When people talk about skill in art, they tend to stress the making of it. But in addition to good craftsmanship, art has to have a deeper, dreamier side, something that stimulates the mind.

The quirky young artist Joe Fig, who has delivered to the Parrish Art Museum a dozen of his intricate, precise three-dimensional sculptural models of famous artist’s studios, is a master craftsman. Not only does he painstakingly re-create the studios in minute detail based on photographs, but he also makes replica figures of the artists. The result is breathtaking, like looking into a fully stocked dollhouse for the very first time.

His work is flawless, providing endless pleasure to museumgoers who like nothing better than to bliss out on skillfully made, cool-looking stuff. For others, like me, the models are a bit too perfect, too intricate and too precise to inspire deep thought, more at home in a haute toy store than a modern art gallery.

Or so I thought until I saw this riveting show.

Mr. Fig has begun to include, alongside the models, taped interviews with the artists in their studios, in which they speak about their work processes, their studio setups and their workday routines. It is no exaggeration to say the interviews bring the models alive.

 Appropriately enough, the first model you encounter is that of Mr. Fig’s own studio in the garage of his home in Norwalk, Conn. It comes with a mock interview conducted by the artist with himself, in which he outlines how he got started on this project in the late 1990s, when he was a painter living in New York and working in part of his living room. He envied successful artists with light-filled, spacious studios, so he began making studio models as a kind of comment on his own situation. The art world loved them.

Mr. Fig’s list of subjects includes studios belonging to Jackson Pollock, Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol, among others. But more recently he has been working on studios of contemporary artists, in particular those living outside New York. The current show includes a batch of new models of studios of artists who live and work on the East End, including Chuck Close (Bridgehampton), Ross Bleckner (Sagaponack) and Jane Freilicher (Water Mill).

The largest and in some ways the most impressive model here is that of the dual studios belonging to the painters Eric Fischl and April Gornik, who are married. They live in North Haven, where they built a home and fabulous studios perpendicular to each other. The model shows both artists in their studios, with Ms. Gornik working on her romantic landscapes and Mr. Fischl on nude figure painting. It is fun to compare and contrast the spaces: Hers is sparse; his is cluttered.
In Ms. Gornick’s interview, she speaks of listening to opera while painting, sometimes listening to a particular aria by one singer and then, in a “battle of the bands,” playing the same aria by a different singer to compare. It’s a telling detail, for the opera fits with her 19th-century neo-romantic — indeed, operatic — landscape painting.

Mr. Bleckner speaks openly about his love of routine and order. He says he gets up and goes to the studio at the same time each day, eating the same thing for lunch and taking a break each afternoon for exercise. Looking at the model of the artist alone in his neat, self-contained studio, while listening to him speak, you begin to get the impression of an artist-workaholic, somebody who lives to paint.

The interviews would be engrossing without the studio models, and vice versa. But together they are spellbinding, taking us behind the scenes of the gallery shows and glossy magazine profiles to show us how and where art gets made.

“The Studio in Miniature: Joe Fig,” Parrish Art Museum, 25 Job’s Lane, Southampton; (631) 283-2118 or parrishart.org. Through Aug. 5.