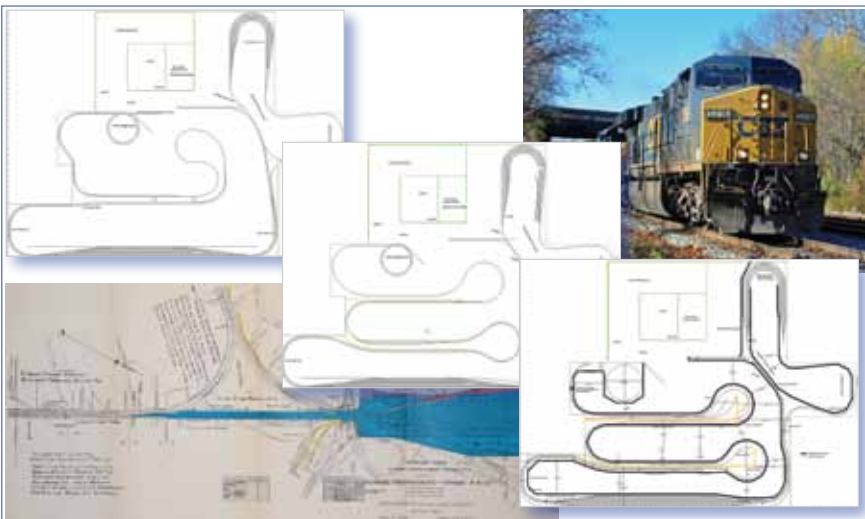


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# JOURNAL 63



Stepping Outside the Sandbox  
Modeling from Artworks  
Multi-Deck Layout Retrospective  
State Belt: Double? Or Half?  
SIG Election; SLC NMRA 2019



The Layout Design Special Interest Group, Incorporated (LDSIG) is an independent, IRS 501(c)(3) tax-exempt group affiliated with the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA).

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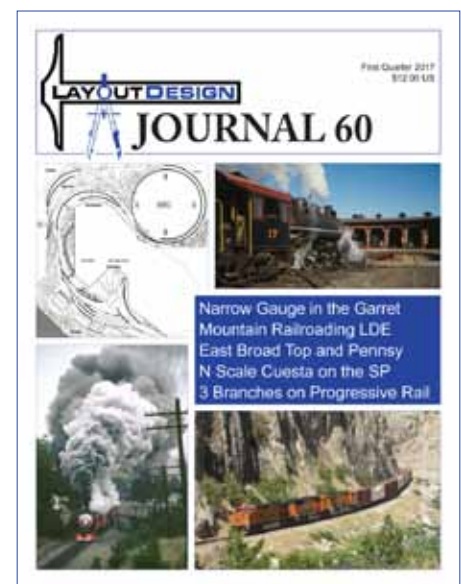
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## Film

Change the way you watch film and high-quality television. Spend more time watching lower-budget independent films (as opposed to blockbuster action flicks) where the emphasis is more on quality rather than appealing to the masses. Watch how the scenes flow, the mood, the lighting, the pacing. When you see a film or series you like, search the Internet for interviews with the writers, creators and producers. The interviews are goldmines of information on what they were trying to accomplish and how they went about it. Some of my favorites are Sean Baker (*Florida Project*, *Tangerine*, *Starlet*), Michael Mann (*Miami Vice*), David Simon/George Pelecanos (*The Wire*), Nic Pizzolato (*True Detective*).

## Military Modeling

Military modelers approach their hobby entirely differently than model railroaders do.

It's a different culture. To be blunt, the overall skill level is much higher than our hobby, the standards much higher, and they are much more driven to try new techniques. Almost everything they do can be applied to railroading.

