent the personality of Ettie, who sits below them, while the Statue of Liberty, an emblem of refuge, above Rosetta, signifies her role as protector and comforter of her daughters. The ornamental detail from the exterior of the family’s home at Alwyn Court, complete with address, hovers over Carrie’s head, and finally, Florine aligned herself with the RCA Building and Radio City Music Hall, which represent her love of popular entertainment and spectacle. Of all of these iconic New York architectural elements, the façade of Alwyn Court is the most personally relevant one for the Stettheimer family, and the fact that

104 Tyler, 153-4.
105 Bloemink, Life and Art, 204-5.
Carrie is paired with it indicates how intimately tied she was to their home.  
Reinforcing this idea is the “elongated red velvet drapery with gold fringe” that parallels
the attenuated figure of Carrie and “recalls the color scheme of the family’s dining
room,” where Carrie was such a fixture.

For in addition to being the caretaker of family and home, Carrie also filled the
role of hostess at the Stettheimer salons. While Florine and Ettie, as painter and writer,
were generally thought of as the intellectuals of the family, with Florine being more
retiring, playing the part of observer at their salons, and conversationalist Ettie actively
participating in lively discussions, Carrie’s contributions to these events have either been
overlooked or considered trivial. A comment Ettie made after Carrie’s death, and
published in the Museum of the City of New York’s catalog for the Dollhouse, has added
to this negative impression of Carrie’s activities within the home. After noting that her
work on the Dollhouse had been sporadic in the years before their mother’s death, due to
Carrie’s all-consuming care-giving duties, Ettie wrote:

Although my sister was an extremely successful and competent
housekeeper...she had no liking whatever for this job, and this, I
imagine, no one suspected. Doing what one doesn’t enjoy takes a
lot of energy and leaves the less for the doing of what one does
enjoy. Carrie’s pleasures were reading, learning, and conversation,
all time and energy consuming, and between them these

106Bloemink, Life and Art, 204, also notes that the neo-Renaissance stone façade of Alwyn Court
represents Carrie’s “quiet and impenetrable” personality and the fact that “she is stylistically and
intellectually caught between divergent centuries.”

107Bloemink, Life and Art, 204.
occupations greatly limited opportunities for working on the
dollhouse.\textsuperscript{108}

While Carrie may not have liked the daily chore of keeping house, especially when that
involved taking care of her ill mother, it seems that she did take pride in her
housekeeping when that entailed hosting her friends and acquaintances at the family’s
social events. As Janine Mileaf asserts, “Although Ettie worked to disassociate her late
sister from the domestic sphere, Carrie herself had already defied traditional stereotypes
of women in the home by assuming her responsibilities with flair. She was known for
wild party menus—oyster salad and feather soup—and haute couture,” both of which
subverted bourgeois norms of sensible or even festive gastronomy and dress.\textsuperscript{109}

Indeed, such anti-bourgeois gestures were commonplace even in Carrie’s
everyday sartorial choices, for in addition to enhancing her rather regal bearing with
feathers, “tiaras, dog collars studded with small pearls and rhinestones, and trains
trimmed in miniver,” Carrie also appreciated high fashion, and donned chic gowns from
Paul Poiret (the sisters’ favorite designer), Callot Soeurs, and Bendel.\textsuperscript{110} In a 1922 letter,
Florine described Carrie as wearing “white satin slippers, white turban and her new blue
metal dress.”\textsuperscript{111} Whether she was referring to a lamé dress or one covered in metallic
sequins or something even more radical is not clear, but what is evident is Carrie’s exotic


\textsuperscript{109}Mileaf, 78.

\textsuperscript{110}Watson, 255.

\textsuperscript{111}Bloemink, \textit{Life and Art}, 274.
and cutting-edge taste in fashion. Her penchant for wearing feathers—and for elevating the quotidian into the sphere of the fantastic—also crossed over to her culinary inventions: for example, in a menu for a dinner party planned by Carrie in 1934, along with more traditional items like cocktails, cheese canapés, and asparagus, are listed halibut and lobster in mayonnaise aspic and feather soup. While this last entrée could have been named this because the soup was light as a feather, it also just as easily could have been a joke or a work of art of sorts, perhaps akin to the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven’s Portrait of Marcel Duchamp from about ten years earlier, of which the Stettheimers were surely familiar.¹¹² An assemblage consisting of a wine glass sprouting “mechanical gears, clock spring, and fishing lure embellished with feathers, chicken bones, and other materials,” the Portrait, whose feathers would have signified the feminine and the primitive, hints at Duchamp’s female persona, Rrose Sélavy.¹¹³ In any case, the whimsicality of “feather soup,” whether edible or not, is evocative of Carrie’s eccentric taste and playful sense of style.¹¹⁴

From the obvious joy she took in flamboyant dressing and arranging strange menus for the salons, and, no doubt, in visiting with her friends who were in attendance

¹¹² The photograph by Charles Sheeler of Portrait of Marcel Duchamp appeared in The Little Review in 1922, and as friends of Duchamp, the Stettheimers probably would have heard about the work at the very least.


¹¹⁴ Alternately, this could be a reference to peacock feather soup, an Indian soup containing vegetables and moong dal, no feathers; if so, it demonstrates the Stettheimers’ bohemian taste for exotic cuisine.
at those parties, it is safe to assume that Carrie derived some satisfaction from creating a theatrical mode of life. For Florine, on the other hand, who “never was…much of a party person….Whatever enjoyment she derived from these often visually attractive occasions was largely in connection with the use she might make of them in her work.”\textsuperscript{115} Indeed, one of Florine’s poems would seem to bear this idea out: “Our Picnics / Our Banquets / Our Friends / Have at last a raison-d’être / Seen in color and design / It amuses me / To recreate them / To paint them.”\textsuperscript{116} While Florine claimed to need an excuse for such occasions, for Carrie, the task of making these occasions “visually attractive” was probably an enjoyable one, and very well may have given her a raison-d’être of sorts, as it would have provided her an opportunity to escape her daily chores. As the material culture scholar Beverly Gordon argues in her book on the subject, the much-maligned domestic arts of party planning and dressing up cultivated for their practitioners “a ‘saturated’ quality, a kind of heightened experience (state, reality) that was aesthetically and sensually charged and full.” The women who staged such “domestic amusements” were essentially creating “self-contained, enchanted ‘worlds’ that helped feed or sustain them, usually by elaborating on their everyday tasks and responsibilities, ‘making them special’ and transforming them into something playful and socially and emotionally satisfying.”\textsuperscript{117} By integrating the everyday into the plane of the aesthetic, thereby

\textsuperscript{115}Ettie Stettheimer, quoted in Barbara Bloemink, “Florine Stettheimer: Hiding in Plain Sight,” in Sawelson-Gorse, 494.

\textsuperscript{116}Quoted in Watson, 257.

elevating the former to the status of art, Carrie was engaging in avant-garde practices that
eschewed the bourgeois separation of life and art—to paraphrase Paul Rosenberg, she
truly lived art.118 In this way, Carrie’s hostess duties can be seen as an extension of her
creative play with her Dollhouse, in which she both literally and figuratively created a
“self-contained, enchanted world” for herself.

Carrie first created a dollhouse in 1916 for a charity fundraiser to help alleviate
infantile paralysis. Made “out of some four or six wooden boxes got from the grocer,” it
brought in upwards of 500 dollars for the cause and inspired Carrie to create a second,
more elaborate Dollhouse, which she would work on intermittently from 1916 until
1935.119 This second, sixteen-room Dollhouse, measuring approximately 28 inches high,
50 inches long, and 35 inches wide, was commissioned from a carpenter and made to
resemble the exterior of André Brook, the Stettheimers’ summer home near Tarrytown,
New York.120 Florine’s early paintings of André Brook, from 1915, demonstrate the
similarity in style between it and the neoclassical façade of the Dollhouse, and the
gardens of their summer home would be the subject of a number of her later paintings,
including the whimsical Sunday Afternoon in the Country of 1917 (figs. 15-18).121 Carrie
decorated the interior of the Dollhouse with a combination of store-bought, mass-
produced items, some of which she painted or otherwise altered, and handcrafted objects,

118 Paul Rosenberg, quoted in Bloemink, Life and Art, 95; Bürger, 49-50.
119 Ettie Stettheimer, quoted in Clark, 10.
120 Clark, 8.
121 Bloemink, Life and Art, 79.
such as needlepoint rugs and lace curtains, most of which she made herself. While the
decoration of the Dollhouse is often found to be similar to that of the Stettheimers’
apartments, this is only true to an extent. Both structures share a refined and somewhat
eclectic decorative sensibility that relies heavily on lace and gold accents. In the
Dollhouse, however, Carrie had free reign to employ a diversity of styles, textures, and
patterns that it seems the Stettheimer homes were lacking, at least as far as one can tell
from the few surviving black and white photographs (figs. 10-11). And compared to
Florine’s penchant for white and gold rooms drenched in lace and cellophane, Carrie’s
“decorative style, with its flamboyant pinks and acid greens, floral patterns and reflective
surfaces” was much more lively and colorful than her sister’s, although both were
considered avant-garde by early commentators. Each room of the Dollhouse has a
different theme with the furniture and decorations coordinated to match: there is the pink-
and-blue bedroom with elaborate gilt gesso details on the furniture; the black lace-
trimmed linen room; the red, black, silver, and gold chinoiserie library; the chintz
bedroom; the pink, and the green, bathrooms; and the plain white-and-blue kitchen, to
name just a handful (figs. 19-21). A few significant examples, including the foyer, the
nursery, the salon, and the art gallery, will serve here to illustrate the principles at work in
Carrie’s aesthetic scheme.

\[122\] Clark, 8.

\[123\] Mileaf, 77; Noble, 5-6, notes that the Dollhouse “demonstrates, with great éclat, her [Carrie’s]
very personal tastes in decoration, which were decidedly avant-garde. The house must have been
outrageously chic in the 1920s. It is interesting to reflect that by 1945, when the house was first displayed
in the Museum, its decorative philosophies...had become the fashionable cliché of the glossy magazines:
and so the twenty-five-year-old house appeared the very apex of current taste.”
One of the more intriguing rooms in the Dollhouse, the foyer features a playful combination of old and modern and “real” and faux elements (fig. 22). “The architectural fantasy of the wallpaper, which represents a formal French garden in a *vue d’optique* that creates an illusion of depth as well as the paradox of the outdoors brought inside, dominates the room.”\(^{124}\) A popular form of entertainment in the eighteenth century, *vues d’optique*, or perspective views, are hand-colored prints that are meant to be seen through a convex lens, which heightens the sense of depth in the print.\(^{125}\) Carrie’s use here, at the formal entrance of the Dollhouse, of one of these prints cut up to serve as illusionistic wallpaper, demonstrates her conscious blurring of art and reality, or representation and reality.\(^{126}\) Although this is a theme common to any dollhouse, here it is especially significant since the real lives and homes of the Stettheimers served as inspiration for the Dollhouse. Blue-green painted curtains frame this faux *vue*, in front of which is an enclosed, functioning elevator with another “view” of trees and a rotunda collaged onto its sliding glass doors. To follow the elevator upstairs, one would encounter a painted faux marble hallway; both the foyer and this room have working electric lights ensconced in glass bead chandeliers, which are found throughout the Dollhouse. Thus, in the foyer, Carrie cleverly combined the old and the new, the deceptively fake and the functional—

\(^{124}\)Clark, 16.

