

Zeitschrift: Swiss express : the Swiss Railways Society journal
Herausgeber: Swiss Railways Society
Band: - (2013)
Heft: 115

Artikel: ADD life to the layout! : Peter Marriott adds figures to a layout
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-854235>

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ADD LIFE TO THE LAYOUT!

Peter Marriott adds figures to a layout



The Gotthard line is receiving a lot of maintenance on this HO diorama of the line made by Heki.

The number and variety of accessories that are now available for model railways in all of the popular scales is enormous. There are detailing parts in plastic, in resin, in white metal and other materials. Some come ready assembled and painted, others arrive in unpainted form or as a kit. New products are being introduced constantly.




WHAT DETAILING DOES A LAYOUT NEED?

The number of details that can be added to layouts depends on many things such as:

- The time that we wish to spend on detailing our layout. Many people find that detailing a layout is one of the fun parts of building a layout and so are prepared to spend a lot of time doing it.
- The cost of the detailing parts and accessories and how much money we are prepared to spend on them. Of course if one chooses to buy unpainted accessories the money will go a lot further!
- The location and time period of the layout – for example a BLS station in rural Bernese Oberland in the late 1960s might require far less figures, less luggage, less signage, less lighting, less taxis and road vehicles compared with a busy City Hauptbahnhof in 2013.

● What would be the level of 'clutter' on the real thing? For example apart from fencing, some cattle and telegraph poles, there may be very few details to add to a line side scene in the Valais. But in contrast a busy suburban line may require bridges, retaining walls, streetlights, pavements, lots of figures, signal gantries, road vehicles, graffiti etc.

ADDING FIGURES

Figures are available in all of the common scales from numerous manufacturers in every imaginable pose. Some are ready painted, others are not. It is generally best to position the figures so that they look like they are doing something. A group of teenagers chatting looks good, or workers in a goods yard in 'action poses', whilst unloading a wagon or vehicle is another alternative. Maybe we should buy a few seated passengers and fit them in our carriages? Figures can be fixed down to the layout with a blob of PVA, or Deluxe Materials 'Tacky Wax'. Woodland Scenics retail 'Scenic Accents' glue as a no-drip glue that allows for figure repositioning without reapplying the adhesive. Companies that make model figures suitable for Swiss layouts include Faller, Kibri, Merten, Noch, Preiser, Vollmer and Woodland Scenics. 

LEFT: Grandma is welcoming the children back from school.

BELOW: An outdoor meal is what the Swiss do best!

