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AFTER THE APOCALYPSE

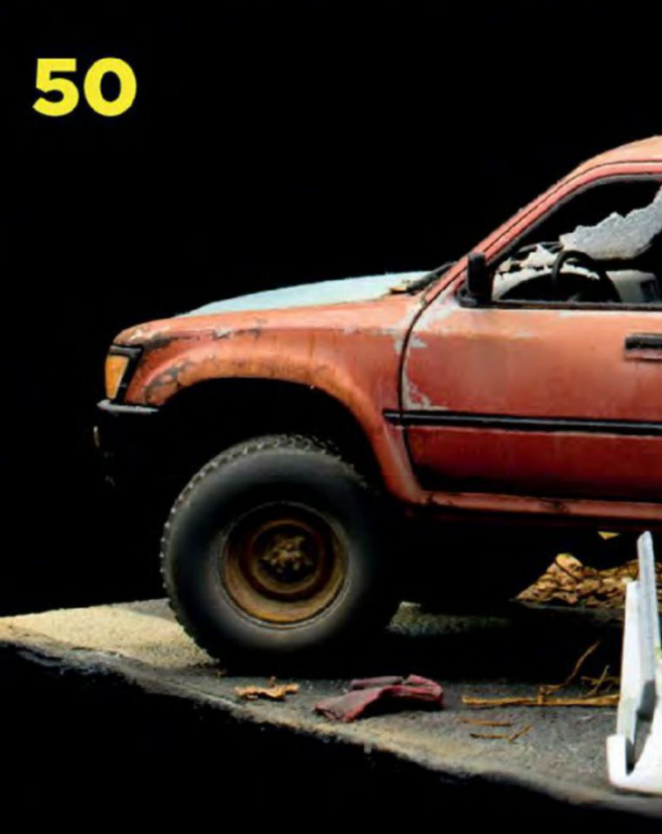
Curated by David Grummitt and Marco Riolo



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AFTER^{THE} APOCALYPSE



Thank you to the following who have made this book possible, Sonia Moro, Andrea Muzzu, Gabriele Leni, Alex Ortiga and Valentina Scarsini.

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AFTER THE APOCALYPSE

There is no doubt that the post-apocalyptic vision is one of the defining tropes of our modern age. Whether the apocalypse comes in the form of an extreme climatic event, an asteroid colliding with Earth, a pandemic, a nuclear war, or some other unforeseen disaster, the image of desperate bands of survivors struggling for survival against the elements, zombies, or each other is a recurrent theme across literature, art, film and television, and now, of course, model making. The origins of the post-apocalyptic and dystopian visions in the modern age can probably be traced back to late nineteenth-century works including Richard Jeffries's *After London* (1885) and H.G. Wells's *Time Machine* (1895) and *War of the Worlds* (1898). Orson Welles's 1938 radio broadcast based upon Wells's *War of the Worlds* seared the idea of the apocalypse into the psyche of twentieth-century America, and in the years following World War II a series of books, films, radio and television series normalised the expectation that, one day, alien invasion, pandemic disease, a nuclear exchange, or some climatic event would end civilisation as we know it.

In the later twentieth century events conspired to bring those apocalyptic imaginings even closer. The 1980s were a decade of nuclear-inspired fear. Films like the BBC's *Threads* (1984), which depicted the aftermath of a nuclear strike on the city of Sheffield, and CBS's television film *The Day After* (1983) coincided with political crisis between the USA and USSR and the very real threat of nuclear war with the deployment of Pershing II and Cruise Missiles in Europe. In 1986, of course, a nuclear apocalypse almost became reality with the explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station. The end of the Cold War seemed to allay these fears to some extent, but new horrors soon emerged to fill post-apocalyptic storylines in novels, film and, of course, computer games. Out of the polluted ruins of Chernobyl came a host of radioactive mutants and zombies, spawning the term 'Stalker' which is now synonymous with post-apocalyptic futures. In the wake of Ebola, SARS and Bird Flu, global pandemics seemed the most likely catastrophe to befall the human race, changing us into flesh-eating zombies. Comic strips like *The Walking Dead*, later immortalised on the small screen, and films such as Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later* (2002) made the zombie apocalypse seem frighteningly real. As we enter the third decade of



the twenty-first century, our post-apocalyptic nightmares seem more real than ever. Covid-19 has made fear of a global pandemic real, while the reality of climate change is beginning to dawn across the globe.

As post-apocalyptic themes become ubiquitous across all forms of popular culture, it's no surprise scale modellers have taken up the challenge to imagine these dystopian futures in miniature. One of the individuals responsible for facilitating these post-apocalyptic modelling projects in recent years has been Marco Riolo, founder of Alternity Miniatures. I was delighted when Marco agreed to help put together this volume and I invited him to share some thoughts on the post-apocalyptic modelling genre.

“This book was born in unprecedented times when the true extent of the humanitarian, health, and social tragedy of the Covid pandemic was not yet clear”



Marco: ‘I was lucky enough to grow up admiring the work of great modellers like Francois Verlinden and Shep Paine. I have always admired, the Belgian master Verlinden and his great foresight. Thanks in part to his efforts, today hundreds of large and small companies worldwide produce all manner of kits, accessories and tools to make our hobby more and more sophisticated and artistic. I had the same objective when I launched my own Alternity Miniatures brand. Without exaggeration, I can say that I didn’t take the easy option and so have never created anything that was not in line with my own passions as a modeller and true to my brand’s motto of ‘dreams and nightmares in scale.’ From the beginning, I have always had a clear idea of the subject matter that would inspire me: to me the guiding light was the uncertainty and complexity that mankind faces, at all levels, after the Chernobyl disaster. The recurring theme, beginning with our logo, is that humanity, through its own actions has made violated Mother Earth and consequently made our home a dangerous place. The post-apocalyptic theme might seem something surreal and distant from us, but in reality, I think we experience it daily, sometimes even unconsciously.

The gas mask is the most frequently represented object in my creations – a motif that runs through our range – and it is a symbol that has never been more relevant than it is today. As youngsters, we could never have imagined that doctors and nurses treating their patients would be dressed like soldiers in NBC suits, yet it has happened. This book was born in unprecedented times when the true extent of the humanitarian, health, and social tragedy of the Covid pandemic was not yet clear. In the beginning my contributors and I wanted only to represent another way of modelling, bringing different topics so that we could show something new and inspiring, but as time went by we realised that maybe this book could say more, going beyond the playful qualities of simple pieces of painted plastic and resin. Maybe it could serve as a warning, a message that we could all heed: let’s all stop, slow down, respect our planet and our fellow men, or we too might end up like the lonely and alienated protagonists of these wonderful dioramas.’

David Grummitt
Marco Riolo

SEARCH AND DESTROY

Antonio Casas Garcia imagines a classic post-apocalyptic scenario.

I wonder who among us remembers watching films like *The Andromeda Strain* (1971) as a youngster? It was based on the 1969 novel by Michael Crichton (of *Jurassic Park* fame) and follows a group of scientists as they discover and combat a deadly virus of extra-terrestrial origin. There is one particularly memorable scene when the scientists, fully garbed in PPE suits, arrive in the abandoned town of Piedmont, New Mexico. They cut into the bodies of the deceased only to find that their blood has mysteriously crystallised ... The scene stuck with me and it provided the inspiration for this diorama, one of a series of post-apocalyptic scenes I have made recently (another of which appeared in issue 6 of *Fantasy Figures International*).

Setting the Scene

The timeframe of the diorama was deliberately left undefined, but it could certainly be placed in the Cold War period. I had a beautiful resin house from DioDump ('Dutch Corner House', ref. DD073) that I had originally planned to include in a World War II Operation Market Garden diorama. My idea was to have a survivor wandering the streets, his belongings in a shopping trolley, when he spots a 'Walker' shambling along in full protective clothing. He takes cover and prays to remain unnoticed. With this diorama I also set myself a little challenge: to paint everything, with the exception of the car, with an old-fashioned paint brush.



Being a corner piece, the DioDump house was ideal for defining the shape of the diorama on a round base. The five resin pieces that constitute the kit were glued together and fitted perfectly. The kit also includes different elements to detail it, including Evergreen plastic rods, cloth for the curtains, and clear acetate for the windows.



The kit has no interior walls or floors, so I made these from Forex, a lightweight polystyrene used in advertising. I then gave everything a solid coat of Tamiya Grey Primer. The kitchen cabinet blocking the door is an old item from Custom Dioramic.





3

I spent some time test-fitting and generally playing around with the various accessories I wanted to add to the house. The curtains were made from cigarette papers. I don't smoke but it's a great material to use in model making.



4

The external walls were painted white and then drybrushed with Vallejo Red Leather (70.818) to highlight the brickwork. When this had dried, I picked out various bricks in a range of colours - Hull Red (70.985), Orange Brown (70.891) and Dark Green (72.028) – to break up the monotony. The roof was painted Sand Yellow (70.916) and then individual tiles were similarly picked out in different colours.



5

Here you can see details of the house front. The door was painted using Scale75 Irati Green (SC43) and the windows and door frames in white, while the pavement and bottom of the house was given a coat of Vallejo Blue Grey Pale (70.905). I then gave the front of the house an overall coat of Vallejo Satin Varnish (70.522) and when dry, I applied some graffiti decals from Uschi Van Der Rosten (ref. 1014). With a coat of Micro Sol decal solution, these conformed to the brickwork perfectly.



6

Here you see some of the details near the door. The grass tufts are from Green Line, while the pallet comes from Macone Models (ref. MAC35143). I used a modelling knife to emphasise the woodgrain and to damage some of the planks. It was painted in Vallejo Blue Grey Pale and then each plank was treated to an individual wash of diluted Blue Grey Pale, German Camouflage Orange Ochre (70.824) or Buff (90.976) to give some variety. I then applied an overall wash using AMMO's Track Wash (A.MIG. 1002) in order to pick out the wood grain. I added the little photoetched grill in the window and weathered it with various enamel-based washes from AMMO.



7

I used a whole range of accessories across the diorama to give a suitably busy and chaotic appearance, including boxes from RB Models, rats from Plus Models, and magazines and newspapers from ETA Diorama Accessories.



8

I wanted the interior to also tell the story, so included this poignant reminder of what had been left behind. This unhappy individual had died in the bath, perhaps at their own hand. I scratch built many of the elements in this part of the diorama, such as the rolls of toilet-paper made with a piece of hollowed rod around which I rolled strips of cigarette paper, fixing them in place with PVA glue. The bathtub is from the Polish brand Super Euromodeller (ref. 35008), while the toilet is from Plus Model (ref. 065). The skeleton is a 3D print from S&C 3D, designed by Mario Petel. There are also various accessories from Historex, Verlinden, Plus Model and some scratch-built items, such as the toilet cistern and the shelves.



9



The kitchen is one of my favourite parts of the house. I wanted to give the impression of chaos and things abandoned in haste. The kitchen furniture comes from Plus Model (ref. 293), except the shelves, which came from an old Verlinden Productions set. The dishes and pans are from Historex.



The post-apocalyptic theme continues into other areas of the house. Note the AK47, from Replikant Technologies, propped up against the sofa. The wall graffiti adds to the desolate feel, while the dead dog (starvation or the virus?) is another reminder of the house's previous inhabitants.



11 The photoetched brass shopping trolley is an exquisite little kit from Hauler (ref. 35073). It needs soldering really to be assembled properly, something beyond my abilities, but my good friend Victor Gonzalez stepped in to help me. Thank you!



12 It was painted Vallejo Aluminium (71.062) and the plastic parts painted blue and red. It was then given a wash with AMMO's Track Wash and took its place in the diorama



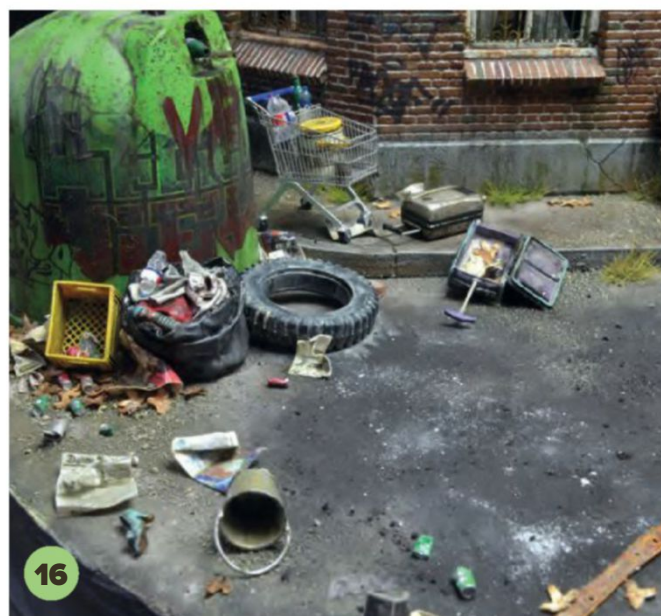
13 The glass recycling container is from the Spanish manufacturer Resin Planet. Keeping in mind my challenge, I brush-painted it using Scale 75 Spring Green (SC47), simply adding some yellow to the green for the highlights. The handles were picked out in aluminium and some Uschi decals applied, before weathering it with enamel-based washes.



14 I stuck some missing persons posters from ETA Diorama Accessories (ref. 211) on the glass-recycling container and placed a Mantis Miniatures rat (ref. 35039) on top of it.



15 More accessories! I love the beer and coke cans from Royal Model (ref. 713) and the backpacks from Eureka XXL (refs. E-026, E-027), as well as the various canned foods from Reality in Scale (ref. 35168).



16 The detritus really adds to the post-apocalyptic feel: here you can see Macone Models trolleys (ref. MAC35160) and Blast Models garbage bags (ref. BL35218K).



17

The right-hand corner of the scene has a Tamiya cat sniffing around Replikant Technologies' impressive tipped-over dustbin (ref. 357008), complete with scattered old newspapers, natural wood, DEF Model plastic bottles (ref. 35013), old cigarette packets from DioArt (ref. 192), and wine bottles from Verlinden Productions.



18

The zombie wearing the PPE is excellent and comes from Royal Model (ref. 763). It is beautifully sculpted and cast, which helped a lot when painting it. The base coat was Vallejo Flat Yellow 70.953, which I highlighted with Lemon Yellow (70.952). I painted the shadows by adding a little brown to the Flat Yellow and emphasised the seams with a light brown. Some enamel-based washes gave it a suitably weathered appearance.



19

I fell in love with the Evolution figure (ref. EM35120) as soon as I saw it. I painted him using the Andrea Miniatures paint sets for Black and Blue (refs. ACS-02 and ACS-05), which were a huge help. These sets, which contain the right shadows and highlights for a particular colour, are a God-send for a poor figure painter like me. The remainder of the figure was painted with Vallejo acrylics.



20

The car is a resin kit from MIG Productions (ref. MP35-263). When I built this diorama the kit was out of production so I had to look for it on the second-hand market, eventually finding one in Australia! Luckily MIG Productions have now re-released the kit.



21

After building and painting the interior I closed the two halves of the kit. I placed a mixture of tissue papers and random pieces of scrap photoetch in the boot to emphasise its abandoned status.



23

The final appearance was the result of several AMMO enamel-based washes applied, slowly building up the different effects of ash, rust and grime.



22

I needed to apply three coats of paint and hairspray to achieve the look of rusting and burnt paint that I wanted. I began with a coat of AK Interactive's German Red Primer (AK124), followed by black for the fire-damaged area and finishing with the orange and chrome paint of the body work.



Acknowledgments

As ever my first debt is to my family, but also thanks to Jaime Olhagaray, Roberto Reale from Royal Model, Roy Schurges from DioDump, Artur Miniszewski from Mantis Miniatures, and Arthur Sekula from DioArt. I'm sure I've forgotten some, but a big thank you to all who helped with this lengthy project.