\(^{125}\)Terpak, 344.

\(^{126}\)The print used in the foyer could potentially be one of the prints Florine collected in Italy in 1913. Bloemink, *Life and Art*, 49, states that while in Italy, Florine “filled her days by buying Venetian paintings with gold and white frames, taking photographs, and collecting *vues d’optiques* of exotic sites in Egypt, China, and the Dardanelles.”
the antique print and *trompe l’oeil* techniques with the more modern elevator and electric lights—to humorous effect.

In the nursery, framed children’s drawings, presumably by Carrie, decorate the walls, which are covered in an allover collage of brightly colored confetti (fig. 23). Another whimsical collage forms a frieze that runs around the room. Depicting Noah’s ark, it features animals and people, the latter in raingear and modern dress, lining up to board the ship. Here again, Carrie is updating an old subject by giving it a playful new twist. The pale green and white furniture coordinates with the rest of the room, and on the floor are miniature toys, including miniature dollhouse furniture, which is sadly lacking a home. A dollhouse within the Dollhouse is visible in some old photographs and mentioned in early press releases, but now seems to be missing. On the interiority of the dollhouse, Susan Stewart observes that “occupying a space within an enclosed space, the dollhouse’s aptest analogy is the locket or the secret recesses of the heart: center within center, within within within. The dollhouse is a materialized secret; what we look for is the dollhouse within the dollhouse and its promise of an infinitely profound interiority.”

Because this symbolic center of the Stettheimer Dollhouse is missing, we must search for the key to its (and its owner’s) secrets elsewhere. While one could read into the creation of the nursery Carrie’s living vicariously or acting out motherly impulses because she never had children of her own, Mileaf cautions against such an interpretation:

127 Clark, 22.

Commentators often see the doll’s house as an opportunity for Carrie to establish a home ‘of her own’, since she lived with her mother for most of her adult life. However, it can be argued that on the contrary, Carrie’s attraction to the doll’s house stemmed from the very fact that it was unreal, and did not require the kind of labour associated with running a family. It may have signified a realm of play and fantasy, detached from the drudgery and responsibility with which Carrie was quite familiar as the sister charged with most of the familial duties.\textsuperscript{129}

Rather than a substitute of sorts for children she never had, then, the Dollhouse, and especially the nursery within it, gave Carrie an outlet in which she could become like a child again herself, drawing in a childlike manner, playing with miniature toys, while maintaining the freedom, control, and patience of an adult.

Of all the rooms in the Dollhouse, the salon is perhaps the space exhibiting the greatest similarity to the public rooms in the Stettheimers’ actual homes, although even here there are important differences (fig. 24). Compared to the red, gray, and gold color scheme that was predominant in the Stettheimers’ living spaces, the salon is more muted, in white and gold, with touches of pastel pink and green in the needlepoint upholstery Carrie made for the furniture, and in the taffeta curtains. The rococo-style furniture is in keeping with the full-sized pieces the family owned, but the eighteenth-century French-style paintings by Albert Sterner above the doors did not have large-scale counterparts in the Stettheimer home, which was dominated by Florine’s paintings. The white and gold in this room, and the unusual Gothic-style fireplace with its twisted columns, are actually more reminiscent of Florine’s preferred color scheme and style, as seen in the canopied

\textsuperscript{129}Mileaf, 78.
bed with twisted posts and other furniture she designed for her various homes and studio (fig. 25). Perhaps using Florine’s aesthetic was Carrie’s way of acknowledging her sister’s influence, which is very limited in the Dollhouse.\textsuperscript{130} The only other rooms that suggest Florine’s taste are the upper and lower backstairs utility areas, which are white with painted floral decorations in bright red, yellow, pink, blue, and green covering almost every surface, from floors and walls to buckets, dustpans, bowls, and even the telephone, as if the flowers in one of Florine’s paintings had shrunken in size and taken over (fig. 26). Similar to Florine’s \textit{Family Portrait No. 2}, the decorative floral elements in these rooms, though miniscule rather than monumental in scale, are allowed to overpower the everyday banality of the subject matter at hand.

In the Dollhouse art gallery, Carrie’s engagement with avant-garde playfulness comes to the fore, as this room demonstrates her close personal ties to the avant-garde art world of New York as well as its members’ unabashed rejection of bourgeois artistic seriousness. The art gallery features “three arched French windows…framed in folded curtains of dull gold-metal foil,” plain white walls and white-and-gold striped floors (fig. 27-29).\textsuperscript{131} The same colors are used in the Renaissance-style fireplace, musicians’ gallery, and Directoire benches, which are the only other decorative elements in the room aside from the art on the walls. While the use of these colors, again, could be a nod to

\textsuperscript{130}\textit{As Ettie noted in the 1947 Dollhouse catalog, “neither my sister Florine nor I had any part whatever in the production of the house; we were not consulted on any point, and we saw the objects only when finished, unless we happened to be present when they were being made. Although the three of us were very interested in one another’s doings, each worked ‘in single strictness’”; quoted in Clark, 11.}

\textsuperscript{131}Clark, 41.
Florine, it seems rather odd that she did not contribute any miniature works to her sister’s art gallery. Perhaps she intended to participate at some future date, which is possible since the Dollhouse was unfinished at the time of both Florine’s and Carrie’s deaths.\(^{132}\) Or perhaps Carrie, accustomed to seeing Florine’s paintings every day in their home, preferred other art for her Dollhouse. In any case, the contemporary artists who did create works for the Dollhouse art gallery include Marcel Duchamp, Albert Gleizes, Gaston Lachaise, Paul Thévenaz, Carl Sprinchorn, Louis Bouché, Alexander and Gela Forster Archipenko, and William and Marguerite Zorach, among others. In addition to being good friends with Carrie, many of these artists had exhibited their work in the Armory Show in 1913, but none to more acclaim (or hubbub) than Duchamp, with his infamous \textit{Nude Descending a Staircase} of 1912. The miniature pen-and-pencil version of this painting that the artist made for Carrie on the occasion of her birthday in 1918 is just over three inches tall, but the sentiment behind it was more significant than its miniature scale might suggest (figs. 29-30). Duchamp’s personal inscription on the back of the work, which he ended with “en bon souvenir” (in good memory), was probably made more poignant by the fact that he would be leaving New York for Argentina later that summer, and did not know when he would see the Stettheimers again.\(^{133}\) Aside from

\(^{132}\) A small photograph of Florine’s \textit{Portrait of My Sister Carrie W. Stettheimer with Dollhouse} does hang in the dining room of the Dollhouse, but it was a later addition to the unfinished room.

\(^{133}\) The inscription reads in full “Nu Descendant un Escalier Pour la collection de la poupée de Carrie Stettheimer à l’occasion de sa fête en bon souvenir” and is signed “Marcel Duchamp 23 juillet 1918 N.Y.” Quoted in Clark, 48. Duchamp left New York for Buenos Aires, largely in order to avoid military service, on August 13, 1918, and did not return to the U.S. until 1920. Bloemink discusses Duchamp’s farewell gestures to the other Stettheimers in more detail in \textit{Life and Art}, 93.
its sentimental value, the presence of Duchamp’s miniature version of *Nude Descending a Staircase*, a work still considered controversial well into the middle of the twentieth century, demonstrates especially well Carrie’s assimilation of avant-garde aesthetics into the otherwise bourgeois form of the Dollhouse.\textsuperscript{134} Any kind of subversive power the original image possessed, however, is somewhat diminished by its miniaturized scale and placement in a dollhouse—it has been made appropriate for a doll’s world—cute and harmless. Clearly, this small-scale work did not destabilize established art traditions to the extent that its full-size counterpart had. Instead, the miniature *Nude* can be seen as participating in a more playful, Dadaist form of subversion that challenges the bourgeois space of the Dollhouse in a lighthearted, winking manner.\textsuperscript{135}

Although the miniature art gallery that today houses the *Nude* and other small works of modern art was actually empty at the time of Carrie’s death in 1944, her sister Ettie “made every effort to place things as Carrie would have liked or as Carrie had done at one time.”\textsuperscript{136} Thus, while we cannot know for sure Carrie’s intentions for the placement of individual works, it is fairly certain that the art gallery’s current configuration is more or less as she wished. It is perhaps telling that the more traditional pictures (an “icon-like figure of an angel” by Claggett Wilson, and the two Rococo style paintings by Sterner) were created specifically for a bedroom and the salon, respectively,

\textsuperscript{134}A 1949 article on Duchamp’s *Nude* in the *Magazine of Art* refers to it as “the now famous and still highly controversial painting,” Katharine Kuh, “Four Versions of ‘Nude Descending a Staircase,’” *Magazine of Art* 42 (1949): 264.

\textsuperscript{135}The play of bourgeois/avant-garde in the Dollhouse will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

\textsuperscript{136}Clark, 58-59.
whereas the modern works of art (mostly nudes, in varying degrees of abstraction) were
set apart from these more quotidian areas of the house and presumably reserved for
display in the art gallery.\textsuperscript{137} The fact that the modern works are in a space reserved for art
rather than on the walls of the living room, for instance, where art can all too easily
become “decorative,” demonstrates the higher, or at least different, status accorded
modernist art in the Dollhouse and in the Stettheimers’ lives. For the Stettheimers, who
reveled in the decorative and felt that art was “a living issue” and “sincerely…lived it,”
this treatment of the art in the Dollhouse can be viewed as both a compliment to modern
art and a slight.\textsuperscript{138} On the one hand, we can imagine that the art is hung on blank walls in
an almost empty room so as to focus the viewer’s attention on it and keep distractions to
a minimum, because the art is deemed important. On the other hand, it could be argued
that the miniature modern artworks are relegated to their own separate room where they
do not have to be viewed all the time, perhaps because they are too difficult to live with
on a daily basis, and pose problems for living spaces that are decorated in a mélange of
styles, both old-fashioned and modern. Perhaps both views were held by Carrie, whose
Dollhouse is, after all, a miniature monument to art and décor that proclaims both worthy
of celebration, no matter how one chooses to live with them.

