



⚠ DANGER ⚠



Great creators of the world: Brian Kescenovitz

With Adrian Florea we began a series of articles where the own interviewed recommends us one of his favourite creators for the following issue

Text & images Brian Kescenovitz

Hisprbrick Magazine: Name?

Brian Kescenovitz: Brian Kescenovitz (aka mondaynoodle)

HM: Age?

BK: 35

HM: Nationality?

BK: American

HM: What do you do normally?

BK: I'm a stay at home, homeschooling dad with six kids. When I do manage to find a little time to myself, I usually try and build, but I also do a bit of video gaming. Actually, gaming was my big hobby before I got back into LEGO®...I'm a geek through and through. Video games, Dungeons & Dragons, toy collecting, collectable card games, radio controlled cars...I've done them all at some point in my life. All the geek staples, except for computers (which I'm not that proficient with) and comic books, which I somehow managed to steer clear of.

HM: When did you first start building with LEGO?

BK: I've had LEGO for as long as I can remember. I stopped building somewhere in my early teens, but thankfully kept all my bricks. Then, in late 2006, I discovered MOCpages, and got the building bug again..

HM: Your first set?

BK: I'm not positive, but the set I remember best from my childhood is #497, the fabled Galaxy Explorer.

HM: And your last set?

BK: # 4993 The Cool Convertible is the most recent set I've purchased, but actually, I get most of my parts through Bricklink.

HM: Your favourite commercial LEGO building theme?

BK: Hmm...right now, probably the Indy line, primarily because of the colors it uses. I had high hopes for the Exo-Force line, and some of it turned out to be pretty interesting, but in the end it just got a little to wacky for my tastes.

HM: Your favourite non-official building theme?

BK: Without a doubt, Mecha. More specifically, I like the western "walking tank" style of mech, often typified by the Battletech/Mechwarrior universe, as opposed to the more humanoid shaped, eastern, "Gundam" style of mecha. Some of my recent builds cross the line a bit more though. For instance, the WAR DOLL was directly inspired by the mechs in the video game "Lost Planet" which was made by Japanese developer Capcom.

HM: What inspires your creations?

BK: Oh, I find inspiration in lots of different places. Most commonly from art I find online or from video game or film content. I also like to check used book stores for cool art books, role playing and miniature gaming manuals with good pictures, etc. Sometimes, inspiration comes from more unusual sources like the silhouette of one of my kids toys laying on the floor or, more often than not, one of my kids actual



LEGO MOCs. I tend to be very focused on form (especially in my mechanically oriented MOC), so anything with an interesting shape can inspire me.

HM: Do you draw or pre-designs before you start building?

BK: I have a sketchbook that I draw rough concepts in, though it usually does not go much beyond that. Occasionally I will flesh them out, but only once has a completed piece of concept art actually resulted in a finished MOC. It's something that I plan on doing more often though, because it seems to help focus me better. I'm generally an extremely slow builder, so anything that can help expedite the process is a welcome addition. But you know how it is...sometimes you just start putting bricks together, and things seem to flow with no rhyme or reason as to why it's working...it just does.

HM: How do you face the process of building your ideas? Do you have a fixed and predefined idea of a MOC which takes form during the building process? Or do you start building with parts directly and that brings you to a final design? To sum up: do the parts define the MOC, or does the MOC decide which parts you are going to use?



BK: Well, it's a little bit of both actually. I usually have a general idea of what I'm going to build and how it might look, but frequently, the final MOC is considerably different than what I had originally envisioned. So in that sense, the parts define the MOC more often than the other way around. For instance, my Dawn Forge MOCs are almost exclusively dark grey, so I'm very familiar with the dark grey pallet of pieces. Whatever parts are available in that color (and that I have on hand) is largely what determines the pieces I use, and consequently effects the final look of the MOC. Of course, there is more to it than that, and I make conscious design decisions independent of piece selection, but I think there are certain parts that I tend to gravitate toward using over others. Whether this tendency breeds proficiency or staleness in a MOC is open to debate, but I suspect it's probably a bit of both.

HM: What is your favourite LEGO® element and why?

BK: It's pretty tough to pick just one, but the ubiquitous cheese slope and grill tile have to rank fairly high on the list. Some other favorites would be the 75° 2x1x3 inverted slope, the 1x2-2x2 bracket, the 4L bar, and the good old fashioned headlight brick

HM: Which part would you like LEGO to produce?

BK: A 1x1 brick with a stud on one side (the technic brick/half pin trick is just too loose), a 2L bar, and a true olive drab brick color.

HM: How many hours do you spend building with LEGO?

BK: It varies wildly. Sometimes I'll build for five or six hours a day (after the kids are in bed) for a few days, and then I might not build for a week. I'm trying to

figure out a more reasonable and reliable building schedule, but it's difficult considering how chaotic things can get around my house.

HM: What does your family think about this hobby?