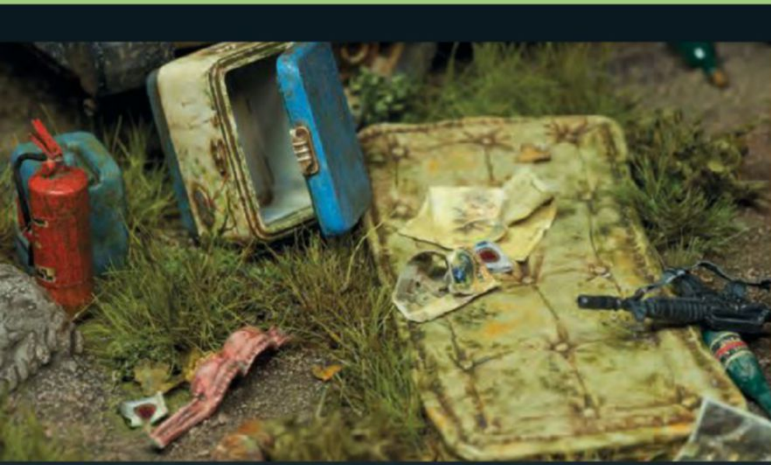


SEARCH AND DESTROY II THE NIGHT



As I said earlier, I have made a series of these post-apocalyptic-themed dioramas. This one I have called 'the Night'. The itinerant camp overrun by zombies in the middle of the night is a recurrent theme in the films and TV series of the Zombie Apocalypse genre (think *The Walking Dead*). I wanted to capture something of that in this diorama. It shows a deserted playground, turned into a makeshift camp. The survivors have discovered an unwelcome guest and panic to regain control of the camp. The figures are from Royal Model (the zombie, ref. 765), Evolution Miniatures (ref. 35076) and Bravo6 (ref. 35036). The van is Takom's superb Volkswagen T3.





THE FUTURE NO LONGER BELONGS TO US

Gabriele Leni imagines a future lost.

When embarking upon any diorama project, it's important to keep three things in mind: what is it we want to communicate; what are the focal points of the diorama; and, finally, how many different elements should we include in the scene? Usually a diorama has more than one figure in the scene, interacting with each other, but this is not a fixed rule and, in fact, often the most successful dioramas are those that, through their very simplicity, make their meaning very clear. Often the main subject of the diorama takes centre ground, maybe slightly shifted to the right or left, but again there is no firm rule. In this case the choice was made, before choosing the models themselves, to fill the four corners of the base with different elements of the story.

There are many variations on the post-apocalyptic world from a zombie invasion, to natural and man-made disasters. I chose to depict the aftermath of a biological infection that has decimated the planet and where the few survivors face a daily struggle to survive. To fill the four corners of my base I was delighted to use a new Stalker figure from Alternity Miniatures, an industrial vehicle, and a couple of playground rides that would provide a location and context and which I intended to fill with small details.

Like many post-apocalyptic projects, the chosen scale was 1/35. This is simply because of the good availability of suitable figures and accessories in this scale and because it is the perfect balance between size and detail.

The figure, of course, is

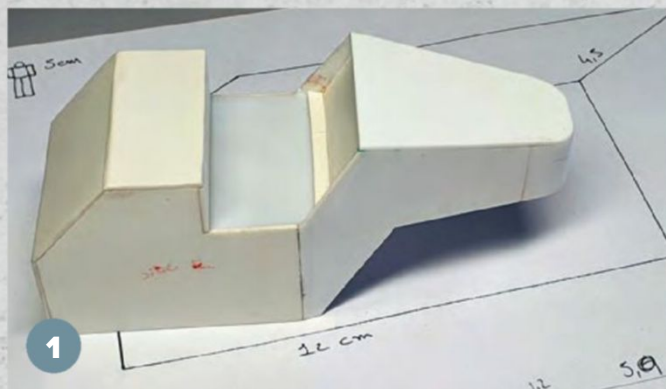


Alternity Miniatures' new 'Mescal Boy' release, while the vehicle was scratchbuilt from Plasticard and wood. My inspiration was an old steam roller, always parked near a football field where I lived as a boy. I had a good amount of reference photographs that helped me out here.

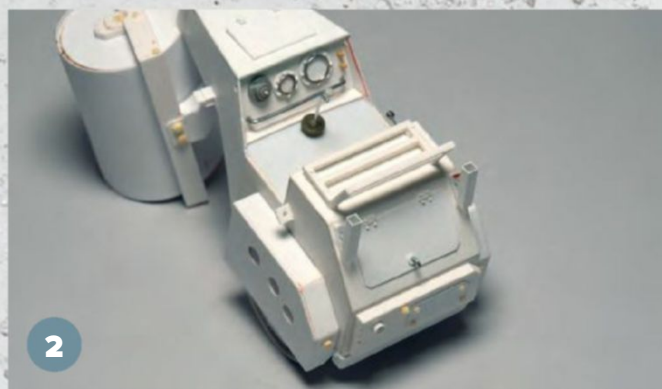
The playground rides are, in some ways, the focus of the diorama. Children's play equipment has an iconic connection to the Apocalypse, whether it be the nuclear holocaust scene in *Terminator 2* or the real-life tragedy of the theme park at Pripyat. In this project they needed, first, to be relatively simple and, second, to be of different dimensions as they would be placed one in front of the other. I also wanted to have space on and around them in which to deposit all manner of detritus (courtesy of some of Alternity Miniatures' accessories and various old parts from tank models). In the end I decided upon a strange climbing frame and a small rocking boat.

I also had to introduce different heights into the diorama, so opted to put the play equipment on concrete structures, raised to different heights, and have the figure and the vehicle at a third, ground, level. The overall impression is that of a deserted partly built children's park, with one of the construction vehicles abandoned and rusted, its capacity to bring joy stolen by the Apocalypse.





The roller was scratchbuilt using Plasticard and two wooden cylinders. Good plans and references are essential for a project like this.



The roller was detailed with plastic discs punched with a 'punch and die' set and various scrap pieces of metal.



Various scrap pieces from old tank kits were used to suggest the engine and other working parts of the roller.



The finished roller ready for the painting booth.

Construction: The Roller

I began work on the roller, armed with the photos of the real vehicle, and with pen and paper I drew the basic shape of the vehicle, trying to be as precise as possible in my measurements. When you scratch build vehicles like this, it is good practice to try to break them down into simpler geometric shapes, as this will allow you greater precision during construction. After adapting the measurements of the real thing to 1/35 scale, I drew the various panels on a sheet of paper and then traced them onto plastic sheet. With these cut out, I used superglue to assemble the basic structure of the vehicle. This gave the basic shape strength, allowing me to work on the details without worrying about damaging the main body of the vehicle. In the bottom of the vehicle, at the front, I cut a small hole to reproduce the details of the engine.

The wheels were simply two wooden cylinders, cut to size and covered with slightly longer plastic sheet to leave a border at both ends. Two circles were then cut with a compass, slightly narrower in diameter than the front face to give more realism and leave a small groove between the wheel and its edge.

With the main structure finished, I started to build the connection between the front wheel and the engine. I deliberately left this damaged to show how the world had literally fallen apart. Other small details, such as the seat, were created using various plastic profiles. The engine panel has small hinges in it and a handle in the middle, while the driver's instrument panel was made with small plastic discs with wire rims carefully glued around them. I also placed tiny rivets around the circumference of the dials and detailed other areas of the roller with the help of a 'punch and die' set. The engine itself was fashioned from bits and pieces from old military models. To assist in painting and weathering I decided to divide the vehicle in two halves: the body and front wheel.

The Climbing Frame

Scratch building the climbing frame was a relatively easy task compared to the roller. The important thing here was to capture the bell shape of the original piece of play equipment. This is the tallest part of the scene and



The cage was made by carefully bending brass rod to shape.



6 The rocking boat was basically a 1/35-scale howitzer shell cut in half and then lengthened with a Plasticard insert.



7 This too was then detailed with Plasticard and pieces of wire.

naturally draws the viewer's eye so I had to find something evocative to finish it off. Searching online, I found some beautiful figurines from the Disney Infinity 2.0 computer game and after buying a Donald Duck figure I decided to make a casting of its head to put on the top of the climbing cage. The cage itself was made with thin brass rods, cut and bent to size. To ensure both the right size and a perfect circle, I used a plastic cylinder to form the various brass rods. I cut plastic discs for the base and roof of the climbing frame and then drilled holes just slightly bigger than the brass rods to make sure I could position them perfectly. Once done, Donald's head was pinned onto the top and secured with Superglue. I then moved onto the base of the climbing frame, taking care to give this a different texture to that of the rocking boat.

Rocking Boat

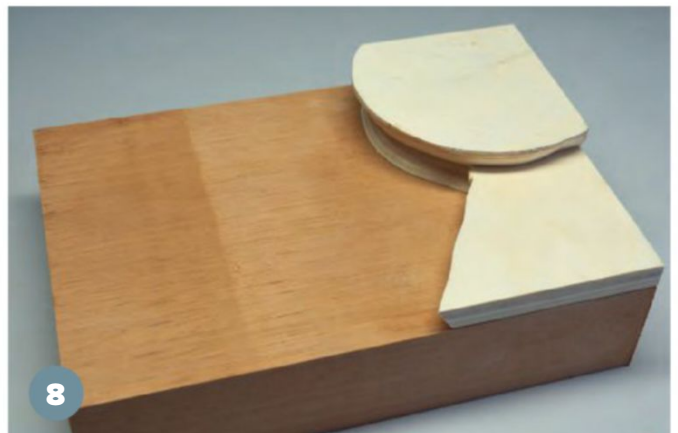
The rocking boat was made from the two halves of a large 1/35-scale howitzer shell. One was left intact, while the other was cut in half, and in the middle I glued a small piece of Plasticard cut and bent to the same profile as the shell. On the front of the boat I glued the front half of the



cut howitzer shell. I fashioned two handles from brass rod and then glued strips of Plasticard, engraved with a wood grain, to the floor of the boat. The base is a wagon wheel, suitably modified, while the spring is simply brass rod wound around a cylinder and bent to give an indication of the weight of the boat.

Diorama base

Before I had assembled any of the elements, I studied the composition of the scene by cutting a sheet of paper to the proposed size of the diorama. I tried to place the elements close to each other, yet at the same time filling the four corners of the base. Time spent planning the composition is essential to any successful diorama. Once I had settled on the size of my diorama I chose a suitable piece of walnut, which I cut and sanded to size. I then stained it black and sealed it with varnish. I then created two further basic levels of the diorama for the pieces of play equipment.



8 The basic shape of the diorama was determined by the size of the base and the addition of two more layers of insulation foam, cut to shape to give three different levels.



9 The base starts to take shape with the concrete bases of the play equipment in place and the groundwork added.



10 Before painting any of the elements, it's important to fix the final the composition of the scene.



11 'Mescal Boy', a new figure from Alternity Miniatures, now released for sale to coincide with the publication of this book, needed very little embellishment. I simply added some wire to the metal detector.

The basic shape of the groundwork was made with Aves two-part epoxy putty. Once dry I used a mixture of PVA glue and the soil designed for Bonsai gardens to make the earth texture. The broken concrete was simply made from plaster with some stones and a piece of wire mesh. This was then placed between the two levels of the diorama. The grass was static grass applied to the surface using an electric static grass applicator. These are available from model railway or wargaming retailers and apply an electrostatic charge to make the static

grass stand up, giving it a realistic finish. Finally, I broke up the remainder of my concrete mixture into irregular-sized chunks and added these randomly around the base of the play equipment structures.

Painting: the Roller

I based my painting of the roller on the photos of the original vehicle. To fit the desolate tone of the diorama, I deliberately desaturated the colours. The key effect I wanted to achieve on the roller was that of rust and old, peeling paint. There are several different methods to achieve this. I began with a coat of black primer on top of which I sprayed various shades of dark brown, dividing the vehicle into discrete zones to ensure that there was no regularity in the use of different shades of brown. I decided to use the 'hairspray method', which basically involves spraying a layer of hairspray over the base (in this case, the brown) and then spraying the second colour over the hairspray. The hairspray can then be activated with warm water, resulting in the top layer of paint chipping away in a realistic and random fashion. I also added some crackle medium paint to the lower parts of the vehicle. This is great because as it dries it develops realistic cracks, just like dried mud.

I applied the main colour to the roller, taking care to



12 'Mescal Boy' has the same superb sculpting and flawless casting we have come to expect from Alternity Miniatures.

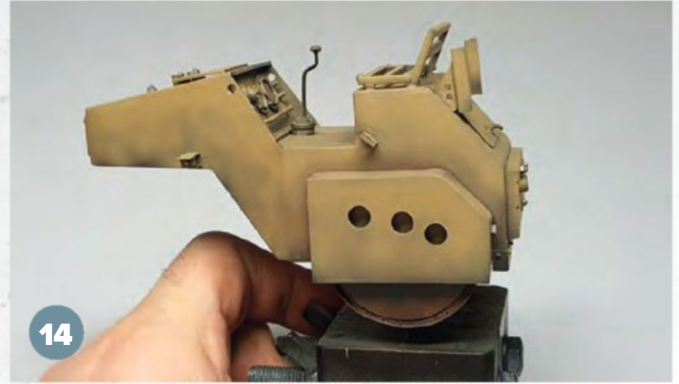
adjust my shades to reflect light and shadow across its surface, and then, with a needle, an old paintbrush and a piece of fine sandpaper I started to chip away, revealing the brown paint underneath. Once complete, I gave the roller a coat of varnish in order to have a strong surface for the subsequent filters and washes. Usually, applying washes is something I approach with great caution. I prefer to apply oil-dot filters rather than washes, as I feel these give me more control over the paint. I mixed three oil paints together to make the wash: Van Dyck Brown, Burnt Umber and Burnt Sienna. Once the wash had dried, I switched to filters, blending small dots of green, blue and red oil paints into the surface to enhance the contrast, but also using white to give the appearance of faded paintwork. The numbers on the vehicle, like the instruments on the dashboard, were painted freehand. The two rollers themselves were treated to a more intense oil paint treatment, using shades of yellow, green, blue, and grey.

The Climbing Frame

The climbing frame was for children, of course, so the colours had to be bright and eye-catching. I chose blue, as it was reminiscent of Donald Duck's clothing and hat, and would give balance to the structure. The chipped paint is lighter; instead of the brown of the roller there are various shades of a neutral grey. This time I added the paint chips



13 The roller was painted in various shades of red brown, perfect for the rusted base that would be revealed by the 'hairspray method'.



14 A coat of sand-yellow, solid for the most part but letting some of the brown show through towards the bottom of the vehicle, was then airbrushed over a layer of hairspray.



15 The result of distressing the sand-yellow paint with an old brush, a needle and a piece of fine sandpaper.



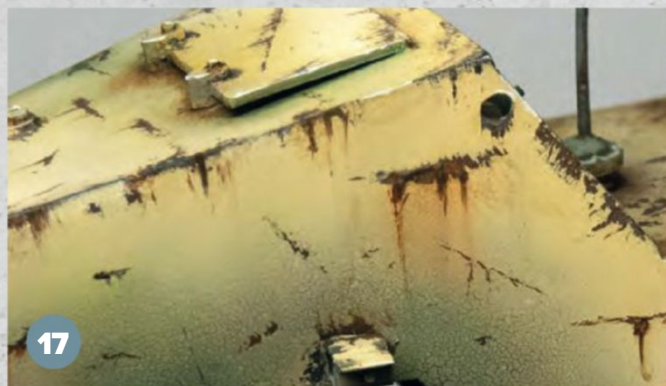
16 The dashboard controls were hand painted and the chips and scratches further refined to give a heavily weathered appearance.

with a sponge, making irregular patterns on the bars, a process repeated on the head. I also used white and yellow to make more pronounced chips on the head atop the frame.

Rocking Boat

In order not to have too strong a contrast between the frame and the boat, I decided to follow a similar colour scheme with the climbing frame but with the introduction of a red band. This attracts attention without being too startling or incongruous. When weathering the boat I used a range of oranges and browns, both to suggest the heavily corroded metal, but also part of the wooden construction showing through the old paintwork. The spring was painted with different metallic colours and given a rust-coloured wash, befitting something that had been neglected for a long time.





