

Kitbash Challenge

Richard Vd Meijden tells about a very different modelling challenge.



PLAINRIES

with the Crash-n-Bash crew: Ethan, Marcel, and George. After a year of online contact, they invited me to join them at their table at SMC and help promote kitbashing.

As I attended more scale model conventions, meetings, and build days, I came to the conclusion that kitbashing was a largely forgotten art in the scale modelling world. Most people have no idea what they're looking at or how the design and execution comes together. When people see a kitbash build, the most common reactions are: "I wish I could do that," "I wish I was that creative," or "I don't know where to start," and so on. Attending those events became a personal crusade to promote kitbashing and get people to start thinking and building outside the box.

After a while, I thought, 'maybe people just need a push in the right direction?'

First some introductions: my name is Richard, I'm married to Diana and the proud father of three almost-grown-up kids. During the week, I run a driving school together with a business partner and a small staff. Science fiction and fantasy have always been a big part of my life; movies, books, graphic novels and the rest have always captured my interest. I've also always been a creative person. From building skateboard ramps to drawing and painting, to model building and renovating my home, I've always loved making things with my own hands.

A couple of years ago, my kids reached an age where they didn't need to be entertained by me anymore, and suddenly, I had time for a hobby again! As a kid, I used to build a lot of scale models. Tamiya was the go-to brand back then, and the range of available kits were mostly planes, cars, and military vehicles. Coming back to the hobby as a sci-fi and fantasy lover, I was thrilled to discover that the world of plastic models had evolved into a wide range of science fiction and fantasy kits! My first kits in 2015 were mostly from the Warhammer range, but even then, I always added my own vision to the kits; none of them looked like the box art or instruction manual once I'd built and painted them.

When I visited my first model convention (Scale Model Challenge in 2015) and discovered a group of kitbashers called Crash-n-Bash, I was blown away by their original designs and creative use of materials. This was a real eye-opener for me and kicked my creative mind into a higher gear. Soon after, thanks to the Interweb, I became friends



Youngest entrant (8yrs old)



2019

SMC 2019: Small Beginnings

At Scale Model Challenge 2019, I came up with the idea to give away 100 free Kitbash Starter Kits: a small goodie bag containing a pingpong ball and some merchandise. To make things more interesting, I added a small challenge: build something using the pingpong ball and win a prize. All participants had to do was use the pingpong ball in their build and email me some photos. By lowering the bar with a free kitbash part to start with, allowing remote entries, and offering a fun prize, I hoped to encourage as many people as possible to get creative and start thinking out of the box – the exact opposite of what 'out of the box building' means in the scale modelling hobby – and start kitbashing! My good friend and model shop owner,





