

DETAILS

MAKE YOUR LAYOUT COME ALIVE

BY

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"The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes."

Sherlock Holmes Quote

-*The Hound of the Baskervilles*

Chapter 3: "The Problem"

"You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear."

Sherlock Holmes Quote

-*A Scandal in Bohemia*

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It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen.

John Wooden

Success is the sum of details.

Harvey S. Firestone

Details create the big picture.

Sanford I. Weill

A still image attracts the viewer with an overall impact, then reveals smaller details upon further study.

Thomas Kinkade

Art is all in the details.

Christian Marclay

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- FOR MANY MODEL RAILROADERS, THE OBJECTIVE IS TO CREATE REALISTIC AND INTERESTING SCENES WITH A RAILROAD THEME
- IN MANY RESPECTS, MODEL RAILROADERS ARE ARTISTS WORKING IN 3 DIMENSIONS
- SO WHAT MAKES A REALISTIC SCENE?
- IS IT PROTOTYPIC AND BELIEVABLE?
- AND WHAT MAKES AN INTERESTING SCENE?
- IS THE VIEWER'S EYE DRAWN TO THE SCENE?
- ONCE THE VIEWER IS DRAWN TO THE SCENE, DO THEY REMAIN FOCUSED ON IT AND TAKE IN THE DETAIL? (DO THEY "OBSERVE" THE SCENE, ARE THEY INTERESTED IN IT)?

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SO LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME REAL LIFE DETAILS

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ROCKVILLE, MD METRO ENTRANCE

HOW MANY DIFFERENT COLOR PAVEMENTS DO YOU SEE? AT LEAST 5

HOW MANY DIFFERENT COLOR SIDEWALKS DO YOU SEE? AT LEAST 3

HOW MANY SIGNS DO YOU SEE? AT LEAST 16

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OTHER DETAILS:

- LOTS OF STREET MARKINGS
- ROOF DETAIL ON BUILDING AT UPPER LEFT
- VARIETY OF TREES AND STREET LIGHTS

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SOME ROOF DETAILS ON A LOCAL CHINESE RESTAURANT

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MORE ROOF DETAILS ON A LOCAL CHINESE RESTAURANT

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THINGS IN REAL LIFE AREN'T ALWAYS STRAIGHT!

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- TRY TO BREAK UP YOUR SCENERY INTO INDIVIDUAL SCENES
- INDIVIDUAL SCENES FOCUS AND CAPTURE THE VIEWER'S ATTENTION
- YOU CAN CREATE AN INDIVIDUAL SCENE BY PROVIDING SOMETHING "GOING ON," SOME ACTION TAKING PLACE
- AS PEOPLE FOCUS ON LEARNING ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE SCENE, THEY THEN NOTICE AND TAKE IN THE DETAIL. THIS WILL TEND TO HOLD THEIR ATTENTION
- IN THIS CLINIC, MY INTENTION IS TO SHOW YOU EXAMPLES OF HOW DETAILS CAN ENHANCE SCENES
- I'M USING PRIMARILY PHOTOS FROM MY LAYOUT AND FROM BERNIE HALLORAN'S OUTSTANDING LAYOUT
- THE DETAILS I'M SHOWING AND DISCUSSING ARE BY NO MEANS A COMPLETE LIST. RATHER, THEY ARE REPRESENTATIVE EXAMPLES OF THE KINDS OF DETAILS THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.

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SO LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME DETAILS

I'VE TRIED TO IDENTIFY WHAT I THINK ARE MAJOR CATEGORIES FOR DETAILS:

- PEOPLE
- STREET DETAILS
- BUILDING DETAILS
- BUILDING SIDE DETAILS
- BUILDING ROOF DETAILS
- TRACK DETAILS
- SIGNS
- WEATHERING
- BACKGROUND AND PERSPECTIVE

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PEOPLE

- UNLESS YOU ARE MODELING A DESERTED AREA. THERE ARE USUALLY PEOPLE AROUND
- CITY, TOWN, OR VILLAGE STREETS USUALLY HAVE PEOPLE WALKING AROUND AND DOING THINGS
- THINK ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE DO IN REAL LIFE

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TRAFFIC COP DIRECTING TRAFFIC
AND A DOG AND FIRE HYDRANT
ON JIM BREWER'S LAYOUT

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HOMEOWNER BEATING A RUG
ON JIM BREWER'S LAYOUT

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A BUSY NEW YORK CITY SCENE

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ANOTHER BUSY NEW YORK CITY SCENE

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ONE TOO MANY AT MARSHALL'S PLACE

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A DOG'S GOTTA DO WHAT A DOG'S GOTTA DO!

