

THE DOLL

Three times Three

Text & images arvo

It is rather curious how some of the so called futuristic designs that tend to draw our attention are in a way or another based on really old concepts...

... right now when information is more accessible than ever, it's almost impossible not to notice; everything is "connected".

TheDoll is our latest MOC and it is a clear example of this.

It seems like our "building indigestion" with IRONMAN didn't last for too long. For us, handling an unnecessarily big building size was a change of pace. We even had an unspoken pact about "never setting foot on those grounds again".

"... we mustn't use that much time to nail an idea..." , we said.

It didn't even take us two weeks until we started fantasizing again, with an image that fascinated us since the first time we saw it. "GHOST in the SHELL", its world, its characters... its music! ... it simply traps you.

We have always said we wouldn't build anything that already has a good MOC in existence, and there are tons of them about GITS: helicopters, weapons, the famous tank (and awesome ones!)... and even though the movie offers you much more than that, we never felt the need to add anything...

... not until we bumped into GITS2!, where "she" appeared for the first time.

Pale, small, almost naked, sitting in that dark alley, thoughtful, while holding a soldier's severed head on her lap. Her agility or her brutal strength (which was simply a survival instinct) didn't surprise us. Not even the mix of evil and innocence of the scene...

... but the way she faced her end. A state that was just as dramatic as aseptic, incapable of resurfacing, with the exception of that frail line that seemed to come out of her mouth:

"... help...h... help..."

An SOS message that didn't stop until she ripped her cold bio-mechanical body with her own hands. Some kind of "programmed retirement", an explosion of colour, a final gift

We really desired it. Quite a lot. Even though the visual references of the doll (gynoid) were scarce, we had all we needed... the will to build it with LEGO®.

GITS2 vs BELLMER

Nothing can escape the Internet.

Eager to find any useful information for our project, we ended up finding "it".

That weird silhouette, schemed and simplified upon disfigurement, had been imagined and created by Hans Bellmer 70 years before. An obsession, designed and redesigned until the point it turned into an unfinished distortion... which he even took to parties (that guy really knew how to have fun!)

We don't even want to start thinking about the amount of designs and pieces we attribute to certain people without even knowing the origin of the idea... Is this important? Who is the owner of the idea? Is there one, or many?... the one that "creates" it... or the one that "improves" it?

It is true that we got carried by an "orphan" image, but in any case it wouldn't be honest to dismiss the work done by the GITS team. Who can resist that?

The say "building a house from the roof down" is not the way... and it isn't, or at least it shouldn't be...

... but that's the way we built this MOC, "from top to down".

BUILDING, in gerund.

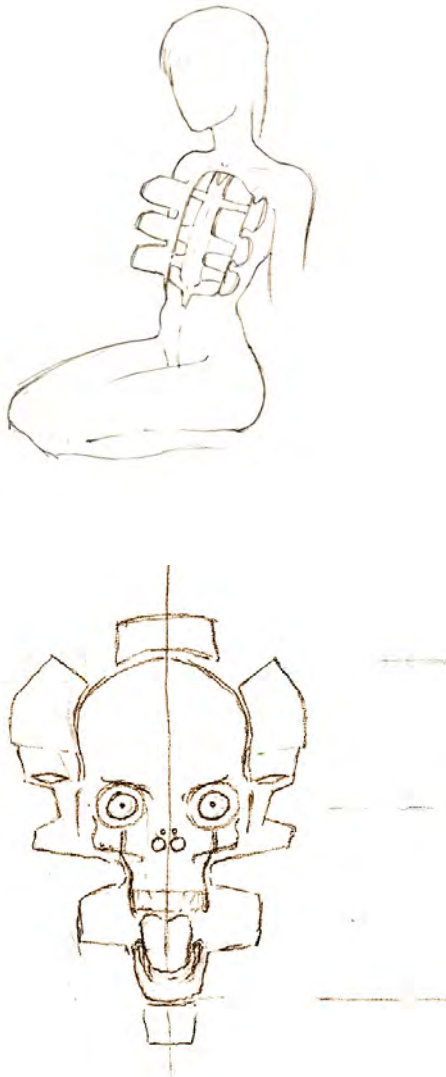
Perhaps we should have brainstormed it from start to end, dose it, and gather ideas... and pieces. But really, do you know many people who just test the water with their foot before jumping into the pool? We only know one...