17 Oil paints were used to replicate the runs of rust on the body of the roller.



19 The rocking boat was similarly painted in blue. I added some prominent highlights to exaggerate the boat's shape and used different colours to pick out the different materials used in its manufacture.

Base

The base has three different but complementary surfaces: grass, soil and concrete. It was important for the concrete to be as neutral as possible so as not to detract in any way from the four elements of the diorama. Equally, the grass needed to have a variety of shades, from deep green to almost yellow. The earth that ties these two surfaces together needed to have a strong, brown colour, not sand, to show it was wet and workable. Nearer the concrete, the cement has leached out into the soil, polluting it with a slightly greyer shade.

Accessories

The accessories were all painted separately, taking care to paint and weather them properly and, at the same time, to give them a harmony with other elements of the diorama. The bin standing in the middle of the climbing frame was simply painted in rust shades, as was the bucket full of bricks. I used a range of colours over a dark brown base, going to an almost Brick Red. The red and browns of the rusted containers and bricks make a nice contrast to the green grass. The sleeping bag inside the boat was painted orange to contrast with the blue of the play equipment. I deliberately kept the wooden boxes quite bland and muted, without stark highlights and shadows, so that the painting did not appear too chaotic. The final box was painted red, while its contents were painted, highlighting

the objects inside, and then weathering them with rusty and grey tones. The discarded toy bears were painted with brighter colours to attract attention to another point of interest in the diorama. Small objects like this can also help break up otherwise monotone surfaces. The sign was made from cardboard, painted with acrylics. The bio-hazard sign was hand painted, a warning of the Apocalypse that has overtaken what should be a place of joy and laughter.

Stalker

I painted the stunning new figure from Alternity Miniatures in brighter colours than I would usually. This was deliberate so as to provide a contrast to the faded and rusted roller and the dilapidated play equipment. I painted the coat using various shades of blue, highlighting it by adding pink to the mixture. I blended greens and brown into the bottom of the coat. The trousers were various greens, khakis and other military shades, applied in very light glaze. I painted a faint weave pattern on the backpack to differentiate its fabric from the rest of the figure and especially the bright orange sleeping bag curled around it.

Kitten and Mice

This diorama has a bit of an 'Easter Egg' in the shape of three small mice. I won't tell you where they are but there are three of them, one victim and two escaping from the kitty inside Donald Duck's cage.



18 The cage was painted blue then chipped by dabbing grey acrylic paint using a sponge, mimicking the grey primer showing underneath the crumbling blue.



20 The collection of accessories and the bio-hazard sign. The teddy bears, again from Alternity Miniatures, are a great post-apocalyptic accessory.



21
I thought long and hard about how I could use colours to make the most of the superb 'Mescal Boy' figure. The blue coat v the play equipment and makes a nice change to the dull, military colours that predominate in Post-Apocalyptic modelling.



22
I carefully painted some texture in the figure's backpack, while the orange sleeping bag serves as an eye-catching spot colour for the diorama as a whole.



23
This overhead view of the diorama shows the three distinct surfaces – concrete, soil and grass – and the complementary colours used to paint them.

Conclusions

I enjoyed this project a great deal, not only because of the subject, but for the opportunity it gave me to use different techniques, different colours and different tools. Often in large dioramas, there is a risk that certain elements receive weathering and less careful painting; in this project I wanted to overturn that by looking for a greater definition of the colour, concentrating on painting each element really well and letting the shapes and arrangement suggest a story and allowing the colours to emphasise that narrative. The Alternity Miniatures' figure and other accessories were decisive in capturing the post-apocalyptic context. I didn't want a single focal point, as often happens even in the largest dioramas, but different points of interest each one with their own story to tell.



24
Bringing everything together: there are lots of different colours here, but careful painting and weathering brings everything together in a realistic way.



THE NEW TOKYO HARBOUR

Diego Cuenca Vidal transports us to a post-apocalyptic Japan.

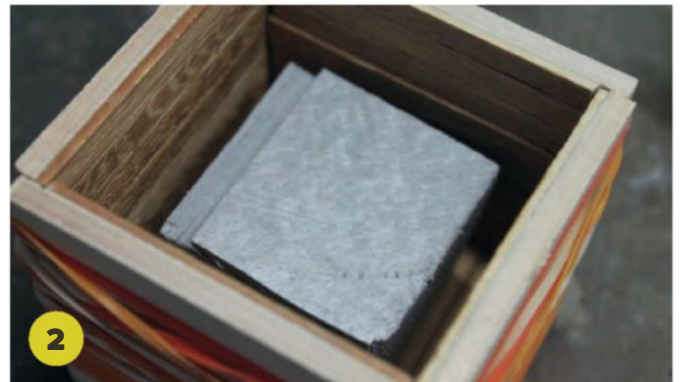
It is 2234. Droughts, epidemics, and nuclear and bacteriological wars have devastated the planet. Only the strongest survive along the margins of what were once the great cities, searching through mountains of waste and garbage for usable materials and food. One of the last cities to survive is Tokyo. Its industrial port zone is one of the few inhabitable areas and is where, like ants, the last 'Stalkers' eke out a meagre existence among the ruins, making reality of what was written 257 years earlier by the brothers Arkadi and Boris Strugatski in their premonitory book *Roadside Picnic*. The old industrial port is now known as 'The New Tokyo Harbour', one of the few places on earth where 'new' life is possible ...

Composing the Diorama

The main elements of the scene are the piece of concrete harbour wall on the left and the section of old fishing boat on the right. The two are balanced by moving the concrete block further forward, while the section of the ship, although in the background, has greater height because of the railing. The figures occupy the foreground, and the viewer is immediately drawn towards them. The awning and its pole provide more height to the right side of the scene, while the neon sign also concentrates the viewer's attention on that side of the vignette.



1 The five sides of the mould were made from wooden strips glued to a plywood base. The strips were then textured with a scribing tool and wire brush before being glued to the plywood.



2 A Styrofoam block was placed in the middle of the mould to keep the weight down. The open top of the mould will be the bottom of the concrete block.



3 Once the plaster has dried and the formwork removed, holes were drilled into the corners of the block to accommodate lifting rings.



4 The cabin of the old fishing boat was scratch built from Plasticard and Evergreen profiles, while the planks were small strips of wood used in naval modelling.



The cabin was then abutted to the concrete harbour wall. Note the crumbling flooring on the remains of the ship's decking.



The base was made from expanded polystyrene edged with Forex. The asphalt pavement was added using a piece of cork board as a base.



The sinkhole was covered in Das Pronto putty and textured with small stones. Makeshift steps are added down into the sinkhole.



The asphalt texture was achieved by spreading a layer of plaster over the corkboard with a spatula, then removing the excess with a damp paint brush. Finally, a layer of diluted PVA glue was applied over the sinkhole to fix everything in place.

The Main Elements: Construction, Painting and Weathering

The concrete block represents the side of the dock, designed to protect the natural harbour against the large ships that pass through it. These days such things are made from metal, but I wanted one with greater texture, so I have recreated an older-style concrete block built with a wooden formwork. The block represented would weigh about 22 tons, although the largest can reach 150 tons. The block was made of plaster, formed in a mould made from plywood and with the interior walls covered with the wooden planks used in naval modelling.

Next to the concrete block was a section of the cockpit of an old fishing boat. Between these two elements the Stalker has built a shelter.

The fishing boat section was built from Evergreen plastic sheets and profiles, some PVC tubing, tin sheets and using naval modelling planks for the floors and ceilings. Pieces of sandpaper imitate the crumbling lino over the wooden boards. The largest nuts and bolts are plastic items from Meng Model, while the smallest ones have been made by cutting small slices from round profiles or stretched plastic.

The different parts of the port have various types of materials that needed to be represented in the vignette: reinforced concrete slabs, asphalt, and paving stones. I wanted to represent an asphalt pavement with a large sinkhole, which would allow me to place the figures in the foreground and at a lower level than the rest of the scene. This does two things: it introduces different textures to the vignette and the all-important difference in levels.

Usually, when painting porous materials like plaster, it is advisable to apply a solid coat of primer to provide a non-porous barrier, but on this occasion I wanted to experiment and apply the paint directly over the plaster. I divided the painting of the concrete harbour section into three distinct parts: the basic grey of the concrete, the diagonal red stripes across its face, and the lower section, which had previously been submerged and would need to reflect the effects of sea water on the concrete. I followed a pattern of a base colour and then three successive layers of shadows and highlights for each component. I then applied an overall wash with brown oil paints before applying pin washes with black and brown oil paints around the details. For the areas that had been previously submerged, I first applied masking tape to protect the upper areas and then applied a semi-transparent layer of green. I placed some pieces of vegetation and then washed everything with green and brown oil paints. The iron lifting rings were painted in a rust brown colour, and then washed with oil paints and a very diluted red acrylic paint. I then sparingly added some rust-coloured pigments.

The fishing boat section was first airbrushed with a mixture of Tamiya Flat Yellow (XF-3) and Dark Yellow (XF-60). Highlights were added using more Flat Yellow and White (XF-2), while the lower section was shaded by adding Hull Red (XF-9) to the yellow basecoat. The wooden planks received a mixture of Cockpit Green (XF-71) and Light Green (XF-15), highlighted with the addition of Flat White and shaded with Field Grey (XF-65). The weathering process on the fishing boat section was quite involved. First, random



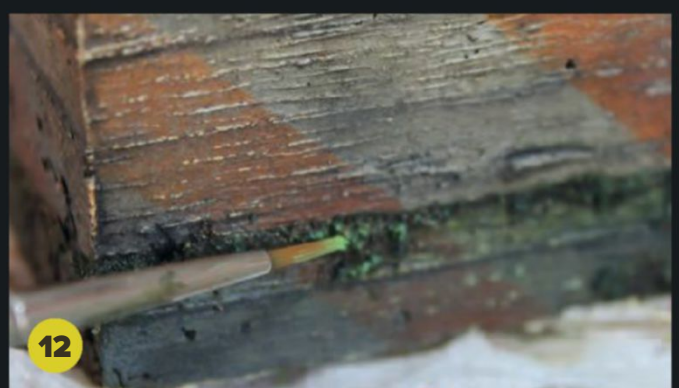
The concrete block was given a base coat of Scale 75 Artic Blue (SC05), highlighted with Vallejo Buff (70.976). It was then given an overall wash with brown oil paints, with a darker shade applied around the details.



Masking tape was then applied and the diagonal stripes sprayed with Vallejo Orange Red (70.910), shading with Hull Red (70.985) towards the bottom of the block.



Stencils were cut from masking tape and the number '01' sprayed on the side of the block. Washes of brown oil paint faded the stark white numbers in a realistic way.



The lower half of the block, once submerged, had a dark green filter applied using very diluted Vallejo Field Green (71.093) and Scale75 Spring Green (SART32). Small clumps of vegetation were then glued in place.



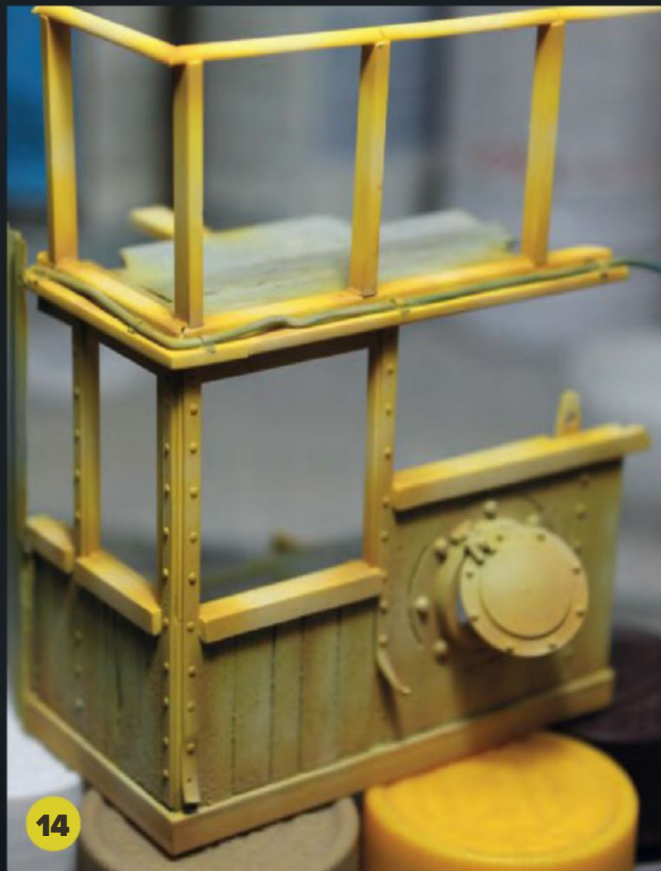
13

The final appearance of the concrete block after all the painting and weathering.



15

The yellow was masked off and the wooden planks airbrushed with a pale green mixture, while various other elements were brush painted.



14

The fishing boat structure airbrushed with a mixture of yellow Tamiya acrylics.





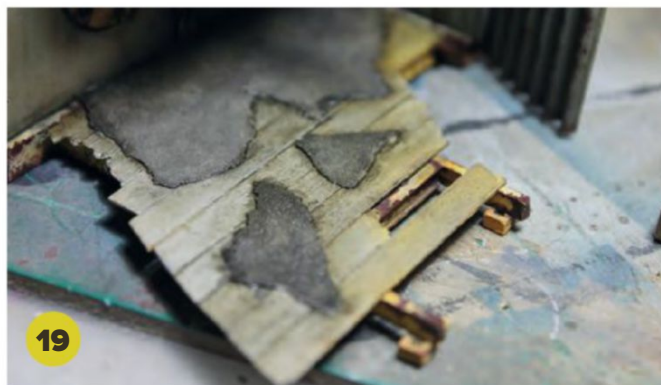
The wooden parts of the ship were masked off and chipping applied, using a sponge, to the metal frame.



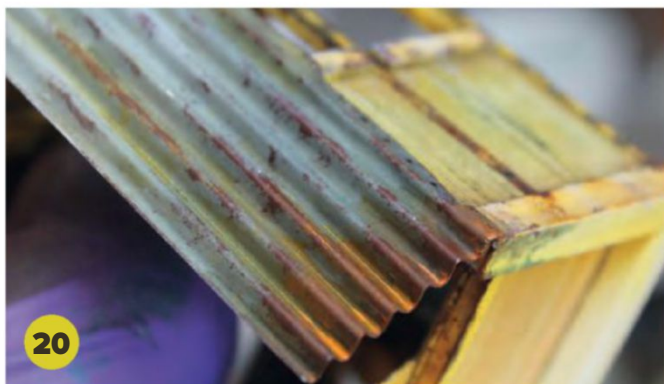
Tiny dots of various-coloured oil paints were applied to the wooden parts and then blended into the surface using a soft, flat brush moistened with thinner.



Attention can be drawn to the various details by outlining them with very dilute dark brown oil paint. In this case the shape and details of the porthole are emphasised.



A similar technique can be used to give depth to and accentuate the shape of the remnants of the flooring.



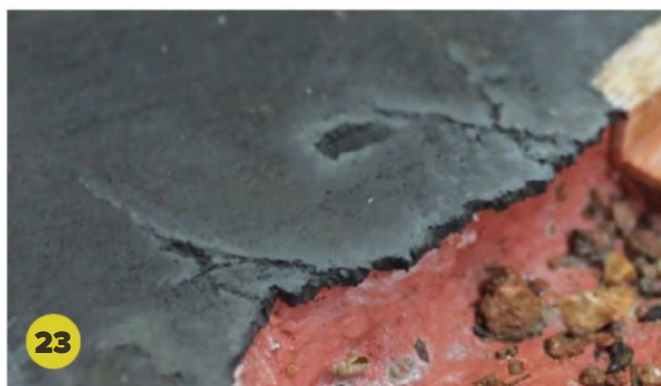
Highly diluted Vallejo Orange Red was sparingly applied to certain parts, such as the makeshift corrugated iron roof, to suggest oxidation.



When the painting and weathering was complete, clear Evergreen plastic sheet was added for the windows. The word 'Infected' was scrawled on the window in red.



