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## PEOPLE

### How to Paint Figures - Part 1

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There are many interesting folks who live and work on my railroads. These people live along the right of way. They work in the businesses in my towns. They ride the railroad, drive the engines, work on the railroad, and maintain all of the equipment and track. They are what make my railroads come alive

Click any picture to get a detailed view



Some of these figures still have stands on them because I have not finished the scenery and can't fasten them permanently in place.

The stands will be removed when I glue them down.

If you have read any of the other articles I have written for LSOL, you will have met many of those people. I put them in all of my passenger cars, in my engines and cabooses, and in all of my buildings and autos. I probably have over two hundred people on my railroads. The outdoor railroad has very few because it is just getting to the stage where I would begin to look for people; however, the indoor railroad is highly populated.

I buy some of these people already painted and many of them not painted



Even if they come painted, I almost always repaint them so that they are different than those that might be found on other railroads. I have even modified some of them to give them a different appearance (i. e. a bald headed man to answer my brother's complaint about not seeing any and African Americans to reflect the true demographics of 1954).

The people on my railroads come in a wide range of sizes. The ones for the outdoor railroad are all 1/22.5 or 1/20.3





None of these have been painted or modified since I am still in the beginning stage of putting buildings and people into my outdoor railroad.

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Those on the indoor railroad range from 1/24 to 1/32







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I even include a few O gauge people for the O gauge buildings along the walls to create a perspective depth in the layout. One thing I have found is: you can't always believe what the manufacturer says about the scale of the people they sell. Some of the people I have purchased thinking they were 1/29 turned out to be closer to 1/24.

This leads to why I am writing this particular article. Jon recently sent me an email saying that he had purchased some figures on ebay and was sending me some for me to paint and do an article about the process. About a week later a package with the figures inside arrived from Jo Anne. The figures were made by FUJIMI in 1988



for use with their line of racing autos. They are labeled as 1/24



This article will focus on the materials and tools needed to paint figures for a railroad. When I am going to paint and modify some figures, I assemble the following tools before I begin. Occasionally, I need some additional tools, but this set generally is all I need





1. A pair of side cutting pliers to remove the figures from the sprue and to trim off large pieces of flash that are found on some figures. You also can use one of the cutters from Micro-Mark specifically designed for this job.

2. A set of files to smooth the flash from the figures.

3. A set of hobby knives to cut and scrape the figures.

4. Needle nosed pliers to hold small parts while working on them.

5. A pin vise and drill set for drilling the holes necessary to hold the wire used in securing arms, legs and heads that are repositioned in changing a figure.

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6. Glues to hold the repositioned arms, legs and heads in place.

7. Green Putty or a similar brand of molding putty to fill in gaps when repositioning arms, legs and heads.

8. Double sided tape to hold the figures to a solid surface while painting them.

9. Fine grained sand paper to finish surfaces before painting.

10. A Dremel tool and a variety of cutting blades to perform the necessary surgery on the people to reposition their arms, legs and heads.

11. A set of safety goggles to protect my eyes when using the Dremel tool.

I also assemble a variety of paints to use on various parts of the people. There are several different types of paint. Each has a specific use so it is important to have some of each for painting the people. Of course, these paints can be used for a lot of other painting jobs on a railroad. The ones that I use



include:

1. India ink and denatured alcohol to use as a wash after painting for weathering or highlighting the skin and clothing on the figures.
2. Acrylic paint in artist's tubes. These can be mixed easily on an artist's pallet or on a piece of glass. I like acrylics because I can control the color mix in very small quantities. I can also see the colors as I mix them on the pallet.
3. Railroad color water based paint such as POLLY Scale or model acrylic paint like TAMIYA Color sold for military models and figures. I use flat colors.
4. Enamel paint such as Floquil in railroad colors and Model Master also sold for military models and figures. I use flat colors.
5. Gloss enamel by Testors for silver, gold and gloss white or black.
6. Micro-Mark's Doc O'Brien's Weathering Powders for the grime, rust and dirt that were found on the clothes, faces, arms and hands of most of the people who worked on the railroad.
7. I recently have added opaque paint markers in red, white, black, blue and brown for eyes, eyebrows, hair and lips. These resemble pens with very fine tips and dispense paint in very thin lines. I found mine at Michael's under the brand name of DecoColor.
8. To keep my hands clean, I use examination rubber gloves when I paint. These slide on and off easily and are cheap enough that they can be disposed of after a couple of wearings. I also use the plastic cups that pudding and Jell-O come in to mix my liquid paints. They also can be thrown away after using them. Eating the pudding is fun too!

It is important to have a wide variety of brushes. I use several different sizes



and try to buy only very good brushes for this type of detail work. As you can see in the picture, I have several brushes that have been used extensively and others that have only been used for details. My detail brushes for figures are all Golden Eagle from Micro-Mark





Finally it is possible to use an airbrush for figures, but I only use it to put a coat of primer on the figures before I begin to detail them. If a figure is modified, it should be done before the priming and painting begin.

Before I started this article, I did a little research on painting of figures for model railroads. I found several articles by going to the Model Train Magazine Index at <http://index.mrmag.com>. The results of my search are at the end of this article. There were several articles on painting figures and each had some interesting techniques. In addition, I again reviewed "Modifying And Scratch Building Large Scale Figures with Joe Crea" produced by Digital Video Images, Inc. I will try to cover some of the techniques found in the articles and the video when I begin the actual painting of the figures Jon and Jo Anne sent to me.

In my next installment, I will explain with words and pictures how I painted those figures. I will be using the tools, paints and brushes that I have talked about in this article.

The articles list from the Model Railroad Index included:

1. "Aging your RR's patrons - changing the "era" of people", Model Railroader, October 1959.
2. "Painting scale figures", Model Railroader, September 1981.
3. "Super-Detailing", Modeling Narrow Gauge Railroads,
4. "Put on a happy face - painting faces on scale people", Model Railroader, May 1984.
5. "Painting people", Railroad Model Craftsman, November 1984.
6. " Weathering figures", Model Railroader, January 1986.
7. "Painting figures for model railroads", Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette, May/June 1986.

8. "Painting your figures - a brief dissertation", Garden Railways, July/August 1990.
9. "Distinctive people make the difference - modifying figures", Model Railroader, December 1991.
10. "Painting your way to better figures", Model Railroader, October 1994.
11. "Tricks with figures and vehicles", 303 Tips for Detailing Model Railroad Scenery and Structures.
12. "Basic model railroading: Add like to your layout with figures", Model Railroader, November 1995.
13. "Modifying Commercial Figures: Pierce, Putty, Paint", Outdoor Railroader, February/March 1996.
14. "Shadows - the secret to painting figures", Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette, January/February 1997.
15. "Populate your layout - tips for modifying and painting inexpensive figures", Model Railroader, March 1996.
16. "Figures with a flair - painting figures", Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette, May/June 1998.
17. "Painting and detailing large-scale figures", Garden Railways, June 1999.
18. "Painting figures and vehicles", Basic Painting and Weathering for Model Railroaders.
19. "Back to basics - Figure painting", Model Railroader, March 2003.

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