While Carrie had plans for outfitting the Dollhouse with dolls, it would seem that
she ultimately preferred “living” in the Dollhouse herself, and never shared this pleasure

\textsuperscript{137} Clark, 58.

\textsuperscript{138} Paul Rosenberg, quoted in Bloemink, \textit{Life and Art}, 95.
with inanimate occupants. In a humorous letter to Gaston Lachaise, thanking him for the art he made for the Dollhouse, Carrie wrote:

My dolls and I thank you most sincerely for the lovely drawings that are to grace their art gallery. I think that the dolls—after they are born, which they are not, yet—ought to be the happiest and proudest dolls in the world as owners of the drawings and the beautiful statue. I am now hoping that they will never be born, so that I can keep them [the art works] forever in custody, and enjoy them myself, while awaiting their arrival.  

As Bloemink notes, this letter, along with the fact that Carrie left the Dollhouse unfinished, demonstrates “the sisters’ preference for anticipation over reality.” Indeed, for Carrie, we can imagine that the process of creating—the outfitting and decorating of her Dollhouse—was more important than the finished product, and it was the crafting of things that brought her the most joy. Moreover, it would seem that the sisters preferred not just anticipation but fantasy over reality, as Carrie’s anthropomorphizing her nonexistent dolls suggests. Perhaps Carrie even imagined herself as a doll when she rearranged the furniture in her Dollhouse—an idea a photograph from around 1914 makes highly plausible. It is the only known photograph of all three Stettheimer sisters together, and in it, the figures of, from left to right, Florine, Carrie, and Ettie are cut out and pasted onto a commercial postcard of Bern, Switzerland (fig. 31). Little is known about this collage, but it was probably made by one or all of the Stettheimers when they

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139 The letter is dated April 11, 1931. Florine and Ettie Stettheimer Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Lachaise created multiple drawings for the Dollhouse as well as an alabaster figural sculpture, Venus, which stands just over six inches tall (c.1925), see figures 27 and 29 and Clark, 50-1, 60-1.

140 Bloemink, Life and Art, 274.
were temporarily stranded in Bern at the outbreak of the war. Like paper dolls, the sisters’ bodies hover over the landscape view behind them, almost convincing the viewer that they belong there, that they might be situated on a cliff overlooking the town below, until one notices that Ettie’s chair is on top of a house. The sisters’ playing with scale and juxtaposition in this postcard foreshadows what Carrie would do in her Dollhouse and Florine in her paintings upon their return to New York. Certainly, the same kind of experimentation and playfulness found in this image also guided the sisters’ art.

Similarly, Bloemink traces the influence of “small, mass-manufactured German paper-picture scenes” from the sisters’ childhood on Florine’s paintings, noting that “each miniature scene originally featured blank areas over which one of the Stettheimer children glued matching paper figures, like puzzle pieces, onto scenic backgrounds….The scattered composition, subject matter, and bright primary colors bear many resemblances to Stettheimer’s paintings,” and both “reveal a similar childish innocence.” For Carrie, the Dollhouse undoubtedly functioned like one of these two-dimensional paper-picture scenes come to life; it was a realm that gave her the power to make-believe.

Florine recognized the importance of the Dollhouse for Carrie in her 1923 painting *Portrait of My Sister Carrie W. Stettheimer with Dollhouse* (fig. 32). Pictured in a faintly pinkish white gown with a black lace shawl and black, ermine-lined train, Carrie gestures toward her Dollhouse, which Florine has depicted in colors to match Carrie’s

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142 Bloemink, *Life and Art*, 82-3.
outfit, clearly suggesting an identity between the artificer and her artwork. The plain white and gray façade of the Dollhouse has been recast in light pink with black details so that it looks more like an oversized birthday cake than a small house. It is precariously balanced on a stand with impossibly thin black legs, which mimic Carrie’s dainty feet in her pointy black shoes and find visual affinity in the “two slender antennae” that extend from her white cloche hat. While many have pointed out this last curious detail, most attribute it to Carrie’s unusual fashion sense or to Florine’s whimsical imagination, and no one has hazarded a guess as to its other possible meanings. Bloemink, however, noting Florine’s conscious use of insect motifs in some of her other paintings, has observed that “the mayfly or butterfly has long been a symbol of metamorphic modes of transformation and concepts of the feminine.” Furthermore, Florine “saw herself as an ‘ephemère, [the] transparent insect that is so translucent one can hardly see it,’ and she linked this state and art, which is itself ephemeral and based on illusion.” By including such insects in her paintings, and aligning herself with them, as in her Portrait of Myself of 1923, Florine was celebrating all that was feminine, ephemeral, and artistic (fig. 33).

While she is not explicitly linked with a winged insect as is Florine in her self-portrait,

143 Bloemink, Life and Art, 148.

144 Bloemink, Life and Art, 133-135.

145 In another interpretation of this painting, Linda Nochlin points to the influence of William Blake, “whose reversal of natural scale, androgynous figure style, and intensified drawing seem to have stirred a responsive chord in Stettheimer’s imagination. Blake’s illustration for his Song of Los, with the figure reclining weightlessly on a flower, seems to have been the prototype for Stettheimer’s memorable self-portrait,” Nochlin, 99. I will return to this idea of reversing natural scale at the end of this chapter.
Carrie’s antennae and wing-like lace shawl at least suggest that Florine saw her sister in a similar light.

Yet, unlike Florine in her self-portrait, who mystically floats in nebulous white space like the dragonfly in the upper right hand corner of the canvas, Carrie is very much grounded in a quasi-domestic environment. She stands on a light blue, floral patterned carpet that harmonizes with the bunch of flowers at her waist and recalls the carpet in Florine’s portrait of their mother. Bordering the carpet is Carrie’s monogram in blue and gold, and the same colors appear in the pink striped curtains that are parted to reveal Carrie, cigarette in one hand, placing a miniature chair through the front door of the Dollhouse with the other. This suggestion of an interior space dominates the foreground of the painting while the middle- and backgrounds of the canvas feature outdoor scenes that demonstrate Florine’s use of atemporal narrative. An image that is essentially a miniature rendition of Florine’s Family Portrait No. 1 from 1915, depicting Ettie, Florine, Rosetta, and Carrie sitting around a table, occupies the middle ground and functions as a memory. Yet while it “might be an image in Carrie’s mind…it also refers to Florine’s art,” and at the same time, “it is not framed as a picture within a picture, but as a real—or remembered—event.” Thus, Florine is again playing with the relationship between images and illusion—those in the mind’s eye and those committed to canvas by an artist. Her repetition of the same image is perhaps a recognition of its all too ephemeral nature and an attempt to make it, and the memory it depicts, more permanent.

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146 Bloemink, Life and Art, 147.
147 Mileaf, 78.
The inclusion of the family portrait in Carrie’s portrait thus speaks not only to Carrie’s close relationship with her family, but also to the idea that the Stettheimers’ daily lives were lived as a form of art.

Connecting the family group with the tiny scene in the background of the painting that depicts fields, a farmhouse, and farmworkers, is a bright pink path that passes “under a series of rose arbors reminiscent of the gardens of André Brook.” Since the façade of the Dollhouse was modeled after that of André Brook, and looms large in the foreground of the painting, the inclusion of gardens like those at André Brook is significant—but their very small size and placement in the background suggest that the Dollhouse is more real, to Carrie at least, than the Stettheimers’ old summer home. Indeed, the figures in the background, and even in the middle ground, of the portrait are so small they resemble toys more than actual people. Florine’s use of miniaturization here is no doubt a tribute to her sister’s ongoing task of making miniatures for her Dollhouse. Bloemink’s interpretation of this aspect of the painting merits quoting in full:

By juxtaposing images of rural workers in the background with the formal foreground setting, Stettheimer reinforces the notion that Carrie’s endeavors in the dollhouse should also be viewed as work and physical labor. As she was well aware, time for Carrie’s creative efforts had to be carefully squirreled away from household and familial administrative duties, thereby making such accomplishments that much more praiseworthy. Carrie, like her sister Florine arranging flowers in the portrait’s middle ground, has not been content simply to sit around listlessly at the family table,

148Bloemink, Life and Art, 148.
but has followed a compulsion to create, allowing her sister to confer on her the title of “Decorator, Designer & Collector.”¹⁴⁹

This last comment refers to the small label on the side of the Dollhouse in the painting that includes Carrie’s name and her designations. In this complex painting, which plays with scale and conflates “interior and exterior, imagination and reality,” Florine not only flattered her sitter by deeming her work on the Dollhouse important and artistic, she also reciprocated Carrie’s practice of miniaturization, which is the sincerest form of flattery.¹⁵⁰

But Florine’s use of doll-like figures and miniature scenes was not limited to this painting; rather a kind of miniature sensibility pervaded most of her works, and critics were often quick to pick up on this. Writing in Art News on the occasion of the Museum of Modern Art’s retrospective exhibition held not long after Florine’s death, Glenway Wescott observed that in her paintings, “passages of still-life and miniature scenes set apart in the background are finer in their way than any twentieth-century work except Bonnard’s; and in fact her detailed way was not unlike his.”¹⁵¹ A small image of Florine’s Portrait of My Sister Carrie is actually used to illustrate this article, with a detail of the farmhouse in the background shown larger than the painting itself. In his favorable review of her work in The Nation in 1932, Paul Rosenfeld also remarked on Florine’s penchant for diminutiveness: after describing at length her love of ornament and her use of “elfish” or “elfin” forms, he noted of her portraits particularly, “the figures of

¹⁴⁹Bloemink, Life and Art, 148.
¹⁵⁰Mileaf, 78.
the family and its adherents have a certain very Parisian dollishness, as befits inhabitants of a rarefied and not quite probable world.” Continuing in this vein, he commented:

As for the various floral American fantasies, they are full of marvelously chic and quite diaphanous persons; and if these puppets have the American seriousness mixed with the American childishness, and are all exalted and pompous about ridiculous things, they also have an elegance and elfishness which is not quite of this world, and of one whose inhabitants might have larked in the train of Titania and Bottom. In fact, the values and relations and accents of Florine Stettheimer’s art are so fastidious and incorporeal and weightless that we seem to be moving through them upon a planet smaller than ours, some large asteroid swimming joyously in its blue ether—the asteroid “Florine”—and getting both the experience of this delicate, remote little sphere and a sense of the grossness and preposterousness of our own earth.\(^{152}\)

