

# DOLL CUSTOMIZER™

APRIL 2011

THE MAGAZINE BY DOLL ARTISTS, FOR DOLL ARTISTS

NINIMOMO'S  
*Fascinator!*

Spring  
Dress

DENTAL EXTRACTIONS  
& MOUTH-SCULPTING

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Dolls*

*Sculpted  
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DOLL CUSTOMIZER

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# Spotlight Artist NINIMOMO

The collaborative work of Nik Moronese and Marie LeBreton

Ninimomo: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Passion in the Making  
By Angela Pravata

When I walked into Ninimomo's studio, I heard music. Yes, the radio was on, but I literally danced some sort of jig with sheer excitement for all of the beauty that was in front of me. I was immediately brought back to when I loved Barbie, and wondered why I ever stopped. All of the designers that I grew up loving were now Barbie-sized, and crafted with the most intricate beading and detail that I have ever seen. As someone who never considered Barbie collecting, I walked into a magical place of fabulous fashion, glamour, and fun, and I immediately needed to be a part of it.

Nik Moronese and Marie LeBreton, also known as Ninimomo, specialize in OOAK (one-of-a-kind) Barbie and Ken dolls. These college friends turned business partners are celebrating their fifteenth year in business, and they are unstoppable. I had a chance to visit them while they were preparing for their weekly preview, as well as this year's National Barbie Doll Collectors Convention being held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in July. This year's focus will be on Ken's 50th birthday. Nik and Marie are researching fashion from 1961 to come up with the perfect designs to mark this very special occasion. The stunning designs that Ninimomo create do not go unnoticed by their extremely loyal customers. I had an opportunity to speak to a few of their most passionate collectors, and their words help paint a picture of just how influential and innovative Ninimomo's designs and creations have been to the Barbie collecting world over the last fifteen years.

Jean-Huy Tran and Shay Kawanomiller are avid collectors of Ninimomo creations. Jean-Huy was never a doll collector until he was introduced to them by Shay. He was immediately hooked. When asked what makes Ninimomo stand apart from the rest, he explained, "I think the experience I have felt with Ninimomo dolls is the same as how I have always enjoyed artwork - I sit in front of them until something precious is stirred within me, and when I walk away from them, I carry that feeling with me, knowing that life has become a little bit more meaningful, and beautiful."

Shay Kawanomiller was a collector for years when he came across Ninimomo. "I was totally hooked," he said. "I fell in love with Ninimomo because they were taking top designers and making their works into Barbie-sized dresses. When I found out how many hours of work they put into creating such pieces, I just had to have one, so we purchased Miss Bashkiriya 2010. She was designed from a couture dress by Christian Dior, and when she arrived, I knew I was hooked. I love them all, but if I had to pick my top three they are: Miss Colombia 2010, Miss Peru 2010, and Miss Burundi 2010. I now own one hundred and forty-five Barbies, thirty-five of them are Ninimomo's, and I still have five more on the way!"



Miss Kosovo 2010-  
inspired by Christian Dior's Fall 2010 Couture Collection

Miss Haiti 2011-  
Debuting at the 2011 National  
Barbie Doll Collector's Convention  
in Ft. Lauderdale this July

Nik and Marie research hundreds of designs from Fashion Week, as well as the shows in Paris and Milan each year to look for inspiration for their creations. However, the process does not stop there. Nik explains how even a sunset will inspire a design. He said, "That's how we made Miss Burundi 2010. When we see something beautiful, we take it and run with it." Shay also pointed out, "The first thing that impressed me about Ninimomo was all the detailing they put into each doll, from repainting their faces, re-rooting and styling the hair, and the material they use, such as: silks, furs, and Swarovski crystal beads. Nik and Marie do more than capture the artist's design — they really put their heart and soul into their creations, and with so many new designers coming out, they have endless opportunities to continue creating such fabulous dolls."

Martha Torres has been collecting Barbies since 1993. She became a fully committed Ninimomo collector ten years ago. When I asked her about her journey through collecting, she said, "Today, I only collect Ninimomo dolls. They are the absolute BEST in the market. I own over three hundred Barbie dolls, and over one hundred and thirty of them are Ninimomo dolls. I love the pageant one-of-a-kind idea since no one else will own the doll you own. And the dolls, oh the dolls, are TO DIE FOR! The gowns, make-up, and hair of a Ninimomo are extraordinary. They are almost like Faberge Eggs — they are of royalty. Again, Nik and Marie's attention to detail is impeccable. I stopped collecting everyone else's designs about seven years ago since I only wanted the best."

Each week, Nik and Marie first preview their latest dolls on the company's Facebook page, and then on the Ninimomo website, where collectors all over the world have instant access to the latest pieces. I was in the studio just a few minutes after a preview, and the calls came flying in. Martha purchased Miss Albania and Miss Seychelles, my personal favorite, and without a second to spare. Martha said, "It's funny, because Nik has a release about every week, and I think there are a few of us that are watching the website 24/7 to have first dibs at the dolls!"

