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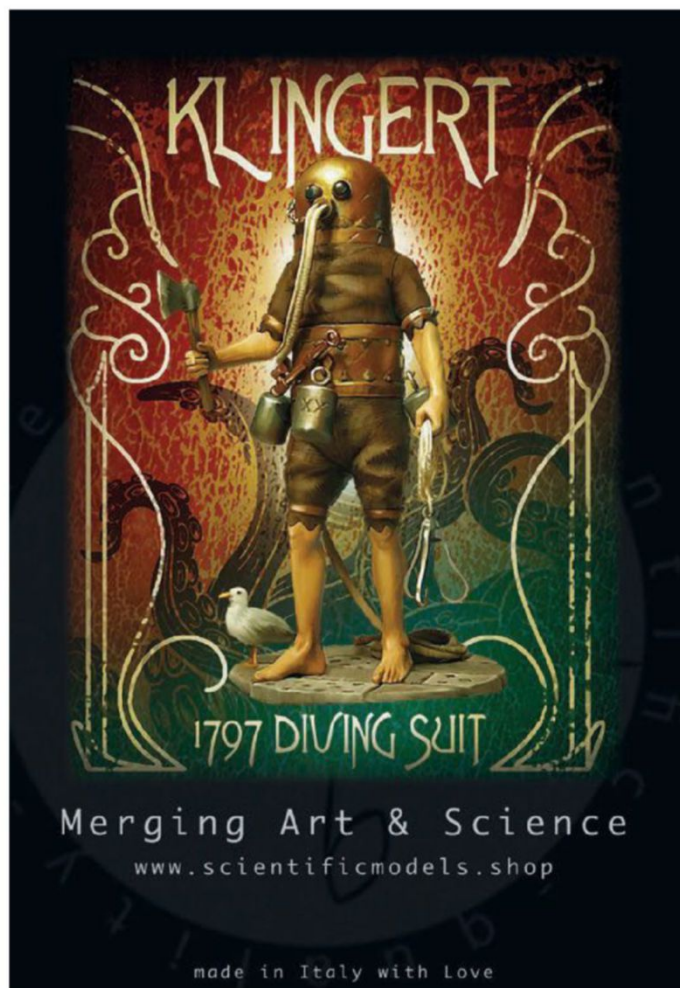
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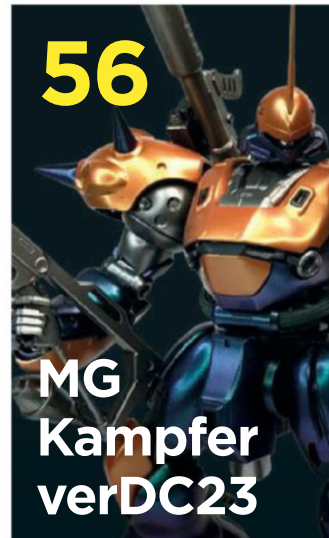


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Inside Issue 8



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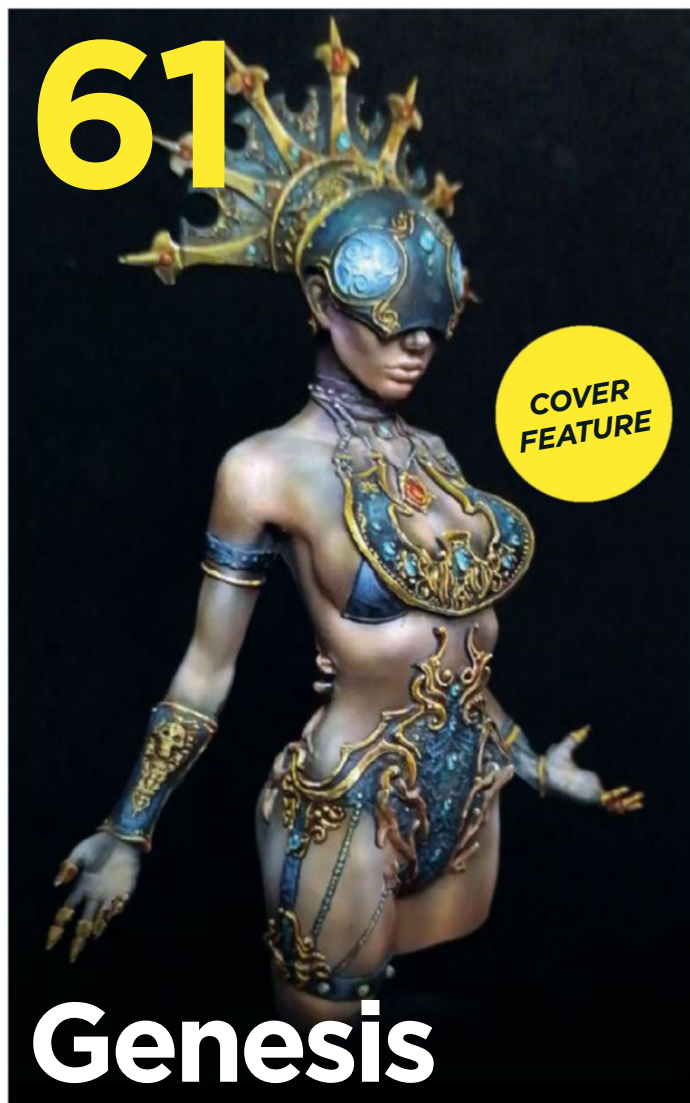
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Welcome...



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The global pandemic continues to run amok with the model show schedule and it is with an inevitable sense of regret that we have taken the decision to cancel the London Toy Soldier & Fantasy Figures Show and the London Plastic Modelling Show, due to be held on 27 and 28 March 2021 respectively. We hope very much that the London Toy Soldier show on Saturday 26 June and the London Plastic Modelling Show, which will include *Fantasy Figures International* as well as our two new magazines *Model Truck World* and *Model Farmer*, on Sunday 27 June 2021 will take place as planned. Another casualty is the World Model Expo, due to be held in Veldhoven, the Netherlands, in July 2021. This had already been postponed from this last summer but will now take place in July 2022. The good news is that the annual Scale Model Challenge will now take place next October. 2020 has been quite a year and I know that for many of us the hobby has been an important part of our strategy for coping in these unprecedented times. Here's hoping that with the first vaccines now being rolled out, the Coronavirus will soon be kicked into touch and the world can begin to get back to normal in 2021.

We've got a great array of articles in this action-packed issue of *Fantasy Figures International*. Allezander de la Rued kicks us off with a marvellous custom build of the iconic Transformer Bumblebee. It's amazing what can be done with a toy, some painting and weathering techniques, and imagination. Another returning contributor is Mirko Brechmann who presents another dystopian vision in the shape of a Chernobyl-inspired vignette. It's then off to the world of Maschinen Krieger, albeit with a Swedish twist, from the bench of Fredrik Håkansson. Our centrefold this month is wonderful build of Bandai's AT-AT by Polish modeller Rafał Lebioda. I suspect quite a few of these kits will have been unwrapped on Christmas morning, so this is a very timely article. Next we have interviews with one of the leading European miniature painters, Fabrizio Rusto, and one of the rising stars of the UK scene, Fet Milner. Don Suratos returns and take a break from his usual heavily weathered style to present a very shiny Mecha, while Luca Zampriolo of Kallamity works his magic on a 1/6-scale action figure to create a unique Mecha. Our cover story this month is a superb rendition of Michael Kontraros's 'Genesis' bust by Canadian painter, Sylvain Aubut. We also have another step-by-step tutorial from the bench of Green Stuff World. Finally this month, it's a great privilege to publish an interview with inspirational Swedish artist Simon Stålenhag. Hopefully, we'll be seeing lots more content inspired by Simon's work over the next year. With that done, I'm going to put my feet up for Christmas and all that remains is to wish you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous 2021.

David

David Grummitt,
Editor-in-Chief



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Let's Meet The Maker

Mally Anderson and Tim Marsh of Journeyman Miniatures



Tim and Mally



Patrick Kamsma's version of 'Road Girl' appeared in issue 5 of FFI and is reprinted in our 2021 Yearbook, out next month.



'Rat Bike' is an impressive continuation of the Road Girl theme.

How did you get into modelling?
What miniatures did you build and paint when you were younger?

Mally: Being the wrong side of 50, I go back to the age of Airfix models - planes, ships etc. I simply loved building them and their intricacy. However, it was always a bit of a hit-and-miss hobby, after all, what else was there for a young man to discover? It was the launch of Lord of the Rings in 2000 that really caught me. DeAgostini launched a magazine with figures and paints and I couldn't resist. I still have the first goblin I painted as a reminder, it's rubbish but I am very proud of it.

Tim: I grew up in a pretty amazing era for fantasy: Ray Harryhausen, Dungeons & Dragons, Star Wars and the advent of video games. Everywhere I looked there were bright amazing creatures from far away worlds battling larger than life heroes. Mini-Tim found all of it far more captivating than real life and I would spend hours drawing the stories that I pictured in my head. Around 1986 on a shopping trip to Croydon we came across a dusty old model shop down a back street. After staring into the window for what seemed like ages my Dad suggested we go in. It was an Aladdin's cave of wonderful white metal models! Orcs, barbarian warriors and a mass of Grenadier & Ral Paratha dragons, I was in a 10-year old's fantasy heaven. I spent all my pocket money on the

biggest dragon I could find and that was that until adulting got in the way and I stopped for close to twenty years. It was walking past a Games Workshop window five years ago that brought it all back to me. One impulse buy later and here we are.

What inspired you to start the business? What was the idea behind Journeyman Miniatures?

Mally: We met through the Cool Mini or Not forum and though we cannot recall how, we both ended up on the same painting course, hosted by Meg Maples in Leicester. It was one of those 'clearly meant to happen' moments. It was not long after that we started discussing starting our own business. Tim had booked Alfonso Giraldes for a course at the pub he ran. That weekend cemented our ideas and we decided this was the way forward for us. Initially we set our sights on courses, although figures were an ultimate goal. But we wanted to set a benchmark, set as high a standard as we could, make the courses a social event, something for the community. With that in mind we wanted to bring the best teachers to the UK to accommodate every level of skill and subject. The pandemic put a few of those plans on hold - one being a week-long course we had booked in a stately home with Alfonso Giraldes, Marc Masclans and David Mommel, all catered for by two top chefs - we were gutted we had to cancel this due to COVID, but hopefully it will happen again.

Tim: Laziness. It was 2016 and I'd been on a couple of painting courses by this point but every one of them was miles away and cost a fortune to attend (the social aspect not the classes themselves). I was pretty active on social media at this point and was already hosting a pretty successful painting club on Tuesdays and Sundays at the pub I ran in Hammersmith. It's fuzzy now but I think I saw a post on Facebook asking Alfonso if he would come over to the UK to teach. Alfonso said something along the lines of "find me a place and I will come" and I remember thinking "wow that would be amazing, could

I do it?" I felt a total pillock messaging the great Banshee and offering up my humble little pub, but Alfonso was amazing and after a brief conversation he agreed! That weekend was amazing: sixteen guys holed up in a small room painting, chatting about models, our favourite painters, curries and hangovers. It was totally intoxicating and I'd helped bring us together! That moment right there was the start of Journeyman and what it meant: community, socialising and the sharing of ideas. It's what's at the core of everything we do, we love the hobby and everything about it.

Your subjects are eclectic – monstrous creatures and post-apocalyptic road girls: how do you decide on your next subject?

Mally: There are two of us is the simple answer but there is so much more. Obviously we have our own tastes and that is probably where our desire as hobbyists kicks in. We are both strong-minded individuals who know what we like, but we allow each other to take the lead. It may sound a bit vague, but it is about identifying an idea or a concept that would draw us both to answer the question - would I buy it? From the start we never wanted to limit ourselves to a genre or style but wanted to evolve and produce what we thought people would like to see. We wanted to set a high standard, using the best artists. To work with Paul Bonner, John Wigley, Joaquin Palacios and Charles Agius on our first release was amazing.

Tim: High-level mini production is actually pretty accessible to be honest; you just have to be brave and persevere. We have no hard-and-fast formula for coming up with our next sculpt, we just like awesome new shinnies. For me I see myself as a painter first so honestly, I want to produce what I'd like to paint! That's how our relationship with Paul Bonner began. I love Paul's work, and the more I got into mini painting the more I wanted to paint one of his characters. I approached him and asked if he would be ok with me commissioning a sculpt of his Ogre Mercenary and happily, he agreed. Originally it was just going to be for myself as at that point I had no idea as to the expense involved. I soon realised the only way to realise this would be through limited production. We ended up funding the project through the painting courses and that was how Bograth the Hunter was released. It's become almost like a drug now, the feeling of working on new concepts, seeing the WIPs, chatting to some of the best artists and sculptors in the business, identifying and working through problems, bringing the minis to market, and finally seeing people putting paint onto something

we'd helped to create. It feels like drawing the stories out of my head again when I was a kid and I love it.

What can we expect in the future from Journeyman Miniatures?

Mally: Until this virus has ended then we cannot host courses, but they will be back. We plan to host these in a few different countries, which will be an exciting challenge for us. We are people-orientated and love the community feeling that you get at these courses. There will be more figures, many more, the list already takes us to the end of 2021 with more in development beyond that point, and we have a couple of pipe dreams that we hope we can develop, but those discussions are for another time. One thing is certain, we intend to be around for a very long time.

Tim: More of the same hopefully; there are significant challenges facing all UK small businesses at the moment, but we will endure. As long as there are fresh ideas boiling out of our heads we will find a way to create them, we can't stop now the box has been opened.

What would your personal message be to hobbyists reading this?

Mally: This hobby is about enjoyment above everything. Do not worry about how good you think you are or are not. Are you enjoying what you do? Enjoy yourself and embrace the community, there are some wonderful people out there who we all share common ground with. And if you ever bump into one of us, then please say hello, we always have time for some pure geek talk.

Tim: Don't take what you're doing too seriously. It's very easy to forget that we are all just big kids slapping paint on toy soldiers. So, with that in mind, just have fun. Painting and modelling can be very insular so get involved online, draw the curtain, throw open the doors and venture to the shows (when they return). It's a huge world out there and it's better shared. ■

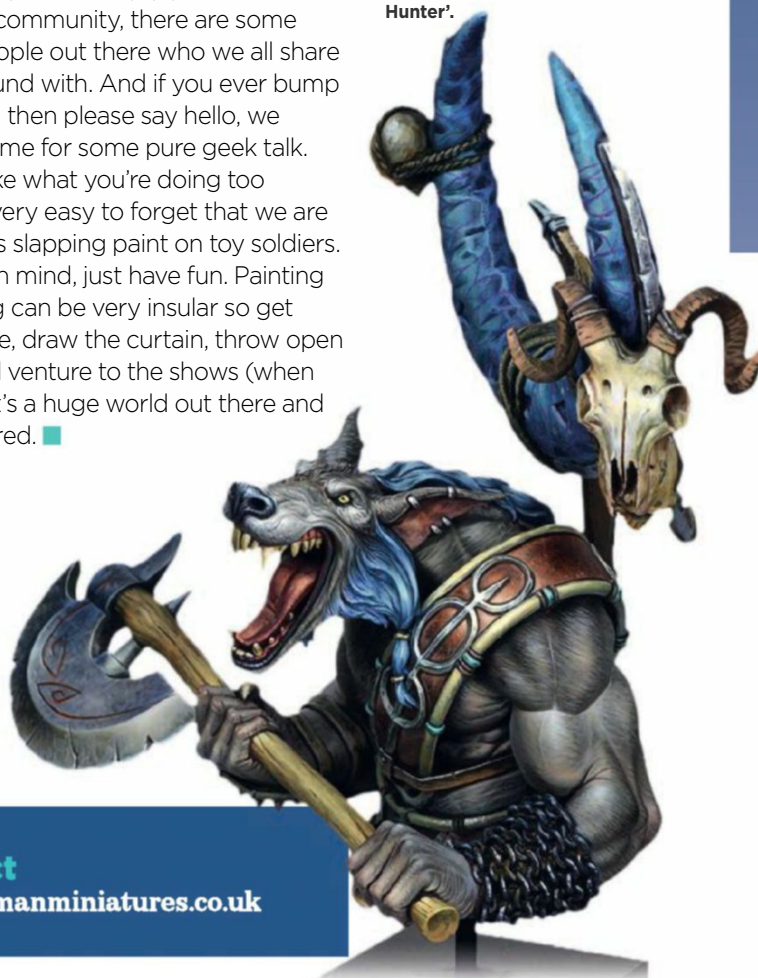


Perhaps their most ambitious figure to date: 'the Minotaur,' sculpted by Joaquin Palacios and painted by Fabrizio Rusto Russo. It was inspired by some Paul



Where it all began: Journeyman Miniatures' first figure, 'Bograth the Hunter'.

'Garmr' is another Paul Bonner-inspired piece. The resin bust was again sculpted by Joaquin Palacios.



Contact
journeymanminiatures.co.uk

News and Reviews

We review the hottest releases from across the hobby.

AMMO by Mig Jiménez

A range of interesting new releases this month by Spanish paint manufacturer and publisher, AMMO. Figures Set Complementary Colors (A.MIG. 7032) is a set of six 17ml acrylic paints designed specifically with the fantasy figure painter in mind. The colours included are: Bright Orange, Bright Violet, Magenta, Rust Ochre, Phthalo Green and Green Blue. The box front shows a fantasy football Ogre player from BigChild Creatives and the rear shows how these colours, individually and mixed, have been used to paint various parts of the figure. AMMO paints can be thinned with water for brush painting or with their proprietary thinner for airbrushing, although they are naturally thinner than, say, Vallejo Model Color or AK Interactive's 3rd Generation Acrylics. The inclusion of a small stirring ball in each bottle to facilitate mixing is always welcome.

Next up we have a selection of AMMO's new Dio Drybrush Paint. Dry brushing is, of course, one of the oldest techniques in the modelling handbook. Basically, it involves using typically a flat brush and wiping the paint off on a kitchen towel or similar until the brush is virtually 'dry'. The brush is then gently flicked back and forth across the subject leaving traces of paint on the highest points and thus emphasising the detail. The technique has rather been eschewed by figure painters in recent years, but still has its uses for highlighting metal (especially complex patterns such as chainmail) and is particularly useful for adding depth and detail to bases and other terrain features. AMMO's new paint comes in large 40ml wide-bottomed bottles. Upon opening them, I was quite surprised to find that the paint is quite liquid, the consistency of hair gel perhaps, and has nothing of the powdery quality I associate with Games Workshop dry brush paints (such as Necron Compound) released a few years ago. There are 29 paints in the range, covering a wide range of colours with a utility for military as well as Sc-Fi and fantasy modellers.

One of things that has become clear looking at the



submissions to this magazine is the importance of scenic modelling, whether that is just a piece of groundwork on a base or a more extensive vignette or diorama. AMMO's Super Pack Vegetation Solution Set (A.MIG. 7806) is a very handy starting point if you want to venture out into creating something a little more elaborate. The set includes four paints – Dark Brown, Forest Green, Lime Green and Green Base; three Oilbrushers – Olive Green, Field Green and Dark Brown; a Dark Brown Wash; Slimy Grime Dark Nature Effects, another enamel-based wash; and two sets

of laser-cut paper vegetation – Meadow Flowers Mix Colors and Ivy. The box also includes a very handy sheet of tips and instructions, although looking at how some of our contributors use these projects both in the magazine and in our forthcoming Post-Apocalyptic modelling book





will also stand you in good stead.