While Florine often took the people she knew and the reality she lived as the subject of her paintings, she was, like her sister, not content with straightforward representation, and preferred creating fantasies in which ordinary things were made special through embellishment and whimsy. Rosenfeld’s metaphor for Florine’s art as its own “delicate, remote little” world that puts the everyday world into perspective could just as easily be used to describe the shifts in scale at work in Carrie’s Dollhouse. With that in mind, the similarly cosmic and hyperbolic statement of Florine’s biographer, Parker Tyler, about her life and art, actually does not seem so outlandish:

What was the real cathedral in Florine’s life? Undoubtedly her own home, and in the Family Portrait No. 2 the spectator is part of the altar, gazing down the aisle of space to the entrance, and instantaneously beyond to the very poles of the earth. This is why Florine’s suspended bouquets seem magically upheld by light only: notice that the chandelier…simply reverses the reach of the

\(^{152}\)Rosenfeld, 523.
Chrysler Building. Florine’s world was ‘relativist,’…and hence her art was the daily record of a fantasy-life, a ‘little theatre’ like one at a royal court, where all life was reduced to a private midway with fanfares, lights, and dancers.\footnote{Tyler, 172.}

Florine and Carrie, both equipped with vivid imaginations that could see the Chrysler Building in a chandelier and creative potential in a scrap of fabric, crafted their own little worlds—in the interiors of their homes, paintings, and Dollhouse—that were incredibly rich and full of life, and were in no way diminished by their small stature.
In the same way that normative ideas about scale and media should not determine the worthiness (or lack thereof) of an artwork, so too should traditional distinctions between art and craft be held at arm’s length when considering a work such as Carrie Stettheimer’s Dollhouse, which defies easy classification. Most dollhouses are considered works of craft rather than art, and Stettheimer’s is no exception, since its creator was not an artist in the traditional sense. But the fact that Stettheimer created her Dollhouse at a time when the strict dividing line between art and craft was becoming increasingly blurred problematizes this categorization. A closer look at the term “craft” reveals the multiple definitions of the word that a dollhouse may be seen to engage. On the one hand, a craftwork can be understood as a handmade, usually functional object made by artisans who specialize in the making of such things. The Arts and Crafts movement, with its emphasis on the handcrafted aesthetic as a palliative against industrialization and its perceived evils, did much to elevate the lowly crafts to the status of art. The decorative arts and interior design more broadly, although not “functional” in a strict sense, are also generally considered to be crafts of this same order, and their application entailed a considerable degree of study and skill. On the other hand, there is the more negative definition of craft that is associated with “arts and crafts” as practiced in elementary schools with popsicle sticks and cotton balls, that is, an object made by
untrained, amateur hands. This notion of craft is more closely associated with non-art and kitsch, and is far removed from the rarified world of the fine arts. The distinction made between art and craft in the following passage understands craft according to the former definition:

Since fine art always entails the making of formal symbols, its root is always to be found in the signifier pointing to some-thing other than itself. By contrast, craft always entails the making of actual things, not signs. The craft object is the thing itself. The subject of a bowl is the bowl. Thus, unlike the fine art object, the craft object’s basic physical configuration as formed matter is not dependent on a social system of symbolic signs that point to some thing; the craft object stands as itself in itself; it stands in all its plenitude and functionality as a man-made physical object with a specific function.154

Following this definition, a miniature chair in a dollhouse, because it was modeled after a larger chair, a functional craft object, can also be seen as a work of craft. Because the chair has been miniaturized, however, it is no longer functional in the way that the larger chair is: “use value is transformed into display value,” thus making dollhouse miniatures more of an art than a craft.155 The dollhouse’s status as “art,” however, is inevitably that of the “lesser” arts (or crafts) of interior design and decoration, rather than the inspired, “original” art of creative genius. For the second meaning of craft still lingers in the dollhouse, since most makers of dollhouses, including the artisans I will study in this chapter, are untrained hobbyists or dabblers. And though these creators may enlist the help of talented artists and craftsmen, they are still considered less serious and important


155Stewart, On Longing, 62.
than professional artists. The associations of dollhouses and their makers with femininity, children, and domesticity, as discussed in chapter one, also prevented their being taken seriously. Moreover, the traditional gendered categorizations of artists as men and practitioners of craft as women would only have reinforced this tendency.

Dollhouses, then, actually exist in a nebulous area somewhere between art and these multiple notions of craft. In this chapter I aim to untangle the complex overlapping of these categories by comparing the Stettheimer Dollhouse with other miniature objects, including Colleen Moore’s Fairy Castle, the Thorne Miniature Rooms, and Marcel Duchamp’s *Boîtes-en-Valise*. These first two objects help to illuminate the practice of dollhouse-making as an acceptable outlet for wealthy American women in the first half of the twentieth century, despite the potential for such activity to be seen as frivolous in a time of war and depression. While it cannot be denied that the Fairy Castle and the Thorne Rooms, in addition to the Stettheimer Dollhouse, would have been perceived unequivocally as non-art by the art establishment and the general public, the women who created these objects imbued them with a sense of higher purpose by adopting charitable, educational, and artistic functions for their miniature craft works, transforming “craft” into “art.” Although artists such as Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque revolutionized art in the early twentieth century with their incorporation of untraditional media, such as newspaper, into their paintings, they nevertheless continued to assert the primacy of painting in the European tradition—they coopted “non-art” objects but did not transform them into autonomous artworks. It was only with Duchamp’s radical appropriation of everyday objects as full-fledged works of art that the definition of art was truly called
into question. These ready-mades and his other projects that blurred the boundaries between art and craft, original and reproduction, were born out of a serious engagement with playfulness and experimentation that characterized much of early twentieth-century modernism. Nowhere is this sense of whimsy more apparent than within the rooms of Stettheimer’s Dollhouse. Nonetheless, Picasso, Braque, and Duchamp were undoubtedly artists, and as such their authority, though initially questioned by traditionalists, would eventually come to be acknowledged. Stettheimer, however, was not regarded as an artist and her Dollhouse was viewed as a mere toy or hobby well into the twentieth century, as changes in its display at the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY) demonstrate. I will argue here that Stettheimer and her Dollhouse were influential forces in the shaping of Duchamp’s Boîtes project, which entailed the making of hundreds of miniature reproductions of almost 70 of his artworks, which were packed into boxes, some of which were set into suitcases (Boîtes-en-Valise), the creation and assembly of which occupied the artist from 1935 until his death, in 1968 (fig. 34). Duchamp in turn made a modern-day reading of the Dollhouse as a work of art possible by challenging the definition of art and willfully blurring the boundary between art and craft (and their attendant gendered associations). Both Stettheimer and Duchamp rejected the art/craft divide through their works in ways (both tacit and explicit) that can ultimately be viewed as avant-garde, that is, as circulating within the destabilizing discursive practices which regulated aesthetic production in Duchamp’s New York circle.\footnote{As mentioned in the introduction, I am indebted to Mileaf, 79, for suggesting a connection between the Stettheimer Dollhouse and Duchamp’s Boîte-en-Valise. While I agree with her statement on}
Two important motifs represented in the structures of dollhouses are wealth and nostalgia. Obviously, it takes quite a bit of time and money to create a dollhouse, a practice that would be beyond the means of individuals who struggle to keep an actual roof over their heads, and so dollhouses, especially the ones under consideration here, are decidedly embedded in the world of the middle- and upper-classes. And although the making and outfitting of dollhouses was a popular activity that was seen as an appropriate leisure pursuit for women of means in the first half of the twentieth century, this activity also carried with it a sense of decadence that was heightened by the gravity of the two World Wars, global pandemics, and the Great Depression. While artists working during this time period could fall back on the idea of the spiritual or emotional necessity of making and viewing art, dollhouse-makers no doubt found it harder to overcome the perceived frivolity and materialism of their work and felt they had to justify their activities. To do this, they recast their projects as charitable or educational works, which involved mining the nostalgic potential of the dollhouse form by emphasizing its connection to children and childhood. While the Fairy Castle embodies an opulent escapism and the Thorne Rooms demonstrate their maker’s sense of nostalgia for a very

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the whole, I disagree with her conclusions as she seems to confuse the Boîtes with the readymades, and does not consider the amount of tedious labor that actually went into the production of the former: “The doll’s house may be more closely linked to the experimental art practices of such Stettheimer friends as Marcel Duchamp than has previously been considered: Duchamp’s notions of replication and readymade, which were played out in the Boîte-en-Valise, suggest that art is not found in expressive, individualistic formats but in the artist’s process of selection. Store-bought, manufactured and gathered by an iconoclast, Duchamp’s objects were understood as brilliantly subversive; assembled in a doll’s house and in a domestic setting, Carrie’s related wares could not be seen as the same.”

particular, historical past, the Stettheimer Dollhouse eschews unbridled fantasy and stylistic purism in favor of unstudied yet assertive avant-gardism.

The extravagant dollhouse built by the silent film actress Colleen Moore (1899-1988) in the 1920s and 30s conspicuously displayed the wealth of its owner and reflected the luxury of Busby Berkeley-era Hollywood. \(^{158}\) The Fairy Castle, as it is called, is indeed lavish: it features twelve rooms, the largest of which its maker was able to sit in (fig. 35), and all of which are whimsically decorated with precious materials including gold, silver, diamonds, pearls, jade and ivory. Filled with priceless objects including miniature books by famous authors, the world’s smallest printed bible dating from 1840, and an organ that plays music via remote control, the castle took several years and the assistance of hundreds of artisans to build and was valued at roughly half a million dollars when it was completed in 1935. \(^{159}\) Perhaps in part to make up for its extravagance, the miniature castle was taken on tour in the 1930s to raise money for various children’s charities, and indeed Colleen Moore’s statement regarding the tour suggests a sense of atonement: “Now that my dream [the castle] is realized in all its perfection, I would be selfish not to do some real good with it.” \(^{160}\) Rather than selfishly keep the dollhouse to herself, Moore felt compelled to put it to philanthropic use: by publicly displaying the Fairy Castle, she not only raised money for charities but also


\(^{160}\) Moore, 5.
provided entertainment and much-needed escape to the spectators who came to see it, not unlike the relief her films might have brought them.\textsuperscript{161} Although adults as well as children were attracted to the castle, its deployment of fantasy was clearly geared toward children while the romanticized pseudo-medievalism of the object’s dominant forms most likely would have inculcated a sense of both childlike wonder and nostalgia of a different sort in its adult viewers.