We didn't even think (or remember) the inconveniences of building something of that size... we just started with it.

From the very beginning we suspected there was a lack of visual references for the gynoid, and that we'd have to resort to our imagination for many of the parts. But achieving that open face, her hair, or the flower she was adorned with... turned into some kind of challenge (one with capital letters), as if it was our final goal.

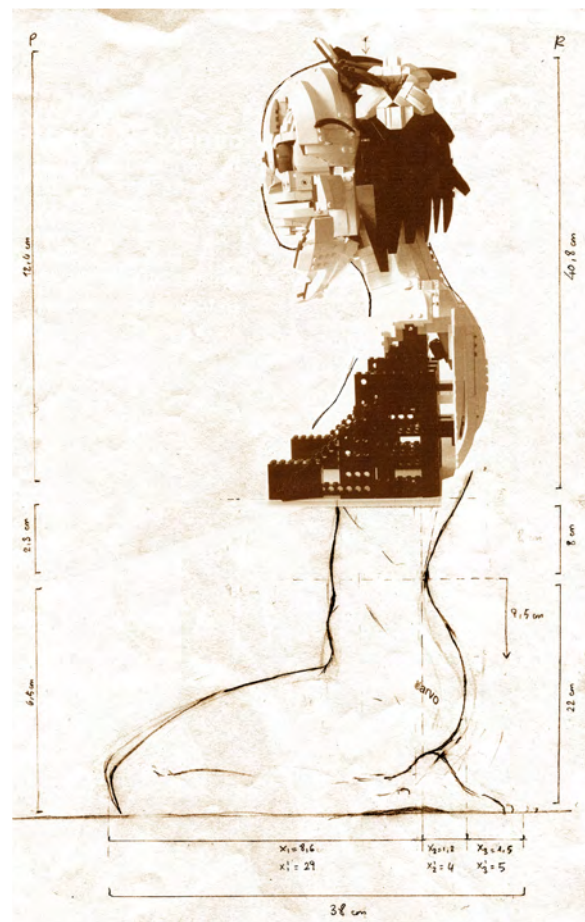
There were no doubts about the main colours. The images were clear, and the combination of White-Tan-Dark Red all along the body seemed obvious. Also some colours here and there would end up giving that "cartoon feeling"...

... even if they were lime or orange pieces, the contrast was assured.



The head shows a similar structure to that used on IRONMAN, with a Technic-nerve through the neck that connects to the body. There are minifig parts, radar dishes, hoses, hinges, arches... fiber optics for placing the teeth, and horns for the eyebrows. The hair is removable, which eased the building process, and contains some of our favourite details. The hair tufts (with a rather Japanese looking style) and the flower.

Having the head's size helped us measure the rest of the body and its proportions giving us a glimpse of the figure we wanted; a slight disproportion between the legs and body, characteristics reminiscent of an infant's body, which some adults still have.



The calculator doesn't lie

From the first sketches, we saw the necessity of building an efficient structure, far from what we had improvised (our expertise). It had to be solid but with enough space to house all the necessary inner details... and most of all... modular! giving special care and attention to the connection points.



Upper left: The main difficulty of this system is connecting without being in the way

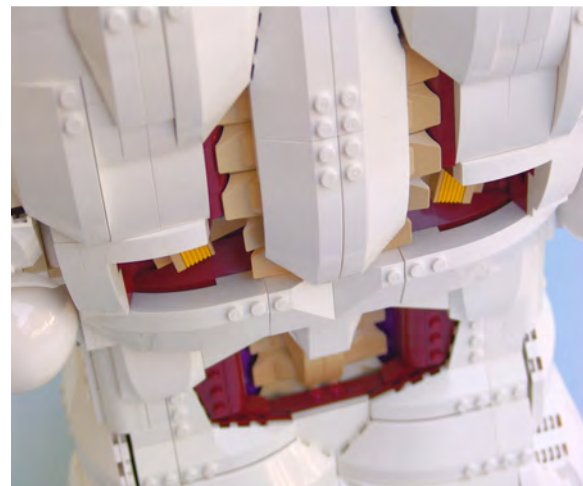
Down: Its configuration is similar to that in IRONMAN, with big shoulder blades, and a visible spine through the two openings in the lower part of the back.