BK: My kids, of course, love it and are building all the time, either with me or by themselves. My sixteen year old daughter, on the other hand, is not especially fond of it, but that's only because I occasionally recruit her help with sorting. Fortunately, my wife has always been supportive of my little "hobbies" and LEGO is no exception. I've tried to get her into it as well, but her spatial relation skills seem a little...lacking. (Oh boy, am I going to hear about that one...)

HM: Home schooling is not a concept that is widely known in Europe. Since LEGO is a very didactic toy, what role do LEGO bricks play in the education of your children? Has it helped to communicate with them? Have you ever tried working on an aspect of their personal development by playing with LEGO bricks?

BK: While I've never really used LEGO as a direct, hands on educational aid, I have noticed its effect on my children's proficiencies in things like spatial relationships and three dimensional geometries. Their grasp of three dimensional problems and their ability to visualize them is really quite remarkable for their ages. It also shows up in their artwork, where three dimensional space stations are the norm instead of stick figures.

HM: Usually it's children who show their parents their creations while the parents merely observe. In your case things may be the other way round, and for now their creations aren't quite as complex as yours, but are any of your children following in your footsteps? How are they doing as far as MOCs are concerned?

"Will the minifigs
ever take revenge?
Probably not..."





BK: I know I'm just coming off as "Proud Daddy" right now, but some of the things they build really are amazing. I've taught them some basic SNOT techniques to help them get beyond the standard "brick on top of brick" thinking, but really, they come up with innovative shapes and connections all on their own. Sometimes they try and imitate my creations, but as I mentioned before, more often than not, it's me drawing inspiration from them.

HM: One interesting aspect of your MOCs is that you create complex geometric shapes that at first glance appear to be impossible to create with LEGO® bricks, like long bending curves and the use of large spheres and cylinders (Lucy, War Doll, Ephram's Garden...). In many the stud completely disappears and they appear to be made in a mold. Is creating clean and perfect curves an obsession in your models?

BK: I wouldn't say curves are an obsession since many of my MOCs are distinctly angular, but a clean and realistic look is frequently my goal. Often, this means building studless or nearly studless, but only because it usually contributes to the polished look of the final product, and not simply for the sake of building studless. I've seen many MOCs that utilize studs in an effective manner and actually enhance their appearance. More often than not though, if you are striving for that realistic, "cast from a mold" look (like I often am), it usually means going mostly studless. .

HM: Lucy is a great MOC. Not only because of the level of detail and building technique, but because of the scene and composition (the height of the base, columns, a minifig escaping). Ephram's garden follows a similar pattern: minifigs trying to escape from a monster. How did you imagine these scenes, where do they come from? Will you ever create a MOC in which the minifigs take revenge and might win?

BK: That's a good question. I'm not quite sure why I always have the minifig fleeing in fear from a terrible fate. I guess I'm just not a big fan of happy endings...or at least not in my imaginary worlds. My favorite author is master of horror and the macabre, H.P. Lovecraft, and the endings of his stories are rarely uplifting but frequently soul chilling, so that may have something to do with it. Lucy was actually inspired by some artwork I found online, and Ephram's garden was inspired in equal parts by the movie "Dune" and the purple worm from Dungeons & Dragons. See...I told you I was a geek. Will the minifigs ever take revenge? Probably not...

HM: The increase of AFOLs and lines like Star Wars create new possibilities not imagined before by LEGO. What do you think about the old school LEGO and the new LEGO?

BK: Well, I certainly enjoy the ever expanding selection of parts that results from all the new sets. Each new piece helps to expand the possibilities that



are available to builders. The actual licenses like Star Wars, Batman, etc. are less important for me since I really only buy sets for the parts they contain, but my kids would probably beg to differ. They love the Star Wars sets, and I've heard many AFOLs who say that it was the Star Wars line that brought them back into the hobby, so from that angle, the new LEGO® seems to be an unqualified success. Sometimes though, there is just no substitute for good old fashioned plates and bricks, so as long as these don't disappear entirely, I can embrace the new. One thing I wouldn't mind seeing is a greater focus on the AFOLs with more UCS style sets with a higher degree of detailing and less focus on playability. They wouldn't necessarily need to be huge like some of the UCS stuff is. How about a small, highly detailed space ship or mech, designed to be more of a desktop model, sold exclusively at LEGO stores and on their website, and aimed squarely at AFOLs. LEGO, if you're listening, I've got a few mech designs I want to discuss with you...

HM: Any other comments you would like to share?

BK: Hmm...I guess I'll end with the advice I give to people who ask for building tips. Here goes...

1. Take your time - It's not always fun to put that extra level of polish on a MOC that you could call done right now, but it's almost always worth it.

2. Build within your collection - Spending your time perfecting a smaller MOC makes more sense than forcing out a huge one that you just don't have the pieces to do right. Save that big one for next year.

3. Set it aside when you need to - If you get stuck during a build and it just doesn't seem to be coming together, set it aside for a week or so and work on something else. Frequently, when you come back, you'll look at it with a fresh set of eyes that may help you decide what direction it needs to go.

4. These guidelines work for me - They may not suit your building style at all, and if that's the case, feel free to call me an idiot and ignore them completely. Happy building!

Thank you very much, Brian, for your collaboration. ■