Finally, a great release for Mecha modellers: In Combat: Future Wars 3 is a glossy 128-page softcover book containing eight builds of classic Gunpla subjects. The emphasis here, as you might expect, is on painting and weathering and how AMMO's products can help you get



the most from your Gunpla. The techniques used are, of course, applicable to all sort of modellers and similar results can be obtained whatever your preferred painting and weathering products are. The layout of this book is extremely well done and there is plenty here to both inform and inspire. Our thanks to the guys at AMMO for the review samples. You can order directly from their website (www.migjimenez.com) or from good model shops.

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Tago Collectibles

Kickstarters, as many of you will know, are a great way of bringing to the market projects that are very individual and would perhaps be overlooked by risk-averse mainstream commercial producers. Rodolfo Goglia of Tago Collectibles has sent us details of his latest Kickstarter project: Moloch, Blade of Sorrows. The figure was designed by Rodolfo and Juan Novelletto, who also did the digital sculpt. What's different about Moloch is that he will be released in several different formats and scales: 1/50 gaming scale, 1/24 painting scale, 1/8 collector scale and a 1/16 mini bust scale. The gaming miniature will be painted by Alessandro Gobbi, Arnau Lazaro Azcarate will paint the 1/24-scale figure, and Michael Pisarki aka LAN the 1/8-scale bust, while our very own Sylvain Aubut is currently hard at work painting the large-scale collectible. The Kickstarter is well underway, and Rodolfo has a range of resin accessories planned that can be used to convert the basic figures. The Moloch project will also include painting guides and video tutorials, so do check out the Kickstarter page to see what it's all about. The Kickstarter campaign is now ended and the Moloch range can be bought via Levelup Hobby (www.leveluphobby.com).





He-Man



She-Ra



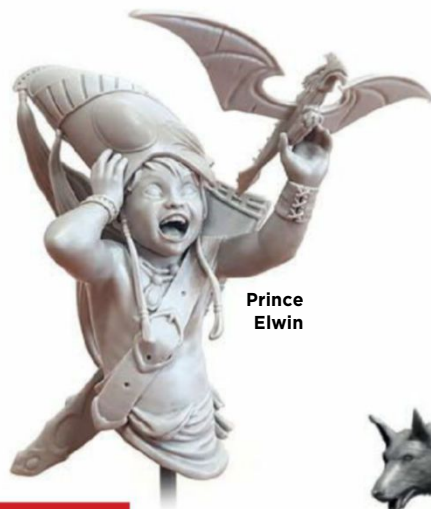
Skeletor

Archon Studio

Archon Studio is another independent manufacturer that began on the crowd-funding site Kickstarter and now produces a range of plastic miniatures designed for tabletop gaming, but which look superbly moulded and produced and will certainly be fun to paint. As well as a

tabletop game based on the classic video-game Castle Wolfenstein, they have produced a range of 30mm figures based on the classic eighties animated series, He-Man and the Masters of the Universe. Currently we have He-Man on Battle Cat and his arch-enemy Skeletor on Panthor, while She-Ra on Swiftwind is planned for the very near future. Both He-Man and Skeletor stand about 55mm tall, while She-Ra is 73mm, and all look huge fun. See www.archon-studio.com for more details.





Prince
Elwin

Dragonhead Models

I was pleased to receive in my in-box recently news of the latest releases from Dragonhead Models. We noted the upcoming release of their 'Mourning' bust a couple of issues ago, and I'm delighted to say it's available to order now from their website. Sculpted by the hugely talented Joaquin Palacios, the bust is in 1/10 scale and stands some 100mm tall. The boxart has been painted by Arnau Lazaro Azcarate and if that doesn't inspire you to buy it and have a go at it yourself, I'm not sure what will! Also from Dragonhead Models, we have the Prince of the Sundelwë, the son of Farstar Elwin, subject of the 'Mourning' bust. This looks another entrancing piece, very different in tone to the 'Mourning' and it'll be interesting to see how painters approach this one. Our thanks to Jamie at Dragonhead Miniatures for the product information. You can see more images and order from www.dragonheadmodels.com.

The Mourning



'Where am I?
Splinter'
(ref. 35215)



Masterbox

The two new sets of figures from Masterbox continue their post-apocalyptic, dystopian future series, which they label as 'Comics in Plastic'. 'Where am I? Splinter' (ref. 35215) contains a 1/35 figure of a teenage girl and her canine companion to add to the 'Skull Clan' line-up. Despite being set in a desert scenario, the girl is dressed in winter attire including a scarf and hat, while carrying a shotgun over her shoulder and holding her German Shepherd dog on a short lead, even though the scowl sculpted on her face should be protection enough. Amusingly, the backpack she carries has a teddy bear moulded into the surface, adding a further slice of character to the figure. The kit contains fourteen parts in total on a single plastic sprue making for a detailed and convincing figure.

The second addition to the 1/35 'Skull Clan' series is entitled 'A new Religion, Pastor' (ref. 35216) and is designed to reflect a more elderly gentleman who is seen as a figure of wisdom and is perhaps given to a new form of religion. The bearded figure is dressed in a pseudo-tracker outfit, similar to that seen on Wild West characters, including a broad brimmed hat, and is joined by a long haired dog. 'Pastor' and his companion are made up of eighteen parts, including what is probably the largest sniper rifle that I've seen in any figure set. As we've come to expect, both of these figures are sculpted to a high standard, with clear facial features and sharply formed injection moulded parts and accessories. Masterbox kits are available from all good model shops (www.mbltd.info).



'A new Religion,
Pastor'
(ref. 35216)

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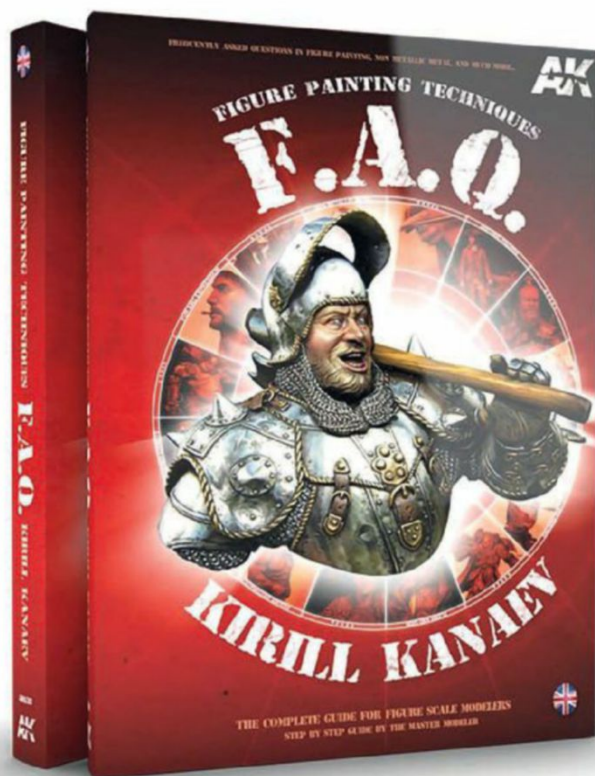
3.- Gently rub the brush over the surface details of the model to **highlight them and enhance the volume.**



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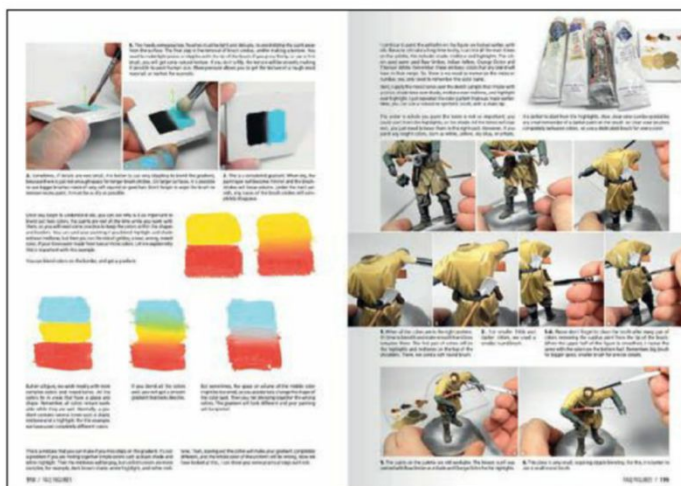
AK Interactive

How-to painting guides seem to be two-a-penny these days, but it is seldom that you get a real insight into painting from the very fundamentals of colour theory, all the way through to extensive step-by-step guides to particular projects. AK Interactive have pulled out all the stops with their publication of what might be considered the ultimate how-to painting guide. *Figure Painting Techniques F.A.Q.: The Complete Guide for Figure Scale Modelers* is a massive publication, written by Russian painter Kirill Kanaev, widely considered to be the most accomplished miniature painter at work today. This is a massive tome – some 500 pages – and is sumptuously illustrated throughout with examples of Kirill's work. The book is divided into six chapters. It starts simply enough, describing the different types of paints and their properties, and the importance of good tools and brushes, before moving on to discuss the importance of a good workspace and how to go about preparing a figure for painting. Chapter 3 is where things begin to get serious, with a lesson on colour theory. Kirill's writing style is a little verbose, it has to be said, and the same points are repeated several times, but this is a really thorough grounding in the key principles you will need to understand to improve as a miniature painter. Chapter 4 discusses what appears to be, to Kirill, the most important aspect of miniature painting: the convincing representation of the effect of light on a miniature. It discusses ideas of so-called zenithal lightning, directed focal light



and other effects we can seek to capture on our miniatures. Chapter 5 goes on to discuss techniques. Here Kirill introduces the basics of working with acrylics and oils, as well as a range of different brush techniques such as stippling and glazes. The use of airbrushes, and increasingly important tool for miniature painters, is also covered here. Then we come to the meat of the book, chapter 6, which accounts for 370 or so of the 500 pages. The chapter covers in turn painting skin, hands, eyes, hair, clothes, and 'elements of animal origin' including furs. All this is illustrated with very helpful step-by-step examples. The next 150 pages or so are given over to reflective surfaces and here Kirill returns again to theory, giving the reader an introduction to the basic physics of light to better understand how to recreate realistic reflections on armour and the like. Kirill also provides a really clear explanation of the Non-Metallic Metal effect, where the illusion of reflections on a metallic surface are created using various non-metallic colours. There is an extensive step-by-step tutorial, covering Young Miniatures' large-scale 'La Hire' bust, and Kirill shows how the theories explained in the previous pages can be translated into painting a miniature. I was left with a good understanding of the NMM technique, although I'm not convinced that will be enough to obtain a satisfactory result in my own painting! The penultimate chapter covers painting wood, gemstones, pearls and crystals, while the final one covers 'special effects', in fact a discussion of more advanced lighting techniques. I think it's fair to say that this is a very personal approach to miniature painting and while the final sections are a little long-winded, the book is a treasure trove of tips, techniques and insights into the practice of a master craftsman. Painters at every stage of their hobby

will find something to interest them in its pages and I'm confident that everyone who reads it will learn something. It's a very beautiful production too and the dozens of photographs of Kirill's painted miniatures are something to behold. The book is not cheap, but it's well worth the investment and highly recommended. It's available from AK Interactive (www.ak-interactive.com) and good booksellers worldwide.



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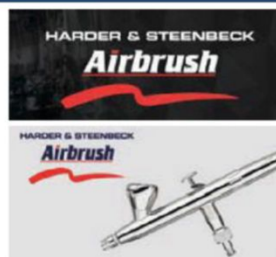
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235 Horse tone - Brown
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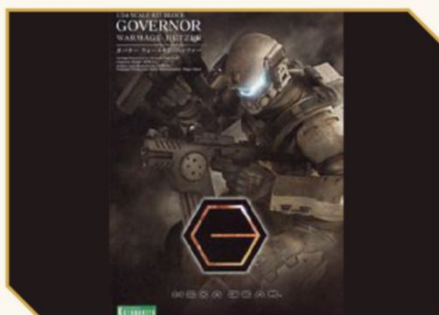
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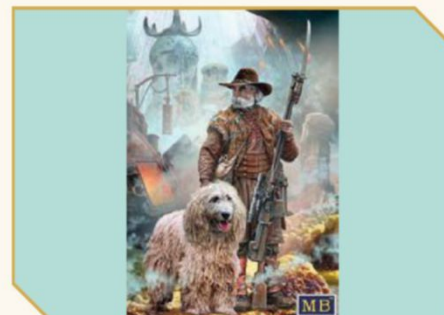
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Allezander Dela Rueda
transforms a Transformer.

Bumblebee

Bumblebee was one of the original Transformers, first appearing in the original Transformers cartoon series back in the 1980s. As such, along with the Autobot leader, Optimus Prime, and the evil Megatron, boss of the Decepticons, he was a constant in my childhood years. When the first Transformers movie was released in 2007, I was entranced. Here was my hero in real life, so to speak, and his old Volkswagen traded in for a series of much cooler Chevrolet Camaros. In 2018 Bumblebee was the eponymous hero of a new movie (albeit renamed B127 for the first part of the film) and his final battle with the Decepticons, Shatter and Dropkick, was the inspiration for this model.

As a scale modeller and scratch builder, I challenged myself to create my very own customised Bumblebee action figure, a model that would rekindle those childhood memories and remind me of my first superhero, as well as capturing the strength and toughness of Bumblebee in the movie. I began my research by watching the 2018 Bumblebee movie again – the hardship! – then I started collecting photos, video clips and anything else to save as a reference. With a good idea of what I wanted to build, I paid a visit to my local hobby ship and toy store but couldn't find what I wanted. I checked online and came across a relatively cheap – around US \$20 – Bumblebee action figure made by a local firm BMB. Unlike the recent more expensive Takara or Hasbro Toys' figures, this Bumblebee transforms into the original Type 1 Volkswagen Beetle, rather than the altogether more impressive Chevrolet Camaro. This figure was not as accurate a replica of the movie Transformer as I would have liked it to be, so, after thinking for a while about how I could modify the model, I decided to finish it as a static display model of Bumblebee. ▶



1



The BMB Black Mamba Bumblebee Studio Series SS16 (ref. H6001-3) is a pretty good replica of the 2018 version and a great start for a custom build.

3



The toy-like fixtures of the car door needed to be removed.

Getting Started

To begin with, I first removed some parts, such as the rear of the car and the engine bonnet, as I didn't want the model to look too bulky. Second, I added some details around the doors, such as wing mirrors, a door handle and some improvements to the interior door panels. I noticed too that the tyres, such a prominent feature, were not well detailed so I rummaged through my spares box and found a suitable set, originally from a R.C. car. I also took some of the plastic gears and details from the R.C. car and placed these inside the body of Bumblebee, making it more detailed and more reminiscent of the Bumblebee seen in the 2018 film.

The next step was Bumblebee's plasma cannon. The original gun on the action figure was also poorly detailed. I can't resist customising a big gun, so decided to scratch build one that would be inspired by the recent movie version. I collected together a variety of materials: lollipop sticks, a plastic balloon stick, gears from a broken computer printer, some thin PVC tubing, panel parts from a Gundam kit, and a line from a roller blind. I began to assemble a plasma gun that was obviously different to the

2



The first task was to disassemble the action figure and determine what would need to be replaced.

original, but one that I thought looked suitably mechanical and powerful. The other arm holds the Micron Bumblebee sword. The blade was too short, so I extended it by adding a second small blade on top and adding some details to the handle guard.

With the external modifications complete, it was now time to install the LED lights. This was a challenge as it was the first time I had attempted to install fibre optic nylon lights. First, I had to drill holes in the head of the plasma gun, the headlights of the car and in Bumblebee's eyes. I had a selection of different sized and coloured lights to add and began with the plasma gun. This was the most difficult as it needed six small lights around the gun and a larger one in the centre. It took me a while as a loose wire connection resulted in several broken lights. The hardest

4



And a number of cogs and other mechanical bit and pieces from an old printer were added.

5



The collection of parts assembled to build Bumblebee's plasma gun.

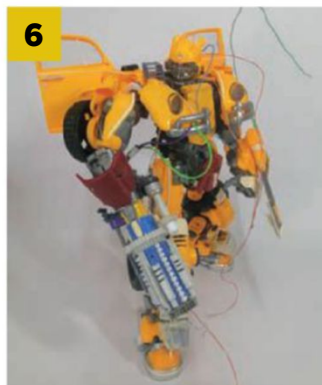
part is hiding the wires, or at least placing them in such a position that they are not obvious to the viewer. Next I added the LED lights to Bumblebee's eyes. The small size of his head meant it was really tricky to accommodate the lights and all the cables, so I had to cut open his head and remove some parts to fit everything in. Finally, I put the car headlight LEDs in place. This was much easier, simply hiding everything behind the headlights as they would be on a real car.

Painting Bumblebee

The original action figure's colour scheme was rather pale and the colours quite insipid. I decided at the beginning that Bumblebee deserved something much more epic! My weapons of choice were Vallejo's excellent Mecha Colors, with some Vallejo weathering products and some Tamiya acrylics. I applied a solid coat of Vallejo Grey Surface Primer (70.641), followed by a thin coat of Mecha Orange (69.007). Almost immediately, I oversprayed this with a coat of Model Air Medium Yellow (71.002). I let this dry for an hour and then, using 1000 grit sandpaper, gently sanded away the yellow to allow some of the orange to show through. This gave a wonderfully realistic appearance of an aged yellow, turning orange with wear.

For the mechanical parts I used Vallejo Game Color Gun Metal (72.054). With that done, it was time for the weathering. I followed up the sandpaper weathering by adding some tiny scratches. I drybrushed the gun metal areas of the plasma gun and body with Tamiya's Silver X-11. I used Vallejo's Fuel Stains (69.814) and Oil Stain (69.813) to add some suitably grimy and shiny stains and spills to the mechanical areas. Finally, I added the effects of smoke and soot using a heavily thinned mixture of Tamiya Flat Brown (XF-10) and Flat Black (XF-1). ➤

6



The custom-built Bumblebee, with the scratch built plasma gun and tangle of LED wires!

7



Bumblebee primed and ready for some paint action.

8



Vallejo's Mecha and Game Colors spray beautifully with the addition of some Airbrush Thinner (71.261) and dry to a durable, satin finish.





