

## Delightful Miniature Purses!

By Karin Buttigieg

The idea for this came to me a few months ago when a customer ordered lots of miniature purse frames that I thought were pretty unattractive and I had sold out of, anyway. So, to make a long story short: Here is my version of miniature purse frames: They are wonderfully ornate, real gold plated with a , satin finish and a subtle antique hue.

When they finally arrived, I immediately got to work and – my first purse looked absolutely awful! My idea did not work as expected because I was still in the old “finicky” mode – I needed to think differently. Bit by bit I found the solutions and now, about 20 purses later, I am having great fun because they are incredibly effective, very easy, fast und a lot of fun to make!

There are loads of other ways to make the purses using these frames, but I used small snippets of old and antique ribbons which just about every doll maker has collected over the years, never to find anything they can do with it. These purses are all made with ribbon bits that are no more than 15 cm long – most use a fair bit less!

Old ribbons are perfect to use: they have woven edges (no fraying), no need for patterns, no need for turning inside out and the antique look comes by itself – the purses all look antique (and are partially antique).

The method is always the same:

### You need:

- **Purse frame and 2 color prints of purse frame**
- **Oval jump rings**
- Thick white glue (Tacky glue – designer)
- Thin white glue (wood glue)
- Thin colored paper (gift wrap – anything you like. It should not be thick).
- **Scalpel**
- **Thread snips**
- **Fine scissors**
- Jewelry fine-nosed pliers
- Brush
- Toothpicks
- Magnifying glasses
- **Glass headed pins**
- **# 12 sewing needles**
- About 2-2.5 cm thick styrofoam board, about 20 x 30 cm, covered with a plastic bag (glass headed pins can hold the plastic in place. For several purses made simultaneously, you will need several styrofoam boards. Only cover one side with plastic.
- . Finest, strong sewing thread (**Polyester thread # 200**)
- Bits of old ribbons, various widths, embroidered motifs etc.
- **Fine silk ribbons for lining** (only some purses were lined)
- **Beads, silk cords** for handles

### Preparing the frames

- 1- Apply thin glue to the wrong side of the frame and press it onto the desired colored paper. Let dry thoroughly.
- 2 -Lay right side up onto the foam panel (without plastic), secure with pins and cut around the edges with the scalpel, pushing into the foam.
- 3) Turn the frame wrong side up.
- 4) Brush the back of the paper generously with wood glue.
- 5) Push the paper into the recesses with the rounded end of a brush. Let dry thoroughly.

### Making the Purse

6) Take a piece of ribbon of your choice (antique ones do look lovely) at least 1.5 cm wider than the frame (there must be at least 7 mm overlap on both sides – more is fine, less is not), about 12-15 cm long (depends on size of frame). Apply thick glue to the wrong side of the desired frame with a toothpick (not so it squeezes out of the sides) and press the frame onto the ribbon and secure with pins. Fold over the ribbon to check the length (keep the frame stuck to the board), measure, mark and glue and pin the 2<sup>nd</sup> frame in place. Let dry. Any decoration, embroidery, etc. are added before the sides are stitched up.

7. **If you need to line the purse:** Use a similar-sized, thin silk ribbon for lining (**silk ribbons**). With tiny stitches, size # 12 needle and the **# 200 thread**, stitch the edges of both ribbons together. If the ribbon is too narrow but the edges of the main ribbon are fine, just stitch the lining ribbon down as described anyway – the #200 thread is so fine it is virtually invisible. If the lining ribbon is a little too large, stitch the edges flush to the main ribbon and press the 2 ribbons. The lining will be a little loose but that doesn't matter. The really tiny purses I left without lining.

7a If none of the thin silk ribbons match your ribbon, cut the shape from fine China silk and use the **Positioning Spray** to temporarily secure the lining to the ribbon. Stitch it in the same manner as described. The spray will disappear in time.

7b: If the china silk wrinkles, use a dowel or similar and roll the wrinkles out.

8) Stitch the eyes of the frame to the fabric (not through the hole) with **# 200 thread** (it is very strong and withstands the metal).

9) Run a bead of thin glue just above the eyes on both sides of the frames. Let dry.

10) Cut the excess ribbon off the frames and cut straight across through the glued length on the sides, using the **thread snips**. These work the best to cut really close.