Broadening the sources of where you get input, stepping outside the sandbox of model railroading, won't yield instant results – none of this will come over night. However, if you embrace the idea, I think you'll find that over the years you'll see a hard-to-define but clear and noticeable upward tick in the quality of your work. **LDJ**

*This piece was originally published on Lance's blog, found on his website: [www.lancemindheim.com](http://www.lancemindheim.com)*

*Nicholas Kalis recommended this article for the LDJ and arranged with Lance for its reproduction here. – BH*



*A few years ago I wanted to move my modeling to a level that transcended just being prototypically accurate. I wanted to create models for myself that, when I viewed them, evoked emotion. In other words, I wanted to move beyond modeling into art. It was a totally personal journey. In order to do this, I took a break from the hobby press and spent a good year taking art theory courses at the Smithsonian. These weren't "how-to" courses per se, but rather focused on areas such as composition and color theory. I also started making much more frequent visits to Washington's numerous art museums. Over time I began to notice a change in the quality of my work. My photo above incorporates concepts such as color harmonies, balance (both vertically and horizontally), and the use of negative space. My latest book, *Model Railroading as Art*, is now available from Amazon and at [www.lancemindheim.com/book-store/](http://www.lancemindheim.com/book-store/) – LM*

# Modeling from Artworks

## O Scale layout recreates scenes from paintings

by John Sethian, additional text by Byron Henderson

Lance Mindheim's article in this issue (page 4) suggests that designers and modelers expand their vision by observing paintings, among others. Lance describes his own efforts as desiring to "evoke emotion" as he moves from prototypical modeling toward art. But some modelers have moved in somewhat the opposite direction by reproducing famous artworks (typically paintings) as 3-D scale scenes on their layouts.

One of the best-known of these was John Armstrong's modeling of Edward Hopper's 1942 painting *Nighthawks* on his Canandaigua Southern layout. Armstrong discussed the challenges of modeling a 2-D scene in three dimensions, particularly the issues of perspective, viewpoint, composition, lighting, and much more in a detailed article in *Model Railroader* January, 1989. [See also the Ted Rose painting printed in *MR* August 1996; discussed in *Layout Design News* #15, July 1996.]

### More Hopper in O

John Sethian has incorporated two well-known Edward Hopper scenes (along with a number of others) into his 2-rail O scale layout.<sup>1</sup> Sethian notes, "Hopper was a master at manipulating light, shadows, and perspective to convey a mood. Duplicating that in 3-D is a challenge, particularly because a model can be viewed from multiple directions; and it has to contend with real geometry."

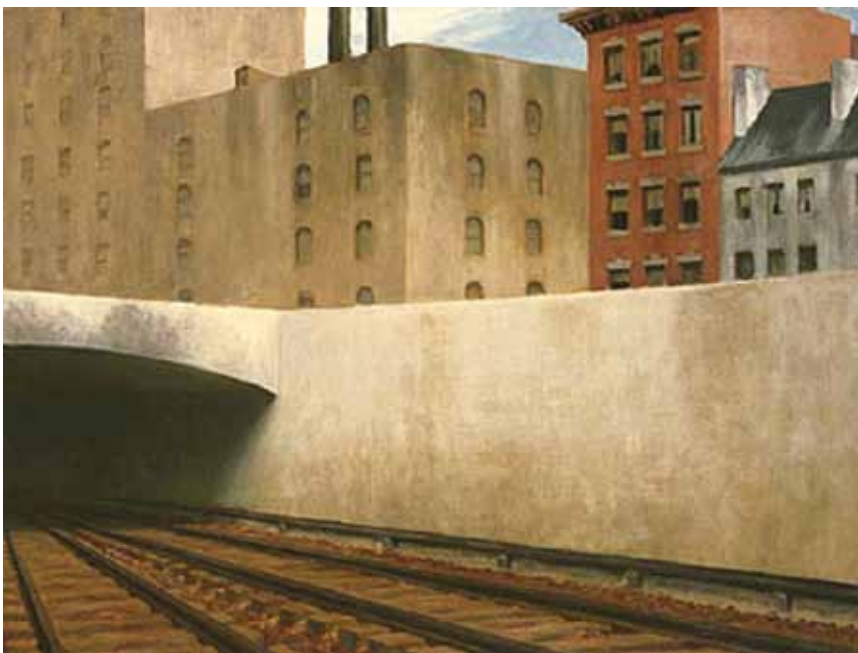
Hopper's *Approaching a City* (1946) (left middle) is said by critics to suggest feelings of both excitement and anxiety as a traveler approaches a city by rail. Hopper's wife Jo is quoted as writing, "... he [Hopper] doesn't want sharp gleam in the tracks running into his tunnel. Feeling of hollow, deep below sheer cliffs, wall of buildings."<sup>2</sup> Sethian reflects the essence of the painting in his modeling with a similar palette of hues and values.