The Bumblebee ride at Universal Studios, Singapore, has this fantastic life-size replica of my favourite Autobot. (Erwin Sooputa)

► The Base

I wanted to place Bumblebee on a small base, strewn with the debris of battle and reminiscent of the final scene in the 2018 movie. I began again by collecting materials: the round aluminium frame from an old, broken wall clock, some plaster board, a spring, some photoetched mesh and other odds and ends. The plaster board was broken up to replicate smashed concrete and stuck to the base. I scratchbuilt a sign and a panel door from Plasticard and added these. Once everything was stuck down, I sprayed everything with Mecha Color Black (70.642), following that up with Tamiya Flat Brown and Light Grey (XF-66). I used Vallejo acrylics to add washes to the base, simply thinning them with water. When these were thoroughly dry I dry-brushed the base to pop out the details and handpainted some damp and oily stains. Finally, I placed Bumblebee on the base. The pose looked suitably dynamic and epic. I was delighted to be able to add this unique model of one of the icons of my childhood to my collection. ■





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The Lost Children of Pripyat



Mirko Brechmann
returns with another
Chernobyl-themed
vignette.

The disaster that befell the Ukrainian city of Pripyat on Saturday, 26 April 1986 has an enduring fascination across all forms of popular culture and scale modelling is no exception. On that evening a safety test on the RBMK-type nuclear reactor at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant went disastrously wrong. An unexpected loss of power, combined with unstable conditions and flaws inherent in the design of the RBMK-type reactor, led to an uncontrolled nuclear reaction and a steam explosion, which shot radioactive steam and debris into the atmosphere. The ensuing fire of the reactor core, now open to the elements, released more radiation into the atmosphere. 36 hours after

the explosion a 10km-radius exclusion zone was established, ten days later this was expanded to 30km, which led to the complete evacuation of the city of Pripyat. The first buses arrived at 11:00 in Pripyat and the inhabitants, many of whom had already fallen ill with nausea, vomiting and dizziness, began to leave.

By 15:00 most of the inhabitants of Pripyat, some 53,000, had been evacuated. Of course, the three days' evacuation they were originally told to prepare for turned out to be permanent and over the course of the next year over 150,000 people were permanently removed from the irradiated zone. The legacy of Chernobyl remains today, with some 5% of the population of Ukraine in

2000 claiming benefits as a result of suffering from the effects of radiation released as a result of the Chernobyl disaster.

In the years immediately following 1986 the only people walking the streets of Pripyat were the so-called 'Liquidators', the civilian and military personnel who worked into the next decade to limit the damage caused by the Chernobyl disaster. A handful of individuals, mainly the very old and known as Samosely, refused to leave the Exclusion Zone and, eventually, the authorities let them be. Subsequently, the city and its surrounding area was visited by those daring, perhaps reckless, individuals who travelled into the Exclusion Zone to photograph the





scene and to conduct research into the effects of radioactivity on the fish, wolves and other wildlife that had taken advantage of the retreat of humanity. More recently still, Pripjat has welcomed 'disaster tourists' – there are over fifty guides licensed to take visitors on tours – eager to get a sense of the disaster and its aftermath.

The Exclusion Zone exerts a macabre pull on popular culture. The opening scene of the 2005 film *Return of the Living Dead: Necropolis* takes place in Chernobyl where canisters of the zombie chemical 2-4-5 Trioxin are discovered. The 2012 film *Chernobyl Diaries* follows a tour group, stranded in Pripjat and assailed by various creatures mutated through their

exposure to the radioactivity. Video games, such as 'S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Shadow of Chernobyl' and 'Call of Duty 4', popularised the Exclusion Zone as a place of nightmares, where radioactive monsters, zombies and worse stalk the nuclear landscape. This theme is continued in the forthcoming release 'Chernobylite', so, as you can see, the popularity of Chernobyl-related games and movies endures.

In the modelling world the Chernobyl disaster has grown in popularity recently, particularly in the wake of the 2019 HBO miniseries *Chernobyl*. Plastic kit companies, particularly the Ukrainian-based ICM, have re-released several of their 1/35 scale Soviet-era lorries in Chernobyl-themed boxings, while Trumpeter

have 1/35 kits of the BRDM-2, a Soviet four-wheeled armoured car, that include the NBC version used to decontaminate Pripjat and the surrounding area after the disaster.

For modellers of a post-apocalyptic bent Chernobyl offers rich pickings indeed. Companies like Alternity Miniatures, Evolution Miniatures and Kellerkind Miniatures offer a wide range of stalkers, zombies and similarly nightmarish figures with which to populate a diorama or smaller vignette themed around a nuclear apocalypse. As we shall see, a number of companies also offer scenery and accessories specifically designed to recreate features and landmarks in Pripjat and the wider Exclusion Zone.

1



The city sign was painted white and the part where the letters stand in red following images of the original.

2



The '1970' on the sign was painted with different acrylic paints using the Non-Metallic Metals technique.

3



For the heavy weathering evident on the city sign, I applied AK Interactive Engine Grime (AK082) in a thin layer and then blended the paint using dabbing movements with an old brush soaked in the thinner.

4



I used AK Interactive's Slimy Green Light (AK027) and Vallejo Environment Slimy Green Dark (73.822) to build up some realistic-looking moss on the base of the sign.

5



One of the two figures is from Alterian Miniatures, sent by my friend Marco Riolo. As is so often the case, the figure from Alterian Miniatures goes perfectly with a post-apocalyptic scene.

6



After applying AK Interactive Terrains: Muddy Ground (AK8017) with a spatula for the groundwork, I dabbed a piece of sponge over the surface to impart an uneven texture.

7



I consciously chose a harsh contrast between light and dark for the grass, wanting to create a warm, welcoming aspect juxtaposed against a darker and more foreboding one. The grass was a mixture of Model Scene's Early Summer (MS-006-03) and Late Summer (MS-006-04) flock and was fixed in place with a mixture of PVA glue and water.

8



I added some small puddles in selected places using AK Interactive Puddles (AK8028).



The flowers come from the 'Nature in a Box' set by Reality in Scale. They were stuck to the base with Super Glue.



For the larger weeds growing around the city sign, I found various small plants in my garden and carefully glued them in place.



To add further variety to the scene, I placed some bushes of a lighter green.



I then used some AK Interactive Wet Effects Fluid (AK079) to enhance the appearance of the muddy ground.



I punched out the leaves from real leaves with the help of an RP Toolz leaf punch and then carefully fixed them in place with Super Glue.



The old tyre was weathered using AMMO's Dry Earth Splashes (A.MIG. 1750), Europe Earth pigment (A.MIG. 3004) and Mig Productions' Light Dust pigment (P027).

The Idea

The idea for this little scene was to show the dark side of the Exclusion Zone and imagine what would have happened if the mass evacuation had not taken place so quickly. It shows a deserted part of Pripjat in which two children pause as they notice a butterfly - a ray of light in their otherwise tragic situation. The

backdrop of this little encounter is the place-name sign of Pripjat. The Pripjat city shield is a limited edition piece made by ARTEFAKT diorama accessories in 1/35 scale courtesy of my friend Alex Friedrich. It is made of resin and beautifully cast. It seemed to me to capture perfectly the pathos of the doomed city. The figures are from Alternity Miniatures and

Kellerkind Miniatures and again are wonderfully sculpted and cast. I found the other materials, such as the plastic canisters and the small wooden cart, in my spares box. They fitted in with the scene I had my mind exactly. The idea was born and construction could begin.



15



With a toothpick and a brush, I spattered mud across the garbage lying around.

16



I painted the piles of garbage, including old plastic canisters and tyres, with different acrylic paints. I scratch built the warning sign.

17



Each of the discarded plastic containers was painted and weathered in turn. It's important in a vignette like this to afford every element the same level of attention.

18



For me the highlight of the scene are the tiny butterflies from Kellerkind Miniatures which I painted with acrylic paints.

19



The bear with the gas mask is also from Alternity Miniatures and complements the scene perfectly.



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Fredrik Håkansson returns with another imaginative Ma.K. diorama.

Erika's workshop



A small town somewhere in Sweden, one autumn evening in 1988:

Erika turned off the gas and lifted her welding goggles. Rock music streamed from the cassette deck, turned to high volume, and in front of her stood a huge suit of power armour. A year and a half of work so far and soon it would be finished. She smiled, only a few final bits of assembly and painting it was left now. The old basement room at the bottom of the apartment building had served as a good workshop for her, but now that she saw how big her creation had become, she was a little worried about how she was going to get it out through the basement door ...



1 The 3D-printed workshop covered with cork tile and 'plastered' with AK Interactive's 'Concrete'. A few quick passes with the airbrush completed the job.

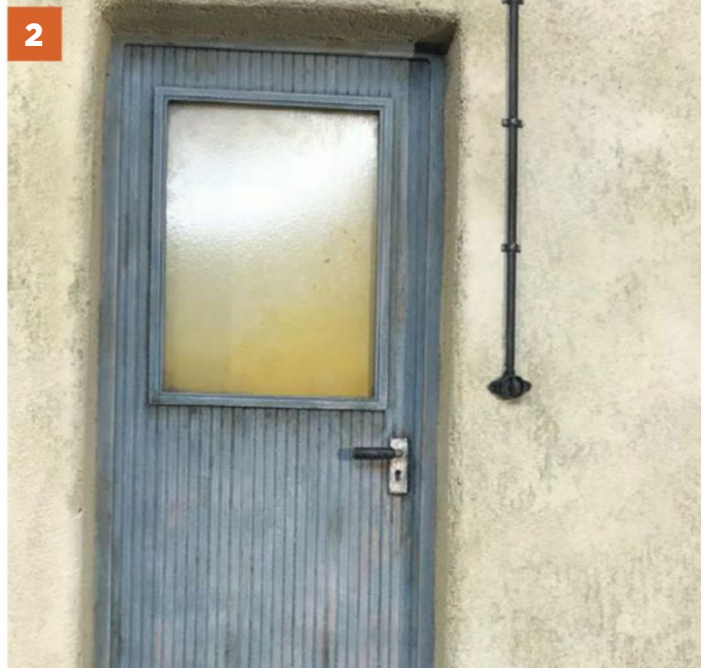
This is the short version of the story of 'Erika's Workshop'. In this model I tried to capture some of the spirit of DIY and the late 1980s. The diorama in 1/20 scale is built around two models: a Maschinen Krieger S.A.F.S Prototype from Wave and the 'Sasha The Welding Girl' figure from Industria Mechanika. I stuck to the word 'prototype' in the description of the Maschinen Krieger model and thought about what the suit would look like in an incomplete state. In this way, an idea was born to create an environment where the S.A.F.S armor was under construction as a secret, DIY project and my thoughts then turned to the type of basement premises that have long existed in Swedish apartment buildings. This would be the perfect environment!

A Workshop in the Basement

I will start with a confession: as a modeller I am lazy by nature. By this I mean that I am constantly trying to find shortcuts and ways to avoid monotonous or very labour-intensive steps in the building process.

In this case, I wanted to build a small and compact diorama. At the same time, I had been thinking for a while about how much a 3D printer could help me in the construction. Would it be possible to print the entire room?

When I started sketching out what the workshop would look like, I decided to test my theory. My printer has a working surface of 210x210mm, so the diorama had to stay within these limits. To make the composition more interesting, I decided to skew the back wall a bit. Had I built the frame in the classic way I would have had to handle a lot of complicated angles. I avoided this as the drawing I created in my computer could be directly transferred to a 3D programme for further processing and from there to the printer. This saved me a great deal of time, while I also



2 The windows were clouded over with the airbrush and then an LED set-up placed on the base behind the wall. This cast a pleasing diffused light source into the workshop.



obtained a perfect fit on the parts from the beginning. I therefore had the walls, windows, doors, frames and steps made in this way. The disadvantage of printing in a filament printer is that you see and feel the different layers and therefore the details almost always need to be sanded to get a smooth and even surface.

I chose to cover the walls and floor with a thin cork board as this is a good material with which to recreate cracks and other damage, while at the same time it provides a secure base for attaching plaster and putty. In this case, I textured the concrete floors and plastered walls with the help of AK Interactive's Terrains Concrete (AK8014), which when dry was carefully sanded with medium-coarse sandpaper to create the look of a smoother plastered surface. I then used heavy diluted acrylic paint to gently airbrush the room. It was important to get an unevenness in the coverage of the paint so that the wall and floor would not appear flat and lifeless. The door and window parts were sanded smooth, and similarly painted with acrylics before being weathered with oil paints and enamels. I made the door handles and hinges from thin metal wire.

As the angle of the room created an empty space behind the wall, I used this to install some LED lights with the aim of creating a feeling of light from the 'outside'. I made window glass from transparent plastic, which I airbrushed on the back with different yellow-brown shades in thin layers. In this way I got a gentle light from the LED through the 'dirty' windows.

4



The Wave Corporation 1/20 S.A.F.S. suit was built up and detailed with some extra weld seams. A suitable paint job underlined the 'under construction' appearance of the suit.

➤ The diorama needed an element at the top to enclose it and define its space, so I decided to make a beam that ran across the room. On this I hung a winch which, in turn, would hold the S.A.F.S. armour upright. In reality, however, it turned out to be the opposite, as one of the challenges was to get the beam to hang straight without dipping at one end. The single wall bracket was not enough to ensure this wasn't the case, so I needed extra support and by weaving a stiff metal wire into the chain from the armour up to the winch, I made sure that the armour together with the chain and the winch formed a support for the beam.

Weathering the Room

A workshop is seldom a clean place. The corners and where the floor met the walls therefore received a slightly darker tone with the help of a thinned dark grey wash applied

6



Some of the various items I printed out for the diorama. Some were downloaded from templates available on the Internet, but others I designed myself on a 3D drawing programme.

5



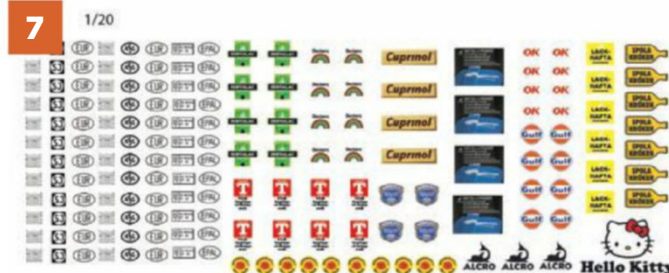
'Sasha' (aka 'Erika') is a beautifully sculpted and cast resin figure from Industria Mechanika. There are quite a few 1/20-scale female figures in a similar vein designed to accompany Ma.K. kits from various manufacturers.

with the airbrush to enhance the feeling of dirt and grime. To further suggest used and dirty appearance, I used fine sand and various pigments to create accumulations of dirt in corners and along the bottoms of the walls (which, incidentally, also hid the joint between the floor and wall in an effective way). I then fixed these accumulations with diluted Mod Podge. Rust-coloured pigment was used on the floor surface under and around the S.A.F.S.

S.A.F.S. Prototype: a Work in Progress

The idea of an armour under construction meant that I had to imagine what it would look like half-finished: no paint, bare, oxidised metal and fresh welds. I made the welds by scribing depressions into which I placed thin strands of Tamiya epoxy putty. I pressed the welding pattern into the putty strands with a small U-shaped piece of sheet metal mounted on a brush shaft. The raw metal surface was created by applying Gunze Sangyo's Mr Surfacers 500 with a stiff brush.

7



To ensure a suitably Swedish feel, I searched for various labels and logos and used the drawing programme to turn these into decals, simply printing them out on decal paper.



The painted and weathered accessories in place. They really add a sense of clutter necessary for a busy workshop scheme, as well as immediately placing the diorama in a spatial and temporal context.

I painted the whole model with acrylics in different shades of rust. The model was then weathered with oil paints. Finally, the welds and edges were highlighted with a soft lead pencil and various white chalk markings were drawn on the armour with a white pencil.

Sasha becomes Erika

The figure of 'Sasha the Welding Girl' is a wonderful model (although I would not directly recommend anyone to engage in welding to dress that way). I chose to omit the gas tubes from the kit as I realised that there wasn't any room for them in the diorama. Painting her was a straightforward business done with a combination of acrylics and oil paints. I usually prime my figures with a zenithal highlight followed by a thin base coat with acrylics. Then I use oil paint to add highlights and shadows. The main advantage of oil paints is that it allows thin translucent layers and smoother transitions. Finally, I applied a pair of homemade decals for the print on the tank top and the tattoos.

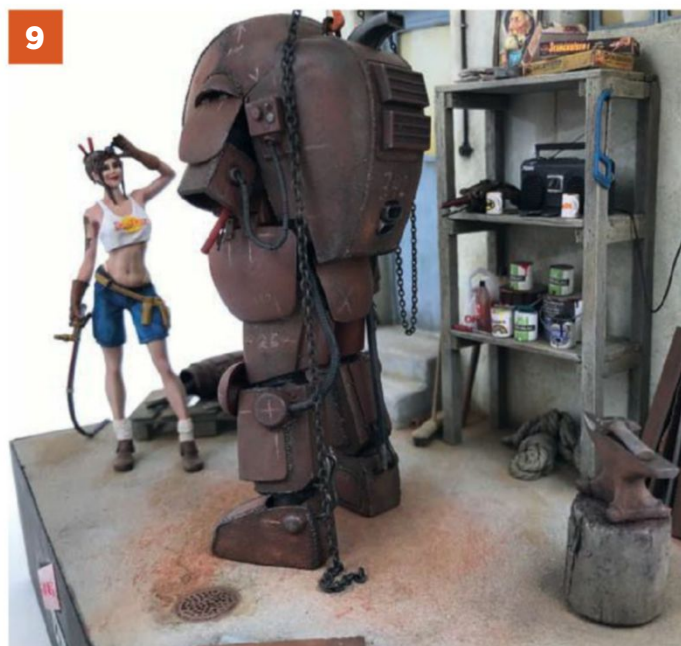
All Those Little Details

One of the best parts in a build like this is the making and painting of all the small details. It's the moment when you really have to challenge yourself in terms of creativity. I wanted to include a touch of the 1980s in the diorama and therefore picked some things that reminded me of this decade: Swedish pop magazines, plastic model boxes, a cassette recorder, mugs, bottles and paint cans. I usually reason along the lines that I should not repeat work that someone else has already done and when it comes to 3D models, there are lots of ready-made things to download through various online forums. One of my favourite sites



is Thingiverse.com. There are lots of fantastic creations here that incredibly talented people from all over the world create and share, and here I often find details that can I print out with the resin printer. The digital models are often in a different scale than the one I need, but the software for the printer can rescale them so that they fit my current project.

However, there is a lot that I cannot find online and then I have to draw it myself instead. Paint cans, plastic bottles and old-fashioned Swedish switches and electrical outlets are examples of this. It's also worth mentioning in this context is that I usually print three or four times as many things as I need. In this way, I get a small stock that I can use for future projects. Labels on bottles and jars or signs belong to that category of details that the viewer instantly recognises and can relate to in a diorama. They enhance the scene by providing an immediate context, showing when or where the scene is taking place. I therefore think it's worth putting some work into this. Nowadays, it is also quite easy to create decals yourself with the help of photos, a drawing programme and decal film for laser or inkjet printers.



Erika surveys her handiwork: how is she going to get that out of the door and up the basement stairs?