Just as Moore endeavored to bring about social improvement with her castle, the precursor to Carrie Stettheimer’s Dollhouse was created for a charity fundraiser to benefit children, and her second Dollhouse—the one currently on display at the MCNY—was also framed in the context of doing good. After Carrie’s death, her sister Ettie wrote in the Museum’s 1947 catalog for the Dollhouse: “I think the idea of being able to create an object of intrinsic worth and at the same time to contribute largely to some cause she was interested in promoting fascinated her. I believe it was her hope to exhibit the house for such a purpose, and in the end to present it to a museum…”\textsuperscript{162} Thus, Carrie is made out to seem beneficent and selfless through her willingness to share her creation with the public rather than frivolous and self-indulgent, as she might have been considered otherwise. Ettie continued: “...I feel certain that no repository would have been more satisfactory to her than the museum of her own city, the city in which she was born and which she probably loved the more because a large part of her childhood and youth were

\textsuperscript{161}Similarly, Colleen Moore’s celebrity also would have been a factor drawing crowds to see her Fairy Castle, an idea Hastie, 38, explores in greater detail. Hastie also likens the act of viewing the dollhouse to that of watching a movie at the cinema.

\textsuperscript{162}Stettheimer, quoted in Clark, 10.
spent in Europe.” Imputing nostalgia for a lost New York childhood to Carrie, Ettie saw the MCNY as the ideal institution for the Dollhouse, and so it became a sentimental gift to the city from one of its own.

Whether Carrie actually felt this way about New York is uncertain but the decision on Ettie’s part to give the Dollhouse to this particular museum, rather than an art museum, both reflects Ettie’s conception of the Dollhouse as a craft project rather than a work of art and underscores her desire to elevate its status by placing it in a museum. This desire becomes clear later in the catalog, when she noted of the Dollhouse, “I look upon this production of Carrie’s as a facile and more or less posthumous substitute for the work she was eminently fitted to adopt as a vocation, had circumstances been favorable—stage design.” Framed in this negative language, as “a facile…substitute,” the Dollhouse becomes an emblem of Carrie’s unfulfilled potential as a stage designer and reflects Ettie’s view that theater was a higher art form than dollhouse-making, as most Americans of the time would likely have agreed. Unlike Florine’s proud declaration of her sister Carrie as “Decorator, Designer, and Collector,” Ettie’s claim avoids associating Carrie with the more obvious calling of interior designer, a profession

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163 Stettheimer, quoted in Clark, 10.

164 By comparison, Ettie, who was also responsible for bequeathing Florine’s paintings after her death, donated most of them to art museums. Evidently, despite wanting to argue for the display-worthiness of the Dollhouse, Ettie also upheld the distinction between art and craft and may have felt that an art museum was no place for a dollhouse.

165 Stettheimer, quoted in Clark, 11.

166 Another reason Ettie may have connected the Dollhouse to the theatre is to associate Carrie with Florine’s earlier success creating costumes and set designs for the operetta *Four Saints in Three Acts* by Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein, first performed in 1934.
that had only recently been established and was not looked upon as highly as the theatrical arts.\textsuperscript{167} Furthermore, as Janine Mileaf notes, “this newly professionalized field quickly acquired negative—i.e., gendered—connotations that Ettie wanted to avoid when establishing her sister’s legacy.” Not only was interior design considered feminine, there was also a “bias against female designers as spinsters, or even lesbians.”\textsuperscript{168} Thus, while Ettie appears to have viewed her sister as a hobbyist whose talents were never fully utilized, her championing of the Dollhouse was intended to emphasize Carrie’s inherent artistic ability over her penchant for what were perceived as the more feminine, and merely decorative, arts.

Unlike the Fairy Castle, that “exquisite toy” which now resides at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, and the Stettheimer Dollhouse, which is on display in a cultural museum that exhibits everything from art and crafts to toys and ephemera, the Thorne Rooms are on permanent exhibition at an institution dedicated to art with a capital “A”—the Art Institute of Chicago. As their name implies, they are not rooms of a dollhouse but miniature period rooms that are displayed as unitary works of art, separate from one another and behind glass. Executed with such perfection that they can easily be mistaken for full-scale rooms when viewed in certain photographs, the level of detail attained in these rooms is astonishing (fig. 36). Everything from the size of the wood grain of the furnishings to the number of needlepoint stitches in the floor coverings is to

\textsuperscript{167}Mileaf, 79.

\textsuperscript{168}Mileaf, 79. The Stettheimers’ close friendship with a number of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals, which is discussed in Whiting, 25-35, 46-7, however, suggests that this was not a motivating factor for Ettie.
scale (one inch to one foot). The creator of these rooms, Narcissa Niblack, who later in life took the name Mrs. James Ward Thorne (1882-1966), “had no formal training in architecture, interior design, or the visual arts.”\textsuperscript{169} She did, however, have a passion for collecting miniatures and visiting historic homes and castles, and what is more, she was possessed of the requisite funds and social connections to employ a team of artisans to assist her in making over sixty-eight models of European and American interiors between 1932 and 1940.\textsuperscript{170} As Bruce Hatton Boyer observes, the creation of period rooms in American museums and the desire among the wealthy to build and decorate their homes in historical styles, specifically those of eighteenth-century England and France, were at their peak in the 1920s and were important catalysts for the creation of the miniature rooms.\textsuperscript{171} Cast in this light, as painstaking historical records of how people once lived, the Thorne Rooms tap into a different sense of nostalgia than does the Fairy Castle or the Stettheimer Dollhouse. Rather than simply transporting the viewer back to her childhood or inviting her to enter a fantasy space that never was, the Thorne Rooms whisk her away to a time and place that are made aesthetically legible through meticulous study while remaining inevitably unknowable in their entirety.

\textsuperscript{169}Bruce Hatton Boyer in Fannia Weingartner and Bruce Hatton Boyer, \textit{Miniature Rooms: The Thorne Rooms at the Art Institute of Chicago} (New York: Abbeville Press, 2004), 10.

\textsuperscript{170}Sixty-eight rooms are on display at the Art Institute of Chicago, and these comprise the majority of Thorne’s work, although there are a few other miniature rooms in the collections of other museums; Boyer, 15.

\textsuperscript{171}Boyer, 12. This demonstrates, again, the fashion for the Rococo style that was so popular in the early twentieth century.
Indeed, the desire to recapture the look and spirit of a bygone era was increasingly important in a time of great social and political change. Speaking of Thorne’s preference for older, more traditional decorative styles, Boyer notes that “…for Mrs. Thorne and others of similar background, the grace of English and French interiors during the eighteenth century was the standard of good taste and breeding. Her notes contain references to her belief that in the eighteenth century, interior design reached its zenith, and it was this period that provided the styles with which she surrounded herself in her everyday life. Thus, the European Rooms, taken as a whole, can be seen as a reminder of a style of living that had virtually come to an end with World War I.”

By both living in and recreating in miniature her idealized version of the (quite distant) past, Thorne can be seen as a staunch traditionalist, reacting against modern life by trying to preserve threatened, older styles and modes of living. Similarly, as the United States was on the brink of entering the second World War, a desire to preserve a particularly American past is evident in the 1941 catalog produced for the American Rooms, which reads in part: “In these days when we are all becoming acutely conscious of the value of our American institutions and traditions, the present series of rooms…has a particularly timely appeal….It is indeed a fully developed American Wing in miniature which in its full scale equivalent would require a larger area for its display than is at present given for this purpose in any museum in the country.”

Due to the miniature rooms’ historical and

172Boyer, 15.

educational value, and their placement in an institution dedicated to art, history, and education, Thorne had no need to justify her miniature-making “craft” as did Moore or Stettheimer (via her sister Ettie). The Thorne rooms were automatically elevated to the status of art by the space in which they were exhibited, even if they fell under the qualified rubric of the decorative arts, newly ensconced in American museums thanks to the interest in period rooms.

While it may only be indicative of Thorne’s personal taste, it also seems quite telling of the traditionalism of most American art institutions in the first half of the twentieth century that of the sixty-eight rooms, only five are decorated in a contemporary (early twentieth-century) fashion. One of these five represents a California interior circa 1940 that is decorated with miniature works of art by artists including Fernand Léger, Amédée Ozenfant, and Marie Laurencin, some of which were commissioned by Thorne specifically for this room (fig. 37).\textsuperscript{174} The 1941 catalog rather humbly states that “this model follows no actual example and is not intended to offer any suggestions as to a proper approach to modern design. Its purpose is merely to indicate the general character of a modern room designed as an appropriate background for contemporary works of art and to point out what may well be called the international quality of design today.”\textsuperscript{175} This rather stark and simple room, with its preponderance of straight lines and modern materials (including plastic), captures surprisingly well the look of its time. Indeed, an

\textsuperscript{174}This room is referred to as a hallway of a penthouse apartment in San Francisco in the literature, but apparently Thorne described it as a “modern art gallery.” Boyer, 164; Thorne, 78.

\textsuperscript{175}Thorne, 78.
important recent development in modern design is actually hinted at in the above description of the Thorne room. The Museum of Modern Art’s influential 1932 International Exhibition of Modern Architecture, which coined the term “International Style” and helped establish the idea of modern design’s pure functionalism, with clean, simple lines, and the absence of ornament, had revolutionized both commercial and residential spaces. The Thorne room’s conversance with architectural modernism’s pioneering techniques makes the fairly simple Stettheimer Dollhouse art gallery—unfinished though it may have been, and its decidedly modern art notwithstanding—look downright old-fashioned, or at least excessively decorated. Granted, although Carrie was not trying to create historically accurate period rooms, the Stettheimer Dollhouse as a whole is nevertheless evocative of its moment, namely the 1920s, and captures a sense of the avant-garde practices of that time. The Thorne room’s fluent modernism, on the other hand, is rendered somewhat ironic in that it approaches modernism from a studied, self-consciously historicizing standpoint. While the interior of this room appears much more modern than that of the Stettheimer art gallery, the art itself had not changed that much in the interim (both rooms feature predominately Cubist works), perhaps reflecting the facts that by 1940, the interior had caught up with the art, and that both had become established to such an extent that they were no longer avant-garde.