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A DOWN-AND-OUT STREET BAND PLAYING FOR MONEY
IN FRONT OF WHAT IS OBVIOUSLY A BIKER BAR

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A BUSY STATION ATTRACTS ATTENTION

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STREET DETAILS

- STREET DETAILS INCLUDE:
 - THE STREET
 - STUFF ON AND NEAR THE STREET
- STREETS ARE NEVER ONE COLOR. WEATHER, OIL, EXHAUST, AND REPAIRS ALL RESULT IN STREETS THAT ARE A MULTITUDE OF COLORS AND PATTERNS
- DON'T BE AFRAID TO WEATHER YOUR STREETS. DARKENING THE ROADWAY IN THE CENTER OF THE LANE IS PROTOTYPICAL OF THE OIL AND EXHAUST THAT WILL ACCUMULATE ON THE ROAD OVER TIME
- SECTIONS OF ROAD ARE OFTEN DUG UP AND THEN REPAVED WITH A DIFFERENT COLOR ASPHALT OR CONCRETE. DON'T BE AFRAID TO USE DIFFERENT COLORS ON SECTIONS OF YOUR ROADS

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- CRACKS IN ROADS ARE TYPICALLY FILLED WITH A BEAD OF TAR. A BLACK, FELT-TIP PEN CAN BE USED TO EASILY DRAW THESE CRACKS ON THE ROAD
- MANY URBAN AND EVEN SUBURBAN ROADS HAVE SEWERS AND UTILITIES RUNNING BELOW THEM. ADD MANHOLE COVERS FOR REALISM
- MOST ROADS ARE SLIGHTLY ARCHED SO WATER DRAINS TO THE SIDES. IF YOU MODEL CURBS, ADD RAINWATER SEWER DRAINS WHERE THE ROAD MEETS THE CURB
- ON MANY STREETS, UTILITY POLES PARALLEL THE STREET. UTILITY POLES HOLD A WEALTH OF DETAIL

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- UTILITY POLES HOLD TRANSFORMERS, CAPACITOR BANKS, TELEPHONE CABLES, ETC.
- MOST UTILITY POLES CARRY 3 PHASE ELECTRICITY (3 WIRES) AND MAYBE A GROUND WIRE (4TH WIRE). WIRES ARE NOT TAUT, BUT PURPOSELY HAVE A SPECIFIC "SAG" IN THEM
- ADD TRANSFORMERS TO UTILITY POLES. USE DARK THREAD FOR WIRES. USE HEAVIER THREAD OR YARN FOR TELEPHONE CABLES

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OUTSTANDING ROAD DETAIL AND WEATHERING
ON BERNIE HALLORAN'S LAYOUT

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MORE ROAD DETAIL AND WEATHERING
ON BERNIE'S LAYOUT

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MORE ROAD DETAIL

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YET MORE...

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YET ANOTHER



AND ONE MORE



CROSSING DETAIL
ON BERNIE HALLORAN'S LAYOUT

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MORE STREET DETAIL

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BUILDING DETAILS

- DETAILS ON BUILDINGS MAKE THEM INTERESTING
- MOST COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS WITH FLAT ROOFS HAVE:
 - A MEANS TO ACCESS THE ROOF (ACCESS HATCH OR STAIRWELL)
 - PLUMBING VENTS
 - SKYLIGHTS
 - VARIOUS KINDS OF ROOF VENTS
 - AIR CONDITIONING UNITS
 - A/C DUCT WORK
 - ANTENNAS (BEFORE CABLE TV)
 - EQUIPMENT LEFT ON THEM (LADDERS, CANS, ETC.)
- MANY FLAT ROOFS ARE COVERED WITH TAR PAPER OR GRAVEL