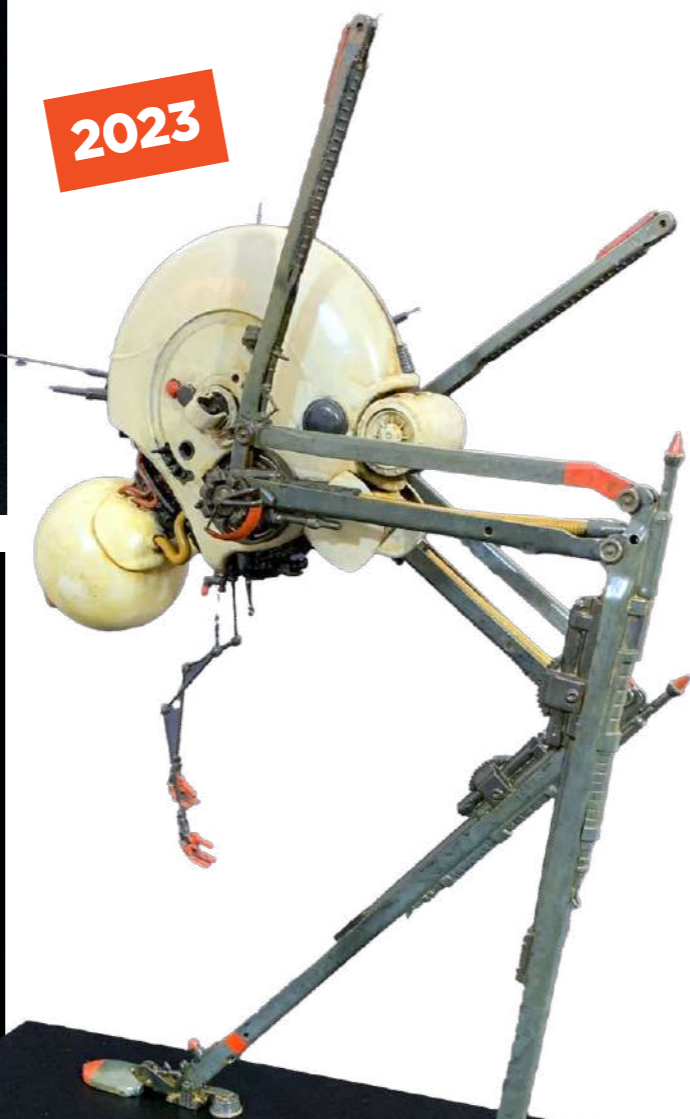
Father and Son build



Youngest entrants



2023



WHEN PEOPLE SEE A KITBASH BUILD, THE MOST COMMON REACTIONS ARE: "I WISH I COULD DO THAT," "I WISH I WAS THAT CREATIVE," OR "I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START," AND SO ON.

➤ Mart from Modelbouwenzo, jumped in right away and sponsored vouchers for his shop as prizes.

This year, 2025, marks the fourth iteration of the Kitbash Challenge, and since the first Challenge, I'm happy to see it grow. That means more people are getting creative and starting to kitbash, which is my main goal! To make the Challenge even more accessible and encourage more kids to join the hobby, I decided to split the challenge into two divisions: under sixteens and sixteen plus. I didn't want youngsters to be demotivated by having to compete against experienced kitbashers and this solved that problem. It's so much fun to see what the younger generation comes up with; they're not yet limited by rules and opinions. Although their entries may not look as refined or skilled as the grown-up entries, their ideas are often more creative and out-of-the-box. And they have the same chance of winning a prize as the experienced builder.

Every year, I receive emails from people telling me this was their first ever kitbash, those messages make me smile big time, every time! No project can ever be a organised by just one person, so I'm very happy with my wife Diana for letting me 'do my thing' and for endlessly supporting me at all the conventions. I also get a lot of feedback and mental support from my good friend and kitbash extraordinaire Ethan from KiBaRo, and his girlfriend Mirjam, who helped set up my website. Sponsors also play a big role by making it possible to hand out prizes. By now, there are five generous sponsors providing prizes for both divisions, for which I am very thankful. For me, this whole project is a side track of my own hobby: getting people enthusiastic, creative, and involved. So

spending some of my own hobby-budget to fund the challenge is a no-brainer. That said, it makes me very proud that all the sponsors are like-minded people, whose motivation is getting people involved in our great hobby. Even if I have little to show for them in return, except for some small exposure in my posts and banner at SMC, I cannot thank them enough for supporting this side project and our great hobby in general. So thank you: Mart, Robert, Ruben, Paulo, and Pavel!

Getting Kitbashing!

So, if you would like to have a go at kitbashing yourself, here are some helpful tips to get you started. Your basic scale model

2024



tools will do perfectly, just add a tube of superglue for gluing non-model-kit plastic, and you're ready to go.

Start with a basic shape. This could be a pingpong ball, a plastic medicine container, a shampoo bottle, or even a half-built scale model.

