Scenery Modeling

Introduction to Model Railroad Scenery
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Scenery is -

• The Setting - a believable and realistic setting for our railroad empire
• Impactful - makes a big difference in the enjoyment, appeal and realism of a layout
• Buildings and Bridges - structures are scenery too, but not covering them here

Scenery Modeling is -

• Forgiving - the most imprecise type of modeling; enhance or re-do if you don't like it
• Cheap - likely the least expensive part of modeling!
• Quick - the modeling with the quickest gratification!
• Easy - the easiest type of modeling!

Secrets to Good Scenery -

• Variety!
>   - shape, color, texture
>   - rocks, trees, vegetation
>   - details: debris, weeds, puddles, flowers, animals, figures, signs, etc.

• Consistent Theme - Appalachians, Rockies, plains, desert, swamps, Pacific NW, etc.
• Engineering Realism - balanced cuts and fills, drainage contours and culverts, etc.
• Viewblocks - tall areas make layout appear larger (trees, structures, cliffs, etc.)

• Flat Finish - dull just like weathering, with few exceptions (glossy water, etc.)
• Shortcuts - scenery can be less detailed as move from foreground to background
• Water Soluble - primary paints and binders can dilute and cleanup with water
• Series of Layers - build up materials in layers

Some References -

• <u>How to Build Realistic Model Railroad Scenery</u> - Dave Frary - #1 railroad book sales
• <u>Scenery for Model Railroads</u> - Bill McClanahan - previous scenery "bible"
• <u>Scenery & Dioramas</u> - Robert Schleicher - comprehensive
• <u>The Scenery Manual</u> - Woodland Scenics - use of their products
• <u>Scenery Tips and Techniques</u> - Model Railroader - selected reprinted articles
• <u>Scenery Ideas</u> - Fine Scale Miniatures - great steps and detailing tips - still in print?

• Inspiring layout story books - Model Railroading with John Allen, The V&O Story, The
   Fabulous Franklin & South Manchester Railroad, Great Model Railroads, etc.
• Numerous articles in all the railroad modeling magazines, plus video tapes

Some Key Materials -

• Scenery Crust Plaster - underlayment (Gypsolyte or Structolyte) or patching type
• Latex or Acrylic Paints - base earth color(s), rock colors, water bed color(s)
• Other Adhesives - white glue, plus hairspray or spray enamels
• Dyed Ground-up Foam Rubber - several colors and sizes
• Gravel and Dirt - several colors and sizes
• Plaster Rock Molds - cast with hydrocal or patching plaster
• Tree-like Weeds - picked after the second frost in the fall
• Other materials mentioned in the "10 Easy Steps" section

Companion Clinic -

<u>Foamboard Layout Construction</u> - Simultaneous construction of both roadbed and scenery bases, in a solid format (like the real world, not hollow), with the ability to visualize and build in very realistic contours. It's also very sturdy (only need a light grid of 1"x2" wood boards underneath), can be fast and lightweight, and is terriffic anchor for structures and trees. Replaces conventional subroadbed and hollow scenery methods.

Scenery Building in 10 Easy Steps -

(1) Landforms - 2 Basic types -
      • hollow (screen, paper strips, other hardshell)
      • <u>solid</u> (carved laminations of foamboard; not foamcore - tip: water mist as carve)

(2) Backdrops (and View Dividers) - usually install and paint before doing 3-D scenery

(3) Plasterwork (and Structures Planting) - tip: add white glue to plaster as binding aid
      • rock outcroppings (molded or carved castings; broken ceiling tiles, bark, rocks,...)
      • thin plaster crust elsewhere (cheap underlayment plaster: Gypsolyte, Structolyte)
      • level an area and plant structures (temporarily plastic wrap base if wish remove)

(4) Base Coloring - mix with artist tube acrylics, or purchase premixed hobby paints
      • 3 basic paint colors - rocks, ground (earth), water beds (black?)
      • highlight rock outcroppings later with India ink wash and dry brushed off-white
      • this paint = the initial adhesive for most layers to follow

(5) Smaller Rocks; Large Gravel or Stones
      • purchased, or handmade from chipped and colored plaster

(6) Ground Cover - Dyed Ground Foam, Chopped Leaves, Dirt
      • fine turf first, then coarse turf, then more fine turf to blend and highlight
      • fine dirts (non-magnetic clean dirt or stone dust - purchased or self ground)
      • mist with "wet water" then dribble on diluted white glue (3 parts water: 1 glue)

(7) Underbrush and Bushes (attach heavier items with straight white glue)
      • "foliage clusters" or "clumps"; Spanish moss; scenery "left overs";
      • stumps, fallen tree trunks or limbs, "slash" (bark, twigs, etc.)

(8) <u>T</u>rees = <u>F</u>oliage (leaves, needles) + <u>A</u>rmature (trunk, branches)
      • kits, ready-to-use, or ...   <u>scratchbuilt</u> (wire, weed or twig armatures) -
          - Sedum, Yarrow, Live-Forever, etc. - quick and nice deciduous trees
          - Sagebrush tips - excellent weathered oak trees, dead or fallen trees
          - Golden Rod and "Puff Balls" (foam coated polyfiber) - nice filler trees
      • foliage - dyed ground foam (fine or clumps), foliage "net", poly fiber, sawdust
      • adhesives - yellow or white glue, hairspray, cheap enamel spray (clear, black, ...)
      • be sure planted vertical (solid scenery = just poke hole, dab in glue, plant)

(9) Details - debris, weeds, puddles, flowers, animals, figures, signs, miniscenes

(10) Water
      • flat water - <u>2 equal parts epoxy</u>, glossy medium, varnish, or rippled glass, etc.
      • white water and falls - clear and white silicone caulking, or dry brush white, etc.

Conclusion -

• Now you know how quick, fun and easy scenery modeling is - so "just do it"!
• Volunteer your scenicked layouts for tours at the April '97 Regional Convention!