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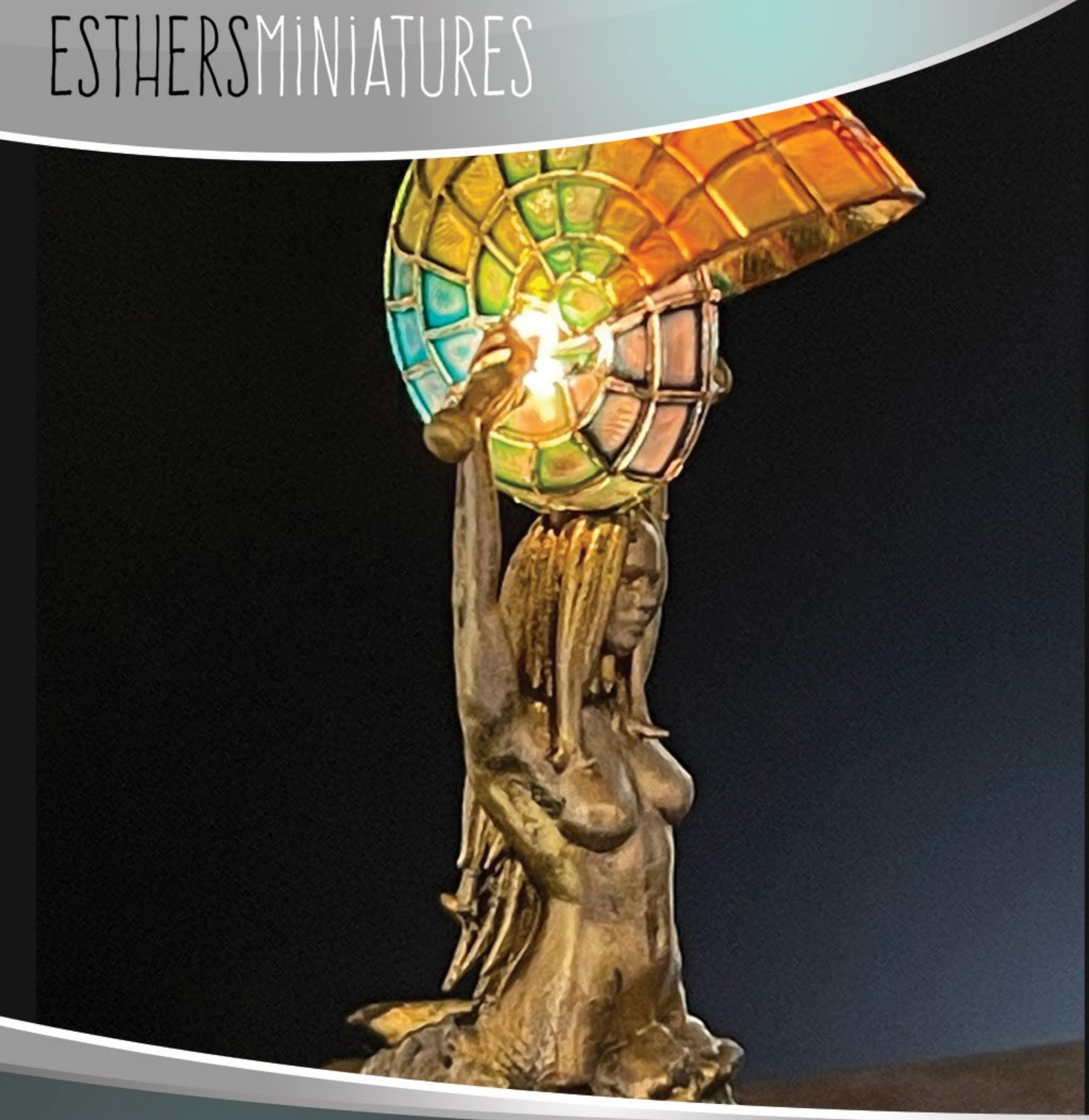

PAINT YOUR TIFFANY NAUTILUS LAMP

Designer

TIFFANY LAMPS HAVE FASCINATED ME FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER. THESE GORGEOUS COLORFUL LAMPS ARE ARTISTIC MARVELS AND I HAVE ALWAYS LONGED TO DUPLICATE THESE IN MINIATURE.

I've always been a creative person. Even though I spent several years as a Marine Lawyer, there was always an artist in there, waiting to get out. I've been recognized for my dollhouse miniatures and sculptures, and also dabbled in "Second Life" as a graphic artist.

When I discovered the joys of 3D printing, I tried to find a way to adapt this fascinating process to my workflow. An endless realm of possibilities opened up. I found I could use my knowledge of technology and the digital world to sculpt and model creations which could later be printed and brought into the real world. I am happy to now offer you 3D printed kits of my designs that you can paint, wire and use to decorate your dollhouses.

In these pages, I've put together tips on how you can paint and wire your Tiffany lamps. Feel free to experiment with color and a variety of finishes to make your own unique miniatures.