Think of a general idea to start from. Do you want to make a robot? A flying or rolling vehicle? Or maybe convert an existing build like your Gundam or Warhammer kit? Now, start adding parts to your basic shape. These can be leftovers from other kits, or just random stuff found around the house. For example, bottlecaps can be thrusters for your spaceship, wheels on your moon lander, or windows on your Ork truck. A faucet filter can be an air intake, thruster, lamp, or



2024

But the most important tip I can give is simply to have fun! Don't let failure – or things not going as you had imagined them – stop you. Because there's no fixed design to follow, you can easily change your design halfway through the build. Let it 'evolve' on its own and you'll be rewarded with a good time and an original looking kit!

Kitbash Challenge 2025

Do you want in on all this fun and are you up for a small challenge? Then do visit the Kitbash Challenge stand at the Scale Model Challenge in Veldhoven in the Netherlands this October and pick up your free Kitbash Starter Kit. This year's starter kit will contain not one, but seven kitbash parts, so you are off to a good start.

The rules are few and simple, so everybody can join in:

- The challenge starts on 18 October, the first day of SMC (right after you pick up your Starter Kit).
- Use the pingpong ball in whatever-you-build.
- Send in some W.I.P and finished photos, with the sticker from the Starter Kit visible.
- Submit your photos by 31 January, providing your name and age.

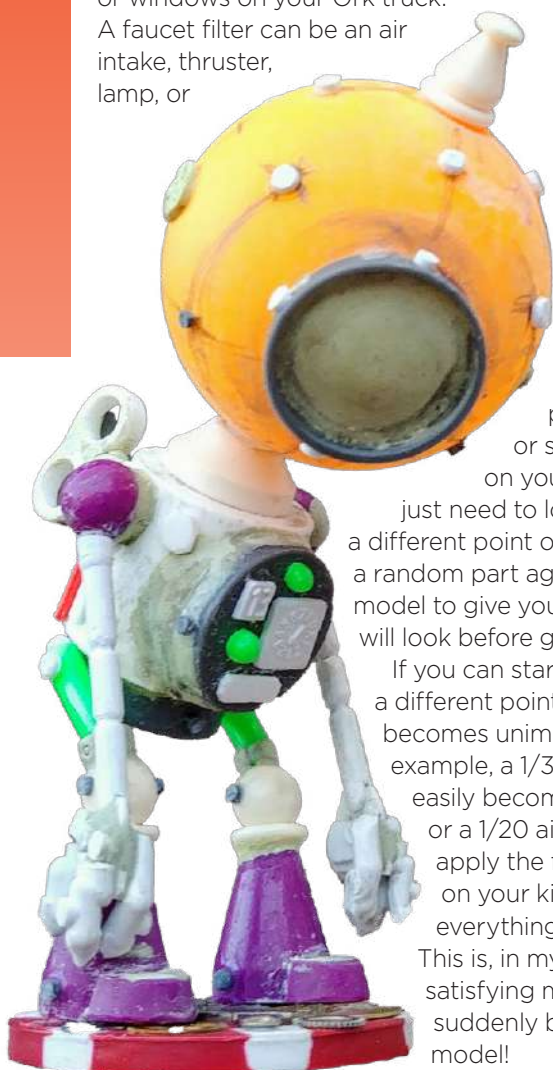
This year's Scale Model Challenge will be held from 18 to 19 October at the Koningshof Conference Centre in Veldhoven, the Netherlands. So please do come and say hi at the SMC in Veldhoven and be sure to get your free Kitbash Starter Kit and start your kitbashing adventure! ■

breathing filter on your Gundam mask. Plastic straws are perfect for steampunk piping, fuel lines, or support beams on your buildings. You

just need to look at things from a different point of view. Just hold a random part against your basic model to give you an idea on how it will look before gluing.

If you can start looking from a different point of view, scale becomes unimportant. For example, a 1/35-scale wheel can easily become a 1/700 thruster or a 1/20 air vent! Once you apply the first layer of primer on your kit-bashed model, everything comes together.

This is, in my opinion, the most satisfying moment; your build suddenly becomes a real model!



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