I'M SETH

AND THIS IS EDEN

AND YOU'RE LISTENING TO COMMUNITEASE.

IT'S A PODCAST WHERE WE SHARE WITH YOU THE ODD,

THE INTERESTING,

AND THE UNUSUAL IN INDIANA.

SO FOR OUR FIRST EPISODE, I THOUGHT WE'D START A LITTLE SMALL.

THIS IS THE MINIATURE HOUSE MUSEUM.

WE'RE TAKING YOU TO A SMALL BUILDING ON THE CORNER OF MAIN STREET AND FIRST AVENUE.

RIGHT ACROSS FROM GREEK'S PIZZERIA.

THROUGH THE WIDE FRONT WINDOWS, PASSERSBY CAN SEE WHAT LOOK LIKE, BASICALLY JUST DOLL HOUSES. BUT AFTER A CHAT WITH ELAINE MANCINI, WHO WORKS AT THE MUSEUM OF MINIATURE HOUSES, WE FOUND OUT THAT THESE TINY HOUSES HAVE SORT OF A BIGGER STORY BEHIND THEM. HERE'S ELAINE.

INCORPORATED IN 1991 AND OPENED TO THE PUBLIC IN AUGUST, 1993. SO WE JUST HAD OUR 24TH ANNIVERSARY.

THATS COOL, AND WHO FOUNDED IT?

THREE LADIES, SUZIE MOFFIT, SUSANNE LANZOFF, AND NANCY LESH, AND THEY WERE ALL MINIATURISTS, WHO DID VERY DIFFERENT TYPES OF MINIATURES, AND THEY HEARD ABOUT SOME WOMAN WHO HAD A HUGE COLLECTION, SHE

HAD BEEN MAKING MINIATURES FOR MANY DECADES WHEN SHE PASSED AWAY. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED TO HER THINGS. SO THEY DON'T KNOW IF SHE HAD CHILDREN, OR IF THEY THREW IT OUT, OR PUT TO AUCTION, NOBODY KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED TO THIS HUGE COLLECTION. SO, NANCY, SUZIE, AND SUSANNE SAID 'WE DON'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN TO OUR THINGS, WE WANT TO SHARE THEM', AND THAT WAS THE IMPETUS FOR FOUNDING A MUSEUM.

SO WE DID A LITTLE BIT OF RESEARCH, AND FOUND OUT THAT MINIATURE HOUSES HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, THEY'VE BEEN FOUND IN CRAZY PLACES LIKE EGYPTIAN TOMBS, AND STUFF LIKE THAT. WHEN MOST PEOPLE THINK OF MINIATURE HOUSES, THEY THINK OF LIKE A TOY, FOR KIDS TO PLAY WITH, OR LIKE A DOLLHOUSE. IN THE CASE OF THE COLLECTION AT THE MUSEUM OF MINIATURE HOUSES, MINIATURE HOUSES ARE NOT JUST DOLLHOUSES, THEY'RE AN ART FORM, MEANT TO BE SEEN, DISPLAYED, AND ENJOYED BY ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE, NOT JUST FOR KIDS TO PLAY WITH. THE ARTIST OFTEN PUTS HOURS OF TIME AND EFFORT INTO MAKING SURE THAT ALL THE FURNITURE, AND ACCESSORIES, AND EVERYTHING INSIDE THE MINIATURE HOUSES ALSO REFLECTS A SPECIFIC TIME PERIOD, OR LOCATION. IN A WAY, MANY OF THEM HELP PRESERVE, OR BRING HISTORY TO LIFE THROUGH ART.

IT VARIES A LOT, IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE, OBVIOUSLY IF YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE A HOUSE, THATS A LOT MORE COSTLY AND TIME CONSUMING THAN TRYING TO MAKE A ROOM OR BOX,WHICH IS A

SINGLE SETTING. MOST MINIATURES DIFFER FROM DOLLHOUSES, IN THAT THEY'RE NOT MEANT TO BE PLAYED WITH, THEY'RE MEANT TO BE LOOKED AT AND SHARED, BUT YOU CAN'T TOUCH THESE THINGS, A LOT OF WHAT'S IN THERE IS VERY FRAGILE, AND THEY HAVE TO ADHERE TO A CERTAIN SCALE. SO ONCE YOU DECIDE ON A SCALE, LET'S SAY, ONE INCH TO ONE FOOT, EVERYTHING IN THAT HOUSE HAS TO ADHERE TO THAT SCALE. AND ALSO, IF YOU CHOOSE A HISTORICAL PERIOD, THEN EVERYTHING IN THAT HOUSE HAS TO ADHERE TO THAT PERIOD, WHETHER IT'S THE 1920S, OR VICTORIAN, OR WHATEVER IT IS, SO THERE ARE CONSTRAINTS ON A MINIATURIST THAT THERE ARE NOT ON ANOTHER KIND OF HOBBYIST, OR A DOLLHOUSE MAKER. NANCY LESH, WHO MADE A REPLICA OF HER CHILDHOOD HOUSE, SAID SHE STOPPED COUNTING AFTER 900 (OWLS).

