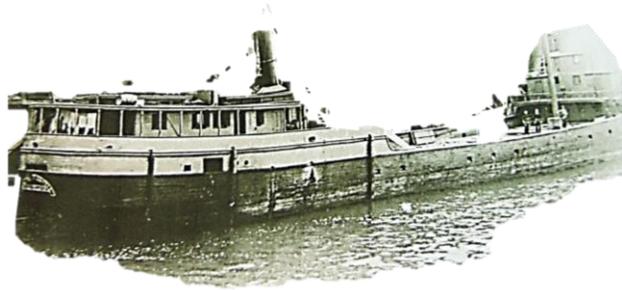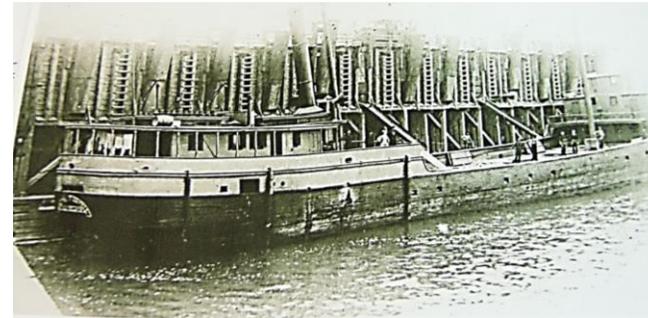# DIORAMAS

April 2024

Adding context enriches the display

Here is a steamer....

that takes on stone

Dioramas can help tell a ship's story

This discussion will explain the process of planning, engineering and constructing your model's story

Dioramas

❖ **Dioramas bring life to models providing:**

  ❖ **Context**

  ❖ **Activity**

  ❖ **Focus or story**

❖ **They come in all sizes and manner**

  ❖ **They are not usually operating layouts**

❖ **Planning is essential to successful execution**

  ❖ **Lack of planning is disastrous**

  ❖ **Missing planning is a bad thing**

  ❖ **Be sure to plan ...... etc.,**

Processes Involved

- ❖ **Planning**
  - ❖ **Context**
  - ❖ **Activity**
  - ❖ **Focus or story**
  - ❖ **Display space and type**
  - ❖ **Key elements**

- ❖ **Engineering**
  - ❖ **Composition**
  - ❖ **Materials**
    - ❖ **Ground cover**
    - ❖ **Relief**
    - ❖ **Foliage**
    - ❖ **Clutter and motion**
  - ❖ **Sequence**
  - ❖ **Spacing**
  - ❖ **Sketching**
  - ❖ **Perspective**
  - ❖ **Scale**

- ❖ **Construction**
  - ❖ **Test the plan**
  - ❖ **Adjust**
  - ❖ **Prepare elements**
  - ❖ **Build terrain**
  - ❖ **Dry fit elements**
  - ❖ **Adjust**
  - ❖ **Insert elements**
  - ❖ **Present**

Planning

❖ In planning your diorama:

❖ Figure out your intent

❖ What model content is intended

❖ What do you want to highlight?

  ❖ Context – Cargo loading

  ❖ Activity – Sea battle

  ❖ Story – Family going to an outing

  ❖ ….one or more?

❖ <u>Key</u> elements

❖ Bridge? Dock? Crashing waves? Equipment? Cliffs? Villages?
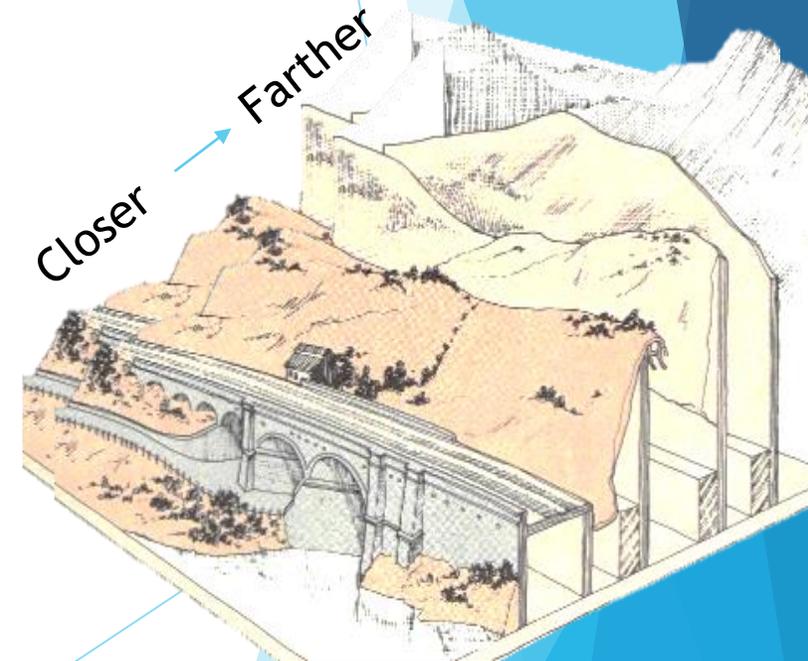
Engineering

❖ **Constraints**

    ❖ Target size, Mobility, Scale, Viewing level, Display method

    ❖ Limit main content to your focus

❖ **Perspective**

    ❖ What is the viewers position relative to the scene?