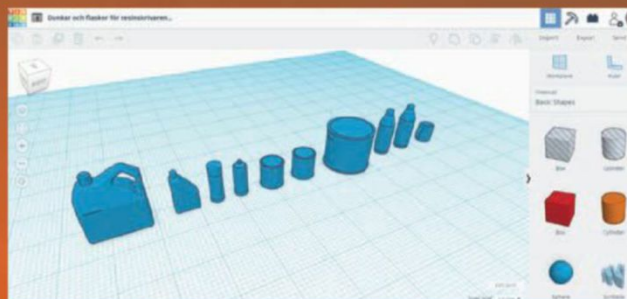
► Some Final Reflections on the Project

Building Erika's Workshop was a really fun project where I felt I went further than ever before in using technology in a creative and at the same time labour-saving way. Building models in unusual scales always creates challenges when it comes to finding details and accessories. 1/20 is by no means a common scale in the world of plastic modelling and there is even less scope in this scale when it comes to diorama accessories. During this project, I really became aware of how the 3D printer could help me shape things that, if not impossible, would at least have been difficult or very time consuming to fabricate by hand. It was certainly not the first project that I have enlisted the help of 3D printers, but it became a project where the printed elements came to dominate the construction of the model and I probably would not have designed and built the model the way I did if I had only worked with traditional methods. Because of this, the 3D printer has become one of my best friends in my hobby room. ■



The 3D Printer as a Tool for Modellers

There is today a huge assortment of 3D printers and, roughly speaking, those designed for home use fall into two types: filament printers and resin printers. For me as a modeller, these two printers complement each other in terms of usability. The filament printer, which is by far the most common type, prints by melting a plastic wire. I use this mainly to print larger parts that I will process in different ways. I prefer to print in the plastic material that is usually abbreviated HIPS. This is basically polystyrene, the same soft and easy-to-work-with material that plastic models are made of and one I am used to working with. This means that it is possible to glue with ordinary plastic cement, just like ordinary plastic models. The resin printer, which instead prints using UV-curing resin that is illuminated with an LCD screen, allows



A simple drawing programme allowed me to design the accessories in 3D and print them on my 3D printer.

much greater precision and is perfect for small sculptural details. The fact that it is possible to print transparent objects also opens up completely new possibilities. However, you should always remember to use a mask when working with things made of resin as the dust is hazardous to health.

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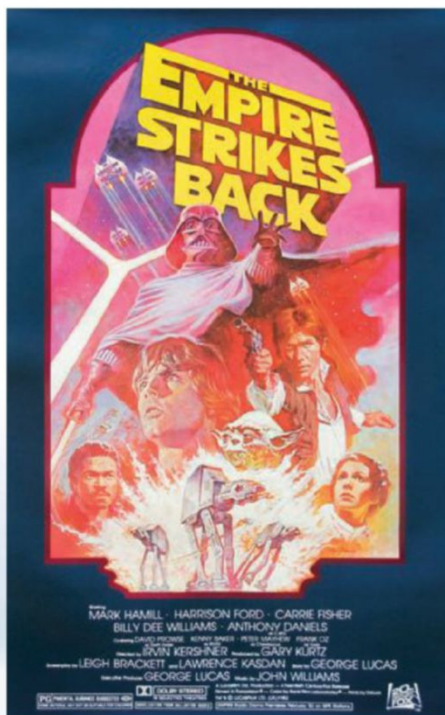


The AT-AT (All Terrain – Armoured Transport) is one of the most iconic vehicles of the Star Wars universe and one of the most powerful symbols of military power employed in the service of the Galactic Empire and First Order. Developed after the Clone Wars from the six-legged AT-TEs, it took part in the early rebellions against Empire before seeing action during the Galactic Civil War, most notably during the battle of Hoth. Improved versions of the AT-AT were also used by the First Order, both as attack vehicles and as mobile command posts.

In 2017 the Japanese manufacturer Bandai issued a beautiful model of the AT-AT walker. Bandai are well known for their superb



Rafał Lebioda builds one of the most iconic vehicles of the Star Wars universe.



The impact that the AT-AT would have on generations of Star Wars fans is evident from this 1982 movie poster.

range of Star Wars kits, several of which have featured in these pages over recent months. They are deservedly known for their fine details, quality moulding and ease of construction and this one is no exception.

Building the AT-AT

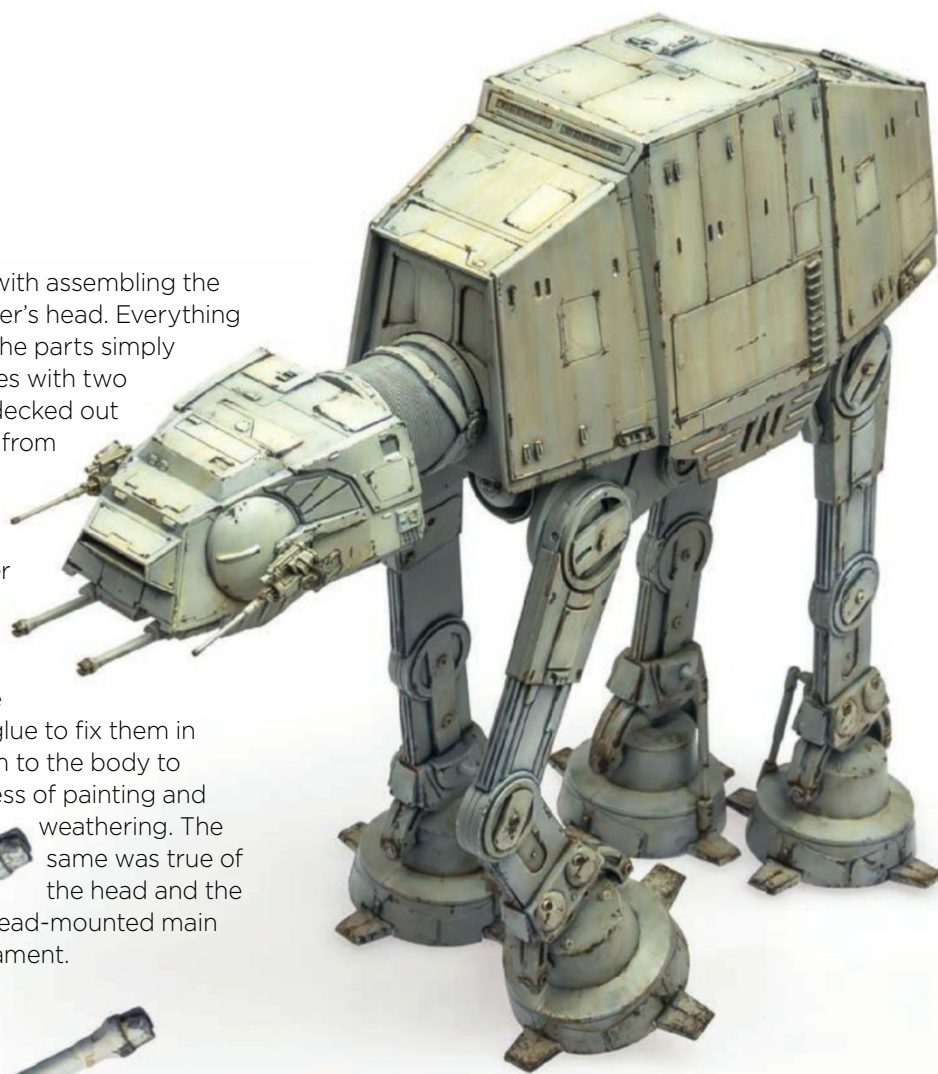
Bandai's Star Wars kits are a breeze to assemble and are engineered to fit together without glue, although I tend to use glue as I want to ensure a firm joint and don't intend to move the model about once it's built. The kit consists of six sprues, one of which contains a large white display base, and a choice of either waterslide decals or

stickers. You don't need much in the way of tools to assemble the kit: some sprue clippers, files and glue are about it.



Following the instructions, I began with assembling the command module located in the walker's head. Everything is straightforward here, with most of the parts simply slotting into one another. The kit comes with two Stormtroopers as crewmen, suitably decked out for battle on the ice planet. I deviated from the instructions, assembling the boxy hull, before moving onto the legs. These are the most complicated part of the assembly, as there are a number of moving parts that allow you to pose them. Once I was happy with

the position of the pose of the legs, I used some glue to fix them in place but didn't fix them to the body to ease the process of painting and weathering. The same was true of the head and the head-mounted main armament.



Primer

Before beginning painting in earnest, I sprayed the entire model with Mr. Hobby's Mr. Surfacer 1000 from a spray can. This sprays beautifully and is the perfect way to prepare a large model like this. Once it had dried, I checked I was happy with everything and made sure there were no mould seams, glue marks or any other imperfections on the surface. With that done, it was time for paint proper.

1



A spacious box with a beautiful image of the model on front demands you look inside. Inside the box, each sprue is individually bagged.

2



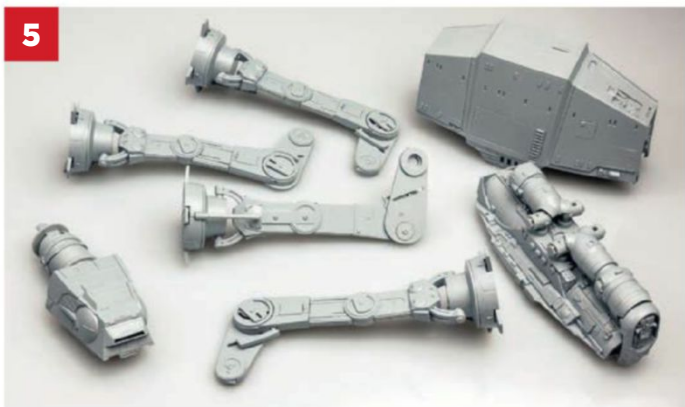
I cut the pieces from the sprues with some clippers and carefully cleaned them up with a hobby knife and files.

3



➤ All components are assembled and ready for painting. Keeping them separate at this stage makes the job of painting and weathering much easier.

5



The final sub-assemblies ready for paint.

Painting the Beast

As always, I applied the basic colours using my proven Mr. Hobby Procon Boy 0.2 mm airbrush. The grey primer was the base colour, which I modulated by applying more shades, starting with Mr Hobby Gray FS26440 (H325) on selected areas of the fuselage. I tended to apply this in the centre of the large panels, especially on the hull sides. I used very diluted paint to do this, slowly building up very thin layers of paint. I then repeated the stage, covering less of the areas, with an even

4



The outer piece of the hull superstructure (C1) fits over the four-part lower hull (B12-13, B30-31). Some plastic cement and clamps ensured a solid bond.

6



Mr. Primer Surfer 1000 spray is a quick and reliable way to obtain a good surface for subsequent paint applications.

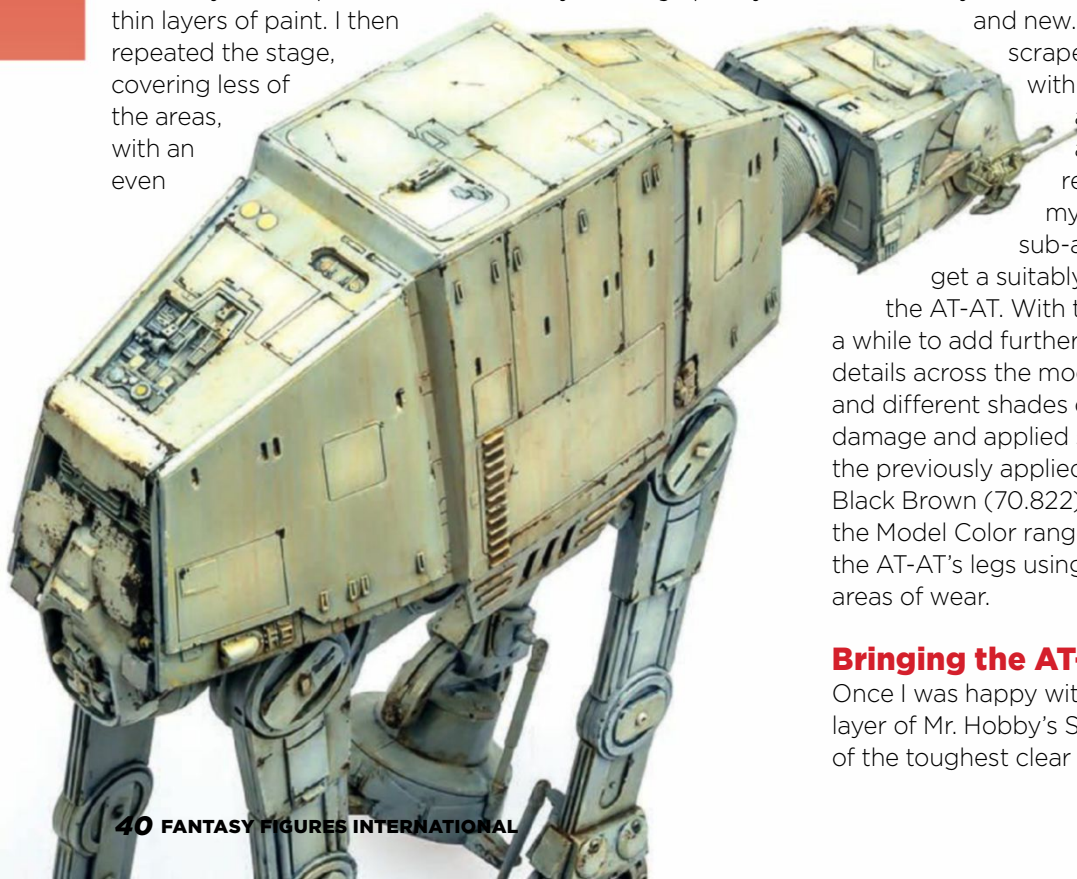
lighter shade achieved by adding white to the paint mixture. To add further interest to the otherwise grey superstructure, I used a piece of cardboard to mask off certain panels and sprayed them with Mr. Hobby Light Gray FS36495 (H338)

Adding the Signs of Battle

I wanted my AT-AT to wear the scars of battles both old and new. I began by painting paint chips and scrapes by first defining the chipped areas with white acrylic paint. This is a tedious and time-consuming process, but absolutely necessary if we are to replicate realistic battle damage. I took my time, switching between the various sub-assemblies – legs, head and hull – to get a suitably random pattern of damage across the AT-AT. With that done, I left the battle damage for a while to add further interest by picking out various small details across the model in different colours, yellows, blues and different shades of grey. I then returned to the battle damage and applied scrapes and chips in the middle of the previously applied white using Vallejo's German Cam. Black Brown (70.822), one of the most versatile paints in the Model Color range. I also applied the same colour to the AT-AT's legs using a sponge to replicate the heaviest areas of wear.

Bringing the AT-AT to Life: Washes

Once I was happy with the paint chips, I applied an overall layer of Mr. Hobby's Super Clear Gloss (GX100). This is one of the toughest clear varnishes available and provides the





7 A straight edge, in this case a piece of cardboard, allowed me to obtain sharp demarcations between the various shades of grey used on the hull.



8 Here you can see the build-up of the 'colour modulation' technique.



9 The initial scratches, as well as other details, are picked out using Vallejo Model Color paints.



10 I tried to place these initial scratches in areas more likely to be heavily worn, such as the access doors.



11 Similar scratches were applied to the AT-AT's legs.



12 I add a few elements of yellow, red and blue to the otherwise monotone hull. 'Spot colours' like this are a good way to add visual interest to a model.

perfect base on which to apply some oil paint washes. These washes really bring the superb surface details of the AT-AT to life. I used Paynes Grey oil paint, thinned with white spirit, as a wash. This was the perfect shade as it has a dark blue hue. I applied the wash liberally, allowed it to dry for a while and then wiped away any excess with a soft cloth. I cleaned up any areas of unwanted wash with cotton buds soaked in thinner and, once the wash had completely dried overnight, applied a coat of Mr Color Super Clear Semi-Gloss (C181) to seal and protect the oil paint wash.

The next stage after this overall wash was to add a dark brown spot wash around the more prominent details. I mixed this from AMMO's excellent Dark Mud Oilbrusher (A.MIG. 3508). These oil paints are very versatile and come in eye make-up-like dispensers, complete with a small brush. I also applied small dots of the Dark Mud, as well as

Ochre and Burnt Siena oil paints to the hull, blending them with vertical strokes of a brush moistened with thinner to achieve realistic dirt streaks down the side of the hull. I also used the same shades to weather the underside of the AT-AT. Although this part of the vehicle is less visible, I still treated it to the same level of weathering as the parts of the vehicle in full view. Finally, I added AMMO's ready-mixed enamel Light Rust Wash (A.MIG. 1004) to emphasise the heavily worn feet of the AT-AT.

The final stage was to add the painted and weathered cannon to the head and assemble the main components. I first attached the head to the body and then the four legs. Final touches included 'metallising' the edges of the hull and legs with a lead pencil and adding some black pigment to the end of the cannon barrels. A last pass with some matt varnish and the AT-AT was complete.



***“They’re the most heavily
armoured ground vehicles in
the Imperial Army.”***

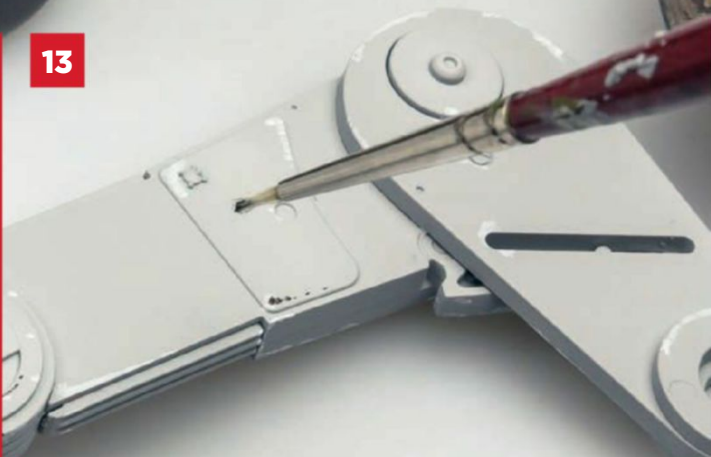
*“...so what you’re saying is that you
have a thorough knowledge of just
how screwed we are.”*

Rebels troopers before the battle of Hoth

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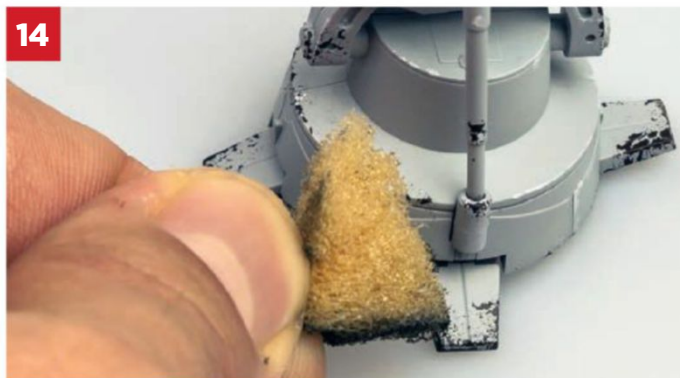


13



I applied a dark brown to the interior of the white scratches to give them a 3D appearance.

