



Kevin Milaeger

Milaeger's

A Vintage Ornament Miscellany

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Oh no---another broken ornament!.... a little tragedy that happens all too often. Usually the ornament is totally smashed, but sometimes there is only minor damage and you don't want to throw it out. I see this fairly often with the ornament style known as an "indent." These ornaments have one or more indentations in the side of the ornament, the purpose being to create more reflection. Most indents were made in the USA or Poland. Those from Poland have much thinner glass, so breakage is more common with them. Often the breakage is in the indentation itself. One thing you can do to conceal that type of damage is to affix a decorative item in the indentation. This could be something like a tiny angel, snowman, reindeer, or even a sprig of holly. Here are some "before and after" pictures of ornaments that have been damaged, and then "repaired" with this technique. All you need is a little decorative figure and a glue gun.



Before



After

With this particular repair, you have created a sort of homemade "diorama" ornament. I wrote about diorama ornaments in a blog last year---[here is a link](#) if you are interested. We have quite a few vintage diorama ornaments in the store right now. Of special interest is a group made in Czechoslovakia. Most that we see are from Japan, so these are fairly uncommon, and would add a new dimension to your tree.

For most folks, "vintage ornaments" are those we remember from our childhood. Of course, depending on one's age, and what ornaments our parents put on their Christmas trees, that definition can vary widely. In the





Czechoslovakian Diorama Ornaments

world of Christmas ornament collectors, it generally means ornaments from the 1950's or 60's. It is often hard to tell exactly how old ornaments are. Remember that most glass ornaments are made from molds. For the most part, the molds stay the same for many years and so the ornaments

created from them are nearly identical in shape, and so can be difficult to date. Older ornaments have a certain patina that you come to appreciate after you develop an "eye" and know what to look for. The gently faded, sometimes mottled, sometimes scratched finish is something collectors look for and cherish. Watchers of the popular "Antiques Roadshow" on television are well familiar with the value of patina, and that it is a big part of what drives value.

A recent customer, gazing at one of our vintage ornament trees, remarked that the ornaments looked awfully "vintagey." When I told her they were all truly "vintage" she was surprised, and then she asked if they were for sale. She then asked where they all came from. When you think about it, virtually every house in the USA (as well other countries that celebrate Christmas) has Christmas ornaments in it. So it should be no surprise that these ornaments eventually recirculate, and new collectors enjoy them until they recirculate again some years later, pretty much like any other antique. But the question of where we get all of the ornaments still



Diorama

hung in the air. We get them from Christmas pickers around the country, as well as Canada and Europe. Pickers are people who go to rummage sales, estate sales, auctions, and the like, and look for items that they can buy at a good price and resell for a profit. We work with many of these pickers, and we often buy ornaments in large groups of several hundred. When that happens we are oftentimes not sure exactly what ornaments will show up, but that is part of the fun! Because we buy from so many pickers, and because we buy them year 'round, the price we pay fluctuates considerably. This is why you might find identical (or nearly so) ornaments on the trees in our stores at different prices. The prices shouldn't vary too much, but we thought you'd like to know the reason for the occasional difference.

We add more ornaments to our vintage trees several times every week. So stop in and see what's "old." We are sure you will find something that sparks a memory or two.

Please [email me](#) if you have any questions or comments.