    ❖ How will you imply distance or diminishing background

    ❖ Changing scales can suggest distance

    ❖ Use hills or "forests" to imply distance

❖ **Transition from real to diorama**

    ❖ **Foliage, hedges fences can define areas**

Closer → Farther

Engineering

❖ Draw/Sketch placement

❖ Make scale drawing of how pieces will be placed and built

❖ Use gradient lines on the plan for terrain

❖ If spacers are used between layers of the scene, include them

❖ Add space for details

❖ Adjust placement, sizes, content, etc., to attain a comfortable fit

  ❖ Lay the sketch over your baseplate and scrutinize …..Happy?

❖ In the next step TRY to follow the plan first, then adjust
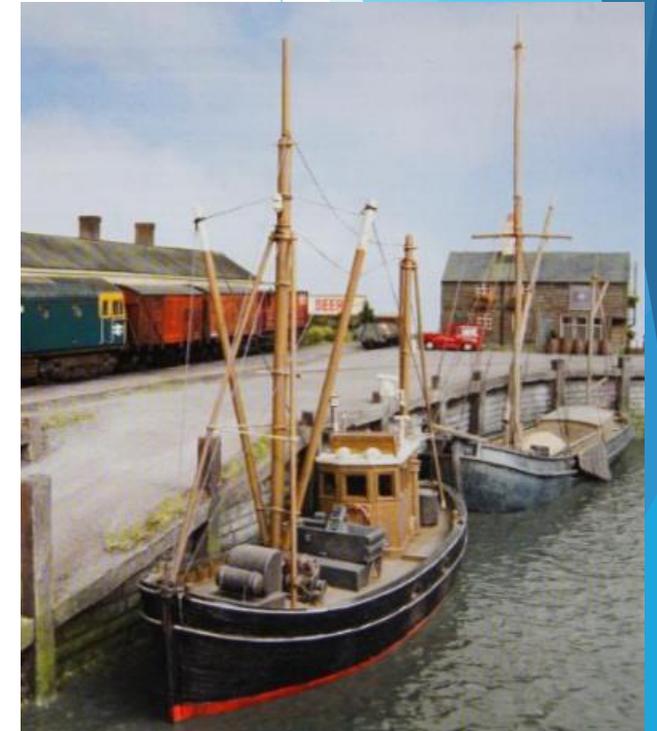
Construction

- Materials
  - Be open minded about materials
  - Borrow from other hobbies
- Terrain
  - Profile guides built from cardstock or Styrofoam are very helpful
- Groundcover
  - Weeds
  - Trees or large foliage may need underlying reinforcement for placement
  - in achieving the gradients
- Buildings
  - Should be relevant
  - Complete structures, fronts, or facsimiles?

Construction

- ❖ **Mounting and fitting**
  - ❖ Details
  - ❖ Foliage
  - ❖ Less is best – stick to the essential
    - ❖ Prepare components before dry mounting
      - ❖ Assembling
      - ❖ Constructing
      - ❖ Weathering and Detailing can wait until final placement
    - ❖ Once terrain is formed, place components per plan – DO NOT GLUE DOWN

Construction

❖ Cardstock placeholders, to scale, can be used for details

❖ Adjust and re-evaluate the result ensuring your objective is achieved (generally)

  ❖ If it looks ok initially, try placement in display configuration and check scales and perspective

❖ If the result is not acceptable:

  ❖ Change terrain

  ❖ Reconsider size, complexity, need of components

  ❖ Substitute components

  ❖ Scrap and re-plan

Construction

❖ **Prepare for final assembly – consider this sequence:**

1. **Paint terrain and waterbody bottom**

2. **Finish paint, weathering and details on components**

3. **Place the portions of docks, sea walls or items that extend "below water" or float**

4. **If swampy, get your reeds and waterside vegetation in place**

5. **Install "water" features, surf, ocean waves, etc.,**

6. **Place trees and large foliage in terrain**

7. **Install structures, equipment, supporting components**

8. **Place landscape materials, grass, and debris**

   ❖ **Use these materials to establish the visual connection between components and their bases**

   ❖ **"Floating" components can quickly ruin the veracity of a scene**

❖ **Review and correct imperfections**

   ❖ **Weather, hide, re-make, eliminate avoiding impact on your masterpiece**

❖ **Mount diorama to display base**

Conclusion

❖ Choose an executable objective

❖ Choose elements of your vision critical to your objective

❖ Plan carefully, then engineer to that plan

❖ Test your plan by dry fitting and adjusting, as needed

❖ Establish a smart sequence for finalizing the diorama

❖ For info on modeling terrain, structures, and other components of your diorama there are many references in print and on-line (text and video)

❖ Our website also links to info