After touring the studio, it's safe to say that Ninimomo has something for every Barbie lover. Their dolls range from \$500-\$900, and they have an extensive layaway program for those of us just starting our collections, or cannot decide between a few. A visit to their website, [www.ninimomo.com](http://www.ninimomo.com), is a visual delight.

Since Ninimomo is celebrating their fifteenth anniversary this year at the convention, they are in the process of recreating a couple of dolls from their first year in business. "We have always strived to carry forth fashion inspired by fashion," said Nik. "We want to celebrate our years in business by bringing something back to life, as fashion generally does. It's a way of remembering where we came from and looking forward to where we're going." Nik and Marie are so grateful to their loyal customers over the years, and the best way to thank them is to continue to give them the best possible parts of themselves — their creativity, their eye for fashion, and most of all, their Ninimomo OOAK Barbies.



# Fascinator

Ninimemo tutorial

The perfect accessory for the upcoming royal wedding: how to make a fascinator!

Kate Middleton and Prince William's big day will be here very soon, so it's time to vamp up Barbie's special events wardrobe. Sure, Barbie has great clothes, but the best way to top off any special ensemble is a hat - but not just any hat - a trendy fascinator will be the finishing touch! What is a fascinator? A fascinator is a hat, but it's more like a hairpiece. If you've seen press coverage of British royal weddings, or horse races like the Royal Ascot, you would have seen numerous members of the royal family and celebrities showing off their best fascinators! It is usually a bit lighter than a hat, and definitely more expressive.

Although fascinators have been traditional in Britain since the 1800s, there's been a recent rise in their popularity. At the British premiere of "Sex and the City," Sarah Jessica Parker wore a wonderful green creation by Philip Treacy. Treacy is an Irish-born hat designer, and has created some of the most exquisite and recognizable hats in the world. His work has also been featured on the runways of Paris and Milan for the most decadent of couture shows.

It's really fun and easy to make a unique piece for your Barbie. You only need to have access to a few supplies, your creativity, and your imagination.

## Supplies:

fabric for the base (most anything will do, I used a basic satin)

feathers

sequins, seed beads, and swarovski 3mm bicone beads

sewing thread, and beading needles if you are using beads

silk flowers

fabric glue

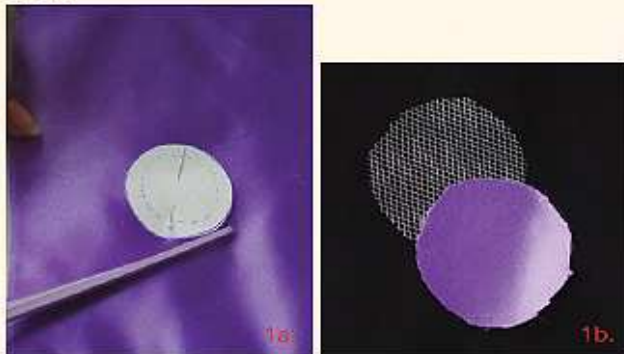
sequin pins or elastic cord

Lastly, inspiration! Go online, search for images of royal wedding celebrations and formal events, the Royal Ascot, and hat designer Philip Treacy

Length of time for project: about an hour. Basic sewing skills will be helpful.

## Instructions:

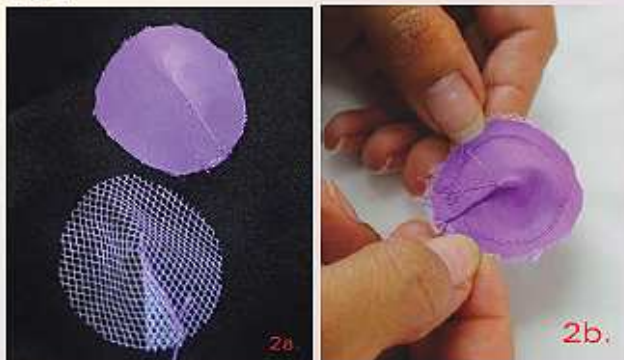
step 1:



1a. Start with a circle-shaped cutout of your base fabric. We used a circle with a diameter of 1 1/2 inches across.

1b. Repeat with the lining – here we chose stiff netting.

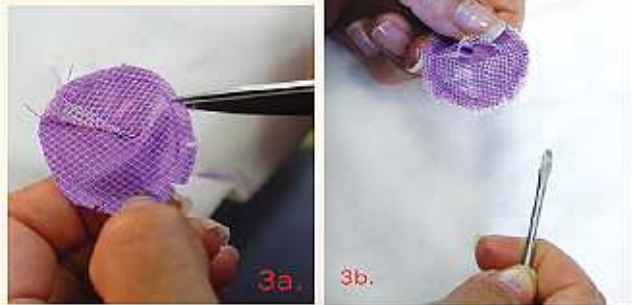
step 2:



2a. Once you've cut out your fabric, make a dart from the edge toward the center.

2b. After you've sewn the darts, pin together the fabric and lining with their right sides facing each other. Sew with a 1/4-inch seam allowance.

step 3:



3a. Trim and cut notches into the seam allowance.