The windows were dirtied by the applications of highly diluted washes of pale-coloured oil paints.



Here you can see how English Uniform and Bone White has been used to highlight the cracked surface of the asphalt.



24

The road markings were masked off and applied by stippling white acrylic paint with an old brush.



25

This is the final appearance of the road section, suitably weathered with oil paint washes.



26

Vallejo's excellent pre-mixed acrylic mud was applied in the sinkhole and small pieces of vegetation added.



27

Enamel-based washes are useful in differentiating between areas of wet and dry mud.



28

Some of the various accessories painted, weathered and placed in their final locations.



29

The makeshift roof made from clear plastic. It was carefully measured and canvas eyes for the tie downs made with thinly sliced plastic rod. Care was taken to ensure that the roof was logically secured to the railing and concrete block, and also weighted down.



30

Two batteries were carefully scratch built from plastic stock, with cables attached from thin wire. They were then painted and placed in the vignette.



31 The neon sign was painstakingly made from stretched clear sprue, then painted with an appropriate transparent orange from AMMO's new Shader range of acrylic paints (A.MIG. 0850).



32 Some of the final touches to the groundwork included placing some amounts of pigment, fixed in place with White Spirit, around details and at the base of the concrete section.

paint chips and scratches were added using a sponge, followed by an overall wash of brown oil paint. I refined the paint chips further using oil paint and added rust stains with the same medium. Heavier staining caused by rust was replicated with diluted orange/red acrylics.

Compared to the concrete block and the section of fishing boat, painting and weathering the remainder of the groundwork was reasonably straightforward. The asphalt was painted with acrylics, blending the colours while they were still wet. The base colour was AMMO Rubber and Tires (A.MIG. 0033) on top of which Vallejo English Uniform (70.921) and Scale75 were applied and blended together. Lighter tones were introduced with the addition of Vallejo Bone White (72.034). I then applied various brown oil paint washes and, once dry, sealed everything with a coat of matt varnish. The sinkhole was treated differently, beginning with an application of Vallejo European Thick Mud (73.807). While this was still wet, small pieces of vegetation and laser-cut leaves were added and a second layer of mud applied to blend everything in. The contrast between areas of wet and dried mud was enhanced by the application of AK Interactive's Fresh (AK016) and Dark Mud (AK023), glossy enamel-based products. At this stage the two figures were introduced to ensure they stood in the mud in a convincing fashion. They were then removed and everything was allowed to dry thoroughly before adding puddles with some suitably tinted acrylic resin.

Figures and Accessories

In a vignette such as this the main interest is, of course, provided by the figures (the human element that also gives it scale), but also by the small accessories that contextualise the scene.

Considering that this vignette represents a refuge from a post-apocalyptic world, I set about gathering together the various elements that could be necessary to survive: a roof to protect against the elements, a chair, a table, boxes and containers to store things, something to provide heat, kitchen utensils, and food. These would be the logical elements of the scene that enhance the sense of reality. There were also the non-essential items, which served to set the context and help the viewer form their own narrative of what has happened here. These included the phone with the 'Keep Calm and Carry On' sign and the neon sign





Masking various parts of the figure with Silly Putty and then applying the basic colours with an airbrush is a quick and effective way of painting figures.



The highlights, shadows and details are then refined with a paint brush.



The pit bull was transformed into a beast of burden with some plastic backpacks, fitted with the help of two-part epoxy putty and some lead foil straps.

colours, shadows, and highlights with an airbrush is much easier than trying to obtain similar results purely with a paint brush. I deliberately chose a similar palette of colours to those used elsewhere in the vignette to harmonise the figure and the dog with the other elements of the scene.

Final Thoughts

I was delighted with the final appearance of this post-apocalyptic vignette. Scratch building the section of fishing boat and the concrete harbour wall was interesting, but the main challenge was the initial composition and design to realise an effective vignette which conveyed a story in a tightly defined space.

and the batteries that power it, bringing a dark humour to the vignette. With the neon sign, I wanted to give a nod to the futuristic Asian aesthetic so typical of films like *Blade Runner*. Other elements that add to the vignette include the pieces of paper, vegetation, and garbage that is trapped in the corners of the buildings, under the concrete block or strewn across the floor of the fishing boat.

The principal characters of our story, of course, are two classics from Alternity Miniatures: Gunther Stalker (ref. AM69) and his pet Pit Bull (ref. AM72). They were perfect for this post-apocalyptic scene. I added three small backpacks from Tamiya's Allied vehicles Accessory Set (ref. 35229) and a tin foil strap to the dog's back. The figures were painted with acrylics, first with an airbrush and then finished with a paint brush. For those of us who are not accomplished figure painters, applying the basic

Products Used



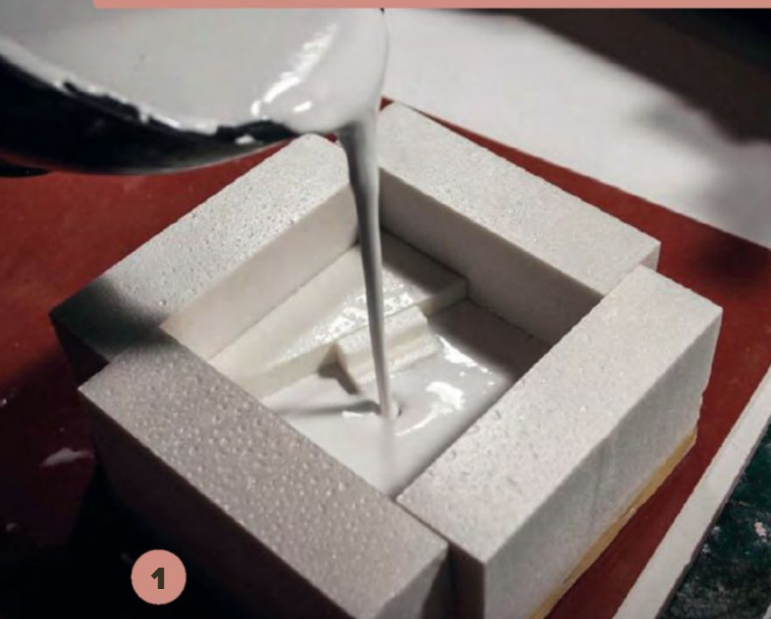
THE BUNKER

Marco Riolo explores the creation of a post-apocalyptic diorama.

Is it possible to tell a story within just seven square centimetres, making it plausible and accessible, but above all else something that would be marketable and interesting for others? This is what I asked myself when I started thinking about this project for my brand, Alternity Miniatures. Given the initial bite-sized dimensions, I inevitably developed my ideas vertically: a two-storey building would give the modeller the chance to include not only the figures but also a small vehicle (such as a motorbike) and other components. There were other crucial aspects to consider as well, namely the thematic and historical setting, while respecting the artistic identity of Alternity Miniatures and the homogeneity of our catalogue.

The answer to these questions was finally provided through some thorough research based on key concepts linked to the former Soviet Union: the idea of industrial decay, not to mention the artistic legacy of that era of Russian history, and video games such as *Stalker*, *Metro* and *State of Decay*. Due to its specific structure and materials (including cement, iron, conduits and pipes, and security doors), a nuclear bunker was the perfect location to base my project around.

This was easily said, but it was actually extremely complex to make concrete (or rather resin) reality. It has involved several great artists from different fields: Giacomo Pantalone aka 'The Lazy Forger' took care of the bunker's sculpture and the accessories, Stefano D'Antonio sculpted the two figures, while Simone Rasetti sculpted the Pit Bull dog. Last, but by no means least, Gabriele Leni masterfully put together and painted the different elements, also creating the box art for each. A scale of 1/35 perfectly suited the project and enhanced the details of the different materials and subjects. In addition, creating in that scale gives the modeller access to the many and varied accessories and models available from other manufacturers according to their personal taste and own creativity.



Sculpting the Base and Accessories

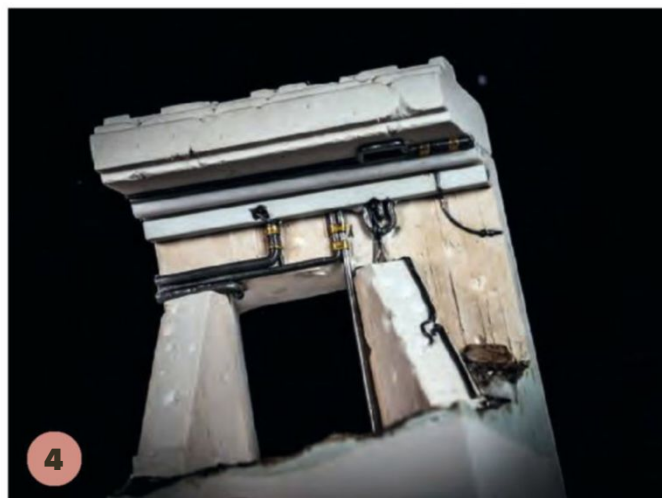
(Giacomo Pantalone aka 'The Lazy Forger'): I had originally designed a large vault hatch to be the centrepiece of the structure, but the small area limited it to a simpler metal door. At the preliminary design study, I decided to keep the main structures at a 15° angle to the base. I do this in all my dioramas as I think it adds a dynamic look and, in truth, I see it as a personal challenge to do so. Due to packaging and casting limitations, the diorama couldn't be produced as a single piece, and the various components of the bunker base (five pieces, not counting the railing and light pole details) had to fit together in a trouble-free manner. As the five basic components had to be sculpted by hand, rather than measuring everything at the beginning, I produced one at a time, using the previously made ones as a template, and leaving enough margin for sanding-down on the outer faces to ensure a perfect fit.

The final production of the base structures was done

through negative forms cut in high quality XPS foam using a thermo-cutter with remarkable accuracy **(photo 1)**. These forms only allow one cast to be made from each, as they are damaged during the extraction process, but the resulting pieces have both a realistic look and are made of a material that allows realistic and different weathering techniques. By padding the form with wooden beams (balsa wood is great for such a task) the resulting concrete block would look as if it just been released from a wooden form-casting tool **(2)**. I used this for the two counterforts at the sides of the door and on the lower wall, while the upper level remained smooth, only scarred by battle damage.

I used two-part epoxy putty for the groundwork, as it was meant to be uneven and would spread to the gaps between the counterforts and the wall behind. This would also help with the assembly of the cast pieces, since the parts now had more surface area to be glued together. Over the putty I impressed some footsteps, which were then covered with a mixture of sand and rubble. I tacked the parts together with PVA glue for the sanding and the detailing phase **(3)**. I smoothed the external faces of the diorama to level any discrepancy in sizes, which allowed me to add pipes and wiring around the door entrance. For the next stage it was necessary to have the whole structure solidly glued together, and the cables (mostly soldering wire of various thicknesses, and styrene tubes) were then cut on the joints where the pieces would be separated before casting **(4)**. To complete the details on the lower half of the diorama, I made the door with styrene sheets and the foil from empty tubes of paint **(5)**.

The railings and the light pole had to be digitally sculpted using 3D software. While I experimented hand-sculpting a





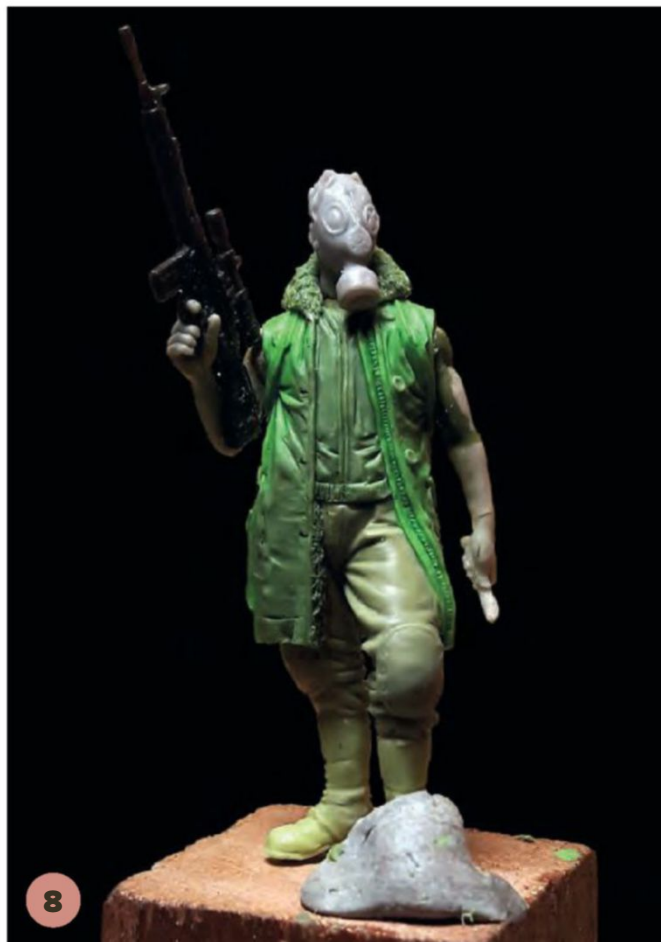
couple of versions of the concrete pylon, I eventually chose to have it 3D printed to preserve its industrial precision in scale. However, I added wiring and an electrical box to it (which is not strictly accurate) as this gave the piece a bit of life.

The railings on the edge of the upper platform would have to be assembled manually by the customer in the final product. This allows the modeller to choose how much damage the metal railings would have suffered, depending on his or her particular interpretation of the scene **(6)**.





7



8



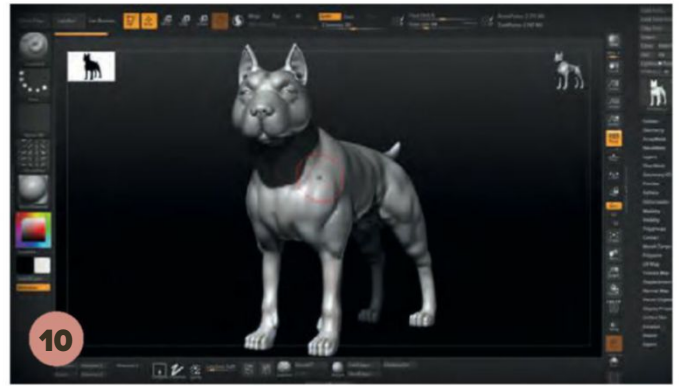
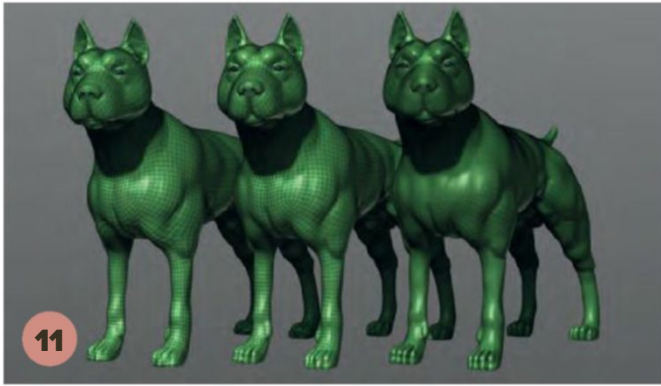
9

Figures

(Stefano D'Antonio): First, I had to consider the piece's composition and where the figures would stand. I started by roughing out the basic shape of the mannequin and its pose. I used some simple wire, sorted and shaped according to the size and posture of the figure, and completed the remainder of the figure using stock parts that represented the torso and pelvis. These stock resin elements are standard in my figure sculpting and are always used to hasten the preliminary work (7). This holds true also for the head, hands and shoes, which will then be adjusted and modified (perhaps even significantly) during the course of the project as the subject develops. The figures were sculpted using Fimo polymer clay. I personally prefer this medium to the more commonly used epoxy putties, as it hardens only when baking, thus giving me enough time to work without worrying about the putty hardening.