11) Cut out the 2 colored paper prints of the frame (minus the eyelets) and glue them to the back of the frame with thin glue, covering the messy parts of the ribbon. Now it looks nice inside out with minimum bulk. If you like, you can varnish (thin glue, shellac) the cut-outs (let dry) before you glue them to the inside of the frame.

12a-b) Fold the purse in half, push pins through the eyelets to match the frames and push a corner on each side inwards for a rounded shape. Pin the sides and stitch the sides plus about 3 mm of the fold.

12c) I didn't stitch the entire fold – it looks nicer left open.

12d) If you want to make a base with a length of oval cardboard in it, arrange the fold as shown in the photo and make a fabric covered cardboard base: width of fold by size of ribbon. Glue or stitch in place before you stitch up the sides. This fold needs to be stitched first, then the cardboard base is inserted, then the sides are stitched up.

13a-b) Stitch the sides with **thread # 200** and secure the ends well.

14) Take the **jump rings** and thin nosed pliers.

15) Push the fabric inwards to expose the eyelets and fit the jump ring through.

16) Almost finished.

17) Run a **silk cord** through the eyelets (end stiffened with thick glue), knot it, add beads (with large hole!) to the ends and stitch the knot to one eyelet, if you want the knot to remain in one position, when the purse is opened. The eyelets are too small for a metal chain.

Finished!

### **Tiny Purse Frames**

18-18a) Tiny purse frames that are shapes fairly straight across the bottom part, will only open as much as the width of the jump ring is. If you want those to open further, tie yellow 0.5 mm sewing elastic through the holes and secure the know with a dab of thin glue, before you cut off the ends.

There are multiple other ways to make the purse frames: important is that there is enough extra fabric at each side. If the ribbon is a fair bit wider than the frame, make small folds or pleats. Gathers do not look very good, I found. You can also crochet, knit with or without beads, use motifs etc. Just fabric only gets too messy because of the open sides. The frames are quite small.

You can easily make several purses a day and just about everyone who does dolls, has collected bits of antique ribbons that cannot be used for anything because they are too wide or too short.

Have Fun!

Your Karin Buttigieg

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4a



4b



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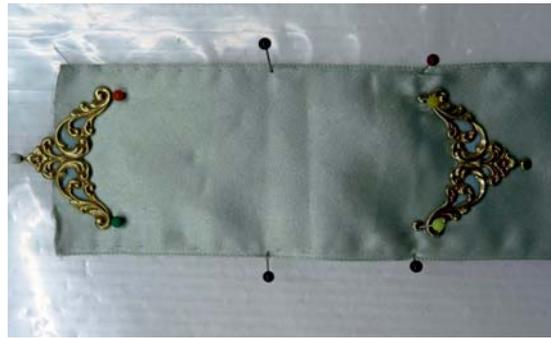
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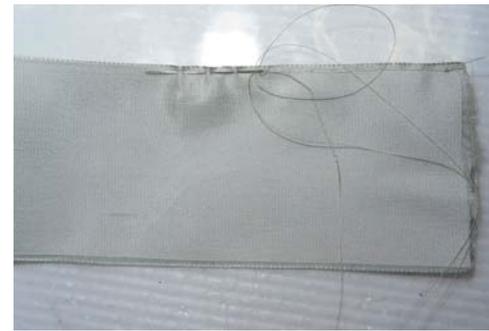
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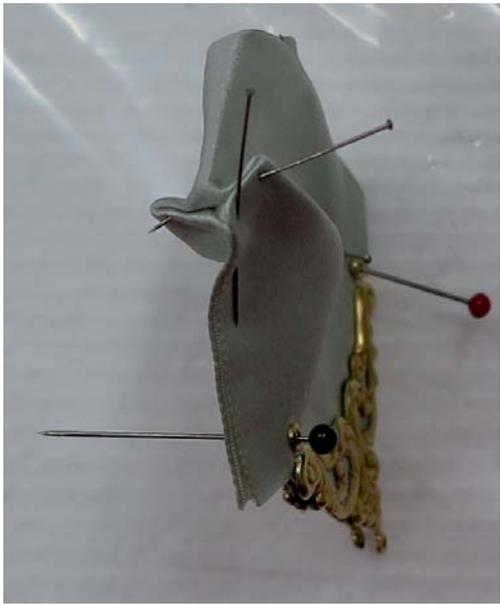
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