

# TOP STUDIO TIPS

**STUDIO MYSTIQUE**  
The main image here shows the basic set-up used to create the shot used in the magazine (below left).

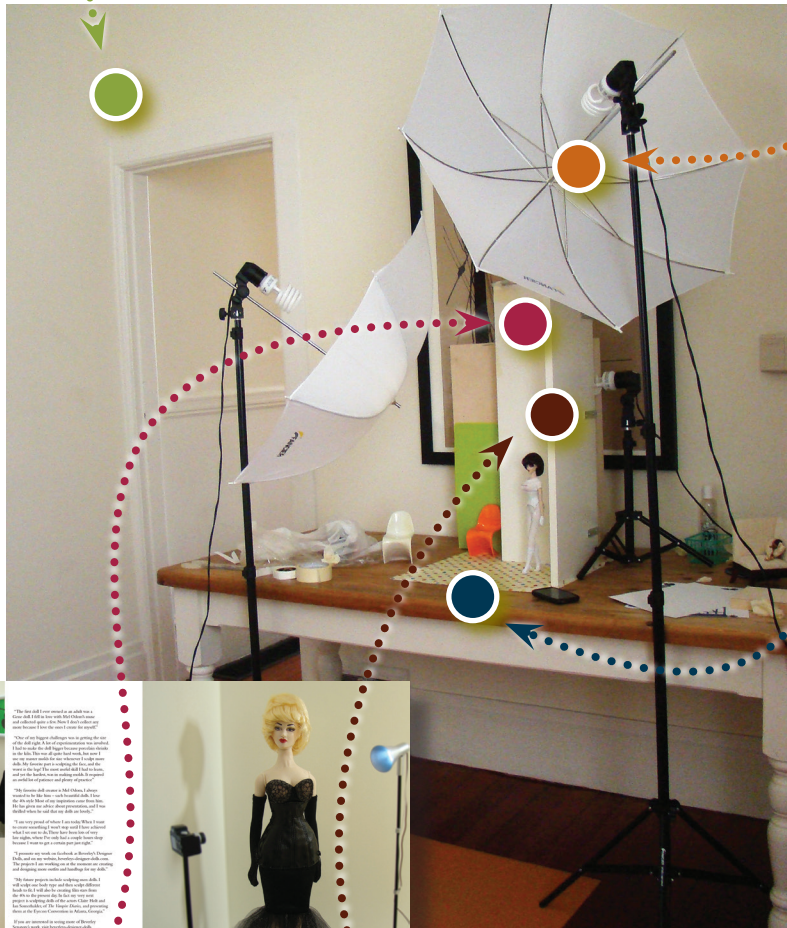
**CROP IT OUT**  
Don't be afraid to crop right in to the essence of your shot. Generally the doll is key. Lose any extraneous detail, just a glimpse of any other artefacts in the composition will usually suffice and will make a stronger image. Hinting at what's there is generally more intriguing for the viewer.

**ANY SPACE WILL DO**  
Ideally you'll use a room that has good natural light and a space that can be blacked out for studio lighting. Create a table-top studio for easy access and shooting.

**LOSE THE SHADOWS**  
Create diffused light with inexpensive daylight bulbs and umbrella reflectors. A set of lights similar to those shown can be found at [www.cowboystudio.com](http://www.cowboystudio.com)

**SIZED TO FIT**  
Build a collection of doll-sized furniture to pop into any set for added visual interest. Place-setting mats can make great flooring and wall-coverings.

**TRIPOD TRUTHS**  
Always use a tripod for your camera. It will eliminate shake and give you pin-sharp pictures. A remote cable release for the shutter will make things even better, so you don't need to touch the camera at all.



**CREATE STRUCTURE**  
Never throw away offcuts or any unused parts of flatpack furniture. This corner is constructed from two unused kitchen unit shelves, fixed together with right-angled brackets on the outside – so they don't show. This simple device has been one of the most useful props I have.

**STRINGING ALONG**  
One of the benefits of photographing dolls is that they will suffer indignities that live models would never, indeed should never, tolerate. Invisible thread is your friend. Another way of losing the stand is to suspend dolls under the shoulders, or even round the neck, with thread. I use heavy laboratory retort stands for support.