Indeed, New York’s avant-garde art scene of the early twentieth century, born out of the tumult of the war years and sustained by the manic energy of the 1920s, had largely dissipated by the 1930s and 40s. In addition to the pall cast by the Great Depression, the earlier social environment that had fostered Stettheimer’s and Duchamp’s
creative activities had changed. Many of the original members of the avant-garde had left New York, including Duchamp, who spent much of the 1930s in France. In 1935, the Stettheimers discontinued their regular salons, and Carrie stopped working on her Dollhouse. In a way, both Stettheimer’s Dollhouse and Duchamp’s Boîtes, which he began making in 1935, are projects that reflect upon and encapsulate the spirit of an earlier time while striving to preserve in miniature a moment of intense intellectual and artistic ferment. In their use of playful miniaturization and their merging of art and craft, these projects were driven by similar experimental, avant-garde tendencies. As argued in chapter 2, the Stettheimer Dollhouse resists easy classification as either avant-garde or bourgeois due to the conflicting nature of the presence of avant-garde art works within a fundamentally bourgeois form, and so it subtly blurs the line between these supposedly mutually exclusive categories, revealing the interdependence of the bourgeoisie and its critical fraction. Likewise, Duchamp’s Boîte series, (figs. 34 and 39) a “portable museum” comprised of a set of boxes, some set in suitcases, which contain miniaturized copies of almost all the artist’s works, challenged the bourgeois art museum by incorporating its methods of display into an avant-garde format that gave the viewer unprecedented control over the art. Within these two re-imaginings of bourgeois spaces (the home, a private and traditionally feminine space, and the museum, a more public space) we find bold declarations of artistic autonomy and a re-articulation of bourgeois spatial-domestic conventions inflected with a new avant-garde vocabulary. Although

176 Williams, 155-163.
Duchamp was undoubtedly more radical in his vision and execution of these new ideas about art and its relationship to space, Stettheimer’s contribution should not be diminished, as her Dollhouse and the experience of creating the miniature Nude Descending a Staircase for it most certainly inspired Duchamp in the making of his Boîtes. Furthermore, it was in Stettheimer’s New York home that Duchamp and his circle developed many avant-garde ideas, and the Dollhouse, inspired in part by that home, is the imaginary space where these ideas would be enshrined, in miniature.

Before creating the miniature for Stettheimer’s Dollhouse, Duchamp created three other versions of the Nude, of which he had conceived as a series from the start.177 In 1918, before leaving New York for Argentina, Duchamp made the miniature Nude for the Dollhouse, as discussed in chapter 2. His decision to miniaturize this particular painting may have been inspired by the intense media attention surrounding the original’s exhibition at the Armory Show in 1913, which involved not only small, grainy, black-and-white reproductions of the painting in newspapers, but also cartoon parodies of it, such as J. F. Griswold’s now famous caricature Rude Descending a Staircase (Rush Hour at the Subway) (fig. 38).178 The Stettheimer version of the Nude, executed in pen and pencil, does indeed approximate the look of a cartoon more than a painting, suggesting

177 Nude No. 1 (1911) was essentially a study for the more famous Nude No. 2 (1912). The artist created Nude No. 3 (1916) at the request of Walter Arensberg, his close friend and patron, who had missed an opportunity to purchase the original from the Armory Show. T. J. Demos, The Exiles of Marcel Duchamp (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 49.

that Duchamp may have had such images in mind when creating this miniature (fig. 30). Although the artist did not arrive in New York until 1915, he no doubt had seen the earlier press coverage, which had helped make *Nude, No. 2* a *succès de scandale* and turned Duchamp into a sensation practically overnight. ¹⁷⁹ The artist likely took pleasure and found validation in seeing his work reproduced multiple times in the papers, and in creating the Dollhouse *Nude*, Duchamp perhaps relived this pleasure. Furthermore, Duchamp had worked as a printer’s apprentice and as a newspaper cartoonist between 1905 and 1910, and this experience, coupled with the tremendous media response to the *Nude*, undoubtedly underpinned his use of replication and miniaturization in his art throughout his career and especially in the miniature *Nudes* he created for the Stettheimer Dollhouse and for his *Boîtes* and *Boîtes-en-Valise*, to which I will now turn. ¹⁸⁰

As Ecke Bonk notes, the idea for the *Boîtes* seems to have come to Duchamp as early as 1914, when he began photographing some of his notes and drawings, printing them at their original size on photographic paper and compiling them in boxes (these are referred to as *Boîtes 1914*). He followed this process again in 1934, making reproductions of the notes and sketches he had made from 1912 to 1917 in preparation for his famous work *Large Glass (The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even)*; this

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¹⁷⁹In a 1966 interview with Pierre Cabanne, Duchamp reflected on his early career in New York, “I wasn’t on the fringes in New York precisely because of the *Nude Descending a Staircase*. When I was introduced, I was always the man who had painted the *Nude Descending a Staircase*, and people knew who they were talking to”; quoted in Gloria Moure, *Marcel Duchamp: Works, Writings and Interviews* (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2009), 142.

¹⁸⁰Judovitz points out that Duchamp’s early experience with engraving and cartooning had a significant impact on his career; see *Unpacking Duchamp*, 17-8.
boxed set of notes came to be called Boîte verte or Green Box, for obvious reasons. The painstaking process of replicating his notes, “scribbled at random on some hundred scraps of paper,” Duchamp described at length:

I wanted to reproduce them as exactly as possible. So I had all of these thoughts lithographed in the same ink which had been used for the originals. In order to find paper that was exactly the same, I had to scour the most unlikely nooks and crannies of Paris. Then we had to cut out three hundred copies of each lithograph with the help of zinc patterns that I had made to fit exactly the outlines of the original papers…

This obsessive concern with replicating his notes down to the exact size, shape, and media of the originals is also present in his Boîtes and Boîtes-en-Valise of 1935-41, but with some important differences. With these later boxes, Duchamp was not just reproducing documents relating to a single work of art; he was creating elaborate reproductions of virtually his entire oeuvre, which by this time included close to seventy pieces, from the Nude and the Large Glass to his ready-mades. The sheer scope of such an undertaking meant that Duchamp would either have to expand his Boîtes or reduce the size of their contents. Given that portability was paramount for the artist as we will see, he opted to reproduce the works contained in these later, post-Dollhouse Boîtes in miniature, utilizing craft techniques not typically employed by artists.

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181 Ecke Bonk, Marcel Duchamp: The Box in a Valise (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), 19. Duchamp claimed that this box of notes was just as important, if not more so, than the work of art itself, and this practice of note-making has been seen by scholars as another example of his moving away from retinal art and toward conceptual art, as noted by Judovitz, 56.

Instead of using modern techniques of reproduction for his Boîtes, Duchamp relied on collotype printing and pochoir coloring, “an anachronistic, cottage-industry procedure, which required the time-consuming hand-coloring of each print by the use of stencils.”

By using such techniques, T.J. Demos states, “he blurred the boundaries between the unique art object and the multiple, between the original and its mechanical reproducibility, and created a number of transitional stages that were hard to define or to distinguish.”

Further contributing to this blurring of boundaries was the fact that Duchamp, rather than undertaking the tedious labor himself, assigned most of it to an outside workshop that specialized in printing and coloring. Thus, his use of traditional print technologies provided him with readymade miniatures. While he outsourced the reproduction of his works, he was personally responsible for breaking them down “into separate graphic steps” and organizing “a large number of successive operations.” This process included compiling 300 copies of approximately seventy works of art into boxes, twenty-four of which were made into “deluxe” editions by being packed into suitcases, creating Boîtes-en-Valise (fig. 39).

These deluxe editions also contained one “original” work of art by Duchamp, mounted on the inside of the valise’s lid. Making

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183 Demos, 49.
184 Bonk, 20.
185 Bonk, 20-1.
186 As Bonk, 257, elaborates, the “originals” were often the photographic color guides Duchamp had created for the pochoir studio to follow as they were creating the reproductions, but occasionally they were actually original, and often very personal, works of art.
the miniature objects took seven years, from 1935-41; then, assembling them in boxes and distributing them occupied Duchamp from 1941 until the end of his life, in 1968.\footnote{Production of the boxes actually continued after his death with the help of his assistants.}

Invoking the Benjaminian idea of the work of art as bereft of its essential aura in the age of mechanical reproduction, Demos commented on Duchamp’s hand-colored photographs (figs. 40-41) within that context: “While photography displaces the original by substituting for it, hand-coloring paradoxically restores a sense of aura.” But Demos finds that “rather than rehearsing the opposition of either original or reproduction, the condition of the Boîte’s images proposes a liminal status between painting and photography.”\footnote{Demos, 52.}

Indeed, the hand-coloring of miniature reproductions, executed not by Duchamp’s hand, but by those of the artisans employed by Duchamp, brings the “original” work of art (and its mechanical reproduction) into the territory of handicraft. What is more, Duchamp was reclaiming ownership over his entire oeuvre. He deployed photographic technology to document his works, but this act of recapturing his art via mechanical process was not enough; in adding the works’ original colors directly to the photographs he took, Duchamp staked out his intellectual property, and in placing the colored photographs in his Boîtes, he created a dedicated space for it.\footnote{On some of his color reproductions of Nude No. 2 made in 1937 that are not included in the Boîtes, Duchamp marked them as his own in a manner at once official and irreverent, by signing and stamping them with a five-centime revenue stamp, which was traditionally used by notaries in France on legal documents to give them validity, as is noted by Bonk, 212-4.} The process of reproduction, miniaturization, and encapsulation in the Boîtes thus provided for the safeguarding, displaying, and transporting of Duchamp’s works in a manner which
decisively broke with traditional methods of exhibition and embraced the critical practices of blurring categories and playfulness, the same operations which were originally on display in the Dollhouse.

Importantly, Duchamp chose to use the traditional museum as the inspiration for his Boîtes and Boîtes-en-Valise, but in co-opting the concept of the museum, he roundly eschewed its monumental scale as well as the notion that the institutional museum was the authoritative arbiter of artistic worth. Duchamp’s Boîtes, then, would allow him to remove “the artwork from the confines of the museum”190 while they also offered a totalizing collection which conveyed a complete narrative of his aesthetic development. In a 1956 interview, he stated: “It was a new form of expression for me. Instead of painting something the idea was to reproduce the paintings that I loved so much in miniature. I didn’t know how to do it. I thought of a book, but I didn’t like that idea. Then I thought of the idea of the box in which all my works would be mounted like in a small museum, a portable museum, so to speak, and here it is in this valise.”191 Indeed, when opened, the Boîte “simulates the horizontals and verticals of a room, perfectly to scale”192 and thus is not only a collection of small works but also a replication of a gallery, sized appropriately, and perhaps not coincidentally, for a dollhouse. Of course, it

190Judovitz, 4.

191Interview with James Johnson Sweeney, quoted in Sanouillet and Peterson, 136. It is important to note that while this form of expression may have been new to Duchamp, the idea of the portable museum has its origins at least as early as the late seventeenth century, when drawings were kept in albums that represented (actual or imagined) collections of art. The Galleria Portatile, c.1690, by Padre Sebastiano Resta (1635-1714), is one such example, now in the Ambrosiana, Milan (also known as Codex Resta I, F 261 inf.).