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ROOF DETAILS

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MORE ROOF DETAILS

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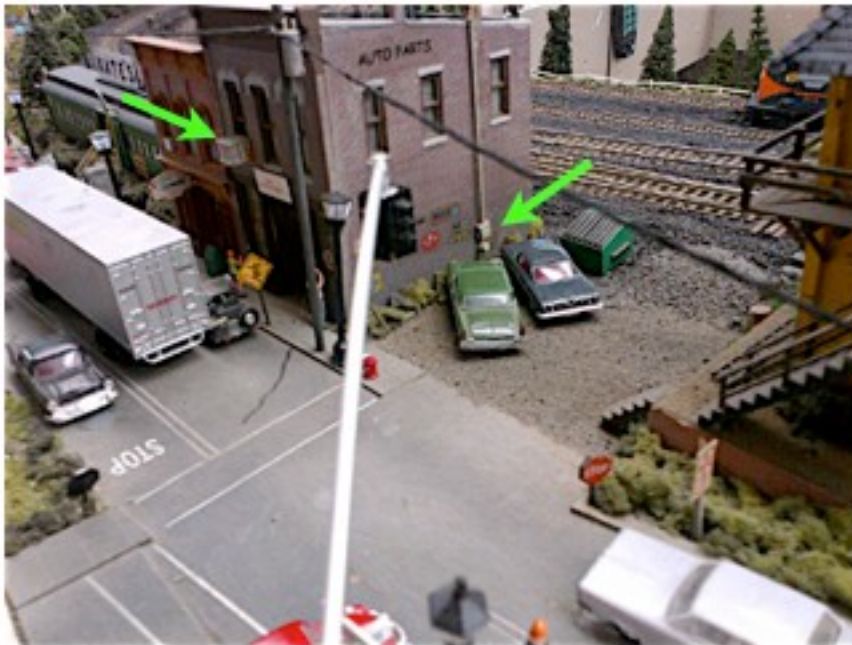
AND MORE

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BUILDING SIDE DETAILS

- WINDOW TREATMENTS. ADD CURTAINS OR SHADES
- I PUT WAX PAPER BEHIND THE CLEAR GLAZING. IT LETS LIGHT IN OR OUT BUT BLOCKS THE VIEW INSIDE
- PRIOR TO THE ADVENT OF CENTRAL A/C, WINDOWS OFTEN HAD WINDOW A/C UNITS IN THEM OR WINDOW FANS
- WINDOW AWNINGS WERE ALSO USED TO KEEP OUT DIRECT SUNLIGHT
- MOST SMALLER BUILDINGS, BOTH COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL, HAVE ELECTRICAL LINES (OR LINE) COMING FROM A UTILITY POLE. THEY CONNECT ABOVE THE ROOF AND TRAVEL DOWN A METAL CONDUIT TO AN ELECTRIC METER

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ELECTRIC METER ON SIDE OF BUILDING.
A/C IN WINDOW

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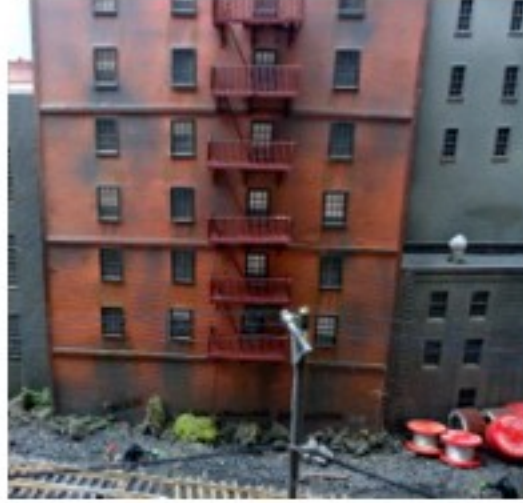
**BUILDING DETAILS
ON BERNIE HALLORAN'S LAYOUT**