I wish you good luck and an abundance of creativity!

Esther Marker
designer MAGIC MINIATURES

Magic Miniatures (now Esthers Miniatures) is my personal brand and has been around since 2002. I make all sorts of miniatures for dollhouses. I've made Venetian masks, religious icons, furniture, dolls and more. Tiffany lamps are the recent addition to my store.

I got my IGMA Artisan Status in the category 3D Printing - Lighting in September 2021.

Kit Contents

Your kit will comprise Tiffany's iconic Nautilus lamp. This Tiffany style features a mermaid holding up a shell. It is a beautiful Art Nouveau piece. The original was designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany in 1900 - 1909.

My designs are evolving and I am constantly looking for new ideas and styles whilst improving on my previous ones. I will be making these available to the community and I am always open to your ideas, suggestions and expertise on how we can make these even better.

Lamp Painting

I will be thoroughly cleaning, curing and removing supports from your kit. In case I have missed something, you may need to go over the area with some fine sandpaper. A few sweeps should sort out any minor issues that remain.

The shell of the lamp has Tiffany "leading" incorporated into the design. These should be colored black, pewter or even a metallic color if you like. After driving myself absolutely crazy trying to figure out a way to do this without spoiling the rececessed areas, I discovered the BEST solution is to use a permanent marker. These come in different styles with different tip sizes and shapes. You may need to experiment to find out which one works best for you. This would depend on how you hold the piece, the angle of your marker and how you tend to write in general. So there is no one size fits all here. Just get a marker that can do that job. Some of you would prefer a marker with a thin tip, others may prefer a chisel tip and still others may prefer a large broad tip. I am amongst those that prefers to work with a larger broad tip. I have recently discovered Sakrua's Pentouch Calligraphy markers in size 1.8mm. These are fabulous and the black is metallic and dark. They have an awesome gold too.

You would also need quality glass paints. I use the ones by the French company Pebeo, but any good quality brand would do. Some of you may prefer to work with water based colors and others may prefer solvent based colors. Just make sure you do not get anything that requires heat to set as the resin will not fare well when heated to the high temperatures required to cure some paints.

NOTE: If you mess up whist using the marker and smudge an area you shouldn't, you can take a cotton swab dipped in a little isopropyl alcohol to remove it. It may create some further frosting on the shade but this will not be noticable after painting. Washing it immediately under running water will minimize this frosting as well. You may need to do this a few times to get rid of the smudge completely.

After outlining, I recommend priming the mermaid and water, i.e the lower part of the lamp. This is because you will be finishing this in a metallic finish and it requires to be primed for the paint and/or metallic coating to adhere properly to the resin. I am partial to the Badger series of primers. I use their Stynlrez primer in "Ebony" for all my lamps. It's a beautiful warm brown that lends itself well to a final finishing in metallic paint or wax. Once primed, you can enhance the back and bulb holder with metallic paint, wax or gilding to simulate aged metal. There are a variety of products out there you can experiment with, including those that could give you a natural patina on your bases. The metallic paint/wax is fairly fast drying. After it is try, you can start painting the recesses with Pebeo Vitrail or other suitable glass paint.

I have finished the shell using a gradient. I use a few different colors and paint these in sections blending and fading the colors as I go along. You could use a gradient from blues to greens or use a more vibrant colorful palette. I use a brush for the gradient and thin the Pebeo Vitrail with Winsor & Newton's Sansodor.

I have made a small video showing how some highlights on how the lamp is painted. It should give you the information you need to finish your lamp. Feel free to experiment with your own materials and techniques and finish the lamp in a way that is truly your own. You can see how I painted the lamp here.

Wiring your Lamp

This lamp is designed to be fully compatible with the “grain of rice” CK-1010 bulbs from Cir-Kit. The ones I recommend can be found here. That said, any suitable small bulb or LED that fits within the bulb space in the sconce and does not burn too hot will work.

The wiring process is very straight forward. You need to get the bulb into the shell and straight out through the mermaid’s body. Due to the curve in the shell, I use an assist wire to help with this process. An assist wire can be a length of flexible wire, fishing line or beading wire that is doubled. I insert it from under the lamp so the folded over part exits from the shell. Anything that can pass through the channel with the flexibility to adapt to the curve in the shell will work. The bulb is then attached to this assist wire and then pulled through. The location of the bulb is then tweaked so it sits in the center of the shell so light distribution is even.

This video will better explain what I am trying to say here.

Conclusion

I hope this tutorial was helpful and you enjoy this fabulous new hobby. I wish you many hours of creative pleasure. I will continue to add more lamp and other designs to my Etsy page, so keep checking back for more.

Please consider joining my group on Facebook and following me on Instagram as I announce all new updates to my Etsy store there as well. My Facebook group is a community of artists that have purchased my finished pieces and kits and you can find inspiration, videos and tips in the group. I will be sharing my works in progress, new products used and discovered and much more to enhance your lamp making experience. You are welcome to add your finished lamp photos to the group as well to inspire others.

Thank you and have a fabulous day!