14



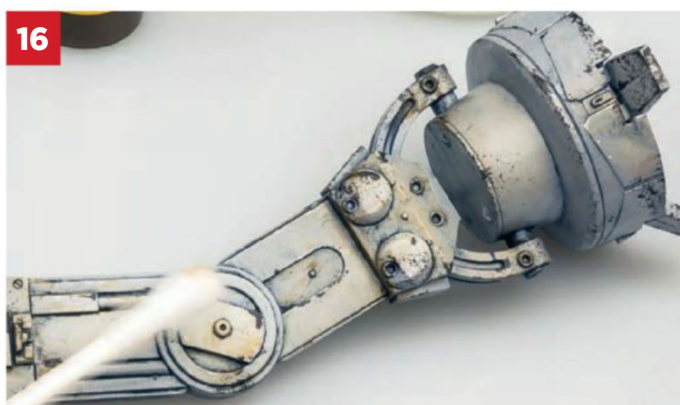
More extensive chipping was added to the feet and lower legs, the parts of the walker that would be most heavily worn, using a sponge. Dab the sponge against a kitchen towel to remove almost all the paint before applying it to the model.

15



Adding the wash, using an AMMO Oilbrusher, really begins to make the model come to life.

16



I repeated this step several times, building up some good definition of the vehicle's details while at the same time giving it a suitably weathered appearance.

17



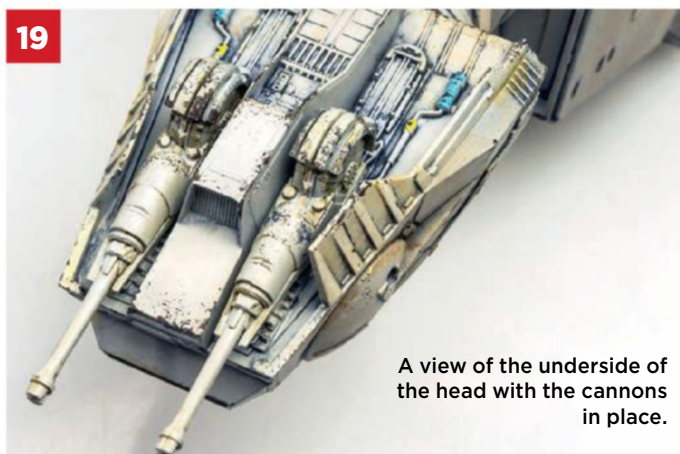
The underside of the vehicle received a similar oil paint wash, using Ochre and Burnt Siena.

18



The cannons mounted in the AT-AT's head were painted and weathered separately before being glued in place.

19



A view of the underside of the head with the cannons in place.

20



With everything assembled, I made sure that the weathering was homogenous across the various parts of the model.

22



A Dark Mud Oilbrusher was used to add small deposits of mud and grime to the feet.

21



I used AMMO's Light Rust Wash to add some further signs of wear and tear in the form of rust streaks to the AT-AT's feet and lower legs.

Conclusion

This model was a pleasure from beginning to end. Bandai have made a kit that is pure quality, through and through. As an ardent fan of the Star Wars universe, I was delighted to add this iconic war machine to my collection. In fact, I had so much fun that I immediately purchased and built two more! Now I have everything I need to launch my attack on the rebel base on the planet of Hoth! ■



BE INSPIRED

Bandai 1/144 AT-AT (ref. 0214476) is available from all good model shops.



At the Bench Fabrizio Rusto

How one of Europe's top miniature painters approaches his craft.

My name is Fabrizio Rusto and I'm a professional miniature painter, character designer and occasional sculptor. You may have seen my work with my 'Rusto' signature and hashtag **#rustoartandcraftshow**. Ever since I was a child I have loved to play with monsters and fantastical figures of all descriptions, drawing and creating alternative universes against the elegant Milanese skyline. My interest and passion for painting developed with me, so I decided to attend art school. Here I was able to nurture my interest in fantasy and fantastic realism, but I also learned how to be an artist; how to convey abstract ideas in art, the history of art and much more. That said, no one ever told me about how fine art could be realised in miniature painting. At art school I had the opportunity to study in real life the paintings of one of the greatest fantasy artists of all time, Alex Horley (aka Allesandro Orlandelli). When I was finishing my first year at art school Allesandro was



Fabrizio Rusto

about to graduate and the graduation display of his work had a profound effect on me. What an experience! I fell completely in love not only with the ideas and images but was also fascinated that fine art techniques could be used to make the sort of artwork I had dreamed of.

As a student at art school I was also searching for my own style and a way to express my ideas. As my studies were coming to an end, I visited an Italian gaming convention in search

of employment, hoping to be able to work as an illustrator or something. There, for the first time, I saw people gaming with miniatures, so as soon as I returned home, I visited Milan's Games Workshop store and





bought my first blister packs of Goblins and Dwarfs. Within a month I was hosting painting demonstrations in the store. Since then, now twenty years ago, I have not stopped painting miniatures for a living. I honed my craft by taking part in numerous competitions and exhibitions: at the Museo del Fumetto, Spazio Wow in Milan, at MuMi (Museum of Miniatures) at Lucca Comics, and at Rome's Grade Museum.

My interests as a miniature painter are wide-ranging and encompass all genres: historical, fantasy and sci-fi. All provide opportunities to do what I love, which is to paint! That said, I do have some favourite subjects, particularly monsters and large, imposing figures. Large surfaces and lots of skin are the challenges I relish the most. I paint across the full range of scales, from 28mm to 200mm, but I particularly enjoy painting busts and 75mm figures.

tends to be for collectors or to produce boxart for new miniatures. Recently the latter has included commissions for Aradia Miniatures, Abyssoul, Big Child Creatives, CMON, Kimera, Mindwork, Pegaso, Rackham, Tiny Leads, TKS and many more. I also plan to release something myself – a real monster in the world of miniatures – as soon as I can!

I have, I think, developed a very personal style of painting over the years. Since I began painting, I have always tried to produce something

I tend not to paint armies for gaming, as I'm not very good at it, so most of my work

that is both unique and recognisable as my work. That has always been my approach when doing commissions for collectors; they are paying for my style and atmosphere. For me, the expression and feeling a miniature conveys has always been more important than the purely technical aspects of miniature painting. I don't mean to suggest that learning new techniques and improving your knowledge and skills aren't important, rather that appreciating how different techniques allow you to express yourself more freely is key. Having learnt something new, the next and most important step is to open your mind.

Most of the time I prefer to paint with acrylic paints, but I also love



► painting with oils. When I'm at work in my studio I find it easy to switch between the two media. For me, it was important to understand both and then be able to decide which media to use, or to employ both. The same was true for sculpting and conversions: I practised and experimented until I became confident in an approach that worked for me.

Painting techniques are always changing and when I was learning how to paint miniatures the techniques employed were quite different to those in vogue today. I experimented with colours on the gaming armies my customers sent me; some worked, and others didn't! I found myself painting the same figure over and over again using different colours. I constantly need new goals and as a professional miniature painter boredom is your greatest enemy, so I decided a few years ago that I would only paint for collectors, painting each miniature to the best of my abilities. I have now hit upon a system of painting that prevents me from getting bored

and presents each new miniature as a challenge. I always imagine two or three versions of each new miniature I sit down to paint. I call this **#miniaturelifestyle**.

What I call the **Classic** version is always my initial vision of a new miniature. To me painting is akin to playing music: you have six contrasting pairs of colours in colour theory like the seven notes in music and you can paint a rhythm with an almost infinite number of variations and combinations to achieve, say, different skin tones. Practice is the key. These variations prevent boredom. Skin tones are a great example: each person's skin tone is unique, so recreating this in miniature is a great way of creating realism. Classic art does the same thing: if the painting is

not a chiaroscuro, a study in light and shadow, you will see a riot of colour. Armed with this knowledge, you can go ahead and break some of the rules of 'good' and 'bad' miniature painting. Try and be relaxed in your painting and don't be obsessed by your mistakes. Painting with acrylics is similar in technique to watercolours and is all about the overlap of transparent layers of paint. You can always go back and add extra layers if you lose something of the detail or the transitions between colours.

Another motto of mine is **#colorhasmemory**. As I've said, even within the same ethnicity, there is a huge range of different skin tones and the same is true for any other colour. When people look at my figures, I hope they will see, at first, groups of three or



four different colours, but when they look more closely they will see all the different shades, hues and tones I have incorporated into my work.

When approaching a new figure, I also come up with what I call an **Unexpected** version. This is the version that does not immediately come to mind. I have a ton of references in my studio but on occasion these do not reveal a 'never-seen-before' version of a familiar piece and I find that browsing the work of artists I follow on Social Media will often result in that little bit of inspiration. A good copy, they say, is better than a bad invention! I usually alter the colours slightly and bear in mind that other art is often rendered with different media and in a different format, but the concept is what is important here. Simply search for an image that catches your eye and then think how that concept can be translated to your miniature. An alternative is to use a colour completely unlike any other used to paint that part of the miniature.

It's important though to remember colour theory and understand how colours complement each other. Good painting is not easy and it's necessary to study

hard throughout your painting journey to achieve your goals. That is part of my passion for painting and it's once again **#miniaturelifestyle**.

My third approach to a new miniature is what I call the **Atmosphere** approach. Studying and applying climatic conditions is a good way to create something more personal, dramatic and, occasionally, unique. Thinking about the effects of moonlight, rain, sun, storms, desert environments, and even alternative realities with two suns, can challenge the way we paint miniatures. This is difficult, as we are painting a three-dimensional miniature, and will push our techniques to the limit. Adding texture and weathering miniatures is part of this, locating them in their environment, but again it's a difficult technique to master and one that is

easy to overdo. Less is more, as they say. When creating an 'atmosphere' we are telling a story through a miniature. Techniques, like using only deep purples (**#deeprusto**) for shadows, can help, but occasionally I will use black in my shadow mix deliberately to desaturate the colours on the miniature and produce a chiaroscuro-like contrast. You can use the same ideas and concepts in applying highlights. I never use pure white as a highlight colour as it too will change the appearance of the whole miniature. I see black and white as the beginning and end of things, and I don't want to see the end of things! The exception to this is when I use true metallics. I can add **#deeprusto** or other shadows, but, of course, you can't add light pastel tones to highlight true metals.

Imitation is a really important part of becoming a better artist. When I was at art school, we would spend long sessions in front of original art by the great masters, spending days copying and trying to replicate their colours and techniques. The first step, then, ➤

► is to experiment with techniques and, once you have grown in confidence, introduce your own colours and experiment. Study and experience are the keys to developing as a miniature painter.

Many recent releases have been inspired by classic fantasy and sci-fi art and I have been fortunate enough to paint the boxart for several of them. My approach to these has not been to produce a faithful copy but to paint a version of the miniature in which the original concept and inspiration is recognisable. I apply my theory of painting in a very conscious way because each brushstroke is unique and I want to respect the original artist, paying tribute to their creation from my personal point of view. I want my miniatures to be seen as more than simply a perfect technical execution of this or that technique. Rather I want them to evince a mood, a feeling, of the idea of and the atmosphere that surrounds a particular piece.

I'm very grateful to *Fantasy Figures International* for giving me this

opportunity to wax lyrical about my love of miniature painting. It wasn't easy to put down in words what I wanted to convey, but I hope the article has provided some insight. I hope I haven't bored you with my philosophy of miniature painting and if you would like to know more then please follow my Social Media accounts: **@rustoart on Facebook** (where you will find some step-by-step tutorials); **@rusto_art on Instagram** (with some of the hashtags used in this article); and my new YouTube channel **craft show Fabrizio Russo**. I really hope that you can find your own way in this beautiful world. Take your time and feel the passion. Cheers, Rusto ... ■



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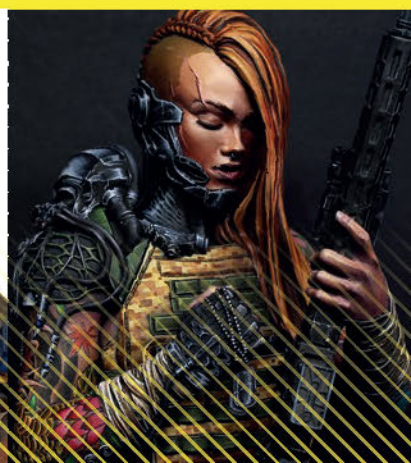
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At the Bench Fet Milner



Robert Lane interviews a painter who searches for excellence through thoughtful innovation.

Whenever I see Fet at a model show I am always interested in what he has brought with him. He works on a wide range of subjects, as can be seen by the accompanying photos. He also likes to slip in some unusual projects that are unexpected. Without any doubt his 'Ducks' ensemble is one of these and is the piece of work that I enjoyed looking at more than anything else at shows last year. Not only is this curated collection of separate mini scenes a great idea, it is executed with great skill.

Fet grew up in New Zealand and I wondered if his introduction to figure modelling was different from the UK experience. I asked him what got him into figure painting; could he remember his first model?

"I was interested in fantasy and science fiction from a very young age – almost certainly because of the *Chronicles of Narnia*. However, I also grew up in a very rural town in southern New Zealand, where there was very little interest in that sort of thing, so my first encounters with models were entirely accidental.

I remember being in the local Paper Plus (like WH Smith over here) and coming across a copy of *White Dwarf*. I'd read *Fighting Fantasy* books and dreamt of having someone to play D&D with, but I'd never even heard of miniatures or wargaming. I was quite entranced, especially because that issue had the Golden Demon winners, and I still remember seeing a forest goblin spider rider that had placed.

Later on, I came across some pretty shoddy figures in a bookshop's bargain bin – they were knock-off superheroes

'Washington DC, 1947', from *Terrible Kids Stuff*, 2017.



'The Butcher' from *Terrible Kids Stuff*, 2016.

or something, I think. I have no idea how they got there. I 'borrowed' my brother's glossy Humbrol enamels to try painting them. They did not come out well at all. There was no further source of models, so for a few years my model-painting career hit a dead end. When I was at high school (and in a more cosmopolitan

part of the country) I made friends with a guy from the UK who had a sizeable collection of 40K figures and he pointed me at a shop that stocked GW. From there on, it was a pretty rapid descent into wargaming. The first model I painted from that era was actually a forest goblin spider rider. I wasn't particularly interested in starting a goblin army, but the version I'd seen had really stuck with me over the years. I painted it with acrylics this time, but it still wasn't very good. As a sort of tribute to that model,

The cat's face is close to life size, so I'm not sure this is actually a miniature: Mr Lee's Minis and sculpted cat, 2020.

I made a heavily customised forest goblin spider rider for my first entry into Golden Demon when I moved to the UK about ten years later. That was probably my first steps into more involved display painting rather than just painting for gaming."

Speaking to Fet, it is obvious that much thought goes into each piece he works on. I asked him what did a figure have to do to make him want to buy it?

"I need to be able to envisage something that I want to achieve with it. That usually means creating a narrative or setting for the piece. A lot of pieces come with a sort of built-in narrative, which doesn't really appeal to me unless I can think of some way to subvert it. In some cases, though, it's the style of sculpting that makes me want to paint something – usually because it's been sculpted by a painter, so you can see how they've worked the folds in fabric to give you those sharp edges. I really like the way Seb Archer sculpts, for instance, and you can see exactly how he'd paint them just from looking at the sculpt. I just wish he did some 54mm stuff; the detail on his 32mm range is just mind-boggling, and much too fine for me to deal with.

I also like to work backwards a bit. In that sense, I'll have an idea for something I want to do and then have to go looking to see if anyone actually makes a model that will work. In this regard, I'm probably a harder sell than most people because I don't buy a model simply because I like it or because 'I might paint it one day'. I have a long list of ideas I want to work through, and unless something comes out that appeals to that (or gives me another idea), I'm not likely to buy it. Unfortunately, I'm now finding that a lot of my ideas require me to sculpt. I really do not like sculpting.

And sometimes I end up painting something that isn't really a figure at all. I'm currently treating some hobo nickels like they're flat figures and having quite a lot of fun with that. I should probably also rant for a moment about a lot of recent fantasy stuff that's really more a sculpture than a paintable figure. They're covered in detail and beautifully crafted, but at the end of the day, all you'll have is the sculptor's work with some of your colour on it. It doesn't feel quite so much like a dialogue between the sculptor and the painter, which is what a good piece should be."

I mentioned at the beginning of this feature that Fet works on a wide range of subjects, scales and genres. I was interested to know whether he needed to learn different skills for this or whether existing skills evolved for each new project?

"I think each scale/style has a set of key skills and techniques, but there's overlap. For instance, I find point control is more important in flats than probably any other



'Contradiction', Dark Age, 2015.

'Weyland-Yutani Cyborg Veteran', Mr Lee's Minis, 2017.

type, but it's obviously valuable for any figure. Meanwhile, you need really strong blending techniques on larger scales, but again that's transferrable. I've probably learnt more about how to apply light from painting flats than from round figures, while I've learnt more about saturation from doing fantasy pieces than historical. Historical pieces force you to think more carefully about narrative because there are stronger constraints on setting and, in many cases, the poses of the figures. I really enjoy trying out new scales and types of figure because they force me to learn new techniques, and then I can apply those techniques to everything else. One of these days, I'll probably give scale modelling a go. I think some *Mad Max*-type vehicles or a MaK diorama could be fun."

I said earlier that Fet's Ducks project was one of my all-time favourite pieces of work, being wonderfully left of centre from traditional figure painting. I wondered what the initial impetus was for the project and how did he know when to stop?



'Censored', a 3D print from 2020.



'John 3:36', Tartar Miniatures, 2014.



'Belle of the Ball', Infamy, 2016.



FER Miniatures' Occitan knight, 2018.

I'd already painted a few ducks, primarily because they're my wife's favourite animal (our house is positively festooned with ducks), and, from visiting a few wetland reserves, I'd seen just how varied and characterful they were. I'd started getting a reputation for being the guy who puts ducks everywhere (although they only actually featured on maybe half a dozen pieces at that time). It was pretty obvious I'd have to do ducks.

From that point, it was really just a matter of deciding the common rules: what plinth size, how many pieces, how many ducks per base, and how to decide the base work. I'd planned from the start to do about 25-30, and by the time I got to 25 it was pretty clear I didn't need to do more;

the impact is right, the theme is clear, and people seem to really enjoy the whole display. I especially like seeing people come across them at shows. There's almost always a double-take as they're about to just browse past what looks like a fairly muted display, and then they get in close for a proper look. That's pretty gratifying."

Fet has his own blog (fetpaint.com) which is an excellent read and gives a good insight into the process of how he works. I asked him if he found putting his thoughts into words helps him think more clearly about figure painting.

"I find it helps me reflect on what I'm doing. I may not always realise why I've done something until it's written down. I'm a technical writer by trade, so getting words down is pretty much like breathing for

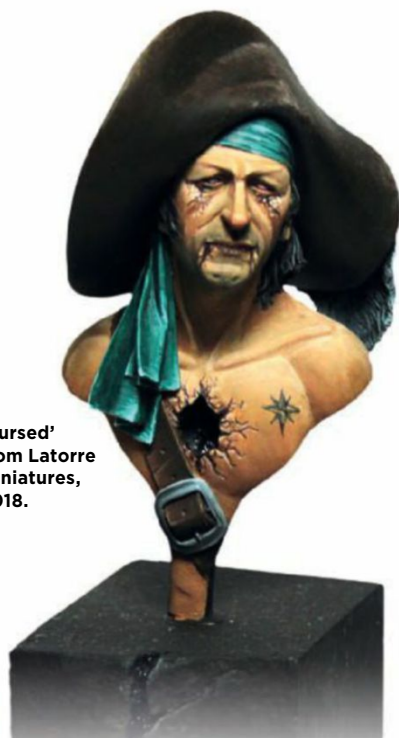


Forest Goblin Spider Rider, made from about £100 of bits in 2007.

