



Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to Sumter we go...

Yep, the next BIG SHOW is almost here (well, in Sumter, anyways). And what a big show and a big deal this one will be.

Our friends from the Sumter IPMS chapter have put a lot of faith in us, and our ability to pull off our side of the event will not only reflect on us and AMPS, but it will also reflect on our Sumter friends. And I'm here to tell you all, our friends in Sumter have a lot riding on us. The Sumter IPMS chapter is really under a microscope with the regional IPMS community. They have suffered a ton of explicit and implicit criticism over their decision to take a chance and invite us to participate with them, but through it all, they've stood up for us, telling their and our critics to pound metaphorical sand.

We owe it to our Sumter friends and AMPS to do the best job that we can with this show. Keep in mind that this show also has the potential to be the biggest that our club has done yet, with possibly 2-3 times the number of armor entries to judge as well as with the added complexity of more entrants with certainly a goodly number of them entering both the IPMS and AMPS sides of the show. There is a lot of room for problems.

Because there will certainly be more models to judge, we'll need more than our usual number of judges. There will be more models to move around a venue that's 5-6 times as large as our previous venue which will require more runners and more time spent with models being moved from point A to point B. There will be more entrants requiring more registrars putting in more registration time and effort. And finally, more models means more scores to be entered into the computer system and a longer, more complicated awards ceremony.

There's a definite theme here – more, More, MORE! More of everything, and especially more people required. And where are those "more" people going to come from? You got it – Us: You, me, him, her – Us. There are no other people. It's up to us to carry this off. Yes, we might hope and expect to get some help from other AMPS chapters and members, but in the end, it's our show and our responsibility to make it happen. If we get some help – great. If we don't, we still gotta get'er done!

So, gird your loins, sharpen your spears, and prepare for battle... The Huns are massing before the gates in Sumter. What'll it be: Defeat or victory? To the victor go the spoils; Our laurels await us...

Last Meeting's Minutes:

Our last meeting was held at 6:00 pm, May 08, 2013. We had 12 members in attendance, and those members brought in 12 models to show and tell.

During the meeting: Scott gave us a treasurer's report: We have approximately \$2400 after paying our share of the venue for this month's show in Sumter; Pending major expenses remain our special

awards for Best Of's, etc estimated at \$250, Mike Roof will order those before our next meeting; We received an up-date on our June Contest from Tony Abbott and Mike Roof; All show preparations remain on track with no outstanding issues; We held an open discussion about the AMPS International Show and Results with some Show & Tell about the awards earned by our club's members; We introduced the issue of bidding for the AMPS 2016 International Show, Mike Roof and Jeff Nelson discussed a possible venue – the Medallion Center. (Tim Darrah also participated in the venue survey but was absent from the meeting.) We also discussed the need to apply for IRS Tax Exempt Status – 501(c)(4) most likely – SC Tax Exempt Status and how both of those fit into possibly applying for a Hospitality Tax Grant to off-set some of the expense of hosting future shows and exhibitions; Our website hit counter passed 69,231 hits on this day; Notified members that a new "joint entry" fee for attendees entering both the IPMS and AMPS sides of our show has been established by our contest committee.

Next Meeting's Agenda:

Our next meeting will be at 6:00 pm, Wednesday, 12 June, 2013 at the HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road, Columbia.

6:00 pm (1800): Meeting starts / Admin Business – This month's business: Treasury Report (Scott Amey); Report on preparations for our pending show (Tony Abbott / Mike / Tim); Review special awards; Review show schedule and jobs needs (judges, runners, registrars, ram rod, judges' training, etc); John Sherrer has bought a vendor table. Contact him if you have items you would like to sell.

6:10 pm (1810): Show & Tell: Builds and WIPs.

6:50 pm (1850): Break: Shopping & Social Mixer

7:10 pm (1910): Reconvene: Show & Tell: Builds and WIPs

8:00 pm (2000): Meeting ends (officially – but we'll carry-on as long as the store will stay open)

Regular meetings are held on 2nd Wednesdays of each month at 6:00 pm (1800) at the HobbyTown USA store, 10120 Two Notch Road, Suite 5, Columbia, SC 29223, (803) 736-0959.

Up-coming Events of Interest:

Jun 12, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

June 21-22, 2013: AMPS Central SC contest co-hosted with IPMS Sumter/Gamecocks at the Sumter County Convention Center, Sumter, SC. This will be the IPMS R-12 Convention with AMPS handling all of the armor categories IAW AMPS judging rules and procedures with separate AMPS awards.

Jul 10, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Aug 14, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Sep 11, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Oct 09, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Nov 09 (T), 2013: Plan date for the AMPS All-American / Lafayette Scale Modelers show in Fayetteville, NC.