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MORE BUILDING DETAILS

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FIRE ESCAPES PROVIDE INTERESTING DETAIL

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TRACK DETAILS

- MOST OF US ARE FAMILIAR WITH TRACK DETAILS, SO I WON'T SPEND A LOT OF TIME ON THEM
- RAILROADS, LIKE REGULAR ROADS, HAVE SIGNS. ADD WHISTLE, YARD LIMIT, AND SPEED SIGNS, ETC., WHERE APPROPRIATE
- WEATHER YOUR RAILS. REAL RAILS ARE NOT SHINY EXCEPT ON THE TOP
- REPLACEMENT (OR REPLACED) TIES ARE OFTEN LEFT NEXT TO THE TRACK
- BALLAST IS USUALLY NOT CLEAN. SOME WEATHERING ON LIGHTER COLORED BALLAST HELPS.
- TRASH (E.G., OLD TIRES, BARRELS) IS OFTEN NEXT TO TRACKS
- SIGNALS, WHETHER FUNCTIONAL OR NOT, ADD TO REALISM

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A WYE JUST SOUTH OF FREDERICK, MD.
NOTE THE TWO SIGNALS AND BALLAST PILES

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ELECTRICAL BOX,
TIE STACKS,
STATION SIGN,
AND WHISTLE SIGN

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SIGNS

- SIGNS ARE EVERYWHERE
- AS YOU DRIVE AROUND, IT IS RARE WHEN YOU ARE NOT WITHIN SIGHT OF AT LEAST ONE SIGN
- SIGNS ARE ALONG ROADS TO INFORM DRIVERS
- SIGNS ARE ALSO ALONG ROADS TO ADVERTISE
- SIGNS ARE ON BUILDINGS
 - SIDES
 - ROOFS
 - WINDOWS

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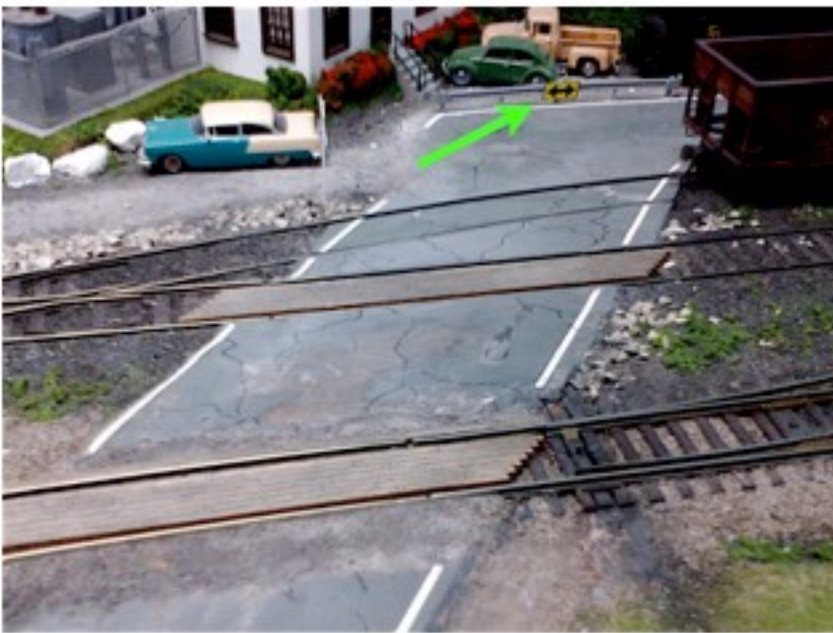
A PLETHORA OF SIGNS AS YOU APPROACH THE RAILROAD UNDERPASS
ON RT 28 IN RURAL DICKERSON, MARYLAND

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AN INTERESTING SIGN ON BERNIE HALLORAN'S LAYOUT

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NOTE THE DOUBLE ARROW ON THE GUARD RAIL

