FSM PHOTO SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Publishing your photos in *FSM*

Photography makes or breaks most *FineScale Modeler* articles. The most frequent reason for manuscript rejection is poor photos. If the text is incomplete or we don't fully understand something you've written, we can ask you to clarify — but we can't re-shoot your photos.

In-progress, how-to-do-it photos are especially important. We often have to reject manuscripts about excellent models because they do not include pictures taken while the model was being built. *FSM* is all about showing readers how you did what you did. Think about the best *FSM* articles you've read — the ones you got the most out of — and, chances are, they included a lot of good descriptions of the techniques used, with photos illustrating exactly how it was done. The ideal *FSM* feature includes enough detail in text and photos for readers to come away not wondering how the author built the model.

In addition to the main text, provide captions for all of the photos you submit. Provide these in a separate document, and please make sure you describe everything going on in each photo.

Taking better photos

Model photography can seem daunting, especially if you are relatively new to cameras and lighting. But it's not hard if you follow these simple tips.

Depth of field: The more of the model that is in focus, or the greater depth of field in the image, the better. Readers want to see everything going on in the image, and there's nothing more distracting than essential areas being out of focus. Depth of field is controlled by lens aperture (or opening). The smaller the aperture, the greater the depth of field and the more the model, front to back, will be in focus. Shoot using the smallest aperture possible, usually ƒ22 or ƒ32. Keep in mind, the smaller the aperture, the more light you'll need.

Control lighting: Generally, more light means better images. For model photography, more light means greater depth of field and better detail. You can use lamps, but don't mix light types — don't use florescent bulbs with incandescent or natural light — because it will corrupt color balance. *FSM* uses indirect (not on the camera) flash.

Use a tripod: Camera blur is OK for art photography, but it's distracting to a reader trying to follow a complex process. A tripod is a great way to keep the camera from moving; a cable release helps, too, to trigger the shutter. It also frees your hands to be in the image for process shots and makes it easy to shoot from the same angle — useful if you are trying to show a sequence.

Show the whole model from several angles: When shooting the finished model, make sure you have everything in the frame. Too often, a good manuscript is spoiled when the beauty shots that should lead and end a story have sections of the model cropped out. Check the viewfinder or screen before releasing the shutter and be sure wingtips, masts, tails, and muzzle brakes are in the frame. Also, shoot the finished model from several angles.

Background check: A cluttered background draws attention away from your masterpiece. A poster-sized piece of colored art paper — steer away from really bright colors — curved up behind the model, makes a simple backdrop and helps concentrate the viewer's attention. Avoid fabric, such as tablecloths or sheets, because the texture may be distracting. Use this simple background for in-progress shots as well: Scarred, paint-splattered cutting mats may seem like a dramatic choice, but they can make it difficult to see the point of the image.

Know your camera: Take the time to read the manual that came with your camera. Also, go online and ask for advice. Modern cameras, especially digitals, all operate differently. The manual should tell you how to control the aperture, how to set a white balance, how to shoot RAW images if available, etc.

Shoot RAW: Subjects should be photographed using the RAW setting, if available, on your digital camera. The next best capture setting is the highest-quality JPEG or TIFF. Only RAW, JPEG, and TIFF file formats are acceptable. These formats give us the best chance of reproducing the model as shot so it looks right in the magazine.

Use a gray card: We recommend using an 18% gray card, available from most camera stores or online photography supply sites. Photograph

Photo/ Illustration Checklist

- ☐ Photos (numbered or labeled so we can relate them to the text) saved in RAW, JPEG, or TIFF formats
- ☐ Gray card image
- ☐ Photo captions
- ☐ Photo and short bio of author
- ☐ How-to sketches (digrams, templates, etc.)
- ☐ Cover letter

the card under the same light as the model and send us an image of the card with the photos. The gray card image file will allow us to reproduce the images with the greatest color accuracy possible. If you are unable to provide an image file with a gray card reference, we will do our best to render your image with color accuracy and exposure.

Don't correct digital images: You may be tempted to color correct, sharpen, resize, crop, or adjust the images before sending them to *FSM*. Don't. We have a better chance of getting the images to look right if the file is as shot. If you do send altered images, please label them as altered.

ISO or film speed: Use low-speed settings (ASA 100) rather than higher (ASA 800) because they produce sharper, less-grainy images. If the scene is too dark for ASA 100, add more light rather than trying to compensate by bumping the ISO setting.

Resolution: Yes, bigger really is better. Please send the highest-resolution images possible. Files should be at least 3-4 megabytes. Hint: If a 3-4 inch wide image looks pixelated on your computer screen, it's too small.

A few words on shooting in-progress shots

Photographing the process of a build or technique takes a little extra work. It can be tough to break out of your modeling rhythm long enough to take a picture. But taking good in-progress images is key to getting your story published. We need to see how you did what you did. Here are a few things to keep in mind to make it easier.

Plan: Before getting started, think about the story's focus. What are the key steps that need to be illustrated? What are you trying to show? It can be helpful to write down the stages you want to photograph and try to stick to that list. That can prevent missing a key step.

Keep the photo gear handy: When you are working on your project, have the photo equipment set up and ready to go so you can shoot with minimal disruption to your build.

Get your hands and tools in the photo: Ideally, we like to see process or technique in action rather than after the fact. It's not always easy and usually requires a tripod or an assistant, but readers better understand a technique if they see it performed.

File names: Photos, especially in-progress images, should be labeled or numbered so we can easily relate them to the text. Note: Use zeros to keep the photos orderly; for example, if there are 30 images with your manuscript, name the first file Photo001, then Photo002, and so on until you get to Photo030 (or whatever your last photo is). This keeps the files in the correct order.

Scale drawings and how-to illustrations

Please include sketches, patterns, templates, or plans with your article. Our artists can work from rough sketches. Draw the roughs as carefully and neatly as you can. We often include arrows, circles, and words in photos to point out what's going on. You can suggest such pointers by including a digitally modified image with your manuscript, but please include the untouched image, too. We can't use images with text or graphics embedded.

Payments and copyright

FSM pays for feature articles (but not show gallery or Reader Gallery images) upon acceptance — when we accept a complete feature for publication, you get a check. We normally purchase all rights to the material. We pay based on the published length of the story as determined at time of layout.

When you're ready, you can mail your submission to the address above, or upload it to the [Firecrown Media submissions portal](#).