Nov 13, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS meeting at HobbyTown USA store on Two Notch Road.

Dec 11, 2013, 6:00 pm (1800): AMPS Christmas Party anyone?

AMPS International Show Results Correction

Last month I wrote that Dave Varettoni was exhibiting in the Advanced Skill Level at the International Show. That was wrong. Dave was entered in the Intermediate Skill Level. Sorry for the incorrect information Dave.

The Art of Scale Model-Building

By: Mike Roof, AMPS #1632

Lately Jeff Nelson and I have been collaborating on some proposed changes to the judging and scoring rules for vignettes. We sensed some problems at the AMPS International Show with some of our fellow judges trying to internalize the subtleties and differences between dioramas and vignettes, so Jeff and I launched into an exchange of ideas that involved the purpose and intent behind what we, as model-builders, do. Because the assessments and scoring of the diorama and vignette categories involve concepts of artistic composition, it became quickly apparent that we needed to proceed from clear understanding of the "art" part of the "art of scale model-building."

So, the question is: Is there "art" in what we model-builders do? To answer that question, I guess the first thing that we have to understand is what is "art." Maybe then we can decide if there's any of that thing called art in our own work, or to put it another way, is model building an art form?

I confess, I thought finding a useful definition of "art" would be a fairly simple and straightforward matter. However, I soon found out that no such uniformly understood definition exists. To be sure, there are many dictionary definitions, such as this one: "[T]he expression or application of human creative skill and imagination...producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power" (http://oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/art).

But if you dig deeper to see what kinds of "works" constitute art, then you run into a concrete philosophical wall. I won't even try to explain, much less rectify, the many and varied definitions of what is and (by exclusion) what is not art. But if you're really interested in a mind-bending exercise, I recommend the following article in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: "The Definition of Art" <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/art-definition/> .

Unfortunately, the experts disagree and really can't help us in deciding if model-building is an art form. Fortunately, those same experts can't deny that model-building is an art form either. The answer is left up to us.

The question gets more complicated when you ask modelers if model-building is an art form or not. Most guys will agree (at least up to a point) that it is, but then a significant number will turn right around and deny that artistic or individual expression has any place in allowing interpretation in creating and presenting our subjects. These individuals, call them the "technocrats," insist that our models should always be exact, precise in all details, replicas of their prototypes. That is, every thing on the hypothetically "perfect" model, down to the smallest details, must exactly mimic the prototype. Hmm...? If the "technocrats" rule and advocate for exact copies of the prototype, well it doesn't seem like there's much, if any, room for art.

The problem that I have with such beliefs is that as a practical matter such perfect replicas are simply not possible. Forget about the technical impossibility of replicating in scale every physical detail and dimension, down to the smallest rivet and screw, presumably in the prototype materials. When taken to its most extreme and logical conclusion, physics makes creating such perfect scale replicas impossible if for no other reason than because the number of atoms and molecules in each replicated part would be less than the number in the prototype, and therefore the replicated part could never be exact in all respects except size. No matter how far the "technocrat" goes, at some point, his goal is frustrated by physics. The "technocrat's" absolute best efforts are always only approximations with physical compromises based on his judgments, interpretations and imagination. (Starting to sound kind of "arty" to me...)

However, there's an even more problematical issue with such a belief: No matter how proportionally close we ever got the dimensions of our hypothetically "perfect" scale replica to the prototype, that model could never appear to the human viewer exactly the same as the prototype. The physics of scale lighting and its effects on light, shadow, and color would always defeat the goal of a perfect scale replica appearing exactly like the prototype. No matter how perfectly close we got the model's colors to the prototype, the model would – could – never look the same as the prototype. Real world lighting would always make the model look different. Since model building is a visual exercise, this divergence of appearance and how we deal with it is critical to the creation of the works we present to our audience.

We discussed this in an earlier issue of the "Wildcat," when we talked about scale lighting and color, but it bears repeating here. When it comes to finish and presentation, the model builder must always resort to his individual style and technique to TRY to make his model appear as realistic as he can. So, even the most stubborn "technocrat" must ultimately resort to some personal, stylistic compromise in how he builds, finishes and presents his models. And as before, those compromises will be based on his judgments, interpretation and imagination. (Those "technocrats" who claim otherwise are only kidding themselves...) Although we're "realists" when it comes to what we usually attempt, when it comes to the results, we're all "impressionists."

(And the above points don't even begin to touch on those subjects that we classify as "imaginary" or "hypothetical," since the "prototypes" for those subject have only ever existed in someone's imagination.)

I believe that this provides us our first solid proof that model building is an art form, and that our models are works of art. Models are always an expression of the builder's style and interpretation of the real or imaginary world in scale. No two model builders have the exact same style, and no two interpret and express their vision of the real or imaginary world in scale the exact same way. Model building requires us to express our imaginations in a highly individual, personal and creative way.