▶ "That was interesting because it all started from an off-the-cuff comment from my mother-in-law when she was looking at some of my models: "Why are they all soldiers or monsters?" I think that's actually a question that more painters should ask. Obviously, a lot of people (especially on the historical side) are really heavily interested in military history, so for them the answer is obvious. For a lot of other painters, though, I suspect it's a holdover from wargaming and from a lack of options. There are a lot of non-military busts, which is great, but I'd like to see more stuff in the full figure department.

The second inspiration was an entry at the Duke of Bavaria show back in 2017: it was a collection of, I think, 25mm crusaders, all on identically sized plinths. Duke of Bavaria was a display-based competition, so all of your pieces are judged together, but pretty much everyone just entered some models they'd finished in the last year or so, usually with nothing connecting them. This display, however, had a great impact because of the clear link between each figure.

'Cursed'
from Latorre
Miniatures,
2018.



me. Technical writing is all about taking something complex and trying to make it easier to understand, so writing about my painting forces me to be a bit more analytical to really pry apart why I do what I do. I'm also keen to share what I've learnt. Back when I started, the Internet was still in its infancy, really, and it was basically impossible for most people to take pictures of their models and get them online (no digital cameras, after all). When those things became more accessible, a lot of the advice you'd get online was close to useless. There was a lot of 'needs more pop', which later evolved into 'needs more contrast', but without any explanation or guidance as to how to do that. It felt (and in a lot of ways, still does) like people were hoarding their expertise, jealously guarding their hard-won techniques. I think that if I have something to impart to other painters, I really should. It certainly would have helped me a lot."

To conclude our conversation and continuing the thoughts of his previous reply, I wondered what is the best piece of advice he has been given and what would his advice be to aspiring figure painters?

"Probably 'break the square', which I think I first heard from Conrad Mynett. It's not so much about painting as composition. The idea is that if you're basing something – especially if it's set in a built environment like a city – you should avoid having the edge of the base line up with the architecture. It looks artificial, more posed than natural. If someone's standing on tiles, for instance, just adjust the angle slightly so the tiles don't line up with the edge of the base and you suddenly have a much more naturalistic scene. The best part about this is that it's very easy to do – it just requires a moment of thinking before you glue down the first bit of basing to twist it 15 degrees or so. You can break this 'rule' with impunity for good effect. I think a

**'Lemarchand
Configuration
no. IV', 2017.**



very 'square' scene works well for my astronaut with cat because it enhances the two-dimensionality of the scene; it looks almost like a painting, which I quite like.

As to advice for aspiring painters, I'd probably say that a good idea can trump a good paintjob, but a good paintjob founded on a good idea is hard to beat. I consider myself a decent painter – certainly not on par with most people who win prizes – and all my most successful pieces have been, I think, based on pretty good ideas."

Fet is one of the most innovative and thoughtful figure painters I have met, and

I am very pleased to be able to share his work with you. He has said that he doesn't enjoy sculpting, however I still look forward to seeing the completion of his, long running, one-off, sculpt of Lady Gaga in her meat dress, feature on his blog at some point in the future. ■

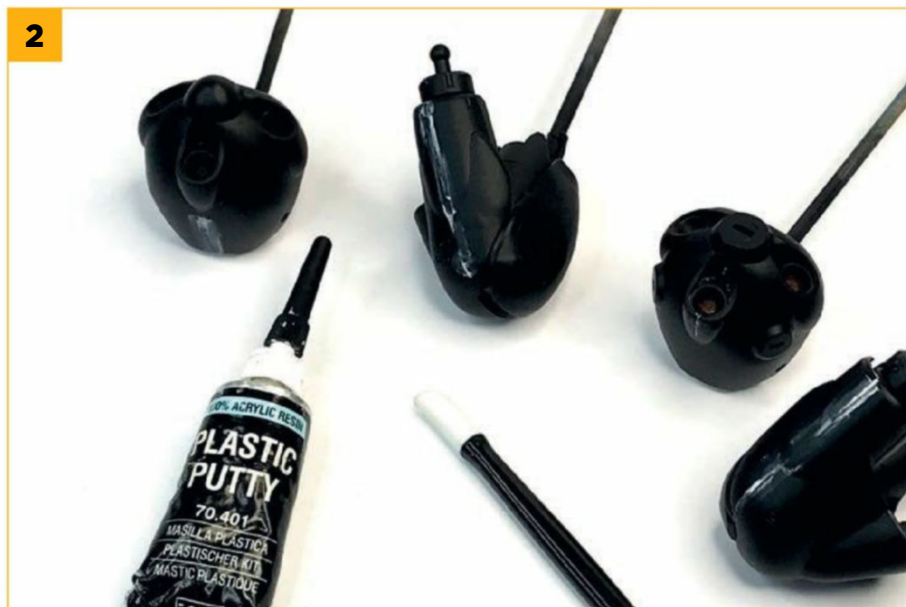
**Fet's
famous
display of
ducks.**



MG Kampfer verDC23



Don Suratos tackles
an older Gundam kit.



The objective of this article is to show how easy it is to produce shiny toy-like yet interesting finishes with Vallejo acrylic paints. Vallejo is probably best known to miniature painters and modellers for their Model and Game Color ranges, which are perfect for hand painting historical, Sci-Fi and fantasy figures. More recently, Vallejo's washes and pigments, and the newer water-based weathering effects paints, have helped establish the firm's reputation for user-friendly materials for weathering all manner of military, historical and Sci-Fi models. However, I feel that people are now beginning to realise that Vallejo has a range of awesome 'bling-bling' paints as well. I'll let you into a bit of a 'wink-wink' secret too: there are more Vallejo 'bling-bling' paints to come!

Prep Work

As with any project, the route to success always starts with some thorough preparation. This Bandai Master Grade (MG) Kampfer is an old kit. Released around 2001, it has the screws to tighten the joints, weak rubbery plastic (PC) pegs to keep things

in place, and some horrendous seam lines. Cleaning up the seam lines across the shoulder armour, the back of the upper leg armour, and the usual seams along the weapons all slowed me down a bit, but it was a vital step to make this into a presentable model.

I used Vallejo Plastic Putty (70.400) as usual to clean up any imperfections.

What I like about the Plastic Putty is that it is water-based and does not harm or in any way react with other Vallejo primers or paints.

This meant I was able to do minor corrections over the primed pieces, without

re-sanding the primed pieces back to the

bare plastic (photo 1). A

decade or so ago, I used to prime, putty, sand, prime, putty and sand (repeat a million times). Now Vallejo's Plastic Putty has helped me reduce my 're-puttying' to a minimum.

I let the Plastic Putty cure for an hour before lightly sanding it. I then applied another coat of primer to check for errors. I must admit that my putty work is not perfect here, but it will do for the purpose of showcasing the Vallejo metallic paints used here.

With this done, the pieces were now ready for painting (2).



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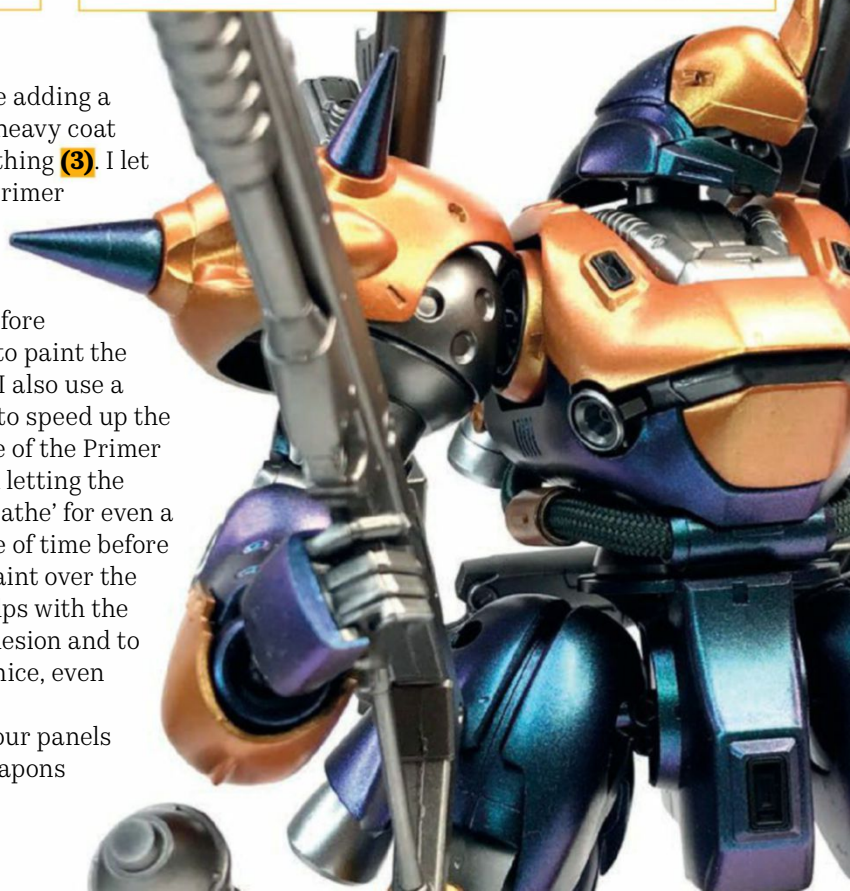


► Priming

I always prime my Gunpla with Vallejo Mecha Primers. They are more scratch resistant than the standard range of Vallejo Surface Primers. They cure in 24 hours or so, depending on your climate, and airbrush smoothly when properly thinned. I always thin Vallejo's Mecha Primers and Surface Primers in a ratio of one part primer to one part of my 'thinning sauce' (itself made up from two parts Airbrush Thinner (71.261) to one part Flow Improver (71.562)). Lighter coloured primers, like Mecha White (73.640) and Ivory (74.643), are thinned differently, using two parts primer to one part 'thinning sauce'. Using Mecha Black Primer (74.642), I primed the model with a thin mist coat all over the pieces. Then I painted the crevices with a slightly heavier

coat, before adding a final semi-heavy coat over everything (3). I let the Black Primer dry for around thirty minutes before beginning to paint the next layer. I also use a hair dryer to speed up the curing time of the Primer and I think letting the primer 'breathe' for even a short space of time before applying paint over the top of it helps with the overall adhesion and to produce a nice, even finish.

The armour panels and the weapons





were given a coat of Gloss Black Surface Primer (77.660) as this gave a nice, shiny undercoat for the application of the metallic paints later (4). Alternatively, I could have applied a coat of Mecha Gloss Varnish (26.701) over the Mecha Black

Primer, a combination I find particularly tough and scratch resistant. It's good to try different techniques though and I was interested to see how



the Gloss Black Surface Primer would compare to my usual approach. Again, I gave this half an hour to dry before proceeding.

Painting Metallic Colours

Airbrushing metallic paints is always something of a challenge. Thin the Vallejo metallic paints (or any other metallic paint for that matter) too much and the pigment will separate from the binder, resulting in the metallic pigment 'running' when airbrushed. If you don't thin the metallic paints though they will certainly clog up your airbrush. My solution: Vallejo Flow Improver.

Vallejo Flow Improver has a similar consistency to Vallejo airbrush paints (Model Air or Mecha) but is actually a

bit thicker than most Vallejo Metallic paints. Vallejo's Metal Colors are best thinned by simply adding a couple of drops of Flow Improver in your airbrush cup, then adding the Metal Color. Mix this through by blowing air back into your paint cup and away you go. I always apply Metal Color in two to three thin coats, taking care not to flood the surface. Flooding or painting in thick coats will give an uneven finish. I applied a range of different Metal Colors – Chrome (77.077), Jet Exhaust (77.713), Steel (77.712), and Gunmetal Grey (77.7200) – to obtain different effects across different parts of the model (5 & 6).

Applying Mecha Color metallics is a tad different. These paints are thicker than the Metal Color range. I thinned two of the new colours, Mecha Color Copper (69.061) and Mecha Color Polished Gold (from a forthcoming Mecha paint set not yet released), in a ratio of three parts paint to one part 'thinning sauce' and applied this in three even coats for a perfectly smooth finish (7).

Applying the Shifter Paints

I used Vallejo's Shifter Paints as a sort of glaze, albeit applied with an airbrush. These paints contain multichromatic pigments, which sparkle but also shift their colour depending on the angle they are viewed at and the angle of incident light. They work best applied over a curved surface, so are perfect for Sci-Fi and Gundam armour plates. I first painted the Orange armor parts with Mecha Color Copper, then painted a thin mist coat of Shifter Gold Yellow/Burnt Orange (77.015) over them (8). I thinned the Shifter paints in a similar manner to Metal Colors, simply adding a couple of drops of Flow Improver to help prevent the airbrush tip clogging. I then sprayed Shifter Green Blue Violet (77.005) and Electric Blue/Intense Violet (77.004) over the Blue/Purple armor plates (9). The great thing about these paints is that they can be mixed together and one can be sprayed over another to create an almost infinite range of colour shifts. Mixing three paints together might dull the finish, but two colours definitely produces awesomely vibrant colours.

► Finishing

Once everything was painted, I let the paint cure thoroughly for 24 hours. I then assembled the kit into sub-assemblies and gave it a couple of coats of Mecha Gloss Varnish (10). The Varnish gave the pieces extra shine and 'bling'. After curing for another 24 hours I completed the final assembly. Painting metallics, or painting un-weathered kits, is the fastest and easiest way to tackle your Gunpla. You will be able to produce a stunning display piece within a relatively short period. Using Shifter paints is a great way to add interest and variety without having to add washes, chips, and all the other things we do to make our models unique. The secret to success in painting with Vallejo Metallic Color and Metallic Mecha Colors is proper thinning with Flow Improver and spraying thin, even coats. It's easy, just remember to experiment and have fun. Saludos! ■

10



'The Varnish gave the pieces extra shine and 'bling'.'



BE INSPIRED

Acrylicos Vallejo Eccentric Color Series: Magic Dust (77.090), Space Dust (77.091) and Galaxy Dust (77.092). Each set contains six 17ml Shifter paints.





Sylvain Aubut returns with an enigmatic piece.

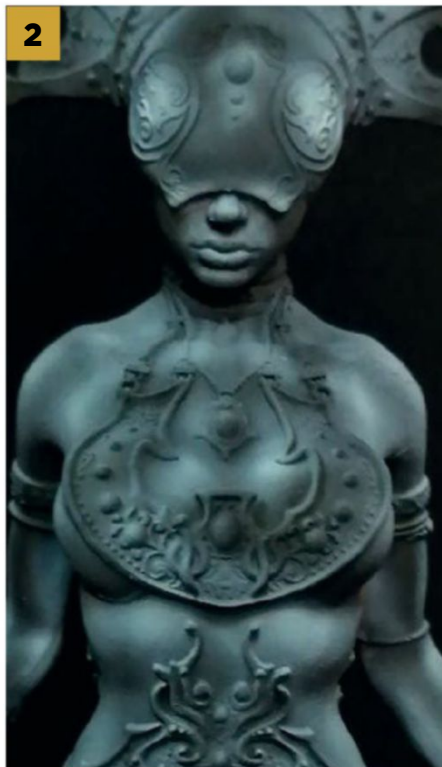
Hey fellow painters, it's me again! Many of you know me for my love of painting – 24 hours in a day is just not enough – but let me begin with a question: do you ever see a figure and know right away what you want to do with it? That was the case for me with the stunning 'Genesis' figure from Michael Kontraros Miniatures. This is a really special piece and when

a truly great miniature painter like Kirrill Kanaev has produced the box art, then you have to say to yourself "Now I have to be original with my version." As soon as I saw 'Genesis' I knew that I would have to go with a dark fantasy aesthetic. She is certainly a strange beauty, not exactly in the way that the Swiss artist H.R. Giger morphs humans with machines, but certainly inspired by those nightmarish visions. I decided that a scheme of dark blue and deep golds juxtaposed against a predominantly light and supernatural skin tone was the way to go.

GENESIS



1 The shape of the figure and the superlative nature of the sculpt were evident after I had applied my black and white pre-shade.



2 usually start with the skin, but with 'Genesis' I was obsessed with her helmet and, as I said, I wanted to realise the gold and blue aesthetic. I usually work across the whole figure at the same time, but not this time. I wanted to do things differently, so started to work from the top to the bottom, as the helmet was such a prominent feature of the figure (more of a crown in fact). I wanted it to be the first thing you see when you look at her and, since the helmet covers almost sixty per cent of her face, I wanted the viewer to have the feeling that even though you can't see her eyes, she can still see you. To this effect, I added a glow from where the eyes would be, adding a creepy aura to the figure. Painting 'Genesis' wasn't an easy task: there are lots of details that need to be seen, and, since I wanted her to have a largely monochrome style, I had to be very careful with the use of colours and be very subtle in transitions between the different tones.

I began with the facial skin tones. As you can see, I initially gave the half of the face that is visible under the helmet a golden appearance. I had started by defining the light and dark areas with different inks. In the areas of light I went with sepia and in the shadows I added black and blue tones. Adding small areas of green,



3 Here I am beginning to add the reds and blue that will act as spot colours to emphasise certain areas: the red jewels on her crown and the blue ones covering her eyes.

purple and yellow further defined the volumes and helped add a more natural look to that skin. I had wanted the skin to be a brownish tone, but as I progressed, I found it tending towards gold. I stopped and started again in order to realise the skin tone I had imagined at the start. Nice to know that everyone makes mistakes! Don't be afraid to make mistakes, you can always correct them. When painting the skin I stumbled across an H.R. Giger picture in my office and that was the real inspiration for my second attempt, so I started over, applying an overall sepia ink base using only my airbrush. I built up the skin tones in a very different way than I normally do, with more contrast and more reflections, almost in the manner of supernatural or undead skin. Finally, I went over the area of highlight with a light flesh tone that really gave her that 'Wow!' factor.