...THE REST

After finishing the head, we needed some sort of "receptacle" that could hold the head and at the same time be the beginning of the inner structure of the torso (our next goal). This structure kept growing, being modified according to our necessities. And we guess you don't need any mention of the work it meant, especially when it grew to a size where we didn't know what pieces we had or what we were looking for... and when we say that LEGO® should have an "Undo button" we are not kidding!.

The structure is "hyper-mega-super-dimensioned" and its section is adequate (and would have been enough like that), but not happy with it, we added Technic-bricks or brackets in all the outer sides to make sure nothing would happen to it. And if we sum the stabilizing effect that the weight has, we made TheDoll into something like an antithesis of IRONMAN.

The hardest things to make in this structure were the "openings" in the back. In our first version we didn't have any. The back was flat... but at the last minute we decided to add them and leave the image and meaning of the back to the eye of the beholder.



As we mentioned before, the torso (open) was our "next stop". One of the most important aspects that we had to manage and deal with was the "width". In the sketches where we reflected the proportions, we forgot a small detail... "What about the front?"

Building an adequate width for the whole MOC wasn't the only vital thing we had to take care of. We had to do so with the inner width as well. It wasn't easy finding the final position for the "doors" (it is likely they don't match the original model's but its number and distribution helped us find the "image" we were trying to evoke) Anything could have happened... there were so many angles that it was almost impossible to cover them all... and that's how it happened. Only the colourful inside made us forget about that detail.

And the reason is that colour had to be the "centre" of the MOC. We included cylinders and pneumatic tubes, fiber optics, radar dishes, wedges and panels of colours that went along the original palette without getting eclipsed...

We knew we would have to build some sort of pedestal for the torso, just like we did with the head. And like with the previous one, it had to be in the inner structure of the supporting part (in this case the legs). We took care of the joining by building two "super-studs" that go deep enough into the torso to guarantee a firm connection without them impeding further building or already existing parts. Their shape is triangular and mimics a real pedestal.



Up: Everything, or almost everything, is built with Technic-Bricks. The torso sits on top of tiles found in the super-studs that connect with its interior.



Up: The cylinders hold the doors and are only shown as a detail. The ribs are presented as dividing lines between the spaces and colours. The rest of the elements are simply there for decoration without covering anything important



The limbs were built using very different logic. While the arms allowed some freedom with their poses, the legs required a specific flexing point.

Besides the hands and feet, we would like to highlight the 6x6 Sphere in the elbows (with the new mudguards holding them) or the long and thin cylinder that dictates the movements of the arm (lovers of "the famous saga" probably have recognized it easily!)

In the legs, without any doubt, the knees (they were one of the parts we built first since we needed a reference for the rest... looks like some sort of sea shell, doesn't it?) and again, the 6x6 Spheres under the hips (it was necessary for them to show up, to give a sense of articulation)



Up: It was crucial that the new mudguards could actually hold the 6x6 sphere. The cylinders imitate those of a single piece.

For building the hands we had a good reference with IRONMAN, even though the bigger size of TheDoll made us rethink the way to achieve the fingers. We especially wanted to be able to bend and angle the fingers individually (the effect is visually attractive and gives the hands a more realistic and natural feeling). One of the problems was to find pieces of reasonable sizes for each finger... but actually, a combination of pieces was the solution... and the skys were the protagonists there. We used helmets on the finger tips and that gave them the "nail effect" (half of certain "sidereal saga" is there for sure!)

For the feet, it was very different. The toes are really important (the helmets reappear here), but both shape and position are more important for the final look. We made a couple of versions but due to the location and position in relation to the whole thing (under the lower back) any changes affected the body structure as well.

After 8 months building, it's hard not to imagine all the MOCs that we could have built or planned instead... but even with that, we like to think of this as a collection of many mini-MOCs, from the flower to the embryo, from the hand to knee, the hair, the hips... or the teeth and ribs...

... we forgot to do some stuff and left some other things and colours to try, but we definitely got what we were looking for, a doll. ■



Up: You just have to put away the arms off a minifig to make it look like a thumb, coincidence?

Down: There are many geisha-like poses, but we thought this one was the most aesthetically appealing.