But is this enough or even all there is to answer the question? I think not.

Model building also involves the notions of the aesthetic. As the ancient Greek proverb says, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," so goes our understanding of what we find interesting and attractive in the subjects we model. Although each of us experiences and judges for himself the aesthetics of our subjects, we all agree that we find some common aspects or characteristics of those subjects pleasing, interesting and engaging. In short, at some level, which varies naturally from one individual modeler to the next, we all perceive our subjects and the scale models we make of them to be "beautiful."

And, just to be clear, even though our prototype subject might be a machine, which usually defies being defined as a work of art, per se, the model builder is like the landscape painter. The sunset

might have a natural beauty and aesthetic the same as our prototypical or hypothetical machine subject, and like the machine, the sunset defies the definition as a work of art, per se. However, the painter is no less an artist, and his painting is no less a work of art just because his subject, the sunset, is not in itself a "work of art." The sunset, the painting, the machine and the model can all be judged to be "beautiful" aesthetically, and the two created by human hands, through skill and imagination, the painting and the model, can both be works of art.

Thus, we find our own models and the models that our fellows build have intrinsic aesthetic qualities and characteristics. That is, we model builders perceive models as having aesthetic qualities that are the same as those generally recognized in other, more traditional, works of art. Our subjects are pleasing to us by the forms, shapes, colors, etc, that they possess. Furthermore, they are also pleasing to us for the less tangible qualities that we associate with their prototypical and imaginary functions and their actual or imaginary social and historical importance and significance.

Not only that, but we also impart much of those tangible and intangible aesthetic qualities to our models through our own effort, interpretation and skill, creating unique expressions of our imaginations in our models and their presentations. Thus our models are not just technical replicas, like some kind of miniature three-dimensional blueprints, but they are much more – Our models are creative products that we make intentionally to capture and to impart those aesthetic qualities and characteristics that we and others find pleasing and interesting.

Finally, although we often look at our model building as a solitary endeavor, sometimes divorced from other people, almost universally, we modelers take great pleasure in exhibiting our works to others who share our aesthetic appreciations. We also enjoy and appreciate viewing and experiencing works created by our fellow modelers. Thus, we form a community of like-minded individuals who share a common aesthetic understanding and appreciation, and we have our own definitions and standards of what constitutes "good" and "bad" model art. As a community of like-minded artists, we hold public exhibitions. Our works are assessed and judged by others from our community who employ our generally common aesthetic appreciations and understanding. As a community, we share our skills, knowledge and techniques with the intent and goal to further and promote the expression of our common aesthetic understanding and appreciation.

So, here we are... Is model building an art form, and are our models works of art?

I don't know about you, but in my world, the answer to those questions is, "Oh, heck yea!"

Model-building is definitely an art form, and our models are works of art.

“The Day Room”

In the US military, most company-level units have a “day room” in the barracks where the troops hang-out, relax, and BS. When you want to learn the latest in “rumor control,” you swing by the day room and chat-up the Joes and Janes hanging out there. They might not always get it right, but they’re always willing to tell ya just what they think! So, welcome to “the Day Room...”

Alright guys and gals, our next big event is nearly upon us.

We've had outstanding success over the last two years with our other shows, but we can't rest on our laurels and assume that our reputation will carry us through this next show. This up-coming show will be our biggest one yet, and if anything, there will be even more work to be done. We should expect that armor model entries will number upwards of 150-200, which alone would be enough to stress our

judging beyond its capacity. Add all the rest of the expanded show requirements to that, and... well, you get the picture.

We all need to put in the time and exert the maximum effort necessary to put on the best show that we can. Our reputation as a club as well as the reputation of AMPS is on the line. Because this show is being held in conjunction with the IPMS R-12 Convention, there are A LOT of highly critical eyes upon us and AMPS. Every little glitch will be magnified by our critics just looking for excuses to point to this event and say, "I told you going in with AMPS was a bad idea."

So, please, everyone, clear your calendars and make your plans to get down to Sumter and lend a hand. While you're there at the show, check in with your club mates and find out what needs doing and what help they need. From the time before the doors open to long after they close, there's always something that needs to be done and never enough people to do it.

Don't become complacent and assume that someone else will do what needs to be done. There is no one else. Seize the initiative and be proactive. Communicate with each other and the show leadership. Keep everyone informed of what's going on, what needs to be done, and what you've done to take care of it. If you need help, don't be too proud to ask for it.

But not to worry! I know you're all up to it. Our success and your performance over the last two years have earned us a solid reputation, a reputation that you can all be proud of.

I know this is going to another kick-butt effort!

Happy modeling!

Mike Roof

Chapter Contact
AMPS Central SC "Wildcats"