

The Art of Downsizing: My Journey into Small-Scale Sculpture

As sculptors accustomed to working on large pieces move to smaller homes, their approach to making art and the outcomes naturally change. This article explores the unique challenges and innovative solutions needed when a sculptor familiar with large projects starts working on smaller ones. Drawing from my experience of moving from a spacious studio in the UK to a tiny apartment in Prague, I'll share how this significant change not only reshaped my approach to art but also led me to start my own small-scale sculpture studio.

Five years ago, when I moved from my UK studio to a smaller space in Prague, I immediately felt the squeeze. Previously, my work involved creating large installations with materials like fiberglass, plaster, and wire, materials that require a lot of space for both crafting and storing. The cramped new studio made me rethink and reduce the size of my projects, making it difficult to continue with large installations. This necessity motivated me to discover innovative materials and techniques.

In this new chapter, I turned my focus to resin, a material I had often used in my larger works, but now adapted for smaller projects. I also continued using wire, choosing finer types that were better suited for smaller, detailed works. This change sparked my interest in wire-wrapping techniques, allowing me to create intricate miniature sculptures that captured the essence of my artistic vision, even in a smaller size.

During my time as a sculptor who specialized in large-scale projects, I often found that my ambitious designs remained just sketches. These large artworks required a lot of time and materials, which meant using up lots of resources and needing careful planning to ensure everything was built correctly and safely. This took a lot of time. However, when I moved to a smaller studio in Prague, I discovered the benefits of working on a smaller scale.

This change allowed me to avoid many of the problems I faced with larger sculptures and significantly cut down the time needed to complete each piece. This shift made it possible for me to start turning those big ideas into smaller, more manageable sculptures.

I revisited an old draft for a project that involved using a large plaster base covered with fiberglass, a process that requires a lot of materials and is quite complex.

However, once I started experimenting with various types of resin for a small mold, things became much easier. Working on the downsized piece allowed me more time to focus on details and enhance the quality and precision of the original design. I expanded my exploration of materials for smaller projects to include foam, wood, metal, fabrics, and glass. I discovered that creating smaller sculptures enhanced my techniques, knowledge of materials, and productivity.

This journey to smaller sculptures taught me the value of flexibility and the potential for creativity in limited environments. It showed that artistic expression isn't confined by space, but can be revitalized and enhanced through thoughtful adaptation.

This shift to [creating small-scale sculptures](#) deeply impacted both my personal identity and my professional growth. It wasn't just a reduction in material and space use, but also a significant emotional journey that completely changed how I view sculpture.

Initially, the tighter limits seemed restrictive, but they quickly became a catalyst for deeper creative exploration. Focusing on smaller pieces allowed me to explore the subtleties of sculpture, uncovering levels of detail and sophistication that larger works couldn't show. This close look at my craft made me feel more connected to my work and made me think deeply about what sculpture means to me.

Professionally, adapting to small sculptures opened new opportunities in the art market, especially in the fields of custom jewelry and small artworks. My audience grew as a result of this diversification, and I was also able to improve my skill set.

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About the Author

I am [Nancy Castrogiovanni](#), an artist, author, and scriptwriter, with a rich foundation in both the visual and performing arts. My academic path includes a Master's in English Literature and a Bachelor's in Fine Art, where I explored the interplay of materials in sculpture and the expressive power of performance. Delving deeper, my PhD research navigated the complex narratives of exiled and foreign writers, with a focus on the works of Mircea Eliade, Milan Kundera, and Italo Calvino.

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