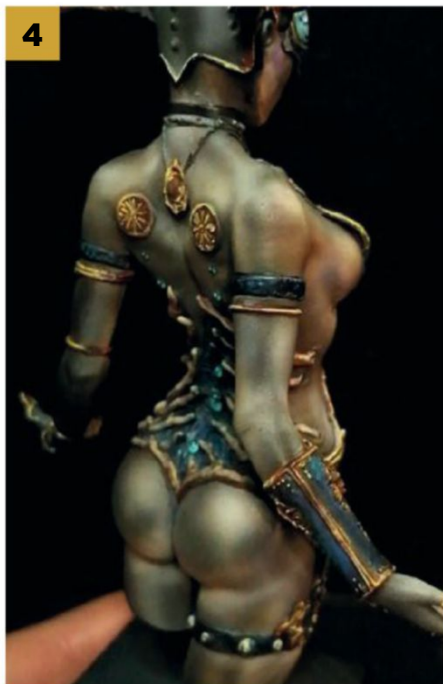
Many of my fellow painters ask me for my recipe for skin tones. The main answer is that I don't have one. I paint with a feeling for the piece in my hand at that time, so every figure is different and so is my technique. What I can say is I always start with a dark red background (either a red oxide, dark red or even a cut-throat red). In my head I think of blood, under the skin,

► Getting Started

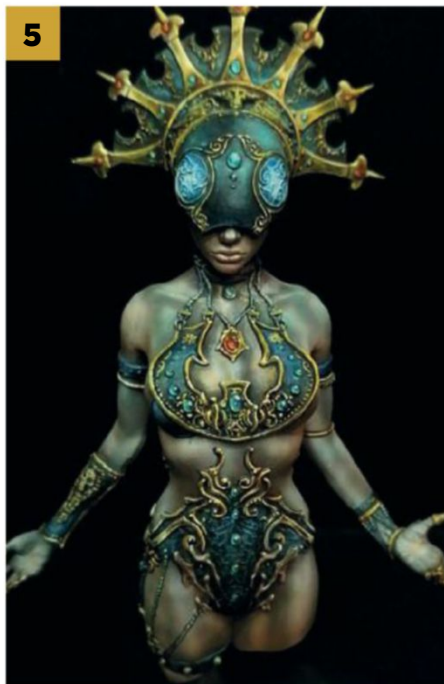
The first step was to create the right ambiance. I usually start a figure by priming it black and defining the highlights with white, sometimes called a pre-shade. I'm a big fan of this technique since it gives you a really good idea of the volumes that need to be achieved. Some miniature painters are content with a single light source, perhaps a zenithal light, and then start painting immediately, but I love to push the pre-shading, almost imagining the figure as a complete black-and-white painting. That provides me with a really good idea of the light I need to apply to the figure to achieve the effect I want. This is very much the case with the skin tones. I love painting skin tones and pre-shading helps me to achieve the right amount of light and reflection in those areas. I find that many painters are happy with a good blend for the skin tone, but for me there is so much more of the story that can be told in the skin tone than by just blending it correctly. The skin needs to be as alive as any other part of the figure. The micro tones need to be present so that the skin contributes to the appearance of the whole figure and is not simply a nice blend of tones.

Painting Genesis

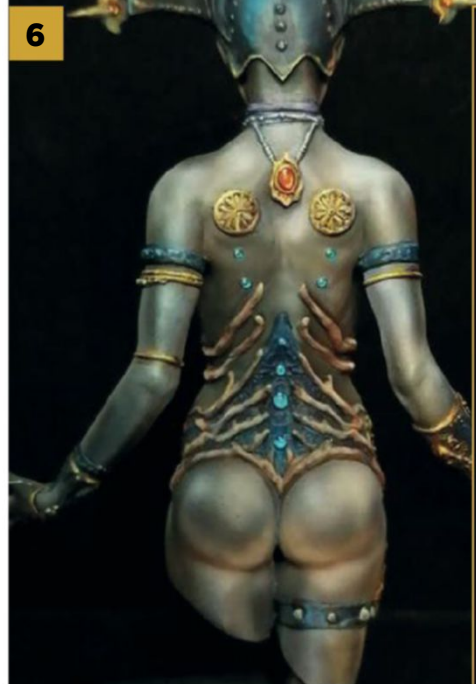
So, once the pre-shade is done, I



4 From the rear you can really appreciate how my first attempt at the skin ended in an almost golden colour.



5 While attractive, I simply didn't think there was enough contrast between the skin and other elements of the figure.



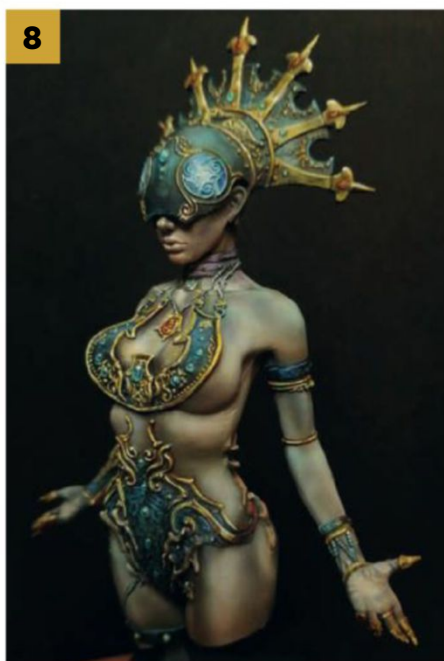
6 The second attempt at the skin: the lighter highlights give her a much more ethereal appearance.



7 Here you can see the beginnings of my attempts at Non-Metallic Metals.

so for different parts of the body the surface layer of skin will be more or less opaque. This means the red base will be more prominent where the skin is thinner, such as the hands, elbows, nose and ears. This, I think, gives a more natural look.

Then I moved on to the head dress with its elaborate golden and blue ornamentation, black leather and glowing jewels. I wanted to keep



8 The finished piece: the overall blue and gold colour scheme complements the skin tones, while the red jewels provides a focal point and another aspect of the story of 'Genesis'.

the aesthetic of the helmet going throughout the figure as a whole, keeping in mind those blue and yellow tones. In my mind the ornamentation needed to be gold, so I decided to experiment with some 'Non-Metallic Metals'. I wanted a new way of painting gold, so, instead of starting with my usual brown base, I decided to aim for unity across the piece. I painted the base a shade of red oxide,

mixing it with sepia and adding to the mix a golden yellow. For the brightest highlights I added a light skin tone. This was a complete contrast to my usual approach and the end result was surprising. I found it gave so much more richness to the gold and at the same time affected a smoother transition between the different colours. Finally, I applied a sepia ink wash to further blend and even out the colours.

I painted the leather with a blueish reflection cast upon it by other elements of the figure. It, again, had lots of texture so it was a question of making it more visually striking than normal black leather. I added ivory to the highlight the leather but toned it down with black/blue washes. To make the texture even more interesting I added a little bit of green here and there. Even though I wanted a predominantly monochrome look to the piece, I always add colour here and there to emphasise certain areas and add more interest. I painted the little jewels across the figure as I went. I didn't want them to stand apart from the piece as a whole but wanted them to complement the rest of the figure, adding interest and focus. You will notice the jewels in her crown and on the chest piece are red. I added them to symbolise life and her heartbeat and add some warmth to the otherwise cold aspect of 'Genesis'.



'She is certainly a strange beauty, not exactly in the way that the Swiss artist H.R. Giger morphs humans with machines, but certainly inspired by those nightmarish visions'



► Final Thoughts

So here you have it my friends, 'Genesis', a tribute to my favourite miniature artist and sculptor. The best advice that I can give is to have fun, explore different techniques and, above all, be proud of your achievements. It may not be perfect, but then nothing in this world is! ■



BE INSPIRED

Michael Kontraros 'Genesis', a 270-piece limited edition figure, sculpted by Michael Kontraros, box art by Kirill Kanaev.
www.mkontraros.com

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RED LEGLOSS



Luca Zampriolo of Kallamity presents a custom sculpt of 1000toys 'Synthetic Human' action figure.

1



In February 2018 I was in Tokyo attending the Winter Wonder Festival and I met my friend Don, who works as advisor for the amazing Japanese toy company 1000toys. He asked me if I wanted to do a custom build of their wonderful 1/6-scale 'Synthetic Human' action figure. This was designed by one of my favourite Japanese Manga artists, Tsutomu Nihei, the man behind *Blame!*, *Knights of Sidonia*, *Eden*, and many more. I had the great pleasure to meet Nihei san at a convention in 2015 at Design Studio Press booth and I'm a

huge fan of his work. I obviously agreed, and was pretty honoured to have been asked, and he told me that I was free to do whatever I liked with the figure. What's more, the custom build would be showcased in many conventions and toy fairs



around the globe. Once back home, I received the Action Figure and I was immediately amazed by the quality of the packaging, the level of detail, and the number of joints this figure had. I received the clear version and, after playing around a little with various poses, I started to think seriously about what I could do with it **(photo 1)**.

Concept

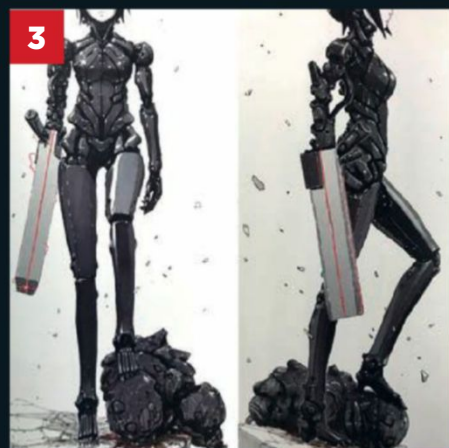
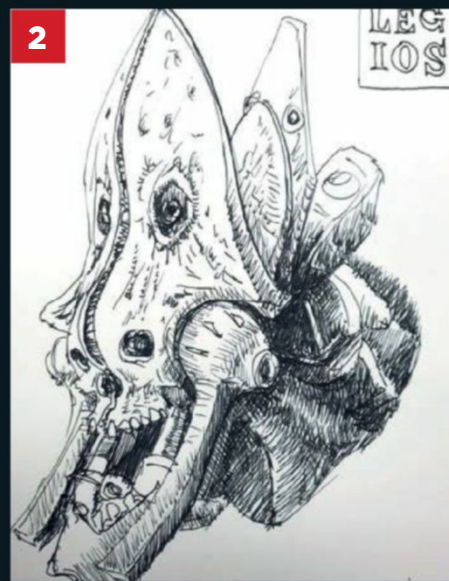
After exploring several possibilities, I came back to taking my inspiration from Nihei Sensei, remembering the Manga style that had made his work so popular all over the world. *Blame!* is a cyberpunk/dystopian tale in which the main character, Killy, wanders in an endless claustrophobic technological world known as 'The City', searching for 'Net Terminal Genes', an excitant genetic marker that allows humans to access the 'Netsphere', the computer brain of 'The City'. The amazing landscapes and structures that Nihei was able to draw are breath-taking – he's also a trained architect – and page after page he takes the reader, level after level, floor after floor, through impenetrable barriers named 'Megastructures' and up against monstrous cyborgs known as 'Silicon Creatures'. The Terminal Genes are in fact the key to stopping the continuous growth of the Megastructures and defeating the robotic killers, the 'Safeguards', which have been tasked with completely destroying humanity. As a huge fan of *Blame!*, my idea was to transform the Synthetic Human into something similar to the Safeguards.

The prospect really excited me, and I began immediately planning how to realise that vision in miniature through a series of sketches **(2 & 3)**.

The Sculpt

I usually work on my original sculptures with styrene and Aves Apoxie Sculpt clay when modifying resin or plastic kits, but this time was completely different. I had to deal with a completely new type of product: an action figure. I felt guilty and apprehensive 'destroying' it in order to transform it into the vision I had in mind for this custom build.

My first thought was to preserve all the joints in order to keep it fully articulated, but as I had less than a month to complete the project, I went for a largely static pose. This would also be the best and safest option to showcase it at all the forthcoming fairs. In May I planned to attend the 5Points Festival in New York City, where this figure was to be displayed for the first time. So, the pressure was on! One month sounds like a long time, but for a project like this, which involved working with a new medium and completing a fully painted figure, it represented a somewhat daunting challenge.





➤ The first step was to saw the legs in order to lengthen them. This meant sacrificing the feet, ankle and knee joints (4).

The belly was also cut up and I used these parts to create the shoulders. As the figure came with the option of a detachable human face mask revealing the synthetic skull behind it, I decided to put the human face on the belly and the skull on the back, in order to utilise all the parts of the figure, albeit in a different configuration. Then I started to rummage through my spare parts drawers and chose some squared parts to give a more robotic look to the lower



legs, backpack and skirts.

To make an interesting design contrast, I decided to diversify the chest, head, upper legs and upper arms with some more organic/cyberpunk details, which I would sculpt on the figure directly using Aves Apoxie Sculpt. You can see this as the neutral grey in the photographs (5). This was my favourite part of the project. I had a great time designing and sculpting the small plates composing the armour with my beloved 'Evil Spatula' and, once the Aves had dried, I refined the shapes with an X-Acto knife. I used a variety of small chisels and sandpapers to make the small armour plates more regular and smoother. Then I added a host of details, using



plastic strips, recessed holes and other scribed patterns.

Initially I had imagined the skull face divided in the middle by a central groove that started from the teeth and ended in something reminiscent of a bishop's mitre, with all sorts of mechanical stuff and antennae on both sides of the skull. Having already used the figure's skull, I used a resin cast of a skull I had sculpted previously for another project, sawing it down the middle and adding Aves putty to fill the gap (6 & 7). I added transverse touches of the spatula to create a continuous stepped pattern along the whole length of the head, like some extraordinary bone growth. The backpack was designed to resemble

some kind of sea urchin, with spikes and towers all around it. Some of these were made out of the coating from empty tubes of Aves putty, others using spare parts from leftover Kallamity kits, while others still came from random plastic and resin Gunpla kits (8). Each one was mounted on a base, which slotted into the back of the Red Legioss, attached with a couple of pins, in order to allow me to put everything in a box that could fit in my luggage during the flight to New York (9).

Moving onto the weapons, I decided to follow the fabulous weapon design Nihei San gave to one of his Blame! characters, namely the squared rifle that Sana-Kan has installed in place

of her forearm in 'Safeguard' mode. To achieve that I cut four square-section profiles spaced by a 1.5 mm-thick styrene strip, painted red and sandwiched between the rest of the weapon, which was satin black (10). The transition from the weapon to the upper arm was organically sculpted using Aves putty, adding a few small mechanical filters and tanks, in an attempt to be faithful to the Nihei's original design (11). Even if the rest of the sculpt only loosely copied the aesthetic of Blame! I really wanted the design of the weapon to pay homage to Tsutomu Nihei san. After fifteen days of working flat out the 1000toys Synthetic Human Custom was finally complete! (12 & 13)

> Primer

Once I was satisfied with the result of my custom build, I was finally able to apply the good old grey primer. I love this step: it's like magic to me. After working on a multi-media build with its distracting multicoloured parts, I can finally unify everything together in one colour. It's one of the most satisfying aspects of any build and makes all the pain and challenge of working in different media totally worthwhile. Every detail pops out, revealing the areas of light and shadows and, yes, luckily, I was happy with the result

(14 & 15). Now I could progress to the final chapter of the project: painting. Everything had progressed much quicker than I had feared, so I would be able to sit back and relax giving myself time to think of a suitably striking colour scheme, exploring the painting techniques that would realise my vision of the Red LegioSS.

Paint

I decided on a bright red scheme, so the first job was to annihilate any trace of the grey primer to really allow the red to shine through. I gave the entire figure a solid coat of white primer, which would be the perfect base for the next stage. Given that the figure was 35cm tall, I decided that an acrylic spray can was the only practical way forward, so I used Tamiya Italian Red (TS-38), a paint designed for car modellers, to lay down the red. The gloss finish of this paint was perfect for applying the decals and washes and negated the need to apply a clear coat over the base (16).

Once the red had completely dried, I began the laborious task of masking the model. This took four or five days, as I wanted a very detailed and complex pattern of white markings across the whole piece. With the masks in place, I sprayed Tamiya



Flat White (XF-2) in two light coats using my airbrush (17). This was followed by a second round of masking and airbrushing of Semi-Gloss Black (X-18) (18). When all

the masks were removed I was very pleased: it was different to my usual heavily weathered style but very nice all the same! Applying the decals, of which there were a great many, was another labour of love. Many of them came from my Pinkman kit (see the

previous issue, number 7, of Fantasy Figures International). I sourced other decals, mainly the white ones, from various sheets I had scattered around my workshop (19). As I thought, the gloss red paint helped enormously in getting me through this process!

With that done I started to brush paint the details. I painted the metal spots and tubes in contrast colours of yellow and orange. Now the figure literally started to come to life, even without any weathering. Weathering was kept quite minimal, in the form of a series of oil paint washes, but this was particularly effective in revealing all the recesses and details of the model. Again, the gloss red finish allowed me to wipe away any excess oil paint with



ease and, once this had dried, I was finally ready to apply an overall coat of Tamiya Flat Clear (TS-13) from a spray can. This had the effect of homogenising all the previous steps, giving a more realistic and effective result (20).

Final Thoughts

This was honestly one of the fastest and fun builds of my entire career. I hoped 1000toys would forgive me for destroying their beautiful Synthetic Human figure, but the end result was pretty spectacular. I really need to thank Don 'datadub' Kratzer for giving me the opportunity to do such a cool collaboration with one of the Japanese brands I admire the most. ■



BE INSPIRED

1000toys 1/6 TOA Heavy Industries Synthetic Human





Tales from the Loop (2014)

Simon Stålenhag



The Editor talks to one of the most imaginative Sci-Fi visual storytellers of the age.

Simon Stålenhag was born in 1984 and grew up in the countryside around the Swedish capital, Stockholm. His love of art and nature was, as we shall see, with him from a very early age and he began by displaying his Science Fiction work, set in hyper-realistic depictions of the



Simon Stålenhag

Scandinavian countryside of his youth, online. In 2014 he published his first book of artwork, *Tales from the Loop*, followed two years later by *Tales from the Flood*. Both explored strange sci-fi phenomena juxtaposed against the mundane, natural background of his native Sweden and the construction of a supermassive

particle accelerator called 'the Loop'. This was the inspiration behind the Amazon TV series 'Tales from the Loop' released early in 2020, while *The Guardian* voted *Tales from the Loop* one of the ten best dystopias of all time, alongside Franz Kafka's *The Trial* and Andrew Niccol's *Gattaca*.