192Bonk, 20.
is important to note that while the Stettheimer Dollhouse presents a coherent three-dimensional space in miniature, Duchamp’s Boîte is much more spatially abstracted, corresponding as it does to a cerebral space of floating images as planar surfaces more than to the walls of a Lilliputian museum.

Unlike most museum galleries, physical interaction with the Boîte is necessary and encouraged. There are moving parts: things open and close, slide in and out, and can be folded and unfolded. The Nude No. 2 is featured to the left of the central Large Glass, and must be slid out of a side compartment to be seen. It is near other of his earlier works, which are made visible when the folded card that the Nude is usually mounted on is unfolded (in some of the Boîtes, the order is changed around). As with some of his other works in the Boîtes, Duchamp fashioned “a narrow cardboard frame printed with reddish-brown wood-grain effect” for the reproductions of Nude No. 2, making the museum analogy even stronger, if playfully so.\textsuperscript{193} The overall effect of looking at the open Boîte, from left to right, is a progression from Duchamp’s early paintings, to his miniature ready-mades, to his Large Glass in the center, on the right of which appears his painting Tu M’ and various iterations of the motifs in Large Glass. The other loose reproductions of his works sit in the bottom of the box and can be taken out and arranged in any way the viewer sees fit (fig. 42). What results is a cumulative aesthetic experience which reinforces the necessary unity of Duchamp’s oeuvre instead of emphasizing

\textsuperscript{193}Bonk, 214.
individual objects in isolation.\textsuperscript{194} This experience is not unlike that of viewing and playing with a dollhouse, whose multiple rooms and their contents strike the viewer as an interdependent, comprehensive whole that is much more than the sum of its parts.

As many scholars have noted, Duchamp believed that the works in the \textit{Boîtes} become more meaningful and more complex than their full-scale counterparts would be in an actual gallery because they are concentrated in a small space and so interact with one another in new and surprising ways.\textsuperscript{195} Furthermore, the \textit{Boîtes} allow for—arguably, they even demand—the viewer’s tactile manipulation of their contents. Dalia Judovitz aptly describes this condition of the \textit{Boîtes}, which is worth quoting in full:

\begin{quote}
The physical process of unpacking these miniaturized replicas coincides with the intellectual discovery of their remarkable affinities and resonances. The process of unfolding creates a new way of experiencing these works, as a system where reference or meaning is generated through cross-reference. The significance and value of these works are revealed by their relationships to each other; their position in the box generates transparencies, overlaps, or zones of opacity.\textsuperscript{196}
\end{quote}

She goes on to note, “The meaning of individual works is not guaranteed either by the artist’s intention or by history; it is there to be created anew each time, by the spectator, as a context generated through the interplay of specific works” and by the necessary participation of the viewer.\textsuperscript{197} Rather than being decontextualized in the white cube of

\textsuperscript{194}Judovitz, 4.
\textsuperscript{195}Judovitz, 4-5; Arturo Schwarz, “Marcel Duchamp and the Multiple,” in Yves Arman, \textit{Marcel Duchamp plays and wins} (Paris: Marval, 1984), 35.
\textsuperscript{196}Judovitz, 4-5.
\textsuperscript{197}Judovitz, 5.
museum space and then reinterpreted for the viewer in certain terms by wall text, the works contained in the Boîtes function both independently and as a collection. The viewer, then, is able to interpret Duchamp’s miniature works within the context the artist desired, which entails the viewer’s freedom to control and manipulate the art in a radical departure from the norms of the traditional bourgeois art institution.

The Boîtes were also a practical way for Duchamp to reunite all of his works, which were held in far-flung collections, into a comprehensive whole. He had even attempted to keep his actual works together by avoiding selling them on the art market and concentrating most of them in one collection, that of the Arensbergs, “who collected more than forty major works” Duchamp produced between 1915 and 1950. Of his personal relation to his works, Duchamp reflected, “I always felt that showing one painting in one place and another somewhere else is just like amputating one finger or a leg each time.” Thus for the artist, the Boîtes functioned to literally reincorporate his body of work as well as his sense of artistic self within the space of a miniature Duchamp museum, a clearly demarcated personal intellectual sphere which nevertheless was intended to be seen by viewers.

198 Bonk, 18, 21. The Arensberg collection was bequeathed to the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1950 and installed with the help of Duchamp in 1954, which ironically and permanently embedded Duchamp’s work in an art institution.

199 1956 interview with James Johnson Sweeney, quoted in Bonk, 18-19.

200 This idea is also explored by Demos, 54.
And Duchamp was an artist who was acutely aware of his relationship with the public; far from a retiring recluse, he was a flamboyant provocateur. But while he mobilized his Boîtes in order to reach the public in a way that he felt was not possible through the traditional museum, the Boîtes also served a more private function, providing for Duchamp a means of self-preservation under dire circumstances. During the Nazi occupation of France during World War II, from 1940-42, Duchamp managed to continue working on his Boîtes, eventually smuggling his work out of the country and escaping himself by adopting the guise of a cheese merchant.

Noting Duchamp’s status as a refugee at the time, Demos remarks that he fought the threat of the “dispersion of homelessness” by means of the “vicarious reconstitution of the self through the process of collection and containment” that the Boîtes provided for him. Making reproductions of his works at this time served to safeguard and preserve them from potential disaster, and perhaps also served a kind of meditative function, giving Duchamp some relief from the chaos of the war years. For the Boîtes-en-Valise in particular, his decision to make his life’s work fit in a suitcase suggests the importance of being able to escape at a moment’s notice. For Duchamp, “the exemplar of avant-garde nomadism, the paragon of an independent life, and the creator of the paradigmatic artistic model of displacement,

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201 Leja, 221-247, discusses this aspect of Duchamp, comparing him to P.T. Barnum specifically.

202 Demos, 13.

203 Demos, 53.
the readymade,” the suitcase—even outside of the context of war—was likely also a nod to his untraditional, globe-trotting lifestyle.204

The portability of the Boîtes and especially the Boîtes-en-Valise and the kind of independent, avant-garde lifestyle they suggest stand in stark contrast to the static haut-bourgeois home that Carrie Stettheimer enjoyed and modeled her Dollhouse upon. Stettheimer, who was more limited than Duchamp in her role as caretaker of her family and household, ironically found her escape from her everyday domestic existence in the creation of another bourgeois domestic space, the Dollhouse. While her project was similar to Duchamp’s in a number of ways (notably both shared in an almost obsessive making of miniatures), it differed in so far as the Dollhouse was a singular, unique object (and in that way it could be seen as projecting an aura) as opposed to a series of reproductions. It was also primarily intended for private display and contemplation within the home rather than for public consumption. Although the bourgeois character of the Dollhouse is ameliorated and inflected by the presence of the avant-garde art gallery, as already discussed, it cannot be considered as subversive to the traditional category of art and to the authority of the art institution as Duchamp’s Boîtes. But even the Boîtes, it should be noted, were created by Duchamp to be sold and so inevitably to participate in the bourgeois art market, thus compromising any kind of purely critical, anti-capitalist avant-garde gesture they might potentially embody.205 As a representation of an

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204 Demos, 52.

205 Jerrold Seigel, The Private Worlds of Marcel Duchamp: Desire, Liberation, and the Self in Modern Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 230-1. Indeed, the decision to package some of the Boîtes in what are essentially briefcases might also be considered, rather than a nod to a
idealized domestic sphere, and as an established form of leisure activity for middle- and upper-class women, the Dollhouse on the whole, however, does not participate in the avant-garde goal of disrupting and turning against bourgeois notions of art and reality, even if, as Stettheimer demonstrated, it possessed the capacity to serve as a space for avant-garde ideas, just as Stettheimer’s salons had facilitated Duchamp’s evolving practices in her own home.

While Carrie Stettheimer embraced a fairly traditional feminine gender role as caretaker of her family and hostess of their social events, Duchamp, as a male avant-garde artist with more independence from his family and a less established home life, made it part of his project to problematize the strict categories of gender, and assumed a more flexible gender identity himself. In 1920, a year after creating his infamous image of the *Mona Lisa* with a mustache, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, Duchamp adopted a female alter ego, Rrose Sélavy (a pun of “Éros, c’est la vie”), whose name he would occasionally sign on his works.²⁰⁶ He referred to this persona in the full title of the *Boîtes*: “de ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rrose Sélavy,” which is “the first thing one sees of the box itself...when the valise is opened,” along with a large M monogram (fig. 41).²⁰⁷ By calling into question the authorship of the *Boîtes*, and his own identity, Duchamp playfully subverted traditional ideas about the function and status of the artist and recalibrated existing bohemian, nomadic lifestyle, a reference to the world of commerce, and specifically to the sample cases of salesmen, as Seigel suggests. In this light, Duchamp can be seen as playfully hinting at the ideas of the artist as salesman and the work of art as commodity, suggesting the interdependent relationship between the avant-garde and the bourgeois, and further complicating the objects’ status as “avant-garde.”

²⁰⁶Seigel, 143.
²⁰⁷Bonk, 197.
gender distinctions, insisting that they be made more malleable. It was this same impulse to question the status quo that had also led Duchamp to challenge the idea of the formal public museum, arguing instead for a more flexible, interactive, and personal space, more akin to a home than a museum, through his Boîtes.

Although the Stettheimer Dollhouse does not engage avant-garde ideas to the extent that the Boîtes do, it does participate in the art-versus-craft debate due to its liminal status as an art/craft object. During the first half of the twentieth century, and even into the second half, Stettheimer’s work was considered a hobby or craft: she was not creating “original” art, the logic went, but was in essence replicating a recognizable type of home in miniature, a project which, in its use of multiple media, could not be neatly categorized as one of the more traditional established art forms such as painting or sculpture. Because Stettheimer’s artistic ambitions took a backseat to those of her sisters, who were the artists of the family, she remained simply a craftswoman, who worked on her Dollhouse whenever she had spare time.²⁰⁸ But, following the reconception of artistic categories in the wake of Duchamp, who initiated the more flexible idea of what a work of art could be—that is, a craftwork, a reproduction, or even a readymade—we can now claim that same territory for the Dollhouse—a claim that does not rest on the presence of

²⁰⁸ Much of the publicity on the Dollhouse from the time it was installed at the MCNY in 1945 refers to it as a craft or hobby, such as this press release, which addresses women and girls specifically: “…one of the current exhibits that any girl—large or small—would enjoy seeing…is the Doll House…It’s really a masterpiece—and it shows how engrossing a hobby can become.” It also misstates that the Dollhouse “became the hobby of all her [Carrie’s] sisters who amused themselves by furnishing it and showing it to friends, among whom were many of our outstanding contemporary artists…” From “The Woman of Tomorrow by Nancy Craig,” December 27, 1945, script for a WJZ radio broadcast, MCNY Publicity Scrapbook.
the miniature works by established artists within it. As Duchamp once provocatively asserted, “I don’t believe in the creative function of the artist. He’s a man like any other... On the other hand the word ‘art’ interests me very much. If it comes from the Sanskrit, as I’ve heard, it signifies ‘making.’ Now everyone makes something, and those who make things on a canvas, with a frame, they’re called artists. Formerly, they were called craftsmen, a term I prefer. We’re all craftsmen...”