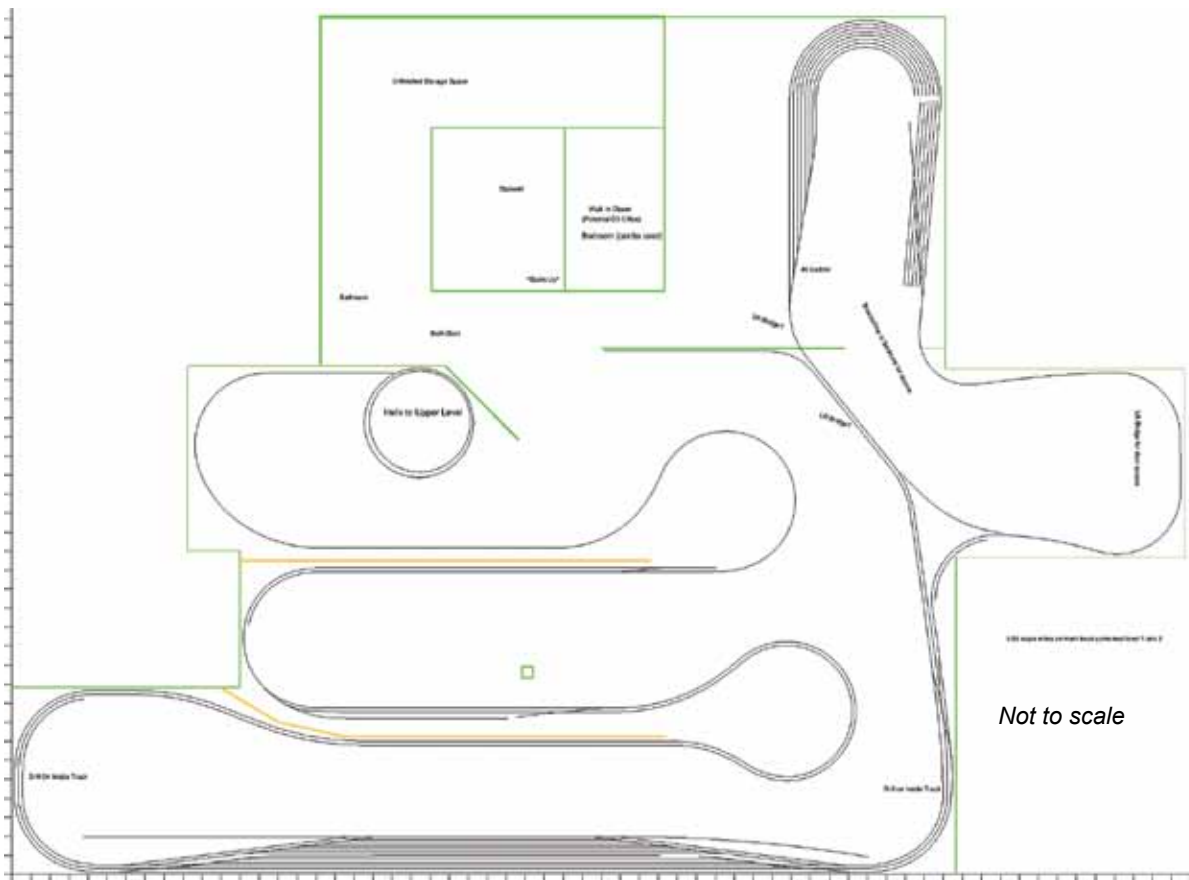
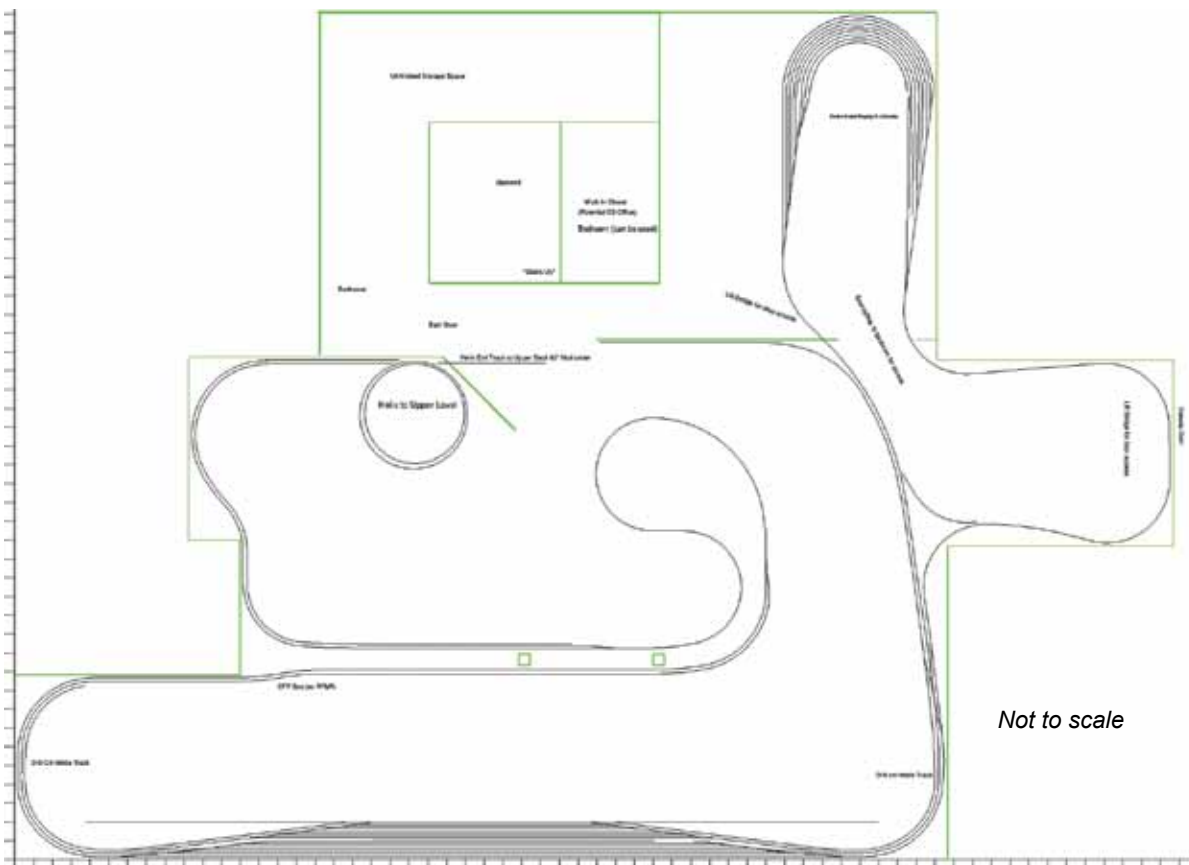
*1 John Sethian's layout was recently featured in Model Railroader, November 2017. It's also covered in the Mar/April 2011 issue (#55) of O Scale Trains. That article is available for download at: [www.oscalemag.com/docs/ost\\_55.pdf](http://www.oscalemag.com/docs/ost_55.pdf)*