WOW.

AND SUSANNE LANZOFF, ANOTHER OF OUR CO-FOUNDERS, MADE A VICTORIAN. IT'S CALLED VICTORIA’S CHOICE, AND IT’S ACTUALLY A KIT, THE HOUSE ITSELF IS A KIT, AND IT'S COMPLETELY FURNISHED, IT HAS DOLLS IN IT, AND ALL KINDS OF ACTIVITIES GOING ON IN THE HOUSE, AND THAT TOOK HER SIX YEARS.

EVEN THOUGH THE MUSEUM IS KNOWN FOR ITS MINIATURE HOUSES, IT ACTUALLY DISPLAYS OTHER KINDS OF ART THAT ARE “MINIATURE” TOO.

WELL, WE'RE VERY PROUD OF BEING WHERE WE ARE IN THE ART AND DESIGN COMMUNITY, AND BEING A GOOD COMMUNITY PARTNER. SO, I REACHED OUT TO CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL, AND JEN, THE CHAIR OF THE ART DEPARTMENT, WAS

EXTREMELY RECEPTIVE TO HAVING US HOST THE WINNERS OF THE "MINUMENTALS" EXHIBIT. AND THIS IS A PROJECT SHE GIVES HER ART STUDENTS EVERY YEAR, SHE DECIDES ON THE THEMES, SUCH AS CLICHES, OR SONG LYRICS, AND THE STUDENTS HAVE TO MAKE SOMETHING NO BIGGER THAN ONE INCH BY ONE INCH, AND IF IT'S THREE DIMENSIONAL, BY ONE INCH, AND THEY'RE NOW PUT UP AT THE HIGH SCHOOL, AND THE ONES THAT ARE VOTED THE BEST ARE THEN HERE ON DISPLAY AT THE MUSEUM FOR THE PUBLIC TO SEE FOR ABOUT A MONTH.

ELAINE IS ABLE TO USE THE MUSEUM AS A WAY TO GET THE COMMUNITY MORE INVOLVED IN ART

WE HAVE EVENTS ALL THE TIME. EVERY SECOND AND FOURTH WEDNESDAY AT NOON, WE HAVE A SERIES CALLED CELEBRATIONS OF CREATIVITY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP. I CAME UP WITH THIS IDEA BECAUSE A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE NOT NECESSARILY INTERESTED IN MINIATURES, OR THEY WOULDN'T BE DRAWN ONTO THE MUSEUM AUTOMATICALLY IF THEY THINK THAT THERE'S NOTHING HERE FOR THEM TO SEE. SO, THIS IS, THE MUSEUM IS REALLY ABOUT CREATIVITY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP, NOT ABOUT MINIATURES, IT'S JUST THAT THAT'S THE VEHICLE. SO I HAVE THESE PERFORMANCES, OR PRESENTATIONS, BY AGAIN, LOCALS, LOCAL MUSICIANS, SONGWRITERS, SINGERS, STEEL DRUM PLAYERS, STORYTELLERS, THE FIRST VIOLA OF THE INDIANAPOLIS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, THE POET LAUREATE OF INDIANA, WE HAVE JUST TREMENDOUS TALENT, AND THAT IS FREE TO THE PUBLIC, THE IDEA, AGAIN BEING GETTING

HERE TO ENJOY THAT PARTICULAR PERFORMANCE OR PRESENTATION, AND THEN YOU'RE INTRODUCED TO THE MINIATURES, AND ALMOST EVERYBODY COMES BACK, SO THAT THEY CAN LOOK AT IT IN MORE DEPTH. SO IT'S AT LUNCH TIME, AND EVERYONE'S INVITED TO BRING HIS OR HER LUNCH AS WELL, AND THE NEXT ONE IS SEPTEMBER 13TH, WHICH IS SILVIA GREY, WHO IS A SURFACE ARTIST, WHO SPECIALIZES IN HAND PAINTING SILK SCARVES.

FOR WHJE RADIO, THIS HAS BEEN COMMUNITEASE.