The appearance of the 'Stalker' was created by combining clothing belonging to different periods of time. Instead of the usual raincoat, a fur collar coat with large pockets was adopted, along with sturdy and dependable World War II-era dispatch rider boots, an ever-lasting hoodie, a Nike-like rucksack (that can be filled at any time with the things necessary for survival), a gas mask, and an additional haversack to carry weapons and munitions (8). Along with the long-barrelled weapon and resting left arm, I created a couple of additional arms: the right one holds a light machine gun, whereas the left one carries a baseball bat so as to let the modeller take their piece down a different path (think Negan in *The Walking Dead*, for instance).

Moving on to the second subject, I pictured the boy as the self-appointed guardian of the bunker, wearing a jacket and steel helmet that reminded me of the American ones



used during the Vietnam war, along with *Back to the Future* sneakers, so as to make it more modern [9]. In this case the homemade gas mask, created through cannibalising various recycled parts, has been intentionally made more striking: the tube and a visible filter, combined with the Soviet-like helmet, aim to emphasize a Cold War aesthetic. I wanted to give the modeller a choice with this figure too, in the shape of an additional head with a simple fishing hat, providing a less defined and somewhat creepy character.

Pit Bull: a 3D Sculpture

(Simone Rasetti): To create the sculpture of the Pit Bull I initially looked for anatomical references and chose images of the dogs from different perspectives. Once the final pose, appearance and scale of the sculpture had been agreed, I looked for the best solution in terms of realising these



choices. To digitally 'sculpt' the Pit Bull, I chose 'Zbrush', a software that allows you to create complex organic shapes. This software, in fact, allows the virtual manipulation of digital 'clay' that simulates the methods and the traditional tools of the sculpture through the use of drawing tablets. The creative process requires an initial process using simple geometric shapes to determine the shape and size of the subject. Once this is done, the anatomical lines of the sculpture are determined, which both adds and reduces volume to various parts of the subject. The most engaging part of the process is the final customization and design of the details, which finally brings the subject to life. In this phase each artist will interpret their own process of personalisation, using different brushes, to lend the work an air of individuality. The final phase consists of preparation, prototyping and the 3D print. I used a Phrozen Shuffle printer, since it allows the creation of three-dimensional solids through the use of photosensitive resin that reacts to an ultraviolet light source [10-13].





Painting

(Gabriele Leni): When I was presented with all the elements for the final phase of this project, I put them together and started considering their shapes and textures, while imagining a brief story that might suit the mood of the diorama. We are in a post-apocalyptic world and this unusual abode is the home of a three-person household: a dog, a boy, and his putative father. The setting demanded



the Stalker and his dog on watch on the upper floor, whereas the boy was positioned close to the security door on the lower floor. The colours chosen had to emphasize this setting without being too eye-catching or distinct, so as to lead the observer's eye first to the father, then to the dog and finally down to the remaining details, leaving the boy almost as an afterthought, to be discovered only on close inspection.

As I set about painting the bunker, I found that several pictures found online came in handy. I didn't want this to be a military scene, characterised by heavy weathering, nor entirely a fantasy scenario, so a balance of colours and techniques was needed. The aim was to obtain a union of what might be actually be plausible, balancing the colours and yet making them more vibrant than they would be naturally, drawing the attention of the observer as I wanted. Bearing this in mind, the bunker was painted in a traditional manner and not overly weathered, as too extreme an appearance would have compromised the effect of the figures.

I mapped out the principal shapes of the structure with various greys that progressively veered towards white, then enhanced their depth with light acrylic filters. This gave the structure a blue hue that made for a nice contrast to the brown ones of the field **(14)**. The railing was painted with a brownish red, adding some heavily chipped paintwork. Conversely, the pole had more colours, not only to make the whole structure more slender, but also to draw attention to the dog and the Stalker **(15)**. The haversack had been leant against the pole by the Stalker, so I painted this in a complementary colour to enhance the contrast. The door of the bunker has a 'Z' scrawled upon the door, a nod to the apocalyptic catastrophe – pandemic, nuclear disaster or



zombies – that has overtaken the world (16).

I deliberately painted the dog a very dark colour, almost black. The very dark grey was highlighted with a few spots to suggest his shiny coat. The Stalker is sporting a bright, burgundy jacket. I had originally planned on some threadbare military garb, but I couldn't resist paying homage to post-atomic video games with a Punk theme, such as *Rage* or *Far Cry 5*. The trousers and backpack shoulder straps were painted in a bleached ultramarine blue. I was careful not to desaturate this totally in order to keep the nice contrast between the blue and the burgundy. I preferred to use drabber shades for the gas mask and hoodie (17).

My idea for painting the boy was also distinctly post-atomic, giving him a green jacket and a similarly coloured helmet, so as to make him almost clumsy looking. It wasn't my aim to portray him with an aggressive attitude but rather I wanted him to be an observer of the surrounding environment, but with his face hidden by that huge mask (18). All the figures were painted with acrylics, using a matt finish and using filters to build up the depth of colour. I find this means they still look good under harsh, artificial lights.

Conclusion

So, there you have a project from the initial concept, to the creation of the masters and painting, to casting and marketing. As you can see producing miniatures like this is really a team effort, drawing on the technical and creative talents of many people. The final result, as you can see, is now six different Alternity Miniatures sets, giving modellers the flexibility to either recreate 'the Bunker' or imagine their own post-apocalyptic dioramas.







Vincenzo Lanna

describes a complex post-apocalyptic project.

The creation of this diorama was somewhat complex and challenging, as happens in model making when one changes both the artistic direction and historical context of a piece while the model is in progress. It all began with a piece from German manufacturer, RT-Diorama, entitled 'The Factory' (ref. 35282). This is a large and impressive kit consisting of three different-sized buildings, a chimney stack, flooring and fences. All the main structures are made of plaster, except for the windows' roof frames, front doors and other accessories, which are all made of laser-cut wood. The set also includes a laser-cut wooden sheet with several German nameplates and signs, since it was originally conceived as a mid-twentieth-century German factory. Gripped by enthusiasm, I immediately began work on the project. I had originally intended to follow closely the example built up on the RT-Diorama homepage, but the more I worked on it, the more I struggled to visualise the final result.

A Change of Direction

I shelved the project until I saw some of the new releases from my old friend Marco Riolo, owner of Alternity Miniatures. At that moment I decided to radically change the initial concept of the diorama, opting for a post-Cold War scenario, closer to the end of the twentieth century than the original World War II setting. I liked the idea of recreating a former factory that had been abandoned and subsequently used as a shelter and headquarters by the survivors of a nuclear war. I also chose to include a single character who would be the focus of the diorama, but more on that later. Before beginning work again on the diorama, I did some research on the Internet, searching for pictures of abandoned factories from the former Soviet Union and East Germany, in order to get a better idea of how to structure the diorama.

First, I decided to remove the chimney stack that was such a prominent part of the original 'Factory' kit, and replace it with something else, namely a big industrial tank (again by RT-Diorama, ref. 35287). This seemed to me much more appropriate to the context. While trying to position the different pieces, something was still missing, so I decided to add a covered raised walkway, again by RT-Diorama. I still thought the factory needed more, however, so I added an additional wall to a corner of the diorama that would otherwise be empty. I added some pipework, supports and air vents, as well as windows panes, all from the excellent RT-Diorama range.







Buildings

I used two out of the three plaster structures included in the original factory kit. To assemble the different plaster sections I used Colle21's cyanoacrylate glue, employing a Superglue Activator spray to speed up the drying time and strengthen the bond (photo 1). Between the sections I also inserted some supporting pins in order to make the structure even more robust. I didn't alter the shape or the appearance of the structures significantly, with the exception of the largest building, which was enhanced with a metal stairway by MiniArt (ref. 35525) up its side (2). At the top of this I added a RT-Diorama door. I also modified the two roof coverings, replicating the corrugated metal sheeting with some recycled cardboard from a biscuit packet (3).

The Wall

The wall behind the main structure was scratch built using a piece of 2cm-thick extruded polystyrene sheet. This material is ideal to create walls and other man-made structures in dioramas, since it can be easily cut, plastered



and glued with PVA glue. The brick pattern was engraved with a pencil with vertical and horizontal lines following a pattern drawn on the sheet. The rough surface of the brickwork was created by simply adding texture with the bristles of an old paint brush. The line of plaster along the bottom of the wall was just a simple plastic strip, while the array of different tubes and cables and the electric panel were scratch built with Plasticard, tube and aluminium section bars. The barbed wire along the top of the wall came from Model Victoria.

To paint the wall, I used as the 'Stone Grey' set (ref. CS40) produced by Italian company LifeColor specifically





for painting brickwork and other masonry. The 'Berlin' mural was created using graphic design software and once printed at the right size, I carefully cut it out to make a template in order to copy the writing onto the wall. I then traced its outlines with a marker pen. The other graffiti was handmade using different-sized marker pens. To finish, I weathered the wall with various enamel-based filters and oil paints from AMMO (4 & 5).

The Floor

In the case of the floor, I only used part of the RT-Diorama kit, specially six of the nine pre-cut plaster pieces. This was attached to a 6cm-thick double layer of foamboard with Colle21's acrylic glue. I also added some photoetched manhole covers from Matho Models (ref. 35031). The missing section of floor made a hole revealing some pipes, which I made from PVC tubing of different diameters.

The Tank

The storage tank is another superb little kit from RT-Diorama. It consists of a PVC cylinder, various PVC tubes, laser-cut wooden supports and five pieces of moulded plaster. Its assembly is very straightforward, and I just added some additional Evergreen plastic supports and detailed the supports and tank itself by adding some welding joints. I also added to the top of the structure with several pieces from my spares box (6).

I began painting the tank with a coat of AMMO's One-Shot Brown Oxide Primer (A.MIG. 2026). I then painted over this with a variety of AMMO's acrylic browns and rust colours, employing their Chipping Effects solution (A.MIG. 2011) to build up the layers of rusted metal and peeling paint. I also applied various coloured filters and enamel-based washes, from both LifeColor and AMMO, to weather the tank. The same techniques were followed across the diorama for the other metal structures and elements.



Covered Walkway

RT-Diorama released their covered walkway as part of their 'Endkampf' kit (ref. 35284) while I was working on the construction of this diorama. I couldn't resist it, so I immediately ordered the kit. When it arrived, I started building it immediately, but also made some changes: the roof was covered with corrugated cardboard and its sides were covered with plastic sheets. I used the small nails used in model ship building to recreate the rivets in the metal panels (7 & 8). The 'Stahlwerk' (steelworks) sign is once again from RT-Diorama. At this point, I decided to add a second walkway along the main facade. This was entirely scratch built with wooden slats, plastic sheets from Evergreen, cardboard and various bits and pieces taken from what was left over from previous projects (9 & 10).

The two main doors of the building are made from laser-cut wood and were also covered Plasticard sheet, sections and metal rivets. They were painted with a combination of Tamiya, AMMO and LifeColor acrylics using both paint brushes and the airbrush. I spent a good deal of time recreating the weathering effects, especially the appearance of old, peeling paint (11).

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Air Vents and Conduits

The air vents are all from RT-Diorama and made from laser-cut cardboard. The great thing about this material is that it can easily be assembled with PVA glue. I used three different sizes of vent. Once the vents were assembled, I spent a long time testing their location in the diorama.

I had to test the whole when dry several times before starting to assemble the different sections to get the exact location. This phase took me a lot of time.

I used three different types of differently-sized pipes (12).

The entire diorama base is covered by different-sized and

shaped pipes that connect one building to another. This was important element in making a convincing industrial appearance; you have to believe this was once a working factory. Connecting everything together was one of the most challenging aspects of this project, but in the end I managed to get the result I wanted. Most of the conduits, the different supports and other bits and pieces are from RT-Diorama. They were painted and weathered using a similar combination of paints and techniques as the other elements of the factory.

Vehicles

The massive Maz-537 KET-T Recovery Truck parked in the factory courtyard was based on the Trumpeter kit (ref. 01006) and Panzershop's resin conversion (ref. 35257) that I had built some time ago. I wanted to give the vehicle

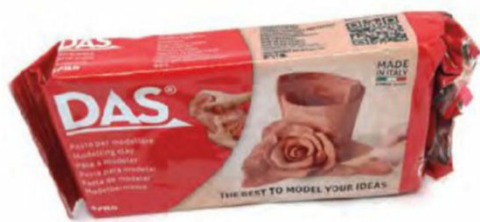




14

an abandoned appearance, so instead of building a new kit I preferred to use an already assembled one. The kit was detailed by replacing the moulded-on cab door and replacing them with some scratch built plastic ones. For the engine, I began with a T-55 tank's resin engine that was heavily modified using components from several kits, scratch built parts from Plasticard, and other bit and pieces. The wiring was added using copper and tin cable.

The recovery truck was similarly painted with acrylic paints: I chose Tamiya for the base coat applied it with the airbrush, adding some simple highlights where the sun would naturally reflect off the truck's surface. I then turned to my LifeColor paints, adding various paint chips, scratches and rust effects with a paint brush. I then applied a wash to bring out the surface detail, using various oil paints from AMMO's Oilbrushers range (13 & 14).



16



17



15



The starting point for the VW Beetle towards the front of the diorama was a pre-assembled die-cast model that I came across in a toy shop. Its shape and details were perfect for this project. As I wanted to depict it as a burnt-out wreck, I removed wheels, windows and other details. I began the painting and weathering with a coat of black primer. I painted this using LifeColor's 'Burned' set (ref. CS29), a set I helped to develop and painted the box art for.

Accessories

This project required a huge number of accessories to be convincing. The accessories needed to contribute to telling the story of this abandoned factory repurposed by the survivors of the nuclear holocaust. The large wooden crate and the cable reel are from RT-Diorama, again made using the laser-cut wood technique. The cable reels come in a variety of sizes. I painted the wooden items by first airbrushing a coat of Tamiya Wood Deck Tan (XF-78), highlighting this with some White (XF-2) and adding some shadows with NATO Brown (XF-69). I then turned to the paint brush, refining the appearance using AMMO acrylics and added some stencilling with a white pencil crayon (15).

Many of the accessories used in this project came from the Italian brand, HD-Models, whose speciality is 3D-printed pieces. The owners of this brand are life-long friends Fabio Mosca and Fabrizio di Petrillo. When browsing through their on-line catalogue, I noticed some interesting pieces that would be perfect for this diorama: a chemical bath, bathtub, batteries, neon lights, a megaphone, a 1000-litre tank, different sizes of wooden and plastic pallets, tyres and wheel rims, plastic chairs, metal barriers and several other items. Some were little kits in their own right: gas cylinders, a central heating radiator, electric generator and so on. Needless to say, the details are extremely realistic, as 3D scans capture the shape and dimensions of the real item perfectly. One of the challenges with 3D-printed models is removing the sometimes delicate resin from the supports necessary for the printing process. This, however, is made easy by the special snipper tool that HD-Model have produced. As long as you take your time, this should ensure you have no disasters. Other accessories were scratch built, such as the old mattresses sculpted from Das Pronto clay (16 & 17). It might seem at first glance that the choice of accessories is random and occasionally anachronistic. I had decided to leave the temporal location of this diorama deliberately ambiguous, so felt that a mixture of contemporary and vintage accessories was entirely appropriate to this post-apocalyptic scene.



18



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The variety of accessories allowed me to use a range of different painting techniques and media – acrylics, oil paints, pencils and graphic markers – and a range of finishes, from matt to gloss (18 & 19). I would like to draw attention to the chemical bath, the light blue finish of which was achieved with Tamiya paints, and the writing added a white pencil and different marker pens. I then sealed the painted chemical bath with a coat of Tamiya Semi-Gloss Clear (X-35) and weathered with a range of AMMO enamel-based filters and oil paints (20). Everything then was put to one side, while I turned my attention to the diorama's centrepiece (21).

emphasise the sense of abandonment, while minimising the human presence in the scene. I settled on 'Bloodykid Stalker' (ref. AM70), one of my favourites among Marco's figures. It shows a child in a military-style parker and helmet, wearing a gasmask. Perfect! I paired him up with 'Pitbull' (ref. AM72), a suitably menacing pet with which to survive the Apocalypse. I painted both figures using the airbrush and Tamiya acrylics to lay down the base colour and then add some first highlights and shadows. I then refined the highlights and shadows and added some details with a paint brush and AMMO acrylics (22).

