

AK



MARIJN



VAN GILS



AK. When did you start modelling?.

I built my first model when I was 6 years old. Well, probably my mother did most of the work, as I wasn't allowed to handle the sharp knife necessary to separate the parts from the sprues yet. We used Velpon generic contact glue, which we had in the house to repair broken coffee cups and tableware.

I kept building models as a child, including AFV's, aircraft, modern warships and ships from the age of sail. But when I discovered the first Verlinden books around the age of 13, I instantly knew I wanted to build dioramas and that is what I have been doing for the subsequent 26 years. Even when creating a single figure, in my mind, it is always a little diorama. I joined a club, KMK, when I was 19, which opened my eyes to the world. Exchanging ideas and techniques at club meetings and travelling to modelling shows has been a tremendous help to evolve as a modeller, as well as a lot of fun!

AK. What is your favourite subject?

My last and current projects both centre around aircraft carriers in the WWII Pacific war. In the past, I have worked around WWII German armour, figures and vignettes with WWI French, Belgian, Congolese, British, Ottoman and German troops. I have also done one GI in Vietnam, a portrait of Frank Zappa, a couple of animals, 2 boxed dioramas with scenes from everyday life. I have also done some pieces which are a bit 'out of the box' and hard to relate to a certain historic, or even fantasy, subject. To me, whatever can tell a good story can be a good subject!

Over the years, I have shifted from AFV dioramas to single figures and figure vignettes, then to boxed dioramas and now I'm doing ship dioramas. Who knows what will be next? But to me, it essentially always remains the same: dioramas that tell a story and whatever happens to be included in them (vehicles, figures, ships, animals, buildings, plants, etc.) are always equally important for a satisfying result.

AK. When it comes to painting and weathering, which paints do you prefer: acrylics, oils or enamels?

I have worked mostly with Humbrol enamels, both for base-coating and weathering vehicles, groundwork and figures. For a lot of projects, I used them exclusively, and I still like them a lot. The last couple of years however, I have been including more and more acrylics for figure painting and also for airbrushing my current ship project. I have also just purchased a nice collection of Abt501 oils for weathering my current ship project.

AK. What is your favourite technique?

I strongly feel that no individual technique is indispensable. There is always another technique that can get you the same end result.

Moreover, I think it is much more important to combine the different techniques properly. Only by layering different effects to a realistic blend, we can end up with a model that really speaks, instead of only showing a nice application of one or more techniques.

That said, I do like to put a lot of attention on shading and highlighting of every detail in a model, probably more than many other modellers. This results in models that look crisp and detailed, luminous and with a lot of depth and 3D-feel in the flesh, as opposed to only looking good on a photograph. I prefer to handpaint all the shadows and highlights with a fine brush, as opposed to (pin)washes and drybrushing. This gives me maximum control and allows me to apply zenithal lighting not only on figures, but on everything in a diorama.

AK. When finishing a model does it have to be ultra realistic or can you appreciate some artistic freedom?

I do like to get all the details of my models as (historically) correct as I can. It is always fun to research the subject, and I think it helps the model get a realistic feel, which in turn helps the model tell its story.

But there is much more to a realistic feel of a model than shrinking the real thing 35 times or more and there is more to telling a story with a model too. Therefore, I don't see any problem in modifying colours for scale effect or atmosphere, exaggerating or reducing certain weathering effects, making a road narrower or a slope steeper, etc. I do it all the time!