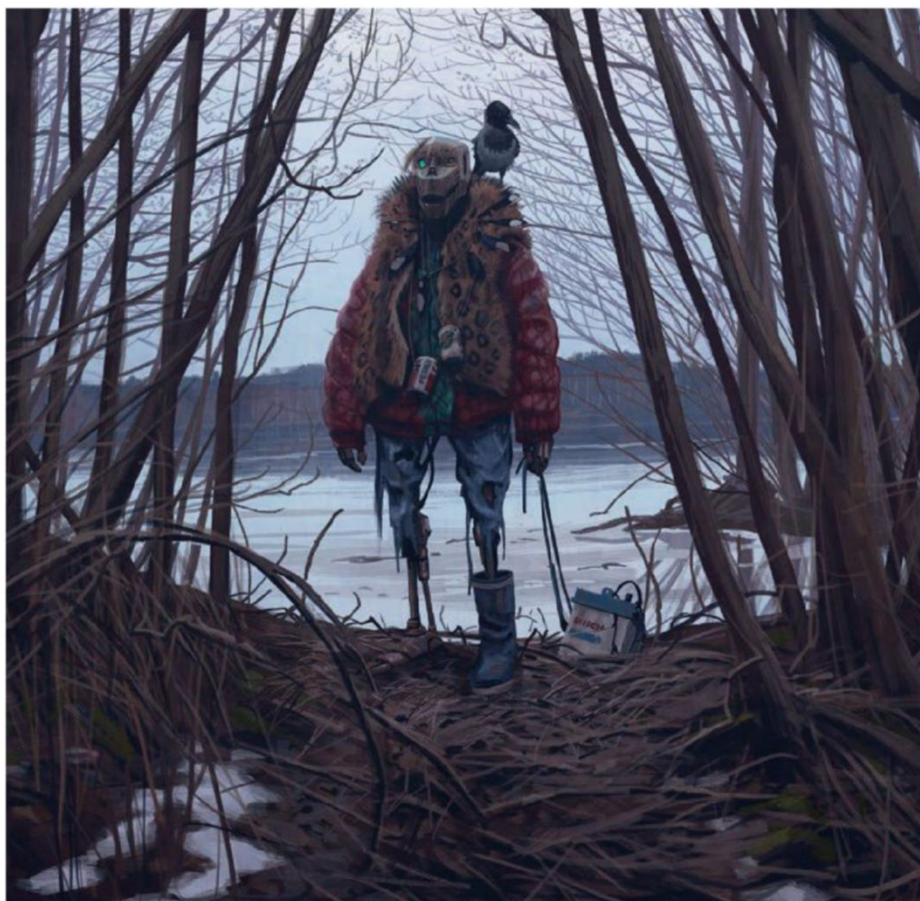
I caught up with Simon early in November via Skype and we had a long chat about all manner of things, ranging from the pop culture of the 1980s, to philosophical questions about the nature of art and history, and our common childhood love of birds and dinosaurs. I began by thanking him for giving us some of his precious time and saying that I knew many of our readers had been inspired by his work. For many of us science fiction was such a big part of our youth, and I asked Simon if science fiction had been something he had



grown up with:

“Actually, as a child I was more influenced by the natural world. My imagination was fired ten percent by science fiction and ninety per cent by nature and the world around me. I think I had an average appreciation of science fiction as a child. I enjoyed watching *Terminator*, but what boy wouldn’t, and, like every other little boy, I loved dinosaurs. My passion though was for nature and from the age of ten or so I spent hours compiling sketch books of birds. I taught myself to draw by sketching birds, dinosaurs and robots in equal measure. By my early twenties it just seemed natural for me to place these things in the kind of landscapes I had grew up in and drew as a child.”

Looking at Simon’s early work, it seems obvious the influence his native Sweden has had on his imagined



Tales from the Flood (2016)

worlds. I asked him how aware he was of this and of the influence of Swedish artists like Lars Jonsson:

“I am not consciously inspired by what you might call my Swedish heritage or Swedish culture. Yet my work reflects what the Sweden of my youth was like and what I saw as a youngster. For *Tales from the Flood*, I tried to Google images of Swedish winter holidays in the 1980s and all I came up with were photos of the royal family on skiing trips. So, I think the imagery of *Tales from the Loop* and *Tales from the Flood* is the unconscious

manifestation of my childhood memories.”

One of the features of Simon’s work is the juxtaposition between the mundane and the fantastic. I asked him how these dystopian images evolved:

“I don’t think the world has changed much in the last few decades; by that I mean it hasn’t altered too much physically, but what has changed is people’s outlook, their behaviour and what they take for granted. I remember being overjoyed by owning a physical copy of *Jurassic Park* on



Tales from the Flood (2016)



Labyrinth (2020)

➤ VHS tape, something my parents could not have imagined, yet that joy of owning something tangible is something my children will probably never experience in the same way. This is what is alien or dystopian about my worlds; they are at once familiar and profoundly different. My work doesn't look forward or backwards in an explicit way, it's more about the timeless condition of human life. I don't think of my worlds as dystopian or utopian, just different. There's a danger in nostalgia, how quickly we become moralising about things we don't understand, whereas I think we should embrace the difference."

Simon's exploration of the familiar, yet presenting it in distinctly unfamiliar ways, is nowhere more apparent than in *The Electric State* (1997). The book's introduction captures this perfectly: 'In late 1997, a runaway teenager and her yellow toy robot travel west through a strange USA, where the ruins of gigantic battle drones litter the countryside along with the discarded trash of a high tech consumerist society in decline. As their car nears the edge of the continent, the world outside the window seems to unravel at an ever faster pace, as if somewhere

beyond the horizon, the hollow core of civilization has finally caved in.' Simon told me how *The Electric State* had been inspired by his own travels in California:



Labyrinth (2020)

"I had such a clear image of California and Hollywood when I travelled there; it was, quite literally a dream come true. But as I travelled around I realised it was both familiar and yet so strange and foreign – even the light switches were different to those in my native Sweden! The images of my childhood became real and tangible, but something remained elusive. I was experiencing the pop culture idea of California, but the real world always escaped me."

Simon's latest project to see completion is *Labyrinth* (2020). I mentioned to him that I found the images both literally and figuratively darker than those in *The Electric State*. Simon reminded me that the world of



The Electric State (2017)



Europa Mekano
(forthcoming)

The Electric State is also very dark, but went on to explain something of the thinking behind *Labyrinth*:

“My original concept for *Labyrinth* was inspired by Death Metal, films like *The Evil Dead*, and Gothic Punk. There was something medieval about my early ideas, with a strong flavour of electric guitars! Like much of my work is was then coloured by images of the super-familiar, before morphing into what I’d call ‘cosmic horror’. Around 2016, when *Labyrinth* was in the making, I was troubled by the global rise of populism and my own fears of a truly dystopian future. I hope *Labyrinth* somehow captures that.”

Simon then went on to say how some of these themes are continued in his current project *Europa Mekano*:

“*Europa Mekano* is vaguely located in the early 2000s. I wanted to capture the dullness of the first decade of the twenty-first century, but place that against the very different European cities of my parents’ generation. In the 1960s and 70s Stockholm was a very different city to the one I know today – dirty, dark and industrial. Perhaps its transformation in the 80s and 90s was a result of the European Green movement. I wanted to combine that mid-twentieth century idea of the city with the technological artefacts of

today and tomorrow. There are details like old cars that look out of place; our cities today are filled with cars that share the same design aesthetic and that results in a certain blandness.”

We then moved onto discuss Simon’s method. I observed that in the world of miniatures there is a tension sometimes between those who design, sculpt and produce digitally and those who use more traditional methods. I asked if Simon had encountered this in his work:

“I love sketching by hand but find myself using the computer more and more; it’s just so convenient. For natural forms, like dinosaurs (which I don’t get to draw often enough now), then pencil and paper are best, but for architectural or other man-made forms then you can’t beat the utility of digital. You can’t improve on a 3D scan of Volvo, for instance, it is what it is. There is no point in drawing cars or commercial logos freehand. I also let the drawing software guide me. It’s amazing to be able to generate light and shadow in a picture at the touch of a button. It’s so precise and geometrical that it’s hard to do by hand. Light is really important in my work. I often take a minimalist, almost monochromatic approach; all the colours are there, but the use of light

makes them appear to border on the monochromatic.”

I asked Simon if he was aware of how modellers had been inspired by his work:

“To an extent, sometimes people share stuff with me via Instagram. More importantly, models have been instrumental in helping to understand how I can make the fantastic appear realistic in my own work. I have always been fascinated by Lego models and especially their robots and Mechs. A Lego model has to be able to stand on a table, so it has to obey certain principles of engineering. This helps me to understand how my robots and fighting suits need to look, move and interact in my art. A few years ago, I had the privilege of meeting one of the animators from the original *Jurassic Park*. We had a long conversation about how they animated the dinosaurs. I used to go through the film, frame by frame, understanding how the dinosaurs moved, transferring this to my own drawings of both dinosaurs and robots. The debt I owe to *Jurassic Park* is acknowledged in one of the images from *Tales from the Loop*.”

Finally, I asked Simon what his fans might expect from him in the future:

“I’ve been shooting a music video and directing a short film, but each of these is only five minutes or so. I’ve been thinking too of setting something in English suburbia and have been researching the appearance of the ‘typical’ English suburban house. Whatever comes next, it will be shared online in advance of publication. Receiving feedback and sharing my work with the community is such an important part of what I do.”

Simon’s generosity, and his curiosity about the world around him and about the nature of history and memory, was evident throughout our conversation. He has graciously allowed us to reprint some of his images in this short article and you can see more examples of his work at his official website www.simonstalenhag.se. I hope we’ll be seeing some modelling inspired by his work soon in *Fantasy Figures International*. ■



by *Creative Green
Stuff World.*

PAW PATROL



I have always had a soft spot for the Steampunk aesthetic, and when I had the opportunity to make a small vignette with the magnificent Weird Armies Reign 'Kettencrad',

from their 'Weird 19' range, I jumped at the chance. I thought that adding a second element would take it out of the context of World War I, placing it in another time or war, or

perhaps even in another universe. So, using a 3D print from my friends at Oda Models, I made a scout dog, dressed in the best Steampunk style.



If you are travelling to competitions and shows it's important that the base and completed model is not too heavy. Try to use light but resistant materials, such as this insulation foam, which you can find at a builder's merchant.



On a bed of paper moistened with PVA glue, I added small real stones. I have my own selection of stones and branches, classified by size, that I add to every time I'm out and about.



Using plastic profiles, I made an obstacle, based on reference photographs of the real thing, and began to plan the scene. The raised section is perfect to place the vehicle and dog on.



The base was initially covered with a mixture of GSW Mud Effect (1753), Light Orange pigment (1764), and sand.

5



The sand was then airbrushed with different inks, including Ancient Sepia (1717) and Moss Green (1715), painted over to add depth and different tones.

6



The base was covered in GSW Terrain Series Static Grass Flock and some small stones. Liquid Pigments - Light Earth (2294) and Industrial Dust (2301) - were added to vary the tones. Once dry, this gives a matt, dusty appearance.

7



The obstacle was given a coat of Matt Surface Primer: Red Rust (1888), over which areas of Scorched Earth (1852) were airbrushed. This gave a nicely varied rust colour. Then a generous coat of Chipping Medium (188) was applied.

8



This was allowed to dry for a couple of hours and then painted over. It was then wetted with water to activate the Chipping Medium and the top layer of paint chipped away with an old brush or toothbrush to give a pleasing rusted appearance.

9



Rust Liquid Pigment (2287) was the final stage of painting and weathering the obstacle. Its matt, dusty appearances integrates perfectly with the groundwork.



Finally, GSW new Barbed Wire was painted, bent to shape and placed around the obstacle.

11



I printed out some suitable minefield warning signs and weathered them with the same inks used on the groundwork. Again, the aim is to tie all the different elements of the scene together.

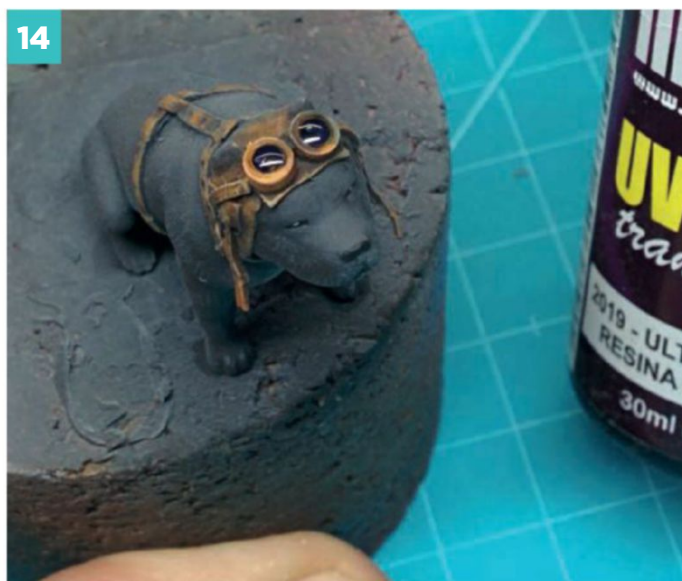


I added some areas of wet mud to the groundwork, using Mud Effect and pigments. It dries to a gloss finish, perfect for recreating wet mud.

'I made a scout dog, dressed in the best Steampunk style'



The dog was primed white and painted in grey acrylics. It was shaded with Black Wash (1750) which dries to a perfect satin finish.



GSW UV Resin (2019) was perfect for the glass on the dog's goggles. Simply drop it in place and set it immediately using our UV torch.

15



Weird Armies Reign Kettencrad Grohl Typ 1 is a lovely little resin kit. It was painted in three different shades of grey. The decals were a mixture of those supplied with the kit and some from my spares box.

17



The vehicle was weathered using similar techniques to the obstacle. I used rust and light grey to simulate paint scratches and added an ink glaze of Andalusian Earth (1716) mixed with Master Medium (1746) so it acted more like a wash, enhancing the raised detail.

16



Once the main colours and decals were down, it was time to pick out the details in a number of contrasting colours to add further interest.

18



The lenses for the headlights were made in the same manner as the dog's goggles, with our UV Resin.



Finally, the rider is painted using military colours and the Zenithal Light technique, that is, as if it was lit by an overhead light source (such as the sun).



Once the legs are painted, they are covered in Liquid Mask (1748) in order to airbrush the leather jacket.



The kit comes with two heads: I chose the German one with a typically World War I-style polygonal camouflage pattern.



The kit also contains various bags and other accessories for both the vehicle and its rider. These were painted last and weathered using similar techniques and colour as the other elements in the scene.



The vehicle is placed on the groundwork. If necessary, the underside of the vehicle should be touched up to imitate the dust and dirt in the area and integrate it properly with the groundwork.



As a final detail, a resin human skull, was placed; a suitable final addition to this vignette!

BE INSPIRED

Weird Armies Reign 1/35 Kettenkrad Ghrol Typ 1 (ref. W19:001). Email war1946@yahoo.com for more details.



New Year, New Hope: New Challenges, New Look

It's been quite a year and certainly not in the way we had expected. As 2020 draws to a close, I wanted to offer a heartfelt thanks from myself and everyone at Guideline Publications. We started 2020 with high hopes for a busy year, full of exciting plans for our portfolio of hobby magazines, new book titles, and looking forward to meeting many of our friends and readers at hobby shows across the United Kingdom, Europe and North America. Then came the pandemic and all that changed. We know how difficult it has been for those affected directly and indirectly by the Coronavirus and its fall-out, as many of you have told us, and we are delighted to have been, in some small way, able to help by providing people with a chance to escape into their hobby and away from the gloom of the pandemic. We could not have done this, however, without the constant support of our editorial staff, our contributors, our advertisers, our subscribers, and readers. David, Chris, Gary, George and Mark, ably assisted by Colin, George, Jan, Jon and Paul (not to mention our designers, Andy, Lincoln and Mark) have worked tirelessly to bring you the best in

hobby publications. Our contributors have sometimes put aside their own challenges and worries to meet our editorial deadlines, while our advertisers and friends in the hobby have supported us throughout what have often also been challenging times for them. Most of all, however, I would like to thank our subscribers, new and old, whose commitment to Guideline Publications makes such a difference when so many of our usual outlets were closed, and to everyone one of our readers who has bought our magazines and books and supported us throughout the year. We approach 2021 full of optimism for the future and with renewed energy to continue to bring you the very best in hobby publications. We have exciting new collaborations and new titles in the offing and, perhaps most of all, we are excited about attending shows again and meeting the people that make our hobbies so important a part of our lives. So, on behalf of everyone at Guideline Publications, a sincere thank you for your support and our very best wishes for a successful and healthy 2021.

Alan Corkhill, Managing Director, Guideline Publications

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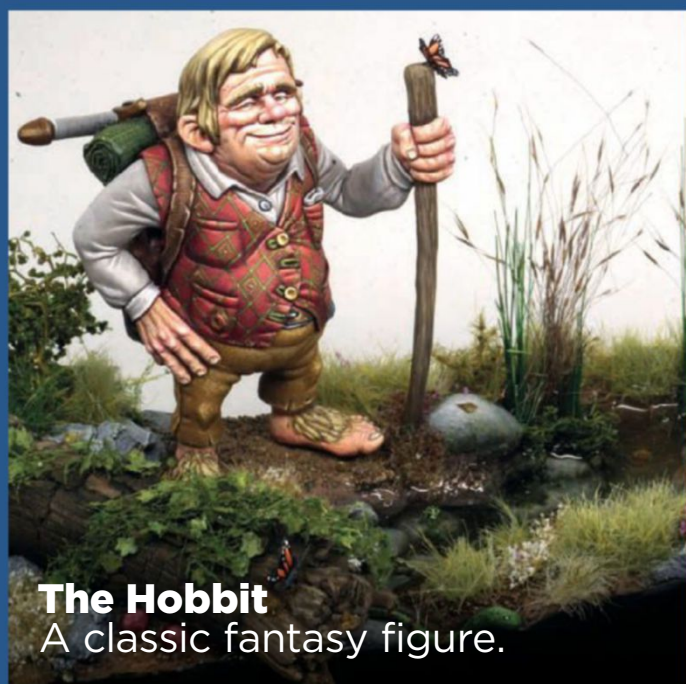
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Rodrigo Hernández Chacón

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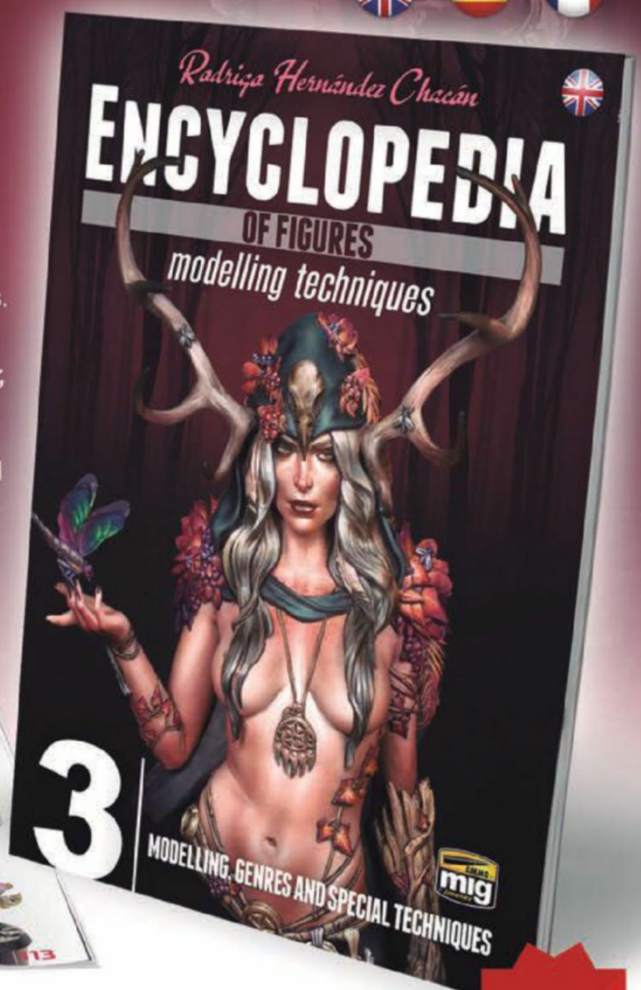
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