Figures

As soon as I revisited 'the Factory' I knew I wanted to put it in a post-apocalyptic setting. The figures from Alternity Miniatures were the obvious choice to populate the scene. The initial idea was to include several 'Stalker'-style figures, along with some other characters. However, after having discussed the matter with the brand owner Marco Riolo, we decided to use just one figure, in order to



22



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The finished factory before any of other elements were placed.



Finishing Touches

Every diorama, even those in the most extreme of urban environments, needs some vegetation. Here nature has survived the nuclear war and is reasserting herself over the man-made environment. I also wanted to emphasise the desolate feel of the abandoned factory and

added plenty of grass, weeds and climbing plants, such as ivy (24). I only used natural materials and relied very heavily on the excellent range of products available from Fabio Modeo's Diorama Presepe. These added right at the end of the project and the result was stunning.

I also added some of Marco's superb post-apocalyptic accessories, primarily 'Scary Kit 2 – Stalker Edition' (ref. AM58), which consists of an old barrel and several other containers stuffed with discarded toys and belongings. I also used the 'Dumpster' (ref. AM46), which is a neat little six-part kit, and 'Landfill Set #1' (ref. AM14), which contains twelve exquisitely cast bags of rubbish, an old pillow, and other pieces of detritus. These were all primed with AMMO One-Shot primer then individually painted with LifeColor acrylics to provide some colour and variety to the otherwise drab, industrial setting. I again used a pencil crayon to scrawl some suitable graffiti on the dumpster. Everything was weathered with oil paints (23).

This was quite an involved project, to the say the least, but the end result, I hope, is impressive and captures the post-apocalyptic world I had pictured in my mind. The RT-Diorama products, while not cheap, are superb quality and certainly make a project like this more manageable. The Alternity Miniatures' figure is perfect too: although small, it has so much character that the viewer's eye is immediately drawn to it and it remains the centre piece of the 'Factory'.



GALLERY

Denniz Halo Hedin

EVACUATION

The Stalker miniature is from the excellent 1/35-scale Evolution Miniatures range. The scene is an abandoned and ruined city. Small details in the vignette tell the story: the city has been evacuated and this stalker is exploring the city or searching for survivors. I think of this kind of vignette as an 'open story'. I like the fact that the viewer can make the story their own and every one who looks upon it will have a different interpretation.



Denniz Halo Hedin

MEMORIES FROM ANOTHER LIFE

The Stalker goes from abandoned house to abandoned house, but when he enters this dusty room he is suddenly transported in his mind to his own home, a home he will never see again. This vignette is all about how scenes evoke what has been lost and what has been. The box behind the desk suggests someone tried to survive here but has now gone. Again, the vignette uses a figure from the Evolution Miniatures range and the dusty appearance of the room was achieved with pigments.



SEARCHING

The streets were covered in dirt, rubble and old papers when the Stalker approached the telephone booth. "What's that inside?" he wonders as he looks at his scanner. No radiation here, or at least not high levels. He needs to have a look and satisfy his curiosity needs to know how this all could happen. He needs to gather supplies if there are any left... This scene takes place in an abandoned city during the 'Eighties, after some sort of disaster, perhaps World War III? Once again the Stalker is from Evolution Miniatures, while the phone booth is from Yen Models.



Mirko Brechmann

IN SEARCH

This small scene depicts a man searching through abandoned houses for other survivors in the wake of a nuclear disaster. The figure 'Gunther' is from Altermity Miniatures' Stalker series, while the small base is from Kellerkind Miniatures. I painted most (roughly 60%) of the figure and the base with the airbrush using acrylic paints. I deliberately painted the figure in brighter colours to bring it to the fore, while the purple glow behind the figure underlines the sense of strangeness.



Mirko Brechmann

LOST PLACES

This little vignette shows two people who have found their own way to adapt to life after a nuclear disaster. I built the basic shape of the pool out of Styrodur and then glued on plastic tiles. Alternity Miniatures' classic 'Voronin' Stalker figurine was assembled and painted from the box. I added the gas mask and backpack to the little girl.

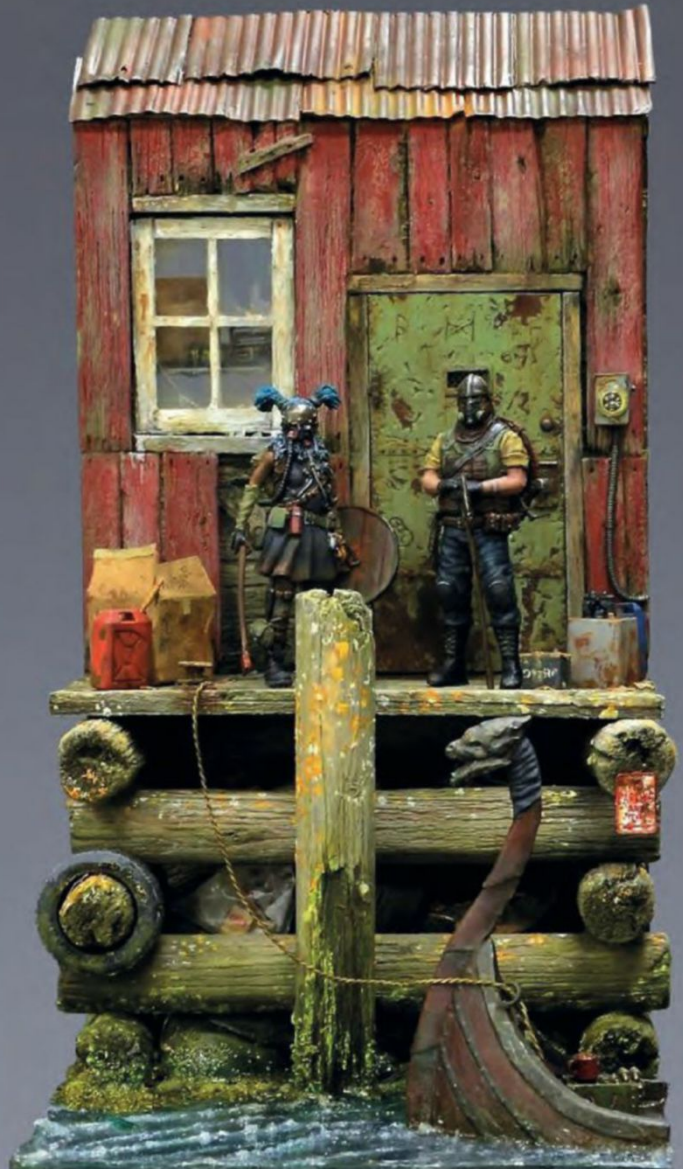


James Craig

AFTER RAGNAROK

Following Ragnarok, the Cataclysm foretold eons before, two survivors, Lif and Lifhrasir, begin the world anew. Scavenging along the eastern coast of Canada, the fabled Vinland that the Viking Lief Eiriksson once crossed the ocean to find, they battle the elements, hunt for resources, and stand as humanity's last hope in the face of ancient powers freed during the Cataclysm. The old tales have become prophetic truths in the days after Ragnarok ...

I have long appreciated an interpretation of the old stories that states that even when the world is facing its darkest days, life (Lif) and the will to live (Lifhrasir) still exist. This is the first in a series of scenes planned to spotlight moments in the lives of these two survivors in the years following Ragnarok. This model and its finish were based on fishing villages I visited in Nova Scotia Canada. The figures and ship are from Kellerkind Miniatures and Collapse Industries. The rest is largely scratchbuilt from basswood, balsa, plaster, paper, dowlings, and styrene. Everything was finished in acrylic paints and enamel-based weathering products from AMMO. The water effects were achieved with Vallejo products.



Marian Berg

HOPE

The creation of this small vignette was a long process. It started when I saw a picture of an American street corner with a shutter door. I found this incredibly atmospheric and really wanted to rebuild this old weathered shutter door, but I didn't know how to do it. Finally, and quite by chance, I came across a ribbon cable from an old PC which had the precisely the structure of these slats to scale. A year later a 1/35 kit of a vending machine came on the market, the perfect accessory for my scene. But I could not complete this project without a suitable figure that tells a story. Fortunately, another year later, Weird Armies Reign released their 'War Child' survivor figure, perfect for my project. So at last I could finish this vignette. The story it tells is a bit sad but also hopeful. She stares down at the lone flower. Maybe she has never seen a living plant before in the world after the Apocalypse, but one day she sees this flower poking from between the concrete slabs and can hardly believe it. This flower gives her hope for the future again!





Ramiro Romceovich

DEAD WIND

The concept behind this vignette was a simple one: I wanted to represent loneliness, but didn't want it to be static. I needed movement in the vignette and decided to achieve this by creating an illusion of movement with the plastic tape blowing in a 'dead wind'. The base was built using plaster, some plastic profiles and resin accessories, wire and some aluminium sheet. Painting was done entirely in acrylics, with some wet effects and small touches of pigment to weather the scene. The small details, such as the discarded papers, were simply laser printed and stuck in place. The figure is the superb 'Stalker with Shotgun' from Albino Raven Miniatures.

Ramiro Romceovich

'RESTOS DE LA ESFERA'

I am drawn to post-apocalyptic themes in my modelling because they allow me more artistic and creative freedom than the strictly historical. They also let me to convey a topical message to the viewer. I enjoy suggesting emotions and atmospheres in my vignettes. I usually scratchbuild the basic elements of my vignettes as this helps me to build something unique, giving me infinite possibilities. In this work I wanted to represent the damage that we will inflict on the Earth if we do not change our habits. The depiction of a landscape half earth and half cement juxtaposes the natural against the artificial. The base is simply made from plaster on the floor, while I used 3D printing for the oil drums, metal mesh, and some other details. I used copper wires, aluminium sheets and scrap plastic to scratchbuild the other elements. The figure, of course, is the iconic 1/35 Stalker figure from Evolution Miniatures.





Roberto del Cima

INTO THE EXCLUSION ZONE

Making a small vignette, especially one where some of the elements remain only half built, requires a careful study of the space available and of the positioning of the various components. The meaning of the scene needs to be reasonably clear to the viewer and it needs to tell a story. At the same time, it needs to be interesting and aesthetically pleasing. In this vignette I wanted to catch a glimpse of what remains of the city of Pripyat, near the Chernobyl nuclear power station. Everything in the vignette was scratchbuilt from blue insulation foam, Plasticard and metal sheet, with the exception, of course, of the figure, bumper car, the barrier and a few other little accessories. The figure, naturally, is the classic 'Voronin' figure from Alternity Miniatures. It, like the rest of the vignette, is painted entirely with acrylics and weathered with oil paints. The signs are simply images of the real thing, scaled down and laser printed.



Gaby Gonzalez

STALKER!

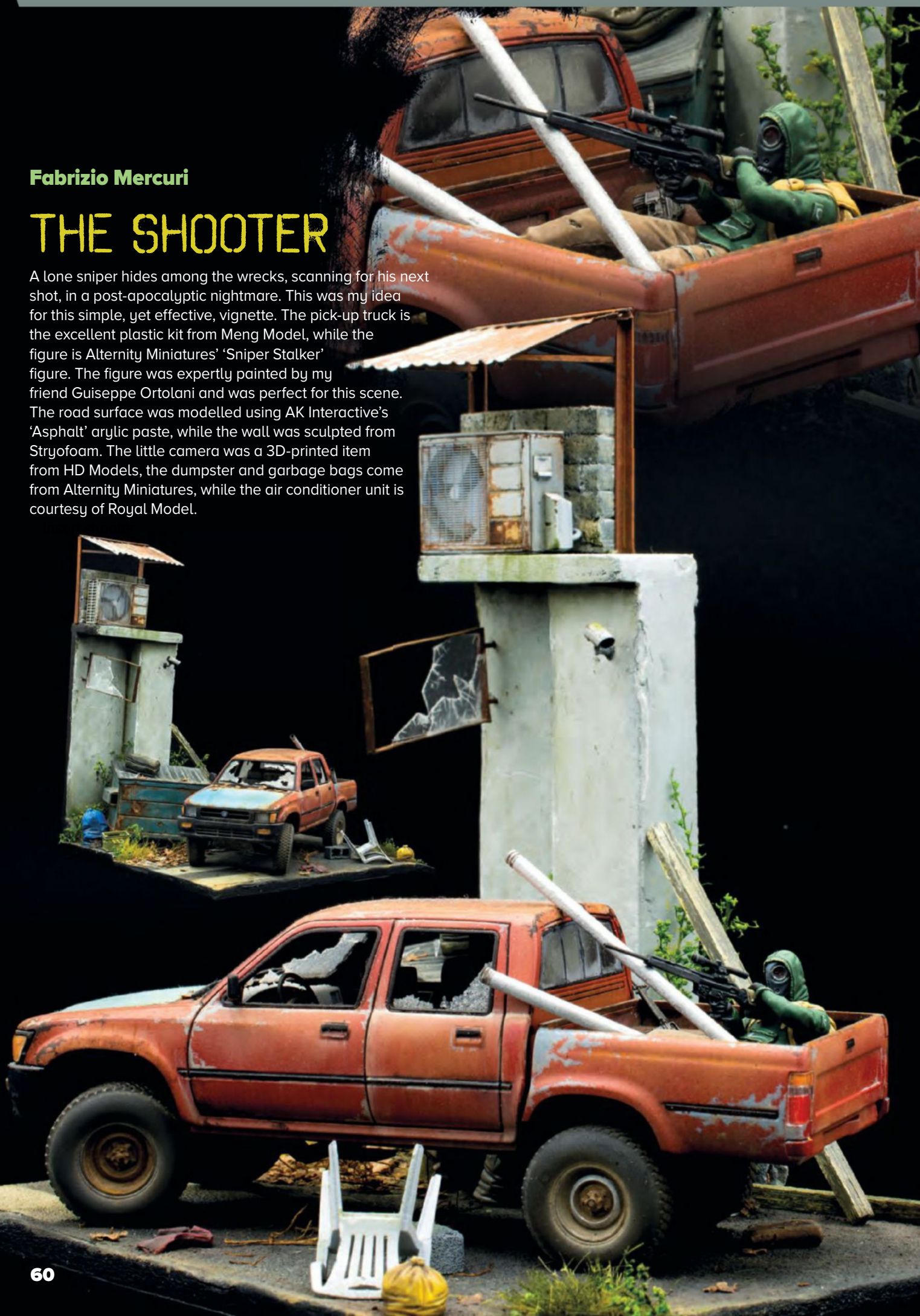
This vignette was based on the classic PC game *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.: Shadow of Chernobyl*, which was released in 2007. The game follows 'the Marked One' trying to track down the 'Stalker' amidst the desolation of the Exclusion Zone following a second nuclear disaster at the Chernobyl power station. The feel is very post-nuclear apocalypse shot through with Soviet-era military vibes. The vignette itself is relatively simple and very dark, but I wanted to paint it in such a way that the viewer's attention is drawn to the Stalker's gas mask, the most iconic part of the entire scene. At the rear of the vignette there is a surprise for the viewer (and perhaps also for the Stalker) as radioactive liquid leaks unchecked from a broken pipe. The Stalker figure is sculpted by Igor Karkov for SK Miniatures.

Insert stalker

Fabrizio Mercuri

THE SHOOTER

A lone sniper hides among the wrecks, scanning for his next shot, in a post-apocalyptic nightmare. This was my idea for this simple, yet effective, vignette. The pick-up truck is the excellent plastic kit from Meng Model, while the figure is Alternity Miniatures' 'Sniper Stalker' figure. The figure was expertly painted by my friend Guiseppe Ortolani and was perfect for this scene. The road surface was modelled using AK Interactive's 'Asphalt'rylic paste, while the wall was sculpted from Stryfoam. The little camera was a 3D-printed item from HD Models, the dumpster and garbage bags come from Alternity Miniatures, while the air conditioner unit is courtesy of Royal Model.





