



AK

DIMITRIS KARAKATSANIS

AK. Hello Dimitris! Let's start with the beginning of your hobby. When did you build your first model or diorama base?

I started scale modeling in the 70's, when I was about 10 years old and my first models were in small scales (1:72 & 1:76) from the corresponding Matchbox's series. I had assembled and painted almost all the "small", vehicles, tanks and planes on the company's catalog of that era. A little later, growing up, I was involved with 1:35 and the Tamiya models were the motivation for that - especially the amazing illustrations on the boxes. At the same time I made my first bases for vehicles and small vignettes for figures.

AK. How did you decide to focus on diorama bases rather than more conventional subjects such as models, vignettes or dioramas in their full sense? Do you still build models themselves?

When I started making vehicles and AFV at 1:35, as teenager, I purchased an airbrush and a compressor. But the truth is that I could not easily "decide" when a model is complete ...or not. So I had been working with them for months, trying to improve them, painting them and even rebuilding them! I enjoying the fact that I was experimenting with too many materials (of that time) for the attribution of realism and damages.

The result of all these was to have a lot of



half-made models (which is usual in this hobby), but at some point I decided to get rid of them, selling them unfinished, as they were, on ebay. There was my first contact with sealing my creations and I slowly started to make figures for the sole purpose of selling them. So at the same time I went into the construction of simple vehicle bases, which clearly needed less time to complete. Time limitation is also the reason why when I make models (now in present) they are on a small scales.

AK. As far as I understand, you build your diorama bases mostly for sale and in quantities. How do you organize your assembly line? What are the typical process? Do you build batch of winter, then a batch of summer bases or use another approach? How much

time does it take you to build a base or a batch? How much do the bases differ from one another?

Anyway, I have no substantial help from others about my constructions, so yes, I have found some methods of increasing my production, which I am trying to apply. Let me point out here that my main occupation is graphic designer and so I have to devote enough time - and absolute priority in this. My constructions are divided into two major categories, what I call "simple constructions", for some figures, a vehicle or airplane, and more complex creations, belonging to the category "collectible" dioramas, buildings, etc. In the first category there are mainly flat bases, ie paved roads, dirt surfaces, concrete slabs, asphalt sections, snowy landscapes etc. In the second category the bases contain also other elements, such as a ruins or facades of buildings, stonewalls, bridges, beaches etc.

Simple bases can be many in construction, at the same time - I have been working on 10 of them at the same time! Typical time for these are 1-2 days for each theme. Note that, depending on demand, subjects are repeatedly built at multi dimensional, or upgraded by combining other elements.

Collector's bases want more time and full attention to the details and it is logical to build them as one at a time. They require at least 7-10 days of work and very good finishing.



AK. How much do you learn new technologies and products? Or you have already mastered all the stuff that you need?

Even now, after a few thousand bases, I enjoy experimenting with products and inventing new techniques, mainly for more realism, wear and tear. I like to share these techniques with friends and I absolutely do this when I get the chance - and believe me, it has no affect on my sales in anyway. However, I rarely find time to follow other's techniques, but only when I have a serious issue to deal with.

AK. What are your favourite technologies and products for modelling?

Due to the amount of my main work, I try to use relatively cheap materials and not necessarily from model shops. My favorite material is a kind of ready-made building plaster, that makes it very easy for clay constructions, mixed with color pigments. Also a product I usually use a lot, is the two component resin, for water representation. Of course, almost all the weathering products of modelling companies are on my workbench to help me when I need them.

AK. How can one order a custom or typical base for a model?

I try to always have several of my "thematic series" at simple bases, and in different dimensions. For anything else custom made, everyone can find me from my Facebook page / Dioramania.gr

There, we will discuss the details and watch the development of the construction. The only problem that continue to exists ...is my time availability.

AK. Do you have any advices for modelers who struggle with building bases and vignettes for their models?

They do not be afraid ...and do not bother to experiment! Only in this way will they have a gradual evolution in technical applications and they will better understand the use and structure of the materials. The ultimate goal is to shape their own personal style into their creations.

AK. Do you plan to publish a book o series of articles about building diorama bases?

I had already started writing some "How2 Guides" leaflets, demonstrating some of my own techniques, but unfortunately once again my main job obligations did not allowed me to continue and establish the making of these leaflets as 1 issue per month. Anyway maybe later I'll start again.

AK. Thank you for the interview!

I thank you for this honor!