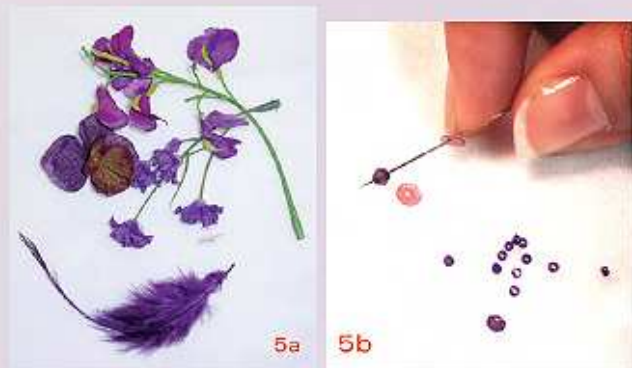
3b. To turn the right side out, you can cut a slit in the center of the lining (this is helpful in keeping your seam from fraying).

step 4:



4. Push out the fabric through the slit and use a thin object with a blunt edge to shape the edge of your base. Press and stitch the slit on the lining closed.

step 5:



5. Now the fun part – a fascinator is meant to be a lighter version of a hat. It's fun and flirty. We've put together several items that would make a great piece. The possibilities are endless!

step 6:

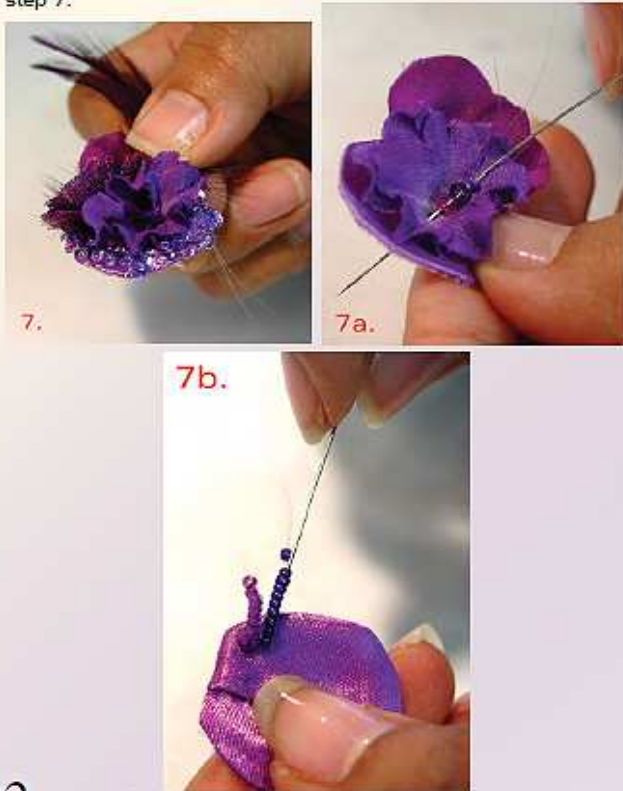


6a. Arrange your decorative items, and start stitching!

6b. A hint – when you work with feathers, apply a small amount of glue on one end, and let the glue dry before sewing. This will help tremendously in keeping the feathers on your piece.

6c. Another hint- if you know how to curl ribbon, you can also curl feathers the same way. Just take care in how much tension you use. Make sure you have several feathers, in case some get destroyed in the curling process.

step 7:

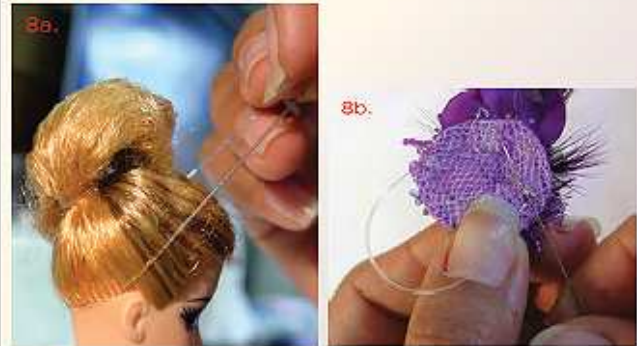


7. Ninimomo loves to incorporate hand-sewn beadwork, and we left patches on the satin hat where we can add clusters of beadwork.

7a. We've used a Swarovski 3mm bicone for a flower's center, and anchored it with a seed bead.

7b. We've also added some hand-beaded fringe by stringing a number of seed beads.

step 8:



8. You're almost done. The last step is to secure the fascinator to your doll's head. You can use sequin pins (short straight pins) and push through the base – use a few pins so the fascinator sits flush on the head. You can also make a band. Elastic cord is perfect for this.

8a. Measure the amount you will need by stretching the cord around the head (go from top then around the back of the head and back to top). Cut the cord a little longer than your measurement and make a double-knot at both ends.

8b. Sew the knotted ends to opposite points of the fascinator's edges.

step 9:



Voila! Just in time for the wedding!!