Luca Pirrera

FORGOTTEN

Not every post-apocalyptic vignette or diorama has to feature Stalkers, Shooters or zombies. In 'Forgotten' I wanted to capture a sense of desolation and abandonment, an old lady sitting all alone at the end of the world with only her faithful poodle as company. The cobblestones were imprinted using Green Stuff World's ingenious roller. The figure comes from Paracel Miniatures' post-apocalyptic range, while various other accessories come from Alternity Miniatures, Royal Model, HD Models and Fabio Modellismo. The newspapers, leaflet, hazard tape and warning sign are from ETA Dioramas' extensive range of post-apocalyptic accessories.



Luca Pirrera

RIOT BUNNY

Riot Bunny is more of a 'classic' post-apocalyptic scene. Clad in a pink tracksuit and a hat, hastily plucked from his (or somebody else's) wardrobe as the world collapsed around him, a survivor makes his desperate last stand. And this time there's no going back ... In an obvious way the vignette is dramatic: the collapsing bridge, the violence and inevitably of what will happen next. The juxtaposition of the man in the pink 'bunny' suit and the dead attacking him also underlines the absurdity of civilisation's collapse. The figures are all from Alternity Miniatures and I was delighted when Marco chose this as the box art for his 'Riot Bunny' figure.





Luca Pirrera

PATH OF THE FADED

The Apocalypse is all about what we have lost; things destroyed and gone forever. This little vignette tells a poignant story, repeated over and over again in the post-apocalyptic world. The idea was to create a glimpse of a desolate, dirty and abandoned urban street. The survivor wears a gas mask and cape, evidence of the poison that has created this dead and inhospitable world. He searches the street looking for those who have disappeared, knowing that it is all gone ... The figure is from Evolution Miniatures, but the centrepiece of this vignette is the kiosk and host of 'missing posters' and other paper accessories from ETA Diorama.





Luca Pirrera

GOODBYE Z BOY!

This is another classic post-apocalyptic vignette. One of Alternity Miniatures' best-known Stalker figures, 'Gunther', waits imperiously at the top of the stairs while (half a) zombie crawls slowly towards him. 'Gunther' shows the resolve of the survivors who revel in the violence of zombie hunting. I modified 'Gunther' by giving him a baseball bat – á la Negan from *The Walking Dead*. After all, why waste precious bullets? The 'half zombie' is from Royal Model's small but excellent range. It's tempting to put too much gore in a scene like this, but here the menace and the violence is all suggested and, I think, much more effective for it.

Volkan Ayhan

LITTLE OLGA

'Little Olga' captures something of the horror of the post-apocalyptic world. A little girl stands beside a streetlamp, catching the last drops of water from a tap. The backdrop is a wire fence onto which the photos of the missing – the young and the old – are stuck. We're not sure of what calamity has befallen Olga's world, but her strange attire and the gasmask makes us wonder about the safety of the water she is drawing down into her bucket.

Olga, of course, is the Weird Armies Reign 'War Child' figure, while her teddy bear is from Alternity Miniatures. Most of the rest of the scene, including the fence, sign and lamp post, is scratchbuilt.



Antonio Casas Garcia

THE DINER

Another piece from my post-apocalyptic series 'Search and Destroy', 'The Diner' captures the moment when a survivor, Tomek, decides to explore an abandoned diner ... and nearly pays with his life. The figures are from Royal Model, Evolution Miniatures and Bravo6. The Bravo6 falling figure was originally designed for the Vietnam War, so needed a little bit of conversion work. The building was scratch built, with a variety of accessories from Macone Models, DioDump and Replikant Technologies.





SUPPLIES

The kits, accessories and paints of many different manufacturers have been used in this book.

Post-Apocalyptic Figures

Any listing of post-apocalyptic figures has to start, of course, with **Alternity Miniatures** (www.alternityminiatures.com)

Albino Raven Miniatures (Facebook: Albino Raven Minis)

Evolution Miniatures (www.evolution-miniatures.com)

Nuts Planet (www.nutsplanet.com)

Royal Model (www.royalmodel.eu)

Diorama Accessories

AK Interactive (www.ak-interactive.com)

AMMO by Mig Jimenez (www.migjimenez.com)

Dio Dump (www.diodump.com)

DioArt (www.dioart-bravehost.com)

ETA Diorama Accessories (www.eta-diorama.com)

Fabio Modelissimo (www.dioramapresepe.com)

Green Line (www.fredericus-rex.eu)

Hauler (www.hauler.cz)

HD-Model (www.hdmodels.it)

Macone Models (www.maconemodels.com)

Mantis Miniatures (www.mantisminiatures.pl)

Matho Models (www.mathomodels.com)

MiniArt (www.miniart-models.com)

Model Victoria (www.modelvictoria.it)

Plus Model (www.plusmodel.cz)

RB Model (www.rbmodel.com)

Replikant Technologies (www.replikanttechnologies.com)

RT Diorama (www.rt-diorama.de)

Super Euromodeller (www.onthewaymodels.com)

Vallejo (www.acrylicosvallejo.com)

Yen Models (www.yenmodels.be)

TANK BOY

Marco Riolo describes how an artistic performance became a scale figure.



Everyone has a specific *modus operandi* when creating a miniature. Personally, I don't start with a sketch and subsequently commission someone else to do the artwork, rather I get inspired by what surrounds me: everyday life, the Web, images, movies, comics and so on. Moreover, I follow some artists that I believe to convey a mood similar to the one expressed by my brand 'Alternity Miniatures'. Among those I follow the French-born plastic and digital artist, photographer and illustrator Thomas Dubief is surely the most inspirational. His work creates surreal characters with a marked physicality and materiality, where cross references to historical and fictional worlds are combined

and reinterpreted by the artist in a masterful way.

Dubief's use of oversized elements and the fact that his art results in a human form clothed in unlikely outfits means that his concepts are easily translatable to the world of miniatures. This was the case with the 2014 work *Tank Boy*, which represented an ordinary soldier fighting in a deliberately undefined futuristic war (photo 1). As usual, I wrote Thomas a letter sharing with him my idea inspired by his own and asking him for a waiver to use his work, as it was, of course, protected by copyright. He graciously accepted my proposal, as only a great artist would do, and this allowed me to start work on the project immediately.

The Concept

At first glance, the subject of this work appears to be an American soldier (notice the white star on the front of his trenchcoat, similar to those used by the United States on military vehicles and airplanes during World War II). The light khaki-coloured clothing also gave me a distinctly American vibe. The name *Tank Boy* itself suggested that the soldier was a sort of 'one-man army', a solitary, yet powerful and destructive war machine. After all, this is a surreal and, in a way, a 'fantasy' subject where we can allow our imagination to run wild. This surreal aspect in particular is highlighted by the unusual headgear: a vintage fencing mask on which two huge Mickey Mouse-like ears have been stuck. To me, the most striking feature of this concept was this eclectic and distinctly creepy blend of well-known Disney imagery with the martial, cruel aspect of an armed soldier. The weapon, a hand-held Gatling Gun, is the core aspect of this character. Extremely powerful and destructive, this rotary cannon has been in use since the American Civil War and, in its basic form, has appeared on military vehicles, ships and aircraft right up to the present day [2]. It's not a weapon you imagine being carried and fired by hand, so its placement with 'Tank Boy' underlines a sense of the surreal, intensifying the menace of the figure and reminding me of the iconic movie character Rambo, firing his M60 machine gun one-handed.

Potential and Market position

Once the concept and the subject have been chosen, a crucial aspect to be considered by those who, like me, do this for a living, is to think about its placement within the miniature market. The first choice to make is one of scale. In this case, I chose 1/35 scale, since it allowed me to reach a potentially wider target, both those modellers who like to paint single figures, as well as those who make vignettes or larger dioramas. This subject is versatile and can thus be used in many different settings: traditional fantasy, post-apocalyptic, or even in a '1946' imaginary wartime scenario. 1/35 scale is ideal for post-apocalyptic modelling, especially when it comes to dioramas and vignettes, simply because of the huge range of buildings, figures and accessories available.

The Choice: Traditional or 3D Sculpture?

Once the scale has been chosen, the next step is to consider which technique to use to produce the master. It's important to keep that master as true as possible to the concept and this, along with the technical and commercial



Roberto Reale at work in his studio designing 'Tank Boy' using digital techniques.

factors, determines what happens next. I can't deny my personal inclination towards traditional sculpture, however, on this occasion I wanted to explore a completely digital figure: sculpting, printing, and the production of the box art.

In my mind I had a clear-cut idea of this project as a 'reversal'. It began from a real and physical concept, a real man dressed up and posed in an act of artistic performance. It was this I wanted to translate into a digital form that would allow me to develop the character by changing some of its features, creating some variants, and realising its potential through the digital format. It wasn't easy to choose the right sculptor for this project, since I was looking for an artist that could both master traditional and digital sculpture and could also print the 3D master, without having those intermediate phases that always result in more expenses and considerable delays in the creative process. This artist would also complete the digital painting of the box art. Few artists are talented in all these areas and able to complete the project according to expectations. Luckily, there was one such man: Master Roberto Reale.

Sculpture

(Roberto Reale): I initially started work as a traditional sculptor, creating classic figures for the Italian manufacturer Royal Model from putty and having them cast in resin. I abandoned this type of sculpture six years ago, committing myself entirely to the digital future. I have always had an interest in technology, but until recently 3D printers weren't of high enough performance to accurately reproduce figures sculpted by digital means. Fortunately, my decision to venture into the world of digital sculpting coincided with new high-resolution 3D printers coming onto the market.

Before describing the sculpting process on this specific project in detail, I would like to spend a few words on the type of digitally produced figures on the market. There are basically two main types: those that are digitally sculpted and those that derive from a 3D scan of a real object. This latter needs to be explained a little. A figure created through a 3D scan captures exactly the pose, features and proportions of the subject, but it doesn't have any artistic pathos and might well lead to difficulties during the painting process, since the thickness of the details means they will barely be seen. In reality the details on any 1/35-scale figure, or vehicle for that matter, need at times to be exaggerated. The thickness of a belt or a button would be scarcely visible on the figure if rendered true to scale, while the folds of the cloth can be difficult to paint effectively if they simply scale down the real thing.

When I work on a subject, I am usually first inspired by a photograph, but with this being a commission with a pre-existing concept, I simply needed to study the pose of the figure. I initially sketched out the whole figure to

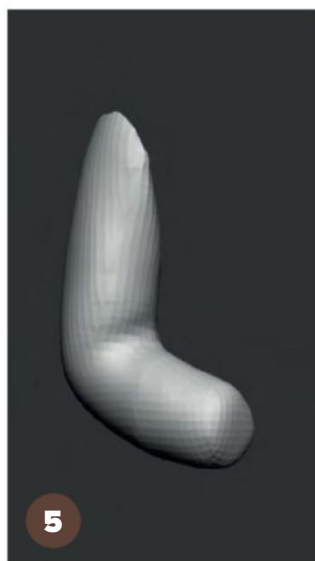


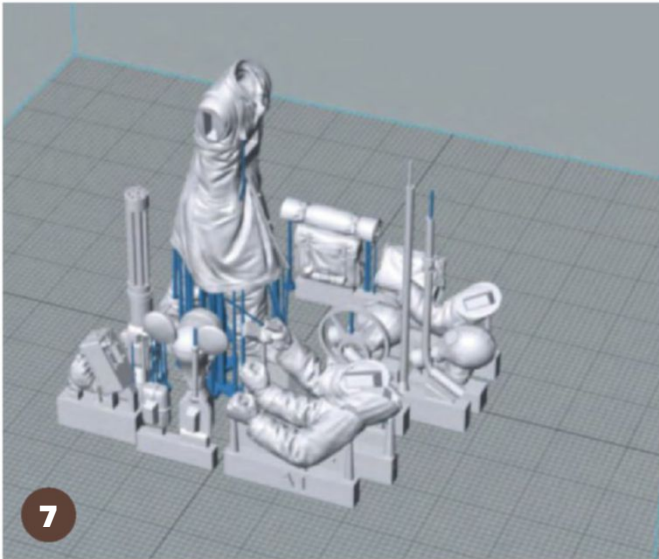
have a general supporting idea of how I would go about recreating the pose. I use the well-known ZBrush software for all my digital sculpting. It is a powerful tool that does not limit the artist's creativity and is used not only in the modelling and toy industries, but also in cinematography. Almost all of the superheroes, monsters, and aliens we have seen hurtling across the big screen were first created with this software. Although the characters are subsequently animated and put against a background using other software, the first phase of bringing them to life involves Zbrush **(3)**.

Once the pose had been chosen, I moved on to the sculpture itself. To create, for instance, an arm I begin with a sphere, named ZSphere in the software. This, through the use of the tools available in the application, was then shaped first into the letter 'L' and, using the polygon tool, sculpted further until it reached its final form **(4, 5 & 6)**. In the final phase, the figure is made of a complex set of subtools as marked by the different colours, even if the surface of the figure is made of thousands - if not millions - of polygons constituting the grid. These polygons often generate mistakes that will cause trouble during printing. Therefore, to make the file printable, it is necessary to re-arrange the grid with suitable repair software. At this point, one might think that the process of sculpting is over, yet there is an additional stage before the figure can be printed. It is now necessary to add the support pieces so the printer can reproduce the subject correctly without flaws or damage to any of the parts. This is the most delicate phase: although most printer software does this automatically, I always have to intervene manually. Moreover, my personal experience as a digital sculptor

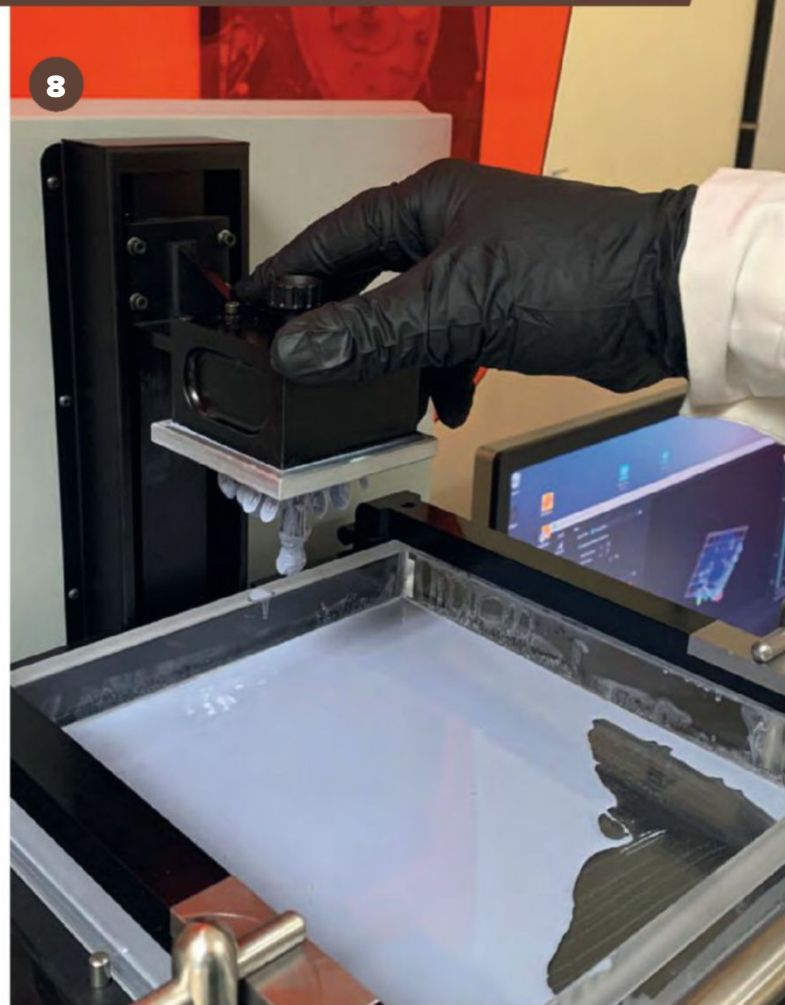
and printer is vital as wrongly placed support pins can damage important sections of the figure. The print itself is a complex and time-consuming affair that can take several hours **(7 & 8)**.