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**SIGNS ON
MY LAYOUT**



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MORE SIGNS ON MY LAYOUT

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WEATHERING

- IN GENERAL, ANYTHING THAT IS OUTSIDE AND NOT NEW OR FRESHLY PAINTED WILL SHOW SIGNS OF WEATHERING
- WEATHERING CAN VARY FROM MILD TO SEVERE. WEATHER YOUR STRUCTURES IN A PROTOTYPICAL MANNER
- MOST STRUCTURES WILL HAVE VARIATIONS IN WEATHERING FROM ONE ANOTHER, UNLESS THEY WERE ALL BUILT AT THE SAME TIME
- EXPLORE VARIOUS TECHNIQUES FOR WEATHERING. AIR BRUSH OVERSPRAYS WITH DILUTED, GRIMY COLORS AND SELF-ADHERING PASTELS ARE TWO EASY, COMMONLY USED METHODS
- APPROPRIATE WEATHERING WILL ADD GREAT REALISM
- THINGS TO WEATHER
 - TRACK
 - ROLLING STOCK
 - VEHICLES
 - ENGINES
 - ROADS, FENCES

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NICELY WEATHERED BUILDINGS
ON BERNIE HALLORAN'S LAYOUT

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ANOTHER OF BERNIE'S WEATHERED BUILDINGS

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OTHER DETAILS

•JUNK

•RAILROADS OFTEN RUN BEHIND INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS OR IN OUT OF THE WAY AREAS. THESE ARE OFTEN AREAS FOR PEOPLE TO LEAVE JUNK

•JUNK AND TRASH CAN ALSO ACCUMULATE IN OTHER PLACES. THINK ABOUT WHERE TRASH OR JUNK MIGHT ACCUMULATE AND MODEL IT



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ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF TRASH

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MORE TRASH

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DON'T FORGET ABOUT GRAFFITI



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MORE GRAFFITI

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AND DON'T FORGET ABOUT
THE BRIDGES

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DETAIL ON ROLLING STOCK

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BACKGROUND AND PERSPECTIVE

- A KEY ELEMENT OF ACHIEVING REALISM IS TO MAKE SURE YOUR SCENES LOOK BELIEVABLE
- BACKGROUND SCENERY SHOULD BE SMALLER THAN THE FOREGROUND SCENERY. THIS GIVES THE ILLUSION OF DEPTH AND DISTANCE. IT IS USUALLY CALLED "FORCED PERSPECTIVE"
- FORCED PERSPECTIVE CAN BE ACHIEVED IN A NUMBER OF WAYS
 - USE BACKDROPS THAT SHOW SCENES THAT APPEAR TO BE IN THE DISTANCE
 - LEAVE A GAP BETWEEN THE SCENERY CLOSEST TO THE WALL AND THE WALL ITSELF, CREATING THE ILLUSION OF DISTANCE
 - DEPENDING UPON THE GAUGE IN WHICH YOU MODEL, USE BACKGROUND BUILDINGS, VEHICLES, ETC. THAT ARE A SMALLER SCALE (E.G., USE N-SCALE BUILDINGS AND VEHICLES FOR BACKGROUND SCENES ON HO-SCALE LAYOUTS)

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N-SCALE BUILDINGS ON BERNIE HALLORAN'S LAYOUT GIVE THE ILLUSION OF DISTANCE

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**N-SCALE BUILDINGS ON MY LAYOUT
GIVE THE ILLUSION OF DEPTH ON A FLAT WALL**

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- I HOPE THESE EXAMPLES GAVE YOU IDEAS FOR HOW TO ADD DETAILS TO YOUR LAYOUT
- SOURCES OF DETAIL PARTS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE WALTHERS CATALOG, LOCAL HOBBY SHOPS, YOUR OWN "MODEL RAILROAD JUNK DRAWER," ETC.
- I PERSONALLY LIKE TO PERUSE E-BAY FOR STUFF. OFTEN YOU CAN FIND INTERESTING STUFF AND STUFF THAT IS NO LONGER MANUFACTURED
- MOST OF ALL, BE OBSERVANT AS YOU TRAVEL AROUND. TAKE NOTE OF DETAIL

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QUESTIONS?