To state the idea more forcefully, there lay embedded in Duchamp’s artistic concept what Roger Fry called “disinterested delight,” a necessary “joy” in the act of creating which transcended the craftsmanship or artistry itself. The fundamental importance of the process of making and the pleasure found therein, more so than the end result of that activity, was stressed by Duchamp, and is reflected in both his Boîtes and in Stettheimer’s Dollhouse, and in the many years both artists spent carefully making their creations.

The changing status of the Dollhouse, from a toy or craft object to a work of art, or to something in between, can be traced in the ways it has been displayed in the Museum of the City of New York since it was installed in the museum in 1945. It was first exhibited as a toy, with “its rooms—all open to the weather so that their contents can be seen and enjoyed,” as a press release from 1946 proudly announced. At one time it


210 “The artist is the man who creates not only for need but for joy, and in the long run mankind will not be content without sharing that joy through the possession of real works of art, however humble or unpretentious they may be.” Roger Fry, “Preface to the Omega Workshops Catalog,” originally published in 1914, in Christopher Reed, ed., A Roger Fry Reader (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 201.

211 This might explain why the miniature dollhouse in the Dollhouse’s nursery went missing. “Doll House de Luxe” March 31, 1946, MCNY Publicity Scrapbook.
was exhibited in a room containing displays of dolls, as seen in a photograph from the 1960s (fig. 43). In the 1970s through the 1990s, it was exhibited with dolls actually inside it, which emphasized its non-art status all the more (figs. 44-5). Noting that the Dollhouse had become “downright dowdy” over the years, that it had lost its original vivaciousness, then-curator John Noble’s decision to create dolls of the Stettheimers and their friends for the Dollhouse was essentially an attempt to bring it back to life.  

Describing the theatrical tactics used in historic homes and recreations, Noble wrote:

> The furniture is arranged as though it were in use, as though the occupant had just stepped out—needlework and newspaper tossed aside, a letter half-written, an apple half-peeled. Fresh flowers are arranged in vases, fires burn in the grates…. Taking this concept further, guides are dressed as persons who might have lived in the house…. We at the Museum decided to see if these principles could not be applied to the presentation of this dollhouse.  

Aside from being questionable from a curatorial standpoint, this incorporation of dolls into the Dollhouse firmly established it as a plaything rather than a work of art or craft, just as it trivialized the Stettheimers’ lives by turning them into dolls, and reflected a nostalgic attempt to recreate a time in the past. Not only were the Stettheimers uncannily brought back to life, but the Dollhouse was also once again seen, at least according to Noble, as “a living entity, not as an inanimate husk.”

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212 Noble, 6-8.

213 Noble, 6.

214 Noble, 8. For more on the uncanny quality of dolls in general, see Kitti Carriker, Created in Our Image: The Miniature Body of the Doll as Subject and Object (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press, 1998).
Today the Dollhouse stands empty, without dolls, the way it was left at Carrie’s death. It is displayed in a small room by itself, separate from the museum’s other collections of art, toys, and New York memorabilia, so that it is ultimately up to the viewer to decide whether it is art or craft, or something else. Far from a dead, “inanimate husk,” the Stettheimer Dollhouse is activated and brought to life by the spectator, in a way that is not unlike the active position of the viewer that Duchamp desired for his Boîtes. Indeed, “it is the very absence of figures which makes…[it]…so compelling…. The rooms are somehow incomplete until we exercise our imagination and populate this amazing miniature world…. We must furnish the crucial missing ingredient—life—which is why we can stand riveted in front of our favorite rooms for so long.”215 The viewer has to walk around the Dollhouse because there are four sides, and her eyes must travel from room to room. As with the Boîtes, the viewer experiences a feeling of dislocation at the shift in scale and must actively imagine herself as either a giant looking at human-sized art objects and rooms or a doll appropriately scaled to occupy the miniature spaces of the home, complete with art gallery, and the Duchamp museum. This experience is had at a definite remove, since the Dollhouse is set behind glass and so has to be traversed imaginatively. Of course, Carrie Stettheimer would have touched and rearranged the Dollhouse’s contents, resulting in an interactive experience altogether more like the one the Boîtes’ viewer would enjoy. Ensnconed in a formal museum space, however, in the very context of experience Duchamp sought to critique and destroy, the

215Boyer, 24.
Dollhouse has been elevated from the status of a mere private plaything; it has thus shed its original interactive character, to signal that the viewer’s dislocation from the work is fundamentally unavoidable. Because many of Duchamp’s Boîtes are now in museum collections, they are also, ironically, no longer accessible to the viewer in the way they were originally intended.

The Dollhouse and the Boîtes successfully bridge the gaps between art and craft and between private collection and public display, and it is their in-between status that demands our consideration. Both works, to different extents, challenge the traditional definitions of art and craft—and therefore problematize the role and status of the artist/craftsman who made them. Such are the avant-garde practices both Duchamp and Stettheimer engaged in their miniature-making. In these works we find clear re-imaginings of traditional spaces, in which Duchamp and Stettheimer tested the limits of the interrelated bourgeois conventions of domesticity, display, and even gender. Duchamp, however, in his subversion of a static space, the museum, revealed the radical possibilities for novel expression and the assertion of control over his intellectual property by producing and reproducing in miniature his oeuvre as it re-incorporated his own identity and sense of self. Moreover, in creating mobile collections of his work, Duchamp provided for a measure of portability not to be found through a bricks-and-mortar museum at the same time that he projected himself as the avant-garde artist—the very figure of the roving, free-wheeling critic of polite, bourgeois society. Stettheimer, herself a wealthy socialite, did not overstep the bounds of her class, as did Duchamp, but worked within them to create her own vision of domestic space while nevertheless
transforming the experiential dimension of life. She did this through instigating a practice based on play and a rejection of the art/craft binary, which Duchamp was engaged in as well. Thus, while Stettheimer carved out a small but dynamic avant-garde enclave within the static space of her actual home and Dollhouse, Duchamp made a virtual home for himself in the Boîtes-en-Valise.
Carrie Stettheimer, as the creator of the Dollhouse, was its ideal beholder: she labored on it for close to twenty years in the privacy of her own home, and one can imagine that she derived much pleasure from the process of constructing and assembling it, noting its progress over the course of weeks and months, and admiring her finished handiwork. As she worked on or viewed her Dollhouse, her thoughts inevitably wandered: she may have remembered her childhood, when she played with paper dolls and brightly colored paper picture scenes. Or perhaps she recalled her family’s sojourns in Europe before the war, where she may have seen portrait miniatures, perspective boxes or even dollhouses in the museums they frequented. Miniature objects such as these may have inspired her to create a dollhouse of her own. Indeed, just as Florine had collected vues d’optiques in Italy, perhaps Carrie had picked up miniatures as souvenirs from her travels, before realizing her desire to create a house in which to display them. In any case, Carrie must have associated specific objects in her Dollhouse with particular events, historical or personal, that were occurring at the time she made or acquired them. For instance, Carrie’s thoughts probably turned to Duchamp and their relationship when she admired the miniature Nude in her Dollhouse, and we can imagine that Duchamp may have reciprocated such thoughts while inspecting the larger, though still miniature Nude.
in his *Boîte*. For both creators, their experiences of “playing with” or handling the objects in their miniature collections were undoubtedly different from the modern viewer’s; the personal memories and associations held in various objects were probably never known by people other than Stettheimer and Duchamp, and can only be surmised by us now.

In this way, both artists utilized the structure of the box in order to organize not just their collections of miniature objects but also their thoughts and memories and ultimately their selves. As both Stewart and Bachelard argue, the boxes, chests, and drawers that hold collections are all complicit in preserving and reactivating memories, as the collection essentially serves to contain the self and comes to represent its collector.\(^{216}\) The boxes that compose the Stettheimer Dollhouse are all open on one side, so that the interior of the structure is always on view to prying eyes. This condition strikes the viewer as somewhat ironic in that the Dollhouse seemingly reveals so much yet we know relatively little about its maker. Duchamp’s *Boîte*, on the other hand, when closed, invites opening, and as Bachelard notes, once a box is opened, the dialectics of inside and outside “no longer exist. The outside is effaced with one stroke, an atmosphere of novelty and surprise reigns. The outside has no more meaning…the dimension of intimacy…has just opened up.”\(^{217}\) Indeed, the sense of intimacy with the artist that is felt


\(^{217}\) Bachelard, 85.
by the viewer of the Boîte is made stronger by the fact that its contents are “of or by” Duchamp himself, as the full title of the work reminds us.

If “the collection is a form of art as play, a form involving the reframing of objects within a world of attention and manipulation of context,” as Stewart has asserted, then the works of Stettheimer and Duchamp are doubly playful, as collections and as lighthearted avant-garde gestures. \(^ {218}\) For in addition to their structural similarity, weighty personal significance, and use of miniaturization, both the Dollhouse and the Boîtes were born out of a cultural context that fostered avant-garde experimentation, which provided artists and non-artists alike with a freeing sense of possibility to create and express themselves in new ways, in their art and in their lives. While Stettheimer was not an active participant in the New York Dada movement as Duchamp was, she was certainly familiar with its goings on, and the ideas in the following description, of the aims of Dadaists, may have resonated with her: “[Dada’s] practitioners did not artificially elevate art to a level it did not deserve; rather, through the vehicle of humor—which they aimed not only at the entire art establishment, but at themselves as well—they ‘managed to deliver art from the clutches of its worshippers.’ They accomplished this…by ‘reduc[ing] the size of ‘A’ in art, to meet the size of the rest of the letters in one’s speech.’”\(^ {219}\) Likewise, Stettheimer and Duchamp challenged Art by taking it off its proverbial pedestal and merging it with life, and by creating miniature collections within

\(^ {218}\)Stewart, *On Longing*, 151.

\(^ {219}\)Naumann, 11, quoting excerpts from Marsden Hartley’s 1921 lecture, variously known as “What is Dadaism?” and “The Importance of Being ‘DADA’”, given at a session of the Société Anonyme.
the everyday forms of a dollhouse and a series of suitcases—smaller and more playful works of art, indeed.
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