The versatility of digital sculpture allows the creation of several different products starting from the same starting point, thus making significant savings of both time and money. It is possible either to create the same subject in different scales or, as





in this project, to create a completely different variant of the figure in the same scale at little cost. For me, this is what makes digital sculpture a huge improvement on the traditional method. Marco asked me to create a second stalker character from 'Tank Boy' to enhance his catalogue while reducing costs to two main elements. When considering the initial pose of 'Tank Boy', we agreed that instead of a weapon, he could wield a tool of some sort and a metal detector seemed to us the obvious



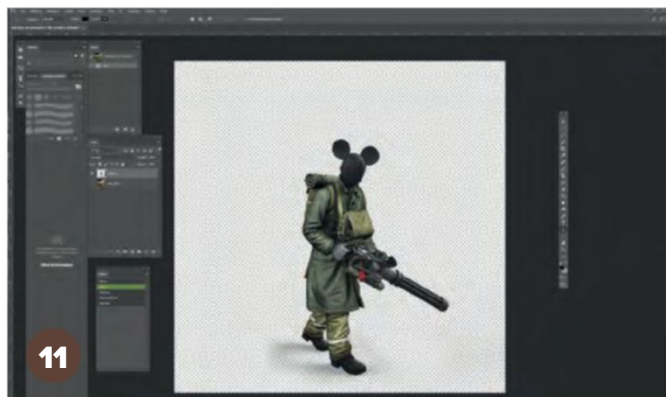
choice. The position of both the torso and the legs was perfect and I therefore simply changed the arms to hold the metal detector. To enhance the appearance of the figure as a post-apocalyptic Stalker decided to swap the mouse head with one wearing a GP5 gas mask, as commonly used by the former Soviet army in the sixties. This theme was carried over in the addition of a vintage metal detector belonging to the same period, giving the figure a unified aesthetic and making it both eerier and enigmatic. We christened this variant of the figure 'Mescal Boy' [9 & 10].

The Box Art

(Roberto Reale): A digitally made sculpture also gives the opportunity to create a coloured image that can be used for the box art. In this case the workflow involves several applications. I generally paint the subject in



ZBrush (yes, you can even paint on ZBrush since this software was actually originally designed for 3D painting and later enhanced and turned into a digital sculpting tool). Once the subject was painted, I worked with a rendering software that allowed me to assign to each component of the subject a specific type of material and its distinctive features, such as texture, roughness, refractive index, and such.

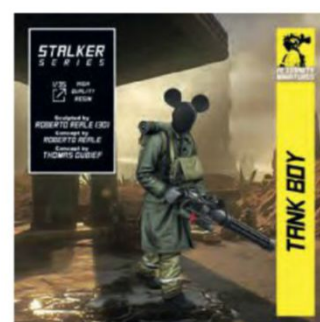


With this established, it is possible to add the correct highlights and reflections to suit the environment in which the figure is placed. The image is subsequently saved, possibly without a background, and opened with Adobe Photoshop, which is then used for image editing. I modified and enhanced the image so as to balance the colours used on the sculpture with the setting used as a background (11).

Final phase: the Background

(Alex Ortiga): The final phase, the choice of an ideal background and the graphic conceptualisation of the stickers used to decorate the box containing the model, was edited as usual by my graphic designer, Alex Ortiga. For the two subjects I started with two images from *Unreal Engine*, a game engine developed by Epic Games. The images were then elaborated upon and properly integrated

with the other elements to create the scene that would eventually adorn the box. The idea was to meld together an abandoned industrial settlement and an arid, war-torn desertscape (12). The final image is more industrial in the case of 'Tank Boy', whereas more of the desertscape is on show for 'Mescal Boy'. The aim was to make the subjects tie together as the two are both lonely survivors in a hostile and boundless environment.



Alternity Miniatures 1/35 Stalker Series 'Tank Boy' (ref. AM84) and 'Mescal Boy' (ref. AM85)



AN UNEXPECTED TREASURE

When Science Fiction meets the Post-
Apocalyptic by **Stefano Garbin.**



The idea of building a post-apocalyptic diorama has been among my planned projects for some time. As a modeller, I began with military modelling where I learned and experimented with various painting and weathering techniques, and from there moved onto Science Fiction subjects. However, it is with the post-apocalyptic genre that I can express my abiding passion for Japanese Manga comics and Anime Science Fiction films.

All of my modelling projects now feature this melting pot of different influences – the latest modelling techniques, various aspects of popular culture, and my own imagination – and I want my dioramas to be not only good models, but also to say something and to invoke an emotional response from the viewer. Too often I have been to European modelling shows and admired the technical skill of the modellers but have been left with the feeling that the dioramas have not ‘said’ anything. As a result, my models are always ‘contaminated’ by factors from outside the modelling world and in this case the influence was very much from the world of Science Fiction.

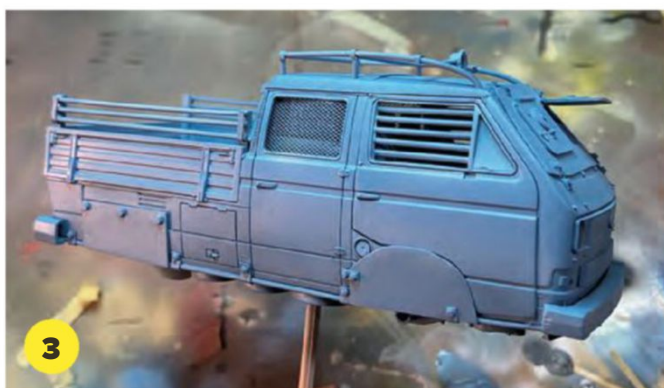
In this respect, then, this diorama cannot be categorised as a ‘pure’ example of the post-apocalyptic genre. It is certainly set in a ‘post’ world, a dystopian future where technology has prevailed over humanity and Artificial Intelligence rules supreme. The central parts of the diorama come from the Alternity Miniatures’ range. I love Marco’s creations because although they are shot through with a distinct sense of ‘otherness’, they also capture everyday life and moments of mundane tenderness (as is the case with the various gas mask-wearing children).

I was also lucky enough to be able to use 1/35-scale 3D test prints of two robots that would eventually lead to the ‘Robogang’ series in 1/20 scale and place them in the back of the truck, emphasising the Science Fiction character of my diorama.

A diorama always originates in the mind and in this respect, I believe, it follows the same path as an artist’s painting. It needs to be composed, playing with the positioning of the figures and various other elements. I knew I wanted to include the robots before I had the idea of a family coming across an abandoned van and the child-like curiosity that led them to discover what had happened here. One of the guiding principles of dioramas is the idea of levels: different elements should appear at different heights to emphasise the narrative that lies at the heart of a good diorama. In this case I wanted the accident and the truck to be at different levels. I ground out a depression on the base upon which to place the abandoned vehicle, ensuring that neither of the two main elements of the scene obstructed the other whichever angle the diorama was viewed from. The viewer must also ‘discover’ the treasure in the back of the van, just as the small boy has, and, momentarily, be transported from the post-apocalyptic to an innocent world of play and childlike discovery.

Getting Started

My starting point was Takom’s superb Volkswagen Double Cab T3 kit (ref. 2014) in 1/35 scale. I wanted to emphasise the futuristic aspects of the projects so removed the traditional suspension and wheels from the truck and replaced them with a hypothetical gravitational propulsion system made from parts from my spares box. I increased the load capacity by scratch building a roof rack and raised the height of the sides of the load bed with Plasticard.



I was also inspired by the *Mad Max* film series to add a grille and bars to the windows, as well as using the driver's and radio operator's hatches from a World War II Panzer IV kit to produce an armoured windscreen cover (photo 1). Once this had been put together, I sprayed a coat of primer to check for any faults in the truck's construction (2).

To paint the modified T3 I used Tamiya acrylic paints. I began with a darker shade of blue than I wanted for the final appearance, starting with Flat Blue (XF-8) and then gradually adding Field Blue (XF-50), being careful not to spray this right to the edges of the different panels (3). Knowing how durable Tamiya paints are, I dispensed with the now obligatory coat of varnish and dived into the aspect of modelling I enjoy the most – creating the effects of peeling paint and rust, and weathering in general.

I have tried various techniques to achieve these effects, but I am most comfortable with oil paints. I like to apply them directly to the model as you can immediately see their effect and they can easily be manipulated, or removed entirely, with thinner until you get the desired result. Oil paints take a while to dry, so it is possible to create different effects over time, mixing the paints directly on the model's surface. I often use a hairdryer to speed up the drying time of the oil paints and this was the case here.

I then applied a pin wash of varying intensities using Raw Sienna oil paint. I also chose to break up the monotony of the blue by painting some areas of the truck in different colours (the green door and the khaki of the armour plate) (4).

The T3 has a large cargo bed and I went through various solutions for the load, before opting for a classic assortment of random fuel drums, jerrycans, boxes and a tyre. I painted these with various Vallejo acrylics, trying to inject some colour, and then weathered them with brown oil paints and picked out the edges and corners with Gun Metal (5). The focus of the cargo bed is, of course, the two robots. Small and delicate, they provide a focus to the scene in general and the truck in particular. They are part of our post-apocalyptic family that has stopped by the roadside and they too look surprised at the discovery of the treasure in the abandoned van. For the steel color of the first robot I used Alclad's Steel, and then applied a Sepia ink diluted with water to emphasise the joints and other details, while for the second I followed the step-by-step instructions of the Andrea Miniatures' Red Paint Set (ref. ACS-004) (6).

Finally, I wanted to add something else to the truck so settled upon Alternity Miniatures' 'Skauteer' (ref. AM18),



7



8



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a neat little resin model of a scooter. This would be ideal for a member of the family to scout ahead and escape quickly from danger (7). I scratch built a little frame from Plasticard to support it. To paint it I chose a mixture of 70% Tamiya Field Blue and 30% Light Blue (XF-23), weathered with various washes and adding some paint chips using Vallejo's German Panzer Grey (73.603) (8).

What could it be that had caused the travellers to stop and explore in this dangerous post-apocalyptic world? I wanted to maintain the definite 'post' context; something

had happened here that would explain both the immediate story behind the diorama and the broader context. I liked the idea of something retro to juxtapose against the futuristic robots so settled upon Bronco Models' 1/35-scale kit of the Fiat 500 Topolino (ref. CB35167). The Topolino was also a product of Science Fiction, in as much as its conventional wheels had been replaced by some sort of gravitational propulsion, but, unlike the T3, I wanted to homogenise the modifications with the existing bodywork.

I began painting the Topolino with a coat of AMMO's Titans primer. I find this primer, which comes in a spray can, gives a consistently smooth and durable finish. I knew the

13



14





little van would be abandoned on an overgrown grassy slope, so green was an obvious choice as a colour scheme. I also wanted it to contrast with the dark grey of the asphalt and the blue of the T3. I used AK Interactive's Russian Green Modulation set (AK553) to paint the Topolino, beginning by highlighting the edges with Dark Base (AK030) and then using 4BO Base (AK031) (9). I modified the colour by then adding an overall enamel-based filter, using AK Interactive's Blue for Panzer Grey (AK071) (10). I then applied a profusion of small dots of various oil paints, blending these into the surface with a soft brush moistened in thinner. This technique, popular among armour modellers, gives a nice, subtle weathered appearance (11).

To suggest the length of time that the van had been abandoned I used two main techniques. First, I applied a pin wash with AMMO's Streaking Grime (A.MIG. 1203), before applying two overall washes, first with AMMO's Light Rust Wash (A.MIG. 1004) and then with Rust Streaking Effects (A.MIG. 1204) (12). I then used True Earth's water-based Rust filters (TERI 01, TERI 03) to complete the abandoned and rusted appearance. The lower parts of the Topolino, which were actually in contact with the ground, would show heavy corrosion and I replicated this with AK Interactive's Corrosion Texture (AK8040), and then used AK Interactive weathering pencils moistened with water to create the rain marks on the vertical surfaces. I finished off with various pigments to blend the vehicle in better with the groundwork (13).

Setting the Scene

As I said earlier, height is one of the guiding principles of diorama planning and construction, and from the beginning I knew this scene would have at least two levels. Having decided on two different heights to the diorama, I played



around with the composition and positioning of the different elements. Once satisfied I cut out a bottom level to the base (14).

Making the road was very straightforward with the help of AK Interactive's Terrains: Asphalt (AK8013). To apply it to your base you simply spread it over the surface. Just be careful to lay a thin layer to avoid the surface cracking once dry (15). It dries to the correct colour, but to be realistic I weathered it with various brown and sand-coloured pigments and a liberal application of AK Interactive's Light Dust Deposits (AK4062) and Rainmarks (AK074). I finished the road by adding a few oil and grease stains (16).

The grassy slope was made using another AK Interactive Terrains product, this time Neutral Texture for Earth (AK0823). This is the basic material for reproducing any type of natural groundwork and is simply smoothed over the base with a spatula. For stones I used a selection of small aquarium stones, which I simply attached using PVA glue.

Before adding the grass, I brush painted the groundwork using AK Interactive's Real Colors S.C.C. 1a Brown (AC034) (17). The appearance of wet ground was then added with Damp Earth (AK078), an enamel-based wash that dries to a gloss finish in varying intensities across the muddy ground. Once the glue holding the stones had dried I painted them Real Colors Medium Gunship Grey (RC244), before picking out individual stones in various shades created by adding Vallejo Dark Green (70.991) and White (AK11011) to the original grey (18).





To reproduce the grass itself I used strands pulled from a ball of Sea Grass. These litter the beaches all around the Mediterranean and are perfect for making grass in dioramas. I interspersed this with different coloured tufts (19). I airbrushed a layer of Vallejo Dark Green over the grass, then mixed that colour with Green Blue (70.974) and highlighted the grass by adding Iraqi Sand (70.819) and White (20). This gave a good variety of natural-looking foliage, but I went further by adding some dried Oregano leaves, fixed in place with varnish and again painted in a

variety of shades of green. To replicate ivy growing up the sides of the little van I used some granulated foam, fixed in place with PVA glue (21). The appearance of the ivy was then reworked and refined by brush painting various Vallejo greens. I completed this part of the diorama by adding some debris around the abandoned Topolino, suggesting the unexpected nature of the events that had led to it being left there, and added a couple of suitable items from Alternity Miniatures' 'Post-Apo Road Sign' (ref. AM57) set.





Products Used



Figuring It Out

Choosing the right figures for this scene was, in fact, one of the first tasks. Fortunately, Alternity Miniatures had the perfect figures in their range: Hypercon Boy #1 (ref. AM24) and Hypercon Male #1 (ref. AM16). They had the right mixture of post-apocalyptic and Sci-Fi. I wanted to emphasise the former, however, so I did a simple swap of the boy's head for one wearing a gasmask. The futuristic helmet of the man provided a visual continuity with the robots in the back of the T3. Both figures were painted using Vallejo acrylics, taking special care to emphasise the highlights and shadows in the folds of their clothing. Painting the man's helmet was a particular challenge, picking out the various details with Vallejo Mecha Color Steel (69.063) over a Gun Metal (69.508) base and then shading it with heavily diluted brown and black inks (22).

Finally, the treasure. That is why the family stopped on the road, a potentially dangerous decision in their post-apocalyptic world. I opted for a scene that suggested that

someone had already come across the abandoned Fiat 500 and stolen some of the contents. The doors are open and there are several teddy bears on the ground, while inside the space at the rear of the car is half-empty, as if someone had forgotten the little bears in their haste to steal the large ones. Again, Alternity Miniatures provided the perfect pieces to realise this: Bears (ref. AM60) and Scary Kit #2 (ref. AM58) for the smaller items lying in the grass. They were similarly painted with Vallejo acrylics and those lying on the ground were dusted with pigments (23).

Final Thoughts

I really enjoyed composing and executing this 'crossover' diorama. Mixing the two genres of Science Fiction and post-apocalyptic modelling was a real challenge, but I hope I've succeeded in suggesting the intersection between the 'old' world of science and technology and the grim post-apocalyptic future.





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