

Tip: Painting Preiser Figures and Other Brands

Date: 06-03-2019, 09-10-2021 Addition, New 16-01-2024

Hi All,

I thought I should comment on the painting of Preiser figures.



Painting small figures isn't for everyone as you need patience, a steady hand, reasonable eye sight and time.

The Elephant in the Room

The big incentive to paint your own figures is cost. At the time of writing this article I researched some costs on the internet.

Item	QTY	Description	Euro	AUD	Price/Figure		Finish
					Euro	AUD	
*1	1000	Seated Passengers from China Painted	94.95	151.73	0.094	0.151	Poor
2	6	Seated Passengers from Preiser Painted	9.49	15.15	1.581	2.525	Good
3	120	Seated Passengers from Preiser Unpainted	21.99	35.13	0.183	0.292	Good
4	100	Seated Passengers from Preiser Painted	119.99	191.64	1.199	1.916	Good
5	40	Seated Passengers from Preiser Painted	40.00	63.88	1.000	1.597	Good
6	36	Seated Passengers from Preiser Unpainted	9.49	15.15	0.263	0.420	Good

For the Talgo Night train I have 9 cars to populate with seated passengers.

The 1st class car interior has 26 seats, eliminate the blind seating locations it reduces to 15 seats.

The 2nd class car interior has 36 seats, eliminate the blind seating locations it reduces to 20 seats.

I decided to have 12-15 passengers per car for the Talgo Night train where the costs work out as shown.

$15 \times 9 = 135 \times 0.292 = \39.42 for unpainted passengers plus time and paint costs

$15 \times 9 = 135 \times 1.916 = \258.66 for painted passengers

Note Item *1: - For the seated passengers from China I have marked the moulding and painting as **poor**, see the following reasons. The moulded figures lack crisp details and seem to be copies of the Preiser figures. There is no flesh colour as the plastic mould tint is utilised, all the figures hair are black and the clothing comprises only two colours. All colours used seem to be a satin finish.



The left photo is figures removed from the bag. All figure poses are sorted into bags. The middle photo is a bag of all women and the right photo is a bag of all men with dull colours. The scale of the men seems to be smaller than the women. Over all I only use these figures as fillers away from windows for the middle seating.

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Paints and Brushes

In the Preiser instruction sheet supplied with the unpainted figures it is suggested to paint the figures with **matt Humbrol acrylic paints** which I have found to have good coverage.

I have noticed in Australia of late that it is difficult to purchase Humbrol acrylic paints as they are no longer popular and hobby shops no longer carry these paints which has forced me to try 'Vellejo Model Color', 'Model Master' from Testors and 'Tamiya Color XF' acrylic paints.



The only paint I don't like is the Tamiya XF (Flat range) as the paint seems to have a slight satin finish which isn't matt enough for painting figures. See red and dark blue colours.



For most figures I use a No. 1 soft round brush.

Figure Preparation

All figures are removed from the support sprue and any mould flash is removed from the figure. Next I sort the figures with the same pose and keep them together in individual plastic zip bags.

Paint Preparation

I only use one colour at a time and I ensure the paint is well shaken/stirred. If the paint is too thick I use the manufacturer's instructions on thinning the paint, in most cases a small amount of water.

Painting Figures

I start with painting the flesh colour on all the figures that are required for a project. By the time you get to the last figure the first figure painted will be dry allowing you to start applying the next colour. I use the rule of starting with light colours and working towards the darker colours as required.

I also try and paint the group of figures with the same pose with different colours to create more variety.

Figure Colour Reference



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Figure Colour Reference continued



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Figure Colour Reference continued



Once painting is complete and the paint has dried, I store the groups of figures in zip plastic bags until I'm ready to install them in the coaches.

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Painting Figures from China

I find if I want to use the figures made in China, I just have to paint the flesh colour and try and change the shape and colour of the hair as a minimum requirement. See examples below left.



I decided to re visit painting the cheap Chinese pre painted figures as I need to have a few more filler figures for another lighting project. The figures above right have been painted all white to make painting new colours easier. The complete repaint of the figures was time consuming.

Figure Colour Reference



The original figure is on the left of each figure type and the new colour combinations are to the right.



Even though the moulding definition is poor the extra colours for each figure make a better infill figure for the centre row seats in a coach to provide more depth of passengers in the coach.

I'll let you decide if I have been successful.

As always enjoy your model trains