

Weathering Techniques

Ray Oswalt is a proponent of realistic looking model ships. Consequently, he has done a lot of experimentation with weathering techniques. Ray did not claim to have all the answers, but he felt that world-renowned miniaturist, Sheperd Paine, in his book How To Build Dioramas, pretty much reflected Ray's philosophies. Weathering can enhance the appearance of models by accentuating details such as ironwork, carvings, planking, and even wood grain!

Oswalt stated that there are four basic weathering operations: washes, dry brushing, pastel chalks, and airbrush techniques.

Washes and dry brushing were his most commonly used applications for ships, but Oswalt did point out that there definitely were situations where chalks are appropriate. Airbrushing, which entailed the application of a very light "dusting" over the surface of a model could be used for muting colors, but required practice, experimentation, and the use of diluted paints.



Chalks are excellent for items such as windlass drums, hawseholes, and galley stacks. In fact, any place where you wish to show grime, ware or rust suits this technique. Ray passed around some Doc O'Brien Pre-ground Chalks (available through Micro-Mark), which are extremely fine ground, and should be handled

with care. A fixative such as Testor's Dull Coat is recommended after applying the chalks

The trickiest technique, and probably the most common among military modelers, is dry brushing. This entails the application of finite amounts of paint, of a contrasting color, over the high points of an object. A fine bristled brush containing very little paint is lightly applied so highlights such as rivets and plating are accentuated. Patience is the key word with this process, since it may not look like much is happening at first.

By far, Ray's favorite procedure is the application of washes. Oswalt did offer some words of caution. Always use fresh compatible paints. Do not use a wash made from



Ray's first weathered model. A scratch built Canadian Grand Banks dory.

thinners such as Dio-Sol. It will bight into the base coat and possibly damage your paint job. Make sure the base coat is always completely cured (it can take as long as two weeks), and avoid applying a coat of water-based paint over solvent-based products such as Floquil. A water based wash is OK since it's just a light application.

There are some requirements that must be considered when using washes. The solution should be transparent and a darker harmonious shade of the surface color, but not black.



Another absolute must is the fact that the wash should contain a retarder. You must have time to work with the product once it has been applied.

Ray's paint of choice is an Australian offering called Jo Sonya, which can be



purchased at Michaels or Craft Woods through mail order. The latter can be contacted at 1-800-468-7070. He uses this acrylic artist's paint for both the primary color as well as the wash. Oswalt uses their flow medium and retarder, in one to one proportions, as well as very small amounts of burnt umber, which gives the solution its color. How much paint is added, is dependent upon how dark you want the weathering to be. Ray

prefers a very subtle look, rather than a "bum boat" appearance.

If you intend to use this product, ample curing time is an absolute must. Jo Sonya will feel dry to the touch in less than an hour, but can take up to two weeks to cure. Water, as



a thinning agent for this product, is not recommended.

Ray then took his *Katy*, and showed us how easy it is. Using a large soft brush, he applied the wash to the hull bottom. He was careful not to get any on the blue since it was fairly fresh paint. Using strokes across the grain, he made sure the solution settled into all the crevasses and around the gudgeons. It was then a matter of wiping away the excess with a damp cloth.

A good example of what could be achieved with weathering was Bob Filipowski's *Louise Howard*. The model exhibited accentuated wood grain, grime, soot, and some rust. Bob stated that another consideration when



thinking about weathering is to lighten the color of the base coat. The membership was shown items, which reflected before and after a solution had been applied. Since a stark white can make objects look larger, and obscure detail, Filipowski suggested using an off white. Bob likes to mute darker colors by adding small amounts of gray. He felt that this would be applicable, even if weathering were not being considered. It was pointed out that this procedure can accentuate detail, and



enhance a model, but it can also reveal blemishes, so use caution, and experiment. Ray summed up the presentation when he stated: "Nobody says you have to do this to your model. Nobody says you have to paint your model. This is just another approach."