*2 All Hopper family quotes from: Gail Levin, Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography, University of California Press, 1998*

*(Middle left) Edward Hopper's original painting, housed in The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC. All original art shared for comparison and critique under Fair Use.*

*(Bottom left) The modeled scene strikes a similar tone, both in color and emotion. These tracks pass under an elevated city scene. Model photos by the author.*





Option 44 sketch (top) reflects Travers Stavac's advice to locate the primary visible yard near staging for a longer mainline run. The wye and yard reflect their real-life relationship, and a single spiral helix preserves aisle space. Option 49's (below) two peninsulas offered a welcome longer run, but raised concerns about narrow aisles, especially in the yard.



# Rethinking the State Belt

## Double? Or Half? Alternatives in different spaces

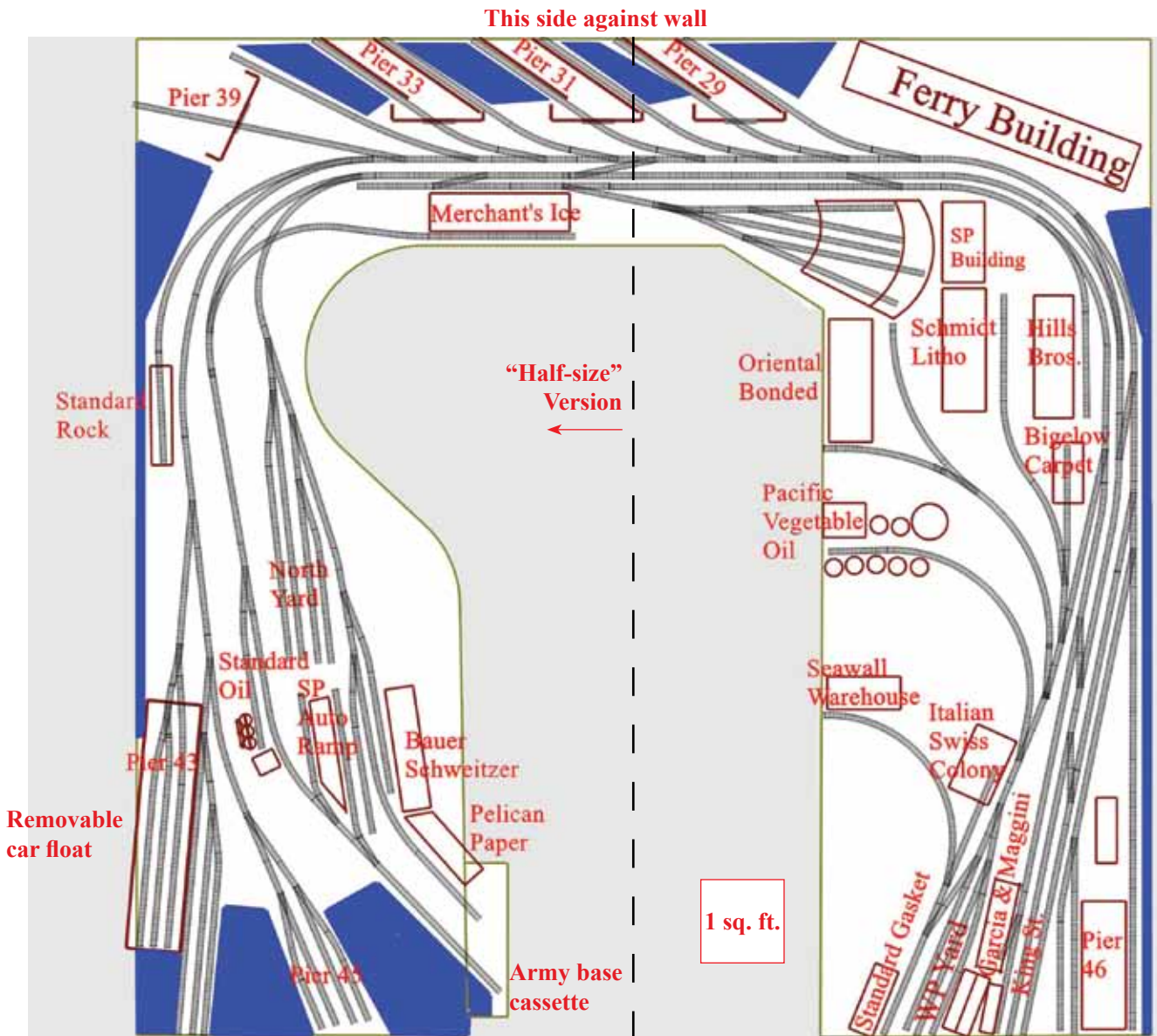
by Bill Kaufman; model photos by author

When I built my current layout, the State Belt Railroad of California, I simply reused the footprint of the old layout, the San Francisco and Colorado (*Railroad Model Craftsman*, January 2006). Both layouts measure 12' X 12' with about a four-foot opening in the middle (see track plan below). LDJ Editor Byron Henderson asked me one day what

I would do if I had half the space – or what I would do with twice the space.

### Half? Easy!

If I cut the current 144 sq. feet in half, it would be a simple equation. 6' X 12' would be the side of the layout that runs from about the car float operation at Pier 43 to about Pier 33.



**State Belt Railroad**  
**HO scale, 12' X 12' plus aisles**  
 22" min. radius  
 PECO C83 #5 turnout min.  
 No grade

Bill's as-built San Francisco State Belt Railroad plan. The layout has been featured in *Railroad Model Craftsman*, April 2007 and July 2009. For a "half-size" version, Bill thinks that he would build only the left half of the current layout (from dotted line). With the removable car floats, this would still provide interchange with the rest of the world. Operator aisles are around three sides and the center.